

IN THE MATTER OF
Independent Committee in relation to the fire at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po

WITNESS STATEMENT OF
CHAN YAT HO MATTHEW

I, CHAN Yat Ho Matthew of 26/F COSCO Tower, 183 Queen's Road Central, Hong Kong, do say as follows: -

1. I am a Case Manager, Building Rehabilitation, of the Urban Renewal Authority ("URA").
2. I joined the URA in June 2019. I was assigned to handle and follow up on the tendering process for maintenance and renovation works of Wang Fuk Court in 2019.
3. The URA was requested by the Independent Committee in relation to the fire at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po ("**Committee**") to provide witness statement(s) by its management and/or responsible officer(s) explaining the matters raised in a letter dated 29 December 2025 from Messrs. Lo & Lo acting for the Committee ("**Letter**").
4. I am duly authorised by the URA to prepare this witness statement on its behalf. Unless otherwise stated, the facts stated in this witness statement are within my knowledge and true, and where the facts are not within my knowledge they are based on the specified sources (including available records of the URA) and true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief, by reason of the veracity of the informant and documentation.
5. Given the time constraint in gathering information and collating relevant documents for the purpose of preparing this witness statement, I may not be able to recollect or explain all relevant matters in detail. That said, the URA will do its best to collate and provide relevant information and documents to assist the Committee, if so directed.
6. I will set out below, chronologically, the facts concerning the URA's involvement in the tendering process for maintenance and renovation works of Wang Fuk Court and follow roughly the structure adopted in the Letter. For ease of reference, the documents which I refer to below will take the format of, e.g., **CYHM#n, p.n.**

7. To facilitate the Committee’s understanding and review of the materials produced, the URA has prepared a Flow Chart setting out the relevant documents/events at each stage of the process under Smart Tender. The Flow Chart is annexed to this witness statement.

Application by the Owners’ Corporation to join Smart Tender

8. To the best of my knowledge, on 10 June 2016, a notice from the Independent Checking Unit (“**ICU**”) of the Housing Department with delegated authority from the Director of Buildings was issued to Wang Fuk Court in relation to mandatory building inspection under section 30B(3) of the Buildings Ordinance (Cap.123). In around September 2016, the Owners’ Corporation of Wang Fuk Court (“**OC-WFC**”) made an application under the Mandatory Building Inspection Subsidy Scheme (“**MBISS**”) operated back then by Hong Kong Housing Society (MBISS was taken over by the URA on 9 July 2018).
9. On 2 February 2018, the OC-WFC further applied to the URA to join the “Smart Tender” Building Rehabilitation Facilitating Services Scheme (“**Smart Tender**”).

Assignment of the Independent Consultant under Smart Tender

10. As part of the services under Smart Tender, the URA would assign a Building Surveying Consultant (“**BSC**”) engaged by the URA to the successful applicant. The BSC acts as the commonly known Independent Consultant (or “*Independent Advisor*” in the Letter).
11. Following the internal procedures and job roster, RS Surveyors operated by Rich State Management Limited (“**RS Surveyors**”) was assigned to act as Independent Consultant for the OC-WFC.¹
12. On 14 February 2018, RS Surveyors emailed the URA to confirm that it had no conflict of interest to provide services to the OC-WFC.²
13. On 6 March 2018, the URA issued a 服務協議通知書 (“**Service Agreement Notice**”) to the OC-WFC notifying that its application for Smart Tender had been approved and that Wang Fuk Court should carry out the repair works for the buildings in compliance with the requirements and schedule listed in the Service Agreement Notice.³

Service agreements signed by the OC-WFC, URA and RS Surveyors

¹ CYHM#2.

² CYHM#3.

³ CYHM#6.

