

Chapter 12

Infrastructure Development and Heritage Conservation

The Government will continue promoting economic development through infrastructure projects, and community development through the revitalisation of historic and built heritage.

Organisational Framework

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

The Planning and Lands Branch is responsible for 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 expediting urban renewal. The Works Branch is responsible for formulating public works policies and co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of public works projects. It also takes charge of policy matters on greening, water supply, slope safety, and flood prevention as well as heritage conservation.

The Development Bureau oversees 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 co-ordination and resolution of interdepartmental 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, in 2007 the Government completed the 'Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy' study which provides a planning framework for the city's long-term development. This study has adopted sustainable development as its principal goal. The recommended strategy, which focuses on the three broad directions of providing a quality living environment, enhancing economic competitiveness and strengthening links with the Mainland, aims to help Hong Kong achieve its vision as 'Asia's world city'.

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 applications for planning permission and for amendments to plans. In 2008, 30 statutory plans were amended and one Urban Renewal Authority development scheme plan was published. At the end of 2008, there were 108 outline zoning plans (OZPs), one development permission area (DPA) plan, eight Land Development Corporation development scheme plans and nine Urban Renewal Authority development scheme plans.

Under the TPO, any person may submit to the Town Planning Board representations in respect of draft statutory plans exhibited for public inspection. In 2008, the TPB heard 8 040 representations and related comments. The authority to approve statutory plan rests with the Chief Executive in Council. During the year, 18 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 2008, the TPB considered 58 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 2008, the TPB considered 1 050 applications for planning permission and reviewed its decisions on 78 applications.

Applicants who are aggrieved by the decisions of the TPB may lodge appeals with the independent Town Planning Appeal Boards. In 2008, the appeal boards

heard two cases, one was dismissed and at year-end the other had yet to be determined.

The TPB also promulgates guidelines for applications for development in areas covered by statutory plans. In 2008, one set of new guidelines was promulgated and one set of existing guidelines was revised. At the end of 2008, there were 30 sets of guidelines.

Planning Enforcement

The Town Planning (Amendment) Ordinance 1991 provides the Planning Authority (the Director of Planning) with enforcement powers to tackle 'unauthorised developments' (UDs) in areas covered by DPA plans or OZPs which replaced DPA plans. The Ordinance provides that all developments within these areas 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 or reinstate the land by a specified date. Non-compliance with a notice is a statutory offence.

In 2008, a total of 334 new UD's were detected in these areas. Most were related to uses such as open storage of vehicles, containers, construction machinery and construction materials, as well as container trailer parks, public car parks and workshops. The Planning Authority issued to offenders a total of 3 508 warning letters and reminders for 541 cases, 1 721 enforcement notices for 259 cases, 45 stop notices for six cases, 473 reinstatement notices for 85 cases, and 1 654 compliance notices for 237 cases. A total of 187 defendants in 45 cases were convicted. The average fine meted out was \$14,445 and the fines ranged from \$360 to \$450 000. During the year, enforcement actions resulted in the discontinuation of 267 UD's which occupied 57 hectares of land, and the regularisation through the planning application system of another 112 UD's covering 40 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 to facilitate the co-ordination of public works, land sales and the reservation of land for specific uses. There were 76 outline development plans and 294 layout plans.

Cross-boundary Planning and Development

The Government maintains close liaison with the Guangdong authorities on planning matters under an arrangement called the Hong Kong-Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference.

Cross-boundary surveys are commissioned regularly to collect statistical information on various aspects of cross-boundary activities, such as travel pattern and behaviour, and 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, '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 was largely completed in 2008.

A planning study entitled 'Land Use Planning for the Closed Area' was launched following the Government's decision in 2006 to revise the boundary of the Frontier Closed Area (FCA). The study aims to provide a framework to guide future development and conservation of the area to be released from the FCA before the new FCA boundary comes into effect. A Stage I Community Engagement Programme was held between May and August 2008. Further community engagement activities will be held before finalisation of the planning framework in 2009.

Major Planning Studies/Planning Reviews

The Harbourfront Area

The Government is committed to providing a quality living environment and enhancing the harbourfront area is one of the major aspects to strive for. During the year, the Hung Hom District study was completed, which provided a framework for enhancement of the Hung Hom waterfront. Public views on the proposals of the Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront were widely sought and preparation for the Hong Kong Island East Harbourfront Study was in the pipeline. The Government continued to work closely with the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee, an advisory committee representing a wide range of interests in the community, in enhancing the harbourfront area taking into account public aspirations.

