



Wellington Waterfront Limited

Signage Guidelines

WATERFRONT SIGNAGE OBJECTIVE

To provide appropriate signage that supports public and approved commercial activity while maintaining the special character of the waterfront.

Explanation

Signs are required to support public amenity and commercial activity. However, the waterfront is a sensitive location which requires a different approach to signage from the rest of the central city. Distraction, visual clutter and proliferation of unnecessary signs are to be avoided. Where possible, the design of space, facilities and elements on the waterfront should speak for itself.

It is not appropriate to apply city signage standards to the waterfront because:

- The waterfront has intentionally been developed to complement the central city.
- Waterfront buildings typically have a smaller scale than structures in the city.
- Buildings on the waterfront are experienced in the round rather than as single street facades.
- Because of their prominent locations and unique forms, waterfront buildings themselves act as signs.
- The waterfront is primarily a civic and recreational place, even though it integrates some commercial activity.
- To preserve views of the city and harbour, glare must be avoided at night.

Public domain and way finding signs are also anticipated. These may also provide advice about waterfront events.

ASSESSING THE NEED FOR A SIGN

Criteria for assessing if a sign is necessary:

- There should be a compelling case for inclusion of every sign.
- The sign will provide a justifiable and overt public benefit.
- The sign is necessary to support the ongoing viability of waterfront use or activity.
- The message is not already conveyed by other signs, elements or visible activity.
- The information cannot be reasonably incorporated into an existing sign.
- There are no appropriate alternative ways to convey the information.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

All public and commercial signs

Maintain the visual integrity, usefulness and amenity of public open space and waterfront buildings. Achieve this by:

- Relating the size and proportions of signs to architectural modules and composition on host buildings or structures.
- Positioning and aligning signs in a manner which is consistent with the composition of buildings and adjacent public spaces, including:
 - centering signs within structural bays
 - conforming to existing symmetry or rhythm
 - continuing existing vertical or horizontal datums
 - acknowledging lines of symmetry
- Relating sign dimensions to relevant viewing distances, while ensuring size and content do not cause the sign to dominate views from adjacent public spaces.
- Avoiding projection above the tops of buildings.

Treat signage consistently in any given location, matching the size, number, position and construction of existing signs as far as possible. Once an approved precedent has been set, all subsequent signs should conform to this theme or type.

Do not apply signage directly to restored surfaces on the exterior façades of heritage buildings.

Ensure that the scale, intensity and content of illuminated signs do not dominate the host building, create a distraction in adjacent public spaces and create glare or excessive upward light-spill. Animated illuminated signs are unlikely to be approved.

Integrate or conceal lighting, cabling and fixings.

Commercial signs in relation to colonnades

Signage may be placed in the glazing at the rear of a colonnade. These signs should be flush with the glass or, if this is impractical, should project no more than 100-200mm. Signs may also be placed inside the glass line i.e. within the interior of a commercial tenancy.

In general, signs may occur in every bay of a colonnade provided they are placed within the bays and are set back sufficiently from the face of the building. The dimension of this setback shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, but likely to be at least 100mm.

Once a precedent or theme has been established for size, location, number and construction, all subsequent signs on a colonnade should conform to this.

Signage should not be suspended from the soffit of the colonnade.

Commercial signs in relation to glazed facades

On glazed elevations, signage should be integrated with the glazing modules and other construction units in the facade. As far as possible, signs should avoid the introduction of additional frames or other construction elements. Instead, they should make use of existing mullions, transoms and glazing bars.

Signage should be flush with the face of the glass in order to maintain the architectural integrity and clean lines of glazed facades.

In general, signage may be placed inside the glass line, i.e. within the interior of a commercial tenancy.

Commercial signs on retail frontages

Signage shall maintain the transparency of retail frontages, particularly at eye level. Large opaque areas and other treatments which impair visual links between internal and external activity shall be avoided.

Neon signs and screen printing onto glazing are possible.

When signs are placed in or behind a glazed frontage, designs shall take account of the potential for veiling reflections to reduce legibility.

Sandwich boards and vertical banners

Sandwich boards or vertical banners are acceptable as temporary signage for a public event, subject to stability under expected wind conditions.

