

## Chapter 12

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# Infrastructure Development and Heritage Conservation

*While developing the infrastructure for Hong Kong's economic growth, the Government is enriching the city's living environment at the same time through conservation and revitalisation.*

### **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 Development Opportunities Office was set up under the Bureau in 2009.

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 concerning 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 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 striking a balance between development and

conservation. The Government's heritage conservation policy and initiatives, drawn up in response to public aspirations, aim to facilitate active public involvement in protecting Hong Kong's heritage.

The Development Opportunities Office (DOO) was established on July 1, 2009 for an initial period of three years to provide one-stop advisory and co-ordinating services to project proponents in the private sector and non-governmental organisations. The DOO does not approve land development projects, but facilitates the implementation of those that have broader social values or that strengthen Hong Kong's economic competitiveness.

The Land and Development Advisory Committee advises the Government on major policies and procedures on land development matters. Its terms of reference and membership were broadened after it was re-organised in July 2009 enabling it to advise the Government on the merits of individual project proposals handled by the DOO.

The DOO has also assisted in developing and co-ordinating implementation of the package of policy measures announced by the Chief Executive in his 2009 Policy Address which called for the redevelopment and wholesale conversion of Hong Kong's old industrial buildings.

## **Planning for Hong Kong**

Strategic town planning provides an important framework for Hong Kong's future development. 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. The recommended strategy focuses on providing Hong Kong with a quality living environment, enhancing its economic competitiveness and strengthening its links with the Mainland to help it become Asia's world city.

### *Harbourfront Enhancement*

Hong Kong's image as a vibrant and colourful city owes much to its attractive Victoria Harbourfront which the Government is committed to protecting and beautifying. In April 2009, a dedicated team was formed within the Development Bureau to co-ordinate inter-departmental plans for enhancing the harbourfront.

During the year, the Government continued to work closely with the Harbourfront Enhancement Committee, an advisory committee comprising 28 members representing different organisations, including green groups, harbour concern bodies, professional institutes, the business sector as well as community leaders. The Government announced final proposals for eight key sites in the New Central Harbourfront after taking into account the views of the public and those of the committee. In particular, the proposals call for the development of two prime waterfront sites into a distinctive civic node with low-rise buildings and structures for different amenities for the public to enjoy. The sites will be developed under a public-private partnership arrangement. There will also be extensive public open space along the entire length of the waterfront for leisure, recreational and cultural use.

### *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 mostly non-Government representatives, the TPB oversees the preparation and review of draft statutory plans, considers representations to them and examines requests to amend them. In 2009, 25 statutory plans were amended and three new ones were published, one of which was an outline zoning plan while the other two were the plans for Urban Renewal Authority development schemes.

Under the TPO, any person may submit to the TPB his or her views on draft statutory plans for public examination. In 2009, the TPB examined 4 040 such submissions. During the year, 20 statutory plans were submitted to the Chief Executive in Council for approval. In 2009, the TPB also considered 27 applications for amendments to statutory plans.

A set of notes is attached to each statutory plan to indicate the uses in particular zones that are permitted and those which require TPB permission. In 2009, the TPB considered 769 applications for planning permission and 563 applications for amendments to approved schemes. The TPB also reviewed its decisions on 65 applications.

Applicants aggrieved by the decisions of the TPB may lodge appeals with the independent Town Planning Appeal Boards. In 2009, the appeal boards heard four cases, of which two were dismissed and two were awaiting a decision.

The TPB also promulgates guidelines for statutory planning. In 2009, two sets of existing guidelines were revised. At the end of 2009, there were 30 sets of guidelines.

### *Planning Enforcement*

The Town Planning Ordinance provides the Planning Authority with enforcement powers to tackle 'unauthorised developments' (UDs) in Development Permission Areas. The Planning Authority may serve statutory notices on the respective landowners, occupiers and/or persons responsible for UD, requiring them to stop or discontinue a UD within a specified time. Subsequently, a further statutory notice may be served requiring the site to be restored. Non-compliance is a statutory offence.

In 2009, a total of 391 new UD, including open storage, container usage sites, vehicle parks and landfills were discovered. A total of 3 391 warning letters or reminders (involving 560 cases), 2 191 enforcement notices (involving 296 cases), four stop notices (involving four cases), 309 reinstatement notices (involving 64 cases) and 1 535 compliance notices (involving 232 cases) were issued. A total of 91 defendants in 42 cases were convicted and fined by the court. The enforcement and prosecution actions have resulted in the discontinuation of 237 UD occupying 57 hectares of land. Another 134 UD covering 55 hectares of land were regularised through the planning application system.

### *Cross-boundary Planning and Development*

The Government maintains close liaison with the Guangdong authorities on planning matters under 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 patterns and behaviour, and Hong Kong people's experience of and aspirations to taking up residence in the Mainland. The findings provide valuable input for planning cross-boundary infrastructure and formulating development strategies.

