

How to understand building regulations.

Every town in the region of Valencian (Comunitat Valenciana) has a set of building regulations. They are based mainly on laws established by the Valencian Government, and often adapted to their own necessities and circumstances.

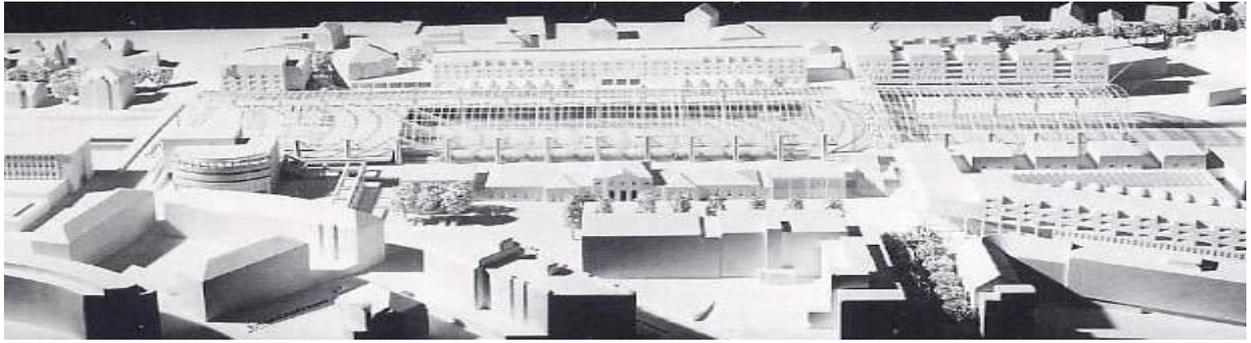
As an approach to understanding building regulations a proposal would be to begin to identify the major characteristics, which define them.

Areas. Every municipality is divided into urban and non-urban land, according to the urban development plan defined by the Council.. Urban land has many different definitions, such as town centre, historic area, one family houses, terrace houses, and so on. Non urban land has special conditions and in general is ruled by upper regulations from the central government in Valencia.

Plot. A piece of land is defined as as plot to build on when it is inscribed in an urban zone. The municipal area of every town is always divided into urban and non urban land. Urban land has urban infrastructure, such as paved areas, roads, sewage ways, artificial lightning, pavements, water and electricity supplies. Building regulations differ between urban and non urban land.

Plot characteristics. According to the situation, the plot needs to have a minimum size in square meters, a minimum front line to the access road, a minimum form such a square or a circle, which must be inscribed in the plot, minimum angles and slopes.

Occupation. There is a maximum surface area by which a plot that can be occupied by a building. This surface is defined as a percentage of the total surface area. In some areas even open terraces and pools are considered as part of this occupied surface.



Distance to the boundaries. In areas of isolated buildings, there is a minimum distance to be kept. The rules differentiate distance to the front and side boundaries. Usually the distance to the front are bigger than the others.

Built volume or surface. According to the area and the size of the plot there is a maximum volume or surface that can be built. This expression is defined in square meters for each square meter of the plot or cubic meter for each square meter of the plot. Underground construction is not usually included in this regulation.

Height. The height of a building is also regulated in meters over the ground level or number of floors. The maximum height is referred to the upper cornice. Pitched roofs and even penthouses are in some cases allowed.

Following these basic concepts, a possible volume to build in a plot can be defined.

In addition there are a number of other regulations relating to esthetic matters such as window size, material type used, all depending on specific urban conditions.

It is always advisable to be assisted by an architect and to make all the necessary enquiries at the town hall.



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