

Chapter 12

Infrastructure Development and Heritage Conservation

The Government is committed to building new infrastructure to meet the growing needs of a progressive Hong Kong. It aims to strike a pragmatic balance among the varied objectives of development, providing a better living environment, and conserving heritage through public engagement and consensus building.

Organisational Framework

The Development Bureau was established on July 1, 2007 following the re-organisation of the Government Secretariat's Policy Bureaux. It consists of two policy branches: the Planning and Lands Branch, and the Works Branch.

The Planning and Lands Branch is responsible for the policy governing planning, development, land use and supply, urban renewal, building safety, and land registration. Its policy objectives are to facilitate Hong Kong's continual development through effective planning and use of land, a steady and sufficient supply of land, efficient registration of land, promoting and ensuring building safety and timely maintenance, and facilitating urban renewal. The Works Branch is responsible for formulating public works policies and coordinating and monitoring the implementation of public works projects. It also takes charge of policy matters on greening, water supply, slope safety, flood prevention as well as heritage conservation.

The Development Bureau has been set up to better coordinate major infrastructure projects that are essential in consolidating Hong Kong's position as a world city. To this end, the bureau oversees the planning and lands group of departments as well as the works group of departments, namely, the Planning Department, Lands Department, Buildings Department, Land Registry, Architectural Services Department, Civil Engineering and Development Department, Drainage Services Department, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, and Water Supplies Department. The reorganisation of these nine government departments under one roof ensures more efficient coordination and resolution of inter-departmental issues relating to infrastructure development at an early stage.

The Development Bureau is also responsible for enhancing the Government's heritage conservation work and for striking a balance between development and conservation. The Government's heritage conservation policy and initiatives were drawn up in response to public aspirations and to facilitate active public involvement in protecting Hong Kong's heritage.

Planning for Hong Kong

Strategic town planning provides an important framework for Hong Kong's future development. To this end, the Government completed the 'Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy' study which provides a planning framework for the city's long-term development.

The Government maintains close liaison with the Guangdong authorities on planning matters under an arrangement called the Hong Kong-Guangdong Cooperation Joint Conference. Joint studies with the Guangdong Government on coordinated development of the Greater Pearl River Delta townships and with the Shenzhen Municipal Government on a new corridor to be built at Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai, and an internal study for examination of the planning, environmental and engineering aspects of the new cross-boundary control point were continuing at end-2007. The study 'Land Use Planning for the Closed Area' was also progressing.

Land Use Planning

The Planning Department prepares planning and development strategy at the territorial level and town plans at the district level. The Department also keeps the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines under constant review, and serves as the executive arm of the Town Planning Board.

Town Planning Board

The Town Planning Board (TPB) is the principal body responsible for statutory planning in Hong Kong. Its members are appointed by the Chief Executive under the Town Planning Ordinance (TPO). Comprising predominantly non-official members, the TPB oversees the preparation of draft statutory plans, considers representations to such plans and considers applications for planning permissions and for amendments to plans. In 2007, 19 statutory plans were amended and three Urban Renewal Authority development scheme plans were published. At year-end, there were 108 outline zoning plans (OZPs), one development permission area (DPA) plan, eight Land Development Corporation development scheme plans and eight Urban Renewal Authority development scheme plans.

Under the TPO, any person may submit to the TPB representations in respect of draft statutory plans exhibited for public inspection. In 2007, the TPB heard 2 748 representations and related comments. The authority to approve statutory plan rests with the Chief Executive in Council. During the year, 15 statutory plans were submitted to the Chief Executive in Council for approval. To achieve greater public participation in the planning process, a new section about applications for amendment of statutory plans was incorporated in the TPO in 2004. In 2007, the TPB considered 49 such applications.

A set of notes is attached to each statutory plan, indicating the uses in particular zones that are always permitted and those which require TPB permission. In 2007, the TPB considered 976 applications for planning permission and reviewed its decisions on 97 applications.

Applicants who are aggrieved by the decisions of the TPB may lodge appeals with the independent Town Planning Appeal Boards. In 2007, the appeal boards heard 18 cases, 11 of which were dismissed, six were allowed and one had yet to be determined.

The TPB also promulgates guidelines on applications for developments in areas covered by statutory plans. In 2007, two sets of guidelines were revised. By year-end, there were 29 sets of guidelines.

Planning Enforcement

The Town Planning (Amendment) Ordinance 1991 provides the Planning Authority (the Director of Planning) with enforcement powers against 'unauthorised developments' (UDs) in areas covered by DPA plans or OZPs which replaced DPA plans. Within these areas, all developments are deemed unauthorised unless they were either in existence before the DPA plans were gazetted, or were permitted under the relevant statutory plans or covered by valid planning permissions. The Planning Authority may serve statutory notices on the respective landowners, occupiers and/or responsible persons, requiring them to discontinue a UD by a specified date or reinstate the land. Non-compliance with a notice is a statutory offence.

In 2007, 421 new UD's were detected in the rural areas. Most were related to uses such as open storage of vehicles, containers, construction machinery and related materials, container trailer parks, public car parks and workshops. The Planning Authority issued to offenders a total of 3 788 warning letters and reminders for 671 cases, 2 150 enforcement notices for 352 cases, 10 stop notices for three cases, 234 reinstatement notices for 35 cases, and 1 668 compliance notices for 249 cases. A total of 157 defendants in 43 cases were convicted in 2007. The average fine meted out was \$14,916. Fines ranged from \$1,500 to \$400,000. During the year, enforcement actions resulted in the discontinuation of 304 UD's which occupied 56 hectares of land, and the regularisation through the planning application system of another 70 UD's covering 27 hectares of land.

