

HISTORIC LANDMARK ZONING OVERLAYS

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METROPOLITAN HISTORIC ZONING COMMISSION

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. HISTORIC ZONING OVERLAYS

Please also see *MHZC Hand Book*.

Neighborhoods and commercial/industrial districts in more than two thousand towns and cities in the United States use historic zoning as a tool to protect their unique architectural characters. There are quantifiable reasons for historic zoning: it gives property owners greater control over development; it stabilizes property values; it decreases the risk of investing in one’s building; it promotes heritage tourism; it protects viable urban housing stock; and it preserves natural resources by conserving building materials. There are less quantifiable, but equally important, reasons for historic zoning—it protects our past for future generations, it nurtures a sense of community, and it provides a sense of place.

Historic zoning overlays are **locally** designated and administered by the Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission (MHZC), an agency of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County. Historic zoning overlays are applied in addition to the base or land-use zoning of an area. *Historic zoning overlays do not impact use.*

Like the National Register of Historic Places, historic zoning honors an area’s historical significance. There are six types of historic zoning overlays: historic preservation, neighborhood conservation, historic bed and breakfast, historic landmarks, historic signage , and historic landmark interiors.

In neighborhood conservation and historic bed and breakfast homestay zoning overlays, certain exterior work on buildings—new construction, additions, demolition, and relocation—is reviewed to ensure that the neighborhood’s historic character is preserved. In addition to the projects reviewed in neighborhood conservation and historic bed and breakfast zoning overlays, historic preservation. And historic landmark overlays also review exterior alterations to existing buildings -- like replacing windows, altering storefronts, or painting brick. Overlays with historic preservation or historic landmark zoning are not more historically significant than those with neighborhood conservation zoning; rather, the MHZC, in conjunction with neighborhood input and local council member direction, determined that these overlays are most compatible with the goals of the neighborhood and the MHZC.

WHAT IS REVIEWED:

IN A HISTORIC LANDMARK OVERLAY

- *New construction (primary and secondary structures)*
- *Additions – increased footprint, height or building envelope of an existing structure*
- *Demolition (in whole or in part)*
- *Relocation of structures*
- *Construction of appurtenances (with the exception of portable storage buildings less than 100 square feet)*
- *Signage*
- *Repairs and Alterations to existing structures*
- *Setback Determinations*

IN A HISTORIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY

- *New construction (primary and secondary structures)*
- *Additions – increased footprint, height or building envelope of an existing structure*
- *Demolition (full or in part)*
- *Relocation of structures*
- *Construction of appurtenances (with the exception of portable storage buildings less than 100 square feet)*
- *Signage*
- *Repairs and Alterations to existing structures*
- *Setback Determinations*



I. INTRODUCTION

B. WHAT ARE THE DESIGN GUIDELINES?

The Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission (MHZC) is the architectural review board that reviews applications for work on properties within historic zoning overlay districts. Its nine members, appointed by the mayor, include representatives from historic zoning overlays, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, the Metropolitan Historical Commission, architect(s), and others. Design review is administered according to a set of design guidelines. The guidelines are criteria and standards, developed jointly by the MHZC and the residents of the neighborhood, which are used in determining the architectural compatibility of proposed projects. The guidelines provide direction for project applicants and ensure that the decisions of the MHZC are not arbitrary or based on anyone's personal taste.

The guidelines protect historic sites and districts from new construction or additions not in character with the historic building or site and from the loss of architecturally or historically important buildings.

By state and local legislation, design guidelines for historic overlays must be in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*—criteria developed by the National Park Service and used by private and public preservation organizations throughout the country. (Please see I.D.)

The italicized sections of the design guidelines contain interpretive information that is meant to make the guidelines easier to understand and memorialize precedent-setting decisions.

Illustrations are intended to provide example buildings and circumstances.

It is important to remember that every building and site is different and what may be appropriate for one building or site may not be appropriate for another. Historic landmarks range from antebellum mansions to mid-century ranch houses and from the Belgium block of Bank Street to the mid-twentieth century modern Municipal Auditorium. These guidelines are meant to provide a framework for alterations to these diverse buildings and sites.

IN A NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION OVERLAY (NCZO) (also B&B Homestays)

- *New construction (primary and secondary structures)*
- *Additions – increased footprint, height or building envelope of an existing structure*
- *Demolition (in whole or in part)*
- *Relocation of structures*
- *Setback Determinations*

WHAT IS NOT REVIEWED IN HISTORIC LANDMARK OVERLAYS

- *Temporary (30 days or fewer) appurtenances, such as:*
 - Real estate, opening soon, special event, and construction signage*
 - Construction related fencing and structures*
 - Special event related structures*
- *Painting of wood*



I. INTRODUCTION

C. PURPOSE OF THE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Within Title 17 of the Metro Codes of Ordinances, “historic zoning” is used as the general term for Nashville’s five types of zoning overlay districts applicable to historic properties: historic preservation, neighborhood conservation, historic bed and breakfast, historic landmark, and historic landmark interiors.

