

Signs

Signage

Important Considerations....

- ♦ A business sign is the single most important advertising tool for most small businesses.
- ♦ Signs are most effective when they are kept simple and easy to read.
- ♦ Signs are generally meant to advertise or identify a particular business, not upstage or overwhelm an entire building.

Purpose of Sign

The purpose of a sign is threefold:

To Identify a Business

To Promote Merchandise or Service

To Attract Customers Inside

The purpose for sign guidelines is to encourage, protect and preserve the historic, architectural and cultural amenities that prevail in the Downtown Historic District. It is the intent of these guidelines to protect property values, create a more attractive business climate and to enhance and protect the physical appearance of the area.

The design of signs within the Historic District must be approached with care. Great importance is placed on the relationship of a sign to the facade on which it is located. A sign must be designed for careful integration with the architectural features and its size and proportions must relate to the fenestration and detailing of the building.

The Historic Review Board encourages business owners to be creative with their signage. Elgin is known for its artistic community and encourages three-dimensional, unique, artistic expressions. In fact, the HRB will recommend funding from the EDC to the business owner for signage that adds to the artistic and historical nature of the district. Contact City Of Elgin and ask for staff handling the Business Assistance Program.



Signs

1. Signs communicate the identity of a business and also create an image for a district. A district with a clutter of signs and with large, uncoordinated graphics tends to give an area a poor image.
2. Signs should be easily seen and clearly intelligible, without being garish or loud.
3. Materials and design should relate to the architectural features of the building, the storefront and/or other buildings, signs and storefronts in the area.
4. No sign may be located on a structure so that it obscures any architectural features such as a cornice, (unless the sign consists of individual letters) or be oversized in proportion to the building.
5. The registered trademark of a specific commodity shall occupy no more than fifteen (15) percent of the area of a sign, except that if the sale of said commodity is the major business conducted on the premises, there shall be no such restriction.
6. The primary business sign may bear lettering only to the name and kind of business and the year the business was established.
7. No support for a sign shall extend above the cornice line of a lining of a building to which the sign is attached.
8. The following signs shall not be permitted, constructed, erected or maintained:
 - ◆ signs which incorporate any manner of flashing, moving or intermittent lighting, excluding public service signs showing time and temperature;
 - ◆ any signs which no longer advertise a business or product previously sold, unless it is of cultural, aesthetic or historical significance to the Historic District area;
 - ◆ portable signs;
 - ◆ signs erected so as to obstruct any door, window or fire escape on a building; roof signs;
 - ◆ large wall signs painted on the side of buildings which are taller than the surrounding buildings, unless they are of aesthetic or historical significance.
9. The sign may only be one square foot of sign area per linear foot of building frontage used by tenant. Where a building fronts on more than one street, the aggregate footage for each frontage shall be calculated and used separately. At no time shall the sign obscure architectural features or be oversized in proportion to the building.
10. Tops of wall signs for street level establishments may not protrude above the tops of second story windowsills.
11. V-shaped "sandwich signs or free standing sidewalk signs may be used up to a maximum size of 2' 6" wide and 3' 6" tall. They must be removed at close of business day, secured against wind, and maintained in good condition.

