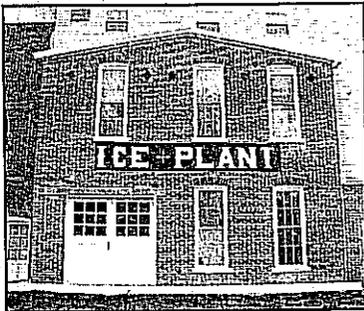


SIGNS

Guidelines for Historic Signs

- If a historic sign cannot be retained in its original location, consider moving it to a different exterior location (ensuring that the sign and the building are not damaged), or move the sign inside where the public can see it.
- If a historic sign cannot be retained, consider donating it to a museum, preservation group, or salvage yard.
- Coordinate new signs with existing historic signs by using compatible sizes, shapes, colors, lettering, and location.
- Make provisions for the protection of historic signs when the building is undergoing maintenance.



Part of the "Ice House".

Historic signs are particularly important if:

- They are associated with historical figures, events, or places.
- They identify the history of the product, business, or service associated with the building, district, or area.
- They reflect the history or development of the building or the district.
- They are good examples or are characteristic of period signs or sign craftsmanship (i.e., gold leaf, neon, etc.).
- They are integral to the fabric of the building (i.e., Carrara glass, carved stone, tile floor, etc.).
- They are local landmarks.

SIGNS

Signs are important parts of commercial buildings, both from a visual and a financial perspective. A clever, carefully designed sign can make a good first impression and can attract customers. A confusing, ordinary sign can detract from the appearance of a building and can turn customers away.

Signs were attached to and erected near buildings in Gettysburg from the earliest periods of the borough's settlement. Old photos show that sign shape, lettering, and location were some of the primary elements used to identify businesses and to attract customers. New signs advertising today's modern businesses can use these same elements to create contemporary signs that both enhance the character of the historic building and convey necessary information to the public.

The guidelines presented in this section are meant to help property owners design and select new signs that are compatible with their historic buildings and Gettysburg's historic commercial area, while meeting the needs of modern business. In addition to following the guidelines in this manual, all signs installed in the borough must meet the provisions of Gettysburg's Zoning Ordinance. For more information, call the Zoning Officer at 334-1160.

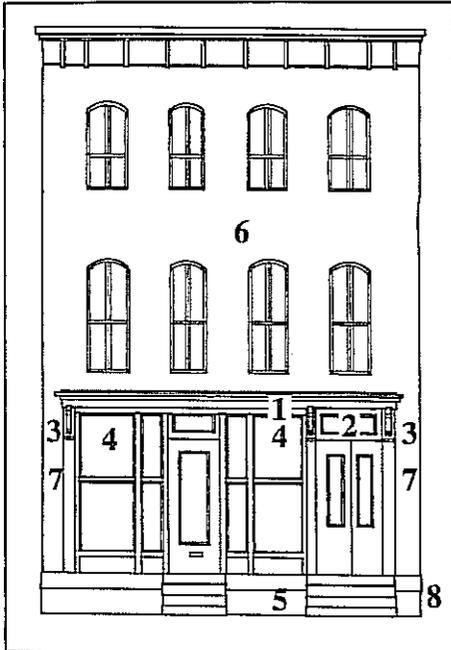


A view of the commercial buildings and signs on Baltimore Street, looking north towards the square around 1900. Photo courtesy of Gettysburg National Military Park.

SIGN POSITION

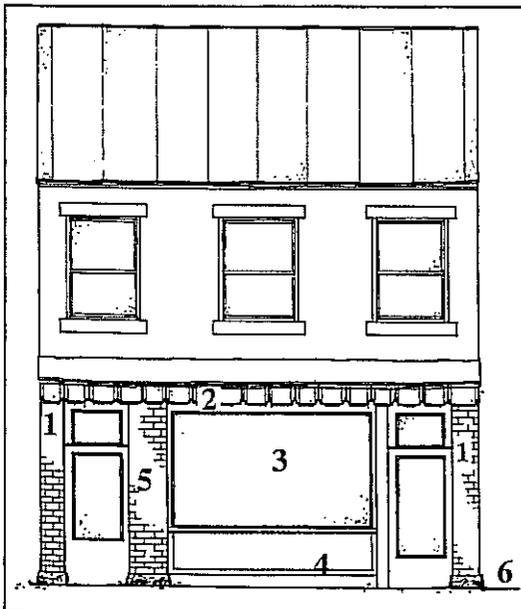
The diagrams below identify the various appropriate locations for signs on buildings in Gettysburg. Locations are identified for buildings that were originally erected as commercial or business buildings, and for buildings that were originally built as houses but are now used for commercial purposes. Signs of every type pictured may not be appropriate for your building. The size and number of signs allowed are determined by the Gettysburg Zoning Ordinance.