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 co-ordinated approach for the future development of the island. 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 economic infrastructure, as well as tourism and recreation development in North Lantau and area improvement works for the rural townships of Mui Wo and Tai O in South Lantau. The respective feasibility studies for these commenced in mid-2007.

Environmental and Area Improvement

The Planning Department undertook an on-going feasibility study on an 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 and the area improvement plan for the shopping areas in Mong Kok were at the final stage for completion. A planning and engineering review of potential housing sites in Tuen Mun East was 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 planning standards for kindergartens and primary schools were amended. The guidelines on rock cavern development 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. To facilitate and encourage hotel developments to support Hong Kong's tourism industry, a total of 10 'hotel use only' sites are included in the 2008-09 Application List for the first time. For sites included in the 2008-09 Application List, the bureau has assessed the particulars of each site carefully and has specified (or will specify) in the Conditions of Sale appropriate development parameters like building height limits and maximum gross floor area or plot ratio.

Where required, air ventilation assessment will be conducted, and appropriate development restrictions will be imposed in the conditions of sale. The bureau has reviewed 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. Consultation with relevant stakeholders is being undertaken on the proposed revised schemes.

Land Acquisition

When private land has to be acquired for public use, this may be done 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 125 850 square metres of private land, comprising about 250 square metres of building land and 125 600

square metres of agricultural land were acquired in 2008. A total of \$870.8 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 \$237.7 million was paid to owners of 97 resumed properties and occupiers affected by 21 urban renewal projects. It also resumed and cleared land for the former Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation for its railway projects. By year-end, \$13 million had been paid as compensation for land resumed for the West Rail project and \$3 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. 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, it has made land available to the market mainly through the Application List System, which is a market-driven mechanism. In 2008, one residential site, three petrol filling stations and one site for logistics development purposes measuring a total of about 2.53 hectares were sold for \$1.07 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, 220 transactions by way of lease modifications and land exchanges were concluded, involving a total of about 93.11 hectares of land and a land premium of \$10.57 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, 19 new properties were taken over for management and 10 properties were disposed of. Forty-two managed properties were released for the urban renewal project in Wanchai in 2008. The department currently manages 450 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 18 100 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 maintenance works were carried out on 5 900 slopes and stabilisation works on 360 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, 958 applications for the building of small houses and 155 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 2 893 occasions. In addition, 854 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 24 157 designated spots in public places.

The Lands Department took over squatter control work from the Housing Department on April 1, 2006. At present, there are about 6 800 surveyed squatter structures in the urban areas and 387 100 in the New Territories. During the year, 187 illegal structures and extensions were demolished by the Squatter Control Unit.

Land Conveyancing

The Legal Advisory and Conveyancing Office provides legal advice and conveyancing services in government land transactions, which include the effective drafting of all government land disposal, lease modification and acquisition documents. It processes applications for the sale of units under construction under the Lands Department Consent Scheme. In 2008, a total of 23 applications, involving 10 317 residential units, were approved. The Office also revised the definition of 'saleable area' in the agreement for the sale of uncompleted residential units to enhance clarity and transparency. The Office also approves Deeds of Mutual Covenant. In 2008, 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 provides survey and mapping services in support of land administration and infrastructure development. It produces topographical maps, carries out land boundary surveys, establishes and maintains the Geodetic Network and the computerised Land Information System (LIS). 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.

The Geodetic Network comprises the extensive ground network of horizontal and vertical control points for all types of land and engineering surveying activities in Hong Kong. The Satellite Positioning Reference Station Network System (SatRef) was established in 2006. Enhanced in 2008 with independent integrity monitoring functions, SatRef serves as an active position-fixing reference framework for all surveying and location based services including geographic information system applications.

The LIS in use since 1989 maintains the digital base map and records land boundary information for identifying land parcels and for the management of land. It is being upgraded to a new system to facilitate fast data updating and secure data delivery to support more complicated applications, capitalising on the successful implementation of the related Data Dissemination System (DDS) and the Geospatial Information Hub (GIH).

In 2009, the DDS will be fully implemented to facilitate efficient online ordering and delivery of digital map data through the Internet. It will also expedite 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 the GIH as a government-wide web-based information integration and sharing platform. The GIH integrates vast amounts of geospatial data across departments on land and economic development, and manages the dissemination of geospatial features and associated attribute data relating to land administration, infrastructure development, public health, census, building management, antiquities, monuments, and old and valuable trees. At present, it supports the operation of more than 40 bureaux and departments in the delivery of public services including heritage conservation.

