



Buildings Department

Lands Department

Planning Department

Joint Practice Note No. 3

Re-engineering of Approval Process for Land and Building Developments

Introduction

The processing of a building development may involve the seeking of a planning permission, land grant or lease modification and building plan approval. The Buildings Department (BD), Lands Department (LandsD) and Planning Department (PlanD) are committed to providing a client-oriented service in helping applicants to obtain the relevant planning, land and building approvals. A task force comprising senior officials of the three departments has been formed to study measures to re-engineer and streamline approval process.

2. This practice note announces the services provided to facilitate the approval process.

Pre-submission Enquiry and Conference

3. Often the applicant may wish to settle the fundamental planning, land and building issues of a development proposal at an early stage so that they can proceed with confidence and avoid any abortive work later on. To facilitate early clearance of these fundamental issues, applicants may make use of pre-submission conferences or enquiry service available in PlanD, LandsD and BD. All departments concerned are committed to taking a proactive approach in handling such enquiries and providing timely and definite response to the enquirers. For details of these enquiry facilities, please refer to the Practice Note for Authorized Persons and Registered Structural Engineers 272, Practice Note for Professional Persons No. 2/2002 and Lands Administration Office Practice Note No. 4/2001 and 2/2002 issued by BD, PlanD and LandsD respectively.

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Inter-departmental Input

4. Where necessary, the respective departments organizing the pre-submission conference may invite other relevant departments to join in the conference for issues that require their input.

Processing of Landscape Plans

5. Landscape submissions will only be required in planning permissions or lease conditions where new landscape features are required to fulfill planning objectives/conditions. For landscape proposal submitted in support of planning applications or to satisfy landscape requirement under planning conditions or lease conditions, where the landscape areas are not required to be handed over to government after completion, PlanD and LandsD will adopt the following processing procedures:

- (a) **“Landscape master plans”** (LMP) could be prepared by a Registered Landscape Architect (RLA) registered under the Landscape Architects Registration Ordinance or any competent person. PlanD will be responsible for processing and vetting of the LMP submitted in connection with section 16 planning applications including compliance with planning conditions. LandsD will be responsible for processing and vetting of LMP under the lease in consultation with the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD). LMP submitted in support of planning application will be considered by the Town Planning Board (TPB) within 2 months under the provision of section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance. LMP submitted for compliance with planning conditions will be processed within six weeks from the date of receipt. For LMP submitted to LandsD to satisfy lease requirement only, the pledge is to process such submission within eight weeks allowing extra time to check compliance with the lease conditions and to seek ArchSD's comment.
- (b) To avoid duplication of work, upon obtaining planning approval of the LMP, separate submission to satisfy the landscape requirements under landscaping clause of the lease, if any, would no longer be necessary. However, it should not be construed that anything indicated in the approved LMP is, in all respects, in compliance with other lease conditions.

6. LMP should demonstrate the broad design of the landscape proposals and should include the information set out in Appendix A. The LMP should be submitted with the conceptual development layout superimposed and prior approval of the above is required before the commencement of site formation works for sites with tree preservation clause and commencement of superstructure works for sites without tree preservation clause. In this connection, reference should also be made to the Lands Administration Office Practice Note No. 8/2002 for Application for Tree Felling or Transplanting for Private Projects.

7. The landscape proposal should be implemented in accordance with the approved LMP. For landscape proposals associated with planning permission, changes to approved LMP falling within the scope of TPB Guidelines No. 19B for Minor Amendments to Approved Development Proposals would require approval from PlanD or TPB, as the case may be. Other minor amendments to the approved LMP not falling within the scope of TPB Guidelines No. 19B should also be submitted for record purpose and to facilitate compliance checking if deemed necessary. All proposed amendments should be highlighted to facilitate vetting as a normal practice. Upon completion and self-certification of compliance by a RLA, LandsD may consider a random check on the completed landscape works. Checking would be carried out by ArchSD under a referral from LandsD. In case the completed landscape works are not certified by a RLA, a full compliance check will be mandatory. The issue of a Certificate of Compliance under the lease may be withheld in case of non-compliance or unsatisfactory landscape works. In case of unresolved issues in connection with the lease requirements, the authorized person concerned may be invited to attend the Building Committee III to present his/her case for settlement.

