

Chapter 240. Rural 5 (R5) District

Section 241. Purpose

- 241.A The purpose of the Rural 5 (acre) District is to enable a mix of uses along Westford's paved roads while protecting the rural character and resources of these main travel corridors. The Rural 5 District is intended to:
- (1) Enable low-density, context-sensitive development while retaining a substantial amount of working and open space land and protecting significant natural resources.
 - (2) Recognize natural constraints to development such as poor soils for wastewater disposal, ledge outcroppings, and steep slopes.
 - (3) Maintain existing rural character and allow for growth that will not place an unreasonable burden on the Town's ability to provide and maintain the existing level of services.

Section 242. Dimensional Standards

- 242.A Density. Residential density must not exceed 1 residential principal structure per 5 acres.
- 242.B Lot Size. Residential lots must be at least ½ acre in size. Nonresidential lots must be at least 5 acres in size. (See Figure 2-1.)
- 242.C Lot Coverage. On multifamily and nonresidential lots, impervious surfaces (ex: buildings, driveways, roads, parking areas, walkways, etc.) must not cover more than 30% of the lot or 3 acres, whichever is less.
- 242.D Setbacks. Development must be set back:
- (1) At least 50 feet from the front lot line or edge of the road right-of-way (if the edge of the right-of-way is unknown, it may be presumed to be 25 feet from the centerline of the road).
 - (2) At least 25 feet from side and rear lot lines.
- 242.E Height. Structures must not exceed 35 feet in height.

Section 243. Use Standards

- 243.A Permitted Uses. The Administrative Officer may issue a zoning permit for the following uses within this district if the requirements of Chapters 300, 320 and 330 are met and the use conforms to 421.A:

(1) Adaptive reuse	(18) Group home
(2) Agriculture	(19) Health or performing arts studio
(3) Agricultural enterprise	(20) Home occupation 1
(4) Art gallery/studio	(21) Home occupation 2
(5) Bed & breakfast	(22) Nursery school/daycare center
(6) Boarding house	(23) Personal service/professional office
(7) Cemetery	(24) Primitive camp
(8) Community facility	(25) Private school not certified by the State
(9) Congregate housing	(26) Public park

(10) Dwelling unit, accessory	(27) Public facilities
(11) Dwelling unit, accessory farm	(28) Recreational facility, indoor
(12) Dwelling unit, two-family	(29) Retail, e-commerce
(13) Dwelling unit, multi-family	(30) Retail, rural
(14) Dwelling unit, single-family	(31) Senior housing
(15) Farm stand	(32) Silviculture
(16) Funeral home	(33) Stable/indoor riding facility
(17) Garden nursery	(34) Veterinarian

243.B Conditional Uses. Within this district the Administrative Officer may issue a zoning permit for the following uses after conditional and site plan approval by the Development Review Board and if the requirements of Chapters 300, 320, 330 and 420 are met:

(1) Club, private	(8) Motor vehicle sales
(2) Contractor's yard	(9) Museum
(3) Crematorium	(10) Recreational facility, outdoor
(4) Domestic animal kennel	(11) Retail, wholesale
(5) Equipment rental and sale	(12) Small-scale industry
(6) Motor vehicle dealer, indoor	(13) Theater, outdoor
(7) Motor vehicle repair	(14) Wireless telecommunication facility

Section 244. Planning and Design Standards


244.A Applicability. The provisions of this section will apply to all development requiring approval by the Development Review Board within this district.

244.B Objectives. To the maximum extent feasible, development must be sited and designed to preserve rural character and to not create strip development along roads (as defined in Paragraph 511.S(16)) by achieving the following objectives:

- (1) Location. Infill development and development within proximity to the Common and Village zoning districts is encouraged.
- (2) Farmland. Development should be located to minimize fragmentation of productive agricultural land, including primary agricultural soils.
- (3) Access. The number of new access points on rural highways should be minimized to limit opportunities for increased traffic congestion and accidents by designing development so that driveways can be shared or aligned at locations with adequate sight distance.
- (4) Frontage. Development should not dominate the view from the road. The area between the road and building should primarily be agricultural, wooded, or naturalistically landscaped.
- (5) Buildings. Buildings should fit into the rural landscape and be compatible with their surroundings. Franchise or corporate architecture and standardized "box" designs are strongly discouraged.
- (6) Parking. Parking should be designed and located to minimize its visibility from the road.

