

MEMORANDUM

TO: Steven E. Sher
FROM: Jim Fahey *Jim Fahey*
DATE: September 11, 1990
RE: Outline of What Is and Is Not Included in Gross Floor Area

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As requested, the following is an outline of what is and is not included in gross floor area, for purposes of determining the maximum floor area ratio allowed under the D.C. Zoning Regulations.

Gross floor area is the sum of the gross horizontal areas of the several floors of all buildings on a lot, measured from the exterior faces of exterior walls and from the center line of party walls separating two buildings. This is achieved by simply multiplying the length by the width of each floor excluding those areas listed on pages 2 and 3 and adding up the totals. Keep in mind to include all exterior walls and to the center line of party walls when taking measurements.

In the case of a building that has a difference in grade, resulting in floors that are by definition part basement and cellar; you use the following method for obtaining the floor area charged to gross floor area:

1. First measure the total perimeter of the floor in question.
2. Then, measure that portion of the perimeter of the floor, the ceiling of which is four feet or more above the adjacent finished grade, and what percentage this is of the total perimeter of the floor in question.
3. The answer to the above will be the percentage of the floor area chargeable to gross floor area. *BZA*

The term gross floor area includes:

1. All floors of the building above grade.
2. Basements; by definition a basement is that portion of a story partly below grade, the ceiling of which is four feet or more above the adjacent finished grade.
3. Elevator shafts and stairwells at each story; however, this does not include elevator shafts or stairwells that are located in the cellar area of a building.
4. Mechanical equipment rooms with a structural headroom of six feet six inches or more.

Case No. 17109
Exhibit No. 72

5. Interior balconies.
6. Mezzanines
7. Attic space (whether or not a floor has actually been laid), providing structural headroom of six feet six inches or more.
8. Overhangs, including covered entrances, canopies, marquises, etc.
9. Open arcades in the "C-5", Downtown SHOP and proposed Downtown Development Overlay Districts.
10. Atriums; ground floor only.
11. Vent shafts and pipe chaser shafts; ground floor only.
12. That portion of an outside balcony projecting more than six feet beyond the exterior wall of a building.
13. All floors of accessory buildings, the ceiling of which is four feet or more above the adjacent finished grade.

Other areas of the building that are included in gross floor area but are given an increase in allowable floor area ratio solely for the following uses:

1. Under sub-section 411.7, penthouses housing mechanical equipment and elevator penthouses are allowed an increase of .37.
2. Except in the "C-5", Downtown SHOP and proposed Downtown Development Overlay Districts, an open arcade complying with Section 2515 is allowed a floor area credit not to exceed 25% of the gross floor area of the floor adjacent to the arcade.

The following are exclusions from gross floor area:

1. Cellars; by definition is that portion of a story, the ceiling of which is less than four feet above the adjacent finished grade.
2. Mechanical equipment rooms with a structural headroom of less than six feet six inches.
3. Outside balconies that do not exceed a projection of six feet beyond the exterior wall of the building.
4. All projections beyond the lot line that may be allowed by other Municipal Codes.

5. In Residential Districts, the first floor or basement areas designed and used for parking space or for recreation space, provided that not more than 50% of the perimeter of the space may be comprised of columns, piers, walls, or windows, or similarly enclosed.
6. Vent shafts and pipe chaser shafts above the ground floor.
7. Atriums above the ground floor.
8. Ramps on the ground floor leading to a parking garage on a lower level.