

Development Rules: Summary of Conforming Requirements

This information has been extracted by the Civic Federation's Planning & Zoning Committee from the Arlington County Zoning Ordinances and reviewed by staff for accuracy. It is intended to give an overview of the current requirements. The summary should be used for discussion purposes. To get the best information about what can be built on a specific lot, bring a plat to the Zoning Office.

	R-5	R-6	R-8	R-10	R-20
Minimum Average Width and Area¹	50 feet 5,000 square feet	60 feet 6,000 square feet	70 feet 8,000 square feet	80 feet 10,000 square feet	100 feet 20,000 square feet
Onsite Parking	2 spaces	1 space	1 space	1 space	1 space
Height Limit	35 feet (Note how height is calculated. ²) No structure located within 25 feet of the front property line can exceed 2 1/2 stories.				
Current Coverage	Up to 56% of the area of the lot (Includes the main building, accessory structures, areas for parking, driveways, and maneuver and loading space.)				
Number of Homes	No more than 1 main residential building and its accessory buildings per lot.				
Minimum Setback Requirements					
Street Setback from lot frontage (property line)	Main building: 25 feet (See note) Open porches: Can extend into the required front setback up to 4 feet (a setback of 21 feet) Note: If houses along your side of the street are generally closer to the front property line than 25 feet, you can request that your setback be reduced to the average setback on the street frontage up to a setback limit of 15 feet (garages 18 feet). These determinations are made on a case-by-case basis.				
Rear Setback	Dwelling: 25 feet from rear lot line on interior lots and 10 feet from rear lot line on corner lots. Accessory buildings including garages: 1 foot from the rear lot line (10 feet on corner lots) if located at least 8 feet from the dwelling.				

¹ "...where a lot has less width and less area than required in this subsection and was recorded under one (1) ownership at the time of the adoption of this ordinance, such lot may be occupied by any use permitted in the "R-6" District."

² "The vertical distance measured at the existing grade of the lot at the perimeter of the building to the highest point of the roof surface, if a flat roof, to the deck line of mansard roof and to the mean height level between eaves and ridge for gable, hip or gambrel roof. The vertical distance shall be calculated by averaging the above-described distance at four (4) points at the perimeter of the building. The four (4) points shall include two (2) points each on the front and rear of the building, at the points closest to the applicable side lot lines"

Side Setbacks	Dwelling and accessory structures: 10 feet from side lot line; one side yard may be 8 feet The aggregate width of both side yards on any lot shall not be less than thirty (30) percent of the required width of the lot [R-5=18 feet; R-6=18 feet; R-8=21 feet; R-10=24 feet; and R-20=30 feet.]
Additions to Existing Main Buildings	No addition shall be located closer than 8 feet to any part of an existing accessory building.
New Accessory Buildings that are 1½ stories or <25 feet tall³	Distance from main building: 8 feet On interior lots, distance from side or rear lot line: 1 foot On corner lots, distance from side lot line: 1 foot On corner lots, distance from rear lot line: 10 feet
New Accessory Buildings that are 2 stories or >25 feet tall	Distance from main building: 15 feet Distance from side lot lines: 10 feet Distance from rear lot line on interior lot: 25 feet Distance from rear lot line on corner lot: 10 feet
Allowable Encroachments into Required Setback Areas	
Allowed Encroaching Projections	Chimneys may extend 18 inches. Unenclosed balconies; eaves, trim and fascia boards and similar architectural features; platforms and terraces may extend no more than 4 feet but not nearer than 5 feet to any property line Unscreened air conditioning units: not less than 8 feet from any side lot line or 10 feet from any rear lot line Air conditioning units screened with fence or vegetation: no closer than 8 feet to any front or rear lot line, and no closer than 5 feet to any side lot line Except porches, any roofed-over area existing on 11-20-76 which is attached to a main structure and which encroaches on required setback or yard area may not be enclosed.
Subsurface	Subsurface parking and subsurface accessory structures may be located anywhere on a property.
Allowed Encroaching Additions	An addition over an existing one-family dwelling encroaching on a required setback or yard area provided there is no more of an encroachment into the required setback or yard than that of the existing wall below it, and providing that new construction may not take place over encroaching garages or porches Ramps and other structures or equipment for individuals with disabilities, to the extent reasonably necessary

³ With heights lower than 1½ stories or 25 feet, whichever is less, and footprint smaller than 560 square feet in R-5 or R-6 Districts, or 650 square feet in any other Zoning District