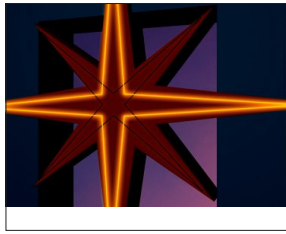


Guidelines for Signs

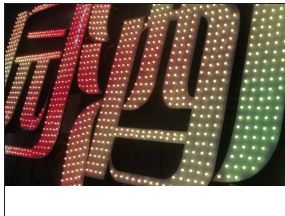
Generally Inappropriate Types of Signs



Pole Sign



Animated Sign



Flashing, Light Sign



Illuminated, Cabinet Sign



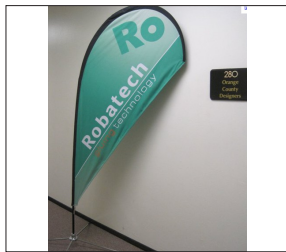
Off-Premise Sign



Inflated Sign, Display



Image Projection Sign



Wind Sign



Video Sign



Temporary Sign

Compatibility

A sign typically serves two functions:

1. To attract attention
2. To convey information

If a sign is well designed, the architecture of a building can serve as the attention-getting feature, allowing the sign to be focused on conveying information in a well conceived manner. All new signs should be developed with the overall context of the building and of the historic district in mind.

Architectural Context

Individual historic districts have historic characteristics that should be preserved, enhanced and incorporated into the design of new building projects. When designing a sign for a new or existing building, the context of the neighborhood, defined by natural forms and patterns, should be taken into account. Often features or details of the building will suggest a motif for new signs.

Guideline 1

A sign should preserve, complement or enhance the architectural composition and features of the building.

- Covering or obscuring significant architectural details should be avoided.
- Damage to architectural detail when attaching the sign should be avoided.

Guideline 2

Consider the overall sign design as an integral part of the building façade.

- The new sign should be coordinated with the overall façade composition, including ornamental details and other signs.
- Signs should be in proportion to the building, so they do not dominate the building appearance.

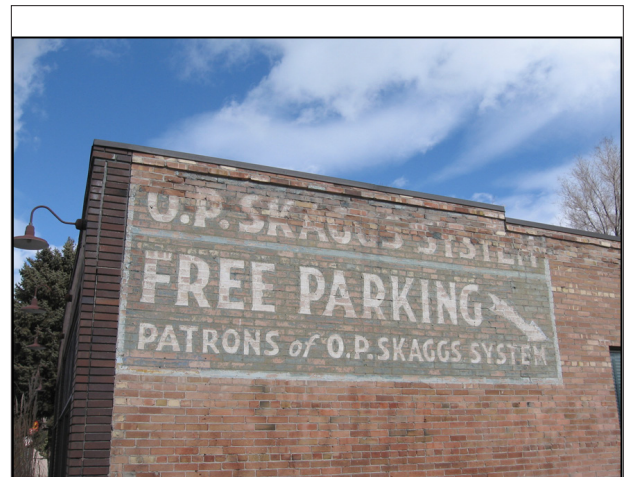
Guideline 3

A master sign plan should be developed for the entire property to guide individual sign design and location decisions.

- This is especially important when a building includes multiple businesses.
- A master sign plan should specify the location, number and size of all signs on the property.
- The materials, methods of illumination and graphic standards should also be defined.
- A master sign plan should make all signs on the building cohesive, linking one to another, ultimately creating a central theme for the site.



This sign on Main Street is proportional to the building and does not obscure ornamental details.



Ghost sign

Guidelines for Signs



This sign is well proportioned with the facade.

Proportion, Scale and Dimensions

Historic preservation should not focus only on one building or site. When considering the preservation of a sign or the addition of a new sign, consideration should be given to its location and setting as it relates to the entire district. The elements that make a sign pleasing include orientation, pedestrian scale and unique architectural features which, when compounded create a unique historic fabric worthy of preservation. Sign lighting, placement, elevation and choice of materials, should be in harmony with the unique characteristics of the individual district.