Departmental Plans

Outline development plans and layout plans are administrative plans prepared by the Planning Department. Detailed planning parameters are shown on these plans to facilitate the coordination of public works, land sales and the reservation of land for specific uses. There were 76 outline development plans and 294 layout plans in 2007.

Cross-boundary Planning and Development

Cross-boundary surveys are commissioned regularly to collect statistical information on various aspects of cross-boundary activities, such as travel pattern and behaviour, Hong Kong people's experience of and aspirations for taking up residence

on the Mainland. The findings of these surveys provide valuable input for the planning of cross-boundary infrastructure and the formulation of development strategies.

A planning study, called 'Coordinated Development of the Greater Pearl River Delta Townships', jointly commissioned by the Hong Kong and Guangdong Governments, commenced in 2006 to formulate a regional development framework. The study is scheduled for completion in 2008.

To strengthen the physical connection between Hong Kong and Shenzhen in line with the economic and infrastructure development of both places, the Government started a joint study with the Shenzhen Municipal Government on a new control point to be built at Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai to establish the need, function and benefits of the corridor. The study is to be completed in early 2008.

A planning study entitled 'Land Use Planning for the Closed Area' was launched following Government's decision in 2006 to revise the boundary of the Frontier Closed Area. The study examines the development potential and constraints and will formulate a planning framework for the land to be released from the area. It is planned for completion in mid-2009.

Major Planning Studies/Planning Reviews

'Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy'

The Territorial Development Strategy is the blueprint for the future development of Hong Kong. It provides a broad planning framework for land use, transport and the environment across the entire territory. The latest review carried out under the 'Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy' study was completed in 2007. Compared with the previous strategies, the study adopted a longer time look to the year 2030 and a wider regional perspective. It underwent extensive public consultations and in-depth topical studies. One of the study's recommendations is the implementation of new development areas in the New Territories to meet Hong Kong's long-term development needs. Due consideration was also given to enhancing the links with the Mainland, particularly that with the Pearl River Delta Region.

The Harbourfront Area

The Government is working closely with the Harbourfront Enhancement Committee (HEC), an advisory committee representing a wide range of interests in the community, in enhancing the harbourfront area taking into account changing public aspirations. During the year, the HEC developed and promulgated the Harbour Planning Guidelines for all individuals and organisations to apply when considering and dealing with proposals in and around Victoria Harbour. While reviewing the planning of the harbourfront areas, the Government completed the Kai Tak Planning Review which led to the approval of the Kai Tak OZP in November 2007 and a comprehensive planning and engineering study for the Wan Chai Development Phase II Review. Ongoing studies include the Urban Design Study for the Central Harbourfront and the Hung Hom District Study.

Lantau Development

In late 2004, the Lantau Development Task Force prepared a concept plan for Lantau to provide an overall planning framework to ensure a balanced and coordinated approach for the future development of Lantau. The overall planning approach is to confine major economic infrastructure and urban development to North Lantau, while protecting the other areas of scenic and high ecological value on Lantau for nature conservation and environmentally sustainable recreational and visitor uses. Based on public comments and taking into account the latest progress and results of relevant studies and projects, the task force updated the concept plan and released a revised concept plan in May 2007. The revised plan serves as the blueprint for taking forward individual development proposals on the island, including improvement works for Mui Wo and Tai O. The respective feasibility studies for these commenced in mid-2007.

Environmental and Area Improvement

The Planning Department undertook an ongoing feasibility study on urban climatic map and standards for wind environment, and air ventilation assessment studies for various proposals. Meanwhile, pedestrian plans for Causeway Bay, Kwun Tong and Tai Po Market, and an area improvement plan for Tsim Sha Tsui have been completed. The pedestrian plan for Central District was at its final stage of completion in 2007. The area improvement plan for shopping areas in Mongkok and a planning and engineering review of potential housing sites in Tuen Mun East were in progress.

Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines

The Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines is a government manual of criteria for determining the scale, location and site requirements of various land uses and facilities applicable to planning studies, town plans and development control. It is constantly under review to take account of changes in government policies, demographic characteristics and social and economic trends. During the year, the manual's introductory chapter and the planning standards for secondary schools, swimming pools and footpath widths were amended. The guidelines on pedestrian and environmental planning were also revised.

Land Supply

The Development Bureau continues the policy of providing adequate land to meet the development needs of the community and of striking a balance between development and providing a quality living environment. In formulating the 2008-09 Application List, the bureau has assessed the particulars of each site carefully and reviewed the development parameters, lowered the development bulk as appropriate and included relevant development restrictions. Where required, air ventilation assessment will be conducted, and appropriate development restrictions will be imposed in the conditions of sale. The bureau will review the approved schemes of the property development projects at Nam Cheong and Yuen Long stations along the West Rail to lower their development density where justified.

Land Acquisition

When private land has to be acquired for public use, it may be acquired through negotiations or by resumption. The ordinances provide for compensation to be paid for the value of the property resumed as at the date of acquisition and for loss of business. If agreement cannot be reached on the amount of compensation to be paid, either party may go to the Lands Tribunal for adjudication. As an alternative to statutory compensation, there are simplified assessment procedures for early release of payments to facilitate clearance of the land.

Some 235 600 square metres of private agricultural land were acquired in 2007. A total of \$409.6 million was paid as compensation during the year.

The Lands Department was also involved in the resumption of land for urban renewal projects undertaken by the Urban Renewal Authority and the Hong Kong Housing Society. During the year, compensation totalling \$185.2 million was paid to owners of 136 resumed properties and occupiers affected by 16 urban renewal projects. It also resumed and cleared land for the former Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation for its railway projects. By year-end, \$8 million had been paid as compensation for land resumed for the West Rail project and \$14 million for the East Rail Extension project which includes the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau spur line and the Hung Hom to Tsim Sha Tsui line.

Land Disposal

While government land available for disposal for permanent development is usually offered for sale by public auction, sale by public tender is also a practice adopted in certain circumstances, such as when the sites being offered for sale do not attract very wide interest. Examples are sites for petrol filling station purposes or when the Government wishes to examine in advance detailed proposals, such as the tender for the new cruise terminal. In some cases, land may be made available by private treaty grant. In October 2003, the Government released a statement on the implementation and consolidation of its housing policy. Since January 2004, new government land would normally be disposed of through the Application List System, which is a market-led mechanism. In 2007, 11 residential sites, one commercial/residential site, seven petrol filling stations and one marine fuelling station site, measuring a total of about 15.66 hectares were sold for \$33.1 billion.

In addition to land supply from the Government, existing privately held land leases may be amended, normally at a premium, on lease-holders' initiatives to provide for more intensive or different type of development in accordance with the prevailing planning intention. During the year, 128 transactions involving lease modifications and land exchanges were concluded, involving a total of about 172.55 hectares of land and a land premium of \$12.24 billion.

Land Management and Lease Enforcement

The Lands Department manages properties which have reverted to government ownership through voluntary surrender, resumption, expiry of government leases, and re-entry or vesting actions under various ordinances. During the year, 23 new

properties were taken over for management and 10 properties were disposed of. The department is currently managing 483 properties.

The department's work in identifying people responsible for the maintenance of registered man-made slopes is continuing. The results of this probe are contained in a 'Slope Maintenance Responsibility Information System' for public inspection.

The Lands Department is responsible for maintaining about 18 000 man-made slopes. With the help of private consultants, it carries out regular inspections of these slopes and employs contractors to carry out routine maintenance and stabilisation works. During the year, routine work was carried out on 6 300 slopes and stabilisation work on 142 slopes.

The Lands Department administers a 'Small House Policy' for indigenous villagers in the New Territories and approves rebuilding of old village houses. During the year, 1 283 applications for the building of small houses and 163 applications for the rebuilding of old village houses were approved. The department is also responsible for processing rent exemption requisitions for indigenous villagers' rural properties in accordance with the exemption criteria of the Government Rent (Assessment and Collection) Ordinance.

The Lands Department acts against illegal occupants of government land under the Land (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance and the Summary Offences Ordinance. The ordinances permit the department to take enforcement action against unauthorised occupation, excavation, cultivation or other forms of trespass on government land. It also participates in joint efforts to control the spread of dengue fever and Japanese encephalitis. During the year, it carried out such work on 2 474 occasions. In addition, 934 warning letters were sent to leaseholders. In collaboration with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, it continues to operate a scheme for the display of non-commercial publicity materials or banners at 22 803 designated spots in public places.

Land Conveyancing

The Legal Advisory and Conveyancing Office provides legal advice and conveyancing services in all government land transactions, which include the effective drafting of all government land disposal, lease modification and acquisition documents. For example, it completed 78 lease modifications and other documentation to facilitate the merger of operations, and provided extensive input into the tender document for the new cruise terminal, in 2007.

It processes applications for the sale of units under construction under the Lands Department Consent Scheme. In 2007, a total of 12 applications, involving 6 230 residential units, were approved. The office also approves Deeds of Mutual Covenant. In 2007, 39 such deeds were approved.

It also processes apportionment of premium and government rents, and recovers arrears of government rents by re-entry or vesting action, where appropriate.

Survey and Mapping

The Survey and Mapping Office (SMO) of the Lands Department produces topographical maps, carries out land boundary surveys, establishes a territory-wide geodetic survey control network and maintains a Computerised Land Information System (CLIS). It also provides support to the Land Survey Authority to administer the Land Survey Ordinance governing the registration and discipline of Authorised Land Surveyors and controlling the standard of land boundary surveys.

It has a 'Hong Kong Satellite Positioning Reference Station Network System'. With 12 Global Positioning System (GPS) reference stations, the system continuously tracks signals from the GPS satellites and provides GPS correctional information for real-time high accuracy position-fixing and other location-based services. It serves as an active position-fixing reference framework for survey and mapping activities that are needed in support of land administration and infrastructure development in Hong Kong.

The CLIS, which has been in use since 1989, records all land boundaries for identifying land parcels and for the management of land. The CLIS is now being upgraded together with other related systems such as the Digital Map and Land Records Data Dissemination System and the Geospatial Information Hub (GIH). An advanced database will be created in the new system to facilitate fast data updating and data delivery to support more complicated applications.

In 2008, the Digital Map and Land Records Data Dissemination System will be fully implemented to facilitate efficient online ordering and delivery of digital map data through the Internet. The system will also facilitate the integration and dissemination of geospatial data within the Government under the 'Data Alignment Measures' project led by the Development Bureau.

In collaboration with other government departments, SMO has developed a government-wide web-based information integration and sharing platform called the GIH. The GIH integrates vast amounts of geospatial data across departments on land and economic development, and manages the dissemination of geospatial features and the associated attribute data relating to land administration, infrastructure development, public health, census, building management, antiquities, monuments, old and valuable trees. The GIH at present supports the operation of more than 40 bureaux and departments in the delivery of public services including heritage conservation.

Land Registration

Land Registration is essential to Hong Kong's social and economic development. The Land Registry provides a comprehensive service for registering documents affecting land and keeping land records for public inspection. Over 2.7 million registers and 17 million documents can be accessed electronically. The table below shows the registry's business volume in 2007.