SIGNS FOR COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS



(1) Under storefront cornice; (2) hanging parallel to the front wall over a recessed entry; (3) hanging from a bracket perpendicular to front wall, below second story sill level; (4) paint, vinyl, or etching on window(s); (5) temporary, movable, freestanding sidewalk signs; (6) in some cases, painted on upper portions of masonry walls; (7) attached flush to the building; (8) freestanding or ground sign when space permits. (Signs may also appear on the lower flap of an awning.)

SIGNS FOR RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS



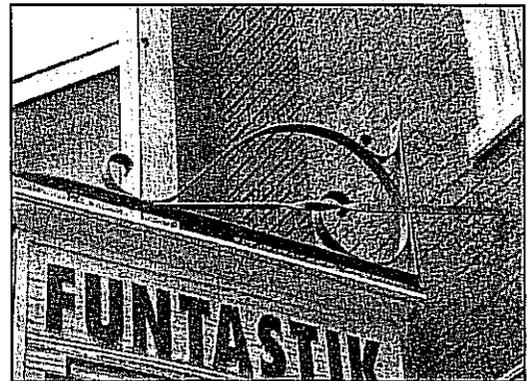
(1) hanging from a bracket perpendicular to front wall, below second story sill level; (2) on lower flap of fabric awning; (3) paint, vinyl, or etching on window(s); (4) temporary, movable, freestanding sidewalk signs; (5) attached flush to the building; (6) freestanding or ground sign when space permits

SIGNS

Guidelines for Attaching a Sign to a Building

The method of attaching signs to buildings must be carefully considered to minimize damage to historic materials.

- Choose methods that allow holes to be appropriately patched if the sign is removed. When possible, mount signs in mortar joints, not in masonry, so holes can be patched if the sign is removed.

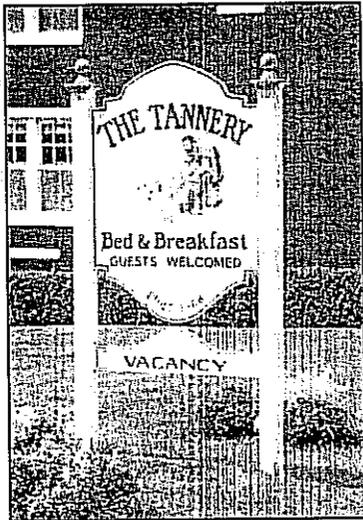


A sign bracket at 21 Chambersburg Street.

- If holes or hardware remain in the building from previous signs, attempt to place the new sign in the same location.
- Place signs so that significant architectural details and features, including transom glass, remain visible.

SIGN TYPES

GROUND SIGNS: Ground signs are not attached to a building or other object. They usually take the shape of rectangles and are located on lots with open land.



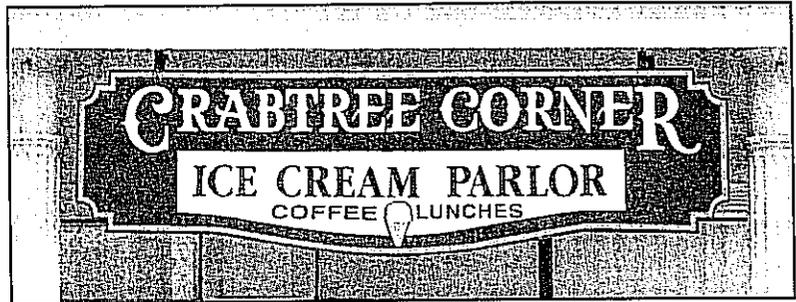
FREE STANDING SIGNS: A freestanding sign is typically hung from a horizontal rail that is attached to a vertical free-standing post.



