



Village of Northbrook

DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING SERVICES

Zoning Code Interpretation

Purpose:	Clarification of How to Treat Open Porches in Computing Floor Area Ratio
Northbrook Zoning Code Section(s):	Article III, Single Family Residential Districts Section 12-206, Definition of Floor Area, Gross
Date:	April 5, 2013

Reason for Interpretation

The definition of the “Gross Floor Area” (Floor Area, Gross in the Zoning Code) excludes certain areas from residential floor area ratio calculations. The definition of the term Gross Floor Area specifically states that ay windows, subject to certain restrictions, are specifically excluded. The following excerpt is taken form the definition of Gross Floor Area:

“Gross floor area shall exclude the following specific areas:

1. *cellar floors;*
2. *attic floors, regardless of the clear ceiling height;*
3. *decks and patios;*
4. ***open, unenclosed porches, not exceeding eight feet in depth;***
5. *chimneys projecting not more than two feet from an exterior wall;*
6. *bay windows projecting not more than three feet from an exterior wall for a distance not more than 1/3 of the length of such wall provided that such projections shall come entirely within planes drawn from the main corners of the building at an interior angle of 45 degrees with the wall in question; and*
7. *the first 200 square feet of accessory storage structures other than garages, when authorized pursuant to Paragraph 9-101 D1 of this Code.*

The term “open porch” is not defined in the Zoning Code. This interpretation is intended to provide clarity as to what constitutes an “open porch”, particularly when dealing with unusual shaped building faces or wrap-around porches.

Interpretation:

Covered porches that have a single dimension of less than 8 feet projecting from a façade are not to be included in floor area ratio (FAR) limits. This means that even if one dimension exceeds 8 feet, it does not automatically get included in the FAR.

A covered, but open front porch can be up to 8 feet deep before the floor area of the porch must be counted in the FAR calculations.

Reviewed and Affirmed:

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