SMO has explored and developed new technological applications to enhance its services. The Terrestrial Laser Scanner acquired in 2008 supports high speed automatic scanning of features with high precision. The equipment is particularly effective for survey measurements of highly complicated or inaccessible structures and will find productive applications in everyday use and in record survey of heritage buildings, emergency survey and construction of 3D models.

SMO has also commenced the implementation of the 3D Spatial Data Processing System the primary objectives being to construct and maintain a territory-wide 3D Spatial Database and to provide analytical 3D visualisation services in support of land administration and land disposal work. The construction of the 3D Spatial Database (initial set) was completed in early 2008. Its trial version has been adopted for use by works departments in shortening their time for building design models for public consultation.

Land Registration

Land Registration safeguards rights and underpins 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 2.8 million land registers and 18 million documents can be accessed electronically. The table below shows the registry's business volume in 2008.

Land Registry Business Volume in 2008

Registration Services

(Distribution of Land Documents Lodged for Registration)

<i>Nature</i>	<i>Number</i>
Agreements for sale and purchase of building units	113 298
Agreements for sale and purchase of land	2 069
Assignments of building units	162 912
Assignments of land	6 246
Building mortgages/building legal charges	84
Other mortgages/legal charges	144 245
Others	283 572
Total	712 426

Search Services

(Distribution of Searches of Land Registers and Records)

<i>Online Searches*</i>		<i>Counter Searches</i>	
Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
4 475 012	88.7	570 017	11.3

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

Hong Kong currently uses a deeds registration system. It is intended to replace this with a title register to provide greater security and ease in conveyancing. To this end, a Land Titles Ordinance was enacted in 2004 but it will not come into effect until further amending legislation is passed. During the year, the registry continued with preparation of the Land Titles (Amendment) Bill and consulted the stakeholders. 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 2008. Major development projects include:

Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point

The Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government have long recognised the need to enhance cross-boundary transport infrastructures for long-term economic growth and further regional co-operation. A joint study to examine the need, function and benefits of a new boundary control point (BCP) at Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai was completed in mid-2008. As the new control point would bring strategic and economic development to both cities and meet future cross-boundary travel demand, both Governments jointly announced the implementation of the BCP in September 2008. The Government will take forward the investigation and preliminary design of the BCP in close liaison with the Shenzhen side and a target to commence operation of the new BCP in 2018.

Development of the Lok Ma Chau Loop

The development of the Lok Ma Chau Loop (the Loop) is among the ten large-scale infrastructure projects for economic growth in the Chief Executive's 2007-08 Policy Address. The planning authorities of Hong Kong and Shenzhen consulted the public on the future land use of the Loop in 2008. With a view to studying and developing the area on a joint basis, both sides agreed that among the three land uses which have gained wider public support in the public engagement exercise, higher education may be developed as the leading use in the Loop, incorporating hi-tech research and development facilities and creative industries. This would provide impetus for human resources development in South China and help enhance the competitiveness of the Pearl River Delta, as well as benefit the long-term economic development of the two cities. Both sides signed a co-operation agreement in November 2008 to commission consultants in mid-2009 to undertake a comprehensive planning and engineering study.

Kai Tak Development

The Kai Tak Development is also one of the large-scale infrastructure projects pledged in the 2007-08 Policy Address. Covering a total area of about 328 hectares at the former airport site and adjoining land, the development is entering the implementation stage. Site preparation works started in April 2008. The vision of the new development is to create a distinguished, vibrant, attractive, and people-oriented 'Kai Tak by the harbour'. Apart from a new cruise terminal, 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 Hong Kong Island will also provide the opportunity to create a vibrant and accessible harbourfront for the enjoyment of the public.

New Development Areas in New Territories

Following the announcement of the planning for New Development Areas (NDAs) as one of the major infrastructure projects for economic growth in the Chief Executive's 2007-08 Policy Address, the North East New Territories New Development Areas Planning and Engineering Study, commissioned jointly by the Civil Engineering and Development Department and the Planning Department, was launched in June 2008 with a view to formulating a feasible planning and development framework for the implementation of Kwu Tung North, Fanling North and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling NDAs to address long term housing and employment needs. The planning and engineering study on the Hung Shui Kiu NDA is scheduled for commencement in 2009.

Transport Infrastructure

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. Details of the projects on transport infrastructure are contained in Chapter 13.

Building Development

Private Sector

Quality and sustainable buildings are necessary features of a prosperous and modern metropolis. The Buildings Department promotes and facilitates the construction and maintenance of such buildings, aiming to make the built environment safe and healthy for the community.

