

A. Paint

1. Keep existing painted materials well painted. Do not paint masonry that is unpainted. Paint aluminum-frame storm doors or windows to match other trim.
2. Prepare the surface properly before painting. Use the gentlest means possible to remove all dirt and loose paint. Do not use sandblasting or high-pressure water wash to remove paint from masonry, soft metal, or wood. Do not use open-flame torches to remove paint. They are a fire hazard.
3. Use a high-quality paint and follow manufacturer's specifications for preparation and application.
4. Choose colors that fit the style of the building and complement the overall color schemes on the street. Avoid using bright and obtrusive colors, too many colors, or a single color for the entire building.

T Prime surfaces if bare wood or metal is exposed or if you are changing types of paints, such as from oil-based to latex. Be sure to use metal primers when painting metal. Do not apply latex paint directly over oil-based paint as it might not bond properly and can pull off the old oil-based paint.

T Remove loose and peeling paint down to the next sound layer, using the gentlest means possible: hand scraping and hand sanding for wood and masonry and wire brushes for harder metals. A heat gun or plate can be used on wood for heavy build up of paint. However, care should be taken when using any heat removal process to not overheat features and cause a fire. Take precautions when removing older paint layers since they may contain lead.

Preservation Brief #10

Exterior Paint Problems on
Historic Woodwork

Preservation Brief #37

Appropriate Methods for
Reducing Lead-Paint Hazards in
Historic Housing

available from:

www2.nps.gov/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm

IX Decorative Features

A. Paint

T Color Placement

Placed correctly, color accentuates details of the building. Generally for **residential buildings**, walls and trim can be painted contrasting colors, with doors and shutters a third, accent color. Individual small details should not be painted with additional accent colors. A fourth color for individual details or accents is not advised in most cases and may be appropriate in Smithfield only for very elaborate Queen Anne houses.

For **commercial buildings**, trim, including trim boards, cornices, storefront, and window framing should be painted the same color. The wall, if painted, should be a contrasting color. The window sash and doors can be painted a different accent color from the walls and trim.

Paint Color Placement on a Residence



Paint Color Placement on a Commercial Facade





Queen Anne style residences offer the opportunity to use a colorful exterior palette.

T Color Selection

For **residential buildings**, the color palette can differ according to architectural style:

Georgian and Federal: Shades of white or ivory are appropriate on the trim and cornice. Wall colors can be white or shades of gray or beige. Doors and shutters should be darker—black, greens, grays, or blues. Hardwood doors may have been varnished or grained instead of painted.

Queen Anne: Deep, rich colors such as greens, rusts, reds, and browns can be used on the exterior trim and walls of late-Victorian-era houses. Keep in mind that some darker colors may chalk and fade more quickly than lighter colors. The important objective is to emphasize the many textures of these highly ornate structures. Shingles can be painted a different color from the siding on the same building. It is best to treat similar elements with the same color to achieve a unified rather than an overly busy and disjointed appearance. On very ornate houses, more colors can be used.

Victorian (vernacular and vernacular cottage): Same as Queen Anne style.

Gothic Cottage: Colors that are based on nature should be used, such as grays, yellows, and tans.

Colonial Revival: Softer colors should be used on these buildings, with the trim painted white or ivory, since this style reflects a return to classical motifs.

Bungalows: Natural earth tones and stains of tans, greens, and grays are most appropriate for this style, using color to emphasize the many textures and surfaces.

IX Decorative Features

B. Signs

In general, use signs in a way that complements the district: follow the guidelines below for size and placement, place them so that they do not obstruct architectural elements and details that define the design of the building, and respect signs of adjacent businesses. The following recommendations are more specific than the existing town regulations and should be followed in the historic district.

Total sign size:

All of the signs on a commercial building should not exceed 50 square feet or 1.5 square feet per 1.0 linear foot of building frontage,

whichever is smaller. In addition, each business in a building with rear entrances should be allowed one flat mounted sign not to exceed 6 square feet. For residential buildings that are a commercial use in a neighborhood, no more than one sign should be used, with total sign area limited to 2 square feet and letters no taller than 4 inches.

