

address  
numbers

Located predictably at each entrance assist visitors and shoppers to reach their destination and can help satisfied customers generate referrals. A legible street address is important for radio, print, and web-based promotion to get the prospective customer through the door.



*do's* Placing the numerical address of your business in at least one location (such as over the door) makes good sense for business, safety and security reasons.

high  
visibility

Easy-to-see address identification is also a low-cost security enhancement. Eliminating confusion reduces police and fire department response time.



*do's* Businesses that advertise should also place the numerical address near the business name.

address  
lighting

Address identification can be in several locations, but at least one place should be illuminated at night. The transom, side wall, awning, projecting signs often include illuminated address numerals. Over-the-door transoms are the first place people generally look, so it is the most logical, helpful location.

*don't's* Businesses with an address absent or too small or applied in a typeface that is not legible -- are far more difficult for prospective customers to find.

can DRAB  
help?

The Design Review Advisory Board can assist business owners. As new businesses open and existing ones update, DRAB may be of help to business owners interested in high-quality graphics, illumination, and design for their sign art.



## Address NUMERALS

### Address

Place storefront address numbers on the transom above storefront doors. Building addresses can be located with the building name on the transom above the main entry, or on an architectural element on the facade. As an alternative, addresses may be located in the entry floor. Appropriate materials for address signs include painted or vinyl numbers on glass, wood or metal depending on the facade material.

### General Guidelines:

- Minimum 6" in height
- Preferred placement locations
  - on the surface of the main entry
  - over the main entry
  - on architectural feature within 10' of the main entry

### Example of appropriate Fonts:

**79 W Mill Rd.**  
(Gill Sans Bold)

**3300 W Mill Rd.**  
(Myriad Pro)

**815 E Mill Rd.**  
(Minion Pro)



**Plaque** Use light color letters (high chroma) on a dark background (low chroma) for the most legible outcome. Plaque style and material should compliment the main signage and the character of the building.



**Cut Out** The number should be at least 2" deep in order to cast a visible shadow. Works well on flatter facades where the address will not compete with other three dimensional features.



**On Glass** Gold leaf lettering or even simple vinyl decals can be a simple cost effective way to display your address. It can be located on the main display if it is near the business name, otherwise it should be placed as close to the main entrance as possible.

# Design Bulletin 2 FREESTANDING Signs

freestanding sign

Free standing outdoor signs are usually the main identification for businesses and shopping centers. Pylon signs are one or two pole structures and are sometimes quite large and elaborate. Monument signs typically consist of a solid structural base with a framework of the same material. They generally have backlit fluorescent illumination but also sometimes incorporate neon lighting into their design.



**do's** Some uses may employ a message board with electronic or manual changeable letters to advertise events, sales, or attractions that occur for a limited time.



components

Primary tenant or development name or logo is placed at the very top. Secondary Tenants have smaller signs located below the primary tenant. Street number and street name is should be displayed on pylon signs.

**don't's**

Consideration of the scale and appearance of freestanding signs is important for public safety as well as the aesthetic qualities. Messages on these signs should be clear and not cluttered by excessive information.



design elements

Pylon signs should be designed to match or complement the colors and architectural features of the adjacent building. Incorporate similar architectural elements at top, sides or base to frame the sign. If a sign contains listings for multiple tenants, the information should be presented in a clear and consistent manner.



**do's** For visibility, message should be limited to the name and street address of the business, with a logo and/or message board. Other messages such as services or products offered, phone numbers, sales or promotions, or slogans, are discouraged. In Dedham only public service information may be conveyed via a digital sign.



can DRAB help?

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## Freestanding SIGNS

### Freestanding Signs

Free standing signs are usually the main identification for businesses and shopping centers. These types of signs are one or two pole structures and are sometimes quite large and elaborate. They generally have backlit fluorescent illumination but also sometimes incorporate neon lighting into their design.



**Pylon Signs** are one or two pole structures and are sometimes quite large and elaborate.



**Monument Signs** typically consist of a solid structural base with a framework of the same material.



**Multiple Tenant Freestanding Signs** for retail centers with more than one tenant shall be limited to a maximum of five business names, including the name of the retail center, if it has one.

### General Guidelines

**Location:** Freestanding signs are placed at the entrance to parking lots or driveways, perpendicular to the street. The base of the sign is usually landscaped. Sign and landscaping should not block sight lines at the driveway or circulation aisles. No portion of freestanding signs should be located on or above the public right-of-way. All parts of freestanding signs should be located at least five feet from any property line.

