

TPB PG-NO. 10

TOWN PLANNING BOARD GUIDELINES FOR
APPLICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT WITHIN GREEN BELT ZONE
UNDER SECTION 16 OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE

(Important Note :

The guidelines are intended for general reference only. The decision to approve or reject an application rests entirely with the Town Planning Board and will be based on individual merits and other specific considerations of each case.

Any enquiry on this pamphlet should be directed to the Planning Information and Technical Administration Unit of the Planning Department, 17th Floor, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, Hong Kong - Tel. No. 2231 5000.

These guidelines are liable to revision without prior notice. The Town Planning Board will only make reference to the guidelines current at the date on which it considers an application.)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The planning intention of the "Green Belt" ("GB") zone is primarily to promote the conservation of the natural environment and to safeguard it from encroachment by urban-type developments.
- 1.2 The "GB" zone covers mainly slopes and hillsides, most of which is naturally vegetated. Some "GB" areas are also designated as Country Parks. Most of the land within the "GB" zone is Government land, although there are also small pockets of private land, generally near built-up areas.
- 1.3 The main purposes of the "GB" zone include the following :
 - a. to conserve existing landscape features, areas of scenic value and areas of recognised "fung shui" importance;
 - b. to define the outer limits of urbanized districts and to serve as a buffer between and within urban areas; and
 - c. to provide additional outlets for passive recreational uses.
- 1.4 To preserve the character and nature of the "GB" zone, the only uses which will always be permitted by the Town Planning Board (the Board) are compatible uses which are essential and for public purpose such as waterworks, water catchment areas, nature reserves, agriculture, forestry and certain passive recreational uses. Other uses, including government/institution/community (G/IC), residential development and public utility installations will require planning permission from the Board and each proposal will be assessed on its individual merits. Applications for development will be considered by the Board according to the criteria set out below.

2. Main Planning Criteria

- a. There is a general presumption against development (other than redevelopment) in a "GB" zone. In general the Board will only be prepared to approve applications for development in the context of requests to rezone to an appropriate use.
- b. An application for new development in a "GB" zone will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and must be justified with very strong planning grounds. The scale and intensity of the proposed development including the plot ratio, site coverage and building height should be compatible with the character of surrounding areas. With the exception of New Territories Exempted Houses, a plot ratio up to 0.4 for residential development may be permitted.
- c. Applications for New Territories Exempted Houses with satisfactory sewage disposal

- facilities and access arrangements may be approved if the application sites are in close proximity to existing villages and in keeping with the surrounding uses, and where the development is to meet the demand from indigenous villagers.
- d. Redevelopment of existing residential development will generally be permitted up to the intensity of the existing development.
 - e. Applications for G/IC uses and public utility installations must demonstrate that the proposed development is essential and that no alternative sites are available. The plot ratio of the development site may exceed 0.4 so as to minimize the land to be allocated for G/IC uses.
 - f. Passive recreational uses which are compatible with the character of surrounding areas may be given sympathetic consideration.
 - g. The design and layout of any proposed development should be compatible with the surrounding area. The development should not involve extensive clearance of existing natural vegetation, affect the existing natural landscape, or cause any adverse visual impact on the surrounding environment.
 - h. The vehicular access road and parking provision proposed should be appropriate to the scale of the development and comply with relevant standards. Access and parking should not adversely affect existing trees or other natural landscape features. Tree preservation and landscaping proposals should be provided.
 - i. The proposed development should not overstrain the capacity of existing and planned infrastructure such as sewerage, roads and water supply. It should not adversely affect drainage or aggravate flooding in the area.
 - j. The proposed development must comply with the development controls and restrictions of areas designated as water gathering grounds.
 - k. The proposed development should not overstrain the overall provision of G/IC facilities in the general area.
 - l. The proposed development should not be susceptible to adverse environmental effects from pollution sources nearby such as traffic noise, unless adequate mitigating measures are provided, and it should not itself be the source of pollution.
 - m. Any proposed development on a slope or hillside should not adversely affect slope stability.

Advisory Clauses

- (a) to note the comments of the Chief Engineer/ Construction, Water Supplies Department that existing water mains are affected. The applicant is required to either divert or protect the water mains found on the Site;
- if diversion is required, existing water mains inside the Site are needed to be diverted outside the Site boundary of the proposed development to lie in Government land. A strip of land of minimum 1.5m in width should be provided for the diversion of the existing water main(s). The cost of diversion of existing water main(s) upon request will have to be borne by the applicant; and the applicant shall submit all the relevant proposal to WSD for consideration and agreement before the works commence;
 - if diversion is not required, the following conditions shall apply:
 - (i) existing water main(s) are affected and no development which requires resiting of water main(s) will be allowed;
 - (ii) details of site formation work shall be submitted to the Director of Water Supplies for approval prior to commencement of works;
 - (iii) no structures shall be built or materials stored within 1.5 metres from the centre line(s) of the existing water main(s). Free access shall be made available at all times for staff of the Director of Water Supplies or their contractor to carry out construction, inspection, operation, maintenance and repair works;
 - (iv) no trees or shrubs with penetrating roots may be planted within the Waterworks Reserve or in the vicinity of the water main(s). No change of existing site condition may be undertaken within the aforesaid area without the prior agreement of the Director of Water Supplies. Rigid root barriers may be required if the clear distance between the proposed tree and the pipe is 2.5m or less, and the barrier must extend below the invert level of the pipe;
 - (v) no planting or obstruction of any kind except turfing shall be permitted within the space of 1.5m around the cover of any valve or within a distance of 1m from any hydrant outlet; and
 - (vi) tree planting may be prohibited in the event that the Director of Water Supplies considers that there is any likelihood of damage being caused to water main(s);
- (b) to note the comments of the Head of the Geotechnical Engineering Office, Civil Engineering and Development Department that if there are changes to include manned facilities in the later design stage, a Natural Terrain Hazard Study may be required;
- (c) to note the comments of the District Lands Officer / Sai Kung, Lands Department that if planning permission is given, the applicant should apply to his office for a Government Land Allocation for the proposed sewage pumping station upon completion of the resumption of the affected lots and clearance of the affected Government Land;

- (d) to note the comments of the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services that in the interest of public safety and ensuring the continuity of electricity supply, the parties concerned with planning, designing, organizing and supervising any activity near underground cables or overhead lines under the mentioned planning application should approach the electricity supplier (i.e. CLP Power) for the requisition of cable plans (and overhead line alignment drawings, where applicable) to find out whether there is any underground cable and / or overhead line within and / or in the vicinity of the Site. They should also be reminded to observe the Electricity Supply Lines (Protection) Regulation and the “Code of Practice on Working near Electricity Supply Lines” established under the Regulation when carrying out works in the vicinity of the electricity supply lines;
- (e) to note the comments of the Commissioner for Transport that as the access road / footpath leading to the Site is not managed by the Transport Department, the applicant should seek comments / agreement of the owner or relevant management / maintenance authorities; and
- (f) to note the comments of the Chief Town Planner/Urban Design and Landscape, Planning Department that approval of the landscape proposal does not imply the approval of any kind of tree works (such as felling/transplanting/pruning) under lease/land grant. Tree works applications should be submitted direct to Lands Department for approval.