

## WAYS TO MITIGATE WALL EFFECT IN BUILDING DEVELOPMENTS

1. The government should immediately extend the application of [Technical Circular on Air Ventilation Assessment (TC1/06)] which is currently applicable to government developments only, to all projects of the Urban Renewal Authority and the Railway Corporations, with a view to finally extending to all public and private developments, to ensure that air ventilation of the district is not compromised.
2. The government should take a leading role to immediately review all large scale development projects, particularly those by the Urban Renewal Authority and the Railway Corporation wholly owned by the Government. Such review should ensure compliance with the requirements of the Air Ventilation Planning Guidelines of the Urban Design Guidelines (Chapter 11 of the Hong Kong Planning Standard & Guidelines), and the requirements of the Technical Circular on Air Ventilation Assessment. Where necessary, the development density should be reduced and design layout improved to mitigate wall effect.
3. The government should conduct a thorough review of all large scale projects which were approved but yet to develop, in order to improve the design such as increasing distance between buildings, creating visual and ventilation corridors, setting back developments from the site boundary, and creating open spaces at street level.
4. Property development should be based on planning decisions, not financial engineering. Rail, urban renewal, cultural venues and other public facilities should be financed through the capital works reserve fund and not through land exchange, development rights or additional plot ratio.
5. The government should thoroughly review the building density of all districts of the Metroplan Area and New Towns, particular harbour-front areas and land facing large open spaces. Specifically the sale of Government owned land should be avoided in high density districts, and where possible low intensity developments on these sites should be preserved or open space should be created to alleviate the inherent density increase from private property rights. For new sites, plot sizes should be reduced to create visual and air ventilation corridors at ground level. The amalgamation of sites should be limited, and developments should be set back to create public open spaces to improve air ventilation, sun light and make the city a more pleasant experience.
6. To review existing legislation, such as Buildings Ordinance Section 16, or through the provisions of the Practice Notes for Authorized Persons, to stipulate clear objective guidelines for professionals and the community to follow.
7. The government should review the current government structure and approval mechanism to minimize unnecessary requirements that are conducive to wall effect, e.g. large car-parking podium structure.
8. The government should depart from the current 2-Dimensional planning approach and adopt a 3-Dimensional planning approach instead. Physical models should be used both as a tool during the design process and a means to communicate with the general public during public engagement process. Whether the development density, building mass and disposition will cause wall effect can be envisaged at an early stage. Apart from Outline Zoning Plans (applicable to district) and General Building Plans (applicable to individual project site), a district-specific Urban Design Guidelines should be formulated.

9. The government should formulate appropriate guidelines by making reference to overseas experience: (i) Shanghai has requirement to limit the width of slab block buildings to not more than 60 metres; (ii) New York has requirement to limit street shadow area for buildings; (iii) Japan and Singapore have included height limit and massing control in the land lease or buildings regulations.
10. As demonstrated in Ngau Tau Kok Estate redevelopment, in planning for large scale development, the government should conduct sunlight, wind tunnel and micro-climatic analysis to minimize adverse effect of new developments.
11. To foster engagement of non-government professionals and the community in the planning process. To ensure planning has taken care of the community needs, the government should consider creating “Planning Aids Scheme” in order to assist affected citizens to obtain independent professional opinions and support community planning applications and representations.
12. An independent Town Planning Board is needed to ensure more sustainable planning and development decisions. The current conflict of interest whereby the Government is a significant financial stakeholder in the outcome, and in charge of the plan approval process, may not guarantee fair and balanced decision making to the benefit of the community at large.

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