1. Design guidelines are criteria and standards which the Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission must consider in determining the appropriateness of proposed work within a neighborhood conservation zoning district. Appropriateness of work must be determined in order to accomplish the goals of historic and neighborhood conservation zoning, as outlined in Article III, Chapter 17.36 (Historic Zoning Regulations), Metropolitan Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance:
 - a. To preserve and protect the historical and/or architectural value of buildings or other structures;
 - b. To regulate exterior design, arrangement, texture, and materials proposed to be used within the historic district to ensure compatibility;
 - c. To create an aesthetic appearance which complements the historic buildings or other structures;
 - d. To foster civic beauty;
 - e. To strengthen the local economy; and
 - f. To promote the use of historic districts for the education, pleasure, and welfare of the present and future citizens of Nashville and Davidson County.



D. SECRETARY OF INTERIOR STANDARDS

By Tennessee state law, all design guidelines for neighborhood conservation zoning overlays must comply with the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. The section of the Act which deals specifically with rehabilitation of historic properties is the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties. The Standards are a series of concepts about maintaining, repairing, and replacing historic materials, as well as designing new construction or making alterations. When the design guidelines do not provide guidance for a specific request, the Standards may be relied upon.

1. *A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.*
2. *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*
3. *Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*
4. *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*
5. *Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*
6. *Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*
7. *Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.*
8. *Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*
9. *New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*



I. INTRODUCTION

10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*



II. DESIGN GUIDELINE PRINCIPLES

- A. Italicized sections of the guidelines contain interpretive information that is meant to make the guidelines easier to understand; they are not part of the guidelines themselves. Images and graphics are intended only to provide example buildings and circumstances. It is important to remember that every building and site is different and what may be appropriate for one building or site may not be appropriate for another.
- B. These guidelines shall apply to the exteriors of buildings, alterations/rehabilitation, new construction in-whole or in-part, demolition in-whole or in-part, and moving a building.
- C. The following actions that do not require the removal of a historic feature(s) may not require a Preservation Permit. (These actions may still require a Building Permit. Please check with Codes Department before proceeding with work.)

Site

- All plants, including trees, bushes, flowers, etc. (Structures to accommodate living elements may require review.)
- Uncovered accessibility ramps

Buildings

- New free-standing buildings and structures that are less than 100 square feet, do not have a permanent foundation, and are located to the rear of the property.
- Temporary building and site illumination such as seasonal or event lighting that has minimal installation and is not in place for more than 30 days.
- Paint color of wood features.

- D. Reconstruction of historic buildings, structures, features or appurtenances may be appropriate when it accurately reproduces a no-longer existing building, structure, feature or appurtenance on its original site, if it (1) would have contributed to the historic and architectural character of the site (2) will be compatible in terms of style, height, scale, massing, and materials with the site; and (3) is accurately based on documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.



III. DEMOLITION

A . PRINCIPLE

1. The primary purpose of historic zoning overlays is to prevent demolition of historic buildings and their character-defining features.
2. The demolition of a building or major portion of a building, which contributes historically, culturally, or architecturally to the character and significance of the district, is not appropriate.
3. The historic character-defining features of a historic building should not be altered, removed, or destroyed.



III. DEMOLITION

B. GUIDELINES

1. Partial-demolition of a structure or site feature

- a. Character-defining features of historic buildings and site features shall be retained. Alterations of window and door openings is considered partial-demolition. Partial-demolition of historic buildings is appropriate if the feature to be removed is not a character-defining feature. Examples of non character-defining features are features that have lost historic integrity or that were added in recent years.
- b. Historic materials should be retained. Replacement of historic materials may be necessary in the case of extreme deterioration. In those cases, replacement materials should match the historic material. Substitute materials may be appropriate if the original material is no longer readily available or if a different material is required. The substitute material should have the same dimensions, texture, design, and workability as the historic material.
- c. Partial-demolition of non-contributing buildings and structures is appropriate if demolition does not result in a form or condition that would not meet the design guidelines for “new construction” or if partial-demolition brings the existing building closer into compliance with the design guidelines for new construction.

2. Full-demolition of a structure or site feature

- a. Historic buildings and site features shall be retained unless the denial of the demolition will result in an economic hardship, as determined by the MHZC in accordance with section 17.40.420 (Historic Zoning Regulations), Metropolitan Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance.
- b. Full-demolition of non-contributing buildings and site features is appropriate as they do not contribute to the historic character of the overlay.



IV. BUILDING ALTERATIONS

A. BUILDING ALTERATIONS PRINCIPLES

1. The original character-defining features of a building, structure, or site and its environment should not be removed or destroyed.
2. Deteriorated historic architectural features should be repaired in-kind rather than replaced.
3. In the event that replacement of historic features is necessary, the new feature should match the material, composition, dimensions, design, color, texture, and all other visual qualities of the original feature. Replacement features should be substantiated by historical, physical, or pictorial evidence, rather than on conjectural design or the availability of salvage or new architectural elements.
4. Every building, structure, and site shall be recognized as a product of its own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance are not appropriate.
5. Changes which have taken place over the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. If the changes have acquired significance in their own right, they should be retained, unless there is a desire for a site to interpret a specific significant time period.

