

CHAPTER 3

**Home Affairs Bureau
Leisure and Cultural Services Department**

**Acquisition and management of
collection items in public museums**

**Audit Commission
Hong Kong
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This audit review was carried out under a set of guidelines tabled in the Provisional Legislative Council by the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee on 11 February 1998. The guidelines were agreed between the Public Accounts Committee and the Director of Audit and accepted by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

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ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT OF COLLECTION ITEMS IN PUBLIC MUSEUMS

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ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT OF COLLECTION ITEMS IN PUBLIC MUSEUMS

Executive Summary

1. Museums collect, conserve, and exhibit their collections for the purpose of education and providing enjoyable and inspiring experiences. Through museum collections, the public could discover a composite picture of cultural, historical and natural heritage. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) is responsible for providing, developing and managing public museums and related services to collect historic, art and science objects, preserve local cultural heritage and promote public appreciation for it. As of September 2020, LCSD managed 14 museums, a film archive and 2 visual arts centres. The 14 museums and the film archive have been designated under section 105G of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) as museums (unless stated otherwise, the 14 museums and the film archive are hereinafter referred to as LCSD museums).

2. The collection scope of LCSD museums includes Hong Kong art, Hong Kong history and culture, Chinese art and history, science and technology, and Hong Kong film heritage. As at 31 December 2019, LCSD museums had 1,595,615 collection items. LCSD museums acquire art, cultural and scientific items mainly through donations or purchases. From 2015-16 to 2019-20, LCSD acquired 143,557 collection items, of which 140,279 (97.7%) and 3,278 (2.3%) were acquired by donations and purchases respectively. The Audit Commission (Audit) has recently conducted a review of the acquisition and management of collection items in public museums managed by LCSD.

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

3. *Acquisition of museum collection items.* The acquisition, care and use of collection items of each LCSD museum are governed by its collection policy. LCSD has devised guidelines setting out the procedures and assessment criteria for the acquisition of museum collection items. According to LCSD acquisition guidelines of April 2020, when an object is proposed for acquisition, the proposal will be

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considered by the Programme Committee of the museum proposing the acquisition. At least two or three Museum Expert Advisers (MEAs) with relevant expertise will be invited to assess the object proposed for acquisition in all cases of acquisition by purchase, and in cases of acquisition by donation with query from the Programme Committee or the approving authority. With the support of the Programme Committee and unanimous support of all MEAs consulted, the proposal will be submitted to the approving authority for endorsement. LCSD will then sign a sale agreement with the seller or a deed of donation with the donor, and proceed with the payment and collect the object (paras. 2.2 to 2.4). Audit noted the following issues:

- (a) ***Need to duly appoint MEAs before soliciting their advice.*** LCSD appoints MEAs from different areas of expertise for a two-year term to provide expert advice to LCSD museums. MEAs are grouped in panels of specific knowledge. New MEA term commences on 1 April. For the 2018-19 to 2019-20 term and the 2020-21 to 2021-22 term, 180 and 174 MEAs were appointed respectively in 27 panels of each term (paras. 2.5 and 2.6). Audit noted that:
- (i) LCSD did not have guidelines nor set a timetable for the appointment of MEAs;
 - (ii) invitation letters to MEAs for appointment were only sent in late March of 2018 and 2020 respectively (i.e. a few days before term commencement date of 1 April);
 - (iii) MEAs confirmed acceptance of appointment between 4 April and 24 August 2018 for the 2018-19 to 2019-20 term, and between 27 March and 9 May 2020 for the 2020-21 to 2021-22 term; and
 - (iv) three MEAs provided advice on an acquisition proposal (total estimated value of the items was \$100,000) for the Hong Kong Museum of History in April 2018 before accepting the MEA appointments for the 2018-19 to 2019-20 term in April, May and June 2018 respectively (para. 2.6);
- (b) ***Need to maintain at least five MEAs in each panel.*** In February 2014, a review on the appointment/re-appointment of MEAs conducted by LCSD suggested that the desirable size of each MEA panel is at least five MEAs. Audit examined the lists of MEAs for the 2018-19 to 2019-20 term and the

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2020-21 to 2021-22 term, and found that of the 27 MEA panels of each term, there were respectively five and six panels each comprising only three to four MEAs (para. 2.7); and

- (c) ***Room for improvement in acquisition of donated items.*** From 2015-16 to 2019-20, over 90% of collection items acquired were from donations each year. Audit examined the acquisition of donated items in the Hong Kong Museum of History and noted that in one case (involving the donation of two wooden boats), while endorsement was obtained for accepting the donation in January 2015, it was not until 2020 (after more than five years) that a suitable location was available for storing and carrying out the fumigation work. In the event, the donor subsequently informed LCSD that he decided to donate only one of the two boats. In July 2020, LCSD collected the boat and stored it in the Law Uk Folk Museum for fumigation and conservation treatment (para. 2.9).

4. ***Accession of museum collection items.*** Accession is the process of registering and cataloguing museum collection items. Audit examined the accession of collection items in the Hong Kong Museum of History, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Film Archive (para. 2.14). Audit found room for improvement as follows:

- (a) ***Need to ensure timely completion of accession of collection items in the Hong Kong Museum of History.*** As at 31 December 2019, there were 13,346 items pending accession in the Hong Kong Museum of History. Of these, 3,622 (27%) items were acquired at least five years ago (para. 2.16);
- (b) ***Need to expedite accession of items with unknown source acquired in the 1980s in the Hong Kong Museum of History.*** In December 2005, LCSD identified an unknown number of collection items in the Hong Kong Museum of History. In October 2009, LCSD checked and recorded that the unknown items comprised some 10,000 items with untraceable source. According to LCSD, these items were acquired in the 1980s and kept in the museum temporary stores afterwards. Audit examined the accession records of these 10,000 items and noted that, as at 31 December 2019, accession of 1,851 items had not yet been completed. Of the 1,851 items, 1,714 items were under the registration process and accession of 137 items had not yet been commenced (paras. 2.18 and 2.19);

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- (c) ***Need to ensure completion of accession before presenting the collection items.*** As at 31 December 2019, there were 414 items pending final checking and recording in the Hong Kong Museum of History. Although accession of these 414 items was not completed, LCSD has been presenting them in the “Hong Kong Story” permanent exhibition in the Hong Kong Museum of History since 2001. In early 2020, LCSD has resumed the accession processes for these 414 items starting from registration. According to LCSD, the purpose of resuming the accession processes was to rectify the old records to ensure that the items concerned would not be mixed up with other stage decoration materials when they were dismantled during enhancement of the permanent exhibition (paras. 2.20 to 2.22); and
- (d) ***Need to critically review the accession processes and monitor the progress of accession of collection items in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Film Archive.*** In late August and September 2020, LCSD informed Audit that as at 30 April 2020, 24,314 and 693,819 items were pending accession in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Film Archive respectively. Of the 24,314 items pending accession in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, 1,104 (5%) items were acquired at least 10 years ago, and of the 693,819 items pending accession in the Hong Kong Film Archive, 456,666 (66%) items were acquired at least 10 years ago (paras. 2.24 to 2.26).

Stocktaking and storage of museum collection items

5. ***Stocktaking of museum collection items.*** According to the operation manuals of the museums, LCSD will conduct stocktaking for all collection items on a cyclical basis (i.e. regular stocktaking) and surprise checking for selected collection items. Audit examined the regular stocktaking and surprise checking records in the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Film Archive (para. 3.2). Audit noted the following issues:

- (a) ***Need to ensure completion of regular stocktaking within the required timeframe.*** According to the operation manual of the Hong Kong Museum of History, for collection items with accession completed (other than those presented in permanent exhibitions, of special heritage value or stored in special storerooms), regular stocktaking will be conducted in a 10-year cycle (i.e. each item will undergo the stocktaking process once in 10 years). The 10-year stocktaking cycle for 112,429 items under this category last

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commenced in April 2011 and had been scheduled for completion in March 2021. However, as at 30 April 2020, only 28,395 (25%) of the 112,429 items had the regular stocktaking process completed (paras. 3.3 and 3.4);

- (b) ***Room for improving efficiency in regular stocktaking exercises.*** Collection items in the Hong Kong Film Archive are categorised into film items, film-related items and film-related reference items. As at 31 December 2019, there were 1,305,368 collection items in the Hong Kong Film Archive. According to LCSD, the 1,305,368 items comprised 611,566 items with accession completed and 693,802 items pending accession. Audit examined the regular stocktaking records on collection items with accession completed in the Hong Kong Film Archive (paras. 3.6 and 3.7). Audit noted that:
- (i) for film items, the last stocktaking cycle completed in November 2013 and the first interim stocktaking report was issued in December 2013. However, it took 45 months (from December 2013 to September 2017) to rectify all irregularities and find all missing items. In July 2020, a new stocktaking cycle commenced (i.e. no stocktaking had been conducted in the 34-month period between September 2017 and June 2020); and
 - (ii) for film-related items, only 25,120 (5.5%) of the 455,801 items had stocktaking completed as at 31 December 2019, more than 11 years since the cycle commenced. Moreover, stocktaking had been suspended on two occasions (totalled 25 months) during the 11 years (paras. 3.7 and 3.8);
- (c) ***Need to improve comprehensiveness of requirements on regular stocktaking.*** There was no stocktaking requirement on film-related reference items in the operation manual of the Hong Kong Film Archive. As at 31 December 2019, of the 1,305,368 collection items in the Hong Kong Film Archive, 149,551 (11%) items were film-related reference items (para. 3.9);
- (d) ***Need to conduct adequate surprise checking on collection items.*** The objective of surprise checking of collection items is to provide an independent counter-checking on the collection items by persons not

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directly involved in routine collection management. However, Audit noted that the Hong Kong Film Archive had counted items handled during daily operation, deeming them as samples that had already been subjected to surprise checking (para. 3.11); and

- (e) ***Need to increase frequency of stocktaking for valuable items.*** LCSD museums conduct stocktaking of their collection items on a cyclical basis. Depending on monetary values, historical values and location of the collection items, some LCSD museums will conduct stocktaking on some of their collection items more frequently. Audit noted that for the Hong Kong Film Archive, regular stocktaking will only be conducted in 2.5-year cycle and 18-year cycle for film items and film-related items respectively. The practice of conducting more frequent regular stocktaking on collection items with higher monetary or historical value was not adopted (paras. 3.12 and 3.13).
6. ***Storage of museum collection items.*** As of September 2020, LCSD museums maintained a total storage space of 16,090 square metres (m²) for storing collection items, including 6,100 m² (38%) in storerooms inside museums and 9,990 m² (62%) in off-site stores. Audit examined the storage of collection items in the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Film Archive (para. 3.16). Audit noted the following issues:
- (a) ***Need to keep temperature and relative humidity of off-site stores within appropriate ranges.*** As of September 2020, of the four off-site stores (not purpose-built for storage of museum collection items) maintained by the Hong Kong Museum of History, two were not provided with 24-hour temperature and humidity control (Store A and Store B). Audit noted that the temperature and relative humidity in the two storerooms of Store A in the period between 1 January 2020 and 26 August 2020 ranged from 16 °C to 34 °C, and 45% to 90% respectively. According to LCSD, collection items kept in stores not purpose-built for storage are carefully selected according to the material nature. In addition, LCSD will deploy other effective means such as creation of microclimate to keep collection items in good condition if it is deemed necessary. However, Audit noted that LCSD had not laid down guidelines on collection items stored in stores not purpose-built (paras. 3.19 to 3.21);

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- (b) ***Need to expedite relocation of collection items from an off-site store.*** One of the stores (Store C) maintained by the Hong Kong Museum of History was located in an aged building. Audit noted that the conditions of the aged building used as Store C were causing concerns. In March 2017, ArchSD advised LCSD that using the aged building as Store C was not recommended. Since 2017, LCSD had been looking for suitable storage space to relocate the collection items stored in Store C. In September 2020, LCSD informed Audit that a space was identified to relocate part of the collection items stored in Store C and relocation was scheduled to commence in the first quarter of 2021. Furthermore, LCSD would continue to identify additional space to relocate the remaining collection items stored in Store C (paras. 3.22 and 3.24);
- (c) ***Need to ensure appropriate temperature and relative humidity in storerooms inside museums.*** There are six storerooms with a total area of 1,228 m² in the Hong Kong Film Archive building for storage of collection items. According to LCSD, three (Storerooms A, B and C) of the six storerooms were purpose-built for storage and the remaining three (Storerooms D, E and F) were not purpose-built for storage but subsequently changed to be used as temporary storage. LCSD has laid down reference ranges of temperature and relative humidity of the storerooms for storing the collection items. Audit examined the temperature and relative humidity records of the six storerooms between 1 January 2019 and 1 June 2020 (totalled 75 weeks) and found that the temperature and relative humidity of the storerooms were out of the reference ranges in 69% and 68% of the time respectively (para. 3.26); and
- (d) ***Need to expedite development of the Heritage Conservation and Resource Centre.*** In March 2005, LCSD identified a site in Tuen Mun for the development of the Central Museum Collection Repository (later renamed Heritage Conservation and Resource Centre — HCRC) to alleviate the shortage of museum storage space. In March 2009, LCSD found that the proposed site in Tuen Mun was not suitable for HCRC development due to technical constraints and its remote location. Alternatively, another site in Tin Shui Wai was identified. In April 2009, the Yuen Long District Council proposed to incorporate more public space and facilities accessible by the public in the project. Since then, LCSD has been liaising with the relevant government bureaux and departments and stakeholders on the inclusion of public facilities. In June 2018, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved a funding of \$89 million for the

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pre-construction consultancy services and site investigation works for the construction of HCRC. In October 2020, LCSD informed Audit that it would submit the revised HCRC proposal to the Yuen Long District Council in the first half of 2021 (paras. 3.28 to 3.31).

Other related issues

7. ***Enhancement of museum permanent exhibitions.*** Permanent exhibitions of individual museums contain collection items or exhibits of the subject matter of the museum which are essential and remain relevant during the entire time they are open to the public. As of September 2020, there were a total of 49 permanent exhibitions in the LCSD museums. LCSD enhances permanent exhibitions in the museums at intervals to sustain the appeal to the public, cultivate a wider audience base and enhance the educational elements in their services (paras. 4.2 and 4.3). Audit noted the following issues:

- (a) ***Need for timely enhancement of permanent exhibitions.*** According to LCSD, in line with professional practice of museums worldwide, permanent exhibitions are often designed to last for 10 to 15 years for science-related museums (i.e. the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum) and 15 to 20 years for other museums (para. 4.5). Audit noted that:
 - (i) 10 (59%) of the 17 permanent exhibitions in the 2 science-related museums had been operating for more than 15 years (more than 15 to 29 years). While enhancement for 1 of the 10 exhibitions was in progress, those for the remaining 9 exhibitions were under planning; and
 - (ii) 7 (22%) of the 32 permanent exhibitions in 2 of the 13 other museums had been operating for more than 20 years (more than 20 to 33 years) and enhancement of the exhibitions was in progress (para. 4.6); and
- (b) ***Need to better monitor progress of enhancement for permanent exhibitions.*** Audit examined the enhancement for 17 permanent exhibitions completed between 2015-16 and 2019-20 and found that the enhancement of 4 exhibitions was completed with delay of some 1 to 6 years. Audit

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selected the two exhibitions with 6-year delay (i.e. Project A in the Hong Kong Space Museum) for further examination. Audit noted that Project A was delayed for 76 months and the permanent exhibitions were closed for 30 months for the enhancement. According to LCSD, the delay was due to time taken for deciding the themes of enhanced exhibitions, preparing the specification for detailed design, rectifying building defects, and fabricating and installing new exhibits. In April 2014, LCSD established a steering committee to monitor the progress of enhancement of permanent exhibitions (including Project A) (paras. 4.8 to 4.12).

8. ***Maintenance of museum exhibits and facilities.*** Permanent exhibitions present museum collections and exhibits, and are fitted with facilities to support the presentation of the collection items and exhibits. Proper and timely maintenance of museum exhibits and facilities is essential for the smooth operation of a museum for the enjoyment of the public. Audit examined the maintenance of museum exhibits and facilities in the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum (para. 4.15). Audit noted the following issues:

- (a) ***Scope for improvement in monitoring and conducting maintenance works.*** LCSD has adopted a computer system, namely the Exhibition Maintenance Portal (EMP), to record and facilitate maintenance of exhibits and facilities in the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum. According to EMP records, in 2019-20, 8,277 repair orders were completed, of which 72 (1%) orders had each taken more than 90 days to complete. Audit noted that apart from EMP records (with the dates of placing and completion of the repair order), there were no other records showing the progress of 64 of the 72 repair orders. For the remaining 8 (72 minus 64) repair orders, relating procurement records showed that procurements (e.g. replacement parts) were only conducted three to eight months after the placing of the repair orders (paras. 4.16 to 4.18); and

- (b) ***Need to improve accuracy in calculating availability of interactive exhibits in the Hong Kong Space Museum.*** LCSD pledges to maintain at least 90% of the hands-on (i.e. interactive) exhibits in use at all times in the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum. EMP was used in the Hong Kong Science Museum to monitor the availability of interactive exhibits. However, the related EMP functions were not applicable in the Hong Kong Space Museum. To assess the availability of interactive

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exhibits, the Hong Kong Space Museum has been using the total number of repair orders placed (for interactive and non-interactive exhibits) and half of the total number of exhibits in the calculation (based on the assumption that the number of interactive exhibits was approximately half of the total number of exhibits). In July 2020, LCSD informed Audit that LCSD was planning to enhance EMP. Upon completion of the enhancement, the availability of interactive exhibits could be monitored through the system (paras. 4.21 and 4.22).

