

# GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLIC SPACES (POPS)



July 2016

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

As Singapore's urban landscape grows denser with a higher population, the provision of well-designed public spaces within private developments will complement the provision of the public parks and open spaces to promote city life and make Singapore a more attractive city to live, work and play in.

These guidelines are intended to provide clear and practical advice to architects, landscape architects, building owners and developers, so as to promote better design and management of public open space across Singapore.

### 1.1 WHAT IS A 'PRIVATELY-OWNED PUBLIC SPACE'?

Privately owned public spaces (POPS) are dedicated public spaces within private development.

Property owners and developers are required to provide public spaces at certain development sites. These include:

1. New sites where public spaces are required as part of the Technical Conditions of Tender for Government Land Sales site; and
2. Redevelopment sites where public spaces are required as part of the planning conditions for major Alterations & Additions works or redevelopment proposals. These include public space locations marked on URA's [Parks and Waterbodies Plan](#).

Property owners and developers may also voluntarily provide such public open spaces to offer amenity to their development and the surrounding area.

## 1.2 TYPES OF PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLIC SPACE

Every privately owned public open space should be designed to respond to the design intent of the overall development as well as the surrounding context.

The most common types of privately owned public spaces are:

**City Rooms** Covered public spaces located at the 1<sup>st</sup> storey of the building. They function as spaces for respite within the dense urban built environment.

**Plazas** Outdoor public spaces that are typically paved, and defined on two or more sides by buildings.

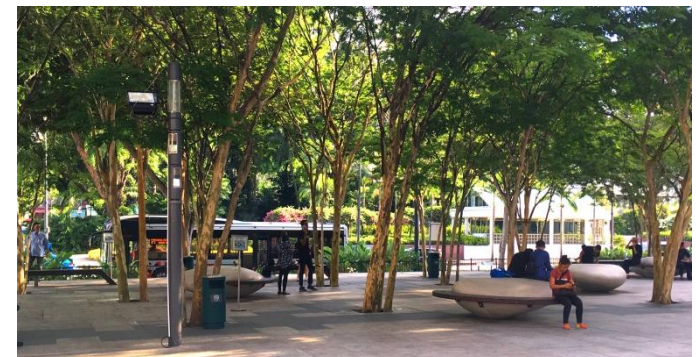
**Urban Parks** These spaces function as green lungs for the city while enhancing the attractiveness of surrounding buildings.



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Images: 1 Asia Square, © Asia Square,  
2 ION Orchard, © STB

3 Plaza Singapura, © URA

## 2.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES

The design guidelines are set out to safeguard the quality of privately-owned public spaces and ensure that these spaces are well-utilised and serve as meaningful places for people for enjoy.

The guidelines set out to ensure that POPS are:

1. Integrated with the overall form of the development;
2. Accessible to all users and well connected to the surrounding area;
3. Comfortable to use throughout the day and in a variety of weather conditions;
4. Well provided with amenities to encourage active and passive recreation; and
5. Safe and secure for all users.

With the design guidelines as basic principles, designers should exercise creativity to create delightful public spaces through choice of materials (including colours and textures), the use of water elements, lighting to design light and shadows, as well as integration and placement of engaging street furniture and art works.

The guidelines cover six key areas:

1. Planning and Layout;
2. Access and Circulation;
3. User Comfort;
4. Landscaping;
5. Amenities; and
6. Signage

The recommendations included in this document serve as a good practice design guide and should not be considered as exhaustive.

For further reading on public space design, refer to **3.0 Further Reading**.

#### **APPLICATION OF THE GUIDELINES**

All property owners, developers and qualified professionals are encouraged to refer to and adopt the guidelines.

The Design Guidelines will be used in the assessment of Development Applications for the design of POPS.

