

立法會 *Legislative Council*

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Panel on Development

Meeting on 22 January 2008

Background brief on wall effect of developments

Purpose

This paper gives an account of the views and concerns expressed by Members and deputations at various forums of the Legislative Council (LegCo) about the problem of wall effect brought about by developments.

Existing mechanisms to control the density and form of developments

2. The Town Planning Board (TPB) is charged with the statutory function, under section 3 of the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131), to prepare statutory town plans for the layout of areas of Hong Kong as well as for the types of building suitable for erection therein with a view to promoting the health, safety, convenience and general welfare of the community. Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs) prepared by the TPB set out, among other things, the land use zonings and development restrictions for individual areas.

3. In general, plot ratio restrictions are stipulated to delineate areas of different development intensities to ensure that the permitted levels of development could be sustainable in terms of infrastructural, environmental and traffic capacities, and compatible with the character of the surrounding areas. Restrictions on building height are imposed to protect important ridgelines, public views to the harbour and other valuable attributes of our landscape; to preserve the special character of some neighbourhoods; and to achieve compatibility with the surrounding developments and natural setting.

4. In a paper provided to the Panel in May 2007, the Administration advised that there were a total of 108 OZPs in force at that time, of which 49 had incorporated development restrictions on plot ratio/gross floor area and building height in all appropriate land use zones. The vast majority of the remaining OZPs also had such restrictions in some of the land use zones. In recent years, community awareness and aspirations for a better living environment had intensified. To address and respond to the community calls for lower development intensity, less congested building layouts and more open space, TPB had been taking a more comprehensive approach in progressively updating OZPs with appropriate development restrictions.

5. As advised by the Administration in a paper issued in March 2007, the development restrictions under OZPs are enforced through the Buildings Ordinance and land sale/lease conditions. In the absence of specific development restrictions under some OZPs and in cases where specific planning approval from TPB is not required, the control of development intensities and building heights could be exercised through specific provisions contained in the land sale/lease conditions and will in any event be subject to the First Schedule to the Buildings (Planning) Regulations of the Buildings Ordinance, which specifies the maximum plot ratios and site coverage permitted for domestic and non-domestic buildings in relation to building heights, whichever is the lesser. This aims to control the bulk and space around buildings and streets.

6. For proposed developments in environmentally sensitive areas or comprehensive development areas, TPB may require the project proponents to submit relevant environmental and visual impact assessment to ensure the scale of developments would not result in adverse environmental and visual impact.

7. In 2003, after public consultation, the Administration introduced the Urban Design Guidelines, as a new chapter of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG), setting out the major urban design considerations and the broad framework for urban design assessment. The considerations include general massing and disposition of buildings, stepped height profile for the protection of the ridgelines and the harbour view, provision of breezeways, view corridors, setback of buildings at street level, etc. The implementation arrangements for the Urban Design Guidelines as set out in Chapter 11 of HKPSG are in **Appendix I**.

8. In 2005, the Planning Department completed the Feasibility Study for the Establishment of Air Ventilation Assessment System (the AVA Study). A set of design guidelines for the improvement of air ventilation was formulated on the basis of the findings. The guidelines include the creation of major air paths and open space, appropriate street layout, reference for building design and disposition and the adoption of a varying building height profile and distribution to avoid wind blockage. The guidelines were incorporated into the Chapter "Urban Design Guidelines" of HKPSG in August 2006.

9. The AVA Study has also proposed a performance-based assessment system to compare the air ventilation impacts of various design options. In July 2006, the Government issued a joint technical circular to provide clear guidelines on matters concerning AVA. Proponent departments/bureaux or authorities responsible for major government projects are required to undertake AVA and ensure that air ventilation impact is given due consideration in the planning and design of major development and redevelopment proposals. The technical circular serves as an internal guideline for including AVA in major government projects. The Government will also conduct AVA for government sale sites to assess the impact of development on pedestrian wind environment.

