Guidelines for Signs

13.0 SIGNS

Policy:

Signage in the downtown should be subordinate to the overall heritage character of the area. It also should be compatible with the property on which it is located, not only in size, but in material and colour as well.

Note: Sign standards identified in the Zoning By-Laws for the City of Rossland should be followed in concordance with these guidelines. These Guidelines apply to the design of a new building as well as the conservation of a heritage structure.

Background

Like colour, signs do not affect the actual form of a building, but they can affect the overall character, perceived scale and character of a building. If designed well, as sign can have a positive effect on the character of a building and can enhance it and add interest to the building.

A sign typically serves two functions: first, to attract attention, second to convey information. If the building front is well designed, it alone can serve the attention-capturing function, allowing the sign to be focused on conveying information in a well conceived manner. All new signs should be developed with the overall context of the building and of downtown's heritage in mind.

All new signs should be developed with the overall context of the building and of the area's heritage in mind.

Signs on a heritage building

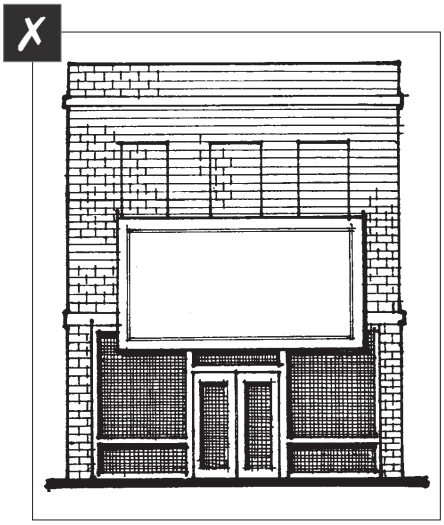
In general, signs should not be the most visible element on a building. Like colour, signs should be integrated into the overall design scheme for the building. In the past signs tended to be relatively simple. They varied in size and location quite broadly, but were simple painted panels with simple type styles. The earliest signs had no lighting. In later years an indirect light source was typical. These relationships should be continued.

The following design guidelines provide information for choosing signs and applying them in a manner that protects the character of the downtown.

Many signs add to the character of the heritage area. Projecting signs, with ornamental brackets, are encouraged.

GUIDELINES FOR SIGNS

Sign Context



Signs should be subordinate to the overall building composition. The sign sketched above is inappropriate.

13.1 Consider the building front as part of an overall sign programme.

The overall façade composition, including ornamental details and signs, should be coordinated. Signs should be in proportion to the building, such that they do not dominate the appearance. Develop a master sign plan for the entire building front, which should be used to guide individual sign design decisions.

13.2 Signs should be subordinate to the overall building composition.

Locate a sign on a building such that it will emphasize design elements of the façade itself. Mount a sign within existing architectural features when feasible. Signs should help reinforce the horizontal lines of mouldings and transoms seen along the street. Do not obscure architectural features with a sign.

13.3 A sign should be in character with the material, colour and detail of the building.

Simple letter styles and graphic designs are more appropriate on many of the restrained, vernacular structures found downtown.

Flush signs, such as the one above, are appropriate.

Permitted Sign Types

13.4 Flush-mounted (fascia) signs may be considered.

A flush-mounted wall sign, or fascia sign, is one that is mounted flat to the wall; in most cases, a flush-mounted wall sign should be positioned just above the display window in the traditional sign band. It should not be located above second floor windows.

- When feasible, place a fascia sign such that it aligns with others in the block.
- In general, the maximum wall sign area on a building should not exceed 7% of the overall façade area.
- The maximum height of an individual fascia sign shall be two feet.
- Only one fascia sign shall be allowed for each distinct façade module.

For additional information:

Auer, Michael J. *Preservation Briefs 25: The Preservation of Historic Signs.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991.

GUIDELINES FOR SIGNS*, continued...*

13.5 A directory sign may be considered.

A directory sign may be used where several businesses share a building. Align several smaller signs, or group them into a single panel as a directory to make them easier to locate. Use similar forms or backgrounds for the signs to tie them together visually and make them easier to read.

13.6 A projecting sign may be considered.

A projecting sign is attached to a building face and is mounted perpendicular to the façade. A projecting sign should be located near the business entrance at eye level, just above the door or to the side of it. The projecting sign should be mounted within the traditional sign band of a building façade. Note that these mounting heights may vary per building.

The maximum size of an individual projecting sign (one face) shall be six square feet. It may not extend from the building façade for a greater distance than six feet, or a distance equal to two-thirds the width of the abutting sidewalk, whichever distance is less. In general, only one projecting sign per building façade is appropriate.

