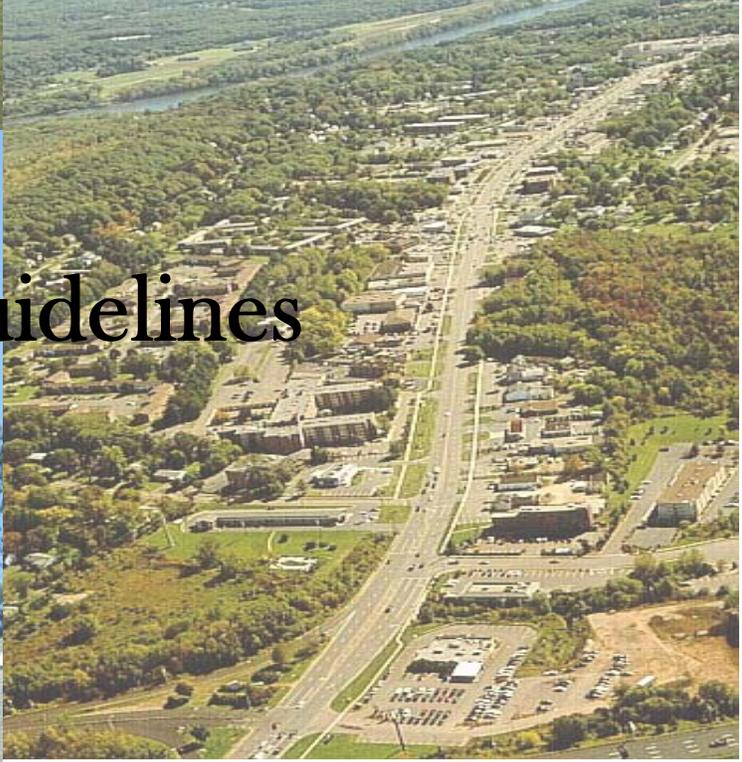
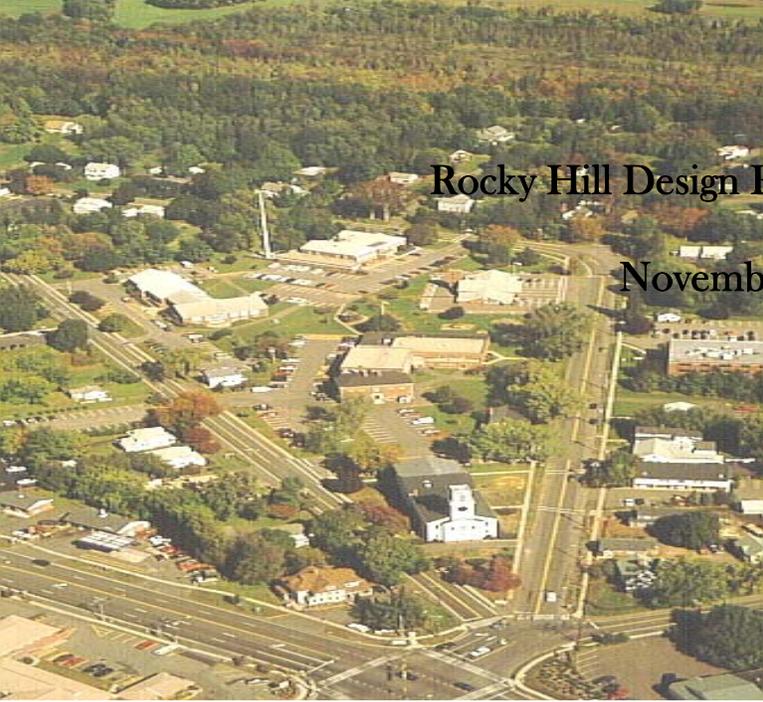




Town of Rocky Hill, CT



Design Guidelines



Rocky Hill Design Review Advisory Board

November 30, 2006

Design Review Advisory Board

Purpose

The purpose of the Design Review Advisory Board is to enhance the community and provide guidance in preserving and improving the character, appearance and aesthetics of the community; to protect Rocky Hill's architectural heritage; and to preserve property values throughout the Town. This will be accomplished by making recommendations consistent with adopted land use regulations to land use boards and Town agencies of the Town on future or pending projects prior to the rendering of any decisions by the boards and commissions. The Design Review Advisory Board is also charged with developing guidelines for community design and appearance by creating a publication containing land use design standards appropriate to Rocky Hill.

