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Panel on Development

Subcommittee on Building Safety and Related Issues

**Minutes of the meeting held on
Friday, 26 August 2011, at 4:30 pm
in Conference Room B of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH (Deputy Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC

Member attending : Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH

Members absent : Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP

**Public officers
attending** : **Agenda item I**

Mrs Carrie LAM CHENG Yuet-ngor, GBS, JP
Secretary for Development

Mr Rex CHANG Wai-yuen, JP
Deputy Secretary for Development
(Planning & Lands)²

Mr Ryan CHIU Pit-ming
Principal Assistant Secretary for Development
(Planning & Lands)³

Mr AU Choi-kai
Director of Buildings

Mr HUI Siu-wai
Assistant Director (Existing Buildings)²
Buildings Department

Mr Robinson CHUNG Kam-yin
Senior Structural Engineer/F1
Buildings Department

Clerk in attendance: Ms Sharon CHUNG
Chief Council Secretary (1)⁴

Staff in attendance : Mr Simon CHEUNG
Senior Council Secretary (1)⁹

Ms Christina SHIU
Legislative Assistant (1)⁴

Action

I Follow-up on building safety issues relating to the collapse of the building at 45J Ma Tau Wai Road in January 2010

(LC Paper No. CB(1)2930/10-11(01) -- Administration's paper -- Buildings Department's initial response to the findings of the coroner's inquest on the building collapse incident at Mau Tau Wai Road

LC Paper No. CB(1)2930/10-11(02) -- News clippings about the coroner's verdict on the

- death of four people during the collapse of the building at 45J Ma Tau Wai Road
- LC Paper No. CB(1)2930/10-11(03) -- Letter dated 18 August 2011 from Hon LEE Wing-tat, Hon James TO Kun-sun and Hon KAM Nai-wai on the coroner's verdict on the death of four people during the collapse of the building at 45J Ma Tau Wai Road
- LC Paper No. CB(1)2930/10-11(04) -- Paper on building safety prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Updated background brief)
- LC Paper No. CB(1)2930/10-11(05) -- Coroner's recommendations to the Director of Buildings in the Findings at Inquest of cases CCDI-102-105/2010 (MC))

The Subcommittee noted three submissions from engineers' and surveyors' associations tabled at the meeting. These submissions expressed views and concerns on the building collapse incident at Ma Tau Wai Road on 29 January 2010 ("the Ma Tau Wai Road Incident").

(Post-meeting note: The submissions were circulated to members vide LC Papers Nos. CB(1) 2955/10-11(01-03) on 29 August 2011.)

2. The Subcommittee deliberated on the Administration's paper concerning the findings of the Coroner's Inquest on the Ma Tau Wai Road Incident (index of proceedings at the **Appendix**).

3. The Administration was requested to provide the following information in respect of the issuance of Repair/Demolition Orders and Investigation Orders by the Buildings Department ("BD") --

- (a) a flow chart with indication of the time allowed for each step, covering the identification of cases, issuance of Orders, monitoring of concerned owners' compliance with Orders, further actions, etc.; and

Admin.

- (b) the number of cases on which each of the above Orders had been issued, numbers of completed cases and outstanding cases, during the past two years.

(Post-meeting note: The above information provided by the Administration was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)3050/10-11(01) on 28 September 2011.)

- Admin. 4. The Administration undertook to brief the Subcommittee on the results of BD's comprehensive review on its building safety enforcement procedures and practices which would commence shortly in the light of the Coroner's observations in the Ma Tau Wai Road Incident.

II Any other business

- 5. Members would be informed of the date of next meeting in due course.
- 6. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:25 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
1 March 2012

Panel on Development

Subcommittee on Building Safety and Related Issues

**Proceedings of the meeting on
Friday, 26 August 2011, at 4:30 pm
in Conference Room B of the Legislative Council Building**

Time Marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action Required
000001 – 000515	Chairman	<p>The Chairman's opening remarks and expression of condolences to the families of the victims of the Ma Tau Wai Road building collapse incident ("the Ma Tau Wai Road Incident")</p> <p>The Chairman's advice that three submissions from engineers' and surveyors' associations expressing views and concerns on the Ma Tau Wai Road Incident were tabled at the meeting</p>	
000516 – 001323	Administration	<p>The Administration's expression of condolences to the families of the victims of the Ma Tau Wai Road Incident</p> <p>The Administration's advice that --</p> <p>(a) it was the basic responsibility of owners to upkeep the safety of their buildings and the community as a whole should not be asked to bear the bitter consequence of poor building maintenance;</p> <p>(b) the Administration had stepped up efforts to improve building safety in Hong Kong over the years, in particular in the wake of the Ma Tau Wai Road Incident;</p> <p>(c) the Coroner's Inquest had revealed that the causes of the Ma Tau Wai</p>	

