

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Review of 'Empty Shell' for Private Development

The LegCo Environmental Affairs Panel, at its meeting on 23 July 1999 while discussing the disposal and management of construction and demolition waste, asked the Administration to review the 'empty shell' concept with a view to reducing the production of decoration waste.

2. Buildings Department has reviewed the subject through a Working Group (WG) comprising government officials of relevant departments and bureaux, representatives of the building professionals, developers and contractors. The terms of reference of this WG are :

- (a) to review building regulations and construction practices so as to identify opportunities to reduce construction and demolition waste and protect the environment through enhancement of construction efficiency; and
- (b) to make recommendations to the Building Sub-committee of the Land and Building Advisory Committee

3. The WG took note of surveys conducted on 10 private developments (the Annex). It is evident from the results of the surveys that the problem of decoration waste (i.e. discarded sanitary fittings) in new private buildings is not serious.

4. In its deliberation, the WG has identified the following concerns if the empty shell concept were to be implemented:

- (a) construction waste generated from fitting out works carried out by individual contractors;
- (b) chaotic site condition arising from individual owners engaging their own contractors for the fitting out works; and
- (c) problem in testing the plumbing and drainage system without fittings for compliance with regulations.

5. The WG is of the view that a building should be provided with the requisite sanitary fitments and that this should generally be provided before the issue of an Occupation Permit, which signifies a building is suitable for occupation. The WG has also recommended that a modification of the relevant building regulation to waive such requirement, subject to the submission of an undertaking that the fitments will be installed prior to actual occupation of the premise, be considered on the merits of individual case. Examples of cases that may merit the granting of modification include :

- (a) hotels or service apartments in which extensive decoration and fitting out works would be carried out after the issue of Occupation Permit; and
- (b) cases where the developer has provided different choices of fitments for the purchasers to choose and that such fitments are not available prior to the completion of the building.

6. The Administration is prepared to accept these recommendations.

7. The WG, in addition to reviewing the provision of fitments, will study issues relating to the design, planning and construction of new buildings as well as site management to identify means for waste minimisation. These may include lean construction, prefabrication, system formwork, waste management plan etc.

Buildings Department
February 2000

Summary of Survey Results

Description	Island Place	Floridian	FSSTL 193	Villa Concerto	Royale Chateau	Hillview Court	Mount Haven	Grand Pacific Views & Grand Pacific Heights	Scenic View	Castello
No. of units handed over	784	214	2510	493	45	105	542	79	45	17
Kitchen cabinets replaced	2	-	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sanitary fitments replaced	1	2	16	2	-	-	16	3	-	-