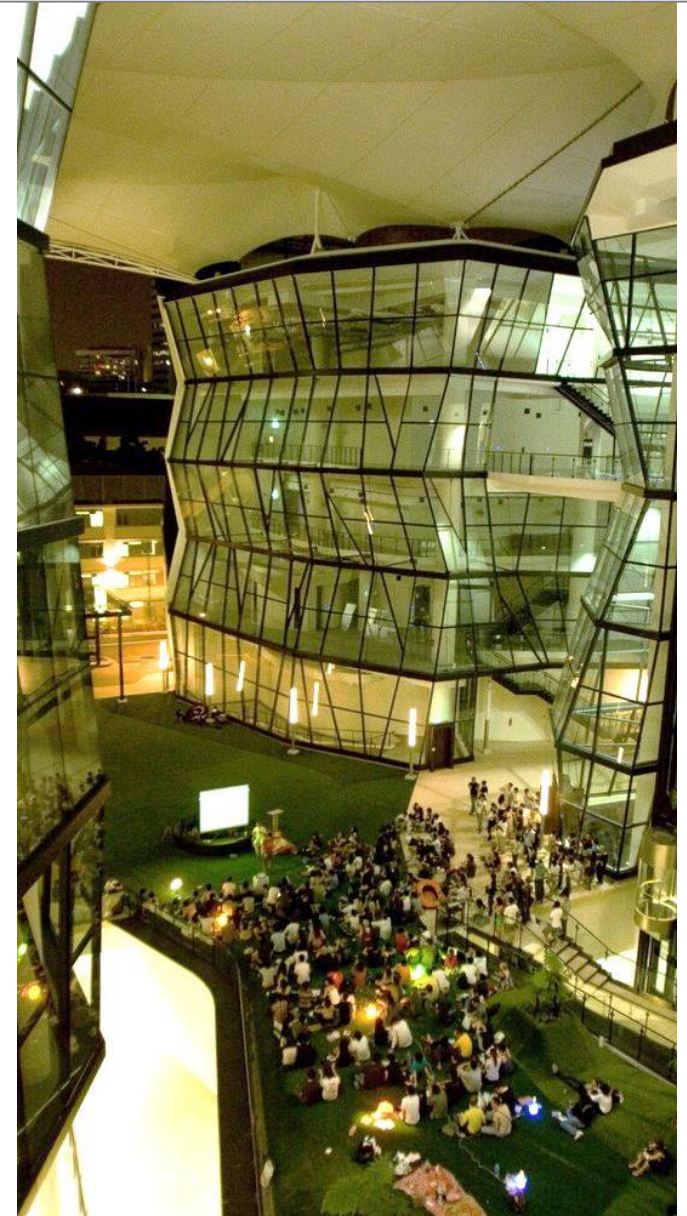


Image: Lasalle College of the Arts © Randy Loh

## 2.1 PLANNING + LAYOUT

The geometry and location of POPS should be considered upfront as part of the development during site planning. It should be an integral part of the overall form and architectural treatment of the development.

### 1. SIZE

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- POPS should be large enough to improve the amenity of the area and be a meaningful space for users.
- As a guide, the total size of the POPS should be equal to (or greater than):
  - *1sqm of public space area for every 50sqm of total GFA of the development; or*
  - *25% of the 1st storey built footprint.*
- The following areas should be excluded from calculation of POPS area:  
*Covered Walkways, Footpaths (within Road Reserve), Outdoor Refreshment Areas (ORA), and Vehicular Driveways*
- POPS which are sheltered should have high volume of at least 2 storeys or an appropriate height in proportion to its size.

### 2. LOCATION

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- The public space frontage should be open and un-obstructed to allow for easy pedestrian access and good visibility from the adjoining street /pedestrian thoroughfare.

