

5.0 SIGNS

In most cases, the architectural design of a building determines the location, size, and shape of the primary wall sign. Wall signs, either painted directly onto the wall or pre-manufactured and affixed to the building, should fit within the specified sign panel component of the building and not cover important architectural elements such as transom windows or vertical piers. The primary sign should be treated as an architectural element consistent with the building's architectural style and character.

A successful sign can reinforce the image of the Downtown as well as serve the needs of the business. Signs make a significant contribution to the general image and attractiveness of the commercial area. Well-designed signs contribute to the character of a storefront, while expressing something about the visual and economic vitality along a streetscape. Signs serve as symbols for a business, not only identifying the name of the establishment but also communicating the "quality" of the business, and expressing the business owner's commitment to maintaining an attractive storefront that is compatible with the streetscape.

5.1 SIGN DEFINITIONS

The following terms shall be defined as follows:

Awnings signs are lettering or simple graphics sewn or otherwise affixed to the awning valance.

External illumination is when the light source is an external part of the sign.

Flush mounted signs are signboards or individual die-cut letters placed on the face of the building. Usually there is a recessed or horizontal molded band on buildings that were designed to accommodate this type of sign.

Hanging signs are hung from sidewalk coverings (i.e., awnings or canopies) or are mounted on the building perpendicular to the sidewalk. Since they are also typically placed near eye level, they can be very effective in attracting the attention of pedestrians.

Icon or graphic signs are the oldest type of commercial sign. These signs illustrate, by their particular shape, the nature of the business within. They are the easiest to read and identify and are therefore well suited to vehicular as well as pedestrian traffic.

Internal illumination is when the light source is an internal component of the sign. These types of signs can be, but are not necessarily limited to, internally illuminated individual letters and "back-lit" or "halo" signs where the solid opaque letters are raised from the building face and the light source is projected onto the wall from behind the letters. Internal illumination does not preclude exposed neon.

Projecting signs are placed on the second story facade and "project" out from the building.

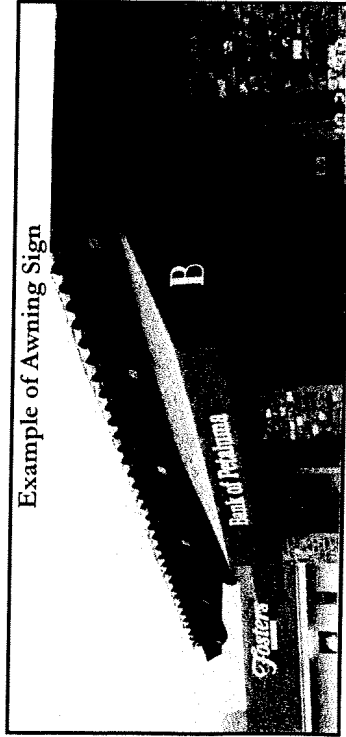
Sign panel is that portion of the building above the storefront display windows and below the second-story window sills.

Window signs are also pedestrian oriented. They are common, and when properly placed, leave the majority of display area open for pedestrian window shopping.

5.2 STANDARDS FOR PERMITTED SIGNS

The following standards shall apply to signs permitted by the Design Guidelines and/or by the provisions of Sections 21-204 and 26-900, regarding signs, of the Zoning Ordinance.

Awning Signs. Lettering and simple graphics shall be limited to a maximum of 10 inches and shall be permitted only on the awning valance. Graphics and/or text on the angled or curved face of an awning are not permitted.



Example of Awning Sign

Flush Mounted/Wall Signs. These signs may extend the width of the storefront within the sign panels. The maximum overall sign height shall be limited to 24 inches; the maximum letter height shall be limited to 18 inches. The overall sign size shall be limited to a maximum coverage of one square foot per linear foot of frontage of the business establishment and shall be located no higher than whichever of the following is the lowest point:

- 25 feet above grade;
- Below the sill line of the second floor windows; or
- Below the cornice line of the building.



Examples of Flush Mounted Signs

Hanging Signs. Hanging signs shall be limited to a maximum of 5 square feet per business establishment. The lowest part of the sign shall be no less than 8 feet above the pedestrian walkway or sidewalk and project a maximum of 5 feet from the building wall. This sign type shall be located no higher than 15 feet above grade.

