

Follow-up to LegCo PLW Panel Meeting on 21 January 2005

Progress on Incorporation of Building Height Restrictions into Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs)

Purpose

This note is a follow-up to the request by the Hon Choy So-yuk at the Legislative Council Planning, Lands and Works meeting held on 21 January 2005.

Background

2. In 2002, the Planning Department (Plan D) completed the study on Urban Design Guidelines for Hong Kong. The Study recommended a comprehensive set of urban design guidelines covering the development height profile. Stepped building heights are recommended for waterfront developments to preserve views of the remaining unbroken sections of the ridgelines and of the Victoria Harbour from important vantage points and view corridors.

3. Before the Urban Design Guidelines were in place, Plan D has taken active steps to review the building height of various areas and building height restrictions have already been incorporated in a number of statutory Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs) on the basis of the recommendations of various planning studies.

4. The progress/priority of imposing building height control is dependent on the following major factors:

- (a) Areas along the harbour-front of the Victoria Harbour will take priority. In this regard, building height restrictions have already been incorporated in a number of OZPs in the past few years. They include Central District (Extension), North Point, Wan Chai North, Kai Tak (South), Kai Tak (North) and Hung Hom OZPs.
- (b) Areas where strong development pressure is envisaged and building height control is not fully in place will also be tackled with urgency. In this respect, detailed building height control has been formulated for the Kowloon Bay and Kwun Tong Business Area to guide their transformation into business centers. Subsequent to public consultation, the recommended building height restrictions have been incorporated into the Ngau Tau Kok and Kowloon Bay, and Kwun Tong (South) OZPs which were gazetted on 25 February 2005.
- (c) Considerations on the need to meeting other local planning circumstances. Building height restrictions have also been imposed in some OZPs to preserve the existing character of some residential neighbourhood, including Mid-Levels East, the Peak Area and Shek Kip Mei OZPs. Reviews will continue to be undertaken in areas where there are existing building height controls to ascertain whether these controls are adequate to achieve the planning objectives, including ridgeline protection.

5. In response to the increasing public aspirations for the preservation of the ridgeline and views of the Victoria Harbour, imposing building height control is justified. Plan D will continue to take forward the review on building height controls for other related areas. However, setting building height control through statutory OZPs will have an impact on the development potential of land. To balance the various interests of the community, we will ensure that the public will be provided with the opportunity to express their views in the plan-making process. Upon the commencement of the Town Planning (Amendment) Ordinance, the transparency of the planning system will be further enhanced, as all representations to draft OZPs will be published for public comment and both the representers and commenters will be heard by the Board.

Planning Department

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