

CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION HPC #2024-009

A RESOLUTION BY THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF  
NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA, REQUESTING A TEXT AMENDMENT TO NORTHFIELD  
CITY CODE CHAPTER 34 – LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

WHEREAS, the Heritage Preservation Commission is tasked with oversight of signs within the Historic-Overlay District and signs at locally designated Heritage Preservation Sites; and

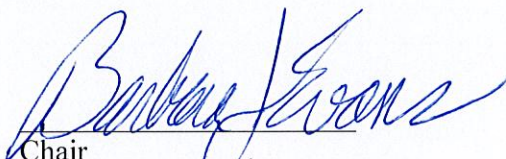
WHEREAS, the Heritage Preservation Commission seeks to increase the diversity of signs allowable within the Historic-Overlay District; and

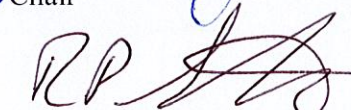
WHEREAS, the Heritage Preservation Commission has reviewed the relevant portions of the City Code and the criteria for issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness that apply only to signs within the Historic-Overlay District; and

WHEREAS, the Commission held a duly noticed public meeting, on August 7th, 2024, to consider testimony from the public regarding the proposed changes, and has considered such testimony.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA, that the Commission has duly considered the proposed changes to City Code, and hereby requests the Draft Ordinance which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference as Exhibit A, be considered by the Planning Commission to be recommended to City Council for adoption.

PASSED by the Heritage Preservation Commission of the City of Northfield this 7th day of August, 2024.

  
Chair

  
Member

VOTE: Y CLARK    Y EVANS    Absent JARMAN  
Y MEEHAN    Y STANGLER    Absent STEED    THOMAS

**EXHIBIT A**

**DRAFT ORDINANCE**

## ORDINANCE NO. XXXX

### AN ORDINANCE AMENDING NORTHFIELD CITY CODE, CHAPTER 34 – LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

**THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTHFIELD DOES ORDAIN THAT** (new material is underlined; deleted material is lined out; sections which are not proposed to be amended are omitted; sections which are only proposed to be re-numbered are only set forth below as to their number and title):

SECTION 1. Northfield Code, Chapter 34 – Land Development Code, Article 6. – Signage, Section 6.10 – Standards for Permanent Signs by Zoning District, Clause (F) - Signs in the H-O District and on Heritage Preservation Sites, is hereby amended, as follows:

**(F) Signs in the H-O District and on Heritage Preservation Sites.**

- (1) This subsection applies to the H-O district and other sites that have been designated as heritage preservation sites.
- (2) Sign computations ~~shall~~will follow the guidelines for the base zoning district.
- (3) Signage ~~shall~~will be designed to enhance and complement the historic character of buildings within the downtown district. Wherever possible, sign review ~~shall~~will be informed by ~~the use of~~ historic photographs or visual records of the building or site.
- (4) ~~Prior to the issuance of~~Before receiving a zoning certificate, the applicant ~~shall~~will be required to apply for, and receive, a Certificate of Appropriateness for ~~the any proposed~~ sign.
- (5) Heritage Preservation Commission and city staff ~~shall~~will review the sign permit application ~~in accordance with~~ per the following guidelines:
  - (a) All sign permits for property within the H-O District ~~shall~~will comply with both the C1 and H-O District requirements of this section.
  - (b) Temporary signs meeting the requirements of ~~this subsection 6, Placement, and 11, Illumination~~, do not require review by the Heritage Preservation Commission and can be approved by the City Planner following Section 6.11 Temporary Signs.
  - (c) Pylon signs are prohibited.
  - (d) Signage should meet the Northfield Downtown Preservation Design Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
- (6) **Placement and Attachment.** ~~Signs shall be positioned so that they are an integral design feature of the building, i.e., signs shall complement and enhance the architectural features of the building. Signs They shall must be placed located and attached so that they do not destroy or cover architectural details such as stone arches, glass transom panels, or decorative brickwork. Signs must not be anchored into masonry or stone and may be anchored to mortar or other material. Unless other placement is specifically approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission for reasons stated in the Certificate of Appropriateness issued by the Heritage Preservation Commission, Signs may must be placed only as follows:~~
  - (a) At or above the horizontal lintel, storefront cornice, or beltcourse, or above the storefront windows;
  - (b) Projecting from the building;
  - (c) Applied to or painted on canvas/fabric awnings ~~only on the valance~~;
  - (d) In areas where signs were historically attached (see Figure 6-3 for examples); or
  - (e) Wall signs for first floor businesses ~~shall~~must be beneath the second floor windows.



