

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
POLICY STATEMENT ON SIGNS AND AWNINGS

CITY OF NEWPORT

DEPARTMENT OF ZONING AND INSPECTIONS

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By motion of the Historic District Commission at their October 17, 2023 meeting, the following guidance on Signs within Newport’s Historic Districts was reviewed, voted, approved, and adopted.

References:

- 1) Newport Standards – Ordinance: 17.80.060
- 2) US Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, Technical Preservation Services, The Preservation of Historic Signs, <https://home1.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/25-signs.htm>
- 3) US Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, Technical Preservation Services, Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts, <https://home1.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/11-storefronts.htm>

As part of Newport’s built environment, signs and awnings have a significant visual impact. In the past, businesses were primarily locally owned, and signs reflected local aesthetics. In the modern, global age, many businesses answer to national or international corporate entities. Signs developed by these global marketers are often intended for suburban, high-traffic areas and are not compatible with pedestrian-oriented streets and the architectural heritage of Newport. Therefore, the Historic District Commission makes the following statement of policy for signs and awnings within Newport’s historic districts:

1. Standard corporate sign packages that make no reference to their context, surroundings or background generally will not be allowed. Signs should respect the architectural character of the building and its immediate surroundings, in addition to the building’s size, scale, design, and material.
2. There shall be no presumption of approval for corporate logos or branding; instead, signs will be reviewed as part of an overall graphics system for a building, regardless of when the submission for approval is made. If multiple tenants occupy one building, their requests for signage, if any, will be reviewed in terms of size and placement to avoid a dis-coordinated or cluttered appearance to the whole of the building and its context. Private agreements regarding tenant signage to which the City is not a party are irrelevant to the submission for approval and will not be considered.
3. Signs should contain the business name and the minimum amount of information necessary to convey the type of business. Repetitive signs or extraneous information, such as telephone numbers, hours of operation, products and or services sold, etc., will not be allowed.
4. Sign and awning materials should be compatible with those of the historic building and should not obscure significant architectural features. Externally illuminated signs will be considered on a case-by-

case basis. Internally illuminated signs, including neon and neon substitutes are not permitted. Awning material, color, and hardware should reflect historic precedence as well as be consistent with other awnings in the same building or connected commercial environment.

5. Signs should be attached to the building carefully to prevent damage to historic fabric (for example, fittings should penetrate mortar joints rather than brick).

6. Signs historically were most commonly either flat to the building or attached on a right angle. For signs protruding from the building on a right angle, consideration will be given to the appropriate overall scale of the sign and specifically its width as compared to the sidewalk's width (if applicable) so as not to impede pedestrian traffic or sightlines.

7. Awnings, specifically, when serving as a sign, in addition to its purpose of screening a door or window, shall comply with all applicable policies above related to signs.

8. Modern Street Signs design and placement may contribute or detract from the city's historic districts, while at the same time providing needed directional reference points for automobile and pedestrian traffic. The Historic District Commission welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with other city departments in the determination of the most appropriate Street Signs for historic districts.

9. This policy statement is intended to supplement, not supersede, previous site-specific existing signage or signage agreements.

For all projects, material cut sheets and detailed description of techniques and methods must be provided as part of the application.

The above criteria are intended as general guidelines to give property owners, architects, builders, and others involved in presenting applications to the Historic District Commission general awareness of the Commission's direction, expectations, samples, and level of detail.

APPROVED BY RESOLUTION:



October 17, 2023

Chair, Historic District Commission

Date