

3. Guidelines for Signs

2021-12-30

Note: Provisions highlighted in yellow indicate a subject for discussion .

Specific questions in blue text.

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Issues to discuss We've gone back and forth on a few issues. The following summary is review some of the discussions and consider sign location, illumination number of signs and application requirements across the full spectrum of sign types.

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Location:

- No sign can cover up an architectural feature such as a window, pilaster, trim, cornice, or decorative element.
- Permanent building signs – on the primary face of the building and associated with the main pedestrian entrance
- Blade signs: Above the ground floor and below the third floor only
- Sign Bands - located on a horizontal strip on the front building façade, below the second floor only.
- Window signs located within the window area. One sign per business or organization is allowed Signs for individual upper story businesses allowed on one upper story window.
- Upper story signs -*We propose to delete this type of sign but indicate what types and under what conditions signs in upper story signs are allowed.*
- Directories -Ground floor only and near the main building entrance or entrance to the business.
- Wall signs and murals: Only allowed where the primary purpose is for pedestrian way-finding for a business that provides service to walk-in customers (such as a bank, retail shop, salon, or restaurant) and generally only on first or second floor facades. A wall sign must relate to or direct pedestrians to the business entrance. Wall signs may be permitted on ground or second floors of building facades adjacent to and facing an alley. The board may allow wall signs in other locations where necessary for pedestrian orientation. Murals are allowed if they meet the requirements for wall signs.
- Awing and canopy signs: Only on vertical surfaces. Signs maybe located on the “return” of awnings and canopies (perpendicular to the building face) if there is no blade sign for that business or occupant.
- Sandwich board signs. As permitted by SDOT standards.

Commented [NG1]: Also includes window signs and a boards, wall signs, upper floor signs etc.

Commented [NG2R1]: Resolved by changing this to sign bands instead of Business signs.

Commented [JO3]: What about blank party walls on a property line?

Commented [NG4]: Murals meaning art work that has not advertisement should be in a different section. Murals that are not signs are allowed, they don't have to be a sign.

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Illumination

- Internally lit signs, except for neon are not allowed
- Permanent building signs – No illumination is allowed
- Blade signs – External illumination and neon (or similar tube lighting) only. (Maybe internally lit letters??)
- Sign Bands -External illumination only.
- Window signs located within the window area. Neon or similar tube lighting only.
- Directories -External illumination only.
- Wall signs: External illumination only.
- Awing and canopy signs: No illumination .
- Sandwich board signs. No illumination.

Commented [JO5]: Let's discuss

Commented [NG6]: Also includes window signs and a boards, wall signs, upper floor signs etc.

Commented [JO7]: We've discussed halo lights and cut out letters with illumination.

Application requirements

Sign Package

A "sign package" application is required for.

- All new buildings.
- Where more than one sign is proposed.
- Where the Board deems it necessary to make a clear judgment regarding an application for a new or modified sign.

The purpose of a sign package is to allow the Board to visualize and consider the composition and extent of proposed signs and the signs' relationship to the building and the building's surroundings.

A "sign package" application shall include:

- Drawings or photo illustrations of all building elevations where existing or new signs are proposed with all sign locations, types, sizes, materials, colors, illumination and other characteristics covered in these guidelines indicated in word and visual descriptions.
- Material and color samples, if requested by the Board.
- Mounting methods and details.
- Illumination, including neon and tube lighting.
- Other characteristics as determined by the board
- If the businesses and tenants of the building are not known at the time of application, it is not necessary to indicate the specific messages pertaining to future occupants. However,

when signs for businesses or tenants are installed, they must adhere to the provisions of the approved sign package

Application for a new or modified sign.

~~If the~~An application is for a single new sign on an existing building where all the existing signs are in conformance with these guidelines, does not necessarily require a sign package ~~is not required~~ unless the Board finds that there are unusual circumstances where more information is necessary to make a determination.

~~In this case, the~~An application for a new or modified sign must include photos of the building facades where there is existing or proposed signs and a description of the proposed sign, indicating its size, materials, location, illumination, mounting and general characteristics.

The Board may request additional information if it finds it necessary to make a determination.

Number of signs.

There shall be a limit of one projecting element, e.g., a blade sign, banner, or awning per address. If a business chooses a sign on the surface of an awnings or canopy that is perpendicular to the building façade, it may not also have a blade sign, flag, or banner. No additional signage may be hung below awnings. (6/03) Exceptions may be made for businesses on corners, in which case one projecting element per facade may be permitted. (12/94.

Signs on new buildings

The draft contains several guidelines that direct sign design, illumination and materials to be restricted to those available before 1940 (essentially WWII – The assumption is that new materials and imagery changed dramatically after the war.) But is this appropriate for new buildings that can use new materials and techniques in subtle ways – although they can be quite over-powering as well. How do you feel about signs on contemporary buildings??

