

Circular No : URA/PB/2019/11-DCG
Our Ref : DC/ADMIN/CIRCULAR/PB_19
Date : 5 July 2019

CIRCULAR TO PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTES

Who should know

Developers, architects and engineers

Effective date

With immediate effect

REFINEMENTS TO GROSS FLOOR AREA (GFA) RULES TO FACILITATE MORE EFFICIENT CALCULATION OF GFA

1. URA has refined the GFA rules for sky terraces, pedestrian linkages, balconies and mechanical & electrical (M&E) spaces. The refinements take into account industry feedback on the need for more efficient calculation of GFA, by enhancing the clarity and objectivity of the GFA rules.
2. The criteria that have been refined are summarised in [Appendix 1](#). Please refer to the [URA Development Control handbooks](#) for the complete list of criteria and the most updated guidelines and procedures.
3. The refinements to the GFA rules will apply with immediate effect to all development applications. In the event a floor space was previously approved as GFA but is no longer counted as GFA under the current refinements, the approved GFA could be used to off-set any additional floor space proposed under an amendment or additions/alterations submission, until the 'credit' GFA is exhausted. However, such proposals to utilise the 'credit' GFA will be assessed based on planning considerations applicable to the context of the site, for example traffic impact.
4. I would appreciate it if you could convey the contents of this circular to the relevant members of your organisation. 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.
5. 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.

Thank you.

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Appendix 1 – Refinements to GFA rules (changes reflected in bold)

1. Sky Terraces

Area that can be exempted

The floor area of a sky terrace which can be excluded from GFA computation is defined by the 45-degree line taken from the underside of any permanent or opaque structure, and not from the underside of a drop panel (see Figure 1). The 45-degree GFA exemption line can be **applied to all external parapet walls (including recessed external parapet walls) surrounding the sky terrace** (see Figure 2).

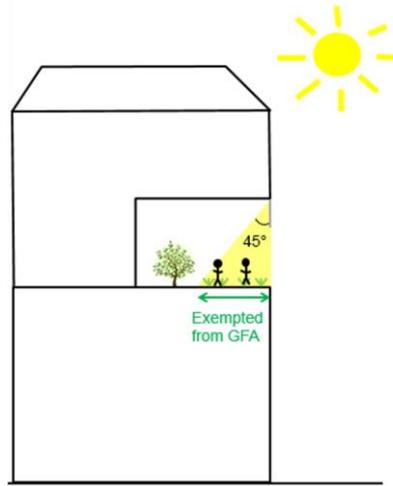


Figure 1

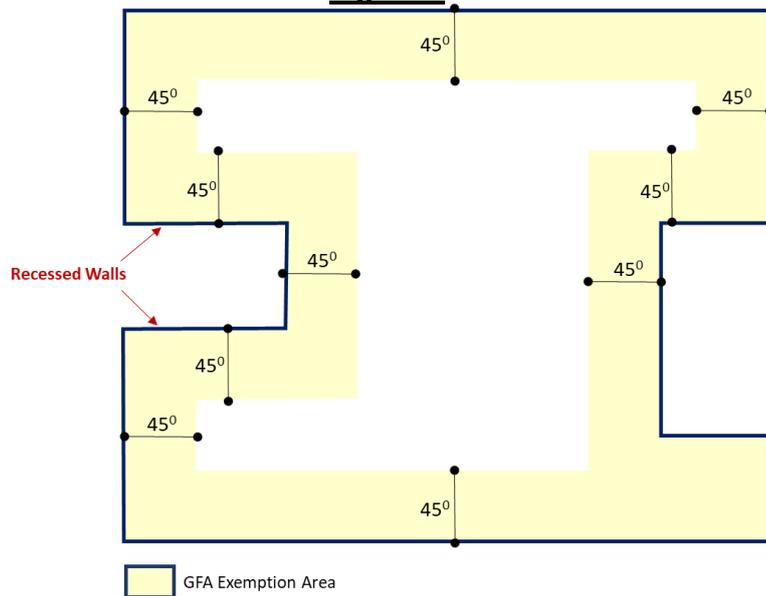


Figure 2

Criteria for GFA exemption

- To be exempted from GFA, the sky terrace must satisfy the following:
- It is lushly landscaped;
 - It is used for communal activities and access to the sky terrace is taken from common areas of the building; and
 - At least 40% of the perimeter wall of sky terrace must **not exceed 1.3m in height** for the perimeter to be considered “open”.

Barrier-Free Access (BFA) and Fire-Escape Corridors	Unenclosed BFA and fire escape corridors are GFA-exempt for all sky terraces regardless of size , as long as they lie within the 45-degree exemption area, subject to the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The corridor serves the sky terrace; and At least 40% of the perimeter wall of sky terrace must not exceed 1.3m in height for the perimeter to be considered “open”.
Sky Terraces outside 45-degree line	Additional residual GFA for sky terraces outside the 45-degree line may be exempted, up to a cap of 20% of the area of the floor plate, subject to the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sky terrace within the 45-degree line occupies at least 60% of the floor plate; The residual area eligible for GFA exemption forms an integral part of the sky terrace, remain unenclosed, communal and non-commercial in nature. Residual areas which serve as corridor spaces to residential units, commercial units or other ancillary/ complementary areas will not qualify for GFA exemption; and At least 60% of the perimeter wall of sky terrace must not exceed 1.3m in height for the perimeter to be considered “open”.

