



Development Services Department

401 N. Elm Street, Denton, TX 76201 • (940) 349-8600

Date: June 26, 2025

To: Mr. Frank Su, Vice President, Land Acquisition – Meritage Homes

From: Tina M. Firgens, AICP, Deputy Director of Development Services/Planning Director

RE: Planning Director Determination for Stella Hills Single-Family Residential Development, Architectural Variety and Building Mass and Form Interpretation

As permitted under the Denton Development Code (DDC) Section 7.10.2D, the Director may approve alternative standards that meet or exceed the DDC standards in DDC Section 7.10. (Site and Building Design); in other words, the alternatives being granted shall be the same or better degree achieved than that of the current standard. In addition, the Director took into consideration and applied the following provisions listed below from DDC Section 7.10.1 (Purpose) in a manner appropriate for residential development, as well as other prior Director Determinations issued for single-family housing design in the City of Denton:

- A. Promote high-quality development and construction;
- D. Provide variety and visual interest in the exterior design of buildings; and
- E. Enhance the streetscape and diminish the prominence of garages and parking areas.

Architectural Variety

For the purposes of determining architectural variety as required in DDC Section 7.10.3D (Architectural Variety), the addition or removal of design features (not a change in building materials alone) shall be used to distinguish building elevations. DDC Section 7.10.3E (Building Mass and Form) states: “Buildings shall incorporate at least three of the following design features to provide visual relief along the front of the residence.”

For the list below, the text shown in “black text” is the list included in DDC Section 7.10.3E. The “***bold italicized text***” are additional design elements that can be used to meet the requirements of DDC Section 7.10.3D and 7.10.3E

DDC Section 7.10.3E. Building Mass and Form

Buildings shall incorporate at least three of the following design features to provide visual relief along the front of the residence: ***(Note: the design features shall be increased to four if reducing the required 3-ft garage off-set from the building; see Front Entry Garages section of letter below)***

1. Dormers ***(while a window is preferred, it is not required)***;
2. Gables;

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3. Recessed entries, a minimum of three feet deep;
4. Covered front porches;
5. Cupolas;
6. Architectural pillars or posts;
7. Bay window with a minimum 24 inches projection;
- 8. *Variable roof pitch and nested roofs;***
- 9. *Shed Roof;***
- 10. *Balconies;***
- 11. *Stoops;***
- 12. *Awnings over garage doors;***
- 13. *Split garage doors where a column or post divides single-car garage doors;***
- 14. *Side-entry or J-swing garage;***
- 15. *Changes in wall plane where an entire section of the garage or home at least 8-feet in width extends at least 24-inches out from the primary wall plane;***
- 16. *Minimum 10% increase in the percentage of windows and doors (excluding garage doors) above the minimum required (15%) for a total 25%; and/or***
- 17. *More than one of the following decorative masonry details incorporated in the gables or across the front of the home: rowlock or soldier course rows around windows and garage doors, basket weave herringbone, or other distinctive brick patterns in gables; cedar shake or stucco board accents in gables.***

Refer to Attachment A for supporting reference materials to help define these terms, and that are applied to residences constructed elsewhere in Denton.

Front-Entry Garages

For the purposes of providing alternate design considerations for front-entry garages, the Director is approving design relief related to the reduction of the garage off-set from the building to accommodate a variety of plan types where architectural relief is achieved.

The 24-inches off-set is preferred to be achieved measuring the off-set from a primary building wall associated with enclosed, occupiable, climate controlled living area to the garage face as this still provides an appropriate off-set and achieves the original intent for variable building plane off-sets and diminishing the prominence of the garage entrances, coupled with the builder's commitment to providing four architectural design elements in 7.10.3E above.

Alternatively, staff recognizes that covered porches (whether climate controlled or not) can be designed in a manner that also achieves the desired architectural relief, provided that the covered porch is of a minimum size, even if the aforementioned 24-inch offset referenced above is not provided. As such, alternate design relief is being provided to accommodate porches for

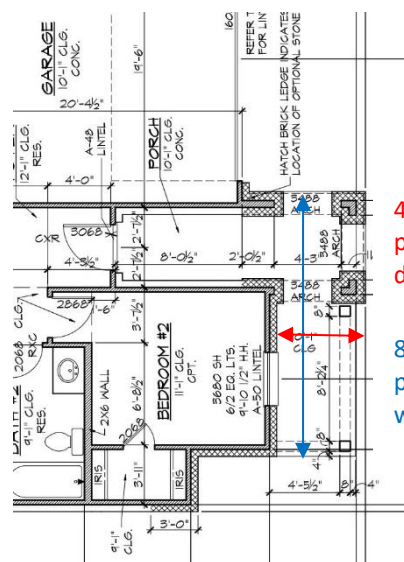
structures that do not achieve the 24-inch off-set between the garage face and primary building wall.

