

**The Hong Kong Institute of Architects
First Quarterly General Meeting
18 March 2021**

President's Report

Dear Members,

Thank you for attending the first Quarterly General Meeting of The Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) in 2021. With the COVID, this first QGM still have to be conducted in a hybrid online-cum-onsite mode. I hope by the next QGM or earlier, the situation would have improved, and we can have many opportunities to communicate face-to-face directly and meet over informal social gatherings.

This Council is committed to serve HKIA members and fulfil our social contract to serve not only ourselves and our clients but also the public. Working together we shall advance architecture for the benefit of our society, and to make HKIA more relevant to our Members, our profession and our society. These would not be possible without the diligent support of the many members of the six newly formed Boards, as well as their committees and task groups. My heartfelt thanks to them for stepping forward to support the Institute and I call on all members to get involved with the work of our Institute, especially in this significant milestone year of the 65th Anniversary of HKIA.

We are continuing with many past programmes as well as developing new initiatives to engage our members and various stakeholders, including the government. I would like to share with you some of our ongoing efforts and work done in the first quarter of 2021.

Making HKIA Relevant

Connecting with Policy Makers

To ensure our views being heard and exert our duly influence on policy making, we have proactively connected with heads of relevant Government departments, bureau, as well as professional organisations in the industry. In the past months, we have met with key officials of Development Bureau (DEVB), Harbourfront Commission, Commissioner for Heritage's Office, Antiquities and Monuments Office, etc. The following written submissions have been made to government:

- To Mrs. Carrie LAM, the Chief Executive HKSAR, on 19 February, regarding HKIA's comments on Lantau Tomorrow and the HK\$550 million first stage feasibility studies.
- To Mr. Michael WONG, Secretary for Development, on 18 February about Modular Integrated Construction (MiC).
- To Mr. Ivanhoe CHANG, Commissioner for Heritage, on 25 February, on heritage conservation of Hong Kong with emphasis on the needs of a holistic heritage preservation policy, a more flexible approval mechanisms for historical buildings, and an inclusive heritage grading mechanism with an assessment framework for

modern architecture. The engagement of the community and industry on heritage preservation criteria and the way forward, including the possibility of public engagement and design competitions for the Shum Shui Po Break Tank, commonly known as the Bishop Hill Cistern, were also suggested.

- To Mrs. Carrie LAM, the Chief Executive HKSAR, on 3 March, regarding HKIA responses to her 2020 Policy Address.
- To Mr. Tony TSE, HKIA's LegCo Functional Constituency representative, on 3 March regarding various items that we like him to follow up with government.

Collaboration with Professional Bodies

HKIA has a good track record of collaborating with other professional organisations in the construction, surveying, town planning, landscape, engineering sectors – not just on issues related to practices of the industry, but also on community issues and services. In view of COVID-19 pandemic, we have teamed up with other professional institutes and academia (including The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects (HKILA), The Hong Kong Institute of Planners (HKIP), The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (HKIS), Community Living Room, as well as two units from The Chinese University of Hong Kong namely Centre of Health Education and Health Promotion (CHEP) and School of Architecture) to work on “Healthy City Initiatives”. A series of public webinars for enhancing awareness towards sustaining healthy buildings and healthy living have started and been planned for the coming months. Other events are also under planning and being discussed.

We also offer our expertise to support collaborative effort to build a more liveable city and fight the pandemic. We have met with the Hong Kong Dental Association (HKDA) and exchanged views on healthy building, in particular on the dental clinic hygiene and ventilation requirement. We have accepted HKDA invitation to have our learned members serve on its special taskforce to review precautionary measures against COVID-19 and facilitate the design of premises under the Private Healthcare Facilities Ordinance.

To advance architecture and build coalition, we have also met and communicated with the Hong Kong Institute of Construction Managers (HKICM), the China Real Estate Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong and International Chapter Limited (CRECCHKI), and Allied Sustainability and Environmental Consultants Group Limited (AEC) on various topics ranging from better site work control to Government's proposal on management and disclosure of climate-related risks by fund managers.

We shall continue to create collaborative professional and social network to enhance HKIA's influence in the community.

Promoting Architectural Excellence

Young Architect Award (YAA) 2020

This year, we have picked a very timely theme for the design proposal: “Revitalization of Bishop Hill Underground Cistern”. A total of 25 registrations were received. Following the interviews and adjudication of the judging panel, the results can be

expected by end of this month. The winner will be provided with a 3-week overseas architectural study trip and HKIA shall continue to support and nurture our young architects.

The 17th Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition – Hong Kong Pre-exhibition (VB 2021)

VB2021 in Venice is still scheduled to open on 22 May as informed by the VB Office. But in view of quarantine and health consideration, the HKIA presence will be both digital and physical and the exhibits content would be further enhanced with AR and VR. The curatorial team and exhibitors will continue to explore participation utilizing modern technology and communication system.