Discussions at Panel meetings

10. The Panel on Planning, Lands and Works (now renamed as "Panel on Development") discussed with the Administration and 18 concerned organizations and individuals the subject at the meeting held on 27 February 2007. It was pointed out by deputations that a high plot ratio coupled with a large plot size would easily create the wall effect. The provision of bonus and exempted gross floor areas in the building approval process had resulted in the increase in building bulk. Property development projects of the former two railway corporations which were usually undertaken on large and elongated sites were most likely to become screen-like buildings. Most deputations held the view that there was an urgent need for the Administration to devise a package of measures to prevent the emergence of further new developments creating the "wall effect". There were suggestions for a rational and scientific review of Hong Kong's long-term planning strategies and that the Government should improve the planning and building approval mechanisms to ensure that relevant planning intentions could be effectively implemented.

11. Some members urged the Administration to obligate all statutory bodies including the Urban Renewal Authority and the two railway corporations to comply with the air ventilation guidelines laid down in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines when planning new developments, and in the longer term to make it a statutory requirement to conduct air ventilation assessment for all development projects. They pointed out that it was unrealistic to expect private developers not to develop a site to its maximum allowable potential in order to avoid the "wall effect".¹ It was therefore incumbent upon the Government to address the problem on various possible fronts, including the exercise of powers under the existing

¹ In its submission to the Panel, the Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong stated that developers were obligated under fiduciary responsibilities to develop a site to its maximum allowable potential and failing to do so might lead to litigation. The only sensible and practical way to tackle the "wall effect" issue was to address it early at the planning stage. Before sites were released to the market, a lower development density and a lighter building bulk could be specified.

legislation to implement planning controls, to plug any loopholes in the existing legislation to prevent abuse by developers, and to review the permitted maximum plot ratios, building heights and layout of buildings etc. of planned developments.

12. On the other hand, some members pointed out that given the peculiar characteristics of Hong Kong, there might not be an easy panacea for the problem. They also cautioned that the Government should not use arbitrary measures to reduce the development intensities of approved developments. Otherwise, Hong Kong's standing as an international city would be undermined.

13. Subsequent to the Panel meeting, the Administration has provided a paper setting out its response to various specific points raised by members at the meeting. The paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)1406/06-07(01)) is reproduced at **Appendix II**.

14. In responding to a member's question at the Panel meeting on 15 October 2007, the Secretary for Development (SDEV) informed the Panel that TPB was conducting a comprehensive review of the existing OZPs with a view to responding to calls from the community for lower development intensity. Out of the 108 OZPs, about half did not have development restrictions, such as plot ratio, building height limit and maximum gross floor area. Although there was no timetable for completing the review of the OZPs due to the voluminous work, priority would be given to those OZPs covering areas under high development/redevelopment pressures and waterfront areas along Victoria Harbour.

15. SDEV also advised that although the property development projects at Nam Cheong and Yuen Long Stations had already been approved by TPB, the projects would be reviewed in response to concerns of the community, in particular the local residents and the relevant District Councils. The Administration would discuss with the railway corporation to formulate alternative schemes for the project. The public and relevant stakeholders would be consulted and those schemes would be vetted through the statutory planning process. Losses, if any, arising from reduction in the development intensity would not have financial implication for the railway corporation because it was only the agent of the Government in the development of the property site. However, public funds and the supply of private housing would be affected.

Discussion at Council meetings

16. An oral question on "Improvement of air ventilation" was raised by Hon TAM Yiu-chung on 20 December 2006, questioning, among others, whether the Government plans to apply the guidelines on air ventilation to assess all the proposed property development projects above railway stations, and whether it plans to enact legislation to enforce those guidelines. The wording of the question and the Government's reply are in **Appendix III**.

17. A written question on "Screen-like buildings" was raised by Hon Alan LEONG on 28 February 2007, questioning, among others, whether the Government has conducted studies over the past three years on the adverse impact caused by the layout of buildings on the air ventilation and environmental hygiene of the neighbouring areas, and whether it would adopt specific measures for districts with a high density of screen-like buildings to prevent the wall effect from worsening. The wording of the question and the Government's reply are in **Appendix IV**.