A planning study, 'Co-ordinated Development of the Greater Pearl River Delta Townships', was commissioned by the Hong Kong, Macao and Guangdong governments to formulate a regional development strategy. The study's findings were promulgated in 2009.

Plans are being made for setting up a boundary control point at Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai to strengthen the physical connection between Hong Kong and Shenzhen.

A study, 'Land Use Planning for the Closed Area', was launched following the Government's decision to revise the Frontier Closed Area's (FCA) boundary. The study aims to provide a guideline for developing and conserving the area. Based on the views expressed by members of the public during the first stage of consultations with them on the subject and on the results of technical and strategic environmental assessments, a draft development plan was drawn up for a second round of public consultations in 2009.

## **Major Planning Studies/Planning Reviews**

### *Lantau Development*

A concept plan, formulated in late 2004, now serves as a guide for the development of Lantau Island. The plan, prepared initially by a Lantau Development Task Force, had since been fine-tuned, and takes into account public views and environmental needs. It prescribes confining major economic infrastructure and urban development to North Lantau, while protecting nearby areas of scenic and high ecological value for conservation and environmentally sustainable recreation and tourist use. It also proposes improvements to the living environment of the rural townships of Mui Wo and Tai O in South Lantau.

### *Environmental and Area Improvement*

The Planning Department is continuing its feasibility study on an urban climatic map and standards for wind environment. It is also carrying out air ventilation assessments for various planning and development schemes. A plan for improving Mong Kok's shopping area and housing sites in Tuen Mun East was completed during the year, while studies on improving Hong Kong Island's east harbourfront and the Lau Fau Shan and Sha Tau Kok townships are continuing.

### *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 reviewed constantly to take into account changes in government policies, demographic characteristics, and social and economic trends. During the year, the planning standards and guidelines for retail facilities, social welfare facilities and vehicle parking areas in subsidised housing development were revised.

## **Land Supply**

The Development Bureau continues to provide adequate land to meet the community's development needs while striking a balance between development and the need to maintain a quality living environment.

To facilitate and encourage hotel development to support Hong Kong's tourism industry, the bureau has extended the pilot measures for 'hotel use only' sites for another year. Nine such sites were included in the 2009-10 Application List.

In accordance with the pledge made by the Chief Executive in his 2007-08 Policy Address, the bureau has reviewed the development parameters of every site included in the 2009-10 Application List. Appropriate development parameters are specified in the Conditions of Sale, such as building height limits and maximum gross floor areas or plot ratios. Where required, air ventilation assessment has been conducted, with appropriate development restrictions imposed in the Conditions of Sale.

The bureau has finalised the revised plan for the property development project at the West Rail's Nam Cheong Station. As for the property development projects at the West Rail's Yuen Long Station, the bureau has consulted the district's residents and their District Council on the revised plan.

## *Land Acquisition*

Acquisition of private land for public use may be done through negotiations or resumption. The relevant ordinances provide for compensation to be paid for the property's value at the date of acquisition and for the loss of business. If agreement cannot be reached on the amount of compensation, either party may go to the Lands Tribunal for adjudication. As alternatives to statutory compensation, there are simplified assessment procedures for early release of payment to facilitate land clearance. Some 78 517 square metres of private land, comprising about 6 465 square metres of building land and 72 052 square metres of agricultural land, were acquired in 2009. Compensation amounting to \$415.2 million was paid during the year.

The Lands Department was also involved in the resumption of land for urban renewal projects. During the year, compensation totalling \$158.6 million was paid to owners of 74 resumed properties and occupiers affected by 23 urban renewal projects. Some 400 square metres of building land for railway projects were resumed in 2009. By the year's end, compensation amounting to \$5.7 million had been paid for land resumed for the West Rail and \$33.3 million for the East Rail Extension.

### *Land Disposal*

While government land available for disposal for permanent development is usually offered for sale through public auction, sale through public tender is also a practice in certain circumstances, such as when the sites being offered for sale do not attract wide interest. Petrol filling station sites are one such example. In some cases, land may be made available by private treaty grant. Since January 2004, the Government has made land available to the market mainly through the Application List System, a market-driven mechanism. In 2009, one commercial-cum-residential site, two residential sites and five petrol filling stations covering a total area of about 4.635 hectares were sold for nearly \$11.076 billion.

Holders of private land leases wishing to amend their leases may seek the Government's permission to do so. They may also apply for permission to carry out different types of development on their land in accordance with prevailing planning intention. During the year, 119 lease modification and land exchange transactions were concluded, involving about 296.62 hectares of land and land premiums amounting to \$4.35 billion.

### *Land Management and Lease Enforcement*

The Lands Department manages properties which have reverted to government ownership through voluntary surrender, expiry of government leases, resumption, re-entry or vesting actions. During the year, 36 new properties were taken over for management and eight properties were disposed of. The department currently manages 478 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 18 300 man-made slopes. With the help of private consultants, it carries out regular inspection of these slopes and employs contractors to carry out routine maintenance and stabilisation works. During the year, routine maintenance works were carried out on 6 300 slopes and stabilisation works on 370 slopes.

