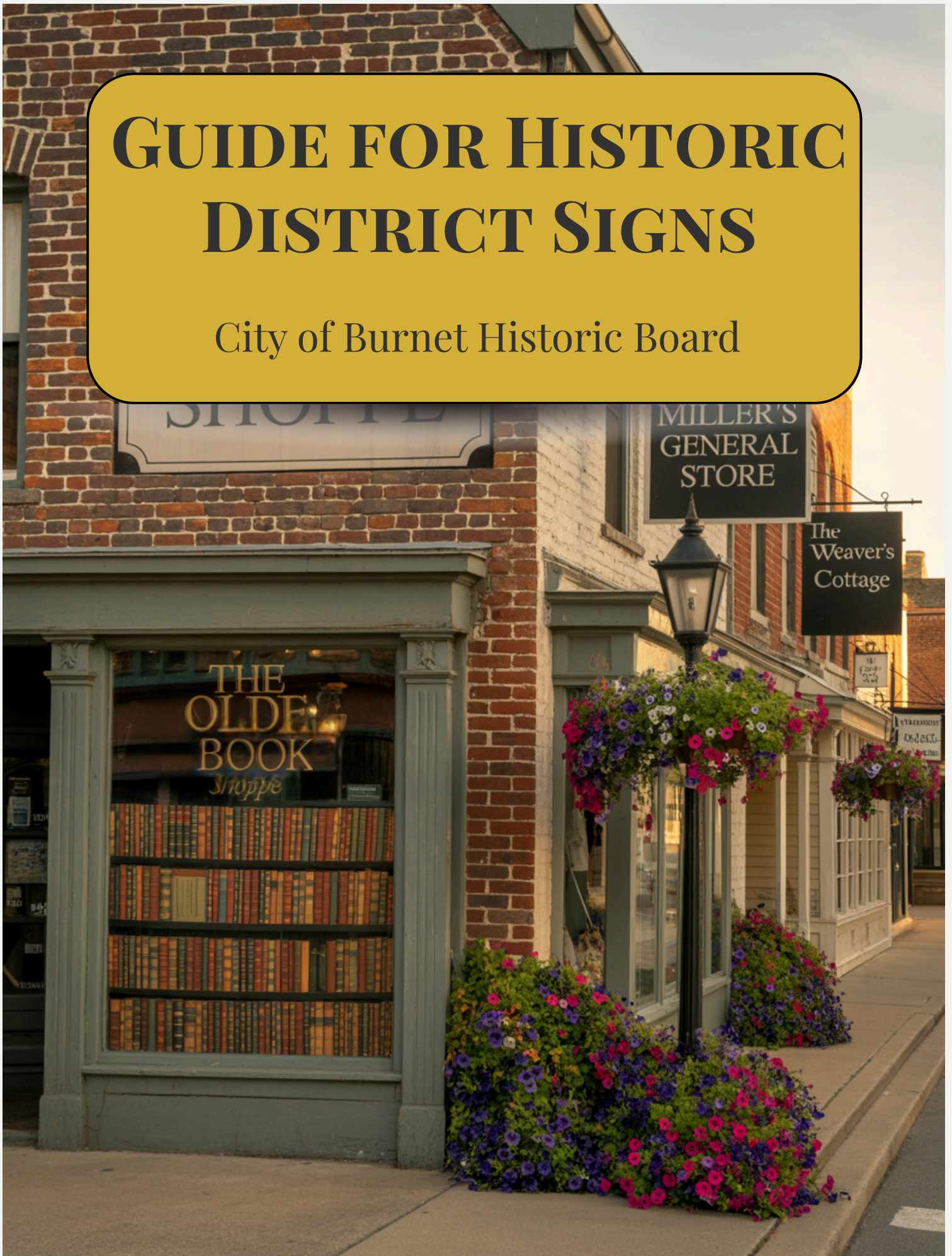


GUIDE FOR HISTORIC DISTRICT SIGNS

City of Burnet Historic Board





This booklet is intended as a planning resource to help business owners, designers, and property managers develop signage that fits within the character of the Historic District. The examples and suggestions included here are not mandatory but are offered to provide guidance and inspiration when considering sign designs.

The Historic District ordinance as adopted from time to time remains the controlling requirement. All signage must comply with the ordinance, which states “Signs shall be designed to complement the historic character of the building and district.”

When businesses have an established logo, brand color, or font, the Historic Preservation Officer/Board will take that into consideration during review. Flexibility may be allowed when brand identity is a factor, provided the design does not conflict with the historic setting.

