



MARIN COUNTY
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
BRIAN C. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR

BUILDING AREA AND FLOOR AREA

Building Area - The sum of the floor area of all floors in all buildings on a site. Unlike "Floor Area," building area includes garages, carports, storage buildings, and other attached or detached accessory structures.

Floor Area - Except as specified by the Tamalpais Area Community Plan, the sum of the gross area of all floors in all buildings on a site, measured from the exterior faces of the exterior walls, including enclosed understory, basement, and attic space that can be easily converted to living area, but excluding:

1. All unenclosed horizontal surfaces, including balconies, courts, decks, porches, terraces;
2. The first two hundred fifty square feet of floor area of all detached accessory structures not designed for and/or used for habitable space;
3. The first five hundred forty square feet of garage areas permanently allocated for vehicle parking; and
4. Exterior wall thickness of greater than six inches, where the additional wall thickness results in greater energy efficiency (e.g., straw bale construction or earthen wall construction), as demonstrated by the applicant and subject to the approval of the Director.

The floor area of stairways, elevators, and other vertical accesses, is included in the total floor area only as to the "footprint" (area at the base) of the vertical access, and is not counted at each floor of a building. In order to qualify as an unenclosed horizontal surface, at least one of the longest wall planes of the space shall be kept open with the exception that railings with a surface area that is at least fifty percent open and unobstructed by structural elements and that are necessary for safety or convenience purposes may be allowed within the open wall plane. As defined herein, understory, basement, and attic space that can be easily converted to living area include: (1) unconditioned and unimproved spaces that yield a minimum clear room area of seven feet by seven feet and a minimum ceiling height of seven and a half feet or higher; and (2) all attic areas with a minimum ceiling height of five feet or higher.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) - The total floor area of all buildings on a lot, divided by the area of that lot. For example, a building with three thousand square feet of floor area on a ten thousand square foot lot has a FAR of 0.30.

12/10/10