

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MEETING

CITY OF DAVENPORT, IOWA

Monday, June 22, 2026; 5:00 PM

City Hall | 226 West 4th Street | Council Chambers

- I. Call to Order
- II. Secretary's Report
 1. Consideration of the May 26, 2026 meeting minutes.
- III. Old Business
- IV. New Business
 1. Case DR26-07: Request for Design Review, C-D Downtown Zoning District; Installation of three wall signs at the Freight House, located at 401 West River Drive. Boozies Bar & Grill, petitioner. [Ward 3]
- V. Public Comment
- VI. Adjournment
- VII. Next Meeting: July 27, 2026

City of Davenport

Department: Development & Neighborhood Services
Contact Info: Matt Werderitch | 563-888-2221

Action / Date
6/22/2026

Subject:
Consideration of the May 26, 2026 meeting minutes.

Recommendation:
Approve the minutes.

Background:
The May 26, 2026 meeting minutes are attached.

Attachments:
1. Meeting Minutes 5-26-2026

MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MEETING
CITY OF DAVENPORT, IOWA
TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2026; 5:00 PM
POLICE DEPARTMENT | 416 HARRISON STREET | COMMUNITY ROOM

I. Call to Order

Present: Molacek, Paone, Martin, Hoff, Stinocher, Tylka, Anderson, Warren
Staff: Reu, Werderitch

II. Secretary's Report

A. Consideration of the April 27, 2026 Meeting Minutes.

Motion by Tylka, second by Anderson, to approve the April 27, 2026 meeting minutes.
Motion to approve was unanimous by voice vote (8-0).

III. Old Business

IV. New Business

A. Case DR26-04: Request for Design Review, C-D Downtown Zoning District; Installation of signage for Maldon Kitchen + Bar at 229 Brady Street. Quad City Custom Signs, petitioner. [Ward 3]

Staff provided a summary of the request for Maldon Kitchen + Bar to install two new projecting signs—one facing Brady Street and one facing 3rd Street. The projecting signs are appropriately scaled for the storefront and provide clear business identification without overwhelming the building façade. The use of a simple projecting blade sign design, restrained color palette, and pedestrian-oriented placement is consistent with the character of the downtown corridor.

Staff recommended Case DR26-04 be approved in accordance with the submitted work write up and materials.

Joe Bindner, Quad City Custom Signs, was in attendance to answer questions about the project.

Board members inquired about access to the restaurant from both Brady Street and East 3rd Street.

Motion by Anderson, second by Warren, to approve Case DR26-04 in accordance with the submitted work write up and materials. Motion was approved by a roll call vote (8-0).

B. Case DR26-05: Request for Design Approval, C-D Downtown Zoning District. Reconstruction of the north parapet wall and exterior painting at 323 East 3rd Street. Donda Holdings LLC, petitioner. [Ward 3]

Staff presented an overview of the request, noting that the proposed work addresses deterioration of the parapet and includes repainting of the street-facing elevation to improve the building's overall appearance. Staff stated that the proposed improvements are generally consistent with the intent of the Downtown Design Guidelines, as the project focuses on stabilization, repair, and compatible exterior maintenance of a previously altered historic commercial structure.

Staff recommended Case DR26-05 be approved in accordance with the submitted work write up and materials.

Doug Sandberg, applicant, was present to answer questions regarding the project. Mr. Sandberg stated that he is open to suggestions regarding the proposed color palette and indicated his intent to repaint the window and door trim black to further enhance the building's curb appeal.

Board members discussed the proposed color scheme with the applicant and expressed support for a darker charcoal color on the parapet wall. The Board also indicated a preference for incorporating a medium-tone tan color similar to that found in the existing "Sergeant Pepper" sign. Additional discussion occurred regarding potential future enhancements to the structure, including signage opportunities and window trim treatments.