The Lands Department administers a 'Small House Policy' for indigenous villagers in the New Territories and approves the rebuilding of old village houses. During the year, 1 290 applications for the building of small houses and 293 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.

In collaboration with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the Lands Department continues to operate a scheme for the display of non-commercial publicity materials or banners at 22 349 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 6 790 surveyed squatter

structures in the urban areas and 386 910 in the New Territories. During the year, 194 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 drafting of all government land disposal and lease modification documents and the checking of title in land acquisitions. It processes applications for the sale of units under construction under the Lands Department Consent Scheme. In 2009, a total of 32 applications, involving 11 671 residential units, were approved. The office also approves Deeds of Mutual Covenant. In 2009, 49 such deeds were approved. It also processes apportionment of premium and government rents, and recovers arrears of government rents by taking appropriate re-entry or vesting action.

### *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, maintains a geodetic survey network, a Satellite Positioning Reference Station Network and a 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 overseeing land boundary survey standards.

A Data Dissemination System (DDS) set up during the year expedites the integration and dissemination of geospatial data within the Government. When fully implemented it will also enable maps to be ordered and delivered through the internet.

In collaboration with other government departments, the SMO has developed a Geospatial Information Hub (GIH) as a government-wide web-based information integration and sharing platform which supports the operation of more than 40 bureaux and departments in delivering public services. Based on the GIH model, a new common geospatial information platform is being developed to facilitate easy access to community geospatial information by the general public through the internet.

The SMO has started implementing a 3D Spatial Data Processing System to maintain a territory-wide 3D spatial database and to provide analytical 3D visualisation services to support land development and management. The first set of 3D spatial database was used by works departments in carrying out various civil engineering applications. The 3D spatial database has been enriched further by the inclusion of photorealistic models of prominent landmarks in Hong Kong.

### **Land Registration**

Land registration safeguards the rights of Hong Kong's social and economic development and underpins its importance. 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 19 million documents can be accessed electronically.

## Land Registry Business Volume in 2009

### Registration Services

*(Distribution of Land Documents Lodged for Registration)*

<i>Nature</i>	<i>Number</i>
Agreements for sale and purchase of building units	133 962
Agreements for sale and purchase of land	2 256
Assignments of building units	141 307
Assignments of land	6 159
Building mortgages/building legal charges	120
Other mortgages/legal charges	116 401
Others	263 937
Total	664 142

### Search Services

*(Distribution by Search Mode)*

<i>Counter Searches</i>		<i>Online Searches*</i>	
<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
570 584	10.7%	4 761 948	89.3%

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

Hong Kong currently adopts a deeds registration system. To provide greater security of title and enhance ease of conveyancing, the Land Titles Ordinance was enacted in 2004. As agreed with the Legislative Council, the law will not come into effect until a comprehensive review is completed and further amended legislation is passed. During the year, the Registry continued preparatory work for the Land Titles (Amendment) Bill and consultation with the stakeholders and the public.

## New Development Projects

The Government remains committed to building new infrastructure and improving existing facilities to meet economic development needs and continues to invest heavily in infrastructure development. Work on providing land and infrastructure for urban areas and the new towns was progressing on schedule in 2009. The major development projects include:



### *The Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point*

The HKSAR Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government will implement jointly the Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point (BCP) project which was announced in September 2008 to enhance the overall cross-boundary transport infrastructure, for long-term economic growth and further regional co-operation. The project is expected to be commissioned in 2018.

### *Development of the Lok Ma Chau Loop*

The development of the Lok Ma Chau Loop (the Loop) is among the 10 large-scale infrastructure projects for economic growth announced by the Chief Executive in his 2007-08 Policy Address. In accordance with the principle of 'joint study, joint development', the Hong Kong and Shenzhen governments are studying the feasibility of developing the Loop. Based on the views collected during consultation with members of the public in Hong Kong and Shenzhen in 2008, the two governments felt that facilities for higher education would be a prime consideration in the Loop's development, to be complemented by facilities for hi-tech research and development for cultural and creative industries. In June 2009, a 'Planning and Engineering Study on Development of the Loop' was launched. The study is expected to be completed before end of 2011.

### *Kai Tak Development*

The Kai Tak Development (KTD) is a large-scale project covering an area of about 328 hectares at the former airport site and its adjoining land. The aim is to create a distinguished, vibrant, attractive, and people-oriented gathering place called 'Kai Tak by the Harbour'. Construction work has started and is expected to be completed in three stages – by 2013, 2016 and 2021. Work on the first stage, or 'package' of facilities, comprising two roads and the site formation works for a cruise terminal at the former runway commenced in 2009. The other packages comprise a multi-purpose stadium complex, government offices, a 24-hectare metro park, and residential and commercial buildings and related facilities.

