



Thomas Dolan Architecture : Building Issues

Differing Requirements for Live/Work vs. Work/Live

In general, work/live accommodates more high-impact work activity than live/work. This suggests, among other things: 1) A more commercial orientation, which normally means full accessibility must be provided 2) A higher likelihood that a separation between live and work will be appropriate. What follows is a comparative treatment of the varying needs of the two types.

Type of Work Being Done

Work activities in live/work are intended to be those that are compatible with residential occupancies and fall in the B Occupancy classification which is the "business" (primarily office) type. Manufacturing type uses such as fabrication and materials handling facilities are not permitted in live/work. There are certain other B Occupancy activities which are not permitted in live/work, such as restaurants, bars, kennels, car washes, medical offices and police and fire stations.

Work activities in work/live are intended to be the dominant pursuit of the occupants, whether they be the residents-- or in some cases employees and customers. Work uses include all B Occupancy activities permitted in live/work, and ADDITIONALLY all activities permitted in F-1 and F-2 Occupancies, which includes moderate and low hazard assembly, fabricating, manufacturing, repair or processing operations--basically anything up to but not including Hazardous Occupancy. The same exceptions to the activities permitted under B Occupancy (at left) are also prohibited in work/live.

Employees

As the more residentially oriented type, employees are less likely to be



present in live/work. However, subject to the work activities permitted in the applicable zone, live/work does permit employees subject to the accessibility requirements (in bold at right) this entails. The most likely location for live/work with employees would be in a renovated building in a commercial zone.

As the most likely category in which employees would be accommodated, work/live is encouraged in commercial or manufacturing zones.

Any live/work or work/live which has employees or walk-in trade will need to be handicap accessible in any areas occupied or used by employees and customers

Walk-In Trade

Of the two types, live/work is less likely to accommodate walk-in trade due to the intensive impact of customers upon what is intended primarily (or partly) as a residence. One possibility: a live-near proximity typology, which provides separation between living and working activities; live/work with separated living and working spaces.

The presence of walk-in trade triggers the accessibility requirements described in bold above. Walk-in, i.e retail trade is a commercial activity usually best suited to areas where consumers of commercial products concentrate. This is most likely to be in a commercial zone. Work/live is the most likely category into which walk-in trade would be accommodated. The predominantly commercial nature of this type makes it most appropriate for walk-in trade when it is desired.

Hazardous Materials

The levels of hazardous materials permitted in live/work are only slightly higher than those permitted in a residence. One of the primary purposes for creating a distinction between live/work and work/live is to



accommodate different levels of hazardous and toxic materials used in their respective work processes. Work/live permits far greater levels of such materials and processes than live/work, and is a clearer choice for those who would accommodate a wide range of work types.

Heavy Objects & Heavy Equipment

Work activities that are compatible with residential use tend not to employ heavy equipment or require storage or manipulation of heavy objects. Therefore the lesser floor loading requirements of live/work make it a more affordable choice for those who don't expect those heavier uses. Work/live was conceived as a distinct type to accommodate heavier uses such as equipment, storage and heavy materials. Its higher floor loading requirements are a necessary response to that need.

Noise

While the building code treats noise sources greater than 60 dB identically under the building code in live/work and work/live, the overall intent of the combined Zoning and Building regulations is that live/work be consistent with the "quiet enjoyment" rights of residents. Therefore greater noise generation is discouraged in live/work. Work/live, being a predominantly work-oriented, more intense occupancy, is more likely to accommodate greater noise generation, mechanical, musical, or otherwise. That having been said, any source of noise 60 dB or greater abutting a residential portion of a neighboring space must attenuate that sound according to the Oakland Live/Work Building Code.