

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**DEVB(PL)291**

Question Serial No.

3556

Head: 82 Buildings Department                      Subhead (No. & title):

Programme:                      Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer:                      Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau:                      Secretary for Development

Question:

The number of applications for approval of general building plans [(gross floor area of proposed new buildings approved (in 1 000 m<sup>2</sup>)] has been undulating in recent years. There were 7 494 in 2011 and 2 094 in 2012. The Department estimates that there will be about 4 600 in 2013. In this connection, will the Department inform this Committee of the average processing time for each application of new building proposal in 2011 and 2012? What strategy and mechanism is in place to ensure efficient handling of the applications received? What was the financial provision and manpower allocated for this work in 2011, 2012? Will there be any increase or decrease in resources for this work in 2013?

Asked by: Hon. SHEK Lai-him, Abraham

Reply:

The Buildings Department (BD) processes applications for approval of building plans for new building proposals in accordance with the provisions of the Buildings Ordinance (BO) and its allied regulations. The BD is subject to statutory time limits under the BO in processing building plan applications. Under the BO, the Building Authority shall be deemed to have given his approval of plans unless he has notified his refusal to give approval within the stipulated timeframes. The statutory timeframes are 60 days for new submissions and 30 days for re-submissions of plans respectively. If a first submission is disapproved and the applicant wishes to proceed with the proposal, a re-submission will be required. On the other hand, for approved cases, a re-submission of plans should be made when the applicant proposes to change the design of the proposal as shown on the approved plans.

The BD processed a total of 15 616 and 16 540 applications for approval of building plans, including new submissions and re-submissions of plans, in 2011 and 2012 respectively. The average processing time of building plan submissions in 2011 and 2012 is tabulated below:

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Average processing time of new submissions of building plans	54.0 days	54.3 days
Average processing time of re-submissions of building plans	25.0 days	24.7 days

The BD has put in place a monitoring system based on the standard procedures and guidelines with the assistance of a computerised information system to ensure efficient handling of building plan submissions within the statutory time limits. To facilitate processing and approval of the submissions, the BD has also issued Practice Notes for Authorized Persons, Registered Structural Engineers and Registered Geotechnical Engineers to enhance the understanding of the practitioners of how the BD applies and enforces the provisions of the BO and its regulations as well as other related administrative and advisory matters.

The existing resources of 170 professional and technical staff in the two New Buildings Divisions of the BD have been deployed to process applications for approval of building plans as part of their overall duties in the control of new buildings and associated works on private land. We are not able to provide a breakdown of the manpower or financial provision involved solely for the plan processing work.

To strengthen services in the approval of plans and related applications for private development projects, 20 new posts for professional and technical staff comprising one Senior Building Surveyor, one Senior Structural Engineer, five Building Surveyors, six Structural Engineers, three Survey Officers and four Technical Officers will be allocated to the New Buildings Divisions of the BD in 2013-14.

Name in block letters: AU Choi-kai  
Post Title: Director of Buildings  
Date: 9.4.2013