

REAL ESTATE



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Q | During the due diligence process for a Seattle building, a title exception has arisen for “areaways.” What is an areaway and why is it showing on title?

A | In Seattle, areaways are usable areas underneath city streets or parks that provide room, access, or light for abutting buildings. An areaway might create a light well or house mechanical equipment. They often require a retaining wall under the sidewalk for support. If this has turned up on title, you should learn more about the street use permit for the areaway, as well as its function and condition. Any street use permit requires a recorded indemnification agreement, which by city code must specify that the use is temporary. This is why it shows on title. If the areaway was under street use permit on January 1, 1990, however, it may be reconstructed, altered, or repaired under a new street use permit.