

ITEM FOR ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 25 – ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT Subhead 000 Operational expenses

Members are invited to recommend to Finance
Committee –

- (a) the creation of the following new rank –

Chief Landscape Architect
(D1) (\$97,250 - \$103,200)

- (b) the creation of the following permanent post in
the Architectural Services Department –

1 Chief Landscape Architect
(D1) (\$97,250 - \$103,200)

PROBLEM

To meet the increasing public expectation for a strategic and holistic approach in landscape planning and greening, we need to strengthen professional landscape architectural expertise within Government.

PROPOSAL

2. We propose to create a new rank and a permanent post of Chief Landscape Architect (CLA) (D1) in the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) for providing strategic professional landscape architectural input in

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public works projects and providing support in the formulation of policies as well as serving as a focal point for co-ordination amongst departments and parties concerned on landscape planning and greening.

JUSTIFICATION

Increasing Importance of Landscape Planning and Greening

3. In the 2007-08 Policy Address, the Chief Executive highlighted the importance of quality life by building a green city. Indeed, there has been growing public expectation for a strategic and holistic approach in integrating landscape planning and urban design with due regard to environmental protection considerations. Good landscaping and greening will go a long way in improving the living environment particularly in a densely populated city as Hong Kong. There is in fact a close relationship between greening and improvement of air quality. During day-time, green plants can help act as a sponge by sequestering carbon dioxide in the atmosphere while releasing breathable oxygen. They can improve air quality by intercepting particulate matters and absorbing gaseous contaminants such as sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides in the atmosphere as well as help lower urban temperature. Through greening and various anti-air pollution measures, we can significantly improve the general environment which is another important mission of the Government.

4. In the light of the above, the Government has in recent years actively pursued the following –

(a) Implementation of annual planting programme

Each year, we compile a territory-wide greening programme to facilitate planning and monitoring of progress and outcome. In particular, we strive to maximise greening opportunities during the planning and development of new projects. We have planted about 35 million plants in capital works projects including trees, shrubs and annuals in the past five years. Planting works have been integrated into major projects including Infrastructure for Penny's Bay Development (4.7 million plants); Trunk Road T7 in Ma On Shan (1.2 million plants) and Kam Tin Bypass (1.1 million plants);

(b) Development and implementation of greening master plans (GMPs)

Apart from maximising planting in new capital works projects, we also make every effort to improve urban greenery through

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development and implementation of GMPs. A GMP seeks to define comprehensively the greening framework of an area with coherent themes and plant species to promote a clear district identity.

Works associated with GMPs for Central and Tsim Sha Tsui were completed in March 2007. Studies on the development of GMPs for Sheung Wan/Wan Chai/Causeway Bay and Mong Kok/Yau Ma Tei were substantially completed in November 2007 and the related greening works will commence in September 2008. Another study for developing GMPs for the remaining urban areas is also in progress for completion in early 2009 after which works will commence. We also plan to commence the studies for GMPs for the New Territories (NT) in mid-2009;

(c) Development of quality parks and open spaces

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department, with the assistance of ArchSD, has been providing new parks and open spaces to meet the requirements of the general public. Eighteen open spaces and parks were completed in the last five years. These included the Open Space in Areas 18 and 21 Fanling which has won the Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) Annual Award and the Open Space in Area 14 Tuen Mun, the theme of which is about sustainability (including the use of recycled plastics moulded to the form, texture and colour of timber as the major construction materials). The Cherry Street Park in Tai Kok Tsui provides a range of active and passive park facilities for urban dwellers, whereas the Dragon Park in Area 25 Tin Shui Wai is a Suzhou style traditional Chinese garden;

(d) Promotion of rooftop greening

Since green roofs can help improve cityscape and attenuate urban heat island effect, ArchSD has incorporated rooftop and podium landscape designs in new government building projects wherever practicable. About 60 projects with such green features have been completed. Also, about 40 projects with such facilities are under construction or planning;

(e) Pursuit of new techniques in greening

As we encounter more and more difficulties in finding space for planting in built-up areas, we are also shifting our attention from “quantity” to “quality”, i.e. to go for quality planting which can create much greater visual impact by adopting new techniques such as vertical greening, and planting at open water channels like Yuen Long Nullah. In doing so, we will also make reference to overseas experience; and

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(f) Collaboration with the private sector

Apart from the Government making its own efforts, initiatives and support from both quasi-government organisations and the private sector are most welcomed. This is also a demonstration of community support. The streetscape improvement works in Des Voeux Road Central and Hollywood Road are good examples of such joint efforts.