9. ***Need to adopt a consistent approach in reporting number of museum collection items.*** According to LCSD's Controlling Officer's Report, as at 31 December 2019, there were 1,595,627 museum collection items (stated as number of objects in museums collections in the Controlling Officer's Report as a performance indicator). Of the 1,595,627 museum collection items, 1,595,615 items were in the LCSD museums and 12 items were in the Art Promotion Office. Audit noted that the number of museum collection items reported in the Controlling Officer's Report included collection items pending accession in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and its two branch museums, and the Hong Kong Film Archive. However, for the remaining 11 museums, only the number of collection items with accession completed were reported (para. 4.25).

10. ***Need to improve public access of museum collection items on the museum websites.*** Since 2002, LCSD museums have been uploading information (e.g. photographs and descriptions) of selected collection items on individual museum websites to enhance public accessibility of museum collections. According to LCSD, as at 31 December 2019, 431,304 (27%) of the 1,595,615 collection items were accessible on the museum websites. Audit noted that nearly all collection items in the Hong Kong Museum of Art, the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum were accessible on the museum websites. However, only 5%, 14% and 30% of collection items in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Film Archive respectively were accessible on the museum websites. According to the five-year Corporate Business Plan of LCSD museums for 2017-22, LCSD would make use of the museum websites, along with other online platforms, to make the collection items more accessible to the public (paras. 4.27 and 4.28).

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Audit recommendations

11. Audit recommendations are made in the respective sections of this Audit Report. Only the key ones are highlighted in this Executive Summary. Audit has *recommended* that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:

- (a) take measures to ensure that MEAs are timely appointed for each term and consider laying down guidelines and setting a timetable for the MEA appointment process (para. 2.12(a));
- (b) explore effective means to increase the number of MEAs to ensure that at least five MEAs are maintained in each panel as far as practicable (para. 2.12(b));
- (c) make greater efforts to identify storage spaces for donated items promptly in future as far as practicable (para. 2.12(c));
- (d) for accession of museum collection items in the Hong Kong Museum of History:
 - (i) continue to make efforts to ensure timely completion of accession of collection items (para. 2.28(a)(i));
 - (ii) complete accession of items with unknown source acquired in the 1980s as soon as practicable (para. 2.28(a)(ii)); and
 - (iii) for the items pending final checking and recording but being presented in permanent exhibitions, take measures to ensure that they are suitably recorded before dismantling so that they would not be mixed up with other decoration materials, and complete accession of them as soon as practicable after the items are dismantled (para. 2.28(a)(iii));
- (e) for the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Film Archive, critically review the accession processes and closely monitor the progress of each process with a view to completing the accession of collection items in a timely manner (para. 2.28(b));

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- (f) review the progress of regular stocktaking of collection items in the Hong Kong Museum of History to ascertain whether it is practicable to complete the stocktaking within the 10-year cycle ending in March 2021, and draw up a backup plan if necessary (para. 3.14(a));
- (g) for stocktaking in the Hong Kong Film Archive:
 - (i) closely monitor the progress of regular stocktaking of film items and film-related items, and take measures to ensure that stocktaking is completed within the timeframe as stated in the operation manual in future (para. 3.14(b)(i));
 - (ii) for film-related items, review the progress of regular stocktaking of the current cycle and draw up a timetable with a view to completing the stocktaking process within the cycle (para. 3.14(b)(ii));
 - (iii) consider conducting regular stocktaking on film-related reference items (para. 3.14(b)(iii));
 - (iv) revise the operation manual to specify adequate number of collection items to be checked in surprise checking (para. 3.14(b)(iv)); and
 - (v) review the frequency of regular stocktaking for collection items with higher monetary or historical value (para. 3.14(b)(v));
- (h) review the practices of regular stocktaking and surprise checking in other LCSD museums (i.e. other than the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Film Archive), look into any similar irregularities as identified in this audit review, and take remedial measures as necessary (para. 3.14(c));
- (i) for the off-site stores of the Hong Kong Museum of History, lay down guidelines on suitable storage of collection items (para. 3.33(a));
- (j) relocate the collection items of the Hong Kong Museum of History stored in the aged building as soon as practicable (para. 3.33(b)(i));

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- (k) in collaboration with the Director of Architectural Services, continue to closely monitor the structural condition of the aged building, and take prompt actions to strengthen the structure if the building would continue to be used as stores and repair any defects identified (para. 3.33(b)(ii));
- (l) take measures to maintain the temperature and relative humidity in the storerooms of the Hong Kong Film Archive within the reference ranges (para. 3.33(c));
- (m) review the conditions of storerooms inside museums and off-site stores of other LCSD museums (i.e. other than the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Film Archive), look into any similar irregularities as identified in this audit review, and take remedial measures as necessary (para. 3.33(d));
- (n) step up efforts to expedite the development of HCRC (para. 3.33(e));
- (o) timely enhance the permanent exhibitions in the science-related museums and other museums (para. 4.13(a));
- (p) better monitor the progress of enhancement for permanent exhibitions in future and take prompt actions to ensure timely completion (para. 4.13(b));
- (q) improve documentation for repair orders in the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum (para. 4.23(a));
- (r) review the documentation and time taken for conducting maintenance works of museum exhibits and facilities in other LCSD museums (i.e. other than the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum), look into any similar irregularities as identified in this audit review, and take remedial measures as necessary (para. 4.23(b));
- (s) closely monitor the progress of the EMP enhancement project to improve accuracy in calculating the availability of interactive exhibits in the Hong Kong Space Museum (para. 4.23(c));

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- (t) **review and adopt a consistent approach in reporting the number of museum collection items in the Controlling Officer's Report in future (para. 4.29(a)); and**

- (u) **step up efforts to increase the number of museum collection items accessible on the museum websites, in particular the websites of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Film Archive (para. 4.29(b)).**

Response from the Government

12. The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 This PART describes the background to the audit and outlines the audit objectives and scope.

Background

1.2 The Government is committed to promoting the development of arts and culture in Hong Kong. From the cultural policy perspective, museums serve as a platform for the community to gain access to and appreciate arts and culture. Museums collect, conserve, and exhibit their collections for the purpose of education and providing enjoyable and inspiring experiences. Through museum collections, the public could discover a composite picture of cultural, historical and natural heritage. The preservation of museum collections represents a long-term commitment to existing and future generations.

1.3 The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) is responsible for providing, developing and managing public museums and related services to collect historic, art and science objects, preserve local cultural heritage and promote public appreciation for it. Through provision of public museum services, LCSD aims to inspire everyone with enjoyable experience in art, history and science. According to LCSD, the roles of public museums are to:

- (a) present and sponsor exhibitions on the visual arts, history, culture, and science and technology for the enjoyment of the public;
- (b) promote an interest in and better understanding of the visual arts, science technology, and the history and culture of Hong Kong through a balanced range of museum educational activities and sharing of experience with local artists, scholars and experts in the fields;
- (c) support and promote contemporary Hong Kong art, and encourage artistic creativity;
- (d) support research on local heritage, history and the visual arts;

Introduction

- (e) provide and operate venues for hire for the presentation of exhibitions, lectures and film shows, and studio facilities for artistic creation; and
- (f) acquire and conserve local films and related materials, and provide facilities for film research and educational activities for film appreciation.

Public museums managed by LCSD

1.4 As of September 2020, LCSD managed 14 museums, a film archive and 2 visual arts centres. The 14 museums and the film archive have been designated under section 105G of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132 — Note 1) as museums (unless stated otherwise, the 14 museums and the film archive are hereinafter referred to as LCSD museums — Note 2). Table 1 shows a list of LCSD museums (as of September 2020).

Note 1: *Under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, 18 premises were designated as museums, including:*

- (a) *16 premises managed by LCSD, including 14 public museums, 1 film archive and 1 premises currently used as museum storage; and*
- (b) *2 premises managed by the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) of the Commissioner for Heritage's Office (CHO) under the Development Bureau (AMO was previously under the administration of LCSD. On 1 April 2019, it was amalgamated with CHO under the Development Bureau).*

The management and control of museums designated under the Ordinance shall be vested in the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services. According to LCSD, LCSD and CHO have devised an administrative mechanism for the management of the 2 premises in (b) above.

Note 2: *Only LCSD museums designated under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance are covered in this audit review.*

Table 1

**LCSD museums
(September 2020)**

14 Museums
<i>Hong Kong Museum of Art and one branch museum</i>
Hong Kong Museum of Art
Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware
<i>Hong Kong Heritage Museum and two branch museums</i>
Hong Kong Heritage Museum
Hong Kong Railway Museum
Sheung Yiu Folk Museum
<i>Hong Kong Museum of History and five branch museums</i>
Hong Kong Museum of History
Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum
Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery
Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence
Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum
Law Uk Folk Museum
<i>Hong Kong Science Museum</i>
<i>Hong Kong Space Museum</i>
<i>Sam Tung Uk Museum</i>
Hong Kong Film Archive

Source: LCSD records

Introduction

1.5 LCSD museums have different characteristics and objectives. They present a variety of exhibitions and programmes to enrich the museum experience of visitors, including:

- (a) ***Permanent exhibitions.*** Permanent exhibitions contain collection items or core materials (exhibits) of the subject matter of the museum which are essential and remain relevant during the entire time they are open to the public. According to LCSD, permanent exhibitions are often designed to last for 10 to 15 years for science-related museums (i.e. the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum) and 15 to 20 years for other museums. Photograph 1 shows an example of permanent exhibition in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum;

Photograph 1

**An example of permanent exhibition
in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum
(the Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall)**



Source: Photograph taken by Audit Commission in June 2020

- (b) ***Special exhibitions.*** Special exhibitions provide various programmes of diverse topics of interest with the aim to encourage repeat visits and widen the range of the museum's audience. Apart from presenting local art, history and culture, LCSD museums also collaborate with world-renowned

museums and cultural organisations to stage blockbuster exhibitions. According to LCSD, special exhibitions usually last for only a few months. For example, in the period November 2019 to February 2020, the Hong Kong Museum of History collaborated with the National Museum of Afghanistan to present the “Glistening Treasures in the Dust — Ancient Artefacts of Afghanistan” which brought some 231 items/sets of rare artefacts from the National Museum of Afghanistan (see Photograph 2); and

Photograph 2

**“Glistening Treasures in the Dust — Ancient Artefacts of Afghanistan”
special exhibition in the Hong Kong Museum of History
(November 2019 to February 2020)**



Source: LCSD records

- (c) ***Other programmes and activities.*** Apart from exhibitions, LCSD museums also organise other programmes and activities, including:
- (i) education programmes to support school curriculum and promote lifelong learning, creativity and research among the wider community;
 - (ii) audience building programmes to capture wider audience and to cater for the needs of different audience groups and generations;

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- (iii) capacity building programmes to nurture young people’s interest in curatorial and museum work; and
- (iv) community engagement programmes to strengthen community engagement in heritage and museum activities.

Collections of LCSD museums

1.6 ***Museum collections.*** Museums have an important mission to acquire, preserve, exhibit and promote their collections to safeguard the natural, cultural and scientific heritage. The collection scope of LCSD museums includes Hong Kong art, Hong Kong history and culture, Chinese art and history, science and technology, and Hong Kong film heritage. As at 31 December 2019, LCSD museums had 1,595,615 collection items (see Table 2).

Table 2

**Number of collection items in LCSD museums
(31 December 2019)**

Museum	Number of collection items
Hong Kong Film Archive	1,305,368 (Note 1)
Hong Kong Museum of History and five branch museums (see Table 1 in para. 1.4 and Note 2)	146,067
Hong Kong Heritage Museum and two branch museums (see Table 1 in para. 1.4 and Note 2)	126,655
Hong Kong Museum of Art and one branch museum (see Table 1 in para. 1.4 and Note 2)	17,405
Hong Kong Science Museum	103
Hong Kong Space Museum	17
Sam Tung Uk Museum	— (Note 3)
Total	1,595,615

Source: LCSD records

Note 1: According to LCSD, the Hong Kong Film Archive has the largest number of collection items as its primary function is to maintain comprehensive records relating to Hong Kong film history and heritage. Although the nature and function of the Hong Kong Film Archive are different from those of a museum, given that it is designated as a museum under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, its archival collection which is mostly for research reference purpose is also regarded as museum collection.

Note 2: The main museums are responsible for the acquisition and management of collection items in their branch museums.

Note 3: The Sam Tung Uk Museum is a display and resource centre for intangible cultural heritage (e.g. Cantonese Opera, Cheung Chau Jiao Festival and herbal tea). It does not keep any collection item.

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1.7 *Acquisition of museum collections.* LCSD museums acquire art, cultural and scientific items to enrich their collections for the enjoyment of the public mainly through donations or purchases (Note 3). Items acquired will become museum collections and will be selected for presenting in the exhibitions at the museums or off-site venues (Note 4) upon completion of accession (Note 5 — unless stated otherwise, collection items hereinafter include both items with accession completed and items pending accession). Table 3 shows the number of collection items acquired by LCSD museums during the period 2015-16 to 2019-20 (Note 6).

Table 3
Number of collection items acquired by LCSD museums
(2015-16 to 2019-20)

Year	Collection items acquired			Total (No.)
	By donations (No.)	By purchases		
		(No.)	(\$ million)	
2015-16	37,798 (99.6%)	151 (0.4%)	9.55	37,949 (100%)
2016-17	33,028 (98.1%)	631 (1.9%)	41.81	33,659 (100%)
2017-18	8,368 (91.8%)	749 (8.2%)	7.51	9,117 (100%)
2018-19	14,081 (91.4%)	1,331 (8.6%)	14.15	15,412 (100%)
2019-20	47,004 (99.1%)	416 (0.9%)	4.68	47,420 (100%)
Overall	140,279 (97.7%)	3,278 (2.3%)	77.70	143,557 (100%)

Source: LCSD records

Note 3: *LCSD museums also, from time to time, receive items of historical and cultural value from other government departments. In the period 2015-16 to 2019-20, 569 items were received and added to the museum collections.*

Note 4: *According to LCSD, collection items may also be presented in off-site venues such as civic centres and outbound exhibitions presented outside Hong Kong as appropriate.*

Note 5: *Accession is the process of registering and cataloguing museum collection items (see para. 2.14).*

Note 6: *In June 2013, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved a funding of \$50 million for LCSD to acquire and commission artworks by local artists. In December 2018, it approved an additional funding of \$500 million for LCSD to acquire museum collections and commission art and cultural projects.*

1.8 ***Storage of museum collections.*** While some collection items are presented in exhibitions in LCSD museums, the remaining collection items are kept in stores. In LCSD museums, collection items are stored in specific storerooms. Due to limited space in individual museums, collection items are also stored in off-site stores temporarily. As of September 2020, LCSD museums maintained a total storage space of 16,090 square metres (m²), including 6,100 m² (38%) in storerooms inside museums and 9,990 m² (62%) in off-site stores.

1.9 ***Collection management systems.*** LCSD museums register their collection items in the collection management systems. Currently, there are four collection management systems providing inventory control of the collection items of LCSD museums (Note 7). The systems record details of collection items, such as description, location, measurement and image. A unique identification number is assigned to each item, which will be marked/affixed on the item.

Note 7: *The four systems include:*

- (a) *a centralised collection management system launched in January 2020 managing the collections of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Film Archive; and*
- (b) *three other systems managing the collections of the Hong Kong Museum of Art, the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum respectively. LCSD has plans to merge these systems into the centralised collection management system (see (a) above) by phases.*

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Advisory structure for management of public museums and acquisition of collection items

1.10 *Museum Advisory Committee (MAC).* To enhance community participation in public museum services, the Government established MAC (Note 8) in October 2016 to advise LCSD on the strategies for development, promotion and management of the public museums (Note 9). MAC is supported by three standing sub-committees on art, history and science (Note 10). While MAC provides advice on overarching matters and issues commonly faced by all LCSD museums, the three sub-committees facilitate focused discussions on stream-specific issues for addressing concerns unique to different streams of museums. The terms of appointment for members of MAC and its sub-committees are two years.

