

# **Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing**

For discussion on  
12 February 2014

TFK/01/2014

## **Renovation of the Hong Kong Museum of Art**

### **PURPOSE**

This paper outlines the main features of the updated renovation plan for the Hong Kong Museum of Art (HKMA).

### **BACKGROUND**

2. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) consulted the Task Force on 22 January 2013 vide Paper No. TFK/04/2013 on the short-term and long-term plans to enhance and revitalize its cultural and leisure facilities at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre (HKCC) Complex. Subsequently, LCSD organized a briefing session for the Task Force members on 13 March 2013 to introduce its plan to renovate the HKMA; and presented the preliminary design at the Task Force meeting on 16 May 2013 vide Paper No. TFK/06/2013.

3. On 6 September 2013, the Town Planning Board (TPB) approved the planning application submitted by the Government for minor relaxation of building height restriction of HKMA from 30mPD to 37.5 mPD to facilitate the construction of an additional gallery floor on the roof-top of HKMA.

4. On 15 January 2014, the Chief Executive announced in his 2014 Policy Address the renovation plan of HKMA: *“To enhance the promotion of local art and bring in more international exhibitions, the Hong Kong Museum of Art will undergo major renovation and expansion to improve facilities and services for visitors. A new gallery will also be built to display the works of local artists.”* (Paragraph 182 of the 2014 Policy Address)

5. Taking into account Members’ views expressed at previous meetings and the views collected during the year-long consultation

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exercise, LCSD has now come up with an updated renovation plan for HKMA and its key features are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

### **THE UPDATED RENOVATION PLAN**

6. Having consulted extensively with stakeholders in the art sector as well as the relevant advisory/statutory bodies including the Task Force, the Art Museum Advisory Panel, Yau Tsim Mong District Council and the TPB, the Government has refined the design and key features of the renovation plan. The latest design strives to meet the stakeholders' aspirations on the one hand and work with the inherent constraints of the museum site/building (e.g. height restrictions, complex network of underground utilities including MTRC cooling mains that surround the museum building) on the other. The relevant layout plans of the renovated HKMA are at Annex (1) to (4). The main features of the updated design are summarized as follows:-

#### **Enhanced Connectivity and Accessibility**

- (a) Upon completion of the renovation, the HKMA will have a total of four entrances to enable the public to access the museum from different directions, thereby enhancing the accessibility of HKMA and the people flow at the Tsimshatsui waterfront. First, the main entrance facing the Piazza between HKMA and the Hong Kong Space Museum will be moved to the ground floor, and a new glazed foyer will be added to enhance the visual transparency of the main entrance and the building;
- (b) In addition, a new entrance (tentatively called the Canopy Entrance) will be provided at the northeast corner of the museum facing the newly renovated Art Square in Salisbury Garden (to be opened in February 2014). The Canopy Entrance will provide a visual corridor linking the proposed at-grade crossing on Salisbury Road (see paragraph 9 below for details) with the HKMA and the waterfront. It will also serve as a pivotal point to link the HKMA with the surrounding urban

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space, including Nathan Road, Avenue of Stars (AoS) and the underground bypass from the nearby underground shopping centres. In the northeast corner, there will be a new entrance connecting the HKCC Piazza;

- (c) To increase the connectivity of HKMA to the harbourfront, a new entrance to the Multi-Function Hall on the first floor will be provided and visitors can access the Hall via a new staircase leading from the harbourfront promenade;

### **New and Expanded Gallery Space**

- (d) With the approval from TPB, the building height of HKMA has been relaxed to 37.5mPD to accommodate a new gallery dedicated to the exhibition of Hong Kong contemporary art, the promotion of which is a core mission of the HKMA. This new gallery will help alleviate the serious shortage of exhibition space at HKMA;
- (e) A new two-storey Annex Building will be added to the western end of the main building by demolishing the existing podium deck which is neither easily accessible nor well utilized. To accommodate large-size contemporary art exhibits, there will be a double height gallery of 9-meter high on the ground floor of the Annex Building. The visitors' experience will be enhanced by introducing exhibition space at the ground floor with close proximity to the open piazza, where a mix of visual and public art activities will be organized. Some of exhibition programmes in the Annex Building will be open to the public after normal museum hours and for free admission;

