

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 District Lands Officer/Sai Kung, Lands Department (DLO/SK, LandsD) that prior written permission should be obtained from relevant departments and DLO/SK before commencement of any works on government land. No tree felling/trimming on government land is allowed unless prior written approval from relevant departments and this office is obtained; and notwithstanding the planning permission may be given, there is no guarantee that permission for the proposed utility installation (i.e. surface drainage system) on government land will be given and the extent of government land will be subject to approval;
- (b) to note the comments of the Chief Building Surveyor/New Territories East 2 & Rail, Buildings Department that all non-exempted ancillary site formation and/or communal drainage works are subject to compliance with Buildings Ordinance; and Authorised Person must be appointed for the site formation and communal drainage works;
- (c) to note the comments of Chief Engineer/Mainland South, Drainage Services Department (CE/MS,DSD) that:
  - (i) the proposed channels/drains should be connected to the existing channel/streamcourse at acute angles for better hydraulic performance;
  - (ii) all stormwater drainage facilities to be completed under the proposed development, whether within private lots or government land, shall be solely maintained by the applicant and the successive owner(s) of the proposed development at their own resources; and
  - (iii) all the proposed works in the vicinity of the streamcourse should not create any adverse drainage impacts, both during and after construction. Proposed flooding mitigation measures if necessary shall be provided at the resources of the applicant to DSD's satisfaction. The applicant should also be reminded to minimise the possible adverse environmental impacts on the existing streamcourse in his design and during construction;
- (d) to note the comments of the Director of Environmental Protection that the applicant is reminded to follow the requirements of the Practice Note for Professional Person (ProPECC) PN5/93 "Drainage Plan subject to Comment by the Environmental Protection Department" and are duly certified by an Authorised Person;
- (e) to note the comments of the Head of Geotechnical Engineering Office, Civil Engineering and Development Department that the applicant is reminded to make necessary submissions to District Lands Office and/or the Building Authority for approval if the natural slope could affect or be affected by the proposed work (if any) in accordance with the provisions of the Buildings Ordinance; and
- (f) to note the comments of the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services that in the interests of public safety and ensuring the continuity of electricity supply, the parties concerned with planning, designing, organizing and supervising any activity near the underground cable or overhead line under the mentioned applications 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 concerned 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.