Yellowknife Downtown Façade Improvement Guidelines

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Goals

The following guidelines are designed to be a reference tool for building owners/lessees when they are considering exterior building enhancements. The goal is to promote a higher development standard for the commercial core of Downtown Yellowknife. These guidelines provide support and guidance for the Downtown Commercial Façade Improvement Program and the Downtown Design Award Program.

The Yellowknife Downtown Façade Improvement Guidelines are not rigid and prescriptive. Rather, they highlight good design principles meant to inspire creativity and individuality in the improvement of the physical appearance of buildings in the downtown. They will contribute to the vitality of the area, enhance street character, and consider winter city design. Façade improvement can also contribute to the sustainability of buildings in Yellowknife. For example, higher efficiency windows or the addition of an entrance vestibule can provide economic, environmental, and social benefits to owners and building users.

Introduction

Yellowknife has a short yet rich history as a city. Many of the most interesting buildings in the city illustrate the difficulties of dealing with climate, topography and remote location in their form and material. Designing to meet these challenges is what gives Yellowknife its character and sets it apart from other cities. The intent of these façade guidelines is to let the eclectic past and present of Yellowknife shine through while portraying pride and high quality design and construction to both citizens and visitors alike.

The character and design of each building on its own, as well as they way it relates to its neighbours is important in creating the feel of the street and a sense of place. The façades of buildings should be thought of as integral to the street scene as a whole. Façade design can also impact the attractiveness of a business to customers.

To keep downtown Yellowknife vibrant it must make the pedestrian the priority. Improving the pedestrian realm and the environmental sustainability of the building should be the main focus of any façade improvement.

Principles

1. Add activity, interest and comfort to the pedestrian environment.
2. Consider the entire street scene and the building's relationship to other buildings in the vicinity.
3. Strengthen the architectural integrity and unity of design of individual buildings.
4. Improve the environmental sustainability of the building.

Guidelines

Create Visual Interest

Create a stimulating pedestrian realm and draw attention to the building.

A. Colour
B. Materiality
C. Texture
D. Rhythm
E. Articulation

Design for the Human Scale

Focus on the street level to positively impact the pedestrian experience and the perception of the building.

A. Fine-grained development
B. Transition between base and body of building
C. Height / massing
D. Shelter from weather

Animate the Street Edge

Consider the interaction between the interior and exterior of the building for the benefit of users and passersby

A. Activate all frontages
B. Setbacks utilized
C. High permeability

Facilitate Wayfinding and Access

Clearly identify the building and its function, and facilitate access for persons with disabilities.

A. Clear signage compatible with architecture
B. Lighting
C. Clear entrance
D. Direct access

Create Visual Interest: Colour

Colour can be especially important during the winter months in northern cities like Yellowknife. It adds contrast and cheer to a white and grey landscape.

- Preserve existing or historic colour schemes where appropriate.
- Add colour during a façade improvement as an accent, or across the full façade.
- Use colour to accentuate features and create visual interest while respecting the native colours of rock, lichen, trees, water, and sky for the main building.
- Apply colour across the entire building façade to add vibrancy to the street and make the building stand out.

This building reflects the natural colours of rock and earth found in the Yellowknife landscape but uses colour to accentuate the doors.

Bright colours on these buildings in Greenland make the community stand out in contrast to its surroundings.

Colour is used on the façade and as accents to make this Yellowknife house distinctive.

Create Visual Interest: Materiality

Materials used for façade improvements should be high quality, durable products that are climate sensitive, and local when possible. Careful design of finishing details adds style and personality to the building.

- Avoid covering existing material details.
- Create accents through changes in material.
- Use materials with recycled content, or that can be re-used or recycled after their useful life.
- Use high quality construction details to ensure durability of the cladding and the building as a whole.
- Ensure that materials complement each other if more than one material is used.

The wood cladding gives a warmth to this building while the metal corner detail adds interest and durability.

Existing brick masonry should not be covered during façade improvements. Stone can be difficult to source locally, so imported materials should be carefully selected and used - such as for building accents.

Metal is an easily transportable, durable and flexible material that can be crafted into various shapes and forms.

Create Visual Interest: Texture

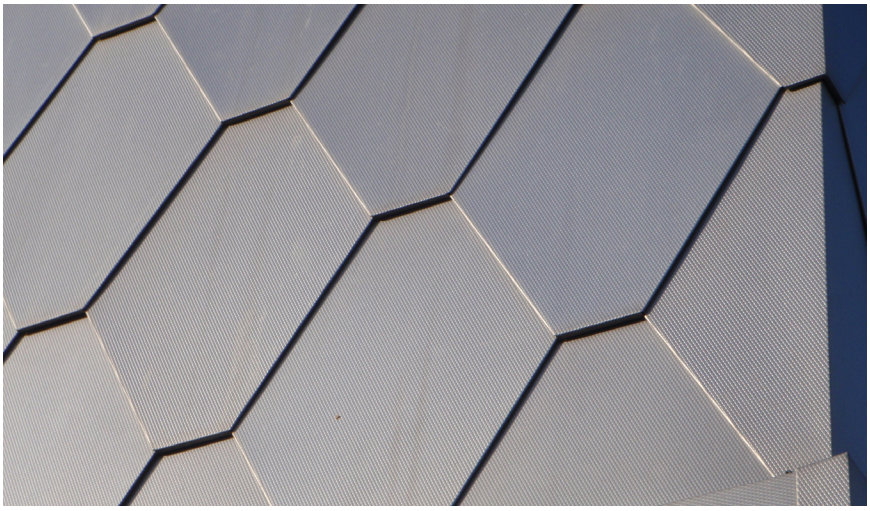
Variation in texture can give larger buildings a more human scale by breaking up the façade.