18. Another written question on "Wall effect caused by buildings" was raised by Hon James TO on 13 June 2007, asking, among others, whether the Government would consider ensuring developers' compliance with non-statutory guidelines on air ventilation by introducing legislation or developing interim mandatory air ventilation assessment criteria, and whether it would exercise its influence on the boards of directors of the two railway companies in order to ensure that such guidelines would not be disobeyed by the railway companies for commercial reasons. The wording of the question and the Government's reply are in **Appendix V**.

19. A motion on "Improving the planning for Hong Kong and reducing screen-like buildings" was moved by Hon WONG Kwok-hing at the Council meeting on 9 May 2007. The motion was negatived. The terms of the motion passed are in **Appendix VI**.

20. A list of relevant papers is in **Appendix VII**.

**Implementation arrangements for the Urban Design Guidelines
set out in Chapter 11 of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines**

8. Implementation

- 8.1 Urban design guidelines can be incorporated through the existing statutory and administrative mechanisms.
- 8.2 The statutory means include: (1) regulation of building heights, site coverage, plot ratios, etc through stipulation in Notes of Outline Zoning Plans prepared under the Town Planning Ordinance; (2) control building layouts through submission of master layout plans in areas zoned "Comprehensive Development Area" on Outline Zoning Plans; (3) control on individual building designs under the Buildings Ordinance; and (4) control on heritage features under Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance.
- 8.3 The administrative mechanisms include (1) incorporation and consideration of urban design elements in the preparation of the lease conditions for development sites, e.g. the "Design, Disposition and Height" clause. Lease conditions could include restrictions on design and disposition of buildings, building heights, types of dwelling, landscaping works and requirements for master layout plans etc.; and (2) undertake urban design studies at district or local levels for new large scale development or redevelopment to set out more detailed guidance.

Developments Creating the Wall Effect

**Questions raised by Members of the Legislative Council's
Panel on Planning, Lands & Works
at its meeting on 27 February 2007**

**The Administration's response to the specific points raised in (a) – (i)
of the letter from Clerk to Panel dated 1 March 2007**

(a) Addressing wall effect in railway development projects

All railway development schemes are required to meet the statutory requirements applicable to private developments including the development restrictions imposed by the relevant Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs) or planning approvals given by the Town Planning Board (TPB). In addition, all railway developments are required to comply with the lease conditions and provisions of the Buildings Ordinance.

For those railway developments for which tenders have been awarded to developers, they should be allowed to proceed in accordance with the contractual provisions entered with the developers. For those developments where tenders have not been awarded, the railway companies take into account the government guidelines on air ventilation in the planning and design of the projects. We note that the railway companies also get in touch with the District Councils and listen to their views on individual development projects.

(b) Government measures to deal with wall effect

The Government shares the community's aspiration for a better living environment and strives to balance it against the fact that Hong Kong is a compact city and we need to put our scarce land resources to optimal use to meet development needs of Hong Kong.

The TPB has taken the initiative of reviewing, and amending, OZPs to provide clear parameters to guide individual developments. The development restrictions under OZPs are enforced through the Buildings Ordinance and land sale/lease conditions.

In the absence of specific development restrictions under some OZPs and in cases where specific planning approval from TPB is not required, the control of development intensities and building heights could be exercised through specific provisions contained in the land sale/lease conditions and will in any event be subject to the First Schedule to the Buildings (Planning) Regulations of the Buildings Ordinance which specifies the maximum plot ratios and site coverage permitted for domestic and non-domestic buildings in relation to building heights, whichever is the lesser. This aims to control the bulk and space around buildings and streets.

To improve clarity and consistency in effecting development restrictions on individual developments, we have reviewed, and strengthened, the present arrangement applicable to the determination of site development intensities and building heights for incorporation into the land sale/lease conditions. As reported by the media, we have recently reduced the plot ratios and building heights of some land sale sites.