14. On 23 May 2018, RS Surveyors carried out a preliminary site inspection with the OC-WFC and ISS Facility Services (“ISS”) (Property Management Company of Wang Fuk Court at the time) for the purpose of preparing, in due course, an Initial Assessment Report for the relevant repair and renovation works of Wang Fuk Court. As mentioned below, RS Surveyors issued such report on 9 August 2018.
15. On 16 June 2018, the URA formally assigned RS Surveyors to the OC-WFC to act as its Independent Consultant under Smart Tender. A bi-partite service agreement dated 16 June 2018 in Chinese (“**Bi-partite Service Agreement**”) was signed between the URA and the OC-WFC.⁴
 - (a) Clause 2.5 states the OC-WFC’s acknowledgement that the URA is an agent of the OC-WFC to assist it in the appointment of a contractor; that RS Surveyors should not be considered as the agent of the URA or its sub-contractor; and that the URA shall not be held accountable for the services offered by RS Surveyors.
 - (b) Clause 18 is an exemption clause for the URA, and the scope of service provided by the URA is set out in Annex I.
16. Of note, the URA was to assist OC-WFC to appoint Authorized Person/Registered Inspector by providing the “DIY Tool-kits”.⁵ These professionals are the “Inspector” in the Inspector Stage and the “Consultant” in the Consultant Stage as mentioned in the Letter. The tendering process for the Inspector and Consultant was conducted by the OC-WFC itself, and it was *not* done through the electronic tendering platform of Smart Tender. The URA did not have any involvement in the procurement of the inspector and consultant, because at that time, the services provided under Smart Tender were limited to the procurement of contractors only.
17. The URA has in place a mechanism to monitor and oversee due performance of BSCs in their capacity as Independent Consultants in projects assigned to them. Specifically:
 - (a) Pursuant to the BSC Service Contract (which, for RS Surveyors, was the Letter of Acceptance dated 15 September 2017 issued by the URA and accepted by RS Surveyors⁶), quarterly progress review meetings will be held with RS Surveyors (as with other BSCs) to review the progress of the services and assignments in

⁴ CYHM#7.

⁵ CYHM#8.

⁶ CYHM#1.

general,⁷ and RS Surveyors was required to attend other meetings as requested by the URA from time to time (Appendix I – Section 1, Clause 3.0).⁸

- (b) The URA will also conduct a formal performance evaluation with RS Surveyors once every six months.⁹
18. Further, a Chinese tri-partite agreement dated 16 June 2018 (“**Tri-partite Agreement**”) was signed among the OC-WFC, RS Surveyors and the URA. The scope of services at various stages of the repair project of Wang Fuk Court to be provided by RS Surveyors is set out in the Annex to that agreement.¹⁰

Procurement of the Inspector

19. On around 3 September 2018, the OC-WFC on its own initiative advertised a tender notice on newspapers for the procurement of the inspector. Upon the request of the OC-WFC, the URA as a facilitator assisted the OC-WFC in the procurement by posting that tender notice on the URA’s Building Rehabilitation Platform website.
20. The URA then had no involvement in the tendering process for inspector because Smart Tender, at the time of the OC-WFC’s joining, had yet to be expanded and did not cover procurement of inspectors. So, the URA was never given the tender documents prepared by the OC-WFC for that purpose, and has no knowledge of the tender arrangement such as to whom the tender documents were sent or the arrangement on the return of tenders. I know now from records that the opening of tenders took place on 27 September 2018, but no representative of the URA was present on that occasion. The URA does not know whether any submitted tender was subsequently withdrawn.
21. Back then, a sample tender document for inspector could be freely downloaded from the URA’s website for reference. I understand it was the same as the template provided by the Hong Kong Housing Society. Certainly, the OC-WFC could freely decide whether to adopt or amend the template.¹¹ The URA has no information showing whether the OC-WFC at the time downloaded or made reference to the template.

⁷ CYHM#4.

⁸ CYHM#1, p.40.

⁹ CYHM#5.

¹⁰ CYHM#10.

¹¹ CYHM#9.