Note 8: *As of September 2020, MAC comprised 25 non-official members appointed by the Secretary for Home Affairs. Its terms of reference are to advise the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services on matters concerning public museums and related offices, including:*

- (a) positioning, image-building and branding;*
- (b) business development strategies;*
- (c) marketing and publicity strategies;*
- (d) development of community engagement strategies;*
- (e) measures to strengthen operational efficiency and accountability of public museums; and*
- (f) other matters as proposed by LCSD.*

Note 9: *Between October 2010 and October 2016, three Museum Advisory Panels (Art, History and Science) had been set up to advise LCSD on the strategies for development, promotion and management of the respective public museums. After reviewing the advisory structure of public museums, in October 2016, the Government established MAC succeeding the three Museum Advisory Panels to continue to provide advice on LCSD museums.*

Note 10: *As of September 2020, the Art Sub-committee, the History Sub-committee, and the Science Sub-committee of MAC comprised 14, 14 and 15 non-official members respectively appointed by the Secretary for Home Affairs. The terms of reference are to advise the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services on policies and matters related to the respective stream of museums and related offices, and perform any other functions in relation to the respective stream of museums and related offices as delegated or assigned by MAC.*

1.11 *Museum Expert Advisers (MEAs)*. To enhance standard of professional judgement, and uphold government procurement principle of maintaining an open, fair and transparent system, since 2000, LCSD has been appointing MEAs (in two-year term) to provide individual expert advice to LCSD museums on matters pertaining to acquisition of collection items. MEAs will also advise on the promotion of art, history, science and film on a need basis. LCSD maintains lists of MEAs according to their areas of expertise and the specific knowledge required in a particular field (i.e. MEA panels/sub-panels — unless stated otherwise, MEA panels/sub-panels are hereinafter referred to as MEA panels for simplicity). When advice from MEAs is required, LCSD will invite MEAs in the specific panel on a rotation basis to provide independent advice.

Responsible division of LCSD

1.12 LCSD museum services (including the acquisition and management of museum collection items) are provided through the Heritage and Museums Division of LCSD. The Division is headed by an Assistant Director and supported by 637 staff to oversee and provide support to the operation and management of LCSD museums (Note 11). An extract of the organisation chart of LCSD (as at 31 March 2020) is at Appendix A. In 2019-20, the expenditure incurred by LCSD in provision of museum services amounted to \$480.7 million.

Audit review

1.13 In 2006, the Audit Commission (Audit) completed a review of the provision of public museum services (the 2006 Audit Review). The review found that there was room for improvement in a number of areas, including the acquisition and management of collection items (e.g. large backlog of collection items pending accession). The review results were reported in Chapter 5 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 46 of March 2006.

Note 11: *Apart from providing museum services, the Heritage and Museums Division is also responsible for art promotion. The Art Promotion Office under the Division manages two other cultural spaces (i.e. the Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre and the Oil Street Art Space) for providing professional facilities for art creation and platforms where artists can display their creativity and exchange ideas.*

Introduction

1.14 Since the 2006 Audit Review, the number of collection items in LCSD museums has increased by 540,159 (51%), from 1,055,456 items in December 2007 to 1,595,615 items in December 2019. In May 2020, Audit commenced a review to examine the acquisition and management of collection items in public museums managed by LCSD. The audit review has focused on the following areas:

- (a) acquisition and accession of museum collection items (PART 2);
- (b) stocktaking and storage of museum collection items (PART 3); and
- (c) other related issues (PART 4).

Audit has found room for improvement in the above areas and has made a number of recommendations to address the issues.

Acknowledgement

1.15 During the audit review, in light of the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the Government had implemented various special work arrangements and targeted measures for government employees, including working from home. Audit would like to acknowledge with gratitude the full cooperation of the staff of LCSD during the course of the audit review amid the COVID-19 epidemic.

PART 2: ACQUISITION AND ACCESSION OF MUSEUM COLLECTION ITEMS

2.1 This PART examines the acquisition and accession of museum collection items by LCSD, focusing on the following areas:

- (a) acquisition of museum collection items (paras. 2.2 to 2.13); and
- (b) accession of museum collection items (paras. 2.14 to 2.29).

Acquisition of museum collection items

2.2 *Collection policy.* The acquisition, care and use of collection items of each LCSD museum are governed by its collection policy (see Appendix B — Note 12). The collection policy also clarifies the position of any material that will not be catalogued, conserved or exhibited (e.g. items loan-in from other organisations).

2.3 *LCSD acquisition guidelines.* LCSD museums acquire collection items mainly through purchases or donations (see para. 1.7). According to LCSD, due to the special and unique nature of the acquisitions involved, the paramount importance of assessing quality in addition to price consideration, and the limited availability of suitable objects in the market, it is impracticable to procure the objects through normal procurement procedures in accordance with the provisions of the Stores and

Note 12: *In the 2006 Audit Review (see para. 1.13), Audit found that other than the Hong Kong Film Archive, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Museum of Art, there was no collection policy for other public museums, and recommended that each museum should have a collection policy for the acquisition and management of collection items. LCSD has consequently formulated collection policy for every museum.*

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

Procurement Regulations (SPRs — Note 13). LCSD has obtained the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury's approval for exemption from applying SPRs and has devised guidelines setting out the procedures and assessment criteria for the acquisition of museum collection items (Note 14).

2.4 Collection items may be purchased or donated from various sources, including artists, collectors, individuals, public or private organisations, commercial galleries and shops, as well as auction houses. According to LCSD acquisition guidelines of April 2020:

- (a) when an object is proposed for acquisition, the proposal will be considered by the Programme Committee (Note 15) of the museum proposing the acquisition;

Note 13: *SPRs are made by the Financial Secretary/Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury under the Public Finance Ordinance (Cap. 2). Apart from procurement of objects (i.e. artefacts and cultural relics) to be added to the museum collections, the exemption also applies to procurement of services for organisation of public programmes by the Heritage and Museums Division of LCSD (see para. 1.12). The exemption does not apply to the procurement of logistical and supporting services, which needs to comply with procurement procedures set out in SPRs.*

Note 14: *In the 2006 Audit Review (see para. 1.13), Audit noted that up to the end of December 2005, LCSD had not yet finalised the procurement procedures for the acquisition of collection items, and recommended that LCSD should expedite action to finalise the procurement procedures. In April 2006, the procurement procedures were approved by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury.*

Note 15: *Programme Committees are set up in the sections/offices under the Heritage and Museums Division (see Appendix A) to vet proposed acquisitions or programme proposals at regular intervals or on a need basis. Each Programme Committee is chaired by the Head of Museum (i.e. Chief Curator or Chief Manager) and comprises museum professional staff.*

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

- (b) at least two or three MEAs (Note 16) with relevant expertise will be invited to assess the object proposed for acquisition (Note 17):
 - (i) in all cases of acquisition by purchase; and
 - (ii) in cases of acquisition by donation with query from members of the Programme Committee (or the approving authority — see (c) below).

Acquisition will not be proceeded unless there is unanimous support of all MEAs consulted;

- (c) with the support of the Programme Committee and MEAs, the proposal for acquisition will be submitted to the approving authority (Note 18) for endorsement; and
- (d) LCSD will sign a sale agreement with the seller (in case of purchase) or a deed of donation with the donor (in case of donation), and proceed with the payment where appropriate and collect the object accordingly.

Room for improvement in the appointment of MEAs

2.5 LCSD appoints MEAs from different areas of expertise for a two-year term to provide expert advice to LCSD museums. MEAs are grouped in panels (see para. 1.11) of specific knowledge such as Hong Kong art, historical pictures,

Note 16: *At least two MEAs will be engaged for a proposed acquisition with estimated value up to \$50,000 and at least three MEAs will be engaged for a proposed acquisition with estimated value over \$50,000.*

Note 17: *An MEA's assessment is based on criteria including the artistic merit/historical value/scientific and technological significance, relevance to collection, authenticity, physical condition, price, durability, display value, education value, as well as reputation of the artist or maker.*

Note 18: *The approving authorities are the Head of Museum, the Assistant Director (Heritage and Museums) of LCSD, the Deputy Director (Culture) of LCSD, and the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services respectively for acquisition of items with value up to \$0.28 million, over \$0.28 million and up to \$0.7 million, over \$0.7 million and up to \$1.4 million, and over \$1.4 million.*

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

archaeology, pop culture, science and technology, and film. When advice is required, LCSD will invite MEAs in the specific panel on a rotation basis to provide independent advice (Note 19). For the 2018-19 to 2019-20 term and the 2020-21 to 2021-22 term, 180 and 174 MEAs were appointed respectively in 27 panels of each term (Note 20).

2.6 *Need to duly appoint MEAs before soliciting their advice.* Nomination and appointment of MEA are conducted every two years. New MEA term commences on 1 April. Audit noted that LCSD did not have guidelines nor set a timetable for the appointment of MEAs. In examining the MEAs appointment records for the 2018-19 to 2019-20 term and the 2020-21 to 2021-22 term, Audit found that:

- (a) the MEA nomination lists were approved by the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services in January 2018 and January 2020 respectively for the two terms. However, invitation letters to MEAs for appointment were only sent in late March of 2018 and 2020 respectively (i.e. a few days before term commencement date of 1 April);
- (b) MEAs confirmed acceptance of appointments:
 - (i) between 4 April and 24 August 2018 for the 2018-19 to 2019-20 term; and
 - (ii) between 27 March and 9 May 2020 for the 2020-21 to 2021-22 term; and
- (c) three MEAs provided advice on an acquisition proposal (total estimated value of the items was \$100,000) for the Hong Kong Museum of History in April 2018 before accepting the MEA appointments for the 2018-19 to 2019-20 term. The three MEAs subsequently accepted the MEA appointment in April, May and June 2018 respectively.

Note 19: *MEAs receive no remuneration for providing advice and are required to declare conflict of interests in providing advice for each proposed acquisition.*

Note 20: *Some MEAs have multiple memberships in the 27 panels.*

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

Candidates nominated for MEA appointments were not duly appointed until they accepted the appointments. It was not satisfactory that advice was sought from the three nominated candidates before their appointments were completed. To facilitate soliciting MEAs' advice as soon as a term starts, LCSD needs to take measures to ensure that MEAs are timely appointed for each term and consider laying down guidelines and setting a timetable for the MEA appointment process.

2.7 *Need to maintain at least five MEAs in each panel.* In February 2014, a review on the appointment/re-appointment of MEAs conducted by LCSD suggested that the desirable size of each MEA panel is at least five MEAs. Audit examined the lists of MEAs for the 2018-19 to 2019-20 term and the 2020-21 to 2021-22 term, and found that of the 27 MEA panels of each term, there were respectively five and six panels each comprising only three to four MEAs. Audit also noted that according to LCSD acquisition guidelines, at least two or three MEAs shall be engaged for each proposed acquisition (see para. 2.4(b)).

2.8 According to LCSD, five is a desirable size for MEA panels but may not be achievable for some very specialised areas (e.g. archaeology, numismatics and philately, military history, and other decorative arts, product and jewellery) as there is a very limited number of local experts. In Audit's view, maintaining the desirable size for MEA panels facilitates the effective acquisition of museum collection items. Audit considers that LCSD needs to explore effective means to increase the number of MEAs to ensure that at least five MEAs are maintained in each panel as far as practicable.

Room for improvement in acquisition of donated items

2.9 From 2015-16 to 2019-20, over 90% of collection items acquired were from donations each year (see Table 3 in para. 1.7). According to LCSD acquisition guidelines, in case of donation, with the support of the Programme Committee (and support from MEAs if applicable) and endorsement of the approving authority, LCSD will sign a deed of donation with the donor and collect the donated item from the donor as appropriate (see para. 2.4). Audit examined the acquisition of donated items in the Hong Kong Museum of History and noted that in one case, due to long time taken in identifying space for storage and conservation treatment for two donated items, the deed of donation was signed and only one donated item was collected more than five years after endorsement was obtained for accepting the donation (see Case 1).

Case 1

Long time taken in identifying space for storage and conservation treatment for two donated items (December 2014 to July 2020)

1. In December 2014, the Programme Committee of the Hong Kong Museum of History supported the acquisition proposal of two wooden boats (Boat A and Boat B) from a donor (Note 1). In January 2015, the proposal was endorsed by the Head of the Hong Kong Museum of History (Note 2) since the two boats were closely related to the history of Hong Kong.
2. Since January 2015, LCSD had considered various options to accommodate the two boats (e.g. outdoor storage with specially designed storage tanks, and indoor/sheltered storage). However, due to the size of the boats (Note 3) and conservation treatment requirement, no suitable location could be identified.
3. More than five years after the endorsement of the acquisition proposal, in April 2020, LCSD made available a suitable space in the Law Uk Folk Museum and decided to store the boats there. In May 2020, LCSD commenced the preparation work for receiving the boats (e.g. fabrication of tailor-made wooden racks to house the boats for fumigation and conservation treatment). In June 2020, LCSD informed the donor that it had identified a suitable storage place for the boats and would arrange collection. However, the donor subsequently informed LCSD that he decided to donate only one of the two boats (Boat A — see Photograph 3). In July 2020, LCSD collected Boat A and stored it in the Law Uk Folk Museum for fumigation and conservation treatment.

Photograph 3

Boat A (December 2014)



Source: LCSD records

Case 1 (Cont'd)

Audit comments

4. According to LCSD acquisition guidelines, LCSD will sign a deed of donation and collect the donated items after obtaining support from the Programme Committee and endorsement of the approving authority (see para. 2.4). However, the guidelines do not specify a timeframe for collection of donated items. In September 2020, LCSD informed Audit that given the unusual size of the two boats (see Note 3), it took time to identify a suitable location to house them for fumigation before they could be collected. It was not until 2020 that a suitable location was available for storing and carrying out the fumigation work. The boat was then collected and the deed of donation signed at the time of collection.

5. According to LCSD, donations were hard to come by, in particular for historical/heritage items. Normally people might wish to donate such items when they moved houses, emigrated or when companies closed down, and donors wanted to hand over the items as soon as possible. Audit considers that taking a long time in identifying storage space is undesirable from the point of view of securing a donated item. LCSD needs to make greater efforts to identify storage spaces for donated items, sign deeds of donation and collect donated items from donors promptly in future as far as practicable.

Source: Audit analysis of LCSD records

Note 1: As no query from members of the Programme Committee was raised, MEA's advice was not sought (see para. 2.4(b)(ii)).

Note 2: The estimated value of the two boats was \$10,000. According to LCSD acquisition guidelines, endorsement from the Head of Museum was sought (see Note 18 to para. 2.4(c)).

Note 3: The dimensions of Boat A were 4 metres (length) × 1.6 metres (height) × 1.1 metres (width). The dimensions of Boat B were 3.5 metres (length) × 1.6 metres (height) × 1 metre (width).

Need to review the performance target on acquisition

2.10 To preserve Hong Kong's art and heritage, LCSD sets an annual target on the acquisition of museum collection items. The achievement of the target has been published and updated on LCSD website and in annual reports. Table 4 shows the annual target and achievement on acquisition of museum collection items for the period 2015-16 to 2019-20.

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

Table 4

**Annual target and achievement on
acquisition of museum collection items
(2015-16 to 2019-20)**

Year	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
(a) Number of collection items (as at 31 March) (Note 1)	1,491,542	1,524,779	1,533,544	1,548,524	1,595,653
(b) Number of collection items acquired in the year	38,096 (Note 2)	33,237	8,765	14,980	47,129
(c) Target and achievement	An annual increase of about 2% of the collections		An incremental increase of about 2% of new acquisition		
	$(c) = \frac{(b)}{(a) \text{ of previous year}} \times 100\%$		$(c) = \frac{(b) - (b) \text{ of previous year}}{(b) \text{ of previous year}} \times 100\%$		
	2.62%	2.23%	(74%) (Note 3)	71%	215%

Source: Audit analysis of LCSD records

Note 1: Number of collection items included items acquired and kept by the Art Promotion Office of LCSD (see Note 11 to para. 1.12).

Note 2: Number of collection items as at 31 March 2015 was 1,453,446.

Note 3: Negative value in achievement of the target in 2017-18 means fewer items were acquired in 2017-18 (8,765 items) than in 2016-17 (33,237 items).

2.11 It can be seen from Table 4 that:

- (a) in 2016-17, despite a decrease in the number of collection items acquired compared with the previous year (2015-16), the actual achievement of 2.23% still exceeded the target percentage of 2%;

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

- (b) in 2017-18, with the change in the definition of target increase in acquisition from “an annual increase of about 2% of the collections” to “an incremental increase of about 2% of new acquisition”, a decrease in the number of collection items acquired compared with the previous year (2016-17) resulted in a significant under-achievement of target (actual achievement of -74% versus the target percentage of 2%); and
- (c) in 2018-19 and 2019-20, the actual achievement of 71% and 215% respectively far exceeded the target percentage of 2%.

Since the majority of LCSD’s collection items were acquired by donations (see Table 3 in para. 1.7), the number of collection items acquired could fluctuate significantly from year to year. Setting the performance target at 2% of the new acquisition in the previous year may not always be an effective performance measure for helping enhance performance, transparency and accountability. For example, if the new acquisition in the previous year was exceptionally low, the target for the current year would be too easy to achieve, as in the case of 2018-19 (new acquisition in 2017-18 of 8,765 items was exceptionally low). In Audit’s view, LCSD should review whether the performance target of an incremental increase of about 2% of new acquisition is an appropriate performance measure.

