

Drainage Services Department
Technical Circular No. 3/2015

Vetting Committee on
Aesthetic Design of Drainage Services Buildings

Introduction

Drainage Services Department (DSD) is committed to delivering world-class quality drainage and sewerage facilities to the public. Apart from good functional performance, we also need to make our drainage services buildings aesthetically pleasing. Designers of new drainage services buildings or retrofitting works are required to integrate sustainability consideration into their design so as to achieve a balance in terms of environmental, economical, functional and social performance.

2. The setting up of Vetting Committee on Aesthetic Design of Pumping Station Buildings (VCAB) to vet the design of pumping station buildings and the drawing up of the relevant Guidelines for submissions in 2006 have brought substantial improvements to the aesthetic design of DSD's pumping stations.

Scope and Effects on Existing Circulars

3. This Circular replaces and updates the DSD Technical Circular No. 9/2006. It expands the scope of VCAB to vet all above ground drainage services buildings and the associated landscape areas with incorporation of the requirements of Integrated Landscape Design Framework (ILDF) introduced by DEVB in March 2014, together with a checklist to facilitate preparation of

submission with consistent standard.

4. For the purpose of this Circular, drainage services buildings include all above-ground pumping station buildings, administration buildings, workshops, pump houses, plant rooms, stores and ancillary buildings as well as other above-ground installations such as boundary fences, walls, pipes and ductworks on buildings, etc. that are visible in sewage treatment facilities and flood protection schemes, and other above-ground installations that are visible to the public.

5. Project proponents are required to submit aesthetic design proposal (including architectural and landscaping aspects) of drainage services buildings to VCAB for vetting before circulation to external departments or parties including the Design Advisory Panel of Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) where necessary.

6. This requirement applies to in-house and consultant-managed projects of DSD including renovation and retrofitting works which would significantly alter the disposition or external appearance of existing buildings.

7. For drainage services buildings designed and built by others and handed over to DSD for operation and maintenance, the respective Sewage Treatment Division, Electrical and Mechanical Projects Division, or Building/Civil Maintenance Team of Hong Kong and Islands Division shall, in addition to commenting on operation and maintenance requirements, remind the project proponent to submit the aesthetic design proposal to VCAB for vetting in accordance with this Circular.

Effective Date

8. This Circular applies to the contracts tendered or works orders issued after 1 July 2015.

Terms of Reference

9. VCAB is accountable to the Director of Drainage Services (D of DS). Its Terms of Reference are:

- (i) to advise D of DS on the aesthetic design of DSD drainage services buildings which may have visual impacts to the surrounding environment;
- (ii) to scrutinize design proposals for drainage services buildings from the aesthetic, visual and greening points of views and recommend design changes in order to minimize the visual impacts and enhance the appearance or greening of new drainage services buildings in future projects and retrofitting works; and
- (iii) to ensure that the drainage services buildings are constructed in accordance with the approved aesthetic and landscape designs as provided in the submissions.

Membership

10. The Membership of VCAB are:

- Chairman : Assistant Director/Projects & Development
- Members : Chief Engineer/Drainage Projects*
Chief Engineer/Harbour Area Treatment Scheme*
Chief Engineer/Electrical and Mechanical Projects*

Chief Engineer/Mainland North*

Senior Engineer/Buildings Civil Maintenance,

Hong Kong and Islands

Secretary : Landscape Architect of DSD Headquarters

(* or their SE representative)

If necessary, the Chairman may co-opt other members to serve VCAB on a temporary or permanent basis.

Submission to VCAB

11. For DSD projects including those designed by consultants, the Division Head of the project office shall satisfy himself the quality of the aesthetic design before submission to VCAB. Likewise proposals from other government departments or organizations shall be vetted by the respective Division Head before submission.

12. VCAB meets on an ad-hoc basis. The proposal shall be submitted in one hard copy together with soft copy to the Secretary of VCAB for record and circulation. VCAB will meet within one month upon receipt of a submission. Subject to the discretion of the Chairman, late submission with justifications may be added to the agenda of the meeting provided that the proposal is received by the Secretary of VCAB not less than two weeks before the meeting.

13. Project proponents and designers shall attend VCAB meetings to give presentations on the design proposals and respond to members' enquiries/comments. Presentation materials shall be sent to the Secretary of VCAB in advance for meeting arrangement.

14. Guidelines for submissions to VCAB are given in **Appendix**.

VCAB Recommendations

15. Each submission will be considered by VCAB at meetings. VCAB, on behalf of D of DS, will either reject or accept the submission with or without any recommendations on design changes. Where necessary, VCAB will ask for clarification, revision and re-submission of the design proposal. Details of the discussion and conclusions made at VCAB meetings will be recorded in the meeting minutes. Extracts of relevant VCAB meeting minutes will be sent to the project proponent for reference or follow-up.

16. The project proponent shall submit a response to VCAB's conclusions or ask for a review if necessary. Any irreconcilable disagreement arising from the recommendations and conclusions of VCAB shall be referred by either the project proponent or VCAB to D of DS for final decision.

Need for Re-submission

17. For design proposals that were previously accepted by VCAB, a re-submission will be required if:

- (i) the disposition of the drainage services building has changed significantly after the design proposal was accepted; or
- (ii) there has been design revision to such extent that the external appearance of the building/landscape area is affected such as addition of utility pipe works/vents on external façade or green roofs and significant reduction of planting areas, etc.