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Proposed Draft Guidelines 2021-01-01

a. General Information

Maybe a photo of a good, historic sign

The Pioneer Square Preservation Ordinance reflects a policy to focus on structures, individually and collectively, so that they can be seen and appreciated. Sign proliferation or inconsistent paint colors, for example, are incompatible with this focus, and are expressly to be avoided. (8/93)

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At the same time, signs are an important part of the District's character and can enhance or diminish an existing building's historical authenticity and a new building's visual compatibility with its surroundings. Many of the district's signs are one-of-a-kind, custom fabricated and/or artworks. One traditional characteristic of many of the District's signs are that they fit with the building's architectural elements in terms of location and orientation to surrounding architectural elements, imagery and type styles, and materials.

The Pioneer Square Preservation Ordinance reflects a policy to focus on structures, individually and collectively, so that they can be seen and appreciated. Sign proliferation or inconsistent paint colors, for example, are incompatible with this focus, and are expressly to be avoided. (8/93)

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All signs on or hanging from buildings, in windows, or applied to windows, are subject to review and approval by the Pioneer Square Preservation Board. (8/93) Locations for signs shall be in accordance with all other regulations for signage. (12/94)

The intent of sign regulations is to ensure that signs relate physically and visually to their location; that signs not hide, damage, or obscure the architectural elements of the building; that signs be oriented toward and promote a pedestrian environment; and that the products or services offered be the focus of business-related signs.

Signs are addressed in the following categories:

- Permanent building signs - that are often part of the building façade, such as a sign on a cornice in the same materials of the cornice itself.
- Blade signs – the eat extend perpendicularly from the building facade
- Sign Bands - which are located on a horizontal strip on the front building façade, generally immediately above the ground floor. Business signs – which identify an individual business, are usually located on or above the ground floor. These include blade signs and sign bands.
- Window signs located within the window area.
- ~~Upper story signs, which are not allowed except as described below.~~
- Directories - pedestrian scaled plaques or kiosks that list the businesses or occupants located within the building.
- Wall signs

Commented [NG9]: Example?

Commented [NG10]: Also includes window signs and a boards, wall signs, upper floor signs etc.

- Signs on awnings and canopies
- Sandwich board signs
- Other miscellaneous signs and banners, usually of a temporary nature,

Neon light elements are discussed as parts of the sign types identified above.

Note that we may want to put application requirements here

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a. General sign guidelines

Rationale, Context, and Intent

The intent of the guidelines below is to establish standards that pertain to all signs and signage in general.

Guidelines

- i. The number, location and type of signs must be considered as a composition. That is, the design character of the signs should not clash with one another; the signs must not overlap, compete with, or duplicate one another, and each sign should be directed to a unique purpose or viewpoint. The Board may require that the applicant submit a sign package for approval that illustrates all the signs proposed for the buildings or business's façade.
- ii. Number of signs. There shall be a limit of one projecting element, e.g., a blade sign, banner, or awning or canopy sign perpendicular to the building face per address. If a business chooses and awnings or canopy sign that is perpendicular to the building face for its projecting element, it may not also have a blade sign, flag, or banner, and no additional signage may be hung below awnings. (6/03) Exceptions may be made for businesses on corners, in which case one projecting element per facade may be permitted. (12/94). This provision is to avoid sign duplication and visual clutter.
- iii. In order to retain the historic and architectural character of the District, there shall no new flashing, scrolling, or moving signs in the District. Nor shall there be electronic signs using a technology that was not available before 1940 during the District's era of significance. Exception. LED and other energy saving luminaires are acceptable if they do not provide a quality of lighting (such as bright, highly focused spotlighting) that was not available during the District's era of significance before 1940.
- iv. New signs shall not cover over architectural features of Contributing or Historic buildings. They may be incorporated into a building's façade where there is a façade element, such as a sign band, that is fashioned to accomplish that purpose.
- v. Neon and similar lighting are permitted only as signage and shall not be used as decorative building trim. (8/93). The use of Neon for artwork and logos are permitted encouraged as part of window or blade signs if the Board finds that they such elements are appropriate for the context.

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Commented [JO11]: Another option might be to limit the number of signs but then you might get everyone trying to maximize the number of signs. Still another option might be to set a low number of signs but allow an additional sign or two if the applicant demonstrates an identifiable need.

Commented [JO12]: See propose provisions above.

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Commented [NG13]: I am not sure about using the term era of significance. This seems to allude to the National Register period of significance, but the local district considers history before and after that significance. But I agree with the point.

¶vi. [Signs must not extend above the top of a building or interrupt the skyline. .](#)

b. Permanent Building signs

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Permanent building signs [— which](#) are those that identify the name of the building and are integrally part of the building's façade. Generally, they are constructed of durable materials and are built into the building [façade itself](#).



