

**HISTORIC SIGN REVIEW
(July 2002)**

INFORMATION REGARDING APPLICATIONS FOR SIGNS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS OR FOR A CITY HISTORIC LANDMARK

General Overview

All proposals for new or revised signage on the façade or site of a designated City Historic Landmark or within a National Register Historic District require review and approval through the Historic Landmark Commission process. This approval is required for any changes to existing signs and awnings, and all new signage proposed for a site – including flush-mounted wall signs, projecting signs, awning signs, free-standing signs, painted signs, window lettering, and interior signs displayed to a building's exterior.

Application Requirements

To initiate the historic sign review process, submit a completed application with all the required exhibits and signatures to the City Historic Preservation Office, Transportation, Planning and Sustainability Department, 4th Floor, One Texas Center, 505 Barton Springs Road, Austin, Texas (or mail to P.O. Box 1088, 78767). Incomplete applications cannot be accepted. If you need assistance, please contact the City Historic Preservation Office at 974-3530. All sign approvals expire sixty (60) days after approval.

Administrative Sign Approvals (Expedited Process)

The City Historic Preservation Office is authorized to administratively approve sign applications which meet Historic Landmark Commission sign guidelines (see attached) and all other city sign code provisions. Proposals for signs on buildings in the Sixth Street Historic District must also meet the Historic Sixth Street Sign Guidelines. The City Historic Preservation Office will review all complete applications within seven (7) working days of submission. City staff forwards sign proposals to the Historic Landmark Commission for a sign review hearing when city historic sign guidelines are not met.

Historic Landmark Commission Reviews (Regular Process)

When administrative approval does not apply, the City Historic Preservation Office will schedule a sign application on the next available Historic Landmark Commission agenda. The Commission meets once monthly, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. To have a sign application scheduled for Historic Landmark Commission review, submit the application to the City Historic Preservation Office at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing date. If the applicant is not present at the public hearing, the Commission may postpone its decision if additional information is needed, or deny the request.

Historic Sign Guidelines

The design and installation of signs on the façade or site of a City Historic Landmark or within a National Register Historic District must be approached with care and sensitivity to the historic materials of the building, and be compatible with the overall proportions, materials, windows and detailing of the building. Refer to attached sign guidelines for more information. For a copy of the Historic Sixth Street Sign Guidelines contact the City Historic Preservation Office at 974-3530.

Additional City Sign Review and Permit Requirements

In addition to meeting Historic Landmark Commission review requirements, all proposed signage in the City of Austin must meet City sign requirements as set forth in Chapter 25-10 of the City Land Development Code. Please note that Historic Landmark Commission requirements are generally more restrictive than City sign requirements. Some signs, including electrical signs and signs larger than 32 square feet, will require an additional city sign permit. In these cases, approval by the Historic Landmark Commission or City Historic Preservation Officer is required prior to city sign permit approval. To determine whether a city sign permit is required, please contact the City Sign Office at 974-3345.

NOTE: Approval of a sign application by the Historic Landmark Commission does not constitute issuance of a city sign permit.

GUIDELINES FOR SIGNS IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS OR FOR A CITY HISTORIC LANDMARK

The Historic Landmark Commission and City Historic Preservation Office considers the following guidelines in reviewing sign applications. The *Historic Sixth Street Sign Guidelines* also apply to proposed signs in the Sixth Street Historic District.

Number of Signs: The Commission prefers one sign per building or site, unless the building or site is at an intersection; in this case, one sign per street frontage may be allowed if warranted. The Commission recommends a single directory sign for buildings with multiple tenants; however, multiple signs may be approved for large commercial buildings as part of an overall signage plan for the site.

Sign Types: The Commission recommends window signs, awning signs, projecting signs, and flush mounted signs for most commercial buildings. Freestanding signs are allowed for office and retail uses in historic residential buildings. City codes prohibit the Commission from approving the following sign types: (1) rotating, (2) off-premise, (3) roof signs, (4) portable, or (5) signs which flash or blink at intervals. City code also prohibits handbills, posters, or placards on a structure except inside a window or on a bulletin board.

Sign Size: The face of ANY proposed sign should not exceed twenty (20) square feet, EXCEPT for projecting signs within the Sixth Street Historic District, where the maximum sign size is (6) square feet. City code requires that projecting signs extend no more than six (6) feet from the building façade, or a distance equal to two-thirds the width of the abutting sidewalk, whichever is less. Awnings with attached or painted signage may project farther from the building facade if a historical precedent exists; however, in these cases a city license agreement will be required to ensure public safety (contact 974-7091 for more information). Projecting and flush-mounted signs should have a minimum depth to avoid a bulky or inappropriate appearance. Large commercial buildings (more than 3 stories) need to limit cumulative signage to forty (40) square feet or less per façade; multiple signage proposals must demonstrate how signage fits into an overall signage plan for the building.

