



County of Albemarle

Community Development Department

Setbacks and Plats: What is Required for Permit Review

What Is a Setback?

A setback is the **minimum** distance required between a structure and a property line. Setbacks are established by zoning regulations and are intended to provide space between buildings, protect neighbors, allow access for utilities and emergency services, and preserve the character of an area.

Setback types include:

- Front setback: Distance from the front property line
- Side setback: Distance from the side property lines
- Rear setback: Distance from the rear property line

The specific setback distances depend on the property's zoning district and the type of structure proposed.

What Is a Plat?

A plat is a scaled drawing that shows the legal boundaries of a parcel. For permits, the plat must be a copy of the recorded plat. A copy of this plat can be obtained from the [County Clerk's Office](#). If a plat cannot be located a copy of the deed **AND** a picture from the [GIS System](#) can be used instead.

How to show setbacks on your recorded plat

1. Start with the recorded plat
 - Use a clear copy of the recorded plat from the Clerk's Office
 - Make sure all property lines and dimensions are visible
 - Do not alter or redraw the property boundaries
2. Show the proposed structure
 - Draw the footprint of the proposed structure directly on the plat
 - Use a clear outline that contrasts with the original plat
 - Label the structure (for example: "Proposed Dwelling", or "Proposed Garage")
3. Measure setback distances
 - Draw straight, perpendicular measurement lines from the closest point of the structure to each relevant property line
 - Show the actual distance in feet
 - Measurements must be clear and readable
4. Label each setback
 - Clearly identify each measurement as:
 - Front setback
 - Side setback – label both separately
 - Rear setback