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		<p>Road Incident were highly complicated and should not be seen in an over-simplistic manner, and the Administration respected the observations of the Coroner and would consider its recommendations seriously;</p> <p>(d) the Buildings Department ("BD") had made initial response on the Coroner's observations through a press release on 16 August 2011 and had decided to conduct a comprehensive review on BD's building safety enforcement manual and instructions ("BD's review") to ensure that they were clear and could cater for the present-day needs of the community; BD would also conduct an internal assessment on the performance of the officers concerned in handling the report of the subject building in Ma Tau Wai Road;</p> <p>(e) in order to enhance neutrality and public confidence in BD's review, the Administration would appoint one or two independent experts to examine the findings of BD's review, and would provide the report on the review to the Subcommittee;</p> <p>(f) since the Administration had already improved manpower support for BD by about 20% in terms of number of staff in 2011-2012, the Administration did not see an imminent need to further increase BD's manpower resources at this stage; and</p>	

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		<p>(g) to attain fruitful deliberation, it was hoped that members should refrain from diverting their attention to issues related to the internal conflicts between different professional grades in BD</p>	
001324 – 002123	Mr KAM Nai-wai Administration	<p>Mr KAM Nai-wai's views that --</p> <p>(a) while he agreed that it was owners' responsibility to maintain safety of their buildings, the Administration had apparently missed out its enforcement responsibility in dealing with uncooperative building owners;</p> <p>(b) as demonstrated in the case of Lee Hing Building (利興樓) at 96 Connaught Road West, which became a "dangerous building" overnight in July 2008 despite repeated assurance from BD on its safety, the work of BD in building safety inspection left much to be desired of; and</p> <p>(c) it would be desirable for the Administration to engage independent experts to carry out BD's review</p> <p>Mr KAM Nai-wai's enquiry on --</p> <p>(a) details of the BD's review; and</p> <p>(b) whether the report and all related findings would be shared with the Subcommittee</p>	

Time Marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action Required
		<p>The Administration's response that --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) BD would not evade its enforcement responsibility in ensuring building safety;(b) there was concern on the time taken by building owners to comply with BD's Repair Orders. However, as Repair Orders were statutory orders, BD must exercise due care and take time to check building ownership when preparing such legal documents;(c) the Administration had yet to work out the scope of BD's review, which would focus on BD's overall procedures and practices for building inspection; and(d) the findings of BD's review and the independent experts' views would be accorded a high degree of transparency, and be shared with members of the Subcommittee as long as releasing the report would not prejudice other legal proceedings <p>Mr KAM's views that to enhance the credibility of BD's review, the approach, scope and contents of the review should be decided by the independent experts instead of BD</p> <p>The Administration's response that it would consider members' suggestions and that in vetting BD's findings, the experts could still ask for supplementary information, and, if necessary, made adjustment to the scope and contents of BD's review</p>	

Time Marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action Required
002124 – 003214	Mr LEE Wing-tat Administration	<p>Mr LEE Wing-tat's views that --</p> <p>(a) although building safety was the responsibility of building owners, the Administration should intervene when and where irresponsible owners failed to comply with building safety requirements and put public safety at risk;</p> <p>(b) given the large number of outstanding non-compliant cases with BD's statutory orders and that many building owners had adopted tactics to delay compliance by lodging appeals to the Appeal Tribunal Panel (Buildings) ("the Appeal Tribunal Panel"), the Administration should consider measures to expedite compliance from concerned owners, such as increasing the number of members serving on the Appeal Tribunal Panel so that more appeal cases could be processed; and</p> <p>(c) it was necessary for BD to step up efficiency of its enforcement actions as a means to enhance its image and credibility, and BD's follow-up to the blockage of fire escapes in a Chinese tenement building at Ma Tau Wai Road was unsatisfactory in which subdivided flats was a problem and a fatal fire happened on 15 June 2011 causing four deaths</p> <p>The Administration's response that --</p> <p>(a) since 1 April 2011, the Administration had adopted a</p>	

