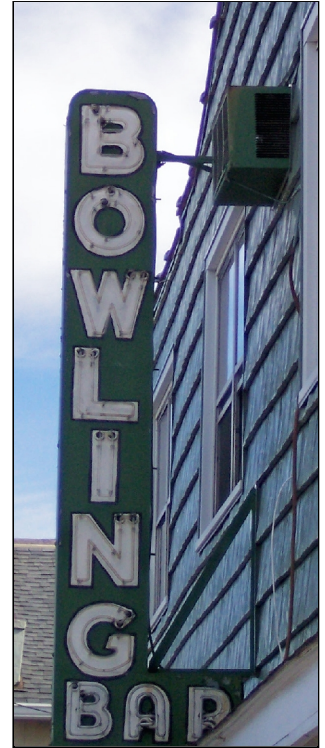
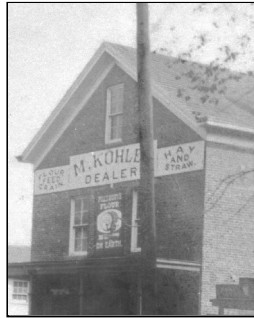


SOME HISTORIC SIGNS IN CLOSTER



GUIDELINES FOR SIGNS



Some early- 20th-century sign types, such as those that extended over the sidewalk and were supported by poles, are no longer permitted.

Late-19th-and-early-20th-century photographs document a wide variety of types of signs in Closter's historic commercial area. It was common to mount board signs on the porch roofs of stores. At one time numerous signs projected perpendicularly to the commercial buildings over the sidewalk adjacent to Closter Dock Road, between the railroad tracks and Harrington Avenue. They were partially supported by posts at the curb. Signs frequently were painted directly onto the walls of buildings. Some of these types of signs are now prohibited by the Code of the Borough of Closter. For instance, today wall signs are not allowed to project more than 12" from the wall of the building.

Because of the current sign restrictions, it is unlikely that new signs on Landmarks or within Landmark Districts can closely replicate the placement, size, and appearance of historic signs. Instead, the objective is to retain existing historic signs and have new signs that are compatible with the historic architecture and streetscape. Signage should not detract from the historic architecture. It is important for signs to reinforce the human scale of the Landmark and the Landmark District. A sign should not overpower the building's façade, but rather attract customers to the business through a design that harmonizes with the building and its streetscape.

Commercial signs are closely regulated as to size, placement, clearance, material, and structural requirements by ordinance in Closter (Section 173-50). Both permanent and temporary signs require a sign permit. The historic preservation regulation for Landmarks and properties within Landmark Districts shall be in addition to this regulation. The sign code may allow a certain square footage for a

sign, but the Closter Historic Preservation Commission (CHPC) may require a smaller sign which is more visually in scale with the building or district. For Landmarks and properties within Landmark Districts, a Certificate of Appropriateness (C/A) is not required for the maintenance and repair of existing signs involving no change in the design, scale, material, color, or appearance. Generally, a new or an altered sign is reviewed by the CHPC as a Minor Application unless it is found to be inappropriate, then the C/A application will be scheduled for a public hearing before the full CHPC.

GUIDELINES

Identify, retain, maintain, and repair historic signs.

Design signs that are compatible in design, size, scale, and materials with the building and/or the district.

In the installation of new signs, do not destroy and/or hide historic materials that characterize the building.

For Landmarks and Key and Contributing Buildings in Landmark Districts

RECOMMENDED

- Maintain and repair significant historic signs even when the business changes.
- Reuse the original sign locations, unless these locations no longer conform to Closter's sign regulations.
- Design the sign to enhance the significant historic architectural features of the building and streetscape, rather than responding to later inappropriate alterations. Consider having the shape of the sign, the lettering (fonts), and graphic illustrations suggest the overall design and historic period of the building, as well as the business's image.
- Use graphically simple signs with few words.

