

KNOW YOUR CC...

The Committee Member 2020-2021

Ar. Michael KK Chong



Why did the chicken cross the road? I have always enjoyed watching kids answering the question what they want to be when they grow up. Because knowing what to do for the rest of the life is a blessing. I was not one of those fortunate ones. Growing up in Kota Kinabalu in the 60's and 70's was fun and life was simple, it was good then and got better as you looked back and compare to what we are facing now. We were the free-rangers rather than growing up in a coop. Some people say life is like driving, you should not be looking at the rear-view mirror too often. One reason is because there may be a chicken crossing the road. My education at Chung Hwa primary School and All Saints' secondary School has enabled me to appreciate both sides of the language divide and culture. A late charge after form six gave me the chance to do architecture or agriculture at Oklahoma State University in USA. It was a simple choice. I worked in Tulsa, Oklahoma after graduation and passed the Oklahoma state architect licensing exam. Has been a member of American Institute of Architects since 1990. After meeting my wife who was working at Kansas City, we returned home in 1994.

New chapter means new start, a recondition and acclimatization to local rules took me four years to become a corporate PAM member. It was during Ar. Jebb Liew's chairman tenure that he invited me to join his committee. The opportunity of branding the chapter's previous international design conferences led me to chair the inaugural Borneo Architecture Festival (BAF) 2015 with much support from the Chairman, past Chairmen, Chapter Committees and graduates. Taking up a challenge by JKR Alan Wong to improve walkability during his session at the ArchiLAB talk on 20th Jan 2016, a Walkability, Accessibility & Connectivity (WAC) workshop was incorporated into BAF 2016. The starting point of the 1 KM radius Luyang Walk is marked at the junction of Jalan Kolam & Jalan Damai. From 2017 on I chaired the reformatted Community & Social Response (CSR) committee with focus on making the WAC project a reality. The chapter chairmen, committee members and secretariat have since put in consistent effort to now. Am glad to note that it is culminating to the formal approval of the pilot project by DBKK and JKR hopefully by end of the year or early 2021. The chicken is getting ready to cross the road.

Looking back the year it was the best of time for wall streets and the worst of time for main streets. Outdoor public spaces seem to be a safer place then indoor, an outdoor event space is created at the CSR pilot project called the Bornion Circle. To make it into a happening place, the CSR committee is planning to engage with local community associations, churches, NGO's like SPARKs and Sabah Art alliance to jointly host events at the new venue. An outdoor BAF idea has also been mooted. I believe there is much opportunity for the architects to make a difference in improving the built environment especially public spaces. The reason the chicken crossed the road because it can.

We can too!

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