

TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK

Architectural Review Board

During the 1999-2000 fiscal year, the Architectural Review Board (ARB) made progress toward fulfilling its purpose to "evaluate applications for site, building and sign development or redevelopment and construction from an architectural and aesthetic perspective with the goal of preserving the quality of our heritage and environment" as set forth in Ordinance #78 on July 7, 1997. Further, the goal of the ARB is to "foster the improvement of the town's appearance" and to "promote harmony between the various elements and the environment."

Throughout the year, the Board worked with architects, engineers, contractors, developers, attorneys, owners, and agents in reviewing over 57 proposals. Several proposals were reviewed more than once to assist in effecting agreed upon changes. In some cases, suggestions were ignored and since the ARB functions only in an advisory capacity, recommendations could not be enforced.

Fifteen reviews were for new retail businesses and office buildings including Home Depot, Lowes, an office building and Liberty Bank's ATM machine on the opposite corners of Orchard Street and Route 1, The Cordial Shoppe on Route 1, the office building on the corner of the Old Post Road and Route 1, the Preserve Country Club and guest cottages, and The Herbery at 1001 Middlesex Turnpike.

Another fifteen reviews pertained to renovations and additions. These included Ames Plaza landscaping and lighting, MacDonald's repainting, and Burger King all on the Boston Post Road. Also included in this category were the Saybrook Point Community Building at the end of College Street, the Firehouse and the Tracy Art Center on Main Street, Acton Library on the Old Boston Post Road, and Pathway Lighting on Elm Street.

Three reviews were for industrial buildings and a warehouse, specifically, the Valtec Corporation on Old Boston Post Road and a warehouse in Custom Park.

Twenty-four reviews were devoted to assisting applicants with the configuration and structure of their signs.

While the Board reviewed proposal after proposal, a check list was devised to guide members in evaluating proposals, namely; **Context** – harmonious relationship to surroundings; **Scale** – proportion, size, height; **Materials** – in harmony with architecture; **Parking and Pedestrian Walkways** – landscaping, lighting, safety, screening; **Landscaping** – placement, appearance and survival of trees, shrubs and flowers, screening; **Lighting** – height, wattage, spillage, location; **Signage** – size, location, materials, texture, color, lighting, design. In every case, members of the ARB strove to

achieve beauty in architectural design while encouraging creativity and harmony with the surroundings.

It is becoming obvious with experience and time that design elements are becoming clearer, and that the image of the town is evolving. Moreover, some progress has been made in defining terms and in locating and describing the characteristics of locales and neighborhoods. Much background textural and photo material has been collected and several plans of action have been suggested for preparing a design and development guide, however, this work is still in progress and will continue in 2000/2001.

Architectural Review Board

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