

TOWN OF Herndon

Uniform Sign Standards

Adopted March 15, 2023

The Town of Herndon Uniform Sign Standards were adopted by the Town of Herndon Historic District Review Board (HDRB) and Town of Herndon Architectural Review Board (ARB) by resolutions dated March 15, 2023. Minor adjustments to these standards may be done administratively for clarification purposes. Substantive changes to standards are subject to Board review and an updated resolution.

Adherence to the sign standards, as determined by staff, is required to receive administrative sign approval. If the standards are not met, administrative approval cannot be granted. The applicant can then choose to pursue a HDRB or ARB application for the non-compliant sign.

This document applies to all signs unless exempt per Section 78-140.5 of the Town of Herndon Zoning Ordinance. It serves as a supplement to the [Herndon sign ordinance](#) (Article XIV of the Zoning Ordinance), the [Historic District Overlay Guidelines](#), the [Herndon Downtown Pattern Book](#), the [Urban Design & Architectural Guidelines for the Herndon Transit-Oriented Core](#), and the [Design Criteria of the Architectural Control District](#) (Section 58-96 of Town Code).

Purpose and Intent

The Town of Herndon Uniform Sign Standards are meant to provide clear and detailed guidance for the design of signage throughout Town, to articulate expectations and design intent for applicants, to manage consistent design and material sign quality and appropriateness, and to ensure signage respectfully fits within Herndon's character and architectural context.

Signs are among the most visible elements of commercial and urban environments. These features are not only a practical economic and business requirement but can also significantly enhance a storefront, building, or streetscape if thoughtfully designed. These standards give direction on the ways in which signage can serve practical needs while contributing to Town character and appearance. As one of the most visible elements of the commercial and urban environment, signs play a significant role in creating an environment where people feel comfortable and want to be.

Objectives

- A) Setting standards and providing uniform controls that permit reasonable and effective use of signs and preserve the character of the Town.
- B) Prohibiting the erection of signs in such numbers, sizes, designs, illumination, and locations as may create a hazard to pedestrians and motorists.
- C) Avoiding excessive conflicts from large or multiple signs to minimize clutter, unsightliness, and confusion.
- D) Establishing a process for consistent review and approval of signage.
- E) Ensuring sign design that builds on the traditional Town image and visual environment the Town seeks to promote.

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Historic District Overlay (HDO)

General Sign Standards

The following standards apply to all signs within the HDO.

1. Signs shall adhere to all applicable sign regulations within the Town of Herndon Zoning Ordinance and any applicable building code requirements.
2. General compliance with all applicable sign design guidelines from the Downtown Pattern Book shall be achieved.
3. Execution of sign design and placement shall complement the building architecture or landscape architecture of the structure or parcel on which it is placed, the character of the surrounding context, and the character of the HDO.
4. Sign installation shall always consider reversibility to ensure building components are not permanently impacted or irreparably damaged.
5. Signs shall be designed, constructed, and installed using high quality and durable materials and practices with proven reputation for longevity in appearance and material integrity.
6. Traditional materials or materials that mimic the appearance and characteristics of traditional materials shall be used.
7. The size, shape, and location of signs shall be appropriate to the scale of the surface or area to which it is affixed.
8. While a diversity of signage types is encouraged for individual businesses, when multiple sign types are used, their designs shall be coordinated and complementary to each other.
9. Signs shall be stationary and securely fastened or anchored to a permanent surface.
10. Signs shall be installed in a manner to minimize any detrimental impacts to historic fabric or character-defining treatments.
11. While signage across the HDO should follow a consistent design palette and design ethic, creative and artistic designs are encouraged to enhance liveliness and visual interest.
12. Signs must be informative and legible at a pedestrian scale.
13. Signage shall not be located on architectural accent or decorative elements unless those features were designed solely for the purpose of containing signage.
14. A sign's color and texture are important characteristics to consider and have significant impacts to the overall aesthetic of a sign. Glossy finishes shall not be used, and colors shall not clash with facade colors.

15. Signs with, materials, colors and textures that contrast with the surface on which it is attached, and principal exterior building treatments are often optimal, however they must not present an overwhelming or distracting appearance.
16. Signage should be individualized for the business and standardized designs should be avoided.
17. If a sign is designed to reflect a particular architectural style, that style should complement or correspond to the building's architectural style.

Historic District Overlay (HDO) Sign Specific Standards

The following standards apply to the various sign types permitted by the Zoning Ordinance.

Wall Signs

1. Confined to flat, unadorned surfaces on the first floor typically within an area designed specifically to contain signage such as broad fascia boards, covered transoms, panels or flat walls next to storefronts and banding above a storefront.
2. Flush-mounted, painted, or pin-mounted with spacers no longer than 2".
3. Centered, justified, or otherwise aligned appropriately in relation to architectural bays, fenestration, and other architectural divisions.
4. Scaled appropriately to fit within the surface on which it is attached with adequate spacing between the sign copy and edges of the surface.

