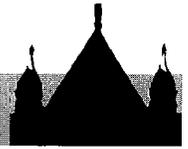
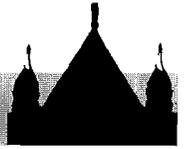


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# 1. INTRODUCTION



## 1.1 Purpose

The Guthrie Sign Guidelines provides an illustrated guide to assist with sign design decisions within the Guthrie Capitol Townsite Historic District (CTHD).

This document is a tool for:

- anyone planning a sign or sign change that affects an historic resource within the CTHD, and
- the Guthrie Historic Preservation Commission to approve or disapprove Certificate of Appropriateness applications

## 1.2 Goals

The Guthrie Sign Guidelines goals are to:

- Preserve the historic character of the CTHD by encouraging quality signage.
- Provide the Guthrie Historic Preservation Commission appropriate CTHD sign standards.
- Inform and aid occupants or designers planning new signs or significant changes to signs.





### 1.3 Historic Background

In 1889, Guthrie was the location of the United States Land Office for claims from the eastern district of the newly opened lands of Oklahoma Territory. Subsequently, Guthrie served as the capital of Oklahoma Territory from 1890 until statehood in 1907 and, also, as the Oklahoma state capital until 1910.

The Guthrie Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. In the "Statement of Significance" from the National Register nomination, the Guthrie Historic District is described as containing "...the largest and best preserved collection of pre-statehood commercial, residential and cultural buildings in the state" of Oklahoma.

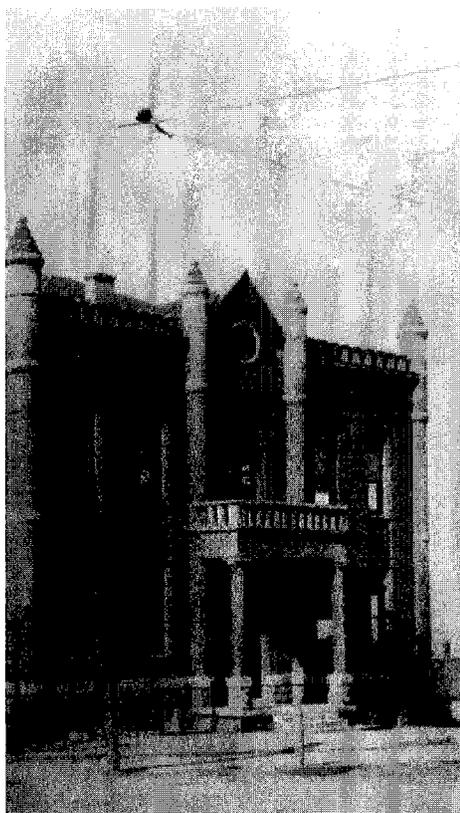
One of the most notable areas within the Guthrie Historic District is the CTHD. The Capitol Townsite Historic District possesses an outstanding collection of masonry commercial buildings. Most of these buildings were constructed between 1889 and 1910. This period of significance starts from the opening of Oklahoma Territory, extends through the founding of Guthrie, and ends at the time that the state capitol was moved from Guthrie to Oklahoma City.

In a report by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), the original commercial area of Guthrie is described:

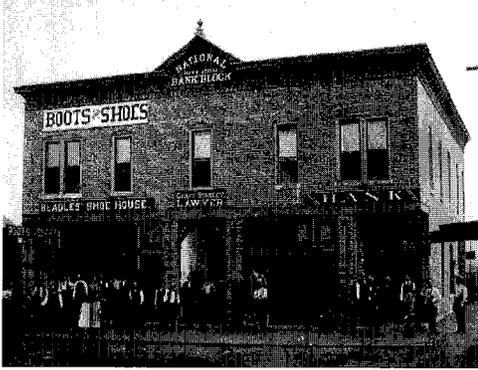
"By the time of statehood, 1907, 18 years after its founding, it had taken on a solid, stable, and even impressive look...In all this a certain homogeneity began to arise, due in part to the nature of available materials, brick, sheet metal, and especially sandstone of a characteristically dull red color. A 'commercial style' arose, a style of long narrow buildings on deep lots, of two to three storeys...The variations on the theme were rich, but it is difficult to imagine a building district with a more cohesive physical aspect and visual character."