Role of Landscape Architects

5. In undertaking landscape planning and greening initiatives, Landscape Architects (LAs) play a most important role. In the delivery of public works projects such as large scale engineering projects (e.g. construction of highways and site formation), development of district and local open spaces, construction of various recreational and tourism projects, etc., LAs have to critically plan, design and implement appropriate landscape works in order to achieve the desired objectives. The highly successful Hong Kong Wetland Park which has won 15 awards, both local and overseas including the Medal of the Year of the HKIA 2006 Annual Award and the Urban Land Institute Global Award, has well demonstrated how good landscaping work can contribute to both environmental education and tourism objectives. The expertise of LAs is also critical to the urban planning process and helps to define an appropriate urban fabric for our city.

6. The work of LAs in the Government is characterised by substantial scope as well as breadth. It also entails multiple interfaces with various professional disciplines such as architects, town planners and engineers. In view of the increasing workload as well as important and unique role of the landscape architectural profession, it is necessary for the Government to be provided with sufficient staffing support and expertise.

Present Situation

7. LA is a professional grade with a total establishment of 45 posts in the Government at present (there are 13 other posts in Housing Department which comes under the Housing Authority). While these 45 posts are separately established in ArchSD, Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD), Highways Department (HyD) and Planning Department (PlanD), the LA grade is under the central management of ArchSD. Under the existing arrangement, apart from serving as the head of the LA grade, Assistant Director (Architectural) (AD(A)), who is an officer of the architectural discipline, is responsible for various professional and administrative duties such as monitoring the overall architectural standards of projects in ArchSD, promotion of quality architectural practices and management of Architect and Technical Officer (Architectural) grades.

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8. The LA grade comprises three ranks, viz. the entry ranks of Assistant Landscape Architect (ALA) and LA (remunerated at Master Pay Scale (MPS) points 18 to 27, and MPS points 30 to 44 respectively) and the promotional rank of Senior Landscape Architect (SLA) (remunerated at MPS points 45 to 49). Despite the importance of the landscape architectural discipline, there is at present no rank at the directorate level in the LA grade. The distribution of the establishment of the LA grade by rank and department is listed below –

Rank	ArchSD	CEDD	HyD	PlanD	Total
ALA/LA #	11	7	13	4	35
SLA	4	2	3	1	10
Total :	15	9	16	5	45

The ALA and LA ranks form a combined establishment and the 35 posts can be filled by officers of either rank.

Need for a New Rank and Permanent Post of CLA

9. LA grade staff are posted to work in different departments with the SLAs reporting to directorate officers of various non-LA discipline on landscape matters. For example, in ArchSD, SLAs work to Chief Architects; in CEDD and HyD, they work to Chief Engineers and in PlanD, they work to Chief Town Planners. While LAs can satisfactorily carry out their duties at the operational level presently, there is a lack of steer or central co-ordination at the strategic level which is necessary to achieve high-level objectives in landscape planning and greening to make a significant impact on the quality of our living environment. In essence, the need for a CLA rank/post is set out below –

- (a) a fully dedicated CLA at D1 level is required to co-ordinate strategic issues of landscape planning and greening as well as those involving inter-departmental concerns, and to dovetail the efforts on various fronts particularly with regard to matters like setting of standards, upholding of quality, research into new techniques in landscaping as well as rendering advice to individual works departments on complex landscape issues which cannot be adequately addressed under the departments' existing set-up. Moreover, a CLA would be able to better pursue cross-sector collaboration among government bureaux/departments, academia and non-governmental organisations in enhancing the quality of landscape planning and greening as well as to provide better support to the Works Branch of the Development Bureau (DEVB), which is the policy bureau for greening, in furthering its objectives;

