



Town of Chatham

Department of Community Development



TOWN ANNEX 261 GEORGE RYDER ROAD CHATHAM, MA 02633
TELEPHONE (508) 945-5160 FAX (508) 945-5163

MEMORANDUM

To: Chatham Zoning Board of Appeals
From: Jay W. Briggs, Building Commissioner
Date: May 04, 2018
Subject: Building Coverage

The Town's Protective Bylaw defines "**Building Coverage**" to mean the buildable upland portion of a lot which is covered by buildings, including porches but excluding parking areas, pools, decks, and any other permanent structures which do not have roofs. However it does not prescribe a methodology for calculating building coverage. Other defined words in the Bylaw are essential to derive an interpretation that will encompass the full intent:

"**BUILDING**" means any structure having a roof supported by columns or by walls and intended for the shelter, housing or enclosure of persons, animals or chattel.

"**BUILDING AREA**" means the total ground floor area as measured on a horizontal plane at the main grade level between exterior faces of walls of the principal building and all buildings exclusive of decks, terraces and steps.

"**UPLAND, BUILDABLE**" means a contiguous area of land, exclusive of any land in a Conservancy District as defined herein, and which is not less than four (4) feet above the water table. Groundwater elevations shall be determined by on-site investigations conducted by a licensed engineer or land surveyor, and shall be adjusted for seasonal fluctuations using the U.S.G.S. procedure set forth in Estimating Highest Groundwater Levels for Construction and Land Use Planning - Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

"**LOT**" means a designated parcel, tract or area of land established by deed, by plan, subdivision, or as otherwise permitted by law.

"**STRUCTURE**" means any combination of materials assembled or maintained at a location on or in the ground or attached to something located on the ground, including but not limited to buildings, tennis courts, swimming pools, and retaining walls.

To ensure consistency in interpretation of building coverage, I suggest using the sum of building area, porch area, and cantilevered portions of buildings above grade level. Decks with roofs are to be considered porches and treated as such. Eaves cannot exceed two feet and are not counted towards building coverage.