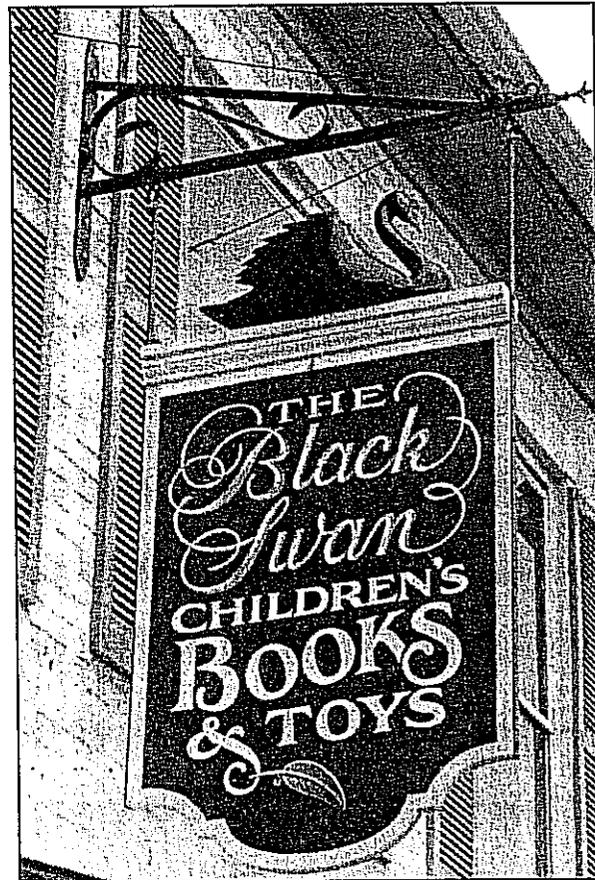
SIGNS IN GETTYSBURG

The photos on these two pages illustrate the most common types of signs used in Gettysburg today. A single building may accommodate more than one type of sign, but all signs on a single building should work together in a coordinated design.

HANGING SIGNS: Hanging signs are usually hung from an iron bracket perpendicular to the wall of a building, but parallel hanging signs may also be appropriate.



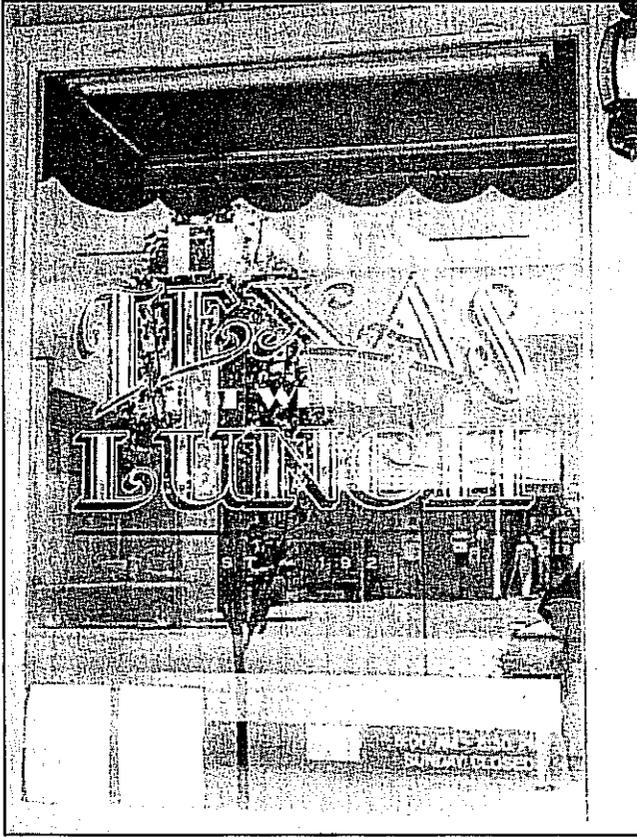
Parallel Hanging Sign



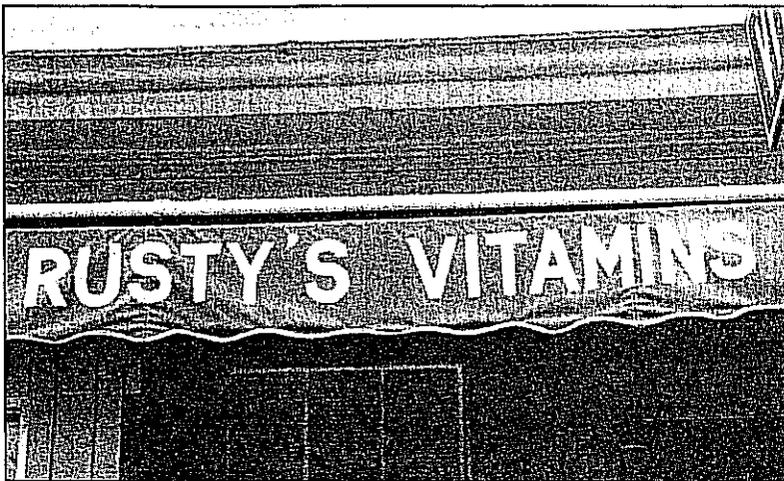
Perpendicular Hanging Sign

Note: Painted wall signs include any signs that are painted directly onto the surface of the wall. This type of sign was used historically, but is appropriate today in limited cases. See the first page of this section on signs for an illustration of a painted wall sign.

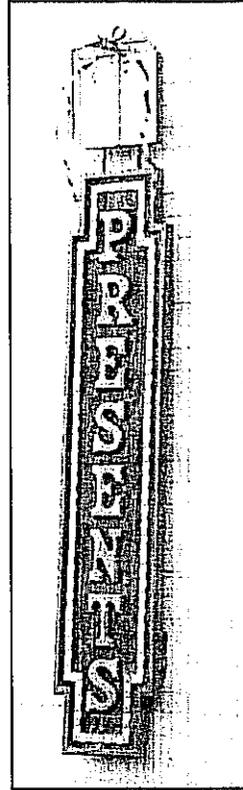
WINDOW SIGNS: Window signs include all signs that are attached in any way to a window. Painted signs, vinyl signs, and etched signs are the most typical types of window signs found in Gettysburg.



AWNING AND CANOPY SIGNS: Awnings and canopies can include lettering and graphics on the lower flap, or valance. Letters and ornamental elements can be painted, screened, or sewn on the fabric.

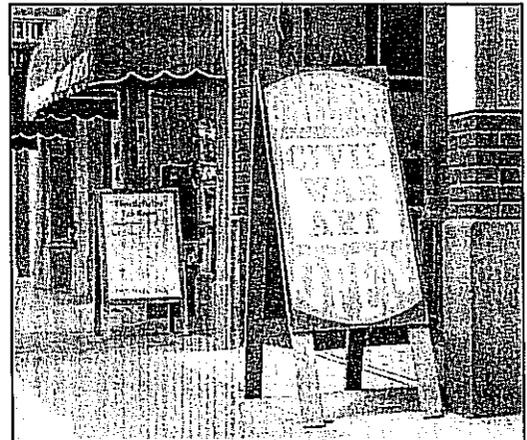


SIGN TYPES



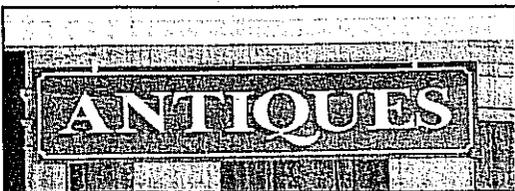
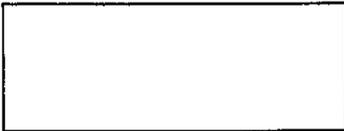
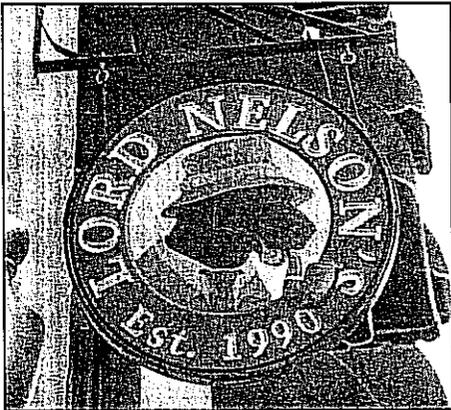
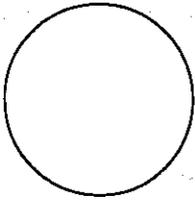
FLUSH MOUNTED WALL SIGNS: Flush mounted wall signs include all signs that are more or less flat and attached parallel to, and directly against, the face of the building.

SANDWICH BOARDS: Sandwich boards are two-sided, movable signs that are triangular in form. They may advertise information that changes regularly (such as menu items), but the temporary nature of the information does not mean that this type of sign should be considered makeshift. Sandwich boards should be designed as carefully as all other business signs.