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		<p>revised enforcement policy against unauthorized building works ("UBWs") and undertaken rigorous enforcement actions against UBWs as well as irregularities of building works associated with subdivided flats;</p> <p>(b) with a view to enhancing owners' proactiveness to comply with statutory orders, the Administration proposed to amend the Buildings Ordinance to allow BD, in cases of default of the owners where BD would engage contractors to carry out the removal works and recover the costs incurred, to impose a 20% surcharge from owners concerned; in actual enforcement, BD would take into consideration genuine difficulties of the owners and act flexibly;</p> <p>(c) while recognizing the need to act cautiously in line with established statutory requirements in handling appeals of statutory orders, the Administration would review the appeal mechanism to examine ways to expedite processing of appeal cases;</p> <p>(d) as regards the building mentioned by Mr LEE Wing-tat, BD had served removal orders to the concerned owners requiring removal of UBWs before 30 August 2011, and BD would take further action if the owners did not comply with the order</p> <p>Mr LEE Wing-tat's view that the fatal</p>	

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		fire happened in the building with subdivided units in Ma Tau Wai Road justified immediate actions by BD	
003215 – 003224	Chairman	The Chairman's declaration that he had served on the Appeal Tribunal Panel	
003225 – 004359	Mr WONG Kwok-hing Administration	<p>Mr WONG Kwok-hing's enquiries about --</p> <p>(a) details and timetable of BD's plan in implementing the Coroner's recommendation on the conduct of building safety inspection jointly by building surveyor ("BS") and structural engineer ("SE");</p> <p>(b) whether BD's existing deployment of BSs and SEs in conducting building safety inspections in six enforcement districts (i.e. four led by BSs and two led by SEs, as stated in the submission from ten engineers' associations) was reasonable; and</p> <p>(c) whether the canopy collapse incident in an industrial building in Tuen Mun on 9 June 2011 was also attributable to BD's existing staff deployment arrangements which did not cater for joint inspection in the first instance</p> <p>The Administration's response that --</p> <p>(a) prior to the canopy collapse incident in Tuen Mun, the subject canopy had been inspected by a SE, not a BS;</p> <p>(b) BD had adopted a "Building Coordinator" approach whereby a</p>	

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		<p>single section was designated to handle all general building safety problems for the same building, the Building Coordinator could be either a BS or SE;</p> <p>(c) there were established guidelines on cross-discipline consultations on safety-related issues including matters relating to structural safety and fire safety, which lay down when and how inter-discipline consultation should be sought; when a BD officer considered the assessment of a building safety problem beyond his expertise, he was required to seek assistance from other disciplines; for example, where necessary, a SE would be requested to conduct a detailed structural analysis for assessment of the structural safety of the building or a BS would be requested to advise on complicated fire safety and planning issues;</p> <p>(d) in 2010, BD had attended to 1 033 and some 14 000 cases calling for emergency inspections under Category 0 (which had to be dealt with within a three-hour response time) and Category 1 (which had to be dealt with within 10 days) respectively;</p> <p>(e) BD considered the existing practice appropriate; the suggestion requiring joint inspection by a BS and a SE for each Category 0 and Category 1 case was not in line with the principles of making the most efficient use of resources and</p>	

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		<p>requiring professionals to be accountable for their own judgments; nonetheless, BD would adopt an open mind in considering the Coroner's suggestions in its review;</p> <p>(f) BD's reorganization had gone through lengthy staff consultation; since 2006, BD had been moving towards a 1:1 manning ratio for recruitment of BS and SE grade posts related to the safety of existing buildings; the number of SE posts had increased from 129 in 2006 to 189 at present; and</p> <p>(g) in achieving the corporate goals of BD, inter-disciplinary conflicts should be avoided as far as possible</p>	
004400 – 005113	Ms Starry LEE Administration	<p>Ms Starry LEE's views that --</p> <p>(a) she supported the Administration's plan to engage independent experts to participate in BD's review;</p> <p>(b) BD's review should include the compliance time for BD's statutory orders, enforcement actions against newly-erected UBWs, and measures to expedite the time taken to inspect buildings and issue Repair Orders; and</p> <p>(c) BD should devise measures to assist owners of poorly-managed buildings to maintain and repair their buildings especially those aged 50 years and above and without owners' corporations</p>	

