

SIGNAGE GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

IN ROME'S LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Signs play an important role in the attractiveness and the appearance of the commercial corridors, as well as the local historic districts. Excessive size, quantity, and information on a building façade can create visual clutter which not only detracts from the street environment and the building's character, but also makes it more difficult for a potential customer to identify the location of the business. Signs should be the appropriate size in relationship to the scale of the storefront window, building, and street. While these guidelines were developed to assist property owners in selecting appropriate signage in the local historic districts, signage that meets these requirements but is not compatible with the area in which the sign is located or the building to which the sign is attached may not be approved.

General Signage:

- The message should be limited to the specifics of the office, apartment, organization, or business located within the premises; signage should not be used as advertisement.
- A sign should express an easy to read, direct message: Keep it simple.
- Letter styles should be chosen that are easy to read and reflect the images of the businesses they represent.
- A storefront should not have more than two signs - one primary and one secondary. The secondary sign should be clearly subordinate to the primary sign in size and visual impact.
- Signs should not cover or obscure any existing architectural detail or element and should be compatible with the architecture of the building.
- The total sign area for all signs attached to a building elevation (including wall signs, window signs, and canopy signs) shall not exceed two times the horizontal length of the wall along that side of the building. Each side of the building shall be calculated separately. For multi-tenant nonresidential developments, the total sign area per wall for each tenant shall be distributed among tenants. For multi-tenant buildings, it shall be the building owner's responsibility to distribute the total sign area per wall for each tenant. Signage shall not extend above the first floor of the building to which it is attached.
- Sign content (lettering, logo, etc.) should not overcrowd the sign background. The message area shall cover no more than 65% of the sign surface for lettering. The message area shall be computed as the area within the smallest rectangle enclosing the limits of the all lettering, logos, trademarks, symbols, and graphics. Logo and trademark sizes shall not exceed the maximum letter size allowed on each sign type. Logos and trademarks that can not legally meet the requirements of these guidelines are prohibited.
- Illuminated signs may be appropriate in the local historic district if they respect the proportions of the storefront and the guidelines outlined above. Signs should be illuminated in such a way as to reduce the spill-over of light to adjacent properties

and public right-of-ways, and signs shall only be illuminated during business hours. Painted signs can be indirectly illuminated with fluorescent or incandescent lights. Internally lit signs are most effective with light letters on a dark opaque background. Exposed neon letters can also be effective, adding color and vitality to the street.

Prohibited Signs:

- Changeable letter or changeable type signs are prohibited, except where traditionally used (such as theater marquees signs and gas stations).
- Flashing signs are prohibited in the local historic districts.
- Inflatable signs are prohibited in the local historic districts.
- Digital or LED signs are prohibited on the exterior of buildings located in the local historic district. However, small digital signs displaying only time and/or temperature incorporated into a free standing sign may be approved if appropriate.
- Signs not of traditional design, not compatible with the local historic district, and not otherwise addressed in these guidelines are prohibited.
- Banners shall be prohibited in the local historic districts except as they comply with local development codes for temporary signage.
- A-Frame or Sandwich Signs are prohibited on the public sidewalks of the local historic district.
- Billboard type signs are prohibited in all local historic districts.

Applied Letter and other Flush-Mounted Wall Signs:

- A wall sign may extend the width of the storefront but shall not be more than 2 1/2 feet high. Generally, lettering for applied letter and other wall signs shall be 8 to 18 inches high.
- The wall sign should be located directly above the storefront, and not extend above the first floor. Wall signs shall allow ornamentation and architectural features to remain visible.
- Wall signs may not be located on a building traditionally used as a single or two family dwelling.
- Definition and enhancement of architectural elements of a building may be encouraged by consideration of columns, sill lines, cornices, and roof edges. Signs must not interrupt, obscure, or hide architectural features. Signs should fit within the lines or panels of the storefront as defined by the building frame and architectural detailing. The placement of signs should respect the existing pattern established by signs on the same block. On buildings with two (2) or more storefronts, signs should be arranged in a uniform manner.

Projecting Signs

- Projecting signs should be mounted perpendicular to the building façade on the lower level or base of a structure.

- Projecting Signs should not extend above the first floor or beyond the eave or roof line of a single floor building; and the bottom of projecting signs shall have a minimum clearance of nine feet measured from the ground.
- Projecting signs shall not extend further than four feet perpendicular from the wall to which they are attached.
- Lettering on projecting signs should be 4 to 12 inches high and occupy only 75 percent of the sign face.
- Projecting signs may not be located on a building traditionally used as a single or two family dwelling.
- Internally lit projecting signs are prohibited.

Display Window Signs

- Window signs should not obscure the display area, and should not occupy more than 20 percent of the total glass area on which they are displayed. The color of the letters should contrast with the display background.
- Window display signs shall count as one sign when calculating total number of allowed signs per storefront.
- Lettering on display window signs should be 4 to 12 inches high.
- Window display signs may not be located on a building traditionally used as a single or two family dwelling.
- Telephone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail or Internet addresses may be part of the window signage only if this information is displayed, in smaller text of three (3) inches maximum height.
- If there is a separate business or businesses on the second floor of a building, the name of the business and the words “2nd Floor” (or other applicable floor) may be on the first floor door. For two (2) or more businesses using a common entrance, letters and/or characters, no greater than three (3) inches in height, may be added to the 20% window signage maximum, not to exceed 40% of the glass area of the door.

Signs on Awnings and Canopies

- Awning signs shall be silk-screened or sewn on to the awning fabric.
- Signs may be placed on either the valance or on the slope of the awning, but may not be placed on both.
- Lettering and/or graphics on the slope of the awning should be 8 to 18 inches high and shall not occupy more than 45 percent of the surface plane on which they are applied.
- The business name or street number may be placed on an awning valance; however, text must be centered vertically and horizontally on the valance and letter height shall not exceed 80 percent the height of the valance.

Directory Signs

- Wall mounted signs are encouraged where multiple offices, services, or retail establishments share common street frontage. These signs may include name, location, or suite, and should be sized to fit the location with 4-inch maximum letter height for listed businesses.

Freestanding Signs

- Monument and pole signs are permitted in the commercial corridors; however, these signs must be able to meet all applicable development codes without variance in addition to meeting the requirements of the preservation ordinance.
- Freestanding signs may be a maximum of eight feet in height or eight feet in width; however, the total sign area may not exceed 32 square feet and the total face area shall not exceed 24 square feet.

Real Estate Signs

- Only one real estate sign advertising a property for lease, rent, or sale shall be allowed on a property in a local historic district.
- Real estate signs may not exceed four feet in height and shall not exceed four feet in width.
- Real estate signs should meet all general signage recommendations.