### *Central Reclamation Phase III and Wan Chai Development Phase II*

The Central and Wan Chai Reclamation on which work has started extends along the Victoria Harbour waterfront from Sheung Wan to the east of the Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter. Central Reclamation Phase III involves reclaiming about 18 hectares of land from the sea and providing the essential infrastructure for the area. Wan Chai Development Phase II provides land for the Central-Wan Chai Bypass and the Island Eastern Corridor Link. These reclamations on the northern shore of Hong Kong Island also provide an opportunity for creating a vibrant and accessible harbourfront for public enjoyment.

### *New Development Areas in New Territories*

The purpose of a North East New Territories New Development Areas (NDAs) Planning and Engineering Study now under way is to formulate a feasible planning and development framework for creating NDAs for Kwu Tung North, Fanling North and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling to address the long-term housing and employment needs of the territory. The first stage of soliciting public views of and aspirations for the

NDA was completed in early 2009. Stage Two, launched at the end of 2009, invites public views on the 'Preliminary Outline Development Plans' for the NDAs.

The planning and engineering study for the proposed Hung Shui Kiu NDA is being reviewed to take into account the proposed Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line and its related infrastructure.

### *Cycle Track Network in the New Territories*

The Government is developing a cycle track network in the New Territories to give local residents and visitors an additional pastime opportunity to explore Hong Kong's interesting and scenic sites. The track is about 110 kilometers long, and stretches from Sai Kung in the east through Ma On Shan, Sha Tin, Tai Po, Fanling, Sheung Shui, Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, to Tsuen Wan in the west.

There will be facilities along the route for bicycle rental, repair, parking as well as for cyclists to rest. Work on the first phase of the network will start in mid-2010 for completion in 2013. The entire network is planned for completion in stages by 2019.

### *Transport Infrastructure*

The Government is pushing ahead with the 10 large-scale infrastructure projects announced by the Chief Executive in his 2007 Policy Address. The aim of those projects is to help Hong Kong develop further, to improve its transportation infrastructure, and to foster cross-boundary integration with neighbouring Shenzhen and the Pearl River Delta region. Details of the transport infrastructure projects are in Chapter 13.

## **Building Development**

### *Private Sector*

Quality and sustainable buildings are essential features of a prosperous and modern metropolis. The Buildings Department promotes and facilitates the construction and maintenance of such buildings to provide a safe and healthy living environment for the community.

In 2009, work started on superstructures at 153 building sites, covering a gross floor area of 1.33 million square metres. A total of 668 buildings, with a combined gross floor area of 1.49 million square metres, were completed at a total cost of \$26.1 billion compared with 753 buildings, with a gross floor area of 1.80 million square metres, built at a total cost of \$23.4 billion, in 2008.

New major construction works in progress at the end of 2009 included phases I and II of Ocean Park's redevelopment. A number of buildings in the phase I redevelopment programme were completed in 2009.

### *Public Sector*

The Government develops and maintains most government buildings and public facilities, other than public housing, through the Architectural Services Department. In 2009, 47 projects were completed. These included the reprovisioning of the

Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground, the Diamond Hill Crematorium, the Indoor Recreation Centre, Community Hall-cum-Library in Tung Chung, schools, improvements to sports facilities and works on open space facilities.

Work started on 24 projects in 2009. These included major projects such as the New Civil Aviation Department Headquarters, the Tseung Kwan O Hospital expansion, Redevelopment of the Victoria Park Swimming Pool Complex, the Wo Hop Shek Crematorium and the Lam Tin North Municipal Services Building.

In line with the Government's policy on sustainable development, the department continued promoting and practising sustainable public architecture and improving the energy efficiency in government buildings and public facilities. Conservation of historic and heritage buildings is also promoted continuously to protect, preserve and revitalise them. On green architecture, the department adopts the Government policy of incorporating in its architectural designs a blending of green elements such as those present in landscaped gardens and green rooftops. The department was awarded a Certificate of Merit by the organisers of the 2008 Hong Kong Awards for Environmental Excellence. Three other projects carried out by the department also won awards bestowed by the Hong Kong Institute of Architects for achievements in heritage conservation, urban design and universal accessibility. The winning projects were: the Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery-cum-Heritage Trail Visitors Centre, the Stanley Waterfront Improvement Works, and a special school for severely mentally handicapped children in Tin Shui Wai.

### **Building Safety and Maintenance**

Encouraging owners to maintain their buildings properly, to carry out timely repairs and to ensure building safety continued to be the Development Bureau's key areas of work in 2009. There were two major developments during the year: the building control regime was modernised and an initiative to help owners repair their buildings was introduced.