13.7 Free-standing, pole-mounted or monument signs may be considered.

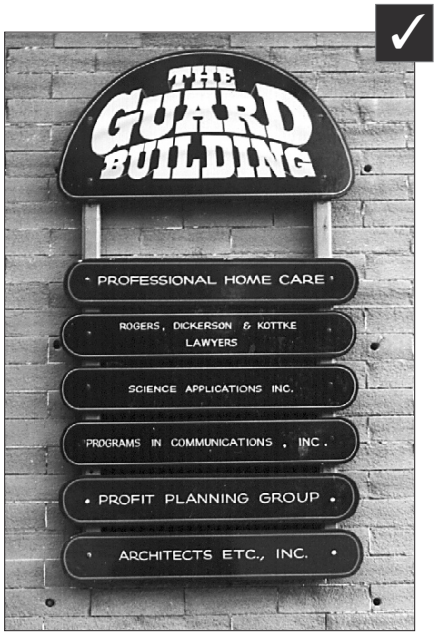
Free-standing signs should be low in scale. Free-standing signs may be used in the front yard of a residence with a commercial use or an auto-oriented commercial use. Free-standing signs should be set back from the sidewalk edge and should be landscaped at the base.

The maximum height (measured at the top of the sign) for a pole-mounted sign shall not exceed twelve feet. The maximum size of a pole-mounted sign shall be twelve square feet. The maximum size of a monument sign shall be twelve square feet.

13.8 An awning or canopy sign is restricted to the valence, or vertical face, facing the street.

An awning sign may be woven, sewn or painted onto the vertical valence of an awning. The wording or graphics should be simple and concise. The maximum area of an awning sign may not exceed 20% of the awning panel or eight square feet, whichever is the lesser amount. Internal illumination of an awning sign is inappropriate.

Wording of signs should be simple and concise, referring to the business name and / or service offered. Graphics, plastic or cutout lettering should not be located on a canopy.



A directory sign may be used where several businesses share a building.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR SIGNS, continued...

13.9 A painted window sign may be considered.

Painted window signs should be painted on the glass storefront window. The wording or graphics should be simple and concise.

The maximum area of a window sign may not exceed 20% of the window or eight square feet, whichever is the lesser amount.

Inappropriate Sign Types

A neon sign is prohibited.

13.10 Signs that are out of character with those seen traditionally, and that would alter the heritage character of the street, are inappropriate.

Flashing, rotating, animated or neon signs are prohibited. Any sign that visually overpowers the building or obscures significant architectural features is inappropriate. Roof-mounted signs also are inappropriate.

13.11 Internally illuminated signs placed or hung on the interior of display windows are inappropriate.

Neon, backlit or poster signs should not be placed on the inside of store windows.

Sign Materials

13.12 Sign materials shall be compatible with that of the building façade.

Painted wood and metal are appropriate materials for signs. Their use is encouraged. Unfinished materials, including unpainted wood, are discouraged because they are out of character with the historic context. Plastic should be used only in limited amounts on signs. Plastic may not be the predominant material on any sign. Highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read are inappropriate.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR SIGNS, continued...

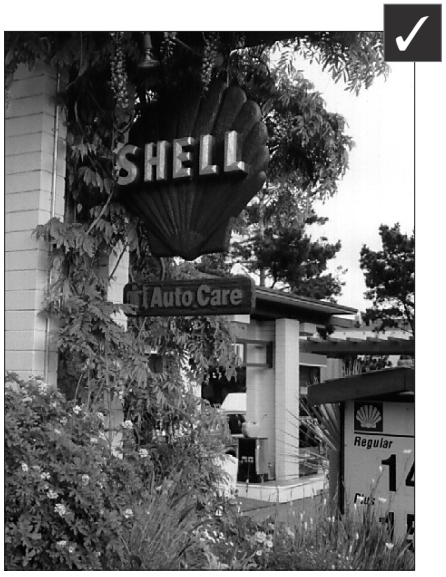
Corporate Signs

13.13 Corporate signs shall be compatible in size, material and composition to those seen historically.

Large corporations can, and shall, be in compliance with the design guidelines for signs as established in this document.

Corporate signs do not have to distinguish themselves from the historic streetscape. They should be equally compatible in size, material and composition to those signs used historically. Corporate logos and colour schemes can be used as a part of the sign composition, but should be subordinate in character to the overall building composition. Overpowering colours should be restrained for use as accent colours.

Internally lit, flashing or neon signs are not appropriate for use on heritage buildings, despite what corporate policies might dictate.



