

HSIA Standards for Determining the Height of Buildings and Issuing of Permits

Definitions:

BASEMENT: That portion of a building that is partly or completely below the grade plane. A basement shall be considered a story above grade plane where the finished surface of the floor above the basement is:

1. More than 6 feet above the grade plane or,
2. More than 6 feet above the finished ground level for more than 50% of the total building perimeter, or
3. More than 12 feet above the finished ground level at any point.

GRADE PLANE: A reference plane representing the average of natural ground level adjoining the building at the exterior walls. Where the natural ground level slopes away from the exterior walls, the reference plane shall be established by the lowest points between the building and a point 6 feet from the building.

HEIGHT, STORY: The vertical distance from the top of two successive finished floor surfaces and, for the topmost story, from the top of the floor finish to the top of the ceiling joists or, where there is not a ceiling, to the top of the roof rafters.

HALF STORY: A usable space within a sloping roof, sometimes having dormer windows.

Determination of Height:

The Hillsmere Shores covenants state that no building may be more than 2-1/2 stories in height. In no case shall a variance be approved where the maximum height of a building above the grade plane is more than 35 feet.

Permits:

Although buildings up to 35 feet in height are permitted, any request for a permit where the highest point on a building is more than 25 feet from the lowest finished ground level must be brought to the board for approval using these standards.

Source:

The source of the definitions above (except for HALF STORY) is the "2003 International Building Code", as published by the International Code Council, Inc., which is adopted by reference as the Building Code for Anne Arundel County (with the additions, insertions, omissions, and changes set forth in the Supplement).