



Historic Preservation Commission Remote Meeting Instructions for April 5, 2021 Meeting

In order to comply with all health orders and State guidelines to stop the spread of the COVID-19 Coronavirus, **no physical location, including the City Council Chambers, will be set up for viewing or participating in this meeting.**

Citizen Participation During Hearing

Click the link below to register for the webinar. After registering, you will receive an email with instructions for joining the meeting. During the public hearing portion, use the Q&A or raised hand features at the bottom of the screen and you will be called upon to speak at the appropriate time.

<https://greeleygov.zoom.us/j/87660302218>

Video Replay on YouTube:

Citizens may also view a video replay of the hearing on the City of Greeley's YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/CityofGreeley>.

Other options for sharing public comments:

E-mail – Submit to cd_admin_team@greeleygov.com

All comments submitted by e-mail will be read into the record at the appropriate points during the meeting in real time. Comments can be submitted up to and throughout the meeting.

Traditional Mail – Historic Preservation Commission, 1100 10th Street, Greeley, CO 80631

All written comments must be received no later than the day of the meeting. Written comments received by mail will also be read into the record in real time.

Visit the Historic Preservation Commission web page at <https://greeleygov.com/government/b-c/boards-and-commissions/historic-preservation> to view and download the contents of the agenda packet. You are also welcome to call the Historic Preservation office at 970-350-9780 if you have any other questions or require special accommodations to attend a virtual hearing.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION Agenda

**April 5, 2021
4:00 p.m.**

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

II. Approval of Minutes for meeting held on March 1, 2021

III. Public Input

IV. Public hearing to consider Certificate of Designation

Case Number: GHR2021-0001
Applicant: Raj Sharma, on behalf of owner 915 919 919 ½ 921 16th Street LLC
Project Name: Color Portraits Sign Greeley Historic Register Nomination
Project Address: 915-21 16th Street
Case Planner: Elizabeth Kellums, Planner III – Historic Preservation

V. Historic Preservation Month Discussion

VI. Commission Member Reports

VII. Staff Report

VIII. Adjournment

Please visit www.greeleygov.com for more information about City responses to protect public and employee health and safety

HISTORIC PRESERVATION HEARINGS:

Hearings are held on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 4:00 p.m.. Agendas are posted on the Historic Preservation web page at <http://greeleygov.com/government/b-c/boards-and-commissions/historic-preservation>

April 19, 2021

May 3, 2021

May 17, 2021

June 7, 2021

June 21, 2021

July 5, 2021 – cancelled/holiday

July 19, 2021

August 2, 2021

August 16, 2021

September 6, 2021 – cancelled/holiday

Historic Preservation Public Hearing Procedure

Public Hearing to...

1. Chair introduce public hearing item
2. Historic Preservation Staff report
3. Applicant Presentation
4. Commission questions
5. Chair opens public hearing
6. Chair closes public hearing
7. Applicant rebuttal
8. Commission discussion and vote



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION Proceedings

**March 1, 2021
4:00 p.m.**

(Zoom Webinar and viewable on City of Greeley YouTube)

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Brunswig called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Commissioners Azari, Gifford, Podell and Sattler were present. (Commissioners DePetro and McLean were absent.)

II. Approval of Minutes for the meeting held on February 1, 2021

Commissioner Podell moved to approve the minutes dated February 1, 2021. Commissioner Azari seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0. (Commissioners DePetro and McLean were absent.)

III. Public Input

Paulette Weaver, 1725 12th Avenue, addressed the Commission on behalf of Historic Greeley Inc. (HGI). Ms. Weaver informed the Commission that representatives of HGI had been in contact with the stone mason working on demolition of the former Garnsey Wheeler building on 8th Avenue. A new structure will be erected on the site using original bricks and other detail features. Ms. Weaver advised that the bricks and other detail work have been removed, cataloged and stored and will be replaced once the new structure is complete.

IV. Public hearing to consider Certificate of Approval for exterior alterations

Case Number:	HPDR2021-0003
Applicant:	Kelly Deitman, Halcyon Design, on behalf of West Greeley Conservation District
Project Name:	Houston Gardens Shade Shelter
Project Address:	515 23rd Avenue
Case Planner:	Elizabeth Kellums, Planner III – Historic Preservation

Ms. Kellums addressed the Commission and introduced the item as a request for construction of a shade shelter at Houston Gardens located at 515 23rd Avenue. She presented a map showing the site and location of the proposed shade shelter. Ms. Kellums presented architectural drawings and noted that the structure would be of wood frame construction with an asphalt shingle roof. She added that the non-historic brick paver patio would be removed and replaced with concrete. Ms. Kellums presented photographs of the site.

Staff reviewed the application in accordance with the criteria and standards in Section 18.36.150(a) regarding alterations to a designated property or property in a historic district. Ms. Kellums reported that the proposal met criteria 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8 as well as the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and design guidelines. Staff recommended approval.

The applicant, Kelly Deitman, addressed the Commission and thanked Ms. Kellums for her presentation.

Chair Brunswig opened the public hearing at 4:10 p.m. There being no comment by mail, email, or Zoom Q&A, the public hearing was closed at 4:10 p.m.

Commissioner Podell moved that, based on the application received and the preceding analysis, the Commission finds that the proposed shade shelter at Houston Gardens at 515 23rd Avenue meets (a) Criteria and Standards 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8 of Section 18.36.150 of the Greeley Municipal Code; and, therefore, approves the Certificate of Approval, with the condition that all required permits be obtained. Commissioner Sattler seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0. (Commissioners DePetro and McLean were absent.)

V. Terry Ranch Water Project presentation by Sean Chambers, Director of Water & Sewer Department, and Adam Jokerst, Deputy Director of Water Resources

Sean Chambers, Water & Sewer Director, addressed the Commission and introduced Adam Jokerst, Deputy Director of Water Resources. Mr. Chambers thanked the Commission for the opportunity to provide information about the Terry Ranch Water Project and noted that there is a lot of information about the project on the City web page.

Mr. Jokerst shared a presentation and walked through the components of the project. He reported that Greeley currently obtains water from four watersheds, Laramie, Poudre, Big Thompson and Colorado. As the City plans for growth, estimated to reach 260,000 by 2065, it was apparent that there is a need to develop a new water supply while keeping rates affordable. Mr. Jokerst advised that one option is to enlarge the Milton Seaman Reservoir from 5,000 acre feet to 50,000 acre feet. However, this could create environmental impacts to wetlands, streams and habitat and any request for a federal or state permit would likely be denied.

Water & Sewer staff looked at over 100 alternatives to meet Greeley's future water supply needs and identified the Terry Ranch Project. Mr. Jokerst reported that Terry Ranch is a 10,000-acre ranch located in northwest Weld County near the Wyoming state

line. The City's interest is not in the ranch, but in the non-tributary aquifer beneath it. He stated that Greeley would be interested in this as a water storage project to be accessed in drought years, adding that it would meet Greeley's water needs for generations.

Mr. Jokerst explained that water would be pumped from the aquifer, run through a small treatment plant, piped along a 30-mile pipeline running through Windsor, treated again, run back through the pipeline and stored. He noted that the Terry Ranch Project does not replace Greeley's current water system, but provides a supplement to be used during drought years. He noted that Greeley water is currently a 100 percent surface water system, adding that underground water storage is used by many communities in the United States. Benefits include fewer environmental impacts and less evaporation. Mr. Jokerst advised that the Terry Ranch Project will require a lot of pumping and treatment (on the way in and out) as well as higher operational costs.

The proposal is unique in that the City would propose to use water supply credits to fund the project and would issue credits to the seller, Wingfoot Water Resources, to meet Greeley's raw water dedication requirements. Greeley would issue 12,121 credits, with each credit equaling a 1 acre-foot dedication. Wingfoot would sell credits to developers or other third parties. Mr. Jokerst explained that issuance of credits would add a third way for developers and builders to meet their raw water dedication requirements, adding that Greeley would continue to accept cash-in-lieu rates for water.

Mr. Jokerst described the revenue stream and how Greeley would receive assets up front toward building infrastructure. He added that the proposed agreement does not give Wingfoot control of Greeley's water resources, benefit any other jurisdiction, sacrifice existing water or restrict buying other water. Mr. Jokerst described the City's due diligence in researching this project as well as public outreach efforts and opportunities for community feedback. He also described the various studies and quality inspections that have been conducted to ensure the water is safe and reliable for consumption. He reported that low level traces of naturally occurring uranium were discovered, adding that they would be removed during treatment. Mr. Jokerst reported that the results of the due diligence efforts were published online and available for review on the City website. Additionally, Mr. Jokerst reported that all results were collected and turned over to third party peer review with findings that the City conducted adequate testing and that the Terry Ranch Project provides a high quality water source.

Mr. Jokerst noted that the proposal would be brought before City Council the following evening and offered to answer any questions.

Chair Brunswig noted that cultural resources was part of the study for the area and understood that any impact on archeology would be far less than expanding a large reservoir. He asked whether there had been adequate surveys to determine the location of pipelines on the ranch. Chair Brunswig also asked whether any supplemental energy production such as solar or wind had been explored to offset costs to operate the facility. Mr. Jokerst explained that an archeological assessment was performed during design of the on-ranch facilities and a decision was made to move all roads and pipelines to follow existing disturbances such as railroad lines. He added that as construction is done, standard archeological protocols will be followed. Mr. Jokerst advised that once water is

delivered, there will be an opportunity to generate hydropower as water falls from the ranch toward Windsor. Chair Brunswig stated that he was glad the City was looking into options and believed this provides a great future for Greeley water.

VI. Household Occupancy Standards presentation by Caleb Jackson, Planner II

Caleb Jackson addressed the Commission and shared a presentation about proposed amendments to Title 18 of the Greeley Municipal Code (“Code”) regarding household occupancy standards, particularly with regard to the number of unrelated adults living in a household and the definition of “family” in the Code. Mr. Jackson provide a brief history of various amendments to the Code since 1962 and discussed the current household occupancy standards in various types of dwellings and zoning districts.

Mr. Jackson advised that the proposed amendment is not to allow turning a single-family home into an apartment, but rather how many unrelated adults can reside in a single-family dwelling. He presented photographs of two homes that are similar, but located in different zone districts and have different occupancy allowances. Upon question by Commissioner Azari, Mr. Jackson advised that City Council adjudicates the zoning types and Code Compliance enforces any violations.

Mr. Jackson explained Council’s priority to re-evaluate housing options as well as the goals set forth in the 2019 Strategic Housing Plan. He noted pressures on finances and housing stock in Greeley, changing demographics, changes in peer communities, and relationship to the overall Development Code update as factors driving the proposed Code amendment.

