

## Video Script on Search Services

### Characters

Mandy – Land Registry’s Staff

Matthew – Customer

### Subtitles

Mandy: Hi, Matthew (Hello Mandy). It is nice to see you again after our last alumni gathering. You mentioned over the phone that you wished to know more about the search services of the Land Registry. Anything I can help?

Matthew: I am interested in an apartment recently. I understand that it is necessary to conduct land searches before a property transaction. But I do not know what a land search is and the purposes it serves. Since my office is nearby, I come over and wish to learn more about it.

Mandy: It is my pleasure, Matthew. Let’s get a queue ticket first. In fact, the object and purpose of keeping the land records by the Land Registry is to prevent secret and fraudulent conveyances and to provide means whereby the titles to real and immovable property may be easily traced and ascertained. This helps to facilitate property transaction and support economic development. Conducting land searches will enable you to get information of registered owners and incumbrances of a property which is the essential information you need to know before the property transaction. Anyone can conduct a land search after paying the prescribed search fees.

Matthew: Well, it sounds that land searches are really important. What are the “incumbrances” that you have just mentioned?

Mandy: In general, instruments delivered for registration include sale and purchase agreements, assignments, mortgages and Deeds of Mutual Covenant, while some other properties may be registered with instruments of outstanding management fees and maintenance fees, court orders and building orders, etc. An incumbrance is generally a claim or lien on a property. Through a land search, you may learn whether a property has any subsisting mortgage, a court order pending action or other incumbrances that may involve a claim. In that case,

you may ask the vendor for the latest information about the registered incumbrances. Where necessary, you may order imaged copies of the relevant instruments for reference.

Matthew: I see. It looks a lot of property information can be obtained from a land search which is in the interest of both the purchaser and vendor. Is a land search expensive?

Mandy: There are two types of land register. A “Current” land register provides information about the current registered ownership and subsisting incumbrances. A “Historical and Current” land register provides information about the historical and current registered owners, as well as all historical and subsisting incumbrances. You may refer to our “Search and Registration Fees Schedule” for different types of search services and the corresponding search fee.

Matthew: The information is clear and the fees are reasonable.

Mandy: It is your turn now. Please pass the property address to my colleague. In general, you will get the relevant land register within 15 minutes.

Matthew: What an efficient service! Apart from potential purchasers like me, who will conduct land searches?

Mandy: Our customers also include practitioners relating to property transactions. Examples are conveyancing solicitors using our land records to check ownership, banks using our land records for mortgage business, estate agents using our statistics of registration for property market analysis, and surveyors making reference to our statistics of registration for property valuation, etc. Besides, government departments make use of our land records for law enforcement.

Matthew: The Land Registry’s search services really contribute a lot to the society of Hong Kong. In addition to the Customer Centre in Queensway, does the Land Registry have any other offices?

Mandy: We have three search offices respectively situated in Tsuen Wan, Yuen Long and Tai Po. Besides, we provide online search services through the Integrated Registration Information System Online Services. Most of the land records are available for downloading or browsing via the Internet. You may

also choose to receive the records by fax or email. As the service is fast and convenient, over 90% of the land searches are conducted through our online search services.

(Counter staff: Here is your land register.)

Matthew: Thank you. It is so great to experience the very efficient Land Registry's search services.

Mandy: You are welcome. I wish you a safe purchase of property and a happy new home.