

Housing Society officer jailed for bribery over building renovation contracts

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A Senior Officer of the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS), charged by the ICAC, was today (Thursday) sentenced to nine months' imprisonment at Tuen Mun Magistracy for bribery in relation to renovation contracts of three private residential buildings in Yuen Long.

Chu Ka-hang, 29, was also ordered to return \$15,000 in restitution to HKHS.

Chu earlier pleaded guilty to three counts of public servant accepting an advantage and one of public servant soliciting an advantage, contrary to 4(2)(a) of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance.

The court heard that at the time of the offences, Jimmy Ying Jim-ming and Chu were respectively Assistant Manager and Senior Officer of the Yuen Long Office of the Property Management Advisory Centre (PMAC) of HKHS.

As officers of PMAC, Ying and Chu were responsible for encouraging flat owners to take part in the Building Management Incentive Scheme of HKHS, which subsidises repair works at common areas of residential buildings.

The officers also offered guidance to flat owners or incorporated owners (IO) in the procurement and tendering of repair and maintenance works.

The court heard that the IO of three private residential buildings in Yuen Long applied to HKHS for subsidies for renovation.

In early 2007, Ying and Chu came up with a plot to provide corrupt assistance to consultancy firms and renovation contractors in securing consultancy and renovation contracts of the buildings under their charter. They agreed to equally share the corrupt proceeds.

With the assistance of Ying and Chu, the IO of Kwan Wah Building (KWB) invited tenders for a consultancy contract of the building.

The court heard that Chao Tak-kwong, former shareholder of Prestige Construction and Engineering Co. Ltd., who was a friend of Chu, had sought Chu's assistance in securing a \$1.4 million renovation contract of KWB for Kwong Chiu-kiu and offered Chu a reward equivalent to 3% of the contract value. Kwong was a director of W.K. Construction Company Limited (W.K. Construction).

On February 5 last year, Chao met Chu in a public toilet in Yuen Long, and handed over about \$10,000 to him on behalf of Kwong.

On April 1 last year, Chao gave \$13,000 to Chu at a shopping centre in Kowloon Tong. The duo were arrested by ICAC officers after the transaction, and the bribe money was recovered from Chu.

Chu also accepted \$20,000 from Chao and Kwong in 2007 for assisting W.K. Construction in obtaining a \$2.6 million renovation contract of Fook Shun Building, another building in Yuen Long.

In March last year, Chu solicited from Chao and Kwong about \$40,000 for assisting W.K. Construction in obtaining a renovation contract worth over \$4 million of a third residential building in Yuen Long - Ho Fat Building, the court was told.

Ying, Chao and Kwong, who were also charged for their roles in the case, were earlier found guilty of a total of seven bribery offences. They were each jailed for 18 months, while Ying was also ordered to pay \$16,500 in restitution to HKHS.

The prosecution was today represented by prosecuting counsel Phil Chau, assisted by ICAC officers Patrick So and Matchy Mak.