- (7) **Service Areas.** Loading, trash, equipment, utilities, and other service areas and vehicle bay doors should be designed and located to minimize their visibility from the road.
 - (8) **Outdoor Storage and Sales.** Outdoor storage for commercial or industrial uses should be designed and located to minimize its visibility from public vantage points. Display areas for retail businesses should be designed and located to avoid visual clutter and maintain an attractive roadscape.
 - (9) **Use.** Working farm and forest lands are the foundation of Westford's rural character. Land uses and new enterprises that support agriculture, silviculture, and maintenance of open land are encouraged in rural areas.
 - (10) **Off-Site Impacts.** Commercial or industrial uses should not operate at a scale or intensity that will result in adverse off-site impacts or degrade the rural character of the area.
 - (11) **Terrain.** Development should be designed and located to fit into the natural terrain to the maximum extent feasible.
 - (12) **Views.** Development should be designed and located to maintain views of Mount Mansfield and any other important public views identified in the Town Plan.
- 244.C **Planning & Design Standards.** Figure 2-3 sets forth a series of planning and design standards that will be used to determine whether proposed development is achieving the objectives listed above in accordance with the following:
- (1) **Intent.** The intent of this scoring system is to provide greater flexibility for applicants to determine how best to meet the objectives given the characteristics of the proposed site and use.
 - (2) **Procedures.** The Development Review Board will score development applications based on the planning and design standards. While the Board may discuss strengths and deficiencies of an application at meetings/hearings, the final score shall be determined in deliberative session. Further:
 - (a) Except where specifically indicated, points will not be awarded cumulatively for meeting multiple performance measures within a given category.
 - (b) Where Figure 2-3 states "professional design required," the applicant must submit a landscape plan prepared by a licensed landscape architect or certified horticulturalist.
 - (c) When applying the planning and design standards, areas of mowed lawn will not be considered landscaping, but planting areas and materials used as a low-impact development (LID) technique for stormwater management may be considered landscaping.
 - (3) **Minimum Score.** In addition to conforming to the other applicable provisions of these regulations, applications must attain a final score of 27 or more points (out of a possible 40) to be approved by the Development Review Board.
 - (4) **Effect of Score.** The Development Review Board will consider applications that earn 27 or more points to have met Criteria 1, 2 and 3 in Figure 4-1 (Development Review Criteria), as applicable.

Figure 2-3. Planning & Design Standards

1	Location. Infill development and development within proximity to the Common and Village zoning districts is encouraged. 2 PTS MAX (Points are cumulative.)	
	A The subject property is already developed.	1 point
	B The proposed development will be located within 1 mile of the Town Common.	1 point
2	Farmland. Development should be located to minimize fragmentation of productive ag land, including primary ag soils. 5 PTS MAX	
	A The proposed development will not be located on productive agricultural land or primary agricultural soils and will maintain viable access to said lands/soils.	5 points
	B At least 60% of the parcel's productive agricultural land will remain undeveloped and suitably configured to be farmed and will maintain viable access to said lands/soils.	2 points
3	Access. The number of new access points on rural highways should be minimized to limit opportunities for increased traffic congestion and accidents by designing development so that adjacent properties will be connected through a cross access and/or driveways will be shared or aligned. (Points for B & C will be awarded cumulatively.) 5 PTS MAX	
	A The proposed development will be served by an existing curb cut.	5 points
	B The proposed development will provide access to multiple lots or sites from a cross access, shared drive or private road.	3 points
	C The proposed development will align its new access with an existing curb cut on the opposite side of the road.	1 point
4	Frontage. Development should not dominate the view from the road. Compliance must be proven from at least six vantage points at representative locations. Vantage points should be at regular intervals. The DRB may require additional vantage points if needed based on terrain, vegetation, or other site specific circumstances. The area between the road and building should primarily be agricultural, wooded or naturalistically landscaped. 3 PTS MAX	
	A Lot frontage will be an agricultural field or meadow at least 300 ft deep or a naturally wooded buffer at least 50 ft deep.	3 points
	B Lot frontage will have a natural elevation change substantial enough to screen development.	2 points
	C Lot frontage will include berms, fencing and/or landscaping to screen development (professional design required).	1 point
 <p>Diagram illustrating frontage standards: A lot frontage of 350' (A) and a 100' (B) buffer area before reaching a building.</p> <p>Photograph illustrating frontage standards: View into industrial site from the road screened by existing vegetation. Buildings and vehicles only visible from driveway entrance.</p>		



5	Buildings. Buildings fit into the rural landscape and are compatible with their surroundings. Franchise or corporate architecture and standardized "box" designs are strongly discouraged.	3 PTS MAX
A	No new building will be built or the new building will not be visible from the road.	3 points
B	The new building will be similar in scale, form and materials to traditional Vermont building types as defined in Chapter 5.	2 points
C	The new building may vary in scale, form and materials from traditional Vermont building types as defined in Chapter 5, but it will feature a context-sensitive design that references Vermont vernacular architectural forms and materials and protects Westford's rural character.	1 point

