

Circular No.: URA/PB/2018/07-DCG
Our Ref: DC/ADMIN/CIRCULAR/PB_18
Date: 17 October 2018

CIRCULAR TO PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTES

Who should know

Flat and condominium owners, developers, architects, and engineers

Effective date

With effect from 17 January 2019

REVISION TO THE BALCONY INCENTIVE SCHEME FOR PRIVATE NON-LANDED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. URA introduced the Balcony Incentive Scheme (BIS) in 2001 to encourage balconies, private enclosed spaces (PES)¹ and private roof terraces (PRT)², collectively known as private outdoor spaces, in private non-landed residential developments. URA will be revising the BIS guidelines to:
 - a. Improve the sizes and locations of private outdoor spaces;
 - b. Provide homebuyers more choices of units with and without private outdoor spaces; and
 - c. Improve developers' communication to homeowners on allowable balcony screens.
2. The BIS was introduced to enable residents to access outdoor spaces from their homes. It also sought to facilitate high-rise greenery to improve the quality of the living environment. However, we have observed that some developments today have excessively large balconies in relation to the size of the indoor spaces of a unit. We have also received feedback from homebuyers who prefer units without balconies that it is challenging to find such units in the market, especially in new developments.
3. Some homeowners have also highlighted that they are unsure about the type of screens allowed at their balconies³ even though developers have sought approval from URA for the designs of such screens at the development application stage. There is therefore scope to improve the manner in which developers communicate the approved screen designs for balconies to

¹ PES are generally open-sided private spaces used for garden and outdoor living at the first storey of flats and condominium developments.

² PRT are usable, semi-outdoor private spaces on the roof of flats and condominium developments.

³ To ensure that balconies remain as outdoor spaces and are not converted into indoor spaces, the installation of screening for private outdoor spaces is allowed if the screens (a) can be drawn open or retracted fully and (b) allow for natural ventilation/air flow within the private outdoor spaces at all times, even when fully drawn.

homeowners upfront. The latest changes to our guidelines are made in response to the above observations and feedback.

Revised Guidelines for Private Outdoor Spaces under the BIS

The revised guidelines are as follows:

Reduction of Bonus Gross Floor Area (GFA) Cap for Private Outdoor Spaces

4. The bonus GFA cap for these spaces in residential developments will be reduced from 10% to 7%.
5. With this revision, developers can still achieve up to 10% bonus GFA beyond the Master Plan-allowable Gross Plot Ratio by qualifying for other incentive schemes, such as the Green Mark Bonus GFA Scheme and the new Indoor Recreation Space Bonus GFA Scheme.
6. As per current practice, all additional GFA granted under the bonus GFA incentive schemes will not form the future development potential of the site.

Size and Width Requirements for Balconies⁴

7. To address public feedback that some balconies are oversized, the total balcony area(s) for each unit will be capped at 15% of the nett internal area⁵. This will ensure that these balconies are not disproportionately large relative to the main unit.
8. Each balcony is to have a minimum width of 1.5 metres as measured from the external building wall to enable it to function as a meaningful outdoor space. URA is prepared to consider exceptions to the width requirement based on the design merit of the proposal, such as a curved or odd-shaped balcony.

Screens for Balconies

9. Currently, developers are to seek approval from URA for the designs of balcony screens as part of the development application process. Although the screen designs are submitted upfront, the developer has the option to choose whether to install the screens. In cases where the screens are not installed upfront by the developer, the approved screen design is intended for use by the Management Corporation (MCST) to guide the installation of screens by individual owners.
10. Developers will now be required to inform homebuyers of the allowable balcony screens at the point of purchase, through the following measures:
 - a. Install the approved screen in its actual scale in the sales gallery and/or show unit, if a sales gallery and/or show unit are erected for the development (see Appendix 1). Developers are to submit a Letter of

⁴ PES and PRTs will not be subject to the above guidelines.

⁵ This excludes voids, balconies, air-conditioner ledges and other external areas.

Undertaking for this purpose at the development application stage (see Appendix 2).

- b. Explicitly state in the unit floor plan in Form 3⁶ that “Balconies are not to be enclosed except with a balcony screen which has been approved and complies with the Competent Authority’s guidelines”.
- c. Provide homebuyers the option to have the approved screen pre-installed at their balconies⁷. This option is to be offered via a side letter at the point of issuance of the Option to Purchase (see Appendix 3).