For Landmarks and Key and Contributing Buildings in Landmark Districts

RECOMMENDED CONTINUED

- Fit the wall, window, directory wall, and awning signs within the features of the façade. Appropriate locations might include:
 - The frieze or signboard of the storefront. On many late-19th-and-early-20th-century commercial buildings, the area above the display windows and transom functions as a signboard and is a logical location for the placement of a sign.
 - A flap or vertical plane of the storefront awning.
 - Glass of the display window or entrance door. Permanently painted or applied window and door signs should not consume more than 15% of the glazed area.
 - Transom windows above display windows and entrances.
 - Upper-story windows. Use lettering only.
- Carefully mount signs so that they do not damage architectural features. Attachments should be made at mortar joints, rather than drilling masonry units. Paint or apply individual letters on the façade of a signboard, rather than attaching them directly to a masonry building where they may damage the historic material.
- Mount a sign on door or window at street level for pedestrians.
- For wall signs, use ones that have minimal projection so that they do not compete with architectural features of the building or district.
- When a building contains multiple storefronts of different businesses, relate the signs of the different businesses to each other in terms of type, height, and proportion. Use compatible colors, lettering, and background values. Maintain general uniformity while permitting limited, compatible variety to give each business a distinct identity.

- When multiple signs are permitted for a business, have a unified graphic appearance. Use the same lettering, colors, logos, and other design features for all signs, including wall signs, window signs, ground signs, directory wall signs, awning signs, freestanding signs, banners, and temporary signs.
- Use non-illuminated or indirectly illuminated signs. When illumination is desired, use soft, indirect light which highlights the sign, rather than attracts attention to the light fixture itself. Possible light sources include concealed spotlights, a simple horizontal strip (shadowbox), or gooseneck lamps. Place lighting fixtures on the building so that they do not negatively impact the composition of the façade or damage historic materials.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Using signs that overpower or clutter the façade, or otherwise distract from the historic character of the building or district.
- Using signs with unusual shapes that do not blend with the building's or district's character.
- Using shiny plastic or unpainted wood backgrounds for signs.
- Installing franchise signs that do not respect the pedestrian and historic character of the building and/or district. Large boldly-colored plastic signs are inappropriate and must be modified to more appropriate size and materials.
- Internally lit signs or box signs.
- Covering, obscuring, interrupting, or destroying significant architectural features with signs or extending a sign beyond the boundary of the architectural feature on which it is placed.
- Using signs that continue inappropriate alterations. However, existing inappropriate signs are grandfathered; therefore, they are not required to be replaced.
- Painting signs directly on a previously unpainted masonry wall or surface.

For Non-Contributing Buildings in Landmark Districts

RECOMMENDED

- Use graphically simple signs with few words.
- Mount a sign on door or window at street level for pedestrians.
- For wall signs, use ones that have minimal projection so that they do not compete with architectural features of the district.
- When a building contains multiple storefronts of different businesses, relate the signs of the different businesses to each other in terms of type, height, and proportion. Use compatible colors, lettering, and background values. Maintain general uniformity while permitting limited, compatible variety to give each business a distinct identity.
- When multiple signs are permitted for a business, have a unified graphic appearance. Use the same lettering, colors, logos, and other design features for all signs on a building, including wall signs, window signs, ground signs, directory wall signs, awning signs, freestanding signs, banners, and temporary signs.
- Use non-illuminated or indirectly illuminated signs. When illumination is desired, use soft, indirect light which highlights the sign, rather than attracts attention to the light fixture itself. Possible light sources include concealed spotlights, a simple horizontal strip (shadowbox), or gooseneck lamps. Place lighting fixtures on the building so that they do not negatively impact the composition of the façade.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Using signs that overpower or clutter the façade, or otherwise distract from the historic character of the district.
- Using signs with unusual shapes that do not blend with the district's character.

- Using shiny plastic or unpainted wood backgrounds for signs.
- Installing franchise signs that do not respect the pedestrian and historic character of district. Large boldly-colored plastic signs are inappropriate and must be modified to more appropriate size and materials.
- Internally lit signs or box signs.



Recommended: Fit signs within the features of the façade such as on the signboard area above the awning, display windows, or the awning flap.

RESOURCES FOR SIGNS

National Park Service, *Preservation Brief 25. The Preservation of Historic Signs*,
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief25.htm>