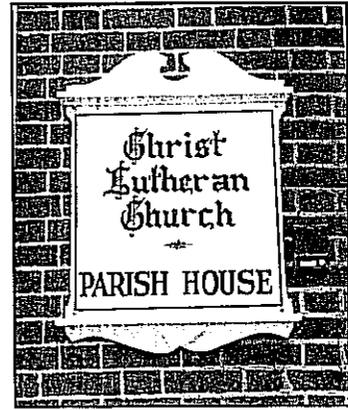
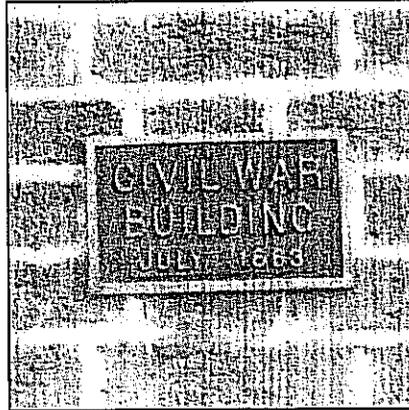
SIGN SHAPE

Simple geometric shapes are appropriate for most signs, buildings, and locations. They are recommended for signs that use large amounts of lettering.



SIGN SHAPE

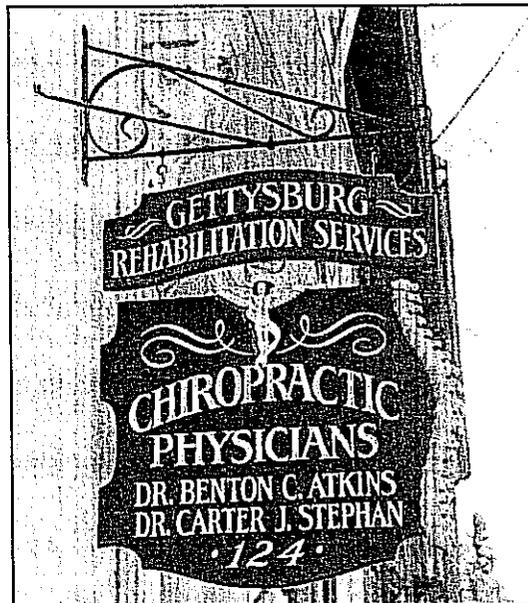
Small flush mounted signs are best suited to simple shapes, although scrolled tops and shaped corners resembling shields (which were common in signs before 1860) may be appropriate.



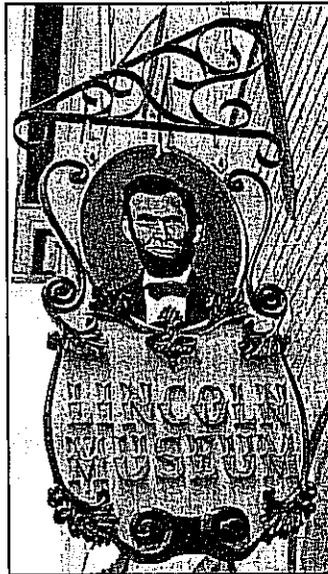
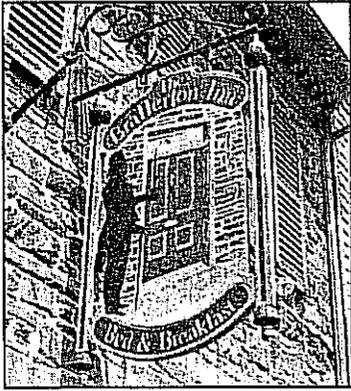
For larger flush mounted signs, simple rectangles are best. Shaped corners and ends may also be appropriate.



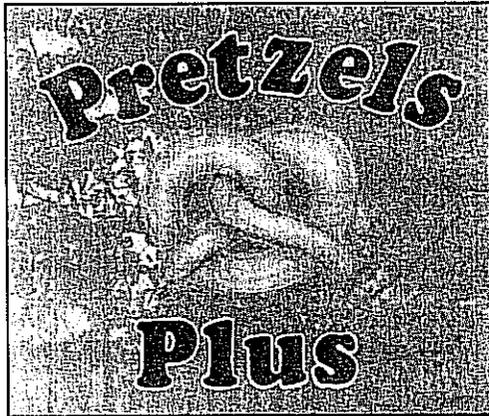
Shapes that represent the type of business are encouraged for all sign types.