Other sandwich boards or vertical banners are discouraged on the waterfront, but may be considered for licensing here only where:

- They are used only when the premises are open, and are removed after hours.
- They do not compromise pedestrian amenity.
- The one sandwich board per ground floor occupancy that may be approved is located adjacent to the relevant premises.
- The proposed location is not exposed to high winds.

Where approved in principle, the location, design and maintenance of sandwich boards should generally comply with section 10 - Licence conditions specific to sandwich boards of the Wellington City Council Footpath Management Policy 21 March 2007.

Identification of sponsors

Signs for sponsorship of public art and similar urban elements must refer to the sponsor by name rather than logo. (This follows the precedent of the Writers Walk).

Sponsor recognition should be discreet, and wherever practicable, integrated into existing elements or associated interpretive signs.

Consider how the sponsorship sign might be changed or removed, and avoid destructive intervention on any building or landscape element.

Temporary signs

A permanent installation with changing content is not a temporary sign, although unobtrusive fixings which allow the installation of temporary signs or banners that comply with 7.1 will be considered and may be approved.

Temporary signs should be in place not more than 2 weeks prior to the event they advertise and removed promptly after the event.

Temporary signs should relate to a public event on the waterfront, or should have significant public good and/or public information benefits.

Owing to their temporary nature, these signs may be larger and more conspicuous than permanent signs. However, they shall complement host buildings and adjacent public open spaces.

Visible fixings should generally be removable after use and should not have a lasting effect on surfaces or substrates. Agreements should be in place to reinstate and repair any damage.

Temporary signs may be applied to the ground surface, subject to confirmation of avoidance of slip hazard and means of removal without risk of permanent marking.

Way finding signs

Way finding signs shall conform to a single established type, and follow a coherent waterfront-wide plan.

Their aesthetic should conform to the existing waterfront furniture suite and their number, position and treatment shall be carefully considered to avoid visual clutter.

They should radiate from the promenade and will signpost popular tourist destinations and civic buildings as well as basic facilities such as toilets and information centres.

Signs to destinations within the waterfront should generally relate to precincts rather than individual buildings.

Signposts should include no more than five destinations or main points. A simple arrow rather than maps should be used to indicate direction. Information regarding basic facilities should have less prominence and, for example, might be located at the base of the sign.

Signs to destinations beyond the waterfront should be located only at key exit/entry points and will signal city-wide activities and destinations. These signs should signal not more than five locations and their aesthetic will follow the wider system of signs installed through the city by the WCC.

Way finding signs on wharf sheds may include shed numbers. These should maintain the traditional treatment of wharf shed numbering.

Interpretive signs

Interpretive signs should be closely associated with their subjects. They should either conform to the language of existing public signage, or they should be understated and an integral part of local architectural and landscape treatments.

Notwithstanding the above requirement for proximity, interpretation strategies may include information at a central location supported by minimal installations elsewhere on the site.

Interpretive information should support a process of discovery and, to the fullest extent possible; the waterfront should be allowed to speak for itself. Where explicit interpretation of sites is necessary, this should be achieved with the minimum number of additional signs.

Interpretive signage should be part of an overall interpretive strategy. This should consider a range of methods which contribute to a coherent information network for the whole waterfront.

Regulatory and safety signs

Use national/international standards and symbols for common signage to ensure signs are legible to all waterfront users, including visitors to Wellington and New Zealand.

Consider placement and number of signs to ensure effectiveness and avoid viewer habituation.

Consider design strategies and interventions that avoid or minimise the need for signs.

Flexibility and innovation

In special circumstances and with compelling justification signage may depart from these guidelines. Such proposals will be subject to more rigorous design review, and their merits will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

APPROVAL PROCESS

Design Review

All signage proposals will be submitted for Technical Advisory Group (TAG) design review in relation to these guidelines.

For very large or prominent signs and in any special circumstances, early discussion with TAG on general intent and direction prior to confirming a design is likely to be helpful.

Information required for review:

Context plan or elevation

Signage shown in context of location. That is for signage on buildings, a building elevation, and for public space signs, plan showing location in relation to buildings, open space and other signs and landscape elements.

Elevation of sign

Include identification of colour, material and general construction

Cross-section(s)

Section(s) to scale showing intended fixing and detail of relationship to substrate - ground or building.

Contact us

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