Guideline 4

A sign should be designed to be in proportion and scale with the building.

- A sign should be in scale with the façade of the building.
- Signs that would cover more than 20 percent of the façade should be avoided.

Guideline 5

A sign should be designed to be a part of the overall building composition.

- A sign should be located on a building so it emphasizes the architectural elements of the façade.
- A sign should be mounted to fit within existing architectural features. The shape of the sign should be used to reinforce the relationship of moldings and transoms seen along the street.



This drawing shows traditional locations for commercial signs.

Guideline 6

Signs should have a human scale, and be pedestrian oriented.

- Signs that are illegible when viewed from the sidewalk, or are located too high upon a building are not encouraged.
- A sign should be located on a building so that it draws an individual's attention toward the building or the use that it is intended to support.



Even though it is on a large building, the sign is designed to be viewed from the sidewalk.

Positioning

One of the parameters that determines the effectiveness of a sign is its location on a building. Incorrect positioning can render a sign useless and obscure, overwhelm the building or harm the architectural features of the site. Most commercial buildings were designed with an obvious location for tenant signs. Effective signs do not obscure or compete with significant features of a historic building (Signs above a storefront could fit within the historic signboard, for example). Further, new signs should also respect neighboring buildings in a way that they do not shadow or overpower adjacent structures.



Properly placed signs generally do not obscure architectural details.

Guidelines for Signs



Signs that cover significant architectural features are discouraged.



Signs at the pedestrian level are encouraged.

Guideline 7

Position a sign so that it does not obscure or conflict with architectural features of the building.

- A wall sign should be placed so that it is framed by the architectural details of the building.
- A wall sign should be placed to reflect the fenestration pattern of the building.
- Placing or dimensioning a wall sign so that it spans the pilasters or detailing of a building should be avoided.
- A projecting sign should be positioned where it will not damage or visually intrude upon architectural details.
- A projecting sign should be placed where it will not obscure a wall sign.

Guideline 8

Position a sign primarily to serve the pedestrian at the street level.

- The majority of signs should be concentrated at the street level close to the entrance of the building.
- Signs at a higher level should be considered only where the premises may be limited in sign location at street level where otherwise, the sign would be obscured or if it is the name of the building.

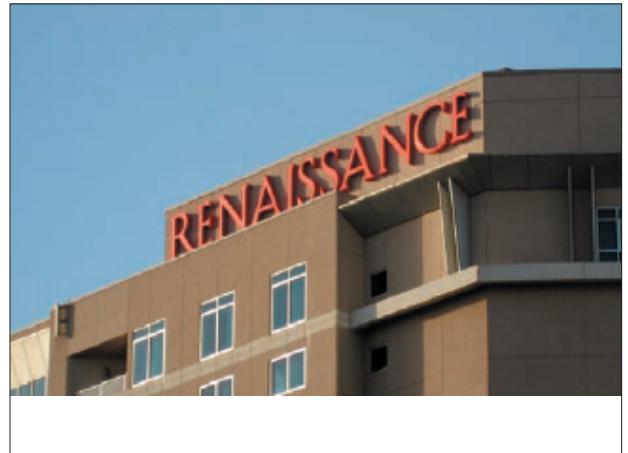
Guideline 9

The use of signs placed on upper levels of a building should be limited since they will be visible over an extended distance and are not related to the street or entrance level of the premises.

- Generally, signs should be placed in an architecturally appropriate location no more than 20 feet above the sidewalk.
- Illumination of signs on upper levels should be limited to the brightness of lower level signs.
- In certain cases, signs on commercial buildings along arterial streets may be placed higher on a façade when it is determined that the sign will not have a negative impact on the design, or design elements of the façade.
- Signs which do not relate to the business within the building generally would not be considered appropriate, unless they relate to the historic use or owner of the building.