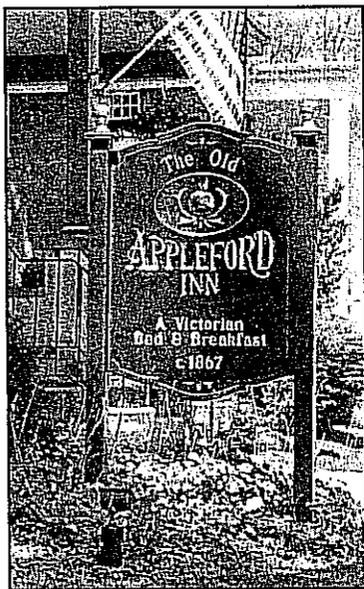
More ornamental shapes may be appropriate for hanging and free-standing signs that do not include a large amount of lettering.



Window signs can use simple designs with horizontal lettering, or lettering can be set along simple curves. These signs can also incorporate graphics and logos of any shape.



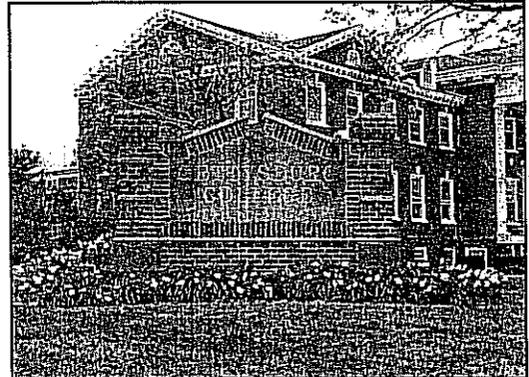
Because ground signs are often larger in scale, simple shapes, generally rectangles, best convey their messages.



SIGN SHAPE & SIZE

Sign Size

Sign size is regulated by Gettysburg's Sign Ordinance. Signs should not appear out of scale with the building to which they are attached. They should not overpower adjacent structures or monopolize the streetscape. Because travel through the commercial areas of Gettysburg is by foot or slow-moving vehicle, signs need not be large to convey their message.



The size of this large ground sign is appropriate to the scale of the surrounding buildings and to the size of the site on which it sits.



The smaller size of the signs of this property are appropriate to the smaller building and the pedestrian scale of the surroundings.

SIGNS

Letter Treatment

Regardless of the style of lettering used, the letters of a sign can be treated in a number of ways.

- They can be individually shaped and attached to the sign, resulting in raised lettering, which adds texture and shadow to the sign. Individually carved or shaped letters were more common to signs that were created before 1860, than after that date.
- The letters can also be carved into the sign, resulting in recessed lettering, which also adds texture and shadow. Carved letters were used for signs throughout history.
- Letters can also be painted on the surface of the sign. Sign painters can use varying colors to suggest the shadows created by light shining on raised or recessed letters. Painted signs were used throughout history.



Logos

If your business has a logo or a symbol that represents the type of business conducted within, try to incorporate it into your sign. This can increase the recognition of your business and help make your sign unique.

LETTERING

The style of lettering used on a sign is important to overall design and clarity. The three main styles of lettering -- Serif, non-Serif, and script -- are illustrated below. Within these styles, numerous typefaces are available. Excessive lettering can confuse and overwhelm the reader. "Short and sweet" works best.

Serif

Serif letters have cross strokes -- or feet -- at the tops, bottoms, and arms.

These are Serif letters.
abcdefghijklmnopqrstu
vwxyz

Non-Serif

Non-Serif letters (also called block letters) have no added strokes.

This is an example of Non-Serif lettering. abcdefghijklmnopqrstu

Script

Script lettering resembles handwritten letters.

This is an example of script lettering. abcdefghijklmnopqrst

Different styles of letters were used during different time periods. If you are attempting to accurately reflect the time period of your building, you may want to follow these guidelines:

SERIF letters have been used throughout American history and were most common for signs erected until the early 20th century. Generally, simple Serif styles were used for signs created before 1860, and more elaborate Serif lettering was used for signs created after 1860. These later Victorian period signs often incorporated a number of letter styles into a single design.

NON-SERIF letters were not used until around 1920. At that time, designers considered the geometric shapes of this letter style more modern than the Serif style.

