

A Sample Study on Gross Floor Area (GFA) Concessions Granted to Buildings

Background

Led by the Buildings Department, a Government inter-departmental working group (WG) conducted a sample study in 2006 on the GFA concessions granted to building development projects (the Study). The purpose is to gauge the level of GFA concessions granted over the years under the respective legislation and policies and examine whether measures should be introduced to control the granting of GFA concessions for the relevant features in light of the public concerns about the impact of such practices on the building height and bulk.

A total of 77 domestic/composite and 20 non-domestic sample buildings with approved building plans were selected and studied. The summary information derived from the Study has been presented in the Administration's submission to the LegCo Panel on Development in December 2008 as well as the Invitation for Response document published by the Council for Sustainable Development in June 2009 to aid the public discussion on the subject ("Building Design to Foster a Quality and Sustainable Built Environment"). For illustration, a table on the ranges of GFA concessions granted as a percentage over the total GFA of these buildings as contained on the LegCo Panel on Development paper ref. no. CB(1)396/08-09(05) is reproduced at **Annex A**. This note provides further information on the sample buildings.

The Buildings

At the time of the Study, 61 out of the 97 sampled buildings had been completed with occupation permits issued. In other words, the data captured in the Study in respect of these buildings reflected the as-built conditions. Data on the other 36 buildings were based on the approved building plans at that time and it is not uncommon for the developers to apply for amendments to such plans before construction begins. That is to say, the ultimate as-built conditions of these 36 sampled buildings may not be the same as the data captured in the Study.

Building-specific information on the aforementioned 61 buildings which had been completed and issued with occupation permits when the Study was conducted is summarized in **Annex B**. Their building plans are available for public inspection in the Buildings Department (BD)'s Building Information Centre upon payment of prescribed fees.

Annex C shows the information on 23 other buildings covered in the Study which were completed and issued with occupation permits after the completion of the Study. As building amendment plans in respect of them were submitted and approved after the completion of the Study, and the buildings were built according to the amended plans, the data captured in the Study may not therefore reflect the actual existing situation. It is therefore inappropriate to disclose the identity of the buildings.

The remaining 13 buildings have yet to be completed. According to the prevailing policy, the Building Authority could not permit public inspection of any plans or documents (and the information on such) of such buildings until they have been completed. Their information is thus not included in this note.

Methodology of Study

A total of 402 domestic/composite and 72 non-domestic developments submitted to the Building Authority for approval between January 2001 and April 2006 were taken as the basis for selection in the Study. A random sample of domestic/composite developments equivalent to 10% of the cases falling within each density zoning¹ was then taken for detailed analysis. As regards non-domestic developments, a random sample equivalent to 20% of the cases was taken. In order to provide more useful data for analysis purpose, an addition of 7 domestic/composite developments which had previously been examined under the Hong Kong 2030 Study, 30 domestic/composite developments having plot ratio of 5 or above and another 5 non-domestic recent developments were included. Thus a total of 77

¹ Residential Zones 1, 2 and 3 are specified in Chapter 2 of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. Simply speaking, they generally correspond to high, medium and low density residential developments.

domestic/composite and 20 non-domestic developments were included in the sample Study.

A sample database of GFA concessions granted for these 97 developments was compiled with reference to the approved plans at the time of the Study. The information contained in the database includes the level of each type of GFA concessions, i.e. bonus GFA, disregarded GFA and exempted GFA as well as the description of the building developments and the site parameters.

General Observations

The general observations derived from the Study are:

- (a) Bonus GFA is the least commonly granted concession. Only 25 cases (14 domestic and 11 non-domestic) out of the sample cases included some elements of bonus GFA. There is also a statutory cap of 20% stipulated under the Building (Planning) Regulations;
- (b) Building developments with small site areas tended to have a high percentage of car parking and access area to the total GFA of the buildings due to the less efficient car-parking layout when compared to buildings with larger site areas. This has resulted in a higher percentage of the disregarded GFA of car-parking facilities in these developments;
- (c) In some small-scale developments where the GFA of the developments per se is small, the percentage of GFA concessions would be high. This may be due to the fact that there are minimum size requirements for the essential facilities and features;
- (d) GFA concessions up to 23% may be needed for the provision of most of the green and amenity features (including sky/podium gardens and recreational facilities);
- (e) The car-parking requirement for private housing in low to medium density zones will likely be lower whilst that for the high density zones, more car parking spaces will be required if the average flat

size is larger and/or the development site is outside the 500m-radius of rail station, which are both factors affecting the number of carparking spaces required under the car-parking standard in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines; and

- (f) As compared to domestic buildings, the level of GFA concessions in non-domestic buildings is generally lower and has fewer variations in the sample cases.

