

Dormers & Roofline Additions

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT / CITY HALL
555 LIBERTY STREET SE, ROOM 305, SALEM, OREGON 97301
(503) 588-6213 www.cityofsalem.net [@Salem_Planning](https://twitter.com/Salem_Planning)



Standard

Dormer additions should be considered only after it has been determined that a space need cannot be met by adaptively reusing existing space within the building. A dormer addition to a historic resource can be acceptable provided it is designed carefully. Significant historic materials and features of the building should be preserved. The new addition should not compromise the historic character or integrity of the original house. Ideally, the dormer should be constructed along a side or rear facade, and should be clearly differentiated from the original resource in material, color and detailing as required in SRC 230.025(e) and SRC 230.025(g).

Full-story additions or other very large rooftop additions are not compatible with historic buildings and should not be constructed. Likewise, changing the pitch or shape of the roof is not compatible. These kinds of additions cannot be built without damaging the historic character of a building.

Adding Dormers

When adding dormers to a historic building, placing them on the rear or on an inconspicuous side will minimize their impact. They should not be placed on front or street-facing elevations, and should not radically change the appearance of the building.

- Make sure that the size, scale, massing, and proportions of the dormer are compatible with the historic building to ensure that the historic form is not expanded or changed to an unacceptable degree.
- Be sure that the style of dormer is compatible with the style of the building.
- Don't create a false historical appearance. Plan the new dormer in a manner that provides some differentiation in material, color, and detailing so that the addition does not appear to be an original part of the historic building.
- Do not change the original roof shape or pitch when adding dormers.
- Minimize the loss of original historic material from external and internal walls.
- Retain and preserve roof details such as ridge cresting, exposed rafters and brackets.
- Replacement roofing materials should be consistent with the original in texture, dimension, design, and color.
- Gutters and downspouts should be copper or metal painted to match the historic building.



CORRECT DORMER
APPLICATION
(ON REAR OF STRUCTURE)



INCORRECT DORMER
APPLICATION
(ON FRONT OF STRUCTURE)

History of Dormers

Dormers adorn the roofs of many historic houses. A dormer is a rooftop projection containing a window. It usually has its own roof. These rooftop projections provide needed headroom and light to the top story of a house, which typically had low, sloping ceilings and limited light. Historically, dormers were sometimes added to houses which did not have them originally. Often the upper level of a house was unfinished or partially finished. As the need for functional space increased, the upper story was finished and a dormer added to provide head room and light.

Dormers typically reflect the style of the house. They could be tall and narrow on a Queen Anne style house, or have a shed roof and extend almost the width of the structure on a Craftsman bungalow. The dormer roof typically matches or compliments the roof of the house. Dormers come in a wide variety of shapes, including gabled, arched, shed and hipped. Sometimes dormers break the roofline. These are called wall dormers.

Additional Reading

Preservation Brief #14: *New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns*. Washington D.C.: Technical Preservation Services (TPS), Heritage Preservation Services Division, National Park Service. US Department of the Interior. Rev. 1986.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. Washington, D.C.: Preservation Assistance Division. National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, rev. 1983.



**City of Salem
Community Development Dept.**

Historic Preservation
www.cityofsalem.net/historic
555 Liberty St. SE
Room 305
Salem, OR 97301

P: 503.588.6173

F: 503.315.2571

Follow us!

Twitter: @SalemHLC

Facebook: Salem Historic Landmarks Commission

This publication has been funded with the assistance of a matching grant-in-aid from the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington D.C. 20240.

OTHER GUIDES IN THE SERIES:

Awnings & Canopies

Commercial Signage

Garages & Outbuildings

Introduction to Historic Salem

Murals & Wall Graphics

New Additions

Porches & Decks

Residential Windows