

City of Lafayette Historic Preservation Commission

Signage Design Guidelines

Adopted 2012 /Amended 2015

Signs are one of the most prominent visual elements on the street. If well designed, signs add interest and variety to a building's facade while enlivening the street scene. Conversely, improperly scaled or designed signs can detract from even the most attractive storefront and clutter its surroundings.

Any sign proposed within the boundaries of the local historic district or on the site of a designated local historic landmark, including interior signage that is intended to be viewed and is directed to the passing public that is clearly visible from the exterior of the property, requires the review and approval of the Historic Preservation Commission.

The following criteria are applied to sign approval or denial:

- Size
- Color
- The material of which the sign is to be constructed
- The installation method
- The number of signs on a building or lot
- The proposed orientation
- The impact on significant architectural or historic features of the building or district

All signage within local historic districts should adhere to the following guidelines, however the Lafayette Historic Preservation Commission recognizes that requests for signage on certain structures may present unforeseeable challenges not addressed in these guidelines. In those instances with no set precedent, sign review will be on a case by case basis.

Section I: Overarching Limitations

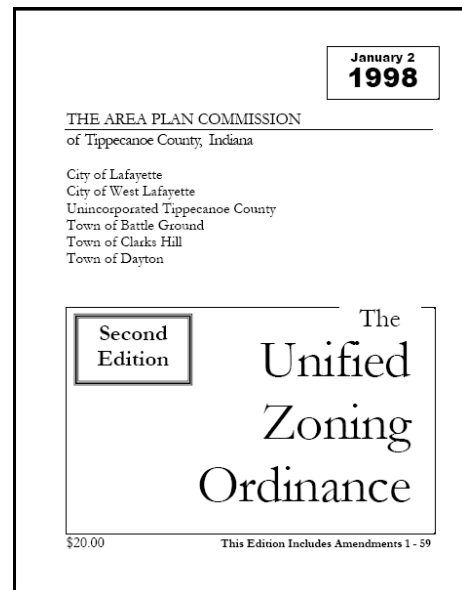
A. All sign design, placement and size should conform to the requirements set forth in the *Unified Zoning Ordinance*. The Historic Preservation Commission will not approve signs requiring a variance under the *Unified Zoning Ordinance* unless a variance has been obtained prior to review by the Commission. The definition of a "sign" shall be the definition established in the "New Unified Zoning Ordinance" (NUZO) applicable to the City of Lafayette.

B. The following signs are highly discouraged in local historic districts:

- A sign or a portion of a sign that rotates
- A roof sign
- A sign which flashes or blinks at intervals
- A sign with deep channel letters

C. Signs Should Not:

- Dominate facades
- Be randomly positioned
- Overlap or obscure other signs
- Be internally illuminated
- Duplicate information
- Create distraction or confusion for motorists
- Obstruct the footpath
- Cause non-repairable damage to building when installed or removed



Section II: Types of Signage

A. Applied Flat Signs

- Should be applied to and fit within the sign board area of a façade (usually a flat area located above a storefront and below 2nd story windows).
- Can be constructed of wood, flat finish metal, or “imitation” material that resemble the aforementioned historic materials when painted.



B. Applied Letters & Logos

- Can be applied directly to the sign board area of a façade (usually a flat area located above a storefront and below 2nd story windows).
- Can be applied to other areas of the building if historic evidence (photos, ghost marks, etc.) indicate previous signs in the proposed area.
- Should be constructed of wood, flat finish metal, or “imitation” material that resemble the aforementioned



C. Projecting/Blade Signs

- Sign bracket should anchor into mortar joints if installed on a masonry structure.
- Should be constructed of wood, flat finish metal, or “imitation” material that resemble the aforementioned historic materials when painted.



D. Back Painted on Glass or Vinyl Appliqué

- If painted, should be silk screened or hand painted on inside surface of glass of the window or door to prevent weathering.
- Should cover no more than 30% of glass surface (includes logos and text).
- Should be centered vertically and horizontally on exposed glass surface.



E. Plaques

- Should be of case or engraved brass, bronze, urethane millwork (Fypon), resin, wood, or stone.
- If applied to masonry surfaces plaque should anchor at mortar joints.



F. Murals/Artwork

- New murals/artwork should not advertise businesses or products.
- New murals/artwork should not be painted on bare masonry.
- Approval is not needed for re-painting of existing murals/artwork as long as the following criteria are followed:
 - The size of the mural/artwork will not change.
 - The design of the mural/artwork will not change.
 - New paint color will match existing.
- All new murals/artwork require review and written approval from the Public Art Committee.



G. Special Signs

- Printed menus must be neatly mounted in a wood or metal frame covered by glass.
- Flags & Banners: brackets should anchor to mortar joints if used in a masonry application.

H. Projecting Neon Signs

- Must conform to all criteria listed in Section II.

