

**LegCo Members' meeting with
Wan Chai District Council members
on 5 July 2001**

Issues raised by Wan Chai District Council members

At the above meeting, Wan Chai District Council (WCDC) members expressed concern about the fire safety requirements for old commercial buildings in Wan Chai district. The LegCo Members attended the meeting noted that the subject might involve the Buildings Department and the Fire Services Department (FSD). They finally decided that the subject be referred to the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works for consideration first.

2. The concerns of WCDC members are summarized below -

- (a) WCDC members considered that the fire installation requirements for certain old commercial buildings which were now used for residential purposes should be relaxed. They requested LegCo Members to consider legislative amendments in this regard;
- (b) WCDC members pointed out that the present fire safety requirements might not be applicable to certain old buildings in the district. Many of these old buildings were previously categorised as commercial buildings and were subject to stringent fire safety requirements. However, some six-storey commercial buildings which were built without elevators a long time ago were now inhabited by the elderly for residential purpose. According to the present legislation, FSD could require these buildings to provide fire safety facilities as those for commercial buildings, such as water tanks and sprinklers. WCDC members said that many elderly residents could not afford the costs for fire safety installations, and the structure of some of these old buildings might not permit such installation. They said that such installations did not match the actual usage of these buildings. The matter had been reflected to FSD but there was little progress; and
- (c) WCDC members also expressed that probably due to manpower constraints, the departments concerned had not carried out site inspections before issuing installation orders to these buildings. They suggested that Government should first deal with those buildings which were actually used as commercial premises. They considered that as some old buildings in Wan Chai would probably be included in the urban renewal scheme, there was no point to execute the installation order for these buildings at this stage.