The goal of this guide is to support businesses in creating signage that both expresses their unique identity and enhances the historic character of the district.

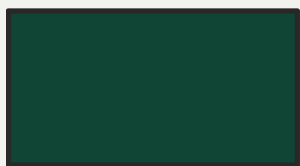
This booklet applies to all signs located within the Burnet Historic District. All signs require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) prior to installation, alteration, or replacement.



COLORS

Colors for signs in the Historic District should reflect those traditionally used during the period of the buildings they accompany. Rich, muted tones such as deep greens, burgundy reds, navy blues, black and warm creams are encouraged, as they provide strong visibility while maintaining a historic character. Minor accent colors may be allowed, particularly for blade signs or temporary signs, provided they are used sparingly and do not overwhelm the overall design. Neon, overly bright, or fluorescent colors are not permitted, as they detract from the architectural setting and historic streetscape.

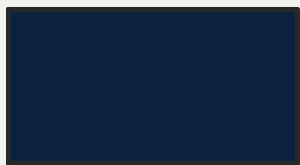
TYPICAL HISTORIC COLOR PALETTE



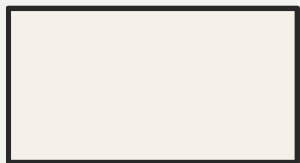
Deep Green



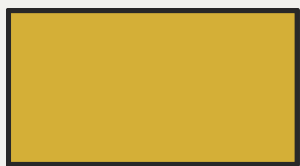
Burgundy



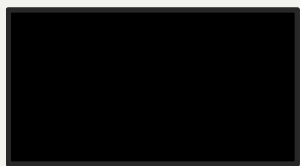
Navy



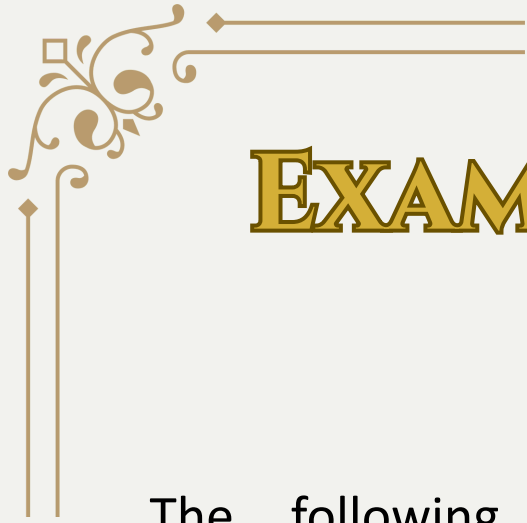
Ivory



Gold



Black



EXAMPLE SIGNS

The following examples illustrate sign designs that meet the intent of the Historic District sign guidelines. Each sample shows how traditional colors, fonts, and motifs can be combined in ways that highlight the business name while maintaining harmony with the surrounding architecture. These examples are not mandatory templates, but rather guides to help inspire sign designs that are historically appropriate, legible, and attractive.



SIGN SIZES

Sign Type	Maximum Size	Mounting / Height	Illumination	Notes
Wall/Flush Sign	≤ 20% of wall area or 75 sq ft,	Flat against façade; cannot	External, shielded only	Uses existing ordinance size
Projecting/Blade Sign (Pedestrian-	6–15 sq ft per face	Bottom ≥ 8 ft above sidewalk;	External, shielded fixtures only	No internal lighting or
Window Sign (Permanent)	≤ 20–25% of window area	May be inside or outside of glass	External, shielded, soft	Temporary signs subject to same
Awning/Canopy Sign	≤ 8 sq ft or 20% of awning face;	On valance or face	External, shielded only	Awnings may be fabric or wood;
Freestanding Sign (Individual	≤ 12 sq ft per face; max 8 ft	In landscaped base	External, shielded only	Only where wall or projecting
Multi-Tenant Directory Sign	≤ 10% of ground-floor façade area;	Wall-mounted only; vertical or	External, shielded only	Panels must be uniform in style;



Fonts

Fonts used in the Historic District should reflect the traditional character of the buildings and streetscape. Classic serif typefaces, simple sans serifs, and modest decorative styles are encouraged for readability and period-appropriate appearance. Script fonts can be used for larger sized lettering. See the attached sign examples for ideas on appropriate fonts

Minor decorative variations may be permitted for blade signs or temporary signs, provided they remain legible and do not distract from the historic setting. Overly modern, novelty, or exaggerated fonts are not acceptable, as they conflict with the architectural context and diminish the district's historic character.

