

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

S-DEVB(PL)07

(Question Serial No. S0063)

Head: (82) Buildings Department

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

Programme: (1) Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings (HUI Siu-wai)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

With reference to Reply Serial No. DEVB(PL)128, among the new building proposals approved in the past two years, how many of them have the construction works commenced or completed as found out by the Administration in the course of monitoring the situation? For those which have not commenced construction, what are the reasons for that? As property prices remain high, will the Administration carry out investigation on sites for which new building proposals have been approved but construction works have not yet commenced, as well as requiring early commencement of construction works in order to stabilise housing supply and the property market? If not, what are the reasons? Will the Administration consider levying tax on vacant sites and flats?

Asked by: Hon. MAK Mei-kuen, AliceReply:

The progress of the 326 building proposals approved in 2012-13 and 2013-14 *are tabulated below:

	2012-13	2013-14*
No. of new building proposals approved	187	139
No. of residential building blocks with notification of commencement of superstructure works submitted but occupation permit not yet issued#	29	64
No. of residential building blocks completed with occupation permit issued	0	0

* Statistics up to 31 December 2013

The residential building blocks with notification submitted may not correspond to the building proposals submitted in the same year

The Buildings Department (BD) is responsible for the enforcement of the safety and health standards of the new buildings and associated works on private land as set out in the Buildings Ordinance (BO). The timing for submitting an application for the consent to the commencement of works is outside the control of BD and the purview of BO.

The lot owner of a development project is normally required to complete the construction of the minimum gross floor area specified in the land grant or lease conditions and obtain an occupation permit from the Building Authority within the Building Covenant (BC) period specified in the land grant or lease conditions. In general, BC period for residential developments ranges from 48 to 72 months from the date of the land lease document, the actual period of which depends on the scale and complexity of the development. Extension of BC period may be given only upon full justifications for delay and payment of premium.

According to figures from the Rating and Valuation Department, the overall vacancy rate of residential properties as at end 2013 was 4.1%, which was the lowest since 1997 and was below the average of 5.0% over the period from 1993 to 2012. The question concerning tax falls outside the jurisdiction of BD.