

**For discussion
on 12 January 2000**

EC(1999-2000)29

ITEM FOR ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 82 - BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT Subhead 001 Salaries

Members are invited to recommend to Finance Committee the conversion of the following supernumerary post in the Slope Safety Section of the Buildings Department to a permanent post -

1 Chief Building Surveyor
(D1) (\$98,250 - \$104,250)

PROBLEM

The existing supernumerary post of Chief Building Surveyor (CBS) (D1) in the Slope Safety Section of the Buildings Department (BD) will lapse on 1 April 2000. The Director of Buildings (DB) needs continued directorate support to oversee the implementation of Government's expanded Landslip Preventive Measures (LPM) Programme regarding the safety of potentially dangerous private slopes.

PROPOSAL

2. DB proposes to convert the supernumerary post of CBS (D1) heading the Slope Safety Section of BD to a permanent post.

/JUSTIFICATION

JUSTIFICATION**Accelerated LPM Programme from 1995 to 2000**

3. On 1 April 1995, the Director of Civil Engineering (DCE) launched a five-year accelerated LPM Programme to upgrade about 900 Government slopes and to study about 1 500 private slopes which are primarily slopes registered in the 1977-78 Slope Catalogue. Vide EC(95-96)79, Members approved the creation of one supernumerary CBS (D1) post, designated as CBS/Slope Safety, for four years up to 31 March 2000 to head the Slope Safety Section (the Section) in BD, which was set up on 1 April 1996 to cope with the work resulting from the accelerated LPM Programme.

4. The Section is responsible for effecting remedial actions under the Buildings Ordinance on potentially dangerous private slopes identified by the Geotechnical Engineering Office (GEO) of the Civil Engineering Department in implementing the accelerated LPM Programme. As a dedicated and self-contained team, the Section has adopted a focused and coordinated approach to perform forward planning, speedy implementation and continuous monitoring of statutory measures relating to private slopes. Its main duties are -

- (a) in association with GEO to step up measures reminding private owners of their responsibilities for the safety of their slopes;
- (b) in conjunction with GEO and the Lands Department establishing maintenance responsibilities of private slopes;
- (c) preparing and issuing Orders on slope matters under Sections 27A and 27C of the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123);
- (d) liaising with private owners affected by the Orders and their consulting engineers to ensure compliance with the statutory requirements. Vetting/approving consulting engineers' slope remedial proposals and determining whether the remedial works after completion can be accepted;
- (e) appointing geotechnical consultants to investigate, design and supervise the carrying out of slope repairs/upgrading works by the Government contractor in default of the private owners, and recovering the costs of works thereof;

/(f)

- (f) providing emergency services regarding private slopes in co-ordination with GEO; and
- (g) actively taking up the role, in conjunction with GEO, in the promotion of public awareness of slope safety and providing assistance to owners of private slopes to maintain them, through the provision of technical advice and the development of other measures.

5. Since its setting up, the Section has received a total of 1077 GEO referrals on 906 substandard private slopes, resulting in the issue of 728 Dangerous Hillside Orders (DHO) to private owners requiring them to upgrade the substandard slopes under Section 27A of the Buildings Ordinance.

Buried Services Investigation Unit

6. In November 1996, the Government introduced legislative measures under Section 27C of the Buildings Ordinance, requiring owners to monitor and repair water-carrying buried services where any leakage may have serious impact on the stability of nearby slopes. Consequently, we set up a new Buried Services Investigation Unit under the direct supervision of CBS/Slope Safety. Since its establishment, the unit has investigated 1044 fill slopes, resulting in the service of 52 Orders under Section 27C of the Buildings Ordinance to require investigation of buried services in, or in the vicinity of, these private slopes.

Expanded LPM Programme from 2000 Onwards

7. As a long-term Government strategy to improve slope safety, DCE will commence a ten-year expanded LPM Programme in early 2000, immediately following the completion of the current accelerated LPM Programme. The target annual output under the expanded LPM Programme from 2000 onwards is to upgrade 250 substandard Government slopes and to study 300 private slopes. As a result, DB's continued support to help achieve the target is necessary after March 2000.