The first Guthrie Historic Preservation Ordinance was written in 1978. This law was designed to preserve the CTHD.

In addition to its National Register status, a portion of the CTHD has the added distinction of being listed as a National Historic Landmark. Guthrie's CTHD is a unique and beautiful place, and it is of primary importance to preserve its historic integrity. Because signs are a prominent and necessary element on commercial buildings, their design and location has a great impact on the the CTHD.



## 1.4 How the Guthrie Sign Guidelines Work



The Guthrie Sign Guidelines cannot be written with the complexity and foresight required to cover all situations that are likely to be experienced in the CTHD. The Guthrie Sign Guidelines is intended as a framework on which decisions are based that protect the historic resources of the CTHD against adverse effects. The Guthrie Sign Guidelines also takes into account the needs of businesses and customers, and the commercial importance of the CTHD as a tourism district.

## 1.5 Laws and Policies



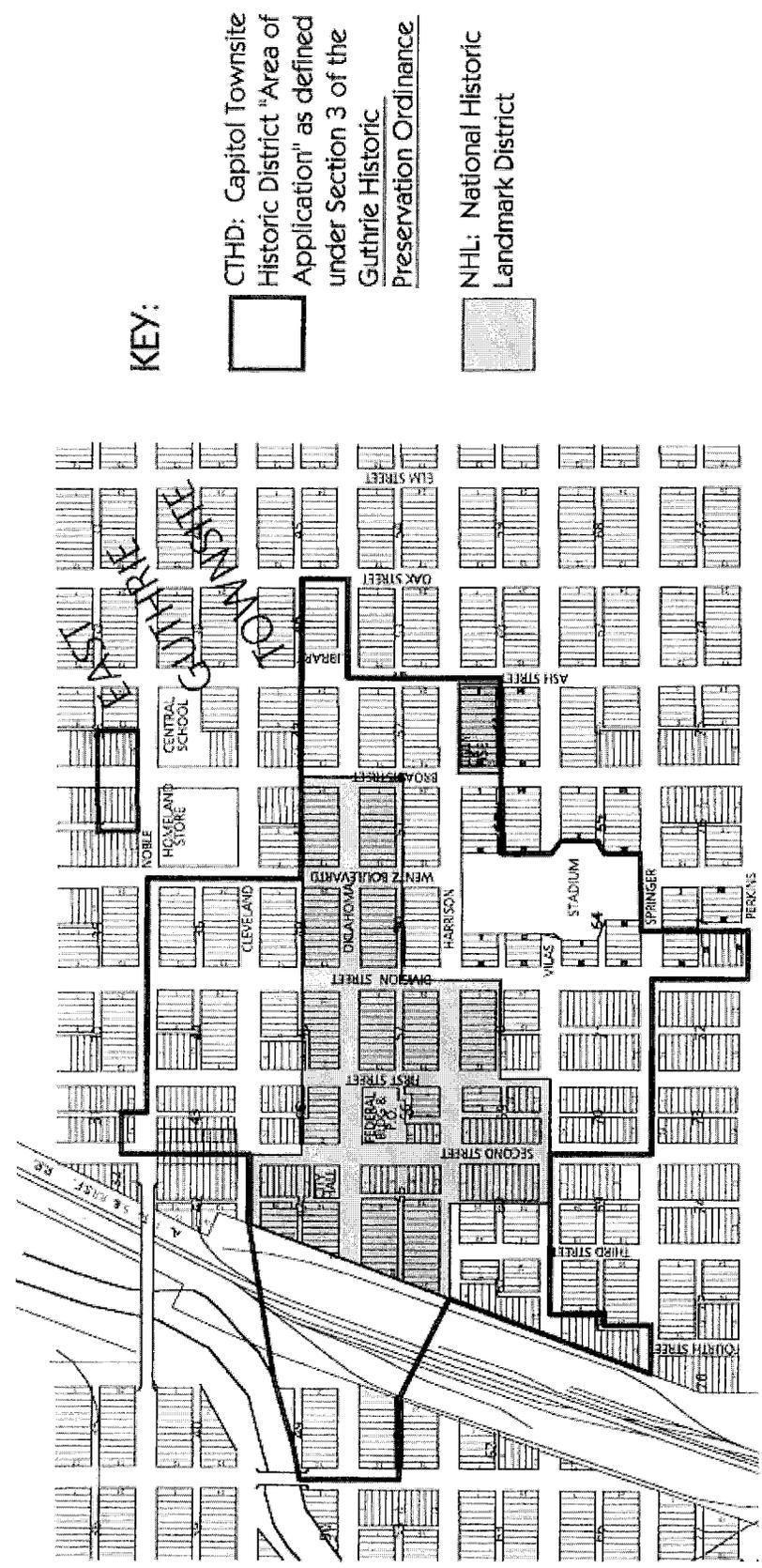
The Guthrie Sign Guidelines coordinates with the Guthrie Design Guidelines and the Guthrie Historic Preservation Ordinance. The Guthrie Sign Guidelines contains written and graphic descriptions of performance requirements for signs within the CTHD.