Following the passage of the Buildings (Amendment) Ordinance 2008 which outlined the framework of a minor works control system, subsidiary legislation detailing the modus operandi of the system was enacted in 2009 for the streamlining of the statutory control procedures for small-scale building works enabling building owners to adopt simplified statutory procedures to carry out small-scale building works such as the installation of drying racks and supporting frames for air conditioners. The registration of minor works contractors started in late 2009 while the new control system will become fully operational during 2010.

In May 2009, the Government joined hands with the Hong Kong Housing Society and the Urban Renewal Authority to launch a one-off drive, called Operation Building Bright, to alleviate the unemployment situation in the building repair and maintenance industry caused by the financial tsunami and to improve building safety. Owners of old and dilapidated buildings were given financial help to carry out repair and maintenance works on their buildings.

A total of \$2 billion was allotted by the Government and the two organisations to the drive to help repair and maintain about 2 000 buildings and create more than 20 000 job opportunities in the construction, repair and maintenance industries.

Owners of buildings that qualify for financial support under the scheme may receive up to 80 per cent of the cost of repairs which must not exceed \$16,000. Owner-occupiers aged 60 or above may receive grants to cover the full cost of repairs, provided the cost does not exceed \$40,000.

The Hong Kong Housing Society assisted the Government in administering the \$1 billion Building Maintenance Grant Scheme for Elderly Owners. Recipients may also use the money they receive from the scheme to repair their premises or repay their outstanding loans with the Buildings Department, the Urban Renewal Authority or the Hong Kong Housing Society which was spent on building maintenance. The scheme was launched in May 2008. From that date until December 2009, a total of 4 920 applications, amounting to \$175 million have been approved.

The bureau is preparing for the launch of the mandatory building inspection and mandatory window inspection schemes to address the problem of building neglect. Legislation for the two schemes is being formulated.

The Buildings Department continues to serve statutory orders on owners and occupiers of dilapidated buildings requiring them to repair defects in their buildings. In 2009, some 1 143 such statutory orders were served and repairs to 1 082 buildings were carried out. The department continued removing unauthorised building works (UBWs) during the year using different measures to eliminate them. These included serving statutory notices and statutory removal orders on the owners and occupiers of such structures, preventing the erection of new UBWs and educating the public on the dangers and nuisances caused by such illegal structures.

### *Major Actions Against UBWs*

During the year, 25 866 cases of UBWs were dealt with; 31 453 statutory orders requiring their removal were served and 42 425 UBWs were removed. Some 2 930 cases were adjudicated, resulting in 2 207 convictions and fines totalling \$7.14 million. A total of 3 063 offenders were prosecuted for failing to comply with the statutory removal orders.

The Buildings Department continued clearing UBWs in 2009. It also removed unauthorised large signboards and cantilevered slab balconies from some 1 162 buildings in 2009. A one-year special operation was launched in March 2009 to remove 5 000 abandoned signboards across the territory to improve the cityscape as well as create new jobs. Over 6 470 such signboards were removed or repaired in 2009.

### **Urban Renewal**

The aim of urban renewal is to improve living conditions in old urban areas and to preserve their local character and social network at the same time.

The Development Bureau formulates policy on urban renewal and provides support and guidance to the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), which was established in May 2001.

The Urban Renewal Strategy (URS) provides guidelines for the URA to carry out its work. In 2008, the Development Bureau launched a comprehensive review of the URA's work to take into account changing circumstances and public aspirations. A steering committee chaired by the Secretary for Development, consisting of 10 leading members of the community, was set up to guide and monitor the review and to invite public participation in it. The review is expected to be completed in mid-2010.

The URA adopts a '4R' approach to bringing new life to old urban areas: redeveloping dilapidated buildings, rehabilitating old buildings, revitalising old districts, and preserving buildings with historical, cultural or architectural value.

By the end of 2009, the URA and its partner, the Hong Kong Housing Society, were carrying out 37 redevelopment projects and four preservation projects, and were making good progress in redeveloping Kwun Tong Town Centre, the largest project being handled by the URA so far. The URA continued to work closely with the Old Wan Chai Revitalisation Initiatives Special Committee and successfully opened two heritage trails in Wan Chai. The special committee is also working with a private property developer to revitalise some of old Wan Chai's streets.

Central Market, a Grade III historical building built in 1939, is to be transformed into a 'Central Oasis' comprising public open space, eateries and an atrium for holding of public events. Central's business district is expected to benefit most from it. Revitalising Central Market is one of the eight initiatives announced by the Chief Executive in his 2009 Policy Address for 'Conserving Central'.

