

## **Guidelines for Provision of Columbarium Facilities in Industrial Buildings**

### Preamble

This set of guidelines sets out some of the key factors which potential developers interested in wholesale conversion / redevelopment of industrial buildings into columbarium facilities would need to consider. The factors listed are by no means exhaustive. The guidelines are of an indicative nature and do not carry any legal status. Potential developers would need to undertake their own studies on the detailed procedures required for the conversion / redevelopment. The guidelines do not bind the relevant authorities, such as those in respect of planning, lands, fire safety and buildings, in deciding on any case involving conversion / redevelopment of industrial buildings into columbarium facilities (the conversion / redevelopment).

#### (a) Business Case

Developers will have to assess the business case of the wholesale conversion / redevelopment. Should they decide to proceed with the conversion / redevelopment, they need to complete the necessary planning and, if required, lease modification procedures, including undertaking the relevant technical assessments such as traffic impact assessment and technical feasibility studies, where required, applying to the Town Planning Board for planning permission and paying for the full market premium for lease modification or full market waiver fee for waiver (as the case may be). All future Alteration and Addition Works pertinent to columbarium development in industrial buildings should comply with the land lease and other relevant statutory requirements and that an Authorised Person should be engaged for advice on the feasibility of any proposed conversion and to submit building plans to the Buildings Department for the proposed change in use / alteration works to demonstrate full compliance with the current provisions of the Buildings Ordinance.

#### (b) Location

Industrial buildings located in the following categories stand a higher chance of successful conversion / redevelopment –

- adjacent to existing cemeteries or existing columbarium

developments;

- avoid industrial buildings located in the heart of an active existing industrial / business area, preferably located at the fringe of the industrial area;
- avoid industrial buildings located in close proximity to existing residential developments / areas set aside for country parks and areas with high conservation value;
- avoid extensive clearance of existing vegetation or cause adverse visual impact to its environs;
- far away from any potentially hazardous installation, such as major dangerous goods store, fuel oil installation; and
- with no major accessibility constraints, i.e. would not create traffic or crowd control problems during grave-sweeping seasons.

(c) Building Structure Consideration

Industrial buildings with no building constraints in terms of factors like structural safety, means of escape, fire resisting construction, unauthorised building works affecting public safety, vertical accessibility (capable of expanding lift capacity), ventilation (capable of alteration to cater for incense burning activities without causing nuisance and safety concerns), etc. would stand a higher chance of successful conversion. The development intensity and building height of the proposed columbarium should be compatible with the general character of the surrounding area.

(d) Building Utilisation

Mixed use involving columbarium and other uses would likely cause concern from the fire safety angle. Industrial buildings where the utilisation is high with active industrial activities are considered less suitable than under-utilised or vacant ones. Converting under-utilised or vacant industrial buildings at suitable locations into columbaria has the incidental advantage of putting them to gainful use.

(e) Design Features

The design and layout of the proposed columbarium should be compatible with its surroundings. Developers are encouraged to adopt design features, such as concealed entrance, to help gain acceptability from the neighbouring community to the

columbarium use. Fully enclosed buildings such as godowns, which are not visible from outside and are capable of providing vertical greening and aesthetic artistic design for their facades, would be more suitable than non-enclosed industrial buildings, subject to fire safety and building regulations being met.

(f) Columbarium Operation and Management

- In overcoming traffic constraints and crowd control, developers are encouraged to devise innovative mechanisms<sup>3</sup> with a view to submitting acceptable proposals which are feasible, manageable and practicable for implementation. Adoption of advanced technologies in operating and managing the columbarium would also be welcome.
- Developers are encouraged to map out a management scheme to ensure the sustainable operation and maintenance of the columbarium. It would be desirable to set up a maintenance fund to be kept separately from the day-to-day accounts.
- Any columbarium proposal should avoid causing environmental nuisance and safety concerns to the neighbouring community, such as noise, light, air pollution as well as fire hazard and crowd management. The applicant should provide information on the proposed mitigation measures to address and minimise the impacts of these areas of concern.
- In considering the suitability of any columbarium development, local views should be taken into account.

(g) Ownership Consideration

Depending on the lease conditions, lease modification/waiver may not be required. If lease modification / waiver is required, such land transaction can only be concluded with the consent of all owners involved.

---

<sup>3</sup> Innovative mechanisms such as appointment system by booking for paying respect and incentive scheme for paying of respect on non-holidays may be considered with due respect to the feasibility and practicability during implementation. Developers should be required to seek advice from the Transport Department and the Police in advance on measures having a bearing on traffic and/or crowd management.

**Food and Health Bureau**  
**April 2011**