22. Solely to assist the OC-WFC's reading of the tender submissions as a non-professional, on 30 October 2018, based on the 24 tender materials provided to the URA by the OC-WFC (via ISS), the URA provided a Tender Price Summary ("**URA's Inspector TPS**") to the OC-WFC. It was a 1-page summary presenting in descending order the bids with the calculated unit rate per man-day for each bid based on the tender sums, and making remarks (which were plain description of information received from tenderers).¹²
23. Despite providing the URA's Inspector TPS, the URA never provided any advice to the OC-WFC on the reasonableness of the tender sums. The URA's Inspector TPS provided purely numerical comparisons of bidders, with the expectation that the OC-WFC would exercise its own independent judgment to select and appoint an inspector. The URA did not participate in the OC-WFC's deliberation or decision-making process.
24. For reference, I note Will Power Architects Company Limited ("**Will Power**") quoted a total price of HK\$222,000, which was the 6th lowest out of the 24 tenderers.
25. On 18 January 2019, the URA received the Initial Assessment Report dated 9 August 2018 prepared by RS Surveyors. The Initial Assessment Report set out the conditions of the prescribed repair items and made suggestions as to what improvement works could be done; and also gave a preliminary ballpark estimate of the repair and improvement works for the general reference of the OC-WFC.¹³
26. I understand that (i) on 25 January 2019, Mr. Brian Yam, Case Officer (Senior Officer) of the URA, attended an Owners' General Meeting ("**OGM**"), which was attended by certain owners of Wang Fuk Court and ISS, to answer enquiries from owners in relation to the services provided under Smart Tender and the progress of the repair works project; and (ii) he had left that OGM before the owners voted for their preferred inspector.¹⁴
27. In that OGM, it was resolved that Will Power be appointed the inspector. The URA has no information showing the reasons or rationale for the owners and OC-WFC doing so.
28. On 28 February 2019, the URA received the contract dated 25 February 2019 executed between Will Power and the OC-WFC for the provision of consultancy services, for the processing of the OC-WFC's application under MBISS, as well as the Anti-Collusive

¹² CYHM#13.

¹³ CYHM#11.

¹⁴ CYHM#14.

Tendering Certificate, the Declaration of Ethical Commitment Requirements, and the Declaration of Integrity and Anti-collusion Clauses (signed by Will Power).¹⁵

29. As part of tender submission requirements, the URA also received a Self-Declaration of Integrity and Anti-collusion dated 22 September 2018 signed by Will Power.¹⁶
30. On 6 November 2019, Mr. KC Shum (now deceased), the Registered Inspector of Will Power, submitted an Inspection Report (“**Inspection Report**”)¹⁷ to the ICU. The URA meanwhile sent the Inspection Report to RS Surveyors as the OC-WFC’s Independent Consultant for its preparation of Pre-tender Assessment Report Part 1 (“**PAR1**”).

Procurement of the Consultant

31. Similar to the process of procurement of the inspector as described above, on 2 January 2020, the OC-WFC advertised a tender notice for procurement of consultancy services on newspapers. The URA again as a facilitator, and on request of the OC-WFC, assisted in posting such tender notice on the URA’s Building Rehabilitation Platform website.
32. The URA similarly had no role to play at all in the tendering process for the consultant, such as the formulation of tender documents, the arrangement for return of tenders, and the opening of tenders on 20 January 2020, which occasion no representative from the URA attended. The URA does not have records showing whether any submitted tender was subsequently withdrawn. It was not involved in the selection of tenderers, did not attend tender interview(s) (if any), and did not provide any advice to the OC-WFC.
33. Again, back then, a sample tender document for consultant could be freely downloaded from the URA’s website for reference; and similarly, I understand this template was the same as that provided by the Hong Kong Housing Society. The OC-WFC could freely decide whether to adopt or amend the standard template but the URA has no information showing if the OC-WFC at the time downloaded or made reference to the template.¹⁸
34. On 24 January 2020, the OC-WFC applied to join the Common Area Subsidy Scheme (“**CAS**”). On 18 March 2020, the URA granted and issued the Approval-in-Principle.¹⁹

¹⁵ CYHM#15.

¹⁶ CYHM#12.

¹⁷ CYHM#16.

¹⁸ CYHM#17.

¹⁹ CYHM#21.