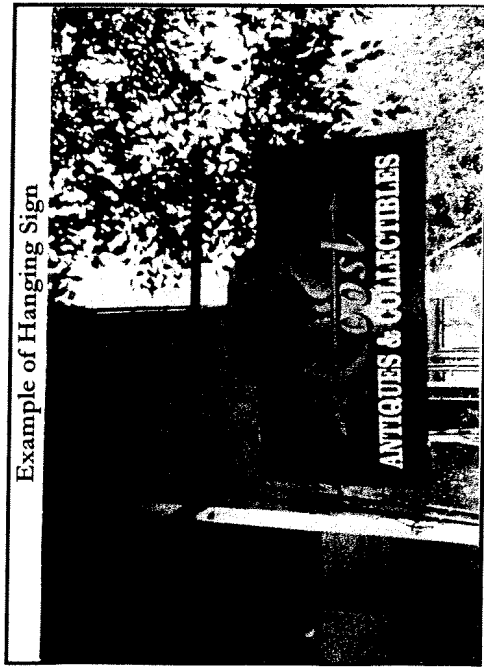
The size and placement of the hanging sign shall be selected so that it does not interfere with neighboring signs. No hanging sign shall be located less than 5 feet from any common wall or other point common to two separate establishments on the same property.

Example of Hanging Sign

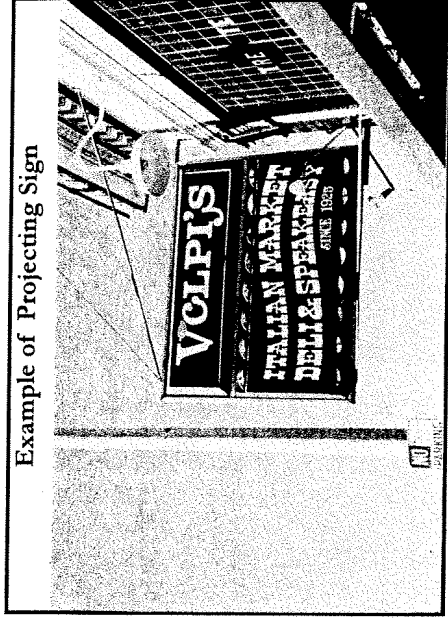


Examples of Hanging Signs



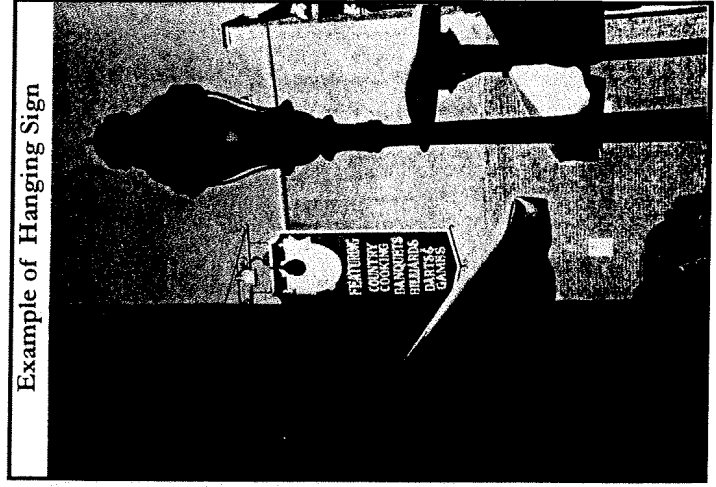


Example of Hanging Sign

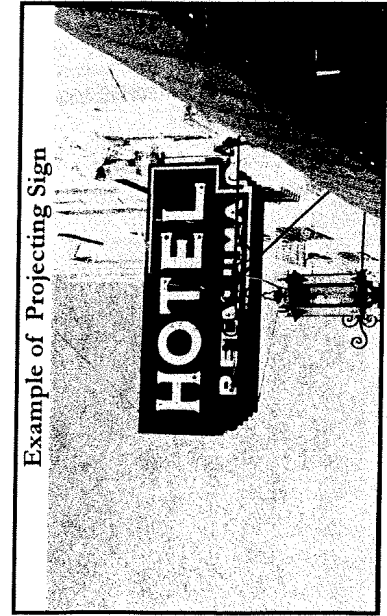


Example of Projecting Sign

Projecting Signs. Projecting signs shall not exceed 10 square feet in area and not project over four feet, including the bracket, from the building wall surface. Projections may be greater than four feet if there are special circumstances that warrant a larger sign (i.e., building setback, etc.). No projecting sign shall be located less than 15 feet from any other projecting sign, regardless of whether other similar sign types are located on the same property.



