

LCQ2: Vetting and approval of plans submitted in respect of building works of modular housing/container housing

Following is a question by the Hon Jeremy Tam and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (May 9):

Question:

Section 16 of the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) provides that if plans of building works submitted to the Building Authority (BA) (i.e. the Director of Buildings) are not endorsed with or accompanied by a certificate from the Director of Fire Services (DFS) certifying that (i) no fire service installation or equipment is necessary in connection with the building that will result from the carrying out of the building works shown on the plans or (ii) in the opinion of DFS, the fire service installations and equipment shown on the plans have met the minimum requirements, BA may refuse to give his approval of the plans. It has been reported that the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) is planning to build three modular housing blocks of three storeys each at 202-220 Nam Cheong Street, Sham Shui Po for temporary residential purpose (HKCSS modular housing). Regarding the issues relating to the issuance by DFS of the aforesaid certificate for the building works of modular housing/container housing and the vetting and approval by BA of plans submitted in respect of such kind of works, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) (i) of the criteria adopted by DFS for determining whether the aforesaid certificate should be issued for the building works of HKCSS modular housing, and (ii) whether DFS has issued the certificate;

(2) of the criteria adopted by BA for determining whether approval should be given to the plans submitted in respect of the building works of HKCSS modular housing; the number of times for which BA has so far received the relevant plans submitted by HKCSS, and on each occasion, (i) the date of receipt of such plans and (ii) the amount of fees charged; whether BA has approved the relevant plans; if so, of the approval date;

(3) of the details of the applications for constructing temporary modular housing/container housing received by BA and DFS in the past five years, including (i) the dates of application, (ii) the locations of the modular housing/container housing concerned, (iii) the amounts of fees payable by the applicants, (iv) the number of revisions made to the plans and (v) the outcome of vetting and approval (set out in a table); (vi) the number of applications received and (vii) the number of applications approved by BA and DFS in each of the past five years, as well as (viii) the amount of fees charged, (ix) the amount of processing time and (x) the number of revisions made to the plans, per application on average; and

(4) regarding each of the cases in which the plans submitted in the past five years to BA for approval which were subsequently rejected, of the proposed location(s) of the modular housing/container housing concerned and the justifications of BA for not granting approval?

Reply:

President,

My consolidated reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Jeremy Tam is as follows:

For building plan applications submitted by an Authorised Person (AP) in accordance with the Buildings Ordinance (BO), regardless of the proposed construction method (including the Modular Integrated Construction (MiC) technology), the Buildings Department (BD) must process the building plans in accordance with the BO and its subsidiary legislation. The BD's officers will scrutinise whether the planning, design and construction of the building and its building works shown on the building plans comply with the statutory requirements and will also refer the building plans to other relevant departments through the centralised processing system for their assessments on areas of concern or requirements under their purview. Other than the conditions or grounds listed under section 16 of the BO that the Buildings Authority (BA) may refuse to give his approval of any plans of building works, BA must approve the building plan submission.

MiC technology refers to a construction method whereby free-standing integrated modules (completed with finishes, fixtures and fittings) are manufactured in a prefabrication factory and then transported to site for installation into a building. To provide clearer and more specific guidance on the use of MiC technology to the industry, the BD has promulgated a practice note in December 2017, setting out general guidance on design requirements for compliance with BO and relevant factors to be considered for projects using MiC technology. The relevant practice note can be found at the following link: www.bd.gov.hk/english/documents/pnap/ADV/ADV036.pdf

Regarding the development proposal at 202-220 Nam Cheong Street at Sham Shui Po, the concerned building plans were submitted to the BD on December 6, 2017 and were approved by the BA in accordance with BO on February 2, 2018. Nevertheless, the BD has not received the related structural plans and drainage plans yet. As the development proposal concerned is a non-profit-making community facility, the BD has exempted the payment of plan processing fees under section 42 of the BO.

Regarding the fire service installations and equipment on the building plans, upon receipt of the building plans referred under the centralised processing system, the Fire Services Department (FSD) has issued a certificate to the AP concerned on December 28, 2017, confirming that the fire service installations and equipment shown on the building plans complied with the requirements set out in the prevailing "Code of Practice for Minimum Fire Service Installations and Equipment" (i.e. for residential buildings of three storeys or less, fire extinguisher(s) should be provided on each

floor).

Up till April 30, 2018, other than the above mentioned proposed development project, the BD and FSD have not received similar building plan submissions, viz. temporary housing development projects using MiC technology.

LCQ4: Safety of banana boats and jet-skis

Following is a question by the Hon Holden Chow and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 9):

Question:

Every summer, many people flock to the waters of Hong Kong to engage in a variety of water sports activities, including riding on a banana boat towed by a speed-boat and jet skiing. It is learnt that accidents involving such recreational activities which resulted in deaths and injuries have occurred from time to time. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of water sports accidents involving banana boats and jet-skis recorded by the authorities in the past five years;
- (2) whether the existing legislation governing vessels regulates jet-skis and non-mechanised vessels such as banana boats; if so, of the details, including the specific requirements under the various provisions and whether such facilities are required to be registered or licensed; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) whether the relevant government departments have conducted inspections regularly on the safety of banana boats and jet-skis; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The reply to the Hon Holden Chow's question is as follows:

- (1) From 2012 to 2017, the Marine Department (MD) recorded three accidents involving jet-skis but none involving banana boats (neither banana boats nor pleasure vessels (PVs) towing them).

