

**Calculation of Gross Floor Area and Non-accountable Gross Floor Area  
Building (Planning) Regulation 23(3)(a) and (b)****Calculation of Gross Floor Area**

Building (Planning) Regulation 23(3)(a) stipulates that gross floor area (GFA) is the area contained within the outer surface of external walls of a building measured at each floor level. Any portions of this area not floored over must be included in the plot ratio calculations.

2. However where large voids occur, a modification of Building (Planning) Regulation 23(3)(a) may be granted on application in the following circumstances :

- (a) in front of cinema and theatre balconies;
- (b) in banking halls and shopping arcades;
- (c) in single-staircase buildings in which cockloft floors are provided in the ground storey;
- (d) in auditoria, sporting halls (including squash courts), school halls and religious institutions; and
- (e) in main common entrance lobbies.

3. In the case of "split level" designs where the difference in level between adjoining floors is less than 1 m, the floor may be regarded as being level for the purposes of this regulation. For greater differences in level, the authorized person should clarify with the Buildings Department before embarking on the project.

4. Subject to the special circumstances of each case, the Building Authority is **in general** prepared to consider favourably application for modification in respect of :

- (a) chimney shafts forming an integral part of a new building;
- (b) fire refuge areas which observe the stated criteria (see Code of Practice for Means of Escape);
- (c) covered areas clearly intended for and designed as playgrounds (see Practice Note for Authorized Persons and Registered Structural Engineers (PNAP) 116);
- (d) swimming pool filtration plant rooms; and
- (e) genuine and properly designed pipe-ducts with adequate access for inspection and maintenance.

/5. Where ....

5. Where a curtain wall system forms the external face of a building, the Building Authority is prepared to accept the outer face of the structural elements, e.g. beams, columns and floor slabs, as the external wall for the purpose of measurement of GFA and site coverage where :

- The curtain wall system itself does not form part of the structural system of the parent building;
- The system does not result in any additional floor area at a floor level; and
- The projection of the system from the outer face of the structural elements does not exceed 300 mm.

6. Cladding may take a variety of forms and as a general rule, should be considered individually for the purpose of measuring GFA. In the case, however, of a form of cladding which may be equated in its design to a curtain wall system, the method of measure of GFA and site coverage given in para. 5 above may be adopted as indicated in the sketches illustrating the above principle for the measurement of GFA and site coverage at Appendix A.

7. External wall finishes may be disregarded for the purpose of measurement of dimensions under Building (Planning) Regulation 23(3). However, no part of any wall finishes should project beyond the site boundaries.

#### **Non-accountable Gross Floor Area**

8. Under Building (Planning) Regulation 23(3)(b), the Building Authority may exclude from GFA calculation floor space occupied solely by machinery or equipment for lift, air-conditioning, heating system or any similar service. The phrase "any similar service" may generally be interpreted to include water tanks, boiler rooms, electrical switch rooms, meter rooms, transformer rooms, generator rooms, pump rooms, telephone equipment rooms, cable riser duct room, CO<sub>2</sub> rooms, hose reel closets, sewage treatment plant rooms and ducts for central ventilation or smoke extraction system. In each case, both the premises for and the size of any such feature should be justified. To guard against possible abuse, the BA will take the following into consideration when considering exclusion of the above features from GFA calculation for single family residence or house type developments:

- (a) There should not be any duplication in the provision of services when GFA exclusions are also being separately applied for; and
- (b) Only the minimum amount of GFA necessary for accommodating and maintaining the services and commensurate with the development would be allowed to be excluded. The authorized person may be required to demonstrate why it is not possible to consolidate the provision of all related services into multi-purposes or centralised rooms such that the area which is excluded from GFA could be used for efficiently.



9. For plant rooms and other features that are excluded from GFA calculation, the enclosing walls/columns and the associated protected lobby, if any, solely serving the said rooms or features and do not serve any other function in accordance with paragraph 11, may also be excluded from GFA calculation.