Development Bureau
October 2009

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Extract of Paper of Legislative Council Panel on Development (19 December 2008)[△]

**Ranges of GFA Concessions Granted
as a Percentage over Actual GFA of Sample Buildings**

GFA concessions	Domestic/Composite Buildings						Non-domestic	
	Residential Zone 1		Residential Zone 2		Residential Zone 3			
	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average
Bonus*	0-10%	1%	Nil		Nil		1%-17%	4%
Disregarded (Carparks)	0%-37%	13%	4%-111% [#]	42%	6%-64%	32%	0%-33%	12%
Other Disregarded (e.g. plant rooms, etc other than carparks)	3%-17%	9%	4%-17%	10%	3%-33%	11%	6%-29%	15%
Exempted (e.g. green & amenity features)	3%-29%	17%	9%-24%	15%	2%-19%	14%	0.3%-15%	6%
	Total	40%	Total	67%	Total	57%	Total	37%

Note:

[△] This table is an extract from the paper of the Legislative Council Panel on Development issued at the meeting of 19 December 2008 (Ref. CB(1)396/08-09(05)). Readers who are interested to read the paper in full could access it through the Legislative Council's website: <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/dev/papers/dev1219cb1-396-5-e.pdf>

* Bonus GFA was granted in 25 cases of the sample cases.

This figure corresponds to a case in Residential Zone 2 where the car-parking space alone occupies 111% of the actual GFA of the development (construction of the building has not yet begun and hence it is not included in Annex B or C).

“Exempted GFA” is granted pursuant to section 42(1) of the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123). The section stipulates that where in the opinion of the BA special circumstances render it desirable he may, on receipt of an application therefor and upon payment of the prescribed fee, permit by notice in writing modifications of the provisions of the Ordinance. The BA uses such power to grant GFA concessions for certain features, including green and amenity features. Examples include balcony, voids, etc. The criteria for granting exempted GFA for various features are stipulated in the relevant practice notes.

“Disregarded GFA” is stipulated in regulations 23(3)(b) and 23A(3) of the Building (Planning) Regulations (Cap. 123 sub. leg. F). The Building Authority (BA) may disregard any floor space that he is satisfied is constructed or intended to be used solely for a number of features such as parking of motor vehicles, refuse storage chambers, etc. or other supporting facilities as may be approved by the BA.

“Bonus GFA” is stipulated in regulation 22 of the Building (Planning) Regulation. If the dedication of set-back area for public passage or surrender of land for road widening at ground level is consented/acquired by the Government, bonus GFA that equals to five times the area surrendered/dedicated or less than 20% of the permissible plot ratio, whichever is the less, may be granted in return for the private area surrendered/dedicated to the public. The BA may also, in return for dedication of an area within or through a building at ground level or other floor levels for public passage, allow concessions by way of section 42(1) of the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123).

GFA Concessions of Sample Buildings
Completed and Issued with Occupation Permits at the Time of the Study on GFA Concessions

Building Name and Address		Usage	Residential Zone	GFA Concession			
				% of Bonus GFA	% of Disregarded GFA (Carparks)	% of Other Disregarded GFA (e.g. plant rooms etc. other than carparks)	% of Exempted GFA (e.g. green & amenity features)
1	Ivy on Belcher's 26 Belcher's Street, Kennedy Town, HK	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	0%	11%	17%
2	The Merton, Blocks 1&2 38 New Praya, Kennedy Town, HK	Domestic/ Composite	1	10%	14%	7%	22%
3	Queen's Terrace 1 Queen Street, Sheung Wan, HK	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	12%	4%	3%
4	60 Victoria Road, HK	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	15%	9%	14%
5	Elite's Place 80 Ko Shing Street, HK	Domestic/ Composite	1	1%	0%	7%	13%
6	Centre Place 1 High Street, HK	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	1%	9%	26%