Implementation

11. The revised guidelines for private outdoor spaces will supersede the corresponding controls of the previous guidelines and will apply to all new applications for private non-landed residential developments (including Executive Condominiums) and the residential component of mixed-use projects submitted on or after 17 January 2019. The revised guidelines will not apply to formal development applications (excluding Outline Applications) submitted before 17 January 2019 which have already been granted Provisional Permission or which will result in a Provisional Permission. An overview of the guidelines on private outdoor spaces, including those introduced in this circular, is found in Appendix 4.
12. I would appreciate it if you could convey the contents of this circular to your members. We have updated the same in the [Development Control Handbooks](#). You are advised to refer to these Handbooks for the most updated guidelines and procedures instead of referring to past circulars. For other information on the master plan, urban design guidelines, private property use and approval, car park locations and availability, private residential property transactions, and conservation areas and buildings, use [URA SPACE](#) (Service Portal and Community e-Services). This is an online portal packed with useful data and visualisation to help building professionals, business operators and the general public in their decision-making. It consolidates detailed information on land use and private property into a one-stop platform presented on geospatial maps. For feedback or enquiries, please [email](#) us.
13. Thank you.

GOH CHIN CHIN
GROUP DIRECTOR (DEVELOPMENT CONTROL)
for CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

⁶ Form 3 is required under rule 10(4) of Housing Developer Rules, and comprises the particulars, documents and information which are to be provided to purchasers prior to the Option to Purchase.

⁷ This is not applicable for developers who choose to pre-install approved screens for all balconies in the development.

Appendix 1 – Requirements for Installation of Balcony Screen at Show Unit

1. Developers will be required to install the approved balcony screen in its actual scale in the show unit of the development, if sales gallery and/or show unit(s) is/are erected for the development. Developers are to provide a Letter of Undertaking (see Appendix 2) to be submitted at the Development Application Stage.
 - a. In instances where the balcony screens are not erected within the show unit itself because of physical constraints of space or the show unit is one without a balcony, the developer will still be required to erect a mock-up of the approved balcony screen in its actual scale somewhere within the sales gallery premises.
 - b. Mock-ups showing scaled down versions of the balcony screens installed at the balcony are not allowed.
 - c. For developments with multiple approved balcony screen designs, mock-ups of all the designs should be installed at the show unit(s) or sales gallery of the development.
 - d. A detailed drawing of the approved balcony screen showing the overall specifications is to be displayed next to the mock-up balcony screen.
2. Clear and conspicuous notices are to be put up and displayed at all the balcony/balconies in the show unit of the development. The written notice is to include the following:
 - a. Explicitly state that “The balcony shall not be enclosed unless with the approved balcony screen”.
 - b. For a balcony where the screen is not installed within the balcony of the show unit itself, the notice should refer to the mock up balcony screen installed in the other show unit or sales gallery.
 - c. State that the purchasers will have the option to have the balcony screen pre-installed in the units and make clear if the purchasers have to bear separate costs for its installation.

Appendix 2 – Draft Letter of Undertaking

UNDERTAKING FOR CONVEYANCE OF BALCONY ENCLOSURE RESTRICTION TO PURCHASERS OF HOUSING UNITS

To: Chief Executive Officer
Urban Redevelopment Authority
As Competent Authority
Under the Planning Act (Cap. 232)

LETTER OF UNDERTAKING

_____ (applicant's name) _____, a company incorporated in Singapore and having its registered office at _____ ("the Company") has applied to the Competent Authority for planning permission for the proposal of balconies at _____ (subject premises) _____ ("the Development") under the Bonus Balcony GFA Scheme ("the Scheme").

In consideration of the CA issuing the planning permission and approving the balconies at the Development under the Scheme, the Company undertakes to convey to purchasers and prospective purchasers of the housing units comprised in the Development that balconies are not allowed to be enclosed unless with an approved balcony screen. In particular, the Company is to -

- (a) Include the following notice in all marketing collaterals⁸ which show any layout plan for a housing unit with balcony or balconies approved under the Scheme

"The balcony shall not be enclosed unless with the approved balcony screen. For an illustration of the approved balcony screen, please refer to Page xxx of this brochure⁹" (see Appendix 1)

- (b) Provide an illustration of the approved balcony screen in the marketing collaterals (see Appendix 1)

⁸ Marketing collaterals shall be defined for purpose of this undertaking to include all marketing materials in any medium and designed to convey the approved layout plans of the housing units comprised in the Development for the express purpose of marketing the sale of the housing units to any prospective purchaser e.g. sales brochure.