### 3. CONFIGURATION / SHAPE

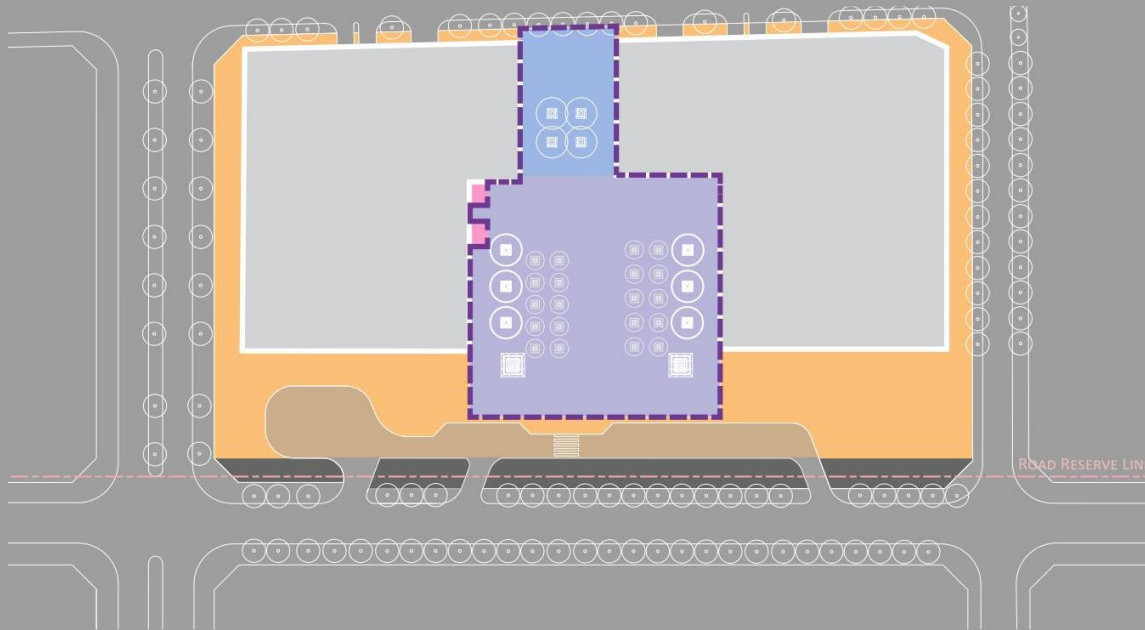
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- At least 75% of the total POPS area should consist of a contiguous space which is regular in shape.

### 4. OPEN SPACE

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- POPS should provide an open space (free of permanent furniture) designed for passive recreation and temporary event use.
- The open space should generally be equal to (or greater than) 50% of the POPS area.

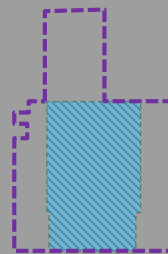
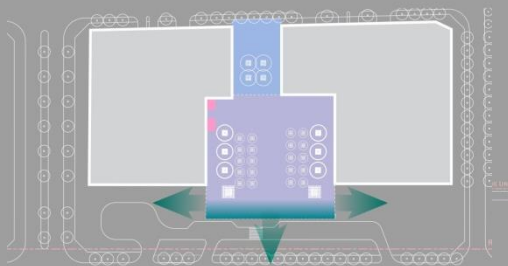


- COVERED WALKWAY
- COVERED DRIVEWAY
- OPEN WALKWAY
- ORA/ODAs
- BUILDING OUTLINE

- POPS AREA BOUNDARY
- MAIN SPACE OF POPS  
AT LEAST 75% OF THE TOTAL POPS AREA SHOULD CONSIST OF CONTIGUOUS SPACE WHICH IS REGULAR IN SHAPE.
- FIXED FURNITURE/LANDSCAPE
- MOVABLE FURNITURE/LANDSCAPE

**LOCATION**  
UNOBSTRUCTED STREET FRONTAGE

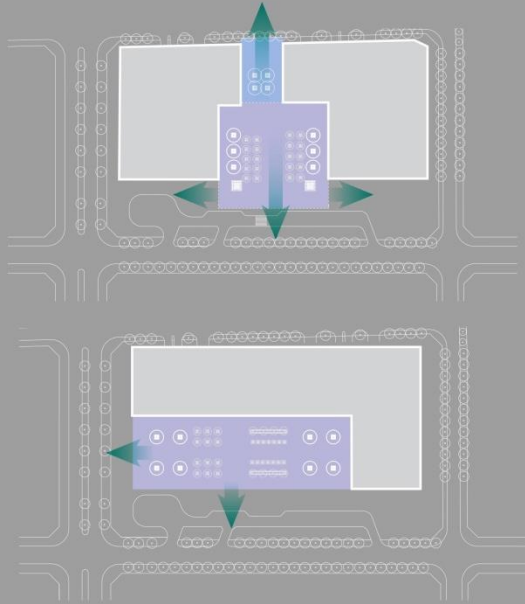
**OPEN SPACE**  
OPEN SPACE SHOULD BE EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN 50% OF TOTAL POPS



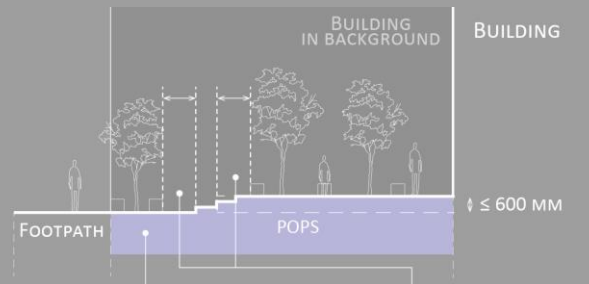
- EVENT SPACE  
(MOVABLE FURNITURE CAN BE REMOVED FOR EVENTS)

