



## VILLAGE DISTRICT CONSULTANT

**DATE:** October 29, 2024

**APPLICANT:** 3 Big Shop Lane

Terrasole Restaurant

**MEETING LOCATION:** Town Hall Annex  
Back Lower Level Conference Room

**VDC MEMBERS:**

(Place check next to those who attended)

☐ M. Ascher

☒ S. Benton

☐ J. Goldfluss

☐ J. Heyman

☒ J. Kinnear

☐ G. Lounsbury

☒ P. Maggi

☒ S. Schrager

**ALSO PRESENT:** Scott Yandrasevich

**APPLICATION:** ☐ Special Permit – *New Building* ☐ Site Plan Approval  
☒ Special Permit – *Additions* ☐ Sign  
☐ Exterior Renovation ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**ACTION:** ☐ VDC recommends design approval as noted  
☐ VDC does not recommend design approval  
☐ Additional design studies/information requested  
☒ Other: We recommend approval of the railing and fence submitted but not the additions

### COMMENTS, EXCEPTIONS AND/OR RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

The VDC refers to our comments from the October 15<sup>th</sup> VDC meeting, and this application should be reviewed by the Ridgefield Historic Commission and the Ridgefield Historical Society.

The ‘Big Shop’ built in 1805-1810 is one of the few remaining commercial buildings in Ridgefield, and its primary façade should not have additions which radically alter the building. Ridgefield has been very fortunate to have commercial property owners who have restored iconic buildings in town because they respect the town’s history and beauty. A few examples are the Prospector Theatre, which was to be demolished; the Bissell building, restored as originally built after a fire leveled it; the Ridgefield railroad station, totally reconstructed to its original design.

The Big Shop is among these iconic Ridgefield structures and should be respected by its current owner and tenant. The Big Shop was condemned and slated for demolition but saved by its new owner at the time, Bart Salano. A seating solution in a pavilion will not destroy the building’s character. Attached find the building history compiled by Madeline Corbin, town historian at the time.

Vote

For approval of recommendations: 4

Against approval of recommendations: 0

**BY:** John Kinnear

Form  
(Jan. 78)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Form Approved  
OMB No. 1010-0175

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION CERTIFICATION**  
**APPLICATION — PART 1**  
(Pursuant to the Tax Reform Act of 1976)

Instructions: Applicant should read the instructions carefully before completing application. No Certification may be made unless a completed application form has been received (P.L. 94-455). Use typewriter or print clearly in dark ink to complete the application form. If additional space is needed to complete Part 1, use the reverse side or a separate plain sheet of paper clearly indicating the owner's name and mailing address. Part 1 of this application may be completed and sent to the appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer at any time during the year, and may be sent separately or with Part 2.

**PART 1 EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE**

1. NAME OF PROPERTY: THE BIG SHOP

Address of property: Street Big Shop Lane

City Ridgefield County Fairfield State Conn. Zip Code 06877

Name of historic district in which property is located: \_\_\_\_\_

2. DESCRIPTION OF PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:

(see instructions for map and photograph requirements—use reverse side if necessary)

3. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

(use reverse side if necessary)

The Big Shop, as an architectural, cultural and historic intity is unique in the Ridgefield community. Built circa 1825 to house the town's first growth industry, The Big Shop retained its' identity as a commercial landmark

(continued inside)

☐ Original site ☐ Moved Date of alterations (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

4. NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS OF OWNER:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number (during day) Area Code \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby attest that the information I have provided is, to the best of my knowledge, correct, and that I am owner of the property described above.

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

For office use only

The structure described above is included within the boundaries of the National Register historic district and ☐ contributes ☐ does not contribute to the character of the district.

The structure ☐ appears ☐ does not appear to meet National Register Criteria for Evaluation (36 CFR 60.6) and ☐ will likely ☐ will not be nominated to the National Register in accord with the Department of the Interior procedures (36 CFR 60).

