



# PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT

Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect St., Ridgefield, CT 06877

203- 431-2766 Fax 203-431-2737

## VILLAGE DISTRICT APPLICATION

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Submit all documents in accordance with the requirements in the Zoning Regulations, and as shown on the applicable checklist for the application. Fees are found on the first two pages of Section 10 in the regulations. Submit the original, signed copy of the application with fees attached, and include copies of the application with all required supporting data in the quantities shown on the checklist. Checks should be made payable to the Town of Ridgefield. Unless waived by the Commission, all information required under the regulations must be provided.

### 1. PROPERTY LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION:

- a. Site address: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Assessor's ID No: \_\_\_\_\_ Zone: CBD Acreage: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Describe any easements or deed restrictions relating to the site and attach a copy of each: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 2. PROPOSED PROJECT:

- Building / Wall Sign
- Free-standing Sign
- Other Sign (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Exterior Renovation (Describe) \_\_\_\_\_
- New Construction (Describe) \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. APPLICANT: \_\_\_\_\_

- a. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_
- e. E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. RECORD OWNER:

- a. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_
- e. E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

5. AUTHORIZED AGENT:

a. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

c. City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

d. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

e. E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

6. ATTACHMENTS:

Village District Checklist and all Attachments

7. FEES

Application Fee \$ 50.00

State Fee \$ 60.00

Legal Notice \$ 60.00

TOTAL \$170.00

*The undersigned hereby applies for approval of an application for Village District Review and declares that the statements contained herein and in all accompanying documents and/or drawings are, to the best of his/her knowledge and belief, true and accurate as presented. Further, as owner, the undersigned hereby grants permission to the Ridgefield Planning and Zoning Commission and its authorized representatives to enter upon the property proposed for the development, for the purposes of reviewing the application, inspection, and enforcement of the Zoning Regulations of the Town of Ridgefield.*

*This agreement shall be binding on the heirs, executors, administrators, successors and assigns of the undersigned.*

APPLICANT(S)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

OWNER(S) OR AUTHORIZED AGENT (IF DIFFERENT FROM APPLICANT)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

**Application Fees and Checklist – VILLAGE DISTRICT**  
(See also “Village District FAQ’s” and Sec. 8.3 of the Zoning Regulations)

**APPLICATION FEES:**

<b>Village District Design Review (Application Fee)</b>	\$ 50
<b>Legal Notice of Decision</b>	\$ 60
<b>State Fee</b> (municipality is exempt per CGS 22a-17)	\$ 60
<b>TOTAL FEES</b>	<b>\$170</b>

**In accordance with Section 9.3.C of these Regulations, the Commission may charge additional fees for technical review at any time during the application process if the size, complexity and/or potential impact of the project requires specialized assistance and expertise.**

**PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION AND REVIEW:**

1. Submit application and fees to Planning and Zoning Office.
2. Attend review session with Village District Consultant. (The Architectural Advisory Committee is the Village District Consultant and is scheduled to meet on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877. Call 431-2766 for appointment. )
3. Recommendations of the VDC are forwarded by staff to the Planning and Zoning Commission.
4. You may be required to attend a Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, where a final decision will be made on the recommendations made by the VDC. The Commission creates a resolution of their decision, which is binding on the applicant, and will publish a legal notice of their decision in the Ridgefield Press.
5. Prior to issuance of any other department permits and prior to the commencement of any work in the Village District, the final decision of the Planning and Zoning Commission must be filed (by the applicant) on the Land Records of the Town of Ridgefield (Town Clerk’s office).

# Village District Checklist

## VILLAGE DISTRICT REVIEW (VDC and P&Z COMMISSION)

- 1. Application Form bearing the original signature(s) of the owner(s) of record, or signature of an Authorized Agent, with letter of authorization from the property owner.
- 2. Application Fees (refer to Fee Schedule, above, and in Subsection 10.1)
- 3. A statement describing in detail the proposed project or activity.
- 4. **BUILDING RENOVATIONS / SPECIAL PERMITS / SITE PLANS:**  
Where applicable, fifteen (15) copies of a site plan at acceptable scale incorporating an A-2 survey of the premises or parcel of land prepared, stamped with an embossed seal and signed by a Connecticut licensed land surveyor showing, **OR**, copy of the same site plan prepared for an accompanying or future submission to the Planning and Zoning Commission, **OR**, site plan sufficient to show the location of:
  - existing and/or proposed buildings and appurtenances thereof;
  - existing and/or proposed parking accommodations;
  - existing and/or proposed buffer strips and landscaping;
  - access and egress details for pedestrian and vehicular traffic;
  - existing and/or proposed SIGNS, and
  - adjacent roads, curb cuts, and width of rights-of-way and travel way.
- 5. Where applicable, fifteen (15) copies of a drawing at an acceptable scale showing proposed exterior elevations of buildings, including dimensions.
  - samples of building materials (siding, roofing, paint colors, etc.)
- 6. Where applicable, fifteen (15) copies of a drawing at an acceptable scale showing the design of any proposed **SIGN:**
  - dimensions (length, width, height)
  - drawing of sign design and content
  - colors of sign
  - materials for construction
  - site plan showing location of proposed free-standing sign
  - building elevation showing location and proportions of wall signs
- 7. Where applicable, fifteen (15) copies of a landscaping plan showing proposed planting areas, lighting, buffer areas, sidewalks, etc.
- 8. Suggested/helpful: Color photographs of the existing site.



