

Appendix 8B Exceptional Sign Review Design Guidelines

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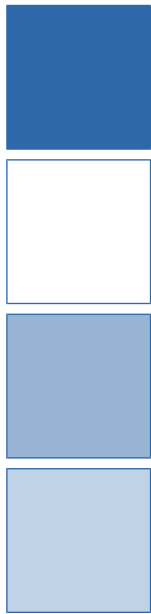
Design Guidelines for Exceptional Signage Reviews

The guidelines listed below clarify the general criteria provided in the LDC and in KRS 100 for variances and LDC waivers. The guidelines provide design questions and standards in order to more closely relate the general variance and waiver criteria to sign design.

Variance Reviews

- A. Will the proposed sign adversely affect the public health, safety or welfare, will it alter the essential character of the general vicinity, will it cause a hazard or a nuisance to the public, or will it allow an unreasonable circumvention of the requirements of the zoning regulations. The following design guidelines further clarify this criterion:
1. Proposals for sign area and height modifications in excess of 25% of what is permitted by chapter 8 should be carefully scrutinized to ensure compatibility with surrounding development.
 2. The proposed sign is in compliance with the underlying form district as described within Cornerstone 2020, typically the type of neighborhood, character of the area and traffic speeds should be considered in the design of a sign.
 3. The proposed sign should be visually consistent with the architecture, materials, colors and overall design of the building(s) which it identifies.
 4. Generally, all colors, except fluorescent, may be allowable depending on their relationships to architecture, the business, and the surrounding neighborhood.
 5. Signs should have an individual character and should not be designed to mimic signs on adjacent properties.
 6. Signs should be clearly readable, information should be limited.
 7. For attached signage the architectural design of the building may influence the location of the sign on the structure.
 8. Light backgrounds are discouraged on internally illuminated signs because visibility is lowered by a “wrap around” effect.
 9. Signs located within overlay districts and/or local landmarks district should be reviewed in accordance with guidelines of the applicable district.

10. Lighted signs should be designed so that they are not unnecessarily bright.
11. The scale of signs should be appropriate for the building on which they are placed and the area in which they are located. The size and shape of a sign should be proportionate with the scale of the structure.
12. Because residential and commercial uses generally exist in close proximity, signs should be designed and located so that they have little or no impact on adjacent residential neighborhoods.
13. Place wall signs to establish facade rhythm, scale and proportion where facade rhythm doesn't exist. On buildings that have a monolithic or plain facade, signs can establish or continue appropriate design rhythm, scale, and proportion.
14. Pedestrian-oriented signs are encouraged. It is desirable and encouraged to include a pedestrian-oriented sign as one of the permitted signs for a business. Pedestrian-oriented signs are signs that are designed for and directed toward pedestrians so that they can easily and comfortably read the sign as they stand adjacent to the business.
15. Select colors carefully. Color is one of the most important aspects of visual communication -- it can be used to catch the eye or to communicate ideas or feelings. Colors should be selected to contribute to legibility and design integrity. Even the most carefully thought out sign may be unattractive and a poor communicator because of poor color selection. Too many colors used thoughtlessly can confuse and negate the message of a sign.
16. Use contrasting colors. Contrast is an important influence on the legibility of signs. A substantial contrast should be provided between the color and material of the background and the letters or symbols to make the sign easier to read in both day and night. Light letters on a dark background or dark letters on a light background are most legible.
17. Limit the number of letter styles. The number of lettering styles should be limited in order to increase legibility. A general rule to follow is to limit the number of different letter types to no more than two for small signs and three for larger signs. Intricate typefaces and symbols that are difficult to read reduce the sign's ability to communicate.
18. Significant signage. The preservation of designated signature signs may be used to justify increases in overall sign area limits as long as the integrity of the signature sign is maintained and any new signage is deemed to be compatible to the signature sign.



- B. Whether the requested variance arises from special circumstances which do not generally apply to land in the general vicinity, or in the same zone. The following design guidelines further clarify this criterion:
1. Elevation changes between properties and adjacent streets should be reviewed to ensure that signage is appropriately visible to the street;
 2. The transportation department responsible for the adjacent public streets must review the plans for freestanding signs to ensure conformance with safety standards prior to approval by the board
- C. Whether the strict application of the provision of the regulation would deprive the applicant of the reasonable use of the land or would create an unnecessary hardship on the applicant. The following design guidelines further clarify this criterion:
1. The transportation department responsible for the adjacent public streets must review the plans for freestanding signs to ensure conformance with safety standards prior to approval by the board.
 2. The SRB should review the layout of the land and surrounding property to determine whether relief is warranted.
- D. Whether the circumstances are the result of actions taken by the applicant subsequent to the adoption of the zoning regulation from which relief is sought.