Building Name and Address		Usage	Residential Zone	GFA Concession			
				% of Bonus GFA	% of Disregarded GFA (Carparks)	% of Other Disregarded GFA (e.g. plant rooms etc. other than carparks)	% of Exempted GFA (e.g. green & amenity features)
7	Grand Promenade 38 Tai Hong Street, HK	Domestic/ Composite	1	8%	22% ^[1]	9%	23%
8	The Zenith Phase 2 258 Queen's Road East, HK	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	27%	13%	14%
9	The Orchards 3 Greig Road, HK	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	19%	14%	23%
10	Paradise Square 3 Kwong Wa Street, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	1	5%	31%	8%	11%
11	8 Waterloo 8 Waterloo Road, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	1	9%	12%	6%	9%
12	The Pacifica 9 Sham Shing Road, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	16%	4%	12%
13	18 Farm Road 18 Farm Road, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	25%	8%	9%
14	Harbourfront Landmark 11 Wan Hoi Street, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	10%	8%	7%

Building Name and Address		Usage	Residential Zone	GFA Concession			
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15	8 Clear Water Bay Road, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	1	10%	11% ^[2]	8%	15%
16	Hilary Court 63G Bonham Road, HK	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	37%	16%	11%
17	Victoria Tower 188 Canton Road, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	1	2%	9%	10%	9%
18	The Zenith Phase 1 3 Wan Chai Road, HK	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	3%	10%	15%
19	Sky Tower 38 Sung Wong Toi Road, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	1	4%	20%	7%	16%
20	The Arch 1 Austin Road West, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	14%	12%	17%
21	The Grandiose 9 Tong Chun Street, NT	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	15%	12%	13%
22	One Silversea 18 Hoi Fai Road, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	26%	14%	21%

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23	Mount Davis 33 33 Ka Wai Man Rd., HK	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	28%	10%	20%
24	The Centre Stage 108 Hollywood Road and 1-17 Bridges Street, HK	Domestic/ Composite	1	1%	16%	7%	23%
25	The Merton, Block 3 8 Davis Street, HK	Domestic/ Composite	1	2%	16%	4%	18%
26	2 Park Road, HK	Domestic/ Composite	1	2%	23%	4%	18%
27	Chelsea Court 100 Yeung Uk Road, NT	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	15%	13%	8%
28	Hampton Place 11 Hoi Fan Road, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	20%	7%	13%
29	Metro Regalia 51 Tong Mi Road, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	0%	3%	16%
30	Residence Oasis 15 Pui Shing Road, NT	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	20% ^[3]	8%	20%

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31	The Lodge 535 Canton Road, Kowloon.	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	0%	10%	15%
32	New Haven 363 Sha Tsui Road, NT	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	14%	12%	6%
33	Metro Harbour View 8 Fuk Lee Street, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	1	0%	12%	9%	6%
34	Bowen's Lookout 13 Bowen Road, HK	Domestic/ Composite	2	0%	50%	14%	13%
35	The Palace 83 Broadcast Drive, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	2	0%	38%	11%	10%
36	The Sky Garden 223 Prince Edward Road West, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	2	0%	48%	8%	14%
37	Noble Hill 38 Ma Sik Road, NT	Domestic/ Composite	2	0%	4%	7%	18%
38	Aegean Coast 2 Kwun Tsing Road, NT	Domestic/ Composite	2	0%	32%	5%	8%

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39	The Cliveden 98 Route Twisk, NT	Domestic/ Composite	2	0%	75%	13%	17%
40	15 Homantin Hill 15 Ho Man Tin Hill Road, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	2	0%	46%	5%	24%
41	Royal Green 18 Ching Hiu Road, NT	Domestic/ Composite	2	0%	0%	4%	18%
42	89 Repulse Bay Road, HK	Domestic/ Composite	3	0%	7%	8%	4%
43	78 Mount Kellett Road, HK	Domestic/ Composite	3	0%	62%	33%	17%
44	One Beacon Hill 1 Beacon Hill Road, Kowloon.	Domestic/ Composite	3	0%	34%	13%	13%
45	Grandville 2 Lok Kwai Path, NT	Domestic/ Composite	3	0%	64%	8%	23%
46	South Hillcrest 3 Tuen Kwai Road, NT	Domestic/ Composite	3	0%	7%	5%	13%

