

SCED welcomes revitalising historic buildings for
nurturing creative sector and promoting tourism

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mrs Rita Lau, welcomed the setting up of a Hong Kong branch campus by the renowned art, design and digital media institution in the United States - Savannah College of Arts and Design (SCAD) - saying that it will bring in new impetus for the local creative sector and offer excellent education opportunities for teenagers who plan to join the industry.

She also welcomed the plan by the Hong Kong Heritage Conservation Foundation Limited to transform the Old Tai O Police Station into a themed boutique hotel through the creative blend of the colonial-style architecture and the beautiful seaside.

According to the selection results of the "Revitalising Historic Buildings through Partnership Scheme" announced by the Development Bureau today (February 17), SCAD is granted the right to use the building of the former North Kowloon Magistracy in Sham Shui Po for its Hong Kong branch campus. It will be the first one in Asia and the second branch of SCAD apart from one in Lacoste, France.

"SCAD is a world renowned institution. Its decision to set up the first Asian campus in Hong Kong no doubt is a great encouragement to local creative industries," Mrs Lau said.

"SCAD's international dimension will widen the exposure of Hong Kong students. The diversified courses it offers will help Hong Kong nurture experts in different creative fields. Its good connection with elite digital entertainment enterprises in the United State will on the other hand help attract regional creative talent to come to Hong Kong for exchanges, thus strengthening Hong Kong's position as a regional creative hub," she added.

Mrs Lau said she expected that the local demand for creative talent will increase following the Government's promotion of local creative industries, and that the SCAD school will provide support in this respect. The school will also attract students from other places in the region and reinforce Hong Kong's international status in the region.

"SCAD will inject modern creative and arts elements to the historic building of the former North Kowloon Magistracy. The location is close to the Jockey Club Creative

Arts Centre and this will help position the district as a creative industries cluster," she said.

SCAD plans to provide 1,500 student places at tertiary level for studies on digital media, including animation, advertising design, photography, graphic design, illustration, interactive design and game development, motion media design, and visual effects. The anticipated renovation period for the magistracy building will be around 15 months and the SCAD school is expected to open in 2011.

The boutique hotel project, which is another selected application under the "Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme", will feature nine suites, a roof-top café, a library and an exhibition area to display the history of the former police station.

"The building of a boutique hotel in Tai O, a fishing village with a tranquil natural environment, will give a unique hospitality experience to tourists who may be familiar only with Hong Kong's metropolitan lifestyle.

"It will also fit in well with the Government's plan to give Tai O a major facelift to enhance its tourism appeal and local economy and promote the fishing village as an eco-tourism destination with high cultural, historical and environmental values," Mrs Lau said.

Mrs Lau noted that a few other projects approved under the partnership scheme, such as the development of Fong Yuen Study Hall into a fishermen's museum and a multi-purpose room for classes and activities, as well as the turning of Mei Ho House into a youth hostel, would also give impetus to diversifying Hong Kong's tourism appeal.

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