- Avoid covering up existing textures in the building façade.
- Add texture during a façade improvement to increase visual and tactile variety.

Sunshades and louvres can be added to a façade to provide texture as well as shading.

The scoring of the masonry on this building gives it texture and emphasizes the end of the wall.

The keystones and lintels above the windows in this building add tactile relief to the façade as does the raised yellow brick.



The unusual shape and scoring of the metal cladding on this Yellowknife school gives the building a unique texture.

Create Visual Interest: Rhythm

Repeating patterns and rhythms enhance the pedestrian environment and create unity across a street scene.

- Avoid covering up existing architectural features that provide rhythm.
- Create rhythm during a façade improvement by adding structural elements such as columns, windows and doorways.
- Use texture, material, and colour to create rhythm.
- Consider the rhythm of the street and how your building can enhance it.

Colour and building style tie this streetscape together in St. John's Newfoundland.

The arches and pilasters on this building create rhythm to reduce the mass of the building. A façade improvement to a large building could add a rhythm of entrances or windows to the main floor.

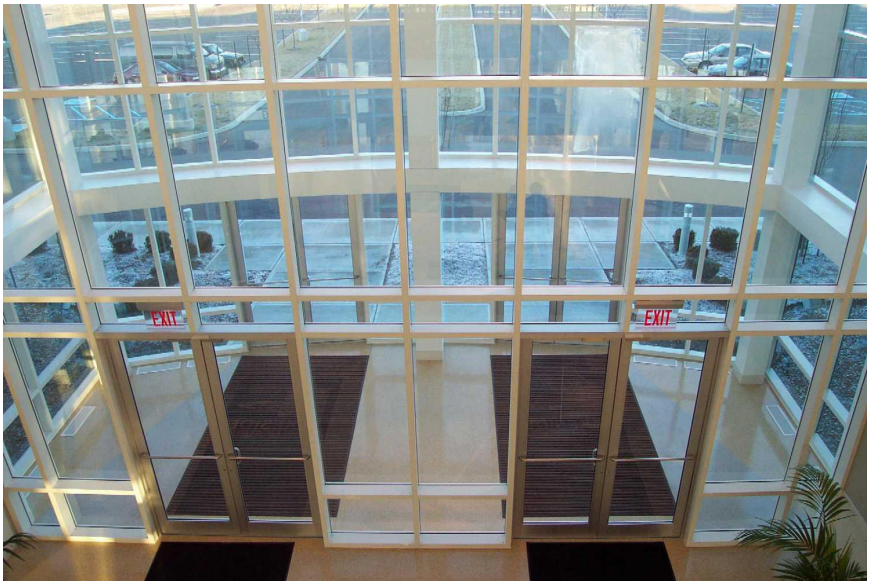
The scale, rooflines, and window styles of these buildings create a rhythm on this street in Bergen, Norway. Façade improvements should consider how to fit into the existing rhythm of the street.

Create Visual Interest: Articulation

Articulation can strengthen the relationship between the building and the street. Articulation occurs through the use of recessed or protruding entrances, fascia, cornices, pilasters and similar architectural features.

- Expose, highlight, or replace articulated features that have been removed.
- Reconfigure storefronts to emphasize doorways and windows or increase the depth of the entrance/vestibule.
- Add a vestibule to articulate the building form and at the same time improve energy efficiency by reducing heat loss and drafts of cold air when doors are opened.

The protrusion of this second storey window uses articulation to add interest to this Yellowknife building.



A protruding vestibule such as this one could be added to the front of a building adding visual interest and improving energy efficiency.

This kindergarten in Finland uses articulation to emphasize different elements of the building.

Design for the Human Scale: Fine-Grained Development

Large buildings should create a pedestrian friendly environment at the ground floor through the use of articulation, texture, colour and material that is respectful of a finer grain of traditional development with smaller lot sizes.

- Do not remove elements that create a fine grain of development.
- During façade improvements to large buildings, introduce vertical elements to break up the building face.
- Add frequent penetrations and entrances to provide relief for the eye as well as shelter from weather.

A facade improvement of a large building should visually divide the building mass at the ground floor with penetrations and entrances that give it a human scale.

While this development is all part of the same building it uses articulation along the roof line and frequent entrances to make it appear like several buildings.

Design for the Human Scale: Transition Between Base and Body of Building

Distinction between the base and the body of a building is especially important for buildings taller than three storeys so they do not dominate the pedestrian realm.

- Do not cover or remove elements that separate the base from the rest of the building.
- Add setbacks or overhangs, material changes, or architectural elements such as cornices and canopies to distinguish the base of the building.

This canopy distinguishes the base from the top of the building and also provides protection from wind and weather.

The Yellowknife Courthouse uses material, texture, setback and artistic elements to distinguish the base from the body of the building.

Stone cladding along the first floor of the Greenstone Building in Yellowknife makes it more visually and tactually interesting for pedestrians.

Design for the Human Scale: Height / Massing

Variations in height and massing add interest to the streetscape. Height changes from one building to the next are important as well as variations in height or roofline within the same building.

- Add architectural elements with height variation.
- Include vertical and horizontal articulation during façade improvements to break up the mass of the building.
- Be conscious of the roofline on neighbouring buildings and try to complement it.

Vertical pilasters and a varied roofline break up the mass of this building.

