BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, POABC

File No: 98-0111	INTERPRETATION	Page 1 of 1	
Interpretation Date:	October 27, 2004		
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 1998	BC Building Code 1998	
Subject:	building area	building area	
Keywords:	building area, exterior w structures	building area, exterior walls, balcony, roof structures	
Building Code Reference(s):	1.1.3.2 Definition of "b	1.1.3.2 Definition of "building area"	

Question:

Building area is defined as the "greatest horizontal area of a building above grade within the outside surface of exterior walls ..."

Since the term "exterior walls" is not defined in the building code, should an open deck, covered balcony or roof canopies be included in the "building area"?

Interpretation:

Nο

In most instances, for the purposes of calculating building area, exterior walls are interpreted to mean the environmental separation between the exterior and interior spaces. Open decks, covered balconies or roof canopies would not be included in the building area provided they are part of the exterior environment.

In the event that an open balcony is subsequently enclosed with an environmental separation, such enclosed balcony would be included in the building area.

Building area for independent structures that do not have any exterior walls, such as a roof structure supported on 4 posts, would be determined by drawing an imaginary line around the perimeter of the 4 posts. The building area would be the area within the imaginary line.

It should be noted that for spatial separation issues, roof canopies that are attached to the side of a building and that shelter a use could pose a significant threat of fire spread to neighbouring buildings or neighbouring properties if there is storage of combustible materials beneath the canopy. The exposing building face may have to be considered at the outside edge of the canopy, rather than the exterior wall of the building. A detailed review with the authority having jurisdiction is warranted for such canopies and their intended use.

Refer to Building Code Appeal Board ruling #1603 for confirmation of this interpretation.

R. J. Light, Committee Chair

The views expressed are the consensus of the joint committee of AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, and POABC, which form the BC Building Code Interpretation Committee. The purpose of the committee is to encourage uniform province wide interpretation of the BC Building Code. These views should not be considered as the official interpretation of legislated requirements based on the BC Building Code, as final responsibility for an interpretation rests with the local *Authority Having Jurisdiction*. The views of the joint committee should not be construed as legal advice.