

Amenity Features

Amenity features are loosely defined as those elements of design that whilst not statutory requirements are desirable to improve the standard and quality of a building or a development project. Provision of such features enhances the sense of care and pride for buildings, thereby inducing proper maintenance and repair. To encourage these features, the Building Authority is prepared to consider modification and exemption, under the Buildings Ordinance and Regulations, for amenities.

2. To justify favourable consideration for modification or exemption, such proposals should meet one or a combination of the following objectives :

- (a) obviating the desire or temptation for unauthorized building works;
- (b) encouraging efficient and effective building management;
- (c) improving environmental compatibility with the neighbourhood; and
- (d) enhancing the quality of life for residents and users.

3. It is not possible to lay down hard and fast rules. Applications would be considered on their individual merits and relevance to the particular building and its users.

4. For large schemes or innovative designs, it is advisable prior to formal submission to hold a preliminary discussion with the Buildings Department (Development Division). If necessary, a proposal will be the subject of consultation with the Lands and the Planning Departments. The intention is that Buildings, Lands and Planning Departments would consider a proposal on similar grounds and in its entirety : factors such as the preservation of trees, landscape and antiquities would be regarded as positive contributions.

5. Some examples of amenity features are given below.

Air-conditioning

6. For **residential buildings**, wall boxes or platforms in reinforced concrete or other suitable material may be constructed as a permanent feature, even over streets, and as such may be excluded from site coverage considerations (see PNAP 68). For **commercial and industrial buildings**, a centralized air-conditioning system should be provided or suitable internal areas should be set aside for this purpose at the design stage. Allowance should be made for adequate ducting & trunking, recesses, set-backs, open yards or other suitable spaces at and above floor levels where air-conditioning package units (or other plant and accessories) can be accommodated without the need to project over streets.

7. In accordance with Building (Planning) Regulation 23(3)(b), any floor space genuinely intended for air-conditioning may be excluded from gross floor area considerations. The following provisions would be considered reasonable :

- (a) air-conditioning plant rooms not exceeding 1% of the total gross floor area of a building; or
- (b) air handling units, not exceeding 4% of the total gross floor area of **each floor** on which they are situated.

If it is intended to exceed these percentages or where an air-conditioning room is provided in each domestic unit, then full justification must be submitted. In such cases, the advice of the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services would be sought during processing.

8. If an unusually extensive system is proposed for exclusion from gross floor area calculations, then it should be shown in detail on the approved plans and be operational before an application for occupation permit is made.

9. In all cases where buildings will be or are likely to be air-conditioned, careful consideration should be given to the need to prevent water dripping. Whenever possible, a built-in system for condensate disposal should be provided.

Security Gates

10. As long as they do not obstruct the means of escape from a building and have locks openable from the inside without keys, security gates may be installed prior to the issue of an occupation permit or may be indicated on floor plans in suitable positions for future installation. Suitable positions are considered to be :

- (a) entrances to individual units;
- (b) main staircase exits from buildings; and
- (c) in a composite building, between the domestic part and the commercial part.

(In this case, the gate would be across an exit route, preferably in a lobby, and should be designed to prevent the entry of non-residents into the domestic part of the building.)

Counters, Kiosks, Offices, Stores, Guard Rooms, and Lavatories for Watchmen and Management Staff

11. Such provision enhances standards of control and maintenance and may be regarded as service facilities in terms of Building (Planning) Regulation 23(3)(b) for exclusion from gross floor area calculations. However, these facilities should not be excessive and should be provided only in common areas to prevent abuse.

Building Service Facilities

12. These are generally covered in PNAP 13.

Projections

13. These are generally covered in PNAP 68 and canopies are specifically dealt with in PNAP 173.

14. For individual domestic units, clothes-drying racks, anti-burglar bars and small window hoods designed to provide protection from the elements and falling objects would not have any site coverage or plot ratio implications. Similarly, any projections that improve the energy efficiency of a building, including enhanced wall thicknesses would also be disregarded for the purposes of site coverage and plot ratio.

Horizontal Screens

15. Horizontal screens may be located in open areas frequently used by occupants, at ground floor or podium level, to protect against risk from falling objects (rather than the elements). They should not materially affect the lighting and ventilation of the areas or nearby rooms.

16. In domestic and composite buildings incorporating roof gardens or play areas at podium level around the perimeter of a domestic tower, solid screens of a width not exceeding 2m may be permitted subject to the construction, planning and drainage being to the satisfaction of the Building Authority.

Prestige Entrances

17. These are generally covered in PNAP 13. The Building Authority aims to adopt a liberal attitude towards provision of such features. However, care must be taken in the design to ensure that future occupants would maintain the integrity of protected lobbies and corridors related to means of escape and fireman's lifts.

Recreational Facilities

18. The provision of podium roof gardens and play areas is encouraged. Where these amenities occur under and within the perimeter of a domestic tower, a modification of Building (Planning) Regulation 23(3)(a) would be granted, provided the area is open in design and not encumbered with structural elements. For the avoidance of doubt, it is clarified that staircases or lift shafts that pass through such floors may be discounted from gross floor area considerations, provided they are not connected with an entrance to the building from outside the podium level or do not serve other accountable accommodation at that level.

19. Certain other recreational facilities such as squash courts, gymnasia and indoor swimming pools are often clearly identifiable with a particular development and aim to benefit the residents and occupiers generally. These can be considered for exclusion from gross floor area calculations by modification of Building (Planning) Regulation 23(2)(a) on a case-by-case basis.

20. This concession does not apply to substantial luxury clubs with restaurants and other facilities obviously meant for an exclusive membership and commercial takings, rather than for the general benefit of residents and occupiers.

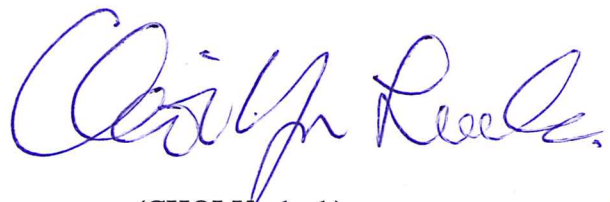
Satellite Dishes

21. These are becoming quite common nowadays being installed in response to public demand. It would seem appropriate therefore to make provision at the design stage of a building to accommodate such a feature.

22. Such a provision could be by way of cast-in-situ mounting blocks and/or built-in-fixing bolts together with an appropriate increase of the design load of the structural elements to accommodate the weight of the dish.

Concluding Observations

23. The Building Authority is open to suggestions for consideration as amenities in the context of this practice note.



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