For proposed developments in environmentally sensitive areas or comprehensive development areas, the TPB may require the project proponents to submit relevant environmental and visual impact assessment to ensure the scale of developments would not result in adverse environmental and visual impact.

(c) Mitigating wall effect of existing developments

To mitigate the wall effect of existing developments, we would continue to improve the pedestrian environment through extensive greening under the Greening Master Plan. Greening can help improve microclimate, enhance pedestrian comfort by providing solar shading, cooling and pollutant filtering, and soften large structures to improve the streetscape at pedestrian level.

As and where opportunities arise, we would ameliorate the wall effect of the existing developments through introducing streetscape improvements or building setbacks in the neighbourhood. We would also apply design improvement measures in the redevelopment of existing sites or development sites within Government's control in the area with particular regard to air ventilation and visual impacts.

(d) Developments approved but not yet commenced

As a general principle, if and when an approved development complies with all the statutory requirements and lease conditions, it could proceed lawfully.

(e)&(h) Air Ventilation Guidelines and Air Ventilation Assessment

Under the 'Feasibility Study for Establishment of Air Ventilation Assessment System' (the AVA Study) completed in 2005, qualitative guidelines have been recommended on how building mass, height, disposition and permeability can improve air ventilation in the pedestrian wind environment. The guidelines are qualitative in nature and not quantitative. In applying the guidelines, due consideration has to be given to the uniqueness of each individual site.

The guidelines have been incorporated into the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. Air ventilation is formally recognised as one of the considerations in the planning of major development and redevelopment proposals. Proponent departments/bureaux or authorities responsible for government projects are required to undertake Air Ventilation Assessment (AVA). We will continue to encourage quasi-government organizations and the private sector to include AVA in planning and design of their projects on a voluntary basis.

We will also conduct AVA for government sale sites to assess the impact of development on pedestrian wind environment, as such AVA will indirectly help improve the design and spatial layout at pedestrian level.

(f) Prevention of wall effect by relevant authority or quasi-government organizations

The Urban Renewal Authority (URA) has strictly mandated that all of its projects must conform with prevailing environmental stipulations. For this reason, the URA has decided that for its projects still under planning, reference will be made to the guidelines on AVA in order to meet the community's environmental aspirations. As a matter of fact, the URA has carried out AVA for both the Peel Street/Graham Street and Lee Tung Street projects.

As to the measures taken by the railway companies in addressing wall effect in railway development projects, please refer to (a) above.

(g) Planning Department's effort against wall effect

Over the years, the Planning Department has put forward various planning measures to promote sustainable planning and building designs for better living environment. These include drawing up and promulgating standards and guidelines on urban design, air ventilation, open space, greening, etc, to guide both public and private developments.

Under the statutory plan making process, appropriate development restrictions have been and would continue to be imposed to control building bulk and height. In processing development proposals requiring planning permission, the Planning Department would, in consultation with other concerned government departments, continue to assess development proposals having regard to all relevant considerations including environmental and visual impacts. The TPB may impose approval conditions to mitigate the adverse visual and environmental effect, where appropriate.

(i) Technical Guides for Air Ventilation Assessment

The Planning Department has commissioned a study on the 'Urban Climatic Map and Standards for Wind Environment' (UCM Study) to identify climatically sensitive areas with a view to establishing air ventilation standards appropriate for the local climatic conditions for future assessment purpose. The feasibility of establishing more quantitative criteria/standards in wind environment will be covered in the UCM Study.

Conclusion

As an on-going initiative and effort of planning with the community, we will continue to work with all stakeholders, professional bodies and the community at large through an open, transparent and consultative engagement process to further promote sustainable developments and foster a quality environment.

