

Criteria & Standards for Administrative Approval of Signs within the Historic Districts

Adopted 12/14/09; Amended x/xx/xx

If permitted under the Zoning Ordinance or City Code, signs may be approved administratively pursuant to sections 10-113 and 10-203 of the Zoning Ordinance. Please note that terms not defined here are set out in the Zoning Ordinance or City Code. For more information on BAR guidelines for signs, refer to the [Design Guidelines chapter \(hyperlink to be added\)](#).

SECTION I: CRITERIA FOR GENERAL SIGN TYPES

1. Permitted Total Number of Signs

- On a corner building (having frontage on two streets or a street and a public alley), a total of three wall or projecting signs may be approved, plus one changeable copy sign.
- On a non-corner building, a total of two wall or projecting signs may be approved, plus one changeable copy sign.
- Wall signs, projecting signs, and changeable copy signs are all included in the total number of signs permitted for administrative approval. Window signs are not included in this calculation.

2. Permitted Sign Types

The following sign types qualify for administrative approval. Any sign type not listed here must be reviewed by the Board, including but not limited to awning/canopy signs and freestanding/monument signs.

Wall Sign

A wall sign is a sign attached to a wall or painted on or against a flat vertical surface of a structure. The following signs are considered wall signs:

- A **flat** sign on a backing affixed to a wall;
- An **individual letter, pin-mounted** sign installed on a sign band or backing rather than anchored directly onto a wall;
- A **painted** wall sign painted on a frieze board or on an already painted building wall.

Projecting Sign

A projecting sign, also known as a blade sign or a hanging sign, has two sides and projects from a wall or from the corner of a corner building. The maximum area of a projecting sign is 7 square feet and only one side of the sign is counted toward the total sign area. The bottom of the sign must be a minimum of 8 feet above a public sidewalk and 14.5 feet above an alley used by vehicles. The sign and its bracket cannot extend more than 4 feet from the building wall, more than 4 feet into the public right-of-way, or within 1 foot of the curb line (City Code Sec. 5-2-29).

Where feasible, new hanging signs should be hung from existing sign brackets previously approved by the BAR or administratively under this process.

Changeable Copy Sign

A changeable copy sign is a non-electronic sign that is designed so that characters, letters or illustrations can be changed or rearranged without altering the face or surface of the sign. Common examples of changeable copy signs include restaurant menu boxes and directory signs for multi-tenant commercial buildings. The following guidelines apply to changeable copy signs:

- One changeable copy sign, not to exceed 4 square feet in area, may be installed on a building;
- It should be located where it does not encroach into the public right-of-way, damage the building, or hide architectural features;
- It must be constructed of a durable material (such as wood or metal), in a single color, and may be no more than 4 inches deep;
- No part of the sign may be back-lit or internally illuminated. The sign case may have subtle external illumination, such as a concealed LED rope or targeted mini spotlight;
- The sign copy must be changed manually.

Window Sign

A window sign is any sign visible from outside a building and visible through any window or door and attached to or within four feet in front of or behind the surface of a window. Window signage may not exceed 20% of the glazing area of the window where it is installed.

2. Permitted Total Sign Area

All signs on a building, including window signs but excluding temporary signs, count toward the total sign area allowed for administrative approval for each frontage. The total area of all signs displayed on a building wall may not exceed 0.75 square feet for each foot of building width.

3. Sign Lighting

Targeted external illumination, such as mini spotlights and gooseneck lighting, which illuminates only the proposed sign and does not damage the building in installation, may be approved administratively. Internal illumination (e.g. halo lighting) and back-lit illumination must be reviewed by the Board.

SECTION II: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION

- Before a sign can be administratively approved, BAR staff will conduct research and/or visit the site to evaluate the subject property and its context to determine if the proposed signage is appropriate. Signs should be designed in styles and materials that are appropriate and sympathetic to the age and architectural style of the building.

- On multi-story buildings, there are separate area regulations for all signs located 20 feet or less above grade and for all signs located more than 20 feet above grade.
- Applicants must obtain a separate sign permit (and/or a building permit) through Code Administration.
- A sign which meets the requirements of a comprehensive sign plan which has already been approved by the Board for a multi-tenant commercial building can be administratively approved by staff, regardless of whether the sign otherwise meets these requirements for administrative approval.
- Signs should be attached in a manner that causes the least damage to the building material. On masonry buildings, anchors and brackets should be installed into the mortar joints to avoid damage to the brick or stone. Upon removal of the signage and hardware, any damage caused by the sign should be repaired.

All other sign types not specifically addressed in this policy must be reviewed and approved by the BAR. Regardless of whether the sign appears to meet the above criteria, staff may determine that the sign(s) must be approved by the BAR at a public hearing.