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## A complex about white elephants

DARWIN Chen seems to be genuinely worried about how he is going to fill his new Cultural Complex with audiences and activities. If he doesn't get them, he fears "the whole thing will be a flop, a huge white elephant." (SCM Post, May 3).

No need for me to revive all the arguments put forward by the Heritage Society in its efforts to save the old KCR station.

Salient among these was that, given vision, this comely and historic building could be imaginatively integrated with any modern complex.

The society asked again and again that, to this end, alternative designs at least be considered, and not just the one design concocted by the Government.

The authorities (Hong-kong Government departments, Urban Councillors, and Buckingham Palace) rejected this request.

The Cultural Complex, they insisted, was urgently needed, and any change of design would lead to unacceptable delays in the project's completion. Work must proceed in the public interest.

And the railway station was hurriedly demolished.

So fortunately for the councillors (but not for Hong-kong), they've beaten Mr Haddon-Cave to it, memorialised themselves in concrete and contributed to the economy's overheating in the process.

Cleverly, they've evaded cutbacks in expenditure on less essential projects — such as the Cheung Chau typhoon shelter.

If Mr Chen is stuck with an empty white elephant, perhaps we could put the junk in it? Or the Yaumati boat people?

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