Projecting Signs (Blade Signs, Suspended Signs)

1. When on the first floor, confined to directly above a storefront, within storefront panels, or beside the storefront. Proximity to the entrance when possible.
2. When on the first floor, designed at a pedestrian scale.
3. When on an upper floor, designed with a vertical orientation.
4. Aligned perpendicular to facade unless placed at building corner in which it can be placed at

a 45-degree angle from the wall.

5. Fixed or suspended from a bracket. Coordinated bracket design (type, size, design, color, material) with the projecting sign design.
6. Double sided. Can be flat or designed with three-dimensional reliefs and forms.
7. Use of creative designs and unique shapes, offering symbols of the business use, are encouraged.
8. Avoid the use of sign cabinets unless cabinets can be kept to less than a 3” thickness, unless necessary for exposed neon signage or three-dimensional shaped projecting signs.

Freestanding Signs

Material, texture, color, and design coordinated with and/or complementary to the architecture and exterior materials of the building.

Sized appropriately for a pedestrian scale and for the space in which it is installed.

Canopy Signs

Located on either the canopy fascia or immediately above the fascia with no more than a 3” gap between the top of the fascia and the bottom of the sign.

Either non-illuminated, halo-lit, or indirect-lit.

Centered, justified, or otherwise appropriately aligned in relation to entrances, storefronts, or other architectural divisions on the ground floor.

Awning Signs

1. Located on either the awning valance or top panel. Applied directly onto the fabric of the canopy awning.
2. Non-illuminated or indirectly illuminated from above.
3. Centered, justified, or otherwise appropriately aligned in relation to entrances, storefronts, or other architectural divisions on the ground floor.
4. Sized appropriately for the awning panel or valance on which it is installed with adequate spacing between copy and edges of the panel or valance.
5. Colored to complement and not clash with the color of the awning.

A-frame Signs (Menu Board Signs, Sandwich Board Signs)

1. Shall be movable and only be displayed outdoors during business hours.
2. May contain either permanent copy or erasable copy with the use of a white board or chalkboard.
3. Constructed of a wood or metal frame.
4. Placed in outside areas typically between the business entrance and the street, as long as sign placement does not pose accessibility issues for safe pedestrian passage.

Architectural Control District (ACD) General Sign Standards

The following standards apply to all signs within the ACD.

1. Signs shall adhere to all applicable sign regulations within the Town of Herndon Zoning Ordinance, the design criteria in the ACD chapter of the Town Code, and any applicable building code requirements.
2. General compliance with all applicable sign design guidelines from the Urban Design & Architectural Guidelines for the Herndon Transit-Oriented Core shall be achieved.
3. Execution of sign design and placement shall complement the building architecture or landscape architecture of the structure or parcel on which it is placed, the character of the surrounding context, and the character of the Town.
4. Sign installation shall always consider reversibility to ensure building components are not permanently impacted or irreparably damaged.
5. Signs shall be designed, constructed, and installed using high quality and durable materials and practices with proven reputation for longevity in appearance and material integrity.
6. The size, shape, and location of signs shall be appropriate to the scale of the surface or area to which it is affixed.
7. While a diversity of signage types is encouraged for individual businesses, when multiple sign

types are used, their designs shall be coordinated and complementary to each other.

8. Signs shall be stationary and securely fastened or anchored to a permanent surface.
9. Creative and artistic signage designs are encouraged to enhance liveliness and visual interest.
10. Signs must be informative and legible at a pedestrian scale when placed at ground level or on the ground floor.
11. Signage shall not be located on architectural accent or decorative elements unless those features were designed solely for the purpose of containing signage.
12. A sign's color and texture are important characteristics to consider and have significant impacts to the overall aesthetic of a sign. Glossy finishes shall not be used, and colors shall not clash with facade colors.
13. Signs with, materials, colors and textures that contrast with the surface on which it is attached, and principal exterior building treatments are often optimal, however they must not present an overwhelming or distracting appearance.
14. Signage should be individualized for the business and standardized designs should be avoided.
15. If a sign is designed to reflect a particular architectural style, that style should complement or correspond to the building's architectural style.

Architectural Control District (ACD) Sign Specific Standards

The following standards apply to the various sign types permitted by the Zoning Ordinance.

Wall Signs

1. Confined to flat, unadorned surfaces on or near the ground floor typically within an area designed specifically to contain signage such as broad fascia boards, covered transoms, panels or flat walls next to storefronts and banding above a storefront.
2. Flush-mounted, painted, or pin-mounted with spacers no longer than 2".
3. Centered, justified, or otherwise aligned appropriately in relation to architectural bays,

fenestration, and other architectural divisions.

4. Scaled appropriately to fit within the surface on which it is attached with adequate spacing between the sign copy and edges of the surface.

Parapet Signs (Tower Signs)

1. Confined to flat, unadorned surfaces on the parapet wall of a multi-story building typically within an area designed specifically to contain signage.
2. Flush-mounted, painted, or pin-mounted with spacers no longer than 2”.
3. Centered, justified, or otherwise aligned appropriately in relation to architectural bays, fenestration, and other architectural divisions.
4. Scaled appropriately to fit within the surface on which it is attached with adequate spacing between the sign copy and edges of the surface.
5. Sized appropriately for the scale of the building, the height of the sign on the building, and the intended audience.

