

GUIDELINES FOR SIGNS AND AWNINGS COLUMBIA DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

The following are a set of guidelines authored by the Historic Zoning Commission for the sake of guiding design of signs, awnings, and the review of all such proposals within the Downtown Historic District. Unless otherwise specified, exceptions to these guidelines can be provided on a case-by-case basis when evidence of hardship, precedent, or practical difficulty is present.

- Wall signs shall not exceed the height of the building cornice.
- Permanent signs and display ads shall not exceed 40 square per building though exceptions may be made by the Commission on a case-by-case basis.
- Wall signs should be placed in traditional locations in order to fit with-in architectural features, for example:
 - above transoms
 - on cornice fascia boards
 - below cornices
- Brackets for projecting signs should be located under the second floor windowsills or a maximum of 15 feet from the street level. Projecting signs shall be no larger than 20 square feet.
- The use of sign symbols, logos, and cut-outs, particularly in projecting signs, is encouraged.
- Ground-mounted signs are permitted, where City sidewalk zoning allows, to a height of 8 feet. Ground mounted signs shall not exceed 40 square feet. If proposed sign's height must be altered to accommodate City safety regulations for visibility, the sign may extend to minimum height requirements as defined by City codes. These cases must be approved by the Historic Zoning Commission.
- Permanent signage on glass is encouraged with a maximum of 20 square feet per tenant with a 40 square feet maximum of signage per building. (A tenant is defined as an individual lessee, with a separate lease from any other lessee with a separate lease contract with a minimum of 200 square feet of space leased. Example: A copier sales store with multi-lines for sale cannot claim multi-tenants).
- Signage shall be compatible with the architecture of the building.
- Temporary signs are allowed on a thirty day basis but are to be limited to a total of ten square feet per building.

- No exterior temporary sign may be placed above the first floor of a building or at a height greater than eight feet.
- The use of neon is prohibited. Neon may be used in building interiors but not as exterior signage or window signage unless original to the building.
- Spot lighting to draw attention to signs and architectural details is encouraged. Light spillage on adjacent properties is prohibited.
- Fabric awnings are encouraged. Awnings shall fit storefront openings or individual window openings. If possible, top edges of awnings shall be mounted to align with the top of the transom or with the framing above the main display window.
- The use of awning valances for signs is encouraged.
- Pedestal, sidewalk sandwich board and pole-mounted signs are to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- The use of the following are prohibited in the Downtown District:
 - Internally lit and/or plastic awnings, with or without signs
 - Internally lit signs
 - Flashing signs
 - Mass-produced blow molded plastic signs
 - Billboards of all types and sizes and whether attached to buildings or free standing
 - Portable trailer signs
 - Historically incompatible canopies, awnings, and imitation mansard roofs made of metal, rough-sawn wood, plastic, shakes, or asphalt roofing.

All sign permits in the Downtown Columbia Historic District are subject to review and final approval by the Historic Zoning Commission.

Severability – If any part or provision of these regulations or applications thereof to any person or circumstances is adjusted invalid by any court or competent jurisdiction, such judgment shall be confined in its operation to the part, provision, or application directly involved in the controversy in which judgment shall have been rendered and shall not affect or impair the validity of the remainder of these regulations or the application thereof to other persons or circumstances. The Historic Zoning Commission hereby declares that it would have enacted the remainder of these regulations without any such part, provision, or application.