



SAN FRANCISCO
PLANNING
DEPARTMENT

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR BULLETIN NO. 3

Dormer Windows

Section 307 of the Planning Code mandates the Zoning Administrator to issue and adopt such rules, regulations and interpretations as are in the Zoning Administrator's opinion, necessary to administer and enforce the provisions of the Planning Code. [Section 7.502 of the San Francisco Charter charges the Zoning Administrator with the responsibility of administering and enforcing the Planning Code.]

Date:
JUNE 1996
Reprinted:
JANUARY 2019

Relevant Code Sections:
311 (Permit Review Procedures for RH, RM, RTO, Neighborhood Commercial, and Eastern Neighborhood Districts)
260(b)(1)(B) (Height Limit Exemptions)
101.1 (Master Plan Consistency)

Formerly known as: Zoning Administrator Bulletin No. 1996-02

TOPIC:

Dormer windows, exemptions from public notification. The following interpretation intends to exempt the size and height of dormer windows in residential alteration permits for any project subject to Section 311 of the Code.

DEFINITION:

A dormer window is usually a gabled extension of an attic room through a sloping roof to allow for a vertical window opening into the room (Source: Webster's Third New International Dictionary).

PURPOSE:

Dormer windows tend to serve two purposes:

1. To allow light and ventilation by incorporating vertical windows into a roof structure; and
2. To increase occupiable floor area by raising the vertical clearance of a room.

RULING:

The Planning Department has adopted and shall implement the standard for dormer windows that will be exempt from public notification. The required standards are as follows:

The size of a dormer window (gable or shed) is limited to 8 by 8 feet;

The dormer window shall be setback at least 3 feet from the side property line;

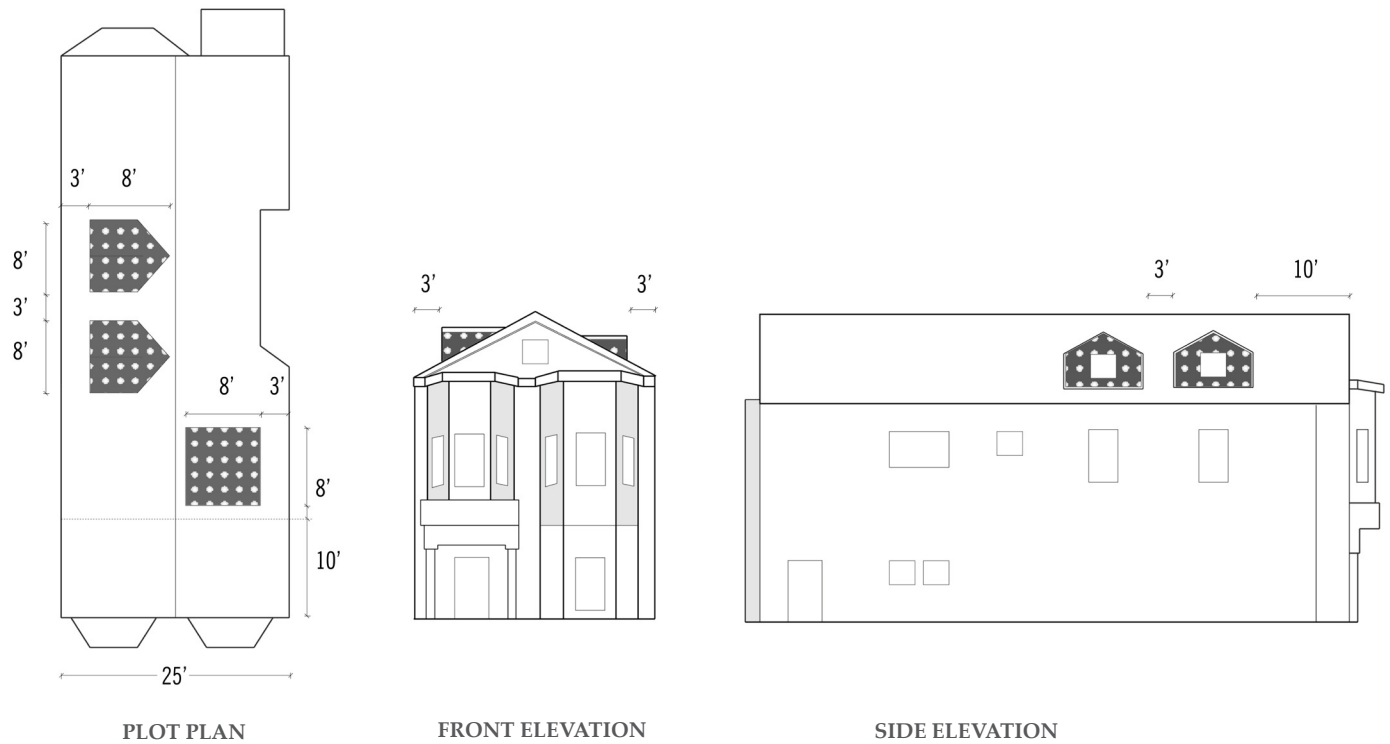
The dormer window shall be setback at least 10 feet from the front building wall;

Separate dormer windows shall have a minimum exterior separation of 3 feet between each other;

The height of the dormer window cannot be higher than the peak roof line of the subject building and shall not exceed 10 feet over the permitted height limit; and

The total roof area of all dormer windows (existing and proposed) and other features exempt from the height limits shall not be more than 20 percent of the existing horizontal area of the roof. If a building's roof has multiple levels, then each level of roof is calculated separately.

Figure 1



Graphics by: Anne Brask

Relevant Planning Code Sections

SECTION 311. PERMIT REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR RH, RM, RTO, NC, and EASTERN NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICTS – The procedures are intended to provide notice to property owners and residents for permits involving building expansions, so that concerns about a project may be identified and resolved during the review of the permit subject to Section 311. Section 311 requires that modifications to an existing building shall be in conformity with the Residential Design Guidelines and with the Master Plan, and all other applicable design guidelines.

SECTION 260 (b)(1)(B). HEIGHT LIMIT EXEMPTIONS – They are intended to exempt features i.e. Dormer Windows, Elevators, Mechanical Penthouses from the height limits permitted by the code, provided that all such features may not exceed 20 percent of the horizontal area of the roof, and a height of 10 feet above the height limit.

SECTION 101.1 MASTER PLAN CONSISTENCY AND IMPLEMENTATION – Master Plan Consistency and Implementation of the Code establish eight priority policies. These policies intend to resolve any inconsistencies in the Master Plan. Section 101.1(2) indicates that if there are inconsistencies in the Master Plan, priority shall be given to the conservation and protection of neighborhood character.



SAN FRANCISCO
PLANNING
DEPARTMENT

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Call or visit the San Francisco Planning Department

Central Reception
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco CA 94103-2479

TEL: **415.558.6378**
FAX: **415 558-6409**
WEB: <http://www.sfplanning.org>

Planning Information Center (PIC)
1660 Mission Street, First Floor
San Francisco CA 94103-2479

TEL: **415.558.6377**
*Planning staff are available by phone and at the PIC counter.
No appointment is necessary.*