2. Pedestrian Linkages

a. Covered walkways¹

Height	The soffit height of covered walkways is 3.6m. Refer to the handbook for guidelines if a higher ceiling or soffit height is proposed.		
Width	The various minimum widths of covered walkways to be exempted from GFA have been rationalised and simplified depending on the location of the site and proximity to transport nodes, as summarised below. However, these are subject to urban design guidelines for selected locations with higher footfall e.g. Central Area, Regional Centres and Key Growth Areas. For walkways wider than the minimum requirement, the GFA exemption may be considered based on the merits of the proposal.		
	Types of Linkage	Minimum Overall Width	Minimum Clear Width
	Walkways within Central Area or 200m of MRT stations / major transport nodes	3.6	3m
	Walkways between 200 – 400m of MRT stations / major transport nodes	3m	2.4m
	All other walkways	2.4m	2m
Location & Design	<p>Covered walkways shall be provided at the periphery of the buildings next to or facing public roads.</p> <p>The walkways shall be continuous, providing connections into the interior of the building, open space or open walkway. All ramps leading into the interior of the building shall begin outside the covered walkway.</p> <p>Covered walkways shall be seamlessly connected to adjoining developments. Covered linkways shall be provided between non-party wall developments.</p>		

¹ Covered walkways in the Central Area may be guided by urban design requirements. These will take precedence over the standard development control parameters.

	<p>All level differences within the covered walkways shall be mitigated with ramps and not steps. For covered linkways between developments, steps are only allowed for steep gradient where ramping is not possible.</p> <p>Covered walkways shall be kept free from all obstructions. All building services and services which may cause obstruction when maintenance works are being carried out shall be located within the building.</p>
Platform Level	The platform level of covered walkways shall match the platform level of the open walkways. Refer to the handbook for details.

b. Through-block Links

Location	The link to be exempted from GFA must run through a building block and directly connect two parcels of public areas i.e. main road (exclude service road and backlane), public pedestrian promenade /mall and public open space/landscaped area.
Number	Additional through-block links may be supported if suitable justification is provided.
Width	The internal clear width of link should generally be more than 4m and less than 7m. For walkways that are more than 7m wide, the GFA exemption may be considered based on the merits of the proposal.
Design	<p>Changes in the floor levels of the linkage shall be accommodated by ramps.</p> <p>There is no need for a through view of the pedestrian link, so long as the linkage provides a direct link between two public areas.</p>
Opening hours	The link must be kept open at all times for public use. Clear and prominent signages with minimum size of 4sqm are to be displayed above the entrances to inform the public that the linkage is open 24 hours for pedestrian circulation

c. Elevated Links connecting to Pedestrian Overhead Bridge

Width	To qualify for GFA exemption, the minimum width of the link for connections to pedestrian overhead bridges is 2.5m
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d. Underground Links

Location	Potential locations for the construction of underground pedestrian links include basement level connections between existing or future RTS stations and adjacent developments.
Allowable Uses & Width	<p>To qualify for GFA exemption, the underground pedestrian link is to have a clear pedestrian walkway width of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 6m to 7m for links without or with activity-generating uses (e.g. shops and restaurants) on only one side. ii. Minimum 7m for links with activity-generating uses (e.g. shops and restaurants) on both sides. iii. For walkways that are more than 7m wide, the GFA exemption may be considered based on the merits of the proposal.
Height and Depth	<p>To qualify for GFA exemption:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The walkway is to have a clear minimum ceiling height of 4m; and ii. Activity-generating uses can be allowed up to a maximum total depth of 14m.

Opening hours	Open during operating hours of the RTS station / normal business operation hours for public use, with signage indicating opening hours provided at the entrances of the link
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3. Balconies

GFA Treatment	Computed as GFA under the Balcony Bonus GFA scheme
GFA Quantum	Bonus GFA capped at 7% above the Master Plan GPR Control
Balcony Openness	Balconies should have a continuous perimeter opening of at least 40%. The portions of a balcony that face a parapet wall (e.g. a wall between the balconies of two adjoining units) not exceeding 1.3m in height are considered “open”.
Balcony Size	Total balcony size for each dwelling unit capped at 15% of the internal nett unit size
Balcony Width	Minimum width of 1.5m as measured from the external building wall
Balcony Access	Balconies with exclusive access from the kitchen/yard/utility space are treated as service balconies and do not qualify for bonus GFA. Balconies which serve as the only access into a dwelling unit will not be able to qualify for bonus GFA.
Balcony Screen	Designed upfront and submitted with the development application for URA’s approval. 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.

4. M&E Spaces

M&E Floors with Limited Headroom	M&E floors or spaces with up to 1.8m headroom can be excluded from GFA computation.
M&E Rooms within Basement Carparks	All M&E rooms (including bin centres and electrical substations) within basement carparks will be excluded from GFA computation.