The Guthrie Sign Guidelines is not a substitute for the Guthrie Historic Preservation Ordinance and it does not override requirements specified in the Ordinance. The Guthrie Historic Preservation Commission must review and approve all exterior signs within the “Area of Application” defined under Section 3 of the Guthrie Historic Preservation Ordinance. (Refer to the map of the CTHD on the following page.)



Note: Changes to all signs visible to the exterior within the CTHD, including signs facing alleys and sidestreets, are subject to review. The Guthrie Historic Preservation Ordinance gives the Guthrie Historic Preservation Commission the authority to “...regulate the design and placement of all **permanent signs** within an historic district and on landmarks and landmark sites”. Signage is to be reviewed by the Commission prior to fabrication. Signage that is not reviewed prior to fabrication may be subject to change.

Local, state and federal laws and policies may affect sign decisions within the CTHD. Please contact the Community Planning and Development Office at the Guthrie City Hall for regulations affecting any project.



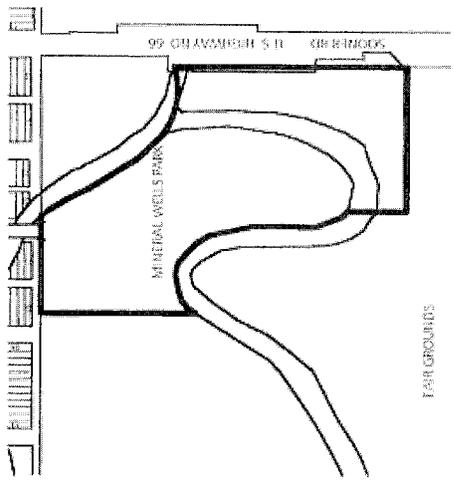
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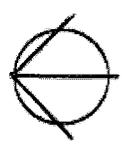
CTHD: Capitol Township Historic District "Area of Application" as defined under Section 3 of the Guthrie Historic Preservation Ordinance.



NHL: National Historic Landmark District



# CAPITOL TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT



## 1.6 Resources

Resources cited at the end of this document are available from the Community Development and Planning Office at the Guthrie City Hall at (405) 282-1110, on a limited basis.

Historic documentation can provide design ideas for signs. Photographs and other historic documents exist, including the Oklahoma Territorial Museum and the State Capitol Publishing Museum collections, the library of the Oklahoma Historical Society, the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office holdings, publications that focus on Guthrie's photographic history, and private collections. Please contact these organizations or the Community Planning and Development Office at the Guthrie City Hall for access to historic documentation.

