

Head 82 — BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

Controlling officer: the Director of Buildings will account for expenditure under this Head.

Estimate 2001–02..... **\$749.9m**

Establishment ceiling 2001–02 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 932 non-directorate posts at 31 March 2001 rising by one post to 933 posts at 31 March 2002..... **\$348.7m**

In addition there will be an estimated 32 directorate posts at 31 March 2001 rising by 13 posts to 45 posts at 31 March 2002.

Capital Account commitment balance..... **\$35.0m**

Controlling Officer's Report

Programme

Buildings and Building Works

This programme contributes to Policy Area 22: Buildings, Lands and Planning (Secretary for Planning and Lands) and Policy Area 31: Housing (Secretary for Housing).

Detail

	1999–2000 (Actual)	2000–01 (Approved)	2000–01 (Revised)	2001–02 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	480.0	545.0 (+13.5%)	558.1 (+2.4%)	749.9 (+34.4%)

Aim

2 The aim is to promote building safety, enforce building standards and improve the quality of building development.

Brief Description

3 With this aim, the department provides services to both existing and new buildings through the operation of the Buildings Ordinance.

4 As regards existing buildings, the services provided include eliminating dangers and nuisances by demolishing unauthorised building works and advertisement signboards; removing dangers from old buildings and slopes; approving alteration and addition works; abating fire hazards in buildings and providing advice on the suitability of premises for the issue of licences for specified commercial uses.

5 As regards new buildings, the department scrutinises building plans, carries out audit checks to monitor the construction quality and site safety and issues occupation permits upon completion of new buildings.

6 In 2000, the department stepped up enforcement action against unauthorised building works. It also set up a Working Group on Built Quality to formulate, inter alia, improvement measures for site supervision of foundation works. In addition, the department undertook the following new initiatives and measures:

Existing Buildings

- starting a one-stop shop service for owners and occupiers of individual buildings;
- formulating and implementing measures to enhance building safety and to tackle the problem of unauthorised building works;
- increasing from 300 to 400 the number of buildings for large-scale blitz clearance of unauthorised building works, mainly on external walls;
- increasing the number of single-staircase buildings targeted for rooftop structure clearance from 200 to 300;
- launching a pilot co-ordinated maintenance of buildings scheme;
- developing a control regime for advertisement signboards;
- expediting processing of licence applications;
- providing a more efficient building plan retrieval and copying service;
- commissioning a pilot project of electronic imaging and retrieval of building plans in Yau Tsim district;
- improving the operation of the Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme to maximise utilisation; and
- completing the code of practice on the inspection, assessment and repair of existing buildings.

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New Buildings

- commencing a comprehensive review of the Buildings Ordinance and Regulations with a view to modernising the legislation;
- facilitating the construction of environmentally friendly and innovative buildings;
- formulating and implementing a supervision system for quality control of foundation works and ground investigation works;
- introducing a mandatory requirement for the provision of space for refuse sorting and access facilities for telecommunication and broadcasting services;
- streamlining the site safety supervision system and simplifying the related code of practice; and
- implementing a new registration system for specialist contractors.

7 The key performance measures in respect of buildings and building works are:

Targets

	Target	1999 (Actual)	2000 (Actual)	2001 (Plan)
<i>24-hour Emergency Services</i>				
target time for responding to emergencies ..	3 hours	91.9%	99.1%	100%
<i>Existing Buildings</i>				
no. of buildings for clearance of unauthorised building works	900/year§	—	404	900
no. of buildings covered by the co-ordinated maintenance buildings scheme	150/yearΩ	—	—	150
no. of single-staircase buildings improved under rooftop structure clearance operations	700/year#	95	220	700
no. of prescribed commercial premises inspected for improvement of fire safety measures†	150/year	152	180	150
no. of specified commercial buildings inspected for improvement of fire safety measures‡	140/year	194	160	140
no. of composite buildings inspected for improvement of fire safety measures@ ..	900/year	—	—	900
no. of advertisement signboards removed/ repaired□	1 200/year	1 494	646	1 200
target time for advising on restaurant licence applications under the Application Vetting Panel system.....	14 days	100%¶	89%	95%
target time for making existing building records available for viewingφ	14 days	—	95.3%	100%
<i>New Buildings</i>				
target time for processing building plans:				
new submissions.....	60 days	99.4%	99.3%	100%
re-submissions	30 days	98.5%	99.2%	100%
target time for processing applications for consent to commence building works	28 days	98.7%	98.5%	100%
target time for processing applications for occupation permits	14 days	98.3%	99%	100%

§ This is an enhanced target of the large-scale blitz clearance operation for 2001 to remove unauthorised building works mainly on the external walls of buildings and some on roofs and podiums, in backlanes and yards. The target for 2000 was 400 buildings.