Audit recommendations

2.12 **Audit has *recommended* that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:**

- (a) **take measures to ensure that MEAs are timely appointed for each term and consider laying down guidelines and setting a timetable for the MEA appointment process;**
- (b) **explore effective means to increase the number of MEAs to ensure that at least five MEAs are maintained in each panel as far as practicable;**
- (c) **make greater efforts to identify storage spaces for donated items, sign deeds of donation and collect donated items from donors promptly in future as far as practicable; and**

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

- (d) **review whether the performance target of an incremental increase of about 2% of new acquisition is an appropriate performance measure.**

Response from the Government

2.13 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) LCSD is now preparing for a review in 2021 to ensure timely appointment of MEAs;
- (b) LCSD will prepare guidelines and set a timetable to enhance the MEA appointment process starting from the next term. Planned measures include:
 - (i) issuing invitation letters to nominated MEAs at least four weeks before the end of a term; and
 - (ii) updating the list of newly appointed MEAs and notifying all sections before the start of a new term;
- (c) there is difficulty in recruiting five experts for some very specialised areas due to the very limited supply of such experts. LCSD considers it not practical to adopt a one-size-fits-all approach. Nonetheless, LCSD has already been making and will continue to make effort in achieving a desirable size of at least five MEAs in each MEA panel if experts in the specialised areas are available;
- (d) LCSD has always tried to collect items from donors in a timely manner. Case 1 in paragraph 2.9 was an unusual case and not a general situation. LCSD museums have always been making and will continue to make effort in identifying storage spaces and will enhance checking of the progress of all donation offers on a monthly basis. Donation deeds will be sent to donors for signature within one month after working out the necessary logistical arrangement; and

- (e) LCSD conducted a review of the performance target in the acquisition of museum collection items in 2017-18 as museum collection continued to grow and the percentage set before 2017-18 for an increasing accumulated total was not deemed to be an effective target. The current approach has been adopted since then. LCSD is now preparing to conduct a review again in 2021-22.

Accession of museum collection items

2.14 Accession is the process of registering and cataloguing museum collection items. A proper accession system can facilitate a museum to:

- (a) analyse and manage its data on collection items;
- (b) retrieve information on collection items efficiently for checking purpose in deciding the acquisition of new collection items, carrying out researches, organising exhibitions, considering the loan of exhibits, and conducting surprise inspections; and
- (c) exercise control over the storage and movement of collection items so as to help prevent loss of collection items.

Audit examined the accession of collection items in the Hong Kong Museum of History, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Film Archive and found room for improvement (see paras. 2.15 to 2.27).

Need to ensure timely completion of accession of collection items in the Hong Kong Museum of History

2.15 *Accession processes in the Hong Kong Museum of History.* Accession of collection items in the Hong Kong Museum of History involves the following key processes:

- (a) **Registration.** When items are collected from the sellers or donors, the acquiring unit will register the items in the collection management system (see para. 1.9) with basic information (such as the type, name, description,

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

purchasing price, location and current photographs). Each item will be given an acquisition number for identification purpose (Note 21);

- (b) **Handover.** After registration, the acquiring unit will make a request for handover of the items to the collection management unit of the museum. The collection management unit will check if the required information is inputted correctly in the collection management system, check the relevant documents (such as deed of donation/sale agreement, legal title of the items and MEA assessment record) and check the physical conditions of the items (Note 22). If everything is in order, the collection management unit will take over the items from the acquiring unit; and
- (c) **Final checking and recording.** After taking over the items, the collection management unit will input the updated details (e.g. dimensions, photographs and locations) of the items in the collection management system. An identification number will be generated through the system for each item, which will then be marked or attached to each item and on the relevant documents.

Upon completion of the accession processes, the collection items could be presented to the public at the museum or in off-site venues (see Note 4 to para. 1.7).

2.16 As at 31 December 2019, there were 13,346 items (291 lots — Note 23) pending accession in the Hong Kong Museum of History. Of these, 3,622 (27%) items were acquired at least five years ago. Table 5 shows the ageing

Note 21: *During the process of registration, the items are kept in boxes sealed with markings. These boxes are stored in storerooms inside the museum for secured safekeeping. The acquiring unit of the museum is responsible for keeping the items free of insect or mould infestation. Conservation treatment will be arranged as and when necessary.*

Note 22: *The collection management unit and the acquiring unit will agree on the exact number of items involved during the handover process. For example, a teapot set considered as one item in the registration process may be revised to several items such as teapot, teapot cover, cups and plates.*

Note 23: *According to LCSD, over 90% of collection items have been acquired in lots or batches with variable number of items (ranging from a few to thousands) and one item might contain different numbers of components, and therefore the processing work was time-consuming.*

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

analysis of items pending accession in the Hong Kong Museum of History as at 31 December 2019.

Table 5

**Ageing analysis of items pending accession
in the Hong Kong Museum of History
(31 December 2019)**

Years elapsed since acquisition	Stage of accession processes			Total (No.)
	Registration (No.)	Handover (No.)	Final checking and recording (No.)	
Less than 5 years	7,876	1,848	–	9,724 (73%)
5 to less than 10 years	1,353	141	–	1,494 (11%)
10 years or more	1,714 (Note 1)	–	414 (Note 2)	2,128 (16%)
Total (see Note 23 to para. 2.16)	10,943 (82%) (207 lots)	1,989 (15%) (83 lots)	414 (3%) (1 lot)	13,346 (100%) (291 lots)

} 3,622 (27%)

Source: Audit analysis of LCSD records

Note 1: These 1,714 collection items were acquired in the 1980s and kept in the museum temporary stores afterwards (see paras. 2.18 and 2.19). They had not been included in the items pending accession reported in the 2006 Audit Review (see para. 2.17).

Note 2: These 414 collection items were acquired in 1980 and presented to the public since 1991 (see paras. 2.20 to 2.23). They had not been included in the items pending accession reported in the 2006 Audit Review (see para. 2.17).

2.17 Timely accession of museum collection items is essential to the effective management of the collection items. Taking a long time in accession will delay public enjoyment of the collection items acquired. In the 2006 Audit Review (see para. 1.13), Audit found that as of November 2005, there were 257,780 collection items pending accession in the Hong Kong Museum of History, and recommended LCSD to draw up an action plan to clear the backlog of items pending accession. According to LCSD, the Hong Kong Museum of History has completed the accession

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

of the items in 2010 (Note 24). As at 31 December 2019, the number of collection items pending accession was 13,346. In Audit's view, there is a need for the Hong Kong Museum of History to continue to make efforts to ensure timely completion of accession of collection items.

Need to expedite accession of items with unknown source acquired in the 1980s in the Hong Kong Museum of History

2.18 In December 2005, LCSD identified an unknown number of collection items in the Hong Kong Museum of History (Note 25). In October 2009, LCSD checked and recorded that the unknown items comprised some 10,000 items (mostly manuscripts, commercial documents, handbills, packaging materials, postcards and photographs) kept in 22 boxes with untraceable source (Note 26). According to LCSD, these items were acquired (either through donations or purchases) in the 1980s and kept in the museum temporary stores afterwards. LCSD planned to complete accession of these items by 2010.

2.19 Audit examined the accession records of these 10,000 items and noted that, as at 31 December 2019:

- (a) accession of 9,814 items was completed; and
- (b) accession of the remaining items had not been completed yet, comprising:
 - (i) 1,714 items under the registration process (see Table 5 in para. 2.16); and

Note 24: *According to LCSD, of the 257,780 items pending accession, about 200,000 items were on loan from other organisation and would not be accessioned.*

Note 25: *These unknown items were mentioned in Note 18 to paragraph 4.14 of Chapter 5 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 46 of March 2006 (see para. 1.13).*

Note 26: *LCSD could not find the source of the items and decided that if there was practical difficulty to trace the source of a collection item due to lapse of time, the source of item would be marked as "untraceable due to the lapse of time" in the collection management system.*

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

- (ii) an estimate of 137 items with the accession processes not yet commenced.

In Audit's view, it was less than satisfactory that with the lapse of 10 years since 2009, accession of 1,851 (1,714 + 137) of the 10,000 items had not yet been completed. Audit considers that LCSD needs to complete the accession of these items as soon as practicable.

Need to ensure completion of accession before presenting the collection items

2.20 As at 31 December 2019, there were 414 items pending final checking and recording in the Hong Kong Museum of History (see Table 5 in para. 2.16). Although accession of these items was not completed, LCSD has been presenting them in the "Hong Kong Story" permanent exhibition in the Hong Kong Museum of History (Note 27).

2.21 According to LCSD:

- (a) the 414 items, comprising old furniture, and fixtures and fittings relating to a typical Chinese herb shop, were purchased in 1980;
- (b) the 414 items had been presented in the former museum premises in the Kowloon Park since 1991 until the relocation of the museum to its present location in Tsim Sha Tsui in 1998. Since 2001, the items have been presented in the "Hong Kong Story" permanent exhibition; and
- (c) accession of the items was not completed because the items had to be retained in the exhibition. The final checking and recording process could

Note 27: *The "Hong Kong Story" permanent exhibition in the Hong Kong Museum of History was opened in 2001. The exhibition is divided into eight galleries of different themes with a total area of 7,000 m². It presents more than 4,000 collection items/exhibits, 750 graphic panels and 53 audiovisual programmes.*

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

only proceed if the items are dismantled when the exhibition is closed for enhancement later (Note 28).

2.22 In early 2020, LCSD has resumed the accession processes for these 414 items starting from registration. As of June 2020, the number of items have been revised to 773 items as agreed between the collection management unit and the acquiring unit (see Note 22 to para. 2.15(b)). In August 2020, LCSD informed Audit that the purpose of resuming the accession processes was to rectify the old records to ensure that the items concerned would not be mixed up with other stage decoration materials when they were dismantled during enhancement of the permanent exhibition.

2.23 In Audit's view, presenting collection items before completion of accession does not constitute a good practice of collection management. LCSD needs to take measures to ensure that the items concerned are suitably recorded before dismantling so that they would not be mixed up with other stage decoration materials. After the items are dismantled, LCSD needs to complete accession of them as soon as practicable.

Need to critically review the accession processes and monitor the progress of accession of collection items in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Film Archive

2.24 In late August and September 2020, LCSD informed Audit that as at 30 April 2020, 24,314 items (177 lots) and 693,819 items (1,038 lots) were pending accession in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Film Archive respectively.

2.25 ***Collection items pending accession in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum.*** For the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, the accession processes are similar to those of the Hong Kong Museum of History (see para. 2.15). As at 30 April 2020, of the 24,314 items pending accession:

- (a) 22,717 (93%) items were in the registration process (see para. 2.15(a));

Note 28: *According to LCSD, the exhibition was closed for enhancement in October 2020.*

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

- (b) 1,151 (5%) items were in the handover process (see para. 2.15(b)); and
- (c) 446 (2%) items were in the final checking and recording process (see para. 2.15(c)).

Table 6 shows the ageing analysis of items pending accession in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum as at 30 April 2020.

Table 6

**Ageing analysis of items pending accession
in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum
(30 April 2020)**

Years elapsed since acquisition	Stage of accession processes			Total (No.)
	Registration (No.)	Handover (No.)	Final checking and recording (No.)	
Less than 5 years	1,188	1,076	446	2,710 (11%)
5 to less than 10 years	20,490	10	—	20,500 (84%)
10 years or more	1,039	65	—	1,104 (5%) (Note)
Total (see Note 23 to para. 2.16)	22,717 (93%) (118 lots)	1,151 (5%) (42 lots)	446 (2%) (17 lots)	24,314 (100%) (177 lots)

Source: Audit analysis of LCSD records

Note: These 1,104 items were acquired 10 to 14 years ago (i.e. between 2006 and 2010). They had not been included in the items pending accession reported in the 2006 Audit Review (see para. 2.27).

2.26 Collection items pending accession in the Hong Kong Film Archive. Accession of collection items in the Hong Kong Film Archive involves the following key processes:

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

- (a) ***Registration and research.*** When collection items are collected from the seller or donor, the acquiring unit will count, sort and repack the items, conduct basic cleaning or fumigation when necessary, and verify the item details and acquisition documents. The items will be registered in the collection management system and each of them will be given an acquisition number for identification purpose; and

- (b) ***Conservation and cataloguing.*** After registration, the items will be handed over for undergoing a conservation process (e.g. film condition inspection) and cataloguing. Upon completion of conservation, the item records (e.g. number of items, description and locations) will be updated in the collection management system. An identification number will be generated through the system for each item, which will then be marked or attached to each item and marked on the relevant documents.

As at 30 April 2020, of the 693,819 items pending accession, 529,550 (76%) items were under the registration and research process, and 164,269 (24%) items were under the conservation and cataloguing process. Table 7 shows the ageing analysis of items pending accession in the Hong Kong Film Archive as at 30 April 2020.

Acquisition and accession of museum collection items

Table 7

**Ageing analysis of items pending accession
in the Hong Kong Film Archive
(30 April 2020)**

Years elapsed since acquisition	Stage of accession processes		Total (No.)
	Registration and research (No.)	Conservation and cataloguing (No.)	
Less than 5 years	93,911	279	94,190 (13%)
5 to less than 10 years	140,995	1,968	142,963 (21%)
10 years or more	294,644	162,022	456,666 (66%) (Note 1)
Total (see Note 23 to para. 2.16)	529,550 (76%) (948 lots)	164,269 (24%) (90 lots)	693,819 (100%) (1,038 lots) (Note 2)

Source: Audit analysis of LCSD records

Note 1: According to LCSD, 233,593 of these 456,666 items were acquired 10 to 14 years ago (i.e. between 2006 and 2010). They had not been included in the items pending accession reported in the 2006 Audit Review (see para. 2.27). The remaining 223,073 items were acquired before 2006, which had been included in the 436,200 backlog items pending accession reported in the 2006 Audit Review (see para. 2.27). The Hong Kong Film Archive had completed registration, basic research and verification of these items in July 2010. However, as at 30 April 2020, detailed research and verification, and conservation and cataloguing of these items have yet to be completed.

Note 2: According to LCSD, in view of the time-consuming, complicated process in accession of film and film-related materials, and the large amount of collection items, the priority in accession is not entirely hinged on the timing of acquisition. Items which are in good conditions and of low programme and research needs may be given lower priority for accession whereas earlier processing of items may take place if there are requests from donors for confirmation of acceptance of donations, or if the collection items pending accession are deteriorating or becoming structurally unstable.

2.27 In the 2006 Audit Review (see para. 1.13), Audit found that as of November 2005, 19,598 and 436,200 items were pending accession in the Hong Kong

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Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Film Archive respectively, and recommended LCSD to draw up action plan to clear the backlog of collection items pending accession. According to LCSD, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum had cleared all backlog items in May 2011 and the Hong Kong Film Archive had cleared all backlog items (i.e. completed registration, basic research and verification — see Note 1 to Table 7 in para. 2.26) in July 2010. However, due to the unexpected growth of museum collection with large number of donated items and the complicated and time-consuming registration process in accession (see Note 23 to para. 2.16), there were 24,314 and 693,819 collection items pending accession in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Film Archive respectively as at 30 April 2020. Audit considers that LCSD needs to critically review the accession processes (see paras. 2.25 and 2.26) in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Film Archive and closely monitor the progress of each process with a view to completing the accession of collection items in a timely manner.

Audit recommendations

2.28 Audit has *recommended* that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:

- (a) for the Hong Kong Museum of History:**
 - (i) continue to make efforts to ensure timely completion of accession of collection items;**
 - (ii) complete accession of items with unknown source acquired in the 1980s as soon as practicable; and**
 - (iii) for the items pending final checking and recording but being presented in permanent exhibitions, take measures to ensure that they are suitably recorded before dismantling so that they would not be mixed up with other decoration materials, and complete accession of them as soon as practicable after the items are dismantled; and**
- (b) for the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Film Archive, critically review the accession processes and closely monitor the**

progress of each process with a view to completing the accession of collection items in a timely manner.

