

TOWNSHIP OF CRANFORD  
ORDINANCE NO. 2003-10

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 136 (LAND DEVELOPMENT)  
AND CHAPTER 199 (SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT) OF  
THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CRANFORD TO AMEND  
REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO BUILDINGS, ALTERATIONS AND  
FACADES IN THE SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford:

SECTION 1. Subsection 23H(10) (Signs, facades and awnings in the Special Improvement District) in §23 (Design standards: specific) in Article IV (Development Requirements and Standards) in Chapter 136 (Land Development) of the Code of the Township of Cranford is hereby repealed.

SECTION 2. §199-2 (Intent and purpose; building permits) in Chapter 199 (Special Improvement District) of the Code of the Township of Cranford is hereby amended to read as follows:

**§199-2. Intent and purpose; building permits.**

It is the intention and purpose of this chapter to encourage and endeavor to have the exteriors of all structures in the district which are or become used, whether all or in part, for nonresidential use, as defined in Chapter 136, Land Development, as amended, to be representative of the design of nonresidential structures in existence during the Victorian Era to the end that, with the passing of time, Victorian facades and signage will be existent on such structures as much as the original architecture of the structure will architecturally allow; or, as much as possible, to have such structures returned to their original architectural designs, all consistent with the objectives outlined in the Improvement Implementation Plan for the Central Business District and Design Manual prepared by Wallace, Roberts and Todd. Therefore, no permit shall be issued and no development application pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq., shall be approved for the construction, alteration or signage of any structures, including the facades thereof, without the prior review and approval of the plans by the District Management Corporation to assure compliance with the design criteria set forth in this section and in §199-2.1, which criteria have been reviewed and approved by the Township Planning Board. The Township Committee hereby finds that the District Management Corporation is constituted and organized so as to be reasonably appropriate and qualified to perform such review and approval. The District Management Corporation may, by resolution, designate a committee to carry out the foregoing. Applications for review shall be submitted as set forth in §199-2.2.

SECTION 3. §199-2.1 (Design criteria) in Chapter 199 (Special Improvement District) is hereby enacted as follows:

**§199-2.1. Design criteria.**

- A. Applicability. All structures in the Special Improvement District (SID) shall conform to the general provisions of the Land Development Ordinance, Chapter 136 of the Code of the Township of Cranford.
- B. Intent of standards. All construction, alterations, signs, facades and awnings located within the Special Improvement District are permitted only in compliance with the following regulations. The intent of this section is to evoke the Victorian architectural era in style, color, material and design in accordance with the statement of general standards set forth in this section.
- C. General standards.

- (1) New buildings constructed within the SID shall evoke the Victorian architectural period.

- (2) Every building located within the SID shall be used in a manner which enhances its appearance and site.
- (3) Existing buildings which make a positive architectural statement shall be recognized as products of their own time and as making a positive contribution to the eclectic nature of the SID.
- (4) Generally, alterations and additions to such buildings shall preserve the architectural integrity of the building and not seek to create an appearance which is of a later or earlier period. However, where existing buildings have already been changed over the course of time, consideration shall be given as to whether these changes may have an architectural or historical significance of their own.
- (5) Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure or site shall, whenever possible, be preserved. Removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features shall be avoided. Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired or replaced but not removed. In the event that replacement is necessary, the new material shall match the material being replaced in arrangement, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features shall be based on accurate duplications.
- (6) Sign designs and colors shall be compatible with the architecture of the building and relate to the building features. Signs shall not be dominant but shall be proportionate, appropriate and complementary to the building and existing signs and surroundings.
- (7) Signs shall be made of appropriate materials. Wooden or wood-like signs are preferred. Signs shall have texture and depth; lettering shall have depth.
- (8) Logos or graphics are permitted so long as they are harmonious with the overall design.
- (9) Incongruous features including, but not limited to, air conditioners, radio or telephone antenna, are not permitted in any facade treatment or other area visible from the street, unless specifically recommended by the District Management Corporation.
- (10) Facades shall be constructed of materials used in existing structures through the Special Improvement District in order to maintain visual compatibility. Such materials include, but are not limited to, brick, wood siding, slate and terra cotta.
- (11) In doing repairs or renovations, original materials shall be retained wherever possible. In the event that replacement is necessary, the new materials shall match the material being replaced in arrangement, design, color, texture and other visual qualities.
- (12) The original finish of masonry facades must be maintained. No unpainted masonry shall be painted unless the painting shall be approved by the District Management Corporation.
- (13) Colors for signs, facades and awnings shall be collected from the color palettes maintained by the District Management Corporation. No more than three colors may be used on any façade, including exterior signs and awnings.
- (14) Primary display windows shall occupy seventy-five (75) percent of the ground floor primary façade.

