

Chapter 5

Signs, Awnings, Vending, & Cafes

A. Signs

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Signs

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& Canopies

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A. SIGNS

Signs are a vital part of commercial areas. A balance should be struck between the need to call attention to individual businesses and the need for a positive image of the entire district. The character of the signs shall be harmonious to the character of the structure on which they are placed. Consider the relationship of the surrounding buildings, compatible colours, appropriate materials, the style and size of the lettering and graphics, and the type of lighting. Signs can complement or detract from the character of a building depending on their design, placement, number, and condition. Historically significant signs on buildings should be retained if possible, even if the business is no longer in existence. The following are recommended guidelines.

1. Placement

- Place signs so that they do not obstruct architectural elements and details that define the design of the building.
- Projecting signs for commercial buildings are limited to one per storefront. They should be no lower than 3 meters (10 feet) from the sidewalk, and no more than 1 meter (3 1/3 feet) from the surface of the building. They should not be placed above the second story sill line. For residential buildings, small projecting signs attached to the wall at the first floor or porch column are appropriate.
- Window signs should be centered in the window at a point for good pedestrian visibility. Optional locations could include 450 mm (18 inches) from the top or bottom of the display window glass. Window signs are also appropriate on upper floor windows and the glazing



A. SIGNS

- Flat wall signs for commercial buildings can be located above the storefront, along second floor railings or balustrades, on covered transoms, or on the pier that frames display windows, or generally on flat, unadorned surfaces of the facade or in areas clearly designed as sign locations. Flat wall signs for residential buildings can be appropriate if attached to the wall at the first floor or between porch columns. Flat wall signs should not exceed 450 mm (18 inches) in height and 1.2 meters (48 inches) in width, and should not extend more than 6 inches from the surface of the building.
 - Awning and canopy signs should be placed on the valance area only. The minimum space between the edge of the letter and the top and bottom of the valance should be 40 mm (1.5 inches).
 - Freestanding signs, in general, are not an appropriate sign type in commercial areas such as Water Square and Market street as they can impede pedestrian traffic. In the rare case where freestanding signs might be acceptable, they should not exceed 1.5 meters (5 feet) in height.
7. Number of permanent signs
- The number of signs should be limited to encourage compatibility with the building and discourage visual clutter.
 - In commercial areas, signs should be limited to two total, which can be different types.
 - A building should have only one wall sign per street frontage.
 - In addition to the existing permitted signs, each business in a building with rear entrances may have one small flat mounted sign not to exceed .4 s.m. (4 s.f.).
4. Size
- All the signs on a commercial building should not exceed 2.3 s.m. (25 s.f.).
 - Average height of letters and symbols should be no more than 300 mm (12 inches) on wall signs, 228 mm (9 inches) on awning and canopy signs, and 150 mm (6 inches) on window signs.
 - Projecting signs should be a maximum of .9 square meters (10 s.f.) per face.
 - Window signs should obscure no more than 20 percent of the window glass.



A. SIGNS

5. Design
 - a. Signs should be appropriate for the business and executed in professional manner.
 - b. Wall murals should be carefully reviewed for compatibility with district character.
6. Shape
 - a. Shape of signs for commercial buildings can conform to the area where the sign is to be located.
 - b. Likewise, the sign can take on the shape of the product or service provided.
7. Materials
 - a. Use traditional sign materials, such as wood, metal, and painted letters on wood, metal, or glass.
 - b. Avoid shiny plastic type products.
 - c. Window signs should be painted or have decal flat letters and should not be three-dimensional.
8. Colour
 - a. Use colours that complement the materials and colour of the building, including accent and trim colours.
 - b. Three colours are recommended, although more colours can be appropriate in tastefully executed designs.
9. Illumination
 - a. Generally, signs should be indirectly lit with a shielded incandescent light source.
 - b. Internally lit translucent signs are not permitted.
10. Other Signs
 - a. Banners should not exceed .5 s. m. (6 square feet) and should be placed along the balustrade or railing of the second floor.
11. Neon Signs
 - a. Neon signs are prohibited within the historic district unless mounted inside windows.
12. Sign Maintenance
 - a. Signs that are not properly maintained should be removed.
 - b. Signs of a business no longer occupying the building or storefront should be removed unless it is historically significant.



