

# Rehabilitation: A Sensible Approach



Rehabilitated buildings with thematic colour designs in Kwun Tong.

Initiatives to encourage and promote better care by the owners of domestic premises in multiple ownership continue to be a major area of work for the URA.

The purposes of building rehabilitation are –

- To improve the environment;
- To improve living conditions in residential buildings;
- Improve building safety; and
- To extend the useful life of buildings.

Currently, URA focuses its rehabilitation work in a number of Rehabilitation Scheme Areas covering parts of Kowloon and Hong Kong Island, while Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) covers other areas throughout Hong Kong.

## Materials Incentive and Loan Schemes

Since 2004, the URA has been providing various building rehabilitation assistance schemes in its Rehabilitation Scheme Areas in order to help address the problem of building dilapidation. Our 'Materials Incentive and Loan' schemes are aimed at improving not only the built environment but also the living conditions of the residents in these areas.

As at 31 March 2011, the URA had assisted owners in the rehabilitation of more than 520 buildings, comprising over 40,000 units. They include the 19 buildings, comprising almost 3,700 units, that were rehabilitated in 2010/11.

## Comprehensive Schemes for Rehabilitation: IBMAS

During the year under review, the URA initiated a new approach through which the Government, URA and HKHS could consolidate the five financial assistance schemes provided by different organisations. Upon completion of this review, URA and HKHS modified, simplified and re-aligned the five rehabilitation-assistance schemes provided by these two organisations into one consolidated scheme, and with one set of application forms that also covers two Government-funded grant and loan schemes.

On 1 April 2011, the URA, together with HKHS and Buildings Department, launched an "Integrated Building Maintenance Assistance Scheme" (IBMAS). This scheme provides much more user-friendly advice and assistance to needy home-owners. It also enables all owners throughout Hong Kong, who meet the same set of eligibility criteria, to receive similar assistance.



Announcement of IBMAS details.



Balloting ceremony of OBB second round.

## Operation Building Bright

The URA is assisting an unprecedentedly high number of building owners through its role in the Government's 'Operation Building Bright' (OBB).

By end March 2011, the URA had provided financial and technical assistance to owners of more than 980 buildings, comprising over 40,000 units, in order to facilitate the rehabilitation of these buildings. Rehabilitation of about 50 of these buildings was completed in 2009/10, with a further 300 buildings due for completion in 2010/11. About 630 buildings are still being assisted.

The OBB, with the URA as one of its implementation agents, has helped to generate heightened awareness of the need for building rehabilitation among owners, as well as create numerous employment opportunities.

The URA, HKHS, Buildings Department and ICAC have been working closely to devise and implement continual-improvement measures. These measures, which include guidelines and briefing sessions on proper tendering procedures, are conducive to good management and maintenance practices. Their implementation has resulted in a much healthier environment, one that benefits all stakeholders, and especially building owners.

On 24 June 2011, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved further funding for OBB. Within its Rehabilitation Scheme Areas, the URA will now be able to increase the total number of buildings that it assists under OBB, to approximately 1,100 buildings and comprising about 55,000 units.



## Mandatory Building and Window Inspection Schemes

In February 2010, the Building (Amendment) Bill 2010, which provides for the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) and the Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme (MWIS), was introduced in the Legislative Council.

The URA welcomes this legislation and is collaborating with the Development Bureau, Buildings Department and HKHS in drawing up scheme details and the framework of subsidies and assistance. URA also participated in discussions by the Legislative Council's Bills Committee, regarding legislation and implementation under the established tripartite building rehabilitation partnership model – the three parties being the URA, Buildings Department and HKHS. The Building (Amendment) Bill 2010 was passed by the Legislative Council on 29 June 2011.

When the subsidiary legislation comes into force in 2012, the URA will provide assistance as well as advice to building owners regarding the formation of Owners' Corporations (OC), in the URA's Scheme Areas. URA would help such owners comply with statutory requirements and establish OCs.



Owners briefing for OBB.

### Building Rehabilitation Hotline

2010/11 saw the launch of a one-stop building rehabilitation hotline (3188 1188), which is jointly operated by the URA and HKHS for the convenience of building owners. It also allows for easier public access to all the rehabilitation schemes that are currently offered by not only the URA, but also the Buildings Department and the Hong Kong Housing Society.



Wan Hong Building in Kwun Tong: before and after rehabilitation.

## Expansion of Rehabilitation Role

During 2010/11, the URA successfully rehabilitated almost 320 buildings. They comprised 19 buildings that were under the URA's two incentive schemes, plus 300 more under OBB. These efforts helped to improve the living conditions of thousands of residents. In sum, the number represents an increase of 230 buildings or 250% above the 90 buildings that were rehabilitated by the URA in 2009/10.

Looking ahead, and in line with the new URS, the URA is planning to expand its rehabilitation role and progressively take over all rehabilitation work throughout Hong Kong.

The URA earmarks to invest more than \$1.3 billion to carry out different schemes to help owners rehabilitate their homes -- numbering 89,000 units in about 2,600 buildings.

The geographical coverage of the URA's building rehabilitation would be expanded in two phases. In 2013/14, URA's work will cover all districts in urban Kowloon, and it will then be extended to urban Hong Kong by 2015/16.





Tak Po Building in Tsuen Wan after rehabilitation.

## Building Colour Design

In addition to its efforts at encouraging proper building maintenance, the URA also provides colour designs for buildings and groups of buildings – so as to enhance the visual appearance of the buildings and their neighbourhoods.



Wa Fung Mansion in Kwun Tong after rehabilitation.

Colour clusters of rehabilitated buildings in Tai Kok Tsui.

