



SIGNAGE

Section

15

SELECTING AN EFFECTIVE SIGNTYPES OF SIGNS MATERIALS, LETTERING, COLORS, AND STYLES SIGN LIGHTING

SELECTING AN EFFECTIVE SIGN

Effective presentation of a business establishment's name is an extremely important part of storefront rehabilitation. Signs were often an integral part of the facades of the 19th century buildings. It is important to remember that unlike the modern highway strip development the era of buildings and downtown streets was geared primarily to pedestrians. Consequently, there is no need for overly large signs that not only obscure important architectural features of the building but also contribute to the visual pollution of the street. New signs should respect the size, scale and design of the historic building.

There is an infinite variety of styles available for signs. When planning a new sign, seek the help of a professional who has had experience in sign design and look at examples of their work.

QUANTITY AND SIZE OF SIGNS

There are two types of sign types: primary and secondary. Each business is permitted one freestanding sign and two wall signs. Each business is permitted three primary sign types. Signage area calculations shall include all regulated primary sign types. Secondary sign types are allowed for each business and do not count toward the allotted signage allowance.

Central Business Restrictions:

- Windows signs will be included in overall signage allowance calculations

LOCATION OF SIGNS

Look carefully at the entire facade of the building/the upper stories as well as the storefront. The position of the sign -- how it relates to the rest of the building -- is the most important consideration in designing the sign. A sign should never cover or overlap any of the architectural details (ex. posts, cornices, brackets, transoms, moldings). Make sure the sign, particularly if it is a flat signboard, fits comfortably above the storefront windows and transoms and below the second floor sill. It should not overlap into any adjoining second floor staircase area.

- Signs should be attached to the building carefully to prevent damage to historic fabric.
- Fittings should penetrate mortar joints rather than brick.

MULTI-TENANT BUILDINGS

In multi-tenant buildings, which may include residential property, professional business or a combination of each street level tenant may have primary and secondary signage as outlined within this section. Upper story tenants with dedicated street level entrances may provide wall or window signage at the entrance with an overall area of 1 lin. ft. building frontage x 0.75 sq. ft. sign area.

Upper story tenants with shared street level entrances are permitted to display an entry in the building's directory. If upper story tenant has street frontage at the level of business then wall or window signage may be provided with overall coverage of 1 lin. ft. building frontage x 0.5 sq. ft. sign area. If upper story tenant does not have street frontage at the level of business or a dedicated street level entry, then no additional signage is permitted.

HISTORIC SIGNS

Retention of signs and advertising painted on historic walls, if of historic or artistic interest (especially where they provide evidence of early or original occupants), is encouraged.

Signage included in the [Historic Signage Survey](#) will not be included in overall signage area allowance or type quantity.

Efforts to recreate or rehabilitate a building's original signage area also encouraged. In the event that the recreation or rehabilitation of an original sign would not fall within the code of ordinance, exceptions may be granted with approval prior to the construction of the sign from the planning department and Historic Preservation Commission.





PRIMARY SIGN TYPES

SIGNS - WALL

A wall sign is defined as a building-mounted sign which is either attached to, displayed, or painted on an exterior wall in a manner parallel with the wall surface, and not projecting more than 16 inches from such surface.

In the past, signboards were used on most commercial buildings. They were usually placed in a specifically designed spot above the transoms, between the storefront and second floor. As a general rule 60% of the signboard area should be devoted to lettering. One line of primary text with eight to ten inch maximum height letters is appropriate. The sign itself should not exceed 2 feet in height in the absence of a limiting surround. Channel letters and painted messages are also permitted in the signboard area. However, painted lettering at previously unpainted historic masonry is prohibited.

SIGNS - WINDOW

A window sign is defined as a sign that is painted on, attached to, such as a decal, or suspended directly behind or in front of a window or the glass portion of a door.

Painted window signs were common at the turn of the century. Typically, these signs were metallic gold; however the use of plain paint or vinyl lettering is also acceptable. Lettering or other information on storefront windows, glass doors or other surfaces must be of high quality, professionally executed following accepted standards and cover no more than 15% of the surface of the glass. Spacing of the letters is extremely important and should only be attempted by a professional sign maker.

Central Business District Restrictions:

- The total area of all window signs, including both permanent and temporary, shall not exceed fifteen (15%) percent of the window area.

SIGNS - PROJECTING

A projecting sign is a building mounted sign with the faces of the sign projecting 12 inches or more from and generally perpendicular to the building fascia, except signs located on a canopy, awning, or marquee.