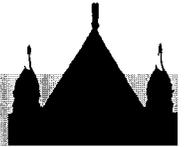
## 1.7 Professional Assistance

It may be prudent to utilize professional and technical assistance for sign design and execution. Sign designs and materials that are compatible with historic districts demand a high level of craftsmanship and a sensitivity to building design.



Historic Painted Wall Sign

## 2. TYPES OF WORK



Correctly evaluating the type of work required and the impact of new signs or sign changes on an historic resource and its neighbors is the first step in the work process.

The acceptable types of work on historic resources are listed below in order, from the type that has the least impact on historic character to the type that is most challenging to historic preservation concerns.



Sandwich Board



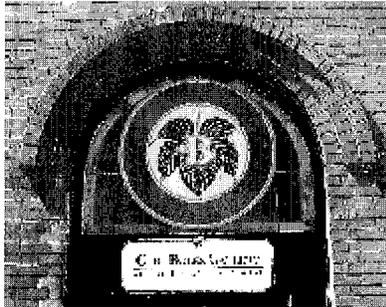
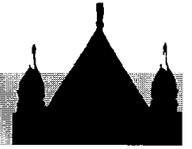
Light Pole with City Information Sign



Historic Building Plaque

1. **Identify, retain and preserve** historic signs, whenever possible. Retaining faded “ghost signs” and original building name signs, and preserving original sign locations and configurations contribute to the CTHD’s historic character.
2. **Protect and maintain** historic signs that are in reasonably good condition.
3. **Repair** historic signs when normal maintenance procedures fail to address a problem. Limited parts replacement may be necessary. However, evidence of the apparent age of a sign is to be recognized as one of the major features contributing to its historic significance.
4. **Reuse** historic signs when possible. Options are to:
  - Keep the sign unaltered as a marketing tool, even if the business changes.
  - Relocate the sign to the interior as a decorative element to preserve it.
  - Make minor modifications to the sign to adapt it to a new business.
5. **New signs:**
  - Must be compatible with the CTHD’s historic architecture.
  - Must be viewed as part of an overall graphics system for the building.

### 3. SIGN TYPES



Glass and Panel Signs



Lettering on Storefront Glass

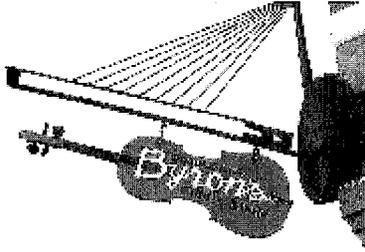


Lettering and Graphics on Storefront

Many different sign types are appropriate to the CTHD. Signs may incorporate words, symbols and objects to communicate effectively.

#### 3.1 Recommended Sign Types include:

- A. Hand painted, vinyl or raised letters on:
  - 1. the horizontal element above the storefront or above the entresol
  - 2. the solid panel above the storefront, where the entresol has been previously replaced with solid infill
  - 3. on wall surfaces on side and back elevations
  - 4. flat panel signs attached flush to wall surfaces on side and back elevations.
- B. Signage on awning borders.
- C. Lettering on the outer surfaces or sides of boxed canopies.
- D. Projecting signs from horizontal standards mounted perpendicular to the building, with the following restrictions:
  - 1. Do not project more than four (4) feet from a building or less than eight (8) feet above the surface level of the sidewalk or lot.
  - 2. Do not extend signs on two story buildings above the sills of second floor windows.
  - 3. Do not extend signs on one story buildings above the cornice line.
  - 4. Appropriate location is on storefront elevation.
- E. Hand painted signs on storefront glazing. Lettering also may be applied directly to window or door glass.
- F. Folding "sandwich board" sidewalk signs. Overall sign size is limited to 34 inches wide by 48 inches tall, including supporting legs. Maximum base spread is to be 36 inches. Sign construction must be sturdy and heavy enough to withstand windloads at the proposed location. Sandwich board signs are limited to one per building, placed in front of the business it represents.