Land Registry Business Volume in 2007

Registration Services

(Distribution of Land Documents Lodged for Registration)

<i>Nature</i>	<i>Number</i>
Agreements for sale and purchase of building units	145 691
Agreements for sale and purchase of land	2 215
Assignments of building units	158 287
Assignments of land	5 938
Building mortgages/building legal charges	88
Other mortgages/legal charges	138 663
Other	276 401
Total	727 283

Search Services

(Distribution of Searches of Land Registers and Records)

<i>Online Searches*</i>		<i>Counter Searches</i>	
Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
4 501 891	88.9	559 578	11.1

* Online searches are conducted through Integrated Registration Information System (IRIS) Online Services.

Work is continuing on the setting up of a title registration system. During the year, the registry reviewed and responded to the comments on the working draft of the Land Titles (Amendment) Bill. The plan is to finalise and introduce the amendment legislation into the Legislative Council in the 2008-09 legislative session. Work also continued on the development of information technology systems to support the future title registration service.

New Development Projects

The Government remains committed to building new infrastructure and improving existing facilities to meet the needs of economic development. In so doing, it continues to invest heavily on infrastructure development. Work on the provision of land and infrastructure in urban areas and the new towns was on schedule in 2007. Major land development projects include:

Kai Tak Development

The development covers the former Kai Tak Airport site and adjoining land occupying a total area of about 328 hectares. The vision of the new development is to create a distinguished, vibrant, attractive, and people-oriented 'Kai Tak by the

harbour'. Apart from the new cruise terminal, other key developments include a multi-purpose stadium complex, government offices, a 24-hectare metro park, and residential and commercial developments.

Central Reclamation Phase III and Wan Chai Development Phase II

The Central and Wan Chai Reclamation extends along the Victoria Harbour waterfront from Sheung Wan to the east of the Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter. The Central Reclamation Phase III is for the reclamation of about 18 hectares of land and provision of essential infrastructure. The main objective of Wan Chai Development Phase II is to provide land for the Central-Wan Chai Bypass and the Island Eastern Corridor Link. These final reclamations on the northern shore of HK Island will also provide the opportunity to create a vibrant and accessible harbourfront for the enjoyment of the public.

Development near Choi Wan Road and Jordan Valley

The project aims to provide a 20-hectare site in Kwun Tong District for public rental housing for 35 000 people, seven schools and open space by 2008 to 2010.

Development at Anderson Road

The project will provide for the formation of about 20 hectares of platforms between Anderson Road and Sau Mau Ping Road by 2011 to 2013 in stages for the development of housing and associated government, institution or community facilities.

Tseung Kwan O New Town

The new development areas of Tseung Kwan O include the Town Centre South area and Pak Shing Kok. Town Centre South will be provided with extensive park and recreational facilities along the waterfront while Pak Shing Kok will become a low-density residential area.

New Development Areas (NDAs) in New Territories

The Government announced the revival of the planning and engineering studies on new development areas at Kwu Tung North, Fanling North, Ping Che and Ta Kwu Ling (site area of about 830 hectares) and at Hung Shui Kiu (site area of about 450 hectares) in the Chief Executive's Policy Address in October 2007. The studies will formulate the development proposals of the NDAs and confirm the feasibility of the NDA schemes to meet long-term housing, social, economic and environmental needs.

Further Development

The Chief Executive pledged in his Policy Address in October 2007 to push ahead with 10 large-scale infrastructure projects to expand the room for Hong Kong's further development, improve transportation, and foster cross-boundary integration with the neighbouring regions of Shenzhen and the Pearl River Delta. More details about the projects on transport infrastructure are contained in Chapter 13.

Building Development

Private Sector

Quality buildings are necessary features of a prosperous and modern metropolis. The Buildings Department facilitates and promotes the construction and maintenance of quality buildings and strives to make the resulting environment safe and healthy for the community as a whole.

During the year, work on superstructures started at 149 building sites, involving a total gross floor area of 1.85 million square metres. A total of 356 buildings, with a combined gross floor area of 1.71 million square metres, were completed at a total cost of \$21.8 billion compared with 811 buildings, with a gross floor area of 2.5 million square metres, built at a total cost of \$25.6 billion, in 2006.

Major new construction works in progress as at the end of 2007 included phase I of the redevelopment of Ocean Park and phase 2 of the Hong Kong Science Park.

Public Sector

The Government develops and maintains all government buildings and public facilities, other than public housing, through the Architectural Services Department. In 2007, 66 projects were completed including the headquarters building of the Independent Commission Against Corruption in North Point, the Rehabilitation Building at Tuen Mun Hospital, the boundary-crossing facilities at Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Corridor.

The Government has worked to improve the design and maintenance of public buildings and promote higher standards in construction. During the year, the Hong Kong Institute of Architects presented its highest award of the year to the Stanley Municipal Services Building. The Hong Kong Wetland Park also won the international award of Urban Land Institute 2007 Global Award for Excellence. Moreover, the study on 'Application of Green Roof in Hong Kong' was completed in early 2007 to promote public awareness of green roof concepts. Landscaping, vertical greening and roof greening provisions were included in public building projects as far as practicable in order to enhance the visual and environmental quality of the public facilities.

In 2007, 78 projects commenced on site, including major ones such as the redevelopment of Lo Wu Correctional Institution, Customs Headquarters Building in North Point, extension block to Prince of Wales Hospital, Tin Shui Wai Public Library and indoor recreation centre. Major upcoming projects including the Tamar Development Project, District Open Space at Po Kong Village Road, wholesale fish market in Tuen Mun, and other similar projects will soon commence.

