1. Legal Ad

   Documents:

   11-2-16 LEGAL AD.PDF

2. Agenda

   Documents:

   11-2-16 AGENDA.PDF

3. HP MEMO - 102-104 Exchange Street

   Documents:

   HP MEMO - 102-104 EXCHANGE STREET.PDF

LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
CITY OF PORTLAND
Public comments are taken at all meetings.

On **Wednesday, November 2, 2016** at **5:00** p.m., the Portland Historic Preservation Board will meet in Room 209 of City Hall to review the following items. (Public comments are taken at all meetings):

1. **PUBLIC HEARING**

   i. Certificate of Appropriateness for Sign Installation; 102-104 EXCHANGE STREET; Noah Talmadge, prop. Portland Meatball Co., Applicant

2. **CONSENT AGENDA**

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

Scott Benson, Chair
Bruce Wood, Vice Chair
Glenn Harmon
Ted Oldham
Penny Pollard
Julia Sheridan
John Turk

HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD AGENDA
November 2, 2016, 5:00 p.m.
Room 209, City Hall, 389 Congress Street
Public comment is taken at all meetings

1. ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM
2. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS
3. REPORT OF DECISIONS OF OCTOBER 19, 2016:
There were no decisions as all agenda items were workshop sessions.

4. PUBLIC HEARING

i. Certificate of Appropriateness for Sign Installation; 102-104 EXCHANGE STREET; Noah Talmatch, Applicant.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE

PUBLIC HEARING
102-104 EXCHANGE STREET

TO: Chair Benson and Members of the Historic Preservation Board

FROM: Rob Wiener, Preservation Compliance Coordinator

DATE: October 27, 2016

RE: November 2, 2016 **Public Hearing**

Application for: Certificate of Appropriateness for Sign Installation

Address: 102-104 Exchange Street

Applicant: Noah Talmatch, owner, Portland Meatball Company

Introduction

Applicant Noah Talmatch, owner of the Portland Meatball Company, comes before the Board seeking approval for a proposed sign at his new restaurant at 104 Exchange Street. Although sign permit applications are typically reviewed and approved at the administrative level, it has been staff's practice to forward sign applications to the Board when a) the subject building is not a standard commercial structure and presents unique challenges as regards placement of signage; b) a new sign type is proposed for which there is little precedent; or c) when the applicant does not agree with staff's determination that the proposed sign does not meet applicable ordinance standards and guidelines. This application is being forwarded to the Board because Mr. Talmatch does not agree with staff's findings and recommendations for a revised sign solution and has elected not to withdraw his application. In circumstances such as this, the historic preservation ordinance provides as follows:

> *If the department determines that the application does not meet the requirements of division 7 and the design manual, the application shall be scheduled for review by the historic preservation board pursuant to section 14-638, unless the applicant withdraws the application. (Section 14-640(c))*

Staff is providing the sign proposal, as well as past and present photos of the building and excerpts from applicable sections of the signage design guidelines included in the historic resources design manual.

Background

Mr. Talmatch formally applied for the sign permit in September. Some weeks prior to filing an application, Mr. Talmatch discussed his sign idea with HP staff during a site visit. At that time staff expressed concerns about the shape and proportion of the proposed sign, noting that the building features an identifiable sign band that extends the full width of the storefront and that wall signs mounted above historic storefronts are typically sized and proportioned to fit that traditional sign zone. (See ATTACHMENTS 3 and 4.) Staff also noted that the proposed sign would extend over the exposed I-beam above this lower band. This would not only result in a sign much taller than is typical, but also one that disrupts a key unifying architectural element shared by the building's adjoining storefronts (the I-beam). Staff suggested Mr. Talmatch pursue a linear sign that would fill all or most of the length of the sign band above the storefront. During the discussion, one of the arguments made by Mr. Talmatch was that the lower band's stucco-like finish was fragile, making it unsuitable for attachment. Staff expressed confidence that a sign could be successfully mounted in this location and suggested alternate hanging methods.

When the sign application was signed off as meeting zoning requirements and forwarded to HP staff for review in mid-October, staff noted that the sign proposal remained unchanged. On October 19 staff communicated to Mr. Talmatch that they could not support the sign as proposed due to its incompatibility with the building façade and staff's finding that it did not meet the historic preservation ordinance sign standard and accompanying guidelines. Staff continues to be willing to discuss alternative solutions, but does not find the proposed sign to meet applicable standards. Mr. Talmatch asserts that the sign is appropriate for its location and that he does not wish to make any changes to its design.

Subject Property, Storefront Description

The subject building, built in 1905, was originally four stories. In 1958, the two upper stories were removed (likely due to a fire). Today, the building is a two story, six bay-wide structure, resulting in a very linear architectural presence. The second floor is dominated by a series of large, mulled window pairs. The windows are separated by regularly spaced projecting brick piers. Panels of dog-tooth bricks terminate the upper façade.

At the ground floor level, there is a recessed entrance bay at the southern end of the building. The balance of the ground floor façade is occupied by two storefronts. The southernmost storefront is two bays wide with a side entrance. The subject storefront (104 Exchange) occupies half the length of the ground floor and features a recessed center entrance flanked by two display windows. The storefronts are the product of a mid-20th century remodeling; it is likely that they were remodeled in 1958 when the upper floors were removed. Above each of the storefronts are two strong horizontal bands. Along with other architectural features, these bands serve to architecturally unify the two storefronts. The upper band is a painted steel I-beam. The lower band, which was probably added in 1958 to conceal dropped ceilings on the interior, features a stucco-like finish.

Although the storefronts date to the 1950's, their basic organization and contributing elements are consistent with traditional storefront design. As the photos in Attachments 4 and 5 illustrate, since the Old Port Historic District was created in 1990, signs over the subject

storefront have been located on the lower band and have extended across much of the band's width. This was true of the sign for Lovell's Exchange, photographed in 1989 and of the most recent sign for Pierre's Electronics. The placement and proportion of the both these signs were consistent with the placement and proportions of traditional signs throughout the Old Port and consistent with what is typically required for new fascia signs above storefronts.

Proposed Sign

The proposed sign (see ATTACHMENT 2) is a flat signboard 9' wide by 3' high, with digitally printed background and lettering. As shown in the attached photo mock-up, the width equals that of the entrance alcove, and the height spans both the lower band and the exposed iron beam. The sign background is printed to simulate corrugated metal.