B. MATERIALS

1. Historic materials should be retained.
2. Deteriorated historic materials should be repaired rather than replaced.
3. If replacement is necessary, new materials should match the historic materials.
4. In the case of materials that are no longer manufactured or are not readily available, substitute materials should match the historic design, dimensions, colors, texture and workability.



IV. BUILDING ALTERATIONS

5. The use of detergent cleaners and chemical stain and paint removers to clean masonry or remove paint is appropriate under most conditions. Abrasive or high-pressure cleaning methods are destructive and should not be used.
6. Silicone-based water sealants are not recommended for use on historic masonry.
7. Repointing with a hard (Portland cement) mortar is destructive to historic masonry. Flexible mortar, made from mixing hydrated lime cement and natural sand, should be used when repointing is necessary.
8. Painting/staining of masonry is generally not appropriate but may be appropriate if: the masonry has previously been painted; or if the masonry has been sandblasted or otherwise damaged and is too deteriorated to withstand weather. If painting is appropriate, the color should match the material's original color and be a stain, rather than a paint, to allow more of the original texture to be visible.

C. WINDOWS & DOORS

1. Historic windows and doors shall be retained.
2. In situations where the original windows and doors are no longer extant or beyond repair, replacement windows and doors should match the original materials, dimensions, and design and fit within the original openings.
3. New openings should not be created unless supported by physical or photographic evidence as an original or early opening. New openings may be appropriate in minimally visible locations.

D. ROOF FORM & ROOFING MATERIALS

1. Historic roof pitch and configuration shall be retained.



IV. BUILDING ALTERATIONS

2. In the case of historic roof forms no longer extant, a replacement roof form should use physical or photographic evidence to replicate the original appearance. If evidence is not available, the replacement roof form should match the arrangement, features, materials, and proportions typically found on buildings of the same style and period of the building involved.
3. The historic roof features such as dormers, chimneys, weather vanes, clerestories, and skylights shall be retained.
4. Replacement of visible roof materials shall match the historic material, when the material is readily available. If not available, substitute roofing material should match the color, texture and dimensions of the historic roof material.
5. Generally, additions to a historic roof forms, such as skylights, dormers and roof decks are inappropriate.

E. PORCHES, STOREFRONTS & ENTRIES

1. Historic porches, hoods, stoops, and primary entrances on residential building types and storefronts and public entrances on non-residential building types shall be retained.
2. Deteriorated porches, storefronts and entries should be repaired rather than replaced.
3. Where replacement is necessary, new features should match the design, dimension, architectural features, materials, and all other visual characteristics of the original.
4. In the case of historic porches, storefronts, or entries no longer being extant, the replacement should use physical or photographic evidence to replicate the original appearance.



IV. BUILDING ALTERATIONS

F. AWNINGS & CANOPIES

Also see “Signage” for awnings that include signage.

1. Awnings should be placed in locations historically used for awnings, over windows and doors, and should not obstruct transoms, columns, cornices, or other architectural features.
2. Awnings may be fixed or retractable.
3. Storefront awnings should project no more than four feet from the building.
4. The most appropriate awning form is a shed form unless the shape of the opening or historic evidence dictates otherwise.
5. Opaque canvas, cotton duck, or similar natural materials are appropriate for most awnings. Metal awnings are appropriate for post-1950s residential building types. Metal or wood awnings may be appropriate for industrial buildings. Plastic or vinyl awnings should not be used.
6. Canopies should not be added on principal facades where there is no historic evidence a canopy existed.

G. MECHANICAL, UTILITY & SECURITY EQUIPMENT

1. Installation of mechanical, utility & security equipment should not require the removal or damage of historic features and should not obscure historic features.
2. Equipment should be placed in locations of minimal visibility.



IV. BUILDING ALTERATIONS

H. BUILDING ILLUMINATION-EXTERIOR

1. Original light fixtures should be retained.
2. New or replacement light fixtures on residential building types should be simple in design to avoid a false sense of history and should be located in a typical historic locations for exterior lighting.
3. Building illumination should be used to highlight architectural features and not as a way to draw attention to the business itself. Light should be directed toward the façade instead of outward. Light fixtures should be concealed or simple and unobtrusive such as uplights mounted above a storefront cornice.
4. Floodlights, spotlights, mercury vapor, sodium vapor, fluorescent tube lamp and CFL lamps and/or colored lights are generally not appropriate.
5. Lighting fixtures and illumination should not flash, spin or be animated in any manner.
6. Conduits, junction boxes and wires should not be visible on street-facing facades.
7. Rope lighting (also known as strand lighting, lite ropes, flexible impact lighting, tubular lighting, and string lighting) is prohibited unless concealed behind a cornice.
8. In the case of masonry buildings, hardware should be installed in masonry joints rather than through the brick or stone.
9. A Gobo light on non-residential building types may be appropriate if the projection is directed to the sidewalk only and not to a building façade; the fixture is small, unobtrusive and obscured from view; the fixture does not require removal of a character-defining feature, and there is only one per building.



