

First licence application granted by Private Columbaria Licensing Board

The Private Columbaria Licensing Board earlier held an open meeting to consider a licence application submitted under the Private Columbaria Ordinance. The relevant procedures have been completed. The Licensing Board informed the applicant concerned in writing today (January 28) that its application had been granted.

The relevant licence will be issued on the same day the applicant concerned duly pays the prescribed licence fee in accordance with Schedule 6 of the Ordinance. The validity period of the licence takes effect from the date of issue of the licence. Upon the issue of the licence, information relating to the licence, including the name and address of the columbarium, restriction on sale of niche interment right (if any), approved plans and licence conditions, will be included in the Register of Private Columbaria to be kept by the Licensing Board in accordance with the Ordinance. The Register will be uploaded to the dedicated website on the regulation of private columbaria (www.rpc.gov.hk) after the issue of the licence mentioned above.

The Licensing Board will continue to process applications for specified instruments (i.e. licence, exemption or temporary suspension of liability under the Ordinance) submitted by some 140 private columbaria. Each applicant for a specified instrument should prove that the private columbarium concerned complies with all the applicable requirements stipulated under the Ordinance and the requirements specified by the Licensing Board. In respect of applications for a licence, the applicant has to submit all the necessary documents and information to prove that the columbarium complies with requirements, including those relating to land, planning, buildings, fire safety, management plan and right to use the premises.

Each application for a specified instrument will be considered by the Licensing Board at its open meetings in due course. The Licensing Board will give regard to the public interest and other relevant considerations when determining an application.

Members of the public may visit the dedicated website mentioned above for information on the latest position of processing of individual applications for specified instruments, agendas of open meetings, decisions of the Licensing Board and the updated Register of Private Columbaria.

As the Ordinance has come into effect, a private columbarium must obtain a licence before it may sell or newly let out niches. To protect their interest, members of the public should buy directly from a licence holder and ensure that all the amounts required to be paid have been clearly stated in the sale agreement.