

BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

A joint committee with members representing
AIBC, EGBC, BOABC

File No: 18-0157

INTERPRETATION

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Interpretation Date:	January 18, 2022
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2018
Subject:	3 Level Dwelling Unit on Sloping Site
Keywords:	Building height, sloping site, grade
Building Code Reference(s):	Div A – 1.3.3.3.(1), 1.4.1.2., Div C – 9.9.9.1.

Question:

This project is a 3-level single dwelling unit located on an extremely sloping site. The lowest level (Level 1) has an exterior balcony on the rear side of the building that extends across the entire building. The exterior balcony is supported on posts with a height of more than 2 m. above the adjacent ground level. Refer to Page 3 for front and side elevations of the dwelling unit. The front elevation faces the street.

Can this project be treated as 3 storeys in building height and designed under Part 9?

Interpretation:

Yes (based on definition of grade)

Sentence 1.3.3.3.(1) of Division A states that buildings can be designed under Part 9 if they meet the following criteria:

- Building height does not exceed 3 storeys
- Building area does not exceed 600 sq.m.
- Major occupancies may include Groups C, D, E, F1 or F2

The definitions in Article 1.4.1.2. of Division A state the following:

- **Grade** means the lowest of the average levels of finished ground adjoining each exterior wall of a building, except that localized depressions need not be considered in the determination of average levels of finished ground. (See First storey and Note A-1.4.1.2.(1).)
- **First storey** means the uppermost storey having its floor level not more than 2 m. above **grade**.



Patrick Shek, P.Eng., CP, FEC, Committee Chair

The views expressed are the consensus of the joint committee with members representing AIBC, EGBC and BOABC, which form the BC Building Code Interpretation Committee. The Building and Safety Standards Branch, Province of BC and the City of Vancouver participate in the committee's proceedings with respect to interpretations of the BC Building Code. 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.

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Since Grade is measured at the finished ground adjoining the exterior wall of the building, it is located at Point A on the Right Elevation drawing on Page 3. Note for this building that this elevation is consistent across with entire width of the building.

Using the definitions above, Level 1 is treated as the 1st storey because it is less than 2 m. above the average grade on the lowest side.

This results in this being a 3-storey building which can be designed to Part 9 as per Sentence 1.3.3.3.(1) of Division A.

Note that evacuation from the building also complies with the requirements of Sentence 9.9.9.1.(1):

- The front door on Level 2 is the exterior exit door from the building.
- Occupants on Level 3 travel not more than 1 storey to reach the Level 2 exterior exit door.
- Occupants on Level 1 travel not more than 1 storey to reach the Level 2 exterior exit door.



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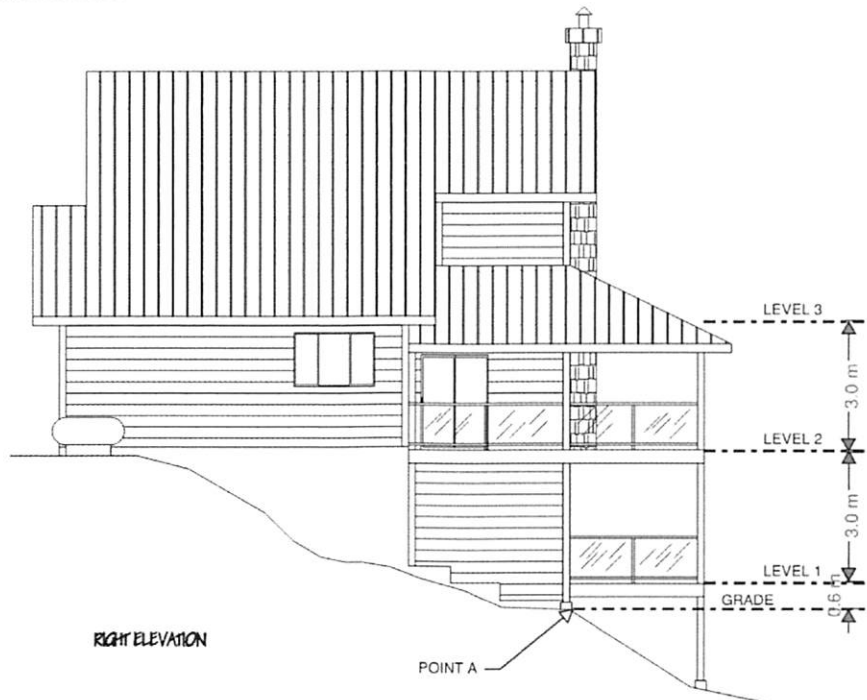
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FRONT ELEVATION



RIGHT ELEVATION

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