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD  
Planning & Zoning Office

Memorandum

To: OWNERS, APPLICANTS, and AUTHORIZED AGENTS THEREOF

From: Richard Baldelli  
Director, Planning and Zoning, ZEO

Re: **REQUIREMENTS FOR FILING – VILLAGE DISTRICT APPLICATIONS**

Required by Section 8-2j (g) of the Connecticut General Statutes and as stated in the Zoning Regulations for the Town of Ridgefield:

Within a Village District, no approval shall be effective until a copy thereof, certified by the Commission, containing the name of the owner of record, a description of the premises to which it relates and specifying the reasons for its decision, is recorded by the applicant in the land records, indexed in the grantor's index under the name of the then record owner.

**Accordingly, all "owners of record" affected by the above Section shall file with the Town Clerk the enclosed blue letterhead Resolution of Approval (NOT the legal notice) immediately following the publication of the legal notice in the Ridgefield Press on \_\_\_\_\_. The Town Clerk charges a filing fee for recording documents.**

# VILLAGE DISTRICT FAQ'S

## ***Where is the Village District in the Town of Ridgefield?***

The **Central Business District (CBD Zone)** was designated as a "Village District" effective on May 1, 2007 by the Planning and Zoning Commission, in conjunction with the adoption of the comprehensive update and revisions to the Zoning Regulations. This area can be found in "downtown" Ridgefield – primarily Main Street, Bailey Avenue, and parts of Catoonah Street and Prospect Street.

## ***What is a "Village District" in Connecticut?***

In 1998, the Connecticut Legislature adopted legislation under Section 8-2j of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) authorizing local zoning commissions to create Village Districts and regulations, allowing them to protect the distinctive character, landscape, and historic structures within those districts. The law requires that all applications for construction or reconstruction in the district for properties visible from the road be subject to these regulations.

In addition to reviewing building construction and improvements in relation to preservation of "distinctive character" in the village, the Commission may regulate other aspects of the development including building materials, color, size, height, and location of improvements and signage, aesthetics of landscaping, maintenance of views, and other criteria identified in Sec. 8-2j of the statutes.

## ***What is this extra layer of regulation, and what does it mean for properties and property owners within the district?***

The Planning and Zoning Commission already regulates much of the change that occurs within the downtown area under its Special Permit requirements, but this new regulation assures that all visible changes would be subject to additional architectural review. In addition to permits that are currently required by the Commission, the Zoning Enforcement Officer, the Planning Director or the Building Department, any exterior changes and signage within the new District would be subject to review by an architectural review board (as may be designated by the Commission).

## ***What are the criteria for this extra review?***

The Zoning Regulations of the Town of Ridgefield refer to the Village District in Section 5.1 (Central Business District), Section 8.3 (Architectural Review / Village Districts) and Section 9.3 (Application Processing). The criteria for review can be found in excerpts from the regulations, beginning on the next page.

## AAC/VDC\* Sign Application check list

<b>Architectural Advisory Committee**</b>			
<b>Application copies</b>	<b>Documents required</b>	<b>Fees</b>	<b>Development Application</b>
<b>3</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Application</li> <li>2. A brief narrative about the sign proposal describing sign, size and location.</li> <li>3. Colored sign pictures</li> <li>4. Sign specs/Size/Dimension including total Square feet</li> <li>5. Rendering of signs showing actual pictures on the building/Wall/freestanding</li> <li>6. Site plan/Survey of where sign is located.</li> <li>7. Picture of the building showing location of sign.</li> <li>8. Bring sample of colored Awning Fabric.</li> </ol>	<b>No fees</b>	<p>After the approval from AAC/VDC the next step is applying for the building permit via View Permit</p>
<b>Village District Consultants**</b>			
<b>Application copies</b>	<b>Documents required</b>	<b>Fees</b>	<b>Development Application</b>
<b>18</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Application</li> <li>2. A brief narrative about the sign proposal describing sign, size and location.</li> <li>3. Colored sign pictures</li> <li>4. Sign specs/Size/Dimension including total Square feet</li> <li>5. Rendering of signs showing actual pictures on the building/Wall/freestanding</li> <li>6. Site plan/Survey of where sign is located.</li> <li>7. Picture of the building showing location of sign.</li> <li>8. Bring sample of colored Awning Fabric.</li> </ol>	<b>\$170.00</b>	<p>After the approval from AAC/VDC and PZC the next step is applying for the building permit via View Permit</p>

\*Please contact the office for the meeting schedule or check the Town's website for schedule.

