



收購及遷置部高級主任陳忠恒（左）與前居民梁威石（右）重回永祥大廈，背後就是當日被怪樹入侵糞渠的舊居。

Andrew (left) and Leung Wai-shek (right) pay a visit to Wing Cheung Building in which the sewage pipe was once clogged up by a tree.

拆解怪樹塞渠謎團 助居民重獲衛生居住環境

Addressing People's Needs by Solving the Mystery of a Clogged Sewage Pipe

遊走舊區，偶爾會發現有些舊樓，從石屎樓頂長出綠意盎然的樹。路人看罷，會驚嘆生命力之頑強；可是當市區重建局（市建局）收購及遷置部高級主任陳忠恒（Andrew）見到一棵附於唐樓的怪樹，卻聯想到可能和居民所受的苦況有關，在抽絲剝繭下更揭開居民「不解」之謎，成功為他們解決居住環境難題……

72歲的梁威石跟弟弟和媽媽三人，住在皇后大道西143號的永祥大廈已經34年。這幢唐樓建於上世紀60年代，梁威石從壯年住到老年。可是舊樓終究年紀大，狀況愈來愈差，還出現外牆石屎剝落和鋼筋外露等狀況，即使復修亦難以挽救，後來市建局把大廈納入重建計劃，在2018年3月起着手收購。

當如廁變成夢魘

當時梁家住在二樓，可他們同時亦面對着一個聽起來很瑣碎、卻令人非常困惱的難題：廁所淤塞。

淤塞問題最初只會偶發，每次完成「大事」，該走的

沖不走，不該來的卻不請自來。他們曾經召喚通渠師傅協助，可是辛勞一番亦無功而返。到後來，馬桶甚至會興之所至變身小噴泉，隨時噴出一地污水，把梁家變成惡臭難當的澤國……

漸漸地，廁所淤塞成為梁家三位老人的夢魘。苦無對策下，梁威石惟有從衣櫃掏出舊衣一堆，強行塞滿馬桶，再找幾個裝滿泥沙的大袋子，重重壓在舊衣上，最後還用一個大膠袋把馬桶密封起來。

那次之後，梁氏家中沒馬桶可用，只能另闢途徑解決生理需要，譬如跑到附近的足球場找公廁上大號。

梁威石說：「我們『後生』的還好，頂多多走幾步，最緊要忍得住。但是九十歲的媽媽走不動。」為解決媽媽的如廁需要，梁家從此添了一個痰罐，而每天到公廁清倒媽媽的「產出」，則成為梁家兄弟的新日常。無奈是，即使這樣折騰，也無補於事。

土法封廁 治標不治本

2019年底，當Andrew到訪梁家時，他先嗅到一屋臭氣，然後看到地上污漬——那個土法馬桶封印，顯然失效了。

「屋裡的衛生情況很差，而且要三個老人家這樣解決基本需要，實在很不理想。」Andrew說：「那段日子因為收購的前期工作，我們常常跑到那條街視察和拍照，也曾在那邊找廁所，更感同身受他們的不方便。」

Andrew很快發現，受影響的不只梁家一戶。他和同事逐層視察、逐戶查詢，發現五層樓的單位廁所都有淤塞，即使曾安排高壓水車到場通渠，也沒有成功。最後他跑上天台，看到一棵長在矮牆外的簷篷上、高約四米的樹。

在這以前，Andrew並非不知道天台有樹，卻不曾懷疑過它。雖然天台陽光充沛，但到底這樹只能攀附石屎上低調求存，卻憑什麼長得如此欣欣向榮？



涉事的馬桶，當日澎湃，如今平靜。
Leung Wai-shek stands in front of the toilet that was once blocked causing serious sanitary problem.



天台上的怪樹，今日已經被清除了。
The tree that used to attach to Wing Cheung building and thrive on the rooftop is now removed.