Applicable Review Standards and Guidelines

In reviewing applications for new signs in historic districts, HP staff and Board are guided by the following historic preservation ordinance standard:

Sec. 14-652.5. Standards for Review of signage

Signs shall be compatible with the subject building and its surrounding context as detailed in the signage design guidelines included in the historic resources design manual. If there is a conflict between this standard and the requirements of Article III, Division 22 (sign ordinance), the stricter standard shall apply.

In addition to the ordinance standard, detailed design guidelines have been adopted by the Board to provide guidance in the interpretation and application of the standard. As the introduction to the **Signage Design Guidelines** states:

The guidelines are general in nature and are intended as guidance in designing appropriate signage for a wide range of building types and styles, as well as contexts. Each application will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, with the objective of approving signage appropriate for the particular building and context.

Following are specific guidelines excerpted from the larger document that are application in the review of this application:

A. *General Design Concerns*

i. *Signage on all buildings, historic and contemporary, should be carefully considered, taking into account the scale, character and design of the building and its surrounding context.*

v. *The design of signage should be respectful of the building on which it is located, carefully designed to fit a given façade, and complementing the building's architectural features.*

B. *Size*

i. *The size of proposed signs should be compatible with the scale of the overall building and its architectural features. Signs should be sized to fit the specific selected location.*

iv. *Signs on adjacent storefronts within the same building should be coordinated in size and proportion.*

C. *Placement and Location*

i. *The placement of signage should take into account the traditional location of signage on buildings and the specific architectural features of the given façade. Features to consider include existing sign boards, lower cornices, lintels and piers.*

ii. *The use of a continuous of a continuous sign band extending over adjacent shops within the same building is encouraged, as a unifying element.*

Staff Comments

- The proposed sign is taller and narrower than is typical of signs located above traditional storefronts. It does not fill the width of the designated sign band on this building and does not relate to the overall proportions of the storefront or the building itself.

- As the 1924 photo illustrates, the building appears originally to have had tall storefront windows, no lower band, and a long, horizontal sign appears located on the iron beam. (See ATTACHMENT 3.) When the top floors were removed in the 1950's and the storefronts were remodeled, a second horizontal band was introduced under the I-beam (likely to obscure dropped ceilings on the interior). Although the resulting condition is somewhat unusual, the basic organization of the storefronts remained unchanged. Since the 1950's remodeling, linear storefront signs have been mounted on the lower sign band and have extended across much of the band's width. (See photos in ATTACHMENTS 5 and 6.) The placement and proportion of the signs were consistent with those of wall-mounted storefront signs throughout the Old Port and consistent with what is recommended in the signage design guidelines.

- Although signage for the abutting storefront is incorporated into an awning, the awning itself is installed within the lower band above the storefront. This establishes a general pattern of placement that should be considered in order to achieve coordinated signage. Were the new sign positioned on this same lower band, some level of consistency would be achieved.

- Regarding the question of mounting, Staff believes a sign could be mounted over the lower band by employing brackets mounted beneath the band, above the storefront, and top brackets mounted to the flange of the beam above.

Motion for Consideration

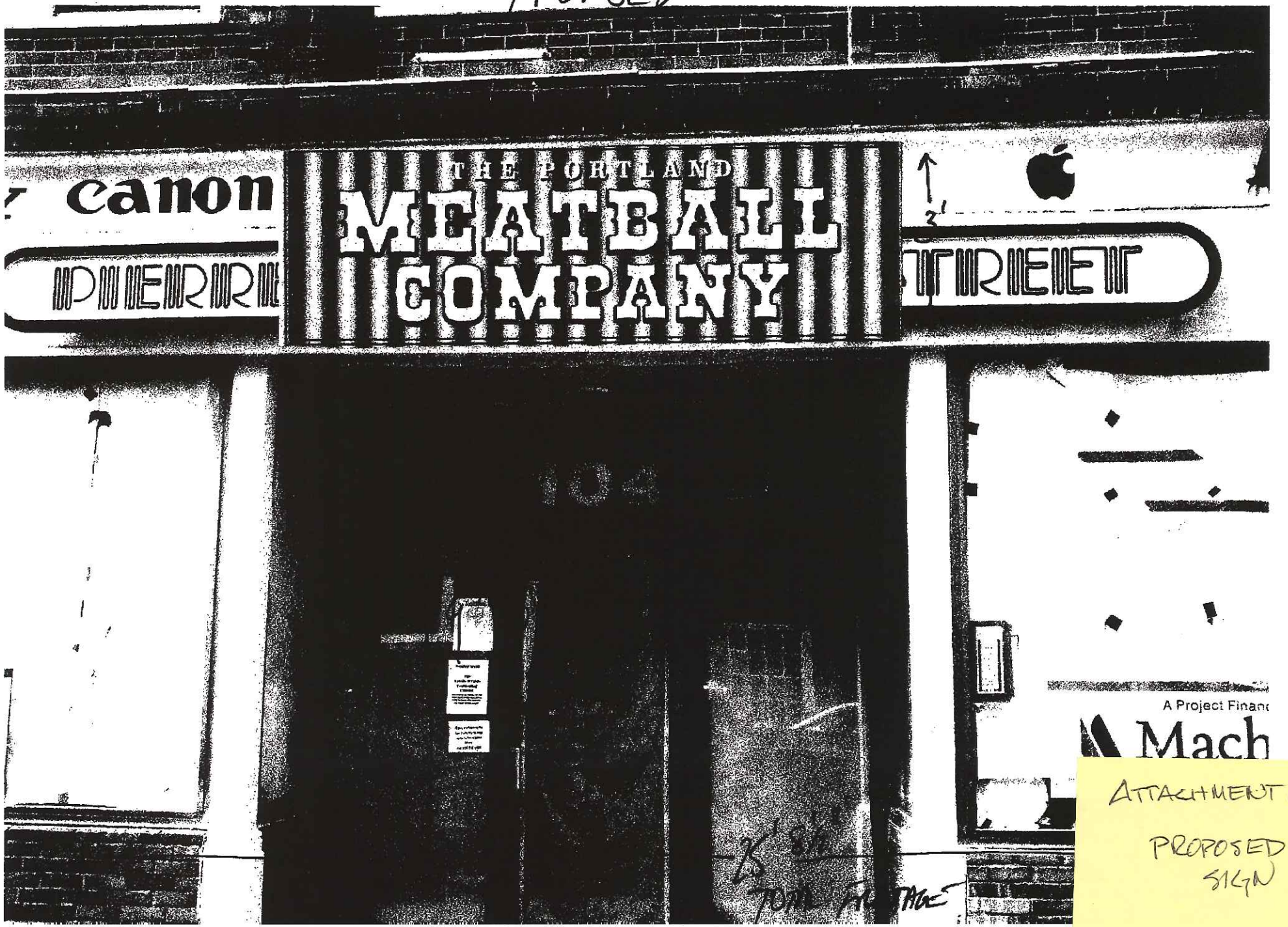
On the basis of plans and specifications submitted by the applicant for the November 2, 2016 public hearing and information included in the accompanying staff report, the Board finds that the proposed sign at 104 Exchange Street **meets (fails to meet)** the historic preservation ordinance standard for review of signs and accompanying signage design guidelines (**subject to the following conditions.....)**