B. TEMPORARY SIGNS

1. Sandwich board type signs should be:
 - a. a maximum of 1.2 meters (4 feet) high
 - b. a maximum of .7 s.m. (8 s.f.)
 - c. constructed of metal or wood
2. Wood signs should be constructed of medium density overlay board or a similar quality materials and not grained plywood.
3. All edges should be covered with molding.
4. Sandwich board-type signs should have a maximum of 4 colours that relate to the colours of the associated building.
5. Letters should be scaled to the size of the sign.
6. No national or political advertising trademarks or logos should be a part of the sign other than that of the business.

C. AWNINGS & CANOPIES

Awnings can contribute to the overall image of the commercial areas, such as Water Square and Market Street by providing visual continuity for an entire block, helping to highlight specific buildings, and covering any unattractively remodeled transom areas above storefronts. They also protect pedestrians from the weather, shield window displays from sunlight, and conserve energy. Canopies are more permanent structures.

1. Types

- a. Fixed, sloped fabric awnings are the traditional type and are appropriate for most historic buildings, both residential and commercial.
- b. Boxed or curved fabric awnings are a more current design treatment, and may be used on a non-historic or new commercial building.
- c. Canopies fabricated from rigid materials are appropriate on some commercial buildings; however, they must fit the storefront design and not obscure important elements such as transoms or decorative glass.
- d. Historic canopies should be retained and maintained on historic building facades.
- e. Backlit awnings or canopies used as illuminated signs are inappropriate.

2. Placement

- a. Place awnings carefully within the storefront, porch, door, or window openings so they do not obscure elements or damage materials.

- b. Choose designs that do not interfere with existing signs or distinctive architectural features of the building, or with street trees or other elements along the street.
- c. Choose an awning shape that fits the opening in which it is installed.
- d. Make sure the bottom of the awning valance is at least 2 meters (7 feet) high if it contains a sign.

3. Colours and Materials

- a. Coordinate colours with the overall building colour scheme. Solid colours, wide stripes, and narrow stripes may be appropriate, but not overly bright or complex patterns.
- b. Aluminum, vinyl plastic, or overly ornate fabric awnings are generally inappropriate for any buildings within the historic district.
- c. Contemporary canopies may be constructed of combinations of metal, wood, and glass; some types of plastic may be appropriate.

D. VENDING STRUCTURES

A vending structure is defined as any stand, rack, cart, prop, table, frame, pedestal, or container used for display of goods and services. These standards shall apply to all vendors.

1. Design

- a. Preference of mobility of the structure will be given.
- b. Only items for sale shall be visible.

2. Materials

- a. Preference to wood or metal frames, carts, tables, or stands will be given.

3. Colour

- a. Colours on vending structures should be in keeping with the character of the historic district. Overly bright colours are inappropriate.

4. Size

- a. All vending structures shall be within a space limited to 6 feet in length and width, and 4 1/2 feet in height.

5. Signs

- a. One sign is permitted per vendor.
- b. The sign should not exceed 4 square feet.
- c. The colour scheme of the sign shall correspond to the colours of the vending structure and shall not exceed three colours.

6. Racks

- a. Only one vending rack shall be allowed per vendor.
- b. No rack shall be allowed unless it is part of a stand with table(s)
- c. All racks must be within the space allocated for a vendor stand.

7. Merchandise

- a. All merchandise must be located on a vending table.
- b. No merchandise shall be placed on the ground nor shall it be visible on the ground under the table.

E. OUTDOOR CAFES

All elements, including chairs, bollards, tables, chains, planters, and trash containers, should be of similar materials, colours, and design character.

1. Fences, Chains, and Bollards
 - a. Should be wrought iron or black painted metal.
 - b. Should be kept well-maintained.
 - c. Bollards shall be at least 75 mm (3 inches) in diameter.
2. Tables and Chairs
 - a. Preference will be given to black painted metal, aluminum, or dark plastic with preference given to metal over plastic.
 - b. Tablecloths are permitted.
3. Planters
 - a. Should be compatible in terms of design, scale, materials, and colour with other elements of the cafe.
 - b. Planters may not be constructed of unfinished wood.
4. Umbrellas
 - a. If used, should be in keeping with the colour scheme of the outdoor cafe.
 - b. The size of the umbrella should be in scale with the table.
5. Trash Containers
 - a. Should be compatible in terms of design, materials, and colour with other elements of the cafe.