

ARTICLE XII

DENSITY AND DIMENSIONAL REGULATIONS

Section 15-184 Building Setback Requirements.

- (a) Subject to Section 15-187 (Architecturally Integrated Subdivisions) and the other provisions of this section, no portion of any building or any freestanding sign may be located on any lot closer to any lot line or to the street right-of-way line or centerline than is authorized in the table set forth below: **(AMENDED 1/22/85)**
- (1) If the street right-of-way line is readily determinable (by reference to a recorded map, set irons, or other means), the setback shall be measured from such right-of-way line. If the right-of-way line is not so determinable, the setback shall be measured from the street centerline.
 - (2) As used in this section, the term “lot boundary line” refers to lot boundaries other than those that abut streets.
 - (3) As used in this section, the term “building” includes any substantial structure, which, by nature of its size, scale, dimensions, bulk, or use tends to constitute a visual obstruction or generate activity similar to that usually associated with a building. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the following structures shall be deemed to fall within this description:
 - a. Gas pumps and overhead canopies or roofs.
 - b. Fences, walls or berms running along lot boundaries adjacent to public street rights-of-way if such fences, walls or berms exceed three feet in height and are substantially opaque except that fences, walls or berms shall not be regarded as “buildings” within the meaning of this subsection if they are located along the rear lot line of lots that have street frontage along both the front and rear of such lots. **(AMENDED 05/19/98)**
 - c. Pergolas, except that a pergola will not be considered a “building” for purposes of this section if it consists merely of an insubstantial frame, no larger than 15 feet long on any side, presents itself visually more as a part of the landscape than as a building. **(AMENDED 10/22/13)**
 - (4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, signs that do not meet the definition of freestanding signs may be erected on or affixed to structures (e.g., some fences) that are not subject to the setback

requirements applicable to buildings only if such signs are located such that they satisfy the setback requirements applicable to freestanding signs in the district where located. (AMENDED 5/26/81; 12/7/83; 2/4/86; 11/14/88; 05/15/90; 04/16/91; 01/16/01)

- (5) Notwithstanding the foregoing, the first three feet of roof overhang on a residential structure constructed in a residential zoning district is not considered a building for the purposes of this section and is not subject to the building setback requirements. (AMENDED 4/22/14)

ZONE	Minimum Distance from Street Right of Way line		Minimum Distance from Street Centerline		Minimum Distance from Lot Boundary Line
	Building	Freestanding Sign	Building	Freestanding Sign	Building and Freestanding Sign
C	25	12.5	55	42.5	20
WR	35	17.5	65	47.5	20
RR	40	20	70	50	20
R-20	40	20	70	50	20
R-15	35	17.5	55	47.5	20
R-10	25	12.5	55	42.5	12
R-S.I.R.	25	12.5	55	42.5	10
R-7.5	25	12.5	55	42.5	10
R-3	15	7.5	45	37.5	8
B-1(c)	--	--	30	--	--
B-1(g)	--	--	30		
B-2	15	7.5	45	37.5	10
B-3	15	7.5	45	37.5	15
B-3-T	15	7.5	45	37.5	15
B-4	30	15	60	45	10
CT	--	--	30	--	--
B-5	40	20	70	50	20
M-1	--	--	30	--	--
M-2	--	--	30	--	--
WM-3	30	15	60	45	20
O	15	7.5	45	37.5	15
O/A	15	7.5	45	37.5	15
R-2	15	7.5	45	37.5	8, plus 2 feet for every additional foot above 35 feet in height

- (b) With respect to lots within the R-20 district that were in existence or had received preliminary plat approval by Orange County prior to November 14, 1988 and were outside the town's extraterritorial planning jurisdiction but that on or after that date became zoned R-20 as a result of the implementation of the Joint Planning Agreement:
- (1) The minimum set back distance from the lot boundary line shall be 15 feet rather than the 20 feet indicated in the table set forth in subsection (a);
 - (2) On lots having frontage on more than one street, the building setback applicable to the street which the front of the principal building located on that lot faces shall be as set forth in subsection (a). The building setback from the other streets shall be 15 feet from the right-of-way line.
(AMENDED 04/25/89)
- (c) Whenever a lot in a nonresidential district has a common boundary line with a lot in a residential district, then the lot in the nonresidential district shall be required to observe the property line setback requirements applicable to the adjoining residential lot.
- (d) Setback distances shall be measured from the property line or street centerline to a point on the lot that is directly below the nearest extension of any part of the building that is substantially a part of the building itself and not a mere appendage to it (such as a flagpole, etc.). Setbacks for berms shall be measured from the property line or street centerline to the point on the berm where it exceeds three feet in height. **(AMENDED 05/19/98)**
- (e) Whenever a private road that serves more than three lots or more than three dwelling units or that serves any nonresidential use tending to generate traffic equivalent to more than three dwelling units is located along a lot boundary, then:
- (1) If the lot is not also bordered by a public street, buildings and freestanding signs shall be set back from the centerline of the private road just as if such road were a public street.
 - (2) If the lot is also bordered by a public street, then the setback distance on lots used for residential purposes (as set forth above in the column labeled "Minimum Distance from Lot Boundary Line") shall be measured from the inside boundary of the traveled portion of the private road.
- (f) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, on lots in residential zones used for residential purposes, a maximum of one accessory building may be located in the rear yard of such lot without regard to the setback requirements otherwise applicable to the rear lot boundary line if such accessory building does not exceed fifteen feet