Attachments:

1. Recent photo of storefront supplied by staff
2. Proposed sign, mock-up supplied by applicant
3. 1924 photo
4. Illustration of traditional storefront design elements
5. 1989 photo of property
6. Previous sign, 2002 photo
7. Signage Design Guidelines

ATTACHMENT 1

PROPOSED



ATTACHMENT 2

PROPOSED SIGN

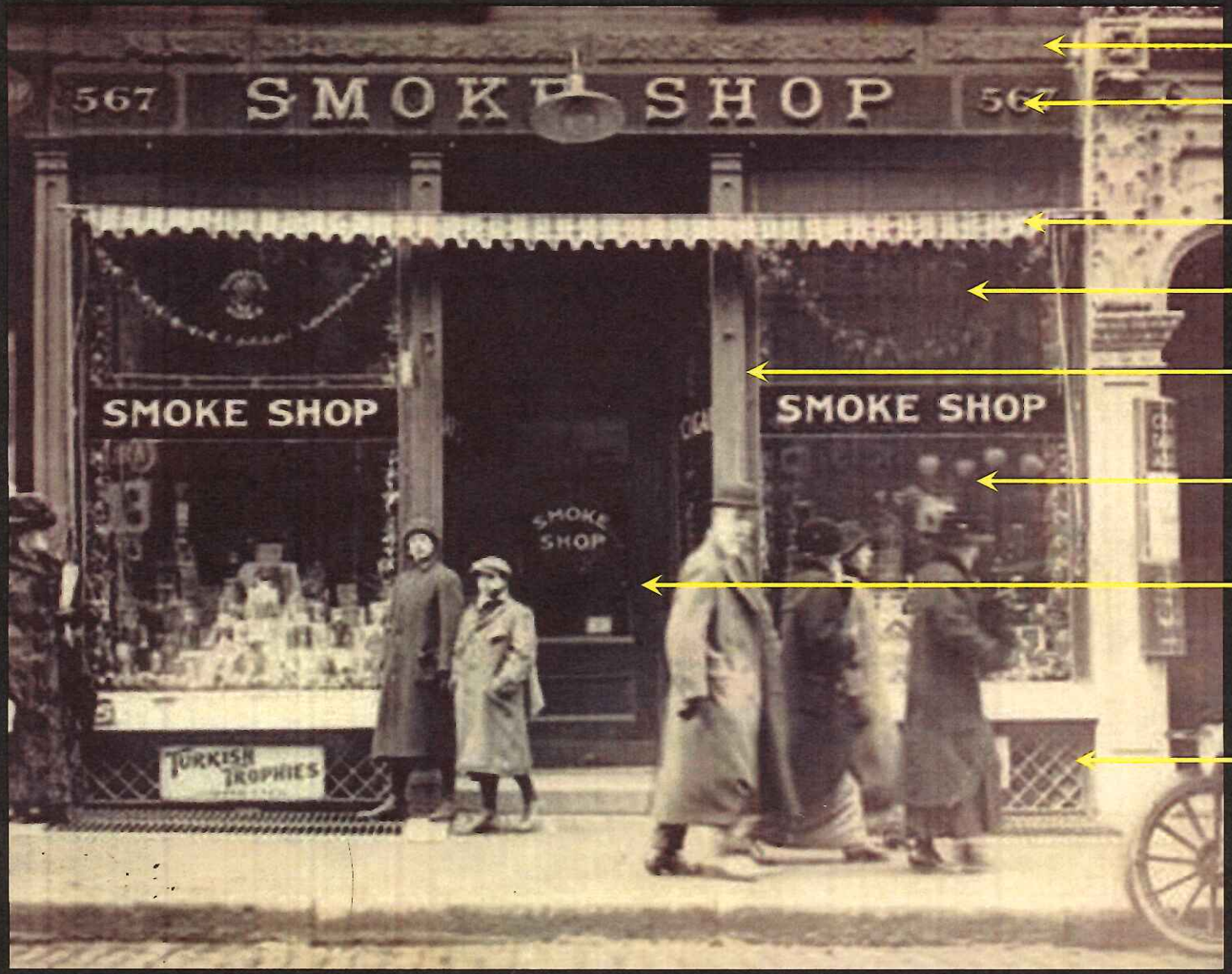
ATTACHMENT 3
1924 photo

(before 3rd & 4th floors were removed)

102-104 EXCHANGE

Traditional Storefront Design Elements

Historic View from 1912



Cornice

Frieze/Sign Band

Awning

Transom

Pier

Display Window

Recessed Entry

Bulkhead

ATTACHMENT 4

ATTACHMENT 5

1989 VIEW

ATTACHMENT 6

2002 VIEW

ATTACHMENT 7

Signage Design Guidelines

Introduction

Signs, awnings, canopies and other similar devices are among the most noticeable visual elements of the urban commercial environment. These devices are not only a practical business requirement for a property owner or tenant but also can significantly enhance a storefront, building façade and street environment. Signage designed, constructed, and installed throughout Portland's historic districts should be executed and placed in a manner which is respectful of the character of the building on which it will be located and the character established by surrounding buildings and environment.