Motion by Tylka, second by Stinocher, to approve Case DR26-05 in accordance with the submitted work write up and materials, subject to the following conditions:

- a. The stucco finish on the parapet wall shall be painted a charcoal gray color.
- b. The stucco finish on the remainder of the first-floor façade shall be painted a tan color that is similar to the medium-neutral tones within the existing painted Sargeant Peppers wall sign.
- c. Per the applicant's request, window and door trim may be painted black.
- d. Final color selections shall be reviewed and approved by City Staff prior to the commencement of work.

Motion to approve with the listed conditions was passed by a roll call vote (8-0).

- C. Case DR26-06: Request for Design Review, C-V Village of East Davenport Zoning District; Installation of signage on The Village Theatre located at 2113 East 11th Street. Riverbend Signworks, petitioner. [Ward 5]

Michelle Russell, property owner, was in attendance and distributed a revised sign package to the Board for review and consideration. The revised proposal included a wall sign consisting of 24-inch-tall white letters reading "Town Hall East" on the north elevation above the second-floor windows. The proposal also included uplighting mounted on the canopy roof below the sign face. In addition, the south-facing gable would feature a white sign reading "THE 2113" in matching font and size, with uplighting mounted on the roof below the sign.

The revised application also included a proposed freestanding ground-mounted sign along East 11th Street; however, no information was provided regarding the sign's dimensions, materials, or overall height.

Board Members discussed the color of the wall signage, proposed materials, placement on each façade, and overall sign dimensions.

Staff noted that review of the revised application was at the Board's discretion. Staff further recommended tabling consideration of the proposed freestanding sign to allow the applicant additional time to submit a formal request containing the necessary information regarding the sign's design, dimensions, placement, and materials.

Tylka made the following motion, which was seconded by Stinocher:

1. The Design Review Board approved the revised wall signage for the north and south façades, as presented at the May 26, 2026 meeting. The attached revised design and scope of work shall govern the installation. The approval is subject to issuance of a Sign Permit and compliance with all applicable City requirements. Final design details shall be reviewed and approved by City Staff prior to installation.
2. The Design Review Board tabled the request to install a freestanding sign. The applicant shall submit a separate Design Review Application prior to formal consideration. Required submittal information shall include, but is not limited to, a full scope of work, digital photographs of the existing property and building, scaled elevations of the proposed sign indicating overall height and sign area, material specifications (including type, dimensions, and color), illumination details, a dimensioned site plan, and a landscaping plan.

Motion was approved by a roll call vote (8-0).

V. General Discussion

VI. Public Comment

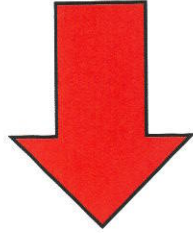
VII. Adjournment

Motion by Tylka, second by Anderson, to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 5:43 pm.

VIII. Next Board Meeting: June 22, 2026

Revised Sign Package for Case DR26-06

Vintage
c. early 1900s



Match Font & Size
(24" tall)
off-white
lit from below
up lighting on canopy



Revised Sign Package for Case DR26-06



North-Facing



On Building:

Match Font & Size (24" tall)
off-white
lit from below
up lighting on canopy

In Yard:

Permanent signage lit by ground lighting

Revised Sign Package for Case DR26-06



South -Facing



On Building:

Match Font & Size
off-white
lit from below
up lighting on canopy

City of Davenport

Department: Development & Neighborhood Services
Contact Info: Matt Werderitch | 563-888-2221

Action / Date
6/22/2026

Subject:

Case DR26-07: Request for Design Review, C-D Downtown Zoning District; Installation of three wall signs at the Freight House, located at 401 West River Drive. Boozies Bar & Grill, petitioner. [Ward 3]

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the south elevation sign in Case DR26-07. Staff advises the Design Review Board to hold discussion, provide feedback, and determine the appropriateness of the wall signs on the east and north elevations.

Background:

Design Request:

Boozies Bar & Grill has submitted an application requesting Design Review Board approval for exterior signage at 401 West River Drive. The restaurant occupies the corner tenant space within the Freight House, a National Register-listed historic building located at the intersection of River Drive and Ripley Street and a prominent landmark along Davenport's riverfront. As the property is located within the C-D Downtown Zoning District, all exterior signage is subject to review and approval by the Design Review Board.