35. As in the case of preparing the URA's Inspector TPS, solely with a view to assisting the OC-WFC in understanding the bids offered by the tenderers for consultant appointment, on 30 January 2020, based on the 35 tender submissions provided to the URA by the OC-WFC (via ISS),²⁰ the URA prepared a Tender Price Summary ("**URA's Consultant TPS**") giving a numerical comparison of the bids for the OC-WFC's reference. Again, the URA never commented on the submitted tenders. For reference, I note Will Power's bid was the 11th lowest with a quote of HK\$308,000 amongst the 35 tender submissions, and the 3 lowest bids received were HK\$45,000, HK\$60,000 and HK\$78,750.²¹
36. I understand that on 23 March 2020 about four representatives of the OC-WFC and ISS attended the URA's office in Cheung Sha Wan for a meeting with two representatives of the URA at the time, Mr. Brian Yam (Senior Officer) and Mr. Keynes Choi (Assistant Manager). This meeting was held upon the request of the OC-WFC, and the purpose was to assist it in understanding the contents of the URA's Consultant TPS. No meeting minutes or records of the meeting were prepared.
37. From March 2020 to December 2021, there was limited (if any) progress made in the appointment of consultant due to the COVID-19 pandemic (including social distancing measures) as it was difficult to arrange the holding of OGMs. The original date for the appointment of the consultant was 17 March 2021 under the Service Agreement Notice. As it was still in the pandemic time, the URA issued a blanket extension of time to the OC-WFC to extend the deadline for the appointment of the consultant for 24 months.
38. I understand on 11 December 2021, Mr. Brian Yam attended an OGM to answer queries from owners in relation to Smart Tender, the URA's Consultant TPS and other building rehabilitation subsidy schemes including the CAS; ISS attended that OGM; and Mr. Brian Yam had left the OGM before the owners voted for their preferred consultant. I was notified afterwards that the resolution passed at that OGM was that Will Power be appointed as the consultant. The URA has no information as to the OC-WFC's rationale in selecting 15 bidders for interview, or the reasons for the appointment of Will Power.
39. On 24 December 2021, the URA further received from ISS a signed contract dated 22 December 2021 between the OC-WFC and Will Power on consultancy services, for the processing of the OC-WFC's application under MBISS,²² as well as a Non-Collusive Tendering Certificate and a Declaration of Ethical Commitment Requirements.²³

²⁰ CYHM#18.

²¹ CYHM#20.

²² CYHM#22.

²³ CYHM#19.

40. At the material time, I was *not* aware of the news in the second half of 2021 reporting that the OC-WFC was embroiled in disputes with or among owners. It is not within the remit of the URA's statutory functions or duties to handle property management matters, which are supposed to be resolved by the owners themselves. The URA did not know nor interfere with the operations of the OC-WFC, or the discussions among owners, the OC-WFC and ISS.

Procurement of the Contractor

41. On 23 August 2022, the URA received Will Power's submission of the 1st draft tender document for "Prescribed Repair Works under MBIS and MWIS for WFC" ("**1st Draft Tender Document**").²⁴
42. On 29 September 2022, the URA further received Will Power's submission of the Cost Estimate of the Repair Works on Wang Fuk Court ("**Will Power's Cost Estimate**") and the Inspection Report prepared in 2019 mentioned above.²⁵
43. Based on the Inspection Report, the 1st Draft Tender Document, and Will Power's Cost Estimate, RS Surveyors prepared the PAR1 dated 13 November 2022 detailing its comments and recommendations, and issued an endorsed copy to the URA.²⁶
44. The contents of the PAR1 are self-explanatory. The role of RS Surveyors was to identify discrepancies, omissions and technical inadequacies and highlight any mandatory repair items that were missing. The matter would then be left to the OC-WFC and Will Power to decide whether they would like to adopt the comments and recommendations made. I wish to only highlight two points about the PAR1 below.
45. Paragraph 2.3 of the PAR1 set out RS Surveyors' comments on Will Power's Cost Estimate, presented in a table comparing repair items stated in the Initial Assessment Report (prepared by RS Surveyors earlier) versus those stated in the 1st Draft Tender Document (prepared by Will Power). Items which were significantly higher or lower than the cost estimates prepared by RS Surveyors were highlighted. The internal guidelines given by the URA to BSCs at the time was that any difference of 30% higher or lower than cost estimates by BSCs would be deemed significantly higher or lower.

²⁴ CYHM#23.

²⁵ CYHM#24.

²⁶ CYHM#25.

