

Buildings Department's response to media enquiries

In response to media enquiries on the situation of some village houses at Venice Villa, Ho Chung, Sai Kung, a spokesman for the Buildings Department (BD) today (November 1) gave the following reply:

Houses in Venice Villa are New Territories Exempted Houses (NTEHs). The BD handles unauthorised building works (UBWs) in NTEHs in accordance with the enhanced enforcement strategy promulgated on April 1, 2012, which is categorised into 3 levels:

First, the BD will take immediate enforcement action against UBWs constituting obvious hazard or imminent danger to life or property, and UBWs under construction or newly erected by serving removal orders on the building owners concerned.

Second, for UBWs completed before June 28, 2011, though not posing imminent danger but have constituted serious contravention of the law and posed higher potential risks to building safety, the BD will classify them as the first round targets for enforcement action. Such first round targets mainly include NTEHs of four storeys or more, enclosed rooftop structures covering more than 50 percent of the roofed-over area of the NTEHs concerned, unauthorised projecting structure attaching to UBWs, etc. The BD will mount large scale village-by-village surveys to identify first round targets for taking enforcement action.

Third, the BD implemented a Reporting Scheme from April 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012 for NTEHs owners to report UBWs completed before June 28, 2011 that are not classified as first round targets, constitute less serious contravention of the law and pose lower potential risks to building safety. The BD will not require immediate removal of the eligible and reported UBWs unless they become imminently dangerous.

According to the BD's records, some owners of the NTEHs at Venice Villa covered in the media enquiries have reported their UBWs under the Reporting Scheme and such reported UBWs have been acknowledged by the BD. According to the records, such include the reports of the government officer concerned with respect to the rooftop structure and glass canopy on ground floor at the private property owned by the officer.

The BD is following up the UBWs reports in Venice Villa in accordance with the established procedures, including checking the Reporting Scheme records of these NTEHs and conducting site visits as necessary so that it can handle the cases according to the enforcement policy against UBWs in NTEHs as mentioned above.