

Guidelines for Review of Signs in Historic Districts.

Objectives

These guidelines were developed to assist the private and public sector with the design and review of signage proposed to be installed within Rapid City's Historic Districts. These guidelines and recommendations were created to ensure that signage enhances the form, scale, and visual character through consideration of such factors as size, position, projection, color, message, texture, materials, illumination, and lettering style. The design guidelines have been created to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To ensure that all signs installed on historic property are compatible with the character of Rapid City's historic past.
- 2) To encourage signs which, by their appropriate design, are integrated with and harmonious to the building and sites which they occupy.
- 3) To preserve and improve the appearance of the City, and its historic neighborhoods, as a community in which to live, work, and recreate.
- 4) To allow each individual business to clearly identify itself, and the goods and services which it offers, in a clear and distinctive manner.
- 5) To promote signs as pedestrian oriented, rather than automotive, which is generally consistent with historic character.
- 6) To ensure that the installation of a sign does not damage the historic fabric, nor detract from the historic character of a historic district.

Guidelines

- I. For signs proposed to be installed on structures located within the environs of historic property:
 - a. If the proposed sign meets all requirements of the sign code and does not contain an electronic or LED message center or fluorescent/day glow colors the sign does not require review by the Historic Sign Review Committee.
 - b. Any other sign shall be reviewed by the Historic Sign Review Committee.
- II. For signs proposed to be installed in a Historic District the following Guidelines shall be observed.
 - a. **Objective I, Size: A sign should be designed to be in proportion and scale with the building.** A sign should be in scale with the façade of the building. A sign must meet the sizing requirements of the Sign Code.
 - b. **Objective II, Position: Position a sign so that it does not obscure or conflict with architectural features of the building.** A wall sign should be placed so that it is framed by the architectural details of the building. A wall sign should be placed to reflect the fenestration pattern of the building. Placing or dimensioning a wall sign so that it spans the pilasters or detailing of a building should be avoided. A projecting sign should be positioned where it will not damage or visually intrude upon architectural details.

- c. **Objective III, Projection: The projection of a wall sign should be minimized to the depth of the sign panel or letters.** A wall sign should be relatively flush with the building façade. A wall sign should be designed to sit within rather than forward of the fascia or other architectural details of the building.
- d. **Objective IV, Color:** Sign colors should complement the colors of the building. The number of colors used on a sign should be limited, In general, no more than three (3) colors should be used, although accent colors may also be appropriate. Color should be used to both accentuate the sign design and message, and also to integrate the sign or lettering with the building and its context. Neon colors should be avoided.
- e. **Objective V, Message: Change to legibility. How much copy is there and how easy is it to read? Trying to avoid offensive, non-welcoming messages.**
- f. **Objective VI, Texture: Related to materials?**
- g. **Objective VII, Materials:** Sign Materials should be compatible with those of the historic building. Materials compatible with the **district's** period and style, used in contemporary designs can form effective new signs. Painted wood and metal are appropriate materials for signs. Their use is encouraged. Highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read may not be appropriate. The introduction of new plastic cabinet boxes are not appropriate. MDO board? Vinyl?
Signs painted directly onto the brick façade of a building are not recommended because it deteriorates the brick. Painted signs on facades of buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places shall not be allowed.
- h. **BRACKETS.** New signs should utilize existing mounting apparatus whenever possible. If new bolt holes or brackets are necessary for sign installation, care should be taken to ensure that installation does not damage the historic building materials in any way. Bolting through mortar joints avoids damage to historic stone or brick. Where ever possible, avoid drilling new holes or creating new fixing positions on historic facades by using existing holes and fixing positions.
- i. **Objective VIII, Illumination:**
- j. **Objective IX, Lettering:** Lettering style for the historic era for which the building or structure was constructed. Letter styles and sizes should be selected that will be compatible with the building front (examples by era of building?)
- k. **Preservation of existing historic signs: Need an inventory (permitting the maintenance and preservation of non-conforming signs)**
 - i. Neon signs
 - ii. Ghost signs
 - iii. Midcentury façade signs?
 - iv. Creamery
 - v. Motor Service
 - vi. Garage

Signs which meet all of the recommended criteria may be reviewed and approved administratively by City Staff.

Definitions:

Moldings

Transoms

Historic Property types

Pilasters

Draft - For Discussion