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Appendix III

Oral question on "Improvement of air ventilation" raised at the meeting of the Legislative Council on 20 December 2006 and the Government's reply

(This question was raised by Hon TAM Yiu-chung)

Question:

As there is great public concern about whether the disposition of newly constructed buildings will create the wall effect, which is not conducive to air ventilation in the districts, will the Government inform this Council, in order to improve air ventilation:

- (a) whether it plans to set building height limits for waterfront sites on the Application List; if so, of the relevant details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (b) whether it plans to apply the new Qualitative Guidelines on Air Ventilation, which are contained in the Urban Design Guidelines issued by the Planning Department, to assess all the proposed property development projects above railway stations, and request the developers concerned to amend their building designs according to such Guidelines; if so, of the relevant details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (c) whether it plans to enact legislation to enforce the Qualitative Guidelines on Air Ventilation; if so, of the relevant details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

Madam President,

The Government shares and supports the community's aspiration to quality living environment. Apart from building structure and safety, regard is also given to the design and disposition of buildings, including the impact on air ventilation.

We have conducted a "Feasibility Study for the Establishment of Air Ventilation Assessment System" and also prepared the "Qualitative Guidelines on Air Ventilation" and a framework for carrying out air ventilation assessment. The Qualitative Guidelines on Air Ventilation have also been incorporated into the Hong

Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines under the chapter on "Urban Design Guidelines".

In July this year, my Bureau and the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau issued a joint technical circular on air ventilation assessment to provide clear guidelines on matters concerning air ventilation assessment for major government projects for initial implementation by relevant departments. We hope this can serve as a role model for the industry.

My reply to the three parts of the question is as follows:

- (a) Land developments in Hong Kong should comply with the development parameters of Outline Zoning Plans (OZP), and height restriction is one of the essential development parameters. Height restrictions prescribed by an OZP are applicable to all sites concerned within the zone, including those on the Application List (AL). For waterfront sites on the existing AL, height restrictions have already been stipulated.

Regarding sites which are currently not subject to height restrictions, appropriate height restrictions will be prescribed progressively after assessment. Such restrictions will be implemented through land leases. This arrangement applies to Government land sale sites and lease modification applications for which Government's approval is required.

- (b) At present, the Qualitative Guidelines on Air Ventilation are applicable only to major government projects. For private projects, including the property developments above railway stations, we encourage project proponents to refer to and adopt the Guidelines in their planning and designs.
- (c) At present, we have no plan to enact legislation to enforce the Qualitative Guidelines on Air Ventilation. The main reason is that the contents of the Guidelines involve some non-quantifiable planning and design issues. In applying the Guidelines, due consideration should be given to the uniqueness of each individual site, as well as the relevant peripheral factors. At present, it is not desirable to implement them compulsorily through legislation.

Appendix IV

Written question on "Screen-like buildings" raised at the meeting of the Legislative Council on 28 February 2007 and the Government's reply

(This question was raised by Hon Alan LEONG)

Question:

A survey conducted by a green group at the end of last year found that among the 138 private residential developments completed in the recent decade, 104 were classified as screen-like buildings. Moreover, all the nine forthcoming projects above railway stations include high-density screen-like buildings of 50 storeys or more. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) whether it has conducted studies over the past three years on the adverse impact caused by the layout of buildings on the air ventilation and environmental hygiene of the neighbouring areas; if it has, of the results and improvement proposals; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (b) whether it will adopt specific measures for districts with a high density of screen-like buildings to prevent the wall effect from worsening, such as revising the relevant Outline Zoning Plans or imposing appropriate lease conditions when granting land in those districts; if it will, of the details of such measures; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

Madam President,

The Government understands and shares the public's concern over the impact of building design and layout on air ventilation. As a matter of fact, we have, in recent years, made efforts to enhance the understanding of the air ventilation issue within the government and the industry. We have taken various measures to include air ventilation as one of the considerations in the planning and design of development projects. We have also strived to pursue sustainable development to meet the community's aspiration for a quality living environment.

My reply to the two-part question is as follows:

- (a) In 2005, the Planning Department completed the Feasibility Study for the Establishment of Air Ventilation Assessment System (the AVA Study). A set of design guidelines for the improvement of air ventilation was formulated on the basis of the findings. The guidelines include the creation of major air paths and open space, appropriate street layout, reference for building design and disposition and the adoption of a varying building height profile and distribution to avoid wind blockage. The guidelines were incorporated into the Chapter "Urban Design Guidelines" of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines in August 2006.