Applicability

- 1) The Design Review Advisory Board shall review, comment and make written recommendations on the following (subject to exemptions listed in item 2):
 - a) all developments requiring Site Plan review by the Planning & Zoning Commission including site design and landscape alterations
 - b) all changes to facades of non-residential buildings
- 2) Exemptions

The following activities are exempt from design review by the Design Review Advisory Board:

- (a) interior alterations
- (b) repair and maintenance of site improvements or structures utilizing the same materials
- (c) construction, alteration or maintenance by a public utility or public agency of underground or overhead utilities intended to service existing or nearby approved developments
- (d) subdivision applications including conservation design subdivisions
- (e) single family structures and developments
- (f) accessory apartments
- (g) cemeteries
- (h) commercial greenhouses in residential zones
- (i) group day care homes
- (j) façade and landscape proposals utilizing grant money from the Silas Deane Highway Façade Improvement Program and which do not require action by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

3) Silas Deane Highway Projects

For activities located along the Silas Deane Highway from Town Line Road to Dividend Street, please refer to, “**The Silas Deane: A Vision for Reinvestment, Action Items and Design Guidelines, Wethersfield & Rocky Hill, CT**”, prepared by Fuss & O’Neill in association with Ferrero Hixon Associates, for conceptual design themes. The Board may refer to design themes found on pages P. 13 through P.26 of the document when reviewing applications under this Section.

Procedure

- 1) The Design Review Advisory Board shall meet at regularly scheduled meetings and on an as-needed basis to consider applications filed directly with it or referred to it by the Planning & Zoning Commission. Application and check list materials are available in the Planning Department and Economic Development Office.
- 2) ***It is recommended that applicants submit their application directly to the Design Review Advisory Board for review and comment prior to submitting an application to the Planning & Zoning Commission.*** In such instances, the Board shall submit its written advisory report *to the applicant* no later than thirty (30) days after receipt thereof so that the *applicant* may include the Board’s recommendations and suggestions with their application to the Planning & Zoning Commission. The written advisory report shall include specific recommendations regarding plan modifications which the Design Review Advisory Board finds desirable based on the general design guidelines contained herein.
- 3) In instances where the Design Review Advisory Board receives application referrals directly from the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Board shall submit its advisory report to the Planning & Zoning Commission and the applicant, at least five (5) days prior to the meeting on which the application is to be considered. The written advisory report shall include specific recommendations regarding plan modifications which the Design Review Advisory Board finds desirable based on the general design guidelines contained herein.

The Reports shall be advisory and not compulsory. The Planning & Zoning Commission shall have final approval authority for all applications. The Planning & Zoning Commission shall not be required to delay any action on an application due to the failure of the Design Review Advisory Board to act in a timely manner.

Application

In addition to any requirements for a Site Plan application for the Planning & Zoning Commission, an applicant should submit the following information to the Design Review Advisory Board, when applicable:

- 1) A plot plan prepared by a professional architect, registered land surveyor, professional civil engineer or professional landscape designer/ landscape architect. This plan should show landscaping (plant species, size, locations and quantities), parking, utilities, sidewalks (locations, width and materials), lighting (pole, base and fixture detail)
- 2) Color site and building photographs
- 3) Fully dimensioned and colorized exterior elevations showing all sides of every building. In the case of an enlargement of a building, the existing building, as well as the proposed addition, should be shown.
- 4) Samples of exterior building materials including color samples and manufacturer's cut sheets
- 5) For signs, the size, location, colors, materials, location and lighting should be shown
- 6) Information should be presented on how the proposed building or sign will complement or improve existing neighboring properties
- 7) Any other information that the applicant deems necessary to aid the Board in evaluating the design

Design Guidelines

The Board shall consider the following criteria when reviewing and acting upon proposals:

Overall Site Design

- 1) The site should be planned to accomplish a desirable transition with the streetscape and to provide for adequate buffers between incompatible land uses, and safe vehicle and pedestrian movement.
- 2) The visibility of parking areas from streets should be restricted by means of plantings, berms, decorative walls, buildings, or other means.
- 3) Large contiguous expanses of parking should be avoided. Plantings, walls, berms and sidewalks should be placed within parking areas to control traffic and reduce the parking areas' visual impact.
- 4) Adjacent buildings of different architectural styles should be separated by means of buffers and plantings.
- 5) A harmonious transition from the site to adjoining properties should be

provided by landscaping or other means.

- 6) Harmony in texture, lines, and masses is recommended. Monotony should be avoided.

Landscape

- 1) Existing topographic patterns and vegetation that contribute to the beauty of a development should be preserved.
- 2) All disturbed portions of sites not otherwise used for buildings, parking or loading areas, walkways or similar purposes should be suitably landscaped with trees, shrubs and other landscape materials and structures.
- 3) Landscape design should provide effective screening of parking areas, retaining walls, utility enclosures, utility cabinets, service areas, outdoor storage areas and dumpster locations.
- 4) Grouped masses of plant materials should be designed to complement architectural elevations and rooflines through color, texture, density and form.
- 5) Perimeter fencing or walls visible to the public and neighboring properties should avoid monotony by the use of recesses, planting materials and architectural features to visually break up their linear appearance.
- 6) Parking areas that face a major public street should be screened from view using decorative berms, dense shrub plantings, low walls or a combination thereof.
- 7) The use of landscaped entries is encouraged at major entries into each individual development if physical site dimensions allow.
- 8) Special attention should be given to the landscaping of building entrances.
- 9) Use of native plants is encouraged and use of invasive plants (as specified in the Town of Rocky Hill Zoning Regulations) is prohibited.