(2) According to Schedule 1 to the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (Certification and Licensing) Regulation (Cap. 548D), jet-skis fall within the vessel type of open cruiser under Class IV vessels (i.e. PVs), for which an Operating Licence (OL) for Local Vessel and a valid third party risks insurance certification must be obtained. An operator must also possess the Pleasure Vessel Operator Certificate of Competency for operating jet-skis. To enhance safety, the MD has endorsed corresponding conditions in the OLs for jet-skis, including permitting the use of jet-skis at daytime only, requiring operators to wear lifejackets and jet-skis to be installed with an equipment commonly known as "kill cord" (i.e. device enabling the engine of a jet-ski to automatically switch off once the operator leaves his seat).

OLs of local vessels are not required for non-mechanised inflatable vessels including banana boats. However, a PV owner who intends to use his vessel for towing inflatable vessels should submit an application in writing to the MD. Upon approval of the application, the MD will endorse the OL of the PV concerned with conditions pertaining to the towing of inflatable boats, including keeping proper lookout on the PV; providing every person on board the vessel being towed with a seat and an independent handhold; and ensuring that each of these persons shall wear a life-jacket.

(3) Apart from conducting regular inspections of PVs, the MD also steps up its patrols and launches anti-speeding operations at popular sites for water sports during the summer. In the summer of 2017, 1 100 inspections of PVs and nine anti-speeding operations were conducted. On the publicity and education fronts, to remind the public to pay attention to their own safety and that of others when taking part in water sports or waterborne recreational activities, the MD collaborates with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Hong Kong Police Force in organising the Water Sports Safety Seminar annually, with a view to raising public awareness of water sports safety. The MD also distributes pamphlets on water sports safety to the public with advice on the safe operation of banana boats and jet-skis. As summer draws near, the MD will continue with its relevant work in patrol and education to ensure water sports safety.

Red flag hoisted at Turtle Cove Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 9) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Turtle Cove Beach in

Southern District, Hong Kong Island. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cannabis buds \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs seized about 3.3 kilograms of suspected cannabis buds with an estimated market value of about \$720,000 at Hong Kong International Airport on May 6.

Customs officers inspected an air mail parcel from the United States on May 6 and seized about 3.3kg of suspected cannabis buds in the carton box.

After follow-up investigation, Customs officers yesterday (May 8) arrested a 32-year-old man suspected to be involved in the case in Shek Kip Mei.

Investigation is ongoing.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Shanghai Kunqu Opera Troupe to perform "The Palace of Eternal Life" (with photo)

The Chinese Opera Festival, an annual event presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, will open in June with "The Palace of Eternal Life" by the Shanghai Kunqu Opera Troupe.

The Shanghai Kunqu Opera Troupe debuted the full-length version of "The Palace of Eternal Life" in Shanghai in 2007. Last year, the Troupe once again staged this classic production across major Chinese cities with its full cast and received remarkable acclaim.

The gem of Kunqu opera is now being brought to the stage in Hong Kong with a full cast of elite actors from different generations and cohorts. Kunqu opera virtuoso Cai Zhengren will lead a cast of younger actors including Li An, Shen Yili, Yu Bin, Luo Chenxue and Ni Xuhao to perform in this opening programme.

The timeless legend "The Palace of Eternal Life" is an everlasting classic in Kunqu opera. The work, written by dramatist Hong Sheng of the Qing dynasty, was inspired by "The Song of Everlasting Regret" by poet Bai Juyi of the Tang dynasty and the Za opera work "The Firmiana Rain" by dramatist Bai Pu of the Yuan dynasty. Based on the beautiful yet sad love story of Emperor Xuanzong of Tang and Imperial Concubine Yang Yuhuan, the play is known as a grand epic of Chinese opera. The Shanghai Kunqu Opera Troupe arranges and presents the play in four chapters to feature two parallel plot lines: the love between the Emperor and Lady Yang, and the An Lushan Rebellion. While the four chapters are relatively independent, they also dovetail with one another. Collections of body movements, vocal styles and music are created that are not performed in usual excerpt performances, demonstrating creativity in every aspect. The Troupe strives for perfection and excellence in terms of showmanship, music, set design, lighting, costumes, styling and props in this rerun.

Details of the performances are as follows:

June 14 (Thursday), 7.30pm
Chapter One "The Pledge"
Main cast: Ni Xuhao and Luo Chenxue

June 15 (Friday), 7.30pm
Chapter Two "The Dance of the Rainbow and Feathery Garments"
Main cast: Li An and Shen Yili

June 16 (Saturday), 7.30pm
Chapter Three "The Mutiny at Mawei"

Main cast: Cai Zhengren (former part)/Li An (latter part) and Yu Bin

June 17 (Sunday), 2.30pm
Chapter Four "The Lover's Reunion"
Main cast: Li An and Yu Bin

All performances will be staged at the Grand Theatre of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. Tickets priced at \$150, \$250, \$350 and \$450 are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk).

For telephone credit card bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7325 or visit www.cof.gov.hk.

Talks and a meet-the-artists session will be held for this programme. Admission is free, and limited seats will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

"Talks on the Art of Kunqu Opera" (in Cantonese) featuring seasoned Kunqu opera researcher Cheung Lai-chun as speaker will be held at AC2, Level 4, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, with details as follows:

May 12 (Saturday), 3pm
Topic: The Jealous Imperial Concubine – An Analysis of "Complaints in the Pavilion" from "The Palace of Eternal Life"

May 19 (Saturday), 3pm
Topic: The Emperor's Tears – An Analysis of "Lamenting the Statue" from "The Palace of Eternal Life"

A meet-the-artists session, "Our Journey through 'The Palace of Eternal Life'" (in Putonghua), featuring Cai Zhengren, Li An, Shen Yili, Yu Bin, Luo Chenxue and Ni Xuhao will be held at 7.30pm on June 13 (Wednesday) at AC2, Level 4, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre. The moderator will be Chinese opera researcher Chan Chun-miu.