8. The above procedures cover landscape proposals within private lots only. Submissions of the landscape details will be required where the landscape areas are to be handed back to Government or formed outside the lot boundaries.

Amendments to Approved Development Proposals

9. For building proposals involving amendments to schemes previously approved by the TPB, fresh planning applications may be required. In this regard, PlanD has sought further delegation of the authority from the TPB to PlanD's officers to

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approve minor amendments without the need for re-submission to the TPB. Reference should be made to the revised TPB Guidelines No. 19B.

Enquiries

10. Applicants are welcomed to contact frontline staff of concerned departments for enquiries on any case-specific issues.



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Re-engineering

A Guide for Landscape Submission for Private Development
(For Areas not Required to be Handed Over to Government after Completion)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this set of guidelines is to set out the general requirements for preparing landscape submission under the planning and land administration system. The guidelines are for general reference only and are subject to revision without prior notice.

2. Scope and Application

- 2.1 This set of guidelines is mainly applicable to private sector building development. It is not necessary to apply these guidelines for New Territories Exempted House, which is normally more simple and straight forward.
- 2.2 These guidelines are intended for areas not required to be handed over to Government after completion. To streamline the requirements, only landscape master plan is required to be submitted. Avoidance of excessive details in submission will allow design flexibility at the later stages or subsequent changes to the development scheme. Nevertheless, the landscape master plan should contain a high degree of accuracy and be capable of implementation, failing which may lead to unnecessary resubmissions of the proposal in the implementation stage.
- 2.3 For sites where landscaped areas are to be handed back to Government or sites with specific landscape requirements such as preparation of method statement for tree preservation/transplantation as required under planning conditions or lease, more detailed submissions will be required. The level of details would need to be assessed on individual case. This category of landscape submission is not covered by this set of guidelines.

3. General Requirements for Preparing Landscape Proposals

- 3.1 The general requirements for preparing landscape proposals for the above are listed below. They serve as basic information, and are not meant to be exhaustive. For good quality submission, considerations should be given to engaging the services of a Registered Landscape Architect (RLA) to address the landscape issues properly.
- 3.2 The following should be included in the submission:

3.2.1 Existing Conditions

- (a) A brief description should be made of the existing site conditions and its adjoining areas, its levels and the trees/vegetation cover it contains together with annotated photographs and viewpoint locations. It shall be supplemented by an accurate survey plan showing the locations of existing trees and other landscape features such as natural stream, if any, within the site.
- (b) A statement is required to confirm whether there is any Champion Tree¹ within the site that is likely to be affected by the proposed development.

3.2.2 Assessment of the Potential Impacts on Existing Trees (if applicable)

- (a) A tree survey should be carried out. Trees to be retained, transplanted and felled should be set out in an assessment schedule and clearly marked on plans showing the existing trees, existing buildings and structures with conceptual layout of the proposed development superimposed together with annotated photographs of the existing conditions. A sample tree preservation and felling plan is attached at **Plan 1** for general reference. However, it is not a mandatory requirement to submit the plan in colour.
- (b) It should be noted tree felling requires separate approval. Hence for sites with tree preservation clause, prior approval to tree felling application and landscape master plan are both required before commencement of site formation works. A decision may be given in one-go in case a tree felling application is submitted concurrently with the landscape submission². The location and number of trees to be transplanted and/or planted as compensation should be shown³.
- (c) A sample tree survey and assessment schedule is attached at **Annex A** for general reference.

¹ Champion Trees refer to those trees identified in the book 'Champion Trees in Urban Hong Kong' published by the then Urban Council in 1994.

² For sites without trees preservation clause, prior approval of the landscape submission is required before commencement of superstructure works.

³ Whenever possible, permission should be sought 12 months in advance so that the root system of any tree suitable for transplanting may be adequately prepared for the transplantation move.

3.2.3 The landscape master plan

- (a) A sample landscape master plan is attached as **Plan 2** for general reference. It should show all hard and soft landscape proposals in plan form with conceptual layout plans, sections and perspectives of the development to demonstrate the intention and feasibility of the landscape proposal. However, it is not a mandatory requirement to submit the landscape master plan in colour.
- (b) A description should be made to explain the concept of, and the vegetation cover and materials contained in landscape master plan. The main purpose is to demonstrate the edge treatment of the landscape master plan would be compatible and harmonious with its surroundings, and that the existing site conditions and vegetation cover have been duly considered in the design process. For proposal involving tree felling, it should be properly addressed in the submission that careful considerations have been given and demonstrated that tree felling is unavoidable.
- (c) A brief schedule on the intended choice of all hardworks elements in broad terms, the intended function, planting densities and size for all softworks elements and a statement to confirm that outdoor children play area, fitness stations and ballgame courts and ancillary works would be in full compliance with relevant safety standards and guidelines.