Figure __. A building sign

Guidelines

- i. General. Existing building signs on Contributing and Historic Buildings shall not be altered or removed.
- ii. Location. New permanent building signs shall be integrated into the building façade (generally, but not always, near the roof line or just above the ground floor or mezzanine level). [Building signs must and](#) not extend above the building façade's top or parapet. The name of a building may also be displayed on the sign band (see section "d" below) or on a plaque or "medallion" less than 2 square feet un area. [Building signs must be on the façade of the main building entry and located so that it does not compete with the location for storefront signage.](#)



Figure __. A building plaque of "medallion" shown here may also be used to indicate a buildings name.

Commented [NG14]: Should this also specify that it should be at the entry to the upper floors so as not to compete with the location for signage for the storefronts. Also this seems to preclude the sign from being at ground level at the entry like where is think the Merrill Place medallion is. Also the downtown code limits heights of signs to not above 60 feet high do we more signs at the tops of building than downtown? Should this specify that the building name sign should be on the front of the building or on a side that has an entrance to the building apart from storefronts.

iii. Dimensions. The dimensions of new building signs shall be as approved by the Board and shall be no larger than 60 SF as measured by a rectangle encompassing the sign. The Board may allow a departure from this area limit for an unusual circumstance where there is a compelling reason.

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iv. Illumination. New building signs shall not be internally illuminated or include neon lighting.

v. Lettering. Lettering shall be as approved by the Board and be no more 20" in height if the sign is located along the building cornice and is greater than 35' above grade. Otherwise, the lettering shall be no more than 10" in height unless there is a demonstrated need to view the sign from greater than 100' away.

Commented [JO15]: This number seems small to me but is based on a sign being viewed 150 feet away. At that distance 15" letters are readable. If the sign is 2 feet tall, then there is room for 15-18" letters. The horizontal distance might be tied to a typical 30' wide residential or office bay. Another way to look at this size is that it is about 2-4x8' pieces of plywood.

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vi. Color and Materials. The sign shall be constructed of the materials of the façade on which it is located. (e.g.: building signs on a masonry building should be constructed of a material that is similar in nature to masonry, such as cast or carved stone). Sign colors shall be the same as the façade materials and as approved by the board. All materials shall be permanent and easily maintainable maintenance.

Commented [NG16]: Example of a demonstrated need?

Commented [JO17]: As a general rule, lettering height of 1" for every 10' of viewing distance is easily visible.

vii. Other. Permanent building signs may not advertise a specific business, although they may indicate a public institution such as a post office or governmental offices.

Commented [NG18]: Many existing building names are also names of business past and present.

c. Blade Signs

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Blade signs are signs that project out perpendicularly from a building façade and are supported by or hung from horizontal brackets. Usually, they identify a business, organization, or activity. They are often prominent features on Contributing and Historic buildings. Blade signs installed above the first floor or mezzanine level are also upper story signs and must comply with provisions for blade and upper story signs.

Signs made of fabric or flexible material and hung perpendicularly from the building as in a rigid blade sign are also considered blade signs.

Commented [NG19]: We have made an exception for a larger blade sign when the building is a majority of one business and there are no other blades signs.



Figure ____ . A traditional blade sign with neon.



Figure > A contemporary blade sign with neon

Guidelines

- i. General.
- ii. Location. Blade signs shall be installed below the top of the second floor of the building, and in such a manner that they do not hide, damage, or obscure the architectural elements of the building.
- iii. Dimensions. non-illuminated blade signs are limited to eight (8) square feet. (12/94)
- iv. Illumination. Blade signs incorporating neon or similar tube oriented lighting of any kind shall not be permitted unless all the following conditions are met:
 - The neon blade sign is sought as part of a reduced overall sign package or plan for the business.
 - Neon blade signs shall be limited to six (6) square feet in dimension with letters not to exceed eight (8) inches in height.
 - Electrical connection from exterior walls to the blade sign shall be made using rigid, paintable electrical tubing painted to match the building facade and all bends shall closely follow the support structure.
 - The wiring and connections shall be internal to the sign and not be visible
 - All neon elements shall be supported by a rigid, opaque backing and framework. (See Figure ___ of a contemporary blade sign for a positive example.):
 - LED lights may be approved provided they produce the same visual character of lights common in the District's period of significance before 1940.
- vii. Lettering. Letter size in blade signs shall be consistent with the scale of the architectural elements of the building (as per SMC 23.66.160) but shall not exceed a maximum height of 10 inches unless an exception has been approved by the Board. Logos and other graphic devices may be larger. Exceptions to the 10-inch height limitation will be considered for individual letters in the business name (subject to a limit of no more than three letters) only if the board finds that the sign fit within the building's architectural details both of the following conditions are satisfied:
 - The exception is sought as part of a reduced overall sign package or plan for the business; and

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Commented [NG21]: Being neon is a traditional sign method of lighting I recommend that we should discuss removing the "not permitted" part and just list the conditions.