ACCESS POINTS

A MINIMUM OF 2 ENTRY/EXIT POINTS



LEVEL CHANGES



STREET FRONTAGE/ ACCESS POINT AT THE SAME PLATFORM LEVEL AS ADJOINING FOOTPATH

KEEP AN UNOBSTRUCTED AREA ADJACENT TO THE PLATFORM CHANGE

DIAGRAMS ARE NOT DRAWN TO SCALE.

## 2.2 ACCESS + CIRCULATION

The POPS should be accessible to all users and well-connected to the adjoining street/ pedestrian thoroughfare and neighbouring buildings. The access and circulation within POPS should be barrier-free and comply with BCA’s universal design guidelines.

It should not be enclosed or fenced in and should be open to public at all times.

### 1. ACCESS POINTS

- POPS should have a minimum of 2 public entry/exit points.
- The entry/exit points should ideally be on opposite sides of the space and located to provide the most direct connection to pedestrian thoroughfares and any nearby public transport options.

### 2. PATHS

- POPS should have pedestrian paths connecting the access points to building entries and design features/amenities within the POPS area.
- The paths should be extensive and without ‘dead-ends’.

### 3. LEVEL CHANGES

- Access points should be at the same platform level as the adjoining footpath.
- Where a level change is required and/or proposed for the POPS:
  - An unobstructed area adjoining to the platform change is to be provided;
  - Any single level change should not be greater than +/- 600mm.

### 4. PEDESTRIAN VS VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

- POPS should be ‘pedestrian only’ zones.
- Where a vehicle drop-off point and/or car park access ramps is located adjacent to the POPS, pedestrian crossing points should be provided and clearly marked.
- Overall site planning should consider pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular movements and ensure that these are co-ordinated and de-conflicted to ensure safety and convenience for all users at peak periods.

## 2.3 USER COMFORT

POPS should be designed to provide users with comfort throughout the day and in a variety of weather conditions.

### 1. SHADE

- POPS should be well shaded to encourage public use throughout the day.
- Shade can be provided by integration within the building footprint, or by adjoining or adjacent buildings, trees, canopies/pergolas, adjustable umbrellas/awnings, and/or landscape elements.
- Sun shadow study is to be undertaken to demonstrate that sufficient shade is provided between 9 am and 4 pm. Shadow diagrams are to be studied for shadow cast on 21 June: at 9am, 12pm and 4pm. For each shadow diagram:
  - At least 50% of the POPS area is to be shaded; and
  - At least 50% of POPS seating is to be shaded.

### 2. LIGHTING

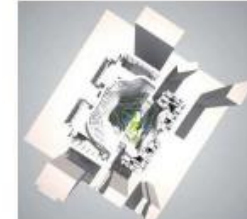
- POPS should be attractively lit to create an environment which is welcoming and safe.
- Spaces should ideally be naturally lit during daylight hours and be artificially lit until 10pm to encourage night time use of the space.
- Night lighting should complement the overall lighting design for the development, and be guided by any prevailing night lighting guidelines for the area.
- Where the POPS is located within a Mixed Use Development and adjacent to/visible from residential units, night lighting design should maintain the amenity of residents and ensure that light is directed away from residential units.

### EXAMPLE OF SHADOW DIAGRAMS

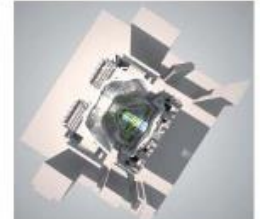
SOURCE: MARINA ONE DAP 2 REPORT, GUSTAFSON PORTER



9 AM  
95% SHADED POPS AREA  
100% SHADED SEATING



12 PM  
50% SHADED POPS AREA  
75% SHADED SEATING



4 PM  
90% SHADED POPS AREA  
90% SHADED SEATING

Image © Gustafson Porter

### 3. VENTILATION

- POPS should be naturally ventilated and orientated to optimise prevailing wind conditions and create a comfortable, passively cooled environment throughout the day.
- Where necessary consider use of outdoor fans/mist systems to supplement passive cooling.