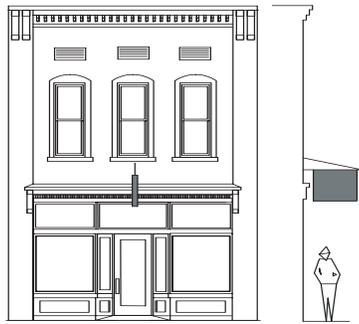
Size by Sign Type:

Projecting signs are hung from brackets or otherwise mounted so that they hang perpendicular to the building. They also can be attached to the underside of awnings. They are intended for viewing from a

moderate distance by pedestrians. **Projecting signs for commercial buildings** should be at least 9 feet from the sidewalk and no more than 4 feet from the surface of the building. For **residential buildings**, small projecting signs attached to the wall at the first floor or porch column are appropriate and should not be located higher than the top of the porch. Size: a maximum of 9 square feet.

Window signs are painted onto or adhered to display windows and should not be three dimensional.

Types of Signs and Typical Locations



projecting sign



window signs



flat wall sign



pier-mounted signs



awning signs



hanging sign

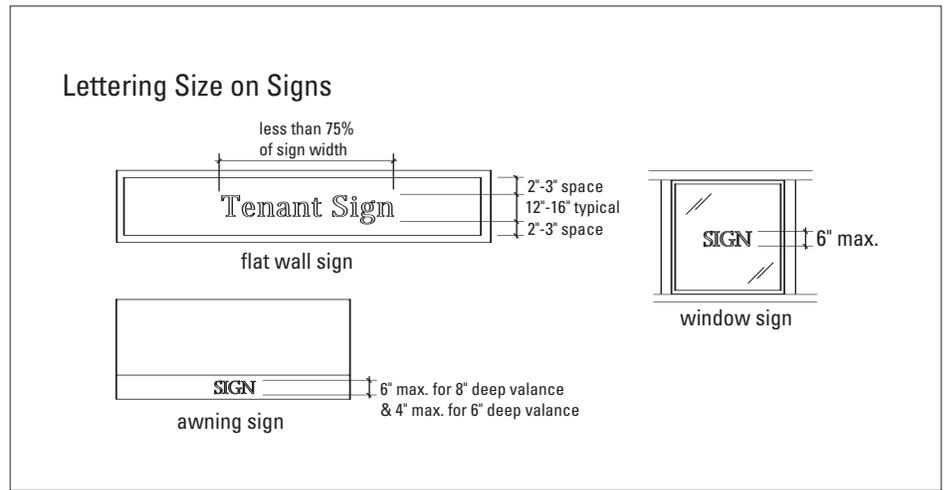


free-standing sign

B. Signs

Intended for pedestrians, they should be placed approximately 5.5 feet above the sidewalk at the center point for good visibility. Optional locations include 18 inches from the top or bottom of the display window glass. Window signs are also appropriate on the glazing of doors. Size: the average height of lettering and symbols should be no more than 6 inches and should obscure no more than 10 percent of the window glass. Each upper-floor tenant could also display one small window sign not to exceed 2 square feet.

Flat wall signs are panels or individual letters mounted to the wall or cornice. Wall signs should not be painted directly on the wall surface. The average height of lettering and symbols should be no more than 12 inches. Large wall signs can be read from a distance and from cars. Wall signs can be appropriate for commercial and residential buildings. Upper-floor tenants should be represented at each primary entrance by a flat, wall-mounted directory sign that does not exceed 10 square feet. **Flat wall signs for commercial buildings** can be located above the storefront, within the frieze of the cornice, on covered transoms, on the pier that frames display windows, on unadorned flat surfaces of the facade, or in areas clearly designed as sign locations. **For residential buildings**, flat signs attached to the wall at the first floor or suspended between porch columns are appropriate. Size: no taller than 18



inches and extending no more than 6 inches from the surface of the building.

