

**TOWN PLANNING BOARD GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION FOR
UNDERGROUND DEVELOPMENT OF
COMMERCIAL / CAR PARKING FACILITIES BENEATH OPEN SPACE,
GOVERNMENT / INSTITUTION / COMMUNITY ZONES AND ROAD 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. Scope and Application

- 1.1 The introduction of underground development is to encourage a more efficient utilisation of land within the urban area where high concentration of activities occurs. Such development should be encouraged in areas where the public would experience significant planning gains, such as improvements to traffic and/or pedestrian circulation. Underground development should be located in areas where reasonable integration with neighbouring land and buildings could be achieved in terms of character and uses. Moreover, the development should demonstrate an enhancement to the quality of the surrounding areas. Underground development at suitable sites in major urban districts comprising Central, Wanchai, Causeway Bay, Tsim Sha Tsui, Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok may be given sympathetic consideration.
- 1.2 The guidelines in this document refer to the consideration of underground development proposals for commercial (excluding hotel, general office and service apartment) and car parking facilities extending beyond private lot boundaries into areas beneath public roads, open space or government/institution/community (G/IC) zones.

2. Main Planning Criteria

- a. The scale and extent of the proposed underground development should be compatible with both the characteristics of the surrounding sites and the broad land use intention of the area from a wider planning viewpoint.

- b. The proposed development should not exceed 6 levels below ground. A higher intensity of development must be justified by special studies on engineering feasibility, viability, security and fire safety considerations. Such applications will be considered on their individual merits.
 - c. The proposed development should not impose any adverse planning and development constraints on other surface and sub-surface land uses. The necessary railway protection measures and utility corridors should be respected.
 - d. Staircases, vehicular access points, ventilation shafts, glazed roofs, and ancillary structures associated with the proposed development that emerge above ground should be sensitively integrated with the existing and planned land uses. Also, the development should provide improvements to pedestrian circulation with the provision of sub-surface connections to neighbouring uses for example, mass transit railway, hotels, shopping areas and car parks.
 - e. The proposed development should demonstrate that there is sufficient consumer demand for the proposed commercial/car parking facility, taking due consideration of both the existing and planned developments in the area.
 - f. The proposed development should not have any adverse impact upon the business activities of neighbouring developments.
 - g. The proposed development should not have any adverse effect upon the local and strategic road network in terms of capacity, safety and circulation. Car parking and loading/unloading facilities should be sufficiently provided according to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines and to the satisfaction of the Transport Department.
 - h. The proposed development schemes should not have an adverse effect upon the surrounding environment either during construction or after completion.
 - i. The proposed development should also satisfy fire protection, emergency evacuation and other hazard control requirements administered by the relevant authorities.
3. To facilitate the Town Planning Board's consideration of the application, the applicant should submit the following supporting information :
- a. the proposed development should be illustrated by a Layout Plan together with necessary documentation and design consideration with due consideration to the suggested scheme design guidelines. The requirements of the Layout Plan and the suggested scheme design guidelines are outlined in Annexes 1 and 2;

- b. for developments proposed beneath open space, a Master Landscape Plan will be required to illustrate how the two would integrate with each other. The requirements for the Master Landscape Plan are outlined in Annex 3;
- c. a traffic impact study will be required to demonstrate that there is no adverse impact on the transportation network. The study should provide improvement measures including temporary traffic management measures that will be required during the construction stage of the scheme to the satisfaction of the Transport Department;
- d. an “Environmental Impact Statement” and an “Environmental Management Plan” (Annex 4) are required to identify the likely impacts and mitigation measures for the development; and
- e. an “Engineering Method Statement” (Annex 5) is required to demonstrate the engineering and geological feasibility of the proposed development.

