



Department of Planning and Zoning

Technical Bulletin

Subject: Bay Windows

Date: 6/30/2018

No.: 18-09

Summary: This Technical Bulletin clarifies what structures are considered bay windows that may encroach into the minimum required yards (setbacks) under Par. 1D of Sect. 2-412 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Effective Date: Immediate

Background: Par. 1D of Sect. 2-412 of the Zoning Ordinance permits bay windows and oriels that are no more than 10 feet in width to extend up to 3 feet into any minimum required yard, but not closer than 5 feet to any lot line. Because bay windows and oriels, which are a type of bay window, are not defined in the Zoning Ordinance, staff has relied on the architectural dictionary definitions of these terms and longstanding interpretations. A bay window is a generic term for all protruding window construction from the exterior wall of a building. In order for an exterior wall “bump out” to be considered a bay window, it has been a longstanding staff interpretation that at least 50% of the surface area of the bump out must consist of glass. Other considerations concerning bay windows include:

- How is the 50% glass area of a bay window calculated?
- Can a bay window contain living space?
- Can any portion of a bay window touch the ground?
- Can a bay window extend between two or more floors?
- How is bay window width measured?

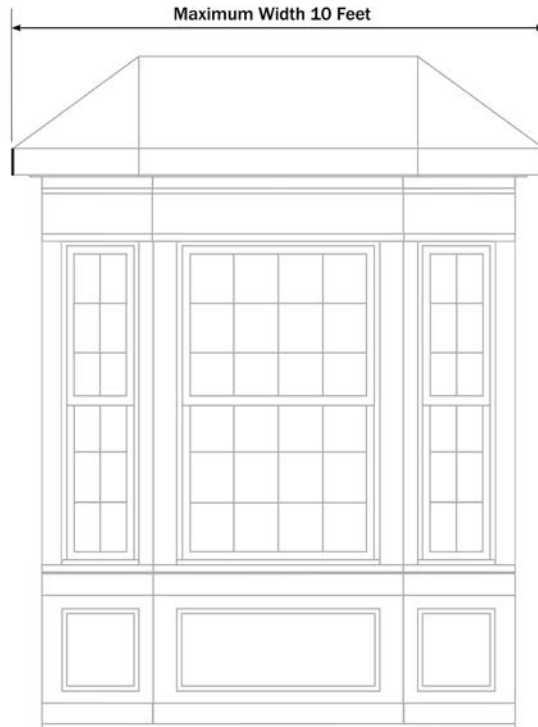
The answers to the above questions have not been consistent among all staff, builders and architects, and there has been confusion as to how Par. 1D of Sect. 2-412 should be interpreted. The purpose of this technical bulletin is to address these issues so that everyone, including staff, architects and builders, has a common understanding of what constitutes a bay window that can encroach into the minimum required yards.

Requirement:

In order for a bay window to be allowed to extend up to 3 feet into any minimum required yard (setback), the following must be met:

- **Width of Bay Window:** The bay window cannot exceed 10 feet in width. The width measurement must include all portions of the bay window, including any windowsill, molding, brackets, corbels, foundation or eaves. **See Figure 1.**

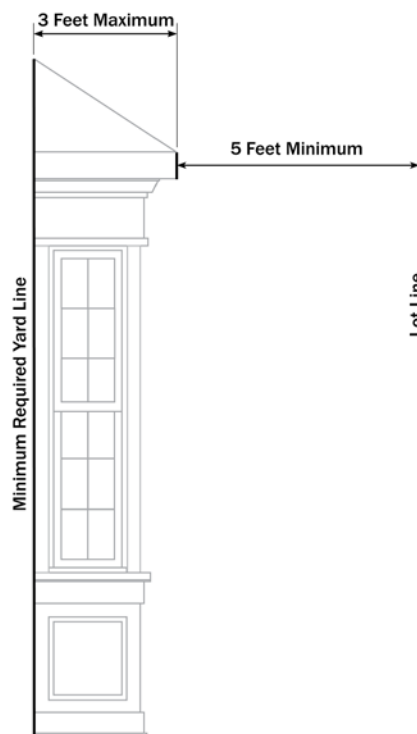
Figure 1:
Maximum Bay Window Width



- Minimum Setback:** A minimum distance of 5 feet must be maintained between the furthest projection of the bay window (including any eaves or foundations) and any lot line. A minimum 5 foot distance between any lot line and bay window must also be maintained in a P district, unless otherwise shown on an approved development plan. **See Figure 2.**

Figure 2:
Maximum Bay Window Extension
and Minimum Distance to Lot Line

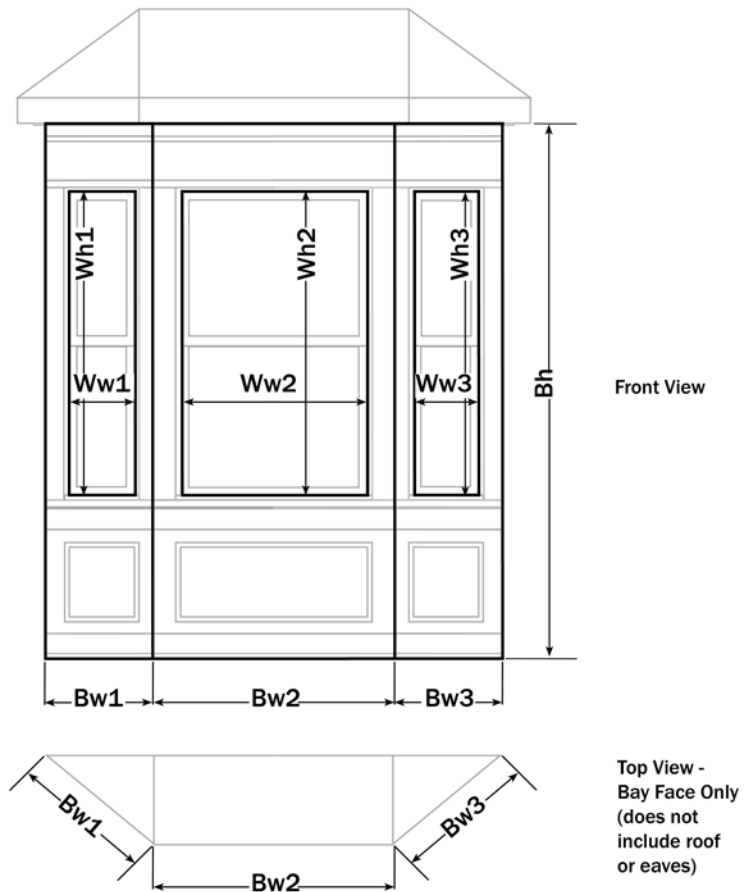
Note:
In NO event can a bay window encroach more than 3 feet in to any minimum required yard.



- Percentage of Glass:** A minimum of 50% of the surface area of the bay window must consist of glass. However, for bay windows without a foundation, the structural support beneath the window does not count toward the surface area of the bay window. Also, while eaves are included in the width calculation of the bay windows, eaves and the associated roof above the eaves are not included in the surface area of the bay window. **See Figure 3.**

$$\% \text{ of Glass Surface Coverage} = \text{Glass Surface Area} \div \text{Bay Window Surface Area}$$

Figure 3:
Total Bay Window and Glass
Surface Area Measurements



$$(Wh1 \times Ww1) + (Wh2 \times Ww2) + (Wh3 \times Ww3) = \text{Total Glass Surface Area}$$

$$Bh \times (Bw1 + Bw2 + Bw3) = \text{Total Bay Window Surface Area}$$

A bay window that meets the above requirements may encroach into a minimum required yard as permitted by Par. 1D of Sect. 2-412 and may contain living space, have a foundation, touch the ground, or extend between multiple floors. A detailed bay window diagram must be provided on building plans that shows all dimensions, total surface area of the bay window, and glass surface area. In addition, the percentage of glass surface in the bay window calculations must be provided.

Questions regarding bay windows should be directed to the Zoning Permit Review Branch at 703-222-1082 or the Ordinance Administration Branch at 703-324-1314, TTY 711.

Approved by: Leslie B. Johnson
Zoning Administrator
Department of Planning and Zoning