

For discussion
on 27 May 2008

**Legislative Council
Panel on Development**

**Review of Measures to Promote
Green Features in Building Developments**

Introduction

This paper outlines the Administration's review of the measures to promote green features in building developments and seeks Members' views and comments on the subject.

Background

2. With a view to encouraging the incorporation of green features that would improve the quality of living space and enhance the sustainability of building developments, after consultation with the relevant stakeholders including building professionals, the industry and the then Legislative Council Panel on Planning, Lands and Works, the Buildings Department (“BD”), the Lands Department (“LandsD”) and the Planning Department (“PlanD”) promulgated in February 2001 and February 2002 respectively two Joint Practice Notes (“JPNs”). The JPNs promulgate a total of 12 green features, namely:

- (a) balconies;
- (b) wider common corridors and lift lobbies;
- (c) communal sky gardens;
- (d) communal podium gardens;
- (e) acoustic fins;
- (f) sunshades and reflectors;
- (g) wing walls, wind catchers and funnels;

- (h) non-structural prefabricated external walls;
- (i) utility platforms;
- (j) mail delivery rooms with mailboxes;
- (k) noise barriers; and
- (l) communal sky gardens for non-residential buildings.

3. Specifically, such features are provided with the following objectives:

- (a) to adopt a holistic life cycle approach to planning, design, construction and maintenance;
- (b) to maximise the use of natural renewable resources and recycled/green building material;
- (c) to minimise the consumption of energy, in particular those non-renewable types; and
- (d) to reduce construction and demolition waste.

4. Subject to fulfillment of certain specified conditions and design requirements, these green features may be exempted from gross floor area ("GFA") and site coverage calculations.

Review of Measures to Promote Green Features

5. A number of building developments have adopted green features since the introduction of the two JPNs. According to statistics up to the end February 2008, a total of 183 completed residential projects have been constructed with green features under the arrangements in the JPNs. During the same period, a total of 529 new building projects were completed. Statistical breakdown of the green features in the 183 buildings is as follows:

Green Features	No. of Projects
Balconies	174
Utility platforms	118
Wider common corridors/lift lobbies	81
Non-structural prefabricated external walls	31
Mail delivery rooms with mailboxes	21
Communal sky gardens	14
Sunshades/reflectors	10

6. An Inter-departmental Working Group ("WG"), comprising representatives of BD, LandsD and PlanD, has been established to review the effectiveness of and the arrangements under the JPNs. In response to the recommendations of the Independent Committee of Inquiry into the Sai Wan Ho Development on Inland Lot No. 8955 made in April 2006, the Administration has expanded the ambit of the WG to cover the review on the need for a cap for GFA concessions granted under the Buildings Ordinance. The WG is chaired by the Director of Buildings.

7. The WG has conducted a number of surveys and studies with a view to assessing the effectiveness of the JPNs and gauging public views on policies on green features. The Group has launched questionnaire surveys for owners and occupants of sample buildings provided with green features. It has sought comments of Authorized Persons, the academia, professional institutes and stakeholders of the industry on the arrangements under the JPNs. The BD has also conducted on-site evaluations of the usage of green features in the sample buildings, as well as focus group meetings with green groups and professional institutes. Public opinion surveys have also been conducted.

8. The findings of the questionnaire surveys, site inspections and focus group meetings have revealed that the benefits of various green features are generally recognized by the respondents. The site inspections have identified no irregularities in the use of the green features in the buildings inspected. No major problems in the maintenance of these features have been revealed from the interviews with the management companies of the buildings in the surveys. A majority of the respondents of the survey indicated that the provision of most of these features would be an important factor in their consideration of purchasing a residential unit.

9. Although some of the green features such as sunshades and wind catchers are less common or even not adopted so far, views collected from the survey suggest that these features are desirable from the environmental viewpoint and hence worthwhile for continued promotion.

10. However, the inclusion of many of these green features on a GFA/site coverage exemption basis naturally increases the height and bulk of the building concerned, exceeding the original development controls laid down in Outline Zoning Plans. According to the views collected from the survey, the exemption criteria of some of the green features may worth further review. Topics worth consideration include the location and maximum headroom of sky gardens and the size and disposition of various green features such as balconies and sky gardens. Some also opined that the Government should strike a balance between the provision of green features and their effects on building height and bulk.

Next Steps

11. The benefits brought about by the provision of green features in buildings to individual flat owners versus public interest in terms of impact of building bulk and height on the neighbourhood is a matter that requires some fine balancing. We intend to engage the stakeholders and community in more active and in-depth discussion once the WG has completed its studies and review of the matter. We will keep Members informed of the progress and welcome Members' views on the issue.

Development Bureau
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