

The A.H. Crabbe Company at 220 S Main Street advertised its wares in 1905 through a wall sign above the storefront and signs painted on the display windows. (Photo courtesy of the Utah Historical Society).



The neon and illuminated marquee for the McKay Jewelry Company at 157 South Main Street dates from 1949 and contributes to the historic character of the building.

Salt Lake City Context

Commercial buildings traditionally have had a variety of sign designs and placement, allowing for wide flexibility of use in Salt Lake City's commercial areas. During the 19th century, a great number of signs commonly dominated the landscape of commercial areas. Signs were displayed in every possible area and manner—in windows, over doors, painted on exterior walls, and hanging over or even across the street. One of the more common places to mount signs was on the lintel above the first story, and around 1900 it became popular to paint signs directly on the inside of display windows in gold leaf.

Following the invention of electricity, it became increasingly common to illuminate signs with light fixtures. This was typically accomplished by a simple fixture anchored above a sign and shining light directly on the advertisement. Light fixtures were commonly simple in design so that the primary focus of the viewer would be on the sign rather than the light fixture. Neon signs first became available in the United States in the 1920s and became very popular during the mid-20th century, particularly for restaurants and movie theaters.

Today, Salt Lake City has a number of Historic Districts on both the National and City Register, with additional districts on the National Register only. These districts, along with numerous buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places and those listed individually on the local Salt Lake City Register of Cultural Resources, are a major contributor to Salt Lake City's attractive and inviting atmosphere.

Appropriate and Inappropriate Types of Signs

The character of Salt Lake City's historic districts and landmark sites necessitates the attention of the City to the form, quality and character of signs. Sign quality has a direct impact on how each individual district is perceived, whether sophisticated, exciting, intriguing, and unique, or over-presented, garish and potentially place-less. Each district has a specific individual architectural character which in turn requires careful design of signs to ensure compatibility with the building and the streetscape.

To ensure that signs enhance each district, it is important to note that there will be sign types which are less appropriate to a specific historic district, irrespective of whether they are allowed in the Zoning District. Sign types that are considered generally to be appropriate or inappropriate in the districts are listed here. They should be read in conjunction with the following design guidelines when considering options for new signs or additional signs.

Generally Appropriate Types of Signs



Historic Sign



Ghost Sign



Projecting Sign



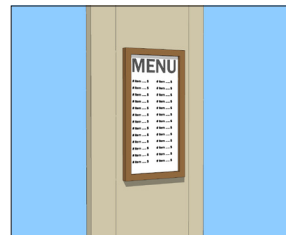
Awning Sign



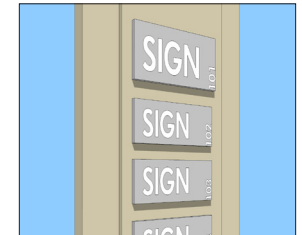
Wall Sign



Window Sign



Menu Board



Directory or Tenant Sign



Wall Plaque



Monument Sign