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- (b) for the sustained implementation of various greening initiatives, there is also a need for a dedicated officer at the directorate level to spearhead research into greening means which are presently not widely adopted in Hong Kong (such as vertical greening, rooftop greening especially in the private sector, greening on flyovers and highways, use of scent to complement visual enjoyment in greening, etc.). We consider it necessary to have a CLA to explore the latest trends in overseas countries for adaptive use in the local setting and serve as a focal point to develop strategic plans to take forward greening in a more integrated and innovative manner; and
- (c) it is pertinent to highlight that greening and development of GMPs do not only entail growing of plants wherever possible. Development of GMPs involves three levels: short, medium and long term measures. Short term measures are those conforming to district layout, posing no conflict with land use and/or traffic arrangements. As for medium and long term measures, they are usually associated with urban renewal or redevelopment when opportunities arise to re-shape the area for enhanced greening such as introduction of tree corridors along thoroughfares. While CEDD will continue to spearhead the development and implementation of GMPs, it would be necessary to have a CLA who possesses a high level of professional competence and co-ordination skill to liaise/co-ordinate among relevant parties cutting across planning, land use and project delivery fronts to achieve smooth sail of these medium and long term measures. We consider that should the existing structure of the LA grade remain intact, realisation of these initiatives will be difficult.

10. Apart from the operational reasons spelt out above, we support the proposed creation of a CLA post as among the professional grades in ArchSD viz. Architect, Maintenance Surveyor, Quantity Surveyor and Structural Engineer, LA grade is the only exception with no access to the directorate level. With the increasing importance attached to landscaping work as set out above and the need for directorate level steer on strategic landscape planning and greening issues, we consider it necessary to establish a new D1 rank/post in the LA grade.

11. We propose to create the CLA post under ArchSD taking into account the increasing importance and uniqueness of their work. Like all other professional grades in ArchSD, LAs are required to possess membership of a professional institution as one of the pre-requisite entry requirements. The present proposal would cause minimal disruption to the current grade management structure whereby the LA grade is under the central management of ArchSD.

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Moreover, while the CLA will contribute to the implementation of GMPs (which is under CEDD's portfolio), he/she will be heavily involved in other strategic aspects including giving steer and maintaining quality of landscape architectural services in the Government, spearheading research as well as pursuing cross sector collaboration under ArchSD's portfolio.

12. In brief, we propose to create a CLA post to head a new Landscape Planning and Greening Division in ArchSD to provide a focal point for meeting the operational needs of enhancing greening efforts so as to develop Hong Kong into a green model comparable to other world cities with outstanding achievements in greening. All LA grade colleagues in ArchSD will be deployed to work under him/her in the new Division. Moreover, the proposed CLA will provide the level of expertise required to interface with key stakeholders like the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), Buildings Department, PlanD, etc. in order to pursue the long term objectives of greening.

- Encl.1 13. The job description of the proposed CLA post is at Enclosure 1. The existing organisation chart showing the distribution of SLA posts in ArchSD is at Enclosure 2. The revised organisation chart showing the distribution of SLA posts in ArchSD upon the creation of the proposed CLA post is at Enclosure 3. An organisation chart showing how the proposed CLA post will feature in the directorate establishment of ArchSD is at Enclosure 4.
- Encl.2
- Encl.3
- Encl.4

Alternatives Considered

14. We have critically examined whether the existing directorate staff in ArchSD have the spare capacity to absorb the duties of the proposed CLA post, but have come to the view that such an alternative is not desirable. Given the nature of the work involved, existing directorate staff in ArchSD do not have the relevant expertise as required of the proposed CLA post. Moreover, they are already fully occupied with responsibilities relating to other core functions of ArchSD. There is thus no better alternative than the proposed creation of a new rank and permanent post of CLA.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

15. The proposed creation of the CLA post will bring about an additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point of \$1,201,200. The additional full annual average staff cost, including salary and staff on-cost, is about \$1,700,000. We have included the necessary provision in the draft Estimates of 2008-09 under Head 25 – ArchSD to meet the cost of this proposal. The proposal is covered in ECI(2007-08)8 “Update on Overall Directorate Establishment Position”.

16. As mentioned in paragraph 12 above, all the LA grade officers in ArchSD will work under the proposed CLA post in the new Landscape Planning and Greening Division. Given that the arrangement involves internal redeployment within the Department, it is therefore cost-neutral. The proposed CLA post will not entail any additional supporting staff.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

17. We consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Development on 18 December 2007. Members in general raised no objection to the proposed CLA post. Some Members however asked if the proposed post could be a supernumerary one before the need for a permanent post was proven; and commented that consideration should be given to filling the proposed post by open recruitment. We consider that creating the proposed CLA post on a supernumerary basis cannot meet the operational needs. Greening is an important and long term objective of the Government and there is an on-going need for the proposed CLA post to provide the level of expertise that is necessary in the pursuit of new techniques and enhanced greening initiatives in order to develop Hong Kong into a green model comparable to other world cities with outstanding achievements in greening. Just to take the implementation of GMPs as an example, the work involved and the time-table are as follows –

- (a) studies for development of GMPs for urban areas are in progress for completion in early 2009;
- (b) construction works of GMPs in urban areas are scheduled for completion by end 2011;
- (c) GMP studies in NT areas will commence in mid-2009 for completion in 2012; and
- (d) implementation of works for GMPs in NT areas will commence in 2013 for completion progressively from 2014 onwards.

In parallel with the above, the CLA will spearhead research into innovative greening designs. On this front, he/she is required to ensure quality design in major park projects in the coming years, e.g. Town Park in Tseung Kwan O Area 45, the planned Metro Park in Kai Tak Development, etc. He/she will also liaise with stakeholders of the redevelopment/rehabilitation projects to ensure that there is a good interface between greenery works undertaken by different parties under a holistic approach. For example, he/she is required to liaise with URA in the Kwun Tong Town Centre Redevelopment in this regard. In view of the foregoing, a time-limited post would not be able to serve the greening objective which is long term in nature.

18. We have also considered the suggestion of filling the proposed CLA post by open recruitment. With directorate posts for various professional grades in ArchSD normally filled by way of promotion, we do not consider it appropriate to treat the LA grade differently. In the event that none of the serving SLAs are considered capable of taking up the proposed CLA post, we would then resort to recruitment.

19. Separately, six professional institutes have written to the Panel in support of the proposal. These include the HKIA, the Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects, the Hong Kong Institute of Planners, the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, the Hong Kong Urban Design Alliance and the Association of Architectural Practices Limited. In addition, the Professional Green Building Council and Association of Landscape Consultants have also written to DEVB in support of the proposed CLA post. In general, they are of the view that the proposal will facilitate the delivery of greening objectives in a more co-ordinated and strategic manner.

ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES

20. The establishment changes in ArchSD for the last two years are as follows –

Establishment (Note)	Number of posts			
	Existing (as at 1 December 2007)	As at 1 April 2007	As at 1 April 2006	As at 1 April 2005
A	39 [#]	39	39	39
B	510	510	512	529
C	1 217	1 217	1 230	1 265
Total	1 766	1 766	1 781	1 833

Note:

A – ranks in the directorate pay scale or equivalent

B – non-directorate ranks the maximum pay point of which is above MPS Point 33 or equivalent

C – non-directorate ranks the maximum pay point of which is at or below MPS Point 33 or equivalent

– as at 1 December 2007, there was no unfilled directorate post in ArchSD

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CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU COMMENTS

21. The Civil Service Bureau supports the proposed creation of a new CLA rank and post to strengthen the professional expertise within the Government for providing landscape architectural input in public works projects and taking forward landscape planning and greening initiatives. The grading and ranking of the proposed post are appropriate having regard to the level and scope of the responsibilities and the professional input required.

ADVICE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DIRECTORATE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

22. The Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service has advised that the grading proposed for the post would be appropriate if the proposal were to be implemented.

Development Bureau
February 2008

**Job Description
Chief Landscape Architect Post**

Rank : Chief Landscape Architect

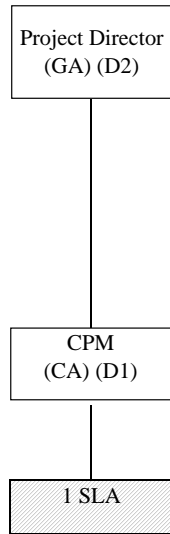
Responsible to : Assistant Director (Architectural), Architectural Services
Department

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

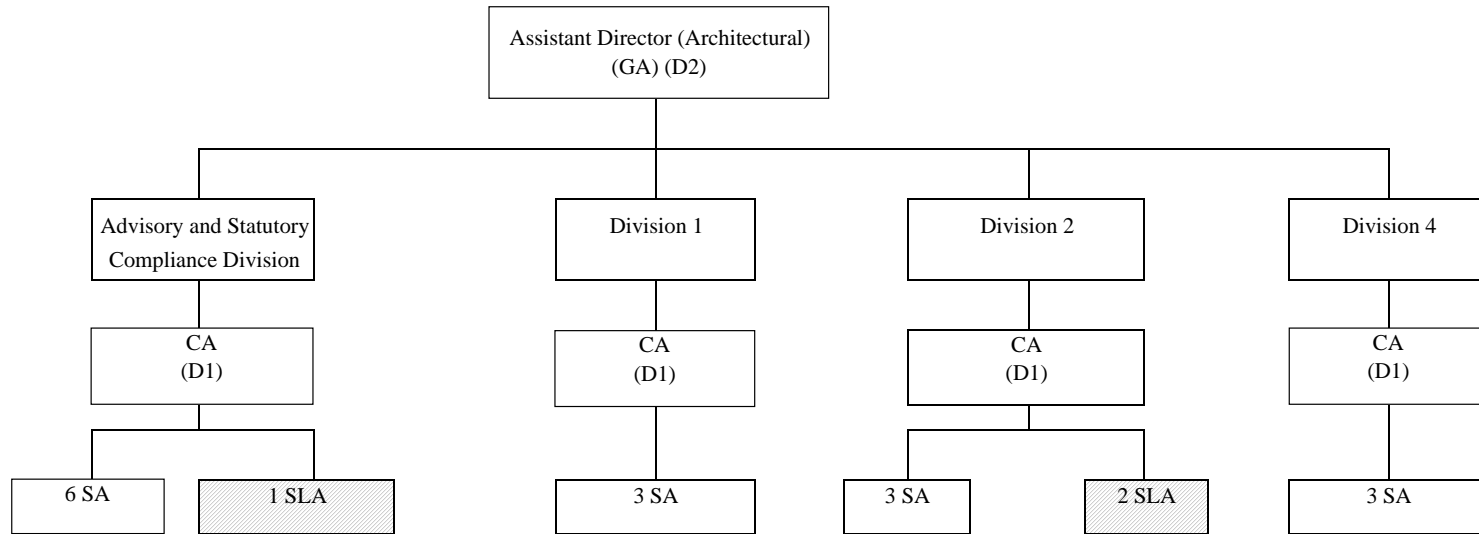
1. To develop strategic plans to take forward landscape planning and greening in an integrated and innovative manner, including setting standards, and identifying possible areas and measures for improvement.
2. To lead research into new methods of greening having regard to overseas experience and local situation; and to formulate guidelines for implementation of the new methods in capital works projects.
3. To monitor the overall quality of landscape architectural works through monitoring of landscape architectural design, contract management, project implementation, etc.
4. To assist the Assistant Director (Architectural) in management of the Landscape Architect grade, including deployment of resources and dealing with recruitment, posting, promotion and training matters.
5. To monitor the overall quality of landscape architectural services delivered by Landscape Architects in Government and to promote best practices.
6. To act as a focal point for co-ordination amongst various government bureaux/departments, academia, non-governmental organisations and other relevant parties on landscape planning and greening matters.
7. To provide professional landscape architectural advice to the Development Bureau and other government bureaux/departments.

Existing Organisation Chart Showing the Distribution of Senior Landscape Architect Posts in Architectural Services Department

Project Management Branch



Architectural Branch



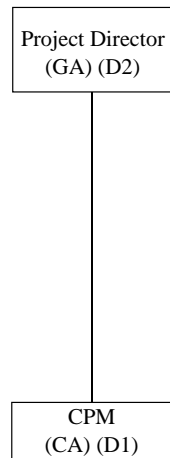
Note: A total of 11 Assistant Landscape Architect/Landscape Architect posts are established in various divisions.