The project proponent should initiate and take a proactive role to submit a revised design proposal to VCAB before finalizing the design. In case of doubt, the Secretary should be consulted.

Engagement of Relevant Professionals in Designing DSD Facilities

18. For large-scale DSD projects, the project proponent should specify in the Consultancy Brief that a Registered Architect (RA) and a Registered Landscape Architect (RLA) shall be engaged to prepare the aesthetic design proposal for VCAB submission. The relevant professionals shall be involved from the design stage to construction and site supervision stage. For the RLA, the service scope should extend to the completion of the establishment period of the greening works.

19. The requirements in paragraph 18 above shall also be included in Design and Build contracts and similar contractual arrangements. The above requirements may be waived by an officer of D2 rank or above, if he/she on review considers it inappropriate.

20. As-built records/photographs of drainage services buildings shall be submitted to the Secretary of VCAB for record purpose.

21. Any enquiry regarding this Circular shall be directed to the Secretary of VCAB.



(K W MAK)

Director of Drainage Services (Acting)

**Vetting Committee on
Aesthetic Design of Drainage Services Buildings**

Guidelines for Submissions

1. This guideline provides general information on the submission of design proposals for vetting by the Vetting Committee on Aesthetic Design of Drainage Services Buildings (VCAB). If in doubt, the Secretary of VCAB should be consulted.

Timing

- a) Stage 1: Upon completion of conceptual design and before circulation to other departments and parties, including the Design Advisory Panel of ArchSD;
- b) Stage 2: Upon completion of detailed design and before construction works commence; and
- c) Stage 3: Submission before handover.

Information to be submitted

2. Information for VCAB should be concise. The purpose is to enable VCAB to understand the concept of the aesthetic design, identify any visual impacts to the surroundings and any measures for enhancing the appearance of the building. Designers should also refer to the Guidelines on Aesthetic Design of Pumping Station Buildings, Checklist for VCAB submission, relevant international and local good practices¹.

¹ The Guidelines on Aesthetic Design of Pumping Station Buildings can be downloaded from DSD Homepage (<http://www.dsd.gov.hk>) under Technical Manuals/DSD Guidelines. Other supplementary information for VCAB submission (i.e. including the Checklist for VCAB submission, Reference List of relevant international and local good practices, Landscape Information Sheet and Proposed Maintenance Schedule of Landscape Works) can be downloaded from DSD Homepage (<http://www.dsd.gov.hk>) under Greening/VCAB Submission.

Stage 1 – Upon completion of conceptual design

3. Submission for Stage 1 shall include:

- (a) A set of drawings in A3 size with plans, elevations, sections and details to:
 - (i) outline the general arrangement of the building;
 - (ii) illustrate the scale and proportion of exterior elements, proposed structural form, façade, landscape features, colour scheme, choice of materials of the building; and
 - (iii) show the landscape treatment and greening proposals and typical planting sections with dimensions.
- (b) A report which includes:
 - (i) background, scope and design requirements of the project;
 - (ii) site analysis (i.e. with photographs showing the whole site area and its surroundings, visual aspects of adjoining structures and vegetation to illustrate site constraints and opportunities);
 - (iii) design solutions;
 - (iv) visual aid or photomontage of completed works;
 - (v) samples of colour scheme and materials; and
 - (vi) Checklist for VCAB submissions ¹ (i.e. only the relevant sections of the Checklist, not the full list).

4. For large-scale projects and sites which are located in visually sensitive areas, the project proponent is recommended to prepare more than one option for consideration by VCAB.

Stage 2 - Upon completion of detailed design and before construction works commence

5. A submission for Stage 2 shall include updated photomontages of completed works with supplementary information, such as:
- (i) a table listing out changes in the approved design;
 - (ii) relevant plans/details illustrating changes (external servicing, lighting and maintenance access) to demonstrate their compatibility with the overall design of the project;
 - (iii) landscape and irrigation proposals including typical planting sections with dimensions;
 - (iv) bio-diversity index (i.e. the number of native species and wildlife attracting species/total number of plants) if applicable;
 - (v) landscape information sheet and proposed maintenance schedule of landscape works ¹; and
 - (vi) Checklist for VCAB submissions ¹ (i.e. only the relevant sections of the Checklist, not the full list).

Stage 3 - Submission before handover of completed works

6. The project office shall submit the following to VCAB before handover of the completed works to the maintenance party:
- i) general layout plan and photomontage of the design approved by VCAB (with dates of meeting or meeting number for previous submission); and
 - ii) photos of completed works taken from the same view point as in item i) above for comparison purpose.
7. Design presentation should be made for Stage 1 submission at VCAB meeting. Presentation may be required for Stage 2 and Stage 3 submissions if the changes are substantial that require explanations.

Re-submission/Follow-up submission

8. Significant change in the disposition and aesthetic design of building/above-ground installations and landscape design during construction requires prior re-submissions to VCAB. For example,

changes are proposed in façade details, wall finishes or colour schemes, and additional exterior openings, ducts or vents at façade or green roofs and significant reduction of landscape areas, etc.

9. Re-submission or follow-up submission should quote the meeting at which the previous submission was scrutinized. A summary of action taken after previous submission and a table of response to comments should be provided. Revised details should be highlighted to illustrate amendments made to the previous submission.

10. Upon request of VCAB, the project proponent and designer may be required to present the revised design to VCAB.

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