

### **Wholesale Conversion of Industrial Buildings**

The Government has implemented a package of measures to encourage the revitalisation of existing industrial buildings through wholesale conversion of vacant or under-utilised industrial buildings. Details of the measures are promulgated in the practice notes issued by the Lands Department (which can be downloaded from its website <http://www.landsd.gov.hk>).

#### **Green Building Designs in Wholesale Conversion of Industrial Buildings**

2. Compared with building redevelopment, wholesale conversion of vacant or under-utilised industrial buildings is in itself a sustainable way to reduce waste and conserve natural resources. Greater environmental benefits can be obtained if the owners adopt green building designs and practices when carrying out the conversion works.

3. In handling alteration and addition (A&A) proposals for the wholesale conversion of existing industrial buildings, the Building Authority (BA) would adopt a pragmatic approach when considering applications for modification of or exemption from various building regulations in view of the constraints posed by the original design of the existing building. To encourage green building designs and practices, provision of green and/or energy efficient features to revitalised industrial buildings will be a relevant factor in support of the granting of modification of or exemption from certain specific regulations. Examples relating to applications for such modification / exemption are as follows:

- (i) If a refuge floor is required to be provided in accordance with the Code of Practice for Fire Safety in Buildings 2011 (the FS Code) for the proposed conversion but there is difficulty or site constraint to comply with the technical requirements of the FS Code, proposal for the provision of a refuge floor with greenery design and enhanced fire service installations will be favourably considered subject to no adverse comments from the Director of Fire Services. PNAP APP-122 is relevant.
- (ii) In the case of conversion to office use, if there are difficulties in providing the required natural lighting and ventilation due to constraints posed by the original design as industrial building, application for modification of Regulations 30 and 31 of the Building (Planning) Regulations (B(P)R) will be favourably considered subject to adequate artificial lighting and mechanical ventilation and energy efficient design that

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could achieve 40% in the categories of Energy Use (EU) and Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ) under the BEAM Plus Certification conferred by the Hong Kong Green Building Council being incorporated in the proposal. PNAP APP-130 is relevant.

- (iii) For individual air-conditioning boxes / platforms attached to the external walls with projection larger than the usually accepted size and/or projection over street, application for modification / exemption will be favourably considered if the proposal is incorporated with the use of energy efficient / environmentally friendly air-conditioning units. PNAP APP-19 is relevant.
- (iv) For the provision of curtain walls to existing building facades, exemption from section 31(1) of the Buildings Ordinance to allow the curtain walls to project over streets will be favourably considered if low-energy absorbent type glazing / energy efficient materials with energy efficient design of the curtain walls that could achieve 40% in the categories of EU and IEQ under the BEAM Plus Certification conferred by the Hong Kong Green Building Council are incorporated in the proposal. PNAP APP-2 is relevant.

#### **Other Measures to Facilitate Wholesale or Partial Conversion of Industrial Buildings**

4. To dovetail with the policy measures on wholesale conversion of existing industrial buildings, the Buildings Department has reviewed the relevant requirements under the B(P)R for setting up places of public entertainment (PPE) in non-domestic buildings, and the revised requirements have been incorporated in Clauses B19.2 and B20.9 of the FS Code.

5. Proposed conversion (whether by wholesale or partial) of an existing industrial building to facilities requiring special electrical and mechanical installations (the 'facilities'), such as in a data centre, may involve the construction of additional transformer rooms or other mandatory features or essential plant rooms<sup>1</sup>. If the proposed conversion would result in certain covered carparking spaces shown on the approved building plans of the original industrial building becoming redundant and such carparking spaces had previously been disregarded from the gross floor area (GFA) calculation under Regulation 23(3)(b) of the B(P)R, any application for modification of Regulation 23(3)(a) of the B(P)R to convert such redundant carparking spaces to additional transformer rooms or other mandatory features or essential plant rooms will be favourably considered according to its special circumstances and subject to favourable comments from relevant Government departments. A letter of undertaking by the registered owner of the premises and the operator of the facilities should be

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<sup>1</sup> Reference should be made to Appendix A to PNAP APP-151 regarding the types of mandatory features and essential plant rooms.

submitted together with the requisite justifications at the building plan submission stage. Such letter should include an undertaking that when the facilities, wholly or partially, have ceased operation and the premises reverted to industrial use, the corresponding additional plant rooms will be demolished and such floor spaces will be reinstated as carparking spaces in accordance with the approved plans of the original industrial building.



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