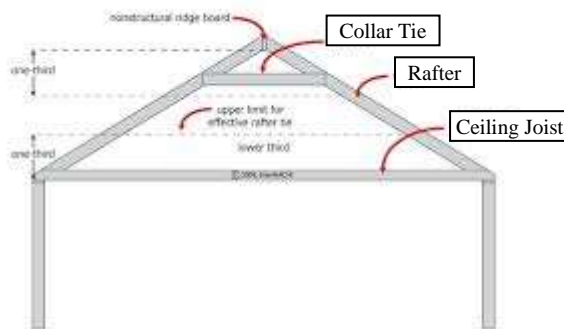


Zoning Review - Floor Area Criteria (Acton Planning Dept. / Zoning Enforcement – Updated October 2015)

Where floor area matters for zoning compliance, the Planning Department uses the following standards and guidelines when reviewing development project and building permit applications.

- Only Buildings have Floor Area. Structures that are not Buildings do not have Gross or Net Floor Areas (see Acton Zoning Bylaw Definitions below).
- Net Floor Area is a subset of Gross Floor Area. In other words, anything excluded from Gross Floor Area is also excluded from Net Floor Area.
- Excluded from Gross Floor Area are:
 - The total of all interior parking spaces / entire garage spaces regardless of size; but floor above garage may count depending on set-up.
 - Any floor area where the floor-to-ceiling height measures less than 6 feet. Attics with collar ties less than 6 feet above the ceiling joists (rafter ties) do not count towards floor area. Where ceiling joists are higher, only the floor space with less than 6-foot clearance under the rafters is excluded.



(Ceiling height is measured from floor to structural ceiling beam, not to drop ceiling; account for pipes, etc.)

- Any space without a roof above it, for instance a deck or patio.
- Any space that is not enclosed on at least three sides, say an open porch, a partially covered patio, a pavilion, or similar.
- Excluded from Net Floor Area:
 - Bathrooms – with closets and their entire surrounding wall widths.
 - Stairs – with adjacent wall widths; 5-foot landing at the bottom and top of stairs for the width of the stairs and adjacent wall widths; in staircases exclude up to 5-foot wide path and adjacent wall width to next set of stairs leading further up or down.
 - Building service areas: Furnaces, HVAC and other mechanical equipment. If fully enclosed exclude entire enclosure with surrounding wall widths as long as reasonably sized. If in the open, exclude 4-foot deep work area around equipment.

- Other building service areas: Built-in functional fireplaces connected to a chimney or flue; chimneys; flues; janitorial equipment/supply closets; or similar.
 - Exterior Walls
 - Elevator wells and their surrounding walls
 - Areas on stories without floors that are open to the lower story
 - In multi-tenant buildings: Common hallways with width of adjacent walls that serve as ingress/egress to more than one apartment or tenant suite.
- No exclusions are made for:
 - Hallways in single-tenant buildings or on the inside of apartments or suites; Cabinetry, appliances, built-in furniture or closets, baseboard heating, floor vents, fake fireplaces, or similar.

Acton Zoning Bylaws Definitions:

BUILDING: A STRUCTURE enclosed within exterior walls, built or erected with any combination of materials, whether portable or fixed, having a roof, to form a STRUCTURE for the shelter of persons, animals, or property.

STRUCTURE: A combination of materials assembled to give support or shelter, such as BUILDINGS, towers, masts, sheds, roofed storage areas, mechanical equipment, swimming pools, tennis courts, signs, fences; but not including driveways, walkways and other paved areas, underground storage tanks, septic tanks and septic systems, and accessory facilities associated with the provision of utilities such as drains, wells, transformers and telephone poles.

FLOOR AREA, GROSS: The sum of the gross horizontal areas of the several floors of a BUILDING measured from the exterior face of exterior walls, or from the centerline of a wall separating two BUILDINGS, but not including interior parking spaces, loading space for motor vehicles, or any space where the floor-to-ceiling height is less than six feet.

FLOOR AREA, NET: The total of all floor areas of a BUILDING including basement and other storage areas, but not including stairways, elevator wells, rest rooms, common hallways and BUILDING service areas, and not including areas used for a Child Care Facility as defined in Section 3.4.6 of this Bylaw provided that such Child Care Facility is accessory to a PRINCIPAL USE located in the same BUILDING or on the same LOT.