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Sign Example Portfolio:

April 2011

To: Sign Designers and Sign Permit Applicants
From: Sebastopol Planning Department
Re: Sign Design Examples

The attached collection of photographs illustrates a range of sign designs. The Design Review Board assembled this collection of sign photographs to help facilitate sign design and review.

The intent is provide sign designers, businesses, and the public generally with examples of key aspects of sign designs, thereby to accomplish business and community objectives with effective, creative and distinctive signs. Sebastopol's Sign Ordinance and its Design Review Board specifically encourage unique and artistic signs.

Good design does not require great expense; while the examples include some higher-cost signs, simple, low-cost materials and design can also accomplish business and community objectives.

The photographs also include examples of design elements that should be avoided, such as clashing fonts or colors, use of non-durable materials, or signs that lose their main message by including too much information.

We hope that these examples will stimulate creative sign designs. We encourage you to review these examples, and to discuss your ideas with Planning Department staff who can also provide guidance on specific Sign Ordinance and permit requirements.

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Freestanding Signs:

Example:



Comments:

F1

Good:

Well constructed from weatherproof materials
Incorporated with planting, obscuring any lighting
Nice graphics
Arched top to wall

Bad:

Colors on sign / logo itself do not match or coordinate well with colors on the wall mount.

F2

Good:

Curved top, with curved text below
Well crafted
Rich Colors



F3

Good:

Natural brass and wood materials
Well crafted
Well designed and proportioned
Inclusion of tree graphic
Good visual hierarchy of text
Nice contrast of rough wood texture to smooth brass



Comments:

F4

Good:

Ornate metal mounting bracket
Oval shape
Inclusion of logo -- breaking outside of oval perimeter
Varying text size to create visual hierarchy of information
Simple graphics to add interest

Example:



F5

Good:

Natural wood, background
Well crafted
Strong graphic



F6

Good:

Iconic / creative use of wine barrel
Sculptural design
Well crafted
Curved text to match curve of barrel



Example:



Comments:

F8

Good:

Natural metal frame and letters w/
travertine background
Nice added detail at corners
Good hierarchy of text

Bad:

No planting at base

F9

Good:

Natural metal materials
Strong simple graphic
Dark / non-white background



Good:

Inclusion of cable car sculpture at
top
Angled top and side
Clear hierarchy of text using varying
text sizes.



Comments:

Example:

F10

Good:

Well designed, non-rectilinear, sculptural shape
Shopping center name at top nicely done with varying text size and font

Bad:

Signage for individual business names poor quality and peeling off



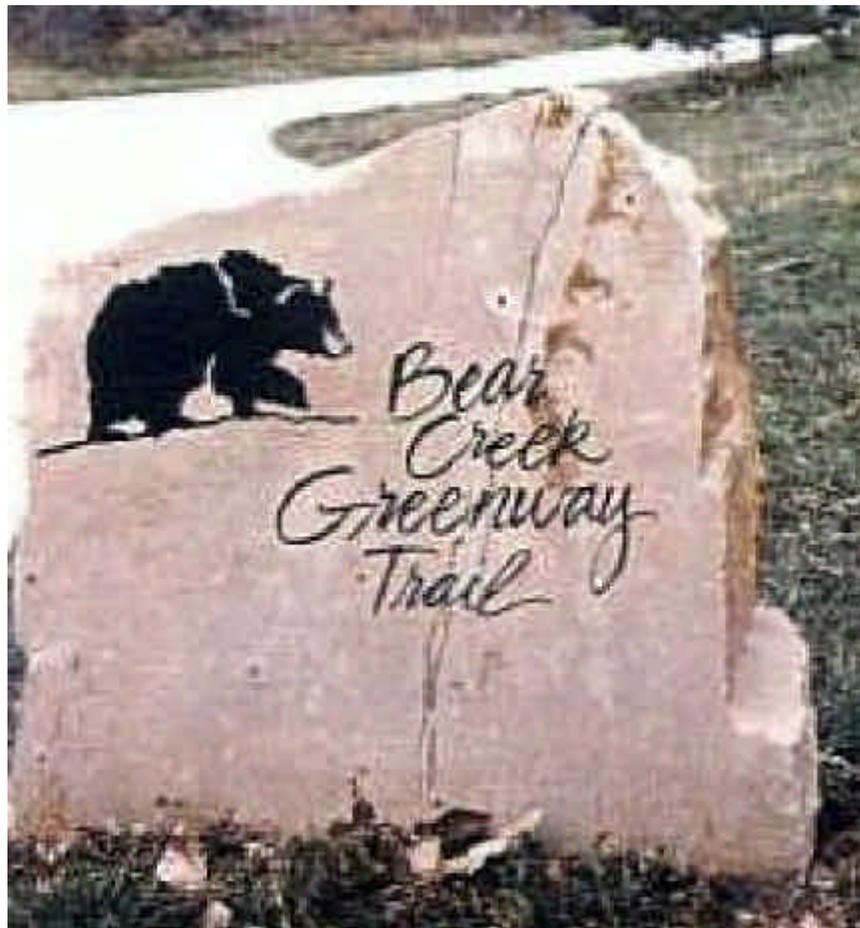
F11

Good:

Shaped top and bottom and post caps
Inclusion of graphics top and bottom
Varying text size and font creating a good visual hierarchy of information
Curved text at bottom
Non-white background



Example:



Comments:

F13

Good:

Use of boulder for sign mount
Strong graphic
Well executed text and graphic



F14

Good:

Individual signs nicely designed
Backlight but with dark backgrounds
so only text is highlighted

Bad:

High contrast between red and green
of the two signs
No coordination of color or style
Backlighting allowed, but external
lighting preferred



F15

Bad:

Backlight with white background
White and light colors look dirty and
old
Uninteresting text design / layout

Wall-mounted Signs:

Comments:

Example:

W1

Good:

Cleverly designed combination of text and graphic
Simple but strong use of color
Good visual hierarchy



W2

Good:

Sculpturally shape makes the entire sign into an icon / logo for store
Simple and inexpensive



W3

Good:

Bold - bright colors
Non-white background
Variation of text font and size creates visual hierarchy and interest



Example:



Comments:

W4

Good:

Sculptural / artistic design
Natural wood background



W5

Good:

Simple design
Use of recycled metal box



W6

Good:

Color scheme coordinates well with building and awning colors
Oval shape
Well executed painting-like imagery behind text

Bad:

Text is a little difficult to read -- slightly bigger or bolder to stand out from background image would have been better

Comments:

Example:

W7

Good:

Creative use of natural (metal) material
Cut-out lettering and graphic



W8

Good:

Sculptural / non-rectilinear shape.
Well designed hierarchy of information.
Varying text styles to add interest

Notes:

Larger than allowed by standard sign
size table. Would require a variance.



Example:



Comments:

W9

Good:

- Well crafted
- Text coloring matches stucco color behind.
- Prominent graphic
- Nicely shaped
- Vertically oriented instead of horizontal



W10

Good:

- Incorporated image / logo
- Rich colors
- Dark background
- Colors coordinate well with brick
- Logo protrudes outside of rectangle shape for added visual interest

Comments:

Example:

W11

Good:

Sign shape reflects / coordinates with shape of building.
Color scheme of building and sign work well together.
Strong graphic identifies building use, text is secondary.