Legend :

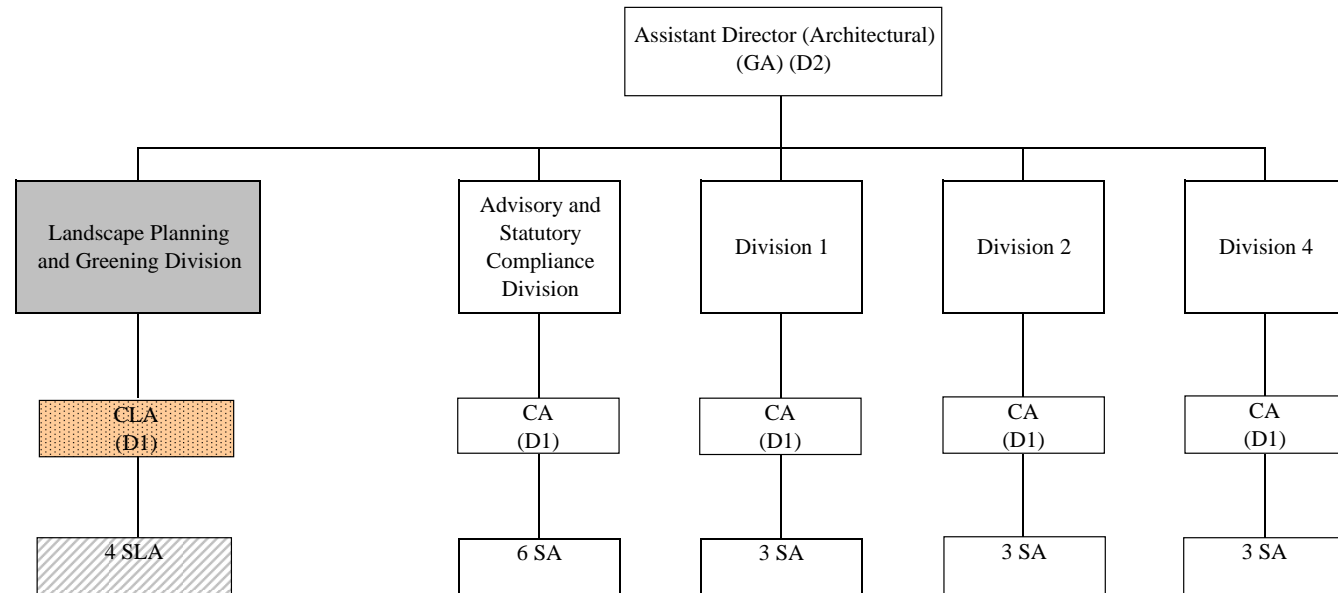
- CA Chief Architect
- CPM Chief Project Manager
- GA Government Architect
- SA Senior Architect
- Senior Landscape Architect (SLA)

**Revised Organisation Chart Showing the Distribution of Senior Landscape Architect Posts
in Architectural Services Department upon the Creation of the Proposed Chief Landscape Architect Post**