**Area:** Freestanding signs should use between 5 to 10 percent of its area for address identification.

**Letters:** Letters and numbers should be at least six (6) inches high and be legible from the street.

**Projection:** All parts of freestanding signs should be located at least five feet from any property line.

**Lighting:** Freestanding signs are to be externally illuminated.

above the  
storefront

The signband above the storefront, or on the transom panels above the display windows, Signband wall signs are traditionally the most prominent graphic feature of shopping streets. Buildings with multiple tenants should create graphic standards. The sign program need not be uniform, but it should enable changes when turnover occurs without damage to the facade.



**do's** | The over-the-shop signband typically fits into the facade below the second story windows. Often placed above the display or the main entrance.

size of  
the sign

Pedestrians across the street and passing vehicles have the best view of the business name on the signband, so the message size has to be calibrated to the width of the street. Regardless of size, the sign should not cover over architectural features such as windows, pilasters, or cornices.

**don't's**

| The signband should not cover over architectural features. This destroys some of the inherent value and character of a place.

sign  
lighting

External lighting of the business name presents a more substantial, enduring appearance than a plastic back-lit box sign. Limit text-based messages to the name of the business. Products, services, and contact information should be located elsewhere on the shopfront.

**don't's**

| The signband should clearly present the business name. Resist the temptation to load up over-the-shop signs with promotional messages.

can DRAB  
help?

The Design Review Advisory Board can assist. As new businesses open and existing ones update ; DRAB may be able to advise business owners interested in high-quality graphics, illumination, and design for their sign art.



### Wall SIGNS

#### Wall Signs

are mounted either flush to the building wall or on to the architectural signband that is often incorporated into the cornice over the ground floor shopfront. Pedestrians across the street have the best view of the business name, so the message size has to be calibrated to the width of the street. Signs comprised of individual letters mounted on a cornice or wall are specifically encouraged. Colors should harmonize with those of nearby businesses.



**Cut Out Letters** The most inexpensive of the signband types consists of individual raised letters arranged on the building frieze just above the first floor windows.



**Plaque Signband** The most typical of wall signs, the plaque sign is a piece of wood or metal that has the storefront sign carved into it. This allows for some depth and shadow on the sign, increasing the legibility without increasing the size.



**Sculptural Signband** The most expensive of the wall sign types consists of a specifically designed sculptural sign that extends up to 12 inches from the facade, but can give an eye catching degree of depth.

#### General Guidelines

**Location:** The top of such signs shall extend no higher than the bottom of the window sills or projected bay located on the second story of the building face or fourteen feet above the street level, whichever is lower.

**Area:** The area of the sign should be in proportion to the size of the building front. Refer to the Town's Sign Code for dimensional specifications.

**Letters:** The copy of such signs shall not be less than six inches in height.

**Projection:** Signs shall project no more than twelve inches from the principal face of the building.

**Lighting:** All wall signs should be externally illuminated.

projecting  
signs

Projecting signs are suspended over the sidewalk, usually over the ground floor entrance. They are usually designed to be visible by passing pedestrians, motorists and passengers. Graphics should memorably communicate the business identity in a way that is of interest when viewed at a variety of speeds by walkers, riders and drivers.



do's

*Projecting signs of no greater than 4 sq ft are allowed in Dedham's LB, GB, and CB zones and should be encouraged anywhere where pedestrian activity is expected.*



simple  
is best

Signs can be either rectangular panels or can be crafted into shapes that represent the business. Symbols, such as eyeglasses for an optometrist or the sombrero-wearing logo/ silhouette integrated into the sign at the right communicate a more dynamic and immediately legible message than similarly-sized signs with more words.



do's

*The colors, symbolism, and shape tell passersby: "This is a Mexican restaurant". Without reading a word – most could also form an opinion on the food and the price range; big steps on the way to deciding to stop and visit.*



sign lighting

Externally lit signs provide an attractive, enduring appearance, putting the emphasis on the identity image and lessens distracting glare. Though internally illuminated projecting signs are increasingly popular, they tend to be associated with commerce that is purely automobile dependent and do not belong everywhere.

don't's

*Signs with a lot of words seldom have a chance to get the message across. For example, on average, a motorist can only absorb about 4 words of a storefront sign.*



can DRAB  
help?

The Design Review Advisory Board can assist business owners interested in improving, repairing, or replacing their projecting signs. DARB can help by clarifying permitting requirements, by identifying funding resources, and by providing design guidance.

## Projecting SIGNS



**Shingle sign** The classic, suspended "shingle" sign is a small projecting sign typically located next to the main entry door just below the second floor. Traditionally, the sign material is wood, but can be other materials as long as it is in the context of the attached building.

Height: 7 to 10 feet from the sidewalk  
Width: 24 inches



**Swinging sign** Signs can be either rectangular panels or can be crafted into shapes that represent the business. Symbols, such as eyeglasses for an optometrist or the sombrero wearing logo/ silhouette integrated into the sign at the right communicate a more dynamic and immediately legible message than similarly-sized signs with more words.

Height: 10 to 18 feet  
Width: refer to Dedham's Sign Code



**Wall mounted, fixed sign** A "fixed" sign projecting from the building can allow the sign to take on a third dimension (pictured right), which can be helpful in creating an iconic sign. It also allows for the sign to be internally illuminated (pictured far right). The fixed sign usually occurs on the second floor level and does not reach lower than the top of the first floor.

Height: 10 and higher  
Width: 2/3 width of sidewalk to a max of 10



### great shopfront

A street of shopfront windows that each present an invitation to passers-by is attractive to both customers, but also as a place for businesses to locate and expand. Design the window display to do all 3 of its jobs, 1) PRESENT the name of the business, 2) DISPLAY representative merchandise, 3) INFORM about promotional events or sales



**do's** *Keep the shopfront window clean and uncluttered to help focus attention on the merchandise. A passerby should be able to glance at a shopfront window and quickly understand what the shop is selling.*



### window shopping

Window shopping happens at all times of the day and night, and from different distances. A cluttered dark shopfront prevents people from getting a look at your merchandise as they walk by or drive past – discouraging future customers.

**don't's**

*Obscuring the view through the shopfront windows discourages new customers who would feel safer in a store they could see into.*



### night lighting

Most retail purchases are made in the early evening, when window displays are most engaging. During evening hours, well designed shopfront displays sell - even when you are closed.



**do's** *Lighting the shopfront windows and display lets your shopfront present your offerings to potential customers even when you are closed.*



### can DRAB help?

The Design Review Advisory Board can assist. As new businesses open and existing ones update; DRAB may be of assistance to business owners interested in high-quality graphics, illumination, and design for their sign art.

## Shopfront WINDOWS

### Shopfront Windows

A window can effectively display merchandise all the way to the back of the store and every spot in between. The eye can be drawn back into the store by using effective lighting and display techniques.



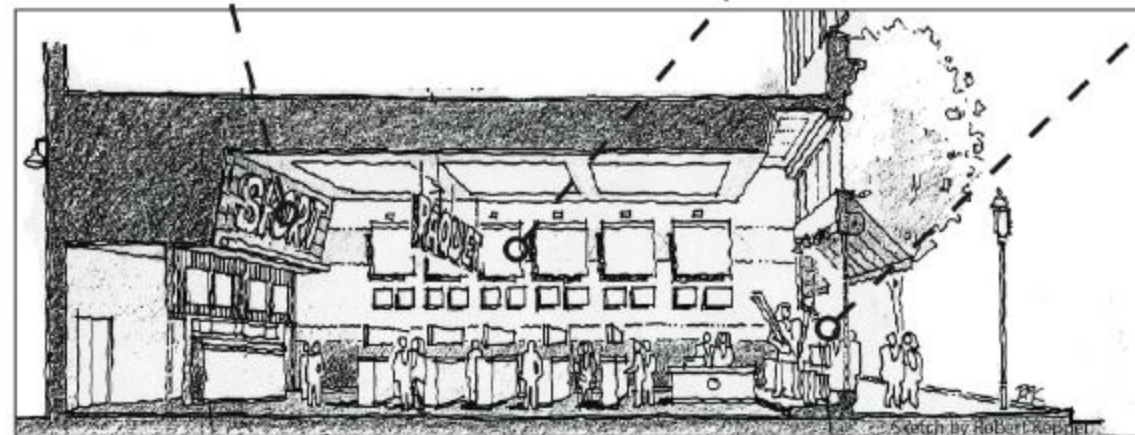
**Rear Bulkhead** An illuminated graphic or sign on the rear bulkhead draws the eye into the full depth of the store. Uplighting the ceiling will reduce the "light at the end of the tunnel" effect, and add height to the space. This could left on at a low level all night.



**Main Space** A number of techniques can be used to integrate the main shopfloor into the shopfront windows. Use accent lighting on high wall merchandise and warm lighting in the merchandise area. Illuminate suspended elements such as sale banners or specific areas of the store; mens, womens, shoes, etc.



**Front Display Space** In a storefront where complete transparency is not desired, the focus should be on the front display space. Using uplighting at front bulkhead and ceiling adds height to the display while focused lighting on merchandise or featured sales in the display window can encourage after hours window shopping.



the way in

In an enclosed mall doors don't matter, but on the Avenue every customer must operate an entrance door on her way in. A dirty, flimsy, uncooperative door presents a negative impression. A solid, sparkling clean, smoothly operating door with a high quality hand hold, knob or push bar just feels good. Upgrade/replace entry way and door hardware regularly.

don't's

Letting the entry door fall into disrepair sends a strong signal to the consumer about the quality of the shop. Covering the sight-line to the interior creates a feeling of uncertainty for the would-be consumer.



awnings

Awnings add color, and limit reflection on the shopfront glass (making it easier to see offerings within) and create opportunity for promotion and business identity signage. Mylar/Plastic backlit "waterfall" awnings are discouraged.



do's

Fabric Awnings convey a sense of enduring quality and care. They can also provide shelter from the elements for passing pedestrians.



temporary signs

Temporary signs are for promotion of short term, time-limited offerings. Graphics and colors can be more bold and materials more ephemeral than usually used for business identity graphics.



do's

Temporary signage, such as banners and sandwich boards should communicate information about promotions, sales and current "special" offerings. However, they should not be an obstruction to pedestrians and are not the place for primary business identity.



can DRAB help?

The Design Review Advisory Board can assist business owners interested in improving, repairing, or replacing their projecting signs. DRAB can help by clarifying permitting requirements, by identifying local resources, and by providing design guidance.

## Shopfront ELEMENTS

### Top 5 things that can improve your Storefront

Here are five simple measures that will help make your storefront the best it can be.

1



**Light Your Signs Well** Signs are all quite different in character and no single design solution will fit every building. A variety of successful techniques can be used.

General Guidelines

- Light using an external incandescent spotlight, gooseneck lights, or fluorescent strip luminaries.
- Back-lit or internally lit signs are prohibited.
- Unshielded spot lights, neon, and flashing signs are prohibited.
- Energy efficient lighting is strongly encouraged.

2



**Awnings** Awnings dampen the glare and reflection from shop windows improving the view of the display.

General Guidelines

- Should be made of a material that resembles canvas.
- May contain simple lettering.
- Colors should complement the buildings and the corridor.
- Placement over important architectural details is prohibited, they should fall within existing openings.

3



**Temporary Signage** Bold and vivid temporary signage can be used to entice potential passerbys by advertising daily specials or sales.

General Guidelines

- Paper window signs, or exterior banners, should have a limited lifespan.
- Colors can be more bold, but still consistent with colors used in the main signage.
- Similar graphical elements found in the main signage should be used in the temporary signage to make it more coherent.

4



**Display your Merchandise** The goal of the shopfront display window is to create an inviting environment where customers can easily see inside the store and determine the type of merchandise being sold.

General Guidelines

- Signs in the windows should allow pedestrians to see inside.
- Windows should not be cluttered with interior signs, "less is more".
- In general, the best retail windows are large, clear, undivided windows.
- Replacement windows should retain the original size, location, and materials.
- Storm windows should be placed on the inside, not the outside.

5



**Solid Entrance** A solid, sparkling clean, smoothly operating door with a high quality hand hold, knob or push bar just feels good. Upgrade/replace entry way and door hardware regularly.

General Guidelines

- Glass panel doors are encouraged, so shoppers can easily tell whether the store is open or not, and if it is safe to enter.
- Flat metal doors and doors without glass should not be used.
- Entrances should be handicapped accessible.
- Entrance should not be difficult to get through because of crowning merchandise

good  
change

From time to time, it is desirable to dramatically change the appearance of a building. An owner planning a change in use, for example, might conclude that the features that made for a comfortable family home in the 1920's would hamper the success of a bike shop, bank, dentist office, or day care operation. The architectural character and quality can be preserved through this process and should be designed appropriately.

don't's

*The solid roll-down security gates compromise the character of these buildings and make the street darker at night making it more likely that neighboring businesses will close early too.*



take  
advantage

Much of the Town's character was established when the predominant material was brick and the architecture was ornate. The skills and resources to create those buildings will not be available again. Take the time to evaluate alternatives to simply covering up original ornaments or architectural features.

don't's

*Boarding up the second floor windows with plywood or brick gives the impression that the building is dilapidated and unkept, and may give potential customers a negative impression.*



uncovering

Simply restoring the facade and uncovering some of the original details can be a cost effective way of adding character to the facade. The second floor is often the most neglected in the facade, falling victim to plywood or some other form of covering.



do's

*Put the second floor to work with merchandising displays and promotional messages that will be easily viewed in the evening.*



can DRAB  
help?

The Design Review Advisory Board can assist business owners interested in improving, repairing, or restoring their building facades. DRAB can help by clarifying permitting requirements, by identifying local resources, and by providing design guidance.

### Building FACADE

*Details such as lintels, pediments, transom windows, pilasters, columns, porticos, or porches (unless the building's original design was modern) are considered as ornament, and should be replaced or added only if the original facade included those elements. Do not create "false historicism" by adding ornaments that were not part of the original building.*

before after



### plant selection

Selected plant materials to be used in the District should reflect the character of the area and eastern Massachusetts. All landscaping plans should be prepared by a landscape architect registered in Massachusetts. Preservation of existing planting reduces the need for new materials to buffer views to and from adjacent sites and uses, and assists in maintaining a human scale on the site.



do's

A planted edge set, as shown here, adds greening and provides a visual barrier between pedestrians and cars. It also provides shade to pedestrians and parked cars.



### roads and drives

Plantings along the roadways should be consistent with the horizontal and vertical alignment of the wall to create an attractive sequence of spaces. Special entrances, intersections, building driveways, and key points should be accented and punctuated by formal plantings to emphasize the space.



do's

Attractive plantings and fencing can provide a sense of continuity at the sidewalk.



### spaces

Planting for the space between buildings and parking lots and at building entrances should be selected and arranged with the intent of creating human scale outdoor spaces which recognize the pedestrian activity in this zone and the need to identify building entrances. Planting type and arrangement within the building entry zone should be sensitive to the desired entry quality, and provide accent while softening and highlighting the building.

don't's

Lack of landscaped edge between the sidewalk and parking area creates the impression that accommodation of cars is much more important than creating an inviting environment for people walking.

### can DRAB help?

The Design Review Advisory Board can assist business owners seeking to improve the appearance and usefulness of the corridor's parking facilities. DRAB can help by clarifying permitting requirements, by identifying local resources, and by providing design guidance.

## Site Elements

### Elements

**Landscape** Generally, it is desirable to maintain a planted edge at least 36 inches wide between the sidewalk and parked vehicles. A range of groundcovers, shrubs, and trees can provide interest, fragrance, shade, and scale.

**Fencing** Fencing can provide a sense of continuity at the sidewalk. When not possible, the the paving edge between the lot and the sidewalk should be finished in a workman-like manner and a curb or other "roll-stop" should prevent cars from protruding over the sidewalk.

**Site Furnishings** The selection of site furnishings may be part of a bigger picture. Consider the appearance of site lighting, seating, special pavements, bollards, planters, trash receptacles, tree grates, mail boxes and bicycle racks in the context of neighboring businesses and streets. Dedham business operators are striving to offer more than "the basics" of a safe, comfortable public realm. Good street and public environments are memorable – accommodating busy streets, lively shopfronts, and interesting people – all held together for a short time by the "frame" of the surrounding architecture and public landscape. At a minimum, a considered approach to public site furnishings would consist of,

- 1) a coordinated palate: color, materials, appearance for things like site lighting, seating, bollards, planters, trash receptacles, tree grates, mail boxes and bicycle racks.
- 2) quality, enduring materials
- 3) an expectation that the selections enable continuity with nearby businesses and the connecting street.

### Plants and landscape materials

Planting for the space between buildings and parking lots and at building entrances should be selected and arranged with the intent of creating human-scale outdoor spaces that provide visual interest and shade.

### Examples



### Parking Arrangement

- Site the building entrance at or close to the sidewalk.
- Site parking behind new buildings where possible.
- Limit continuous frontage devoted to a parking lot to two parking lanes and one travel lane, or about 60'
- Create shared parking arrangements that anticipate that different uses have different peak demand hours.
- Structured parking that is part of newer buildings should be designed with the capacity to accommodate a mix of adjacent uses.

