

Section 12.03

Balconies Projection for “Height” and “Floor Area”.

Q- When is a balcony projection from a building considered to be a part of a building for determining “Height” and “Floor area”?

A- The term “Height of Building or Structure” is defined in Section 12.03 of the Zoning Code, in part, as “ ... the vertical distance above grade measured to the highest of the roof, structure, or the parapet wall, whichever is highest... ”.

The term “Grade (Adjacent Ground Elevation)” is further defined in the same section, in part, as “...lowest point of elevation of the finished surface of the ground, paving or sidewalk within the area between the building and the property line, or when the property line is more than 5 feet from the building, between the building and a line 5 feet from the **building**.”

The term “Building” is then further defined in the same section 12.03 as “Any structure having a roof **supported by columns or walls**, for the housing, shelter, or enclosure of persons, animals, chattels or property of any kind.” Thus, if there are any exterior walls or columns on a structure, that wall and/or columns defines the perimeter of a building. For example, attached decks which are supported by columns are considered to be part of the building and therefore the outermost supporting columns of the deck are considered to be the perimeter of the building.

There are some instances in which there are no supporting walls or columns under certain elements of a building. For example a “cantilever balcony” is supported at a wall or beam/column line at some distance from the edge of the balcony. Historically, up to 5 feet of cantilever projection has been allowed without it being considered as part of a “building” when defining height of a building. Similarly, for many years, the Building Code specifically allowed a projection of up to 5 feet beyond a building line without having it be considered as part of the floor area.

Thus, when determining the height of a building, any open, unenclosed, cantilever balcony, not exceeding 5 feet beyond the support, are not to be included in the definition of a building. In cases in which balconies exceed 5 feet, up to 5 feet of the balconies may be excluded from the definition of the building. See the attached two sketches for illustrations. The first Figure illustrates cases in which a projection does not exceed 5 feet. The second Figure illustrates cases in which a projection exceeds 5 feet.

For floor area determination, refer to Information Bulletin No. P/BC 2002-02.