A simple detail such as the raised section on this roof can be part of a façade improvement design.

Design for the Human Scale: Shelter from Weather

Entranceways, canopies and awnings should be used to provide protection from the wind, sun, rain and snow. Louvers can prevent excessive heat gain inside a building during Yellowknife's long summer days.

- Install properly placed louvers and canopies for shading windows.
- Use recessed entranceways, and awnings for protection from snow and winter winds in the colder months.

These sun louvers on the Greenstone building in Yellowknife let the sun in at certain times of year, while blocking it at others. They also add architectural interest.

This artistic awning was added to the building to provide protection from wind, snow and rain.

A recessed entranceway such as this can be included in a façade improvement to provide shelter from the elements for pedestrians and window shoppers.

Animate the Street Edge: Activate all Frontages

Activate the street frontage on both sides of a corner lot so that the building does not turn its back on a particular street.

- Wrap the façade treatment around the building so that both streets are animated and active.
- Animate blank walls during a façade improvement through the addition of windows or entranceways.
- Incorporate fenestration and visual interest into both façades.

Accents of colour, awnings, and windows were added to this building to carry the active face of the building around the corner.

Moving an entrance to a corner will activate both streets fronts. In this building the awning, windows, and material choices link the two façades of the building.

Animate the Street Edge: Setbacks Utilized

Setbacks from the property line represent an opportunity to animate the street and can be part of a façade improvement.

- Use setbacks for plants, landscape, site furnishings, bicycle racks, or for displaying goods and services.
- Incorporate formal or informal seating.
- Enhance the pavement in a forecourt or setback with interesting patterns or designs.

The setback on this Yellowknife building is used to create a pleasant landscape that welcomes people inside and creates both formal and informal seating opportunities.

This setback is used to create formal seating for patrons, and separated from the street by decorative fencing.

The mosaic tile in this forecourt draws attention to the entrance and animates the street.

Animate the Street Edge: High Permeability

Glazing is important for maximizing interaction between the interior and exterior environments and enhancing safety through 'eyes on the street'. In a northern environment glazing is also a significant source of heat loss, so should be carefully considered.

- Upgrade to high efficiency windows to minimize heat loss.
- On north facing façades, it may be appropriate to select a lower window to wall ratio, to reduce heat loss.
- Glazing should have low reflectivity and be at eye level so that patrons can see out and pedestrians can see in.

The large size and low reflectivity of the glass in this window reveal the patrons and plants inside and invite pedestrians to enter.

The size of a display window can be increased during a façade improvement to improve the permeability of the building.

This coffee shop in Reikjavik, Iceland has large south facing windows that use internal shades to control glare and reduce heat loss in the evenings.

Facilitate Wayfinding and Access: Clear Signage Compatible with Architecture

Signs are integral to the overall perception of the building and help identify the building use for passersby.

- Sign design should reflect the architectural style of the building.
- Install high quality signs that are easily read from the sidewalk.
- Avoid cheap plastic backlit signs. See the Yellowknife Commercial Sign Guidelines for more detail.

This sign is simple with clean lines, and reflects the more modern style of the building.

This ornate sign complements the traditional style of the building and its present use.

Facilitate Wayfinding and Access: Lighting

Proper lighting enhances safety, can highlight architectural details, and can advertise the use of the building. Excessive and improper light causes light pollution and can be a safety concern if glare is created. Properly designed lighting will protect the visibility of the stars and northern lights which are a prominent part of the Yellowknife winter.

- Clearly define entrances through lighting.
- Use external lighting for signs and high quality fixtures (see Yellowknife Commercial Sign Guidelines for more detail).
- Install full cut off lights (emitting no light above the horizontal plane) that follow Dark Sky criteria.

This gooseneck lighting is appropriate for the style and use of this building.

The lighting for this building follows Dark Sky principles. Relevant areas are lit with downcast lighting and no glare is created.

The lighting on these businesses in Oslo, Norway enhances the character and charm of the buildings.

Facilitate Wayfinding and Access: Clear Entrance

A clear entrance provides a focal point for the façade and helps people orient themselves.

- Highlight the main building entrance through architectural detailing, articulation and lighting when conducting a façade improvement.

This building uses architectural treatment, a change in material and lighting to highlight the entrance.

An articulation in the façade of this shop indicates the entrance, making it easy to find.

Facilitate Wayfinding and Access: Direct Access

A façade improvement provides the opportunity to ensure building access for various levels of mobility.

- Make improvements to ensure entrances are flush with the sidewalk, with no step or riser.
- Add ramps and railings when the height difference between the sidewalk and the entrance is too great to make it flush.

This church has added railings to the step and to a ramp in order to improve access.

Le Stock Pot in Yellowknife added a ramp to the porch so that the main entrance is more accessible.

Façade Improvement Examples

The following pages highlight examples of potential façade improvements for buildings on 50 Street in downtown Yellowknife. These designs illustrate some of the principles and guidelines that are detailed in this document. They are by no means the only way façade improvements could be carried out on these buildings but simply represent one scenario. There are a myriad of ways commercial enterprises and offices could improve the external face they present to citizens and visitors alike.

Existing

Modified

1 Vertical columns of exposed brick add **texture** and **rhythm** that help **break up the building mass.**
2 High quality signage **compatible with the architecture**.
3 Use of warm **colours** to add interest, and warmth in a winter setting.

Façade Improvement Examples

Existing

Modified

1 High **permeability** with increased window size.
2 Signage **compatible with the architecture**.
3 **Clear, well lit** and **well articulated** building entrance.

Existing

Modified

1 Vertical elements, reinforced by **lighting**, create **rhythm** and portray a **fine grain** of development.
2 High quality, **durable materials.**
3 **Shelter** from the weather.
4 High quality, **legible** signage grouped together near an entrance.
5 High **permeability** that increases interaction between internal and external environments.

CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

COMMERCIAL SIGNAGE

GUIDELINES

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GUIDELINES

DESIGN EXAMPLES

PURPOSE

Signage is an important visual means for communicating information to passers-by in a functioning city. A quality sign not only conveys the name and location of a business but sends messages about quality, style, permanence and pride. Signs should not be an afterthought, but a planned element of a business.

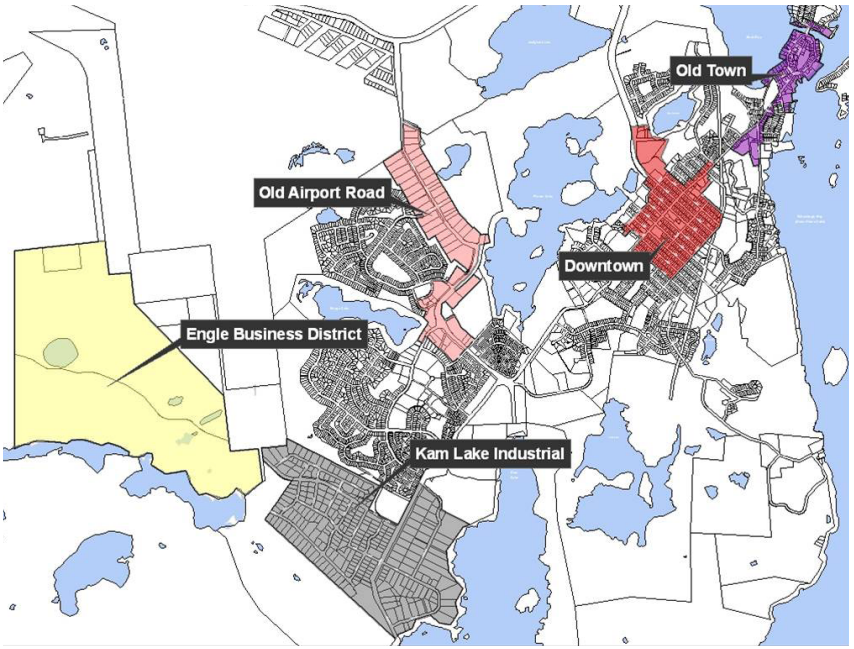
The purpose of this guideline is to provide guidance in the way signs are designed, constructed and placed within the city to better implement Zoning By-law No.4404 Sign Regulations. The objective of this document is to support both old and new businesses by providing quality design principles and good examples of technique.

The intent of the signage guidelines is to:

- Establish improved standards for business identification.
- Assist property owners and business owners in understanding city expectations.
- Reduce the time and fees for processing sign approvals.
- Encourage creative and innovative approaches to signage within an established framework.
- Promote economic vitality in the downtown.
- Enhance overall property values and the visual environment in the city by encouraging quality sign design and fabrication.
- Ensure that commercial signs are designed for the purpose of identifying a business in an attractive and functional manner.

APPLICABILITY

This document is intended to provide an easy to follow supplement to the sign regulations established by Schedule 2 of Zoning By-law No.4404. This By-law applies to all properties within the City of Yellowknife as as indicated in the map below and in the table on the following page.



All signs are subject to all other orders, by-laws and regulations of the City of Yellowknife. All new signs must be approved by the City through the Development Permit process to conform with Zoning By-law No. 4404 and this document, The City of Yellowknife Commercial Signage Guidelines.

APPLICABILITY

	Old Town	Downtown	Old Airport Road,	Industrial Areas
Permitted Sign Types	• Façade signs: • Awning signs • Projecting signs • Permanent banner signs • Marquee signs & Canopy signs • A-Frame signs/ Sandwich board signs • Window signs • Restaurant menu signs • Free-standing signs/ Monument signs • Temporary signs • Roof signs	• Façade signs: • Awning signs • Projecting signs • Permanent banner signs • Marquee signs & Canopy signs • A-Frame signs/ Sandwich board signs • Window signs • Restaurant menu signs • Free-standing signs/ Monument signs • Temporary signs • Roof signs	• Façade signs: • Awning signs • Projecting signs • Permanent banner signs • Marquee signs & Canopy signs • A-Frame signs/ Sandwich board signs • Window signs • Restaurant menu signs • Free-standing signs/ Monument signs • Temporary signs Roof signs	• Façade signs: • Awning signs • Projecting signs • Permanent banner signs • Marquee signs & Canopy signs • A-Frame signs/ Sandwich board signs • Window signs • Restaurant menu signs • Free-standing signs/ Monument signs • Temporary signs • Roof signs

NINE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Introduction

Signs should meet the promotional and identification needs of the business while enhancing the building on which it is placed and the streetscape of which it is a part. Effective signage incorporates the following nine principles as appropriate.

1. Architectural Compatibility

Signs should complement the building by using compatible materials, size, shape, colour, and details. Signs should also be sympathetic to the urban context of which the building is a part of.

The use of internally illuminated (e.g. backlit box) signs is undesirable, as they disrupt the continuity of the façade and visually separate the sign face from the building.

Generic sign standards dictated by national parent corporations are generally not sympathetic to the streetscape on which they are to be sited. These signs should be customized to make them compatible with the specific street character.

Right This sign complements the façade and provides clear identity of the business while preserving the continuity of the building façade.

Above This sign's background colour and the horizontal layout echo other elements on the façade.

Below Backlit box signs are discouraged.

2. Simplicity and Legibility

Signs should be designed and fabricated to easily communicate their message. A simple and clear type is critical for a truly effective sign so it can be quickly read. The adage “less is more” should always be applied. An attempt to insert too much information will defeat the purpose and result in illegible clutter.

Use suitable material, colours, words and design to enhance clarity and legibility. The number and spacing of words or letters and the type of script used depends on the location of the sign. In a pedestrian oriented neighbourhood, such as Old Town and Downtown, signs can be more creative in the type of script used as the reader will have more time to read and interpret the message. If the intent is to attract drivers to a location, i.e., Kam Lake Industrial Area, the sign should be clear and read at a quick glance from a distance.

This signage is of a size and scale which is suited to a pedestrian oriented setting.

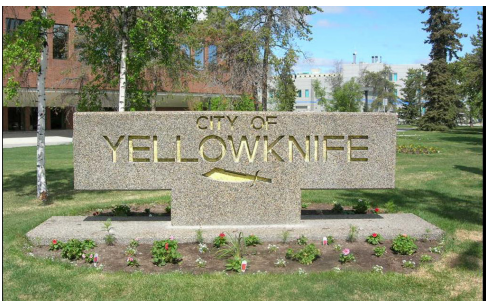
This sign is more clearly oriented towards the travelling public.

3. Form and Materials

The selection of a sign's form and materials requires careful thought. Signs directly painted onto a building façade are discouraged because they are generally less conscious of the building façade. Lettering and images that stand out in relief are encouraged.

The type of material should suit the building façade and relate to its context. Materials should be high quality, durable and low maintenance. Materials should be weatherproof, and treated or painted so that they will not discolour, rust, fade, crack, or corrode. Local materials should be used wherever possible. Suitable materials include acrylic, aluminum, brass-plated, copper, bronze and stone. Plywood, interior grade wood and unfinished lumber are discouraged.

These signs use high quality, low maintenance and local materials. Granite is local to Yellowknife.



4. Illumination and Lighting

Illumination needs to be carefully considered in sign design. Lighting should provide effective visual communication while contributing positively to the overall streetscape. Lighting should be closely matched to signage requirements and sympathetic to surrounding light level intensities. In many cases, simply illuminating an interior window display is an effective lighting solution.

Effective lighting should complement efforts to integrate signage with the building's architecture. One method to achieve this is to select back- or halo-lit individual letters and sign symbols over backlit box signs. Another method is to utilize gooseneck hooded lights or a similar projected light source. Signs with flashing, blinking or traveling lights are not permitted.

A number of considerations should be taken into account when selecting fixtures. The style and colour of fixtures should be sympathetic to the building and sign, and their size and scale should be compatible with the building and not obscure signage and architectural details. Shielded fixtures which prevent glare from spilling over onto other property or any public-right-of-way are encouraged. The International Dark-Sky Association is a good resource for decreasing light pollution. Long lasting and energy efficient lighting, such as LED lighting, is encouraged.

To minimize the visual mass and projection of the illuminated signs, all electrical transformer boxes and raceways should be concealed from public view. If a raceway cannot be mounted internally behind the finished exterior wall, the exposed metal surfaces should be integrated into the overall design of the sign.

Left Interior lighting may be sufficient to identify a business.

Below Back- or halo- lit illumination of individual letters is encouraged.

Above An example of illumination that is compatible with surrounding lighting intensities.

Right Projected lighting using gooseneck hooded lights.

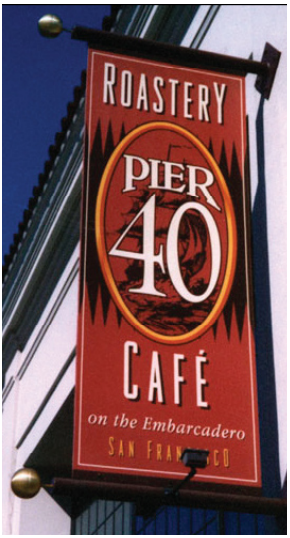
Below right Careful fixture selection shields the light source to prevent spillover onto surrounding properties.

5. Colour and Contrast

Select colours and colour combinations carefully. Colours should be legible for both day and night time viewing. Excessive colour choices that do not complement each other can confuse the eyes and interfere with identification of the sign. Similarly, large sign areas with multiple colours should be avoided. In many cases, colour accents can be used to create unique and attractive signage

Strong contrast contributes to the legibility of signs. Generally, light letters on a dark background or dark letters on a light background are most legible.

These signs are good examples of the use of colours, colour combinations and contrast.



6. Scale and Placement

A sign should not dominate the building or the street scene but should be consistent with the proportions of the buildings' façade or the component of a building in which it is located. Generally speaking, small storefronts should have smaller signs than larger storefronts.

A sign should be oriented towards pedestrians and traffic to encourage retail and street activity. Wall signs should be placed to fit with façade rhythm and proportion. A properly located sign should integrate with other architectural features, not conceal or obscure them. For instance, a storefront sign can be centred above a central recessed entry.

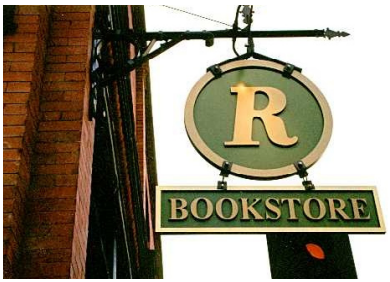
Above This oversized sign conceals many of the building's architectural features and compromises the proportions of the overall façade.

Below This centrally located sign enhances the architectural features of the building.

7. Message and Content

The colour and font selection should be non-cluttered to ensure clarity and legibility of the building's message. Signs which incorporate simple and brief sign messages are easier to read, look cleaner and are more attractive.

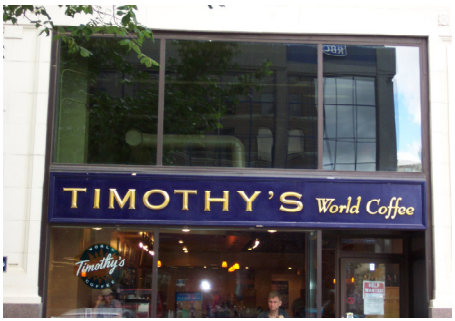
A typical and clear business sign will typically include the name of the store, a logo and / or other decorative features. Symbols and corporate logos should be used as they tend to register more quickly in the viewers' mind than a written message. Priority should be given to signage at primary locations which contains the business name and/or its logo. If additional product or services information display area is required it can be placed below or at some other secondary location.



Above The symbol registers quickly in viewers' mind, with additional information displayed below.

Above right This sign is scaled for an industrial building and sends a clear business message.

Right An example of a sign with a clear and legible message.



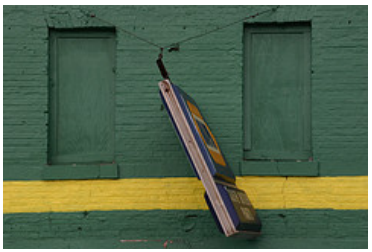
8. Safety and Hazards

It clearly states in the Signage By-law 4404 that signs shall not be attached to or stand on the ground in any public street or place. Within a property, signs should be carefully located to ensure that no physical and visual obstructions for vehicular and / or pedestrian traffic are created, particularly at entrance/exit points of parking lots or intersections. Furthermore, glossy finishes that cause glare and reflections are discouraged.

A sign located at the entrance point of a parking lot, clearly identifying the business while preserving visibility and preventing encroachments upon the public right-of-way.

9. Maintenance

Ensure that signs are well-kept, functioning properly and that the sign is clearly visible with no signs of damage.



A dilapidated sign

FACADE SIGNS

Façade signs generally include wall signs, fascia signs / storefront signs, and plaque signs. Façade signs are mounted flat on the exterior walls of a building exposed to public view, usually above the framed business entrance and below the roofline of the building.

Zoning Requirements

- Must not project more than 30 cm from the building façade.
- Shall not project more than 1.0 m above the roofline of the building to which it is attached.
- Must provide a minimum 2.5 m clearance between the ground and the lowest point of the sign.
- Plaque signs may only be located on wall surfaces adjacent to front entrances.
- Plaque signs should not project further than 5 cm from the building wall.
- Should fit within an imaginary rectangle of up to 0.25 m^2.
- Subject to the overarching demands for all sign types.

Guidelines

- Have clearly defined edges to enhance visual interest.
- Display simple and clear message to enhance legibility.
- Create unique and visually interesting signs through diverse materials, colours, fonts and shapes.
- Integrate mounting hardware, including lighting fixtures, as a part of the sign design or hide them from view.

Left Façade sign appropriately located on the façade.

Above Example of a plaque sign.

Above right Visible mounting hardware and raceway, as visible in this example, should be avoided.

AWNING SIGNS

Awning signs are visual messages affixed to or imprinted on a temporary shelter resting on a supporting framework, such as a rigid metal frame.

Zoning Requirements

- Must provide a minimum 2.5 m clearance between the sidewalk and the lowest point of the sign.
- Subject to the overarching demands for all sign types.

Guidelines

- Awnings should preferably be retractable and not fixed.
- Exaggerated scale and projection are inappropriate.
- Awnings should not obscure architectural features.
- Solid or simple colours are recommended.
- Choose durable materials, i.e. non-reflective canvas, metal or plastic.
- Fixed awnings should have sharp slope angles to prevent snow and dirt accumulation.
- Individual awnings over windows and door entrances are encouraged over continuous awnings which obscure architectural features.

Above Awnings with sharp slope angles.

Above right Individual awnings over windows are encouraged.

Right An example of a retractable awning sign.

MARQUEE AND CANOPY SIGNS

Marquee signs are permanent roof-like structures at the entry to buildings typically occupied by theatres, cinemas, performing arts facilities, or parking structures. Canopy signs are affixed to any permanent architectural projection extending over a door, entrance, window, or outdoor service area.

Zoning Requirements

- Shall not project more than 1 m above the top of the marquee and the canopy to which it is attached.
- A minimum clearance of 2.5 m shall be provided between the ground and the lowest point of the sign.
- Subject to the overarching demands for all sign types.

Guidelines

- Canopy and marquee structures should be designed as integral parts of the building.
- Choose proper scale, font size, and sign height to display message without dominating the streetscape.
- Light features (other than flashing or travelling lights) on marquee signs can add festive atmosphere to a street.

Above left Example of a marquee sign used for a theatre.

Above right Metal and glass are popular materials for canopy signs.

Left A well-designed canopy sign celebrates the architecture features without dominating the streetscape.

PERMANENT BANNER SIGNS

Permanent banner signs are vertically oriented visual messages displayed on a heavyweight canvas fabric.

Zoning Requirements

No specific requirements. Shall be subject to the overarching demands for all sign types and other orders, by-laws, and regulations.

Guidelines

- Banner signs should hang from projecting metal brackets with both ends of the banner securely attached and perpendicular to the building fascia.
- Select brackets that complement the banners and the architecture.
- Banners should be placed a minimum of 3 m above grade.
- Avoid using excessive colours and graphics, or oversized banners that may dominate the façade.
- Simple and clear design is preferred.
- Banners placed in a sequence create a sense of rhythm.
- Banners can be integrated with pilasters, columns and similar features to accent the building's architecture.
- Use durable materials, flexing brackets and 'wind holes' in banners to reduce wear and tear due to wind loads.

Below A simple banner sign is suitable in pedestrian oriented neighbourhood.

Above Aligning several banners in a row creates rhythm and accentuates columns on the façade.

WINDOW SIGNS

Window signs are painted, posted, displayed, or etched on a translucent or transparent surface, including windows or doors. Window signs are not typically the primary signage for a business.

Zoning Requirements

No specific requirements. Shall be subject to the overarching demands for all sign types and other orders, by-laws, and regulations.

Guidelines

- Simple and clear design is preferred.
- Choose proper text, colour, and typeface to avoid clutter or illegibility.
- Choose proper scale to allow view penetration - pedestrians can view the business inside and patrons inside can view the street outside.
- Signs should be placed directly onto the interior surface of the glazed area or hung inside the window.
- Choose quality and reliable materials such as paint, gold-leaf or neon.
- Consider a variety of professional applications, such as sandblasting or etched glass.
- Glass-mounted graphics and colours may be applied by painting, silk screening, or vinyl die-cut forms.

Examples of window signs that communicate messages yet allow view penetration between inside and outside.

A-FRAME / SANDWICH BOARD SIGNS

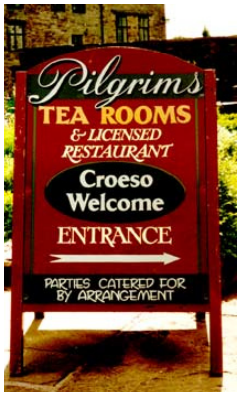
An A-frame sign is a free-standing portable sign supported by an "A" frame. This sign type is frequently seen in high pedestrian traffic areas to promote spontaneous walk-in sales.

Zoning Requirements

- Sign placement must not disrupt pedestrian movement.
- Maximum sign area is 0.72 m^2 (calculated on one side only).
- Maximum height is 1.2 m and maximum width is 0.6 m.
- Signs cannot be affixed permanently to the ground or to any structure or object.
- Subject to the overarching demands for all sign types.

Guidelines

- Choose durable materials, i.e., film faced plywood, wallboard or metal.
- Avoid using materials like glass, breakable materials, laminated paper, vinyl, plastic or PVC pipe frames.
- Incorporate logos, graphics and interesting shapes to attract customers and enhance pedestrian experience.



Left Example of an attractive A-frame sign with durable materials.

Above Example of a portable sign, which is not encouraged.

FREESTANDING / MONUMENT SIGNS

Freestanding and monument signs are supported by two upright columns, or have a solid footing in or upon the ground. Monument signs generally have low overall height. By virtue of their relatively large allowable size, freestanding signs are typically found in commercial areas such as Old Airport Road. Freestanding signs can also include tenant signs, in which the various tenants within a building, complex or multi-tenant space are listed.

Zoning Requirements

- Maximum 8 m sign height from the ground level, including the sign base.
- Maximum 25 sq m^2 sign area.
- Subject to the overarching demands for all sign types.

Guidelines

- Pedestrian-scaled monument signs should be used in pedestrian oriented areas, such as Downtown and Old Town.
- Too many panels on a freestanding sign compromises legibility and clarity.
- High quality and durable materials, such as metal, brick, stone, tile, cast concrete, or similar masonry materials are encouraged.
- Materials, finishes, colours and sign lettering should be in harmony with the overall sign image.
- Avoid using internally illuminated signs which can cause uncomfortable glare to motorists at night.
- External illumination is encouraged, such as gooseneck hooded lights and halo-lit illumination.
- Orient signs perpendicular to the street or intersection to maximize view exposure.
- Ensure signs are well integrated with site landscaping.
- Tenant directory signs are designed and oriented for the pedestrian. They are usually placed at eye level near building entrances.
- Use quality fabrication to withstand wear and tear from variable weather conditions.

FREESTANDING / MONUMENT SIGNS

Above left A people-scaled free-standing sign well integrated with site landscaping.

Left A properly designed and located freestanding sign with durable materials.

Below A good example of a tenant sign.

Below right A sign with poor overall image and improperly sized text

Above A sign maximizes its view exposure by its perpendicular placement to the highway.

Right External illumination is preferred.

PROJECTING SIGNS

Projecting signs are attached to the face of a building, either fixed to the wall or hung from decorative brackets. This sign type is pedestrian oriented and is commonly used in traditional downtown and high pedestrian traffic areas.

Zoning Requirements

- Project a minimum of 30 cm from the building face.
- The entire sign body project no more than 2 m above the parapet.
- The entire sign body not extend more than 2 m from the building face.
- Minimum clearance of 3 m shall be provided from the ground to the lowest point of the sign.
- Subject to the overarching demands for all sign types.

Guidelines

- The primary sign body should fit within a 0.5 sq m^2 imaginary rectangle for a pedestrian friendly scale.
- Creative and visually interesting pieces should be chosen (e.g. painted or applied letters, two or three dimensional symbols or logos)
- The sign's shapes, colours and materials should reflect the building character.

Above left A well-designed projecting sign related to its business.

Above A projecting sign located at the building corner is placed at equal angles to the two building faces.

Left A well designed sign related to the building character.

RESTAURANT MENU SIGNS

Restaurant menu signs are signs that incorporate a menu or a list of products and prices offered by the restaurant.

Zoning Requirements

No specific requirements. Shall be subject to the overarching demands for all sign types and other orders, by-laws, and regulations.

Guidelines

- House the signs in cabinets to withstand wear and tear and variable weather conditions.
- Signs displayed on boards should be mounted to the building wall adjacent to the entrance, or as a free-standing structure within the property line.
- The imaginary rectangular area for a sign should not exceed 0.6 m^2, including decorative extensions surrounding the cabinet or board.
- Durable materials, such as metal, glass or weather resistant wood, are encouraged for cabinets and display boards.
- Creative and eye-catching signs are encouraged to attract customers.
- The scale, shape, colour and material choices should complement the building character.

Above Restaurant menu signs incorporated with the building character.

Above right An eye-catching sign design.

Right A menu displayed in a free-standing cabinet.

TEMPORARY SIGNS

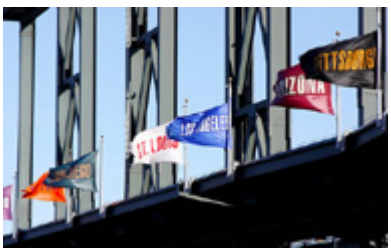
Temporary signs are signs intended to be on display for a limited period of time only and are not permanently mounted. Examples may include banner signs, pennants, stake signs, A-frame signs, painted window signs or card signs integrated within a window display. Several of these sign types can also be used for permanent display when the situation allows. Temporary signs are often used to advertise seasonal business promotions and events.

Zoning Requirements

- Off-site advertisement is not permitted in Yellowknife.
- No other specific requirements, but subject to the overarching demands for all sign types.

Guidelines

- Convey easily legible messages through simple fonts and layouts.
- Properly display the sign for clear visibility.
- Avoid obscuring other signs or architectural features on the building.
- Materials should be durable enough to avoid discolouration, cracking or other damage during the course of display.
- Signs should stand within the property line.
- Signs should be removed when the content is no longer applicable.



Above left Temporary banner sign.

Left Pennants.

Above Temporary painted window sign and sign card.

ROOF SIGNS

Roof signs are erected in whole or in part upon or over the roof or parapet of a building. A roof sign can be placed on either a flat or sloping roof.

Zoning Requirements

- Mounted wholly or partially on the building where it sits.
- Maximum 5 m display height from the top of the building façade to the top of the sign.
- Maximum 25 m^2 sign area.
- Must not project beyond any portion of the exterior walls.
- Sign height not to exceed the maximum height in the zoning district.
- Subject to the overarching demands for all sign types

Guidelines

- All components and mounting should be solidly connected and able to resist wind loads.
- Signs, fixtures and hardware should be durable and weather proof.
- Cut-out or penetrated roof signs are preferred over solid sign boxes.
- Integrate fonts, logos and messages into the sign shape.
- Avoid oversized signs or sign clutter.

Above, **above right** Penetrated roof signs that appear visually light and suited to their rooftop locations.

Right This sign communicates its message clearly but appears visually heavy.

DESIGN EXAMPLES

In order to better illustrate the application of design guidelines, some examples are provided in existing Yellowknife neighbourhoods. These illustrations are not 'rules', but examples to inspire better design and to broaden the spectrum of applications. Each example highlights the supporting guidelines illustrated in this document.

Example # 1 Façade sign

- Simple sign design provides legibility and clarity.
- The colour and contrast assist both day and night time viewing.
- The sign scale respects the buildings' façade and the area in which it is located.

- When a raceway cannot be mounted internally behind the finished exterior wall, the exposed metal surfaces should be integrated into the overall design of the sign.
- Backlit illumination is applied to the logo.
- The lettering stands out in relief.

DESIGN EXAMPLES

Example # 2 Free-standing Sign

- Avoid displaying too many signs.
- Use durable and weatherproof materials such as metal and stone.
- Incorporate the sign placement with its surroundings, i.e. site landscaping.
- The major tenant may have a slightly larger panel.

- Use illumination only if necessary.
- Use contrasting dark and light colours for the lettering and background.
- Externally illuminated signs are encouraged over backlit box signs.
- Properly shield the light source.
- Avoid upward directed lighting.

Example # 3 Façade Sign

- Select sign materials that complement the overall building character and material palette.
- Simple sign design provides legibility and clarity.
- Sign lettering stands out in relief.
- When the entrance is not directly facing the street, locate the sign where it can be easily seen.

- Backlighting of individually mounted letters.
- The raceway and lighting fixtures are mounted behind the decorative wood sheathing.
- Avoid overly bright illumination compared to surrounding lighting intensity.

DESIGN EXAMPLES

Example # 4 Canopy Sign

- The font size, height and scale respects the surrounding building characteristics.
- The canopy adds articulation to the building and offers shelter while letting light through.
- Metal and glass are quality materials for canopy signs.

- Individually lit letters are preferred.
- Avoid overly bright illumination compared to surrounding lighting intensity.

FEEDBACK

Please direct questions to the
City of Yellowknife's Planning and Lands Division

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Fax: (867) 920-5649