

City of Victoria
Heritage
Program



*Building
on our past*

**SIGN & AWNING
GUIDELINES**



Sign and Awning Guidelines

Purpose

Sign guidelines provide design direction for anyone making an application to put a sign on a heritage-designated building. They also set out the general criteria that the Planning Department uses to review sign applications. These guidelines are an expansion of, but subordinate to, the regulations contained in the *City Sign Bylaw*. Part 8 of the Sign Bylaw contains specific regulations pertaining to Old Town.

Procedure

Before any sign is erected, relocate or altered, it must be approved by the Permits & Inspections Division, who will issue a permit. Erecting, altering or relocating signs on heritage-designated buildings may require an additional step. All signs on heritage buildings are reviewed by the Heritage Planner before a permit is issued. These sign applications may be submitted to the Heritage Advisory Committee for recommendation to City Council.

Basic Principles

Special, inflexible design guidelines are not desired because of the enormous variety of architectural styles, exterior treatments and surrounding motifs of heritage buildings. Any sign, however, should respect the integrity of the building design and the general character of the signs and buildings in the immediate vicinity. The following basic principles apply.

- a) No sign should be constructed or situated so that it disfigures or conceals any significant architectural feature of the building
- b) Signs should identify and be simple rather than "busy".
- c) The overall design of a sign, including its size, shape, material, texture, colour and method of lighting, should be compatible with the building's architecture.

i) Materials:

Wood, metal, leather, glass and fabric (canopy) are acceptable. Plastic signs are less desirable and special attention to detail is required where plastics are used.



for Heritage-Designated Buildings

Comprehensive Sign Scheme

The use of high-gloss plastic should be minimized.

ii) Texture

Sign texture (i.e., rough cut wood, raised lettering, smooth painted surface) should complement the texture of the building (i.e., rusticated granite, ornate iron balustrades, smooth stucco).

iii) Lighting Methods:

Indirect and neon lighting are permitted. Back-lit fluorescent illumination is not appropriate except for individual channel letters.

iv) Colour:

Sign colours should complement the colour of the building.

v) Methods of Attachment:

Check the building's condition before erecting a sign, to ensure that no physical damage will result. Sign fastenings should be inconspicuous, unless they form an integral part of the overall sign design, in which case they should use traditional materials such as wood or wrought iron. Lag bolts should be inserted into mortar joints, not through brick or stone units.

Owners of heritage designated buildings that are visually prominent and house a large number of commercial businesses are encouraged to prepare an overall sign plan for each of their buildings. This will minimize conflicts and delays when individual sign applications are made and ensure that one message is not lost due to the proliferation and competition of other signs. Applicants are responsible to ensure their application complies with the sign allowance requirements of the Sign Bylaw.

Awning Principles

Awnings should respect the integrity of the building design and the general character of awnings and buildings in the immediate vicinity. Specifically:

- a) Awnings should be installed within masonry openings so that they do not obscure details in the masonry or distort the proportions of architectural features.
- b) The colour scheme of awnings should be compatible with those of windows and other architectural features. For heritage buildings, traditional retractable-style awnings may be more appropriate than fixed quarter and half-barrel type awnings.
- d) Back-lit awnings are not appropriate for heritage buildings.



Other Information

For further information, contact:

The Planning Department,
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Victoria, B.C. V8W 1P6
Telephone: (250) 361-0384

To enquire about sign permits, contact:

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