

News Clipping

Client / Product : The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors
Publication : South China Morning Post
Date : 23 May 2016 (Monday)
Page : EDT3

CONTINUED FROM A1



Former Institute of Surveyors president Vincent Ho inspects a green roof on the Baptist University campus. Photos: Sam Tsang

Baptist University may have breached roof rules

campus, similar brick and green modifications could be seen on the roof of the five-storey David C. Lam Building, but the *Post* was unable to access the other rooftops.

The Baptist University spokesman insisted that all green roof projects were supervised by qualified professionals who had done due diligence before any modifications were made. But safety checks would still be carried out within two weeks just to be sure.

The collapse at the City University sports centre on Friday, just a day before a big banquet was to be held in the hall covered by the green roof, has highlighted the risk of overloading rooftops with soil and vegetation.

The university's eight-member investigation committee will hold its first meeting today on what caused the accident.

Education minister Eddie Ng Hak-kim has ordered all campus-



Vincent Ho measures features on a green Baptist University rooftop.

es to inspect their green modifications as a result of the safety scare.

Adding green roofs has become trendy for tertiary institutions looking to do their bit for the environment. But they have left such projects in the hands of hired professionals who can authorise

modification work without necessarily seeking approval.

Current building regulations rely heavily on owners taking the initiative to submit plans for approval if they alter a building's structure - which means the government is in the dark when

they fail to comply with such formalities.

City University yesterday continued to hold veteran surveyor Kenneth Chan Jor-kin responsible as the authorised person in charge of its green rooftop project, although Chan denies it.

It is not only the universities. Between 2008 and 2015, more than 100 primary and secondary schools applied to the government's Environment and Conservation Fund for greening work, following then-chief executive Donald Tsang Yam-kuen's promotion of rooftop greenery in his 2007 policy address.

The government has clarified that greening work involving demolition and alteration, or addition of structures or drainage systems, was bound by the Buildings Ordinance, while placing of flower pots or laying of soil was exempted. But Ho said large-scale work still required professional inspection.

News Clipping

Client / Product : The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors
Publication : South China Morning Post
Date : 23 May 2016 (Monday)
Page : EDT1

ACCIDENT

BAPTIST U MAY HAVE BREACHED ROOF RULES

Post investigation with an expert found extra structures that should have been flagged to Buildings Department despite the school's claims

Christy Leung
christy.leung@scmp.com

A *Post* investigation has found that green roofs on the Baptist University campus may have breached building safety rules, raising concerns about the extent of the problem at the city's educational institutions after Friday's roof collapse at City University.

While City University was busy with damage control after a huge green rooftop at its sports centre in Kowloon Tong came crashing down, injuring three people, Baptist University claimed on Saturday that it did not require government approval for converting five of its own rooftops into gardens.

But an inspection yesterday of two rooftops by an expert who accompanied the *Post* to Baptist University's campus, also in Kowloon Tong, found additional structures that should clearly have been flagged to the Buildings Department.

On the rooftop of the Sir Run Run Shaw Building, a 300-square-metre area was fenced in with bricks and concrete and filled with green pitch 12.7cm thick.

In response to the *Post*'s inqui-

ries, a Baptist University spokesman said the management would revisit the requirements of the project to see if government approval was necessary.

But Vincent Ho Kui-yip, former president of the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, said the university would still have to remove all the greenery before seeking fresh approval from the Buildings Department.

"It does seem like extra building work to me, which requires submission of plans to the Buildings Department," the surveyor said after inspecting the premises.

Ho estimated the green pitch and the additional structures had put an extra load of 150kg per square metre on the roof.

He also spotted signs of water leakage, and was concerned about the effect on the structural integrity of the building. "The extra weight would result in early ageing of the concrete beams in the structures. The beams could deflect or crack easily," he said.

Ho called for a proper check of all green rooftops by the university, even if there was no immediate threat to safety.

In a different part of the

> CONTINUED ON A3