As a work in progress, the curatorial team have and will continue to stage a series of webinars, and may organise a physical exhibition at City Gallery later this year. The latest webinar themed “Redistributing the Hong Kong Harbourfront” held on 2 February received enthusiastic response with around 130 participants and more than 300 views via Zoom and Facebook platforms.

Architectural Competitions

Besides organising, co-organising or promoting architectural design competitions to provide our Members with the opportunities of showcasing talents, HKIA also endeavours to enhance the community’s awareness and appreciation of architecture excellence through promoting the winning projects. Some competition highlights in the first quarter of this year are:

- **Design Competition for Hong Kong Observatory Tide Gauge Station at Tai Po Kau** which received overwhelming response of 45 valid entries, many with high quality. You have met the young talented winners at the award presentation ceremony staged at this QGM just now.
- **HKIA x CIC Logo and Trophy Design Competition** received 11 submissions. The winner has been announced at end of February.
- **Architectural Design Idea Competition for SDG Eco- Village Transitional Housing Project** organised by Professional Green Building Council (PGBC), which HKIA and Hong Kong Construction Association being the co-organisers. The entry submission will be closed tomorrow (19 March), and adjudication results can be expected by end April or May.

Voicing out on Local Issues

Conservation for Bishop Hill Cistern

The public and the built professionals are highly concerned about the conservation of this heritage venue. Members of HKIA and the Heritage and Conservation Committee (H&CC) have actively advocated the cistern preservation since last December when the planned demolition became public knowledge. Besides issuing a statement on 29 December 2020 requesting preservation, various HKIA and H&CC members have engaged in various platforms and media interviews to provide professional input to the conservation issues. HKIA also held a public webinar on 7 January on the

preservation needs, which was well attended by over 350 participants from various sectors including the media.

A special taskforce, under the leadership of H&CC Chair Nicky WONG, has been set up for further follow-up. The Taskforce, composed of learned members, would not only provide input on the conservation and adaptive re-use of this cistern, but also work to overhaul the inadequate grading mechanisms for the conservation of Hong Kong's heritage structures. Public engagement on architectural heritage conservation would also be explored. We have already started a dialogue with relevant authorities, such as Commissioner for Heritage's Office and Antiquities and Monuments Office, and have requested to have regular meetings with them to enhance communication. We welcome member's advice and support of HKIA's effort to advance heritage preservation in Hong Kong.

Lantau Tomorrow Vision

The passing of the first stage HK\$550 million funding for Lantau Tomorrow feasibility studies demands our city to honestly define our vision for a vibrant, liveable, and sustainable Hong Kong. I have met DEVB and conveyed views of the Institute and submitted our thoughts and suggestions to the Chief Executive. We stressed that the present studies cannot be just technical focused. We reiterated the need for an overall vision for a vibrant, liveable and sustainable Hong Kong, as well as a clear long-term development and land use policy. We also highlighted the importance of community participation in the studies, science-based impact assessment on the environmental eco-system, and the priority for quality of development rather than quantity. We have also requested the inclusion of architect in a key leadership role in the consultancy contract.

We shall continue our efforts to monitor the studies progress and communicate with government and policy-makers about our views.

Policy Address and Budget

We have collected member's views from different Boards and Committees on the wide spectrum of the Policy Address and the Budget, and have responded correspondingly with written submissions to the Government, or issuing public statements via traditional or mass media platforms.

Educational Support for Different Generations

Education is one of HKIA's major function for nurturing young architects, safeguarding standards, and enhancing the profession in pursuit for excellence.

Accreditation for Architectural Programmes

In December last year, visiting boards appointed by HKIA and Architects Registration Board (ARB) have conducted revalidation visit to The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and City University of Hong Kong (CityU). I am glad to report that both HKIA Council and ARB have endorsed the visiting board reports granting unconditional recognition for five years for Master of Architecture and Bachelor of Social Science (Architectural Studies) programmes of CUHK, as well as Bachelor of Science in Architectural Studies programme of CityU.

My heartfelt gratitude to the local and overseas visiting board members and observers, who have devoted time and efforts in the very intense 3-day schedule of onsite-cum-online school visits and meetings with the universities' faculties, students and alumni.

Liaison with RIBA re Academic Recognition

The Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA) has removed UK programmes from its list of architectural educational qualifications recommended for recognition since February last year. The move has led to the decision of HKIA and ARB on adopting special transitional arrangements regarding applying for HKIA/ARB Professional Assessment.

In view of the impact on Hong Kong students, we have set up a joint HKIA/ARB taskforce to study the way forward for the benefit of present and future students studying in UK. We have initiated dialogue with representative of Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) to explore bilateral academic qualification recognition and hope to resolve the present impasse to improve students' choice in architecture study.