### 4. NOISE

- POPS should be protected from major external noise sources.
- Where necessary consider using water features and landscape elements to mask unwanted external noise.

### 5. EXHAUST VENTILATION DUCTS

- Exhaust ventilation ducts should not be located within or fronting POPS.
- These should be located and integrated within the building envelope and discharged away from public areas.



## 2.4 LANDSCAPING

POPS should be lushly landscaped, to achieve Singapore’s aspirations to be a ‘City in a Garden’.

### 1. AREA OF SOFTSCAPE / HARDSCAPE

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- POPS should include both softscape (grass, planter beds, trees) and hardscape (paving) elements to suit the development typology and the site context.
- The recommended areas of softscape are:
  - 10-20% of the POPS areas which are covered and/or planned for large scale/regular events use; and
  - 20-40% of the POPS areas which are open-to-the-sky.
- POPS which comprise predominantly hardscape should include vertical greenery.

### 2. SOFTSCAPE

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#### Trees

- POPS should include trees to provide shade in spaces which are open-to-the-sky.
- Spaces which are open-to-the-sky should include 1 tree/100sqm of POPS area.
- Tree species should be selected to suit the site conditions and space typology, and to ensure long term sustainable growth.
- Trees can be planted in raised planters where POPs are located above basement spaces or drainage canals.

#### Grass

- Grass is encouraged in larger spaces which are planned for active recreation by local area residents/workers e.g. informal sporting use, kite flying, etc.

#### Planter Beds

- Where possible, planter beds should be flushed with the ground, or raised to no more than 400-500mm above the finished floor level to create additional ledge seating.

### 3. HARDSCAPE

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- Paving is encouraged in high-traffic areas/paths and for open spaces which are planned for large scale/regular events use.

## 2.5 AMENITIES

Amenities encourage people to stop, relax and enjoy the public space. Design of amenities should be inclusive to serve different uses and user groups.

### 1. BASIC AMENITIES

All POPS should include the following basic amenities:

#### A. Seating

- Seating should be located throughout the space and there should be a variety of seating to cater to different uses, age groups and physical abilities.
- As a guide, POPS should include at least 1 seat/20sqm of POPS area. (1 metre of bench/ledge = 2 seats).
- The different types of seating are: movable seating, and fixed seating such as seats and benches, walls, planter ledges, steps. As a guide:
  - No more than 15% of seating should be on steps or ledges; and
  - At least 50% of seats should have back and arm rests.
- Seats are to be made of durable and comfortable materials. Seats with materials which are highly heat absorbent should be located in shaded areas.

#### B. Bicycle Parking

- POPS should include bike racks directly adjacent but not within/inside the space.

### 2. ADDITIONAL AMENITIES

- Large POPS should consider additional amenities, such as:
  - Design Features : Public Art, Water Features
  - Furniture + Equipment: Movable Seating, Tables, Play/Exercise Equipment, Built-in Lighting and Audio Equipment for events
  - Services for Public Use: Drinking Fountains, Wi-Fi, Phone Charging Points
- As a guide, additional amenities should be provided as follows:

POPS Area	Additional Types of Amenities Req'd
500-1,000 sqm	1
1,000 – 2,000 sqm	2
Over 2,000 sqm	3

1



2



3



4



5



Images 1 © Asia Square; 3 © Travel Drafts; 2, 4, 5 © URA

## 2.6 SIGNAGE

The provision of clear, visible, and readable signage is essential to identify POPS as accessible to the public, and inform the public about the provider of the public space.

### 1. LOCATION

- An information plaque is to be installed at a visible and fixed location near the main entrance of the public space.

### 2. CONTENT

- The information plaque is to contain the following information:
  - Public Open Space logo measuring at least 30 cm by 30 cm;
  - “Open to public 24 hours” statement;
  - Public space owner and their contact information.

*See image on the right for example. Please refer to [Appendix 1-1 of Circular URA/PB/2017/02-PCUDG](#) on POPS Design Guidelines for template of the logo.*

- All text on the signage is to be highly contrasting with the background colour of the sign, at least 20mm in height, and in a highly legible font.

### 3. MATERIAL

- The signage must be constructed of highly durable materials such as metal or stone that are fully opaque and non-reflective.

POPS signage should be integrated with other signages within the development, and in the same vicinity where possible to reduce visual clutter.



### 3.0 FURTHER READING

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