Response from the Government

2.29 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) the Hong Kong Museum of History has been devoting great efforts to accession and will continue to step up by further reviewing the accessioning procedure and enhance mechanism to streamline and expedite the process. Planned measures include:
 - (i) accessioning new acquisitions from 2020-21 onwards in 1 to 2 years;
 - (ii) completing accession of collections acquired before 2020-21 by 2023;
 - (iii) reporting accession progress on a monthly basis;
 - (iv) setting reminder (e-notification) in the centralised collection management system (see Note 7 to para. 1.9) to enhance monitoring of outstanding items; and
 - (v) seeking approval from Head of Museum for the extension of the set accessioning period with justifications if necessary;
- (b) the Hong Kong Museum of History has kept a record of the items with unknown source acquired in the 1980s. The museum will streamline and expedite the process to complete accession of items with unknown source by 2021;
- (c) the Hong Kong Museum of History has kept clear record of the items on display in the permanent exhibitions and has already planned to accord top priority to complete the accessioning process of the items after they are dismantled from the permanent exhibition closed in October 2020;

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- (d) the Hong Kong Heritage Museum will review the accessioning procedure to enhance the mechanism to streamline and expedite the process. Planned measures include those mentioned in (a)(i), (iii), (iv) and (v) above; and

- (e) the Hong Kong Film Archive will critically review the existing accessioning procedure and workflow to further streamline and improve the mechanism and explore different means to expedite the process. Planned measures include:
 - (i) reviewing criteria and prioritise accessioning of collection items to achieve better efficiency;

 - (ii) deriving a reference timeframe according to the nature of the collection type to facilitate planning of work;

 - (iii) producing a work schedule for completion of the outstanding items with a target to complete items acquired before 2010 first, followed by those acquired between 2010 and 2020;

 - (iv) according higher priority to less complicated items and items which have been acquired for more than 10 years;

 - (v) securing temporary additional manpower to expedite the process for clearance of outstanding items and to shorten the period required, especially in case of sudden influx of large number of donated items;

 - (vi) reporting the progress on a monthly basis;

 - (vii) setting reminder (e-notification) in the centralised collection management system to enhance monitoring of outstanding items; and

 - (viii) seeking approval from section head for the extension of the set accessioning period with justifications if necessary.

PART 3: STOCKTAKING AND STORAGE OF MUSEUM COLLECTION ITEMS

3.1 This PART examines stocktaking and storage of museum collection items by LCSD, focusing on the following issues:

- (a) stocktaking of museum collection items (paras. 3.2 to 3.15); and
- (b) storage of museum collection items (paras. 3.16 to 3.35).

Stocktaking of museum collection items

3.2 According to the operation manuals of the museums, LCSD will conduct stocktaking for all collection items on a cyclical basis (i.e. regular stocktaking) and surprise checking for selected collection items. The procedures and requirements of regular stocktaking and surprise checking are stated in the operation manuals of individual museums (Note 29). Audit examined the regular stocktaking and surprise checking records in the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Film Archive and found room for improvement (see paras. 3.3 to 3.13).

Need to ensure completion of regular stocktaking within the required timeframe

3.3 According to the operation manual of the Hong Kong Museum of History:

Note 29: *In the 2006 Audit Review (see para. 1.13), Audit found that there were no written procedures on stocktaking and surprise checking in LCSD museums and the annual stocktaking did not cover collection items pending accession, and recommended that each LCSD museum should have proper stocktaking and surprise checking procedures for collection items and items pending accession. In response to the audit recommendation, LCSD has included procedures and requirements on regular stocktaking and surprise checking for collection items and items pending accession in the operation manuals of individual museums.*

Stocktaking and storage of museum collection items

- (a) for collection items presented in permanent exhibitions, items of special heritage value (Note 30) and items pending accession, regular stocktaking will be conducted annually;
- (b) for collection items stored in special storerooms (Note 31), regular stocktaking will be conducted biennially (i.e. each item will undergo the stocktaking process once in 2 years); and
- (c) for other collection items with accession completed, regular stocktaking will be conducted in a 10-year cycle (i.e. each item will undergo the stocktaking process once in 10 years).

3.4 Audit examined the regular stocktaking records on collection items stored in special storerooms (see para. 3.3(b)) and other items with accession completed (see para. 3.3(c)) and noted that:

- (a) for 16,010 items stored in special storerooms, the 2-year stocktaking cycle last commenced in July 2018 and had been scheduled for completion in June 2020. According to LCSD, the stocktaking of these items was completed in September 2020, slightly behind the scheduled completion date because of the outbreak of COVID-19; and
- (b) for 112,429 other items with accession completed, the 10-year stocktaking cycle last commenced in April 2011 and had been scheduled for completion in March 2021. However, as at 30 April 2020, only 28,395 (25%) of the 112,429 items had the regular stocktaking process completed (Note 32).

Note 30: *Collection items of special heritage value include items that the community intends to preserve because of their cultural or historic importance.*

Note 31: *Collection items stored in special storerooms include numismatics, philatelic items, silverwares and memorabilia.*

Note 32: *Between April 2011 and May 2016, the 10-year stocktaking cycle for other items with accession completed covered collection items stored in special storerooms. Since June 2016, the stocktaking cycle for items stored in special storerooms has been revised from 10 to 2 years.*

3.5 As at 30 April 2020, 112,429 collection items in the Hong Kong Museum of History were subject to the 10-year stocktaking cycle. However, only 28,395 (25%) of the items had the regular stocktaking process completed. As the 10-year stocktaking cycle will end shortly in March 2021 and the regular stocktaking process of 84,034 (75%) collection items has yet to be completed, Audit considers that LCSD needs to review the progress of stocktaking of these items to ascertain whether it is practicable to complete the stocktaking within the 10-year cycle ending in March 2021, and draw up a backup plan if necessary.

Room for improving efficiency in regular stocktaking exercises

3.6 Collection items in the Hong Kong Film Archive are categorised into film items (Note 33), film-related items (Note 34) and film-related reference items (Note 35). As at 31 December 2019, there were 1,305,368 collection items in the Hong Kong Film Archive (see Table 2 in para. 1.6). According to LCSD, the 1,305,368 items comprised 611,566 items with accession completed and 693,802 items pending accession. Table 8 shows the regular stocktaking requirements for these items as stated in the Hong Kong Film Archive operation manual.

Note 33: *A film item refers to a film title. According to LCSD, one film title comprises different numbers of film elements and film reels. Each film title is considered as a collection item.*

Note 34: *A film-related item refers to an item relating to the film industry and film culture other than film reel. Examples of film-related items are posters, photographs, scripts, film festival catalogues, newspaper cuttings, biographies, books and periodicals.*

Note 35: *Film-related reference item refers to reference material relating to the film industry and film culture. They may not be directly relating to a particular film title. Examples of film-related reference items are books, periodicals, graphics, videos, and production of the Hong Kong Film Archive including videos of oral history interviews and seminars.*

Stocktaking and storage of museum collection items

Table 8

**Regular stocktaking requirements for collection items
in the Hong Kong Film Archive
(December 2019)**

Collection item		Regular stocktaking cycle	Number of items as at 31 December 2019	
Accession completed	Film items	All items checked in 2.5 years	6,214	611,566
	Film-related items	All items checked in 18 years	455,801	
	Film-related reference items	N.A. (Note)	149,551	
Pending accession	Film items	All items checked annually	7,902	693,802
	Film-related items	All items checked annually	685,900	
	Film-related reference items	N.A. (Note)	—	
Total			1,305,368	

Source: Audit analysis of LCSD records

Note: No regular stocktaking requirement on film-related reference items is stated in the operation manual (see para. 3.9).

3.7 Audit examined the regular stocktaking records on collection items with accession completed in the Hong Kong Film Archive and found that:

Stocktaking and storage of museum collection items

- (a) for film items:
 - (i) the last stocktaking cycle commenced in November 2011 (Note 36). Stocktaking of all film items was completed in November 2013;
 - (ii) according to the first interim stocktaking report issued in December 2013, 741 film reels had been identified with irregularities (Note 37) and 63 film reels had been missing. Eight interim stocktaking reports were then issued between December 2013 and November 2016 to update the progress of rectification. As of September 2017, all irregularities had been rectified and all missing items had been found; and
 - (iii) according to LCSD, the stocktaking cycle is considered completed when all irregularities identified are rectified and the missing items are found. In July 2020, a new stocktaking cycle commenced (Note 38); and

- (b) for film-related items:
 - (i) the current stocktaking cycle commenced in April 2008 for completion in March 2026. Up to 31 December 2019, of the 455,801 film-related items (see Table 8 in para. 3.6), 25,120 (5.5%) had stocktaking completed; and
 - (ii) stocktaking had been suspended between June 2014 and November 2015 due to massive relocation of collection items to a new off-site store, and between October 2016 and June 2017 due to staff redeployment.

Note 36: *The stocktaking cycle for film items was 11 years. The last stocktaking cycle commenced in 2011 and was scheduled for completion in 2022. Since 2019, the stocktaking cycle for film items has been revised from 11 to 2.5 years.*

Note 37: *Examples of irregularities identified were typographical errors in item identification numbers, incorrect locations of items and outdated records.*

Note 38: *According to LCSD, the work plan for the new stocktaking cycle was affected by the outbreak of COVID-19.*

Stocktaking and storage of museum collection items

3.8 In Audit's view, it was less than satisfactory that:

- (a) for film items:
 - (i) after the issue of the first interim stocktaking report in December 2013, it took 45 months (from December 2013 to September 2017) to rectify all irregularities and find all missing items (see para. 3.7(a)(i) and (ii)); and
 - (ii) in the 34-month period between September 2017 and June 2020, no stocktaking had been conducted (see para. 3.7(a)(iii)); and
- (b) for film-related items, only 25,120 (5.5%) of the 455,801 items had stocktaking completed as at 31 December 2019, more than 11 years since the cycle commenced in April 2008. Moreover, stocktaking had been suspended on two occasions (totalled 25 months) during the 11 years (see para. 3.7(b)).

To ensure the completeness of records and the physical existence of collection items, Audit considers that LCS D needs to closely monitor the progress of regular stocktaking of film items and film-related items and take measures to ensure that stocktaking is completed within the timeframe as stated in the operation manual in future. In particular, for film-related items, LCS D needs to review the progress of regular stocktaking of the current cycle and draw up a timetable with a view to completing the stocktaking process within the cycle.

Need to improve comprehensiveness of requirements on regular stocktaking

3.9 As shown in Table 8 in paragraph 3.6, there was no stocktaking requirement on film-related reference items in the operation manual of the Hong Kong Film Archive. As at 31 December 2019, of the 1,305,368 collection items in the Hong Kong Film Archive, 149,551 (11%) items were film-related reference items. In the absence of regular stocktaking of these items, there is a risk about the physical existence of the items and completeness of the collection records. LCS D needs to consider conducting regular stocktaking on these items.

Need to conduct adequate surprise checking on collection items

- 3.10 According to the operation manual of the Hong Kong Film Archive:
- (a) surprise checking shall be conducted monthly on a total of 152 film items (i.e. 1,063 film elements and film reels — see Note 33 to para. 3.6) and 1,067 film-related items in a year (i.e. approximately 89 film elements and film reels and 89 film-related items per month) (Note 39);
 - (b) 504 film elements and film reels and 144 film-related items shall be inspected by inspection officers in a year;
 - (c) 8,250 film elements and film reels and 15,246 film-related items would be handled in daily operation in a year; and
 - (d) counting the items checked by inspection officers (see (b) above) and the items handled during daily operation (see (c) above), a total of 8,754 (8,250 + 504) film elements and film reels and 15,390 (15,246 + 144) film-related items shall be checked annually. The total number of items to be checked would exceed the required number as stated in (a) above.

3.11 In Audit's view, the objective of surprise checking of collection items is to provide an independent counter-checking on the collection items by persons not directly involved in routine collection management. Counting items handled during daily operation, deeming them as samples that had already been subjected to surprise checking (see para. 3.10(d)) is not in line with the surprise-checking objective. Audit considers that LCSD needs to revise the operation manual of the Hong Kong Film Archive to specify adequate number of collection items to be checked in surprise checking.

Note 39: *The number of collection items for surprise checking is calculated by a statistical formula stated in the operation manual based on the number of collection items as of September 2019.*

Stocktaking and storage of museum collection items

Need to increase frequency of stocktaking for valuable items

3.12 LCSD museums conduct stocktaking of their collection items on a cyclical basis (see para. 3.2). Depending on monetary values, historical values and location of the collection items, some LCSD museums will conduct stocktaking on some of their collection items more frequently, for example:

- (a) for the Hong Kong Museum of History, regular stocktaking will be conducted annually for collection items presented in permanent exhibitions, items of special heritage value and items pending accession (see para. 3.3(a)), and biennially for collection items stored in special storerooms (see para. 3.3(b)); and
- (b) for the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Museum of Art, regular stocktaking will be conducted annually for collection items with value of \$100,000 or above.

3.13 Audit noted that for the Hong Kong Film Archive, regular stocktaking will only be conducted in 2.5-year cycle and 18-year cycle for film items and film-related items respectively (see Table 8 in para. 3.6). The practice of conducting more frequent regular stocktaking on collection items with higher monetary or historical value was not adopted as in the case of the Hong Kong Museum of History, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Museum of Art (see para. 3.12(a) and (b)). To ensure the safe custody of collection items with higher monetary or historical value in the Hong Kong Film Archive, Audit considers that LCSD needs to review the frequency of stocktaking for these items.

Audit recommendations

3.14 **Audit has recommended that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:**

- (a) **review the progress of regular stocktaking of collection items in the Hong Kong Museum of History to ascertain whether it is practicable to complete the stocktaking within the 10-year cycle ending in March 2021, and draw up a backup plan if necessary;**

- (b) for the Hong Kong Film Archive:**
 - (i) closely monitor the progress of regular stocktaking of film items and film-related items, and take measures to ensure that stocktaking is completed within the timeframe as stated in the operation manual in future;**
 - (ii) for film-related items, review the progress of regular stocktaking of the current cycle and draw up a timetable with a view to completing the stocktaking process within the cycle;**
 - (iii) consider conducting regular stocktaking on film-related reference items;**
 - (iv) revise the operation manual to specify adequate number of collection items to be checked in surprise checking; and**
 - (v) review the frequency of regular stocktaking for collection items with higher monetary or historical value; and**
- (c) review the practices of regular stocktaking and surprise checking in other LCSD museums (i.e. other than the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Film Archive), look into any similar irregularities as identified in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.13, and take remedial measures as necessary.**

Response from the Government

3.15 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) the Hong Kong Museum of History has reviewed the progress of stocktaking of collection items and has found that the work progress was affected by unforeseeable factors and the epidemic. The museum will expedite the stocktaking process. Planned measures include:**
 - (i) reviewing and streamlining the process to improve efficiency;**

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- (ii) allocating temporary additional manpower to expedite the stocktaking exercises;
 - (iii) closely monitoring the stocktaking exercises by reporting the progress to Head of Museum on a monthly basis; and
 - (iv) drawing up a backup plan where necessary;
- (b) the Hong Kong Film Archive will put in place enhanced measures to closely monitor the progress of the stocktaking exercises for film items and film-related items to ensure that stocktaking will be completed within the timeframe as stated in the operation manual. Planned measures include:
 - (i) reviewing and streamlining the process to improve efficiency; and
 - (ii) submitting regular stocktaking and irregularities reports on a monthly basis;
- (c) the Hong Kong Film Archive has reviewed the progress of stocktaking for film-related items and has planned to draw up a timetable and put in place enhanced measures with a view to completing the current stocktaking exercise in 2026 in accordance with the 18-year cycle. Planned measures include:
 - (i) securing temporary additional manpower to expedite the stocktaking exercises and to shorten the duration required;
 - (ii) exploring other possibilities of expediting like outsourcing the stocktaking exercises to audit firms or other service providers where appropriate and practicable; and
 - (iii) closely monitoring the stocktaking exercises by submitting stocktaking and irregularities reports to the section head on a monthly basis;
- (d) the Hong Kong Film Archive has planned to:

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- (i) conduct regular stocktaking exercises on film-related reference items starting from 2021;
 - (ii) revise the operation manual to specify adequate number of collection items to be included in the surprise checking starting from 2021; and
 - (iii) review the frequency of stocktaking to include collection items of higher monetary and historical values making reference to the practice of museums if applicable starting from 2021; and
- (e) LCSD has planned to review the practices of regular stocktaking and surprise checking for all museums starting from 2021, and take remedial measures where necessary.

Storage of museum collection items

3.16 As of September 2020, LCSD museums maintained a total storage space of 16,090 m² for storing collection items, including 6,100 m² (38%) in storerooms inside museums and 9,990 m² (62%) in off-site stores (see para. 1.8). Storage of collection items under appropriate condition is essential to maintain the items in a stable condition, and avoid damage and deterioration. Audit examined the storage of collection items in the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Film Archive and found room for improvement (see paras. 3.17 to 3.32).

Need to keep temperature and relative humidity of off-site stores within appropriate ranges

3.17 Collection items of the Hong Kong Museum of History are stored in storerooms inside the museum or in off-site stores. According to LCSD, it was not necessary to store all museum collection items in purpose-built storerooms for the following reasons:

- (a) some collection items were not affected by temperature and humidity and could be stored in off-site stores; and

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- (b) special precautionary measures such as creation of microclimate would be provided for those items in off-site storerooms if necessary.

3.18 LCSD has formulated general environment requirements for purpose-built storerooms (with 24-hour temperature and humidity control) to keep all kinds of collection items under appropriate conditions as follows:

- (a) for storage of general collection items, temperature shall be maintained at 20 degree Celsius (°C) to 25 °C and relative humidity at 50% to 60%;
- (b) for storage of metallic items, relative humidity shall be maintained at 30% to 40%; and
- (c) for storage of items sensitive to temperature and humidity, special attention is required (e.g. historical photographs will be packed with acid-free or low alkaline paper before putting inside archival boxes).

