

**Submission of the Town Planning Board
Subcommittee of Legislative Council to study the Urban Renewal Authority White Bill
(Meeting on 24.11.1999)**

On 2.11.1999, the Administration briefed the Town Planning Board (TPB) on the the “Consultation Paper on the Urban Renewal Authority Bill”. The following is a summary of the main points raised by Members of TPB:

General Approach

- The proposed approach for urban renewal as set out in the Consultation Paper was generally supported by the TPB.

- Apart from redevelopment of the dilapidated buildings in the old urban areas, more emphasis should be given to the preservation of cultural heritage and revitalization of existing neighbourhoods in the old urban areas. In this regard, the objective of preservation of buildings of historical, cultural or architectural interest in urban renewal action areas as stated in paragraph 6 (d) of the Consultation Paper was supported. Since this objective was not explicitly set out in the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) White Bill, an express provision on the preservation objective in section 5 of the Bill was proposed.

- Other than redevelopment projects, other district projects such as pedestrianization of some of the existing built-up area would also help improve the living environment.

- The basis for the formulation of the 5-year corporate plan and annual business plan should be clearly elaborated.

Re-housing and Land Assembly

- Proper re-housing arrangements for the tenants/owners affected by URA projects should be made.

- The Administration should ensure that the re-housing and land assembly arrangements for

urban renewal projects would not be challenged as an abuse of power and infringement of property rights.

Financial Arrangement

- The implications for granting relaxation of plot ratio restrictions and gross floor area exemption for the provision of Government, institution or community facilities in URA schemes should be carefully considered as the proposals could imply a double standard if similar provisions were not applicable to other private sector developments.
- The financial arrangements for the URA (including the method of charging of land premium) might require special attention.

Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Programme

- The effect of the 20-year urban redevelopment/rehabilitation programme on housing demand and housing supply would need to be carefully considered by the relevant authority.
- The proposal of promoting the maintenance and improvement of individual buildings was generally supported. As a result of the tightening up of control on building design and construction since the 1970s, the problem of premature urban decay might become less serious in future.