Awning signs can be painted or sewn onto the valance or body of the awning. Awning and canopy signs should be placed on the valance area only. Size: the average height of lettering and symbols should be no more than 9 inches and the minimum space between the edge of the letter and the top and bottom of the valance should be 1.5 inches.

Freestanding signs are mounted to posts or other supports and placed in front of buildings that are set back from the street. In general, they are not an appropriate sign type in a traditional downtown except for use in the front yard of a residence that has been converted to commercial or office use. Size: no higher than 8 feet or larger than 16 square feet.

Roof signs are not allowed in the historic district.

IX Decorative Features

B. Signs

1. Limit the number of signs to encourage compatibility with the building and discourage visual clutter. In commercial areas, signs should be limited to two total, even if they are different types. Window signs and directory signs are not included in this total.
2. Use the services of sign professionals who are skilled at lettering and surface preparation.
3. Ensure that signs are readable and convey an image appropriate for the business. Sign painters or graphic designers can assist with sign design.
4. As appropriate, make the shape of the sign conform to the area where the sign is to be located. It also can take on the shape of the product or service provided, such as a shoe for a shoe store.
5. Use traditional sign materials such as wood, glass, gold leaf, raised individual metal or painted wood letters, and painted letters on wood, metal, or glass. Use neon only as appropriate and only in commercial areas.
6. Use colors that complement the materials and color scheme of the building, including accent and trim colors. Three colors are recommended, although more colors can be appropriate in exceptional and tastefully executed designs.
7. Avoid self-illuminated signs. In general, signs should be indirectly lit with a shielded incandescent light source.
8. Submit a master sign plan for the building. Each business on the main level should have the same limits for total area and total number as an individual building. These directory signs are allowed in addition to the building total.
9. Use banners only as temporary signs and ensure that any wall murals are compatible with the district character.

Preservation Brief #25

The Preservation of Historic Signs

available from:

www2.nps.gov/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm

B. Signs

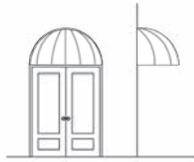


Smithfield's historic district has a wide variety of appropriate sign types.

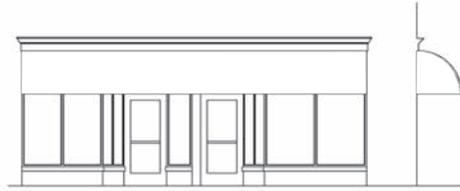
IX Decorative Features

C. Awnings

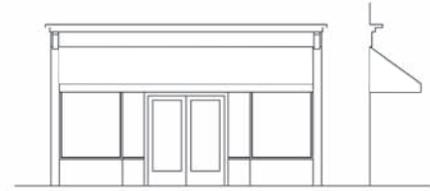
Types of Awnings and Typical Locations



Curved Awning



Curved Awning



Sloped Awning

1. Choose awning types that are appropriate for the Smithfield historic district.

Sloped fabric awnings, whether fixed or retractable, are the traditional awning type and are appropriate for most historic buildings, both residential and commercial.

Boxed or curved fabric awnings, a more current design, can be used on nonhistoric or new commercial buildings.

Aluminum or plastic awnings are generally inappropriate for any historic district buildings.

2. Place the awning within the storefront, porch, door, or window opening so that it fits the opening and does not obscure distinctive architectural elements or damage materials. Choose a design that does not interfere with existing signs, street trees, or other elements along the street.
3. Keep the bottom of the awning at least 7 feet above grade.

4. Coordinate colors with the overall building color scheme. Solid colors, wide stripes, and narrow stripes may be appropriate, but not overly bright or complex patterns. Avoid using shiny, plastic-like fabrics.

5. Avoid backlit awnings.

i Awnings can protect pedestrians from the weather, shield window displays from the sun, conserve energy, highlight specific buildings or businesses, and cover unattractively remodeled transom areas above storefronts.



Awnings are a practical and visual enhancement to many storefronts in the downtown commercial district.