## **Heritage Conservation**

### *Heritage Conservation Policy and New Initiatives*

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) Six non-profit-making organisations were selected under Batch I of the 'Revitalising Historic Buildings through Partnership Scheme' to revitalise six historic buildings. The buildings are: the Old Tai O Police Station, the Fong Yuen Study Hall, Lai Chi Kok Hospital, Lui Seng Chun, Mei Ho House and North Kowloon Magistracy;
- (b) Batch II was launched in August. Under it, proposals were invited for revitalising five historic buildings: – the Old Tai Po Police Station, the Blue House Cluster, Fanling Magistracy, the Old House at Wong Uk Village, and Stone Houses;

- (c) Following a review in 2009, the bureau introduced improvements to the Heritage Impact Assessment mechanism, requiring all new capital works projects to be carried out with minimal or no damage to heritage sites, or to have ways of reducing impairment if damage is unavoidable;
- (d) A total of 1 444 historic buildings were assessed for their heritage value, following which the bureau assisted the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) to finalise their grading; and
- (e) Two privately-owned historic buildings (Residence of Ip Ting-sz and Yan Tun Kong Study Hall) and 41 pre-war waterworks structures in six reservoirs (Pok Fu Lam Reservoir, Wong Nai Chung Reservoir, Kowloon Reservoir, Aberdeen Reservoir, Shing Mun (Jubilee) Reservoir and Tai Tam Group of Reservoirs) were declared monuments for permanent protection under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance.

In the private domain:

- (a) The bureau approved eight applications from private owners of graded historic buildings for funds to maintain their buildings; and
- (b) The Government lifted partially a temporary ban, called the Pokfulam Moratorium to help preserve a privately owned Grade 3 historic building, Jessville, at 128 Pok Fu Lam Road.

### *Public Engagement and Publicity*

The bureau ran a series of programmes to reach out to the community through listening to public views and working with stakeholders to strengthen interaction between the Government and the community.

In 2009, the bureau organised a number of activities for students and young people to strengthen their interest in and knowledge of heritage conservation. These were:

- (a) A 'Historic Buildings Drawing Competition-cum-Exhibition' held from March to May, in which over 560 students participated.
- (b) Postcards featuring the winning entries of a drawing competition were distributed in primary and secondary schools for students to post free of charge on 'Free Posting Day' in June;
- (c) Guided tours of the Central Police Station Compound and the Tai Tam Waterworks Heritage Trail were conducted for members of the public from April to December; and
- (d) A 'Faces & Places' heritage photo exhibition cum-thematic talks was held from September to November to give members of the public wider knowledge of the architectural history of Central and Western District and Wan Chai.

A dedicated government website on heritage conservation [www.heritage.gov.hk](http://www.heritage.gov.hk) was launched in January 2008, and it has received more than 673 000 visits. Since

June 2008, the bureau also published a bimonthly newsletter ‘活化@Heritage’ featuring topics of public concern and explaining the work of the Commissioner for Heritage’s Office. Over 100 000 printed copies had been distributed by the end of 2009.

### *Antiquities and Monuments Office*

The Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) continued with its task of preserving Hong Kong’s heritage and promoting public awareness by means of various educational and extension projects in 2009. The AMO provides secretariat support to the AAB, which advises the Government on sites and structures that merit protection as monuments and on matters related to antiquities and monuments.

In 2009, restoration and repair works on a number of historic buildings were carried out, including Yi Shing Kung in Wang Chau, Yi Tai Study Hall in Kam Tin, Kun Lung Wai in Lung Yeuk Tau, Man Mo Temple in Tai Po, Hung Shing Temple on Kau Sai Chau, Maryknoll Convent School in Kowloon Tong and the Main Building of Helena May in Central. Restoration of Chik Kwai Study Hall in Pat Heung and the Tang Ancestral Hall in Ha Tsuen was also in progress and due for completion in 2010 and 2011 respectively.

Further archaeological investigation was conducted to establish the extent of the remnants of Lung Tsun Stone Bridge in the Kai Tak Area. In-situ preservation of the remnants will be arranged. To allow construction of two schools, a rescue excavation at So Kwun Wat, Tuen Mun was conducted, while archaeological investigations were also carried out at Sai Kung, Tuen Mun and Lantau Island to prevent underground archaeological deposits from being damaged during the building of village houses at those sites.

The AMO organised frequent educational and publicity activities including displays, lectures, guided tours and workshops. An exhibition entitled ‘Heritage Alive: UNESCO Culture Heritage Awards’ was organised jointly by the AMO, the Commissioner for Heritage’s Office, the University of Hong Kong and UNESCO’s Bangkok Office in November 2009 to celebrate Hong Kong’s winning entries since 2000.

### **Greening, Landscape and Tree Management**

The bureau co-ordinates the implementation of greening measures and draws up a greening programme for the whole of Hong Kong each year to improve the living environment. About 55 million plants, including trees, shrubs and annuals, were planted during the past five years with 7.6 million planted in 2009-10.

#### *Greening Master Plans*

The Government is developing and implementing Greening Master Plans (GMPs) for various districts. The GMPs define the overall greening frameworks and themes for individual districts. The greening works proposed in the GMPs for Sheung Wan, Wan Chai, Causeway Bay, Mong Kok and Yau Ma Tei were completed in December

2009. The development of GMPs for the remaining urban areas has been completed and work under these commenced from August to December 2009 for completion in 2011. Meanwhile, the Government will prepare the formulation of GMPs for the New Territories.