Signs, as components of a building façade, are relatively temporary as businesses or tenants change with some frequency over time. The design and installation of signage should recognize this temporary nature of uses and should always be approached with an attitude of reversibility. All signs should be designed and installed in a manner that, upon their removal, the character defining features of the building remain intact and that the exterior materials of the building are not permanently or irreparably damaged.

Regulation of Signage in Historic Districts

Any new sign and any change in the appearance of an existing sign located on Landmark structures or within Historic Districts or Historic Landscape Districts shall be subject to review and approval under the provisions of the historic preservation ordinance (Article IX of the Land Use Code) and shall require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The following guidelines provide guidance in the interpretation and application of the historic preservation ordinance review standard (Sec. 14-652.5). The guidelines are general in nature and are intended as guidance in designing appropriate signage for a wide range of building types and styles, as well as contexts. Each application will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, with the objective of approving signage appropriate for the particular building and context.

These guidelines shall apply to all sign types, including but not limited to, projecting signs, wall signs, permanent window signs, awnings and canopies, banners, free-standing signs (where permitted), portable signs, and rooftop signs (where permitted).

If there is a conflict between these standards and guidelines and the requirements of Division 22 of the Land Use Code (sign ordinance) or other provisions of the City Code, the stricter shall apply.

Guidelines

A. General Design Concerns

i. Signage on all buildings, historic and contemporary, should be carefully considered, taking into account the scale, character and design of the subject building and its surrounding context.

ii. Signs should not dominate building facades or obscure their architectural features (arches, transom panels, sills, moldings, cornices, windows, etc.)

iii. Design, selection of materials, and workmanship should be of high quality in appearance and character, complementary to the materials and character of the building, and convey a sense of permanence and durability.

iv. In a downtown setting, the design of signage should be oriented and sized to reflect the nature of movement around the building, with an emphasis primarily on the pedestrian and slow-moving traffic.

v. The design of signage should be respectful of the building on which it is located, carefully designed to fit a given façade, and complementing the building's architectural features. Signage of a style that predates the building, such as providing "colonialized" signs on a Victorian storefront, is not appropriate. A sign of contemporary design or materials on a historic building may be acceptable, provided it complies with the guidelines herein.

vi. Where multiple signs occur on a single building, there should be a common pattern and character between such signs. Signs need not all be identical, but there should be a common pattern or placement, general scale and design, and type of illumination.

B. Size

i. The size of proposed signs should be compatible with the scale of the overall building and its architectural features. Signs should be sized to fit the specific selected location.

ii. The size of signs and individual letters should be at an appropriate scale for pedestrians and slow-moving traffic. Except in unique circumstances, projecting signs should not exceed 16 square feet, on the first floor level.

iii. As a general rule, projecting signs should not extend more than 4 feet into any public right-of-way.

iv. Signs on adjacent storefronts within the same building should be coordinated in size and proportion.

C. Placement and Location

i. The placement of signage should take into account the traditional location of signage on buildings and the specific architectural features of the given façade. Features to consider include existing sign boards, lower cornices, lintels and piers.

ii. The placement of signage should not visually obscure architecturally significant features of the building.

iii. The use of a continuous sign band extending over adjacent shops within the same building is encouraged, as a unifying element.

iv. Where signage is proposed on (or behind) window surfaces, such signage should not substantially obscure visibility through the window and should be incidental to the scale of the window. Larger window signs will be considered in the overall sign allowances for individual tenants.

v. Generally, the placement of signage should occur below the sill of the second story windows. Placement elsewhere on a building may be considered under the following circumstances: a) where the design of the base portion of the building establishes some higher point as an appropriate location; b) where unusual site characteristics exist; or c) where the proposed signage exhibits exceptional design merit and is integrated into the design vocabulary of the subject building.

vi. For historic structures, upper floor signage (including rooftop signs) is generally not allowed, except for permanent window signs or where unique circumstances warrant an exception (e.g. where a historically or architecturally significant rooftop sign is to be recreated).

vii. Freestanding signs are generally not allowed. However, if the distance of the building or tenant's frontage from the street makes a building sign infeasible or ineffective, a freestanding sign may be considered. Integration of such signs into site features, such as planter walls, is encouraged.

viii. In addition to placement criteria above, the minimum clearance of projecting signs, awnings, canopies and marquees from the sidewalk must conform to current building codes (generally 8' clearance).

ix. The placement of signs must not disrupt or obstruct the vision of drivers or pedestrians so as to create a hazardous situation. No signs should be so located as to significantly obstruct pedestrian circulation.

D. Communication

i. Signage is most effective when it is simple and limited in subject matter to the name of the business or property and the incorporation of a logo, symbol, or other graphic display which is central to the primary tenant or use of the property. General commercial advertising incidental to the principal use is discouraged.

ii. Typefaces should be selected which are easy to read and scaled appropriately for both the sign and building. Logos or symbols are encouraged where integrated with the sign. Pictographs (such as the creation of a projecting sign in the shape of a key for a lock shop) can be an interesting and appropriate feature.

iii. A sign should not, by virtue of its color or shape, be distracting from the design and character of the building on which it is located. Signs tend to be most effective when there is a contrast in color between the lettering/symbols and the background of the sign.

iv. The importance of trademarked corporate identification is recognized in the review of sign applications. However, in order to preserve Portland's unique character and sense of place, standard corporate signage will, in some instances, be required to be reinterpreted to ensure compatibility with the subject building and the surrounding context. Such reinterpretation may include, but not be limited to, use of alternative materials or lighting solutions, adjustments in the scale of trademark logos or graphics, etc.