Example of Hanging Sign



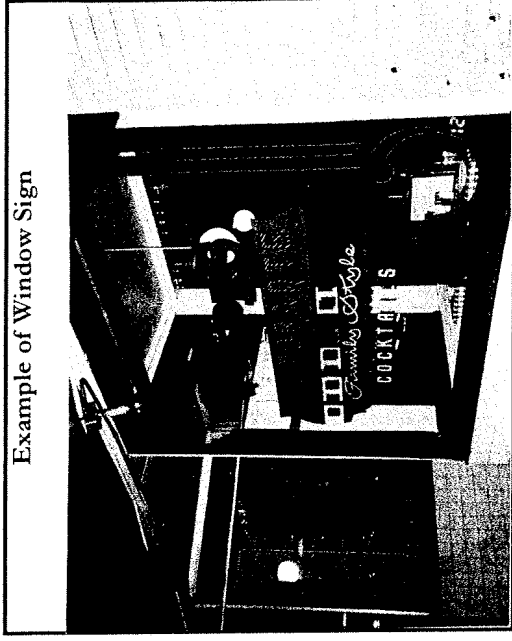
Example of Projecting Sign

Window Signs (both permanent and temporary). On the ground level, coverage shall not exceed 20 percent of the total window and door area visible from the exterior of the building. On the second level, coverage shall not exceed 30 percent per window. No window signs shall be permitted above the second level. Window signs shall be displayed so as not to obscure the display area.

Temporary window signs identifying sales or special events shall be calculated as a part of the total permitted coverage and limited to a total of two 30 day periods per calendar year.



Example of Window Sign



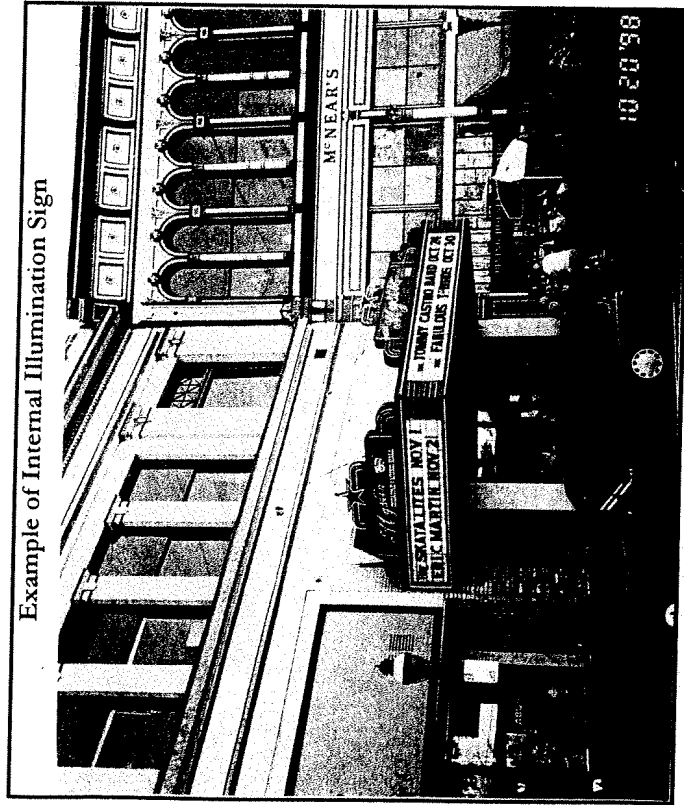
Example of Window Sign

5.3 SIGN DESIGN

Content. A sign should express an easy to read, direct message. The fewer the words used to communicate a message, the more effective the sign. Too much information will make the message confusing or difficult to comprehend from a passing vehicle. If additional information is necessary, it shall be contained on a smaller sign placed in a secondary location such as the front door, display window, or adjacent piers.

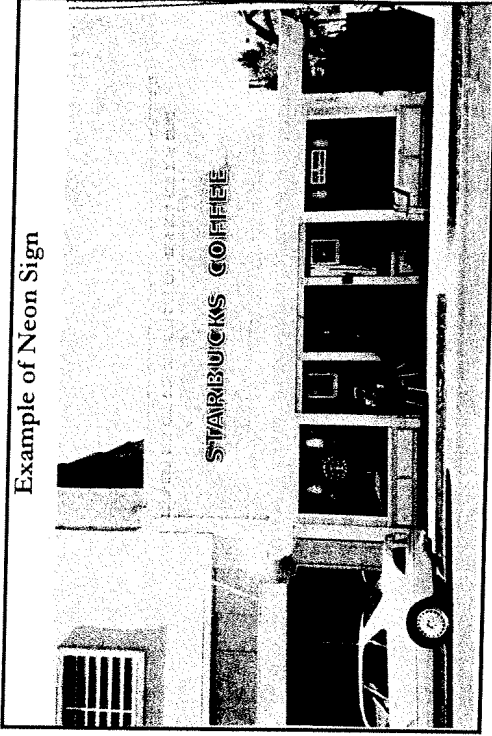
A storefront shall be limited to no more than two signs: one primary and one secondary. The name of the business should be the only message on the primary sign. Secondary signs may inform the customer of products sold or services rendered.