Ω The co-ordinated maintenance of buildings scheme is a pilot scheme aimed at helping building owners to comply with their statutory obligation to maintain their buildings in good condition in a co-ordinated manner. This is a new target commencing November 2000.

This is an enhanced target of illegal rooftop structures cleared from single-staircase buildings. The targets for 1999 and 2000 were 100 and 300 buildings respectively.

† Under the Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Ordinance, fire safety improvement is required for premises used for banking, off-course betting, jewellery or goldsmith's business, supermarket, department store or shopping arcade, with a floor area exceeding 230 m².

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- ‡ Under the Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Ordinance, fire safety improvement is required for commercial buildings constructed or designed on or before 23 March 1973 for office, business, trade or any entertainment use.
- @ This is a new target introduced in 2001. The department will conduct inspections to old composite (commercial/residential) buildings and advise owners/occupiers to improve fire safety provisions.
- A high proportion of output in 1999 was the result of Typhoon York. The decrease in the number of signboards removed/repared in 2000 is due to shift of work priorities to tackling unauthorised building works. With a more intensive work programme, a higher output is anticipated in 2001.
- ¶ The target in 1999 was 30 days.
- φ This is a new target introduced in July 2000. Through streamlining of procedures and redeployment of resources, the processing time has been reduced from about 45 days in 1999 to 14 days in mid-2000.

Indicators

	1999 (Actual)	2000 (Actual)	2001 (Estimate)
<i>24-hour Emergency Services</i>			
no. of emergency reports attended to.....	930	634	700
<i>Existing Buildings</i>			
no. of reports on unauthorised building works attended to	17 014	15 860	14 000
no. of removal orders issued on unauthorised building works.....	14 038	10 602	19 000§
no. of unauthorised structures removed and irregularities rectified.....	7 590	18 297	15 000
no. of reports on dilapidated buildings attended to	4 596	4 613	4 100
no. of repair orders issued on dilapidated buildings#	772	434	400
no. of dilapidated buildings repaired	839	534	600
no. of repair orders issued on dangerous slopes †	212	170	230
no. of dangerous slopes repaired.....	67	53	50
no. of prescribed commercial premises issued with fire safety directions.....	151	121	120
no. of specified commercial buildings issued with fire safety improvement directions	142	144	140
no. of composite buildings issued with advisory letters to improve fire safety	—	—	900
no. of licence/registration applications processed (restaurants, places of public entertainment, tutorial schools etc.).....	5 583	6 215	6 200
<i>Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme (BSILS)</i>			
no. of loan applications processed.....	111	308	1 160@
no. of loan applications approved.....	56	281	1 000@
total amount of loans committed (\$m).....	2.2	10.2	41.0@
<i>New Buildings</i>			
no. of new building proposals approved	296	284	300
no. of plans received and processed.....	13 178	12 104	12 500
no. of occupation permits issued	296	231	250
gross floor area of new building proposals approved (in 1 000 m ²)	5 727	4 204	4 500
no. of site audit checks made.....	3 691	3 916	4 700f
no. of sites inspected.....	1 330	1 256	1 400

§ The substantial increase in the number of removal orders issued is mainly due to the enhanced clearance operation of unauthorised building works on the external walls of 900 buildings.

The programmed inspections and follow-up action carried out to buildings of specific age groups in the past 3 years have improved their general condition, reducing the number of repair orders requiring to be issued.

† The number of repair orders on dangerous slopes issued was reflected by the referrals from Geotechnical Engineering Office.

@ In arriving at these estimates, the proposed expansion of the ambit of the loan fund has not been taken into account.

