

**Business Facilitation Advisory Committee
Pre-construction Task Force**

***Information Paper on Review of Storey Height of Residential
Developments***

Purpose

At the Pre-construction Task Force Meeting held on 30.5.2007, the work of a working group led by the Planning Department (PlanD) to review the issue of storey height of residential developments was mentioned. This paper is to brief Members on the background and progress of the review undertaken by the Working Group on Storey Heights of Residential Developments (WG).

Background

2. In considering a planning application for minor relaxation of building height restriction for a proposed residential development in the Peak Area in September 2005, the Town Planning Board (TPB) asked if the Government would undertake a review to determine the appropriate floor-to-floor height for buildings. Similar concern was raised by the Lands Department (LandsD) as there appeared to be an increasing number of proposals for new residential developments with storey heights above the 'norm' submitted to the Building Committee III. The matter was discussed at the meeting of the Task Force on Re-engineering Development Process on 10.1.2006, and the Task Force hoped that some guidelines on storey height to guard against potential abuse and to ensure consistency could be formulated. A joint WG with representatives of the PlanD, Buildings Department and LandsD has been set up, and a representative from the Architectural Services Department serves as an expert advisor.

3. The WG is tasked to review the storey height (i.e. floor-to-floor height) of residential developments with a view to formulating some guidelines on reasonable storey height for residential developments for the reference of the development sector.

Process

4. In the process of the review, the WG met the representatives of the Real Estate Developments Association of Hong Kong (REDA) and professional bodies including the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, Hong Kong Institution of Engineers and the Association of Architectural Practices on 26.9.2006 and 14.2.2007 and exchanged views on the need for and approach to formulating guidelines on storey height. The major concerns raised included micro storey height control should be avoided as there were already macro planning control on the overall building bulk in terms of plot ratio and building height through the Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs) and leases; the proposed guidelines should allow sufficient design flexibility to meet changing market demand and not be applied to all types of developments indiscriminately; and the stakeholders should be adequately consulted in the process.

5. The WG explained to the representatives of the REDA and professional bodies that the establishment of guidelines on storey height would be useful for sites which were not yet subject to building height control under the OZPs, and for sites where the statutory building height control was specified in terms of maximum number of storeys rather than absolute height. Formulation of suitable guidelines on storey height would help control the overall building bulk of development in response to the community's rising expectation. The review would examine flat- and house-type developments as well as different components in such developments, e.g. entrance lobby, clubhouse, and car park. The proposed guidelines would allow for design flexibility with due consideration to the merits of individual proposals. Moreover, the stakeholders would be consulted in the process of the review.

6. The WG has held five meetings so far and has come up with some initial findings for formulating appropriate guidelines for reasonable storey heights of residential developments, taking due account of the views expressed by the industry and the need to strike a proper balance with the public aspiration for lower building height and minimizing building bulk.

7. Subject to further consideration by the WG and the Task Force on Re-engineering Development Process, the stakeholders would be consulted again and there would be formal consultation with the relevant Sub-Committees of the Land and Building Advisory Committee.

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Views Sought

8. Members are invited to note the work of the WG and express views on the subject.

Planning Department
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