



## Building Division Bulletin

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## Partly Enclosed Areas Interpretation for Residential GFA

Updated: June 22, 2020

This bulletin is effective for a building permit application made after **July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020**. The bulletin has been developed to help clarify the interpretation of “**residential floor area**” and, more specifically, how to calculate the “**residential gross floor area**” (RGFA) of a “**building**”. The intent of regulating RGFA is to control the overall massing of construction while accommodating a certain amount of functional living space. With this in mind, spaces that contribute to the massing of a building while providing functional space for occupants, ought to be included in the determination of RGFA. The three terms reference in this Bulletin, as defined in the City of White Rock’s Zoning Bylaw (Bylaw No.2000), include:

“**residential floor area**” means the sum total of floor areas of each storey in a building for multi-unit residential use which contains four (4) or more dwelling units, measured to the mid-point of the exterior walls, including areas occupied by internal walls and partitions, and excluding unenclosed balconies, common stairwells, elevator shafts, common corridors, enclosed parking facilities, and common recreation or amenity areas.

“**residential gross floor area**” means the sum total of floor areas of each storey in a building containing a one-, two- or three-unit residential use, excluding a basement, cellar, crawl spaces, carport, garage, bay window, bow window or box window, elevator shafts, and areas occupied by stairs on the second storey of a building.

“**building**” means any structure wholly or partly enclosed by a roof or roods, supported by walls, columns or posts and used or intended for the shelter or accommodation of persons, animals, chattels or things.

The current definition of “building” does not clearly identify how **partly enclosed** spaces, not explicitly referenced in the definition of “residential floor area” (e.g., unenclosed balconies, common stairwells, elevator shafts, etc.), or explicitly excluded in the calculation of “residential gross floor area” (e.g., cellar, crawl spaces, bay window, etc.) ought to be considered in the determination of RGFA. The following clarifies how spaces contributing to the massing and functional use of a residential property will be determined for inclusion, or exclusion, in the calculation of RGFA.

If the perimeter of an area has walls that enclose that area by its perimeter length of **60% or greater**, and that same area is covered with a roof, the area would be considered part of the “building” and would counts towards the RGFA. If the perimeter length of the area, covered with a roof, falls below 60% it would be considered unenclosed and would be excluded from the RGFA calculation. **Figure 1** and the steps described below outline how the calculation would be carried out in review of a partly enclosed space.

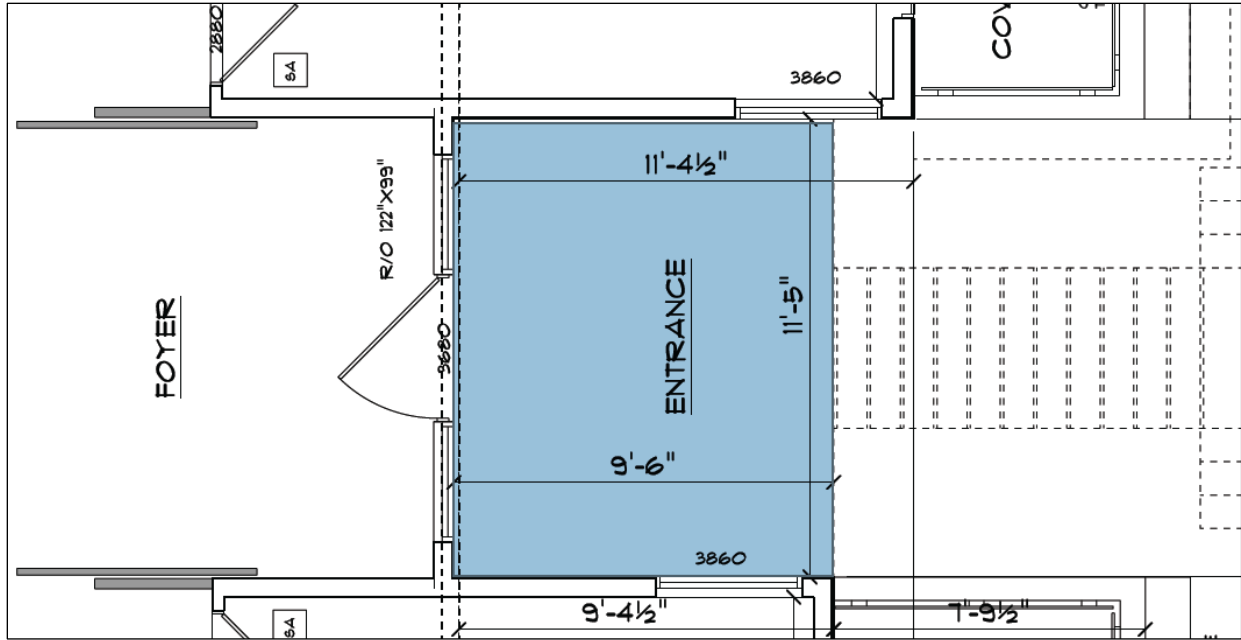


Figure 1: Determination of Enclosure

Step 1: Determine the perimeter of the partly enclosed space by adding the lengths of each wall and the length of the open portion of the area.

**Example:**  $9.5' + 9.5' + 11.42' + 11.42' = 41.84'$

Step 2: Multiply the total perimeter measurement by 0.6 to determine the “60% threshold”

**Example:**  $41.84' \times 0.6 = 25.10'$

Step 3: If the length of the walled portion of the perimeter is greater than the 60% threshold then the space is considered enclosed and the space defined by the area would be included in the RGFA calculation.

**Example:**  $\text{walled portion} = 30.42' > 25.10' = \text{enclosed (108.49ft}^2 \text{ to be included in RGFA)}$

If you have any questions regarding the interpretation please feel free to contact the Building Division directly at 604-541-2149 or email [building@whiterockcity.ca](mailto:building@whiterockcity.ca)