Figure 6-3: Illustration of where signs are historically attached to buildings in the downtown historic district.

- (7) **Sign Shape.** Wall and projecting signs must use physical relief in their design through one or more of the following:

- (a) A raised or recessed border;
- (b) Raised or recessed lettering, graphics, logos, or other features related to the nature of the business;
- (c) When the sign is set apart from the building surface, unique or ornate sign shapes (not simply a rectangle, circle, square, or oval);

For this section, the physical relief must have a minimum depth of one-quarter (1/4) inch, and a maximum depth of six (6) inches measured from the surface it is set against, either the sign surface or the building surface. Sculptural elements may project up to twelve (12) inches, provided they are secondary to the primary message and related to the business or entity identified by the sign. Projections on wall signs greater than twelve (12) inches will be considered projecting signs. Signs shall be designed to match the historic time period elements. Wall signs shall include a raised rectangular border that sets the sign apart from the building surface or hanging space. Wall signs shall make use of individual raised letters. Projecting signs may be fabricated in a variety of shapes appropriate to the building or business.

- (8) **Colors.** Sign colors must not detract from the building façade to which the sign is attached. Bright or vibrant colors may be approved subject to the following conditions:

- (a) They are used in moderation; and
- (b) The overall effect does not detract from the district, the building, adjacent buildings, or the primary message of the sign; or
- (c) They serve a legitimate communication purpose, including as trademarked logos or branding or relate directly to the goods, services, or function of the business.

Fluorescent colors are prohibited. shall coordinate with the building façade to which the sign is attached. A combination of soft/neutral shades and dark/rich shades will best reflect the historical time period. No more than four (4) two colors, excluding shades and gradients, may shall be used for the sign letters. The Heritage Preservation Commission may adopt a historic preservation color palette as part of the Northfield Downtown Preservation Design Guidelines.

- (9) **Material.** Signs and sign letters should must be made of wood, metal, or other weatherproof material. When contemporary materials are used for signs, they must be painted and/or made to simulate the texture and depth of traditional downtown sign materials, such as wood, metal, glass, tile, stone, or masonry. that is in keeping with the corresponding historic period of the building. Signs that appear to be made of plastic are prohibited. Signs Brackets for projecting signs shall be made of iron or other painted metal, and shall be secured at the top of the sign, and anchored into the mortar, not the masonry. Sign brackets must appear to be made of metal.

- (10) **Message.** The sign message shall be legible and shall relate to the nature of the business. These requirements may be accomplished through the use of words, pictures, names, symbols and logos. Logos, if used, shall be incorporated into signage designs compatible with the Historic District.

~~(11-8)~~ **Telephone Numbers and Websites. Lettering.** Lettering styles shall be legible and shall relate to the character of the property's use and the era of the building. Lettering on wall signs is encouraged to be of a serif lettering style. Wall signs shall contain no more than two lettering styles, and the lettering and any logo shall occupy no more than 60 percent of the total sign area and shall not extend outside of sign borders. If telephone numbers and websites are desired, the Heritage Preservation Commission encourages them to be located on window and door signs. Telephone numbers and websites may be included on other sign types, provided they are clearly secondary (<50%) to the primary message of the sign and occupy no more than 12 percent of the total sign area.

~~(12-9)~~ **11 Illumination.**

~~(a) External illumination for signs will not blink or fluctuate. Light rays will shine only upon the sign.~~

~~(b) Internally illuminated signs are prohibited, except for window signs inside a building.~~

— External illumination of signs is permitted by incandescent, LED, or fluorescent light, but shall emit a continuous white light that prevents direct shining onto the ground or adjacent buildings. Exposed neon signs shall be permitted when installed inside windows or the interior of the building. With the exception of lighted "open" signs, or temporary window displays of products sold using non-twinkling, non-intermittent, non-flashing lighting strings, internally illuminated signs are not permitted. For purposes of this clause, internally illuminated sign means the illumination of a sign by self-illumination or by an artificial source of light either on the face of the sign, such as light emitting diodes (LEDs) or light bulbs, or contained within such sign, including, but not limited to, fluorescent and neon signs.

