



香港建築師學會

The Hong Kong Institute of Architects

The Hong Kong Institute of Architects Response to the Public Consultation on Review of Columbarium Policy

There are immediate needs for quick actions to provide more columbarium facilities. Columbarium and cemeteries facilities could be viewed as housing for the deceased, and the government should make provision for a certain percentage of the facilities affordable to the less privileged, in order to prevent the situation where the private sector provide, all the required niches affordable only to the rich.

Alternatives for Increasing Supply of Columbarium Facilities

To increase the supply of columbarium facilities, alternative and legal means for providing columbarium facilities should be explored, as explained below:-

- In the urban areas, small columbaria annexed to parks or even country parks, underground columbaria, defunct air-raid shelters, rock cravens, abandoned land fills etc. should be explored.
- More columbarium facilities at existing cemetery facilities should be encouraged but scientific analysis on sufficiency of infrastructure and transport facilities during peak seasons should be studied to justify the anticipated increase.
- It is quite common to have columbaria situated within religious compounds in China and other parts of the world. Considerations should be given to allowing certain amount of niches as ancillary facilities to religious compounds (i.e. no need for OZP or lease modifications). However, limits shall be set on the number of niches allowed (according to site area or Gross Floor Area).
- Other possible means would include allowing high-rise buildings for storage of urns, and converting industrial buildings into columbarium facilities.
- For best use of available columbarium sites, consideration should be given to central urn storage facilities. Urns could be hand-delivered or mechanically delivered to small ceremonial halls for bereavers to pay tributes to the deceased upon advance bookings.
- Quick and immediate actions on planning and design of the last remaining zoned piece of land for large scale columbarium facilities at Tuen Mun Planning Area 46 should be carried out.
- More environmentally-friendly and sustainable means of handling ashes should be promoted, for example—
 - Construction of more Gardens of Remembrance, time-limited lease and incentive scheme for the return of niches are supported.
 - New columbaria in remote areas are not encouraged as this will induce damages to the environment, wastage of energies on transportation and inconvenience to the public. Columbaria in remote areas are only acceptable if the problems on means of transportation during peak seasons can be resolved (for examples, on outlying islands served by ferries during peak seasons).



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Private Columbarium Development

Regarding the private columbarium development, we are of the view that:-

- To protect consumers, operators of private columbarium service providers should make available approved plans, future expansion plans, Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) and relevant lease conditions for customer's inspection (similar to purchasing a flat).
- Lands Department and Planning Department should strictly enforce cases of lease and OZP violations respectively (government should however have contingency plans for accommodation of remains of the deceased after enforcement).
- On licensing of columbarium facilities, besides strict compliance to Building Regulations, criteria like greening, maximum number of niches, air pollution abatement measures, and infrastructure capacity should all be taken into consideration (smaller facilities, e.g. ancillary to religious compounds, can be exempted from compliance to some of these criteria).

Good Design for Columbaria

It will be beneficial if the Government would consider holding design competitions for soliciting innovative ideas on locations and designs of columbaria at each of the 18 districts. We believe beautiful columbaria in an appropriate setting will make them more acceptable to the public.

The Hong Kong Institute of Architects
September 2010

**LegCo Panel on Food Safety and
Environmental Hygiene
Review of Columbarium Policy**

Views of
Hong Kong Institute of Architects
20 September 2010

Increasing the Supply of Columbarium Facilities

- It is obvious that there are immediate needs for quick actions for provisioning of more columbarium facilities

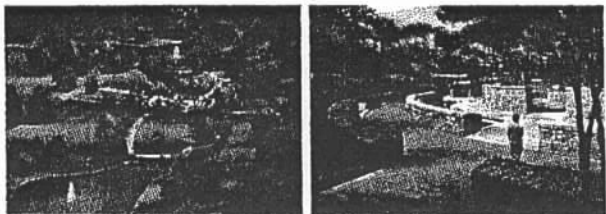
Increasing the Supply of Columbarium Facilities

- Columbarium/Cemeteries facilities are basically housing for the deceased & the gov't should make provision for a certain % for the public. – i.e. Affordable "Niches" for the Poor
- By doing nothing, it will encourage private sectors to build illegal or unauthorized niches which only the rich can afford
- When the poor cannot, they have to try and break the bank to buy one; this would make the gov't look uncaring

Increasing the Supply of Columbarium Facilities

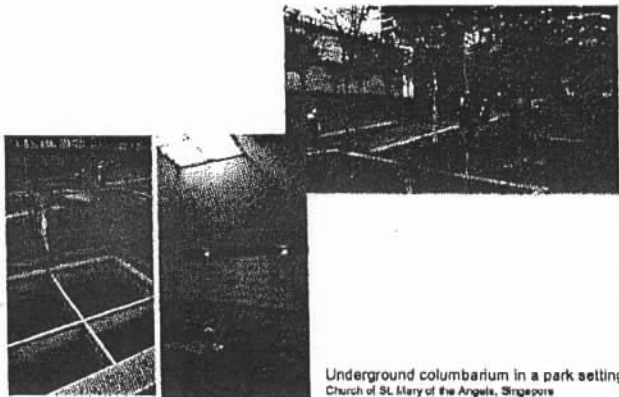
- Alternatives but legal means of provisioning of columbarium facilities in the urban areas should be explored
 - Small columbaria annexed to parks or even country parks
 - Underground columbaria
 - Defunct air-raid shelters
 - Rock Cravens
 - Abandoned land fills(P.S. transportation to these sites usually is not a problem)

