



ALTA/ACSM Land Title Surveys— Gross floor area

—by Gary Kent

Q ■ What does the surveyor have to do to complete Table A item 7(b)(2)—gross floor area of all buildings? Do I have to go inside the building and measure?

A ■ Table A item 7(b)(2) is a good example of the reason for the introductory comments to Table A which state, in part, “*The items of Table A must be negotiated between the surveyor and client. It may be necessary for the surveyor to qualify or expand upon the description of these items...*” If the surveyor is aware that this item is being requested at the onset, it would be best to broach the subject even before providing a quotation.

When this item is *intentionally* requested, it is probably to determine if the property conforms to the floor space area restriction for the zoning classification. Unfortunately, due to the propensity for some persons to apparently check off Table A items simply because “they are there,” the surveyor may receive the pretentious response that “you should know what to do.” The response to that uninformed and rather cavalier statement should be to educate the client by quoting the introductory statements to Table A and pointing out the typical purpose for this item.

Assuming that the request is, in fact, related to the floor space area restriction, the surveyor should consult the zoning ordinance to determine how that calculation is made and, therefore, what measurements will need to be made in the field. Keep in mind, that ordinances vary. The calculation for at least one ordinance in my state is based on the net floor space of the building, *excluding interior walls*. Needless to say, on a four-story, approximately 150,000 square foot office building, there would be considerable time and cost associated with making those measurements. Perhaps an alternative would be for the client to obtain a set of the architectural plans for the building. Obviously, both the surveyor and the

client should be aware of such issues before any fee negotiation is completed.

If, on the other hand, the client cannot give a reason for the item being requested, the surveyor might ask if they really want to incur the related cost.

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