

Guidelines for Signage – DRAFT

All Historic Districts/Landmarks

Existing Historic Signs

1. **Preservation**—Preserve historic signs, such as ghost signs or other signs characteristic of the building's or district's period of significance, whenever possible.
2. **Maintenance**—Repair historic signs and replace historic parts in-kind when deteriorated beyond repair.

General Guidance

1. **Number and size**—Each building is allowed one major and two minor signs. Total requested signage should not exceed 50 square feet. **Staff note – this will need additional research to determine whether this makes sense for New Braunfels. City of San Antonio uses this number.**
2. **New signs**—Select the type of sign to be used based on evidence of historic signs or sign attachment parts along the building storefront where possible. Design signs to respect and respond to the character and/or period of the area in which they are being placed. Signs should identify the tenant without creating visual clutter or distracting from building features and historic district.
3. **Scale**—Design signage to be in proportion to the facade, respecting the building's size, scale and mass, height, and rhythms and sizes of window and door openings. Scale signage (in terms of its height and width) to be subordinate to the overall building composition.
4. **Location**—Place signs where historically located and reuse sign attachment parts where they exist. Do not erect signs on an area where they will disfigure or conceal architectural details, window openings, doors, or other significant details such as cornices, gables, porches, balconies, or other decorative elements.
5. **Damage**—Avoid irreversible damage caused by installing a sign. For example, mount a sign to the mortar rather than the historic masonry.
6. **Materials**—Construct signs of durable materials used for signs during the period of the building's construction, such as wood, wrought iron, steel, aluminum, and metal grill work. Do not use plastic, fiberglass, highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read, or other synthetic materials not historically used in the district.
7. **Lighting**—Indirect or bare-bulb light sources that do not produce glare to illuminate signs is encouraged. All illumination shall be steady and stationary.

Awning and Canopy Signs

1. **Appropriate usage**—Limit the use of awning and canopy signs to building forms that historically used awnings, most typically commercial storefronts.
2. **Placement**—Place signs on the awning or canopy valance, which is the portion that is parallel with the window.
3. **Mounting**—Install awning hardware in a manner that does not damage historic building elements or materials.
4. **Materials**—Fabricate awnings using fire-resistant canvas in a color that is appropriate to the period of the building.
5. **Shape**—Select awning shapes that reflect the door or window openings they cover. Limit valances to approximately eight to twelve inches in length.
6. **Lettering and symbols**—Lettering should generally be placed on the valance portion of the awning.
7. **Internal illumination**—Do not use internal illumination or other techniques that cause awnings to glow; however, illumination may be concealed in the awning to provide directional light to illuminate sidewalks or storefronts.

Projecting and Wall Mounted Signs

1. Mounting devices—Construct sign frames and panels that will be used to be attach signs to the wall of a building of wood, metal, or other durable materials appropriate to the building's period of construction.
2. Structural supports—Utilize sign hooks, expansion bolts, or through bolts with washers on the inside of the wall depending upon the weight and area of the sign, and the condition of the wall to which it is to be attached.
3. Appropriate usage—Limit the use of projecting and wall-mounted signs to building forms that historically used these types of signs, most typically commercial storefronts. To a lesser degree, these signage types may also be appropriate in areas where residential building forms have been adapted for office or retail uses, if sized accordingly.
4. Projecting Signs
 - a. **Placement**—Mount projecting signs perpendicularly to a building or column while allowing eight feet of overhead clearance above public walkways.
 - b. **Public right-of-way**—Limit the extension of projecting signs from the building facade into the public right-of-way for a maximum distance of eight feet or a distance equal to two-thirds the width of the abutting sidewalk, whichever distance is greater.
 - c. Area-Projecting signs should be scaled appropriately in response to the building façade and number of tenants.
5. Wall Mounted Signs
 - a. **Area**—Limit the aggregate area of all wall-mounted signs to twenty-five percent of a building facade.
 - b. **Projection**—Limit the projection of wall-mounted signs to less than twelve inches from the building wall.
 - c. **Placement**—Locate wall signs on existing signboards—the area above the storefront windows and below the second story windows—when available. Mount wall signs to align with others on the block if an existing signboard is not available.
 - d. **Channel letters**—Avoid using internally-illuminated, wall-mounted channel letters for new signs unless historic precedent exists. Reverse channel letters may be permitted.

Freestanding Signs

1. Appropriate usage—Freestanding signs are most appropriate in locations where building forms are set back from the street, such as in areas where historic residences have been adapted for office or retail uses, or in commercial districts where they may be used to identify parking areas or other accessory uses.
2. Placement—Place freestanding signs near the public right-of-way where they are clearly visible to passing pedestrians and motorists, a minimum of five feet from the street right-of-way and ten feet from all interior side lot lines. No freestanding sign should be placed in a manner that obstructs the pedestrian walkway.
3. Number of signs—Limit the number of freestanding signs per platted lot to one, unless the lot fronts more than one street, in which case, one sign is allowed on each street on which the lot has frontage.
4. Height—Limit the height of freestanding signs to no more than six (6) feet.
5. Area— The size of new signs should be appropriate within the historic context and shall be determined by considering historic precedent, sign patterns within historic districts, and conditions specific to individual properties.
6. Structural supports—Use subtle structural elements (in terms of their scale and mass) with historically compatible materials to support a freestanding sign.