#### *Report of the Task Force on Tree Management – People, Trees, Harmony*

To address concerns about the public safety aspects of tree management, a task force on tree management led by the Chief Secretary for Administration published the 'Report of the Task Force on Tree Management – People, Trees, Harmony' in June 2009 following a comprehensive review. The report recognised that tree safety could not be tackled in isolation through management and maintenance without putting tree management in the overall context of Government's broader greening and landscape policy. The report recommended, among other things, that the bureau should take up the overall policy responsibility for greening, landscape and tree management.

### **Drainage Services**

#### *Flood Prevention Programme*

To address flooding risks, the Drainage Services Department has completed flood protection works to a total cost of about \$11.2 billion throughout Hong Kong Island, Kowloon peninsula and the New Territories. The department has also embarked on the planning, design and construction of further flood protection works of a total cost of about \$10.4 billion.

The majority of major flood protection works in the New Territories has been completed. These include about 82 kilometres of trained rivers and 27 village floodwater pumping schemes. The risk of regional flooding in the New Territories has therefore been substantially reduced. Works to improve about 32 kilometres of drainage works in Sha Tin, Tai Po, Fanling and Sheung Shui and other areas are due for completion in 2013. Design work for another eight kilometres of drainage channels in the upstream portions of the Ping Yuen River, Sheung Yue River and Ng Tung River in the Northern New Territories is in progress.

Completed major flood protection works in the urban areas include the Tai Hang Tung Flood-water Tank and Kai Tak Transfer Tunnel in West Kowloon and the Sheung Wan storm-water pumping station which was commissioned in 2009. Construction of another nine kilometres of storm-water drains in East Kowloon will be completed by 2011.

To reduce further the flooding risk in urban areas, the department is working in full swing on the construction of the Hong Kong West, Tsuen Wan and Lai Chi Kok drainage tunnels, totalling 19 kilometres with 43 intake structures. Construction of the former two tunnels commenced in late 2007, while work on the Lai Chi Kok tunnel started in late 2008. These projects, when completed in 2012, will intercept and channel storm-water from hillsides to the sea through the intakes and drainage tunnels, thereby reducing the risk of flooding in urban areas including Happy Valley, Causeway Bay, Wan Chai, Central and Western District, Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung,



Cheung Sha Wan and Lai Chi Kok. This arrangement of interception at mid-stream will minimise the need to build additional drains in these highly congested urban areas.

Under a preventive maintenance programme, the department continues to carry out inspection, de-silting and repair works for drainage systems. In 2009, over 1 900 kilometres of drains and watercourses were inspected and about \$129 million was spent on such maintenance work.

To promote flood prevention concepts, the department arranged regular visits to the San Tin Flood Prevention Information Centre for district councillors and school students, and also distributed pamphlets to property management offices and the general public.

### *Nullah Improvement Works*

In 2005, the Government announced a plan to provide decking to 16 sections of nullahs in urban areas to improve their surrounding environment. Eight sections of decking were completed between 2006 and 2007. Decking and improvements to another six sections are in progress and due for completion between 2010 and 2012. Improvement works for the remaining two nullahs are in the design stage and public consultation is being carried out.

The department has also started investigation into rehabilitation of the Yuen Long Town nullahs which were constructed more than 40 years ago. A feasibility study on improving the environmental conditions of the nullahs was completed in 2009. The department will carry out the preliminary design of the improvements to the town centre section of the nullahs.

### **Slope Safety**

The Civil Engineering and Development Department's comprehensive Slope Safety System has brought about a substantial improvement in the safety of slopes by improving 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 Landslip Preventive Measures (LPM) Programme, about \$1.2 billion was spent in 2009 to improve the safety of slopes. Upgrading works were completed on 385 sub-standard government man-made slopes, all of which were landscaped to blend in with their surroundings. Safety screening studies were completed on 312 private man-made slopes.

A long-term Landslip Prevention and Mitigation (LPM) Programme was launched. It will deal with the landslide risk remaining after completion of the LPM in 2010, by upgrading man-made slopes and systematic mitigation of risk from natural hillside catchments with a known history of landslides where they are close to existing buildings and important transport corridors.

The department also inspects sub-standard man-made slopes in squatter areas and advises on clearance of squatter dwellings on slope safety grounds. In 2009, it inspected 20 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 2009, more than 29 technical guidance documents in the form of publications, guidance notes and study reports were produced.

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

## **Water Supplies**

### *Water from Guangdong*

Hong Kong began receiving raw water from Dongjiang in 1965. This is now the major source of raw water for Hong Kong. To accommodate seasonal fluctuations in the local yield, the current agreement for Dongjiang water supply signed in December 2008 provides flexibility in the daily supply rate. This enables Hong Kong to have better control of the storage level in reservoirs, thereby minimising overflow more effectively and saving pumping costs. It also guarantees the long-term supply of water from Dongjiang.