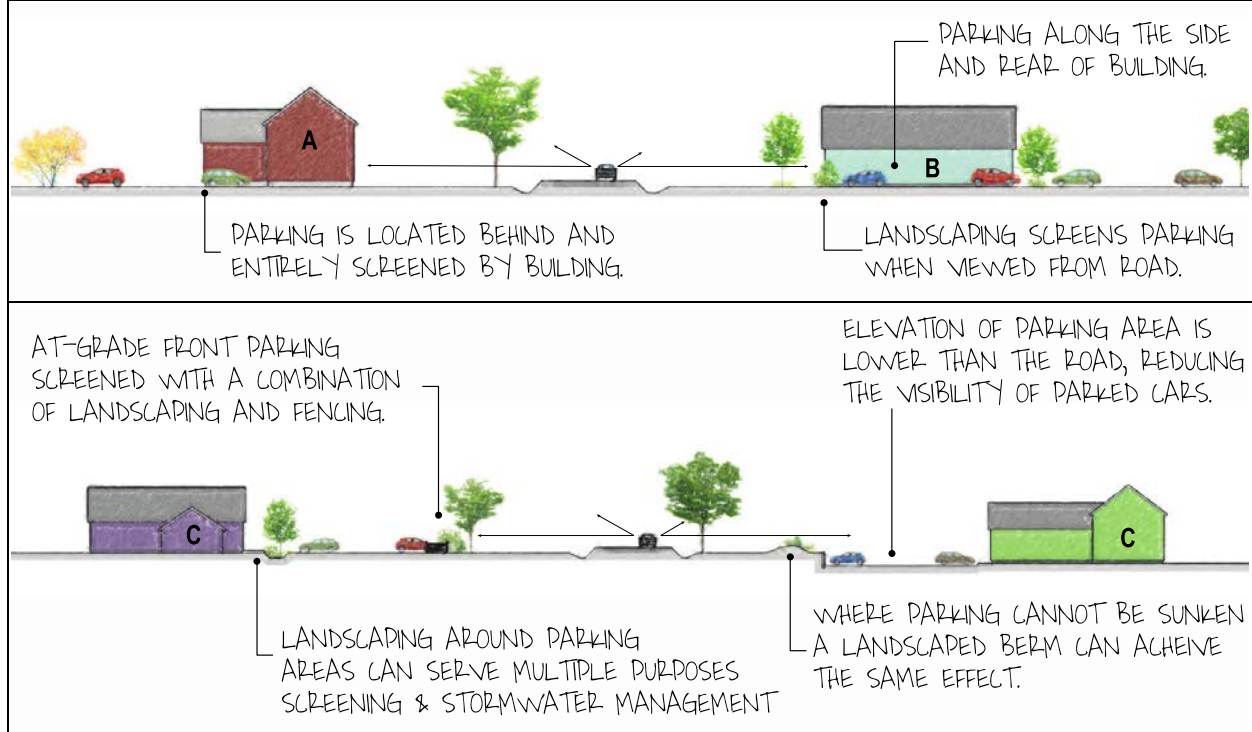


THE CONTEMPORARY, METAL INDUSTRIAL BUILDING (RIGHT) HAS THE FORM OF A TRADITIONAL MONITOR BARN. THE REHABILITATED HISTORIC BARN (LEFT) HAS A NEW LIFE AS AN OFFICE BUILDING.



THE NEW HOUSE (LEFT) CLOSELY REPLICATES THE DESIGN OF A HISTORIC VERMONT FARMHOUSE. THE NEW HOUSE (RIGHT) IS A CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATION OF THE VERMONT VERNACULAR. THE BUILDINGS ARE SIMILAR IN SCALE. THEY SHARE FEATURES LIKE ROOF FORM, CROSS-GABLES AND THE PORCH.

6	Parking. Parking should be designed and located to minimize its visibility from the road.	3 PTS MAX
A	No parking will be visible from the road.	3 points
B	Parking will be located to the side or rear of the building and will be screened with landscaping (professional design required).	2 points
C	Parking will be located in front of the building and will be screened with landscaping (professional design required).	1 point