E. Illumination

i. Illumination of signage should be compatible with the character of illumination of existing appropriate signs on the building or in the vicinity.

ii. In residential zones, internally-illuminated signs are not appropriate.

iii. Where ample lighting exists from street lights or building façade illumination, sign lighting may not be allowed.

iv. Acceptable forms of internal illumination may include halo-lit signs and dye-cut metal sign panels that illuminate individual letters and symbols only. Neon signs may be acceptable as well where they are custom-designed to be compatible with the building's historic and/or architectural character. As a general rule, standard internally-illuminated box-type signs and individual letters that are internally illuminated are prohibited.

v. Where internal illumination of a sign causes the scale of the sign to become excessive in relation to architectural features of the building, alternative lighting should be considered.

vi. External illumination of signage should be concentrated evenly on the sign itself, with no significant glare or spillover onto adjacent buildings. The light source should be concealed from the direct view of the pedestrian and driver.

vii. All electrical conduit, transformers, raceways and wires should be concealed within or behind the sign or face of the building, be designed as an integral element of the building façade, or be substantially disguised or hidden so as to be unobtrusive to the appearance of the building and sign. The attachment of such devices to the

structure should not permanently damage any significant architectural features or exterior building material. For projecting blade-type signs, spot lights should be incorporated into the bracket itself.

viii. Generally, flashing or moving lights are not appropriate. Special situations, such as the design of marquees or features relating to special uses such as cultural events or public activities may be appropriate exceptions where sensitively designed and where no safety hazard is created.

F. Number of Signs

i. The proliferation of signs within a dense urban environment can lead to visual clutter. The number of signs for each tenant or building should be kept to a minimum while recognizing the need for identification and visibility.

ii. Ground floor tenants shall generally be limited to one wall sign and one projecting sign per tenant. Where tenants have frontage on more than one street, additional signs may be allowed.

iii. Upper floor tenants should generally be served by a building directory sign. Directory signs should be located at or near building entrances and should be scaled so that individual names are visible to the pedestrian. Where allowed (see Section C, vi and vii), upper floor building signs will be limited to one per building façade.

iv. Signs (and/or banners) displayed during business hours only constitute an ongoing advertising format and will be considered permanent signs rather than temporary signs, if such display continues for more than 30 calendar days.

G. Guidelines for Special Categories of Signs

In addition to the guidelines described above, certain types of signs require special guidelines which relate to their special characteristics or purpose.

i. Awnings, Canopies and Marquees that incorporate Signage: The shape and size of these devices should correspond to the shape, character and size of the opening over which they will be installed, and should fully fill the width of the individual window or door opening. These devices should not obscure architecturally significant elements of the building. The attachment of such devices to the structure should not permanently damage any significant architectural features or exterior building material.

Where there are existing (appropriate) awnings or canopies on the building, new awnings should be designed and located to be compatible with those existing.

Signage graphics on awnings or canopies should generally be confined to the valance and side returns. Awnings or canopies with graphics may be considered as primary signage.

Fabric awnings should be of a canvas-type material and should not emit light.

ii. Public Information Signs: This category of signage includes informational signage such as traffic regulations, transit information, public announcements or community activity information, and historic markers, as well as directional signage such as street/district signs and wayfinding signs to major civic, arts and cultural destinations. Wherever possible, these signs should be designed and located so that they complement and reinforce the historic character of the environment in which they are placed. Such signs may be freestanding as necessary to effectively serve their purpose and may be located off the premises to which they refer.

iii. Painted Wall Art and Signs: Painted wall art such as murals and tromp l'oeil should be used only to enhance the environment or streetscape and should not be developed for advertising purposes. Such wall art should not disrupt the setting of an historic building or of an otherwise distinctive environment.

Painted walls signs such as business names may be appropriate and should be reviewed according to other applicable guidelines. Concerns about future reversibility may prohibit signs proposed for unpainted masonry surfaces.

In a few instances, historic painted walls signs of a commercial nature are still discernable on the facades of some buildings and serve as reminders of former businesses and activities found therein. Where these signs reflect a significant period of Portland's history, preservation may be required.

iv. Portable/Movable Signs: Sandwich board signs commonly found are the only portable freestanding signs that are permitted (other than special temporary signs and public information signs.) All portable signs placed within the public way require special permitting through the City. In addition to requirements of that process, all such signs should be designed and located in a manner which does not detract from the character of the pedestrian environment, nor create obstacles to pedestrian circulation or visibility. Portable signs are generally not allowed in residential zones.

v. Temporary Signs: Temporary signs or banners are exhibited for a limited time--generally no more than 30 days--to advertise special events or sales and should be removed immediately following the event. Temporary promotional commercial signs or banners should be used on a limited basis and are not allowed as an ongoing form of advertising.

vi. Real-Estate Signs: In commercial districts, real estate signs should be displayed in windows only and removed promptly upon the sale or lease of the property.

vii. Non-Commercial Banners, Flags and Pennants: The number of such elements per business or tenant, however, should be limited to avoid visual clutter. While the flag or banner may be relatively temporary in nature, the brackets or poles from which these elements hang tend to remain for extended periods. Attachment of

such support devices to buildings or other structures should not cause damage to architectural features or building materials.

viii. On-site informational signs: On-site signs for such needs as identifying parking entrances and exits, handicapped parking spaces or handicapped access, drive-thru teller signs, and other similar directional signs should be considered as part of a signage system, coordinated in size, materials, design and character within a single property and with adjacent properties.

ix. Signs on residential structures within residential zones: Signs on residential structures should be located and sized to be compatible with the character of the district and property. Signs on residential properties should generally be smaller than those in a commercial district and shall be limited to one.

x. Off-premise signs: With the exception of public information or wayfinding signs, signs advertising businesses or products not found on the premises are not allowed.

H. Brackets and Installation

i. Brackets should be in scale with the sign and building. As a general rule, brackets should be simple and incidental to the sign. They must be adequately engineered to support the intended load, and generally should conform to a 2:3 vertical-horizontal proportion.

ii. Attachments for all signage, awnings, conduit, etc. should cause no irreversible damage to historic building materials. On masonry buildings, attachments for all signage, awnings, conduit, etc. should be installed at mortar joints or into existing holes, to avoid damaging masonry. Where possible, existing sign brackets should be reused.

I. Master Signage Plans

i. A master signage plan will be required for all major projects (rehab and new construction) as part of the site plan and/or historic preservation review process. Signage on new buildings should be related to, and read as an integral part of, the design and material palette of the building. The master sign plan should allow adaptability for changing tenants and uses over time.

J. Maintenance

i. All signs shall be maintained in good visual and structural condition.