For the list below, the text shown in “black text” is the list included in DDC Section 7.10.3F (Garage Design). The “***bold italicized text***” are additional design elements that shall be used to meet the requirements of DDC Section 7.10.3F.

DDC Section 7.10.3F Garage Design

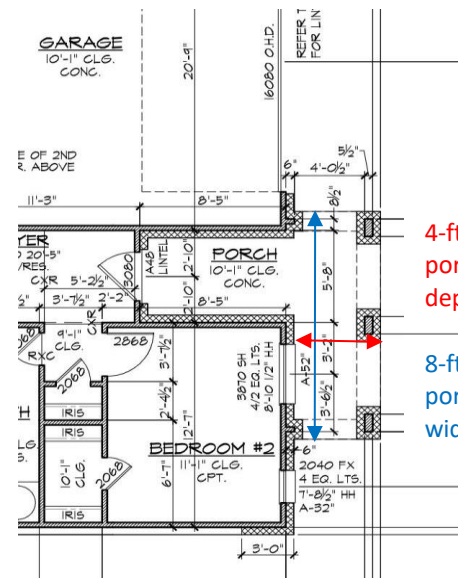
1. Where alleys are present, garages shall be accessed from the alley to the maximum extent practicable.
2. For front-entry garages:
 - a. The garage shall be offset a minimum of ***24-inches*** from the building;

Exception: the 24-inches off-set referenced above may be reduced to 0-inches provided that a covered porch, minimum 4-feet in depth (measured from the exterior building wall face to the edge of the column exterior) and minimum 8-feet in width, with supporting columns is provided (does not have to be climate controlled) (see image below)



4-ft min.
porch
depth

8-ft min.
porch
width



4-ft min.
porch
depth

8-ft min.
porch
width

Arrows above denote where measurements are taken from for covered porch minimum width and depth. Note that a recessed entry area may count towards the minimum 8-foot width dimension, but not the minimum 4-foot porch depth dimension.

and

- b. The total width of the garage door(s) shall not occupy more than 40 percent of the ground-floor building frontage.

3. Side- and rear-entry garages are encouraged and may encroach into setbacks pursuant to Table 3.7-A: Authorized Exceptions to Setbacks.

Additionally, please note that this design relief shall apply to all builders within the Stella Hills single-family residential development, including but not limited to Meritage Homes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Tina M. Firgens", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tina M. Firgens, AICP
Deputy Director of Development Services/Planning Director

Enclosures:
Attachment A – Architectural Design Elements Defined

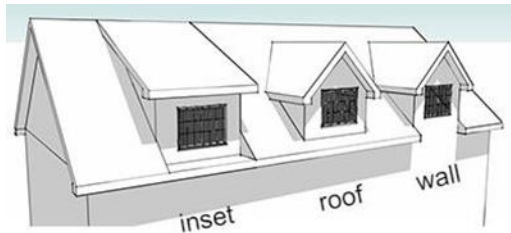
Attachment A – Architectural Design Elements Define

Dormers:

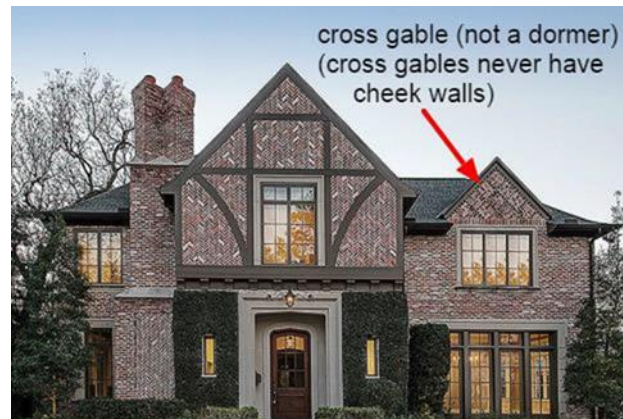
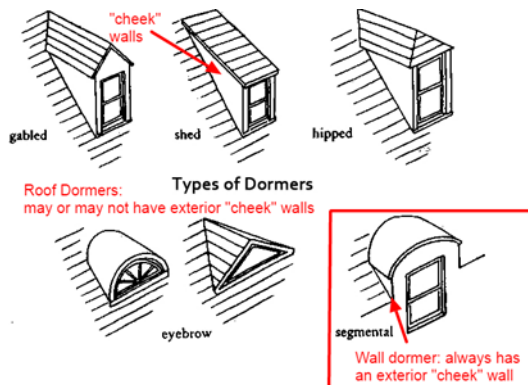
Definition: Dormer means projecting structure which is set vertically on a sloping building roof, having its own roof, which may be flat, arched, gabled or hip in shape. While a window within the dormer is preferred, it is not required.

Dormer Categories

Dormers can be placed into three structural categories: roof dormer, wall dormer, and inset dormer.



Cheek Wall - The vertical sides of the dormer.



Wall dormers always have a “cheek” wall. This is what distinguishes it from a cross gable, which never has a cheek wall.

Covered Front Porches vs Recessed Entries

A porch is a covered shelter projecting in front of the entrance of a house or building. The structure is external to the walls of the building but may be enclosed by walls, columns, rails, or screens extending from the main structure.

A recessed entry is created when the front door is inset behind the front wall of the house by at least three feet, typically covered by the primary roof line and fully enclosed by walls on both sides. A recessed entry can be paired with a front porch if the width of the recessed space is enlarged by 24 inches or more on a single side or 12 inches or more on both sides of the front door.



Covered front porch



Recessed entry



Wider recessed entry/covered porch

Stoops

Definition: A stoop is a small staircase ending with a platform (covered or uncovered) that leads to the entrance of the residence. Depending on the style and number of steps, the stoop may include railing on one or both sides.



Projection Windows - Styles



BAY WINDOW



BOX BAY WINDOW

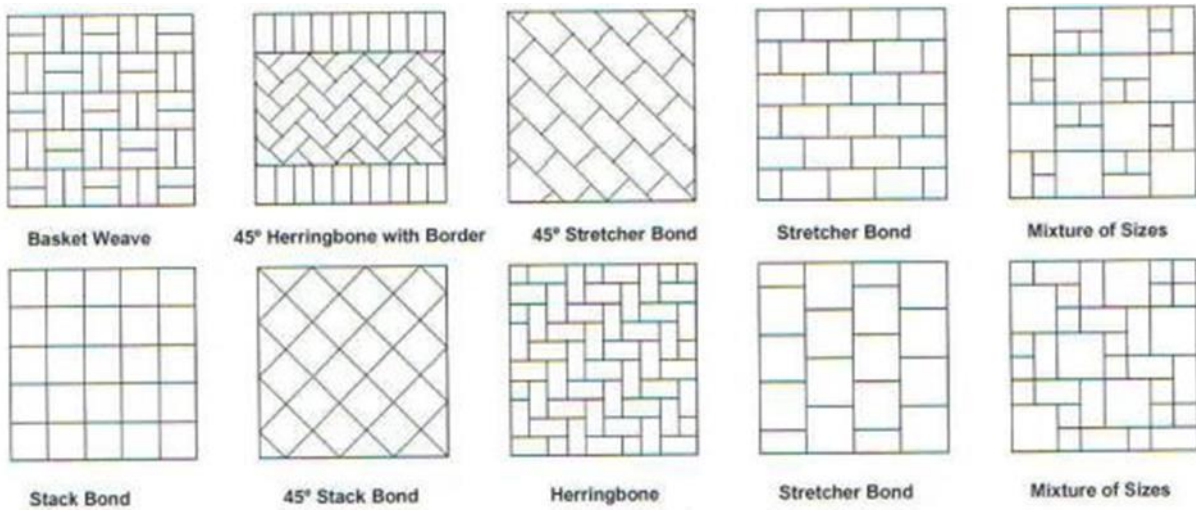


BUMP-OUT BAY WINDOW



BOW WINDOW

Decorative Masonry Patterns



Roof Designs

Below is an example of a split or lean-to gable style. This would be acceptable as a gable feature.



Example of a jerkinhead gable.

