

Two property owners fined over \$110,000 in total for carrying out unauthorised building works

Two owners of detached houses on Redhill Peninsula pleaded guilty at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts yesterday (June 12) for carrying out unauthorised building works (UBWs), contravening section 14(1) of the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) (BO), namely, knowingly carrying out building works without prior approval and consent from the Buildings Department (BD). They were fined over \$110,000 in total by the court.

The BD discovered certain UBWs at the two detached houses during a large-scale operation in September 2023 to inspect houses along the coastal area of Redhill Peninsula. Investigation by the BD found that the owners of the two houses had knowingly carried out the concerned building works without the prior approval and consent from the BD, contravening section 14(1) of the BO. Hence, the BD instigated prosecution action against the two owners under section 40(1AA) of the BO in August last year. The two owners were convicted and fined \$30,000 and \$82,980 respectively yesterday.

A spokesman for the BD said today (June 13), "The Redhill Peninsula incident reveals that coastal detached houses with UBWs or illegal occupation of government land can pose safety hazards and risks to nearby slopes. If such contraventions are discovered, the BD will take vigorous enforcement actions and instigate prosecution actions. Property owners should consult building professionals before carrying out building works to ensure compliance with the BO."

The spokesperson said that these are the first two convictions for contravening section 14(1) of the BO in relation to the Redhill Peninsula incident. The BD has already instigated prosecutions against 30 detached houses on Redhill Peninsula, including the above two houses. Court hearings for these cases are being rolled out.

Pursuant to section 40(1AA) of the BO, any person who knowingly contravenes section 14(1) (i.e. commencement or carrying out any building works without having first obtained approval and consent from the BD), commits an offence and is liable upon conviction to a fine of \$400,000 and to imprisonment for two years, and a further fine of \$20,000 for each day that the offence continues.

The Government has earlier on put forward proposals to amend the BO, including increasing the penalties to enhance deterrence against failure to comply with statutory notices or orders by the specified time and offences against serious UBWs. The Government is drafting the legislative amendments, with a view to submitting the amendment bill to the Legislative Council in the first half of 2026.