The AVA Study has also proposed a performance-based assessment system to compare the air ventilation impacts of various design options. In July 2006, the Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau and the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau jointly issued a technical circular specifically on air ventilation assessment, under which air ventilation is formally recognized as one of the considerations in the planning of major Government development and redevelopment projects. We hope this will set as an example for the industry to follow. The private sector and quasi-public organisations are encouraged to refer to and adopts the guidelines in the planning and design of development projects.

- (b) To keep pace with our social needs and our economic development, we will review and revise the land uses under the Outline Zoning Plans from time to time. Appropriate development parameters such as height restrictions and plot ratio will be formulated. In drawing up town plans and considering development proposals, we will make reference to the "Urban Design Guidelines" and carefully consider the impact of building design and disposition of development proposals on visual quality and air ventilation. The relevant authority will, on individual merits, request applicants to submit an air ventilation assessment through the planning approval mechanism.

In addition, appropriate development densities will be determined for individual sites under town plan and the Buildings Ordinance. This will not only cater for sustainable development of our city, but also meet the community's aspiration for a quality living and working environment. The relevant planning parameters will be specified in land leases to reflect the planning intention of the sites concerned.

Appendix V

Written question on "Wall effect caused by buildings" raised at the meeting of the Legislative Council on 13 June 2007 and the Government's reply

(This question was raised by Hon James TO)

Question:

About the problem of wall effect brought about by buildings, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) as I was informed at a meeting with the Planning Department in November 2005 that the department would request the Lands Department ("LD") to include a condition relating to allocation of non-building areas in the Conditions of Sale for a site at Hoi Fai Road in Tai Kok Tsui (Kowloon Inland Lot No. 11146) in order to ensure that space would be reserved between the buildings to be constructed on the site and the existing buildings, so as to improve air ventilation and reduce wall effect; however, such condition was not included in the Conditions of Sale published by LD recently, of the reasons for LD not including the condition;
- (b) as the current guidelines on air ventilation are not legally binding, whether the Government will consider ensuring developers' compliance with such guidelines by introducing legislation or developing interim mandatory air ventilation assessment criteria;
- (c) as the Government has advised that the railway companies would take into account the government guidelines on air ventilation in the planning and design of the projects, whether the Government will exercise its influence on the boards of directors of the two railway companies in order to ensure that such guidelines will not be disobeyed by the railway companies for commercial reasons; and
- (d) whether it will study the impact on the surrounding environment caused by projects which are currently alleged to be buildings creating the wall effect, and whether it will identify the government lands pending for sale which may potentially be developed into buildings creating the wall effect; if it will not, the reasons for that, and how the Government helps the public to understand the impact on the surrounding environment caused by developments creating the wall effect?

Reply:

Madam President,

My reply to the four parts of the question is as follows:

- (a) The Conditions of Sale for the site at Hoi Fai Road (Kowloon Inland Lot No. 11146) were included in the List of Sites for Sale by Application (commonly known as "Application List") only after they had been vetted by the relevant professional government departments. Also, the use and developable scale of the site are in compliance with the planning intention of the relevant Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) in force.

In the area around Tai Kwok Tsui and the West Kowloon Reclamation, new road networks, which converge with the east-bound and west-bound roads of the old district and directly lead to the new waterfront, provide not only transport links but also breezeways and view corridors for the area. In terms of layout design on the district level, the area does not rely on the Kowloon Inland Lot No. 11146 to serve as the ventilation opening for the area.

As regards development intensity, the plot ratio of the site is 7.5, less than that of other similar developments in Kowloon. Given the height restriction (140 metre above Principal Datum) specified in the Conditions of Sale, buildings to be erected on the site will be lower than the neighbouring ones.