### **Food & Beverages (F&B) Outlets**

- (f) Taking Members' advice that quality F&B outlets should be provided in the HKMA so as to increase the vibrancy of the waterfront, we propose to provide a café and a restaurant on

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the ground and first floors of the Annex Building respectively. The restaurant will enjoy a fabulous view of the harbour and the café will provide alfresco dining facilities. There will be a separate entrance for the F&B outlets, so that they can stay open for business when the museum is closed. Moreover, the Multi-Function Hall on the first floor can also be used for holding corporate and charity functions/events;

### **New Outlook and Visual Transparency**

- (g) A new façade cladding system, which is compatible with the new features and additions of the future HKMA, will be adopted to facelift the museum architecturally and aesthetically. The treatment will allow necessary changes to be made to the cladding system in future. For example, new window openings may be added to the external walls of the building without affecting the overall cladding system and its outlook. In addition, spectacular artworks can be installed and displayed on the external walls facing the waterfront as iconic attractions; and
  
- (h) A transparent building design will be adopted for the HKMA, including a grand lobby with a glass corridor, glazed walls at the Annex Building and a glazed facade for the new roof-top gallery. Moreover, a glass façade will be installed at the southern side of the main building of HKMA. This glass façade will open up the public lobbies on the second, third and fourth floor of the main building and provide an unobstructed view of the harbour on these floors. These features, together with the artistic installations on the facades of the Museum, will enable the renovated HKMA to stand out in the Tsimshatsui waterfront, thereby creating an identity of its own and increasing its visibility when viewed from Salisbury Road and the other side of the harbour.

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### **RESPONSE TO MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

7. LCSD has carefully considered Members' comments made at the Task Force meeting on 16 May 2013 and our response to the particular questions/comments is as follows:-

#### **Redevelopment v/s Renovation**

8. Owing to the existence of an extensive network of underground utilities, the restriction of the structural framework of the building which pose limitations on the footprint of the new building, as well as the height restriction, demolition and reconstruction of the existing building will not greatly increase the usable floor area as compared to the alteration and expansion option. On the other hand, increasing exhibition spaces within the existing building fabric of the museum without any expansion horizontally or vertically is not feasible. Secondly, being a 20-year old building, the building structure of HKMA is still in good conditions. It will be environmental unfriendly if we were to demolish this relatively young building. Thirdly, the cost of redevelopment will likely be several times higher than the renovation option and require much longer planning and construction lead time. Taking these considerations together, the Government considers the redevelopment option not cost-effective, economical or environmentally friendly. The added advantage of the renovation option is that its scheduled completion date (late 2017) will fit in well with the tentative completion dates of the Salisbury Garden Phase II redevelopment (the eastern portion) and the remodeling of the New World Centre (NWC) in 2017/2018.

#### **Harbourfront Enhancements**

9. As mentioned in paragraph 6 above, we believe that the renovation project will greatly enhance the overall connectivity, accessibility and visual transparency of the Tsimshatsui waterfront. Moreover, to tie in with the opening of the Art Square in Salisbury Garden in February 2014 and the re-opening of the HKMA, an at-grade

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pedestrian crossing on Salisbury Road (linking the Peninsula Hotel and the Hong Kong Space Museum) will be reinstated in June/July 2014. This at-grade crossing will greatly enhance the accessibility and connectivity of the business areas on Nathan Road/Salisbury Road with the waterfront.

10. Secondly, we will transform the Piazza in front of the HKMA into a “Forum of Art”, which will form part of an open cultural corridor leading from the Art Square in Salisbury Garden to the HKCC Piazza. We are confident that these public open spaces will evolve into a prime venue for various forms of cultural events including mini-concerts, performances, public art, interactive art and cultural programmes, spectacles and a rendezvous for the general and art communities.