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Commented [NG22]: We need to discuss if we to define what the max number is to know what is reduced. Or if they apply for 5 and limit is to 4 and if they apply for 3 and limit to 2 are those both reduced?

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Commented [JO23]: Current language is 6 SF but that may be a bit restrictive.

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Commented [NG24]: Maybe this should say when used in tube lighting like neon.

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v. The size of the letters for which an exception is requested is consistent with the scale and character of the building, the frontage of the business, the transparency requirements of the regulations, and all other conditions under SMC 23.66.160. An overall sign package or plan will be considered reduced for purposes of the exception if it calls for approval of signage that is substantially less than what would otherwise be allowable under the regulations. (12/94)

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vi. Color and Materials. Blade signs on Contributing and Historic buildings shall be made of materials that were available before 1940 during the era of significance such as wood, glass, and metal. Painted opaque, panel materials such as rigid polymer panels may also be acceptable if the finishes visually resemble the materials noted above and are approved by the Board.

Commented [JO25]: Check to see if this applies to blade signs

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vii. Signs made of fabric or flexible material and hung perpendicularly from the building are permitted provided that the material is durable, and the colors are not subject to rapid fading. Such signs must be supported top and bottom with a rigid mounting.

Commented [JO26]: Current guidelines say: For contributing and historic buildings, wood or wood products are the preferred materials for rigid hanging and projecting (blade) signs and individual signage letters applied to building facades. However, this seems a bit anachronistic since there are metal blade signs in the district.

viii. All signage supports shall be fastened to the exterior wall using metal anchors at existing grout joints only; and g) the sign taken as a whole is consistent with the scale and character of the building, the transparency requirements of the regulations, and all other conditions under SMC 23.66.160. An overall sign package or plan will be considered reduced for purposes of the exception if it calls for approval of signage that is substantially less than what would otherwise be allowable under regulations. (5/96)

Commented [JO27]: Note that I put fabric signs in this category because banners and flags seem to be temporary and moved every day.

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Figure _____. An example of an appropriate blade sign made of fabric.

d. Sign Bands

Rationale, Context, and Intent

A sign band is an area located on some buildings in the zone above storefront windows and below second floor windows designed to display signage. (7/99) The intent of this provision is to allow attractive signs consistent with the character and architectural features of the building; and also to provide inviting announcement of the business or activity.



Figure____. Two sign bands, note the locations, subdued colors, and variation in size.

Guidelines

- i. General. Sign bands are permitted where there is a horizontal area between the first and second floors to accommodate a sign band. Such an area is sometimes called a first-floor cornice or lintel. Sign bands may also be located within a storefront as shown in Figure directly above. New sign bands must not cover or obscure existing architectural features
- ii. Location. Above the ground floor storefront and below the second floor windows only.
- iii. Dimensions. maximum height of the sign band shall be 24 inches high unless otherwise approved by the Board.
- iv. Illumination. Exterior illumination is permitted. Internally lit sign bands are not permitted. Exception: On new buildings constructed since 2020, back lit, glowing letters on an opaque panel may be permitted subject to approval by the Board.
- v. Lettering. Maximum height is 18 inches unless otherwise approved by the board.
- vi. Color and Materials. Materials must be durable. Materials for Contributing and Historic buildings shall be made of materials that were available during the era of significance period in which the building was constructed, such as wood, glass, and metal. Painted opaque, panel materials such as rigid polymer panels may also be acceptable visually similar to the traditional materials an if approved by the Board.

e. Window Signs

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Commented [JO28]: Check dimensions in the field.

Commented [NG29]: This needs to be clarified that it is if the applicants are adding a flat surface for a sign band when one doesn't exist. There needs to be more specification about staying with in the existing architectural features of the building.

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Commented [JO30]: Option for board consideration.

Commented [NG31R30]: It could be hard to defend allowing on one building and not another. We argued in that a new building has to relate to the character of the district and that having a sign that doesn't relate to the character of the district pushes it toward incompatible.

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Commented [NG32]: This is larger than the 12 inches we have now, but could be okay. But need to add that the letters need to fit with existing or added sign band. But we have seen a couple example where the sign was done on a curve dipping above and below the band and still looked nice because it looked intentional. We have had others that were proposed that were just a little too large for the space, looked odd like it didn't belong

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Rationale, Context, and Intent

Window signs are semi-permanent signs affixed directly to a window. The intent of window sign guidelines is to provide for pedestrian oriented signage without modifying the architecture of a building and allowing visibility into the commercial space.