Building Safety and Maintenance

Encouraging building owners to maintain their buildings properly, to conduct timely repair and to ensure building safety continued to be the Development Bureau's key areas of work in the year. The year 2007 saw the laying of foundation for taking forward two major proposals to tackle the problem of building neglect for the long-

term and to modernise the building control regime. The Development Bureau published the report of the second-stage public consultation on Mandatory Building Inspection, which revealed a general consensus in the community that owners should bear the responsibility to inspect and repair their buildings. The public was generally supportive of a mandatory route to require the inspection and repair of buildings by owners.

Legislation to introduce the mandatory building inspection and mandatory window inspection schemes is being prepared. During the year, the bureau also introduced into the legislature an amendment bill to introduce a minor works control system to streamline the statutory control procedures for minor building works. Such a system would enable building owners to follow simplified and lawful procedures to conduct minor building works such as installation of drying racks and supporting frames for air conditioners. Relevant regulations for the modus operandi of the system would be made after passage of the amendment bill by the Legislative Council.

The Buildings Department continued to undertake a multi-pronged strategy to remove unauthorised building works (UBWs) through enforcement action against UBWs that pose an imminent danger or health hazard, curbing the construction of new unauthorised works, and public education to encourage building owners not to construct building works illegally.

Major Actions Against UBWs

During the year, 26 009 reported cases of UBWs were dealt with, 32 898 orders requiring their removal were issued and 51 312 UBWs were removed. Prosecutions of offenders for failing to comply with removal orders totalled 3 021. There were 2 934 adjudicated cases resulting in 2 180 convictions involving fines totaling \$7.33 million.

To tackle the problem of existing UBWs, the Buildings Department continued its 'blitz' clearance operations, demolishing in one go all external UBWs including large glass panel walls, large TV screens, large signboards and UBWs on cantilevered slab balconies in a number of buildings in populated districts. Some 1 514 buildings were dealt with in 'blitz' in 2007. The programme to remove illegal rooftop structures on single staircase buildings also continued, with illegal rooftop structures on 707 such buildings being removed in 2007.

To raise community awareness of liability issues caused by UBWs, the Buildings Department issued 8 621 statutory warning notices that could be registered against property title in respect of UBWs. In a bid to stop the erection of new UBWs, special patrol teams were commissioned by the department to inspect UBWs under construction within 48 hours of receiving reports from the public about UBWs. During the year, the department handled 3 590 reported cases.

Urban Renewal

The policy objective of urban renewal is to improve the living conditions of residents in older urban areas while endeavouring to preserve their local character and social network.

The Development Bureau formulates the overall urban renewal policy, and provides support and policy guidance to the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) which was established in May 2001 to undertake urban renewal. The Urban Renewal Strategy, published by the Government in November 2001, sets out the policy guidelines for the URA's work.

The URA adopts a holistic '4R' approach to regenerate old urban areas, involving redeveloping dilapidated buildings, rehabilitating old buildings, revitalising old districts, and preserving buildings with historical, cultural or architectural value within its project areas.

By end-2007, the URA and its strategic partner, the Hong Kong Housing Society, had commenced 34 redevelopment projects, including the massive Kwun Tong Town Centre redevelopment project. Some of the projects, such as the Nga Tsin Wai Village project in Wong Tai Sin have preservation elements. URA was also tasked by the Chief Executive in his 2007-08 Policy Address to extend the scope of historic building protection to cover pre-war buildings for adaptive re-use.

To assist owners in need of rehabilitating their buildings, the URA had provided them with materials, interest-free loans, grant and other assistance. The URA also carried out revitalisation initiatives in various old districts. In end-December 2007, the Development Bureau and the URA announced an overall plan to revitalise the older part of Wan Chai on an area basis.

Heritage Conservation

Heritage Conservation Policy and New Initiatives

From July 2007, Works Branch of the newly formed Development Bureau became responsible for the policy on development-related heritage conservation transferred from the Home Affairs Bureau. In tandem with rising public aspirations for the protection of valuable heritage in Hong Kong, the bureau adopted a policy statement to guide heritage conservation work in the years to come: 'To protect, conserve and revitalise as appropriate historical and heritage sites and buildings through relevant and sustainable approaches for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. In implementing this policy, due regard will be given to development needs in public interest, respect for private property rights, budgetary considerations, cross-sector collaboration and active engagement of stakeholders and the general public'.

The bureau drew up a series of new initiatives in October 2007 to press ahead the heritage conservation work, including:

- (a) To require public works projects to conduct heritage impact assessments;
- (b) To implement revitalisation of historic buildings through partnership schemes;
- (c) To provide economic incentives for conservation and maintenance of privately-owned historic buildings;
- (d) To set up the 'Commissioner for Heritage's Office'; and
- (e) To conduct public engagement and publicity programmes.

In December 2007, the bureau promulgated the requirement for conducting heritage impact assessment in a Technical Circular (Works) for general compliance. In brief, proponents and works agents of all new capital works projects would have to consider whether their projects would affect sites or buildings of historic and archaeological significance at the project inception stage, and to conduct heritage impact assessments if the answer is affirmative. This will help prevent heritage sites and buildings from being affected, or if impact is unavoidable, help to ensure mitigation measures are devised and the public consulted before the projects are launched.

The bureau will examine various incentive schemes, such as land exchange and transfer of development rights, to encourage private owners to preserve their historic buildings. However, given the sensitivity and complexity of these incentives, the bureau would only apply them on a case-by-case basis. In 2007, the bureau succeeded in preserving the historic building, King Yin Lei, after it was declared a Proposed Monument and explored conservation options with its owners. The bureau also started formulating a mechanism to render financial assistance to owners for the maintenance of privately-owned monuments and graded historic buildings.

In October 2007, the bureau held fruitful discussions on heritage conservation with the general public, professional and concern groups. Public engagement and transparency are important when dealing with heritage conservation. Recognising this, the bureau drew up public engagement and publicity programmes for 2008 to further promote community awareness of and participation in heritage conservation.