3.19 For off-site stores, which were not purpose-built for storing collection items, due to limitations in provision of equipment and utilities, it may not be feasible to provide 24-hour temperature and humidity control. As of September 2020, of the four off-site stores maintained by the Hong Kong Museum of History, two were not provided with 24-hour temperature and humidity control (Store A and Store B). Audit noted that the building chiller system of Store A could not support 24-hour air-conditioning. On 10 July 2020, Audit conducted a site visit to Store A and further noted that:

- (a) there were two storerooms in Store A. Collection items stored in the storerooms included furniture, models, appliances for household use and industrial products;
- (b) two portable dehumidifiers were placed in each room and LCSD would switch on the dehumidifiers as and when necessary; and
- (c) the room temperature and relative humidity inside the two storerooms measured by Audit were 31.2 °C and 66%, and 31.3 °C and 75% respectively. Outdoor temperature and relative humidity were 31.2 °C and 72%.

Stocktaking and storage of museum collection items

3.20 LCSD provided to Audit the temperature and relative humidity records of the two storerooms of Store A between 1 January 2020 and 26 August 2020. Table 9 shows the monthly maximum and minimum temperature and relative humidity in the two storerooms for the period.

Table 9

**Monthly maximum and minimum temperature and relative humidity
recorded in the two storerooms of Store A
(1 January 2020 to 26 August 2020)**

Month	Temperature		Relative humidity	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
January 2020 (Note)	16 °C	22 °C	51 %	74 %
February 2020	17 °C	26 °C	45 %	90 %
March 2020	20 °C	26 °C	61 %	88 %
April 2020	20 °C	27 °C	45 %	80 %
May 2020	25 °C	30 °C	67 %	85 %
June 2020	22 °C	32 °C	61 %	81 %
July 2020	23 °C	34 °C	59 %	78 %
August 2020 (up to 26 August)	27 °C	33 °C	63 %	77 %

Source: Audit analysis of LCSD records

Note: According to LCSD, for January 2020, data on temperature and relative humidity were retrieved for one storeroom only.

Remarks: LCSD has monitored the temperature and relative humidity in the two storerooms of Store A since February 2018 by two data loggers (one in each room) and retrieved the data to monitor the climatic conditions of the storerooms.

3.21 According to LCSD, collection items kept in stores not purpose-built for storage are carefully selected according to the material nature. They are generally items that are robust and not sensitive to temperature and relative humidity fluctuations. In addition, LCSD will deploy other effective means such as creation of microclimate to keep collection items in good condition if it is deemed necessary.

Stocktaking and storage of museum collection items

However, Audit noted that LCSD had not laid down guidelines on collection items stored in stores not purpose-built. In Audit's view, storage of collection items under appropriate condition is essential to maintain the items in a stable condition, and avoid damage and deterioration (see para. 3.16). Audit considers that, for off-site stores of the Hong Kong Museum of History, LCSD needs to lay down guidelines on suitable storage of collection items.

Need to expedite relocation of collection items from an off-site store

3.22 One of the stores (Store C) maintained by the Hong Kong Museum of History was located in an aged building. Audit noted that the conditions of the aged building used as Store C were causing concerns as summarised below:

- (a) since 2011, LCSD had been seeking assistance and advice from the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) in monitoring the structural condition of the building to facilitate LCSD's plan in relocation of collection items;
- (b) in September 2011, after conducting site inspections, ArchSD advised LCSD that there should not be any increase in imposed loading due to the lack of structural drawings of the building and it was necessary to reduce the existing imposed floor loading for areas with large floor deflections. Subsequent surveys and inspections had indicated that the condition of the building was fair with no significant defects identified;
- (c) in March 2017, after a joint site visit, ArchSD informed LCSD that using the building as Store C was not recommended and reiterated that additional imposed loading, if any, should be removed despite that there was no imminent danger;
- (d) in June 2017, ArchSD advised LCSD that expert advice might be required on the structural assessment methodology and standard in order to ascertain the loading capacity of Store C. According to ArchSD, the process in formulating structural appraisal proposal, carrying out actual site tests/laboratory tests and drafting of appraisal reports for such an aged building would take considerable time; and

Stocktaking and storage of museum collection items

- (e) in March 2019, ArchSD recommended LCSD to consider strengthening the timber floor of the building as the long-term solution instead of merely ascertaining the loading capacity if the building would continue to be used as stores. According to ArchSD, the floor strengthening works might also take some time as a detailed structural survey to review the existing conditions and a feasibility study of the strengthening works were required.

3.23 On 3 July 2020, Audit conducted a site visit to Store C and noted that:

- (a) apart from one vacant room on the first floor, all other rooms were used as storage; and
- (b) defects were noted in various locations in the building (see an example in Photograph 4).

Audit also noted that, up to September 2020, no floor-strengthening works for Store C (see para. 3.22(e)) had been conducted.

Photograph 4

Damaged floor on ground floor of Store C (July 2020)



Source: Photograph taken by Audit on 3 July 2020

Stocktaking and storage of museum collection items

3.24 ArchSD advised LCSD in March 2017 that using the aged building as Store C was not recommended (see para. 3.22(c)). Audit noted that since 2017, LCSD had been looking for suitable storage space to relocate the collection items stored in Store C. In September 2020, LCSD informed Audit that a space was identified to relocate part of the collection items stored in Store C and relocation was scheduled to commence in the first quarter of 2021. Furthermore, LCSD would continue to identify additional space to relocate the remaining collection items stored in Store C.

3.25 Audit considers that LCSD needs to relocate the collection items stored in Store C as soon as practicable and, in collaboration with ArchSD, continue to closely monitor the structural condition of the aged building and take prompt actions to strengthen the structure if the building would continue to be used as stores and repair any defects identified.

Need to ensure appropriate temperature and relative humidity in storerooms inside museums

3.26 There are six storerooms with a total area of 1,228 m² in the Hong Kong Film Archive building for storage of collection items. According to LCSD, three (Storerooms A, B and C) of the six storerooms were purpose-built for storage and the remaining three (Storerooms D, E and F) were not purpose-built for storage but subsequently changed to be used as temporary storage. LCSD has laid down reference ranges of temperature and relative humidity of the storerooms for storing the collection items. It maintains records of the temperature and relative humidity of the six storerooms by wireless environmental monitoring sensors and retrieves the data on a continuous basis to monitor the climatic conditions of the storerooms. Audit examined the temperature and relative humidity records of the six storerooms between 1 January 2019 and 1 June 2020 (totalled 75 weeks) and found that the temperature and relative humidity of the storerooms were out of the reference ranges in 69% and 68% of the time respectively (see Table 10).

Stocktaking and storage of museum collection items

Table 10

**Temperature and relative humidity recorded
in the storerooms of the Hong Kong Film Archive
(75 weeks between 1 January 2019 and 1 June 2020)**

Storeroom	Temperature		Relative humidity			
	Reference range	Number of weeks where temperature was out of the reference range		Reference range	Number of weeks where relative humidity was out of the reference range	
		(No.)	(%)		(No.)	(%)
A	3 °C to 5 °C	75	100%	30% to 35%	33	44%
B		75	100%		63	84%
C		75	100%		64	85%
D	20 °C to 24 °C	21	28%	50% to 60%	62	83%
E		24	32%		41	55%
F		40	53%		43	57%
Overall		310	69%	Overall	306	68%

Source: Audit analysis of LCSD records

3.27 Audit noted that in the 75-week period, for Storerooms A, B and C, the recorded temperature and relative humidity ranged from 7 °C to 16 °C and 19% to 54%, and for Storerooms D, E and F, the recorded temperature and relative humidity ranged from 18 °C to 23 °C and 29% to 74%. Audit considers that LCSD needs to take measures to maintain the temperature and relative humidity in the storerooms of the Hong Kong Film Archive within the reference ranges.

Need to expedite development of the Heritage Conservation and Resource Centre

3.28 In March 2005, LCSD identified a site in Tuen Mun for the development of the Central Museum Collection Repository (later renamed Heritage Conservation and Resource Centre — HCRC) to alleviate the shortage of museum storage space. In the 2006 Audit Review (see para. 1.13), Audit recommended LCSD to expedite action to develop HCRC. According to LCSD:

- (a) there was a genuine need to construct HCRC, not only to address the current serious shortfall, but to find a solution to the anticipated growth of collections in future;
- (b) the proposed HCRC would involve the construction of an eight-storey purpose-equipped building in Tuen Mun; and
- (c) subject to resource allocation, LCSD planned to have HCRC completed by 2010.

3.29 In March 2009, LCSD found that the proposed site in Tuen Mun was not suitable for HCRC development due to technical constraints (e.g. limitation on building height) and its remote location (i.e. not easily accessible by public transport). Alternatively, another site in Tin Shui Wai was identified to develop HCRC. In April 2009, LCSD consulted the Yuen Long District Council on the HCRC proposal. The Yuen Long District Council proposed to incorporate more public space and facilities accessible by the public in the project.

3.30 Since April 2009, LCSD has been liaising with the relevant government bureaux and departments and stakeholders on the inclusion of public facilities in the project. In January 2013, the District Facilities Management Committee of the Yuen Long District Council supported the HCRC proposal in principle. From 2014 to 2016, LCSD had worked with relevant government bureaux and departments in defining the scope of the project, studying its technical feasibility, as well as seeking the necessary resources under the relevant internal resource allocation exercises for implementing the proposed works project. In June 2018, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council (LegCo) approved a funding of \$89 million for the pre-construction consultancy services and site investigation works for the construction

of HCRC (Note 40), which was scheduled to complete in the second quarter of 2021 (Note 41).

3.31 In September 2019, the HCRC proposal was vetoed by the District Facilities Management Committee of the Yuen Long District Council. In October 2020, LCSD informed Audit that it would revise the HCRC proposal and submit the revised proposal to the Yuen Long District Council again in the first half of 2021.

3.32 It was less than satisfactory that development of HCRC had spent some 15 years (from 2005 to 2020) and was still in the pre-construction stage. According to LCSD, scattered storage of museum collection items at different off-site stores has created preservation and management problems, which pose risks of damage to the collection items. In fact, since the 2006 Audit Review, the number of collection items in LCSD museums has increased by 51%, from 1,055,456 items in December 2007 to 1,595,615 items in December 2019 (see para. 1.14). Given the areas for improvement identified in this audit review about off-site stores (see paras. 3.17 to 3.25), effective measures are needed to alleviate the shortcomings of off-site storage. In this regard, HCRC would be a potential long-term solution. Audit considers that LCSD needs to step up efforts to expedite the development of HCRC with a view to resolving the storage shortage problem as soon as practicable.

Audit recommendations

3.33 **Audit has recommended that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:**

Note 40: *According to the funding paper submitted to LegCo in April 2018, the proposed HCRC will be a dedicated storage and conservation facility for preserving the collections pertaining to LCSD museums and the Art Promotion Office (see Note 11 to para. 1.12) and will also provide facilities for education, exhibition and scholarly activities.*

Note 41: *In April 2019, an agreement for architectural, structural, building services and landscape consultancy services was awarded (at a lump sum fee of \$47.2 million). In May 2020, another agreement for quantity surveying consultancy services was awarded (at a lump sum fee of \$9.2 million).*

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- (a) **for the off-site stores of the Hong Kong Museum of History, lay down guidelines on suitable storage of collection items;**
- (b) **for the store located in the aged building:**
 - (i) **relocate the collection items stored in the aged building as soon as practicable; and**
 - (ii) **in collaboration with the Director of Architectural Services, continue to closely monitor the structural condition of the aged building, and take prompt actions to strengthen the structure if the building would continue to be used as stores and repair any defects identified;**
- (c) **take measures to maintain the temperature and relative humidity in the storerooms of the Hong Kong Film Archive within the reference ranges;**
- (d) **review the conditions of storerooms inside museums and off-site stores of other LCSD museums (i.e. other than the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Film Archive), look into any similar irregularities as identified in paragraphs 3.17 to 3.27, and take remedial measures as necessary; and**
- (e) **step up efforts to expedite the development of HCRC.**

Response from the Government

3.34 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) LCSD has planned to enhance the existing practice of selecting suitable items to be stored at temporary off-site storerooms by laying down the selection criteria in the form of a guideline by late 2021;
- (b) LCSD has been soliciting and will continue to solicit the Government Property Agency's assistance in identifying additional space to relocate the remaining collection items stored in the aged building. Another site in Tuen

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Mun was identified in mid-September 2020. Once the site is confirmed suitable, LCSD will follow up closely with the Government Property Agency and ArchSD on the leasing and fitting-out arrangements with a target to have the site ready for the relocation of the remaining collection items by around early 2022;

- (c) LCSD has been following up and will continue to follow up closely with ArchSD and the related government bureaux and departments to expedite the structural enhancement works of the aged building;
- (d) the Hong Kong Film Archive has planned to overhaul the air-conditioning and dehumidification system by phases to maintain the temperature and relative humidity in the storerooms within the reference ranges. The first phase will be conducted in 2021. The Hong Kong Film Archive has also planned to conduct more frequent inspections to enhance monitoring and to rectify the situation where the conditions are not met as far as practicable;
- (e) LCSD has planned to review the conditions of purpose-built storerooms and temporary off-site stores starting from 2021, and take remedial measures where necessary; and
- (f) LCSD has been coordinating and will continue to coordinate with the different government bureaux and departments involved to secure support from the local district and to ensure the timely development of HCRC, taking into account the changes and additional facilities required by the local district that have to be incorporated into the project and to go through the necessary procedures required in modifying the nature and expanding the scope of the facility accordingly.

3.35 The Director of Architectural Services agrees with the audit recommendation in paragraph 3.33(b)(ii). She has said that ArchSD will continue to provide assistance and technical advice to LCSD in implementing this recommendation.

PART 4: OTHER RELATED ISSUES

4.1 This PART examines other issues relating to the management of museum collection items, focusing on the following areas:

- (a) enhancement of museum permanent exhibitions (paras. 4.2 to 4.14);
- (b) maintenance of museum exhibits and facilities (paras. 4.15 to 4.24); and
- (c) publication of information on museum collection items (paras. 4.25 to 4.30).

Enhancement of museum permanent exhibitions

4.2 Permanent exhibitions of individual museums contain collection items or exhibits of the subject matter of the museum which are essential and remain relevant during the entire time they are open to the public (see para. 1.5(a)). The exhibitions are usually fitted with facilities to support the presentation of the collection items and exhibits. These facilities include tailor-made showcases, specialised lighting and displaying equipment, and necessary flooring and electrical work. As of September 2020, there were a total of 49 permanent exhibitions in the LCSD museums (Note 42). Table 11 shows the number of permanent exhibitions in the LCSD museums. Appendix C shows the details of the 49 permanent exhibitions.

Note 42: *According to LCSD, as of September 2020, enhancement of 4 of the 49 permanent exhibitions were in progress and not open to public (including 2 in the Hong Kong Science Museum, 1 in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and 1 in the Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence). Furthermore, LCSD has been conducting enhancement for the 6 permanent exhibitions in the Sam Tung Uk Museum in phases for completion in 2021.*

Table 11

**Number of permanent exhibitions in LCSD museums
(September 2020)**

Museum	Number of permanent exhibitions
Hong Kong Museum of Art	7
Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware	3
Hong Kong Heritage Museum	6
Hong Kong Railway Museum	1
Sheung Yiu Folk Museum	1
Hong Kong Museum of History	1
Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum	2
Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery	1
Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence	1
Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum	1
Law Uk Folk Museum	1
Hong Kong Science Museum	15
Hong Kong Space Museum	2
Sam Tung Uk Museum	6
Hong Kong Film Archive	1
Total	49

Source: LCSD records

4.3 LCSD enhances permanent exhibitions in the museums at intervals to sustain the appeal to the public, cultivate a wider audience base and enhance the educational elements in their services. The enhancement includes expanding exhibition space, upgrading facilities, replacing outdated exhibits, updating and enhancing the contents in the light of new information or archival information surfaced through new researches, extending the scope of exhibitions and deploying latest technologies to enhance visitors' experience.

Other related issues

4.4 Collection items are presented in permanent exhibitions for appreciation by the public. It is therefore important that the enhancement of permanent exhibitions should be properly planned and executed to sustain their attractiveness.

Need for timely enhancement of permanent exhibitions

4.5 According to LCSD, in line with professional practice of museums worldwide, permanent exhibitions are often designed to last for 10 to 15 years for science-related museums (i.e. the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum) and 15 to 20 years for other museums. Table 12 summarises the number of years elapsed since the last enhancement for the 49 permanent exhibitions as of September 2020 (see details at Appendix C).

Table 12

**Number of years elapsed since the last enhancement
for 49 permanent exhibitions
(September 2020)**

Permanent exhibitions	Number of years elapsed since last enhancement	Number of permanent exhibitions	
2 science-related museums	15 years or less	7 (Note 1)	} 17
	More than 15 years	10	
13 other museums	20 years or less	25 (Note 2)	} 32
	More than 20 years	7	
Total		49	

Source: Audit analysis of LCSD records

Note 1: According to LCSD, the enhancement for 4 of the 7 permanent exhibitions was completed between 2016 and 2018.

