

At the case conference, LegCo Panel Members noted that the URA was subject to restructuring and would no longer be responsible for project supervision. Concern was raised as to how the URA could ensure the quality of redeveloped building in future, including the URA's accountability for future building problems, if any.

1. Introduction

In response to the concerns Members have expressed over how the Authority could ensure the quality of redeveloped buildings in future, the Authority would like to stress it is particularly mindful that one of its purposes required by Ordinance is to **improve the standard of housing and the built environment of Hong Kong**, by undertaking, encouraging, promoting and facilitating urban renewal. Accordingly, the Authority places heavy emphasis on the need to ensure proper supervision of projects to achieve quality construction works on-site and has not relinquished this responsibility as a result of the reorganisation that has taken place, leading to the redundancies of 24 senior staff.

The reorganisation was necessitated, inter alia, by:

- (a) the substantial reduction in the volume of existing construction-related work (particularly of developments undertaken as “own projects”); and
- (b) the likelihood that, for at least the next 3 years, there will be no new construction-related activities.

The number of redevelopment projects undertaken by the Land Development Corporation (LDC) steadily decreased and had been winding down since 1996 – the total number of projects handled in 1996 was eleven, whilst there are currently four projects under construction. Subsequently, there was a need to reduce the number of staff in the former Project Management Division. There are adequate remaining professional/technical staff to effectively handle existing projects and any new construction-related work that will be undertaken by the Authority in the short term through the administration of the supervision system described hereinafter.

2. Supervision System

The *Construction Industry Review Committee (CIRC) Report* commissioned by the SAR CE and which was published at the beginning of the year highlighted the problem of sub-standard quality in the construction industry and recommended various suggestions for improvement, including the enhancement of site supervision and the carrying out of independent technical audits on-site. Before the publication of this Report, a system had already been put in place by the LDC since the middle of 1999 for the carrying out of independent auditing and the monitoring of site supervision, which achieved satisfactory results on its past projects. This system will be reviewed and continuously enhanced to ensure the quality of works in future URA redevelopment projects.

A proactive supervision system to ensure the quality of construction works is adopted by URA, which is over-and-above statutory requirements and the industry's norm of a team of professional consultants being engaged to produce the building design, whilst the Authorized Person and the Registered Structural Engineer allocate technical staff to supervise the construction of the works on site.

The framework of the supervision system employed by the URA is as follows: -

- a) To strengthen the supervision system required by statute and ensure the quality of construction works, a **department** in LDC headed by an experienced building professional and supported by a multi-disciplinary professional team was **designated for coordinating and carrying out monitoring activities on the quality of works on-site**. The department will continue to play this role in the URA on future redevelopment projects.

2. Supervision System (Cont'd)

One of the department's responsibility in this role is to ensure that an effective **work supervision system** for each project is in place and operation, including the following: -

- i. **Quality Supervision Plan** - prior to commencement of construction works on site, the consultants are required to submit a **quality supervision plan** for comment and record. During the construction phase, the consultants will inspect and check the quality of works according to the quality supervision plan. The consultants are contractually obliged to provide **adequate supervision on-site** by **professional staff** to ensure that the works constructed are in accordance with the specified quality standards.

- ii. A team of the URA's technical staff, independent of the project supervising team and consisting of experienced professionals, will conduct **on-site compliance checks** for: -
 - the **adequacy of site supervision** by the consultants and the proper operation of the quality supervision plan;
 - random **construction works audits** to check quality of works in critical and high-risk areas.

Any non-compliance discovered would be required to be rectified in accordance with a remedial plan incorporating timetables for completion of rectification works. These compliance-checking activities will become more frequent and extensive if non-compliance is identified.

2. Supervision System (Cont'd)

- b) Upon **completion of the construction works**, the Buildings Department will inspect the works and carry out acceptance tests to ensure compliance with all **statutory** requirements prior to issuing the **Occupation Permit**, whilst the consultants will be responsible for carrying out acceptance tests to ensure compliance with **contractual** requirements before their issuance of the **Practical Completion Certificate**. In addition to the checking for compliance with all the requirements of drawings and specifications, materials and workmanship carried out by consultants, the URA will also conduct thorough inspections of the workmanship and quality of works on-site prior to their hand-over.

- c) The URA is responsible for the rectification of any identified defects. **Contractors** would be required to promptly carry out any defects rectification works that may be required under the instruction and supervision of the **consultants**.