~~(c) Flashing, intermittent, rotating signs or signs that create the illusion of movement are prohibited.~~

Exceptions to this guideline ~~shall~~ will be allowed for public and institutional uses service, time/temperature and theater signs.

~~(130)~~ **Historic Building Names/Years/Ghost Signs.** Permanent historic names and years, and ghost signs on buildings shall not be removed and shall be reviewed by the HPC heritage preservation commission when changed or painted. These signs are not subject to the standard sign area requirement.

~~(11)~~ **Ghost Signs.** Ghost signs on buildings will not be removed and must be maintained and reviewed by the city planner. Any additional proposed changes beyond maintenance must be reviewed by the HPC. These signs are not subject to the standard sign area requirement.

SECTION 2. Northfield Code, Chapter 34 – Land Development Code, Article 8. – Development Procedures, Section 8.5.8 – Heritage Preservation Commission's Certificate of Appropriateness, Subsection (A) – Applicability, is hereby amended, as follows:

**8.5.8 Heritage Preservation Commission's Certificate of Appropriateness.**

(A) **Applicability.** Unless otherwise exempted in Section 7.8.3, Exemptions, or unless otherwise provided in this Section, in the H-O district no zoning certificate or building permit for construction, exterior alteration or rehabilitation, moving, or demolition of a building or structure on a city-owned or privately owned heritage preservation site ~~shall~~ will be issued until the project has been submitted to, and received approval of a certificate of appropriateness from either the ~~heritage preservation commission~~ Heritage Preservation Commission or the city planner subject to the below review procedures. The city planner or the city's planner's designee ~~shall~~ will classify proposed work as described below into one of the following two categories, which ~~shall~~ will determine the applicable review procedure as provided in clause (C) of this Section:

(1) Major Work:

- (i) New construction including the expansion or enlargement of an existing building or site.
- (ii) Demolition in whole or in part.
- (iii) Moving of historic buildings, structures, or objects.
- (iv) Remodeling, exterior alteration, or rehabilitation that will change the exterior appearance including but not limited to painting, lighting, landscaping, and awnings.
- (v) Signage.
- (vi) Any other major work determined by the city planner, in the city planner's judgment, not meeting the definition of minor work.

- (2) Minor Work (minor alterations in keeping with the integrity of the heritage preservation site and do not impact the overall architectural character and visual character):
- (i) ~~Ordinary and routine maintenance such as tuck pointing.~~
  - (ii) ~~MO~~Ordinary and routine maintenance or reconstruction where any exterior surface materials are to be replaced with historically appropriate identical materials and where such replacement materials will be installed to the original historical configuration. This includes, but is not limited to; re-pointing, repainting, reroofing, residing, and replacement of windows with the same form, materials and finish.
  - (iii) Minor amendments to an approved major work COA.
  - (iii) The relocation of an existing sign or signs, previously approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission, when an existing business moves or relocates within the Historic Overlay District.

SECTION 3 Northfield Code, Chapter 34 – Land Development Code, Article 9. – Definitions, Section 9.2 – Definitions, be amended to insert in the existing list of definitions the following new definitions in alphabetical order, as follows:

**Sign, Internally Illuminated.** A sign that is illuminated by self-illumination or by an artificial source of light either on the face of the sign, such as light emitting diodes (LEDs) or light bulbs, or contained within such sign, including, but not limited to, fluorescent and neon signs.

**Sign, Projecting.** A sign, other than a wall sign, which projects perpendicularly from, and is supported by, a wall of a building or structure. Or any portion of a wall sign projecting more than 12” from the building surface.

**Fluorescent Colors** – colors of any hue that exhibit fluorescence detectable as a visible “glow” when exposed to ultraviolet radiation.

SECTION 4. This Ordinance will take effect thirty days after its publication.

Passed by the City Council of the City of Northfield, Minnesota, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2024.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

First Reading	
Second Reading	
Date of Publication	
Date Ordinance takes effect	

VOTE:     \_\_\_\_ POWNELL   \_\_\_\_ HOLMES   \_\_\_\_ NESS   \_\_\_\_ PETERSON WHITE  
             \_\_\_\_ REISTER   \_\_\_\_ SOKUP   \_\_\_\_ ZUCCOLOTTO