W12

Good:

Use of font style and color to convey business character
Dark background color



W13

Good:

Creative graphics incorporated with text.
Good external lighting
Lighting, awning (sign), and trim paint color all coordinate well to create an attractive storefront

Bad:

Actual lettering difficult to read



Example:



Comments:

W14

Good:

Sign shape and placement coordinated with building shape.
Strong image breaks through perimeter of sign for added visual interest
Dark background
Bold colors



W15

Good:

Well framed by architectural element
Rich colors
Variation in text size for added visual appeal
Sculptural / 3D graphic
Curve at bottom breaks up rectilinear shape



W16

Good:

Alternate, non-rectilinear shape
Red lettering and graphics coordinate well with brick backdrop.
Graphic / logo included in sign

Comments:

Example:

W17

Good:

Bold - bright colors, coordinates perfectly with building colors
Nice use of curve and chilly graphic



W18

Good:

Oval shaped
Curved text
Rich color
Simple graphic element



W19

Good:

Creative composition / design
Use of recycled materials
Nice arching text



Example:



Comments:

W20

Good:

Classic, strong image
Function of business is clear without
need of text.



W21

Good:

Strong graphic and sculptural 3-D
design.
Function of business is clear from
graphic, text is secondary
Strong / bold colors



W22

Good:

Patinaed metal background.
Playful varying length vertical clear
plastic creates interesting pattern and
breaks from rectangular perimeter
Simple individual lettering

Comments:

Example:

W23

Good:
Sculptural 3 dimensional sign
Strong graphic / logo identification



W24

Good:
Round Shape
Dark Background
Simple Design

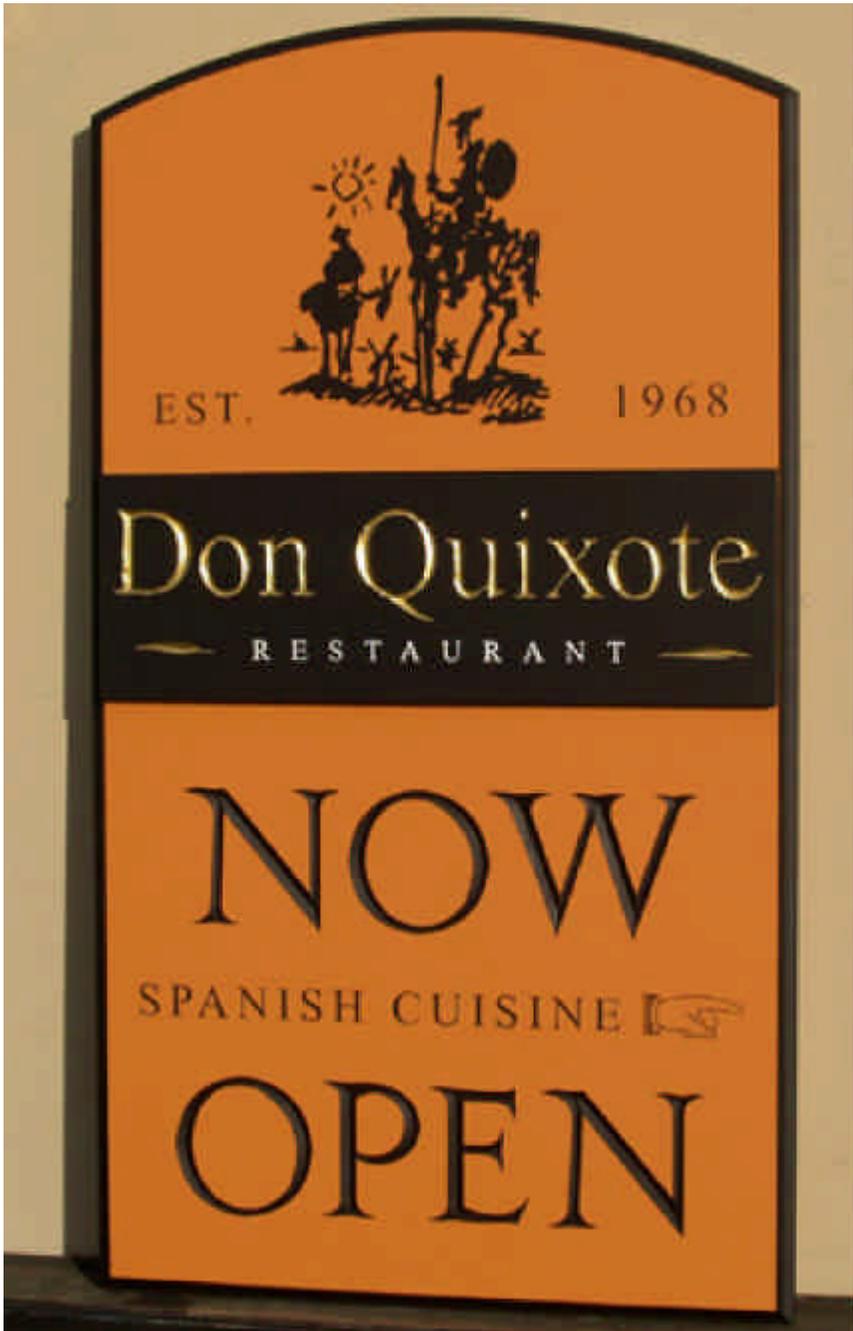


W25

Good:
Classic neon
Varying colors
Curved text
Notes:
Neon signs are allowed in all commercial districts, but require design review board approval. No blinking, flashing, or animated signs allowed



Example:



Comments:

W26

Good:

Nice graphic / icon
Rich / bold colors w/ non-white background
Varying text size to create good hierarchy of information
Curved top
Vertical Orientation



W27

Good:

Color scheme uses similar shades to awning below
Non-white background
Use of vertical text
Varying text size and font to create a hierarchy of information and visual interest
Inclusion of graphic

Comments:

Example:

W28

Good:

Bold color scheme
Strong imagery associated with signage
Clever use of incorporating sign with garden trellis



W29

Good:

Simple inexpensive design
Bold colors and well proportioned layout
Strong graphic / logo design
Varying text size to create good hierarchy of information



W30

Good:

Painted directly onto building
Strong hierarchy on information
Bold graphic, fits well to warehouse context



Example:



Comments:

W31

Good:

Strong graphic / iconic imagery demonstrates purpose of store -- text is secondary

Coordinates with architectural shape of building, i.e. large book aligns with gable point.

Bad:

Large to the point of being overwhelming. Prefer signs to be well integrated with the architecture of the building

Notes:

Larger than allowed by standard size table. Would require a variance.



W32

Good:

Strong graphic / iconic imagery demonstrates purpose of store -- text is secondary

Rich colors

Varying size of text to match curve
Curve at bottom adds interest to standard rectangular shape



W33

Good:

Vertical orientation

Well placed on structure

Bold colors

Incorporates icon / image

Bad:

Color does not coordinate well with other building elements.

Comments:

W34

Good:

Artistic individual lettering
Icons / graphics mounted separately from text

Bright / bold colors

Bad:

Cheap plastic ice cream sign below awning.

Faded and dirty -- not well maintained

Sign does not identify business type

Example:



W35

Good:

Signage painted directly onto building
All text, but artistically done with varying size and font

Clear hierarchy of information

Inclusion of some vertical text
Sharp layout with dark background and lighter text.

Done in traditional / historic style

Notes:

Larger than allowed by standard sign size table. Would require a variance.



W36

Good:

Mural design: Sign part of a larger mural-type painting.

Well designed and well executed

Bad:

Sign does not identify business type

Notes:

Larger than allowed by standard sign size table. Would require a variance, but are highly encouraged.



Example:



Comments:

W37

Good:

Mural design: Sign part of a larger mural-type painting.
Well designed and well executed

Notes:

Larger than allowed by standard sign size table. Would require a variance, but are highly encouraged.



W38

Good:

Mural design: Sign part of a larger mural-type painting.
Well designed and well executed
Retro / vintage style
Inclusion of rooster sculpture on roof.

Bad:

Sign overwhelms the architecture of the building.

