

HONG KONG STANDARD
15 JUL 1994

A matter of convenience

By Clara Chan

URBAN Councillors are angry that the proposed Salisbury Garden, Tsim Sha Tsui, might be deprived of its own public convenience.

At a recent Recreation Select Committee meeting Urban Services Department (USD) officials outlined plans to replace the garden's proposed small toilet with a bigger, brighter one in a commercial arcade underneath.

But Hong Kong's toilet expert, Urban Council chairman Dr Ronald Leung, does not want to inconvenience the public by making them climb downstairs to spend a penny.

But Rosana Chan, USD chief executive officer, said: "If the toilet is put above the ground in the garden, it will be an intrusion."

Dr Leung asked: "Why put the toilet underground?"

"Our toilets have been much improved to be different from before. They are not intrusive but an enhancement of the garden."

Councillor San Stephen Wong backed Dr Leung.

He asked: "The toilet is there to give convenience to tourists and should be accessible. Why bother to take a lift to go downstairs to find it?"

Handicapped people would also have to take the lift to go down one floor to go to the toilet.

Councillor Paul Young said locating a toilet in the commercial arcade was a marketing strategy. "People can freely use the toilet in the garden and not go shopping," he said.

USD officials and the project architect said they would take the councillors' opposition

into account and reconsider where to put the toilet.

The Urban Council hosted the Asia-Pacific Seminar on Public Toilets last month, focusing on the problems of public toilets in the region and examining options for improvement.

Councillors were also angry when told the Salisbury Garden project would be completed by the end of next year — a delay of eight months — because of problems caused by two big underground water pipes.

Councillor Wong Shui-lai said the government had not prepared the ground carefully. However an Architectural Services Department official said they knew beforehand about the pipes but technical problems had resulted in long delays in inter-departmental communications.