Projection from the Building

Projecting signs are generally two sided signs, suspended from an iron bracket or building element, mounted perpendicular to the face of the building. Both lettered and symbolic projecting signs, have been used since the first settlers arrived, and are an important component to Salt Lake City's historic past. Projecting signs are sometimes paired with another at a 45-degree angle for increased visibility.



This sign placed at the top of the building is not readily visible from the street or sidewalk.



A typical projecting sign



This projecting sign is paired with another for increased visibility



Wall signs should be relatively flush with the facade of the building.

These design guidelines apply in addition to those in relevant preceding chapters, which may include Rehabilitation Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction and General Design Guidelines.

Guideline 10

The projection of a wall sign should be minimized to the depth of the sign panel or letter.

- A wall sign should be relatively flush with the building facade.
- A wall sign should be designed to sit within rather than forward of the fascia or other architectural details of the building.

Guideline 11

A projecting sign should be designed to equate with the sign projection seen traditionally.

- Projecting a sign from the building wall should be attuned to the mass and scale of the building to which it is attached. A large projecting sign on a small building would compete with the architectural feel of the structure and therefore would not be encouraged.
- Projecting a sign that exceeds that of the immediate surrounding area is discouraged, but should be reviewed on a case by case basis.
- The sign bracket of a projecting sign should be designed as a decorative or complementary element of the sign.

Sign Attachment Parts

When a new sign is proposed on a historic building, owners should first look for evidence of a previous sign installation. Evidence can be either physical or documentary. The existence of surviving hardware—rollers, arms, clamps and other fasteners or signs that hardware was once in place, such as bolt holes or recessed roller boxes (for awnings) are the most likely forms of physical evidence. Storefront remodeling projects often uncover concealed and disused sign hardware that can either be repaired or at least suggest what type of sign was formerly in place. Clamps, fasteners, and bolt holes in an exterior wall can reveal the position, type and dimensions of a missing sign installation.

Guideline 12

Sign attachment parts should be reused in their original location (holes in the façade or fixing positions) to protect the original building materials.

- Sign attachment parts should avoid damaging any architectural details or features of the building.
- Consider reusing the sign and fixing positions or cover previous fixing positions wherever possible.
- Wherever possible, avoid drilling new holes or creating new fixing positions on historic facades, by using existing holes and fixing positions.
- When creating new fixture areas on brick buildings, drill holes in the mortar rather than the brick.

Historical documentation on a building or sign can be found at the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) or in the Salt Lake City Planning Department.

http://history.utah.gov/state_historic_preservation_office/index.html

<http://www.slcgov.com/CED/planning/>

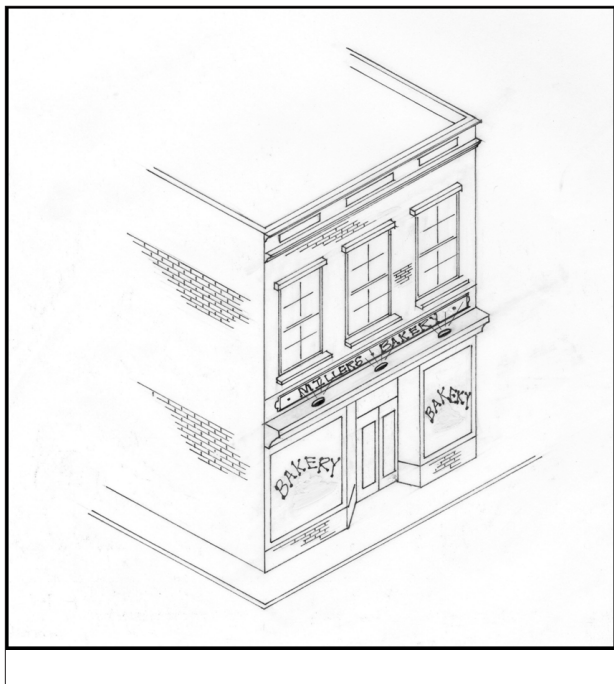


This projecting sign reused the attachment hardware.