Guidelines

- i. General. Window signs subject to Board approval and must comply with transparency requirements ~~in 1.e.i.v and 2.e.i.a).~~

- ii. Location. Window signs must not be located above the ground floor. ~~floor.~~

Exception: One sign per business or organization is allowed on an upper story window. The purpose of this provision is to facilitate wayfinding. An upper story window sign must be on the same building façade as the pedestrian entrance to the business. If allowed under these provisions, an upper story window sign may include neon, in limited circumstances where necessary for wayfinding (See Section g. below) .

Except for neon signs advertising products served in the business, only one window sign is permitted per a business's façade. Buildings on street corners may have two window signs: one for each side of the building. Additional window signs on alleys may be permitted.

- iii. Dimensions. Signs mounted in windows must allow people see what the business offers inside as well as maintain a visual connection from the inside to the outside and be compliant with the Transparency Guidelines. In no case ~~shall~~**ould** any window be covered more than 25% with signage. **Films and other materials that reduce visibility into the business interior are not allowed**
ALTERNATE In no case should any window sign cover more than 4 square feet in area, as measured by the sign's surface coverage, excluding any transparent area within the sign's design.

Commented [JO33]: Maybe allow window signs on the second floor??

Commented [NG34R33]: I would suggest we look for some examples of sign in upper floor windows to consider. I would support window signage over exterior signage on floors above the ground floor.

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Commented [NG35]: We should look at if two would look better when the storefront is symmetrical. Also look at the businesses that have a band at the bottom of each window. This would eliminate that so we should talk about if that is successful in appearance or not.

Commented [JO36]: Note exception for beer signs.

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Figure____. A typical window sign (does this meet the guidelines??)

Commented [NG37]: We should not use this photo until this sign gets approved.

iv. Neon lighting elements in windows may be approved subject to the following:

- The wiring and connections shall be internal to the sign and not be visible.
- The number of neon signs shall be limited to one for each 10 linear feet of business frontage for the first forty feet of business, and one for each additional 15 feet of frontage for businesses over forty feet. For a business that has transom windows beginning at ten (10) feet above the sidewalk, one additional neon sign may be allowed for every 30 feet of frontage if located within the transom windows. Neon signs need not be spaced one per ten feet, but may be clustered, provided the maximum number of approved signs is not exceeded and the grouping does not obscure visibility into the business. Permitted neon signs may be located in transom windows, according to the guidelines contained in this section. (12/94)

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When a business is on a corner and has at least 10 linear feet (measured horizontally) of glazing on the secondary facade, additional neon signs are permitted for the secondary facade as on the basis stated in the above paragraph for the primary facade. (12/94.

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Commented [JO38]: This is what the current rules say. We may want to think about if it still applies. What has been the history of applications and Board decisions

Commented [NG39R38]: This rule was likely written to reduce the number of beer signs that bars were getting for free from suppliers however after this the liquor licensing specified they could only have 4 liquor advertising signs. This working has lead to a lot of signs being allowed. See the bonds business in the Frye building. I think we should rethink this.

v. Lettering. Lettering shall be no higher than 10 inches, although artwork and non-corporate (locally owned) logos may be larger.

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Commented [JO40]: Need to check

vi. Color and Materials. Window signs must not be susceptible to fading or deterioration. Paint and gold leaf are generally acceptable, as are vinyl film and other durable synthetic products, subject to iii above and vii below. .

- vii. Businesses, tenants, and building owners must comply with the requirements above. However, if a storefront is vacant and/or the interior of the space is under construction, temporary window coverings may be approved by the Board. In such cases window signs, films or other coverings must be removed upon occupancy.

Do we want to put in the provisions that Genna highlighted at right

Commented [NG41]: Maybe we want to encourage non-commercial art work for these purposes. Also any signage as part of the covering would likely fall under the SMC23.66.160 D. Temporary Signs.

1. The following signs are permitted at all times:

a. Real estate "for sale," "for rent" and "open house" signs, and signs identifying the architect, engineer or contractor for work currently under construction. The total area for these types of signs in the aggregate shall not exceed twenty-four (24) square feet per sixty (60) linear feet of street frontage, provided that the design, location, shape, size, color and graphics are approved by the Department of Neighborhoods Director after review and recommendation by the Preservation Board, and provided further that the Director may approve up to thirty-six (36) square feet if there is more than one user of real estate signs or if the building abuts more than two (2) streets; and

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f. Banners and Flags

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Banners and flags are semi-permanent signs that are generally constructed of flexible materials. They are located and attached on buildings to be easily **removable, daily**. Signs constructed of flexible materials such as fabric that are mounted permanently on a building are blade signs covered in Section c.

The intent of guidelines for banners and flags is to allow signs and displays that do not detract from a building's architectural quality but do promote businesses, events, and sports teams while adding to the streetscape's visual interest.

The US and Washington State flags are not subject to these guidelines if they are properly and respectfully displayed. However the Board will still review the installation of a flag holder or other attachment.