Time Marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action Required
		<p>Ms Starry LEE's enquiry on BD's follow-up actions on the aged buildings found to be in need of emergency repair or identified with obvious building defects in the special inspection programme launched after the Ma Tau Wai Road Incident</p> <p>The Administration's response that --</p> <p>(a) shortly after the Ma Tau Wai Road Incident, BD had inspected 4 011 buildings aged 50 years or above to assess their state of repair and building safety; these buildings were grouped into four categories for follow-up action according to their conditions;</p> <p>(b) while contractors were engaged to conduct urgent rectification works in two Category I cases, BD had followed up with the buildings of other Categories by issuing Repair and Investigation Orders as well as Advisory Letters as appropriate, and more than 300 buildings had complied with BD's orders to carry out investigation and repair works;</p> <p>(c) eligible owners could apply for financial assistance including that provided under the Operation Building Bright ("OBB"); in situations where the owners could not organize themselves in carrying out the repair works, BD would conduct works on their behalf and recover the cost from owners after deducting the grant from OBB; and</p> <p>(d) OBB had substantially facilitated</p>	

Time Marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action Required
		the clearing of longstanding backlog orders involving the repair of no less than 800 aged and dilapidated buildings	
005114 – 005924	Mr James TO Administration	<p>Mr James TO's views that --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) if the Buildings Authority ("BA") failed to take action under the law against a dangerous building at a time when BA's intervention was warranted, the failure constituted dereliction of duty; (b) the testimony of an expert at the Coroner's Court revealed that the building at 45J, Ma Tau Wai Road "was in a dying state" (彌留狀態) at the time of BD's inspection; (c) if BA did not agree to the expert's view, which had been accepted by the Coroner's Court as part of its conclusion and meant that BA had failed to perform his duty, it was important for BA to seek to overrule this conclusion; and (d) the independent experts to be engaged by the Administration should study the Coroner Court's recommendation for BD to conduct joint inspection of buildings of Categories 0 and 1 by BSs and SEs notwithstanding that the proposal might trigger inter-disciplinary conflicts, as well as the criteria for BD to trigger different levels of enforcement actions <p>The Administration's response that BD's review would take into account</p>	

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		the Coroner Court's recommendations	
005925 – 010705	Ir Dr Raymond HO Administration	<p>Ir Dr Raymond HO's views that --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Director of Buildings should address the cross-disciplinary conflicts involving the BS and SE grades in a fair and impartial manner; (b) the independent experts to be appointed by the Administration should look into the concerns raised in the three submissions received by the Subcommittee; (c) in view of resources constraints, whether joint inspection of buildings by BSs and SEs was worth pursuing would depend largely on the cost- effectiveness of such arrangement; (d) in some cases, visual inspection would be insufficient in determining the structural safety of a building, and in such cases, structural calculations, supplemented by the use of relevant devices/equipment, would be necessary; (e) while subdivision of units might lead to structural problems, as the subject involved complicated social issue, subdivided units should be "regulated" rather than "eliminated"; and (f) legislation should be introduced to empower BA to apply for Court warrant for entry into flats with 	

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		<p>suspected subdivided units</p> <p>Ir Dr Raymond HO's enquiry on whether the experts to be appointed would review BD's manpower deployment and inter-disciplinary issues</p> <p>The Administration's response that --</p> <p>(a) the experts had yet to be identified and appointed; as overseas experts might not be familiar with building safety problems in Hong Kong, the initial thinking was to appoint local experts; and</p> <p>(b) the Administration would seriously consider views from members and relevant sectors on the scope of BD's review</p>	
010706 – 011628	Mr IP Kwok-him Administration Chairman	<p>Mr IP Kwok-him's views that --</p> <p>(a) he was astonished by the experts' testimony at the Coroner's Inquest that the building at 45J, Ma Tau Wai Road "was in a dying state" (彌留狀態) at the time of BD's inspection, and was concerned that BD had not made the same observation;</p> <p>(b) BD should learn a lesson from the case of Lee Hing Building (利興樓) and the Mau Tau Wai Road Incident in improving the reliability of building safety inspections, since the public counted heavily on BD for maintaining the safety of</p>	

