

**Projections in relation to site coverage and plot ratio
Building (Planning) Regulations 20 & 21**

In accordance with regulation 2 of the Building (Planning) Regulations (B(P)R), site coverage means the area of a site that is covered by the building(s) erected thereon. Hence all components of a building, including all projections, should be accountable for site coverage. However, site coverage is also a measure to control the building bulk.

Minor projecting features

2. In the case of plot ratio, the definition of gross floor area uses the term 'external wall'. Clearly 'wall' does not just mean concrete or brick material, and windows and parapet railings should obviously also be included. For projections from a building, it is accepted that if the projections are not at a floor level, or potential floor level, and do not dominate the face of a building, measurement as accountable gross floor area is not required.

3. It follows from the above that the following projections from the face of a building, having no significant impact on building bulk, need not be counted for site coverage and plot ratio:

- (a) pitched roof eaves and flat roof overhangs complying with the projection and clear height limits in regulation 7(1) of the B(P)R (provided these are not contained within parapet walls as part of an accessible flat roof);
- (b) individual air-conditioner boxes and platforms of reasonable size and projecting not more than 750mm, which have a built-in system for condensate disposal;
- (c) individual projections/window hoods complying with B(P)R and porches having projection not exceeding 2m;
- (d) window cills and window surrounds projecting not more than 100 mm;
- (e) string courses, fins and architectural mouldings complying with the projection and clear height limits in regulation 7(1) of the B(P)R (but not structural beams and columns);
- (f) window flower boxes projecting not more than 500mm in width;
- (g) external drainage pipes and gutters complying with the projection and clear height limits in regulation 7(2) of the B(P)R;
- (h) sunshades solely used for the purpose of energy conservation projecting not more than 1.5m from the external wall complying with the criteria set out in PNAP APP-67;

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- (i) reflectors projecting not more than 1.5m from the external walls, subject to submission of quantitative assessment of environmental benefits to the BA for consideration in case they project over 0.5m from the external walls;
- (j) canopies projecting not more than 2m over an entrance to a building; and
- (k) drying racks projecting not more than 750mm.

4. It is emphasized that, notwithstanding paragraph 3 above, if any of the listed features is so exaggerated, excessive in scale, or defeats the provisions of the Ordinance (for example, a structural beam doubling as a flower box) or is provided or designed in an unusual way, that feature will be counted for site coverage and, if appropriate, also for plot ratio.

Projecting windows

5. It follows from the above that all other projections must be included in site coverage and plot ratio calculations. However projecting windows will not be regarded as GFA and will be accepted as not counting for site coverage and plot ratio, if they satisfy all the following criteria within the storey from which they project :

- (a) the projecting window is from living room, dining room or bedroom of domestic accommodation only;
- (b) only one such projecting window is allowed per room and it should be located on one external wall only;
- (c) the total area of the projecting window does not exceed 50% of the total area of the external wall of the room where the projecting window is located* ;
- (d) the extent of the projection is not more than 100 mm from the outer face of the main external wall;
- (e) the base is not less than 500 mm above finished floor level;
- (f) the window complies fully with regulation 3A of the B(P)R. For the purposes of this requirement, the height of 1100 mm protective barrier will be measured from floor level and any part of the window within this dimension should be fixed or otherwise suitably protected in line with clause (2) of the said Regulation; and
- (g) the projecting windows will not form a piecemeal addition to existing buildings.

* For the avoidance of doubt, the thickness of the enclosure walls and slabs (floor and ceiling) of the room where the projecting window is located should be discounted for the purpose of calculating the total area of the external wall.

Covered areas under large projecting/overhanging features

6. For innovative building designs excluding shopfront overhead, signboard and the like, the Buildings Department has been taking a pragmatic approach on the acceptance

of different projecting/overhanging features. Save for the areas covered by projecting features which provide a weather-protected shelter capable of functional use, it is accepted that where there is no objection from the relevant government departments and the clear height of the projecting feature is more than 7.5m above the covered areas, the covered areas satisfying the following criteria will not be regarded as GFA and thus are not required to be included in the GFA calculation:-

- (a) The ratio of horizontal width of the covered area to the clear height of the projecting features above the covered area is not less than 1:8,
OR
- (b) Access to the covered area is not possible and abuse is unlikely.

7. For the covered area under special design of projecting / overhanging features which do not satisfy the requirements in paragraph 6 above, such as twisted building form, inclined external wall design, etc., justifications should be provided with the merits of the design for consideration of GFA exemption (please also see PNAP APP-2).

Air-conditioning boxes/platforms

8. Except those complying with Part II of the Building (Planning) Regulations, no projections will normally be allowed over streets unless they can be justified in the public interest. In this context the projection of individual air-conditioning boxes/platforms not exceeding 750mm and window hoods not exceeding 500mm may be permitted, provided they are at a height of not less than 2.5 m above ground (please also see PNAP APP-42). For proposals relating to wholesale conversion of industrial buildings and other similar alteration and addition works, application for exemption from section 31(1) of the Buildings Ordinance and/or modification of regulations 20 and 21 of the B(P)Rs for the erection of individual air-conditioning boxes/platforms with a projection of more than 750mm from the external walls with or without projection over a street will be favourably considered only if there is sufficient justification to demonstrate that there are difficulties in placing the air conditioners inside the premises due to the design and layout constraints in the existing building. As a condition for the granting of the exemption/modification, Grade 1 room air conditioners as specified in the Code of Practice on Energy Labeling of Products issued by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department should be installed upon completion of the proposed works.

