

政府總部  
發展局  
規劃地政科  
香港花園道美利大廈



Planning and Lands Branch  
Development Bureau  
Government Secretariat  
Murray Building, Garden Road  
Hong Kong

本局檔號 Our Ref. DEVB(PL-L) 35/05/2006 Pt. 4

來函檔號 Your Ref. CB(3)/PAC/CS (48, 49 & 49A)

29 January 2009

Clerk, Public Accounts Committee  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Building  
8 Jackson Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

(Attn : Ms Serena CHU)

Dear Ms CHU,

**Follow-up to Public Accounts Committee Report No. 39  
Small house grants in the New Territories**

Thank you for your letter of 16 January 2009 on the above subject.

As we have reported to the Public Accounts Committee and the Panel on Development, we are deliberating on the review of the Small House Policy including a number of measures to optimise the implementation of the Small House Policy.

Over the last few years, we have in consultation with the Heung Yee Kuk, put in place a new set of procedures to streamline the processing of Small House applications thereby expediting the processing of such applications, stipulated in the lease conditions of Small House grants that no prior arrangement for transfer or disposal of Small House applicants' beneficial interest be allowed, and introduced a new set of fire safety requirements under which fire safety alternatives would be accepted for Small House applications

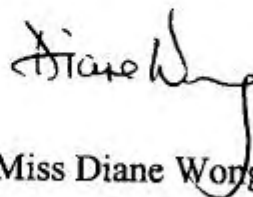
with practical constraints meeting the original Emergency Vehicular Access requirements.

We understand that the rural setting has changed significantly since the introduction of the Small House Policy in 1972. These changes have raised concern over the Small House Policy in the context of effective land resources utilization, land use planning and environmental sustainability. On the other hand, we cannot underestimate the complicated and inter-woven issues involved in different aspects of the Small House Policy. These include the legal and human right considerations, the environmental impact caused by Small House developments, the lack of proper planning and public land for provision of public facilities in villages, the existence of unauthorized building works in Small Houses, and the persistently strong demand for land for Small House developments.

The complexity and far-reaching implications of the considerations as mentioned above underline that the review would be time-consuming. We are also approaching the issue in a pragmatic manner. We are discussing with the Heung Yee Kuk on how to streamline the process of resolving objections to Small House applications, improve on the mechanism for reviewing the land reservation for open space and other public facilities on village layout plans, and rationalize unauthorised building works in New Territories Exempted Houses including, amongst others, Small Houses. Furthermore, we are also exploring the feasibility of whether and how some suitable Village Expansion Area projects could be taken forward, subject to the availability of necessary funding.

The Administration would continue our efforts on the review of the Small House Policy. Taking account of the complexity and difficulty of the issues involved, we would adopt a practical approach in putting forward proposals on the relevant aspects of the Small House Policy for consultation with the Heung Yee Kuk and the community at large.

Yours sincerely,



(Miss Diane Wong)

for Secretary for Development

c.c. AA/SDEV  
Director of Planning  
Director of Lands  
Director of Buildings