Notes:

Larger than allowed by standard sign size table. Would require a variance, but are highly encouraged.

Comments:

W39

Good:

Strip mall signage
Very clean
All signs from same style individual letters and same color
Minor changes in text size okay -- creates hierarchy and visual interest

W40

Good:

Each individual sign well done.
Bold colors -- non-white backgrounds

Bad:

No organization of signs on building, no uniform height or other relationship between signs

W41

Bad:

Overcrowded
No unifying theme / motif / type
Many poorly installed cheap plastic signs that will not hold up to the weather

W42

Bad:

Cheap / flimsy material and construction that did not withstand wind and weather.
Bright white background
Sign location uncoordinated with building design and shape.
No attention to artistry or visual appeal

Example:



Projecting Signs:

Example:



Comments:

P1

Good:

- Natural wood background
- Simple materials
- Inclusion of icon / graphic
- Slightly arched text
- Varying text size to create clear hierarchy of information



P2

Good:

- Large graphic -- text is secondary
- Wrap-around curved text
- Nicely coordinated bracket mount

Comments:

P3

Good:

Sculptural 3-D design

Non-white colors

Strong graphic / icon represents nature of business, text is secondary

Bad:

Poorly maintained

Example:



P4

Good:

Corporate sign conforming to local design standards

Dark background

Round shape



Example:



Comments:

P5

Good:

Nicely shaped sign.
Inclusion of sculpture above sign
Rich colors, non-white background

Notes:

Larger than allowed by standard code. Would require a variance



P6

Good:

Creative use of plumbing pipe on bracket., inexpensively made
Strong logo / imagery
Represents nature of plumbing business through logo without needing large amount of text.

Comments:

Example:

P7

Good:

Large graphic -- text is secondary
Rich Colors, non-white background
Arched top

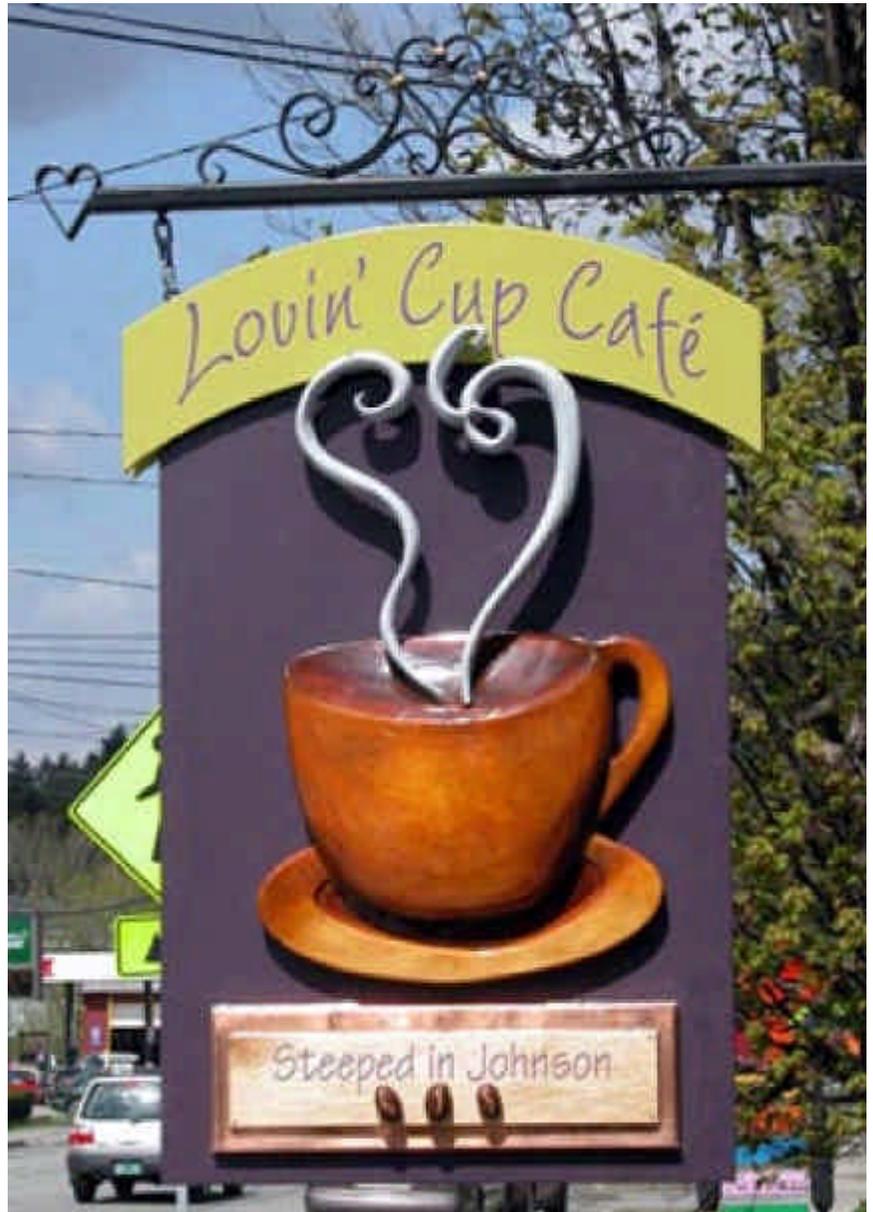
Nicely coordinated bracket mount

Bad:

Overly cutesie or chi-chi

Notes:

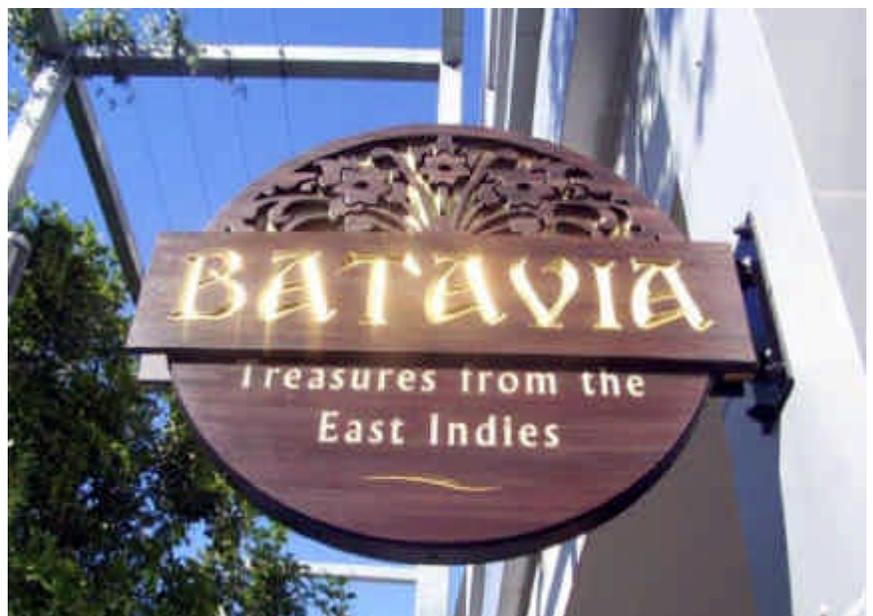
Larger than allowed by standard code, would require a variance.



