

# Arts districts are centred around parks, not malls

When Gordon Lee calls for a mixed commercial and residential development at West Kowloon Cultural District interspersed with cultural facilities ("Cultural district ideal for HK", June 15), his comparison with Manhattan was factually incorrect.

Anyone who has ever lived in New York would note that most of the cultural art facilities are built and centred around the city's crown jewel, Central Park, which is surrounded by upscale residential and commercial districts.

It is the same with two other neighbourhoods associated with the arts, Greenwich Village and SoHo, that evolved around the historic Washington Square Park.

Central Park was actually conceived by a group of distinguished New Yorkers concerned about the well-being of residents. It would be irresponsible of the government to sell the land of an urban green park for commercial and residential development.

SCMP 22-6-2009

May I call to the attention of West Kowloon Cultural District Authority board that a group of University of Hong Kong architecture students has devised a design of an economically, culturally and environmentally-sustainable green system interlinking a group of our urban green parks with the proposed West Kowloon cultural park.

The surrounding lands and facilities would be developed and upgraded via a harbour green park approach.

Hong Kong Alternatives believes it is in the public interest for the government to exclude any high-rise commercial and residential development from the cultural district. Officials should take note of the innovative ideas of these young talented students and their call for a creative, economically and environmentally sustainable Hong Kong starting with an integrated cultural green park.

I hope their voices can be heard and that their vision is realised.

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