

48

Building (Planning) Regulation 20

Projections in relation to site coverage and plot ratio

From the definition contained in Building (Planning) Regulation 2 it is clear that site coverage relates to the proportion of a site which is covered by a building or, in the case of a composite building (and/or one with a podium) by a different part of a building. In simple terms, the site coverage may thus be considered as the shadow cast on a site with the sun directly overhead. In many instances site coverage is also associated with plot ratio.

2. In development of the above principle it would seem that all components of a building, including all projections, should be accountable for site coverage, and possibly also plot ratio, but it has been argued that this could not have been the basic intention behind this legislative provision, which most observers see mainly as a measure to limit general building bulk for environmental reasons.

3. In accordance with the above position the Building Authority considers the following projections from the face of a building to have no significant impact on building bulk and therefore as not counting as part of its site coverage and plot ratio component:-

- (a) pitched roof eaves and flat roof overhangs (provided these are not contained within parapet walls as part of an accessible flat roof);
- (b) individual air-conditioner boxes;
- (c) individual canopies, window hoods and porches;
- (d) window cills and window surrounds projecting not more than 100mm;
- (e) string courses, fins and architectural mouldings (but not structural beams and columns);
- (f) window flower boxes provided they are small, individual and non-continuous; and
- (g) external drainage pipes and gutters.

4. It is emphasised 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 count for site coverage and, if appropriate, also for plot ratio.

5. It follows from the above that all other projections (for example, bay or other projecting windows, etc.) must be included in site coverage and plot ratio calculations, although the usual provisions for the giving of modifications will still apply.

6. No projections will normally be allowed over streets unless they can be justified in the public interest.

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Ref. : BDD/BGP/BREG/P/2

BOC March 1980  
Revised 1984

Index under : Bay windows  
Projecting windows