Guidelines

- i. General **flags and banners must be removed from the building face at the close of business daily**. Flags and banners shall not have any text on them, and the size of the flag or banner must be consistent with the character and scale of the building, the frontage of the business, and the scale of surrounding buildings. Banners (either temporary or permanent) that are draped across buildings are prohibited.
- ii. **Location: Banners and flags shall not be mounted above the first floor.**
- iii. Dimensions: Banners and flags shall not exceed 6 feet in the longest dimension and shall not be larger in area than 18 square feet.
- iv. Illumination. Banners and flags shall not be illuminated except for US and Washington State Flags.
- v. Lettering: Lettering is not **allowed** unless part of a logo or symbol.
- vi. Color and Materials: Banners and flags must consist of durable, flexible material and securely mounted to avoid creating a hazard.
- vii. Other

g. Upper Story Signs and Building and Tenant Directories

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Signs on upper stories to advertise upper story businesses have the potential to cause visual clutter and detract from a building's architecture. Upper story signs are located above the first floor and do not include permanent building signs, which are considered under Section b. Where upper story businesses and other activities require signage it is preferable to provide signage at ground level, if possible. If there are multiple businesses requiring pedestrian oriented signage, provide a directory that can

Commented [JO42]: ?

Commented [NG43R42]: I don't think that anyone actually removes them at the end of the day

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Commented [NG44]: However we would still review the installation of any flag holder

Commented [JO45]: Do we really want this? I wonder if it is more appropriate if the banners are removed from the public realm.

Commented [JO46]: What about flags (e.g.: 12th man flags) mounted above building cornices?

Commented [NG47R46]: We should discuss this. I am under the impression that this was written because there was an issue with businesses putting up "going out of business sale" signs when they really were not and otherwise competing with each other with large signs.

Commented [NG48R46]: I also think that this is to encourage permanent signs. And to have temporary signs in the windows.

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Commented [JO49]: This should be discussed.

Commented [JO50]: Let's discuss

Commented [NG51]: WE may need to define upper story signs. Is this anything above the first floor or is this at or toward the top of the building.

indicates the location and type of services provided by businesses and activities that do not have at grade street front exposure.

~~There are some limited circumstances where upper level signage may be necessary to provide wayfinding to businesses, government facilities and services for people who may not be familiar with the District. In those cases, the Board may consider upper level signs in accordance with the guidelines below.~~



Example of a directory

Guidelines

- ~~i. General: Signage located on upper floors is not permitted, except for:~~
- ~~b) temporary signage as per SMC 23.66.160D or~~
- ~~c) When it is the name of the building. (7/99) (See Section b. Permanent Building Signs.)~~
- ~~d) When the applicant demonstrates to the Board's satisfaction that it is necessary to provide wayfinding for people not familiar with the District. In this case the sign must meet all the requirements below:~~
 - ~~• The sign must not cover the façade's architectural features but be located on an otherwise flat and unadorned portion of the façade or situated in a window.~~
 - ~~• Window signs must meet the provisions for window signs. Opaque or translucent window coverings are not allowed. One neon window sign per business may be allowed~~

Commented [NG52]: How do we decide when this is necessary or not?

Commented [JO53]: Trying to articulate an exception to upper level sign prohibition per Board discussion on Dec 1, 2021.

Commented [NG54]: Change to be more specific about the location of the sign.

- Signs mounted on upper story building facades may not be internally lit or include neon lighting.
- Upper story bracket (blade) signs may be allowed if it is not possible to incorporate window signs or signs directly on the building façade.
- The lettering must not be greater than 12 inches in height.
- Upper story building signs must be constructed of permanent, high quality materials that are edged and finished in a workmanlike manner.
- An upper story building sign's colors must be subdued and complement the building's façade's colors, as determined by the Board.
- Because the need for wayfinding of upper story activities is a special condition, the design, materials mounting, and construction of the proposed sign must be of highest quality, as determined by the Board.

- iii.i. Location: Directories ~~are to~~ must be located on the ground floor, roughly at eye level.
- iv.ii. Dimensions: A directory sign for an individual building tenant, business, or activity shall not be greater than 1 square foot.
- v.iii. Illumination: Directories must not be back lit. Front lighting from an external source is acceptable.
- vi.iv. Lettering. Lettering shall not be larger than 6 inches in height. Logos and other graphic devices may be larger subject to Board approval.
- vii.v. Color and Materials: Directories must be made of durable, vandal resistant materials.

Commented [JO55]: Thoughts on allowing neon?

Commented [NG56]: We have signs such as the Marriot signs both a blade sign on the building corner and signs at the top that have neon. Hotels generally want a light sign.

Commented [JO57]: Note: Tacoma allows upper story bracket signs in the Old City Hall district.

Commented [NG58R57]: We have examples of blades signs at ground floor entries for businesses on upper levels. We have made exception for this only when the entire building or at least the majority of the floors above ground level are all the same business and limited the number of signs. If we were to allow this then we would need to set parameters on how many signs, where they are located and what size they are. I think that we should look at examples of these signs while discussing.