Project Management Branch



Architectural Branch

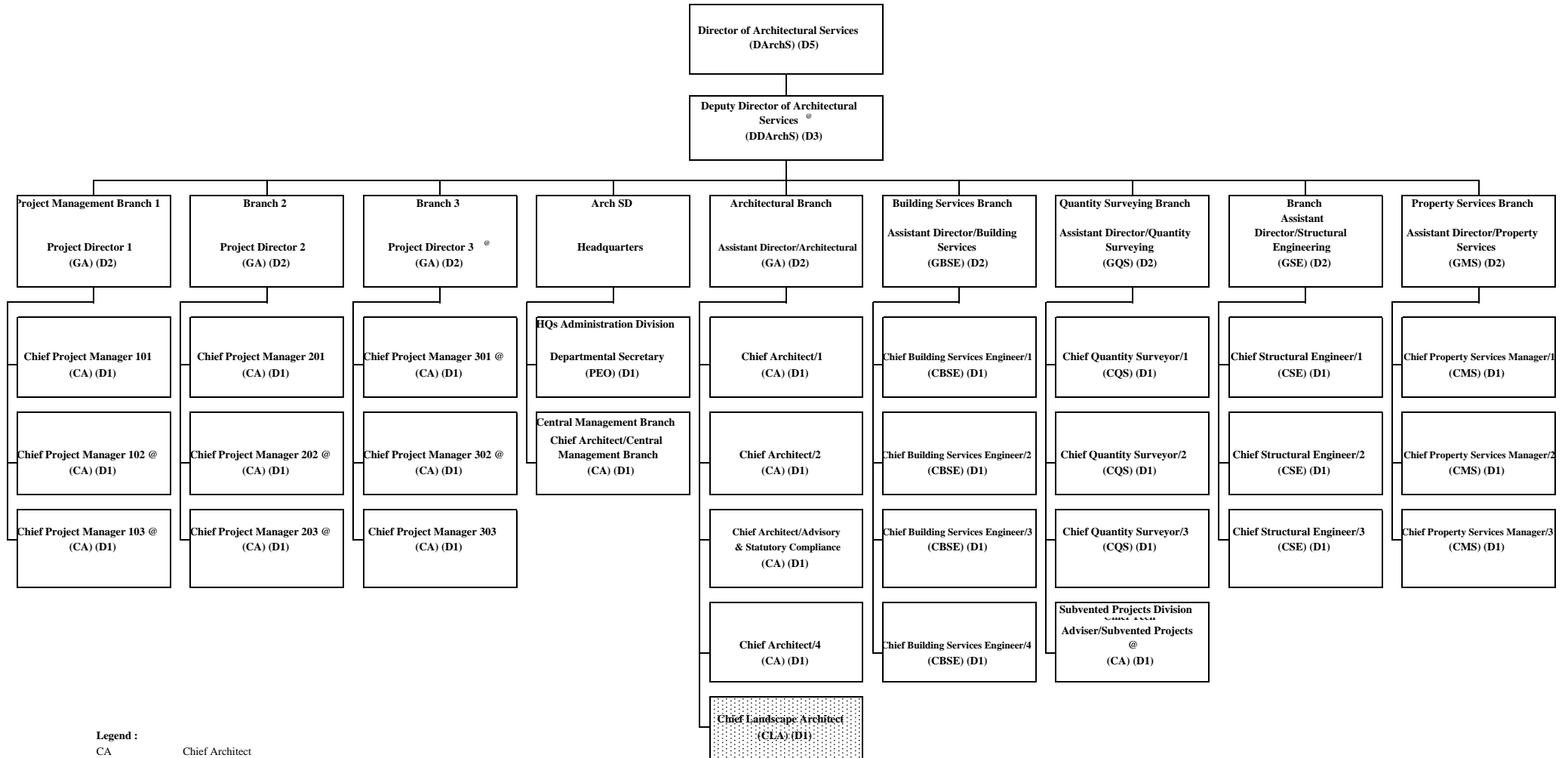


Note: The 11 Assistant Landscape Architect/Landscape Architect posts are put under the Landscape Planning and Greening Division.

Legend :

- CA Chief Architect
- CPM Chief Project Manager
- GA Government Architect
- SA Senior Architect
- Proposed new division
- Proposed Chief Landscape Architect (CLA) post
- Existing Senior Landscape Architect (SLA) posts
- Other existing posts

Organisation Chart Showing the Proposed Chief Landscape Architect Post in the Directorate Establishment of Architectural Services Department



Legend :

- | | | | |
|---------|---|------|---------------------------------------|
| CA | Chief Architect | GA | Government Architect |
| CBSE | Chief Building Services Engineer | GBSE | Government Building Services Engineer |
| CMS | Chief Maintenance Surveyor | GMS | Government Maintenance Surveyor |
| CQS | Chief Quantity Surveyor | GQS | Government Quantity Surveyor |
| CSE | Chief Structural Engineer | GSE | Government Structural Engineer |
| DArchS | Director of Architectural Services | PEO | Principal Executive Officer |
| DDArchS | Deputy Director of Architectural Services | | |

 Proposed Chief Landscape Architect (CLA) post

@ Multi-disciplinary post