During 2008, work on superstructures started at 105 building sites, involving a total gross floor area of 1.33 million square metres. A total of 753 buildings, with a combined gross floor area of 1.80 million square metres, were completed at a total cost of \$23.4 billion compared with 356 buildings, with a gross floor area of 1.71 million square metres, built at a total cost of \$21.8 billion, in 2007.

The conversion of existing monuments at the former Marine Police Headquarters in Tsim Sha Tsui into a heritage hotel and shopping complex was completed at the end of the year. Major new construction works in progress at the end of 2008 included phases I and II of the redevelopment of Ocean Park.

Public Sector

The Government develops and maintains all government buildings and public facilities, other than public housing, through the Architectural Services Department. In 2008, 63 projects were completed including the Stanley Waterfront Improvement project, the Centre for Youth Development in Chai Wan, schools, and open space facilities.

In 2008, 51 projects commenced on site, including major ones such as the Tamar Development Project, District Open Space at Po Kong Village Road, the Sun

Yat Sen Memorial Park and Swimming Pool Complex, the Siu Sai Wan Complex, and expansion of Tseung Kwan O Hospital.

In line with the Government's policy on sustainable development, the department has continued to promote and practise sustainable public architecture. With recognition from the industry, a total of 12 architectural awards, of which nine were on sustainability, were received for government projects during the year. The Stanley Municipal Services Building was presented with the highest Green Building Award of the year by the Professional Green Building Council and was also granted a merit award on sustainability in the Quality Building Award 2008. The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department Headquarters building was honoured with an international award by the Architects Regional Council Asia. Greening initiatives such as landscape gardens, vertical greening and green roofs have continually been integrated in the design of government building projects. During the year, four awards on greening were won for government projects, including the Stanley Waterfront Improvement project and the Tuen Mun Children and Juvenile Home.

Building Safety and Maintenance

Encouraging 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 saw major development in two areas to modernise the building control regime and to assist owners to repair their buildings.

During the year, the Buildings (Amendment) Ordinance 2008 was passed in the Legislative Council. This introduces a minor works control system to streamline the statutory control procedures for small-scale building works. The system is intended to enable building owners to follow simplified statutory procedures to conduct minor building works such as installation of drying racks and supporting frames for air conditioners. This new control system will come into operation upon the commencement of the corresponding subsidiary legislation, detailing the *modus operandi* of the system.

A \$1 billion Building Maintenance Grant Scheme for Elderly Owners was launched in May 2008 to provide financial assistance to elderly owner-occupiers to repair and maintain their buildings and improve building safety. A maximum grant of \$40,000 is available for each eligible elderly owner-occupier within a period of five years. Eligible elderly owner-occupiers may also use the grants to repay their outstanding loans with the Buildings Department, the Urban Renewal Authority or the Hong Kong Housing Society in relation to building maintenance. The Government has appointed the Hong Kong Housing Society to administer the Scheme.

The bureau is also continuing its preparation for the launch of the mandatory building inspection and mandatory window inspection schemes to arrest the problem of building neglect in the long run. Legislation for the two schemes is being prepared.

The Buildings Department continued to promote timely maintenance and enforce repair of dilapidated buildings. In 2008, 927 building repair orders were issued and repairs to 1 060 buildings were completed. On the elimination of unauthorised building works (UBWs), the department continued to undertake a multi-pronged strategy to remove UBWs through enforcement action against UBWs that pose an imminent danger or health hazard, curbing the construction of new UBWs, and public education to encourage building owners not to construct building works illegally.

Major Actions Against UBWs

During the year, 25 804 reported cases of UBWs were dealt with, 32 847 orders requiring their removal were issued and 47 593 UBWs were removed. Prosecutions of offenders for failing to comply with removal orders totalled 3 091. A total of 3 003 cases were adjudicated, resulting in 2 163 convictions with fines totalling \$6.92 million.

To tackle the problem of existing UBWs, the Buildings Department continued its 'blitz' clearance operations, demolishing in one go all UBWs including large glass panel external walls, large TV screens, large signboards and UBWs on cantilevered slab balconies in some 1 579 buildings in 2008. The programme to remove illegal rooftop structures on single staircase buildings also continued, with illegal rooftop structures on 632 such buildings removed in 2008.