Commented [JO59]: 12' would be visible from across the street (120'). -which, as I understand it, is the distance at which visual wayfinding must assist smart phone way finding.

Commented [NG60]: This would be important. They have advocated for business identification colors before.

Commented [NG61R60]: My other concern with this is that businesses come and go and that this will lead to more holes in buildings as businesses want different signage and different locations.

Commented [JO62]: It seems reasonable to allow a greater size. Maybe 3 SF?

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Wall Signs (and Murals)

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Wall signs are signs that are attached to a non-street facing wall or a wall without ground floor windows. Properly located, designed, and constructed wall signs can add interest to otherwise blank wall surfaces. Murals are images (generally painted) and affixed to walls but do not serve as a sign to a business. The intent of these guidelines is to permit well designed and constructed wall signs and murals in appropriate locations on existing buildings.

Guidelines

- i. General: Wall signs are only allowed on buildings constructed before January 2020. The rationale for this provision is that opportunities for signage within new buildings can be integrated into the building in a number of ways without requiring a wall sign.
- ii. No wall signs with moving images, or billboards for products are allowed. -No wall signs for products or off premise businesses are allowed.
- iii. Location: Wall signs are only allowed where the primary purpose is for pedestrian way-finding for a business that provides service to walk-in customers (such as a bank, retail shop, salon, or restaurant) and generally only on first or second floor facades. A wall sign must relate to or direct pedestrians to the business entrance. Wall signs may be permitted on ground or second floors of building facades adjacent to and facing an alley. The board may allow wall signs in other locations where necessary for pedestrian orientation. -and only on
- iv. Wall signs are only permitted where they do not cover or change re are no other architectural features such as windows, entries, storefronts, pilasters, etc. Exception: Wall signs may be permitted on ground or second floors of building facades adjacent to and facing an alley.
- v. Dimensions: Wall signs shall be sized to be compatible with the character of the district as determined by the Board. Generally, wall signs should be no larger than 40240 square feet in total area. The area of wall signs must also not exceed 10% of the facade area.
- vi. Illumination: Wall signs shall not be internally lit. Wall signs may be externally lit to a light level of 1 foot candle/square foot.
- vii. Lettering: letter sizes shall be appropriately scaled to fit the overall design and dimensions of the sign, as determined by the Board.
- viii. Color and Materials: Wall signs shall be painted on a wood, metal or permanent panel backing and attached in such a manner that the building surface is not damaged. Colors and graphics of wall signs shall be compatible with the character of the District, as determined by the Board.
- ix. WHAT DO WE SAY ABOUT PAINTED MURALS DIRECTLY ON THE BUILDING SURFACE? Murals. Murals that do not specifically relate to a business, product or service are encouraged if they conform to guidelines ii, iv, v, vi, vii, and viii; and the Board determines that the mural will be consistent with the character and quality of the District.

Commented [JO63]: ?

Commented [NG64R63]: Murals meaning artwork should not be included in the sign section as they are not a sign. A ...

Commented [JO65]: Do we want to allow these at all? ...

Commented [NG66]: What about a sign that is on the ...

Commented [JO67]: What do you think

Commented [NG68R67]: I am not sure why we would ...

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Commented [JO69]: What about blank party walls on a ...

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Commented [JO70]: Is it ok to have signs on party wall ...

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Commented [JO71]: What about blank party walls on a ...

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Commented [NG72]: Code gives maximum size of it t ...

Commented [JO73]: Note the change to 240 SF but tha ...

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Commented [JO74]: Should be discussed

Commented [JO75]: I'm guessing that this precludes ...

Commented [NG76]: This would be a sign. But ...

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vii.



Figure ____ Example of an appropriate wall sign. (This doesn't meet the requirements for wall signs – so what do we do with it?)

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III.1. Awning, Canopy and Hanging Signs

Rationale, Context, and Intent

This section addresses signs on or attached to pedestrian weather protection elements including fabric awnings, structural canopies, and similar devices. The intent is to permit well designed and constructed signs on these elements that are consistent with a building's architecture, other signs on the building and the District's character.

Commented [NG77]: Being this is in the sign section and deals with signs added to canopies and awnings will we have a section in the alteration to building or new buildings that provides guidelines of the design of the awing or canopy?



Figure ____ An example of an acceptable awning sign (left) and a canopy sign (right).

Guidelines

i. General: Awning and canopy signs must name the business, organization, or activity. Logos and graphics are permitted if the Board determines that they do not detract from the character of the building or the District.

Commented [JO78]: This might be a judgement call so we may want to delete this provision. However, the impetus of these guidelines is to allow the Board to reject proposals that are way out of character.