11. Thirdly, the new 9-meter high gallery in the Annex Building (paragraph 6(e) above) will be very different from the traditional white-cube gallery space. It will be used primarily for experimental and unconventional exhibitions. It is the museum’s intention to designate this gallery as a “co-creative” space for staging thematic “art jam” or “art house” exhibitions through collaboration with guest curators, artists and art groups. We believe that the lively exhibitions to be shown in this new gallery will further enliven the harbourfront for public enjoyment.

12. Lastly, the F&B outlets in the HKMA will remain open when the museum is closed. This would help keep the Tsimshatsui waterfront vibrant in the evening.

### **Environmental Protection and Green Features**

13. Environmental protection and energy saving features have been embedded into the design of the future HKMA to ensure that electricity consumption for air-conditioning and UV level will meet with the international museum standards and energy saving requirements. The green measures include:

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- (a) cladding the entire façade of the museum with a new skin, while keeping the existing tiles intact in view of their fair condition. Besides, the cladding will provide an insulated layer to reduce heat gain during hot summer;
- (b) providing a green garden on the roof-top and a green wall facing the harbour; and
- (c) installing a flexible planter pallet system around the museum premises to enhance the greenery of the waterfront. The plants are movable and the pallet system can be used for temporary exhibition of artworks to enrich the artistic ambience of the promenade.

### CONCLUSION

14. The renovation plan as detailed above will enable HKMA to establish itself as a signature cultural landmark on the Tsimshatsui waterfront. The availability of new and refurbished gallery space will help strengthen HKMA's support for Hong Kong art and enable it to bring in more world-class art exhibitions to Hong Kong. The quality dining and customer services to be provided will help enliven the waterfront especially during night time and public holidays. With its enhanced visibility, accessibility and connectivity, we are confident that HKMA and its adjacent open space will become a focal cultural attraction in Hong Kong. The project will also tie in with the renovation plans of the Salisbury Garden Phase II, HKCC, Avenue of Stars and NWC to revitalize the Tsimshatsui waterfront and enable us to take a holistic approach in re-shaping the waterfront as a vibrant cultural and tourist attraction.

15. The updated renovation plan adheres to various Harbour Planning Principles.<sup>1</sup> First, it **preserves the Victoria Harbour** with a

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<sup>1</sup> The eight principles are on preserving Victoria Harbour, stakeholder engagement, sustainable development, integrated planning, proactive harbour enhancement, vibrant harbour, accessible harbour and public enjoyment.

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stronger cultural ambience without the need for any reclamation. Secondly, as mentioned in paragraph 6 above, extensive **stakeholder engagement** has been conducted in the past year to ensure a transparent and inclusive consultation process with the views collected duly reflected in the updated design. The provision of additional galleries and facilities as well as improved connection with adjacent areas would enable the **sustainable development** of both the museum and the Tsimshatsui waterfront. The renovation plan also attains the principle of **integrated planning** as the renovated museum will be the first phase of the overall strategic and holistic plan for re-energizing the HKCC Complex in the Tsimshatsui waterfront. The plan will also achieve **proactive harbour enhancement** as the renovation proposal will include iconic features and architectural interventions, such as face-lifting facades, illuminated glass structures of the HKMA building to enhance the visitors' harbourfront experience. Moreover, the new galleries and open space of the HKMA will enable the organisation of more cultural and leisure programmes so as to meet the rising aspirations of community and bring **vibrancy to the harbour**. By providing an at-grade crossing at Salisbury Road to link the busy commercial spine of Nathan Road via the renovated Salisbury Garden and the HKMA to the harbourfront, we will have a more **accessible harbourfront**. Finally, the proposed renovation and expansion of HKMA will certainly provide more museum facilities and multi-purpose open space for **public enjoyment**.

### THE WAY FORWARD

16. We plan to consult the Panel on Home Affairs of the Legislative Council (LegCo) on the renovation project in May 2014, followed by funding application to the Public Works Sub-Committee and Finance Committee (FC) of LegCo in June 2014. Subject to FC's approval, construction works will commence in December 2014. During the renovation period, the HKMA will be closed for about three years but will continue its business, including organizing exhibitions and education programmes in other LCSD museums and open space as well as non-LCSD venues in order to maintain its presence and services to



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the public. It is expected that the works will be completed in late 2017. Meanwhile, we will continue to work out with the parties concerned the long-term strategic plans for revitalizing the rest of the HKCC Complex/Tsimshatsui waterfront.

### **ADVICE SOUGHT**

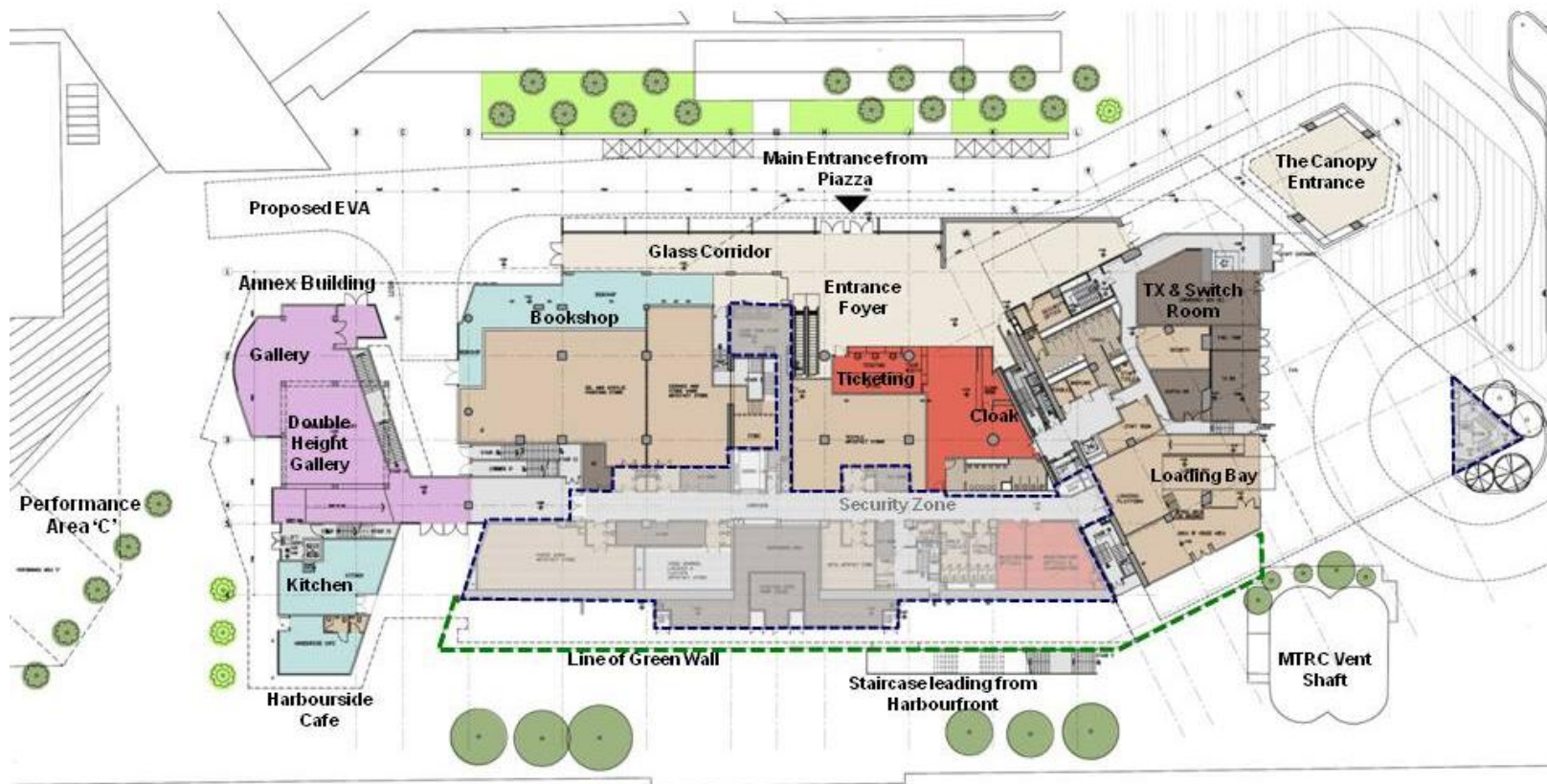
17. Members are invited to comment on the updated renovation plan for HKMA outlined in paragraph 6 above.