D. General regulations.

- (1) Nonconforming signs shall not be rebuilt, enlarged, changed or altered in size, location, text or appearance.
- (2) No neon sign shall be permitted, except in accordance with the following:
  - (a) No exterior neon lighting shall be permitted.
  - (b) No neon lighting shall be permitted that outlines windows or architectural features such as doors, roofs, cornices, and the like.
  - (c) Neon signs shall be permitted only in a window display.
  - (d) No neon sign may occupy more than ten (10) percent of the total area of the window in which it is displayed, measured by the height and width of the sign.
  - (e) No neon sign shall be permitted above the first floor.
  - (f) All neon signs shall comply with all standards established by the National Electrical Safety Code.
- (3) Where an overall sign plan has been approved by the Planning Board or Board of Adjustment for any structure or as part of any site plan, any subsequent sign for the structure or site shall take into consideration the previously approved plan in terms of location, letter style, lighting, color, construction and material, height and dimensions.
- (4) Signs shall, at all times, be visible, legible and in good repair and must be of professional quality.
- (5) The owner of the property and the proprietor of the business premises shall be jointly and severally responsible for keeping the area surrounding ground signs neat, clean and landscaped.

E. Prohibited signs. The following signs are prohibited:

- (1) Signs other than blade signs which project more than six inches from the wall to which they are attached.
- (2) Marquees and canopy signs, except as permitted in Subsection I (1) below.
- (3) Permanent banners, streamers, advertising flags, inflatable objects, twirlers and like objects. Subject to approval by the District Management Corporation, such decorations may be used as temporary adornment.
- (4) Exterior moving signs of any nature and interior moving signs located within eight feet of a window within public view.
- (5) Signs painted directly on structures, except signs painted directly on unpainted brick where, in the opinion of the District Management Corporation, such sign has historical value or where such sign successfully evokes the Victorian era. A sign painted directly on a structure cannot be the primary sign for any business located within. The bottom of any sign painted directly on a structure must be located at least 10 feet above ground level.
- (6) Pylon signs. Except as permitted in Subsection H (2) below, subject to review by the District Management Corporation.
- (7) Signs utilizing stark white and/or bright, Day-Glo colors.

- (8) Backlit signs.
- (9) Non-matte finish metal or non-matte finish plastic signs.
- (10) Flashing, intermittent or changing color light including LED, fiberoptic signs, strobe lights, or highway flashers.

F. Temporary signs.

- (1) Temporary signs for special events and sales shall be permitted (subject to approval by the District Management Corporation as set forth in this section). No such temporary sign shall be displayed for more than thirty (30) days consecutively or 120 days aggregate in one calendar year.
- (2) One temporary sign shall be permitted per business. Unless such sign is attached to the principal building, it shall be no closer than 10 feet to any property line. Such sign shall not exceed six square feet in size nor stand more than four feet above grade.
- (3) Decorative flags must be double-sided and shall project from the facade on a five-foot pole. The lowest point of the flag shall be not less than seven feet above the sidewalk.

G. Window lettering and window signs:

- (1) All permitted window lettering and window signs shall be of professional quality and applied to the interior of the window.
- (2) Window lettering or signs shall pertain only to the establishment occupying that portion of the premises in which the window is located, and shall include only:
  - (a) The name of the business, in letters not to exceed twelve (12) inches in height.
  - (b) The business logo, service or merchandise, in letters not to exceed eight (8) inches in height.
  - (c) A phone number or an e-mail address, in letters not to exceed eight (8) inches in height.

H. Sign, size, number, height, location and area requirements. Signs may be erected only in accordance with the following requirements:

- (1) No commercial establishment shall be permitted a total of more than two signs, provided, however, that no single exterior wall of any one establishment shall contain more than one of the two permitted signs. Except as otherwise specifically provided in this section, no such sign shall not be freestanding or perpendicular to the street line.
- (2) No permitted freestanding sign shall be placed closer than one-half of the required front setback from any abutting street right-of-way line or property line.
- (3) Blade signs shall be permitted, provided that:
  - (a) Blade signs must be attached to the building by an ornamental bracket.
  - (b) No blade sign may have more than two faces.
  - (c) No blade sign, including brackets, may project more than 42 inches from the building to which it is attached.