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47	BeneVille 18 Tuen Kwai Road, NT	Domestic/ Composite	3	0%	9%	7%	11%
48	The Aegean 2 Tsing Fat Street, NT	Domestic/ Composite	3	0%	60%	14%	17%
49	Royal View Hotel 353 Castle Peak Road, NT	Domestic/ Composite	3	0%	6%	4%	2%
50	Caldecott Hill 2 Caldecott Road, Kowloon	Domestic/ Composite	3	0%	34%	3%	22%
51	Grosvenor Place 117 Repulse Bay Road, HK	Domestic/ Composite	3	0%	34%	15%	24%
52	AIA Central (Former AIG Tower) 1 Connaught Road, HK	Non-domestic	n/a	13%	10%	22%	12%
53	Tai Tung Building 8 Fleming Road, HK	Non-domestic	n/a	1%	3%	16%	4%
54	Three Pacific Place 1 Queen's Road East, HK	Non-domestic	n/a	4%	13%	17%	15%

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55	One Peking 1 Peking Road, Kowloon	Non-domestic	n/a	0%	26%	24%	6%
56	Harbourview Horizon 12 Hung Lok Road, Kowloon	Non-domestic	n/a	0%	4%	9%	4%
57	Novotel Citygate 51 Man Tung Road, NT	Non-domestic	n/a	0%	3%	26%	7%
58	HSBC Headquarters 1 Queen's Road Central, HK	Non-domestic	n/a	17%	2%	10%	8%
59	Entertainment Building 30 Queen's Road Central, HK	Non-domestic	n/a	11%	0%	16%	4%
60	Olympia Plaza 255 King's Road, HK	Non-domestic	n/a	2%	12%	11%	0.3%
61	One IFC 1 Harbour View Street, HK	Non-domestic	n/a	0%	14%	14%	8%

^[1] Including 6% for public transport terminus

^[2] Including 5% for public transport terminus

^[3] Including 4% for public transport terminus

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GFA Concessions of Sample Buildings
Completed and Issued with Occupation Permits after the Study on GFA Concessions

Item No.	Usage	Residential Zone	GFA Concession			
			% of Bonus GFA	% of Disregarded GFA (Carparks)	% of Other Disregarded GFA (e.g. plant rooms etc. other than carparks)	% of Exempted GFA (e.g. green & amenity features)
1	Domestic/Composite	1	0%	7%	8%	19%
2	Domestic/Composite	1	0%	11%	7%	21%
3	Domestic/Composite	1	0%	17%	15%	14%
4	Domestic/Composite	1	6%	12%	12%	21%
5	Domestic/Composite	1	0%	14%	10%	21%
6	Domestic/Composite	1	0%	12%	9%	29%
7	Domestic/Composite	1	0%	0%	15%	22%
8	Domestic/Composite	1	1%	0%	15%	23%
9	Domestic/Composite	1	0%	0%	7%	20%
10	Domestic/Composite	1	0%	0%	3%	21%
11	Domestic/Composite	1	1%	0%	14%	18%
12	Domestic/Composite	1	0%	37%	12%	17%
13	Domestic/Composite	1	0%	20%	5%	22%
14	Domestic/Composite	2	0%	20%	17%	15%
15	Domestic/Composite	3	0%	38%	9%	10%

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			% of Bonus GFA	% of Disregarded GFA (Carparks)	% of Other Disregarded GFA (e.g. plant rooms etc. other than carparks)	% of Exempted GFA (e.g. green & amenity features)
16	Non-domestic	n/a	0%	4%	7%	4%
17	Non-domestic	n/a	0%	14%	11%	3%
18	Non-domestic	n/a	0%	18%	9%	9%
19	Non-domestic	n/a	3%	23%	6%	5%
20	Non-domestic	n/a	4%	22%	18%	5%
21	Non-domestic	n/a	11%	12%	9%	6%
22	Non-domestic	n/a	2%	33%	19%	6%
23	Non-domestic	n/a	0%	0%	9%	9%

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