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		<p>buildings; and</p> <p>(c) BD should review the standards set for structural safety, i.e. whether these standards were too low for ensuring building safety</p> <p>The Administration's response that --</p> <p>(a) members and the public's impression of the Ma Tau Wai Road Incident might have been based on media reports on the Coroner's Inquest only and hence might not have been aware of and taken into consideration all the evidence produced and factors discussed during the hearing;</p> <p>(b) the primary concern of the Coroner's Inquest was to ascertain the causes of death of the deceased in the incident, rather than to establish the causes of the building collapse;</p> <p>(c) the description by the expert at the Coroner's Inquest that the collapsed building "was in a dying state" (彌留狀態) was not a professional term to describe the condition of a building; in fact, the objective and technical findings of the expert and BD's inspection had many areas in common; and</p> <p>(d) based on the data collected at the time of inspection, the building should not have collapsed if not for the exertion of an external force, and it should be noted that some works were underway inside the building at the time of the</p>	

Time Marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action Required
		<p>collapse</p> <p>The Chairman's comments that --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) the causes of building collapse were highly complicated and external factors should not be ignored;(b) BD should consider the suggestion of Mr James TO and Mr IP Kwok-him to review the present building safety standards which had been in use for many years; and(c) as a court case relating to the Ma Tau Wai Incident had yet to be heard, the Subcommittee should refrain from discussing the causes of the building collapse	
011629 – 012402	Dr Priscilla LEUNG Administration	<p>Dr Priscilla LEUNG's views that --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) it was difficult to accept that no effective enforcement action had been taken by BD on building irregularities at the building at 45J, Ma Tau Wai Road before its eventual collapse in January 2010;(b) the Administration should allay public concern about aged and poorly-maintained buildings which existed in great number in To Kwa Wan and Hung Hom;(c) she agreed that BD should raise the building safety standards currently in use;(d) the existing practice which counted heavily on the judgement of	

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		<p>technocrats, who were prone to follow rigid and inflexible safety standards, were unable to alleviate occupants' safety concerns, nor the practice of categorizing some aged buildings with reported defects as "<i>having no immediate danger</i>" (無即時危險) could relieve occupants' worry</p> <p>The Administration's response that --</p> <p>(a) a building found to "<i>have no immediate danger</i>" (無即時危險) meant that it was structurally safe as a whole, and no immediate closure or emergency shoring works was required; however, this did not mean that the building was free from any defects or had no potential danger in other ways; and</p> <p>(b) where appropriate, BD would issue Repair Orders requiring building owners to carry out the necessary repair, or in urgent cases, to engage a Government contractor to implement remedial works immediately without issuing an order first</p>	
012403 – 013404	Mr LEE Wing-tat Administration Chairman	<p>Mr LEE Wing-tat's views that --</p> <p>(a) building owners' compliance with BD's statutory orders hinged on the Administration's determination in taking enforcement actions;</p> <p>(b) BD should consider replacing the term "<i>no immediate danger</i>" (無即時危險) used in the assessment of buildings, as it was misleading and</p>	

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		<p>might understate the seriousness of the structural problems and thereby lead to inaction on the part of owners in carrying out remedial works; and</p> <p>(c) the Coroner had made adverse comments on the attitude of BD staff, which might have negative impact on BD's staff morale and image</p> <p>Mr LEE Wing-tat's enquiry on whether a "review system" was in place to guard against building owners' non-compliance with BD's statutory orders</p> <p>The Administration's response that --</p> <p>(a) building owners were required to carry out timely rectification works before the specified deadlines in BD's orders, and with the aid of computerized records and under clear guidelines, BD staff would follow up all the statutory notices issued, and further enforcement actions would be taken if building owners failed to comply with the statutory orders; and</p> <p>(b) in most of the cases, concerned building owners were required to keep BA informed of their appointment of an Authorized Person to coordinate and supervise and a registered contractor to carry out the repair works</p> <p>The Chairman's and Mr LEE Wing-tat's request that Administration should</p>	<p>The Administration</p>

Time Marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action Required
		<p>provide the following information in respect of the issuance of Repair/Demolition Orders and Investigation Orders by BD --</p> <p>(a) a flow chart with indication of the time allowed for each step, covering the identification of cases, issuance of Orders, monitoring of concerned owners' compliance with Orders, further actions, etc.; and</p> <p>(b) the number of cases on which each of the above Orders had been issued, numbers of completed cases and outstanding cases, during the past two years</p> <p>The Administration's response that --</p> <p>(a) further to the flow chart at Annex B to the discussion paper, it would provide further information as requested;</p> <p>(b) BD would normally give building owners two months to remove UBWs and six months to carry out repair works; follow-up checks were conducted within six months after the deadlines; and</p> <p>(c) major reasons causing delay in owners' compliance with BD's orders included extension of deadlines on compassionate grounds</p>	<p>was requested to take action under paragraph 3 of the minutes</p>
013405 – 014044	Dr Priscilla LEUNG Administration	<p>Dr Priscilla LEUNG's views that --</p> <p>(a) BD's advice, prior to the collapse of the building at 45J Ma Tau Wai</p>	