Projecting Signs (Blade Signs, Suspended Signs)

1. Confined to directly above a storefront, within storefront panels, or beside the storefront. Proximity to the entrance when possible.
2. Designed at a pedestrian scale.
3. Aligned perpendicular to facade unless placed at building corner in which it can be placed at a 45-degree angle from the wall.
4. Fixed or suspended from a bracket. Coordinated bracket design (type, size, design, color, material) with the projecting sign design.
5. Double sided. Can be flat or designed with three-dimensional reliefs and forms.
6. Use of creative designs and unique shapes, offering symbols of the business use, are encouraged.
7. Avoid the use of sign cabinets unless cabinets can be kept to less than a 3” thickness, unless necessary for exposed neon signage or three-dimensional shaped projecting signs.

Freestanding Signs (Monument Signs)

Material, texture, color, and design coordinated with and/or complementary to the

architecture and exterior materials of the building.

Sized appropriately for the space in which it is installed.

Located in relation to entrances and situated and designed to not obscure important building viewsheds.

Designed at a pedestrian scale if placed near a pedestrian entrance and designed at a motor vehicle scale if designed near a road entrance.

Internal Signs

Located internal to a site with minimal visibility off-site.

Material, texture, color, and design coordinated with and/or complementary to the architecture and exterior materials of the building.

Coordinated design with any other internal signs on the site.

Sized appropriately for the space in which it is installed.

Designed at a pedestrian scale if placed near a pedestrian entrance and designed at a motor vehicle scale if designed near a road entrance.



Uniform Sign Standards

Sign Type Definitions

Wall Sign – any sign attached to a wall or painted on or against a flat vertical surface of a structure.

Parapet Sign – a wall sign installed on a parapet of a multi-story building.

Projecting Sign – any sign, affixed to a building, supported by a bracket attached to a vertical surface, and oriented perpendicular to the wall plane on which the bracket is anchored. Also referred to as a “blade sign”.

Freestanding Sign – any sign that is supported by structures or supports in or upon the ground and independent of any support from any building or wall. Also referred to as a “monument sign”

Internal Sign – either wall or freestanding signs located away from the public right-of-way and intended for visible internal to the site only on multi-tenant, multi-parcel, and multi-building commercial centers.

Canopy Sign – a sign affixed to a canopy.

Awning Sign – a sign applied directly on the surface of an awning.

A-frame Sign – a two-faced sign with supports that are connected at the top and separated at the base, forming a capital “A” shape. Also referred to as “sandwich board” or “menu board” signs.



**TOWN OF HERNDON, VIRGINIA
HISTORIC DISTRICT REVIEW BOARD**

RESOLUTION

MARCH 15, 2023

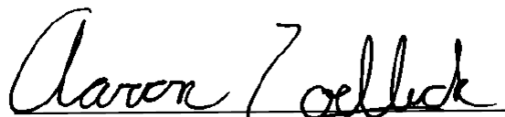
**Resolution - to adopt the Uniform Sign Standards for the Town of Herndon
Historic District Overlay.**

The Historic District Review Board held a regular work session on March 1, 2023, and a regular meeting on March 15, 2023, to consider this item. The standards function to allow administrative review and approval of signs proposed within the Town of Herndon Historic District Overlay. The standards are not intended to conflict with existing applicable zoning ordinance and building code regulations and are supplemental to existing applicable design guidelines.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Historic District Review Board for the Town of Herndon, Virginia that:

1. The Historic District Review Board hereby adopts the Uniform Sign Standards for the Town of Herndon Historic District Overlay, as authorized under Section 78-140.5 of the Town of Herndon Zoning Ordinance.

This is certified to be a true and accurate copy of resolution 23-HDRB-004, adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Town of Herndon Historic District Review Board on March 15, 2023.



Aaron Zoellick

Clerk of Boards and Commissions

**TOWN OF HERNDON, VIRGINIA
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD**

RESOLUTION

MARCH 15, 2023

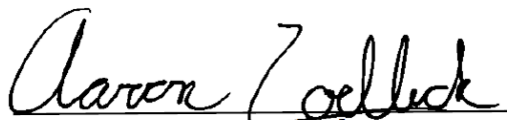
**Resolution - to adopt the Uniform Sign Standards for the Town of Herndon
Architectural Control District.**

The Architectural Review Board held a regular work session on March 1, 2023, and a regular meeting on March 15, 2023, to consider this item. The standards function to allow administrative review and approval of signs proposed within the Town of Herndon Architectural Control District. The standards are not intended to conflict with existing applicable zoning ordinance and building code regulations and are supplemental to existing applicable design guidelines.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Architectural Review Board for the Town of Herndon, Virginia that:

1. The Architectural Review Board hereby adopts the Uniform Sign Standards for the Town of Herndon Architectural Control District, as authorized under Section 78-140.5 of the Town of Herndon Zoning Ordinance.

This is certified to be a true and accurate copy of resolution 23-ARB-005, adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Town of Herndon Architectural Review Board on March 15, 2023.



Aaron Zoellick

Clerk of Boards and Commissions