\*\*The Application must reach the office by 2:00PM on Friday before the scheduled Tuesday meeting.

# **DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION**

(Next Step after the Approvals from AAC/VDC)

**Once the approval is received from AAC/VDC, you must apply for a Development Application for the item approved by the AAC/VDC (Signs/ Building alterations, etc.) via View Permit System:**

<https://www.ridgefieldct.org/town-ridgefield-online-permit-system>

- 1. Click on the “Building” Tab, and select the applicable permit type.**
- 2. Submit the necessary paperwork and fees applicable for your permit.**

**Contact the Land Use Department for further assistance:**

**Building: 203-431-2743**

**Zoning: 203-431-2766**



***How is the review accomplished?***

An application for VDC review must be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Office. The application contains a list of materials and documents required to complete the review, and required fees. The application will be scheduled for review by the VDC, and the results of that review will be forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Commission will adopt, modify or deny the proposal with careful consideration of the recommendations of the VDC, and in conjunction with the standards and criteria found in the zoning regulations. The decision of the Planning and Zoning Commission is binding, and a record of the decision must be filed in the land records of the Town Clerk prior to the issuance of any zoning permits and/or prior to commencement of any work.

**THE APPLICABLE REGULATIONS ARE FOUND BELOW. The entire set of regulations can be found in the drop-down menus on the town’s website at [www.ridgefieldct.org](http://www.ridgefieldct.org), under “Departments – Planning and Zoning – Zoning Regulations.”**

***5.1 Central Business District (CBD)***

**PURPOSE**

The CBD Zone is established to enhance the historic character of Ridgefield Center; to preserve Ridgefield Center as the traditional focal point in the community for cultural, civic and commercial activities; to promote pedestrian friendly development; and to aid in the preservation and restoration of its architectural assets.

**ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW REQUIRED**

The CBD Zone is hereby designated as a Village District as authorized by CGS 8-2j. Any new construction or remodeling of the exterior of a building within the CBD Zone shall be reviewed by a design review board designated by the Commission (see Section 8.3 for additional information and requirements).

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## **8.3 Architectural Review / Village Districts**

### **PURPOSE**

This Section is intended to ensure that the exterior design of buildings and sites is in harmony with the character of the community, to encourage high quality building and site design, and to result in development which is compatible with the character of the community.

### **APPLICABILITY**

The following types of applications shall be subject to the provisions of this Section:

1. Any exterior modification associated with a proposed development, construction, or use in the Central Business District (CBD) zone shall be reviewed in relation to the design guidelines in Subsection 8.3.D and the additional considerations in Subsection 8.3.E.
2. Any exterior modification associated with a principal use or activity permitted by Special Permit in any residence in the Central Business District (CBD) zone, except for establishment of an interior lot or accessway, a group home, or an agricultural use, shall be reviewed in relation to the design guidelines in Subsection 8.3.D.

### **PROCEDURE**

1. Applications subject to the provisions of this Section shall be referred to the Village District Consultant (VDC), which may be the Architectural Advisory Committee (AAC) or another Board or individual(s) appointed by the Commission as appropriate, upon acceptance of a complete application.
2. The application shall be reviewed by the VDC in relation to the design guidelines of this Section.
3. The application shall be commented upon by the VDC prior to the opening of any public hearing on the application and such report be issued no more than thirty-five (35) days from the date of acceptance of a complete application.
4. Failure to act within the prescribed period shall be construed as approval of the design of the proposed application by the VDC.
5. A request from the VDC for resubmission of the application based on the VDC recommendations shall not be considered failure to act.

### **DESIGN GUIDELINES**

1. **Relationship of Buildings to Site and Adjoining Areas**
  - a. Buildings shall be organized in a coordinated and functional manner that is compatible with site features and the desirable characteristics of adjoining areas.

