

VILLAGE OF HARWOOD HEIGHTS
Proposed Single-Family Home Building Height and Mass Amendments
Public Hearing Draft for
Public Hearing on November 1, 2006

Background:

The Village is experiencing a great deal of reinvestment in its single-family homes including everything from teardowns, to second floor additions, to extensive remodeling. Given the age of much of the housing, the escalating property values, and the Village's excellent location within the Chicago metro area, this trend is expected to continue for quite some time.

In the 1950's, the time period in which many of the existing homes were built, the average home size in the US was a little more than 1,100 square feet. By 2001, the size had swelled to over 2,100 square feet. While reinvestment in housing is critical to the long-term viability of the Village, it is important that new and expanded homes maintain a compatible scale and character with existing homes.

The proposed regulations attempt to address the overall scale and appearance of "mass" for new/expanded homes by establishing height limits at various points along a home rather than a single limitation on overall height as has been the case in the past. In addition, the regulations attempt to break-up large walls by requiring window and door openings and by controlling the height of flat roofed structures differently than those with pitched roofs. Because most of these regulations are new, several new definitions in the zoning code are needed as well. Please note that the Village recognizes that demolitions can also be disruptive to neighboring homes so new regulations for those are included in the Proposed Administration and Enforcement Amendments document (see Sec. 17.52.140)

Proposed New and Revised Definitions – Sec. 17.04.050B

The following definitions are proposed to be replaced and/or added to Sec. 17.04.050B.:

Replace the current definition of "Basement" in its entirety and replace with: "Basement" means that portion of a building that is wholly or partially below grade and below the first finished floor.

Add: "First Finished Floor" means the top of the surface of the lowest floor of a building that is wholly or mostly above grade and not the basement.

Add: "Habitable Area" means area in a building used for living purposes as defined in the building code in Title 15, but not including area used strictly for storage.

Replace the current definition of "Building Height" in it entirety and replace with: "Height, Building" means the vertical distance from grade to the highest point of the roof, parapet wall, or other structural element of a building excluding those elements that are excepted from maximum building height standards in Sec. 17.04.200.

Add: “Height, Eave” means the vertical distance from grade to the edge of the roof along the drip line. No habitable area may be located above the maximum eave height except that floors that are at least seven (7) feet below this height may have ceilings that extend above this height.

Add: “Height, First Finished Floor” means the vertical distance from grade to the top surface of the first finished floor.

Add: “Wall Opening Percentage” means the surface area of all doors and operable and non-operable windows located at or above the first finished floor level on an exterior building wall as a percentage of the total surface area of the exterior building wall that is above the first finished floor on which the doors and windows are located. For purposes of calculating the required minimum wall opening percentage, building walls with recesses and projections of ten (10) feet or less in depth and less than four hundred square (400) feet of surface area shall be exempt.

Proposed Building Height and Mass Regulations in the R1 and R2 Zoning Districts – Chapter 17.12

The Building Height regulations contained in Sec. 7.12.020G.1. in the R1 zoning district, and Sec. 17.12.030F.1. in the R2 zoning district, are proposed to be deleted in their entirety and replaced with the following:

Maximum First Finished Floor Height: four and one-half (4½) feet.

Maximum First Floor Porch Eave Height: fourteen and one-half (14½) feet.

Maximum Eave Height for Buildings with a Hip, Gable or Gambrel Roof:

1. Buildings with only one story above the first finished floor: fourteen and one-half (14½) feet.
2. Buildings with more than one story above the first finished floor: twenty-three and one-half (23½) feet.

Maximum Building Height:

1. Buildings with only one story above the first finished floor: twenty (20) feet.
2. Buildings with more than one story above the first finished floor and a hip, gable or gambrel roof: thirty (30) feet
3. Buildings with a roof type other than hip, gable or gambrel: twenty-six (26) feet and a maximum of two stories above the first finished floor

Minimum Wall Opening Percentage: 10% per wall.