3.2.4 Level of Landscaped Area Provision

Clear demarcation of public and private landscape areas on plan is required. The level of provision of landscape area in terms of total planting area and covered planting area and their locations, e.g. street level and/or podium level, should be clearly illustrated/stated. Criteria on countability of open space towards satisfying the standards of provision can be found in Chapter 4 on Recreation, Open Space and Greening of Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines.

- 3.2.5 Depending on the local circumstances, information should be included in the landscape master plan for treatment of slopes and ancillary structures such as retaining structures, noise barriers, and stilt structures particularly when these are located within and close to the boundary of the site, and may create adverse landscape and visual impacts to the environment. If screen planting or other landscape measures are proposed, the type of planting and finishes of the above structures should also be included in the explanatory schedule (paragraph 3.2.3(c)) to demonstrate their

compatibility with the surrounding in terms of quality and standard. Construction details of hardworks elements, detailed planting plans (except in case of tree preservation/transplanting/compensation) and details of children play area, fitness stations and ballgame courts need not be submitted.

- 3.3 The landscape proposal should take account of relevant Government standards. These include GEO Publication No. 1/2000 on Technical Guidelines on Landscape Treatment and Bio-engineering for Man-made Slopes and Retaining Walls that provides useful information of commonly accepted landscape treatment on slopes and retaining structures. Besides, the current version of Design Manual – Barrier Free Access issued by Building Authority shall be generally followed in the provision of access to cater for disabled persons to landscape areas.
- 3.4 The landscaped area should be designed with adequate soil depth (i.e. a minimum 1.2m soil depth excluding drainage layers for tree planting) and drainage for all planted areas with the provision of adequate source of water supply. It is the responsibility of the developer to ensure that the management and maintenance of the landscaped area would be undertaken in a sustainable manner.

Annex A

TREE SURVEY

SURVEY SHEET NO.

[illegible]



圖例
LEGEND

- 擬保留的樹叢
TREE GROUP TO BE RETAINED
- 擬保留的樹木
TREE TO BE RETAINED
- 擬移植的樹木
TREE TO BE TRANSPLANTED
- 擬砍伐的樹木
TREE TO BE FELLED
- 已種草的地方
GRASSED AREA
- 新發展布局
NEW DEVELOPMENT LAYOUT
- 地盤情況照片記錄的取景位置
VIEWPOINT FOR PHOTO RECORD ON SITE CONDITIONS



註釋
NOTES:

1. 樹木測量詳細資料表可參閱所提交的園景建議
SCHEDULE OF DETAILED TREE SURVEY
INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND IN THE
LANDSCAPE SUBMISSION
2. 個別樹木和地盤情況的照片記錄可參閱所提交的
園景建議
PHOTO RECORD OF INDIVIDUAL TREE AND SITE
CONDITIONS CAN BE FOUND IN THE LANDSCAPE
SUBMISSION
3. 圖上標示的樹冠應與樹冠的實際大小成比例
TREE'S CANOPY MARKED ON PLAN SHOULD BE
PROPORTIONAL TO THE ACTUAL SIZE

0 5 10 20 米
M

有關於地段第 ____ 號擬議綜合發展的保護和砍伐樹木示意圖
TREE PRESERVATION AND FELLING PLAN
FOR PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT
AT LOT No. _____

圖則編號
PLAN No. M/TPB/2002/99

圖
PLAN 1



有關於地段第_____號擬議綜合發展的園景建議
LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL FOR PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT
AT LOT No. _____

園景區面積: (作動態用途) 平方米
LANDSCAPED AREA: (FOR ACTIVE USE) m²
園景區面積: (作靜態用途) 平方米
LANDSCAPED AREA: (FOR PASSIVE USE) m²
新種植區總面積: 平方米
TOTAL NEW PLANTING AREA: m²
有蓋新種植區面積: 平方米
COVERED NEW PLANTING AREA: m²