

22 February 2007

By fax (2185 7845) and mail

Clerk to the Panel on
Planning, Lands and Works
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Attention: Mr. Wong Siu-yee

Dear Sir

Developments Creating the Wall Effect

We thank you for your letter of 31 January and as requested, would like to offer our views as follows.

We wish to state at the outset that our members are taking as keen an interest as every citizen in Hong Kong in the quality of the air we breathe. It has been suggested that the “wall effect” built-form contributes to our poor air quality and more often than not, developers have been blamed for the creation of this type of built-form.

It should be noted that developers are not the real culprits. Developers are obligated under fiduciary responsibilities to develop a site to its maximum allowable potential for which they have assessed and paid a full price. They are constrained by planning restrictions, lease restrictions and development controls under the Buildings Ordinance. In the case of developments above railway stations, developers are subject to even further restrictions resulting in even fewer options as the layout and disposition of the buildings to be erected are largely pre-set by the railway corporations.

A “wall effect” built-form, by definition, will only arise in relatively large sites (i.e. large enough to form a “wall”) and as a matter of fact they are most commonly found in sites that have been sold by the Government and the railway corporations. We believe the only sensible and practical way to tackle the “wall effect” issue is to address it early at the planning stage. Before sites are released to the market, a lower development density and a lighter building bulk can be specified, but this will

naturally result in a lower sale price which the community as a whole would need to accept as a cost to bear in return for a more desirable living environment.

We hope the above would be of use to your discussion.

Yours sincerely

Louis Loong
Secretary General