



TOWN OF VERNON

55 WEST MAIN STREET, VERNON, CT 06066

(860) 870-3640

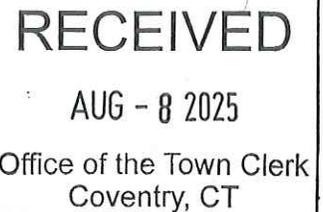
astephens@vernon-ct.gov

OFFICE OF THE
TOWN PLANNER

August 4, 2025

CERTIFIED MAIL: 7022 3330 0000 60842084

Lori Tollmann – Town Clerk
1712 Main St
Coventry, CT 06238



Dear Ms. Tollmann:

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-7d(f), please accept this notification of pending applications received by the Town of Vernon Planning and Zoning Commission.

Public Notice
Town of Vernon

The Vernon Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) will hold the following public hearing at a regular meeting on Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, third Floor of Town Hall, 14 Park Place, Vernon:

PZ 2025-07 – 55 WEST MAIN STREET – An application of Ashley Stephens, on behalf of the Town of Vernon, for a text amendment to the Vernon Zoning regulations, Section 21, Architectural & Design Review.

The applications are available for review in the office of the Town Planner, or can be sent electronically, upon request.

With regards,

Ashley Stephens
Town Planner, AICP

SECTION 21
Architectural & Design Review **Regulations**

§ 21.1. ApplicabilityIntent.

21.1.1. The Planning & Zoning Commission, in accordance with CGS 8-2j, shall require ~~Architectural and dDesign rReview~~ for all applications associated with a parcel or parcels which fall within the Rockville Village District as depicted on the official Town of Vernon Zoning Map. All applications for Special Permits, Site Plan approval, or modifications to a ~~previous approval already approved plan only~~ when said modification ~~or Special Permit or Site Plan~~ involves significant architectural features shall be submitted for review. Such review shall be conducted by the Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC) as established herein.

21.1.2. Purpose.

~~21.1.2.~~ The purpose of architectural design and review is to promote and encourage public and private actions to:

- 21.1.2.1. Maintain a high standard of community development;
- 21.1.2.2. To protect the public health, safety, convenience and welfare;
- 21.1.2.3. Protect the value of all real property within the community;
- 21.1.2.4. Promote aesthetically pleasing development; and
- 21.1.2.5. Preserve the special physical characteristics and context of existing neighborhoods.

21.1.3. Findings as to the adequacy of design, architectural treatment and aesthetic character shall be made in view of the fact that excessive uniformity, inappropriateness of poor quality of design in the exterior appearance of buildings erected in any neighborhood adversely affect the desirability of the immediate area and the neighboring areas for residential, business, or other purposes.

21.1.4. It is the policy of the ~~Planning & Zoning Commission~~ Design Review Advisory Committee ~~that it will to~~ seek improvements in design rather than to practice censorship of creativity. It is not the charge of the DRAC ~~Planning & Zoning Commission~~ to review projects for compliance with building codes or fire safety codes.

§ 21.2. Criteria for plan evaluation.

21.2.1. The ~~Planning & Zoning Commission~~ DRAC will consider the general criteria outlined below to review the following:

- 21.2.1.1. The basic design for the proposed uses, buildings or development;
- 21.2.1.2. The relationship between the buildings, ~~and the~~ land, and the physical environment;
- 21.2.1.3. The relationship between uses and building/structures; and
- 21.2.1.4. The overall physical appearance of the proposed use/buildings/development and its compatibility with surrounding development and the neighborhood.

21.2.2. Specific Criteria for Plan Evaluation.

- 21.2.3. The purpose of these criteria is to establish a checklist of those items that affect the physical aspect of Vernon's environment, pertinent to appearance ~~is in~~ the design of the site, building and structures, plantings, signs, lighting, and other objects that are observed by the public.
- 21.2.4. These criteria are not intended to restrict imagination, innovation, or variety, but rather to assist in focusing on design principles, which can result in creative solutions that will develop a satisfactory visual appearance within the Town.
- 21.2.5. The criteria are:
- 21.2.5.1. Impact on the market value of existing structures in the adjoining area;
 - 21.2.5.2. Impact on the historic significance of the site and the affected area;
 - 21.2.5.3. Compatibility with the Plan of Development of the Town;
 - 21.2.5.4. Types, styles and colors of building materials, exterior facades, and facing, and fenestration;
 - 21.2.5.5. Special architectural features;
 - 21.2.5.6. Relationship of scale, massing and width to height of new structures;
 - 21.2.5.7. Colors, materials, location of lighting;
 - 21.2.5.8. Design and placement of signs;
 - 21.2.5.9. Blending of mechanical hardware and miscellaneous;
 - 21.2.5.10. Location and dimensions of public and private vehicular and pedestrian streets, drives and walkways.

§ 21.3. Standards.

The following standards are intended as guidelines to aid applicants in conforming to the Zoning Regulations as stated in this document.

