(Question Serial No. 3042)

Head: (91) Lands Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Land Administration

Controlling Officer: Director of Lands (Thomas CHAN)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Under the Programme, the Lands Department (LandsD) will continue to implement the measures under the new round of revitalisation scheme for industrial buildings. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1) Details of applications as at 1 March 2020 under the six new measures (namely redevelopment, wholesale conversion, facilitating community-led transitional housing proposals for wholesale conversion of industrial buildings, relaxing the waiver application policy to permit uses for arts and cultural sectors, creative industries, and innovation and technology sectors, broadening the permissible uses of buffer floors and broadening the permissible uses of buffer floors) to be provided in respect of each project as follows: i) lot number, ii) address, iii) amount of waiver fees, iv) uses applied, v) floor area before redevelopment/conversion works, and vi) floor area after redevelopment/conversion works;

2) A breakdown of the number of applications under processing by 18 districts; and

3) Will the Government consider relaxing the requirement on operation period for the conversion of industrial buildings into transitional housing to a minimum of 10 years, so as to allow owners more flexibility and development opportunities? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WAN Siu-kin, Andrew (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

1) As announced in the 2018 Policy Address, six measures (the 2018 Measures) are being implemented to facilitate transformation of old industrial buildings (IBs) to better meet
our changing social and economic needs, and to address more effectively the issues of fire safety and non-compliant uses. Up to February 2020, the Lands Department (LandsD) received six lease modification applications for redevelopment of IBs respectively located in Kowloon East and Tsuen Wan & Kwai Tsing, and two special waiver applications for wholesale conversion of IBs respectively located in Hong Kong East and Kowloon East. LandsD is not in a position to provide the details required at this moment, as the premium chargeable in one application for redevelopment is being assessed, whilst other land applications for redevelopment and wholesale conversion are still under processing. As for the other four measures, no special waiver application has been received for facilitating community-led transitional housing proposals in wholesale-converted IBs and partial conversion leveraging the broadened permissible uses of buffer floors, while no land application to LandsD is required to permit compliant uses for specified sectors in individual IB units and to allow a broader interpretation for “godown” use under lease provisions.

Note 1: Including one lease modification application withdrawn by the applicant.

2) As at February 2020, the breakdown by district of the land applications for redevelopment and wholesale conversion that were under processing is set out in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District (by District Lands Office)</th>
<th>No. of land applications under the 2018 Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong East</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowloon East</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsuen Wan &amp; Kwai Tsing</td>
<td>1 Note 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) Facilitating community-led transitional housing proposals in wholesale-converted IBs supported by the Task Force on Transitional Housing is a short-term relief measure. We have been maximising the flexibility permissible under the planning regime to help expedite such projects. Projects with an operating period of not more than five years initially will be procedurally simpler, requiring no planning application. This is in line with the spirit of streamlined processing for transitional housing. Both IB owners and non-government organisations are free to decide whether to renew the projects upon the expiry of the five-year initial period. If the project is extended for another five years, the above streamlined arrangement of requiring no planning application will continue to apply.

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