Note 2: According to LCSD, the enhancement for 14 of the 25 permanent exhibitions was completed between 2016 and 2020 (up to September 2020).

4.6 Audit noted that as of September 2020:

- (a) 10 (59%) of the 17 permanent exhibitions in the 2 science-related museums had been operating for more than 15 years (more than 15 to 29 years). While enhancement for 1 of the 10 exhibitions was in progress, those for the remaining 9 exhibitions were under planning (see Appendix C). According to LCSD, it has replaced and upgraded the exhibits at intervals in these 9 permanent exhibitions; and
- (b) 7 (22%) of the 32 permanent exhibitions in 2 of the 13 other museums had been operating for more than 20 years (more than 20 to 33 years) and enhancement of the exhibitions was in progress (see Appendix C).

4.7 From time to time, there were public concerns on the attractiveness of permanent exhibitions and outdated exhibits and facilities (Note 43). In Audit's view, timely enhancement will sustain the appeal of the permanent exhibitions to the public and attract the public to visit the museums. Audit considers that LCSD needs to timely enhance the permanent exhibitions in the science-related museums and other museums.

Need to better monitor progress of enhancement for permanent exhibitions

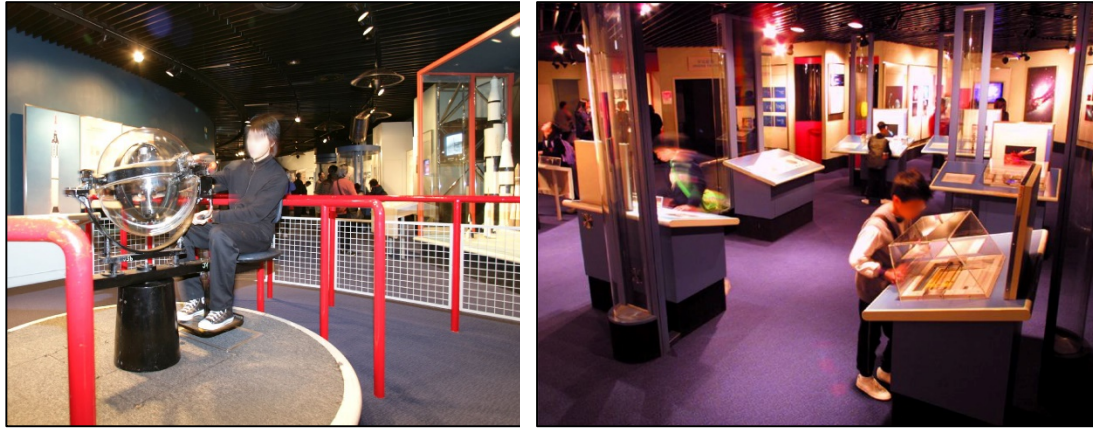
4.8 Audit examined the enhancement for 17 permanent exhibitions completed between 2015-16 and 2019-20 and found that the enhancement of 4 exhibitions was completed with delay of some 1 to 6 years (the enhancement of two exhibitions was delayed by 6 years and two was delayed by 1 year).

4.9 Audit selected the two permanent exhibitions with 6-year delay (Project A) for further examination. Project A involved the enhancement for two permanent exhibitions in the Hong Kong Space Museum (Photographs 5 and 6 show examples of the permanent exhibitions before and after enhancement respectively).

Note 43: *For example, in July 2013, a member of the Museum Advisory Panel (Science) (see Note 9 to para. 1.10) expressed concerns on the outdated exhibits in the Hong Kong Science Museum. In December 2018, in a meeting of the LegCo Panel on Home Affairs, some Members also expressed concerns on the outdated exhibits in the Hong Kong Science Museum.*

Photograph 5

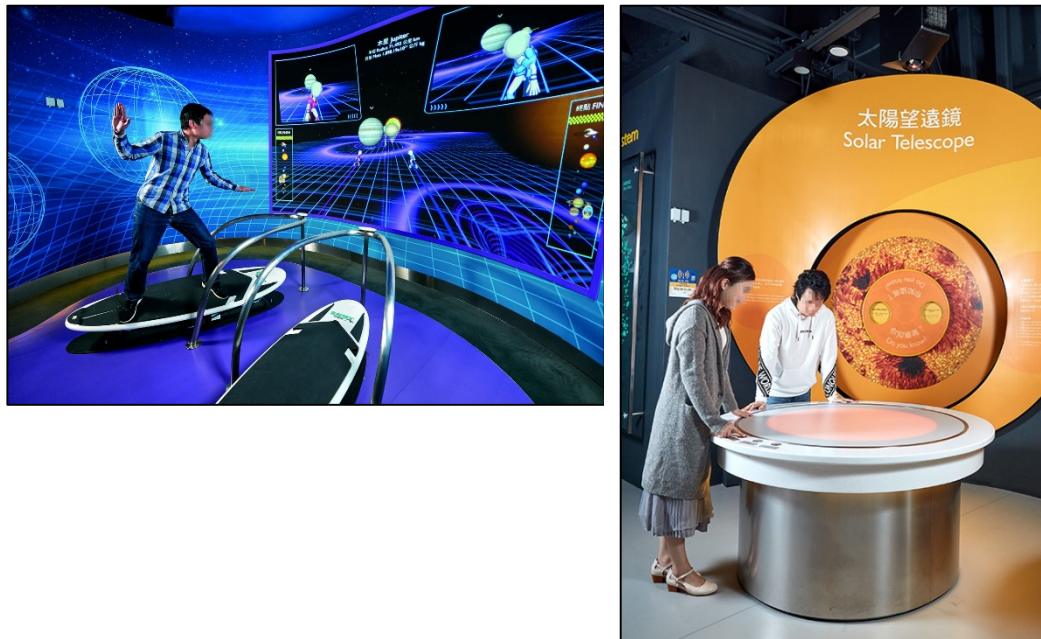
**The permanent exhibitions in
the Hong Kong Space Museum before enhancement**



Source: LCSD records

Photograph 6

**The permanent exhibitions in
the Hong Kong Space Museum after enhancement**



Source: LCSD records

4.10 In June 2008, the Finance Committee of LegCo approved \$32 million for the project which was scheduled for completion in December 2011. However, Project A was not completed until April 2018 (i.e. overall delay of 76 months) and the actual expenditure was \$31.9 million. Table 13 shows the target completion dates for various stages of Project A as stated in the funding paper submitted to LegCo in May 2008 and the actual completion dates.

Table 13

**Target and actual completion dates of Project A
(September 2008 to April 2018)**

Item	Description	Target completion date	Actual completion date
1.	Research on topics and exhibits	September 2008	June 2010
2.	Tendering for design	June 2009	August 2012
3.	Conceptual design and exhibit prototyping (Note 1)	March 2010	March 2014
4.	Detailed design (Note 1)		
5.	Tendering for exhibit fabrication	December 2010	July 2015
6.	Exhibits fabrication (Note 2)	June 2011	April 2018
7.	Dismantling of outdated exhibits and installation of exhibits (Note 2)	December 2011	
Overall delay (December 2011 to April 2018)			76 months (Note 3)

Source: Audit analysis of LCSD records

Note 1: In August 2012, LCSD engaged a contractor for exhibit design services including conceptual design, exhibit prototyping, exhibit detailed design, and project management for exhibits fabrications under a contract. The contract was completed in April 2018 and the total contract expenditure was \$4.8 million.

Note 2: In July 2015, LCSD engaged another contractor for exhibits fabrication, dismantling of outdated exhibits and installation of exhibits under another contract. The contract was completed in April 2018 and the total contract expenditure was \$15 million.

Note 3: The exhibitions were closed for the enhancement from October 2015 to April 2018 (30 months).

Other related issues

4.11 Upon enquiry, LCSD informed Audit in August and September 2020 that Project A was delayed due to the following reasons:

- (a) ***Decision on themes of enhanced exhibitions.*** The last major enhancement of the Hong Kong Space Museum was completed in 1991. Since then, astronomy and space science had witnessed astounding progress. A significant amount of time was required to conduct research on themes and topics that were most up-to-date and appealing to the public for inclusion in the scope of enhancement. Some of these themes such as gravitational waves and Mars exploration were at the frontier of cutting-edge astronomical research and required careful study to explore their feasibility of presentation in the new exhibitions;
- (b) ***Preparation of specification for detailed design.*** Additional work was required to prepare the specification for detailed design for the tender document due to complexity of the project, including adoption of new interactive and displaying technology to present complicated science concepts, consideration of professional museum standards on safety, durability and maintenance requirement, and the design of new exhibits to fit in the ovoid-shaped exhibition galleries;
- (c) ***Rectification of building defects.*** After dismantling the outdated exhibits (which were fabricated some 30 years ago), LCSD found a large number of unforeseeable building defects in the galleries. The defects included cracks and bulges on wall surface, loosening wall finishing and exposing structural steel structures. To ensure building safety, structural repair and maintenance works had been conducted immediately. LCSD had also taken the opportunity to refurbish the fire services system and other building services facilities to meet the layout of the new exhibits; and
- (d) ***Fabrication and installation of new exhibits.*** Many exhibits in the enhanced exhibitions were tailor-made to achieve specific objectives and effects. The fabrication and installation of these exhibits required technical skills such as precise engineering controls, slick interactive interfaces and highly accurate mechanical systems. LCSD had encountered challenges in production, such as to develop suitable technologies to fabricate and install the new exhibits, and to check and test the exhibits to ensure that they were safe and function properly for public use.

4.12 In view of the fact that a number of enhancement projects had been planned for various LCSD museums, in April 2014, LCSD established a steering committee chaired by a Deputy Director of LCSD to monitor the progress of enhancement of permanent exhibitions (including Project A). However, when the steering committee was established, Project A had already been delayed for 28 months. In Audit's view, it was less than satisfactory that Project A was delayed for a long time (more than 6 years). The delay in completion of enhancement deprived the public from enjoying museum services with updated technology and exhibits for a long period (the permanent exhibitions were closed for 30 months for the enhancement). Audit considers that LCSD needs to better monitor the progress of enhancement for permanent exhibitions in future and take prompt actions to ensure timely completion.

Audit recommendations

4.13 **Audit has recommended that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:**

- (a) **timely enhance the permanent exhibitions in the science-related museums and other museums; and**
- (b) **better monitor the progress of enhancement for permanent exhibitions in future and take prompt actions to ensure timely completion.**

Response from the Government

4.14 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) LCSD has been devoting and will continue to devote great efforts to enhance the permanent exhibitions in its museums. LCSD has planned to renew the permanent exhibitions and related exhibits according to their different nature which is in line with general practices of museums internationally, as follows:
 - (i) for large-scale permanent gallery revamping, LCSD will conduct it by phases. Revamping of all permanent galleries at the Hong Kong Museum of Art were recently completed in 2019. Plans in the

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coming years include the Hong Kong Science Museum, Hong Kong Museum of History, and Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence;

- (ii) for permanent exhibitions at small museums which are mostly folk museums with small exhibition areas in historic houses, display will be enhanced every now and then. For example, enhancement of the permanent exhibition of the Hong Kong Railway Museum and the Sheung Yiu Folk Museum was completed in 2019 and 2020 respectively; and that of the Sam Tung Uk Museum is in production, to be ready in 2021; and
 - (iii) other than large-scale renewal, LCSD will continue to change exhibits, refresh presentation or organise small-scale thematic displays in permanent exhibitions from time to time to update exhibition content and deploy new presentation strategies to provide new experience to visitors; and
- (b) LCSD has been stepping up and will continue to step up monitoring of the progress of enhancement for permanent exhibitions. For projects studied and mentioned in this audit review, additional time was required for unforeseeable structural enhancement of galleries for safety reasons. In future, LCSD will continue to closely monitor the progress of large-scale enhancement for permanent exhibitions. LCSD has already put in place a coordination meeting on capital works and renewal projects to review the progress and interface of all large-scale renewal projects. Additional measures will include:
- (i) drawing up a master work plan with check points and milestones for each project to facilitate monitoring of progress;
 - (ii) conducting quarterly meetings to identify potential problems and solutions related to the building structures and facilities of the galleries;
 - (iii) drawing up plans or innovative strategies to improve efficiency of enhancement works to shorten and stagger gallery closure period where possible;

- (iv) conducting quarterly reviews to identify risks that might potentially delay the project and be prepared for alternative solutions; and
- (v) coordinating necessary meetings with other government bureaux and departments to expedite problem-solving for unforeseeable problems encountered.

In addition, LCSD will continue to organise public programmes during the planning and works period to maintain public service and minimise impact to the public.

Maintenance of museum exhibits and facilities

4.15 Permanent exhibitions present museum collections and exhibits, and are fitted with facilities to support the presentation of the collection items and exhibits (see para. 4.2). Proper and timely maintenance of museum exhibits and facilities is essential for the smooth operation of a museum for the enjoyment of the public. On the other hand, improper maintenance of exhibits and facilities may affect attractiveness and safety of collection items being presented. Audit examined the maintenance of museum exhibits and facilities in the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum and found room for improvement (see paras. 4.16 to 4.22).

Scope for improvement in monitoring and conducting maintenance works

4.16 As at 30 June 2020, the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum had 524 exhibits and 134 exhibits respectively. LCSD has adopted a computer system, namely the Exhibition Maintenance Portal (EMP), to record and facilitate maintenance of exhibits and facilities in the two museums. According to the practice of the two museums:

- (a) LCSD museum staff conducts inspections on the exhibits and facilities in the museums every day. If repair/refurbishment of any exhibit and facility is required, the staff will place a repair order in EMP; and

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- (b) the maintenance staff will arrange the repair/refurbishment. The repair order will be marked completed in EMP if LCSD museum staff considers the repair/refurbishment satisfactory after checking.

4.17 According to EMP records, in 2019-20, 8,277 repair orders were completed. Table 14 shows the time taken to complete a repair order (from placement to completion of the order).

Table 14

**Time taken to complete repair order
(2019-20)**

Time taken to complete repair order	Number of repair order		
	The Hong Kong Science Museum	The Hong Kong Space Museum	Total
7 days or less	6,821	1,139	7,960 (96%)
8 to 30 days	140	20	160 (2%)
31 to 60 days	46	7	53 (0.6%)
61 to 90 days	30	2	32 (0.4%)
More than 90 days	68	4	72 (1%) (Note)
Total	7,105	1,172	8,277 (100%)

Source: Audit analysis of LCSD records

Note: 91 to 655 days had been taken to complete these 72 repair orders.

4.18 Audit attempted to ascertain the reasons for taking more than 90 days to complete each of the 72 repair orders and noted the following:

- (a) apart from EMP records (with the dates of placing and completion of the repair order), there were no other records showing the progress of 64 of the 72 repair orders; and

- (b) for the remaining 8 (72 minus 64) repair orders, there were records showing the procurements of related goods/services (e.g. replacement parts). Such procurements were only conducted three to eight months after the placing of the repair orders.

4.19 Upon Audit enquiry, in July and September 2020, LCSD informed Audit that for the 72 repair orders which took more than 90 days to complete:

- (a) 40 (55%) orders were related to minor defects of exhibits, such as missing of small units, scratches of wooden parts and detachment of painting on exhibit surface. The defects did not affect the operation of the exhibits. Maintenance works for them were arranged in batches for cost-effectiveness, and therefore longer time had been taken (i.e. 91 to 571 days);
- (b) 15 (21%) orders required replacement of missing parts of the exhibits. A longer time (i.e. 115 to 655 days) had been taken to order the replacement parts, which in some cases needed to be tailor-made. Nevertheless, operation of the exhibits had not been affected and the exhibits were open to the public during the period; and
- (c) 17 (24%) orders were related to the replacement of lighting facilities and stanchion. The defects did not affect the operation of the museum. Maintenance works for them were arranged in batches, and therefore longer time had been taken (i.e. 91 to 436 days).

4.20 Proper and timely maintenance of museum exhibits and facilities is essential for the smooth operation of a museum for the enjoyment of the public (see para. 4.15). Although LCSD completed most of the repair orders within 90 days in 2019-20, inadequate documentation on progress of repair orders was not conducive to effective monitoring of their progress. Audit considers that, in order to better monitor the progress, LCSD needs to improve documentation for repair orders in the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum.

Need to improve accuracy in calculating availability of interactive exhibits in the Hong Kong Space Museum

4.21 LCSD pledges to maintain at least 90% of the hands-on (i.e. interactive) exhibits in use at all times in the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum (Note 44). According to LCSD, EMP has been developed and used in the Hong Kong Science Museum since March 2017. The system was adopted in the Hong Kong Space Museum in mid-2018.