- (b) Under the Feasibility Study for Establishment of Air Ventilation Assessment (AVA) System completed in 2005, a set of guidelines have been recommended on how building mass, height, disposition and permeability can improve air ventilation in the pedestrian wind environment. The guidelines are qualitative in nature and not quantitative. In applying the guidelines, due consideration should be given to the uniqueness of the each individual site and other relevant peripheral factors. At present, it is not desirable to implement them compulsorily through legislation.

The guidelines have been incorporated into the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. Air ventilation is formally recognised as one of the considerations in the planning of major development and redevelopment proposals. Proponent departments/bureaux or authorities responsible for government projects are required to undertake AVA. We will continue to encourage quasi-government organisations and private sector to include AVA in planning and design of their projects on a voluntary basis.

- (c) All railway development projects are required to meet statutory requirements. For individual cases which call for consideration by the board of directors of the railway companies, government officials who act as directors on the boards will, based on the specific circumstances of each case and the justifications put forward by the railway companies, consider giving appropriate advice to the boards. It is a collective decision of the boards of directors as to how a case of this kind should be dealt with ultimately.
- (d) The Town Planning Board (TPB) reviews and amends OZPs to provide clear parameters to guide individual developments. The First Schedule to the Building (Planning) Regulations specifies the maximum plot ratios and site coverage permitted for domestic and non-domestic buildings in relation to building heights. This aims to control the building bulk and space around buildings and streets.

For environmentally sensitive areas and comprehensive development areas, the TPB may require the project proponents to submit relevant environmental and visual impact assessment to ensure the scale of developments would not result in adverse environmental and visual impact.

Before a government site is included into the Application List, the Planning Department will make an appropriate assessment. In making such assessment, the Planning Department will examine development parameters such as development intensity and building height, and undertake AVA for some major sites. As mentioned above, the Conditions of Sale will be included in the Application List only after they have been vetted by the relevant professional government departments.

Details of urban design standards and AVA are set out in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, which is a public document for reference by the trade and the public. The entire document has been uploaded to the webpage of the Planning Department (http://www.pland.gov.hk/tech_doc/hkpsg/english/index.htm) for public access.

Appendix VI

Motion on "Improving the planning for Hong Kong and reducing screen-like buildings" negatived at the meeting of the Legislative Council on 9 May 2007

(This motion was moved by Hon WONG Kwok-hing)

"That, despite the planning guidelines provided in the existing Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines on building density, layout, urban design and air ventilation etc, such guidelines are not legally binding, resulting in the recent emergence of a large number of screen-like buildings, which not only affect the air ventilation and lighting, etc of the neighbouring areas but also bring adverse impact on the planning of ancillary facilities, such as transport and public realm, for the entire community; in view of the above, this Council urges the Government to thoroughly review the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, consider introducing legislative measures to regulate the density and height of buildings, air ventilation and lighting, etc, and, at the same time, protect the ridgelines and harbour view, so as to ensure better planning for Hong Kong."

Appendix VII

Wall effect

List of relevant papers

Date	Meeting	References
20 December 2006	An oral question on "Improvement of air ventilation" was raised at the Council meeting.	Hansard (p. 30 to 38) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1220-translate-e.pdf
27 February 2007	PLW Panel discussed the subject of "Developments creating the wall effect" with the Administration and deputations.	Discussion paper http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0227cb1-983-7-e.pdf Minutes of meeting http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl070227.pdf Follow-up paper http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0227cb1-1406-1-e.pdf Other papers and submissions http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw_ia.htm
28 February 2007	A written question on "Screen-like Buildings" was raised at the Council meeting.	Hansard (p. 7 - 9) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0228-translate-e.pdf
9 May 2007	A motion on "Improving the planning for Hong Kong and reducing screen-like buildings" was moved at the	Hansard (p. 167 - 247) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0509-translate-e.pdf

Date	Meeting	References
	Council meeting. The motion was negated.	
13 June 2007	A written question on "Wall effect caused by buildings" was raised at the Council meeting.	Hansard (p. 61 to 63) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/chinese/counmtg/floor/cm0613-confirm-ec.pdf