V. SITE ALTERATIONS

A. SITE ALTERATIONS PRINCIPLES

1. Features of the site that are important in defining the overall character of the landmark should be identified, retained, and preserved. Removal or radical change of site features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the landmark should be avoided.
2. Removal or relocation of buildings or landscape features which are historically related to the landmark shall be avoided.
3. Repair of deteriorated landscape or site features rather than replacement is encouraged where possible. Addition of conjectural landscape features which would create a false sense of historic development should not occur.
4. Construction of new buildings adjacent to the landmark building shall not detract from or diminish the value of the landmark itself.
5. New or added exterior site features shall be placed so as not to detract from or diminish the value of the landmark itself.
6. Site work including construction of parking and utility work shall be undertaken carefully so as not to disturb architectural or archaeological features of the landmark site.

B. FENCES & WALLS

1. Historic fencing and walls should be repaired, rather than replaced, where possible.
2. If replacement is necessary, the new fence or wall should use the same materials as the original and be in the same location with same dimensions as the original.
3. If new fencing or walls is required where none existed historically, it should be of a simple design and of a material appropriate for the history of the site.



V. SITE ALTERATIONS

4. Chain link or woven fences are generally not appropriate.
5. New fencing or walls that mimic historic one or are reclaimed are not appropriate if they are from an earlier era than the historic site.

C. PERMANENT BUILT LANDSCAPE FEATURES

1. Curbs, steps, pavement and gravel parking areas or driveways, walkways and other such appurtenances should not contrast greatly with the character of the site in terms of design, size, materials, material color and location and should not disturb archaeological features of the site.
2. A/V equipment such as security cameras, satellite dishes and antennas should be located in areas with minimal visibility and should not require new holes in historic masonry.
3. Permanently installed fixtures such as garden structures, fountains or waterfalls should be based on documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
4. Above-ground swimming pools should not be publicly visible. In-ground swimming pool should be located in a rear yard in a manner that minimizes its public visibility.

D. PUBLIC SPACES

1. Landscaping, sidewalks, signage, lighting, street furniture, and other work undertaken in public spaces, by any individual, group, or agency, shall be presented to the MHZC for review of compatibility with the character of the overlay.



VI. NEW CONSTRUCTION

A. NEW CONSTRUCTION PRINCIPLES

1. New construction generally includes additions to existing buildings, new buildings or the reconstruction of a historic feature.
2. New construction should not require the removal, obstruction or alteration of historic features of a historic building or the site.
3. New construction shall not disturb archaeological areas of the site or those areas with the potential for archeology. Excavation work should be carefully undertaken and care shall be used to properly record any archaeological materials encountered.
4. New construction on a landmark site does not need to imitate past architectural styles. New buildings inspired by historic styles and forms, but identifiable as new construction, are appropriate.

B. ADDITIONS TO BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

1. Additions to historic buildings should be minimal. Additions to existing buildings should be compatible in scale, materials, and texture; additions should not be visually jarring or contrasting.
2. Additions should be constructed in such a manner that historically or architecturally significant materials and site features are not destroyed.
3. Additions should be attached in a minimal manner so that if the addition were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the original structure would be retained.
4. Generally, an addition should be situated at the rear of a building and should not be taller or wider than the historic building. Typically, rooftop additions are not appropriate.



VI. NEW CONSTRUCTION

5. An addition should be compatible, by not contrasting greatly, with the height, scale, roof form, proportion and rhythm of openings, materials, texture, details, and material color of the associated historic building.
6. The creation of an addition through enclosure of a front porch is not appropriate.
7. Additions to non-historic buildings may be appropriate if they do not detrimentally affect the historic character of the site.

C. NEW BUILDINGS & STRUCTURE ON A LANDMARK SITE

1. New buildings and structures on a Landmark site should be minimal and located in areas that minimize their visual impacts on the site's historic features.
2. New buildings and structures should be compatible with the historic site and/or principal historic building, by not contrasting greatly with the historic building or site. At the same time, new construction should reflect the era in which it was built and should not create of false sense of history by being too imitative.
3. Construction of new buildings and structures on a Landmark site shall not detract from or diminish the value of the landmark itself.
4. New buildings and structures should not diminish key views to and from a historic building or site.
5. New construction should not be located in areas of potential archaeological value.



VII. SIGNAGE

A. SIGNAGE PRINCIPLES

1. Because Nashville's landmark sites are so diverse, not all sign types and illumination will be appropriate for all landmarks.
2. Signage located on the interior of a building or attached to the inside of glass windows is not reviewed.
3. Sandwich board signs and three-dimensional sidewalk signs that are brought into the building at the close of each business day shall not be reviewed by the MHZC but may require review by Public Works.
4. Where a sign is proposed to encroach into the public right-of-way, an application shall be made with the Public Works Department in addition to the sign permit application with the MHZC. Both applications shall include the requirements of the Public Works Department available at their website: www.nashville.gov/Public-Works/Developer-Services.aspx, in addition to the MHZC submittal requirements.
5. A common signage plan is mandatory for a building or site that includes multiple businesses.
 - A common signage plan shall provide for consistency among signs with regard to at least four of the following: materials; location of each sign on the building; sign proportions; color scheme; lighting; lettering or graphic style.
 - The common signage plan shall establish an allowable area of signage for existing and future tenants with regard to all allowed sign types.
 - The common signage plan shall indicate existing nonconforming signs as well as the amount and locations of on-premise signage to be allocated to each tenant under the new plan.
6. A sign shall be brought into compliance with the provisions of these design guidelines if a sign permit is required to rebuild the sign. This does not include a panel change in a non-conforming cabinet sign, which shall be permitted. However, in no instance shall there be an increase in the degree of nonconformity.



