

## Department of Permitting & Inspections

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TO: Bob Duncan, RA, AIA  
FROM: Scott Gustin  
DATE: August 4, 2020  
RE: Building height 15-17 Monroe Street

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I have reviewed your letter of July 27, 2020 and associated drawings regarding height measurement of the residential building at 15-17 Monroe Street. We agree on measurement of the existing gable roof structure. Height is measured to the mid-point of the roof rise. We continue to differ as to the impact on height created by a new full shed dormer on one side. The introduction of a full shed dormer effectively changes the top half story to a three-quarter story with significant increase in building volume. Usable building space increases as does the apparent building mass and height. I think we would agree if we were talking about a flat-roof structure with two roof levels, the higher flat roof level would be the building height.

Sec. 5.2.6, *Building Height Measurements*, of the Comprehensive Development Ordinance articulates specific provisions for height measurement of several different roof forms. What you are proposing at 15-17 Monroe Street is not specifically addressed. In such cases, the CDO refers height measurement of "other roof forms" to the determination of the administrative officer in a manner that most closely reflects the intent of the height measurement standards. Item (a), 2, B of Sec. 5.2.6 offers some guidance and states that a double-pitched roof shall be measured to the roofplate of the highest pitch. Double-pitch is not defined in the CDO; however, reference is made to a gambrel or double-pitch mansard roof forms. Double-pitch could also simply mean two different pitches. Such is the case for the full shed dormer at 15-17 Monroe Street. Using the standard in Sec. 5.2.6, (a), 2, B, height of the structure with a full shed dormer would be measured to the roofplate of the full shed dormer.

Height limits are a common means of limiting development intensity. Therefore, height limits in residential zones are more restrictive than in mixed use and downtown zones. The property at 15-17 Monroe Street is located in a residential zone, and the building is presently within inches of the maximum permissible 35' height limit as measured to the midpoint of the roof rise. The proposed change in roof volume from a half to a three quarter story would exceed the anticipated development intensity of this site. Further guidance can be gleaned from Sec. 5.2.6 (b), *Exceptions to Height Limits*. This section specifies a variety of instances and building components that may extend beyond the height limit. Except for item 1 related to existing nonconformities, none of the height exceptions allow for additional conditioned building space beyond the height limit.

In sum, the introduction of a full shed dormer at 15-17 Monroe Street would significantly increase upper story building volume and would consequently increase the overall height of the building.

This decision may be appealed to the Development Review Board within 15 days of issuance.