

Development in Mid-levels Scheduled Area
Buildings Ordinance section 2(1)
Building (Administration) Regulation 8(1)(bb)(vii) and 8(1)(l)

Building works in the Mid-levels Scheduled Area (specified as Area Number 1 of the Scheduled Areas in the Fifth Schedule of the Buildings Ordinance, hereafter called the Scheduled Area in this practice note) are subject to additional geotechnical controls under the Buildings Ordinance and Regulations and they are described as follows.

Ground Investigation

2. Under Buildings Ordinance section 2(1), ground investigation in the Scheduled Area is within the definition of building works. Ground investigation plans including laboratory testing as prescribed in Building (Administration) Regulation 8(1)(l) must be submitted for approval and consent under the Buildings Ordinance.

3. Ground Investigations should conform to standards laid down in GEOGUIDE 2 - Guide to Site Investigation, and GEOGUIDE 3 - Guide to Rock and Soil Descriptions. These documents are published by the Geotechnical Control Office (GCO) and are available for sale at the Government Publications Centre. As a general rule, a requirement will be made under Buildings Ordinance section 17(1)(6)(e) that ground investigation is adequately supervised on site by a suitably experienced engineer or engineering geologist, and the cores recovered are carefully examined and properly logged. Reference should also be made to PNAP:132 - Site Investigation.

Demolition

4. Demolition plans as prescribed in Building (Administration) Regulation 8(1)(baa) must be submitted for approval and consent.

Bulk excavation

5. Bulk excavation at any site in the Scheduled Area shall not be carried out below levels to be determined by the Building Authority as required in Building (Construction) Regulation 27B. This control measure is necessary to minimize cumulative adverse effects of bulk excavation on the stability of hillside generally.

6. To assist the early planning of a building scheme, authorized persons and registered structural engineers are strongly advised to request a provisional determination of bulk excavation level constraints as soon as they are commissioned for any building works in the Scheduled Area. The Buildings Ordinance Office (BOO) will normally be able to issue a tentative plan showing the approximate bulk excavation limits within 10 working days of receipt of a request by GCO. The final determination of bulk excavation limits will generally be issued by BOO within one month from the date of receipt by GCO of the following documents:

- (a) Ground investigation report; and
- (b) Topographic survey plan and cross-sections in terms of Building (Administration) Regulation 8(1)(b)(ii) and 8(1)(c). The specifications for the survey will be provided by GCO on request.

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7. The envelope of all bulk excavation must be shown on the site formation plans in accordance with Building (Administration) Regulation 8(1)(bb)(vii).

Foundations

8. Building (Administration) Regulation 11A requires that for sites in the Scheduled Area, the foundation plan is to be submitted with the site formation plan. This is to enable the Building Authority to give due consideration to effects on the stability of the hillside resulting from factors such as changes in groundwater levels or surcharge loading which can be caused by the foundation system itself. Submissions not in compliance with this requirement will be liable to be refused under Buildings Ordinance sections 16(1)(a), (e) or (i).

Performance Review

9. The requirement for a performance review as defined in Buildings Ordinance section 2(1) may be imposed as a condition on giving of approval or consent to the commencement of building works in the Scheduled Area, but it is not intended to impose the requirement for every development/redevelopment site within the Scheduled Area. Where a performance review is required, the review should demonstrate that the building works have been adequately inspected and monitored in the course of construction, and that the geotechnical design assumptions upon which the building works have been based are valid, otherwise an application for an occupation permit or a temporary occupation permit may be refused under Buildings Ordinance section 21(6)(f).

Other Geotechnical Controls

10. Apart from the foregoing, authorized persons and registered structural engineers should note that there are also additional geotechnical controls which may also be applied on sites in the Scheduled Area covering landslip debris resistance, Buildings Ordinance section 16(1)(q), sequence of works, Buildings Ordinance section 17(1)(6)(f), and groundwater drainage works, Buildings Ordinance section 28A to D.

Extra Set of Plans to be Submitted

11. In order to facilitate processing of building development proposals in the Scheduled Area, one extra set of the following plans should be submitted:

- (a) general building plans;
- (b) site formation plans together with relevant reports and calculations;
- (c) foundation plans including pilecap details, relevant reports and calculations; and
- (d) shoring plans.

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Geotechnical Information

12. The Mid-levels Consultants' Study was summarized in a report titled 'Mid-levels Study: Report on Geology, Hydrology and Soil Properties (1982)'. The report is available for sale at the Government Publications Centre.

13. In addition, all factual data on geology, hydrology and soil properties collected in the course of the Mid-levels Study between 1979 and 1981 are available from the Geotechnical Information Unit as per PNAP:104. These data may provide useful assistance in the geotechnical appraisal of the site.

Boundary of Scheduled Area

14. The attention of authorized persons and registered structural engineers is drawn to the Fifth Schedule regarding the exact extent of Scheduled Area No. 1 in the Mid-levels area to which this practice note applies. A plan illustrating the boundary of the Scheduled Area is on display in BOO and in the Geotechnical Information Unit of the Civil Engineering Library.



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