大膽假設，小心求證

所謂「大膽假設，小心求證」，Andrew擇日安排工程及合約部同事重返現場視察，終於證實了街坊長久以來的疑惑：那樹的根莖沿着大廈外牆生長，早就從失修的糞渠縫隙中，找到門路並在裡頭一直往下爬到一樓，終於導致管道堵塞、污水倒灌。

Andrew笑說：「有句話叫『十年樹木』，這幢房子的淤塞不是一日之寒，只是業主們沒有組織和資金去處理，無奈忍受。這也是很多舊樓業主要長年面對的問題。」市建局最後決定為大廈全面更換糞渠，並且安排緊急動工，讓街坊重獲衛生的居住環境。

急居民所急

Andrew早在1997年就加入市建局的前身土地發展公司，經驗老到。這些年來，他視察過大大小小的舊樓，當中最常見的舊區居住問題是石屎剝落，還有天花板漏水、梯間照明不足等。市建局成功收購這些舊樓後，一般會安排簡單維修和清潔，務求讓街坊在遷出前的短暫日子裏，依然住得安心。

「我曾經碰過樹木抓破外牆的個案，破壞糞渠則是第一遭。不過，像永祥大廈那樣，市建局不等收購完成，便已迅速尋求全體住戶同意，提前安排工程，是比較特殊的案例。況且以一幢行將拆卸的大廈來說，



站在永祥大廈頂上的樹，一面從天台吸收充沛陽光，一面從大廈糞渠攝取豐足營養。

The tree attaching to the building has thrived having absorbed sunlight on the rooftop and being fertilised with waste in the pipes.

換糞渠工程的規模可不算小。」Andrew說：「這讓我再次體會到市建局『以人為本』的理念：想別人所想，急別人所急。」

告別奇樹和倒夜香的日子

換渠工程必須先在外牆搭棚，才能鋸樹又換喉，期間還遇上新型冠狀病毒疫情第一波，最後好不容易趕及在2019年的農曆新年前完成。此後，梁威石告別了奇樹和倒夜香日子。

「工程完成後很好，非常好！」梁威石說：「廁所暢通，地台排水，不臭了，有一種開始新生活的感覺。」後來他親自寫了一封信，感謝市建局關顧民生，特別讚揚Andrew的協助。那以後，三母子在永祥大廈又住了大半年，順利取得賠償，現在已經遷出。

這次解難成功，Andrew獲申訴專員公署頒發「2020申訴專員嘉許獎」。「其實這次最大的感受，是集合各部門之力，解決民生需要。」他說：「欣慰的是，居民不用再上上落落如廁和倒夜香了！」

Leung Wai-shek, aged 72, had lived in Wing Cheung Building on 143, Queen's Road West with his brother and mother for 34 years. The conditions of the old tenement building, built in the 1960s, had deteriorated badly and was beyond repair. It was included in the URA's redevelopment scheme and acquired by the URA in March 2018. Back then, the Leung family was annoyed by a problem in the house: toilet blockage.

When Andrew Chan, Senior Acquisition and Clearance Officer of the URA visited the Leung family, he noticed a serious sanitary problem in their toilet. He then found out toilets in other units had the same clogged-up problem. Attempts to desilt the sewers had been made but were all in vain. In the end, it was discovered that the obstruction was caused by a tree attached to the building, whose roots and branches had seeped through the cracks of the sewage stacks and begun growing downward into the pipes over time causing blockage and sewer backflow. Drainage cleaners had been asked to help, but the problem remained and even worsened. Leung had no choice but to stuff piles of old clothes into the toilet. He then laid some heavy sandbags on top and sealed the toilet with a huge plastic bag.

After that the toilet was completely out of use. The Leung brothers had to run back and forth to use the public toilet in a nearby football court, while their old mother could only use a potty to answer her nature's calls. The two brothers then became "night soil workers" and disposed of the waste in the public toilet each day.

According to Andrew, toilet blockage was a longstanding problem of Wing Cheung Building. Yet the owners were helpless to the problem as they were incapable of organising works nor had they got sufficient funds. The URA eventually decided to replace all sewage pipes of the building and even expedited the works so that residents were able to live in a hygienic environment later again. He added that the URA's prompt action to seek the consent of the residents for early implementation of works in spite of the yet-to-be completed acquisition of Wing Cheung Building reminded him of the URA's mission to always understand people's needs and improve the living environment for the people.



Andrew (左)「急別人所急」的努力，獲申訴專員公署頒發「2020申訴專員嘉許獎」。

Andrew's (left) hard work pays off with his winning of the Ombudsman's Award in 2020.