



DESIGN REVIEW GUIDE

The Process

Old Saybrook is well known as a community with a high quality of life, small and cohesive neighborhoods, a vibrant downtown and waterfront - all on the spectacular setting of Long Island Sound and the mouth of the Connecticut River. This deserving reputation is due in part to the town's small size, entrepreneurial spirit, civic-minded citizens and active government. One of the many factors that makes Old Saybrook such a great place to live, work and visit is the community's attention to detail and respect for its natural, architectural and cultural heritage.

Old Saybrook's Design Review process strives to protect and enhance the town's unique qualities and strong "sense of place" by carrying out economic development under design objectives. The purpose of this Design Review Guide is to help applicants in preparing projects to be reviewed by the Architectural Review Board. Through materials such as this, the Land Use agencies seek to make information available well before the final design of a project, saving the applicant and the Town time and money.

WHAT IS DESIGN REVIEW?

Design Review is part of the zoning permit process that makes recommendations to the Zoning Commission, Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals for commercial, industrial, municipal, and multi-family building design. Old Saybrook has used Design Review since 1997 as a tool for maintaining the town's special character and appeal, and high quality of life.

The purpose of Design Review is to protect the character of these special places and to ensure that development or changes to existing development has a harmonious relationship to its surroundings in regard to adjacent buildings, the neighborhood, the overall character of the town, the site and the natural environment. Design Review works to keep Old Saybrook from looking and feeling like "Anywhere, USA."



Old Saybrook Town Hall

The Design Review process considers the "character" of improvements/structures/buildings. These include such things as building scale and massing, materials, parking, pedestrian walkways, landscaping, signs and lighting. The Design Review process also considers the Site Plan Objectives of *Section 51.5 of the Zoning Regulations* i.e., traffic access and off-site improvements, on-site circulation and parking, landscaping and screening, lighting, cultural, natural and historic resources and neighborhood character. Each issue considered may appear individually small, however, in combination, can make the difference between a good project and a bad



Aerial View Lighthouses

HOW DOES DESIGN REVIEW BENEFIT THE TOWN?

Design Review is a tool for protecting community character and revitalizing areas targeted for development. It allows the Town to look beyond the specifics of a proposed development and consider its context and how a project will fit and benefit its surroundings. Design Review benefits the community and individual property owners in many important

Reinforce Community Identity

Old Saybrook has a special character. Think about your neighborhood, the waterfront or Main Street - if you saw a photograph of one of these places, could you tell it was Old Saybrook or does it look just like any other small town? A great many communities across the country are struggling to maintain their identity. We all want to improve the quality of life and make our town more attractive. Old Saybrook already has a strong character and high quality of life. Design Review helps protect this asset for future generations.

Enhance and Protect Property Values

Design Review helps assure property owners that their investment will be protected. Just as traditional zoning prevents landfills from locating in a residential neighborhood, Design Review tries to ensure that the character of the neighborhood is maintained. Improvements in the quality of design stabilize and, in some cases, enhance the value of property. This, in turn, makes the property more attractive for investment and benefits the overall character of the neighborhood and the Town.



William Parker House, 1646

Promote Economic Development

Design Review is an especially important tool for commercial districts where increased private investment and maintaining an image of vitality is the goal. Places like the Main Street Shopping District and marine commercial development along the Connecticut River rely heavily on Design Review to protect and enhance public and private investments, and to support and encourage appropriate new or renovation to commercial properties. The same is true for many other places around the country that



Saybrook Point Inn & Marina

HOW DO I KNOW IF DESIGN REVIEW APPLIES TO

The Old Saybrook Zoning Regulations require all commercial, industrial, municipal and multi-family housing proposals go to the Architectural Review Board for design review. All new or modified signs should come before the Board for review.

Staff in the Land Use Department can provide you with an application form and the appropriate section of the Design Review Guide that applies to your project. The type and location of the proposal will determine the specific design

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT FROM THE PROCESS?

It is best if you can meet with the Land Use Department Staff in the early stages of planning your proposal. They can offer ideas about particular concerns or issues that may arise during the review of your project. By meeting with the staff early, these points can be incorporated into your project before you have made a significant investment of time and money. In some cases, staff can approve small projects in a few days. Others may take more time and/or additional reviews, depending on the complexity of the project. The ARB reports to the Zoning Commission for its consideration in making its final decision.

Projects going through Design Review are evaluated in three basic stages: (1) Staff reviews the application and provides comments to the Architectural Review Board; (2) the Architectural Review Board meets with the applicant and forwards



Pashbeshauke Pavilion

comments to the Zoning Commission; and, (3) the Zoning Commission considers comments provided by the Staff, the Architectural Review Board, and testimony from the

The Architectural Review Board advises the Zoning Commission on design issues, and meets the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Teacher's Lounge at the Middle School on Sheffield Street. The Zoning Commission makes the final decision, and meets the 1st and 3rd Monday. The public has an opportunity to review and comment on all development projects requiring a permit from the Zoning Commission, and there is a 15 day appeal period after



Historic James Pharmacy

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

town zoning permits & general information

- **Old Saybrook Land Use Boards**
302 Main Street, Old Saybrook, CT 06475
860.388.3131

town building permits

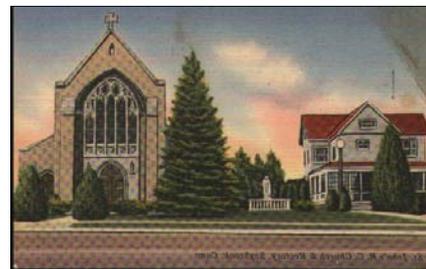
- **Old Saybrook Building Department**
302 Main Street, Old Saybrook, CT 06475
860.388.3131

historic preservation and rehabilitation tax credits

- **Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation**
940 Whitney Ave., Hamden, CT 06517
203.562.6312 www.cttrust.org

historic rehabilitation and preservation

- **National Trust for Historic Preservation**
785 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036
800.944.6847 www.nationaltrust.org



Grace Episcopal Church

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