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ii. Location: Signs on canopies or awnings must be on the vertical surface and not extend above or below the front of a canopy's or awning's vertical surface. Signs may be located on the surface of an awning or canopy perpendicular to the building's façade. (I.e.: on the "return" of the awning or canopy.), provided the business or activity does not also feature a blade sign.

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iii. Dimensions: The sign must fit within the dimensions of the canopy's or awning's vertical surface

Commented [NG79]: Current guidelines do not allow signage on the ends of canopies or awning. They also do not allow a blade sign if there is also a awning. Maybe we consider allowing signage on the ends so business can be seen by pedestrians coming down the street.

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iv. Illumination: No illumination is allowed on awnings or canopies. Backlit awnings are specifically prohibited.

Commented [JO80]: Might we allow neon or backlit lettering on permanent canopies.

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v-iv. No additional signage may be hung below awning or canopies. (6/03) Lettering Maximum 10" tall.

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v. Color, Materials and Construction: Materials must be durable and easily maintainable

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iii.

IV-II. Sandwich Board Signs and Other Signs Located in the Public Right of Way

Commented [JO81]: Need to check with SDOT re: their standards.

Commented [JO82]: This must be coordinated with SDOT

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Sandwich board or "A-Board" signs are small, self-supporting, and portable signs located on sidewalks constructed of two panels which are advertise a business and are located directly in front of that business. The intent is to allow well designed and constructed sandwich board signs that are located where they do not impede pedestrian movement.



Figure _____. An example of a sandwich board or A-board sign

Guidelines

vi. General: When multiple businesses, including upper floor businesses, share a common entrance, a single shared sandwich board sign may be allowed in lieu of multiple, individual signs. Such signs shall be limited to one per entrance to the shared location. (7/03)

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Commented [JO83]: Do we want to be this restrictive. There are a number of sandwich boards already around the District that do not meet this criteria.

Commented [NG84R83]: It has been hard to get them to share and then what happens when one business changes. However there have been problems caused by too many Aboards blocking the sidewalk or cross walk and people wanting their sign to be the one in front. But that part is out of our control if each business gets one.

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~~Businesses located on side streets in a one block area to the east and west of 1st Ave. S. may share one sandwich board sign to be placed at the corner of 1st Ave. S. and the side street on which their businesses are located. The shared corner sandwich board sign must be located next to the corner building face and must not impair pedestrian flow. Businesses located on side streets that choose to share one corner sandwich board sign may have one additional sandwich board sign located in front of their businesses. (7/03) Shared corner sandwich board signs shall display a standardized format and be consistent in design, color, and typeface.~~

Sandwich board signs shall occupy the sidewalk only during business hours and cannot be chained to trees, parking meters, etc. (12/94) They shall also comply with all other regulations for signs in Pioneer Square. (12/94)

- vii. Location: Sandwich board signs shall be located directly in front of the business frontage either next to the building face or at the street side of the sidewalk by newsstands, streetlights, or other amenities. Signs shall not impair pedestrian flow. (12/94). Sandwich board signs shall be limited to one per address.
- viii. Dimensions: Sandwich board signs shall be a minimum of two feet high and a maximum of four feet high and be a maximum of two- and one-half feet wide; (12/94)
- ix. Illumination: Sandwich board signs shall not be illuminated or otherwise electrified. They are prohibited from containing neon in any form. (12/94)
- x. Lettering Letter size is restricted to 10 inches in height. (7/03)
- xi. Color, Materials and Construction: Sandwich boards must be a free-standing A-frame type sign to allow a horizontal component such as a chain or bar to hold the sign in place the chain or bar must be between 3 to 8 inches above the ground and secured on all four sides to accommodates high winds and sight impaired persons. (12/94).

Sandwich Board signs shall be constructed of durable, rigid materials such as wood or polymer panels. If not constructed of wood, the signs must be painted or finished to look like wood. Sign surfaces that allow temporary messages such as chalk boards are acceptable

- xii. Other: Prior to submitting an application to the Board, the applicant must have the consent of the property owner.
- xiii. Temporary or permanent signs on or in outdoor cafes and seating areas, such as signs hung on railings are prohibited.

Commented [NG85]: We need to eliminate this section as it is not consistent with SDOT guidelines for A Boards.

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Commented [NG86]: I think that we should do some checking on what the standard size is for Aboard we have had some issues with this. Also we might want to look at examples of 4 feet high and see if that large is really compatible. Also see if SDOT guidelines allow one that large.

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Commented [NG87]: I think the first line covers this so we could remove the neon line.

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Commented [NG88]: A lot of businesses have wanted a chalk board section that they can put daily messages or special on, we have allowed this under the condition that letters are less than 10 inches.

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Commented [NG89]: All applications have to have the consent of the property owner so we don't need this.

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Figure _____. Example of a sign hung on a café seating area [railing](#). This type of sign is prohibited.