To raise community awareness of liability issues caused by UBWs, the Buildings Department issued 8 272 statutory warning notices for registration against property title in respect of UBWs. In a bid to stop the erection of new UBWs, the department commissioned private consultants as special patrol teams to investigate within 48 hours of receiving reports from the public about UBWs under construction. During the year, the department handled 4 009 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 policy on urban renewal 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 (URS), published by the Government in November 2001, sets out the policy guidelines for the URA's work. To reflect changing circumstances and public aspirations, the Development Bureau launched a root-and-branch review of the URS in July 2008. A steering committee, chaired by the Secretary for Development and consisting of ten prominent members of the community, was set up to guide and monitor the whole review process and facilitate public participation.

The URA adopts a holistic '4R' approach to the regeneration of 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 the end of 2008, the URA and its strategic partner, the Hong Kong Housing Society, had commenced 35 redevelopment projects and four preservation projects, including the Kwun Tong Town Centre redevelopment project, which in terms of both site areas and number of property interests affected is the largest one the URA has handled. The year also marked a major step forward in the areas of revitalisation and preservation. Following consultation with the Wan Chai District Council (WCDC) in January 2008, an Old Wan Chai Revitalisation Initiatives Special Committee chaired by the Deputy Chairman of the WCDC was set up to map out a plan for revitalising the area.

In September 2008, the URA commenced two projects to preserve 20 pre-war verandah-type shophouses at Shanghai Street and Prince Edward Road West for adaptive re-use. The URA also continued to assist owners to rehabilitate their buildings by providing them with materials, interest-free loans, grants and other assistance.

Heritage Conservation

Heritage Conservation Policy and New Initiatives

Heritage conservation was accorded priority under the Chief Executive's announcement in his 2007-08 Policy Address that the bureau would press ahead with heritage work over the next five years. Since the announcement of the new heritage conservation policy and a package of initiatives to promote heritage conservation in October 2007, the Development Bureau has made good progress on various fronts.

In the Government domain:

- (a) The bureau has implemented the Heritage Impact Assessment mechanism since January 2008 for all new capital works projects to ensure that impact on heritage sites will be avoided or minimised and mitigation measures will be devised if impact is unavoidable;
- (b) The bureau launched the first batch of the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme (the Revitalisation Scheme) to invite non-profit-making organisations to put selected historic buildings to adaptive re-use;
- (c) A review was completed on the relationship between the monument declaration system under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (the Ordinance) and the administrative grading system of the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB);
- (d) The comprehensive grading of some 1 440 historic buildings is about to be completed and the bureau will consult the AAB on the results of the review;

- (e) Three historic buildings (Maryknoll Convent School, King Yin Lei and Green Island Lighthouse Compound) were declared monuments under the Ordinance for permanent protection;
- (f) The Government entered into a partnership with the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) to take forward the conservation and revitalisation of the Central Police Station Compound, after completion of a six-month public engagement exercise conducted by HKJC from October 2007 to April 2008 to engage stakeholders through various channels and activities. The project will take the opportunity to showcase in Hong Kong how new and sustainable uses can be integrated creatively into a historic site whilst preserving its overall historic and architectural significance;
- (g) The Government removed the original site of the Central School on Hollywood Road permanently from the List of Sites for Sale by Application, and will investigate further how best the site may be used for creative industries and education while recognising its historic significance; and
- (h) The bureau conducted studies on overseas practice in adapting building codes to facilitate adaptive re-use of historic buildings and overseas experience on the revitalisation of historic buildings. The practice and experience will be applied in the heritage conservation as appropriate.

In the private domain:

- (a) The bureau successfully applied the policy on economic incentives to facilitate conservation of privately-owned historic buildings for the first time in the case of King Yin Lei through a proposed non in-situ land exchange arrangement with the owner;
- (b) The bureau launched a scheme to provide financial assistance to facilitate maintenance of privately-owned graded historic buildings; and
- (c) The bureau undertook various public engagement and publicity programmes in the year and will continue its efforts in the coming years.

Public Engagement and Publicity

The bureau undertook a series of proactive programmes to reach out to the community, listen to public views and work with the stakeholders to strengthen interaction between the Government and the community.

From January to May, a 'Public Awareness Campaign on Heritage Conservation' was launched to foster public awareness and interest in heritage conservation through activities, including thematic exhibitions, roving exhibitions, public lectures and workshop, guided tours, an open day at Mei Ho House and an international conference, which attracted more than 62 000 visitors. The highlight of the campaign was the 'Historic Buildings Photo Competition' which received an overwhelming response from the public.

The bureau conducted public engagement exercises for revitalisation projects, including the former Central School site, and the seven buildings being selected for

adaptive re-use under the Revitalisation Scheme. Further public engagement exercises will be conducted for revitalisation projects in the coming year.