Sign Design, Coloring and Materials: The Commission prefers simple sign shapes, such as rectangular or oval signs. The Commission recommends painted wood and metal signs with matte finishes; signs using reflective materials, plastics, and unfinished surfaces are not allowed. Limit the colors used in a sign to no more than three. For sites with multiple signs, all signs should have corresponding or matching design, coloring and materials. Signage design, coloring and materials should match or complement the existing color scheme of the historic buildings on the site to the maximum extent feasible.

Lettering: No more than two typefaces allowed. Avoid lettering appearing contemporary in design or materials.

Lighting: In an effort to maintain the historic character of National Register Districts, the Commission urges all lighting to be indirect and obscured from public view to the maximum extent possible. Shielded incandescent lights attached to the top of a sign or recessed can lights in awnings are strongly encouraged.

Neon Signs: Neon signs are prohibited on pre-1950 building facades; an exception may be made for surviving neon signage dating from the 1950s or earlier provided that the signage does not detract from the historic character of the building or area. For new and post-1950 buildings, limited amounts of neon signage may be considered, although backlit neon signage is strongly preferred over exposed neon.

Sign Placement: Flush-mounted and projecting signs should be positioned near the business entrance immediately above the shop doorway or shopfront. Single-tenant signs are not allowed over doorways serving multiple tenants. As required by the city land development code, the bottom of the sign shall be a minimum of nine (9) feet above the sidewalk. When feasible, place signs to align with others in the block. Signs should not obscure, cover, or hide architectural elements, such as windows, decorative banding, or other ornamentation.

Sign Mounting: 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 historic building materials in any way. Bolting through mortar joints avoids damage to historic stone or brick.

Exceptions: The City Historic Landmark Commission may consider exceptions to the foregoing provisions when warranted, and not prohibited by city ordinance.

NOTE: Existing signs do not always meet these Guidelines or City of Austin ordinance requirements, and either predate the ordinance or are illegal. Illegal signs are subject to enforcement action by the City of Austin.

Revised June 30, 2002

**APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF A SIGN IN NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICTS
OR FOR A CITY HISTORIC LANDMARK**

(Separate form required for each proposed sign on building or site)

ADDRESS of Proposed Sign: _____ Date of Application: _____

APPLICANT:

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

_____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Fax: (____) _____

SIGN COMPANY:

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

_____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Fax: (____) _____

SIGN TYPE:

Flush mounted Projecting (Blade) Window Awning Directory Free-standing

SIZE OF SIGN: Height: _____ Width: _____ Depth: _____ Total sign area: _____ sq. ft.

MATERIALS AND FINISH OF SIGN: _____

SIGN COLORS: _____

TYPE OF LIGHTING: _____ METHOD OF INSTALLATION: _____

SIGN CONTENT (Include name of establishment, size of letters, size of logo):

SUMIT FORM TO CITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE, 4TH FLOOR, ONE TEXAS CENTER, 505 BARTON SPRINGS ROAD AT LEAST 10 DAYS PRIOR TO HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION MEETING WITH ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. One color depiction of the sign itself on 8 ½" x 11" paper showing the design, colors, materials, and ALL dimensions of the sign (height, width and depth), as well as mounting detail (unless using existing mounting).
2. One dimensioned drawing on 8 ½" x 11" paper showing the exact placement of the sign on the building, the dimension of the building walls and lighting (if included). PROJECTING and AWNING SIGNS: Also show the type of bracket proposed, the distance from the bottom of the sign to the sidewalk, and the width of the sidewalk at the proposed location. FREE-STANDING SIGNS: Also include a dimensioned site layout showing the proposed placement of the sign on the site and its relationship to other buildings and landscape features.
3. Color photographs showing building and site where sign is proposed, including close-up of proposed sign location.
4. Paint chip or surface finish sample for all proposed sign surfaces.
5. For buildings with multiple tenants, signage applications must include overall signage plan for building. At a minimum, include a drawing(s) and/or photos to show all proposed/existing signage for each exterior building façade.

ONLY COMPLETED APPLICATIONS WITH ALL REQUIRED EXHIBITS CAN BE ACCEPTED AND REVIEWED.

Signature of Property Owner/Agent (Required)

Printed name and address of property owner/agent: _____

Signature of Applicant (Required)

To be completed by City Staff: NRHD COA

Administrative Approval: Yes No

HLC Hearing Date: _____

Date Received: _____

Date Approved: _____

Disposition: Approved Disapproved