Large corporations shall design signs to be compatible in size, material and composition to those seen historically.

Sign Content

13.14 Symbol signs are encouraged.

Symbols add interest to the street, are quickly read, and are remembered better than written words.

Symbol signs are encouraged.

13.15 Use colours for the sign that are compatible with those of the building front.

13.16 Simple sign designs are preferred.

Typefaces that are in keeping with those seen in the area historically are encouraged. Avoid sign types that appear too contemporary. Also limit the number of colours used on a sign. In general, no more than three colours should be used.

Simple sign designs are preferred.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR SIGNS, continued...

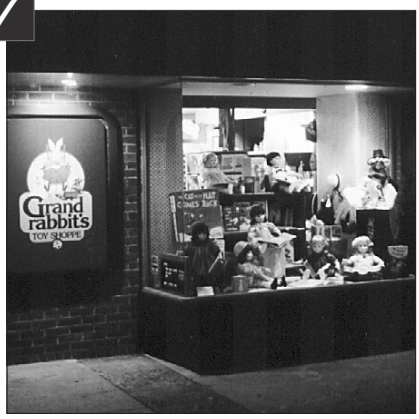
13.17 Select letter styles and sizes that will be compatible with the building front.

Historic letter styles were both serif and sans-serif fonts. Some were relatively simple while others were more ornate. Avoid hard-to-read or overly intricate typeface styles.

The following fonts are sample styles (note that this list does not include all acceptable letter styles):

- *Chancery: Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz*
- Krone: Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
- Colonna: Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
- Geneva: Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Lighting



Display window illumination should complement the entire building scheme.

13.18 Interior, or display window, lighting should be of a warm colour, similar to that used for the external sign illumination.

Display window illumination should complement the entire building scheme. A similar use in colours on façade elements, signage and display windows will add to the attractiveness of the business and the streetscape.

13.19 The light for a sign shall be an indirect source.

Light shall be directed at the sign from an external, shielded lamp. Internal illumination of a sign, including neon, is inappropriate. A warm light, similar to daylight, is appropriate. The blue cast of fluorescent light or the orange cast of sodium vapour causes a shift in the colours of the street as seen historically and are strongly discouraged as light sources.

The light for a sign shall be an indirect source.

Glossary

GLOSSARY

Alignment The arrangement of objects along a straight line.

Arch A structure built to support the weight above an opening. A true arch is curved. It consists of wedge-shaped stones or bricks called Voussoirs (vu-swar'), put together to make a curved bridge which spans the opening.

Balcony A platform projecting from the wall of an upper story, enclosed by a railing or balustrade, with an entrance from the building and supported by brackets, columns, or cantilevered out.

Baluster A short, upright column or urn-shaped support of a railing.

Balustrade A row of balusters and the railing connecting them. Used as a stair rail and also above the cornice on the outside of a building.

Bargeboard A projecting board, often decorated, that acts as trim to cover the ends of the structure where a pitched roof overhangs a gable.

Bay Window A window or set of windows which project out from a wall, forming an alcove or small space in a room; ordinarily begins at ground level, but may be carried out on brackets or corbels.

Board and Batten Vertical plank siding with joints covered by narrow wood strips.

Bracket A supporting member for a projecting element or shelf, sometimes in the shape of an inverted L and sometimes as a solid piece or a triangular truss.

Caning Metal struts supporting leaded glass.

Canopy A roofed structure constructed of fabric or other material placed so as to extend outward from a building providing a protective shield for doors, windows and other openings, supported by the building and supports extended to the ground directly under the canopy or cantilevered from the building.

Clapboards Narrow, horizontal, overlapping wooden boards, usually thicker along the bottom edge, that form the outer skin of the walls of many wood frame houses. The horizontal lines of the overlaps generally are from four to six inches apart in older houses.

Column A slender upright structure, generally consisting of a cylindrical shaft, a base, and a capital; pillar: It is usually a supporting or ornamental member in a building.

Coursed Ashlar A square, hewn stone used in building. It also refers to a thick dressed, square stone used for facing brick walls, etc.

GLOSSARY, continued...

Dormer A window set upright in a sloping roof. The term is also used to refer to the roofed projection in which this window is set.

Eave The underside of a sloping roof projecting beyond the wall of a building.

Elevation A mechanically accurate, "head-on" drawing of a face of a building or object, without any allowance for the effect of the laws of perspective. Any measurement on an elevation will be in a fixed proportion, or scale, to the corresponding measurement on the real building.

Façade Front or principal face of a building, any side of a building that faces a street or other open space.

False Front A front wall which extends beyond the sidewalls of a building to create a more imposing façade.