- b. A unified design theme for building massing, exterior treatments and signage shall be established where harmony in textures, lines, and masses is provided and monotony is avoided.
- c. Parking areas shall be treated appropriately in relation to the building, the neighborhood, and the community.
- d. The height and scale of each building shall be compatible with its site and existing (or anticipated) adjoining buildings.
- e. Newly installed utility services, and service revisions necessitated by exterior alterations, shall be underground.
- f. A desirable streetscape and attractive landscape transitions to adjoining properties shall be provided.

## **2. Landscape and Site Treatment**

- a. Landscape treatment shall be provided to enhance architectural features, shield unsightly areas, provide shade, and relate to the natural environment and topography.
- b. Plant material shall be selected for its ultimate growth, for hardiness, for compatibility with the character of the area, and for interest in its shape, texture, and color.
- c. Planting materials used for landscaping and screening shall be native to Connecticut. The use of any plant designated by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection as invasive species is prohibited.
- d. Pedestrian sidewalks, walk paths, and trails shall provide safe and convenient connections within the site and between adjacent sites and shall generally be constructed of brick, concrete or paving blocks and not be gravel, earth or loose stone.
- e. Existing trees at four (4) inches or greater caliper shall be incorporated into the site plan.

## **3. Building Design**

- a. Architectural features shall be evaluated based on the scale of the building(s), the quality of the design, and the relationship to surroundings.
- b. Facades and rooflines shall be articulated and/or varied to reduce the appearance of bulk and provide architectural interest.
- c. Building materials shall have good architectural character and durable quality and shall be selected for harmony of the building with adjoining buildings.
- d. Building textures, colors, and components shall be selected for harmony of the building with adjoining buildings.
- e. Utility and service equipment areas shall be screened from public view with materials harmonious with the building.

## **4. Signs and Lighting**

- a. Every sign shall be designed as an integral architectural element of the building and site to which it principally relates and shall be coordinated with the building architecture.

- b. Exterior lighting, where used, shall enhance public safety, the building design, and the landscape.
- c. Lighting shall be restrained in design and excessive brightness avoided.

## **ADDITIONAL VILLAGE DISTRICT CONSIDERATIONS**

### **1. Design Guidelines**

- a. Special attention shall be paid to protecting the distinctive character, landscape, and historic structures within the Village District.
- b. The removal or disruption of historic, traditional, or significant structures or architectural elements shall be avoided or minimized.
- c. The conversion, conservation, and preservation of existing buildings and sites in a manner that maintains the historic or distinctive character of the Village District is encouraged.
- d. The exterior of structures or sites shall be consistent with:
  - i. the "Connecticut Historical Commission - The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings", as amended; or
  - ii. the distinctive characteristics of the district identified in the Ridgefield Plan of Conservation and Development.
- e. Proposed buildings or modifications to existing buildings shall be harmoniously related to their surroundings, the terrain in the district, and to the use, scale and architecture of existing buildings in the district that have a functional or visual relationship to a proposed building or modification.
- f. All spaces, structures, and related site improvements visible from public roadways shall be designed to be compatible with the elements of the area of the Village District in and around the proposed building or modification.
- g. The color, size, height, location, proportion of openings, roof treatments, building materials, and landscaping of commercial or residential property, and any proposed signs and lighting, shall be evaluated for compatibility with the local architectural motif.
- h. Maintenance of views, historic buildings, monuments, and landscaping shall be encouraged.

## **Section 9.3 Application Processing**

### **H. REFERRAL OF APPLICATION (TO VILLAGE DISTRICT CON.)**

- 1. When an application is filed in any zoning district which is identified as a village district, such application shall be forwarded for review and comment to the Village District consultant selected by the Commission.
- 2. Such Village District consultant shall be:
  - a. an Architectural Review Board (which may be the Architectural Advisory Committee) provided the members shall include at least one (1) architect,

- landscape architect or planner who is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners; or
  - b. a licensed architect or an architectural firm; or
  - c. a licensed landscape architect; or
  - d. a planner who is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.
3. The Village District consultant shall review an application and report to the Commission within thirty-five (35) days of receipt of the application.
  4. Such report and recommendation shall be entered into the public hearing record and considered by the Commission in making its decision.
  5. Failure of the Village District consultant to report within the specified time shall not alter or delay any other time limit imposed by these Regulations.

**I. REFERRAL OF APPLICATION (IN A VILLAGE DISTRICT)**

1. When an application is filed in any zoning district which is identified as a village district, the Commission may seek the recommendations of any Town or regional agency or outside specialist including, but not limited to:
  - a. the regional planning agency,
  - b. the Ridgefield Historic District Commission,
  - c. the Ridgefield Historical Society,
  - d. the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, and
  - e. the University of Connecticut College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.
2. Any reports or recommendations from such agencies or organizations shall be entered into the public hearing record.