



MEMORANDUM

TO: Residential Review Planners

FROM: Jessica Kingpetcharat, Planner Principal
WPDRD Residential Review

DATE:

SUBJECT: Attic Exemption

On April 4, 2007, Erica Eichert, former supervisor of Residential Review released a memo regarding the calculation of attic space with regards to gross floor area. This memo replaces the previous memo and further clarifies the attic space exemption.

Land Development Code 25-2, Subchapter F (“McMansion”) states that a habitable portion of an attic may be exempted from gross floor area calculations if:

1. The roof above it is not a flat or mansard roof and has a slope of 3 to 12 or greater.
- 2. It is fully contained within the roof structure;**
3. It has only one floor;
4. It does not extend beyond the footprint of the floors below;
5. It is the highest habitable portion of the building; and
- 6. Fifty percent or more of the area has a ceiling height of seven feet or less.**

Unfinished, non-habitable attic spaces accessed with pull-down stairs or ladders are not counted towards the gross floor area of a building. These areas may only be used for storage. If walls are erected in these areas, the area must be counted towards gross floor area unless the space or a portion of the space qualifies for another type of exemption.

Roofing structure is intended to mean a structural element that provides structural support to the roofing system.

Because habitable attic space requires egress to meet Building Code standards, dormers and gables shall qualify as being fully contained within the roof structure. However, the space within the dormers and gables will be included in the height calculation when determining if the space to be exempted meets part 6 of the criteria listed above.

The height of the area to be exempted shall be measured from the finished floor elevation (FFE) of the floor area to be exempted to:

- The underside of the roof rafters at the outer most support wall of the attic, or
- The bottom of the top chord of the roof truss (e.g. underside of roof rafters or as defined in BCM. Height may not be measured to collar ties, ceiling joists or any type of furred down ceiling.)

When determining whether a habitable portion of an attic qualifies for the gross floor area exemption, the entire attic floor space is counted towards the area of the attic. In the example(s) below, $X + Z$ must be greater than Y to be exempted from gross floor area calculations.

To be considered for the exemption, applicants must provide the following at a minimum:

- Lines on the plans identifying the finished floor elevation of each floor
- Line on the plan identifying underside of the roof decking, roof rafters, or bottom of the top chord of the roof truss
- Detail and sectional of the area to be exempted
- Floor plan of the area

Examples: