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環境運輸及工務局
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Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
Technical Circular (Works) No. 36/2004

The Advisory Committee on the Appearance of
Bridges and Associated Structures (ACABAS)

Scope

This Circular updates the membership of the Advisory Committee on the Appearance of Bridges and Associated Structures (ACABAS). Revised guidelines for ACABAS submissions are also included to promote better understanding of the submission requirements.

Background

2. ACABAS was set up in 1984 to advise on the visual merit, general amenity value and related environmental considerations of all proposals to construct bridges and associated structures over, under, on or adjacent to public roads.

3. The purpose of ACABAS is to promote the awareness of project proponents and designers of the final appearance of bridge and associated structures, which should be regarded as an important criterion for design, and to stimulate innovative and creative designs in the aesthetic appearance of bridges and associated structures, including railway bridges.

Effective Date

4. This Circular takes immediate effect.

Effect on Existing Circular

5. This Circular supersedes ETWB TC (Works) No. 17/2003.

Terms of Reference of ACABAS

6. The primary activity of ACABAS is the vetting of the design of bridges and other structures associated with the public highway system from the aesthetic, visual and greening points of view. Acceptance of the design proposal with regard to other highway aspects, e.g. maintenance requirements, should be obtained from relevant offices/divisions of the Highways Department (HyD).

7. ACABAS is accountable to the Director of Highways (DH_y). Its terms of reference are:

- a) to advise the DH_y on standards to be applied and procedures to be adopted to achieve high aesthetic quality of design for bridges and associated structures, and to promulgate general guidance on such matters;
- b) to scrutinise individual design proposals for bridges and associated structures from the aesthetic, visual and greening points of view and to accept proposals or recommend design revisions on behalf of the DH_y; and
- c) to refer design proposals to the DH_y on which 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.

8. The advice of ACABAS shall be sought on any bridges or structures associated with the public highway system. However, ACABAS will not comment on structures already built or designs that cannot be changed due to various reasons or constraints.

Membership

9. The regular membership of ACABAS consists of:

- a) Chairman : A Regional Highway Engineer, HyD
- b) Members : One representative each from
 - (1) Architectural Services Department;
 - (2) Civil Engineering and Development Department;
 - (3) Bridges and Structures Division, HyD;
 - (4) Planning Department;
 - (5) Housing Department;
 - (6) Hong Kong Institute of Architects;
 - (7) Hong Kong Institution of Engineers; and
 - (8) An academic institution (to be invited by the Chairman).
- c) Secretary : A Senior Landscape Architect, HyD

The representative from government departments for b) (1) to b) (5) above should be at least a senior professional. If necessary, the Chairman may co-opt other members to serve ACABAS on a temporary or permanent basis.

Submission to ACABAS

10. The DHy is responsible for the public highway system. All works departments which need to provide bridges and other structures associated with the public highway system have to obtain the acceptance of the DHy by submitting their design proposals to ACABAS before implementation.

11. If private and quasi-government bodies need to construct bridges and other structures associated with the public highway system, the granting of approval to such constructions will be conditional on obtaining the acceptance of the DHy by submitting the design proposals to ACABAS before implementation.

12. ACABAS meets monthly and normally on the third Tuesday of each month. Should the date fall on a public holiday, the meeting would be re-scheduled to the first working day after the public holiday.

13. Guidelines for submissions to ACABAS are given in **Appendix A**. Submissions should reach the Secretary of ACABAS at least two weeks before the meeting for inclusion in the agenda. Ten sets of the submission are required.

14. The project proponent and the designer should attend ACABAS meetings to give a presentation on the design proposal and respond to members' enquiries.

ACABAS Recommendations

15. Each submission will be considered by ACABAS at the monthly meetings. ACABAS, on behalf of the DHy, will either reject or accept the submission with or without any recommendations on design changes. Where necessary, ACABAS may ask for a revised design to be submitted. Details of the discussion and conclusions made at the ACABAS meeting will be recorded in the meeting minutes. The designer or the project proponent may have to provide additional clarification of any points of details after ACABAS's deliberation.