All signs shall clearly identify the business name or trade name in text as the primary element. The lettering of the name must remain the dominant feature of the design. At least 50% of the sign area should be devoted to lettering (business name, trade name, or functional descriptor). Lettering shall be simple, legible, and consistent with the historic character of the district.



MOTIFS & DECORATIVE ELEMENTS

Motifs and decorative details on signs should be drawn from traditional forms that reflect the historic era of the district. Simple embellishments such as borders, scrollwork, rosettes, or modest geometric patterns may be used to frame or highlight lettering. Trade symbols — such as a key for a locksmith, a book for a bookstore, or a mortar and pestle for a pharmacy — are also appropriate when used in proportion and as secondary elements to the text. When a business has an established logo or branded graphic, the Historic Preservation Officer/Board will take that into consideration. Logos may be permitted as part of a sign design if they are scaled appropriately and adapted to avoid conflict with the historic setting. Modern cartoon imagery is unacceptable, as it detracts from the district's historic character.

Traditional sign-painting techniques are encouraged, such as modest drop shadows, outlines, or the use of gold leaf for emphasis. Decorative borders or motifs may be used to complement lettering, provided they do not overwhelm the design.

SAMPLE MOTIFS & DECORATIVE ELEMENTS

There are literally hundreds, if not thousands of motifs and decorative elements. These are just a few examples.



Fleur-de-lis



Star



Laurel Wreath



Rope Border



Diamond Repeat



Greek Key



Dentil Trim



Flourishes



Symbol



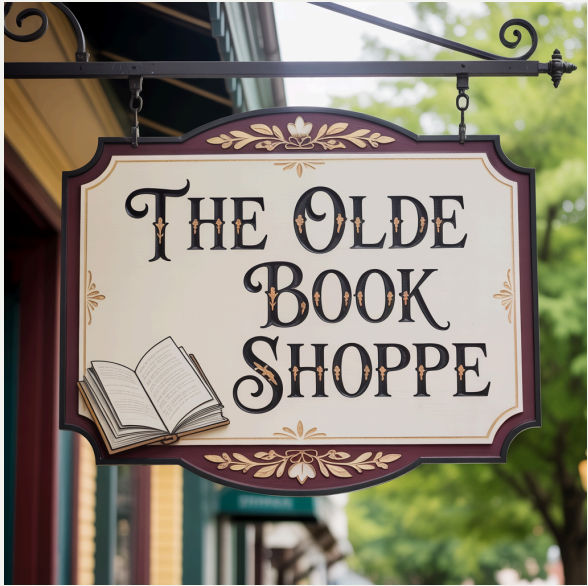
LOGOS & ILLUSTRATIONS

The key element in using logos and illustrations is that they should be secondary to the name.

A logo, symbol, or illustration may be included, but should not exceed 25% of the total sign design. Logos must be scaled to complement the text and should not be taller than the combined lines of text. For example, if there are three lines of text, the logo or illustration should not be taller than the three lines together. Portraits, photos, cartoon characters, or large faces are prohibited unless historically documented for that business or building.

SAMPLE SIGNS WITH LOGOS & ILLUSTRATIONS

These are just some quick samples to give you some ideas. You are not required to use these exact designs although you are certainly welcome to do so.



MORE SAMPLE SIGNS WITH LOGOS & ILLUSTRATIONS



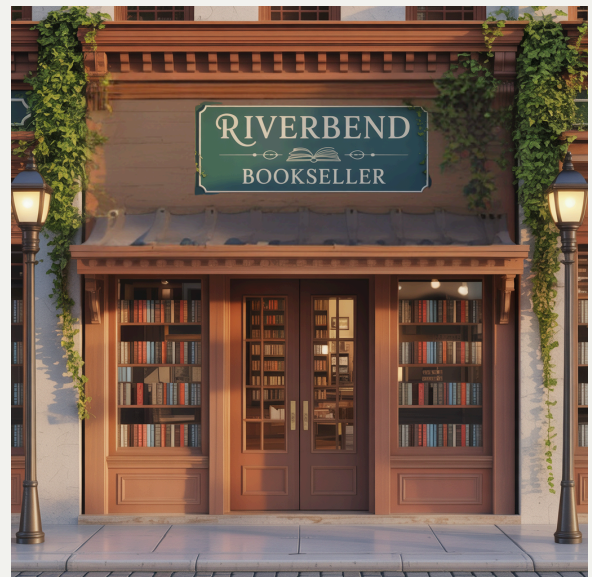
MORE SAMPLE SIGNS WITH LOGOS & ILLUSTRATIONS

The key element in using logos and illustrations is that they should be secondary to the name.