VII. SIGNAGE

7. A sign shall be brought into compliance with the provisions of these design guidelines if at any time the sign is altered, repaired, restored or rebuilt to the extent that the cost exceeds fifty percent of the estimated replacement cost of the sign (in current dollar value). All permits within any six consecutive calendar months shall be aggregated for purposes of measuring the fifty percent standard.
8. If the alteration or repair is caused by involuntary damage or casualty, the design may be altered or repaired to its pre-damaged condition. A sign may be removed or taken off-site for repair and maintenance. The sign must be returned to the original location within 90 days of removal.
9. Signs that flash, blink, revolve, or are put into motion by the atmosphere are generally not appropriate unless such is appropriate for the era of the historic site. Neon tubing or like illumination, luminous paints, or back-lit plastics should not be used as a part of any sign.

B. REPAIR & MAINTENANCE OF HISTORIC SIGNS

1. Historic signage should be retained and should not be obscured.
2. Painted ghost signage should be maintained and not obscured. They should not be over restored so that all evidence of their age is lost.
3. Historic cabinet signs may have the face of the signage replaced to promote the new business.

C. NEW SIGNAGE FOR RESIDENTIAL BUILDING TYPES

1. Materials: Appropriate materials for signage include wood and metal.
2. Allotment: Generally, the square footage of all signs on the site shall not exceed six square feet, not including interpretive signage. Allotment may also be considered in relation to the site itself, not just the building.



VII. SIGNAGE

3. Location: Signage should be placed in locations historically used for signage and shall not obscure historic features or disturb potential archaeological sites.
4. Signage Types: Typical signage types for residential building types include a monument sign in the yard, small wall sign next to the entrance or small sign hanging from the porch rack.
5. Signage Illumination: Signs may be illuminated by remote light sources, provided that these light sources are shielded to protect adjacent properties from glare.

C. NEW SIGNAGE FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING TYPES

1. Materials: All permanent, on-premises signs shall be constructed of a rigid, weatherable material such as hard plastic, wood, MDO plywood, aluminum, steel, PVC, glass, fiberglass and/or Plexiglass. On-premises permanent signs shall not be constructed of nonrigid materials including, but not limited to, vinyl, fabric, canvas, or corrugated plastic. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to approved, permitted canopies, awnings and porticoes.
2. Allotment: Size of signage shall be based on an allotment associated with the width of the building and the signage type. (See specific signage types for additional information.)
4. Signage Location and Types: See following pages for more information about different signage types and their associated locations. In determination of number of stories, relevant to some signage types, rooftop additions shall not be considered within the number of stories. Manual and electronic changeable copy signs are generally not appropriate.
5. Signage Illumination:
 - a. External light sources shall be placed close to, and directed onto the sign and shielded to minimize glare into the street, sidewalks or onto adjacent properties.



VII. SIGNAGE

- b. Projecting light fixtures used for externally illuminated signs shall be simple and unobtrusive in appearance. They should not obscure the sign.
- c. Channel letters may be internally lit or back-lit.
- d. For cabinet signs, the background must be opaque. Only graphics, text and logos may be illuminated, and a halo of one inch around graphics, text, and logos may be non-opaque.
- e. Exposed neon may be used for lettering or as an accent.
- f. Blinking, flashing, chasing, and sequential lighting are generally not appropriate.
- g. Visible transformers/raceways must be designed to appear as part of the building, a background to the sign, and/or painted to match the building.



VII. NEW SIGNAGE FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS, CONT.

5. Allocation of Sign Area

The maximum sign area for each type of sign is established in the following tables. Specific requirements for each sign type are shown on the subsequent pages.

For each cell in the table, there is a maximum allowed sign area that may be utilized with any combination and any number of signs associated with that cell, unless otherwise noted.

The measurements for “linear feet” shall be at grade.

Existing historic ghost signs do not count towards a building’s allotment.

Wall Signs Awning Sign Canopy Sign Projecting Sign	1 square foot of sign area per 1 linear foot of building façade or 36 square feet, whichever is greater.
Shingle Sign	9 square feet per sign, limit 2 per primary entrance
Monument Sign	24 square feet
Skyline Sign Building Height:	
75’ to 100’	480 square feet
101’ to 200’	600 square feet
201’ and taller	720 square feet



VII. NEW SIGNAGE FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS, CONT.

6. Building Sign: Wall Sign

Description

A wall sign is a building sign that is attached flat to, or mounted away from but parallel to, the building façade.

General Provisions

- A wall sign shall be located lower than the window sills of the top floor for multi-story buildings.
- No portion of a wall sign may extend above the roof line or above a parapet wall of a building with a flat roof.
- No portion of a wall sign may extend above the lower eave line of a building with a pitched roof.
- A wall sign cannot cover windows or architectural details.
- An exposed raceway shall be finished to match the background wall or be integrated into the overall design of the sign.
- A wall sign can be externally or internally illuminated in accordance with the section on Illumination.



