



Officials order removal of cemetery

Developer built island graveyard without government permission

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The Lands Department last night issued a written warning to the developer of a private cemetery on an island off Tai Po, demanding that it demolish unauthorised structures built on the site by late this month. But the department was still unable, despite repeated requests, to say whether developing a cemetery on private land on Ma Shi Chau was a violation of land-lease conditions.

was the second it has issued to developer Union Lucky Development Limited. It issued the first warning on August 12, regarding the illegal development, the Lands Department revealed last night. It said the land lease did not allow the erection of any structures without prior government approval. The department could not explain why it did not inform the **South China Morning Post** ([SEHK: 0583](#), [announcements](#), [news](#)) about the first warning when it was approached last week by a reporter. The cemetery development is on an island that has been earmarked as a geopark. The department also failed to say why some of the structures, which had been on the site after land clearance by the developer earlier this year, were allowed to remain for months. In a statement last night, a spokesman said the department had been monitoring the site for the past few months, checking land records, contacting the developer and seeking technical and legal advice from various government departments. It said the developer had objected to the first warning on geotechnical and safety grounds and had sought to extend a demolition deadline from the end of August to September 28. "If the lot owners fail to do so within the stipulated time, the government will take further lease enforcement action as it considers appropriate without further reference to the lot owners," the spokesman said. In the worst scenario, the government could even take over the land. Undeterred by the first warning, the developer, however, in the past two weeks, continued to solicit buyers for 3,000 urn plots at the cemetery for a minimum HK\$90,000 each. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has contacted the developer and vowed to take action if breaches of cemetery regulations were found. An e-mail obtained by the *South China Morning Post* shows department officials were tipped off by conservationists in mid-July about the cemetery on the island. Since then it apparently has done little and this week said it had been waiting for legal advice from government lawyers. One conservationist familiar with the situation said: "It is like a police officer seeing strangers with pistols outside a bank but taking no action to stop them and just waiting." The directors of Union Lucky Development have not responded to *Post* reports about the cemetery. Reporters yesterday visited Union Lucky's registered office at Kwong Fuk Road, Tai Po, and found the office was being run under another company called Regent (Holdings) Ltd.

An employee there said Chan Tsz-kin, one of the two Union Lucky directors, was out on business and unavailable.

A company registry search shows that Regent (Holdings) Ltd is owned by Cheung Hing-hoi and his wife, Cheung Bik-fong, who was a director of Union Lucky and is now its secretary. Cheung Hing-hoi, a prominent property developer based in Tai Po, is also a president of an association for businessmen in the New Territories and the honorary president of the New Territories Realty Association.