The application includes three wall-mounted signs that have already been installed on the building. The proposed signage consists of one 10-foot by 4-foot sign located above the tenant storefront on the river-facing elevation and two 8-foot by 4-foot signs mounted on the east and north building elevations. Each sign features a black background with white lettering displaying the business name and operating hours.

The signage was installed prior to obtaining Design Review Board approval and issuance of a Sign Permit. As a result, the request is being reviewed retroactively.

Signs Installed Without Design Review Board Approval:

Davenport's Zoning Ordinance requires Design Review Board approval prior to the installation of any sign on a structure located within the C-D Downtown Zoning District.

City staff were recently notified that the signage had been installed. Typically, signage requiring Design Review Board approval is identified during the permitting process. In this instance, the three wall signs were installed without an approved Sign Permit, Design Review Board approval, or required inspections.

The Design Review Board's role is to evaluate the request based on its consistency with the Downtown Design Guidelines and the overall character of the district. Enforcement of the Davenport Municipal Code is administered separately by the Development and Neighborhood Services Department. The wall signs comply with the dimensional requirements of Chapter 17.12 of the Davenport Municipal Code.

Compatibility with the Freight House:

Staff recognizes the need for effective tenant identification and way finding within the Freight House complex, particularly for businesses seeking visibility from River Drive and the riverfront.

Staff finds that the south storefront sign, located above the tenant's entrance, is appropriately scaled and integrated into the building's façade. Additionally, the south-facing sign is consistent in size, placement, and material with the adjacent sign previously approved for Antonella's II Sicilian Pizzeria, helping maintain an established pattern of tenant identification along the river-facing elevation.

However, staff finds that the east and north wall signs are less compatible with the historic character of the Freight House. The northeast corner of the building is a prominent façade, further defined by a highly visible roof-mounted sign that contributes to the building's overall identity. The size, placement, and panel-style design of the proposed signs introduce a more contemporary commercial element that is not fully integrated with the building's historic industrial architecture. As a result, the signs draw visual attention away from the building itself and diminish the prominence of one of Davenport's most recognizable historic landmarks.

Staff acknowledges that additional visibility for Freight House tenants may be warranted. To that end, City staff are actively working with Freight House tenants and stakeholders to explore a more comprehensive signage and way finding program for the property. Such an approach would improve tenant visibility and customer navigation while preserving the architectural integrity and historic character of the Freight House. Staff believes a coordinated signage strategy would better serve both individual businesses and the overall appearance of this important historic resource.

Downtown Design Guidelines:

The Downtown Design Guidelines encourage signage to be designed as an integral component of a building's architecture and site design rather than as an afterthought. Signage should complement the character of the structure, reinforce the identity of the district, and contribute positively to the pedestrian environment.

Staff finds that the storefront sign and south-facing wall sign generally align with the intent of the Guidelines due to their relationship to the building's architectural features and established signage pattern within the Freight House complex.

Conversely, staff finds that the east and north wall signs are not fully consistent with the intent of the Downtown Design Guidelines. The signs are not well integrated into the building's architectural composition and detract from the historic character of the Freight House. As a result, staff concludes that these signs do not advance the Guidelines' objective of preserving and enhancing the visual quality of downtown's historic resources.

