

Signage



“One of the most readily apparent aspects of town character is signage. Since signs are intended to be highly visible and attract attention, they often produce a lasting impression on visitors and provide an indication of the commercial health of a business district.”

*Dealing with Change in the Connecticut River Valley:
A Design Manual for Conservation and Development.*

Overview

Does the signage achieve a level of commonality that reflects the character of the neighborhood and town without occurring at the expense of individual expression and design creativity?

Guidelines:

- Integrate the sign into the site plan, and ensure that it complements its surroundings.
- Avoid visual competition with other signs in the area.
- Minimize the number of building and directional signs to avoid repetition.
- Avoid markings on the pavement.
- Refer to Appendix B for approved sign types and specific requirements for a unified sign plan.



signage
Zoning Regulations and Review Procedures



The Town's zoning regulations set maximum size, height and other dimensional standards for signs (note that special sign standards for the Town Center are provided in the *Simsbury Center Code*). The application and review procedures for signs are summarized on page 107.

sign types
Photographic Examples

Sign Type	Examples
Building Signs	
Awning/Canopy Signs	
Projecting Signs	

Photographs of a range of signs are provided in "Appendix D: Examples of Sign Types" on page 109 to assist with an understanding of the various sign types addressed in the zoning regulations and design guidelines.

Relationship to the Site and Architecture

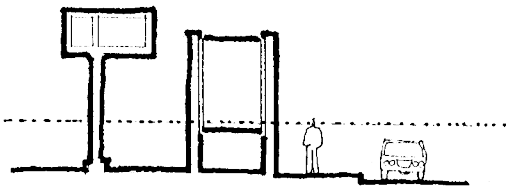
Does the sign design conform to the architectural character of the building in terms of historic era, style, location, and size?



Guidelines:

- Create a new sign proportionate to the dimensions of its location. Avoid exaggerated sign surfaces or individual sign letters on building parapets or other designated areas.
- Integrate signage programs to become a natural part of the building façade.
- At the time of application, replace existing over-sized sign with one more appropriate for the location.
- Directly proportion the overall sign area in relation to the setback from the primary vantage point (e.g. a 32 square foot sign viewed at 30 feet would be the equivalent of a 16 square foot sign viewed at 15 feet).
- Avoid repetitious signage information on the same building frontage regardless of the sign area allowed in the zoning regulations.
- Maintain a space (36 inches minimum) between tenants' adjoining wall signs and a space (18 inches minimum) to the vertical edge of the wall.
- Avoid roof-mounted signage where possible and consider parallel hung signage on the façade. Where roof signs are the only feasible option, ensure that the bottom of the letters or sign are mounted closely to the roof.
- Construct freestanding monument signs at a low height whenever site conditions allow for visibility.
- Avoid top heavy, pole mounted freestanding signs.
- Use driveway directional signs only for projects where circulation is complex and traffic must proceed through the site along a specific path.

Tall signs and stanchions are reminders of 1960s strip mall developments



Low-level signs are just as readable and more to a "New England" scale



The Scale of Signage

Graphics, Text and Information

Does the sign identify the business and street number, and avoid advertising?

Guidelines:

- Do not use advertising and business slogans. Signs may include information describing products sold or services provided.
- Design information to fit properly into the sign location attractively and without visual clutter.
- Avoid use of extremely small letters when the primary vantage is from the street rather than an adjacent sidewalk.
- Use symbols, logos, and illustrations as well as street number for identification.
- Use small-scaled informational signs (e.g. restrooms, elevators, telephones, etc.) that have a uniform appearance, for directing pedestrians.



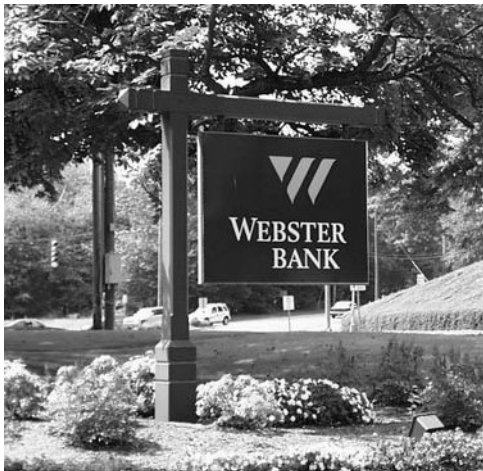
Materials, Color and Texture

Do the materials, color, and texture of the signage conform to the architectural character of the building and to the general character of the larger neighborhood?



Guidelines:

- Use permanent, durable materials (e.g. stone, brick, or wood) on the bases of freestanding signs. Avoid texture-coated sheet metal or plastic.
- Use durable, weather-resistant and vandal-proof materials for the sign.
- Avoid extremely bright background colors (e.g. bright red, orange, or yellow).
- Coordinate sign background, trim, message color, and detail with the architecture it serves.
- Avoid a white or off-white color in a large field of illuminated background.
- Avoid visible raceways and transformers for individual letters.
- Avoid exposed guy wires or supports to stabilize signs.
- Trim edges of flat sheet signs (i.e. plywood) or frame to improve the finished appearance.
- Avoid use of plastic foam letters if possible, or properly cap each letter with plexiglass and secure with studs and glue.
- Use a flat or semi-gloss finish on the surface and avoid a glossy, plastic finish.



Signage Landscaping

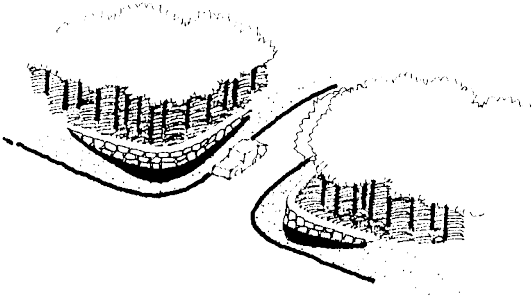
Is the sign integrated with the ground plane by using complementary plant materials as part of an overall planting plan?

Guidelines:

- Use durable and low maintenance plant materials with year round appeal at the base of freestanding signs.
- Utilize low walls to define specific plant beds when appropriate to the architecture.
- Irrigate planting beds when possible.
- Screen low-level lighting from view with plant materials.



Stone walls can define an entrance, help save existing trees and provide a base for signage.



Integrating Signage

Signage

Signage Lighting

Is sign lighting used judiciously and specifically to illuminate useful information, and is the intensity consistent with neighborhood standards?



Guidelines:

- Use only back-lit (halo-lit, or reverse pan channel) individual letters on skyline signs located on the upper portions of the building.
- Use only external or back-lit illumination sources when lighting.
- Screen any external spot or flood lighting from view by the passersby.
- Illuminate only the sign surface. Avoid blinding motorists or pedestrians with light spill onto adjacent property.
- Avoid overly bright illumination for signage compared to surrounding lighting level intensities.