in height or contain more than 150 square feet of gross floor area. **(AMENDED 5/26/81)**

- (g) Reserved. **(REPEALED 3/24/09)**
- (h) Reserved. **(REPEALED 3/24/09)**
- (i) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, no setback requirement shall apply to bus shelters erected by or at the direction of the town. **(AMENDED 1/22/85)**
- (j) Notwithstanding any provision in (a), no minimum distance from a lot boundary line for buildings or freestanding signs shall be required from any railroad right-of-way or other railroad property being used principally as a track bed or corridor. **(AMENDED 2/4/86)**
- (k) In addition to the overall density restrictions of the underlying zone, each mobile home unit in any mobile home community (use classification 1.122 or 1.123) must be placed such that it is at least 10 feet in any direction from any other mobile home unit within the community, in order to reduce the likelihood of the spread of fire. **(AMENDED 10/20/87)**
- (l) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (a) or (b), properties located in Carrboro's Transition Area II, and zoned R-R shall be required to maintain a 100-foot undisturbed, naturally vegetated setback along any common boundary line with Properties in Orange County's planning jurisdiction that are designated both Rural Buffer and Public/Private Open Space on the Joint Planning Area Land Use Plan. No structures or associated clearing shall be permitted within this setback. Utilities and associated clearing shall be permitted within this setback only to the extent that no reasonable alternative exists. **(AMENDED 06/05/89)**
- (m) When the neighborhood preservation district commission determines that an application for a permit under this ordinance involves a proposed authentic restoration, new construction or reconstruction in the same location and in the original conformation of a structure within a neighborhood preservation district that has architectural or historic significance, but that such proposed restoration, construction or reconstruction cannot reasonably be accomplished in conformity with the setback requirements set forth in this section, the neighborhood preservation district commission may recommend, and the permit issuing authority may allow, a deviation from these requirements to the extent reasonably necessary to accommodate such restoration, construction or reconstruction. **(AMENDED 09/26/89)**
- (n) Signs erected in connection with elections or political campaigns, as described in subsection 15-273(a)(5), shall not be subject to the setback requirements of this

section. However, as provided in subsection 15-273(a)(5), such signs may not be attached to any natural or man-made permanent structure located within a public right-of-way, including without limitation trees, utility poles, or traffic control signs. **(AMENDED 08/25/92)**

- (o) When the appearance commission determines that (i) any new construction or any repair, renovation, or reconstruction of a pre-existing building is proposed within any commercial zoning district; and (ii) the appearance of the building would be substantially improved by the addition of or extension of an architectural feature; and (iii) the feature proposed by the appearance commission would violate the setback provisions of this section, then, subject to the following requirements, the commission may recommend, and upon such recommendation the applicant may amend his plans to propose and the permit issuing authority may authorize, an encroachment of such architectural feature into the required setback area.
 - (1) For purposes of this subsection, the term “architectural feature” includes any part of a building other than a building wall or mechanical appurtenance.
 - (2) The maximum encroachment that can be authorized under this subsection is two feet.
 - (3) The encroachment may be allowed when the appearance commission and permit issuing authority both conclude that authorization of the encroachment would result in a building that is more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood than would be the case if the encroachment were not allowed. **(AMENDED 11/09/93)**
- (p) Notwithstanding the other provisions of this section, in the historic district, no portion of any new dwelling unit on a flag lot may be located any closer than fifteen (15) feet from any property line or any closer than thirty (30) feet from any existing dwelling unit located on the lot from which the flag lot was created (see Section 15-175.10). **(AMENDED 11/21/95)**
- (q) Notwithstanding the other provisions of this section, the base of a use classification 18.200 tower shall be set back from a street right-of-way line and a lot boundary lane a distance that is not less than the height of the tower. **(AMENDED 02/18/97)**
- (r) Notwithstanding any provision in this section with respect to use classification 1.340, single-room occupancy buildings may be set back from a street right-of-way line a distance that is consistent with the setbacks of other nearby buildings that front the same street. **(AMENDED 01/11/00)**