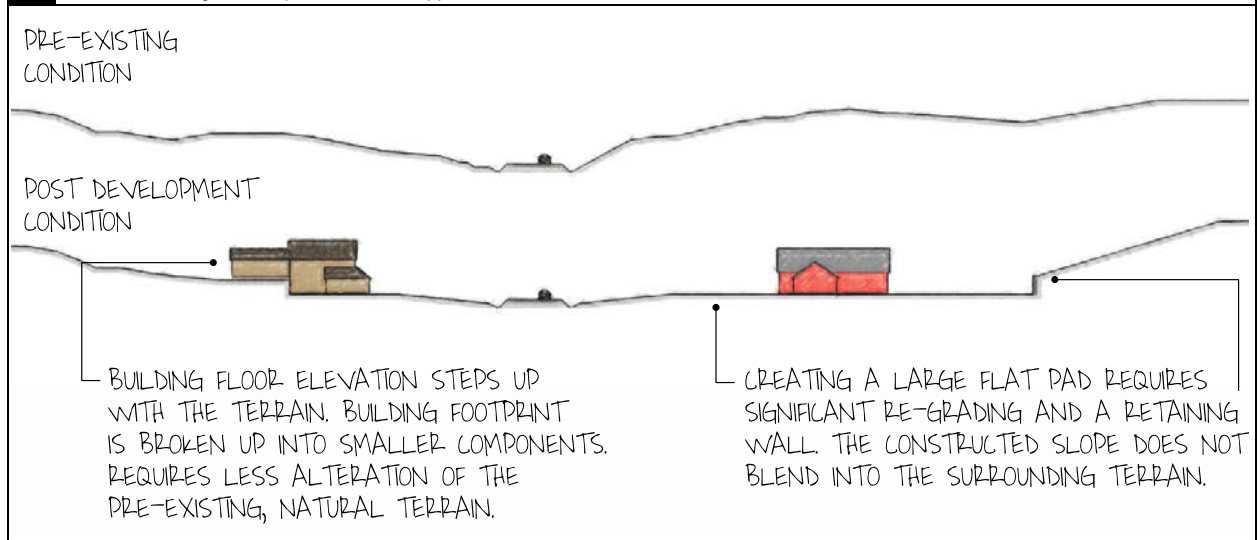
7	Service Areas. Loading, trash, equipment, utilities and other service areas and vehicle bay doors should be designed and located to minimize their visibility from the road.	3 PTS MAX
A	No service areas or vehicle bay doors will be visible from the road.	3 points
B	Any vehicle bay doors will face away from the road and any service areas will be located to the side or rear of buildings and screened (professional design required).	2 points
C	Vehicle bay doors will face the road and/or service areas will be located in front of the building and screened (professional design required).	1 point

8	Outdoor Storage or Sales. Outdoor storage for commercial or industrial uses should be designed and located to minimize its visibility from the road. Display areas for retail businesses should be designed and located to avoid visual clutter and maintain an attractive roadscape.	5 PTS MAX
A	There will be no outdoor storage or sales associated with the use.	5 points
B	There will be outdoor storage or sales, but it will not be visible from the road.	4 points
C	There may be incidental outdoor storage located to the rear of the building, or a limited amount of merchandise displayed in a location visible from the road.	2 points
D	Outdoor storage will be a principal component of the use, but it will be screened (professional design required)	1 point

9	Use. Working farm and forest lands are the foundation of Westford's rural character. Land uses and new enterprises that support agriculture, silviculture and maintenance of open land are encouraged in rural areas.	3 PTS MAX
A	The use will be an agricultural enterprise, including the sale or processing of locally-produced farm or forest products or agri-tourism, or will be an agricultural or silvicultural support business.	3 points
B	The use will involve the production or sale of live plants, farm or garden products, art, or hand-crafted items.	2 points
C	The use will involve outdoor recreation, lodging, dining, or event hosting.	1 point

10	Off-Site Impacts. Commercial or industrial uses should not operate at a scale or intensity that will result in adverse off-site impacts or degrade the rural character of the area. <i>(Commercial or industrial points are cumulative)</i>	4 PTS MAX
A	The use will not generate regular employee, customer, and shipping traffic in excess of 20 trips per day.	1 point
B	The use will not operate between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.	1 point
C	The use will occur entirely within an enclosed building.	1 point
D	The use will not require more than 10 parking spaces.	1 point
E	Residential use excluding home occupations	4 points

11	Terrain. Development must be designed and located to fit into the natural terrain to the maximum extent feasible.	2 PTS MAX
A	The development will result in no to minimal change in the site's natural grade.	2 points
B	The development will significantly alter the site's natural grade but will result in a landform that is compatible with the surrounding landscape and will not appear unnatural or constructed.	1 point



12	Views. Development should be designed and located to maintain views (from the road) of Mount Mansfield or any other important views identified in the <i>Westford Town Plan</i> . Compliance must be proven from at least six vantage points at representative locations. Vantage points should be at regular intervals. The DRB may require additional vantage points if needed based on terrain, vegetation, or other site specific circumstances. See illustration on next page.	2 PTS MAX
A	The proposed development will not be located within a Mount Mansfield or other important viewshed.	2 points
B	The proposed development will be located within a Mount Mansfield or other important viewshed, but it will be designed so that it does not substantially block the view from the road.	1 point

