

IN THE Details

Dormers bring space and light into four homes built by Cape Associates.

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PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF CAPE ASSOCIATES



A shed dormer ties two doghouse dormers together, opening the front entrance into a grand entryway, complete with a vaulted ceiling and huge window for letting natural light pour in.

If the term “dormer” makes you think of a cozy book nook in the attic, it’s time to revisit where this versatile architectural detail is making strides in modern building design.

Originally, dormers were used to gain extra living space in the attic when Parisian law limited buildings to six stories. Over time, they developed into an essential and elegant architectural feature. Contemporary architects still use dormers as they were first intended—to gain more space. Advances in window engineering also allow architects to use dormers with green-building sensibilities to open interior spaces to natural light without stressing climate control systems.

Cape Associates applies dormers in creative ways to enhance livability and aesthetics. The building company’s projects highlighted here will give you an idea of how dormers can get more space, light and curb appeal for your home.

Instead of housing a window, this king-size dormer has French doors that open onto a balcony.

Construction: CAPE ASSOCIATES, INC.

10-Room Cape Cod-Style Home, Orleans (photo inset page 58)

This stunning renovation exhibits the two major benefits that dormers contribute to a home's interior: space and light. Specifically, the steep, 12-pitch roof limited livable floor space in the bedroom and bathroom, each in opposite gable ends of the upstairs. By installing a doghouse dormer in each room, the heightened ceiling increased the amount of usable floor space without actually creating more square footage. In the bathroom, this meant space for a new full shower, tub and double vanity. Plus, the windows in the dormers let more natural light into both rooms, which before only had a single window on the gable wall.

To tie the two doghouse dormers together aesthetically from the exterior, the architect added a shed dormer to the foyer. The addition opened the front entrance into a grand entryway, complete with a vaulted ceiling and huge window for letting natural light pour in.

Six-Room Colonial, Eastham (photo right)

This new construction sits on a quarter-acre parcel right on Cape Cod Bay. Getting the most out of the building footprint meant using every bit of living space. Inspired by traditional cottage-style construction, the architect opened up the long, sloping roof by placing a shed dormer and doghouse dormer side by side.



A shed dormer and doghouse dormer placed side by side open up a long, sloping roof.

Main House, Family Compound, Orleans (photo page 58-59)

The shed dormer provides needed headroom to gain access to the second floor, and the doghouse dormer allows for a vaulted ceiling to the upstairs bedroom.

Perched on 17-acres abutting Pleasant Bay, this 16-room summer home boasts six king-size dormers. Fully conceived into the original design, these regal dormers add substantial livable space and natural light to the interior. Furthermore, instead of housing a window, these structures open up with French patio doors leading to private, exterior balcony space.

Seven-Room Cape Cod-Style Home, Eastham (photo left)

Look closely at these dormers and you'll see something is missing—the cheek wall. Where a traditional doghouse and shed dormer have two opposing walls, the roofs of these dormers dive into the roof of the house. This detail stretches the dormers the entire width of the rooms to maximize the additional livable space. Once the homeowners saw how much space these slick dormers opened up inside, and outside by way of a private deck, they moved the master bedroom upstairs. **SHOME**



Dormers can stretch the entire width of a room to maximize livable space.