



By MAIL and FAX

Your Ref: CB1/PL/DEV+EA
Our Ref: 213-09-LegCo-GBldg

4th December 2009

Legislative Council Secretariat
3/F., Citibank Tower,
3 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong.

Attn: Clerk to the Panel on Environmental Affairs (Attn: Miss Mandy POON)

To whom it may concern:

Panel on Development and Panel on Environmental Affairs
Joint Meeting of December 10, 2009:
Green Council's Submission for Consideration

Thank you for inviting the Green Council to contribute comments and suggestions on the measures to encourage the inclusion of environmental features in building developments, for consideration and potential discussion at the upcoming Meeting. For the Panel Members' consideration, I am pleased to submit the following pre-meeting comments, questions and recommendations:

General

- (a) Green Council officials applaud and support the HKSAR Government in taking a decisive and leading position on including green features to improve air ventilation, greening, energy efficiency, etc., in the construction and development of "Green Buildings". As announced by our Chief Executive Donald Tsang on November 20, 2009, HKSAR Government officials are reviewing the policy on green features at new residential projects, implying that such features may no longer be exempt from a building's gross floor area [GFA] (although this measure will only be applicable to new development projects).

In fact, there is an immediate need for the Government to direct and mandate developers to plan and provide more environmentally sound facilities in order to improve people's quality of life and sustainability in our Asia's World City.

.../2

1 | Page

- (b) The current criteria for exemption of the green and amenity features, that usually only relate to and benefit the residence alone) have to be reviewed. In this regard, particular attention should be directed towards: the GFA concessions for mandatory and other green / amenity features, car parking provision, areas for public passage or road widening, capping GFA concessions, and legal status of certain GFA concessions). In parallel, appraisal systems for the evaluation of their environmental performance aspects and levels should be developed -- e.g. establishment and implementation of performance indicators, preparation and dissemination of a matrix of the overall effectiveness of various features, etc..
- (c) For sustainable building design, the Government should establish clearly defined guidelines/directives -- e.g. building separation / permeability, building setback and greening of buildings recommended in the "Report on the Engagement Process for a First Sustainable Development Strategy", etc. -- for the developers to adopt and use on a routine [perhaps even mandatory?] basis. Such a significant Government direction and sector implementation would definitely promote and advance sustainability of the built environment and improve the quality of our urban living space.

Specific Comments

- (d) Green features should be in compliance with the environmental criteria stated in recognized green building schemes -- e.g. the HK-BEAM (Hong Kong Building Environmental Assessment Method, the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System developed by the US Green Building Council (USGBC), and / or other credible alternative schemes. Particular emphasis should be placed on the selection / purchasing / use of green building materials as well as other relevant processes and measures e.g. mandatory implementation of the Building Energy Codes, reduction of energy consumption of buildings, etc. .
- (e) With the Green Council being the preeminent Hong Kong organization guiding, promoting and overseeing the Hong Kong Green Label Scheme¹ (HKGLS), Green Council officials contend that environmentally preferable products/services -- e.g. construction materials, electrical installations, etc. -- and most notably those already verified/certified and ecolabelled as environmental leadership products/services,

.../3

¹ This is an independent, not-for-profit and voluntary scheme that has operated since 2000. Its focus is to identify, differentiate, certify and recognize environmentally preferable products produced and/or marketed in Hong Kong. For more details, go to www.greenlabel.org.hk.

should receive recognition, promotion and preference as highly desirable components of green building initiatives. For example, preference given to the identification, selection and application of environmentally preferable paint products can ensure reduced levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and other anthropogenic chemicals which can lead to a wide range of environmental contamination and pollution and/or indoor air quality problems with adverse [and potentially severe] health impacts. Similarly, preference for building materials with significant recycled content levels can aid in reducing volumes of wastes while also promoting and stimulating the local environmental industry through the utilization of recycled materials.

- (f) Regarding GFA concessions, because basic infrastructures of buildings for proper functioning and safe operation should be accountable, there is no need for granting GFA concessions.
- (g) While recognizing that there are occasional problems resulting from disproportionately large car parks incorporated in building complexes, the existing policy and regulations on the provision of car parking should be reviewed and amended in order to properly address parking requirements while reducing roadside pollution and traffic congestion levels.
- (h) A platform for communication and experience sharing should be established and maintained to enable constructive and environmentally beneficial cooperation and collaboration between the Government, business sector and related stakeholder sector.

The above summarizes the position of the Green Council on the subject of "Green Buildings". On behalf and as the CEO of the Green Council, I welcome the opportunity to personally present, elaborate upon, and discuss this submission at the upcoming Meeting.

Yours respectfully,



Linda W P Ho
Chief Executive Officer
Green Council

LH/tc