**Leisure and Cultural Services Department  
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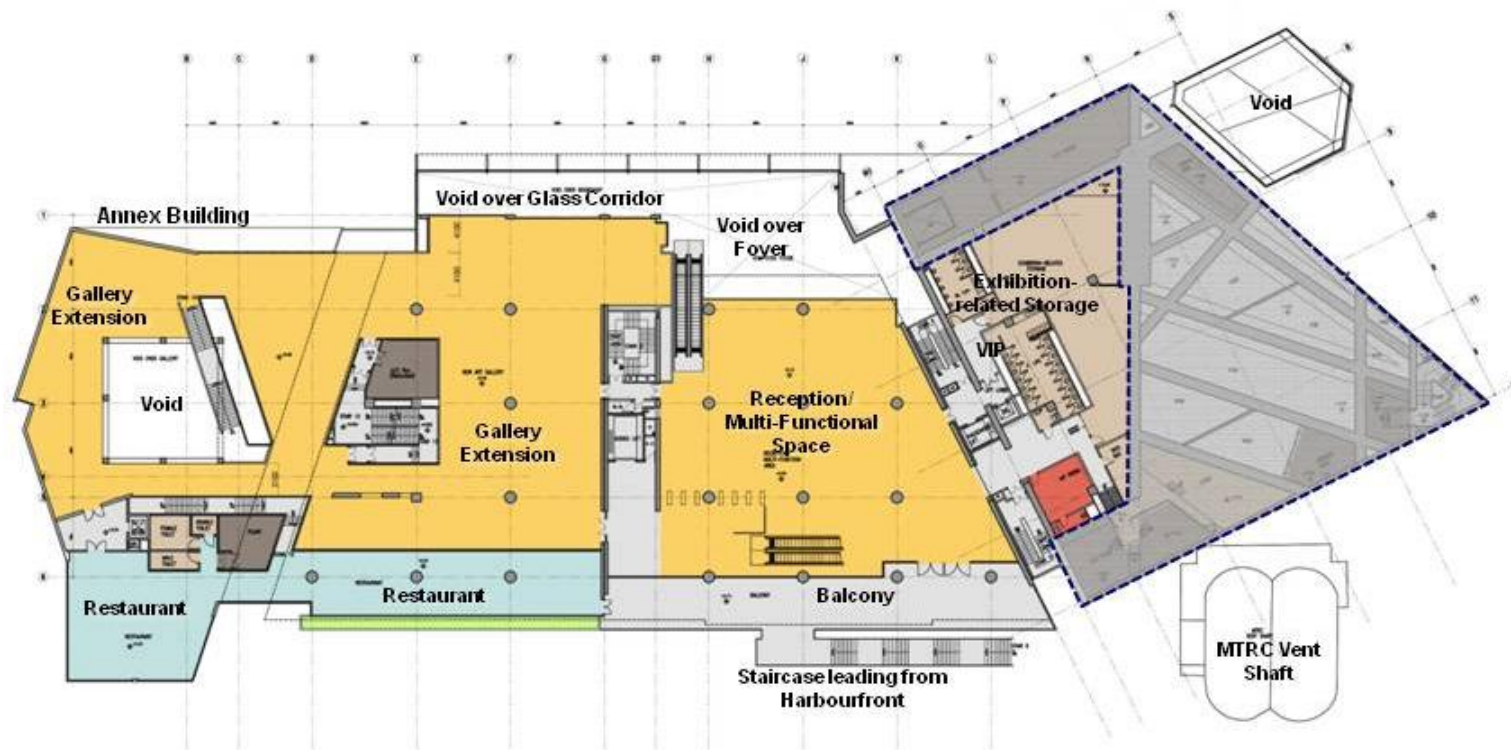
Annex 1- Renovation of Hong Kong Museum of Art