Antiquities and Monuments Office

The Antiquities and Monuments Office continued its task of preserving Hong Kong's heritage and promoting public awareness of it through various educational and extension projects in 2007.

The Antiquities Advisory Board has 28 appointed members. It advises the Government on sites and structures that merit protection by declaring them monuments and about other matters related to antiquities and monuments.

In 2007, restoration and repair work on a number of historic buildings were carried out, including the Tang Ancestral Hall and Yu Kiu Ancestral Hall along the Ping Shan Heritage Trail, Yeung Hau Temple in Ha Tsuen, Man Lun Fung Ancestral Hall and Tai Fu Tai in San Tin, Man Mo Temple in Tai Po and Cheung Shan Kwu Tsz in Ping Che. In preparation for the full restoration of Chik Kwai Study Hall in Pat Heung to

be carried out in 2008, a conservation study and a cartographic survey of the study hall were conducted.

In 2007, archaeological studies of the former Mountain Lodge and Central School were conducted to determine the condition of the demolished buildings' foundations. Necessitated by a road extension project, rescue excavation was carried out at Cheung Shue Tan, Tai Po. Artefacts from the prehistoric period and environmental samples were recovered, showing the cultural and natural changes that occurred along the eastern coast of the New Territories. Similar measures were taken at Sai Kung, Tuen Mun, Cheung Chau, and Sha Tau Kok to prevent the underground archaeological remains from being damaged during the building of village houses at those sites.

The work on transforming the former Whitfield Barracks at Kowloon Park into the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre won the Jury Commendation for Innovation at the 2007 UNESCO Heritage Awards. Some of the facilities at the centre, which opened in October 2005, include an exhibition gallery, reference library and lecture hall.

The Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery-cum-Heritage Trail Visitors Centre, which was converted from the old Ping Shan Police Station, a Grade III historic building, opened in April 2007.

Two international conferences were held in Hong Kong in 2007. They were the 'Evolution and Rehabilitation of the Asian Shophouse' jointly organised with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), UNESCO ICCROM-Asian Academy for Heritage Management and Lord Wilson Heritage Trust; and the 'Heritage Conservation and Prehistoric Archaeology of South China' jointly organised with the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Two electronic database systems are being developed to store heritage information. They are the Heritage Virtual Tour Programme, set up in July 2007, which will provide a panoramic view of 60 historic buildings and sites across Hong Kong; and the Hong Kong Traditional Chinese Architectural Information System, which will maintain a database of about 200 traditional Chinese villages and buildings in Hong Kong. Both will be launched in 2008.

Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership

In November 2007, the bureau briefed non-governmental organisations (NGOs) about the way Hong Kong's historic buildings will be revitalised under a plan called 'Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme'. The scheme is designed to speed up the process of turning government-owned historic buildings into unique cultural landmarks through partnership with NGOs. The scheme will start off with seven buildings. Non-profit-making charitable organisations may submit proposal for revitalising these buildings. Successful applicants will be given advice and financial support. Teams will be set up in departments, such as the Architectural Services Department and Buildings Department to provide the scheme with technical support. The scheme will be launched in early 2008.

Commissioner for Heritage's Office

A Commissioner for Heritage's Office will be set up in the Development Bureau for coordinating the heritage conservation work and for the Government to liaise with the scheme's public participants. Work on setting up the office started in late 2007.

Greening

The bureau continues to implement greening measures to improve the living environment in Hong Kong and to draw up a greening programme for the whole of Hong Kong each year. About 63 million plants including trees, shrubs and annuals were planted in the past five years. The bureau provided about 11 million plants in 2007-08. It also continues organising different greening and horticultural activities to promote greater public awareness and support for greening. Some 80 greening programmes with community participation were held in 2007.

Greening Master Plans

In addition, the bureau is actively pursuing the development and implementation of Greening Master Plans (GMPs) for the territory. A GMP defines an overall greening framework for an area by identifying suitable locations for planting desirable species and building up greening themes. GMPs are developed in consultation with District Councils and the local community through an enhanced partnering approach. Implementation of the GMPs for Central and Tsim Sha Tsui were completed in March 2007. The GMPs for Sheung Wan/Wan Chai/Causeway Bay and Mong Kok/Yau Ma Tei were completed in December 2007. Implementation will start in September 2008 for completion by end-2009. The development of GMPs for the remaining urban areas has started and will be completed in early 2009. The development of GMPs for the New Territories is scheduled to start in mid-2009.

Drainage Services

Flood Prevention Programme

The Government is carrying out a massive \$12.1 billion programme to prevent flooding in the New Territories. It is also spending \$8.1 billion on improving drainage systems in the urban areas, and \$5.9 billion on drainage tunnels in Hong Kong West, Tsuen Wan and Lai Chi Kok to better protect these areas from floods.

Improvements to about 73 kilometres of river channels have been completed in the northwestern and northern parts of the New Territories. The Yuen Long Bypass Floodway and Shenzhen River Regulation Project were included in the programme. Flooding in the area has been substantially reduced as a result of the improvements.

Works carried out on 1.8 kilometres of Ma Wat River in Kau Lung Hang, Tai Po North, are due for completion by end-2008. Works on improving another 30 kilometres of upstream rivers and storm water drains in Sha Tin, Tai Po, Fanling and Sheung Shui have also started and are scheduled for completion in 2011. Design work for another 10.3 kilometres of drainage channels in the northern New Territories, including the upstream portion of Ping Yuen, Sheung Yue and Ng Tung

Rivers, is in hand. Upon completion of these remaining river training works, the regional flooding problem in the northern New Territories will be largely reduced.

