

PANEL ON DEVELOPMENT

Rehousing Blocks of the Urban Renewal Authority

After the Panel meeting on 23 June 2015 to discuss the “Work of the Urban Renewal Authority”, the Administration was requested to provide information about the respective numbers of housing units in the four buildings provided by the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) for rehousing purposes, i.e. Bedford Tower, Rich Building, 12 Soy Street and Shun Shing Mansion, and their respective vacancy rates.

We have consulted the Urban Renewal Authority and would provide the requisite information as follows.

When the Urban Renewal Authority (“URA”) was established in 2001 to replace the former Land Development Corporation (“LDC”), it inherited four rehousing blocks from LDC, namely, Shun Sing Mansion at No.466, Des Voeux Road West; Rich Building at Nos. 163-165, Lai Chi Kok Road, Sham Shui Po; Bedford Tower at Nos. 68-72, Bedford Road, Tai Kok Tsui; and No.12, Soy Street, Mong Kok.

At the time, LDC did not have any arrangement with the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) or the Hong Kong Housing Society (HS) to provide rehousing units for domestic tenants displaced by the LDC redevelopment projects. LDC used these four rehousing blocks to rehouse domestic tenants affected by LDC’s redevelopment projects as an alternative option to ex gratia payment to the affected tenants. URA has since retained the incumbent occupiers of the units affected by the LDC projects.

Since its establishment in 2001, the URA has reached and renewed agreement with HA and HS to provide public housing units to rehouse domestic tenants affected by URA’s redevelopment projects who meet the public housing eligibility criteria of HA and HS. As URA can now offer

public housing units to the eligible domestic tenants affected by URA projects, the four rehousing blocks inherited from LDC are no longer required for its original purpose. The four rehousing blocks have since been used instead to provide temporary shelter for affected tenants of URA redevelopment projects who have urgent housing needs under exceptional circumstances upon vacation/clearance from their affected properties while queuing for public rental housing.

As at July 2015, the occupancy and vacancy rates of the four blocks (broken down by family flats and 1&2 persons' shared-cubicles) are as follows -

Name of Building	Shun Sing Mansion	Rich Building	Bedford Tower	No.12, Soy Street
Number of family flats	62	20	44	112
Number of family flats occupied	23	7	25	26
Occupancy rate of family flats	37%	35%	57%	23%
Vacancy rate of family flats	63%	65%	43%	77%
Number of 1&2 persons' shared-cubicles	26	18	(Note)	170
Number of 1&2 persons' shared-cubicles occupied	9	4		31
Occupancy rate of 1&2 persons shared-cubicles	35%	22%		18%

Vacancy rate of 1&2 persons shared-cubicles	65%	78%		82%
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Note: Bedford Tower does not provide 1&2 persons' shared-cubicles.

To enhance the occupancy rates of the four rehousing blocks and put them to better use, the URA Board decided at a recent meeting to make available the vacant units in the rehousing blocks to domestic tenants affected by URA's redevelopment projects who are *not* eligible for public housing units of HA and HS. This will be an alternative option to ex gratia payment in cash for these affected singletons, doubletons or families who will otherwise have no rehousing option.

This arrangement aims at providing interim rehousing for affected tenants before they qualify for public rental housing. When they do, they will vacate the units which will serve as rolling stock. URA plans to make available this alternative option to affected tenants of redevelopment projects to be commenced in 2016.

***Development Bureau
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