

**Bridges over Streets and Lanes  
Buildings Ordinance section 31(1)**

There are occasions when bridges may have to be constructed over streets/lanes. A bridge may link buildings which have integrated functions and/or associated interests, or may be required by the Director of Lands under the terms of the lease.

2. Where a bridge or associated highway structure is to be constructed **wholly or partly within a private lot or gains support from or is connected to a building resting on a private lot**, exemption under Buildings Ordinance section 31(1) to permit the bridge to project over streets or lanes may be given provided that :

- (a) the Building Authority (BA) is satisfied that the bridge is required for one or more of the following purposes:
  - (i) is required under the lease or approval condition of a planning permission; or consistent with the Outline Zoning Plan(s) (OZP), Outline Development Plan(s) or Layout Plan(s);
  - (ii) is functionally necessary to facilitate the efficient planning of the developments on both sides of the streets or lanes serving as occupants' movement between the buildings so as to relieve heavy pedestrian traffic at street/lane level and the proposal is acceptable to the Lands Department, the Planning Department, the Transport Department and the Highways Department;
  - (iii) is having an identified public benefit e.g. segregation of pedestrian and road traffic to relieve heavy pedestrian flow at street/lane level and facilitate commuters' access to public transport facilities, public buildings or public footbridge network, and the proposal is acceptable to the Lands Department, the Planning Department, the Transport Department and the Highways Department; or
  - (iv) is having other justified special circumstances.
- (b) the bridge is for pedestrian circulation or vehicular links only. Commercial activities generally are not allowed unless with planning permission and specific justified public benefit acceptable to relevant government departments, and are accountable for GFA calculation under OZP;

/(c) .....

- (c) the width and number of storeys of the bridge require full justification commensurate with the anticipated pedestrian flow. Impact assessment studies on visual and air ventilation may be required for bridges more than 1 storey and/or clear width more than 6m; and
- (d) the design with respect to aesthetic of the bridge and any associated highway structures which is over, under, on or immediately next to public roads in the Territory, is acceptable to the Advisory Committee on the Appearance of Bridges and Associated Structures (ACABAS).

3. For the purpose of paragraph 2(d) above, the authorized person (AP) should submit ten sets of the design proposal which comprise the relevant materials as stipulated in the latest version of Environment, Transport and Works Bureau Technical Circular (Works) (ETWB TC (W)) No. 36/2004 on “The Advisory Committee on the Appearance of Bridges and Associated Structures (ACABAS)” to the secretary of the ACABAS directly. The submission should be condensed in no larger than A3 size format in a simple stapled package, together with a CD-ROM or DVD-ROM containing the soft copy of the documents in the submission in PDF/JPG format for record purpose. Information to be submitted should be concisely selected with a view to enabling the ACABAS to understand the design and should include the following information:

- (a) drawings showing the general arrangement of the bridge;
- (b) the elevations of all parts to be exposed to view together with either a perspective or axonometric view and sufficient information to illustrate the form, texture and colour treatment of the proposed bridge and associated structure;
- (c) comprehensive photographs of the site (to be affixed to the plans); and
- (d) in the case of footbridges, details of anticipated pedestrian flows (to be indicated on the plans) to justify the proposed width, design and location.

4. To facilitate comprehensive consideration of the design proposals submitted to it, the ACABAS may require the attendance of the authorized persons and registered structural engineers at its meeting. The terms of reference of the ACABAS are at Appendix A. If the ACABAS does not find a design acceptable, the BA may not allow the exemption under section 31(1) of the Buildings Ordinance.

5. Where a bridge or associated highway structure of a free-standing type is to be constructed **entirely on government land or over a public highway**, ie wholly outside a private lot, the structure is exempted from the provisions of the Buildings Ordinance. The Director of Highways is the competent authority for such structures and plans should therefore be submitted to the Highways Department directly.

6. Maintenance responsibility of various elements of the bridges/structures should be resolved with the Highways Department before construction.

7. This practice note should be read in conjunction with the latest version of ETWB TC (W) No. 36/2004 on “The Advisory Committee on the Appearance of Bridges and Associated Structures (ACABAS)” and ETWB TC (W) No. 10/2005 on “Planting on Footbridges and Flyovers” together with PNAP APP-34 (previously known as PNAP 92) on the subject of "Structural Design of Bridges and Associated Highway Structures".

(AU Choi-kai )  
Building Authority

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**Terms of Reference of  
Advisory Committee on the Appearance of Bridges  
and Associated Structures (ACABAS)**

The terms of reference of ACABAS are :

- (a) to enquire into the visual merits, general amenity value and related environmental factors of all proposals for bridges and associated structures over, under, on or adjacent to public roads in the Territory;
- (b) to advise the Director of Highways on standards to be applied and procedures to be adopted to encourage an appropriately high level of aesthetic quality in the design of bridges and associated structures and to promulgate general guidance on such matters;
- (c) to receive and scrutinize individual proposals at the preliminary design stage, to advise designers of their acceptability or otherwise and to make recommendations as deemed necessary; and
- (d) to refer proposals to the Director of Highways where, after consideration by ACABAS, disagreement is found to be irreconcilable either -
  - (i) in principle, because for instance a design is likely to result in disproportionate damage to sensitive historic, scenic, ecological or other environmental features; or
  - (ii) in detail, because for instance the proposed layout, style or surface finishes are considered to be inappropriate,

provided that, should the Director of Highways feel unable to arbitrate, or should the Department or other body responsible for the proposals so request, such disagreement may be referred to Policy Branch for a decision.