



HISTORIC REVIEW COMMISSION OF PITTSBURGH

HISTORIC DISTRICTS DESIGN GUIDELINES: **TEMPORARY SIGNS**

A. Background and Policy

1. The Historic Review Commission of Pittsburgh has jurisdiction over all exterior alterations to buildings in City Designated Historic Districts that are visible from a public street or way. This includes all external signs, regardless of their material and regardless of their longevity.
2. There must be a sign permit for all permanent signs. The City Zoning Office considers all signs of greater than two or three weeks duration to be permanent signs.
3. All permanent signs must meet the zoning regulations and design guidelines for the zoning and historic districts in which they are found.
4. The Historic Review Commission does not wish to make it impossible for businesses to utilize temporary signs to advertise sales or special services. The Commission also does not want to allow the use of temporary signs in such a way as to skirt or avoid the sign regulations in the Pittsburgh Urban Zoning Code and the design guidelines for the City Designated Historic Districts.

B. Guidelines

1. Property or business owners must apply to the Historic Review Commission, and receive a Certificate of Appropriateness for all temporary signs.
2. Temporary signs may remain in place for a maximum of four (4) weeks.
3. Property or business owners may apply for a maximum of two (2) temporary signs in any twelve (12) month period.
4. If a permitted temporary sign is not taken down within four (4) weeks of its installation, the property or business owner will not be issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for another temporary sign for a period of six (6) months following the sign's removal.
5. Temporary signs may **not** be installed in such a way as to cover any of the windows or significant architectural features of a building.
6. Temporary signs shall be subject the same size restrictions as set forth for wall signs in the Neighborhood Business District Sign Regulations, Chapter 919.04 of the Pittsburgh Urban Zoning Code (attached).
7. The Historic Review Commission will not issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for a temporary sign to any applicant who has an outstanding violation of the Pittsburgh Historic Preservation Ordinance.
8. These limitations shall not apply to temporary real estate sale and rental signs, official government flags, temporary political campaign signs, or temporary displays or signs in the nature of decorations associated with national, local, or religious holidays, as permitted in the Pittsburgh Urban Zoning Code.

Neighborhood Business District Sign Regulation

919.04A *General*

(A.1) *Purpose.* The purpose of these special provisions is to provide control over signage in commercial areas of the City which includes uses which are within and adjacent to residential neighborhoods, where such uses are physically oriented toward pedestrian traffic rather than vehicular traffic, and where the existing general provisions regulating signage allow types and sizes of signs which are not appropriate to these types of districts.

(A.2) *Application.* These regulations shall apply only to those areas specifically listed hereunder, and shall be used in addition to the general provisions for signs found above. Where differences occur between the provisions of Section 919.04 and those found elsewhere in this Chapter, the provisions of this section shall apply.

In the Neighborhood Business Sign Districts, there shall be applied the regulations prescribed in this chapter and the qualifying regulations prescribed in other chapters specifically referred to in the following sections of this chapter.

(A.3) *District Classifications.* To carry out the purpose and provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, the following Neighborhood Business Sign Districts are hereby established:

Name	Boundary
1. East Carson Street	That area defined by the A1 Commercial/Residential Associated District along and adjacent to East Carson Street, as defined by ordinance on the City's Zoning District Map.

(A.4) *Special Definitions.*

(1) "Projecting Sign" means any business or identification sign which sole means of support is by attachment to a legal structure on a zoning lot and which projects more than twelve (12) inches into a public right of way. A projection sign shall contain no more than two (2) sign faces, which include lettering, and these sign faces shall be back-to-back.

(1) *Number of Signs.*

A. For each street level business, a maximum of one (1) wall sign, two (2) window signs, and either one (1) awning sign or one (1) projecting sign or one (1) ground sign shall be permitted for each facade of a structure facing a street.

B. For each upper floor business, a maximum of two (2) window signs, one (1) door sign, and either one (1) awning sign or one (1) projecting sign shall be permitted on the facade of a structure facing the street.

C. The maximum area of all signs, including ground signs, shall be fifteen percent (15%) of the area of the face of the building on which the signs are proposed. For ground signs, the area of the face of the buildings nearest to and visible from the ground signs shall be considered for this calculation.