However, the exact differences would not be disclosed, for otherwise it would amount to price-fixing or communication of price sensitive information.

46. Paragraph 4 of the PAR1 set out another table showing the price difference between the cost estimates from RS Surveyors and those from Will Power. However, this table was not disclosed to any third parties including the OC-WFC, Will Power or any contractors in order to prevent bid-rigging.
47. On 25 November 2022, the PAR1 (except its paragraph 4) was issued to the OC-WFC.
48. On 15 December 2022, the URA attended a meeting with the OC-WFC to explain the comments in the PAR1. No meeting minutes or records of the meeting were prepared.
49. On 30 December 2022, presumably after considering the PAR1, Will Power submitted the 2nd revised draft tender document (“**2nd Draft Tender Document**”) to the URA and the OC-WFC.²⁷
50. As recorded in the minutes of the OGM on 4 March 2023,²⁸ the OC-WFC finalised the tender documents. The representatives of the URA were not present in that OGM. In the minutes of the Management Committee (“**MC**”) meeting dated 17 March 2023:²⁹
 - (a) Paragraph 5.2 set out the assessment criteria that Will Power had proposed for consideration and adoption. In particular, item 8 referred to certificate of no legal proceedings over the past 2 years issued by a practising solicitor, whereas item 9 referred to the contractor having no litigation record over the last 8 years.
 - (b) Paragraph 5.3 recorded that the OC-WFC had sought the URA’s opinion on the assessment criteria; and on 15 March 2023, the URA had replied that it had no other opinion but the diction of certain scoring should be set out clearly.
51. The URA does not play any role in the setting of tender assessment criteria or the point scoring system in the tendering process, whether in the present case concerning Wang Fuk Court or in other rehabilitation cases. The URA does not and would not do that for the same reason in refusing to comment on the reasonableness of the price of any bids submitted, to avoid being perceived as biased. The reply from the URA as described in paragraph 5.3 of the minutes for the MC meeting held on 17 March 2023 was contained

²⁷ CYHM#26.

²⁸ CYHM#27.

²⁹ CYHM#29.

in the email on 15 March 2023 issued by Mr. Brian Yam. As one could see from the email, he handwrote certain comments on the diction of the scoring of certain tender assessment criteria but had not given any view on the selection criteria.³⁰

52. On 27 March 2023, the URA received from the OC-WFC a finalised tender document (“**Finalised Tender Document**”) and the endorsed tender assessment criteria.³¹
53. On 19 April 2023, RS Surveyors issued Pre-tender Assessment Report Part 2 (“**PAR2**”).³² It also prepared an Independent Cost Estimate (“**Independent Cost Estimate**”), placed in a sealed envelope to be deposited into the URA’s tender box.³³
54. On 16 May 2023, the URA’s electronic tendering platform of Smart Tender advertised and sent a tender notice to all registered contractors.³⁴ Ultimately, 99 contractors in total downloaded the Finalised Tender Document before closure at 17:00 on 4 July 2023.
55. On 25 May 2023, the OC-WFC applied for the 3rd round of Operation Building Bright 2.0 subsidy (“**OBB Subsidy**”).
56. Right before 17:00 on 4 July 2023, the staff of the URA deposited the sealed envelope containing the Independent Cost Estimate (by RS Surveyors) into the URA’s tender box, with the document to be unsealed after opening of tenders, to be overseen by a Certified Public Accountant in the presence of the representatives of the OC-WFC.
57. On 5 July 2023, the URA’s officers attended the opening of tenders with representatives of the OC-WFC. Witnessed by a Certified Public Accountant, all tenders received and the Independent Cost Estimate were opened. 57 tenders had been received. The process was video recorded³⁵ and documented.³⁶ Based on records, no tenders were withdrawn.
58. On 18 September 2023, Will Power submitted the 1st draft of the Tender Analysis Report (“**Will Power’s TAR**”).³⁷
59. As per the tender document template, Will Power as the consultant engaged by the OC-WFC signed declarations on ethical commitment and integrity including a Non-

³⁰ CYHM#28.

³¹ CYHM#30.

³² CYHM#31.

³³ CYHM#32.

