



# VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD

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**Keith Kazmark**

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**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

June 27, 2025

Jennifer B. Leynes, M.H.P.  
Historic Preservation Office

**RE: PARK DEVELOPMENT OF ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER PROPERTY  
VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD, BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
PROJECT AUTHORIZATION APPLICATION (HPO #20-0608-29)**

Dear Ms. Leynes:

Enclosed please find the Village of Ridgewood's response and further documentation for the above-referenced project. Should you have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Best Regards,

Keith Kazmark

Village Manager

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Dear Ms. Leynes:

In follow-up to your letter dated May 29, 2025, the Village of Ridgewood (“Village”) has prepared the following additional information and clarifications for the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office (“HPO”) staff in preparation of the presentation to the Historic Sites Council on July 21, 2025.

**1. Planting Plan Details:**

*Request: Planting plan identifying the proposed plant species, particularly for the landscape screen between the house and the proposed athletic field;*

The planting plan for Zabriskie-Schedler Park is carefully designed to reflect the site's natural landscape, support local ecology, and honor the historic character of the John A.L. Zabriskie House (“the House”). Recognizing the significance of the House on the property, the landscape design thoughtfully enhances its presence, preserves key viewsheds from the surrounding neighborhood and proposed park amenities, and establishes the House as a central focal point within the park.

Native tree species, in combination with non-native vegetation that will thrive and require minimal maintenance while being compatible with the uses of the site, including species already identified on the property, such as Red Maple, Pin Oak, Norway Spruce, etc. will form the planting strategy. These trees provide a resilient and sustainable canopy while reinforcing the park's natural identity. Their seasonal color and structural variety also create a scenic and sympathetic backdrop for the House. Understory plantings will feature native shrubs, grasses, and flowering plants, chosen to reflect the natural New Jersey landscape such as boxwood and lavender.

A revised plan, including detailed information on plantings, is enclosed. Please note that the plantings between the House and the field will be adjusted in accordance with recommendations from Richard Grubb & Associates, as required by the Archaeological Overlay. These plantings will be carefully designed to minimize disturbance within Site Core Area 1. Additionally, archaeological monitoring will be conducted in this area throughout the project.

**2. Comfort Station Details:**

*Request: Plans/specifications and/or renderings of the proposed comfort station*

The proposed comfort station for Zabriskie-Schedler Park will be a prefabricated structure designed to blend with the historic character of the site by CXT Precast Concrete Flush Restrooms. Featuring a combination of wood and masonry siding, the building materials will be carefully selected to be compatible with the architectural style and finishes of the nearby Zabriskie-Schedler House. This approach ensures that the comfort station serves its functional purpose while respecting and complementing the park's historic and aesthetic context.

Product details and the building plan are attached. Please note that the plan depicts a general floor layout; these units are prefabricated and made to order. The 21' x 26' Montrose model features two multi-user restrooms, equipped with three toilets (including two ADA-compliant), one urinal, two sinks, ADA grab bars, and both interior and exterior lighting. Constructed from steel-reinforced precast concrete, the Montrose is available in a variety of textures and colors to complement existing architecture. These structures are easy to install, low maintenance, and resistant to vandalism.

### **3. Park Furniture/Fixture Details**

*Request: Specifications for the proposed lighting, benches, bleachers, and other park furniture, as applicable.*

**Park Benches** - The benches installed at Zabriskie Schedler Park are from the Keystone Ridge Pullman Series, selected for their durability, aesthetic appeal, and comfort. These benches are finished in a sleek black color that compliments the park's natural and architectural elements while providing a timeless, classic look. Constructed from high-quality, powder-coated steel, the Pullman Series benches are designed to withstand various weather conditions and heavy public use, making them ideal for high-traffic community spaces. This bench is the Village of Ridgewood's standard bench in all its parks. Specifications and images are attached.

**Lighting** – The light fixtures proposed at Zabriskie Schedler Park are contemporary 10-foot poles, finished in a black color to match the park's cohesive design aesthetic – i.e. benches and garbage receptacles. These fixtures are engineered to meet the illumination lighting standards set by the Village of Ridgewood, ensuring both safety and visibility throughout the park during evening hours. Designed with modern efficiency and durability in mind, the lighting provides consistent and appropriate brightness levels while minimizing light pollution. Their streamlined appearance blends seamlessly with the park's surroundings, contributing to a well-lit, welcoming, and visually appealing environment for all visitors. Specifications and lighting details are attached.