The structure is located in the district which ☐ appears ☐ does not appear to meet National Register Criteria for Evaluation (36 CFR 60.6). ☐ will likely ☐ will not be nominated to the National Register in accord with Department of the Interior procedures (36 CFR 60), and ☐ appears ☐ does not appear to contribute to the character of the district.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State Historic Preservation Officer

This property has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Department of the Interior (36 CFR 67) and, if subject to depreciation under section 167 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954:

☐ is hereby certified a historic structure.  
☐ does not contribute to the character of the historic district and does not merit certification as a historic structure. Reasons given on the attached sheet.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of the National Register

Statement of Significance continued

throughout the nineteenth century. Its social history, moreover, is studded with the names of men of stature in the political, cultural and commercial affairs of the town, and its Jone's Hall, a gathering place for public meetings and community events, was of significant value to the community.

The first owners of The Big Shop were Abijah Ressiguie and Chauncey Olmstead who started their "carriage manufactory" circa 1810 - 1815. Ressiguie, later the proprietor of the well known Keeler Tavern, learned the carriage trade in 1806 at age 15, as an apprentice in a six year old industry, born when the Rev. Samuel Goodrich (father of S. J. Goodrich of "Peter Parley" fame) employed an English "chaise-maker" named Skeltinger to build a carriage, the first ever made in Ridgefield.

Olmstead and Ressiguie (a representative to the Legislature and noted figure in town life) were each members of early Ridgefield families. Their business prospered, and the "Light Carriage" they made in twenty-four styles bearing names like "Lafaett", "The Yankee" etc., were extremely popular in the South. A branch office was opened in New Orleans, and around 1825 Albin "Boss" Jennings was hired to construct a large "carriage manufactory" on former Fair Grounds at the south west corner of West Lane and Main Street amid a small industrial center of the time, and in the high traffic vicinity of the Keeler Tavern.

Mr. Jennings, a young carpenter from Weston, had settled in Ridgefield in 1812, married his first client's daughter, and later became a Town Selectman and a representative to the Legislature. The building he designed was a large, two storied "L" shaped structure, sided with unpainted clapboard, and noticeably larger in scale than its neighbors. In proportion and fenestration, it reflected the Federal style and shared other characteristics of New England mills and small factories of the period. Although it no longer exists, there is some reason to believe that a Bell Cupola was once a part of the design. Interior space in the pegged post and beam structure was probably undivided, except for a small office. The enclosed stair to the second floor is still panelled with feather edge wainscot. Finished carriages were stored on this second floor, and removed for the public meetings and events held in the space called Jone's Hall, (after 1837) for almost a century. Among these was the Soldier's Fair during the Civil War, a lecture series on "evolution", club meetings and church services, the annual chauffer's ball and the large political meeting addressed by Vice President Hannibal Hamlin on his visit to Ridgefield.

The first partnership was dissolved in 1837 and re-established by Olmstead with Platt Brush. Others with interests in the firm were Ressiguie and Cesar Jone, a well known townsman, Justice of the Peace and Town Selectman who had served in the War of 1812. The Brush-Olmstead firm survived for over forty years. Among their more notable employees was a future mayor of Norwalk (Walter Quintead) and Elias G. Hoyt, who made the trip to California after gold, crossing the Rockies by foot in mid-winter!

In 1880, a coach and body builder for the firm moved a portion of The Big Shop to its present site behind the powerful "Bedient Block" on Main Street, a move significant in direction and timing which insured the continuity of its physical presence as a visible local landmark. It coincided with the decline of the West Lane - Keeler Tavern area's commercial importance and the spurt in growth of the central business district where it now stands. Mr. Gilbert used part of the space for a carriage business of his own.

Another part of The Big Shop was occupied by a shirt factory which employed sixty persons in making a colored shirt for the New York market known as the "Ridgefield Shirt". Its owners were Edward H. Smith and D. Smith Sholes, Probate Judge and co-founder of the Ridgefield Saving Bank and Postmaster. Both men, active in town cultural affairs, were officers of "The Committee to Secure a Library".

Time eventually made shirts and carriages of the nineteenth century obsolete, and The Big Shop in its final phase became an apartment building for low income housing which deteriorated into a tenement and was condemned for residential use around 1970. It has been unoccupied since then.