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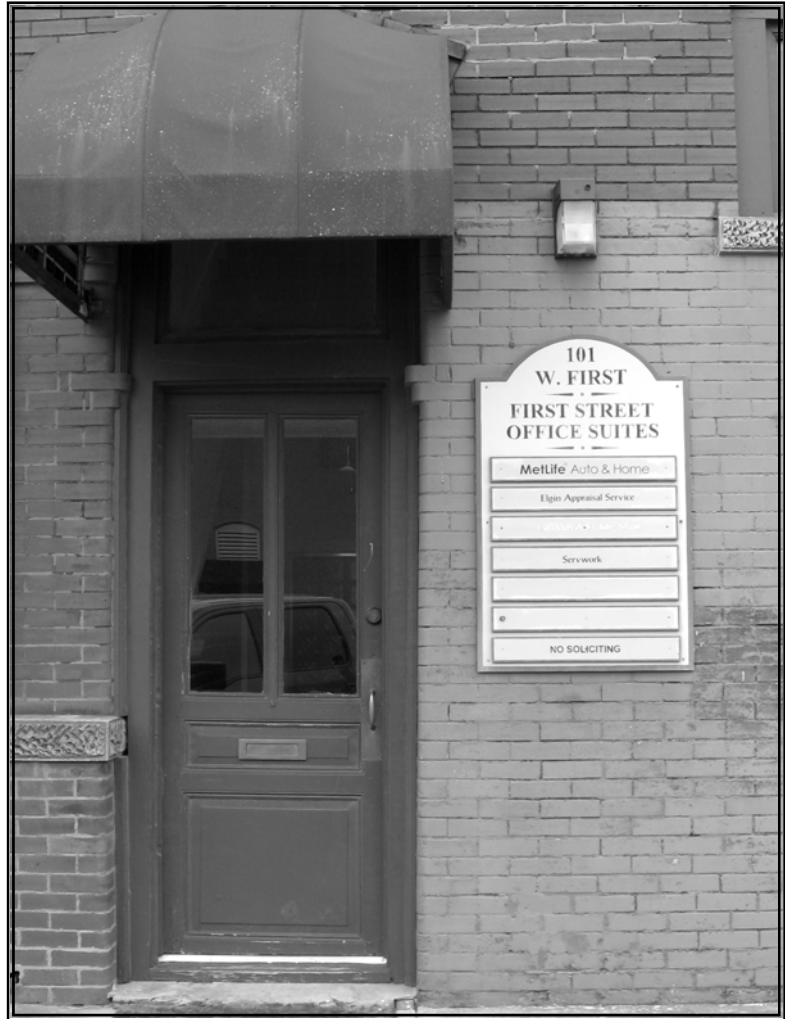
12. All window signs must be painted with accent color to help project the appearance of the sign. Only business name, physical address and web address (without the preface www) is allowed on the window sign. A business owner may place hours of operation and phone number as an interior hanging sign on the inside of the door of the business.

13. For buildings with multiple tenants

- ◆ It is preferred by the HRB that buildings with multiple tenants on the second floor, to create a building directory for tenants instead of individual tenant signage.

- ◆ All signs on a single building shall be coordinated as to size, shape, color and location. They shall be of shapes, colors and textures compatible with each other and with the architecture and exterior finish materials of the building.

- ◆ Buildings with more than one story, projecting signs or surface-mounted signs shall be prohibited above the sill line of the second floor.



- ◆ When a tenant's space has no street frontage, the maximum permitted sign area shall be one half of the area that is permitted for tenants with similar street frontage, using the width of the tenant space projected to the nearest street in place of street frontage measurement.

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Types of Signs

There are several types of signs that are appropriate for your building. Depending on the type of building you have, there are several options you can take:

- ◆ First and foremost, keep your sign simple. Stay away from elaborate lettering such as Old English or Gothic. Downtown was built at the turn of the century and lettering then was primarily block letters. It was kept simple. Use colors and logos to add life to your sign.
- ◆ The Primary sign may include BUSINESS PROPER NAME only. No telephone numbers, addresses.
- ◆ Make sure your sign will attract the customers you want.
- ◆ Consider 3-dimensional & unique signs
- ◆ Positioning of sign is extremely important to overall building composition.
- ◆ Flush Mounted Wall Sign



This type of sign works well with the overall façade and composition and can be seen well from cars and pedestrians across the street. Recommended square footage is 1 square foot per linear foot of building.



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1. Window Sign

This type of sign is attractive for pedestrian orientation and a good choice when other types would obscure architectural detailing of a building. Window signs should not obscure the front display area of the storefront and should not exceed more than 30% of the window space.