Design Standards

- A** Overall area allocation (see allocation of sign area)
(max)
- B** Projection (max) 2 inch OR
13 inches for internally
lighted or neon signage
- C** Exposed Raceway height 50% of the letter height, OR if
the Raceway is used as the sign
background, the Raceway may
extend 3 inches beyond the
largest part of the sign.



VII. NEW SIGNAGE FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS, CONT.

7. Building Sign: Wall Sign-Painted

Description

A painted wall sign is one that is painted directly onto an exterior wall. Painted signage is not appropriate for residential building types. (For murals, see IV.B. Materials.).

General Provisions

- A painted sign should only be added to rear elevations or exposed upper secondary elevations and should not cover transoms, columns, cornices, decorative elements, openings and architectural features or require the enclosure of openings.
- Signs painted on main facades or the first level of buildings are not appropriate.
- Generally, a painted sign should not be more than 125 square feet in size.
- Painted signs should serve as a sign for the current occupant(s) and should not advertise off-site businesses or products.
- Generally, painted signage should not have lighting; however, if lighting is necessary, it should be between one and two gooseneck lights or another type of light that can be hidden by an architectural feature. Metallic, fluorescent and day-glow paints are not appropriate.



VII. NEW SIGNAGE FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS, CONT.

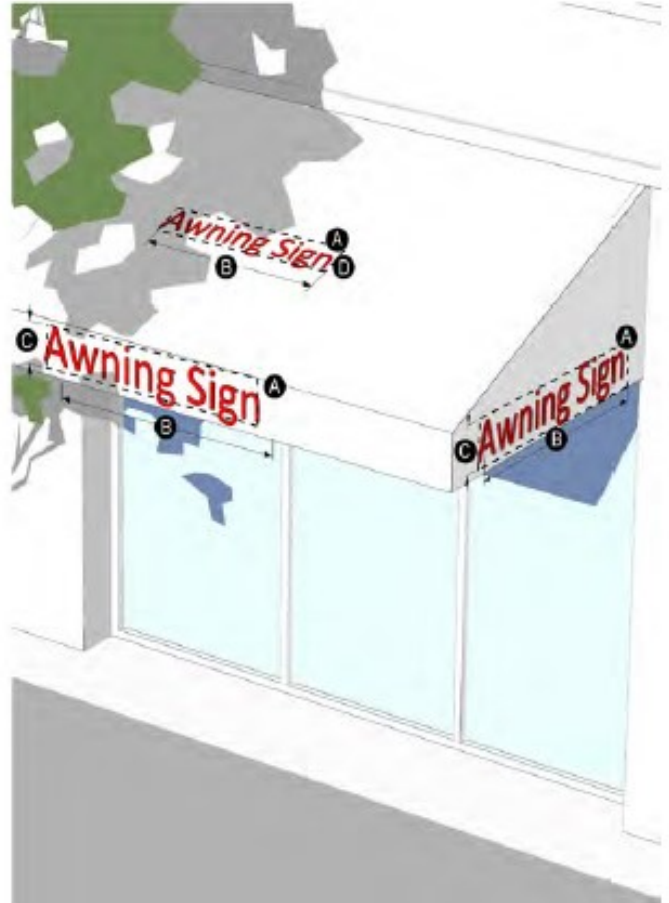
8. Building Sign: Awning Sign

Description

Awning Signs are a type of building sign. Graphics and symbols are painted, sewn or otherwise adhered to the awning material as an integrated part of the awning itself.

General Provisions

- Only awnings on first and second story windows or doors may contain signs.
- A maximum of one sign is allowed per awning face.
- An awning sign may only be externally illuminated.
- See the Awnings section of the design guidelines for additional information on the design of awnings.
- An awning sign cannot cover architectural details.



Design Standards

A Overall area allocation (max) (see allocation of sign area)

B Sign Width 75%
(max % of awning width/depth)

C Height of text and graphics on valance 2 feet
(max)

D Max area of sloping plane covered by sign 50%



VII. NEW SIGNAGE FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS, CONT.

9. Building Sign: Canopy Sign

Description

A canopy sign is a type of building sign that is attached above, below or to the face of a canopy.

General Provisions

- A canopy sign cannot extend outside the overall length or width of the canopy. However a canopy sign may extend above or below the canopy provided the sign meets all other design standards.
- Maximum of one sign per canopy face.
- Raceways are permitted for signs extending below or above the canopy.
- A canopy sign can be externally or internally illuminated in accordance with the Illumination section.
- Cabinet signs are not permitted as canopy signs.
- A canopy sign cannot cover architectural details.

See the Awning/Canopy section of the design guidelines for additional information on the design of canopies.

- This definition does not include freestanding canopies.

Design Standards

A Overall area allocation (max)	(see allocation of sign area)
B Sign Width (max % of awning width/depth)	75%
C Height of text and graphics (max)	2 feet
D Depth (max)	13 inches
E Exposed Raceway height (max)	50% of the letter height OR if the Raceway is used as the sign background, the Raceway may extend 3 inches beyond the largest part of the sign.