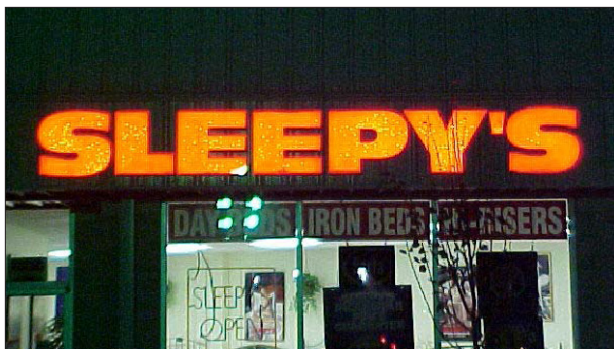


Careless placement of a sign can have lasting effects on the building.

Guidelines for Signs



Lighting for a sign should be indirect and as unobtrusive as possible. This example shows lights mounted above a storefront cornice.



The color intensity of this sign does not compliment the architecture of the building.

Illumination

Well designed sign illumination can add energy and visual excitement to the area, in keeping with a commercial or entertainment district, but it should not overwhelm. The best signs are those that are illuminated to fit with the design of the building. An indirectly lit sign, with light that also highlights building features may be appropriate.

Guideline 13

Illumination of a sign should be done with the objective of achieving a balance between the architecture, the historic district and the sign.

- The color and the intensity of illumination are central to achieving a complementary balance of building and signs.
- Unless historically documented, intermittent or flashing light sources should be avoided.
- The sign illumination source should be shielded and directed only toward the sign to minimize glare.
- Light intensity should not overpower the building or street edge.
- Small and discreet modern light fittings may provide an unobtrusive alternative to traditionally styled lamp units.

Guideline 14

Wiring conduit for sign lighting should be carefully routed to avoid damage to architectural details and to be concealed from view as much as possible.

- In some cases, copper sheathing should be used for wiring to minimize visibility.
- The wiring should be placed between the brick coursing and recesses to reduce the visibility.
- The power supply may be routed directly through a wall or window, hidden behind the sign.

Guideline 15

The illumination source for a sign should be compatible with both the sign and building.

- Light can be directed at the sign from an external, shielded lamp.
- All sign lighting should be shielded and directed only toward the sign.
- Internal illumination of the lettering only is most appropriate if internal illumination is used.

Guideline 16

Consider halo illumination as an alternative to other types of internally illuminated signs.

- Reversed pan-channel letters with an internal light source reflecting off of the building may be used for “halo” illumination.
- The light source should not be visible.



The lighting of this sign is shielded and directed toward the sign.



Halo lighting

Guidelines for Signs



This neon sign is located on an arterial street, and is therefore larger than a sign along a smaller street.



This illuminated cabinet sign is discouraged.

Guideline 17

The selective use of neon may be considered.

Neon should be used in limited volume to ensure that it does not become visually obtrusive and dominate the street frontage.

- In certain cases neon may be more appropriate when framed and shielded.

Guideline 18

The increased scale and vehicular orientation of a larger building along arterial streets may provide an appropriate setting for a greater level of illumination.

- Sign dimensions and proportions should relate to the façade and location of the building.

Guideline 19

The use of internally illuminated sign faces should be limited to individual cut out letters.

The use of large panel internally illuminated signs is not recommended.

- The plastic or vinyl faces used for internally illuminated signs are discouraged in the historic district.
- Individual pan-channel letters with a plastic face or individual cutout letters and letters routed out of the face of an opaque cabinet sign may be used.
- The light source for internally illuminated signs should be white.