(2) *Size of Signs.*

A. Wall signs shall be a maximum of two (2) square feet in area for every lineal foot of the building frontage, up to a maximum of forty (40) square feet. Maximum lettering size shall be eighteen (18) inches.

B. For each street level business window and doors, signs shall be a maximum of twenty percent (20%) of the glazed area of the window or door in which they are placed up to a maximum of eight (8) square feet. For each upper floor business, window or door signs shall be a maximum of fifty percent (50%) of the glazed area of the window or door in which they are placed, up to a maximum of ten (10) square feet.

C. Projecting signs shall be a maximum of nine (9) square feet per side. The area of irregular or three-dimensional shapes shall be computed by multiplying the height and the width at the widest points.

D. Ground signs shall be limited to forty (40) square feet, and the sign and sign structure shall be no higher than twelve (12) feet.

(3) *Location of Signs.*

A. No sign or sign structure or support shall be placed onto or obscure or damage any significant architectural feature of a building, including but not limited to a window or a door frame, cornice, molding, ornamental feature, or unusual or fragile material.

B. No sign shall be painted onto any significant architectural feature, including but not limited to a window or doorframe, cornice, molding, ornamental feature, or unusual or fragile material.

C. No sign or structure support shall be located on the roof of a building or structure, nor shall any sign or sign structure or support extend beyond the cornice line of any building structure.

D. Projecting signs shall extend no more than four (4) feet from the front of a building or structure or two-thirds (2/3) of the width of the sidewalk beneath the sign where such sidewalk exists, whichever is less. The bottom most point of a projecting sign shall be no less than ten (10) feet from above the grade beneath the sign.

(4) *Sign Materials.*

A. The following types of signs and materials shall not be permitted for signs in a Neighborhood Business Sign District:

1. Internally illuminated box signs;
2. Individually illuminated channel letters;
3. Flashing, moving or intermittently illuminated sign;
4. Internally illuminated awnings.

B. Wall signs shall be painted only on to separate material, which is applied to the facade of the building.

C. For awning signs, letters shall be applied or painted onto the valance portion of the awning only.

(5) *Sign Illumination*

A. Internally illuminated signs or letters shall not be permitted.

B. The sign face may be illuminated with small shielded spotlights, which are placed as to not glare onto of the public right of way, or into adjacent properties or neon tubing may be attached to the face of the sign for illumination.

(6) *Historic Plaques.*

- A. In addition to the signs permitted above, the City's historic designation plaque and one other historic plaque may be applied to a wall of a building or structure. These historic plaques shall be a maximum of one and one-half (1-1/2) square feet in area.

(7) *East Carson Street Historic District.*

A. *Intent.*

This commercial area is an historic district with a unique collection of nineteenth and twentieth century structures, built in a variety of architectural styles, but forming a continuous urban fabric along an important city arterial. The vast majority of structures are attached brick structures built to the property line along the street with narrow sidewalks along a two (2) or three-lane cartway.

The intent of these special provisions is to minimize the possibly adverse effect of signs on these significant architectural resources, to improve the safety of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and improve the communicative value of the signage for the primary users of the district.

A further intent of these regulations is to provide for signage which is compatible with the architectural character of the district, so that the historic characteristics of the district are not adversely impacted by inappropriate signage.

B. *Number of Signs.*

1. One (1) ground sign shall be permitted per zoning lot and shall substitute for a projecting sign or an awning sign.

C. *Size of Signs.*

1. Ground signs shall be limited to twenty-five (25) square feet in area, and the sign and sign structure shall be no higher than eight (8) feet.
2. The limitation on the total area of all signs shall not include signs which are determined to be a significant historic element of the building and which are an integral part of the building facade.

D. *Location of Signs.*

1. Signs for street level businesses shall be located below the sills of the second floor windows and above the frame of the storefront windows.
2. Ground signs shall be located within the buildable area of the lot. Ground signs shall be used only where the building or structure on a zoning lot is set back from the front property line by at least twenty (20) feet. Ground signs shall not be supported by poles, uprights, braces or other means of support, which are not a part of the sign face.

E. *Sign Materials.*

1. Sign supports and structures shall be designed to be the minimum necessary to safely install the sign. Sign structures and supports shall be designed to be compatible with the architecture of the building.