VII. NEW SIGNAGE FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS, CONT.

10. Building Sign: Projecting Sign

Description

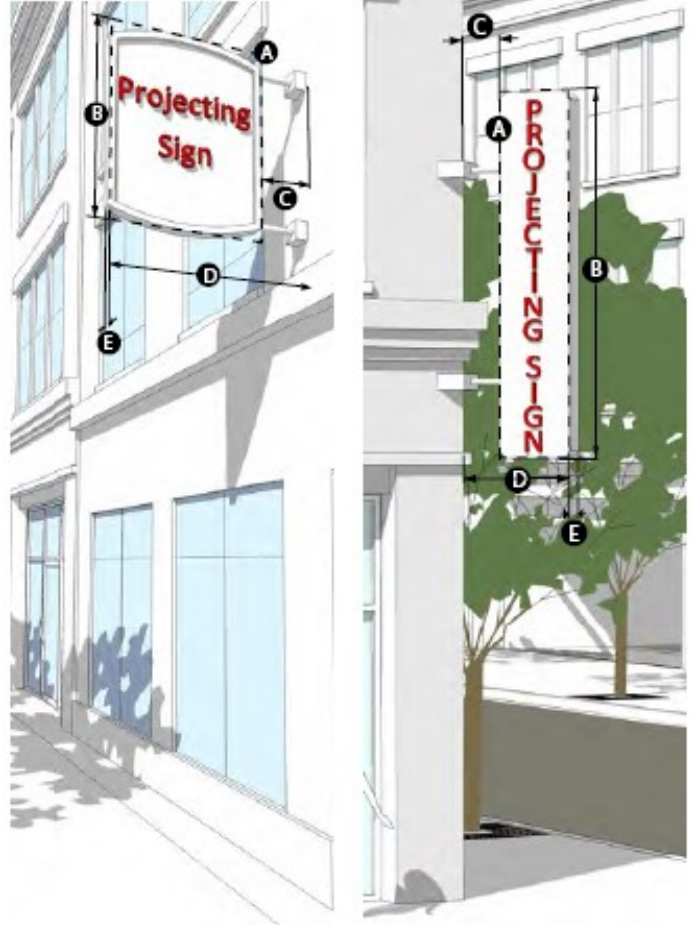
A projecting sign is a type of building sign that projects outward from the façade, typically at a ninety degree angle. Projecting signs are typically, but not always, vertically oriented and generally mounted above the first floor.

General Provisions

- A projecting sign must be located at least 25 feet from any other projecting sign.
- A projecting sign may be erected on a building corner when the building corner adjoins the intersection of two streets. Allocation of sign area from both streets may be used; however, in no case shall the sign exceed the maximum dimensional standards below.
- A projecting sign shall be located below the window sills of the third story.
- The top of a projecting sign shall not extend above the building eave or top of parapet.
- A projecting sign can be externally or internally illuminated in accordance with the Illumination design guidelines.
- Projecting signs that are 3-dimensional may be permitted in areas that such signage historically.
- A projecting sign cannot cover windows or architectural details.

Design Standards

A Overall area allocation (max)	(see allocation of sign area)
B Height (max)	
1 story buildings	10 feet
2 and 3 story buildings	16 feet
4 or more story buildings	20 feet
C Average spacing from façade (min)	1 foot
D Projection Width (max)	6 feet
E Depth of Cabinet (max)	2 inch or 18 inches for internally lighted or neon signage





VII. NEW SIGNAGE FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS, CONT.

11. Building Sign: Shingle Sign

Description

A shingle sign is a smaller building sign that projects outward, typically at a ninety degree angle, and hangs from a bracket or support that is located over or near a building entrance.

General Provisions

- Signs shall be located within 8 feet of an active pedestrian building entrance. This does not include service entries or entries that primarily remain locked.
- An active pedestrian entrance at the corner of a building is allowed signs on both streets.
- A shingle sign shall be located below the window sills of the second story.
- A shingle sign shall not be internally illuminated.
- A shingle sign cannot cover windows or architectural details.



Design Standards

A Area (max)	9 square feet
B Height (max)	3 feet
C Spacing from façade (min)	6 inches
D Width (max)	3 feet
E Depth (max)	6 inches



VII. NEW SIGNAGE FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS, CONT.

12. Ground Sign: Monument Sign

Description

A monument sign is a ground sign that is attached along its entire length to a continuous pedestal.

General Provisions

- Monument signs shall only be allowed when the existing building face is set back from the public right-of-way by at least 20’.
- Each property, which allows a monument sign, is permitted one per street frontage. One additional monument sign is allowed for properties with 300 or more feet of street frontage on one street. Where more than one sign is permitted, signs along the same street frontage shall be spaced a minimum of 200 feet apart.
- A monument sign must be set back at least 5 feet from the front property line.
- A sign erected on the top of a retaining wall is required to meet the standards for a monument sign. The height of the wall shall be included in the overall height calculation. In this case, the 5 foot minimum setback is not required.
- A sign affixed to the face of a retaining wall or seat wall that is an integral part of a plaza or streetscape design may utilize the sign area allocated to wall signs. In this case, the 5 foot minimum setback is not required.
- A monument sign can be externally or internally illuminated in accordance with the Illumination section of the design guidelines.

