

Signage and Lighting



Flat signboards, low-profile projecting signs, painted lettering on the display windows and awning valance are appropriate.

Signage is an essential element in any commercial district. Anonymity is clearly not good for business. Unfortunately, signage has often been one of the most disfiguring elements in the urban landscape. A visual clutter of oversized and ill-positioned signs presents a negative image for the entire street.

A business sign is important not only as an identifier, but equally significant as an expression of an image for the business. Don't underestimate the value of quality signage. A clear message, presented with style, will encourage passersby to venture in. Money spent on quality signage is usually money well spent.

When thinking about signage, consider the following:

Size and placement

Signage should be directed at and scaled to the pedestrian. Don't assume that the largest sign is the best. Pay particular attention to how your sign relates to your building. Look for logical signage locations on your facade.

The best location for signage is at the continuous flat wall areas above storefront display windows and below the upper level windows. Where such space is limited by the location of the storefront cornice or a balcony, signage can be applied to the display windows or on low-profile projecting signboards. Don't cover windows, doors, or architectural ornaments. A good sign looks like it belongs where it was placed. It should be an extension of the overall design of your facade.

Message and design

A good sign is simple and direct. Don't be tempted to say too much. Choose a letter style or graphic treatment that projects your image and is clear and easy to read. Coordinate sign colors with the colors of your building. Remember that visual clutter will only dilute your message.

A good sign can take many forms. It may be painted on a flat panel, or it might have a sculptural quality. Individual letters might be applied to the facade. Logos or lettering can be painted, stenciled, or engraved on windows. Even the valance of an awning can be an excellent signboard. Sign design that brings additional identity to storefront businesses, by using three-dimensional signs,

symbols, or representations of the business (mortar and pestle, scales of justice, barber poles, etc.) is encouraged. Small two-sided signs that project perpendicularly over the sidewalk are excellent for communication for pedestrians. Neon signage is not appropriate on the building exterior. Lighting for other kinds of signage should be limited to direct illumination by incandescent lamps.

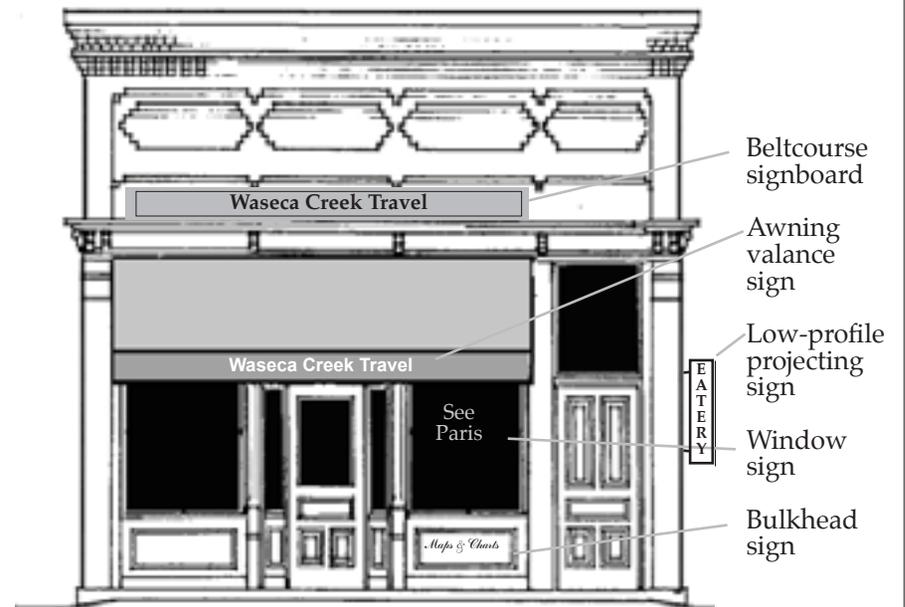
Inappropriate signs

Certain sign types are generally considered inappropriate in an historic commercial district. These would include large projecting signs, rooftop signs, and internally illuminated awnings and signs.

All signage within the Waseca Historic District must be approved by the HPC.

General Sign Guidelines

- Signs should be made of traditional materials such as wood or metal panels with painted or ornamental metal lettering.
- Signage should be sized appropriately and in proportion to its building.
- Signs and graphics should have colors that are coordinated with the overall building colors and the colors of the adjacent buildings.
- Signs should have a lettering typeface generally of the era of the building, such as letters in a serif or script style for the earliest buildings, and with the possible use of more modern sans-serif style lettering for more recent buildings. However, each sign shall contain no more than two lettering styles, and the lettering shall not occupy more than 60 percent of the total sign area. Where businesses are required to utilize a corporate image or the sign lettering style and/or color is part of the business identity, the corporate image may be acceptable by utilizing other mitigating historic sign design features such as a raised sign boarder, dimensional letters, small lettering size and scale.
- Signage should be placed at traditional sign locations including the storefront beltcourse, upper facade walls, hanging or mounted inside windows, or projecting perpendicularly from the face of the building.





While neon lighting is generally discouraged, if applied on a well-designed, low-profile sign, it may be permitted.

- Signs should not conceal any architectural features.
- Signage mounting brackets and hardware should be anchored into mortar, not masonry.
- Signs which are lit should have concealed lighting—spot or up-lit lighting for signs is recommended.
- Internally-lit or flashing signs are not appropriate for historic commercial districts.

General Lighting Guidelines

- Commercial sign lighting fixtures should be simple in design or concealed.
- Concealed light fixtures or fixtures appropriate to the building's period are encouraged.
- Spot or up-lit lighting for signs is recommended.
- Light fixtures should be low profile and have minimal projection from building face.
- Lighting should not conceal any architectural features.
- The light source should not be visible from the public right-of-way.
- Incandescent illumination is the most appropriate light source for historic commercial signage.
- "Historic" theme light fixtures such as "Colonial" coach lanterns are not appropriate to the Waseca Historic District.
- Internally-lit plastic signs and awnings are not appropriate.
- Flashing lights are not appropriate for historic commercial districts.
- Light fixture mounting brackets and hardware should be anchored into mortar, not masonry.
- Neon signage is not appropriate on the building exterior.