SAMPLE WALL SIGNS

Here are some ideas to get you thinking about what you might do for wall signs. Note that a business may have both a wall sign in addition to a blade/projecting sign.





SAMPLE WALL SIGNS

MORE SAMPLE WALL SIGNS.



SAMPLE WALL SIGNS

MORE EXAMPLES.





SAMPLE PROJECTING/ BLADE SIGNS

Projecting/Blade signs should be Pedestrian-Scale. A Pedestrian-Scale sign is designed primarily for visibility and legibility to people walking on the sidewalk, not for drivers at a distance. Pedestrian-scale signs are modest in size, mounted at a height of at least eight feet above the sidewalk to clear head height while remaining eye-level and shall project no more than one foot from the side of the building.

All illumination shall be external, shielded, and stationary. Internally illuminated cabinets, exposed bulbs, neon, digital/LED message boards, and flashing lights are prohibited.

Note that a business may have both a wall sign in addition to a projecting/blade sign.

SAMPLE PROJECTING/ BLADE SIGNS

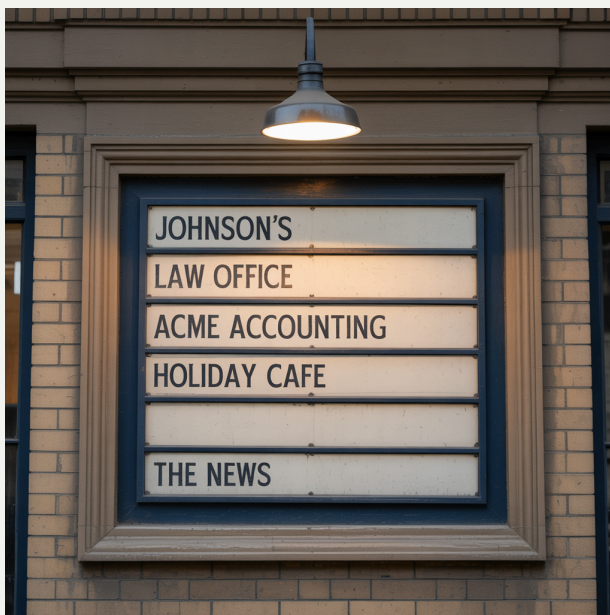


SAMPLE PROJECTING/ BLADE SIGNS

CONTINUED



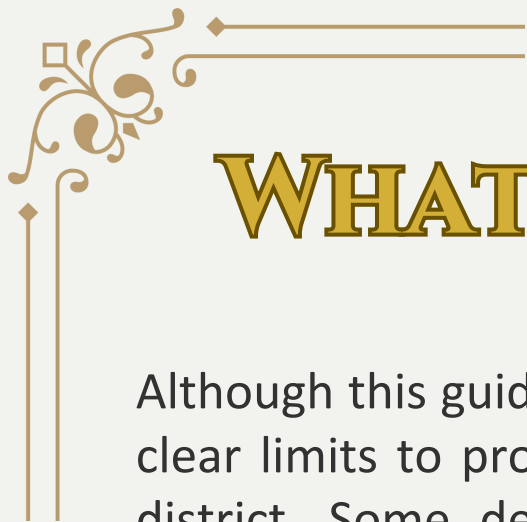
SAMPLE MULTI-TENANT SIGNS





SAMPLE WINDOW/ DOOR SIGNS





WHAT NOT TO DO

Although this guide encourages creativity, there are clear limits to protect the historic character of the district. Some design choices—such as oversized graphics, neon colors, or signs that ignore the balance between text and image—conflict with both the spirit and requirements of the ordinance. The following practices should be avoided:

- Signs made entirely of logos without the business name in text.
- Logos or illustrations that dominate the sign face or exceed the height of the lettering.
- Neon, fluorescent, or glowing colors and finishes.
- Cartoon characters, portraits, or large faces, unless historically documented.
- Fonts that are overly modern, novelty-based, or difficult to read.
- Photographic images or full-color printed graphic panels.
- Cluttered designs with too many words, fonts, or motifs competing for attention.



KEY TAKE-A-WAYS

- Flat wall signs should be secondary to the building, never overwhelming architectural features.
- Use approved historic palettes for consistency and harmony.
- Choose serif fonts or classic sans serifs; avoid novelty or cartoon styles.
- Motifs are allowed as accents but must remain simple and historically inspired.
- Signs should always emphasize legibility and respect for historic context.



For more information contact:
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