**Bleachers** - The Village seeks to use standard model bleachers for the project. These bleachers feature a 17" first seat height, with single foot planks on rows 2 and 3, and double foot planks on rows 4 and above. Riser planks are also included starting at row 4. In compliance with safety requirements, guardrails will be installed on all systems with five rows or more. A catalog and image are attached.

### **4. Parking Analysis Details**

*Requests: Analysis of the number of proposed parking spaces in proportion to the planned size of the new field and its proposed use.*

As per the plan, the Village affirms that the number of proposed parking spaces is appropriate in proportion to the planned size of the new field and its intended use. Factors considered include field dimensions, expected attendance, frequency of use, and the types of events planned. It is important to note that parking requirements for fields can vary significantly depending on their specific function, level of activity, and community context. Industry research indicates that the proposed parking for this project appears to be consistent with typical standards for similar recreational or athletic fields. Available references suggest between 16 and 40 spaces per field or one space per 3,000 square feet of field area. Since the proposed field can only accommodate one sport event at a time, the proposed 41 parking spaces meets all of these recommendations.

## **5. Compatibility of Synthetic Turf**

*Request: Address the compatibility of a grass field versus a synthetic turf field within the historic property, which historically possessed an agricultural setting*

The decision to install synthetic turf on a historic property must be carefully considered, as it does not align with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties*. Therefore, its use should be based on a thorough assessment of the site's specific needs, constraints, and the potential impacts on its historic character and natural environment. Although the property originally featured an agricultural setting, the Village supports the installation of a synthetic turf field as a necessary improvement that addresses current recreational needs. This approach has been formally approved by the Council through multiple resolutions, including those adopted in 2018 and 2023. It is important to recognize that the property's historic significance lies primarily in the architecture and history of the House, not in the surrounding open field, which has evolved over time and lacks any defining agricultural features.

As noted in the APA (page 17 under *Landscape Changes & Context*), the landscape of the property has been significantly altered from its original state, largely due to the development of the Village of Ridgewood and the construction of Route 17. The introduction of this highway had a profound and lasting impact on the former Zabriskie-Schedler Property. It physically divided the land, effectively severing it from Ridgewood's central business district and diminishing its historical connection to the surrounding community.

This transformation of the landscape has altered the property's context and reduced the integrity of its original agricultural setting. Any proposed changes—such as the installation of synthetic turf—must therefore consider not only their compatibility with the property's historic character but also the cumulative impacts of prior developments that have already reshaped the site's environment and function. In this context, the use of synthetic turf represents a response to contemporary community needs within a setting that has already experienced substantial physical and contextual change.

Moreover, the HPO has previously approved the installation of synthetic turf fields in parks of even greater cultural and historic sensitivity and significance —such as those designed by the renowned Olmsted Brothers firm. These landscapes, unlike the one that currently surrounds the House, carry significant weight in the history of American park design, yet HPO has determined that in those cases synthetic turf, can be carefully integrated and the argument can be made, that

this material choice does not detract entirely from their historic integrity.

In this context, as assumed in others, the proposed use of synthetic turf at the Zabriskie-Schelder Park site is considered allowable under mitigative conditions. The field material ultimately allows for consistent, safe, and intensive community use while minimizing long-term maintenance. Given HPO's prior approvals in more historically significant landscapes, this approach reflects a reasonable balance between maintaining the historic property and contemporary park uses.

## **6. Previous Application Clarifications**

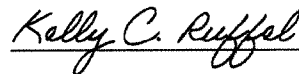
*Request: Supplemental alternatives analysis to address whether the park development plan dated July 29, 2022, which included a 50 yard x 75 yard grass field, meets the project need. This plan previously received a conceptual approval from HPO staff in August 2022 (HPO-H2022-202)*

It is important to acknowledge that there have been changes in administration, staffing, and methodology since the earlier phases of this project. As a result, prior submissions and determinations—such as the conceptual approval granted by HPO staff in August 2022 (HPO-H2022-202) for the July 29, 2022, park development plan, which included a 50-yard by 75-yard grass field—should no longer serve as the guiding framework for the project moving forward. As outlined in the April 28th application submission (see “General Need for the Project” section, page 7), a revised statement was prepared to demonstrate how the current proposal better addresses the project's objectives. It is important to note that while the project approach has evolved, the fundamental need for a new community park—including an athletic field—has remained unchanged since the inception of the site's acquisition and planning.

In light of the administrative and procedural changes, the current proposal should be reviewed independently of earlier concepts, with attention given to the updated project scope.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Kelly C. Ruffel  
*Preservation Consultant on Behalf of  
the Village of Ridgewood*