Script letters were not used as frequently as the other styles. Script lettering is more difficult to read and was used sparingly. If used for new signs, it should continue to be used sparingly. It is often successfully used for small, less important words, such as *of*, *at*, and *in*.

MATERIAL

Historically, signs were most often made of wood and were hung from wrought iron brackets. Brass plaques were also made and attached directly to the building. In the late nineteenth century tin, cast iron, and steel became available for signs. After 1920 steel, aluminum, and plastic became popular. Leaded glass signs also became popular at this time. Business names and other designs were incorporated into leaded and stained glass transoms that were installed above doors and display windows. Tile signs gained popularity in the 1930s. Names and designs were created in tile at the floor of an entrance to a commercial building or under the display windows.

Today, signs can be made from all of these materials. Real wood can be used, but redwood, which is the preferred species, is limited and therefore expensive. Wood look-alikes include urethane board and MDO board. **Urethane board** is a compressed and hardened foam that can be finished by any real-wood method, including painting, carving, and routing. **MDO board** is similar to plywood and is made specifically for signs. It is composed of six layers, with the grain running in opposite directions in consecutive layers, which guards against warping. (Regular plywood is prone to warping.) MDO board has an approximate life span of 7 years. Like urethane board, it can be painted, carved, and routed, but it is heavier and thinner.

Vinyl is used for signs to produce letters and graphics that are applied to windows, boards, or other surfaces. Vinyl lasts longer than paint and is easier to change. A special frosted vinyl is available; on glass, it gives the appearance of etching. Vinyl, with the appearance of gold leaf, is also available.

Plastic signs are widely used for commercial advertisement, but they are generally not appropriate for historic areas. Corrugated plastic and plexiglass are also not appropriate.

Aluminum with a baked enamel finish can also be used for signs. White is the most common color, but others are available. Vinyl or painted graphics are typically added to the surface.

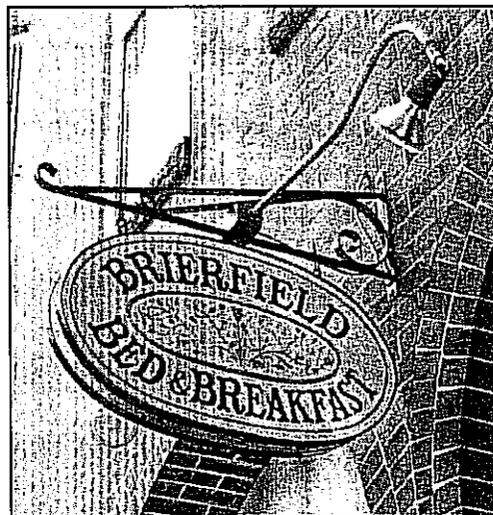
Brass or other metal is sometimes used for small identification signs, markers, and plaques.

Cast iron is typically used for brackets and other hardware required to hang signs. Standard scroll brackets are available, but custom designs can be created. **Steel** is also sometimes used for hanging hardware. When it is used, it should be finished with a dark color to resemble cast iron.

Gold leaf is a historically appropriate finish for signs. It gives letters and graphics a sophisticated, polished appearance. An **Acid ink** is available to create the texture and appearance of etching on glass. **Sandblasting**, which is generally inappropriate for historic buildings, can be used on new signs to create special textures.

SIGNS

COLOR: The contrast between the background of a sign and the lettering of the sign is the most significant factor in legibility. Simple designs with simple color schemes are most effective. Few signs require more than three colors to convey their message clearly. Bright or bold colors detract from the historical character of the building and overwhelm the reader. The colors of a sign do not need to match those of the building exactly, but they should complement it. If gold leaf will be used for lettering or graphics, a darker background works best. Consider dark blue, black, dark green, or maroon. Providing a thin band of contrasting color at the border of the sign also helps define the sign.



ILLUMINATION: If a sign requires illumination, the lighting should be indirect, hidden from view, and small in scale. Lights may be placed in the ground, pointing up at a sign, or for hanging signs, they may be attached to the bracket, pointing down. Internally lit signs are not appropriate for historic areas. Neon signs, which were made of slender glass tubes illuminated by electrified gas beginning in the 1920s, may be appropriate for a limited number of buildings. Existing neon signs can still be repaired and refurbished today.

SIGNS OF GETTYSBURG

SIGNS