K. Obsolete Signs

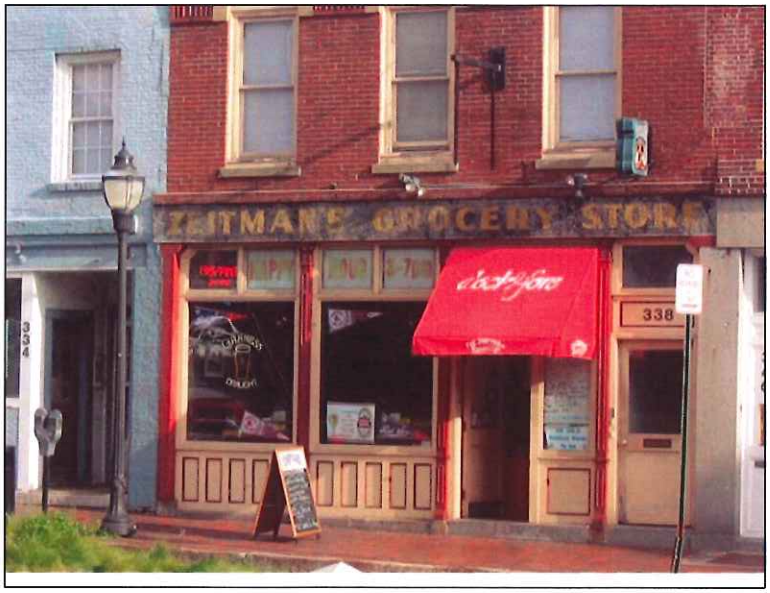
i. Except where an obsolete sign is determined to have historical significance, obsolete signs for establishments no longer located at the premises should be removed.

Illustrated Examples

An example of a well-coordinated signage scheme. The awnings' traditional form (shed style with loose scalloped valance) and placement over the transom windows reinforce the historic character of the storefront.

This awning solution is a successful contemporary interpretation of the traditional shed-type awning. Instead of a loose and/or scalloped valance, the valance is taut. The graphic element on the slope of the awning, while not typically encouraged, works here because of its scale, subtlety and repetition.

This awning solution is inappropriate for its historic setting. The combination of a non-traditional shape, shiny plastic material, and poorly integrated graphics is in conflict with the historic character of the property and streetscape.



Historic signs are important reminders of Portland's commercial history and may not be removed or covered without express approval.

A sophisticated signage solution, reminiscent of historic signage and well-suited to the building's corner location.

On commercial blocks with several individual storefronts, it is advisable to develop a master plan for signage that ensures a level of consistency while showcasing the individual nature of each business. Here, the same style bracket is used across the entire ground floor frontage. The signs themselves are all wood, non-lit and similarly sized.

A classic example of traditional signage and retractable awnings still in use. The consistency shown here is particularly well-suited to large buildings with multiple storefront tenants.

Obsolete signs should be removed entirely. Even with the graphics removed, these sign panels distract from and clutter a landmark building on a prominent corner.

Standard internally-illuminated box-type signs are not appropriate in historic districts. This example, not in a district, illustrates the visual impact of this type of signage on its historic neighbor.

When the Eastland Park Hotel wanted to re-establish the original grandeur of its main entrance, this traditional style marquee with signage was created to evoke the era and spirit of the hotel's 1920's construction.

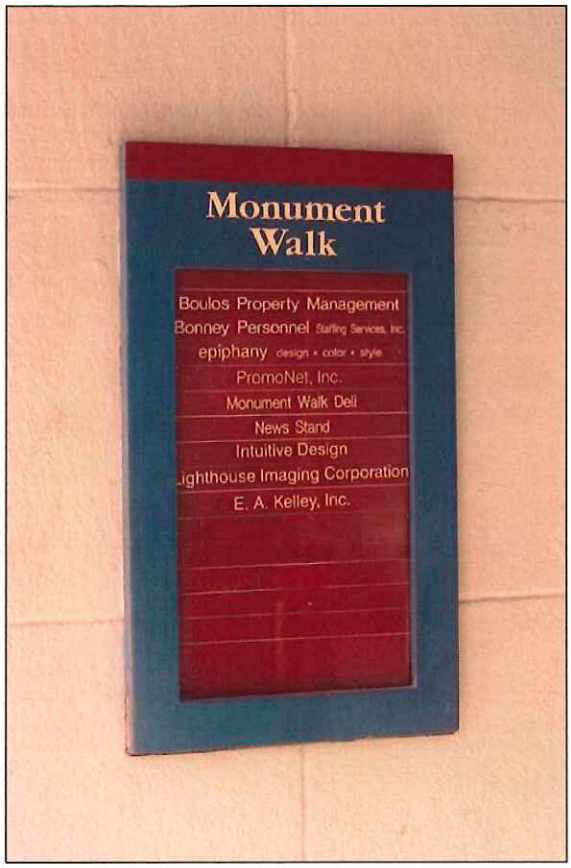
Located at the rear of City Hall, Merrill Auditorium long suffered from a lack of visibility and its "back door" entrance gave no clue as to the grandeur and elegance of the space within. This marquee, added in 2006, successfully improves visibility for the auditorium and enhances the sense of arrival, just as traditional marquees were designed to do. Although clearly contemporary in design and material, this installation is seamlessly integrated with its historic setting. The brushed aluminum letters project from the face of the sign band, giving depth and visual interest to the marquee.

At night, the letters are halo-lit; a subtle band of neon completes the composition.

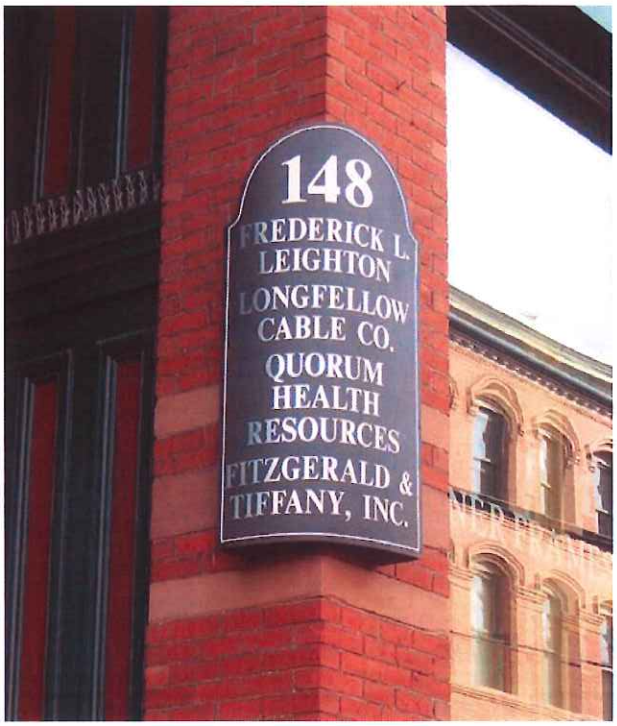
This discrete sign, incorporated within the historic granite retaining wall, serves its intended purpose without competing with the landmark building behind it. The typeface, gold-leaf lettering and slate sign panel also reinforce the dignity of its setting.