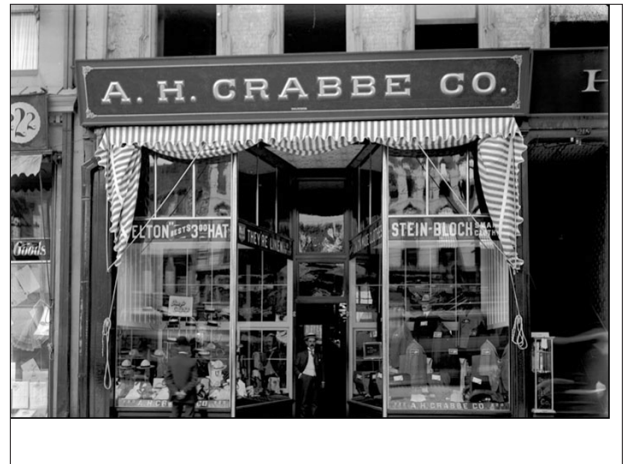
Material

Historically, signs were either painted directly on the building façade or made of wood either attached directly to the building or suspended from wrought iron brackets. As technology advanced and building styles changed, a wider range of materials were used. These included bronze plates attached to buildings, cast iron, stainless steel, etched or painted glass, leaded glass, gold leaf, and tile. Each material was popular during particular time periods, and might not be appropriate at all building locations.

Guideline 19

Sign materials should be compatible with those of the historic building. Materials characteristic of the building's period and style, used in contemporary designs, can form effective new signs.

- Painted wood and metal are appropriate materials for signs. Their use is encouraged.
- Unfinished materials should be designed and used carefully.
- Highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read may not be appropriate.
- The use of plastic on the exterior of a sign is usually not appropriate.



Signs are made of wood or painted on the building.



The color and material of this sign were designed to match the window cladding.

Guidelines for Signs

For more information, see Preservation Brief 25 from the National Park Service.

[Http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief25.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief25.htm)

Color

The use of color is an important factor in effectively communicating a message. Colors have different meanings and work in various ways in contrast with each other and together. Contrast between the foreground and background is an important component in creating legibility. If colored text is used on a bright background the contrast will be weak. For optimal contrast results, white text against dark colored backgrounds works best. In sign design color can be a combining factor in harmonizing the sign with the environment. Color will distinguish signs from each other and can offer an indication of the message without having to be able to understand the language of the sign.

Guideline 20

Sign colors should complement the colors of the building.

- The number of colors used on a sign should be limited. In general, no more than three (3) colors should be used, although accent colors may also be appropriate.
- Sign colors should be coordinated with overall building colors.
- Color should be used both to accentuate the sign design and message, and also to integrate the sign or lettering with the building and its context.



The Color of this sign fits the color of the structure.

Guideline 21

Strong primary colors should be used primarily as an accent.

- Sign panels should avoid the extensive use of primary color or significant areas of white or cream, which would have the effect of visually detaching the sign from the building.
- Primary colors should be used sparingly.

Form and Lettering

Signs should be viewed as part of an overall graphics system for the building. They do not have to do all the “work” by themselves. The most effective signs work with the building, not against it.

The Salt Lake City historic districts contain buildings constructed over a long period of time, by different owners for different purposes; the buildings reflect different architectural styles and personal tastes. These factors are what give the districts a diverse and distinct quality that is unique to Salt Lake City. Likewise, it is encouraged that designers and owners create signs that complement these different architectural styles and celebrate the diversity of the district.

Guideline 22

Letter styles and sizes should be selected that will be compatible with the building front.

- Except on large buildings along arterial streets, sign lettering should be determined based on the legibility from the pedestrian way, and not the street.
- A sign letter of lesser height will be appropriate depending upon the scale of the street frontage.



Primary colors are used only as lettering and trim on this sign. The background is white. This has the beneficial effect of visually detaching the building from the sign.



Letters are compatible with building front.

Guidelines for Signs

Guideline 23

Letters that create signs that are out of character with the historic district or building, or that would alter the character of the historic district would be considered inappropriate.

- Use letters and fonts that enhance rather than detract from the historic design of the building.
- Lettering and fonts should emphasize legibility rather than any sort of stylistic agenda.

Guideline 24

A corporate logo or color scheme incorporated into a building design may be recognized as a sign.

- This may take the form of canopies, roof material and, in some cases, building style or design.



Signs that cover significant architectural details are discouraged.



A well designed wall sign.