(d) A blade sign shall not be larger than 5% of the area of the facade to which it is attached. Ornamental brackets to which a blade sign may be attached are not included in such five-percent calculation.

(e) No more than one blade sign is permitted for each entrance door.

(f) The bottom of any blade sign must be at least 7½ feet above ground level; its top may not extend higher than whichever of the following is lowest: 25 feet above grade or the top of the sills of the first level of windows above the ground floor.

(g) Blade signs may only be indirectly illuminated (no interior lighting).

(h) Blade signs may not be less than 1½ inches in thickness.

I. Awnings.

(1) The outer decorative skin of all awnings shall be of canvas. No other material, such as vinyl or metal is permitted.

(2) No awning shall be backlit.

(3) “Waterfall” or “bubble” awnings are not permitted.

(4) An awning may display only the name of the business conducted or products or services sold therein, which may appear on the vertical flap only, and may not exceed a height of eight (8) inches.

(5) No non-conforming awning shall be rebuilt, enlarged, changed or altered in size, location, text or appearance.

J. Other regulations:

(1) Where there is a business or office floor above the first floor which is not the same business as is located on the first floor, each such business shall be permitted one sign not more than eighteen (18) inches high or more than three (3) feet wide, such sign to be placed or painted on the window of the business or office.

(2) Where window lettering and window signs are permitted, aggregate space and time limitations set forth in this chapter shall be construed to apply to any community service advertisements included in the display.

(3) Storefront window displays shall be illuminated from dusk until midnight.

(4) Storage of materials, stock or inventory shall not be permitted in any window display area ordinarily exposed to public view. All screening of windows shall be maintained in a clean and attractive manner.

(5) Window display areas of vacant storefronts shall be maintained in good condition and in accordance with the regulations of this chapter. The owner of any storefront vacant for more than sixty (60) days shall apply for approval and install a decorative window display within sixty (60) days of the date of the vacancy.

(6) Applied letters may be substituted for wall-mounted signs, if constructed of painted wood, painted cast metal, bronze, brass or black anodized aluminum. Applied plastic letters are not permitted. Applied letters shall not exceed eighteen (18) inches in height.

K. Incorporation of zoning regulations.

- (1) All development regulations contained in the Land Development Ordinance are incorporated herein by reference.
- (2) Nothing contained in this chapter is intended to repeal any portion of the Land Development chapter.
- (3) In the event of any conflict between the provisions of this chapter and the provisions of the Land Development chapter, the provisions of the more restrictive chapter shall apply.

SECTION 4. §199-2.2 (Applications) in Chapter 199 (Special Improvement District) is hereby enacted as follows:

**§199-2.2. Applications.**

- A. No person shall erect or alter any structure or sign, façade or awning in the Special Improvement District until and unless an application for same shall have been submitted to and approved by the District Management Corporation. Such application shall include specific details setting forth the following information, where applicable:
  - (1) The store front plan.
  - (2) An architectural rendering or line drawing to scale of all building elevations showing proposed improvements, including paint scheme, sign placements and any awning placements.
  - (3) Current photographs of the subject building and adjacent buildings.
  - (4) Samples of new exposed building material (i.e., siding).
  - (5) Separate renderings of any and all proposed signs and/or awnings, including:
    - (a) The placement of the sign and/or awnings.
    - (b) The dimensions.
    - (c) The size and style of all lettering.
    - (d) Colors, with paint chips and/or color charts attached.
    - (e) Fabric, with fabric sample attached.
    - (f) Construction materials.
    - (g) Lighting.
    - (h) Height above grade and below roofline.
    - (i) Sign location.
- B. The District Management Corporation shall grant or deny approval of the application within 45 days of the date of submission of such application to the District Management Corporation office or within such further time as may be consented to by the applicant. If the District Management Corporation shall not have granted or denied said application within 45 days, the application shall be deemed to have been approved.

SECTION 5. §199-2.3 (Violations and penalties) in Chapter 199 (Special Improvement District) is hereby enacted as follows:

