

## Chapter VIII

*signs complementing building design  
line pedestrian arcade*

### Signs

#### A. Introduction

Signage, depending on its design, can either positively contribute towards improving the visual quality of a city or create visual blight. Well-designed, creative, restrained signage conveys an orderly, high-quality image that complements individual building(s) and enhances the overall streetscape. Excessive or illegible signage degrades the visual character of the environment.

These sign design guidelines implement the Design Principles set forth in Chapter 1. They are intended to promote the highest level of sign design quality and creativity, while in keeping with the overall character of the community of San Juan Capistrano.

Site-specific standards shall take precedence when in conflict with the guidelines. Where such standards are silent, these guidelines will serve as a supplement. Section 9 of the Land Use Code should be consulted for specific regulations governing the size, type and number of signs.



## **B. General Design Objectives**

Signage for business and residential developments should:

- Contribute in the enhancement of the City's distinctive character
- Incorporate creative, high quality signage
- Complement the building's architectural design
- Relate in terms of scale and proportions to its surroundings

*project entry sign integrated with building design*



### C. General Sign Design Guidelines

- a. The sign design should enhance the selected project style or theme.
- b. Sign size and proportions should be in scale with the building onto which it is placed.
- c. Freestanding monument signs should be located within landscaped areas, perpendicular to approaching traffic and positioned to provide clear lines of sight at intersections and driveway approaches.

#### 1. Colors

- a. Restrained use of color is recommended, use of multiple colors is discouraged.
- b. Color accents may be utilized to enhance sign legibility.
- c. Use of contrasting colors to achieve visually pleasing signs should be considered as part of the sign design process.

#### 2. Materials

- a. The following materials are recommended for signs in San Juan Capistrano:
  - Ceramic tile - painted or sandblasted
  - High-density pre-formed foam - painted or otherwise finished to compliment the building architecture
  - Wood - carved or sandblasted
  - Metal - formed, etched, cast or engraved

*classic neon sign in Downtown*



### 3. Sign Copy/ Lettering Style/ Spacing

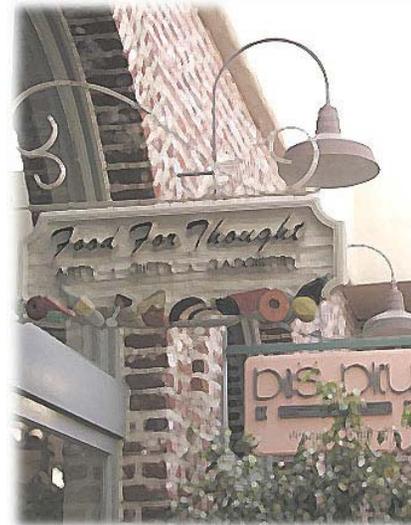
- a. A limited number of lettering styles should be employed in sign design to increase legibility. The number of different lettering types should not exceed two for small signs and three for larger signs.
- b. Avoid using overly intricate typefaces as well as crowding of the sign text.

### 4. Sign Illumination

- a. The light source of indirect lighting fixtures should be adequately shielded to prevent glare.
- b. Use of individual letter signage, comprised of internally illuminated, backlit, or non-illuminated solid letters is encouraged.

### 5. Placement

- a. Signs should be placed in proximity to the main business entrance.
- b. Wall sign placement should be coordinated with architectural features.



### C. Wall and Building Signs

- a. Wall signs should not project away from the surface upon which they are attached by more than the minimum required distance for construction purposes and in no case by more than 12 inches.
- b. Internally illuminated cabinet signs are not permitted. Internally illuminated, reverse letter and backlit channel letter signs are encouraged.
- c. Wall signs painted directly on the structure are encouraged.
- d. Lettering should not occupy more than 75% of the background area.
- e. Prefabricated building fascia corporate signs are not acceptable.

