

PREFACE

1. This Design Manual is an updated version of the “Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 1997”.
2. The Design Manual : Barrier Free Access 1997 sets out the design requirements of providing proper access to and appropriate facilities in a building for persons with a disability and other sectors of the population including the elderly, who at times require the same provisions as persons with a disability. Following a review of the 1997 Design Manual together with the legislation, legal framework and administration, it has been identified that while Hong Kong’s existing principal and subsidiary legislation caters for some of the needs of persons with a disability, it does not adequately address the specific needs of the elderly in terms of spatial requirements and facilities.
3. In the next 20 to 30 years we will see a significant demographic shift in the population of Hong Kong with a greater proportion of the elderly. It must be acknowledged that persons with a disability and the elderly are as much a part of our society as everyone else, would require better integration of facilities for barrier free access. During the review of the “Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 1997”, some of the standards in providing more reasonable and clearer guidelines have been re-examined. Those old provisions that were open to interpretation have been refined to remove any possible ambiguities. Those stringent provisions that were considered not necessary have been proposed to be relaxed after considering local conditions and users’ requirements. In addition, this Manual has also been expanded to include provision of facilities for the elderly to enhance their health and safety and to facilitate their movement within buildings.
4. The “barrier-free” design requirements, newly introduced design considerations and enhanced design standards aim to facilitate greater independence of not only persons with a disability and the elderly but also people with other forms of physical infirmities or limitations such as pregnant women, families with young children. It is intended that the implementation of this Design Manual will result in greater awareness of the public, professionals and developers who will come to appreciate the value of making the built-environment more accessible and friendly to as broad a spectrum of our community as possible.