⁹ An example of the notice and illustration is set out in Appendix 1 hereto

- (c) Put up and display clear and conspicuous notices at the balcony/balconies in the show unit(s) of any housing unit(s) which is/are approved under the Scheme during the marketing period for the Development, to inform visitors of the balcony enclosure restriction and the design and full extent of the approved balcony screen.
- (d) Install a mock-up of the approved balcony screen in its actual scale at the show unit or in the sales gallery. For developments with more than one design of approved balcony screen, to install mock-ups of all types of the approved balcony screens in their actual scale at the show unit or in the sales gallery.

The Company also undertakes to do at its own cost and expense all things necessary to ensure that the provisions of this undertaking are complied with in all respects.

The Company acknowledges that the planning permission shall be issued by the CA subject to such conditions as the CA may impose. In the event of any breach or non-compliance with any of such conditions, the CA may cancel the said planning permission.

Dated this ____ day of _____.


Name of Director

Authorised by resolution to sign this Undertaking for and on behalf of abovenamed Company

Name of Company

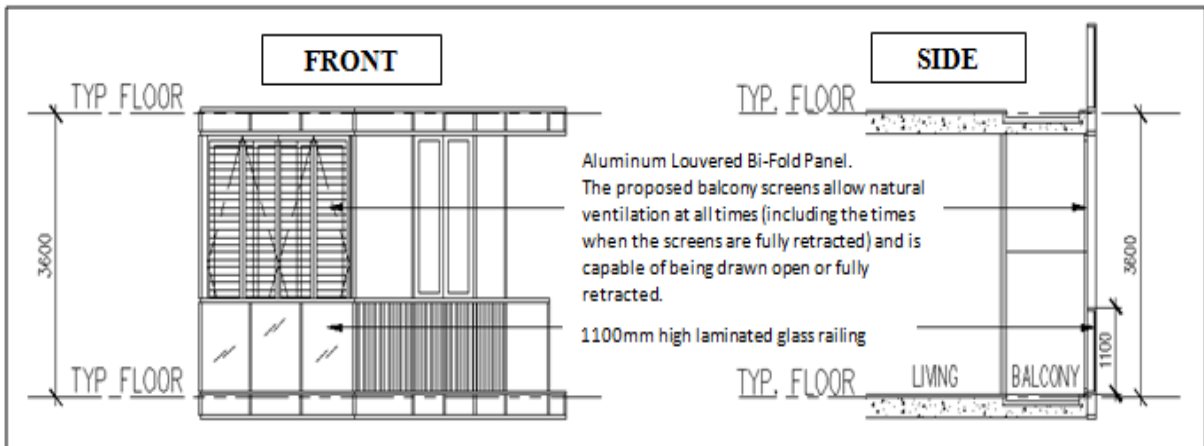
APPENDIX 1

Sample of notice to be included in sales brochure



* “The balcony shall not be enclosed. Only approved balcony screens are to be used. For an illustration of the approved balcony screen, please refer to Page xxx of this brochure.”

Approved balcony screens (Page xxx)



Appendix 3 – Side Letter Template

Date:

To: [Purchaser]
[Address]

Dear Sir/Madam

[ADDRESS OF UNIT] (the “Unit”)

1. The Unit contains a balcony approved by the Competent Authority under the Planning Act (Cap. 232). The Competent Authority has also approved balcony screens to be installed in units in the development. Drawings and specifications of the approved balcony screens are [as follows/set out at Appendix A]. [Developer to insert/append drawings and specifications of the balcony screen]
2. You have the option to install the approved balcony screen for the balcony of the Unit by the time the developer delivers vacant possession of the Unit to you. The balcony screens will be installed *free of charge / at an additional cost of _____ [to insert cost of pre-installing balcony screens] to be paid by way of _____ [to insert mode of payment, e.g. cheque or cashier’s order] drawn in favour of _____ [to insert the name of Vendor’s project account opened with bank or finance company] and to be paid by the date the duly signed Sale and Purchase Agreement is returned to us.
** Delete whichever is inapplicable.*
3. Please complete the form below this letter and submit the duly completed form to us together with the duly signed Sale & Purchase Agreement.
4. Please note that if you opt to install the approved balcony screen for the balcony of the Unit, the approved balcony screen shall be deemed to be included as one of the items to be provided for the Unit under the Specifications of the Sale and Purchase Agreement for the Unit.
5. In the event you sub-sell the Unit before legal completion, you shall inform any sub-purchaser(s) to whom you may sell the Unit of the terms of this letter and you shall procure the agreement of the sub-purchaser(s) to the terms of this letter.
6. Please note Clause _____ [to insert relevant clause number as stated in the Sale and Purchase Agreement] of the Sale and Purchase Agreement which is reproduced below:

***Roofing Over/Enclosing Private Enclosed Space, Open Terrace,
Roof Garden and Balcony***

The Purchaser acknowledges that he is aware that the private enclosed space(s) and/or open terrace(s) and/or roof garden(s) and/or balcony(ies) in the Unit (collectively known as the "Open-Air Spaces") (if any) are designed and intended to be open to the sky/Open-Air Spaces and that the Purchaser shall therefore not be entitled to cause or require the Open-Air Spaces (if any) to be roofed over or enclosed in any manner or form unless the prior written approvals of the relevant competent authority and the Vendor or the management corporation (when formed) are first obtained, nor shall he be entitled to raise objections to the fact that the Open-Air Spaces (if any) is/are open to the sky.

7. If you have any queries as to the interpretation or import of the matters set out in this letter, you should seek the advice of your solicitors.
8. Please acknowledge receipt of this letter on the duplicate copy.

Yours faithfully

for [Name of Developer]

To: [Name of Developer]

I/We* hereby acknowledge receipt of this letter dated [developer to insert date of letter] prior to making payment of the booking fee for the grant of option for the Unit.

In respect of the option to install the approved balcony screen for the balcony of the Unit on the terms set out in the [developer's name] letter dated [date],
[Please [tick/check/select/etc] the [relevant box/option/etc] below.]

- I/We* want the approved balcony screen installed for the balcony of the Unit.
- I/We* do not want the approved balcony screen installed for the balcony of the Unit.

Date: _____

(For individual)

Name:
NRIC/Passport No.:

Name:
NRIC/Passport No.:

or

(For Company)

Name / NRIC or Passport No:

Designation:
For and on behalf of:
Company Stamp:

* Delete whichever is inapplicable.

Appendix 4 – Guidelines for the Provision of Private Outdoor Spaces

GFA Treatment	Computed as GFA under the Balcony Bonus GFA scheme
GFA Quantum (new)	Bonus GFA capped at 7% above the Master Plan GPR Control
Balcony Openness	Balconies should have a continuous perimeter opening of at least 40%
Balcony Size (new)	Total balcony size for each dwelling unit capped at 15% of the internal nett unit size
Balcony Width (new)	Minimum width of 1.5m as measured from the external building wall
Balcony Access	Balcony should not take exclusive access from the kitchen or service area. Service balconies, which are commonly provided at the utility areas for the purpose of drying clothes, will not qualify for Balcony Bonus GFA.
Balcony Screen	<p>Designed upfront and submitted with the development application for URA's approval.</p> <p>Screening for private outdoor spaces is allowed if it (a) can be drawn open or retracted fully and (b) allows for natural ventilation/air flow within the private outdoor space at all times, even when the screening is fully drawn</p>
Information for Home-buyers on Balcony Screens (new)	<p>Install a full-sized approved screening in the show unit of the development, if a sales gallery and/or show unit are erected for the development</p> <p>Explicitly state in the unit floor plan in Form 3 that "Balconies are not to be enclosed except with a balcony screen which has been approved and complies with the Competent Authority's guidelines"</p> <p>Provide purchasers of units the option to have the approved screening pre-installed at their private outdoor spaces. This option is to be offered via a side letter at the point of issuance of the Option to Purchase.</p>

<p>PES / PRT Covering</p>	<p>To provide a minimum covering of 2m in depth along the external wall of the unit abutting the PES / PRT. Alternatively, provide a design solution that protect users of the PES / PRT without compromising the open and outdoor character of the PES / PRT.</p> <p>Full covers over the entire PES can be allowed provided they comply with development control parameters such as building setback and site coverage. Full covers over the entire PRT can be allowed provided the development complies with the storey height controls applicable.</p> <p>The design of the covering provided should facilitate easy maintenance and avoid accumulation of litter which could cause nuisance to other units.</p>
<p>PES Enclosure or Fencing</p>	<p>Any PES enclosure or fencing that defines the extent of the PES is not to exceed 1m in height</p>
<p>Construction Productivity Pre-requisites</p>	<p>Development¹⁰ is to comply with the following construction productivity pre-requisites:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 80% of the bathrooms are PBUs 2. Achieves a buildable design score of at least <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) 90 points for GFA ≥ 25,000sqm b) 87 points for 5,000sqm ≤ GFA < 25,000sqm c) 82 points for 2,000sqm ≤ GFA < 5,000sqm

¹⁰ Applicable to all new building projects with GFA of 2,000m² or more.