16. If a preliminary design concept is considered to be broadly acceptable, this will be recorded in the meeting minutes to allow proceeding with the final design or working drawings which will have to be submitted to ACABAS for vetting and acceptance before construction.

17. ACABAS may recommend the provision of hard or soft landscape elements in conjunction with the structure. It may recommend changes to the location of ramps/stairways, structural form, alignment, finishes and any other features that may impact on the appearance of the structure.

18. It remains the responsibility of the project proponent and the designer to ensure that the recommendations of ACABAS are implemented. Any disagreement with the ACABAS recommendations or conclusions should be brought up to the relevant authorities pursuant to paragraph 21 of this Circular.

Need for Re-submissions

19. For design proposals that was previously accepted by ACABAS, a re-submission will be required if:

- a) the environmental context has changed significantly after the design proposal was accepted; or
- b) there has been a change in the design to the extent that the appearance of the structure is affected.

The project proponent should initiate and take a proactive role to submit a revised design proposal to ACABAS. In case of doubt, the Secretary of ACABAS should be approached for advice.

20. As-built records/photographs of design proposals shall be submitted to ACABAS for record purpose.

Disagreement with ACABAS Recommendations/Conclusions

21. Relevant part of the ACABAS meeting minutes will be sent to the project proponent who submitted the design proposal. The project proponent may submit a response to the ACABAS's conclusion and ask for a review. Any irreconcilable disagreement arising from the conclusions of ACABAS shall be referred initially by either party to the DHy. If the project proponent disagrees with the DHy's decision, it may refer the disagreement to the Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works for a final ruling.

(C S Wai)

**Deputy Secretary for the Environment,
Transport and Works (Works) 2**

Guidelines for Submissions to ACABAS

1. Timing

To avoid abortive work, submissions to ACABAS should be made upon completion of conceptual design and before the commencement of detail design. Submissions to ACABAS should be made after thorough analysis of constraints, design criteria and possible options. In the case of large-scale projects, submissions may be made in phases provided that the designer is able to first present a master plan of the theme for the whole project, which will then be maintained in subsequent submissions.

2. Attendance

For speedy processing of the submission, the project proponent and the designer should attend ACABAS meetings.

3. Information to be submitted

Information for ACABAS should be concise. The purpose is to enable ACABAS to understand the design concept and how it suits the site conditions and constraints. A submission should normally include the following:

- (a) A set of drawings in A3 size with plans, elevations, sections and details to outline the general arrangement of the proposed structure, to present parts that will be exposed to view, to illustrate the proposed form and texture, and to explain the landscape treatment and greening proposals. Details for drainage and illumination should be included to demonstrate their compatibility with the overall design of the structure. Where a colour scheme is proposed, true colour samples and a coloured set of drawings should be submitted and presented at the meeting.
- (b) A set of photographs with a comprehensive coverage of the site and its surroundings and adjoining structures to illustrate their relationship. Photomontages should be used where appropriate to demonstrate the relationship between existing and proposed features.
- (c) For more complicated structures, perspectives and/or axonometric views should be submitted or a model should be presented at the meeting.
- (d) Samples of proposed finishing materials, where available, should be presented at the meeting to illustrate true colours and texture.

- (e) For footbridges and subways, the anticipated pedestrian flows should be provided to justify the layout and dimensions.
- (f) In case the submission is an alternative design proposal, the project proponent should vet the alternative design first and attach a statement of satisfaction to the submission.

4. Phased submissions for large scale projects

Where a phased submission strategy is adopted for a large scale project comprising several separate structures, the first submission should include the overall design theme by means of a master plan. Each subsequent submission should show its relationship to the previously submitted structures and reference should be made to the design theme of the project.

5. Re-submission/Follow-up submission

Re-submission or follow-up submission should quote the date or meeting number at which the previous submission was assessed. 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. In case there is change of appearance, revised photomontage(s) demonstrating the relationship between existing and proposed features should be submitted.