10. Air-conditioning plant rooms to be excluded from GFA calculation should as a rule be located outside the individual residential units. For an air-conditioning plant room proposed with access within an individual residential unit, the authorized person should justify why access to such room cannot be located outside the unit. In any event, the provision and size of such rooms need to be justified before consideration for exclusion from GFA will be given. In the event that such room is permitted to be provided with access within the individual unit, such plant room should meet the following criteria before it can be considered for exclusion from GFA calculation under Building (Planning) Regulation 23(3)(b) :-

- (a) The floor of the plant room should have a level difference of a minimum of 500 mm with the floor of the main accommodation;
- (b) The plant room should have at least one side open, but railing, open grille and louver on the open side to parapet level are acceptable. Enclosure above parapet level may be allowed where there is a need to separate the intake air and exhaust air. Enclosure for the purpose of compliance with paragraph 12.3 of the Code of Practice for Fire Resisting Construction may also be allowed on the open side; and
- (c) The open side should face into open air.

Where an air-conditioning plant room is not proposed, air-conditioning platforms, complying with the requirements set out in PNAP 68, provided on the external elevations of the building are not accountable for GFA calculation under regulation 23(3) of the Building (Planning) Regulation.

11. The horizontal area of staircases and lift shafts should normally be measured for GFA together with the floor through which they pass. However, where these features pass through a floor accepted as not being accountable for GFA (by reason of the captioned regulation), the area of the features may also be discounted, with one exception. The exception is that entrance lobbies, lifts, staircases and exit corridors, other than those solely serving the non-accountable floors, at the level(s) of main access to a building from the street(s) should always be included in the measurement for GFA. In such locations,

/these ....

these features have a local function and do not merely pass through a floor. For the features passing through a floor that is partly accountable and partly non-accountable for GFA, their exclusion from GFA either in its entirety or parts thereof will be considered on a case-by-case basis taking into account their locations and functions. The principle is that such features on a particular floor should be counted for GFA if the area they serve at that floor is accountable for GFA calculation.

### **Carparking and Loading and Unloading Areas**

12. Under B(P)R 23(3)(b), the BA has the discretionary power to disregard from GFA calculations any floor space that he is satisfied constructed and intended to be used solely for, inter alia, parking motor vehicles, loading and unloading of motor vehicles. The BA generally accepts that public and private car parks, and public transport termini provided in buildings are space for parking or loading and unloading of motor vehicles falling within the meaning of B(P)R 23(3)(b). In exercising the BA's discretionary power under B(P)R 23(3)(b) to disregard or not to disregard such area or any part thereof from GFA calculation, it will determine each case on its merits based on the design of the carpark and the effect on the public interest including the infrastructure, density and building bulk. In general, the BA will follow the following lines in its exercise of discretion :-

#### **(i) Carparking spaces**

The BA may allow the exclusion from GFA calculation of carparking spaces which are intended for the use of the occupants and their bona fide visitors of the parent building under Building (Planning) Regulation 23(3)(b). In deciding on the number of car-parking spaces that could be excluded, the BA will make reference to the standards set out in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG), the design and layout of the car-park as well as the advice of the Commissioner for Transport.

For the avoidance of doubt, any parking provision on open areas of a site, or on an open podium roof, need not be measured for GFA.

#### **(ii) Public Transport Terminus (PTT)**

The BA would take the advice of the Planning Department in determining the effect of excluding PTT from GFA calculation on the infrastructure, density and building bulk. As Planning Department has advised that the town planning intention is that all PTT should count for GFA calculation unless otherwise provided for in the relevant town plan, hence as a general rule, unless otherwise specified in the relevant town plan or any specific planning approval for the site, all PTT should be accountable for GFA.

/(iii) Loading ....

**(iii) Loading and Unloading Areas**

Areas for loading/unloading purposes would only qualify for exclusion from measurement of GFA if they are directly associated with spaces specifically earmarked for parking of motor vehicles for loading and unloading purposes and in accordance with the minimum requirements as specified in lease conditions or the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, whichever is the less. For instance, areas set aside for loading/unloading detached container boxes in a container yard should be measured for GFA.