4.22 In addition to using EMP to record and facilitate maintenance of exhibits and facilities (see para. 4.16), EMP was also used in the Hong Kong Science Museum to monitor the availability of interactive exhibits. However, the related EMP functions were not applicable in the Hong Kong Space Museum. To assess the availability of interactive exhibits, the Hong Kong Space Museum has been using the total number of repair orders placed (for interactive and non-interactive exhibits) and half of the total number of exhibits in the calculation (based on the assumption that the number of interactive exhibits was approximately half of the total number of exhibits). Audit noted that as of June 2020, 76 (57%) of the 134 exhibits in the Hong Kong Space Museum (see para. 4.16) were interactive exhibits. However, the number of repair orders placed might not reflect the actual number of interactive exhibits available. Upon enquiry, in July 2020, LCSD informed Audit that LCSD was planning to enhance EMP and preparing the technical specification for the enhancement, which was scheduled for completion in September 2021. Upon completion of the enhancement, the availability of interactive exhibits could be monitored through the system. Audit considers that LCSD should closely monitor the progress of the EMP enhancement project to improve accuracy in calculating the availability of interactive exhibits in the Hong Kong Space Museum.

Audit recommendations

4.23 **Audit has recommended that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:**

- (a) **improve documentation for repair orders in the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum;**

Note 44: *According to LCSD, for the 5-year period from 2015-16 to 2019-20, the pledge had been 100% achieved.*

- (b) review the documentation and time taken for conducting maintenance works of museum exhibits and facilities in other LCSD museums (i.e. other than the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum), look into any similar irregularities as identified in paragraphs 4.16 to 4.20, and take remedial measures as necessary; and
- (c) closely monitor the progress of the EMP enhancement project to improve accuracy in calculating the availability of interactive exhibits in the Hong Kong Space Museum.

Response from the Government

4.24 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) LCSD has been closely monitoring and will continue to review the practices for conducting maintenance works of museum exhibits and facilities in all museums and take remedial measures where necessary; and
- (b) LCSD has already scheduled to upgrade EMP to improve accuracy of calculating the availability of interactive exhibits in 2021. The Hong Kong Space Museum will review the function of EMP more regularly on an annual basis and enhance its efficiency. Modification of the system will be carried out if discrepancies are identified. Monitoring of progress will be reviewed by the Exhibit Maintenance Task Force to be set up at the museum which is to meet on a quarterly basis.

Publication of information on museum collection items

Need to adopt a consistent approach in reporting number of museum collection items

4.25 According to LCSD's Controlling Officer's Report, as at 31 December 2019, there were 1,595,627 museum collection items (stated as number of objects in museums collections in the Controlling Officer's Report as a performance indicator). Of the 1,595,627 museum collection items, 1,595,615 items were in the LCSD museums and 12 items were in the Art Promotion Office (see Note 11 to

Other related issues

para. 1.12). Audit noted that the number of museum collection items reported in the Controlling Officer's Report included collection items pending accession in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum (including the two branch museums — see Table 2 in para. 1.6) and the Hong Kong Film Archive (Note 45). However, for the remaining 11 museums, only the number of collection items with accession completed were reported.

4.26 In Audit's view, the figures reported in the Controlling Officer's Report shall be in a clear and consistent manner. LCSD needs to review and adopt a consistent approach in reporting the number of museum collection items in the Controlling Officer's Report in future.

Need to improve public access of museum collection items on the museum websites

4.27 Since 2002, LCSD museums have been uploading information (e.g. photographs and descriptions) of selected collection items (Note 46) on individual museum websites to enhance public accessibility of museum collections. According to LCSD, as at 31 December 2019, 431,304 (27%) of the 1,595,615 collection items were accessible on the museum websites (see Table 15).

Note 45: *As at 31 December 2019, the numbers of collection items pending accession in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Film Archive were 24,417 items and 693,802 items respectively.*

Note 46: *According to LCSD, due to various reasons (e.g. copyright and agreement between the artists/donors and LCSD), not all collection items are available for public access on the museum websites. Apart from museum websites, the public could access the collection items through the public computers in the resource centres of respective museums.*

Table 15

**Number of collection items accessible on museum websites
(31 December 2019)**

Museum	Total collection items (No.)	Collection items accessible on museum websites	
		(No.)	(%)
Hong Kong Film Archive	1,305,368	387,072	30%
Hong Kong Museum of History (see Table 2 in para. 1.6)	146,067	20,350	14%
Hong Kong Heritage Museum (see Table 2 in para. 1.6)	126,655	6,441	5%
Hong Kong Museum of Art (see Table 2 in para. 1.6)	17,405	17,321	99.5%
Hong Kong Science Museum	103	103	100%
Hong Kong Space Museum	17	17	100%
Overall	1,595,615	431,304	27%

Source: Audit analysis of LCSD records

4.28 According to the five-year Corporate Business Plan of LCSD museums for 2017-22, LCSD would make use of the museum websites, along with other online platforms, to make the collection items more accessible to the public. In this connection, Audit considers that LCSD needs to step up efforts to increase the number of museum collection items accessible on the museum websites, in particular the websites of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Film Archive.

Audit recommendations

4.29 Audit has *recommended* that the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services should:

Other related issues

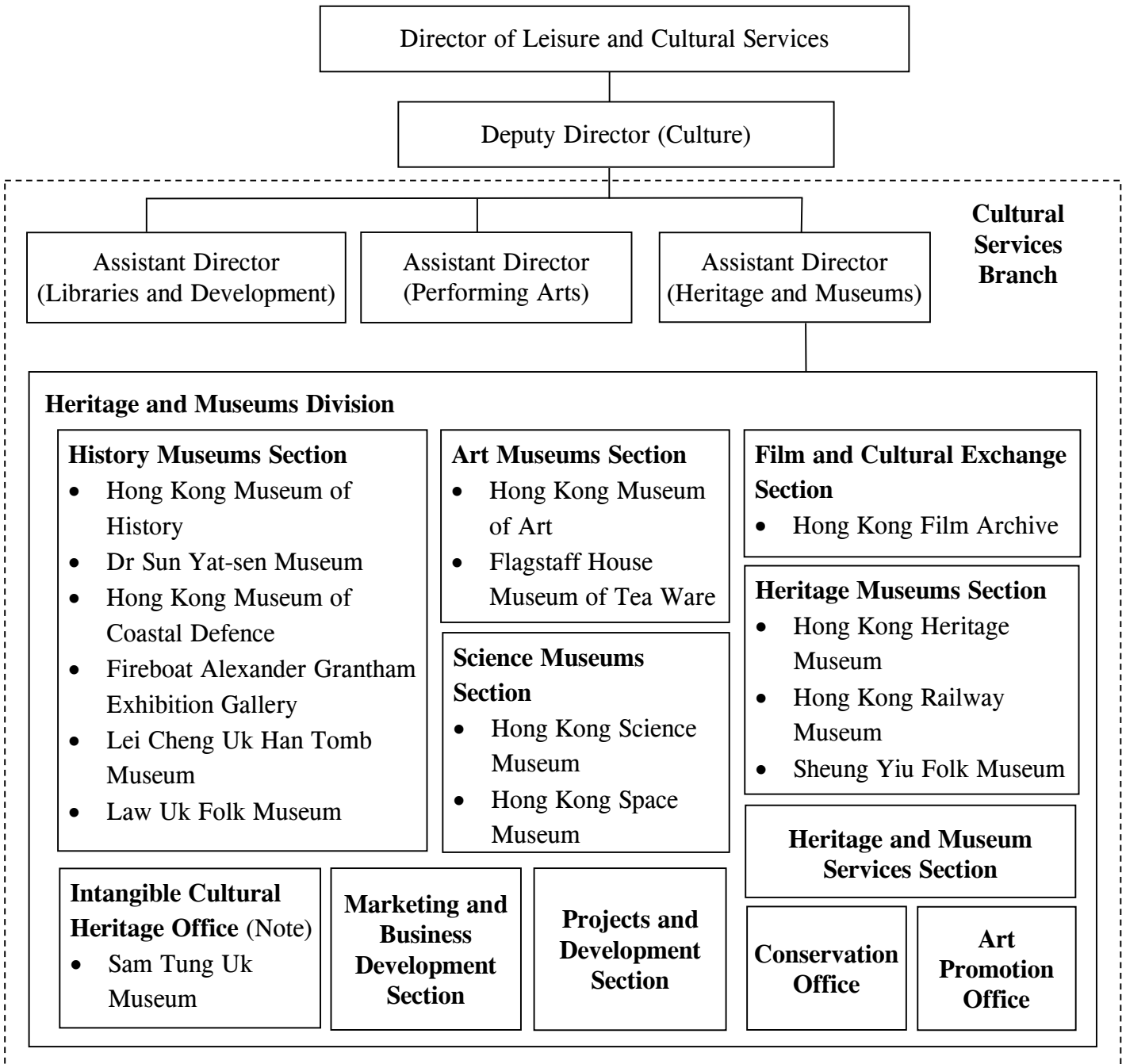
- (a) **review and adopt a consistent approach in reporting the number of museum collection items in the Controlling Officer's Report in future; and**
- (b) **step up efforts to increase the number of museum collection items accessible on the museum websites, in particular the websites of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Hong Kong Film Archive.**

Response from the Government

4.30 The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services generally agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) LCSD will align and adopt a consistent approach for all museums in reporting the number of objects in museum collections in the Controlling Officer's Report with effect from the next reporting cycle in 2021. The Hong Kong Film Archive will continue to follow its existing practice given its nature as an archive; and
- (b) LCSD has attached great importance to enabling greater virtual access to the museums' collections. For the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Film Archive with many collection items related to design and popular culture, the clearance of copyright and intellectual right issues are particularly complicated. LCSD museums will:
 - (i) continue to make effort in uploading collection items without copyright or intellectual property right issue onto their websites as far as practicable;
 - (ii) continue to encourage donors to grant the right for them to reproduce and upload the collection items onto their websites for public access where possible; and
 - (iii) increase number of collections available for digital viewing at the museums' resource centres as an alternative means of public access. For instance, 43% of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum's collection items are available for digital viewing at its resource centre.

**Leisure and Cultural Services Department:
 Organisation chart (extract)
 (31 March 2020)**



Source: LCSD records

Note: Apart from management of the Sam Tung Uk Museum, the Intangible Cultural Heritage Office is also responsible for the identification, documentation, research, preservation, promotion and transmission of intangible cultural heritage.

Collection policies of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department museums

1. The Hong Kong Museum of Art and one branch museum

The museum emphasises on the acquisition of Hong Kong art through donations and purchases with a view to building up its Hong Kong art collection to reflect the development and cultural identity of local artists as well as their accomplishments. Other collections which the Museum wishes to develop include Historical Pictures, Chinese Antiquities, Chinese Fine Art, Paintings and Calligraphies, with a focus on objects related to Guangdong and South China.

2. Hong Kong Museum of History and five branch museums

The museum aims to collect cultural objects which are closely related to the history of Hong Kong and the South China area, and has made strenuous effort in building up the collection through donations and purchases. Its collection is classified into five major categories: natural history, local history, ethnography, coastal defence and military history, as well as Dr Sun Yat-sen and modern Chinese history, comprising a wide range of items from historical photographs, philatelic objects to farming implements and military objects.

3. Hong Kong Heritage Museum and two branch museums

The museum is dedicated to preserving and interpreting Hong Kong's diverse cultures through the collection of a wide range of artefacts and works of art reflecting the essence of Hong Kong's unique culture originated from the territory and neighbouring regions. Its collections include Local History, Performing Art, Folk Art, Popular Culture, Contemporary Art, Design and Chinese Fine Art.

4. The Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum

The museum's collection aims to reflect the local and worldwide achievements in science, technology, medical science, transportation, astronomy and other science disciplines. It also has plans to develop its natural history collections which are representative of the geological evolution and wide-reaching biodiversity throughout the Earth's history.

5. The Hong Kong Film Archive

The Archive is dedicated to collecting and preserving Hong Kong films as well as the film-related materials that can illustrate the development of local film culture and facilitate research on local cinema history. In addition to film elements, the archive also collects audiovisual materials in different formats, two and three dimensional objects including posters, stills, props and costumes.

Source: LCSD records

Appendix C
(paras. 4.2, 4.5 and
4.6 refer)

**Details of 49 permanent exhibitions in
the Leisure and Cultural Services Department museums
(September 2020)**

Museum	Number of permanent exhibitions	Name of permanent exhibitions	Last enhancement conducted within last 15 or 20 years (Note 1)	Last enhancement conducted more than 15 or 20 years ago (Note 1)
<i>Science-related museums</i>				
Hong Kong Science Museum	1	World of Mirrors	✓	
	1	Jockey Club Environmental Conservation Gallery	✓	
	1	Biodiversity Gallery	✓ (Note 2)	
	1	Children's Gallery	✓ (Note 2)	
	1	Earth Science Gallery	✓ (Note 3)	
	1	Palaeontology Gallery		✓ (Note 3)
	1	Electricity and Magnetism Gallery		✓
	1	Telecommunications Gallery		✓
	1	Light		✓
	1	Motion		✓
	1	Sound		✓
	1	Mathematics		✓
	1	Transportation		✓
	1	Home Technology		✓
	1	Food Science		✓
Hong Kong Space Museum	1	Hall of the Cosmos	✓ (Note 2)	
	1	Hall of Space Exploration	✓ (Note 2)	

(enhancement under planning)

Appendix C
(Cont'd)
(paras. 4.2, 4.5 and
4.6 refer)

Museum	Number of permanent exhibitions	Name of permanent exhibitions	Last enhancement conducted within last 15 or 20 years (Note 1)	Last enhancement conducted more than 15 or 20 years ago (Note 1)
<i>Other museums</i>				
Hong Kong Museum of Art	1	Xubaizhai Gallery of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy	✓	
	1	Hong Kong Art Gallery	✓	
	1	Chinese Antiquities Gallery	✓	
	1	China Trade Art Gallery	✓	
	1	Chi Lo Lou Gallery of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy	✓	(Note 4)
	1	Wu Guanzhong Art Gallery	✓	
	1	The Wing (Upper)	✓	
Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware	1	Let's Talk about Tea through the Ages	✓	
	1	Gems of Chinese Seals Donated by the K. S. Lo Foundation	✓	
	1	Gems of Zisha in the K. S. Lo Collection	✓	
Hong Kong Heritage Museum	1	T. T. Tsui Gallery of Chinese Art	✓	
	1	Children Discovery Gallery	✓	
	1	Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall	✓	
	1	Hong Kong Culture Gallery	✓ (Note 3)	
	1	Chao Shao-an Gallery	✓	
	1	Jin Yong Gallery	✓ (Note 4)	

Appendix C
(Cont'd)
(paras. 4.2, 4.5 and
4.6 refer)

Museum	Number of permanent exhibitions	Name of permanent exhibitions	Last enhancement conducted within last 15 or 20 years (Note 1)	Last enhancement conducted more than 15 or 20 years ago (Note 1)
Hong Kong Railway Museum	1	The History of Hong Kong Railway	✓ (Note 4)	
Sheung Yiu Folk Museum	1	Life in Sheung Yiu Village	✓ (Note 4)	
Hong Kong Museum of History	1	The Hong Kong Story	✓	
Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum	1	Hong Kong in Dr Sun Yat-sen's Time	✓	
	1	Dr Sun Yat-sen and Modern China	✓	
Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery	1	Fireboat Alexander Grantham	✓	
Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence	1	Permanent Exhibition Gallery		✓ (Note 3)
Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum	1	Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb	✓	
Law Uk Folk Museum	1	Law Uk	✓ (Note 4)	
Sam Tung Uk Museum	6	Intangible Cultural Heritage of Hong Kong		✓ (Note 5)

Appendix C
(Cont'd)
(paras. 4.2, 4.5 and
4.6 refer)

Museum	Number of permanent exhibitions	Name of permanent exhibitions	Last enhancement conducted within last 15 or 20 years (Note 1)	Last enhancement conducted more than 15 or 20 years ago (Note 1)
Hong Kong Film Archive	1	Lobby of the Hong Kong Film Archive	✓	

Source: Audit analysis of LCSD records

Note 1: The timeframe of 15 years is applicable to science-related museums, whereas 20 years is for other museums.

Note 2: According to LCSD, enhancement of the permanent exhibition was completed between 2016 and 2018 (see Note 1 to Table 12 in para. 4.5).

Note 3: According to LCSD, enhancement of the permanent exhibition was in progress and not open to public (see Note 42 to para. 4.2).

Note 4: According to LCSD, enhancement of the permanent exhibition was completed between 2016 and 2020 (up to September 2020 — see Note 2 to Table 12 in para. 4.5).

Note 5: According to LCSD, it has been conducting enhancement for the 6 permanent exhibitions in the Sam Tung Uk Museum in phases for completion in 2021 (see Note 42 to para. 4.2).

Acronyms and abbreviations

AMO	Antiquities and Monuments Office
ArchSD	Architectural Services Department
Audit	Audit Commission
°C	Degree Celsius
CHO	Commissioner for Heritage's Office
EMP	Exhibition Maintenance Portal
HCRC	Heritage Conservation and Resource Centre
LCSD	Leisure and Cultural Services Department
LegCo	Legislative Council
m ²	Square metres
MAC	Museum Advisory Committee
MEA	Museum Expert Adviser
SPRs	Stores and Procurement Regulations