For the low-lying villages, 27 village flood pumping schemes are in operation to protect 35 low-lying villages. In East Kowloon, contracts have been put out for laying 19 kilometres of storm water drains from Tsim Sha Tsui to Kwun Tong by 2011. So far about 4.6 kilometres of storm water drains have already been laid. In West Kowloon, construction of about 12 kilometres of storm water drains in Yau Ma Tei, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon Tong and Yau Yat Tsuen were completed in 2007.

To further reduce flooding risks in urban areas, three drainage tunnels will be constructed. They are the Hong Kong West Drainage Tunnel, Tsuen Wan Drainage Tunnel and the Lai Chi Kok Transfer Scheme making up a total of 43 intake structures and about 19 kilometres of tunnels. The Lai Chi Kok Transfer Scheme and Inter-Reservoir Transfer Scheme (IRTS) will bring the level of flood protection at Lai Chi Kok, Cheung Sha Wan and Sham Shui Po up to standard. The IRTS can also help to preserve rain water. Works on the two schemes will start in early 2008.

The projects, when completed, will channel storm waters on hillsides into the sea via the drainage tunnels reducing the risk of flooding in urban areas such as Happy Valley, Causeway Bay, Wan Chai, Central & Western District, Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung, Cheung Sha Wan and Lai Chi Kok. This will also reduce the need for additional drains to be built in these already highly congested areas.

Under a preventive maintenance programme, the Drainage Services Department maintains about 2 600 kilometres of watercourse, river channels and drains, from which about 270 000 cubic metres of silt were removed in 2007.

Apart from arranging regular visits to the San Tin Flood Prevention Information Centre for district councillors and school children, the department also distributed pamphlets to villagers and property management offices to educate the public on flood prevention. In September, the department joined the 'Innovation Expo 2007' to further enhance public awareness of the importance of flood prevention.

Decking of Nullahs

In 2005, the Government announced a plan to deck 16 sections of nullahs in the urban areas to improve their surrounding environment.

The works are being carried out in three packages. Package A, which consists of eight sections of decking works was completed following the completion of the Lung Chu Street Nullah in October 2007.

Works under Package B which consist of four nullahs will commence in early 2008. There are four nullahs under Package C which are in the design stage and latest advice of the relevant District Councils will be sought on how best to undertake these works to meet public needs. All of the nullah decking works are scheduled to be completed progressively by 2014.

Slope Safety

The Government manages a comprehensive Slope Safety System, which has brought about a substantial improvement in the safety of slopes in Hong Kong. This has been achieved by improving safety standards and technology, ensuring the safety of new slopes, improving the safety of existing slopes, and providing public warnings, information, education and community advisory services on slope safety.

Under the continuing Landslip Preventive Measures (LPM) Programme, about \$900 million was spent in 2007 to improve the safety of slopes. Upgrading works were completed on 290 substandard government slopes, all of which were landscaped to blend with their surroundings. Safety screening studies were completed on 300 private slopes.

A strategy has been devised to deal with the landslide risk that remains after completion of the current phase of the LPM Programme in 2010. The long-term Landslip Prevention and Mitigation Programme (LPMitP) after 2010 is aimed at containing landslide risk through upgrading of man-made slopes on a rolling basis and systematic mitigation of risk from natural hillside catchments with a known history of landslides close to existing buildings and important transport corridors.

The Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) also inspects substandard slopes to see if they are liable to collapse during rainfall. It also urges the clearance of squatter structures built on or adjacent to slopes that are unsafe and advises people living in those structures to move to safe shelters during heavy rain. In 2007, it inspected 12 squatter control areas and subsequently recommended removal of those structures.

The Government cannot solve Hong Kong's slope problem single-handedly. It needs public involvement and cooperation to reduce landslide risk. A wide range of activities is carried out to drive home the slope safety message to the community. These include broadcasting messages on television and radio, distributing promotional materials, organising roadshows, holding public seminars, and giving school talks and training courses. In 2007, more than 20 guidance documents in the form of publications, guidance notes and study reports were produced. These included the 'Guide to Soil Nail Design and Construction'.

New TV and radio Announcements in the Public Interest on 'Slope Safety – Personal Safety Precautionary Measures during the Issuance of Landslip Warnings' were launched in April in time for the onset of the rainy season.

To mark the 30th anniversary of the Hong Kong Slope Safety System and the establishment of the Geotechnical Engineering Office (GEO), a major exhibition on '30 Years of Efforts in Slope Safety' was staged in April alongside a photo competition with slope safety as the main theme. The competition was open to the general public and 31 prizes were awarded to winners in three categories.

Water Supplies

Water from Guangdong

Hong Kong began receiving raw water from the Shenzhen Reservoir in Guangdong in 1960 under a scheme that provides it with 22.7 million cubic metres of water a year. The infrastructure for channelling water to Hong Kong was expanded in 1965 with the building of an 80-kilometre transfer system known as the Dongshen Water Supply System to deliver water from Dongjiang, or East River, to Hong Kong via Shenzhen Reservoir. In mid-2003, a dedicated aqueduct was commissioned to deliver Dongjiang water directly to Shenzhen Reservoir. Since then, the quality of Dongjiang water supplied to Hong Kong has improved significantly.

Dongjiang is the major source of raw water for Hong Kong. The current agreement signed in April 2006 guarantees long-term supply of Dongjiang water to Hong Kong.

Water Storage and Consumption

Full supply was maintained throughout the year. At the end of 2007, some 386 million cubic metres of water was in storage, compared with 435 million cubic metres a year earlier. Hong Kong's two largest reservoirs, High Island and Plover Cove held a total of 339 million cubic metres. Rainfall of 1 706 millimetres, about 23 per cent lower than the annual average of 2 214 millimetres, was recorded in 2007.