8. DB estimates that, under the expanded LPM Programme, there will be altogether 270 substandard private slopes requiring rectification actions under the Buildings Ordinance per year. He needs to maintain the current staff resources in the Slope Safety Section in order to handle the estimated annual 270 GEO referrals arising from the expanded LPM Programme beyond 2000.

/Proposed

Proposed Conversion to a Permanent Post

9. The Head of the Section is the key professional to oversee enforcement action to be taken under the LPM Programme, to determine appropriate action in emergency situations involving private slopes and to coordinate with Government departments to formulate policies and strategy on slope safety matters. He is also the delegated signatory of the Building Authority for statutory orders on slope matters and has to administer consultancy agreements for default works and monitor slope works contracts. DB considers that the Head of the Section should be a highly experienced professional building surveyor at D1 level, well-versed in Government policies and work practices on slope safety and landslip prevention, and possesses sufficient stature, maturity and experience to command the respect of building professionals. Accordingly, DB proposes the conversion of the existing supernumerary post of CBS (D1) in the Section, designated as CBS/Slope Safety, to a permanent post in view of Government's long-term commitment to landslip prevention. The job description of the post is at Enclosure 1.

Encl. 1

10. Apart from the CBS post, there are 56 non-directorate posts in the Section, including nine non-directorate posts in the Buried Services Investigation Unit. The organisation chart of the Section is at Enclosure 2.

Encl. 2

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. The additional notional annual salary cost of the proposal at mid-point is \$1,213,200. The full annual average staff cost of the proposal, including salaries and staff on-cost, is \$2,192,000. We have included sufficient provision in the 2000-01 draft Estimates to meet the cost of this proposal.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

12. Following the Kwun Lung Lau landslide in 1994, the Slope Safety Review carried out by the Secretary of Works recommended the acceleration of the LPM Programme.

13. DCE has recently compiled a New Catalogue of Slopes to replace the old Catalogue of 1977-78, registering all sizable man-made slopes in Hong Kong. A total of about 54000 slopes have been registered, of which 17000 are private slopes. A Legislative Council brief on the maintenance and upgrading of man-made slopes registered in the New Catalogue of Slopes was issued to Members on 20 July 1998.

/CIVIL

CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU COMMENTS

14. The Administration has considered carefully alternative means to provide the level of service required, including redeployment, bearing in mind the need for greater efficiency and productivity under the Enhanced Productivity Programme. We are satisfied that the proposal contained in the paper is the most appropriate way to proceed. Civil Service Bureau supports the proposed conversion of the post to permanent post, having regard to the long-term operational requirements.

ADVICE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DIRECTORATE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

15. The Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service has advised that the grading proposed for the post would be appropriate if the post were to be created on the permanent establishment.