Projecting Object Sign



Projecting Flat Panel



Projecting Flat Panel

- G. Three dimensional signs that depict objects or symbols.
- H. On buildings constructed after the mid-1920's custom neon may be used sparingly as an artistic accent or in signage. Use of neon will be reviewed for appropriateness and design on a case by case basis.
- I. Temporary signs, defined by ordinance as signs used for less than 30 days, as follows:
  - 1. Small signs that are compatible with other approved permanent signage.
  - 2. Signs for special events, such as banners, community activity flyers, and public service announcements.
  - 3. Signs for new businesses used in cases where permanent signs are not yet approved.
- J. Unobtrusive painted wood or stock "Open" and "Closed" signs.

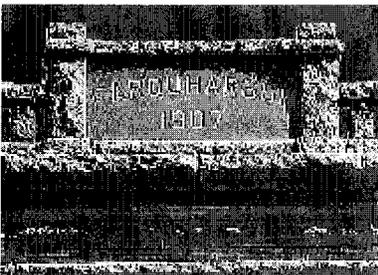
**3.2 Sign Types that are Not Compatible** with the historic architecture within the district include:

- A. Plastic sign panels.
- B. Plastic letters.
- C. Any flush mounted signage that projects beyond the planar surface of the building element used as its background or frame.
- D. Signage that projects above or obscures parapets, roof lines, windows, canopies or other building features.
- E. Internally illuminated signs.
- F. Mass produced neon, such as contemporary name brand advertising, used as window signage.
- G. Temporary signs that are not compatible with other approved signage, such as newspaper ads taped to windows.
- H. Projecting signs on sidewalk mounted poles with the exception of City of Guthrie directional, regulatory, informational, or seasonal banners or signage.
- I. Off premise advertising signs and billboards.

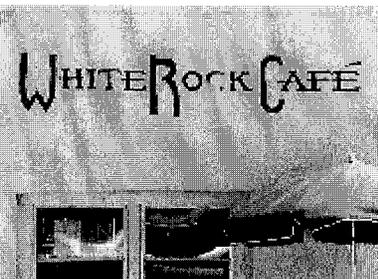
## 4. DESIGN



Historic Building Sign at Parapet



Historic Building Sign at Parapet



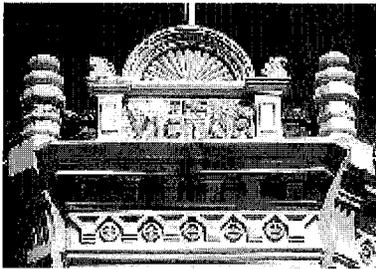
Painted Wall Sign

The best sign design is simple, legible and compatible with the design of the historic resource, usually a building, where it is placed. Carefully designed and executed graphics that coordinate with the design elements of the building (or any other background) can have great visual impact without being obtrusive, and they are most likely to be appropriate to the historic character of the CTHD.

**Design Recommendations** for signs include:

- A. Design signs with respect to the historic context of the building or resource. For example, plastic signs on Territorial Era buildings are inappropriate. However, plastic signs on newer buildings may be acceptable if the sign is appropriate to the size, design, color and style of the building, and to the context of the CTHD.
- B. New sign design can be influenced by documentation of original signs and sign locations. If documentation is not available, compare the building elevation to similar buildings, where sign types and placement can be referred to for clues about design.
- C. Utilize original sign panels, signs painted in windows, projecting signs, or painted signs designed to fit within the context of the building design.
- D. Wood or metal are acceptable sign panel materials. Wood panels must have a minimum thickness of one half inch. Metal panels must have a finished edge to give the appearance of a one half inch thickness.
- E. Sign colors are to be part of an overall harmonious building color scheme that is in context with the CTHD. Light and dark contrast may be used for legibility.
- F. Lettering is to complement the historic resource and sign design. Two-dimensional lettering and other graphics are to be either professionally hand painted or vinyl. Borders are recommended.
- G. Lighting: Plastic backlit (or indirectly lit) signs are inappropriate for the district and are prohibited. Signs may be directly lit with exterior building lights.
- H. New signs, like the best Victorian and early twentieth century signs, are to be artistic and designed to complement buildings. Emphasize quality, not quantity.