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ANNEX 1

Layout Plan (LP)

A Layout Plan together with supporting documents will be required to support the application. The LP shall comprise :

- a. plans illustrating the layout of each proposed level of development indicating the location of proposed uses, including Government/Institution/Community (G/IC) uses, alignment and widths of internal roads, parking/servicing areas, plant and machinery and all ingress/egress points for both pedestrians and vehicles;
- b. plans illustrating the relationship between underground spaces and surface land uses; for example, openings to the surface and points of access for pedestrians/vehicles;
- c. a pedestrian circulation plan. Where the developments provide pedestrian walkways connecting to commercial areas at street level, the proposed development scheme should seek to pay attention to ensure that the ground level pedestrian realm is kept active, comfortable and diverse;
- d. a development schedule, outlining the space allocated for each use will include :
 - i. site formation and levels of development (in metres above or below PD);
 - ii. site area (in square metres);
 - iii. site volume (in cubic metres);
 - iv. commercial accommodation by use (i.e. maximum GFA in square metres);
 - v. G/IC and open space facilities (i.e. the types of facilities proposed with the minimum GFA for each facility);
 - vi. provision of car parking spaces;
 - vii. provision of loading/unloading spaces;
- e. a development programme showing the proposed phasing of development, the relative timing of the various phases and the provision of facilities in each phase;
- f. an explanatory note addressing the following aspects :
 - i. the character of the proposed development in relation to the surrounding area;
 - ii. the integration of the proposed development with neighbouring land and buildings;

- iii. the enhancement of the proposed development to the quality of the surrounding area;
and
- g. supplementary information including cross-section and elevation drawings of the proposed development, photographs and models would assist the Town Planning Board in the consideration of the application.

ANNEX 2

Scheme Design

The following guidelines should be considered in underground development design :

- a. comprehensive pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems with clear directional signage should be carefully designed to provide convenience, comfort, orientation and safety;
- b. attractive entrances, quality finishes and features such as galleria and atria should be encouraged to provide interest, public identity and visual integration in underground development;
- c. elements such as vent shafts and staircases protruding into the surface should be carefully designed to ameliorate intrusions and help integrate with the uses on ground level;
- d. natural/artificial lighting and ventilation should be adequate and well designed; and
- e. appropriate management, maintenance, security and surveillance measures should be incorporated into the scheme design.

ANNEX 3

Underground development situated immediately beneath areas used as public pleasure grounds/open space, will require a Master Landscape Plan to illustrate how the open space would be integrated with the proposed development. The Master Landscape Plan should illustrate :

- a. survey of existing trees;
- b. inventory of existing facilities (e.g. sitting out areas, paved areas etc.);
- c. landscaped areas to be lost during construction, and retained;
- d. areas to be developed as open space upon the completion of the scheme;
- e. illustration of the “before” and “after” situation, with a clear statement on the changes which

have been introduced;

- f. pedestrian circulation through open space;
- g. service vehicle access to open space;
- h. deck loading factors to support landscape works;
- i. and new schedule of accommodation (list of facilities).

ANNEX 4

Environmental Consideration

An “Environmental Impact Statement” and “Environmental Management Plan” will be required to identify the likely impacts, mitigation measures and management procedures for the proposed development. The following points will be assessed :

Impact During Construction

- a. An assessment of the location of above ground structures associated with the scheme in relation to existing surface land uses and also, air quality, dust emissions, noise, pedestrian severance, potential loss of amenity and possible traffic generated by both private and construction vehicles;
- b. an assessment of both the mitigation measures outlined in the document and the measures the applicant proposes to undertake to reduce adverse environmental impacts during the construction process;

Impact During Operation

- c. an assessment of the emissions of noise and dust from ventilation shafts and plant penetrating the surface lot above the scheme. The implications of such emissions upon the environment will be a key consideration; and
- d. to assess the scheme against the environment requirements of air / noise quality identified by the Environmental Protection Department, to ensure appropriate mitigation measures are taken to meet these requirements.

ANNEX 5

Engineering Method Statement

An engineering method statement is required to demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed development in engineering and geological terms. It includes :

- a. the proposed method of excavation (for example, the open-cut method or tunnel excavation) and a plan showing the extend of areas to be excavated;
- b. work areas required for plant and equipment and storage of construction materials; and
- c. a proposed programme of works to outline the stages of development and to indicate possible disruption and also the proposed mitigation measures.