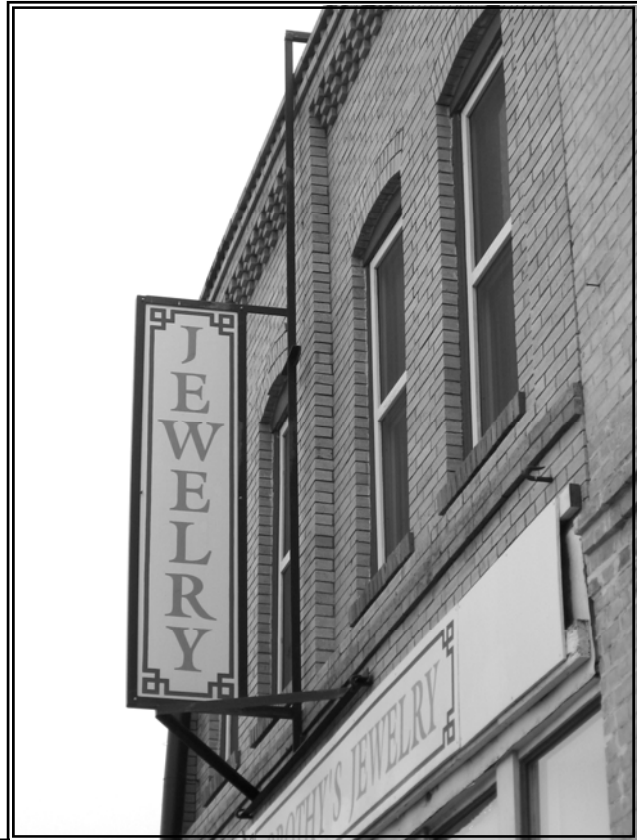
Simple sign with appealing graphics



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2. Projection Sign

This type of sign that extends perpendicular to the building and is geared for pedestrian and vehicular orientation. The maximum square footage recommended for a projection sign is 1 square foot per linear foot of building. However, because there are two sides to the sign, the square footage for both sides would be included in the total. For example if you are allowed 25 feet (minimum linear allowance for projection signs) then your projection sign cannot be more than 5 square feet on each side



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3. Sign on Awning

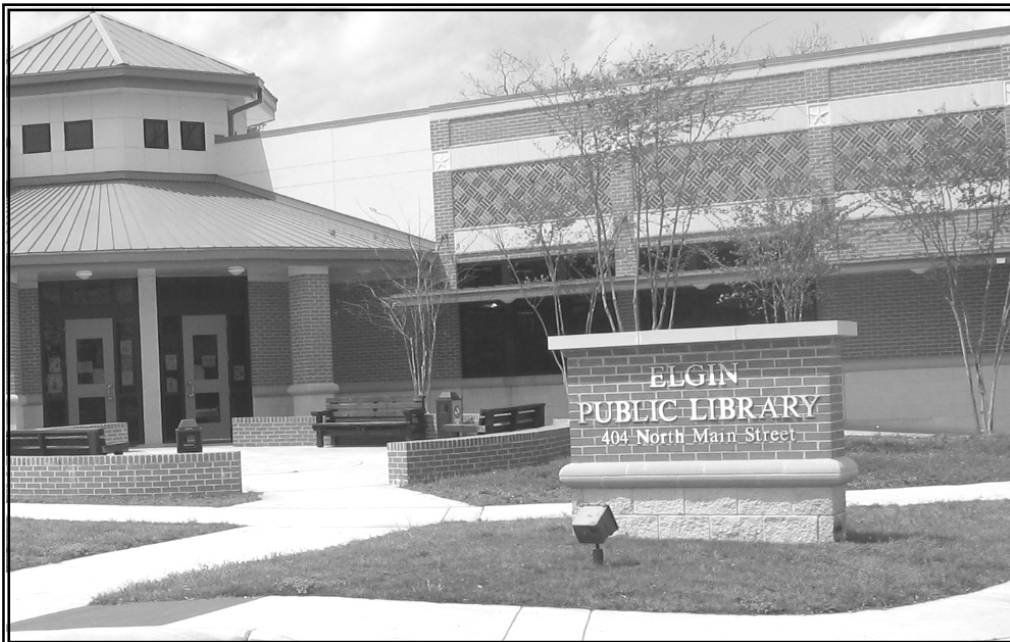
This type of sign is similar to a flush mount sign, but emphasizes the entrance of the store more through the awning. The letter on the awning sign should not exceed 6" to 8" in height.