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Layout Alteration – GIF

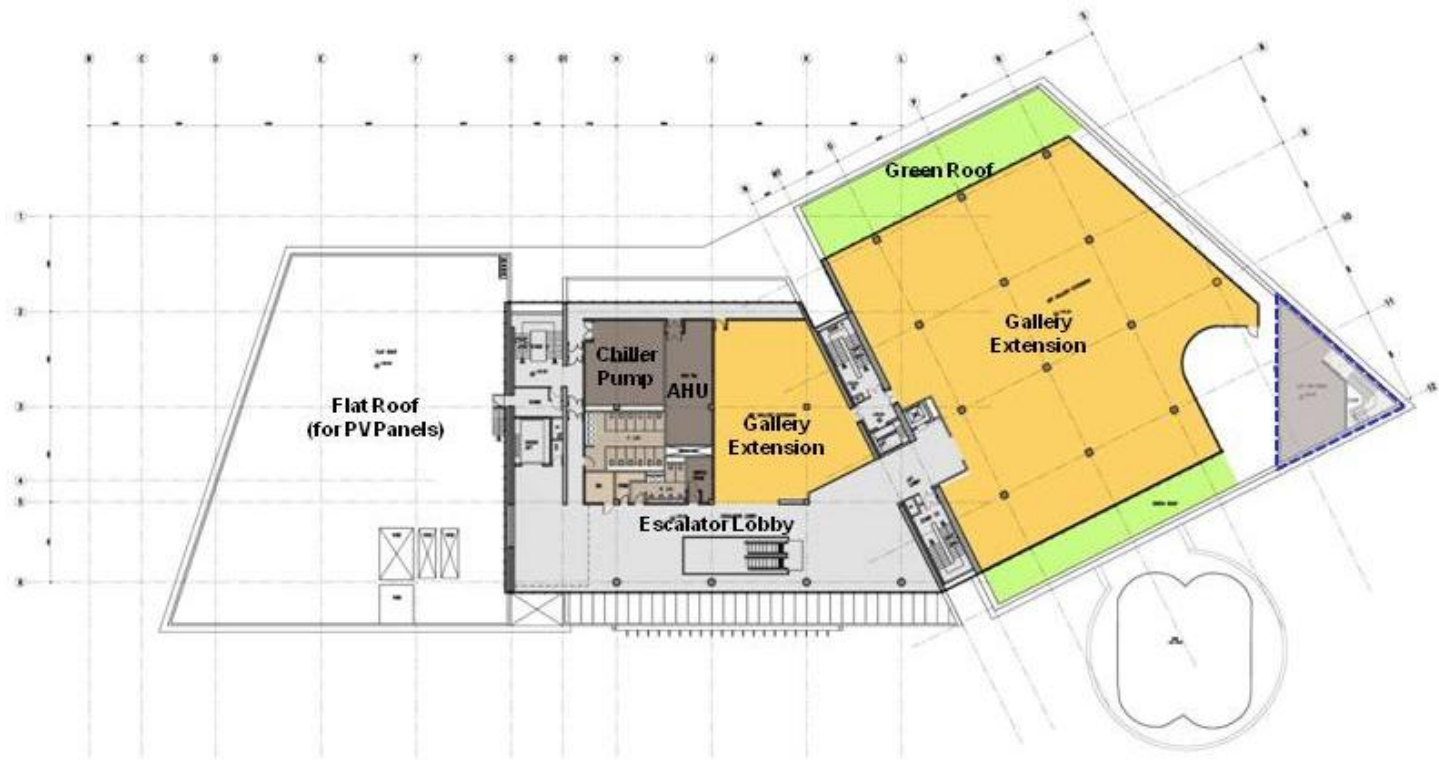




Layout Alteration – 1/F

Annex 3- Renovation of Hong Kong Museum of Art

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Layout Alteration – 5/F