- 21.3.1. Relationship of buildings to site.
- 21.3.1.1. The site shall be planned to accomplish a desirable transition with the streetscape and to provide for adequate planting, safe pedestrian movement and parking area;
 - 21.3.1.2. Parking areas shall be treated with building wall extensions, planting, berms, or other innovative means to partially screen parking areas from view from public ways. These elements should also be designed with public safety in mind;
 - 21.3.1.3. Without restricting the permissible limits of the applicable zoning district, the height and scale of each building shall be compatible with its site and existing (or anticipated) adjoining buildings;
 - 21.3.1.4. Newly installed utility services, and service revisions necessitated by exterior alterations shall be underground.

§ 21.4. Landscaping and site treatment.

Landscape elements included in these standards consist of all forms of planting and vegetation, ground forms, rock groupings, water patterns and all visible construction except buildings and utilitarian structures.

- 21.4.1. Landscape treatment shall be provided to enhance architectural features, strengthen vistas, and provide shade;
- 21.4.2. Plant material shall be selected for interest in its structure, texture, and color and for its ultimate growth. Plants that are indigenous to the area and others that will be hardy, harmonious to the design, and of good appearance shall be used;
- 21.4.3. Plants shall be of sufficient size and number to ensure an attractive appearance upon completion of the landscape construction;
- 21.4.4. Where natural or existing topographic patterns contribute to beauty and utility of a development, they shall be preserved and developed. Modification to topography will be permitted where it contributes to good appearance;
- 21.4.5. Existing trees at four (4) inches caliper or greater shall be incorporated into the site plan wherever possible;
- 21.4.6. Screening of service yards and other places that tend to be unsightly shall be accomplished by use of walls, fencing, planting, or combinations of these. Screening shall be effective in winter and summer;
- 21.4.7. In locations where plants will be susceptible to injury by pedestrian or motor traffic, they shall be protected by appropriate curbs, tree guards, or other devices;
- 21.4.8. In areas where general planting will not survive, other materials such as fences, walls, and pavings of wood, brick, stone, grave, and cobbles shall be used. Carefully selected plants shall be combined with such materials where possible.
- 21.4.9. Parking areas and traffic ways shall be enhanced with landscaped spaces containing shrubs, tree or tree groupings. Landscape spaces shall be developed consistent with LID practices, which shall be designed to incorporate stormwater best management practices in accordance with the Town LID Manual. Parking areas shall provide a minimum of one island for every twenty (20) parking spaces.
- 21.4.10. For every five (5) parking spaces, a minimum of one (1) three (3) inch caliper tree shall be provided. Preferred varieties include: Pin Oaks, Norway Maples, Crimson Maples, Great Ash, Little Leaf Linden, and Black Locusts.
- 21.4.11. Within wetlands and regulated areas, plantings must conform to those listed in the document entitled "Native Wetland Plants for the Hockanum Watershed" and outlined in "Planting Guide to Native Wetlands Plants of the Connecticut River Watershed for Wetland Restoration Use" dated February, 1997.

§ 21.5. Building design.

21.5.1. Architectural style is not restricted. Evaluation of the appearance of a project shall be based on the quality of its design and relationship to surroundings;

21.5.2. Buildings shall be in good scale and in harmonious conformance with permanent neighboring development.

21.5.3. Building Materials.

21.5.3.1. Materials shall have good architectural character;

21.5.3.2. Materials shall be selected for suitability to the type of building and the design in which they are used; and

21.5.3.3. Materials shall be of durable quality.

21.5.4. Building components, such as windows, doors, eaves, and parapets, shall have good proportion and relationships to one another.

21.5.5. Colors shall be harmonious.

21.5.6. Mechanical equipment or other utility hardware on roof, ground, or buildings shall be screened from public view with materials harmonious with the building or they shall be located as not to be visible from any public ways.

21.5.7. Refuse and waste removal areas, service yards, storage yards, and exterior work areas shall be screened from view of public ways.

21.5.8. Monotony of design in single or multiple building projects is discouraged. Variation of detail, form, and setting shall be used to provide visual interest.

21.5.9. Prototype structures (the first new structure in an area which has been designed for a particular character) shall reflect the desired character of the entire area.

§ 21.6. Lighting, street hardware and miscellaneous structures.

21.6.1. Exterior lighting standards and building fixtures shall be of a design and size compatible with the building and adjacent areas. Lighting shall be restrained in design and excessive brightness avoided.

21.6.2. Miscellaneous structures and street hardware shall be designed to be part of the architectural concept of design and landscape. Materials shall be compatible with buildings, scale shall be appropriate, colors shall be in harmony with buildings and surroundings, and proportions shall be attractive.

§ 21.7. Signs.

21.7.1. Every sign shall have appropriate scale and proportion in its design and in its visual relationship to buildings and surroundings.

21.7.2. Every sign shall be designed as an integral architectural element of the building and site to which it principally relates.

21.7.3. The colors, materials, and lighting of every sign shall be restrained and harmonious with the building and site to which it principally relates.

21.7.4. The number of graphic elements on a sign shall be held to the minimum needed to convey the sign's major message and shall be composed in proportion to the area of the sign fence.

21.7.5. Each sign shall be compatible with signs on adjoining premises and shall not compete for attention.

21.7.6. Identification signs of a prototype design and corporation logos shall conform to the criteria for all other signs.