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		<p>Road, that it had "<i>no immediate danger</i>" (無即時危險) was misleading to the owner and occupants, as they were not aware of other potential danger that the building might pose, it was natural that they would proceed with works inside the building;</p> <p>(b) BD should give clear and sufficient information to the public regarding its descriptions of the conditions of buildings;</p> <p>(c) BD had an undeniable responsibility over the Ma Tau Wai Incident in cautioning owners and occupants against the potential risks and hazards that could be caused by the building; and</p> <p>(d) BD's Repair Orders served to the owner of the building at Ma Tau Wai Road about a year before the incident demanding repair of the external walls had an effect of underplaying the level of the danger the building was facing</p> <p>The Administration's response that --</p> <p>(a) BD accorded great importance to upholding building safety; and</p> <p>(b) since the owners of the building at Ma Tau Wai Road had already been issued with Repair Orders, they should have engaged a qualified person to carry out the repair works; if a qualified person had been appointed, he/she should have taken precautionary measures and cautioned owners about the</p>	

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		possible collapse before and during the repairs works	
014045 – 015028	Mr James TO Administration Chairman	<p>Mr James TO's views that --</p> <p>(a) the testimony by one of the experts at the Coroner's Inquest revealed a huge discrepancy between the assessment of BD's staff and the expert on the condition of the building at 45J, Ma Tau Wai Road;</p> <p>(b) in the light of the expert's comments that the building "was in a dying state" (彌留狀態), BD should review why the BD officer responsible for the inspection had not approached a SE for advice on the structural safety of the building, and whether the discrepancy mentioned in (a) was due to the adoption of unreasonably low safety standards, irresponsible attitude of BD's inspection staff, or that the expert's assessment was wrong; and</p> <p>(c) if BD had adopted an improper standard in concluding that a building was in no danger, the safety of millions of Hong Kong people inhabiting in multi-storey buildings would be at risk</p> <p>The Chairman's advice that the meeting should not discuss the details of the Ma Tau Wai Incident as a court case related to the incident had yet to be heard</p> <p>The Administration's response that --</p> <p>(a) the Administration had accorded</p>	

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		<p>great importance to enhancing building safety in the territory; as a matter of fact, buildings in Hong Kong were generally constructed with high safety standard;</p> <p>(b) there were established guidelines for building inspection as well as cross-discipline consultation arrangements within BD; and</p> <p>(c) BD's comprehensive review to be conducted would cover the adequacy of these guidelines in coping with the present-day situation</p> <p>Mr James TO's view that as there were many building works in progress in buildings, BD should take this into account in assessing the actions to be taken against buildings with irregularities</p> <p>The Administration's response that building works should only be carried out by qualified persons. Therefore, it would not be reasonable to require BD's frontline staff to factor in their judgment that works could be done by unqualified persons</p> <p>The Chairman's remarks that out of the 4 011 buildings aged 50 years or above inspected by BD after the Ma Tau Wai Road Incident, BD had arranged urgent rectification works for two buildings which had reflected that BD had a standard in place to take action against dangerous buildings</p>	

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015029 – 015404	Ir Dr Raymond HO Administration Chairman	<p>Ir Dr Raymond HO's views that --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) it was necessary to link up visual assessment with structural assessment, making good use of the expertise of BSs and SEs in building safety inspection;(b) building safety being a highly complicated matter subject to many factors, it would be difficult to achieve absolute accurate assessment as whether a dilapidated building was in immediate danger at a point of time; and(c) it was important for the experts who would examine BD's review to make constructive suggestions on the coordination of professional resources and improvement of the procedures and practices for building safety inspection <p>The Chairman's concluding remarks that --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) the Subcommittee supported the Administration's plan to engage independent experts to examine BD's review;(b) some members had stressed that it was important for BD to demonstrate seriousness and determination in enforcing its statutory orders; and(c) as rightly pointed out by some members, the Administration should revisit the existing building safety standards to ascertain	

Time Marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action Required
		whether they were able to meet the present-day requirements The Chairman's advice that the date of the next meeting would be fixed in due course	

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
1 March 2012