## VILLAGE DISTRICT CONSULTANT

**DATE:** October 15, 2024

**APPLICANT:** 3 Big Shop Lane

Terrasole Restaurant

**MEETING LOCATION:** Town Hall Annex  
Back Lower Level Conference Room

**VDC MEMBERS:**

(Place check next to those who attended)

<input type="checkbox"/> M. Ascher	<input type="checkbox"/> S. Benton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> J. Goldfluss	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> J. Heyman
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> J. Kinnear	<input type="checkbox"/> G. Lounsbury	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P. Maggi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S. Schragar

**ALSO PRESENT:** Scott Yandrasevich

**APPLICATION:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Special Permit – <i>New Building</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Site Plan Approval
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Special Permit – <i>Addition</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Sign
<input type="checkbox"/> Exterior Renovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

**ACTION:**

<input type="checkbox"/> VDC recommends design approval as noted
<input type="checkbox"/> VDC does not recommend design approval
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional design studies/information requested
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

**COMMENTS, EXCEPTIONS AND/OR RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS**

The VDC recommends that the proposed pavilion structure for additional seating be freestanding, not attached to the existing historic structure, with an almost flat roof and located at the lower terrace. The maximum height of the structure should be 9'-0". A canopy of fabric could provide cover from the French doors.

We also recommend that the addition on the west have a gable roof, and the round window be removed. The fence to be wood, stained to match the building.

We look forward to a resubmission.

Vote

For approval of recommendations: 5

Against approval of recommendations: 0

**BY:** John Kinnear



## ARCHITECTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**DATE:** October 29, 2024

**APPLICANT:** 622 Main Street

Corner Cafe

**MEETING LOCATION:** Town Hall Annex  
Back Lower Level Conference Room

**AAC MEMBERS:**

(Place check next to those who attended)

<input type="checkbox"/> M. Ascher	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S. Benton	<input type="checkbox"/> J. Goldfluss	<input type="checkbox"/> J. Heyman
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> J. Kinnear	<input type="checkbox"/> G. Lounsbury	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P. Maggi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S. Schrager

**ALSO PRESENT:** Lana Sexton

**APPLICATION:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Special Permit – <i>New Buildings</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Site Plan Approval
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Permit – <i>Addition</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Signs – (two)
<input type="checkbox"/> Exterior Renovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

**ACTION:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AAC recommends design approval as noted
<input type="checkbox"/> AAC does not recommend design approval
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional design studies/information requested
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

### COMMENTS, EXCEPTIONS AND/OR RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- 1) The AAC recommends approval of the two matching signs since this building faces Route 116 and Route 35, and is a corner lot.
- 2) We recommend a 2" wide black border at the perimeter of each sign.

Vote

For approval of recommendations: 4

Against approval of recommendations: 0

**BY:** John Kinnear



## ARCHITECTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**DATE:** October 29, 2024

**APPLICANT:** 323 Florida Hill Road

**MEETING LOCATION:** Town Hall Annex  
Back Lower Level Conference Room

**AAC MEMBERS:**

(Place check next to those who attended)

☐ M. Ascher

☒ S. Benton

☐ J. Goldfluss

☐ J. Heyman

☒ J. Kinnear

☐ G. Lounsbury

☒ P. Maggi

☒ S. Schrager

**ALSO PRESENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**APPLICATION:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Special Permit – <i>New Buildings</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Site Plan Approval
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Permit – <i>Addition</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Sign
<input type="checkbox"/> Exterior Renovation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Demolition permit</u>

**ACTION:**

☐ AAC recommends design approval as noted

☐ AAC does not recommend design approval

☒ Additional design studies/information requested

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMENTS, EXCEPTIONS AND/OR RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

The applicant has not submitted photos or a site plan showing the garage proposed to be demolished.

No decision regarding the application will be made without photos of both structures.

Vote

For approval of recommendations: 4

Against approval of recommendations: 0

**BY:** John Kinnear