Illumination. External illumination or “back-lit/halo” illumination of signs is strongly encouraged for the Historic District. This approach to illuminating signs is more sensitive to the historic buildings in the District, is less intrusive to the District’s streetscape, and is more in keeping with the historic approach to signing a building. Light for externally illuminated signs should be contained within the sign frame and not spill over to other portions of the building.



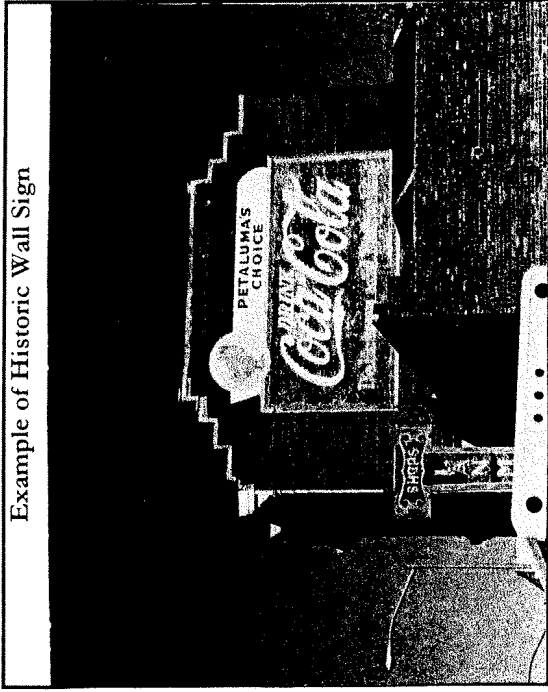
Example of Internal Illumination Sign

Example of Neon Sign



Legibility. The sign should communicate its message quickly and easily. The clearer the typestyle, the more readily it will be understood. Lettering that is difficult to read should be avoided on a primary sign.

Size and Placement. In most cases, the architectural design of a building suggests the location, size, and shape of the primary sign. Signs should relate in placement and size to other building elements and should fit within the specified sign panels. The location and size of the sign shall not cover any architectural elements such as windows, cornices, decorative material, or vertical piers. Individual signs in a single storefront should relate to each other in design, size, color, placement on the building, and lettering style.



- Roof signs;
- Rotating, moving, flashing signs, or lights;
- Sandwich board signs;
- Statues used for advertising;
- Traffic sign replicas;
- Vehicle signs, attached to parked vehicles to advertise a nearby business.

No advertising placards, banner, pennants or signs other than those specifically approved (i.e., as window signs, awning signs, temporary signs, etc.), shall be affixed on glass panes (interior or exterior), or on supports of shop windows and doors, on the exterior of the storefront, or within 10 feet of the building line. No signs shall be affixed to the interior of the store such that it faces and is visible from the exterior of the store.

Temporary banners may be allowed as a temporary sign, under the applicable provisions of the Sign Ordinance.

Use of permanent sale signs is prohibited. Temporary sale or special event signs may be located in the storefront window areas only as specifically permitted under the provisions of the Sign Ordinance.

A non-conforming sign which was legal when originally installed but which, due to changes in regulations, no longer conforms to existing standards, shall not be enlarged, extended, or moved to a different portion of the lot or parcel, except that a non-conforming sign may be reconstructed in such a way as to make it conforming.

5.4 PROHIBITED SIGNS

The following types of signs are prohibited within the Historic Commercial District:

- Animated signs, except time and temperature displays;
- Balloons and other inflatable-type signs;
- Banners, flags, and pennants (except those specifically provided for and exemptions listed below);
- Off premise signs;
- Paper, cloth or plastic streamers and bunting (except holiday decorations);

5.5 EXEMPTIONS

The following shall be exempt from the provisions of this section:

- Murals not advertising a business, except that design review shall still be required;
- Building graphics not advertising a business;
- Building address numbers and historic building names;
- Banners within the City right-of-way advertising City-wide, temporary special events are subject to a separate review and approval process and are exempt from these Design Guidelines.