Waiver Reviews

- A. The waiver will not adversely affect adjacent property owners. The following design guidelines further clarify this criterion:
1. The proposed sign should be visually consistent with the architecture, materials, colors and overall design of the building(s) which it identifies.
 2. Generally, all colors, except fluorescent, may be allowable depending on their relationships to architecture, the business, and the surrounding neighborhood.
 3. Signs should have an individual character and should not be designed to mimic signs on adjacent properties.
 4. Signs should be clearly readable, information should be limited.
 5. For attached signage the architectural design of the building may influence the location of the sign on the structure.
 6. Light backgrounds are discouraged on internally illuminated signs because visibility is lowered by a “wrap around” effect.

7. The transportation department responsible for the adjacent public streets must review the plans for a freestanding signs to ensure conformance with safety standards prior to approval by the board.
8. Signs located within overlay districts and/or local landmarks district should be reviewed in accordance with guidelines of the applicable district.
9. Lighted signs should be designed so that they are not unnecessarily bright.
10. The scale of signs should be appropriate for the building on which they are placed and the area in which they are located. The size and shape of a sign should be proportionate with the scale of the structure.
11. Because residential and commercial uses generally exist in close proximity, signs should be designed and located so that they have little or no impact on adjacent residential neighborhoods.
12. Place wall signs to establish facade rhythm, scale and proportion where facade rhythm doesn't exist. On buildings that have a monolithic or plain facade, signs can establish or continue appropriate design rhythm, scale, and proportion.
13. Pedestrian-oriented signs are encouraged. It is desirable and encouraged to include a pedestrian-oriented sign as one of the permitted signs for a business. Pedestrian-oriented signs are signs that are designed for and directed toward pedestrians so that they can easily and comfortably read the sign as they stand adjacent to the business.
14. Select colors carefully. Color is one of the most important aspects of visual communication -- it can be used to catch the eye or to communicate ideas or feelings. Colors should be selected to contribute to legibility and design integrity. Even the most carefully thought out sign may be unattractive and a poor communicator because of poor color selection. Too many colors used thoughtlessly can confuse and negate the message of a sign.
15. Use contrasting colors. Contrast is an important influence on the legibility of signs. A substantial contrast should be provided between the color and material of the background and the letters or symbols to make the sign easier to read in both day and night. Light letters on a dark background or dark letters on a light background are most legible.
16. Limit the number of letter styles. The number of lettering styles should be limited in order to increase legibility. A general rule to follow is to limit the number of different letter types to no more than two for small signs and three for larger signs. Intricate typefaces and symbols that are difficult to read reduce the sign's ability to communicate.
17. Significant signage. The preservation of designated signature signs may be used to justify increases in the overall number of attached signs on a facade as long as the integrity of the signature sign is maintained and any new signage is deemed to be compatible to the signature sign.

Land Development Code (LDC)

- B. The waiver will not violate the Comprehensive Plan. The following design guideline further clarifies this criterion:
 - 1. The proposed sign is in compliance with the underlying form district as described within Cornerstone 2020, typically the type of neighborhood, character of the area and traffic speeds should be considered in the design of a sign.
- C. The extent of waiver of the regulation is the minimum necessary to afford relief to the applicant. The following design guidelines further clarify this criterion:
 - 1. Proposals for sign area and height modifications in excess of 25% of what is permitted by chapter 8 should be carefully scrutinized to ensure compatibility with surrounding development..
 - 2. Elevation changes between properties and adjacent streets should be reviewed to ensure that signage is appropriately visible to the street.
- D. The applicant has either:
 - 1. Incorporated other design measures that exceed the minimums of the district and compensate for non-compliance with the requirements to be waived (net beneficial effect). The following design guidelines further clarify this criterion:
 - a. The use of symbols or three dimensional forms is encouraged.
 - b. Signs should make a positive contribution to the general appearance of the street and commercial area in which they are located. A well-designed sign can be a major asset to a building. The SRB encourages imaginative and innovative sign design. The Exceptional Sign Review application procedure is specifically designed for artistic and unusual signs that might not fit the standard sign regulations and categories.
 - 2. The strict application of the provisions of the regulation would deprive the applicant of the reasonable use of the land or would create an unnecessary hardship on the applicant. The following design guidelines further clarify this criterion:
 - a. The transportation department responsible for the adjacent public streets must review the plans for freestanding signs to ensure conformance with safety standards prior to approval by the board.
 - b. The SRB should review the layout of the land and surrounding property to determine whether relief is warranted.

Appendix 8B Exceptional Sign Review Design Guidelines

Sign Authorizations

Sign Authorization Reviews shall use the same set of design guidelines as listed under the Waiver Reviews. Emphasis in sign authorizations shall be on the innovative design of signage and its potential impact on the property it relates to, surrounding properties and to the street or public realm.