A dedicated website on heritage conservation (www.heritage.gov.hk) was launched in January to provide an effective platform for the dissemination of information. During the year, the website attracted more than 300 000 visitors. The bureau began publishing a bimonthly newsletter '活化@Heritage' in June 2008 to feature topics of public concern and the work of the Commissioner for Heritage's Office. The newsletters can be downloaded from the dedicated heritage website and are also available in public libraries, District Offices, tertiary educational institutions and professional bodies.

Commissioner for Heritage's Office

The Development Bureau set up the Commissioner for Heritage's Office on April 25, 2008 to provide dedicated support in implementing the policy on heritage conservation and keeping it under constant review, taking forward a series of new initiatives, as well as serving as a focal point of contact, both locally and overseas. The Office comprises professionals from the fields of architecture, engineering, estate surveying and historical research and others, and non-civil service contract staff specialising in property management and marketing.

Antiquities and Monuments Office

The Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) continued its task of preserving Hong Kong's heritage and promoting public awareness of it through various educational and extension projects in 2008.

The Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) has 26 appointed members. It advises the Government on sites and structures that merit protection by declaring monuments and on other matters related to antiquities and monuments. The AMO provides secretariat support for the AAB.

In 2008, restoration and repair work on a number of historic buildings was carried out, including the Hau Ku Shek Ancestral Hall in Ho Sheung Heung, Fan Sin Temple in Sheung Wun Yiu, Yeung Hau Temple in Ha Tsuen, Tai Fu Tai in San Tin and the Helena May in Central. A conservation study and cartographic survey for Chik Kwai Study Hall in Pat Heung was also conducted. Full restoration of the Study Hall commenced in October 2008.

In April 2008, the remains of Longjin Bridge, which adjoined the main gate of the old Kowloon Walled City, were identified through the archaeological impact assessment of the Kai Tak Development. Further investigation was conducted between November 2008 and March 2009 on in-situ preservation. To allow construction of two school projects, a large-scale rescue excavation at So Kwun Wat in Tuen Mun was launched in November 2008 with a completion target of June 2009. Experts from the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences were invited to recover the archaeological remains jointly with the Office. Archaeological investigations were also arranged at Sai Kung, Yuen Long, Lamma

Island and Sha Tau Kok to prevent underground archaeological deposits from being damaged during the building of village houses at those sites.

On education and publicity, the AMO organised an exhibition entitled 'Building Together: 160 Years of Hong Kong-French Common Heritage and Perspectives' at the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre in collaboration with the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Consulate General of France in Hong Kong and Macao from September to the end of 2008.

A new electronic database, the Hong Kong Traditional Chinese Architectural Information System, was launched in March 2008 enabling the public to gain access to data about 200 traditional Chinese villages and buildings in the territory.

Greening

The bureau continues to co-ordinate implementation of 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 during the past five years with 7.5 million planted in 2008-09. The bureau organised about 60 greening and horticultural activities in 2008 to promote greater public awareness and support for greening.

Greening Master Plans

The Government is developing and implementing Greening Master Plans (GMPs) for the various areas in the territory. GMPs define the overall greening frameworks and themes for individual areas and are developed using an enhanced partnering approach, consulting District Councils and the local community in the process. The greening works proposed in the GMPs for Sheung Wan, Wan Chai, Causeway Bay, Mong Kok and Yau Ma Tei commenced in August 2008 for completion by the end of 2009. The development of GMPs for the remaining urban areas will be completed in early 2009 and related greening works will commence in late 2009 for completion by the end of 2011. The bureau will start development of GMPs for the New Territories in late 2009.

Drainage Services

Flood Prevention Programme

The Drainage Services Department has been implementing an \$11.8 billion flood prevention programme in the New Territories for river training works and village flood pumping schemes, and an \$8.8 billion programme of urban drainage improvement works to raise substantially the standard of flood protection.

In Northwestern and Northern New Territories, about 75 kilometres of river have been trained with 27 village flood pumping schemes in operation. The risk of regional flooding in the New Territories has been substantially reduced. Work on improving another 37 kilometres of upstream rivers and storm water drains in Sha Tin, Tai Po, Fanling and Sheung Shui are due for completion in 2012. Design work for another eight kilometres of drainage channels in the upstream portions of the

Ping Yuen, Sheung Yue and Ng Tung Rivers in the Northern New Territories is in progress.

