

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

The Architectural Review Board is the steward of small-town character for Old Saybrook's commercial and multi-family development. The Town Charter charges the Board to "evaluate applications for site, building or sign development, redevelopment or construction from an architectural and aesthetic perspective with the goal of preserving the quality of our heritage and environment". Over the years, the ARB has "raised the bar" by discussing issues that are often not considered by an owner, and therefore, out of the scope of his or her designers, such that they often "fall through the cracks". By taking a pro-active policy in realistically considering each developer's offerings and potential, we have found most all to be receptive to and appreciative of our requests and suggestions for adaptive fine-tuning. Our goal is to pass on to the Zoning Commission a positive recommendation reflecting mutually agreed upon modifications for permitting.

This year we began to work in earnest within the guidance of the Zoning Regulations *town-wide design standards* for neighborhoods, buildings, landscaping, and parking. The Board has held numerous workshops to review the proposed regulations and provide input to the Zoning Commission; these regulations are an invaluable tool for the Board to use in the accomplishment of its mission. The Board reviews each development for building scale, style, and compatibility with its neighborhood; façade renovations are an important concern of the Board because the Zoning Commission often permits renovations as-of-right. The Board evaluates appropriateness of landscape design with respect to location and type. When reviewing signs, the Board makes recommendations to the Enforcement Officer with regard to compatibility with adjacent signs; of particular concern is review of the lighting of signs to avoid excessive illumination, glare in the public right of way, and protection of the environment. These *town-wide design standards* are available at the Town Hall to all applicants for land use permits, as well as on the Town website.

The Board meets twice each month on the 2nd and 4th Monday evenings at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall. This year we reviewed one large new commercial development, 9 renovations, and 17 signs. Kathy Noyes supports us as our administrative clerk.

From the beginning, the Board has given special recognition to projects that especially preserve or cultivate the long-standing character of the town. In 1998, the Board established the Design Excellence Award program to distinguish renovations and new constructions made with an eye towards appropriate scale, design, and use. This year, the ARB concluded its award program and arranged for a wall of the Town Hall to showcase its recipients.

Theodore "Guy" Pendleton, *Chairman*