Support for Professional Assessment Candidates

With a view to provide more user-friendly Study Guide to assist candidates to prepare for their PA, the Professional Assessment Committee (PAC) has published the online Study Guide for HKIA/ARB Professional Assessment – Paper 2 Building Contracts. It focuses on practical contractual problems we encounter in our professional field, with suggested approaches to deal with these situations from an architect's perspective so our young members can apply theoretical principles to their daily work.

This inaugural Study Guide is just the pioneer of PAC's ambitious and worthwhile endeavours. PAC academia are working on similar guide for other PA papers, which are scheduled for publication in phases in this year and the next. My heartfelt thanks to all PAC members, especially the Subject Panel and the editorial team for their effort to make the PA a more friendly process with easy-to-use knowledge dissemination documents.

Lifelong Knowledge and Technology Enhancement

To keep Members abreast of technological developments in the industry, HKIA has been running a number of trainings and webinars on BIM and IT applications. The next round of BIM Pro top-up training is scheduled in April. We are also further developing the HKIA BIM Pro and BIM Co Accreditation Programme, so as to expand the study choices for Members.

To enrich our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events for Members, from time to time, HKIA has collaborated with local and international professional organisations so that we can benefit from a wider pool of speakers, topics and perspectives. We have recently discussed with the Hong Kong Institute of Construction Managers in this regard, and joint CPD events can be expected in near future.

Supports amidst Challenging Times

COVID Testing at Construction Sites

In view of the request for regular testing for COVID-19 for construction site staff, HKIA representatives, together with our counterparts from the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) and the Association of Consulting Engineers of Hong Kong (ACEHK) met with heads of Development Bureau (DEVB) and the Construction Industry Council (CIC) after the Lunar New Year period. We suggested CIC to extend its testing service coverage to resident site supervision staff by consultants. We also urged DEVB to issue standard guidelines on handling different contractual and financial implications on government construction contracts caused by COVID-19, aiming to address the long-term financial burden of consultants and contractors.

Subsidy Scheme for Fresh Graduates and Assistant Professionals

By close of Round 1 of the scheme at end of November 2020, the Architectural Sector has 179 Graduate subsidy places and 129 Assistant Professional subsidy places approved.

HKIA, and other professional institutes, had liaised with DEVB on relaxing the criteria and simplifying the process for Round 2. At close of application by end January, the Architectural Sector has filed applications for 187 Graduate places and 240 Assistant Professional places. Due to such overwhelming response, in spite of being allocated originally 60 and 197 quotas respectively, it is likely that some of the vacant places of other sectors will be transferred to our sector too. DEVB's application processing is still undergoing, with HKIA assistance, and I hope to have positive news regarding application results soon.

Statutory Submission Handling

Most Government departments have resumed normal public services after the Lunar New Year period. Yet, due to the backlog of cases during the departments' special work arrangement of the past months, some Members have been facing prolonged procrastination for handling their statutory submissions. We have reflected the problems to the departments concerned. We will continue to closely monitor the situation and will strive to find timely, reasonable resolution.

HKIA is continuing with our effort to work closing with DEVB and relevant approval authorities, via our representatives in various consultative and advisory committees, to streamline the vetting and approval process of building plans. We welcome member's inputs on how the process can be further improved.

Connection with Mainland and Overseas Counterparts

Due to the global outbreak of COVID-19, many events of our partnering organisations in the Mainland or overseas were postponed, or changed to online format. That have not deterred our Members from participating as representatives or speakers. Some larger-scale ones being:-

- Conference on New Measures to Assist Hong Kong Engineering Construction Consultant Enterprises and Professionals to Start Business and Practise, jointly

organised by DEVB of Hong Kong and Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of Guangdong Province (DHURD)

- Exchange Session on “Hong Kong Engineering Construction Consultant Enterprises and Professionals Starting Business and Practising in Greater Bay Area”
- International UIA (Union of Architects) Region IV Presidents Meeting
- Special Interim ARCASIA (Architects Regional Council Asia) Council Meeting
- ARCASIA Committee on Social Responsibility Meeting
- UIA Work Programme “Architecture & Children” Meeting
- A number of HKIA involved articles and projects were published in the latest COVID-19 special issue of ARCASIA publication *Architecture Asia (AA)* under the theme of “Building a Healthy Future”

HKIA shall continue to strive for expanding our global participation and influence on building a better world through sustainable and quality architecture.

Wish for a Healthy and Prosperous 2021

Before closing my President's report, I would like to reiterate that HKIA belongs to members. My Council endeavours to enhance communication with, and better support, our Members. We have already set up a Taskforce on Reviewing Communications Channels with General Members. Under the leadership of the Honourary Secretary, and with dedicated Boards' representation, the Taskforce would come up with concrete action plans to engage members.

I expect that with the threat of pandemic subsiding, we can have face-to-face sharing with more Members in the activities of the Institute in near future.

May I wish you all a healthy and prosperous 2021!

Yours sincerely,

Donald CHOI Wun Hing, FHKIA, R.A
President

9 March 2021