Design Standards

A Sign area (max per sign)	(see allocation of sign area)
B Height (max)	5 feet
C Depth (max)	18 inches





VII. NEW SIGNAGE FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS, CONT.

13. Skyline Sign

Description

A skyline sign is attached flat to or mounted away from the building façade. Sign may be parallel to the building façade or vertical. Located on the upper band of a building.

General Provisions

- A skyline sign is only allowed on buildings greater than 75 feet in height.
- A skyline sign must be located within the top third of the building.
- No portion of a skyline sign may extend above the roof line or above a parapet wall of a building with a flat roof.
- No more than one skyline sign per façade is allowed.
- Raceways are not permitted on skyline signs.
- A skyline sign can be internally (but not externally) illuminated in accordance with the Illumination section of the design guidelines.



Design Standards

A Area (max)	(see allocation of sign area)
B Height (max)	14 feet
C Width (max % of façade length)	50%



VI. GLOSSARY

Definitions

Addition: *New construction that increases the footprint, height, or building envelope of an existing structure.*

Alteration: *A replacement or change in a building material; the addition or elimination of any architectural element of a building; a repair that reconstructs any part of an existing building; construction of, or change to, an appurtenance.*

Appropriate: *Suitable for, or compatible with, a property or district, based on accepted standard and techniques for historic preservation.*

Appurtenances: *Fences, walls, paving, streetlights, curbs, gravel, signs, satellite dishes, fountains, mailboxes, and other accessory or adjunct permanent built features related to a building or streetscape and those features or structures installed for more than 30 days in a calendar year.*

Certificate of Appropriateness: *See Preservation Permit.*

Character-defining Features: *Character-defining features include the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment.*

Contributory Status: *Contributing buildings are those that contribute to the historic character of the district, and non-contributing buildings do not contribute to the overlay's historic character. Contributory status is determined based on the historic integrity of the building, the history and development of the district, and the date of construction. Generally, contributory status for each building is evaluated at the time the overlay is adopted; however, contributory status can change over time as new information becomes available and as districts age.*

Elevation: *A scaled drawing that illustrates the view of a side of a building.*

Facade: *An exterior side of a building.*



VI. GLOSSARY

Form: *The formal structure of a building—the manner of arranging and coordinating the elements and part of a building. A sense of three-dimensional mass and volume, the external outline of the building.*

Footprint: *The area on a project site that is used by the building structure and is defined by the perimeter of the building plan. Parking lots, landscapes, and other nonbuilding facilities are not included in the building footprint.*

Ghost Signage: *An old hand-painted advertising sign that has been preserved on a building for extended period of time. The name comes from their often faded appearance.*

Gobo Light:: *A light fixture that has a stencil or template placed inside or in front of the a light source to control the shape of emitted light.*

Half Story: *Usable space fully under the roof, often identified by dormers, skylights or windows in a gable field. The primary wall and eave heights are consistent with single-story building.*

Historic: *A structure or site, usually constructed more than fifty years ago, which possesses historical or architectural significance, based on the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.*

Marquee: *A permanent roof-like shelter over an entrance to a building. Marquees are usually flat roofed and sometimes have supporting posts on the side opposite the side of the marquee that attaches to the building and may include signage and lighting. Historically, marquees were used typically for hotels and theaters. Also see “Canopy”.*

Muntin: *A secondary framing member to hold panes within a window or glazed door.*

Mullion: *A vertical member separating (and often supporting) window, doors or panels set in series.*

New Construction: *Any freestanding structure on a lot constructed after the designation of the historic landmark overlay.*



VI. GLOSSARY

Orientation: *The directional expression of the front facade of a building, i.e., facing the street, facing north.*

Period of Significance: *The span of time during which significant events and activities occurred. Events and associations with historic properties are finite; most properties have a clearly definable period of significance.*

Preservation Permit: *A legal document issued by the Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission confirming review and approval of work to be done within the boundaries of a historic landmark overlay. A preservation permit is required before a building permit can be issued. Previously called Certificate of Appropriateness.*

Public Facade: *The exterior faces of buildings that front public streets.*

Public Right of Way: *A publicly owned and maintained street or walkway.*

Public Space: *Any area that is either owned, leased or for which there is held an easement by a governmental entity, or an area that is required to be open to the public.*

Reconstruction: *Construction of an accurate replica of a historic building or portion thereof, based on physical, pictorial or documentary evidence.*

Rehabilitation: *The act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.*

Repair: *See alteration.*

Shall: *What must happen.*

Should: *What must happen unless circumstances illustrate why an alternative is more appropriate.*



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Nashville, TN 37204
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The Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission reviews applications to create new historic overlays and reviews and approves preservation permits for new construction, alterations, additions, repair and demolition. For design guidelines, permit applications, and meeting information, visit us at www.nashville.gov/mbc.

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GOV](http://WWW.NASHVILLE.GOV)**



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