I. Interior Signs Intended To Be Viewed and Directed to the Passing Public that is Clearly Visible From the Exterior of the Property.

- Signs should not be animated, as defined in “New Unified Zoning Ordinance” (NUZO) applicable to the City of Lafayette
- Signs should respect neighboring buildings in a way that they do not illuminate or overpower adjacent structures, and not be visually obtrusive and dominate the street frontage.
- Signs which do not relate to the business are not appropriate.
- Signs should not detract from the historical features.



Section III: Position and Location of signage

A. Position signs so they will not obscure existing architectural details.

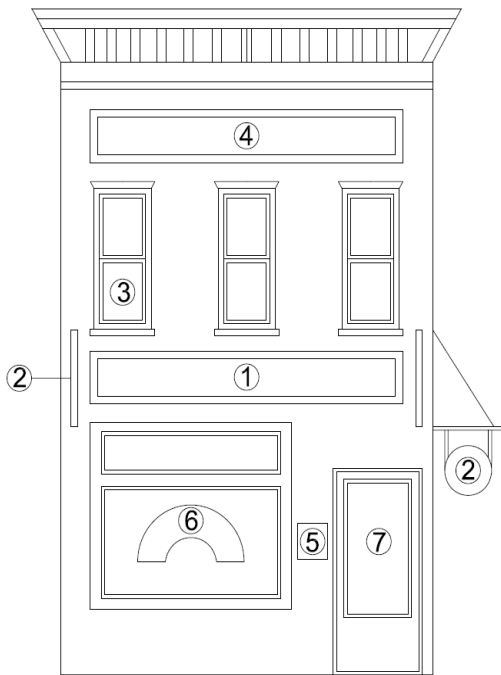
- If decorative bands, brickwork, or panels are indented in the face material, place the sign to fit within them.
- If a building's name or date is raised on the façade and is historically valuable, they should be retained, and should not be blocked or damaged by the new signage.

B. Align signs approximately with others on the block when feasible.

- Follow the order of sign alignment, if other signage on the block have aligned with each other. This creates visual continuity along storefronts and provides a uniform sight line for viewers, making signs more readable.
- If aligning signs is not possible, look for other features to determine sign placement. Each store sign may relate directly to the store entrance in a similar fashion, or all signs may be placed in windows.

C. Locations for signs.

- All signs should be limited to below the 2nd floor window level, unless historic evidence (photos, drawings, postcards) show signage in a different area for that particular structure.
- Signs on a building or façade:
 - If parallel, maximum thickness of three inches.
 - If perpendicular, maximum width of four feet, maximum thickness of three inches.
 - Eight foot minimum clearance above sidewalk or street.
- Signs on a building or sidewall:
 - Should maintain a suitable set back from the corner.
 - Should align with features of the primary façade.
- Signs on windows:
 - Should be individual letters with a contrasting outline.
 - Should cover no more than 30% of glass surface.
- Street numbers, individually applied or painted, should be placed above primary entry.



Sign Locations

(Numbers correspond to diagram at left)

1. Signboard
2. Projecting/Blade Sign
3. Upper Level Window Sign Applied to Glass (with historic evidence)
4. Frieze Sign (with historic evidence)
5. Plaque
6. Storefront Window Sign Applied to Glass
7. Door Sign Applied to Glass

Section IV: Lighting, Color, and Font

A. Indirect illumination is recommended for signage.

- Light fixtures mounted on the front of the building that shine on the sign are called “indirect sources.” These light a portion of the face of the building and emphasize the continuity of the building surface.
- Indirect lighting fixtures should be shielded to prevent glare on the street and sidewalk - “gooseneck” lamps are a good example of shielded, indirect lighting.
- Unobtrusive fittings and cabling are required.

B. Internal illumination is highly discouraged.

C. Fonts and Colors

- Signs should contain clear and legible lettering that contrasts with the sign background.
- Lettering style should be compatible with the building.
- Corporate colors may need to be adapted to suit the historic district
- The following fonts are recommended:

Baskerville Old Face	Calisto MT	Bernard MT Condensed
Bookman Old Style	Bodoni MT	FELIX TITLING
Goudy Old Style	Garamond	Modern No. 20
High Tower Text	Gung Suh	Times New Roman

Section V: Signage Material & Masonry Applications

A. Signage material

- Signs should be constructed of traditional materials such as wood or flat-finish metal.
- Signs can be constructed of imitation materials that have the same visual characteristics of traditional materials when painted, such as urethane millwork (Fypon) or resin.

B. Painted masonry

- New painted signage is not allowed on bare masonry.
- Appropriate historic murals/artwork or existing signage on bare masonry can be repainted using the same colors, design and proportions.

C. Anchoring

- All signs and hanging brackets must be anchored in a way that when removed historic materials will not be harmed (ie; anchoring in mortar joints, creating holes small enough to patch, etc.).