A simple sign on awning accentuating the store's entry is important

4. Monument Sign

This type of sign is primarily used for auto orientation and it is a good choice for blending in well to the landscape and site. As opposed to a sign that stands on a pole. This sign is also oriented for pedestrian traffic. The maximum recommended square footage is the linear square feet of the lot, not to exceed 50 feet or 25 on each side.

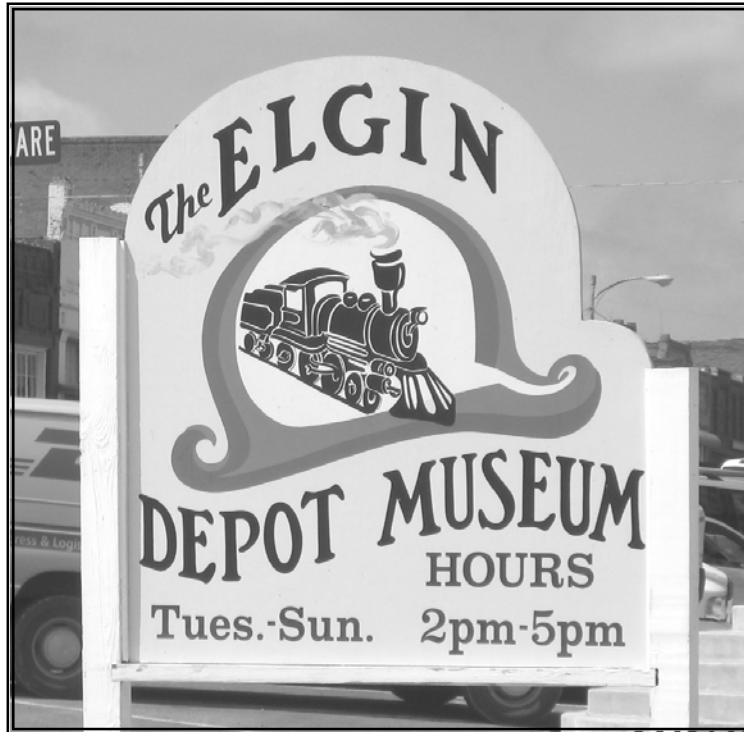


Use of brick with the sign is a good choice and is preferred over free standing.

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5. Freestanding Sign

This type of sign is auto oriented and found on the fringes of the downtown area. The recommended square footage is 1 square foot per 1 linear foot of lot frontage. Like the projection sign, the square footage on both sides counts towards the total square footage. The maximum recommended height is 15 feet and the maximum recommended square footage is 50 square feet / 25 square feet on both sides.



Not highly recommended downtown.

6. Sign Illumination

If you are going to light up your sign with external light fixtures, be cautious not to place the lights too close together or you will get overlapping illumination that will obscure your sign. We recommend that you use the lights that hang over the sign or place the external lights far enough away from the sign so that overlapping of light does not occur.

7. Backlit Signs are not permitted



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7. Temporary Signs

Canvas banners or other professional temporary signs advertising a new business, product, extended hours, or sale may be placed on the building or awning for a maximum of 30 days. This type of signage is temporary and will not be effective if installed for extended periods of time. A permit may be obtained from staff by calling 281-5724 ext 27 at City Hall.

Temporary Signs should be short term only.
Not to replace permanent business name signage.