A well designed and executed sign that is both understated and highly effective for its purpose. Individual laser-cut metal letters stand atop a metal entrance canopy.

All too often, real estate signs remain in place long after the space they advertise is leased, becoming permanent fixtures that clutter the façade of a historic structure. For this reason, they should be placed in windows and removed as soon as a space is filled.

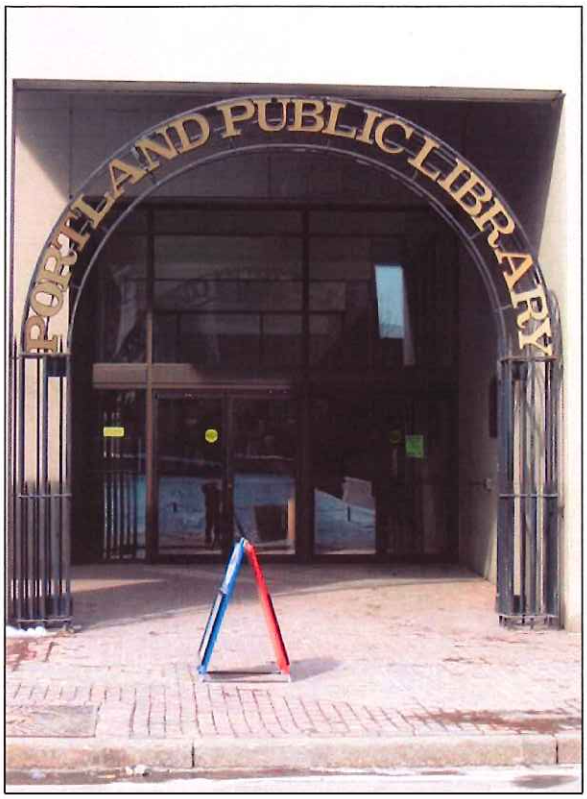


Directory signs, located near the main building entrance, are an appropriate solution for upper floor tenants. Upper floor signs for individual tenants are not encouraged.



A curved metal sign mounted at a corner is a form of signage the appears in historic photos of Portland. Here it has been used as a building directory for a historic structure.

Grouped bonze plaques can be an effective form of directory signage, and is often used for professional offices. Close coordination of the individual plaques, in terms of size, style and placement, is critical.

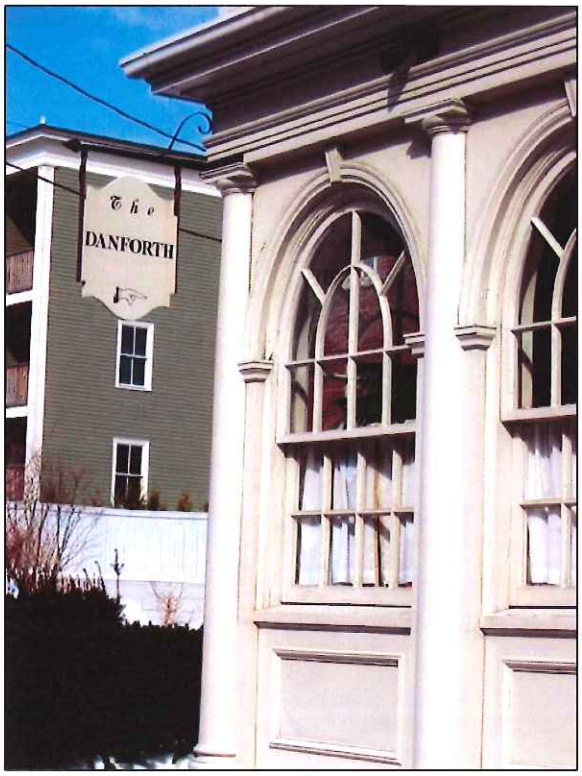


A good example of an architecturally integrated sign solution. This type of signage is strongly encouraged for institutional uses, where turnover in tenancy is not an issue.

A sculptural, contemporary bracket and sign well-suited to its modern storefront. Note the subtle spotlights that no not detract from the sign or storefront.

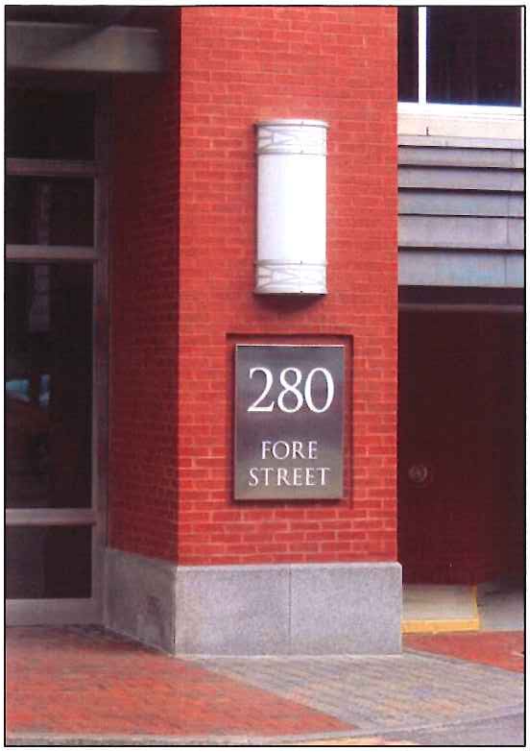
This sign, which features subtle halo backlighting, reinforces the clean, contemporary design of the building itself.

