

**The Hong Kong Institute of Architects  
Quarterly General Meeting 2023  
30 March 2023**

**President's Report**

Dear Members,

Thank you for attending the First Quarterly General Meeting (QGM) of The Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) in 2023. After enduring over 3 years of anti-pandemic restrictions, we finally get a chance to meet each other face-to-face in a physical mask-off setting.

While this QGM is my first formal meeting with HKIA members, I have been fulfilling my duties as HKIA President ever since I came to office in early January of 2023. From leading the architectural hiking tour to Lantau Mountain Camps, hosting the Spring Reception cum housewarming party of the recently renovated HKIA premises to meeting with Government officials on important industry issues, including SOPL, KYC Artificial Island and manpower shortage, I have devoted full 100% of my time on Institute business.

With the COVID-related matters going off the radar, I would like to draw your attention to some of the focuses of this Council in 2023.

**Addressing Issues of Concerns**

**Manpower shortage**

At this very minute, the Professional Assessment Committee is actually working hard in assessing candidates to be admitted into our profession. While we've close to 250 applicants which again breaks the record, you and I all know that it is not sufficient to fill the supply-demand gap. In view of the upcoming major infrastructure and housing projects, the situation is going to worsen if solution is not identified.

In our submission to the Financial Secretary on the government budget, we pointed out that simplifying government procedures, addressing the fee-diving phenomenon, enhancing the cultural infrastructure, and expanding and subsidizing professional educational programmes are all direct and/or indirect ways of developing a healthier ecosystem to nurture young professional talent.

**Reflecting members' views to Government and statutory bodies**

Through our Boards, Committees and Special Task Forces and our representation in various committees of the Government and statutory bodies, members could share their views on specific subjects of concerns, contributing to the policy-making process of public bodies. On major issues impacting the construction industry and society as a whole, we also proactively engage with other professional institutes and government officials to make our voices heard. At the end of the day, we rely on members serving on HKIA Boards/Committees as well as external bodies to contribute their knowledge, ideas and insights to develop concrete and practical proposals. As such, I encourage all of you to consider joining our Boards and Committees. Your participation in HKIA

will certainly make HKIA stronger.

The 2023-24 Council continues the previous Council's arrangement of engaging registered practices via breakfast meetings. The first meeting with Band 1 firms was held last week. Views were exchanged on SOPL, unfair contract terms and a few other topics. Meetings with Bands 2 & 3 firms will be arranged in the following months.

### **Specific task forces**

Owing to the importance of some major issues, we have established specific task forces under the Board of Practices and Board of Local Affairs to tackle the Northern Metropolis development, the Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands development, Carbon Neutrality, Streamlining of Government Procedures, Design for Safety, Unfair Contract Terms, Security of Payment Legislation, and Fee Diving. These are all critical issues affecting our practices and the architecture profession. The task forces will consolidate views from members, discuss with relevant authorities and prepare submissions to the Government. In case you have any specific insights on these topics, please don't hesitate to share with the task forces.

### **Upholding Professional Standards**

#### **Professional Assessment**

The results of the PA exams on papers 1, 2, 6, 7 & 8 held in November 2022 were announced in February this year. A record number of 209 candidates passed all the written papers. Last week we organized a sharing session where some of our younger members gave out tips on preparing for the professional interview, altogether over 160 people joined the sharing session face-to-face and online. As to the professional interview, it is in fact happening today, and the number of almost 250 candidates taking the interview is also a record-breaking figure. Wishing them the best of luck on the interview!

#### **Mutual recognition of academic qualifications with ARBUK**

The discussion with the Architects Registration Board United Kingdom (ARBUK) on potential bilateral recognition of academic qualifications is near the end. Most of the issues have been resolved, and the major hurdle is that ARBUK insists on signing the agreement with ARB HK instead of HKIA. Advice from legal professional is that ARB HK is not authorized under ARO to sign such agreements with external parties. We shall engage in further discussion with ARBUK on this point. Meanwhile, the transitional arrangement of recognizing UK architectural programmes for Hong Kong students to expire in June 2023 will likely be extended if necessary.

### **International Networking**

#### **International Union of Architects (UIA)**

HKIA remains active in the international architect arena. I joined the UIA RIV Presidents meetings online in January and February, and other members also attended the same meetings as well as a few other meetings. The highlight of this year's UIA will be the UIA Congress to be held in Copenhagen in June. BExA Chair Helen Leung and I will join the Congress, and we are applying for government funding so that more members could join the event.

The UIA Golden Cubes Awards Hong Kong region HKIA pre-selection was held on 21 February, and entrants to School Award, Institution Award and Audio-visual Media Award were selected. May we wish them every success in competing for the Awards. To celebrate the International Women's Day on 8 March, the newly formed HKIA Women Architects Group organized a PechaKucha sharing session at the HKIA premises.

### **Architects Regional Council Asia (ARCASIA)**

With reopening of borders, we have been able to participate in international events physically. Hon Sec Thomas attended in person ARCASIA Committee's Roundtable meeting held in Kathmandu of Nepal in January and then ARCASIA OB-Committee Chairs meeting in Boracay of the Philippines in February. ARCASIA Fellowship organized an online Remembrance event on 19 March to pay tribute to the passing of Ronald Poon and Mubasshar Hussain, both Past Chairs of ARCASIA. Ronald Poon, as you know, is also a former President of the Institute. Past HKIA Presidents Anna Kwong and Edward Shen, HKIA members Joseph Kwan and Tony Tang shared in the event.