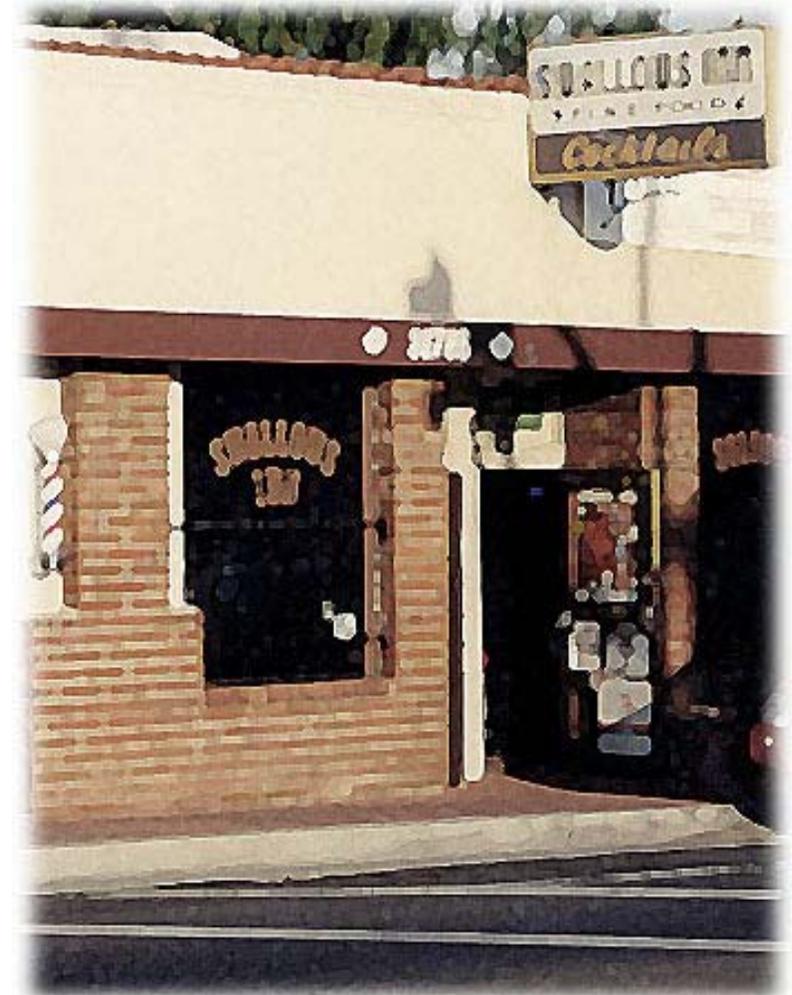
#### 1. Awning Signs

- a. Awnings should not be internally illuminated. Indirect downward awning illumination is allowed.
- b. Sign text or logo areas should not occupy more than 30% of the awning panel

#### 2. Projecting (Blade) Signs

- a. Size uniformity should be maintained along street frontages to the greatest extent possible.
- b. The text, copy and logo should not exceed 75% of the sign background.
- c. Sign supports and brackets should be compatible with the design and scale of the sign.

*the Swallows Inn cocktail lounge uses blade and window signage*



### 3. Window Signs

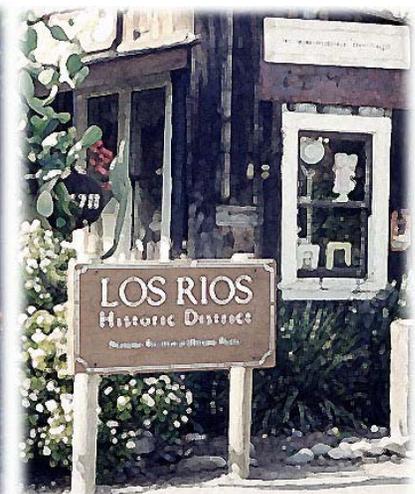
- a. Window signs should be limited to individual letter signs and logos.

### 4. Restaurant Menu Signs

- a. Restaurant menu signs should be located in proximity to the restaurant entry or near the public sidewalk, where entries are more than 10 ft. from the sidewalk.
- b. Restaurant menu signs should be appropriate in size, location and design with the character and architectural detail of the building as well as the character of the restaurant.

### 5. Freestanding Signs

- a. Pole signs are not permitted.
- b. Freestanding signs should include a 2 ft. high (min) base. The base color(s) and material(s) should be compatible with the architectural theme.
- c. Business address identification (street name and number) should be included as part of the sign design. Multi-tenant developments should display the range of address numbers.





## *VIII - Signs*