In the urban areas, construction of remaining nine kilometres of storm water drains in East Kowloon will be completed by 2011. In West Kowloon, the 100 000-cubic metre Tai Hang Tung flood storage tank, the 1.5-kilometre Kai Tak storm water transfer tunnel, and over 40 kilometres of storm water drains have been constructed. On Hong Kong Island, the construction of intercepting drains at Queen's Road Central was completed in June 2008. In order to mitigate the flooding in Sheung Wan, construction of the Sheung Wan stormwater pumping station commenced in 2006 for completion in 2009.

To further reduce the flooding risk in urban areas, Hong Kong West Drainage Tunnel, Tsuen Wan Drainage Tunnel and Lai Chi Kok Drainage Tunnel, totaling 19 kilometres with 43 intake structures, will be constructed. Construction of the former two tunnels commenced in late 2007, while work on the Lai Chi Kok Drainage Tunnel started in November 2008. These projects, when completed in 2012, will channel storm water from hillsides to the sea through the drainage tunnels, reducing the risk of flooding in urban areas such as Happy Valley, Causeway Bay, Wan Chai, Central and Western District, Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung, Cheung Sha Wan and Lai Chi Kok. This will also minimise the need to build additional drains in these highly congested urban areas.

Under a preventive maintenance programme, the department maintains about 2 600 kilometres of watercourse, river channels and drains, from which about 13 000 cubic metres of silt were removed in 2008.

Apart from arranging regular visits to the San Tin Flood Prevention Information Centre for district councillors and school students, the department also distributed pamphlets to villagers and property management offices to educate the public on flood prevention. To introduce the department's work to the public, it held an Open Day at Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works in March and joined the 'Science in the Public Service' Fun Fair in November.

Nullah Improvement Works

In 2005, the Government announced that 16 sections of nullahs in the urban areas would be decked to improve their surrounding environment. Eight sections of decking works including Lung Chu Street Nullah under Package A were completed in 2006 and 2007. Four sections of nullah improvement works under Package B commenced in 2008. The remaining four nullahs under Package C are in the design stage and public consultation is being carried out with a view to meeting public needs. Package C nullah improvement works are scheduled to commence in 2009 and 2010 for completion by 2014.

Rehabilitation of the Yuen Long Town Nullahs is also being undertaken. The existing nullahs in Yuen Long Town were constructed more than 40 years ago and a consultancy study was commissioned in 2007 to investigate the feasibility of improving their environmental conditions.

Slope Safety

The Civil Engineering and Development Department manages a comprehensive Slope Safety System, which has brought about a substantial improvement in the safety of slopes. 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 \$1 billion was spent in 2008 to improve the safety of slopes. Upgrading works were completed on 310 substandard government man-made slopes, all of which were landscaped to blend in with their surroundings. Safety screening studies were completed on 300 private man-made slopes.

A long-term Landslip Prevention and Mitigation Programme was launched. This programme will deal with the landslide risk remaining after completion of the current phase of the LPM Programme in 2010. It will do this through the upgrading of man-made slopes and systematic mitigation of risk from natural hillside catchments that have a known history of landslides and are close to existing buildings and important transport corridors.

The department also inspects substandard slopes to see if they are liable to collapse during rainfall. It recommends 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 2008, it inspected 20 sub-standard man-made slopes and recommended clearance of affected squatter dwellings.

The department carries out a wide range of activities to advise the community on slope safety. In 2008, more than 20 technical guidance documents in the form of publications, guidance notes and study reports were produced.

In collaboration with the Hong Kong Red Cross, a one-year programme entitled 'Slope and Home Safety' was organised in 2008-09. The objectives of the programme were to provide information and enhance the vigilance of villagers with respect to slope and home safety, thereby reducing potential dangers in their living environment. The programme consisted of many community educational activities and also regular home visits to the village elderly.

To support the forthcoming New Senior Secondary curriculum, the department produced educational materials, including 14 booklets, posters, promotional materials etc. on various topics in relation to the geology and landslides in Hong Kong, to enhance the understanding of local teachers and students on slope safety issues.

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. Dongjiang is the major source of raw water for Hong Kong. The 2006 water supply agreement expired at the end of 2008. A new water supply agreement for 2009 to 2011 was signed in December 2008. This will maintain the same benefits of the current agreement despite increasing demand for the scarce fresh water resources from cities in Guangdong. There will be flexibility in the daily supply rate to tie in with seasonal fluctuations in the local yield, which will enable Hong Kong to have better control of the storage level in reservoirs, thereby minimising wastage and saving pumping costs. It also guarantees the long-term supply of Dongjiang water to Hong Kong.

