

PLB(UR)25/99/06 Pt.8

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14 June 2002

Miss Salumi Chan
Clerk to Panel on Planning, Lands and Works
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Miss Chan,

**LegCo Panel on Planning, Lands and Works
Special Meeting on 31 May 2002**

At the special meeting of the Panel on 31 May 2002 to discuss the item “Capital Injection into the Urban Renewal Authority (URA)”, Members raised the following two issues related to the acquisition of properties by the URA in the three “early launch” projects:

- (a) the URA’s Review Committee; and
- (b) the holding back of a certain sum in the URA’s purchase offer for compliance with outstanding orders issued by the Building Authority under the Buildings Ordinance and/or for removal of unauthorised extensions/structures.

We have now checked the position with the URA.

URA's Review Committee

Following the establishment of the URA in May 2001, an appeal panel was set up by the URA Board on 10 May 2001 with Professor Cecilia Chan Lai-wan as the Chairperson. The appeal panel would consider applications for review of decisions made by the URA management from property owners and occupiers affected by URA projects.

The details of the operation of the appeal panel were considered by the URA Board in April 2002. The Board decided, among other things, that the appeal panel should be renamed as Review Committee to make it less legalistic and formal. The Board also decided the terms of reference of the Review Committee as follows:

- (a) eligibility of owners for the URA's Home Purchase Allowance and other ex gratia allowances;
- (b) eligibility of domestic tenants for rehousing or ex gratia compensation;
- (c) eligibility of non-domestic occupiers for ex gratia allowances;
- (d) application for the URA's concessionary rental policy, if any; and
- (e) matters relating to tenancies or licences granted to domestic occupiers rehoused in premises owned by the URA, or the renewal or termination of such tenancies or licences.

The Review Committee comprises Professor Cecilia Chan Lai-wan as the Chairperson and three other URA Board members, namely the Hon. Chan Kam-lam, the Hon. Fred Li Wah-ming and Mr Michael Lai Kam-cheung. There are also some 30 co-opted members in the Committee from different background, including community leaders, academics, professionals and social workers.

Individual cases will be heard by a review panel chaired by one of the above Board members on the Committee and at least two other members drawn from the list of the co-opted members.

Information leaflets on the operation and terms of reference of the Review Committee are available in the URA's three neighbourhood centres. If there is a need, residents can make a formal written application to the Secretary to the Review Committee. They may also approach the social service teams for assistance should they wish to bring their cases to the attention of the Committee. As at 7 June 2002, the URA had not received any formal written application for review from owners and tenants in the three "early launch" projects.

Outstanding Orders issued by the Building Authority and Removal of Unauthorised Structures

In the acquisition of properties, the URA has followed the general practice in Hong Kong as regards the deduction of costs for compliance with statutory orders issued by the Building Authority under the Buildings Ordinance and/or for removal of unauthorised extensions/structures.

When there is any outstanding statutory order issued by the Building Authority and/or unauthorised extension/structure in a property to be purchased, the URA will set aside a reasonable amount from the purchase price and put it into a stakeholder's account to meet the costs to be incurred, which should be legally borne by the seller (i.e. the existing owner). Any difference between the amount set aside and the actual costs incurred will be settled with the seller on completion of the works. The URA will always discuss with the owners concerned with a view to minimising the amount which has to be set aside.

Yours sincerely,

(Ms Olivia Nip)
for Secretary for Planning and Lands

c.c. Managing Director/
Urban Renewal Authority