



City of Carmel-by-the-Sea

Community Planning and Building Department

Base Floor Area and Site Coverage

What is the base floor area?

The Base Floor Area is the total square footage included within the surrounding exterior walls of all floors contained within all enclosed buildings on a building site whether finished or unfinished. Floor area shall include, but shall not be limited to, all floors of all enclosed spaces within all building, basements, mezzanines, guesthouses, studios, garages and carports. All attic, basement and storage shed spaces with five or more feet of clearance between the floor or walking surface and the ceiling or roof surface shall be counted as floor area.

How much floor area is allowed?

The maximum floor area on a site depends on the size of the site. For site less than 4,000 square feet, the maximum base floor area is 45% of the building site. On sites between 4,000 square feet and 10,000 square feet, the base floor area shall be calculated as follows: $(\text{Lot Size}) * [0.45 - ((\text{Sq. Ft. Over } 4,000) * 0.02) / 1000]$. For sites larger than 10,000 square feet, please speak with a Planner to determine the total floor area. A list of typical lot sizes and their associated allowed base floor area is shown on 2nd page of this handout.

For sites with an average slope greater than 30 percent, the maximum allowed base floor area shall be reduced by two percent for each one percent increase in average slope above 30 percent up to a maximum reduction of 50 percent.

What is site coverage?

Site Coverage includes areas where materials or structures that do not qualify as floor area cover the natural soil. Examples include, but are not limited to: patios, walkways, driveways, decks, steps, decomposed granite, artificial lawns, gravel, and hot tubs.

Structures on the property that qualify as floor area such as the house, garage, storage shed, etc. are not considered site coverage.

How much site coverage is allowed?

The allowable site coverage depends on the base floor area for your site. Site coverage is limited to 22% of the base floor area and a 4% bonus is added if at least 50% of all site coverage on the property is made of permeable materials. The table on the 2nd page shows the allowable site coverage for several common lot sizes with and without the bonus.

Lot Size (square feet)	Base Floor Area (square feet)	Allowable Site Coverage (square feet)	Allowable Site Coverage <u>with Bonus</u> (square feet)
4,000	1,800	396	556
5,000	2,150	473	673
6,000	2,460	541	781
7,000	2,730	601	881
8,000	2,960	651	971
9,000	3,150	693	1,053
10,000	3,300	726	1,126

Site Coverage Materials

Permeable Materials include but are not limited to, sand-set bricks or pavers, gravel, and spaced decking.

Impermeable Materials include, but are not limited to, decomposed granite, asphalt, concrete, mortared brick and stone, ponds, hottubs, outdoor fireplaces, and structures under five feet tall.

Non-Conforming Site Coverage

Properties that exceed the allowed site coverage are not permitted to add additional floor area unless the site coverage is reduced at a rate of two square feet of site coverage for every one square foot of added site coverage or to compliance, whichever is less.

Additionally, properties that exceed the allowed site coverage are permitted to reorganize the non-conforming site coverage only if it located behind the front 15-foot setback and it does not qualify as a structure (deck, balcony, etc.).

Permits are required any time you add site coverage.

A Notice of Authorized Work is required any time you reduce or relocate site coverage.

In some cases, a building permit is also required. You may check with the building department by calling (831) 620-2010.