Mr. Jackson presented information about the increase in median home prices over the past several years compared to income. He also shared information about what peer communities are considering to address this issue. Mr. Jackson described some of the advantages that include increasing housing choices, easing financial burden, growing housing stock, and changing the character of family-oriented neighborhoods. He added that concerns include nuisances like increased vehicles/parking, trash, noise, and changing a standard that has been in place in Greeley since 1980. Next steps include continuing to collect public feedback and holding public hearings with Planning Commission and City Council in March and May, respectively.

Mr. Jackson noted that survey results and other information could be found at <https://greeleygov.com/services/cd/dev-code-update/household-occupancy-standards>. He welcomed any feedback from the Commission. Chair Brunswig asked staff to keep in mind how this might impact historic homes and neighborhoods in Greeley.

VII. Commission Member Reports

Commissioner Azari reported attending the Colorado Preservation Institute's annual conference and presented an overview and takeaways from the Preservation and Action conference. He noted that the conference recognized the indigenous peoples of Colorado and their significance to the state's history and also centered on financial aspects of historic preservation and tax advantages. In addition, information was provided about History Colorado's state preservation plan focusing on preserving places that matter as well as information on specific preservation actions throughout Colorado, including gateway cities and towns near national parks such as Estes Park.

Chair Brunswig added that he had also attended several sessions and would provide a report at the next meeting.

VIII. Staff Report

Ms. Kellums thanked Commissioner Azari for his report and advised that she will present information about some of the sessions she attended in the next month or two. She noted that all of the sessions were recorded and can be viewed by anyone who may want to watch a session they may have missed.

Ms. Kellums reported that at the April 5 meeting, there will be a designation hearing, the first in about three years. She explained to Commissioners where they could locate the hearing packet on the Historic Preservation web page.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Bob Brunswig, Chair

Elizabeth Kellums, Secretary

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION SUMMARY

ITEM: Request for Certificate of Designation for the Color Portraits Sign

LOCATION: 915-21 16th Street

APPLICANT: Raj Sharma, on behalf of owner 915 919 919 ½ 921 16th Street LLC

CASE NUMBER: GHR2021-0001

CASE PLANNER: Elizabeth Kellums, Planner III – Historic Preservation

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION HEARING DATE: April 5, 2021

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION FUNCTION:

Review the nomination for eligibility for individual designation on the Greeley Historic Register based on criteria for designation in Section 18.36.060 of the City of Greeley Municipal Code, and approve or deny the request.

PROPERTY OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

On February 12, 2021, Raj Sharma, on behalf of owner 915 919 919 ½ 921 16th Street LLC, submitted a complete Greeley Historic Register nomination for the rooftop Color Portraits sign at 915-921 16th Street. Please refer to Attachments A through C for the Application and Historic Building Inventory, Photographs, and the Existing Site Map.

The owners nominated the property for designation based on their knowledge and research. They propose that the sign is eligible for individual designation under Criteria (1)a. Historical Significance, (2)a, d, and e. Architectural Significance, and (3)a and b Geographical Significance of Section 18.36.060(a) of the City of Greeley Municipal Code.

PROPERTY DATA

Legal Description: GR3248 E45' L12 TO 16 & E45' of S15' L17
BLK163 NORMAL WAY, City of Greeley,
County of Weld, State of Colorado

Neighborhood: 16th Street Corridor

Year Property Built: Sign built in 1943 by Ray Moore Sign Service
(Source: Kent Smith, Smith Sign Company);
Building built in ca. 1908 (Source: Weld County Assessor)

Architectural Style/Type:	Twentieth Century Commercial Sign
Dates of Significant Renovations:	Certificate of Occupancy Approval: Grand Lake's 16th Street Tavern, 915 16th Street; Permit #15120145; Date: 12/15/2015. Sign Permit #15100174 for 19 square foot wall sign; Owner: Raj Sharma; Establishment: Grand Lake's 16th St Tavern; Date: 10/15/2015. Sign Permit #13110225 for 12 square foot projecting wall sign and 15 square foot mural; owner: Vista Lodging; Establishment: The Crush Room; Date: 11/8/2013. Certificate of Occupancy Approval: The Crush Room; Permit #11080217; Owner: 915-919-919 ½ -921 16th Street LLC; Date: 11/10/2011. Certificate of Occupancy Approval: RJ Smoke Shop; Permit #10070051; Date: 7/22/2010. Certificate of Occupancy Approval: Music Depot, LLC; Date: 11/5/2005. Certificate of Occupancy Approval: Mills Music & Repair, Inc.; Date: 10/17/1997. Certificate of Occupancy Approval: Sleeping Bear Trading Co.; Owner: Tom and Elaine Rossman; Use: Retail Sales; Date: May 27, 1992. Permit A-910818 to install 2 furnaces and 2 air conditioning units; Owner: Ron Thompson; Contractor: A-1 Heating & Air; Date: 7/16/1991. Certificate of Occupancy Approval: The Book Store; Use: Sell Textbooks; Date: 7/31/1985. Permit #831308 to reroof the Single Family Dwelling; Owner: Hulda Nash; Contractor: Independent Roofing; Date: 7/11/1983.

Electrical Permit #790281; Change service to 125 A & load center; Owner: Corman Book Store; Contractor: Staley Elect; Date: 12/4/1979.

Sign Permit; 79007x; Smith Sign Studio for roof sign; dimensions 3x8; area: 48 square feet; projection over public property: 7; date: 9/13/1979; Final approval 9/24/1979.

Letter to Mary Nordlund, Alberta, Canada, dated 4/12/1962 regarding the building located and described as Ray's Office Equipment, 915 16th Street, and building code violations found there on April 5, 1962. From George Bargelt, Director of Building.

Source: Building Permit File for 915 16th Street

Certificate of Occupancy Approval: La Petite Bakery, 919 16th Street; Owner: 915 919 919 ½ 921 16th Street LLC; Use: Bakery; Permit #160600339; Date: 6/30/2016.

Sign Permit for 21.3 square foot wall sign; Establishment: La Petite French Bakery; Owner: Raj Sharma; Contractor: Fast Signs; Permit #16070140; Date: 7/13/2016.

Certificate of Occupancy Approval for Blacklist Boardshop, LLC; Use of Building: Sales; Permit #09030140; Date: 4/14/2009.

Sign Permit for 11.17 square foot wall sign for Blacklist; Owner: 915 919 919 ½ 921 16th Street LLC; Permit #09040002; Date: 4/1/2009.

Certificate of Occupancy Approval for Prairie Reader Used Books; Use of Building: Sales; Date: 6/24/1996.

Roof permit for 919 ½ 16th Street; Rolled Roofing; Owner: Hulda Nash; Contractor: Robert Workman; Permit #831093; Date: 7/1/1983; Final: No access given to roof 7/13/1983, so stamped final inspection not approved and Certificate of Occupancy not issued, dated 1/23/1984.

Permit for minor remodel at 919 16th Street; Permit #810566; Owner: Mrs. Nash; Contractor: Rebecca Watkins; Date: 10/1/1981; notes on inspection card: "Phone no. disconnected; unable to contact for inspection."

Certificate of Occupancy for Quality Optical at 919 16th Street; Owner or Agent: Donald Beaver; Use: Optical business; Date: 9/15/1977.

Electrical Permit for Air Conditioning at 919 16th Street; Owner or Tenant: Powers Optical; Contractor: Abbett Electric Company; Permit #750333; Date: 7/15/1975.

Electrical Permit for new service at 919 16th Street; owner or tenant: Mrs. Nash; Contractor: Abbett Electric Company; Permit #740129; Date: 2/28/1974.

Electrical Permit to connect a sign at 919 16th Street; Owner or tenant: Powers; Contractor: Abbett Electric; Permit #731268; Date: 5/7/1973.

Sign Permit for 12 square foot projecting wall mounted sign at 919 16th Street; Contractor: Adtec Advertising Company; Permit #734028; Date: 3/28/1973.

Source: Building Permit file for 919 16th Street

Certificate of Occupancy Approval for True Love at 921 16th Street; Use: Sales; Permit #15070044; Date: 7/7/2015.

Certificate of Occupancy Approval for Casa Blanca Smoke Shop at 921 16th Street; Use: Sales; Permit #11020011; Date: 2/4/2011.

Sign Permit Application for 9 square foot wall sign for RJ Smoke Shop; Owner : 915 919 919 ½ 921 16th Street LLC; Contractor: Signs First; Permit #10080328.

Certificate of Occupancy Approval for Paul's Barber & Styling Salon; Use: sales and service; Date: 7/11/2003.

Mechanical Permit; Owner: Campus Hair Shoppe; Contractor: Greeley Gas Co.; Permit #870276; Date: 12/14/1987.

Plumbing Permit for water heater; Owner: Campus Beauty Salon; Contractor: J. M. Roy (Eaton); Permit #662074; Date: 2/25/1966.

Source: Building Permit Files for 921 16th Street

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

Pursuant to Section 18.36.060(a) of the Municipal Code, a property shall be eligible for historic preservation designation and eligible for economic incentives if it meets at least one (1) criterion in one (1) or more of the following categories:

I. Areas of Significance:

1. Historical significance
2. Architectural significance
3. Geographical significance

In order to determine if a property can convey significance and therefore be eligible for designation, the Commission also evaluates properties according to the areas of II. Periods of Significance, and III. Integrity, as established by the National Park Service for evaluation of properties for the National Register and pursuant to Section 18.36.060(d) of the Municipal Code.

STAFF EVALUATION

*Italicized criteria are those criteria under which staff determined the property to be eligible for designation.

I. AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Section 16.60.060(a) (1) Historical Significance

The site, building or property:

- a. Has character, interest and integrity and reflects the heritage and cultural development of the City, State or Nation.***
- b. Is associated with an important historical event.**
- c. Is associated with an important individual or group who contributed in a significant way to the political, social and/or cultural life of the community.**

History of Color Portraits Sign

(Historic Preservation Staff verified the following information through research by the Staff of the City of Greeley Museums from the files Greeley Museums at the Greeley History Museum.)

Ray Moore Sign Service constructed the Color Portraits sign and delivered it to 915-21 16th Street on May 31, 1943 for Nash studio at a cost of \$204. City directories list Martin Studio at 915 ½ in 1935, the first photography business to occupy this property. Martin occupied the 915 storefront through 1939 and then moved to 919 16th Street for 1940-41. Robert Eldon Martin was born in Illinois in 1910 and worked in photography in Jackson, Mississippi before moving to Colorado. After working in Windsor for a short time, he moved to Greeley and opened Martin Studio. In 1935, he married his wife Charlotte Bethel (Eckfelt) Martin, who had attended college in Greeley. She joined him in the business and was a partner in their studio until she passed away in 1988. He joined the US Army in October 1943 and trained at Camp Roberts in California. The *Greeley Tribune* reported in May 1944, he returned from training camp for a two week furlough with his family at their home at 1544 9th Avenue. It also indicated that he was the photographer for Camp Roberts and that his wife ran Martin Studio in his absence. In December 1943, he received a medical discharge and returned home. His wife passed away in November 1988. She was a member of Trinity Episcopal Church and several organizations, including the Embroiderer's Guild of America, the American Iris Society, the Weld County Rock and Mineral Society, and the American Hemerocallis Society. He passed away in October 1989. They were survived by several children.

City directories do not list a photography studio in any of these storefronts in 1942 and 1944. Starting in 1946, Hugh Nash and Nash Photographers or Nash Studio were listed variously at 915, 915½, 917 and 919 through approximately 1973. However, Nash Studio occupied the space at 919 16th Street in May 1943 when the sign was delivered on May 31, 1943. Hugh was born in Kearney, Nebraska in 1907 and came to Greeley with his parents and lived here for several years prior to marrying his wife Hulda Katherine (Reimer) Nash in 1928. Hulda had come to Greeley in approximately 1926, when she was 18 years old and obtained her teaching certificate from the State Normal School. She taught in rural schools around Greeley from 1928 through 1933. He served as a photographer for the Army during World War II, Signal Corps Photographer at Camp Roberts, California and spent part of his furlough in Greeley in September 1945. They opened and operated Nash Studio. It is unclear if the studio was open while Hugh served in the army, since his family lived with him in California during his service at Camp Roberts. Hulda was a co-owner and worked as a professional photo retoucher. In July 1950, Hugh spoke to the Greeley City Council on behalf of a group of local photographers about the need to regulate the activities of all photographers, specifically calling out unethical practices of some traveling photographers. They also were members of First United Presbyterian Church in Greeley. Hugh passed away in October 1972 at the age of 64. Hulda was listed at this property through 1990, and she passed away in April 1994 at the age of 86 at her home.

Staff Comments: The Color Portraits Sign has character, interest and integrity and reflects the heritage and cultural development of Greeley. It reflects the 1940s and modernization from the World War II era and the commercial development along the 16th Street block north of the college. The sign is significant for association with prominent Greeley and Army photographer, Hugh Victor Nash, a long-time local photographer.

For these reasons, staff finds the property does meet **criteria (1)a for historical significance.**

Section 16.60.060(a) (2) Architectural Significance

The site, building or property:

- a. Characterizes an architectural style associated with a particular era and/or ethnic group.*
- b. Is identified with a particular architect, master builder or craftsman.*
- c. Is architecturally unique or innovative.*
- d. Has a strong or unique relationship to other areas potentially eligible for preservation because of architectural significance.*
- e. Has visual symbolic meaning or appeal for the community.*

Architectural Description

The Color Portraits sign is a mid-20th century steel roof-top commercial sign. The sign originally had glass tubing for lighting up the painted lettering with neon. The lettering is a large, easy to read san serif font. The sign is approximately 16 feet long and 8 feet tall.

Ray Moore Sign Service constructed this glass and steel sign in 1943, reflecting several popular sign trends of the times. Ray Moore grew up on a ranch and worked as a rancher, realtor and sign company owner/businessman during the course of his life. Ray Moore Sign Service operated in Greeley for 10 years, from approximately 1936 to 1946/7 when he sold out to return to ranching.

Neon gas in glass tubing was first used in signs in the 1920s, with the first documented neon commercial sign for a car dealership in California in 1923. It reached the height of popularity in the 1940s, and after a decline became popular again in the 1970s (for more information, see ATTACHMENT D Preservation Brief #25 The Preservation of Historic Signs). The Color Portraits sign also reflects the use of larger and rooftop signs, as the increased use of automobiles created a need for larger advertising signs to draw attention and be readable.

Staff Comments:

The Color Portraits sign reflects early to mid-Twentieth Century Sign architecture. It is significant for characterizing mid-20th Century commercial neon signs. Being a rooftop sign, it has not physically interfered with other signs on the building, as more recent signs have been installed on the wall of the building. It is also a known landmark that helps identify the area, which also gives it visual or symbolic meaning for the community.

For these reasons, staff finds the property does meet **criterion (2)a, d, and e for architectural significance.**

Section 16.60.060(a) (3) Geographical Significance

The site, building or property:

- a. Has proximity and a strong connection or link to an area, site, structure or object significant in the history or development of the City, State or Nation.*
- b. Is a visual feature identifying an area or neighborhood or consists of buildings, homes, replicas, structures, objects, properties, parks, land features, trees and sites historically or geographically associated with an area.*

Geographical Location

The sign is located near many historic properties and areas that are deserving of preservation. It is located north of 16th Street, the northern boundary of the historic campus of the University of Northern Colorado, which was Colorado State College of Education at the time the sign was installed. Three lots to the west is the Campus Pharmacy Building at 931 16th Street, individually designated on the Greeley Historic Register, and the sign is west of the Monroe Avenue Historic District on 9th Avenue.

The sign is particularly significant as a visual feature identifying an area, in this case the 16th Street business corridor, as it is a well-known feature and is associated with the commercial development of the corridor.

Staff Comments:

The Color Portraits sign helps identify the 16th Street commercial corridor and is in close proximity to designated properties and the university.

For these reasons, staff finds the property does meet **criteria (3)a and b for geographical significance.**

II. PERIODS OF SIGNIFICANCE

In establishing significance and integrity, it is helpful to consider the dates for which the property is significant. According to the National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, “the period of significance is the length of time when a property was associated with important events, activities or persons, or attained the characteristics which qualify it for” designation. The period of significance establishes whether alterations to a property are significant and contributing to a property or if they detract from the integrity and ability to convey significance. Alterations completed during the period of significance may add to the ability to convey significance. Alterations completed outside the period of significance decrease the ability of the property to convey significance. The following are periods of significance for the areas for which this property is significant:

Historical Significance – (1943 - 1973); *the sign is significant for representing the historical and cultural development of Greeley and for association with original owners Hugh and Hulda Nash and Nash Studio.*

Architectural Significance – (1943); *the sign is significant as an example of a mid-20th century neon commercial sign.*

Geographical Significance – (1943); the sign is significant for location on 16th Street and proximity to multiple Greeley Historic Register designated properties.

III. INTEGRITY

In addition to the Municipal Code Significance criteria, Section 18.36.060(d) establishes Integrity criteria. Staff evaluates a property to determine whether it retains sufficient historical, architectural and geographical integrity. After determining if a property meets the criteria for significance, it is very important to evaluate changes to the exterior of a property to determine if the property can convey that significance. For example, if a property has been changed so much that it does not appear historic or there is little or no historic materials left, then it does not retain enough integrity to convey the significance and would not be eligible for designation.

According to the National Register, “integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance.” (National Register Bulletin 15, “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” p. 44) “Integrity is based on significance: why, where and when a property is important. Only after significance is fully established can you proceed to the issue of integrity.” (sic, p. 45)

Section 18.36.060 (d) Integrity criteria. All properties and districts shall be evaluated for their physical integrity using the following criteria, as defined by the National Park Service in the current version of the publication “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation:”

- (1) Location – The place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
- (2) Design – the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure and style of a property.
- (3) Setting – the physical environment of a historic property.
- (4) Materials – the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
- (5) Workmanship – the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
- (6) Feeling – a property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- (7) Association – the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

The Color Portraits Sign exhibits integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The sign was constructed and delivered in May 1943 and likely installed soon after. Originally, the sign had glass tubing for neon gas to light it, however that was removed at an unknown date, likely after Nash Studio closed in 1973. The sign still retains the original font and the steel retains paint to reflect the original colors and the holes from the attachment of the glass tubing. The sign remains in the original location on the roof of the building at 915-21 16th Street. The sign retains sufficient integrity to convey the historical, architectural and geographical significance.

NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 18.36.080 of the Municipal Code, notice was published in the *Greeley Tribune* on March 21st and 28th and a letter notifying the property owner of the public hearing was emailed to the owner on March 1, 2021. Staff posted a public hearing notification sign at the property on March 10, 2021. On March 22, 2021, Matt Revitte called to ask about the public hearing at 915-21 16th Street and said he likes the sign when staff told him the Commission was having a designation hearing for the sign on April 5th.

SUMMARY

Municipal Code requires that a property meet at least one criterion in one of the three areas of significance in Section 18.36.060(a), including historical, architectural and geographical significance and must exhibit sufficient integrity to convey the significance.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Find that the Color Portraits Sign meets criteria in three areas of significance and conveys sufficient integrity to convey historical, architectural and geographical significance, and therefore designate the Color Portraits Sign at 915-21 16th Street as an historic property on the Greeley Historic Register.

RECOMMENDED COMMISSION MOTION

A motion, based on the application received and the preceding analysis, that the Commission finds and concludes that the Color Portraits Sign at 915-21 16th Street meets significance criteria of Section 18.36.060(a) and integrity criteria of Section 18.36.060(d) of the Greeley Municipal Code, as summarized below, and therefore approve the designation.

(1) Historical Significance:

a. The property has character, interest and integrity and reflects the heritage and cultural development of the City, State or Nation.

The Color Portraits Sign has character, interest and integrity and reflects the heritage and cultural development of Greeley. The sign reflects the commercial development in the 16th Street corridor.

(2) Architectural Significance:

a. Characterizes an architectural style associated with a particular era and/or ethnic group.

d. Has a strong or unique relationship to other areas potentially eligible for preservation because of architectural significance.

e. Has visual symbolic meaning or appeal for the community.

The sign represents mid-20th century commercial neon sign architecture and is associated with the 16th Street corridor development.

(3) Geographical Significance:

a. The property has proximity to a square, park or unique area deserving of preservation.

b. Is a visual feature identifying an area or neighborhood or consists of utilitarian and commercial structures historically and geographically associated with an area.

The sign is significant for its location on the 16th Street corridor, across from the college and in close proximity to Greeley Historic Register-designated Monroe Avenue Historic District and Campus Pharmacy Building, an area significant for reflecting the mid-20th century commercial development of Greeley.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A	Application & Historic Building Inventory Form
Attachment B	Photographs
Attachment C	Existing Site Map
Attachment D	Preservation Brief #25: Preservation of Historic Signs

Greeley Historic Preservation Office (970) 350-9222 – 1100 10th Street, Ste. 201 Greeley, Colorado

CITY OF GREELEY

APPLICATION FORM FOR NOMINATION OF A HISTORIC PROPERTY

Chapter 18.36 of the Greeley City Code, the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance provides for a property to be nominated for designation as a Historic Property. The information below must be filled out and submitted to the Commission for consideration. *Historic Preservation Office Staff can assist in completion of this form.*

APPLICANT(S)

Name: 915 919 919 1/2 921 16th Street, LLC
 Address: P.O. Box 270334 L
Louisville, CO 80002-5005
 Telephone: 303-834-7252
 Email: raj@vistalodging.com

HISTORIC PROPERTY

Name: Color Portraits sign
 Address: 915-921 16th Street
Greeley, CO 80631
 Historic Use: signage
 Current or Proposed Use: signage
 Legal Description: GR 3248 E45' L12 TO 168 E45' OF S15' L17
BLK 163 NORMAL WAY
 City of Greeley, County of Weld, State of Colorado

NAME YOU WISH TO HAVE THE BUILDING DESIGNATED AS:

Color Portraits sign

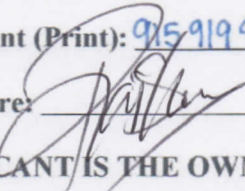
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORICAL QUALITIES RELATING TO THE

PROPOSED PROPERTY: Please attach additional information you wish considered on a separate sheet.

The Color Portraits sign on the top of a row of commercial buildings on 16th Street is a large 1930s-40s era steel sign that was illuminated with neon tube that highlighted the large colorful letters. The free standing sign is a neighborhood landmark and harkens back to the beginnings of commercial development bordering the university. It advertised both the Martin and Nash photography studios that operated there from the mid-1930s to early 1970s.

Certification: I certify that the information and exhibits herewith submitted are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Applicant (Print): 915 919 919 1/2 921 16th Street LLC Telephone: 303-834-7252

Signature: 

Date: January 30, 2021

APPLICANT IS THE OWNER? YES X

NO

**CITY OF GREELEY
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
HISTORIC BUILDING INVENTORY**

Fill out the form as completely as possible. Please answer all questions. Unknown is an acceptable answer. Historic Preservation Office Staff can provide assistance with completion of this form. Adequate information will allow us to evaluate the building's significance and eligibility for nomination to the Greeley Historic Register.

Historic Property Name: Color Portraits sign
 Current Property Name: Color Portraits sign
 Address: 915-921 16th Street, Greeley, CO 80631
 Legal Description: GR 3248 E 45' L12 To 16 & E 45' OF S15' L17
BLK 163 NORMAL WAY
 Owner Name & Address: 915 919 919 1/2 921 16th Street, LLC, P.O. Box 270334, Louisville, CO
80002-5005
 Style: 20th Century Commercial sign
 Materials: Steel and Glass
 Stories: one
 Other historic designation: Yes: No: X Date:
 Designating Authority: n/a
 Addition/Year of Addition:
 Original Site: Yes: X No: Date moved:
 Historic Use: signage
 Present Use: signage
 Date of Construction: Estimate: 1930-1945 Actual: Original Cost:
 Source: business era for Nash Portrait studio and Martin Studio
 Condition: fair
 Architect: unknown
 Source:
 Builder/Contractor: unknown
 Source:
 Original Owner: Hulda Nash / Martin Studio
 Source: county record; city directories
 Associated building(s): 915-921 16th Street

Architectural description: (add continuation sheet if necessary) See Staff for assistance
The Color Portraits sign is a large, steel freestanding sign atop a commercial building. It was originally painted steel and glass neon tubing illuminating the letters. It's a typical example of 20th Century commercial roadside architecture.

Significance: Check all that apply. Buildings, sites or other structures must meet at least one criterion in one category of historical, architectural and geographical significance to qualify for nomination. Staff will evaluate the property for integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, as defined by the National Park Service, and included in Section 18.36.060 of the Greeley Municipal Code.

Historical:

- ☒ Has character, interest and integrity and reflects the heritage and cultural development of the city, state or nation
- ☐ Is associated with an important historical event
- ☐ Is associated with an important individual or group who contributed in a significant way to the political, social and/or cultural life of the community

Architectural:

- ☒ Characterizes an architectural style associated with a particular era and/or ethnic group
- ☐ Is identified with a particular architect, master builder or craftsman
- ☐ Is architecturally unique or innovative
- ☒ Has a strong or unique relationship to other areas potentially eligible for preservation because of architectural significance
- ☒ Has visual symbolic meaning or appeal for the community

Geographical:

- ☒ Has proximity and a strong connection or link to an area, site, structure or object significant in the history or development of the city, state or nation
- ☒ Is a visual feature identifying an area or neighborhood or consists of buildings, homes, replicas, structures, objects, properties, parks, land features, trees and sites historically or geographically associated with an area

Non-owner nomination additional criteria:

Non-owner individual nominations are to be reviewed under stricter protections and must meet the following criteria of compelling historic importance to the entire community, including at least one of the following criteria:

- ☐ Unusual or uncommon significance that the structure's potential demolition or major alteration would diminish the character and sense of place in the community of Greeley;
- or
- ☐ Superior or outstanding examples of architectural, historical or geographical significance criteria outline in the criteria for designation in Section 18.36.060. The term "superior" shall mean excellence of its kind and the term "outstanding" shall mean marked by eminence and distinction.

Statement of Significance: (add continuation sheet if necessary)

The Color Portraits sign is notable for its size and age, and has come to serve as a landmark in the Greeley 16th Street business district. The sign is a vestige of the commercial enterprises that have bordered the university for more than a century. In its operational heyday, the large illuminated neon sign lit "Normal Way," as the street was once called, both day and night. Its size and design evokes the Art Moderne ~~era~~ style in which it was built.

Photographs: Include color photos of *each* building elevation. High quality digital photos are acceptable.

References: Indicate *specific* information sources (add continuation sheet if necessary)

Weld County Assessor Property Portal
City of Greeley directories 1934-1977

Inventory completed by: Linde Thompson - Historic Greeley, Inc.

Signature: Linde Thompson

Date: January 30, 2021 Phone: 970-302-8368

Address: Historic Greeley - 1103 9th Avenue - Greeley, CO 80631

Color Portraits Sign photos



2018.50.0004.1 City of Greeley Museums, Permanent Collection. Nash Studio and Color Portraits sign. Date and photographer unknown.



Photo by Elizabeth Kellums, March 2021



Feb 2021 – Photo by Linde Thompson



Feb 2021 – Photo by Linde Thompson



Feb 2021 – Photo by Linde Thompson

From Kent Smith, entry in books of Ray Moore Sign Studio:

Nash Studio		919-16th St.			
1946					
43	5/31	Neon sign	4.00	8/40	204.00
	7/19			2/55	54.00
	9/13			6/64	75.00
	11/23			6/13	80.00
	12/6			9/74	25.00
	1/4			2/1	25.00

Entered into the book in 1946, but work done in 1943 (far left column), delivered on 5/31. Cost was \$204.

Site Map - 915 - 21 16th Street



Created: 3/16/2021
By: COG Planning, Hist Pres, GIS

* Based on Composite of 2007 Army Corps of Engineers Flood Study and Greeley Areas of Ecological Significance.



Legend



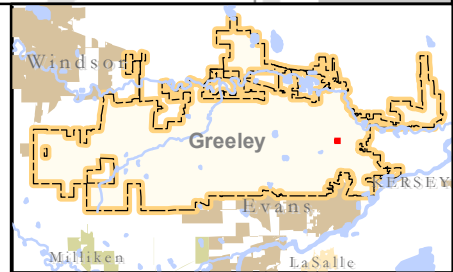
915 - 21 16th Street



Parcels



Structure



Notes:

All planimetric data was digitized from aerial photographs dated 1987, 1992, 1995, 2000, and 2005. Updates are continual and data representations will change over time. This product is not necessarily accurate to engineering or surveying standards but does meet National Mapping Accuracy Standards (NMAS). The information contained within this document is not intended to be used for the preparation of construction documents.

Information contained on this document remains the property of the City of Greeley. Copying any portion of this map without the written permission of the City of Greeley is strictly prohibited.

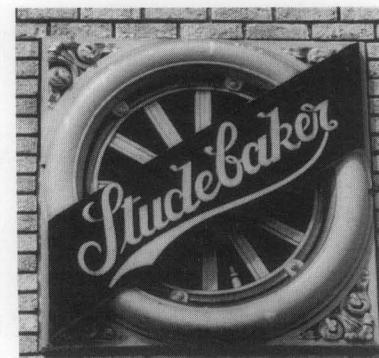
25 PRESERVATION BRIEFS

The Preservation of Historic Signs

Michael J. Auer



U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Cultural Resources
Preservation Assistance



"Signs" refers to a great number of verbal, symbolic or figural markers. Posters, billboards, graffiti and traffic signals, corporate logos, flags, decals and bumper stickers, insignia on baseball caps and tee shirts: all of these are "signs." Buildings themselves can be signs, as structures shaped like hot dogs, coffee pots or Chippendale highboys attest. The signs encountered each day are seemingly countless, for language itself is largely symbolic. This Brief, however, will limit its discussion of "signs" to lettered or symbolic messages affixed to historic buildings or associated with them.

Signs are everywhere. And everywhere they play an important role in human activity. They identify. They direct and decorate. They promote, inform, and advertise. Signs are essentially social. They name a human activity, and often identify who is doing it. Signs allow the owner to communicate with the reader, and the people inside a building to communicate with those outside of it.

Signs speak of the people who run the businesses, shops, and firms. Signs are signatures. They reflect the owner's tastes and personality. They often reflect the ethnic makeup of a neighborhood and its character, as well as the social and business activities carried out there. By giving concrete details about daily life in a former era, historic signs allow the past to speak to the present in ways that buildings by themselves do not (Figs. 1 and 2). And multiple surviving historic signs on the same building can indicate several periods in its history or use. In this respect, signs are like archeological layers that reveal different periods of human occupancy and use.

Historic signs give continuity to public spaces, becoming part of the community memory. They sometimes become landmarks in themselves, almost without regard for the building to which they are attached, or the property on which they stand. Furthermore, in an age of uniform franchise signs and generic plastic "box" signs, historic signs often attract by their individuality: by a clever detail, a daring use of color and motion, or a reference to particular people, shops, or events.



1. Detail from a busy Chicago street market, about 1905. The sign over the sidewalk depicts a fish. It also gives the Hebrew letters for the English words "Fish Market." The sign offers information about the people who patronized the store that is not available from looking at the buildings. They were European Jews who were beginning to learn English. Chicago Historical Society, negative number ICHi-19155.

Yet historic signs pose problems for those who would save them. Buildings change uses. Businesses undergo change in ownership. New ownership or use normally brings change in signs. Signs are typically part of a business owner's sales strategy, and may be changed to reflect evolving business practices or to project a new image.



2. N. Main Street, Rockford, Illinois, 1929. Signs give a wealth of information about a particular time and place. Photo: Lake County (IL) Museum, Curt Teich Postcard Archives.

Signs also change to reflect trends in architecture and technology: witness the Art Deco and Depression Modern lettering popular in the 1920s and 1930s, and the use of neon in the 1940s and 1950s.

The cultural significance of signs combined with their often transitory nature makes the preservation of historic signs fraught with questions, problems, and paradoxes. If the common practice in every period has been to change signs with regularity, when and how should historic signs be kept? If the business is changing hands, how can historic signs be reused? The subject is an important one, and offers opportunities to save elements that convey the texture of daily life from the past.

This Brief will attempt to answer some of the preservation questions raised by historic signs. It will discuss historic sign practices, and show examples of how historic signs have been preserved even when the business has changed hands or the building itself has been converted to a new use.

Historic Sign Types and Practices

Pre-Nineteenth Century

American sign practices originated largely in Europe. The earliest commercial signs included *symbols* of the merchant's goods or tradesman's craft. Emblems were mounted on poles, suspended from buildings, or painted on hanging wooden boards. Such symbolic signs were necessary in a society where few could read, although verbal signs were not entirely unknown. A sheep signified a tailor, a tankard a tavern. The red and white striped pole signifying the barber-shop, and the three gold balls outside the pawnshop are two such emblems that can occasionally be seen

today (Fig. 3). (The barber's sign survives from an era when barbers were also surgeons; the emblem suggests bloody bandages associated with the craft. The pawnbroker's sign is a sign of a sign: it derives from the coat of arms of the Medici banking family.)





b

3. (a) Once commonplace, the three balls symbolizing the pawnbroker are now rare. These date from the 1920s (the supports are much more recent, as is the storefront to which they are attached). (b) Objects associated with a business continue to be used as signs. Photos: Thomas C. Jester.

Flat signs with lettering mounted flush against the building gradually replaced hanging, symbolic signs. The suspended signs posed safety hazards, and creaked when they swayed in the wind: "The creaking signs not only kept the citizens awake at night, but they knocked them off their horses, and occasionally fell on them too." The result, in England, was a law in 1762 banning large projecting signs. In 1797 all projecting signs were forbidden, although some establishments, notably "public houses," retained the hanging sign tradition."¹

By the end of the eighteenth century, the hanging sign had declined in popularity. Flat or flush-mounted signs, on the other hand, had become standard. Like symbolic signs, however, the tradition of projecting signs has survived into the present.

Nineteenth Century Signs and Sign Practices

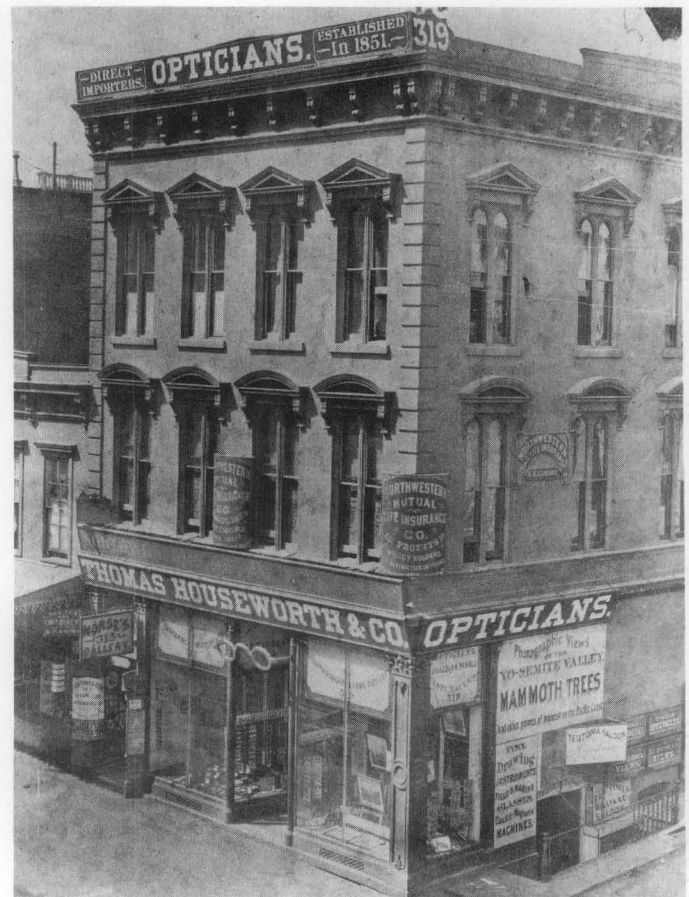
Surviving nineteenth-century photographs depict a great variety of signs. The list of signs discussed here is by no means exhaustive.

Fascia signs, placed on the fascia or horizontal band between the storefront and the second floor, were among the most common. The fascia is often called the "signboard," and as the word implies, provided a perfect place for a sign—then as now. The narrowness of the fascia imposed strict limits on the sign maker, however, and such signs usually gave little more than the name of the business and perhaps a street number.

Similar to fascia signs were signs between the levels of windows across the upper facade. Such signs were mounted on horizontal boards or painted on the build-

ing. Signs of this type tended to use several "lines" of text, the name of business and short description, for example. The message, reading from top to bottom, sometimes covered several stories of the building. Other *painted signs* presented figures, products, or scenes. Such signs were typically more vertical than horizontal in emphasis. Whether such painted signs featured text or images, they became major features of the building, as their makers intended them to be. The building itself often became a backdrop for the sign.

Signs in the form of *plaques, shields, and ovals* were used on many nineteenth-century buildings (Fig 4). Such signs had the advantage of being easily replaced as tenants came and went. They also easily incorporated images as well as lettering.



4. This circa 1866 view of a San Francisco building shows the range of signs used in the nineteenth century: Symbolic signs (the spectacles over the entrance); fascia signs; plaques, often in the shape of shields and normally used by insurance companies, in part to symbolize the protective function of insurance; posters, wall signs, window signs, hanging signs, and rooftop signs. Photo: Library of Congress.

Hanging or projecting signs, both lettered and symbolic, were also common in the nineteenth century, although less so than previously. Projecting signs were often paired with another at a 45° angle for increased visibility. Occasionally a sign would stretch out from the building across the sidewalk, supported by a post at the street.

Goldleaf signs, and signs painted or etched on glass in windows, doors and transoms were quite common.

Porcelain enamel signs were also very popular in the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the mid-twentieth century. Signs carved from stone or wood also appeared frequently, especially on institutional buildings. Painted shutters and even window shades provided additional advertising space.

Posters found their way into display windows when they weren't pasted onto the building. *Sidewalk signs* or "*sandwich boards*" offered another chance to catch the eye of any passerby not watching the graphics overhead.

Nineteenth-century tenants looking for additional advertising space found it in unexpected places. They used the *entrance steps* to mount signs in a variety of ways: Handrails, risers, skirts, and balusters sported signs that gave businesses on upper levels a chance to attract notice.

Awnings offered other opportunities for keeping a name before the public. The fringe or skirt of the awning, as well as the panel at the side were the usual places for a name or street number. *Flags*, particularly hung from the upper floors, and *banners*, sometimes stretching across the sidewalk, also appeared on buildings.

Rooftop signs appeared with greater frequency in the second half of the nineteenth century than previously. Earlier rooftop signs tended to be relatively simple—often merely larger versions of the horizontal signs typically found on lower levels. Late in the century the signs became more ornate as well as more numerous. These later rooftop signs were typically found on hotels, theaters, banks and other large buildings.

The sign types described here were not used in isolation. Window and awning signs attracted sidewalk pedestrians and people in the street. Upper level signs reached viewers at greater distances. If signs were numerous, however, they were nonetheless usually small in scale.

As the century wore on, signs increased in size and scale. Wall signs several stories high were not uncommon in the second half of the century (Fig 5). This development reflects changes in urban life as the century headed to its close. Cities were experiencing rapid population growth. Buildings became bigger and taller. Elevated trains and electric trolleys increased the pace of city life. And when it comes to signs, speed alters scale. The faster people travel, the bigger a sign has to be before they can see it.

Twentieth Century Signs and Sign Practices

The advent of the twentieth century approximately coincided with the coming of electricity, which gave signs light and, later, movement. Illuminated signs were not unknown before electricity. An advertisement printed about 1700 mentioned a nighttime sign lit by candles, and in 1840 the legendary showman P.T. Barnum built a huge sign illuminated by gas.² But electricity was safer and cheaper than candles, kerosene and gas. Its widespread use gave signs a prominence they retain today: illuminated signs dominate the streets at night.

Electricity permitted signs to be illuminated by light shining onto them, but the real revolution occurred when lightbulbs were used to *form* the images and words on signs (Fig 6). Lightbulbs flashing on and off



5. Painted figures and lines of text cover this building in New York City, about 1890. The woman is distributing handbills. The painted workman on the ladder is putting up a poster. Altogether the signs are striking examples of the signmaker's art in the late nineteenth century. Photo: Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, New York City.

made new demands on the attention of passersby. Lightbulbs blinking in sequence could also simulate movement. Add this property to the mix, and a dramatic transformation of American streets resulted.

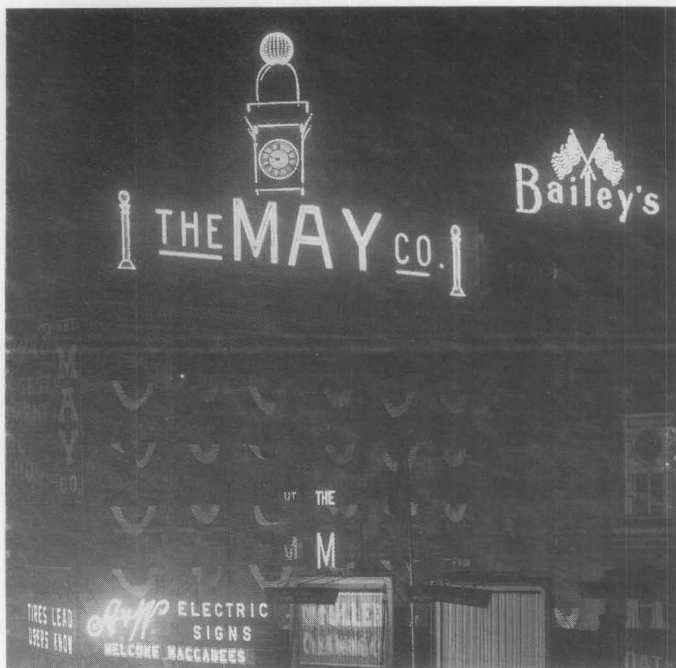
Moving signs were not unknown prior to the advent of electricity, for wind-driven signs had made their appearance in the nineteenth century. But electricity gave signs an unparalleled range of motion. This movement added yet another element to the life of the street.

Neon is another great twentieth-century contribution to the signmaker's art. "Neon," coined from the Greek word for "new," is a "new gas." It has the useful property of glowing when an electric charge passes through it. (Argon, krypton, xenon and helium share this property. Only neon and argon, however, are typically used in commercial signs.) Encased in glass tubes shaped into letters or symbols, neon offered signmakers an opportunity to mold light into an infinite variety of shapes, colors, and images. Combined with an electric timer, the neon tubing could present images moving in succession.

Neon first appeared in signs in the 1920s, and reached its height of popularity in the 1940s. The first documented neon commercial sign in the United States was at a Packard Motor Car dealership in Los Angeles in 1923.³ After a period of decline, it underwent a renaissance, beginning in the 1970s. Artists experimented

with neon as a conscious art-form, and several notable architects further helped in its revival.⁴ Renewed interest in this colorful medium also sparked interest in preserving historic neon signs.

Along with such developments as the coming of electricity and then neon, stylistic movements influenced twentieth-century signs. In particular, Art Deco and Streamlined Moderne affected not just buildings, but their signs as well.



6. This view of Cleveland taken about 1910 shows how electricity transformed American cities. These dramatic and highly visible signs no doubt provided excellent advertising for "A & W Electric Signs." Its signs—at the bottom of the photograph—also proclaim the company to be the "exclusive agents" for a maker of "electric on enamel signs." Photo: Library of Congress.

Architects working in these styles often integrated signs and buildings into a unified design. This was particularly true of storefronts built using pigmented structural glass, commonly known as "Carrara glass," and porcelain enamel on steel panels. These materials allowed words and images to be etched into the glass or enamel, or to be constructed in different colors and patterns as part of an overall design for the building. Such storefronts were popular from the 1920s into the 1940s (Fig. 7).

As the century advanced, new styles took hold. The late 1950s brought signs with fins, star bursts, and other images reflecting a new fascination with outer space (Fig. 8).

In the decades after World War II signs were also transformed by a group of materials now known generically as "plastic." Plastic had several advantages over wood, metal and other traditional sign materials. As the name indicates, "plastic" can take almost any shape. It can also take almost any color. Plastic is translucent. Lit from behind, it appears to glow. It is relatively durable. Above all, it is inexpensive, and can be mass produced. Plastic quickly became the dominant sign material.



7. In the 1930s and 1940s, signs built into storefronts became popular. This example is from Guthrie, Oklahoma. Photo: H. Ward Jandl.



8. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the country turned its attention to outer space. Wings, fins, and satellite shapes appeared, as in this example in Long Beach, California. Photo: Peter Phillips.

Another profound influence on signs in this period stemmed from business trends rather than from technological breakthroughs or design movements: the rise of chain stores and franchises. National firms replaced many local businesses. Standard corporate signs went up; local trademarks came down. The rise of mass culture, of which the national chain is but one expression, has meant the rise of standardization, and the elimination of regional differences and local character.

The decline of gold-leafing and other traditional sign techniques contributed to these trends. Mass-produced signs have replaced local signs that differed from owner to owner and from signmaker to signmaker. The result is not just sameness, but impersonality as well: It is becoming rarer, for example, to find owners' names on signs. Whether the trend toward sameness can successfully be resisted is yet to be seen. (Some crafts, such as gold-leafing and porcelain enameling, for example, have experienced a revival of sorts.) But the preservation of historic signs is one way to ensure that at least some of these expressions of local history continue to enliven our streets.

Sign Regulation

Historic commercial areas have customarily been a riot of signs. Yet if clutter has ample precedent, so do efforts to control it. Early attempts to regulate signs in this country include those of professional associations of advertisers, such as the International Bill Posters Organization of North America, founded in St. Louis in 1872.⁵

However, early efforts by municipalities to enact sign regulations met with disfavor in the courts, which traditionally opposed any regulatory effort based on aesthetic concerns. Early successes in the legal arena, such as the 1911 case, *St. Louis Gunning Advertising Company v. City of St. Louis*, were realized when proponents of sign controls argued that signs and billboards endangered public health and safety.

Yet gradually courts found merit in the regulation of private property for aesthetic reasons. In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court handed down the landmark decision, *Berman v. Parker*, in which the court declared: "It is within the power of the legislature to determine that the community should be beautiful as well as healthy, spacious as well as clean, well balanced as well as carefully patrolled."⁶

With the blessing of the courts, communities across the nation have enacted sign controls to reduce "urban blight." And where historic buildings are concerned, the growth of local review commissions has added to the momentum for controls in historic districts.

Typically, sign controls regulate the number, size and type of signs. In some cases, moving or projecting signs are prohibited. Often such ordinances also regulate sign placement—owners are told to line up their signs with others on the block, for example. Materials, likewise, are prescribed: wood is encouraged, plastic discouraged or forbidden altogether. Sign controls often specify lighting sources: indirect illumination (light shining onto the sign) is often required instead of neon tubing, bare lightbulbs, or "backlighting," used in most plastic signs. Some ordinances forbid lighting completely. (Neon, especially, is still held in disfavor in some areas.) Finally, ordinances sometimes require signs to be "compatible" in color and other design qualities with the facade of the building and the overall appearance of the street.

Existing signs frequently do not meet requirements set forth in sign controls. They are too big, for example, or project too far from the building. Typically, sign ordinances permit such "nonconforming" existing

signs to remain, but only for a specified period, after which they must be removed. If they need repair before then, or if the business changes owners, they must likewise be removed.

Sign controls offer communities the chance to reduce visual blight. They can also assist in producing both a new visibility and a new viability for historic commercial districts. Yet sign ordinances are not without problems. Sign controls satisfy contemporary ideas of "good taste." But "bad taste" has ample historic precedent. And in any case, tastes change. What is tasteful today may be dated tomorrow. Sign controls can impose a uniformity that falsifies history. Most historic districts contain buildings constructed over a long period of time, by different owners for different purposes; the buildings reflect different architectural styles and personal tastes. By requiring a standard sign "image" in such matters as size, material, typeface and other qualities, sign controls can mute the diversity of historic districts. Such controls can also sacrifice signs of some age and distinction that have not yet come back into fashion.⁷ Neon serves as an instructive example in this regard: once "in," then "out," then "in" again. Unfortunately, a great number of notable signs were lost because sign controls were drafted in many communities when neon was "out." Increasingly, however, communities are enacting ordinances that recognize older and historic signs and permit them to be kept. The National Park Service encourages this trend.

Sign as Icon

Signs often become so important to a community that they are valued long after their role as commercial markers has ceased. They become landmarks, loved because they have been visible at certain street corners—or from many vantage points across the city—for a long time (Fig. 9). Such signs are valued for their familiarity, their beauty, their humor, their size, or even their grotesqueness. In these cases, signs transcend their conventional role as vehicles of information, as identifiers of something else. When signs reach this stage, they accumulate rich layers of meaning. They no longer merely advertise, but are valued in and of themselves. They become icons.



9. Signs are often popular neighborhood landmarks. This is one in Butte, Montana. Photo: Jet Lowe, HAER.

Preserving Historic Signs

Historic signs can contribute to the character of buildings and districts. They can also be valued in themselves, quite apart from the buildings to which they may be attached. However, any program to preserve historic signs must recognize the challenges they present. These challenges are not for the most part technical. Sign preservation is more likely to involve aesthetic concerns and to generate community debate. Added to these concerns are several community goals that often appear to conflict: retaining diverse elements from the past, encouraging artistic expression in new signs, zoning for aesthetic concerns, and reconciling business requirements with preservation.

Preserving historic signs is not always easy. But the intrinsic merit of many signs, as well as their contribution to the overall character of a place, make the effort worthwhile. Observing the guidelines given below can help preserve both business and history.

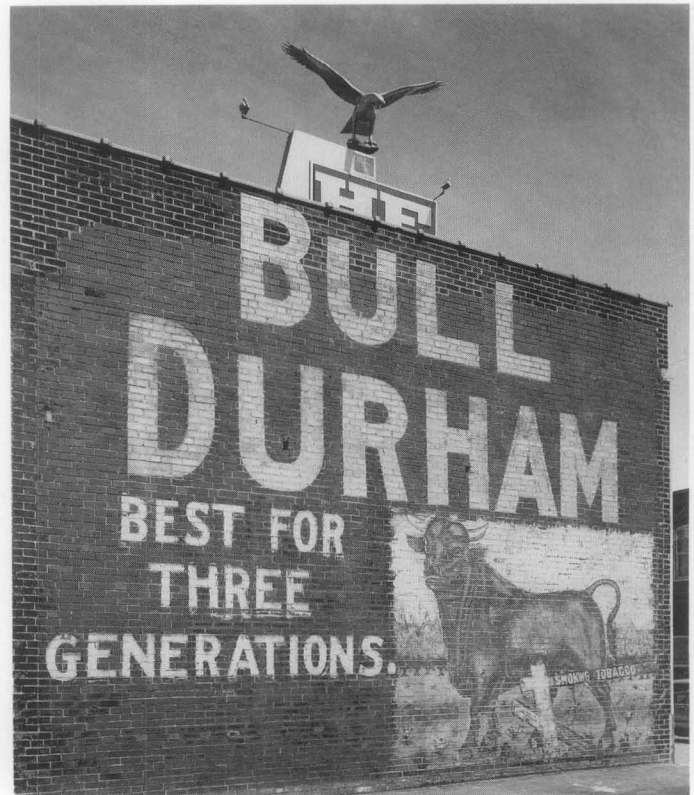
Retaining Historic Signs

Retain historic signs whenever possible, particularly when they are:

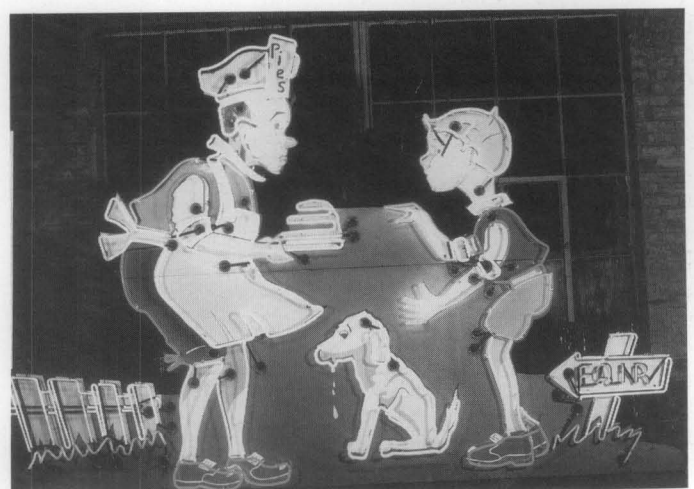
- associated with historic figures, events or places (Fig. 10).
- significant as evidence of the history of the product, business or service advertised (Fig. 11).
- significant as reflecting the history of the building or

the development of the historic district. A sign may be the only indicator of a building's historic use (Fig. 12).

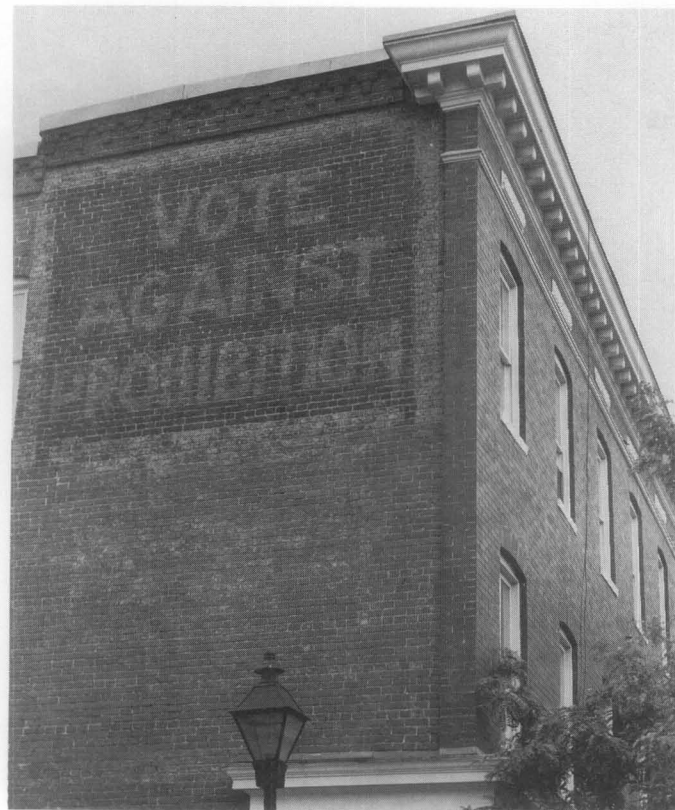
- characteristic of a specific historic period, such as gold leaf on glass, neon, or stainless steel lettering.
- integral to the building's design or physical fabric, as when a sign is part of a storefront made of Carrara glass or enamel panels, or when the name of the historic firm or the date are rendered in stone, metal



a



b



10. This fading sign was painted in Baltimore in 1931 or 1932. It survives from the campaign to enact the 21st Amendment to the United States Constitution, which repealed Prohibition. Such fading brick wall signs are known as "ghost signs." Photo: Thomas C. Jester.

11. (a) Signs for Bull Durham Tobacco once covered walls all over the country. (b) Similarly, Simple Simon and the Pie Man appeared on Howard Johnson signs nationwide. This one has been moved to a shop for repair. Photos: (a) Jack Boucher, HABS; (b) Len Davidson.

or tile (Fig. 13). In such cases, removal can harm the integrity of a historic property's design, or cause significant damage to its materials.

- outstanding examples of the signmaker's art, whether because of their excellent craftsmanship, use of materials, or design (Fig. 14).
- local landmarks, that is, signs recognized as popular focal points in a community (Fig. 15).



12. The sign on this historic building gives important information about its past. Photo: Thomas C. Jester.

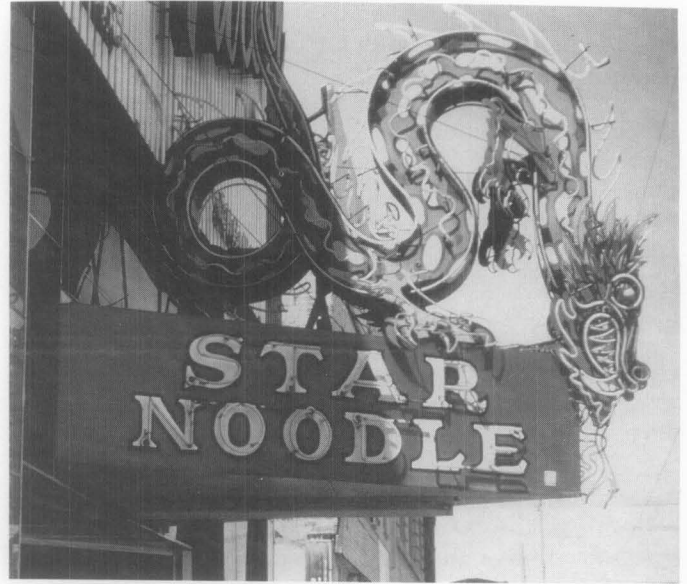


13. Historic signs were often built into a property—and often under foot. Photo: Richard Wagner, National Trust for Historic Preservation.

- elements important in defining the character of a district, such as marquee in a theater district.

Maintaining and Repairing Historic Signs

Maintenance of historic signs is essential for their long-term preservation. Sign maintenance involves periodic inspections for evidence of damage and deterioration.



14. This Ogden, Utah, sign is a superb example of neon. Photo: deTeel Patterson Tiller.



15. The sign for the Busy Bee Cafe is well-known throughout Dubuque, Iowa. Photo: National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Regional Office.

Lightbulbs may need replacement. Screws and bolts may be weakened, or missing altogether. Dirt and other debris may be accumulating, introduced by birds or insects, and should be cleaned out. Water may be collecting in or on sign cabinets, threatening electrical connections. The source of water penetration should be identified and sealed. Most of these minor repairs are routine maintenance measures, and do not call for special expertise. All repairs, however, require caution. For example, electricity should be turned off when working around electric signs.

More extensive repairs should be undertaken by professionals. The sign industry is a large and active one. Sign designers, fabricators and skilled craftsmen are located throughout the country. Once in danger of being lost altogether, gold leaf on glass and porcelain enamel are undergoing revivals, and the art of bending neon tubes is now widely practiced. Finding help from qualified sources should not be difficult. Before contracting for work on historic signs, however, owners should check references, and view other projects completed by the same company.

Major repairs may require removal of the sign to a workshop. Since signs are sometimes damaged while the building is undergoing repair, work on the building should be scheduled while the sign is in the shop. (If the sign remains in place while work on the building is in progress, the sign should be protected.)

Repair techniques for specific sign materials are discussed below (see "Repairing Historic Sign Materials" on page 10). The overall goal in repairs such as supplying missing letters, replacing broken neon tubing, or splicing in new members for deteriorated sections is to restore a sign that is otherwise whole. **Recognize, however, that the apparent age of historic signs is one of their major features; do not "over restore" signs so that all evidence of their age is lost, even though the appearance and form may be recaptured.**

Reusing Historic Signs

If a building or business has changed hands, historic signs associated with former enterprises in the building should be reused if possible by:

- keeping the historic sign—unaltered. This is often possible even when the new business is of a different nature from the old. Preferably, the old sign can be left in its historic location; sometimes, however, it may be necessary to move the sign elsewhere on the building to accommodate a new one. Conversely, it may be necessary to relocate new signs to avoid hiding or overwhelming historic ones, or to redesign proposed new signs so that the old ones may remain. (The legitimate advertising needs of current tenants, however, must be recognized.)

Keeping the old sign is often a good marketing strategy. It can exploit the recognition value of the old name and play upon the public's fondness for the old sign. The advertising value of an old sign can be immense. This is especially true when the sign is a community landmark.

- relocating the sign to the interior, such as in the lobby or above the bar in a restaurant. This option is less preferable than keeping the sign outside the

building, but it does preserve the sign, and leaves open the possibility of putting it back in its historic location.

- modifying the sign for use with the new business. This may not be possible without destroying essential features, but in some cases it can be done by changing details only (Fig. 16). In other respects, the sign may be perfectly serviceable as is.

If none of these options is possible, the sign could be donated to a local museum, preservation organization or other group.



a



b



c

16. (a) The Jayhawk Hotel in Topeka, Kansas, was built in 1926; (b) Its prominent and popular rooftop signs were deteriorating when the hotel closed; (c) The new owners converted the building to offices, but were able to keep the historic signs by changing "HOTEL" to "TOWER." The new, repaired, signs reuse three of the historic letters: T, O, and E. Photos: (a and b) Kiene and Bradley; Courtesy, Kansas State Historical Society; (c) Kansas State Historical Society.

Repairing Historic Sign Materials

Porcelain Enamel. Porcelain enamel is among the most durable of materials used in signs.⁸ Made of glass bonded onto metal (usually steel) at high temperatures, it keeps both its high gloss and its colors for decades. Since the surface of the sign is essentially glass, porcelain enamel is virtually maintenance free; dirt can be washed off with soap and water and other glass cleaners.

Porcelain enamel signs can be damaged by direct blows from stones and other sharp objects. If both the enamel surface and the undercoat are scratched, the metal surface can rust at the impact site. Because the bond between glass and metal is so strong, however, the rust does not "travel" behind the glass, and the rust is normally confined to localized areas. The sign edges can also rust if they were never enamelled. To treat the problem, clean the rust off carefully, and touch-up the area with cold enamel (a type of epoxy used mostly in jewelry), or with enamel paints.

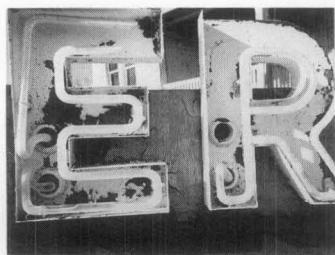
Dents in porcelain enamel signs should be left alone. Attempting to hammer them out risks further damage.

Goldleaf or gilding. Goldleaf or gilding is both elegant and durable. These properties made it among the most popular sign materials in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Surface-gilded signs (for example, gilded raised letters or symbols found

on the exterior) typically last about 40 years. Damage to these signs occurs from weather and abrasion. Damage to gilded signs on glass normally occurs when the protective coating applied over the gilding is removed by harsh cleaning chemicals or scratched by scrub brushes. The sign can then flake upon subsequent cleanings.

Historic gilded signs can be repaired, typically by regilding damaged areas. An oil size is painted on the surface. The gold leaf is applied when the surface has become sufficiently "tacky." Similarly, historic "reverse on glass" goldleaf signs can be repaired—by experts. A sample of the flaking sign is first taken to determine its composition. Reverse on glass signs use goldleaf ranging from 12 to 23 karats. The gold is alloyed with copper and silver in varying amounts for differences in color. (Surface gilding—on raised letters, picture frames and statehouse domes—uses 23 karat gold. Pure gold, 24 karat, is too soft to use in such applications.) The damaged portions of the sign are then regilded in the same manner as they were done historically: the inside surface of the glass is coated with a gelatin; gold leaves about three inches square are then spread over the area. The new letter or design is then drawn in reverse on the new leaf, and coated with a backing paint (normally a chrome yellow). With the new design thus sealed, the rest of the leaf is removed. The

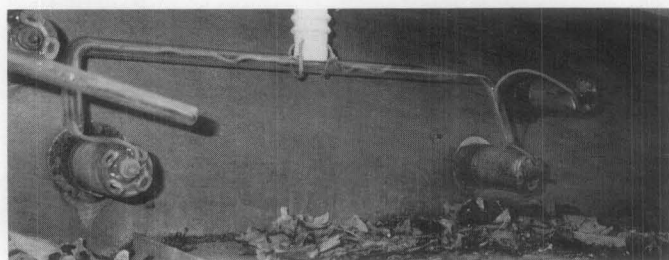
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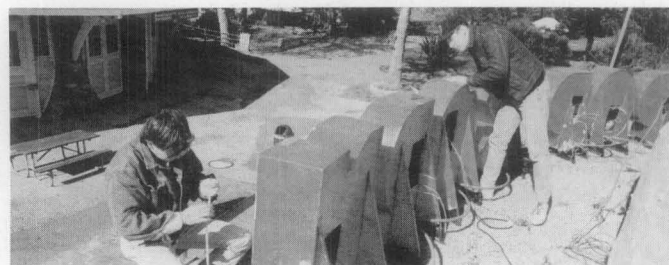
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g

17. Glen Echo Park near Washington, D.C., is an early 20th century amusement park. (It is the home of the first bumper car ride in the world.) Its neon signs needed repair: (a) tubes were broken and the surrounding "metal cans" needed work also; (b) and (c) removal of the back of "Candy Corner" sign revealed debris from insects and birds; (d) preparing the "metal cans" from the "Pop Corn" sign for remounting; (e) and (f) neon fabricators installing the new tubing in the repaired and remounted cans; (g) repairs finished, the relit signs enliven the park once again. Photos: (a-c) Stan Fowler; (d-f) Larry Kanter; (g) Rebecca Hammel.

sign is then sealed with a clear, water-resistant varnish.

Gilded signs, both surface and reverse on glass, can be cleaned gently with soap and water, using a soft cloth. Additionally, for glass signs, the varnish backing should be replaced every seven years at the latest.

Neon. Neon signs can last 50 years, although 20–25 years is more typical. When a neon sign fails, it is not because the gas has “failed,” but because the system surrounding it has broken down. The glass tubes have been broken, for example, thus letting the gas escape, or the electrodes or transformers have failed. If the tube is broken, a new one must be made by a highly skilled “glass bender.” After the hot glass tube has been shaped, it must undergo “purification” before being refilled with gas. The glass and the metal electrode at the end of the tube are heated in turns. As these elements become hot, surface impurities burn off into the tube. The resulting vapor is then removed through “evacuation”—the process of creating a vacuum. Only then is the

“neon” gas (neon or mercury-argon) added. Neon gives red light, mercury-argon produces blue. Other colors are produced by using colored glass and any of dozens of phosphor coatings inside the tube. Green, for example, can be produced by using mercury-argon in yellow glass. Since color is so important in neon signs, it is vital to determine the original color or colors. A neon studio can accomplish this using a number of specialized techniques.

A failing transformer can cause the neon sign to flicker intensely, and may have to be replaced. Flickering neon can also indicate a problem with the gas pressure inside the tube. The gas may be at too high or too low a pressure. If so, the gas must be repumped.

Repairs to neon signs also include repairs to the surrounding components of the sign. The “metal cans” that often serve as backdrops to the tubing may need cleaning or, in case of rust, scraping and repainting.

As with gilded signs, repair of neon signs is not a matter for amateurs (Fig. 17).

New Signs and Historic Buildings

Preserving old signs is one thing. Making new ones is another. Closely related to the preservation of historic signs on historic buildings is the subject of new signs for historic buildings. Determining what new signs are appropriate for historic buildings, however, involves a major paradox: Historic sign practices were not always “sympathetic” to buildings. They were often unsympathetic to the building, or frankly contemptuous of it. Repeating some historic practices, therefore, would definitely not be recommended.

Yet many efforts to control signage lead to bland sameness. For this reason the National Park Service discourages the adoption of local guidelines that are too restrictive, and that effectively dictate uniform signs within commercial districts. Instead, it encourages communities to promote diversity in signs—their sizes, types, colors, lighting, lettering and other qualities. It also encourages business owners to choose signs that reflect their own tastes, values, and personalities. At the same time, tenant sign practices can be stricter than sign ordinances. The National Park Service therefore encourages businesses to fit their sign programs to the building.

The following points should be considered when designing and constructing new signs for historic buildings:

- signs should be viewed as part of an overall graphics system for the building. They do not have to do all the “work” by themselves. The building’s form, name and outstanding features, both decorative and functional, also support the advertising function of a sign. Signs should work with the building, rather than against it.
- new signs should respect the size, scale and design of the historic building. Often features or details of the building will suggest a motif for new signs.
- sign placement is important: new signs should not obscure significant features of the historic building. (Signs above a storefront should fit within the his-

toric signboard, for example.)

- new signs should also respect neighboring buildings. They should not shadow or overpower adjacent structures.
- sign materials should be compatible with those of the historic building. Materials characteristic of the building’s period and style, used in contemporary designs, can form effective new signs.
- new signs should be attached to the building carefully, both to prevent damage to historic fabric, and to ensure the safety of pedestrians. Fittings should penetrate mortar joints rather than brick, for example, and signloads should be properly calculated and distributed.

Conclusion

Historic signs once allowed buyers and sellers to communicate quickly, using images that were the medium of daily life. Surviving historic signs have not lost their ability to speak. But their message has changed. By communicating names, addresses, prices, products, images and other fragments of daily life, they also bring the past to life (Fig. 18).



18. Sign painters pausing from their work, 1932. Photo: Courtesy, Cumquat Publishing Co. and Tettaton Sign Co., St. Louis, Missouri.

With halting steps I paced the streets, and passed the sign of "The Crossed Harpoons"—but it looked too expensive and jolly there. . . . Moving on, I at last came to a dim sort of light not far from the docks, and heard a forlorn creaking in the air; and looking up, saw a swinging sign over the door with a white painting upon it, faintly representing a tall straight jet of misty spray, and these words underneath—"The Spouter-Inn:—Peter Coffin."

The creaking wooden sign in *Moby Dick* identifies public lodging. But it also does a great deal more than that. It projects an image. It sets a mood and defines a place. The ability to convey commercial and symbolic messages is a property of all signs, not just those in novels.

Every sign hanging outside a door, standing on a roof, extending over a storefront, or marching across a wall transmits messages from the sign maker to the sign reader. Mixed in with names, addresses, business hours and products are images, personalities, values and beliefs.

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Cover photograph: Terra cotta wheel with Studebaker banner, 1926, Lakewood, Ohio. Photo: Frank Wrenick.

NOTES

¹ Bill Evans and Andrew Lawson, *Shopfronts*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1981, p. 109, 114.

² Charles L.H. Wagner, *The Story of Signs: An Outline History of the Sign Arts from Earliest Recorded Times to the Present "Atomic Age"*. Boston: Arthur MacGibbon, 1954, p. 37.

³ Rudi Stern, *Let There Be Neon*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1979, p. 19.

⁴ See Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*. Rev. ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977.

⁵ George H. Kramer, "Preserving Historic Signs in the Commercial Landscape: The Impact of Regulation." (Unpublished Masters Thesis: University of Oregon, 1989), p. 15. This section on sign regulation is heavily indebted to this work. See especially Chapter 2, History of Sign Regulation and Chapter 3, Mechanics of Sign Regulation, pp. 7-60.

⁶ *Berman v. Parker* involved the condemnation of an older building for an urban renewal project. The decision "ironically would prove to be a major spur to a new wave of local preservation laws. . . ." Christopher J. Duerksen, ed. *A Handbook on Historic Preservation Law*. Washington, D.C.: The Conservation Foundation and The National Center for Preservation Law, 1983, p. 7.

⁷ A balanced approach to sign controls is offered by Peter H. Phillips, "Sign Controls for Historic Signs," PAS Memo, November 1988. (Published by American Planning Association, Washington, D.C.).

⁸ See John Tymoski, "Porcelain Enamel: The Sign Industry's Most Durable Material," *Signs of the Times*, December 1990, pp. 66-71. For goldleaf, see October 1984 and November 1990 special issues of *Signs of the Times*. An excellent short "course" in neon evaluation is offered in "Neon: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," by Paul R. Davis, *Identity*, Spring 1991, pp. 56-59.

Acknowledgements

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This publication has been prepared pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, which directs the Secretary of the Interior to develop and make available information concerning historic properties. Preservation Brief 25 was developed under the editorship of H. Ward Jandl, Chief, Technical Preservation Services. Comments on the usefulness of this publication may be directed to Chief, Technical Preservation Services Branch, Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127.

October 1991



Community Development Department MEMORANDUM

TO: Historic Preservation Commission
RE: Historic Preservation Month
FROM: Elizabeth Kellums, Planner III – Historic Preservation
DATE: April 5, 2021

May is Historic Preservation Month. Because of COVID restrictions in 2020, the Commission was unable to host an event. The Historic Preservation Office did not receive any Historic Preservation Month Award nominations, and no awards were given. The City printed a Historic Preservation Month poster, designed by Gary Bainter, G-Man Graphics, for 2020, which featured historic photos representing the seven principles upon which Nathan Meeker founded Greeley, including temperance, education, irrigation, agriculture, religion, cooperation and family values. The poster also celebrated the 25th anniversary of historic preservation in Greeley and the 150th anniversary of the founding of Greeley. Many posters remain, and the City does not plan to design and print a new poster for Historic Preservation Month 2021.

Traditionally, the Historic Preservation Commission has a public, in-person event to give Historic Preservation Month Awards and have a preservation-related presentation and celebrate Historic Preservation Month. Because the City, as a governmental entity, is still operating in Red on the COVID dial, no City-sponsored in-person events are allowed at this time, and the City does not have an approximate date when restrictions will be lifted.

Staff plans to draft a proclamation for City Council for Historic Preservation Month and would like to discuss other ideas of the Commission to honor the month.