### **Canberra Accord**

As some of you may know, the Canberra Accord is a multilateral agreement among organizations with established systems for the accreditation of architectural education programmes that are substantially equivalent. The signatories include the accreditation bodies in Mainland China, USA and Canada. Our member Dr. Rosman Wai has taken up the role of the Chair of the Canberra Accord since July 2021. Hong Kong is going to host its General Meeting in June this year. We shall keep you posted on further development of the meeting.

### **Reconnecting with Mainland**

The relaxation of the quarantine procedures and cross-border restrictions has taken us by surprise, which is actually a welcome relief to our Board of Mainland Affairs. In the first quarter of this year, we've already organized two study tours to visit the UABB exhibitions as well as other architectures in Shenzhen of the Greater Bay Area (GBA). And we are planning more excursions to the GBA in the later part of this year. Interested members please look out for announcements from the Board of Mainland Affairs. Meanwhile, we have received quite a few official delegations, including the one from Nanhai in Foshan and the one from Tianhe in Guangzhou.

I myself have been busy joining quite a few functions held in both Hong Kong and the Mainland, such as a few seminars organized by Qianhai Authority in Hong Kong, a promotional seminar by Hainan Government, a roundtable in Qianhai, another roundtable organized by Shenzhen Registered Architects Association in Guangzhou, and CIC's delegation to the International Intelligent Construction Industry Innovation Conference in Chongqing. There are obviously numerous opportunities for us to explore in the Mainland, especially the nearby GBA cities. We shall try our best to identify such opportunities and share relevant information with members.

### **Promoting Architectural Excellence**

#### **HKIA Gold Medal 2022**

The HKIA Gold Medal 2022 Organizing Committee has been formed, led by our Vice

President Julia. We will soon solicit nomination for potential candidates as recipient of the Award. As you know, the prestigious Award aims to acknowledge someone who has made consistent, profound and distinguished contributions to Hong Kong's architecture. Therefore, we look forward to your assistance in identifying among our fellow architects one who has demonstrated exuberant qualities in one or more of the following categories: personal integrity, architectural excellence, advancement of the architectural profession, architectural design and built environment, practice of architecture and its reputation, impact on society and humanity, exploration of the future of architecture, and advancement of architectural education.

### **HKIA Annual Awards 2022**

Another prestigious Award in progress is the HKIA Annual Awards 2022. We have made some adjustments to the Awards, adding more categories to the Awards and recognizing shortlisted quality projects. The nomination period will start soon. I encourage all of you to consider applying for the Awards.

### **HKIA Roving Architecture Exhibitions (RAX)**

We have obtained close to \$10m funding from CreateHK to organize HKIA Roving Architecture Exhibitions this year. There are two curatorial teams responsible for Venice – Hong Kong exhibitions (theme: Transformative Hong Kong, The Laboratory of the Future) and Kuala Lumpur – Nanjing Exhibitions (theme: Harmony in Diversity – Connecting the Metropolis by In-Betweens) respectively. The Venice exhibition will be on from May till November, while the KL exhibition will likely commence in July, followed by possibly Bangkok and Nanjing. The response exhibition in Hong Kong will be held in the first quarter of next year. Interested members please take note of the schedule.

### **2022 Hong Kong Shenzhen Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism\Architecture**

The Shenzhen exhibition of the UABB Biennial of Urbanism\Architecture was held at GDH City · Jinpi (Kingway Brewery Industrial Heritage) from early December 2022 to late March 2023. Some 20 members joined a guided tour to visit the Exhibition on 22 February, and another 35-member tour to visit the Exhibition plus other architectures in Shenzhen was organized on 18 March. Vice President Julia Lau, BExA Chair Helen Leung and Past President Bernard Lim joined the closing ceremony on 26 March.

### **Conclusion**

With COVID situation somewhat under control and the local economy slowly picking up, we at the Council think that it is the perfect moment to steer our members' attention towards overcoming the challenges facing our profession, and enhancing the work environment of our members and practices. I hope from my report so far you can feel the commitment of this Council to address your concerns via our active participation in webinars, competitions, awards, professional assessment exams, community outreach efforts, and other local and overseas events. As the Institute is a member-driven organization, we rely on our fellow members' support to show us that the Council is in fact steering HKIA towards the right direction for the good of our members, the profession, industry and society.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my Council peers, who have put in enormous time and efforts to plan and deliver meaningful programmes, to represent

HKIA in engaging public bodies, and to make our voices heard by both the Government and the general public. I should also thank the dedication and hardwork of the Secretariat which has helped turn desired plans into success. Last but not least, I sincerely thank all our members, who have given staunch support to the Institute and participated in our activities.

As aforementioned, the HKIA premises has recently been renovated, and there are events and meetings being organized at the venue. Whether you are joining one of the events or not, may I invite you to take some time to visit the premises and enjoy the new look of our office.

Yours sincerely,

CHAN Chak Bun Benny, *CHKIA, RA*  
President  
30 March 2023