### *Water Storage and Consumption*

Full supply was maintained throughout the year. At the end of 2009, some 410 million cubic metres of water was in storage, compared with 415 million cubic metres a year earlier. Hong Kong's two largest reservoirs, High Island and Plover Cove held a total of 355 million cubic metres. Rainfall of 2 182 millimetres, eight per cent lower than the annual average of 2 383 millimetres, was recorded in 2009.

The average daily consumption of water in 2009 was 2.608 million cubic metres, compared with 2.612 million cubic metres in 2008. Some 952 million cubic metres of potable water was consumed in 2009, compared with 956 million cubic metres in 2008. In addition, 271 million cubic metres of sea water was used for flushing, compared with 275 million cubic metres in 2008.

### *Total Water Management*

The Government is implementing the Total Water Management strategy that 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.

The key initiatives on water demand management include implementation of active leakage control, extension of the use of sea water for toilet flushing, stepping up public education on water conservation and promotion of the use of water saving devices. In September, the Government implemented a voluntary Water Efficiency Labelling Scheme to promote awareness of the public of the level of water

consumption and efficiency of water-using fixtures and appliances. The current practice in protection of water supply resources is also being enhanced at the same time. With public acceptance of the use of reclaimed water in the two pilot schemes at Ngong Ping and Shek Wu Hui, the Government will explore the option of providing reclaimed water from the Shek Wu Hui Sewage Treatment Works to consumers in Sheung Shui/Fanling for toilet flushing and other non-potable uses. In addition, the Government will promote the re-use of grey water and rainwater harvesting and will encourage private developers to consider them. The option of sea water desalination will be developed further.

### *Water Works*

The works of the first, second and third stages of a programme for the replacement and rehabilitation of some 3 000 kilometres of water mains is in progress. Detailed design of the final stage continues.

A design and construction consultancy expanding the Tai Po Water Treatment Works and ancillary raw and fresh water transfer facilities commenced in June 2009. Work is due to commence in February 2010 for completion in September 2014.

### *Water Accounts and Customer Relations*

The number of consumers with water accounts continues to rise gradually. At year-end, the department was handling approximately 2.75 million accounts. For the greater convenience to customers, payment 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 involving replacement of 1.3 million ageing domestic water meters, continued in 2009.

A voluntary Quality Water Recognition Scheme for Buildings encouraging proper maintenance of internal plumbing systems continues to receive public support. Three grades of certificates (gold, silver and blue) are now awarded to successful applicants according to the number of years of their participation in the scheme.

## **Construction Industry**

### *Construction Industry Council*

The Construction Industry Council (CIC) continued to make steady progress in initiatives to raise standards in the industry including construction site safety, subcontracting, environment and technology, procurement, and manpower training and development. The CIC keeps industry stakeholders informed of latest developments through its website at [www.hkcic.org](http://www.hkcic.org).

The Construction Industry Council Training Academy under the CIC continued to provide training and trade testing services for the construction industry.

Up to the end of 2009, 5 044 applications for registration in the Voluntary Subcontractor Registration Scheme were received and 4 457 were approved.

### *Construction Workers Registration*

The Construction Workers Registration Authority (CWRA) continued to oversee the registration of construction workers and administration of the Construction Workers Registration Ordinance (CWRO). Up to end of December 2009, there were about 268 000 registered construction workers, among whom 99 000 renewed their registration for the first time. Under the CWRO's phase one prohibition, in place since September 2007, workers shall not carry out construction work on construction sites unless they are registered as construction workers. The construction industry can generally meet the requirements of the ordinance.

### *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 seventh phase of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA). Under Supplement VI to CEPA signed between the Mainland and Hong Kong in May 2009, the Mainland side committed to continuing its recognition of Hong Kong Project Managers employed by Hong Kong-invested construction enterprises for the purpose of qualification assessment of such enterprises, until promulgation of new 'Standards for the Qualifications of Construction Enterprises'. In addition, the two sides agreed to move ahead with their work on mutual recognition of professional qualifications between Mainland Supervision Engineers and Hong Kong Building Engineers as well as the recognition of Hong Kong Architects in obtaining the qualification as Mainland Supervision Engineers.

The bureau continued to second graduate trainees of its Graduate Training Scheme to Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Chongqing for training. In 2009, a total of 10 graduate trainees of architectural, landscape architectural, civil engineering, structural engineering, geotechnical engineering and quantity surveying disciplines completed their three-month secondment training in those cities.

### *Websites*

Development Bureau: [www.devb.gov.hk](http://www.devb.gov.hk)

Planning and Lands Branch: [www.devb-plb.gov.hk](http://www.devb-plb.gov.hk)

Works Branch: [www.devb-wb.gov.hk](http://www.devb-wb.gov.hk)