Water Storage and Consumption

Full supply was maintained throughout the year. At the end of 2008, some 415 million cubic metres of water was in storage, compared with 386 million cubic metres a year earlier. Hong Kong's two largest reservoirs, High Island and Plover Cove held a total of 364 million cubic metres. Rainfall of 3 066 millimetres, 29 per cent higher than the annual average of 2 383 millimetres, was recorded in 2008.

The average daily consumption of water in 2008 was 2.612 million cubic metres, compared with 2.605 million cubic metres in 2007. Some 956 million cubic metres of potable water was consumed in 2008, compared with 951 million cubic metres in 2007. In addition, 275 million cubic metres of sea water was used for flushing, compared with 271 million cubic metres in 2007.

Total Water Management

The Government is proceeding with a Total Water Management (TWM) Programme. A study has been commissioned to examine water demand and supply in Hong Kong and to evaluate all major options for their management. Based on the findings of the study, a TWM strategy has been formulated. It aims to manage the water demand and supply in an integrated, multi-sectoral and sustainable manner. The strategy puts emphasis on containing growth of water demand through conservation while the supply management will also be strengthened.

On water demand management, the key initiatives are the implementation of active leakage control, extension of the use of seawater for toilet flushing, stepping up public education on water conservation and promotion of the use of water saving devices, including the development of a voluntary Water Efficiency Labelling Scheme. The current practice in protection of water supply resources will be strengthened. Subject to the final results of two current pilot schemes on use of reclaimed water in Ngong Ping and Shek Wu Hui, the Government will consider a plan to provide reclaimed water from the Shek Wu Hui Sewage Treatment Works for consumers in Sheung Shui and Fanling for toilet flushing and other non-potable uses. In addition, the Government will conduct trials in the re-use of grey water and of rainwater harvesting and it will encourage private developers to consider them. The option of seawater desalination will be further developed.

Water Works

Works on the first, second and third stages of the programme for the replacement and rehabilitation of some 3 000 kilometres of water mains began in

December 2000, January 2007 and September 2008. Detailed design of the final stage is under way, and work on it will be carried out from 2011 to 2015.

Remedial work on the protective rock rip-rap at Plover Cove Reservoir main dam was completed during this year.

The investigation consultancy to expand the Tai Po Water Treatment Works and Ancillary Raw Water and Fresh Water Transfer Facilities commenced in June 2008 followed by design and construction consultancy in June 2009. The construction works are targeted to commence in February 2010 for completion in September 2014.

The Water Supplies Department continues to work on plans to provide 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.

Water Accounts and Customer Relations

The number of consumers with water accounts continues to rise gradually. At year-end, the department was handling approximately 2.73 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 2008.

The voluntary Quality Water Recognition Scheme for Buildings (known as the Fresh Water Plumbing Quality Maintenance Recognition Scheme before 2008), which was 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

Since its formation on February 1, 2007, the Construction Industry Council (CIC) has established a close partnership with the Government. The CIC has made steady progress in taking forward improvement initiatives to raise standards in the construction industry in the major areas of construction site safety, environment and technology, manpower training and development, procurement and subcontracting. The CIC uses its website at www.hkcic.org to keep industry stakeholders informed of the latest developments.

The CIC amalgamated with the former Construction Industry Training Authority on January 1, 2008. Upon amalgamation, the Construction Industry Training Board was formed under CIC to continue to provide 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 2008, 4 317 applications for registration had been received and 3 838 were approved.

Construction Workers Registration

The Construction Workers Registration Authority (CWRA) continued the registration of construction workers. Up to the end of December 2008, about 266 000 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. The CWRA has been preparing for implementing the remaining phase of prohibition, under which 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

During the year, the Development Bureau continued discussions with stakeholders of the Hong Kong construction industry and the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development on the sixth phase of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA). Under Supplement V to CEPA signed between the Mainland and Hong Kong in July 2008, further commitments to market access were secured for Hong Kong service providers to set up construction engineering design enterprises in the Mainland. It also allows Hong Kong professionals, who have obtained the Mainland's registered Urban Planner or Supervision Engineer qualification, to register and practise in Guangdong Province.

In 2008, the bureau continued to organise graduate secondment training programmes with various Mainland authorities. In Shenzhen, the sixth batch of graduates commenced their training in October 2008. Based on the positive results in the Shenzhen secondment training programme, the programme has been extended to Guangzhou and Chongqing. The first batch of quantity surveying and landscape architectural graduates completed their three-month training in Guangzhou in January 2008 while the first batch of civil engineering and geotechnical engineering graduates completed their training course in Chongqing in June 2008.

Websites

Development Bureau: www.devb.gov.hk

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

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