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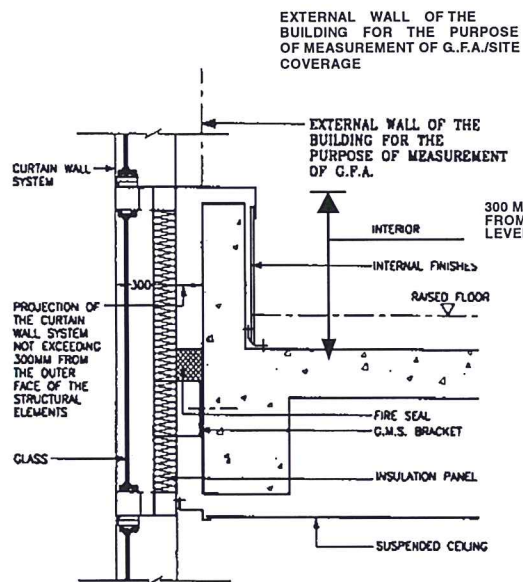
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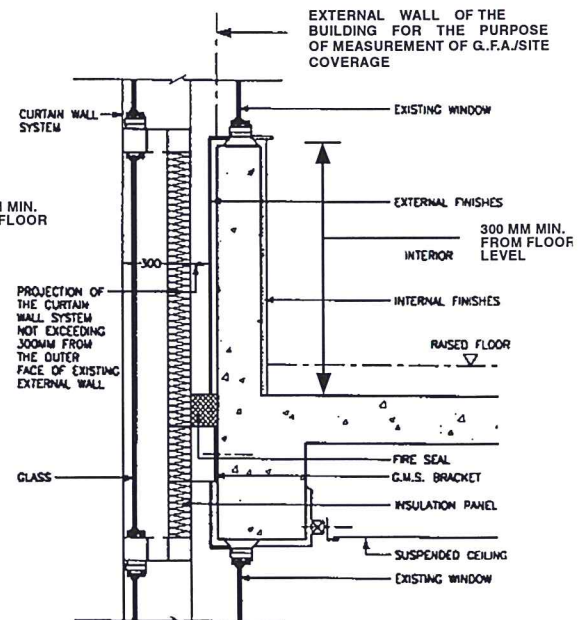


CURTAIN WALL SYSTEM INSTALLED  
AT NEW BUILDING



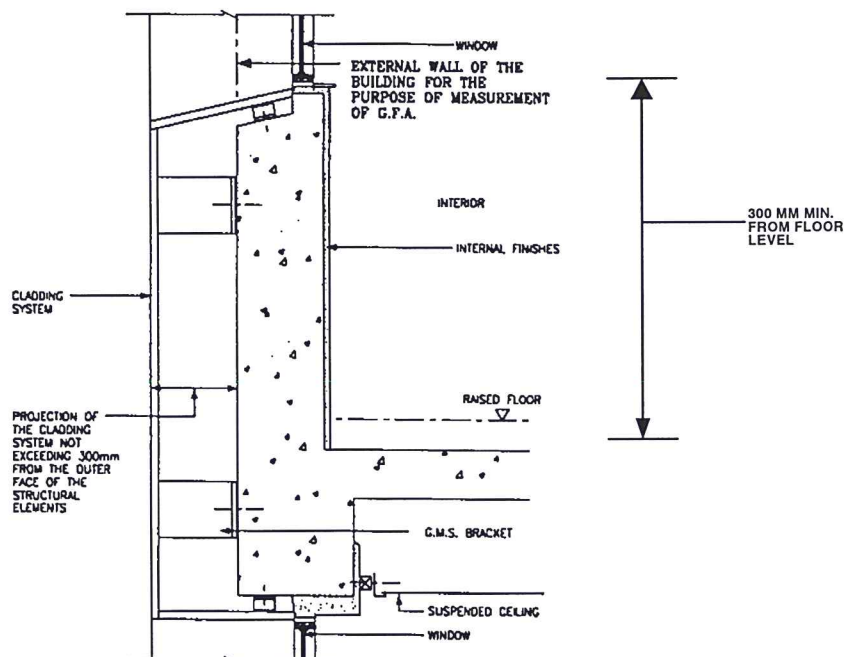
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