Lighting

- 1) Exterior lighting should enhance building design. Lighting standards and building fixtures should be of a design and size compatible with the building and adjacent areas and should be controlled to avoid light and glare onto adjacent properties and public streets.
- 2) Lighting should be restrained and excessive brightness should be avoided. All fixtures shall be 90 degree full cut-off.

- 3) Light poles shall be “flush mounted” and not on piers or columns that project from the finished grade more than six (6) inches or, if site use dictates utilization of elevated piers or columns, such piers or columns should be decorative in nature.

Building Design

- 1) Architectural style is not restricted. Evaluation of the appearance of a project shall be based on the quality of its design and its relationship to its surroundings.
- 2) Building facades should be staggered to decrease the commercial strip image as well as provide for additional visual interest and identification for separate retail stores. Designs should incorporate wall plane projections or recesses so that no uninterrupted length of any façade exceeds 100 feet.
- 3) Building facades that face public streets should incorporate display windows, awnings, public entry areas, overhangs or other such features to create visual interest along no less than 60% of their horizontal length.
- 4) Windows that face public streets and public ways should be recessed and should include visually prominent sills, shutters, awnings or other forms of framing.
- 5) Entryways should incorporate human scale design elements such as canopies, porticos, overhangs, raised corniced parapets over the doors, peaked roof forms, arches, and architectural details such as integrated tile and moldings. Design element variations should give orientation and aesthetically pleasing character to the building and specifically to the entryway to the building.
- 6) Variations in rooflines should be used to add interest to and reduce the scale of larger buildings, and should reflect the New England character in which the building is located. Roofing materials and design should provide texture, pattern and overall interest to the building.
- 7) Rooflines should avoid extended flat horizontal lines.
- 8) If flat roofs are utilized, decorative parapets should be used to add interest and character and should be extended beyond the front façade of the building if more than just the front façade is visible from a public street or way.
- 9) All roof-mounted equipment and appurtenances shall be architecturally integrated and shall be shielded from view.

- 10) Parapets concealing flat roofs and roof-mounted equipment and appurtenances shall be in proportion with the building relative to height and bulk.
- 11) Ground-mounted mechanical and electrical equipment should be screened through the use of walls, fences, slopes, landscaping, berms or combination thereof.

Building Materials & Color

- 1) Variety in complimentary exterior materials and color is encouraged. Accent colors, materials and details including, but not limited to, fascia, trim, railings and rafter ends, should be applied to emphasize features such as entrances and should be consistent with the overall character of the building design.
- 2) Predominant exterior materials should be:
 - Brick
 - Wood
 - Stone
 - Textured/tinted concrete masonry units
- 3) Use of manufactured materials that simulate natural materials is acceptable and should be used in a manner that appears natural.
- 4) Predominant exterior building materials should not include:
 - Smooth-faced or split-faced concrete block
 - Tilt-up concrete panels
 - Pre-fabricated steel panels
- 5) Glass and reflective materials such as aluminum and plastic should be used carefully to minimize their reflective properties. Overhangs should protect large areas of glass. Highly reflective mirrored glass should be avoided.

Pedestrian/Site Amenities

- 1) Site development should create pedestrian spaces such as plazas, greens, commons, terraces and patios and include amenities such as benches, fountains and sculptures.
- 2) Pedestrian walks should be fully integrated with the internal vehicular circulation system to allow safe and convenient pedestrian traffic.
- 3) Special emphasis should be placed on providing safe, walkable and landscaped pedestrian access through parking areas and building entrances.

Signage

- 1) For sites with more than one tenant, a unified sign plan should be developed to provide orientation, direction and sense of arrival under one common graphic system.
- 2) Where project identification signs are provided, they should be located at the primary entrances to a project and should be integrated into a monument sign. Design of entry signs should be consistent with the design of the overall project and should be integrated into a landscape plan.
- 3) Where freestanding signs are proposed, they should be of a monument style composed of materials that are architecturally related to the buildings on the site and incorporated into a landscape plan.
- 4) Consideration should be given to alternative sign types, including use of surface mounted lettering and external lighting sources. In lieu of standard, internally illuminated "can" sign types, use of the following alternative sign types is encouraged:
 - Carved or incised into wall surface material
 - Inset lettering
 - Cast, carved or inset in some form of plaque attached to the wall
 - Raised, individual letters attached to the building or other background
 - Individual, suspended/projecting signs over project walkways
- 5) Signage should not dominate exterior building architecture, individual storefront design or site layout. Signs should be no larger than required for legibility and should respect the scale, proportions, colors and materials of the buildings to which they are applied.
- 6) Traffic control and information signs should conform to the same graphic system as the other signs within the development.