φ The site audit checks cover both construction quality and site safety since the last quarter of 2000.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2001–02

8 During 2001–02, the department will take forward reforms in all areas of its work. In particular, it will:

- intensify action to improve building safety, targeting 900 buildings for blitz clearance of unauthorised building works and 700 single-staircase buildings for clearance of illegal rooftop structures;

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- strengthen support for building owners through implementing the co-ordinated maintenance of buildings scheme, broadening the assistance available to owners by an expanded loan scheme, issuing a layman's manual on building maintenance and registering minor works contractors;
- adopt a new strategy for auditing the safety of building works including both foundation and superstructure works;
- encourage construction of environmentally friendly buildings through means such as exempting "green" facilities from the calculation of gross floor area and implementing fast track approval of building plans;
- create a more supportive regulatory environment through modernisation of the Buildings Ordinance and facilitating innovative design and technology;
- devise a signboard registration system with a view to ensuring that advertisement signs are safely constructed and properly maintained;
- upgrade the fire safety standards of old composite buildings in collaboration with the Fire Services Department; and
- improve further its services to the public through shortening processing time for all applications for licensing and implementing a one-stop shop service whereby all enquiries, complaints and enforcement activities relating to building safety matters in any particular building will be co-ordinated by an assigned officer.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

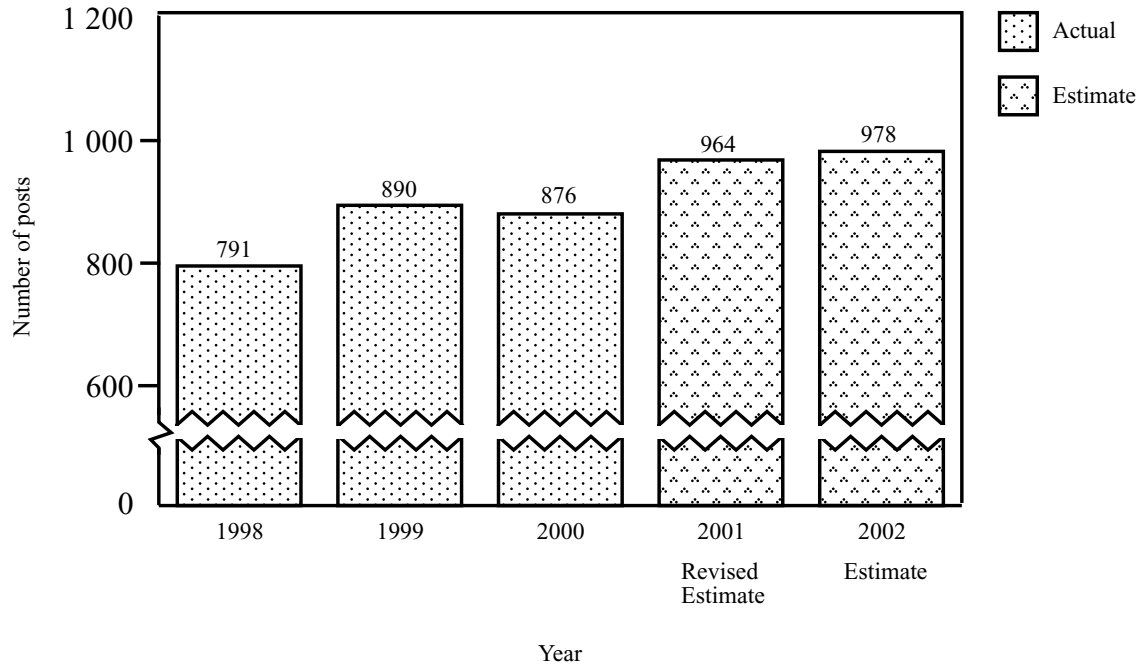
Programme	1999–2000 (Actual) (\$m)	2000–01 (Approved) (\$m)	2000–01 (Revised) (\$m)	2001–02 (Estimate) (\$m)
Buildings and Building Works	480.0	545.0 (+13.5%)	558.1 (+2.4%)	749.9 (+34.4%)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Provision for 2001–02 is \$191.8 million (34.4%) higher than the revised estimate for 2000–01. This is mainly due to additional provision to step up the department's efforts to remove unauthorised building works on a more extensive basis, demolish more illegal rooftop structures on single-staircase buildings and introduce a registration scheme for the control of advertisement signboards. The increase is also due to full-year provision to step up fire inspection and enforcement in composite buildings. There is a net creation of two permanent and 12 supernumerary posts after taking into account the deletion of 34 posts under the Enhanced Productivity Programme.