Planning and Lands Bureau
January 2000

Job Description
Chief Building Surveyor/Slope Safety

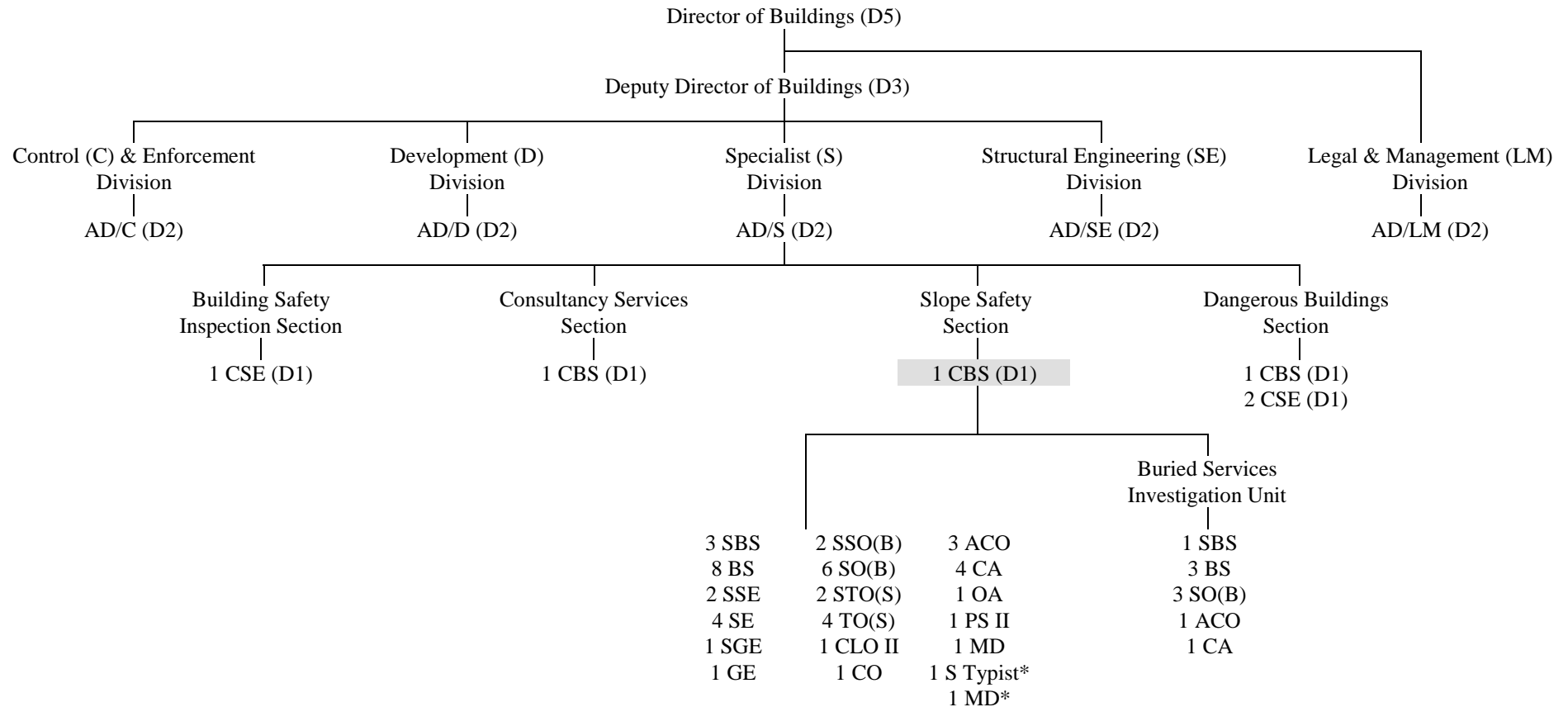
Rank : Chief Building Surveyor (D1)

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Responsible to the Assistant Director/Specialist (AD/S) for supervising the day-to-day work of the Slope Safety Section. Duties include -

- (1) coordinating with the Geotechnical Engineering Office of the Civil Engineering Department to formulate the policy and strategy on slope safety measures under the Buildings Ordinance;
- (2) approving the service of or signing statutory orders;
- (3) approving plans for remedial works to make safe dangerous hillsides and ensuring the works are carried out properly;
- (4) procuring, administering and managing consultancy agreements and slope works contracts for default works;
- (5) approving works orders and authorizing payments in connection with default works;
- (6) serving as Chairperson to the Default Works Group Meeting, the Consultant Progress Meeting, the Slope Works Contractor Meeting and attending other meetings on slope safety matters as appropriate;
- (7) responding to appeals and recommending prosecution actions relating to statutory orders;
- (8) representing the Section in inter-departmental and external conferences and committees on private slope safety matters;
- (9) supervising emergency duty terms during tropical cyclones or other adverse weather conditions;
- (10) monitoring work statistics and evaluating performance; and
- (11) performing such other duties as assigned to him by AD/S.

Organisation Chart of the Slope Safety Section of Buildings Department



* Non-directorate posts which will lapse on 1.4.2000.

Supernumerary post of CBS proposed to be made permanent.

Legend

AD	Assistant Director	SSO(B)	Senior Survey Officer (Building)	PS II	Personal Secretary II
CBS	Chief Building Surveyor	STO(S)	Senior Technical Officer (Structural)	S Typist	Senior Typist
CSE	Chief Structural Engineer	SO(B)	Survey Officer (Building)	MD	Motor Driver
SBS	Senior Building Surveyor	TO(S)	Technical Officer (Structural)		
SSE	Senior Structural Engineer	CLO II	Chinese Language Officer II		
SGE	Senior Geotechnical Engineer	CO	Clerical Officer		
BS	Building Surveyor	ACO	Assistant Clerical Officer		
SE	Structural Engineer	CA	Clerical Assistant		
GE	Geotechnical Engineer	OA	Office Assistant		