Increasing the Supply of Columbarium Facilities



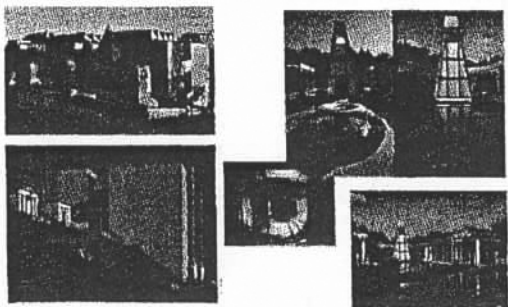
Columbarium in a park setting
Bellevue Cemetery, St. Louis, MO, USA
(photos from Bellevue Cemetery website)

Increasing the Supply of Columbarium Facilities



Underground columbarium in a park setting
Church of St. Mary of the Angels, Singapore

Increasing the Supply of Columbarium Facilities



More Innovative designs for columbarium
Greenwood Mausoleum, Brooklyn, NY, USA

Increasing the Supply of Columbarium Facilities



Columbaria inside cravens?

Increasing the Supply of Columbarium Facilities

- More columbarium facilities at existing cemetery facilities should be encouraged but scientific analysis on sufficiency of infrastructure and transport facilities during peak seasons should be studied to justify the anticipated increase

Increasing the Supply of Columbarium Facilities

- It is quite common to have columbaria situated within religious compounds in China and other parts of the world, considerations should be given to allowing certain amount of niches as ancillary facilities (i.e. no need for OZP or lease modifications) to religious compounds
- However, limits shall be set on no. of niches allowed (according to site area or GFA)

Increasing the Supply of Columbarium Facilities



Simple & Non-intrusive design for Niches within religious compounds
(photos from the Armani Columbarium website)

Increasing the Supply of Columbarium Facilities

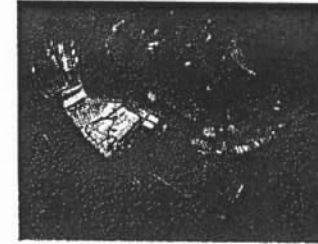
- Other possible means of increasing columbarium supply:
 - Allowing highrise buildings for storage of urns is supported
 - Conversion of industrial buildings into columbarium facilities is supported

Increasing the Supply of Columbarium Facilities

- Other possible means of increasing columbarium supply:
 - For best use of available columbarium sites, consideration shall be given to having central urn storage facilities; urns could be hand or mechanically delivered to small ceremonial halls for bereavers to pay tributes to the deceased upon advance bookings

Increasing the Supply of Columbarium Facilities

- Quick & immediate actions on the last remaining zoned piece of land for large scale columbarium facilities, i.e. Tuen Mun Planning Area 46



(photo from HKSAR gov't)

Promoting more Environmentally-friendly and Sustainable Means of Handling Cremains

- Construction of more GoRs is supported
- Time-limited lease and incentive scheme for the return of niches is supported

Promoting more Environmentally-friendly and Sustainable Means of Handling Cremains

- New columbaria in remote areas not encouraged as this will induce damages to the environment, waste of energies on transportation & inconvenience to the public
- Columbaria in remote areas are only acceptable provided the problems on means of transportation during peak seasons can be resolved (e.g. on outlying islands & supported by ferries during peak seasons)

Consumer Protection

- Operators shall make available approved plans, future expansion plans, OZP and relevant lease conditions for customer's inspection (similar to purchasing a flat)

Existing Regulations on Private Columbarium Development

- LandsD and PlanD shall strictly enforce cases of lease and OZP violations respectively (government shall however have contingency plans for accommodation of remains of the deceased after enforcement)

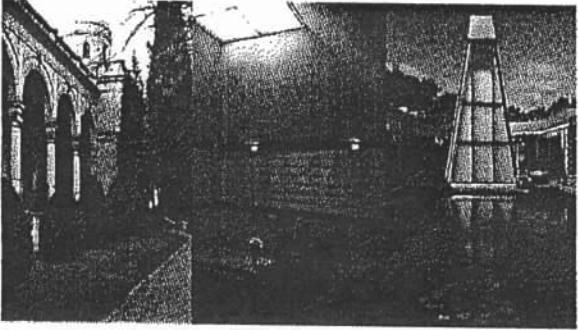
Existing Regulations on Private Columbarium Development

- On licensing of columbarium facilities, beside strict compliance to Building Regulations, greening, maximum no. of niches, air pollution abatement measures, infrastructure capacity shall all be taken into considerations (smaller facilities, e.g. ancillary to religious compounds, can be exempted)
- Consider setting up of a licensing authority to coordinate different departmental concerns

Good Design for Columbaria

- Consider holding design competitions for soliciting innovative ideas on locations/designs of columbaria at each of the 18 districts
- We believe beautiful columbaria will make them more acceptable to the public

Columbaria can be beautiful, too.



A Presentation by HKIA
20 September 2010