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*Changes in the size of the establishment
(as at 31 March)*



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Sub-head (Code)	Actual expenditure 1999–2000	Approved estimate 2000–01	Revised estimate 2000–01	Estimate 2001–02
	\$' 000	\$' 000	\$' 000	\$'000
Recurrent Account				
000	Operational expenses.....	—	—	714,524
	Salaries	420,768	441,687	—
	Allowances.....	7,682	8,092	—
	Job-related allowances	—	11	—
	Hire of services and professional fees	2,661	3,170	—
	Contract maintenance.....	2,852	2,961	—
	General departmental expenses	36,202	60,769	—
	Total, Recurrent Account	470,165	516,690	714,524
Capital Account				
I — Plant, Equipment and Works				
661	Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote).....	464	650	3,700
	Total, Plant, Equipment and Works.....	464	650	3,700
II — Other Non-Recurrent				
700	General other non-recurrent	9,338	27,643	31,703
	Total, Other Non-Recurrent	9,338	27,643	31,703
	Total, Capital Account.....	9,802	28,293	35,403
	Total Expenditure.....	479,967	544,983	749,927

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Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2001–02 for the salaries and expenses of the Buildings Department is \$749,927,000. This represents an increase of \$191,841,000 over the revised estimate for 2000–01 and of \$269,960,000 over actual expenditure in 1999–2000.

Recurrent Account

2 Provision of \$714,524,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries and allowances of staff of the Buildings Department and its other operating expenses. Management and control of the department's operational expenses takes the form of a one-line vote. The controlling officer is given flexibility in the virement of funds within the subhead to facilitate the achievement of greater efficiency and enhanced productivity.

3 As a vote-funded department, the Buildings Department is subject to establishment control. The establishment at 31 March 2001 will be 964 permanent posts. It is expected that two permanent and 12 supernumerary posts will be created in 2001–02. Subject to certain conditions, the controlling officer may under delegated powers create or delete non-directorate posts during 2001–02, but the notional annual mid-point salary value of all such posts must not exceed \$348,696,000.

4 An analysis of financial provision under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is as follows:

	1999–2000 (Actual) (\$' 000)	2000–01 (Original Estimate) (\$' 000)	2000–01 (Revised Estimate) (\$' 000)	2001–02 (Estimate) (\$' 000)
Personal emoluments				
- Salaries.....	420,768	441,687	440,812	468,474
- Allowances.....	7,682	8,092	6,309	6,300
- Job-related allowances.....	—	11	11	11
Departmental expenses				
- Hire of services and professional fees.....	2,661	3,170	3,870	4,858
- Contract maintenance.....	2,852	2,961	2,961	6,030
- General departmental expenses.....	36,202	60,769	70,069	228,851
	470,165	516,690	524,032	714,524

5 Subject to the cash-limited ceiling of \$714,524,000 which will not be increased in the course of the year except for increases to the personal emoluments portion in line with the civil service pay adjustment, the controlling officer may deploy funds freely to meet requirements under each of the various expenditure components. The Administration will provide to Finance Committee quarterly financial reports showing actual spending and any redeployment of funds within *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* based on the above analysis.

Capital Account

Plant, Equipment and Works

6 Provision of \$3,700,000 under *Subhead 661 Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)* represents an increase of \$3,050,000 (469.2%) over the revised estimate for 2000–01. This is mainly due to the increased requirement for equipment to facilitate inspection of buildings and foundation construction works.

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Capital Account

Commitments

Sub-head (Code)	Item (Code)	Ambit	Approved commitment	Accumulated expenditure to 31.3.2000	Revised estimated expenditure for 2000-01	Balance
			\$' 000	\$' 000	\$' 000	\$' 000
700		<i>General other non-recurrent</i>				
	003	Contracting out microfilming of building records.....	31,260	13,802	10,458	7,000
	005	Study on steel corrosion and material deterioration in reinforced concrete buildings.....	40,000	34,427	4,580	993
	007	Translation and production of codes of practice and design manuals in Chinese	500	64	150	286
	011	Consultancy to compile a full list of existing private buildings in Hong Kong.....	3,300	—	330	2,970
	012	Consultancy to review Code of Practice for Fire Safety in buildings and renovation works	8,500	—	850	7,650
	013	Consultancy to review Building Regulations on lighting and ventilation of buildings	6,000	598	4,186	1,216
	014	In-situ tests on cantilevered slab canopies	5,700	352	3,200	2,148
	015	Consultancy to review Building Regulations on drainage of buildings.....	4,000	—	1,200	2,800
	016	Consultancy for water seepage and drain leakage investigation.....	3,200	—	—	3,200
	018	Pilot project on electronic imaging of building records.....	6,000	—	4,250	1,750
	019	Consultancy study on the seismic effects on buildings in Hong Kong	5,000	—	—	5,000
		Total	<u>113,460</u>	<u>49,243</u>	<u>29,204</u>	<u>35,013</u>