21.7.7. Signs with specifically advertise brand names or symbols of products of any kind shall be strongly discouraged.

§ 21.8. Maintenance—planning and design factors.

21.8.1. Continued good appearance depends upon the extent and quality of maintenance. The choice of materials and their use, together with the types of finishes and other protective measures, must be conducive to easy maintenance and upkeep.

21.8.2. Materials and finishes shall be selected for their durability and wear as well as for their beauty. Proper measures and devices shall be incorporated for protection against the elements, neglect, damage and abuse.

21.8.3. Provision for washing and cleaning of buildings and structures, and control of dirt and refuse, shall be included in the design.

§ 21.9. Application submission requirements.

The following items are required in addition to the Site Plan of Development prepared in accordance with the Town's Zoning Regulations.

21.9.1. The overall architectural design of the proposed structure including elevations at an appropriate scale, of the façade and all exterior elevations, showing all fenestration, signs and other architectural features including the color and style of the building materials (and samples if required by the ~~Planning & Zoning Commission~~ DRAC).

21.9.2. Color photographs and/or color rendering.

21.9.3. A drawing showing the height and architectural style of the proposed structure in relationship to surrounding buildings; composite elevations from all streets abutting the site if multiple buildings are proposed.

21.9.4. The height, location, fixture design, and intensity of all exterior lighting, expected illumination off the site.

21.9.5. The height location, exact colors and design of all signs.

21.9.6. Elevations drawings from all streets abutting the site with all proposed plantings superimposed. Location and size of plants and trees shall be shown.

21.9.7. All foundations and other ornamental or decorative features visible from surrounding properties.

21.9.8. All provisions for the designs of the following appurtenances if visible from the exterior.

21.9.8.1. Utility lines, meters, boxes;

21.9.8.2. Refuse storage and pickup areas;

21.9.8.3. Stairs, ramps;

21.9.8.4. Flues, chimneys, exhaust fans;

21.9.8.5. Sunshades, awnings, louvers;

21.9.8.6. Balconies;

21.9.8.7. Mechanical equipment visible from exterior;

21.9.8.8. Loading docks, loading spaces;

21.9.8.9. Roof leaders, downspouts;

21.9.8.10. Antennas;

§ 21.10. Procedures.

21.10.1. All applicants shall submit one (1) copy of all items required under Section 21.9 (Application Submission Requirements) no later than the date of submission of a formal application to the Planning & Zoning Commission. When possible, applicants are encouraged to submit applications for design review in advance of submittal to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Moreover, an applicant may request preliminary consideration by the Design Review Advisory Committee of ~~his~~any general plans prior to seeking a Special Permit, Site Plan approval, or modification to an already approved plan. Applicants are advised to make submittals as complete as possible to avoid delays in the design review process.

21.10.2. Following receipt by the Planning & Zoning Commission of an application which requires review by the DRAC as outlined above such application and supporting materials shall be transmitted to the DRAC for comment.

21.10.3. The ~~Planning & Zoning Commission~~DRAC will review all supporting materials for architectural and design review following submission of ~~when the application is submitted.~~ Within 35 days of the date of receipt of the application, ~~The Planning & Zoning Commission~~DRAC will make recommendations to the applicant regarding plan modifications, which the ~~Planning & Zoning Commission~~DRAC finds desirable, based on the standards and criteria outlined in the above Sections. Such recommendations shall be advisory in nature as ~~The Planning & Zoning Commission~~ has the final approval authority for all applications.

§21.11 Establishment and Administration

21.11.1. In accordance with CGS 8-2j(d), the Planning & Zoning Commission hereby designates the “Design Review Advisory Committee” (DRAC). Such committee shall have the powers and duties as described by Statute and herein. Membership for such committee shall include:

- 21.11.1A: Town of Vernon Town Planner (or properly credentialed designee).
- 21.11.1B: Town of Vernon Building Official.
- 21.11.1C: Town of Vernon Economic Development Coordinator.
- 21.11.1D: 1 Full Member of the Planning & Zoning Commission, to be appointed annually by the Planning & Zoning Commission.
- 21.11.1E: 1 Member of the Local Historic Preservation Commission, or other Vernon resident with relevant experience, to be appointed annually by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

21.11.2. At least a quorum of members of the Committee shall meet at such times as the Committee may determine in accordance with the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act. Such meetings shall be open to the public.

21.11.3. If at any time the requirements of CGS 8-2j(d) cannot be fulfilled by the Committee membership outlined above, the Planning & Zoning Commission may temporarily engage a village district consultant to perform said reviews on an interim basis as provided by Statute.

21.12. Minor Modifications

21.12.1. Upon receipt of an application, the Planning & Zoning Commission may determine that the application as submitted does not propose substantial modifications and authorize the design review to be conducted solely by the Town Planner. Following a review of the application, the Town Planner shall include any comments or recommendations in writing to the Planning & Zoning Commission within 35 days of the date of receipt or determine that such review should be conducted by the DRAC and refer such application for consideration.

21.10.2.