Fascia A flat board with a vertical face that forms the trim along the edge of a flat roof, or along the horizontal, or "eaves," sides of a pitched roof. The rain gutter is often mounted on it.

Fenestration The arrangement and design of windows in a building.

Floor Area Ratio The relationship of the total floor area of a building to the land area of its site, as defined in a ratio in which the numerator is the floor area, and the denominator is the site area.

Finial The decorative, pointed terminus of a roof or roof form.

Frame A window component: see window parts.

Gable The portion, above eave level, of an end wall of a building with a pitched or gambrel roof. In the case of a pitched roof this takes the form of a triangle. The term is also used sometimes to refer to the whole end wall.

Joist One of the horizontal wood beams that support the floors or ceilings of a house. They are set parallel to one another—usually from 1'0" to 2'0" apart—and span between supporting walls or larger wood beams.

Lap Siding See clapboards.

Lintel A heavy horizontal beam of wood or stone over an opening of a door or window to support the weight above it.

Moulding A decorative band or strip of material with a constant profile or section designed to cast interesting shadows. It is generally used in cornices and as trim around window and door openings.

GLOSSARY, continued...

Oriel Window A projecting bay with windows, which emerges from the building at a point above ground level. It is often confused with a bay window which ordinarily begins at ground level.

Pier The part of a wall between windows or other openings. The term is also used sometimes to refer to a reinforcing part built out from the surface of a wall; a buttress.

Pilaster A support or pier treated architecturally as a column, with a base, shaft, and capital that is attached to a wall surface.

Post A piece of wood, metal, etc., usually long and square or cylindrical, set upright to support a building, sign, gate, etc.; pillar; pole.

Preservation The act or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a building or structure, and the existing form and vegetative cover of a site. It may include initial stabilization work, where necessary, as well as ongoing maintenance of the historic building materials.

Protection The act or process of applying measures designed to affect the physical condition of a property be defending or guarding it from deterioration, loss or attack, or to cover or shield the property from danger of injury. In the case of buildings and structures, such treatment is generally of a temporary nature and anticipates future historic preservation treatment; in the case of archaeological sites, the protective measure may be temporary or permanent.

Quoin (koin) Dressed stones or bricks at the corners of the buildings, laid so that their faces are alternately large and small. Originally used to add strength to the masonry wall, later used decoratively.

Rafter Any of the beams that slope from the ridge of a roof to the eaves and serve to support the roof.

Reconstruction The act or process of reproducing by new construction the exact form and detail of a vanished building, structure, or object, or part thereof, as it appeared at a specific period of time.

Rehabilitation The act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural, and cultural value.

Renovation The act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration which makes possible a contemporary use.

GLOSSARY, continued...

Restoration The act or process of accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later work or by the replacement of missing earlier work.

Roof The top covering of a building. Following are some types:

- ***Gable roof*** has a pitched roof with ridge and vertical ends.
- ***Hip roof*** has sloped ends instead of vertical ends.
- ***Shed roof*** (lean-to) has one slope only and is built against a higher wall.
- ***Jerkin-head*** (clipped gable or hipped gable) is similar to gable but with the end clipped back.
- ***Gambrel roof*** is a variation of a gable roof, each side of which has a shallower slope above a steeper one.

Sash See window parts.

Shape The general outline of a building or its façade.

Siding The narrow horizontal or vertical wood boards that form the outer face of the walls in a traditional wood frame house. Horizontal wood siding is also referred to as clapboards. The term “siding” is also more loosely used to describe any material that can be applied to the outside of a building as a finish.

Sill The lowest horizontal member in a frame or opening for a window or door. Also, the lowest horizontal member in a framed wall or partition.

Size The dimensions in height and width of a building's face.

Soffit The underside of a structural part, as of a beam, arch, etc.

Stile A vertical piece in a panel or frame, as of a door or window.

Stabilization The fact or process of applying measures designed to re-establish a weather resistant enclosure and the structural stability of an unsafe or deteriorated property while maintaining the essential form as it exists at present.

Store Front The street level façade of a commercial building, usually having display windows.

GLOSSARY, continued...

Visual Continuity A sense of unity or belonging together that elements of the built environment exhibit because of similarities among them.

Window Parts The moving units of a window are known as Sashes and move within the fixed Frame. The Sash may consist of one large Pane of glass or may be subdivided into smaller panes by thin members called Muntins or Glazing Bars. Sometimes in nineteenth-century houses windows are arranged side by side and divided by heavy vertical wood members called Mullions. For a diagram of window parts, see pages 72 and 73.