P8

Good:

Natural wood material
Well crafted
Round shape



Example:



Comments:

P9

Good:

Sculptural 3-D graphic-- text is secondary

Unique

Corporate sign conforming to local design objectives

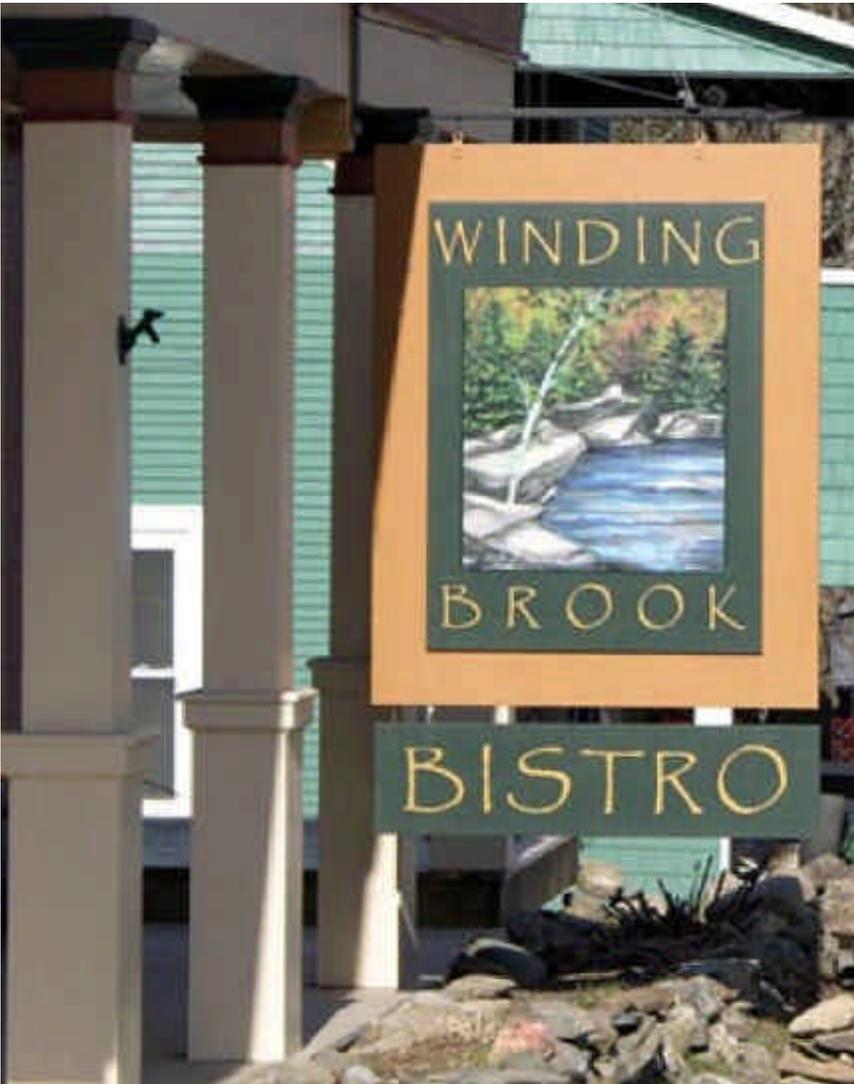
Rich Colors, non-white background

Nicely designed bracket mount

External lighting

Notes:

Large projecting sign mounted high on building. Would require a variance



P10

Good:

Large projecting sign over landscaped / non-pedestrian way

Nice graphic

Rich Colors

Notes:

Larger than allowed by standard code, would require a variance.

Comments:

P11

Good:

Corporate signage made to fit on existing building
Signage incorporated into architecture of building
Good quality

Notes:

Large projecting sign mounted high on building. Would require a variance

Example:



P12

Good:

Standard projecting / blade size and configuration.
Includes graphic / icon or logo
Rich colors, non-white background



Example:



Comments:

P13

Good:

Simple but nicely designed
Back-lighting but dark background,
only text highlighted
Creative / graphic text



P14

Good:

Sculptural 3-D design
Rich colors
Strong graphic / icon
"Retro" or "vintage" design
Sign positioned above wall-mount
support

Comments:

P15

Good:

Classic example of iconic signage. No text necessary, but clearly indicates nature of business.

Notes:

Neon signs are allowed in all commercial districts, but require design review board approval. No blinking, flashing, or animated signs allowed

Example:

