

Position statement of The Hong Kong Institute of Architectural Conservationists (HKICON) on the Northern Metropolis Development.

The northern New Territories contain rich cultural and natural heritage resources that form precious and unique rural cultural landscapes along the Shenzhen River. These resources require appropriate conservation, revitalization, and sustainable management.

HKICON advocates for a heritage-conscious approach to the Northern Metropolis Development that aligns with UN SDGs and UN-Habitat's vision of sustainable city development. We propose adopting the "Cultural Landscape Approach," which acknowledges the relationship between humans and nature, providing a more holistic planning and management framework that integrates cultural and natural elements, as well as tangible and intangible aspects for heritage management. We call for a comprehensive survey to identify the valuable heritage resources within the proposed NM area and nearby New Development Areas. Additionally, a Strategic Heritage Impact Assessment is recommended to determine the potential impacts and the cumulative effects on cultural, natural heritage, and cultural landscape values of the NM development and to devise suitable and timely management measures to protect the heritage values of the site. HKICON also recommends the formulation of a cultural landscape management regime that preserves ecosystem integrity while promoting cultural sustainability and socio-economic vitality of traditional farming and fishing landscapes, war and industrial heritage, as well as other under-recognized heritage resources in the area.