



Press Release

Management of Stonewall Trees by the Government

According to the Tree Register maintained by Development Bureau (DEVB), there are 309 stonewall trees on Government land. Many of those trees are located in densely populated urban areas. Management of the stonewall trees to maintain their healthy growth and stability has aroused a vast public concern.

With the dedication to create a safe and green living environment of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects (HKILA) and The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) established a Joint Task Force (JTF) to conduct an independent review of the prevailing practice of managing stonewall trees adopted by the Hong Kong SAR Government.

The JTF scrutinized the current tree management guidelines promulgated by DEVB and a relevant LegCo Paper, and convened interviews with stakeholders to gain in-depth appreciations of the prevailing practice of the stonewall tree management.

The JTF noted that the current guidelines adopted for assessing risk of stonewall trees focus on health defects of the trees. There lacks a well-established and comprehensive guideline which covers the stability assessment of stonewall trees. In addition, public's acceptance of carrying out mitigation measures against the risk of stonewall tree collapse is not sufficient.

The JTF made the following recommendations to the Government for consideration:

- (i) Raising public awareness of the risk of stonewall tree collapse and the need for necessary precautionary mitigation measures through enhanced public education.
- (ii) Promoting research and development of technical work pertaining to stonewall tree safety with collaboration of arboricultural, landscape architectural and engineering professionals.
- (iii) Stepping up the arboricultural maintenance guidelines for enhancing safety of stonewall trees.
- (iv) Reviewing the integrated approach for management of stonewall trees.
- (v) Enhancing the training and education requirements of personnel involved in assessment of stonewall tree safety.

The Review and Recommendation Report by the JTF, which details the review and the recommendations, has been submitted to the Secretary for Development, Mr. Paul CHAN Mo-po. A copy of the Report (English only) is now available to the public via the following links:

<http://www.hkila.com/v2/file/news-pdf334.pdf>

<http://www.hkie.org.hk/Docs/communityservices/opinions/2015-2016/JTF%20Report%20on%20Management%20of%20Stonewall%20Trees.pdf>

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