Signs that were hung perpendicular to the facade were common on older buildings. They are especially suitable for displaying symbols and logos and can be designed in many shapes and should be hung with attractive hardware. New hanging signs may be appropriate for historic commercial buildings, if they are of a scale and design compatible with the historic buildings. The size and position of perpendicular signs should be managed so as to not interfere with neighboring signs.

Central Business District Restrictions:

- Signs must maintain a minimum clearance of 8 feet from the bottom of the sign to the sidewalk.
- Signs shall not project more than 42 inches from the building or within 24 inches of the curb or pavement edge.
- Signs shall maintain a minimum spacing of 10 feet between neighboring signs.

SIGNS - AWNING

An awning sign is a building mounted sign that provides additional functionality as shelter. Lettering or symbols can be incorporated into the drop or valance or the awning surface. The color of the awning can reinforce the store's identity, but should also complement the historic building. Awning signs may be illuminated, but internal illumination is not permitted.

See Section 11 Windows, Doors, Blinds, Awnings, & Canopies for additional requirements.

SIGNS - FREESTANDING

A freestanding sign is a sign that is not attached to a building, but permanently affixed to the ground where property is available outside of the public right of way.

Monument signs, ground signs, post and pole signs are all considered types of freestanding signs.

Monument signs are freestanding signs with low overall height. Ground signs, pole signs and post signs have visible support structures.

Central Business Restrictions:

- Within 20 feet of the street or curb line, no sign may obstruct visibility in an area within 2.5 ft. and 9 ft. from the ground line

SIGNS - MARQUEE

A marquee sign is a sign that is mounted to a permanent canopy.

Some twentieth-century commercial buildings, specifically hotels and theaters, originally featured suspended canopies of metal, glass, and/or wood over entrances. These signs occasionally included lights or changeable messages.



SECONDARY SIGN TYPES

SIGNS - BUILDING

Definition of building signs:

Directory Signs: In addition to the wall signs otherwise permitted by these regulations an additional sign may be permitted for the purpose of identifying first floor and upper floor tenants that do not have outside building frontage.

Identification Signs: Any sign containing the address, name of the building (NOT the business name) and any emergency information.

SIGNS - ACCESSORY

Definition of Accessory signs:

Information Signs: Small signs installed along a business frontage commonly seen as open signs or hours of operation.

Directional Signs: A permanent instructional sign located on private property at or near the public right-of-way, directing or guiding vehicular traffic onto the property and/or toward parking or other identified locations on the property.

Attraction or Reader Board signs: Any sign having changeable copy for the purpose of advertising events, sales, services or products provided on the site; may also include menu display boards.

Instructional or "way-finding" signs shall be permitted in addition to all other signs when they are of such size and location that satisfy the intended instructional purpose and based on their size, location, and intended purpose will not constitute additional advertising. Instructional signs shall be permitted without limitation as to number or size and may include the name of the business and logos.

SIGNS - PORTABLE

The definition of a portable sign is a sign such as a Sandwich Board/Sidewalk Sign that is not secured or attached to the ground or surface upon which it is located, but supported by its own frame and most often forming the cross-sectional shape of an A.



MATERIAL, LETTERING, COLOR, AND STYLE

As in all aspects of rehabilitation, materials for signs should be chosen with care. Hundreds of styles of letters are available which can be executed in wood, metal, paint and plastic. The style and spacing of lettering used is critically important. Simple, straight forward lettering is best. Two factors to consider are that the lettering should reflect the business image and should relate to the overall design and historic period of the storefront. Avoid choosing flamboyant, overly fancy lettering or garish colors. Muted colors in keeping with softened tones of historical structures are most effective.

SIGN LIGHTING

Although most small businesses function without a lighted sign (window display lights are usually sufficient), some depend on evening traffic. Signs may be illuminated by ambient lighting (sun or other lighting not related to the sign), external sign lighting (separate light source aimed at the sign surface), or internal sign lighting (light source contained within sign). "Gooseneck" lights, small spots, or floodlights are appropriate for externally lighted signs. "Backlighting" or neutral colored light behind opaque sign components is acceptable for internally lighted signs. Internally lighted signs with translucent sign components are prohibited.

Central Business Restrictions:

- Only one interior illuminated business sign allowed per business that is located within a three-foot radius of any exterior window
- Illuminated signs may not flash or move
- Illuminated signs may not exceed four square feet in size.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

<i>Preservation Briefs:</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts</i>
<i>Preservation Briefs:</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>The Preservation of Historic Signs</i>