9. This practice note is applicable to all new building plans or major revision of building plans for development proposals submitted to the BA for approval on or after 1 April 2011. Subject to paragraph 10 below, this practice note is also applicable to building plans which have been previously disapproved and are resubmitted for approval on or after 1 April 2011.

10. For building plans which have been firstly submitted on or before 31 March 2011 and subsequently disapproved by the BA but not on ground relating to proof of ownership or realistic prospect of control of the land forming the site, the first resubmission of such plans to the BA on or after 1 April 2011, which is submitted within 6 months from the date of disapproval of the firstly submitted plans, would not be subject to the requirements of this practice note. For the avoidance of doubt, if such first resubmission of plans eventually has been disapproved by the BA, any further resubmission of the plans would be subject to the requirements of this practice note.

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11. Subject to section 16(3)(d) of the BO, building plans approved by the BA prior to the implementation of this practice note should make reference to the “December 2010” version of this practice note (Appendix A).

(AU Choi-kai)
Building Authority

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Buildings Department

**Practice Note for Authorized Persons,
Registered Structural Engineers and
Registered Geotechnical Engineers**

APP-19

**Projections in relation to site coverage and plot ratio
Regulations 20 & 21 of the Building (Planning) Regulations**

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Minor projecting features

2. In the case of plot ratio, the definition of gross floor area uses the term ‘external wall’. Clearly ‘wall’ does not just mean concrete or brick material, and windows and parapet railings should obviously also be included. For projections from a building, it is accepted that if the projections are not at a floor level, or potential floor level, and do not dominate the face of a building, measurement as accountable gross floor area is not required.

3. It follows from the above that the following projections from the face of a building, having no significant impact on building bulk, need not be counted for site coverage and plot ratio:

- (e) pitched roof eaves and flat roof overhangs complying with the projection and clear height limits in Regulation 7(1) of the B(P)R (provided these are not contained within parapet walls as part of an accessible flat roof);
- (f) individual air-conditioner boxes and platforms of reasonable size and projecting not more than 750mm, which have a built-in system for condensate disposal;
- (g) individual projections/window hoods complying with the projection and clear height limits in Regulation 7(1) of the B(P)R and porches having projection not exceeding 2m;
- (h) window cills and window surrounds projecting not more than 100 mm;
- (h) string courses, fins and architectural mouldings complying with the projection and clear height limits in Regulation 7(1) of the B(P)R (but not structural beams and columns);
- (i) window flower boxes projecting not more than 500mm in width;
- (j) external drainage pipes and gutters complying with the projection and height limits in Regulation 7(2) of the B(P)R;
- (h) sunshades solely used for the purpose of energy conservation projecting not more than 1.5m from the external wall;

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- (i) canopies projecting not more than 2m over an entrance to a building; and
- (j) drying racks projecting not more than 750mm.

4. It is emphasized that, notwithstanding paragraph 3 above, if any of the listed features is so exaggerated, excessive in scale, or defeats the provisions of the Ordinance (for example, a structural beam doubling as a flower box) or is provided or designed in an unusual way, that feature will be counted for site coverage and, if appropriate, also for plot ratio.

Projecting windows

5. It follows from the above that all other projections must be included in site coverage and plot ratio calculations. However projecting windows may be accepted as not counting for plot ratio provided they satisfy all the following criteria within the storey from which they project :

- (a) the projecting window is from domestic accommodation only;
- (b) only one such projecting window is located on one external wall and situated in any one room;
- (c) the total areas of the projecting windows together with the louvres/open grilles, if any, for the purpose of shielding of air-conditioning plants placed underneath or above the projecting windows, do not exceed 50% of the total areas of the façade of the said floor on the same elevation;
- (d) the extent of the projection is not more than 500 mm from the face of the main external wall;
- (e) the base is not less than 500 mm above finished floor level;
- (f) the top is not less than 500 mm from the underside of the finish ceiling; and
- (g) the window complies fully with Regulation 3A of the B(P)R. For the purposes of this requirement, the height of 1100 mm protective barrier will be measured from floor level and any part of the window within this dimension should be fixed or otherwise suitably protected in line with clause (2) of the Regulation.

Air-conditioning boxes/platforms

6. Except those complying with Part II of the Building (Planning) Regulations, no projections will normally be allowed over streets unless they can be justified in the public interest. For proposals relating to wholesale conversion of industrial buildings and other similar alteration and addition works, application for exemption from section 31(1) of the Buildings Ordinance and/or modification of Regulations 20 and 21 of the B(P)R for the erection of individual air-conditioning boxes/platforms with a projection of more than

/750mm.....

750mm from the external walls with or without projection over a street will be favourably considered only if there is sufficient justification to demonstrate that there are difficulties in placing the air conditioners inside the premises due to the design and layout constraints in the existing building. As a condition for the granting of the exemption/modification, Grade 1 room air conditioners as specified in the Code of Practice on Energy Labeling of Products issued by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department should be installed upon completion of the proposed works.



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