



INFORMATION BULLETIN / PUBLIC - BUILDING CODE

REFERENCE NO.: L.A. Zoning Code 12.03

Effective: 5-17-79

DOCUMENT NO. **P/BC 2002-021**

Revised: 11-1-02

Previously Issued As: MGD 107

CALCULATING FLOOR AREA

A. Purpose:

To provide guidelines for the calculation of floor area as applied throughout the Zoning Code and, in particular, to clarify permissible assumptions which may be applied to floor area calculations used for parking requirements.

To illustrate the distinction between the enforcement of the Building Code and the Zoning Code in the application of floor area.

B. Code:

Sec. 12.03 of the Zoning Code defines floor area:

Is that area in square feet confined within the exterior walls of a building, but not including the area of the following: exterior walls, stairways, shafts, rooms housing building-operating equipment or machinery, parking areas with associated driveways and ramps, space for the landing and storage of helicopters, and basement storage areas.

Sec. 12.21.1-A, 5 provides:

In computing the total floor area within a building, the gross area confined within the exterior walls within a building shall be considered as the floor area of that floor of the building, except for the space devoted to stairways, elevator shafts, light courts, rooms housing mechanical equipment incidental to the operation of buildings, and outdoor eating areas of ground floor restaurants.

C. Determination:

When applying Sec. 12.03 for parking considerations, the area of rooms containing equipment or machinery incidental to and integral with the operation of the building shall be excluded from the floor area. Further, the area of rooms (or perhaps entire buildings) containing equipment or machinery, the purpose of which is independent of or unrelated to the building in which it is located, shall be excluded from the floor area. Examples include, but are not limited to utility pumping or distribution stations, rooms with cellular telephone switching equipment, mechanical equipment used in manufacturing processes without human intervention, etc.

When applying Sec. 12.21.1-A, 5 for floor area ratio, the area of rooms containing equipment or machinery incidental to and integral with the operation of the building shall be excluded from the floor area. However, the area of rooms (or perhaps entire buildings) containing equipment or machinery,

the purpose of which is independent of or unrelated to the building in which it is located, shall be included as floor area.

When applying either Sec. 12.03 or 12.21.1 A 5, architectural projections not intended for regular use or occupancy shall not be counted as floor area. Areas under projections intended for use and occupancy shall be included as floor area in accordance with the guidelines below. For all Building Code applications, the area under architectural projections exceeding 5 feet (1524 mm) in width, as defined in Sec. 91.3204.1, shall be included in the floor area calculation.

D. Guidelines:

a. The following guidelines shall apply when calculating floor area for parking considerations under the Zoning Code definition:

1. For buildings physically enclosed with exterior walls, the area under architectural projections (of any dimension) not intended for regular use or occupancy shall not be counted as floor area. Areas under projections intended for use and occupancy shall be included as floor area. The plan check supervisor shall have the discretion of requiring the recordation of a Covenant and Agreement Regarding Maintenance of Building identifying areas under projections and specifying they are not to be used for any occupancy.
2. For structures with a roof not physically enclosed by exterior walls, the entire area under the roof shall be considered floor area unless satisfying (3) below.
3. The floor area of rooms within buildings housing mechanical equipment or machinery or the floor area of entire buildings housing mechanical equipment or machinery shall not be counted. The equipment or machinery need not be associated with the operation of the building in which it is contained, but must be permanently affixed and arranged in a fashion not otherwise allowing human occupancy. Those areas designed within such buildings to allow reasonable access to the equipment for its regular maintenance shall likewise not be counted as floor area.

b. The following guidelines shall apply when calculating floor area under the Building Code definition:

Architectural projection shall mean any projection not intended for shelter or occupancy and which extends beyond the outer face of an exterior wall of a building, but shall not include signs.

Area under architectural projections exceeding 5 feet (1524 mm) in width shall be included in the floor area calculation. Exterior walls shall be considered to exist at the outer edges of such projections for the purpose of enforcing exterior wall construction and opening protection due to building location on the property.