The average daily consumption of water in 2007 was 2.61 million cubic metres, compared with 2.64 million cubic metres in 2006. Some 951 million cubic metres of potable water was consumed in 2007, compared with 963 million cubic metres in 2006. In addition, 271 million cubic metres of sea water was used for flushing, compared with 260 million cubic metres in 2006.

Total Water Management

The Government is proceeding with the Total Water Management Programme for rational utilisation, protection and management of water resources and for exploring new water resources. The Government has completed a pilot plant study to investigate the technical and financial viability of seawater desalination using reverse osmosis in Hong Kong. On the question of water reclamation and reuse, the Government has commissioned two pilot schemes for using reclaimed water in Ngong Ping and Shek Wu Hui. In addition, the Government is conducting a study on long-term strategies to be adopted under the Total Water Management Programme in Hong Kong. The study will take into account the findings of the various Hong Kong pilot schemes and those of similar schemes overseas. The study will be completed in 2008.

Water Works

Works on the first and second stages of the programme for the replacement and rehabilitation of some 3 000 kilometres of water mains began in December 2000 and January 2007 respectively. Works on the third stage will be carried out between 2008 and 2013. Planning of the final stage is under way, and works on it will be carried out from 2011 to 2015.

Construction of Choi Wan Road Fresh Water Service Reservoir, Choi Wan Road Salt Water Service Reservoir and Ping Che Fresh Water Service Reservoir was completed during the year. The remedial work on the rip-rap at the Plover Cove Reservoir's main dam was continuing.

The Water Supplies Department continues to work on plans for providing a reliable supply of fresh and salt water to new developments and redevelopments taking place in Chai Wan on Hong Kong Island, Sham Shui Po and West Kowloon Reclamation in Kowloon, and Yuen Long, Tin Shui Wai, Sheung Shui, Tai Po, Ma On Shan, Sai Kung and Lantau in the New Territories.

To facilitate better planning and enhance progress and financial control of maintenance works, the Maintenance Works Management System was commissioned and successfully rolled out in March 2007.

Water Accounts and Customer Relations

The number of consumers with water accounts continues to rise gradually. At year-end, the department was handling approximately 2.7 million accounts. To provide greater convenience to customers, the paying of water bills and other matters such as change of addresses can be done online. The Water Supplies Department also continues to act as an agent for collecting sewage charges and trade effluent surcharges on behalf of the Drainage Services Department.

To enhance the accuracy of water meters, a territory-wide five-year programme, launched in 2006 for replacing 1.3 million ageing domestic water meters, continued in 2007.

The voluntary Fresh Water Plumbing Quality Maintenance Recognition Scheme, launched in July 2002 to encourage proper maintenance of internal plumbing systems in buildings, continues to receive public support. Renewal certificates are now valid for two years instead of one year.

Construction Industry

Construction Industry Council

Following the substantial completion of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Construction Industry Review Committee (CIRC), an overall review on the progress achieved was conducted in February 2007.

The Construction Industry Council (CIC) was formed in 2007 to sustain the momentum of reform generated by the implementation of CIRC recommendations. CIC has established committees focusing on construction site safety, subcontracting, environment and technology, procurement, manpower training and development and is pursuing in close partnership with government initiatives conducive to the long-term development of the construction industry. CIC is using its website at www.hkcic.org to keep industry stakeholders informed of the latest developments.

CIC will amalgamate with the Construction Industry Training Authority (CITA) on January 1, 2008. Upon the amalgamation, CIC took over from the CITA the collection of industry levy and formed the Construction Industry Training Board to continue

providing training and trade testing services for the construction industry under the new name of Construction Industry Council Training Academy.

Response to the first phase of the Voluntary Subcontractor Registration Scheme, launched in November 2003, has been encouraging. By November of 2007, 3 897 applications for registration were received and 3 558 were approved.

Construction Workers Registration

The Construction Workers Registration Authority continued the registration of construction workers. Up to mid-December 2007, about 225 000 construction workers had been registered. Phase one prohibition of the Construction Workers Registration Ordinance commenced on September 1, 2007 prohibiting workers from carrying out construction work on construction sites unless they were registered under the ordinance. Under the second phase, those not registered as skilled or semi-skilled workers of a designated trade will not be allowed to work in that trade.

Developments under CEPA

The Development Bureau continued discussions with stakeholders of the Hong Kong construction industry and the Ministry of Construction (MoC) on the fifth phase of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA). Further commitments in promoting the mutual recognition of professional qualifications and registration of professionals were secured under Supplement IV to CEPA signed in June 2007. The bureau continued to organise with the Shenzhen Construction Bureau and the Shenzhen Works Bureau the Mainland secondment training programme for graduates. The first batch of quantity surveying and structural engineering graduates as well as the third batch of civil engineering graduates completed successfully a three-month training course in Shenzhen in February and July 2007 respectively. Based on the positive results in the Shenzhen secondment training programme, the programme was extended to Guangzhou. The first batch of quantity surveying and landscape architectural graduates commenced training in Guangzhou in October 2007. To further promote exchange and cooperation in the training of professionals, the bureau has planned to extend the programme to other Mainland cities.

During the year, as part of Hong Kong's ongoing promotion of its construction industry and related services, the Development Bureau organised a large-scale forum on the planning and development of sustainable urban form in Changsha with the MoC. The bureau also jointly organised a seminar with the Guangdong Provincial Department of Construction in Guangzhou for the contractors and consultants of the two places to enhance mutual understanding in preparation for further business collaboration.

Websites

Development Bureau: www.devb.gov.hk

Planning and Lands Branch: www.devb-plb.gov.hk

Works Branch: www.devb-wb.gov.hk