



BOROUGH OF ALLENTOWN
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

***GUIDELINES FOR SIGNAGE
IN THE ALLENTOWN HISTORIC BUSINESS DISTRICT***

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) recognizes that well designed signage will identify and create the unique qualities of a business, provide variety and vitality to the streetscape, and create a visual connection between the building and the surrounding Historic District. Signs for businesses in the Allentown Historic District play a crucial role in advertising and attracting business and in preserving the historic character of Allentown. Maintaining these signage elements is in the interest of business owners, residents, and visitors to Allentown.

To clearly inform businesses of what is considered appropriate signage, the following guidelines are being distributed to Allentown businesses. The guidelines are based on the Allentown Ordinance (Section 28-10, 10.2 Signs) <https://ecode360.com/35610634#35610634> and the Allentown HPC Design Guidelines (pp. 41 – 43) ([Design Guidelines](#))

New permanent store signs and changes to existing signs must be approved by the Allentown HPC and a permit must be obtained from the Allentown Code Enforcement Official, who can be contacted through the Borough Clerk's Office.

Guidelines

1. The size, shape, material, and placement of signs should complement the design of the building and neighboring buildings. Signs should not conceal important architectural detail, overpower, clutter the façade, or otherwise detract from the historic character of the building.
2. In general, painted wood signs with painted or raised letters are most appropriate for 19th century commercial structures. Other durable materials used for signs during the period of the building's construction, such as composite wood, wrought iron, steel, aluminum, and metal grill work are appropriate. Other materials are reviewed on a case by case basis.
3. Lettering displayed on window glass of a storefront is appropriate.
4. Plastic signs are not appropriate.
5. Signage on awnings must follow sign guidelines.
6. Signs may be illuminated from an indirect light source. Neon and fluorescent signs are prohibited. Small internally lit LED signs shall only be permitted during normal business hours with HPC approval. All illumination is to be steady and stationary, not flashing or moving.

7. Signs may be free standing, mounted flush to the building, or mounted on brackets perpendicular to the building depending on the most appropriate siting for the building.
8. Preserve historic signs, such as old hand painted advertising signs, or other signs characteristic of the building's or district's historic period whenever possible. Repair historic signs and replace historic parts in-kind when deteriorated beyond repair.
9. Do not erect signs above the cornice line or uppermost portion of a facade wall, or where they will disfigure or conceal architectural details, window openings, doors, or other significant details.
10. Avoid irreversible damage to any historic part of a building. For example, mount a sign to the mortar rather than the historic masonry.
11. Select a color scheme that provides contrast between the background and lettering to make signs more legible
12. Do not use highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read.
13. Select letter styles and sizes that complement the overall character of the building façade. Avoid hard-to-read or overly intricate styles.

Temporary Signs or Banners

1. Temporary signs, window signs, political signs, community bulletin boards or directional signs do not require a permit.
2. Not more than one temporary sign shall be permitted on any lot identifying architects, engineers, builders, brokers, contractors, or others connected with the construction of any building on such lot.
3. One temporary sign may be erected or installed without a permit announcing that the property on which it is located is for sale or rent.
4. One sign may be installed upon issuance of a permit for the announcement of grand openings or business closures.
5. Political signs shall be permitted for a period of two months prior to a primary, general, or special election and for one week thereafter.

Prohibited Signs

Billboards, junior billboards, portable signs, neon signs and advertising benches. Signs posted on fences, posts, utility poles or trees. Revolving signs or signs with a kinetic component. Roof mounted signs. Moored balloons or other floating signs that are tethered to the ground or to a structure. A full list of prohibited signs is found in the Borough's sign ordinance.

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