

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

Standard of Provisions in Public Rental Housing Developments

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the current standard of provisions in public rental housing developments.

Background

2. To improve the overall cost-effectiveness in the provision of public rental housing, the Building Committee of the Housing Authority approved in June 2003 the adoption of a new “Functional and Cost-effective” approach to the design and construction of public rental housing. Central to this design approach is the optimum and cost-effective delivery of public housing to meet the functional needs of tenants in terms of safety, comfort, health and environmental well-being. At the same time, we will continue to uphold the objectives under the Quality Housing Initiatives, including promotion of environmental friendly design, construction quality and life-cycle costing, etc. We will –

- (a) quest for optimised planning of estate facilities in new developments, including the exploration of feasibility to tap into surplus resources in the vicinity;
- (b) examine the characteristics of individual site in order to optimise its development potential and building design; and
- (c) review standards and provisions of residential buildings to address basic needs of tenants, and to take into account advancements in building technologies and construction practices.

We briefed Members on the various initiatives under items (a) and (b) to optimise the development intensity and potential of public housing sites at the meeting on 1 December vide Paper No. CB(1) 438/03-04(04). The following paragraphs focus on item (c), i.e. the standard of provisions for public rental housing developments.

Standard of Finishes and Provisions

3. Under the “Functional and Cost-effective” design approach, we seek to optimise building designs to address the basic functional needs of our tenants. To ensure the best utilisation of public resources, we have recently reviewed the standard of provisions for public rental housing blocks. The major initiatives to enhance cost-effectiveness as approved by the Building Committee of the Housing Authority are set out below.

Wall Finishes at Typical Floor Lift Lobby and Corridor

4. For wall finishes at typical floor lift lobbies, we will use ceramic tiles instead of homogeneous tiles, while for corridor walls, we will use multi-layer acrylic paint in lieu of homogeneous tiles. The installation of tiles necessitates wet trades in the construction process, requires more time and demands higher skills to achieve quality works. These are not conducive to construction efficiency and better working environments in construction sites, and may even pose maintenance problems during the service life of buildings. Sprayed acrylic paint is now commonly used in the industry as it offers a wide range of colour and texture. The replacement of tiles with multi-layer acrylic paint will not affect the functionality of wall finishes, but will result in lower initial and life cycle costs, and help overcome the afore-mentioned problems.

Non-provision of Flat Entrance Metal Gates

5. With the improvements in new building designs and enhanced security measures in public rental housing such as ground floor security gates with digital lock, 24-hours security tower guards, closed-circuit television (CCTV) and doorphone systems, flat entrance door with door viewer and security door guard, it is no longer essential to provide metal gates to domestic flats for security purpose. In fact, no metal gates have been provided for most of the rental flats

transferred from Home Ownership Scheme. Tenants allocated these flats are receptive to this arrangement.

6. The non-provision of metal gates is in line with private sector practice. It also facilitates the installation of gates by tenants at their own choice. Installation guidelines have been issued by the Housing Department (HD) to advise tenants on the proper selection and installation of their metal gates.

Adjusting Illumination Level in Public Areas

7. The illumination level of lighting in public areas in future public rental housing blocks will be brought in line with the standard commonly adopted in private sector developments, i.e., 85 lux in lobbies, 50 lux in corridors and 40 lux in staircases. This will help conserve energy without materially affecting the functionality of the lighting installations. As an existing design practice, 24-hour and timer-controlled lighting will be provided for public areas where there is no natural daylight. The Housing Authority has no plan to implement intelligent motion-detection lighting control system in public housing estates.

Communal Aerial Broadcast Distribution System (CABDS) and Telephone Provision

8. Wireless telecommunication and local area network equipment have become very common nowadays. With this technological advancement, the provision of telephone sockets at multiple locations of a flat is no longer necessary. We will accordingly confine such provision to the living/dining room only. TV/FM sockets will continue to be installed at the living/dining room.

Review of Automated Refuse Collection System

9. The Housing Authority is actively exploring the use of more cost-effective systems for refuse collection in public rental housing estates. These systems enable refuse from each domestic block to be collected at the local refuse chamber in specially designed containers in a sealed manner to avoid the leakage of liquid and odour. The refuse will be compacted locally at the block and/or a central refuse collection point within the estate to reduce its volume to facilitate removal from the blocks and the estate. These alternative systems

should be able to replace the Automated Refuse Collection System, which requires installation of complex and costly vacuum suction, for maintaining a hygienic and odour-free living environment in a more cost-effective manner.

Way Forward

10. The “Functional and Cost-effective” design approach aims at enhancing the cost-effectiveness in the provision of public rental housing without compromising functional quality. The Housing Authority will continue to make every effort to improve living environments for public rental housing tenants through careful planning and design, proper choice of materials and efficient construction processes.

Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau
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