## 5. QUANTITY/SIZE/PROPORTION



Historic Building Sign at Parapet



Functional Object Sign

The quantity and size of new signs must be compatible with the building (or any other background) design and proportions. Historic patterns for signage within the CTHD vary greatly but, in general, documentation shows that quantities, sizes and proportions of permanent signs on Territorial Era and early statehood commercial buildings complemented rather than competed with the architecture.

**Size and Quantity Recommendations** for signs include:

- A. Signs must not obscure, dominate, cover over or disfigure architectural and/or historic features or details.
- B. Each commercial building is limited to one primary business sign per elevation. In addition, each business may also place secondary signs directly lettered on a window, door or storefront glass.
- C. In general, the storefront and window area covered by signage is not to exceed 30 percent when a rectangle is drawn around the finished sign.
- D. Letter height must be proportional to the sign and building design. Letter height is to be limited to 20 inches on building wall signs or other signs intended for distant viewing from vehicles. Lettering on smaller signs, such as those painted on storefront glass or projecting signs, is to be proportionately smaller.
- E. Signs placed or painted directly on building elements are to use that element as a frame for height limits. For example, the borders of a sign placed on the horizontal beam above an entresol is to be limited to the space provided by the beam surface.
- F. Private dwelling unit home occupation signs are to comply with the provisions of Article 4, Section 7.6(b) of the zoning ordinance of the City of Guthrie.

**Resources:** The following documents are some of the resources available for further information.

Oklahoma Sign Design Guidelines. (Oklahoma Main Street Program) This document is no longer in publication, however, a copy is on file at the Community Development and Planning Office at the Guthrie City Hall.

Preservation Brief #25, The Preservation of Historic Signs, (NPS)

City of Guthrie Zoning Ordinance. A copy is available for review at the Community Development and Planning Office at the Guthrie City Hall. Staff will assist with information on sections pertinent to individual projects.

**Sign Guidelines Photo Credit List:**

Thanks to Lloyd C. Lentz, III and Bob Bozarth for their kind permission to reprint historic photos from their private collections in Section 1 of this document. The following is a list of the recent photos used in Sections 2 through 5 to show examples of signage within Guthrie's CTHD.

SG-5, bottom	State Capital Publishing Museum, 301 W. Harrison
SG-6, top	typical street light with city information sign
SG-6, center	Gaffney Building, 212 W. Oklahoma
SG-6, bottom	First National Bank (Bank of Indian Territory), 202 W. Oklahoma
SG-7, top	Pabst Building, 101 S. 2 <sup>nd</sup>
SG-7, center	Pabst Building, 101 S. 2 <sup>nd</sup>
SG-7, bottom	Starr Building, 322 W. Oklahoma
SG-8, top	A.F.A.M. Masonic Hall, 121 E. Oklahoma
SG-8, center	Bonfils Building, 107 S. 2 <sup>nd</sup>
SG-8, bottom	Starr Building, 322 W. Oklahoma
SG-9, top	Bonfils Building, 107 S. 2 <sup>nd</sup>
SG-9, center	Farquharson Building, 114 W. Oklahoma
SG-9, bottom	White Rock Cafe, 114 S. Division
SG-10, top	Victor Building, 202 W. Harrison
SG-10, bottom	First National Bank (Bank of Indian Territory), 202 W. Oklahoma

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Historic Guthrie photographs from the private collections of Lloyd C. Lentz, III and Bob Bozarth. Reprinted with the owner's permission.

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Oklahoma City, OK 73103

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