When residential buildings are converted to business use, sign solutions need to be carefully considered. In this instance, the size and placement of the sign is at odds with the residential character of the structure.

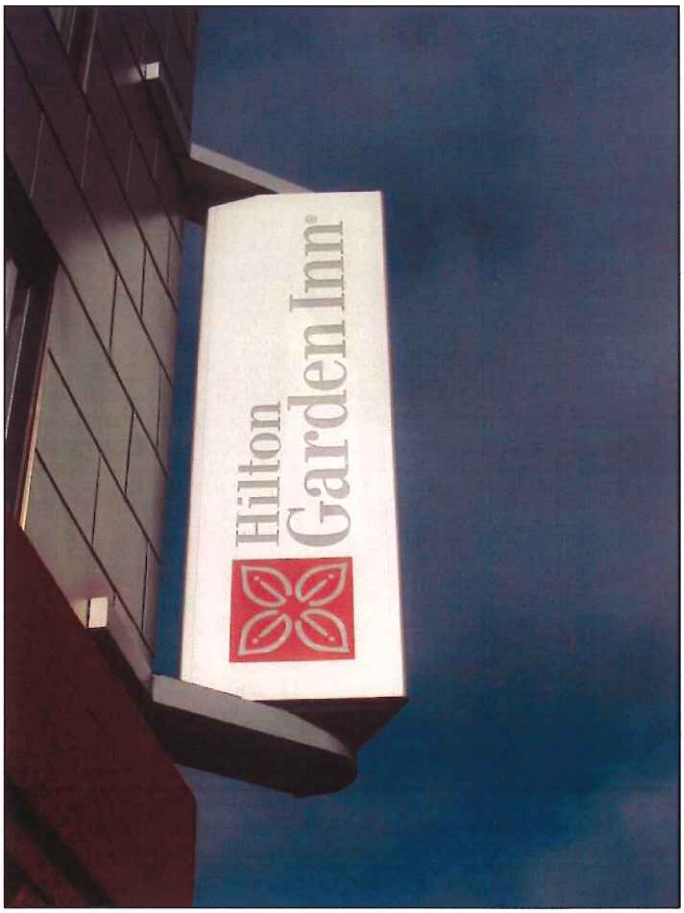


This small scale business sign, with its traditional shape and graphic style, is especially appropriate for its historic residential context.

Here, the combination of exposed conduit and multiple floodlight bulbs detracts from both the sign itself and the building In all cases, electrical conduit, transformers, raceways and wires must be concealed within or behind the sign or be hidden so as to be unobtrusive.



Laser-cut stainless steel and white Lucite are used here to create an illuminated sign that matches the quality and style of the modern building it identifies. Note the subtle inset panel in the brick pier which frames the sign.



This sign illustrates how a departure from a standard corporate sign solution can effectively relate the signage to the unique character and materials of a particular building. Such an approach can help to avoid the "Anywhere, America" homogenization that standard corporate sign solutions create.

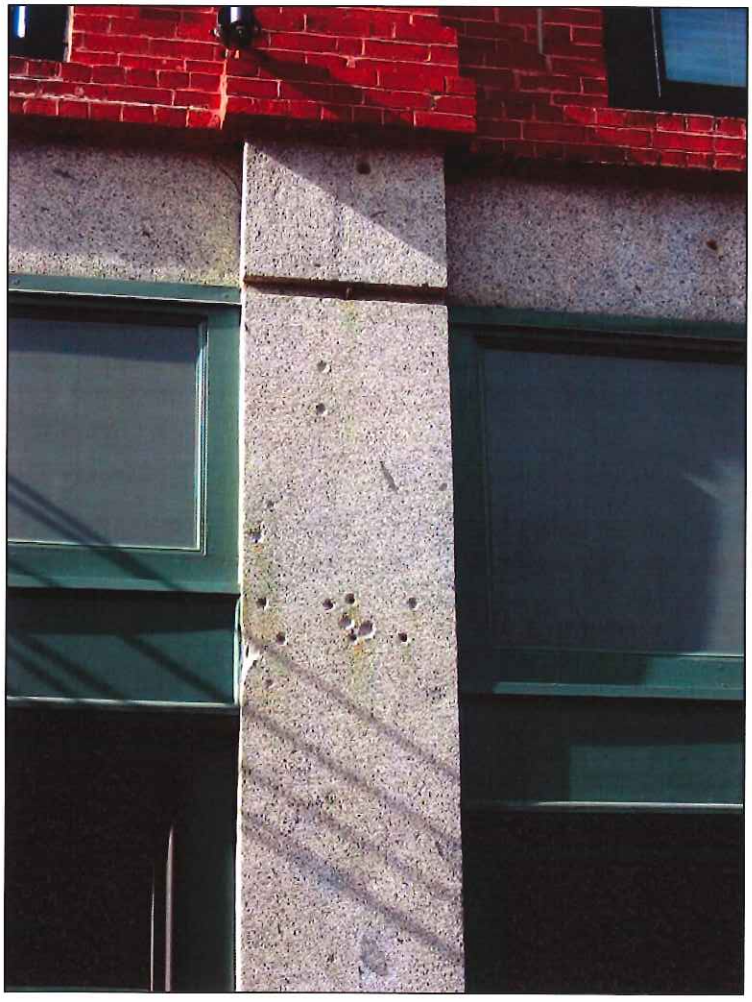
Subtle internal halo illumination, instead of a standard internally illuminated sign box with a glowing sign face, helps relate this sign to its historic district context.

Signage should advertise the name of the business, not brand name products sold within. By avoiding generic sign solutions, the unique nature of Portland's commercial districts is preserved.

Covering windows with numerous unrelated items not only obscures visibility into the store itself, but creates a cluttered, unprofessional image for the business. For this reason, sign standards limit coverage to no more than 50% of a window.

Promotional banners, while acceptable if used occasionally, should not be used as an ongoing form of advertising and should be removed within 30 days.

Installed without approval (and subsequently removed,) this signage overwhelmed the architectural features of this dignified building.



This photo illustrates what happens over time when signs brackets are mounted directly into architectural masonry. Not only does the appearance of the building suffer, but permanent damage is done to the masonry as well. Whenever possible, existing brackets or holes should be reused. Alternatively, brackets should be mounted into the mortar joints, not the masonry itself.