

\$30m transformation for Chungking

By Laura Beck

A CAMPAIGN has kicked off to modernise the notorious Chungking Mansions in Tsim Sha Tsui, the block described by its building manager as "a cancer that could be cured".

Known for fires, frequent blackouts and illegal guesthouses, the owners of the building have installed a \$3 million transformer as the first step in a five-year refurbishment plan.

Up to now, Chungking has had only two power transformers to supply the 900 units in the 32-year-old building with power, and the building manager said they were not able to cope with the demand.

"There will be no blackouts now because the new transformer will supply power to one-third of the units," manager Ho Shun-tin said.

"The Incorporated Owners of Chungking Mansions will raise the funds by increasing the management fees of ten-

ants from 50 to 60 per cent," he said.

The unit holders currently pay \$250 a month in management fees for a commercial unit and \$200 for residential units.

An estimated 4,000 residents live in the building.

Mr Ho said that at least \$30 million would be needed to fund the five-year plan.

Improvements, include updating the building's lifts, installing new drainage pipes, fixing the external walls and putting in a new floor on the shopping arcade.

Mr Ho denied the building was being sold for redevelopment. "I think that some rumours have been raised, but these are only rumours," he said. "There is no authority that I know of that could take down the building because it is not on government land and is owned by people in the building."