³⁴ CYHM#33.

³⁵ CYHM#34.

³⁶ CYHM#35.

³⁷ CYHM#36.

Collusive Tendering Certificate and a Declaration of Ethical Commitment Requirements³⁸.

60. On 12 October 2023, at the OC-WFC’s request, the URA attended an ad-hoc meeting with the OC-WFC and ISS. The URA answered queries about Smart Tender DIY Tool-kits requirements about tender interviews, and specifically reminded the representatives of the OC-WFC that if the OC-WFC was to interview any bidder, it must invite the five lowest bidders to the interview before resolving to accept a bid. Subsequently, records of written invitations to and confirmations from invited tenderers were provided to the URA³⁹ as per the requirements set out in the “DIY Tool-kits”.⁴⁰ The URA was never required nor requested to attend and did not attend any tender interview conducted by the OC-WFC, and did not receive any information from the OC-WFC about the details about any such interview. The URA and the Independent Consultant also never received the “Progress Report of Building Renovation Project” prepared by Will Power.
61. On 4 December 2023, an assessment report dated 27 November 2023 prepared by RS Surveyors regarding the contents of Will Power’s TAR was issued to the OC-WFC.⁴¹
62. On 11 December 2023, Will Power submitted a revised Tender Analysis Report (“**Will Power’s Revised TAR**”).⁴²
63. On 28 January 2024, the owners and OC-WFC resolved at an EGM to appoint Prestige Construction & Engineering Co., Limited (“**Prestige**”) as the contractor. This EGM was attended by the URA.
64. On 7 February 2024, the OC-WFC sent a draft contractor contract to the URA⁴³ for RS Surveyors to review and comment.⁴⁴ I would like to stress, however, that such service was *not* provided by RS Surveyors under Smart Tender – instead, RS Surveyors did that because the OC-WFC had applied for the OBB Subsidy. Without such application, the Independent Consultant’s role ends upon passing of resolution to appoint a contractor.
65. On 16 April 2024, the OC-WFC signed the contractor contract with Prestige.⁴⁵

³⁸ CYHM#12.

³⁹ CYHM#37.

⁴⁰ CYHM#8.

⁴¹ CYHM#38.

⁴² CYHM#39.

⁴³ CYHM#40.

⁴⁴ CYHM#41.

⁴⁵ CYHM#42.

66. In the period from 23 January 2024 to 8 April 2024, the URA received 7 email enquiries from owners, 6 of which were made after Prestige had been appointed as the contractor. The URA duly provided its responses to each enquiry within one month of receipt.⁴⁶
67. On 20 May 2024, RS Surveyors issued a Contract Document Report to the URA, giving its comments on the relevant contract documents for Wang Fuk Court to assist the URA in its assessment of the OC-WFC's eligibility to apply for OBB Subsidy.⁴⁷

Other Matters

68. I confirm the URA has no records about additional key events, concerning the tendering process for the Wang Fuk Court maintenance and repair works, that involved the URA.
69. I confirm the URA has never played a role in the planning, design, implementation, or selection of building materials for the Wang Fuk Court maintenance and repair works; and to the best knowledge of the URA, such matters were proposed by Will Power and approved by the OC-WFC.
70. I confirm the URA had no involvement in the OC-WFC's decision to conduct extensive renovations across all eight buildings simultaneously.
71. In early December 2025, the URA learned of prosecutorial actions against Will Power and Prestige, including arrests of their key personnel. The URA accordingly exercised its discretion, under Clause 13.1 of the Building Rehabilitation Company Registration Scheme (BRCRS) Terms and Conditions Handbook, to remove their registrations by written notice.⁴⁸

Conclusion

72. I am deeply saddened by the devastating fire at Wang Fuk Court. I understand the URA is willing to assist the Committee in its investigation into the tragedy and its formulation of recommendations on how to safeguard future building rehabilitation projects.

⁴⁶ CYHM#43.

⁴⁷ CYHM#44.

⁴⁸ CYHM#45.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true and the opinion expressed in it is honestly held.



Chan Yat Ho Matthew
Case Manager, Building Rehabilitation
Urban Renewal Authority
Date: 28 January 2026