Attachments:

1. Application
2. Photos
3. Downtown Design Guidelines - Signage
4. Freight House National Register Nomination



CITY OF DAVENPORT
 Development & Neighborhood
 Services – Planning
 1200 E. 46th St
 Davenport, IA 52807

Office 563.326.6198
 planning@davenportiowa.com

APPLICATION FOR
DESIGN REVIEW

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

REVIEW DISTRICT	SUBMITTAL DATE	MEETING DATE
G-D	6-10-26	6-22-26

SITE ADDRESS & PARCEL OR LOCATION DESCRIPTION
401 W RIVER DRIVE

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT (not a scope of work)

APPLICABILITY (PRIOR TO ANY WORK, APPROVAL IS REQUIRED)
Design Review Applications must be completed and approved PRIOR to the commencement of the following types of work:

- New construction or an alteration to an exterior of a structure where changes are visible from the public right-of-way
- New parking lots, fencing/walls, landscaping, or alterations of
- Sign installation or alteration
- Streetscaping element installation within the public right-of-way

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Name | Company Name
Monica McKown - BOOZIE'S BAR & GRILL

Address
401 WEST RIVER DR, SUITE 6

City | State | Zip
DAVENPORT, IA 52801

Phone
563-357-1265

Secondary Phone
563-328-2929

Acceptance of Applicant

I, the undersigned, certify that the information on this application to the best of my knowledge is true and correct. I further certify that I have a legal interest in the property in question, and/or that I am legally able to represent all other persons or entities with interest in this property, and acknowledge formal procedure and submittal requirements.

I understand I am responsible for attendance at the meeting as shown on the design review board calendar. The City reserves the right to require further site studies as necessary.

By checking this box and typing my name below, I am electronically signing this application.

Monica McKown 10/4/26
 Type Applicant's Name here to serve as a signature Date

ALL SUBMITTALS SHALL INCLUDE: **SUBMITTED**

- Full Scope of Work (SOW) attached as a .PDF
all work & materials shall be described & itemized/listed in detail
- Digital photos of existing building/sign elevations/façades
- Proposed color building/sign elevations to scale
rendering as proposed & depicted on existing building/signs
- Material specifications: type, dimensions, & color
- MINOR & MAJOR ADDITIONS, SITE IMPROVEMENTS, & NEW BUILDINGS SHALL INCLUDE ADDITIONAL ITEMS*:**
- Dimensioned Site Plan (proposed & existing buildings/site items)
- Landscape Plan
- Grading Plan with 2 foot intervals (if needed)
- Storage & Mechanical Screening shall be shown

* Major Additions & New Buildings may require more extensive information

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Property Owner

Address

Phone Secondary Phone

E-Mail Address

Project Manager/Other

Address

Phone Secondary Phone

E-Mail Address

Formal Procedure Application Fee: **NONE**

- (1) Application:
- Prior to submission of the application, the applicant shall correspond with Planning staff to discuss the request, potential alternatives and the process.
 - The submission of the application does not constitute official acceptance by the City of Davenport. Planning staff will review the application for completeness and notify the applicant that the application has been accepted or additional information is required. *Inaccurate or incomplete applications may result in delay of required regularly scheduled meetings.*
- (2) Scope of Board's Consideration:
- Only work described in the application may be approved.
 - If insufficient information exists to make a proper judgment on the application, the Board may continue the consideration a maximum of three regularly scheduled consecutive meetings, excluding applicant requested continuances.
- (3) Post Board Ruling:
- If approved, design approval does not constitute a City permit or license and does vest against any other land development regulation or regulatory approval. Applicant must contact necessary development authorities.
 - Design approval expires one year from the date of approval unless a building permit is obtained within such period. An applicant may apply in writing for an extension of time at any time prior to the date of expiration.
 - Appeals to the Board's determinations are \$75 made to City Council and shall be in writing submitted to the Zoning Administrator within 30 calendar days of Board's decision.

Submit this form with attachments to: planning@davenportiowa.com

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 563-357-1265

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Terms

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Due Date 4/20/2026
Other

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qty 1 4x10' Alu-panel qty 2 4'x8' Alu-panel Sign - Installed as proof shown	3	500.00	1,500.00T
Shop Supply Charge		6.00	6.00T

Subtotal	\$1,506.00
Sales Tax (7.0%)	\$105.42
Total	\$1,611.42
Payments/Credits	\$0.00
	\$1,611.42

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COLORS SHOWN ARE NOT 100 PERCENT ACCURATE DUE TO THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SCREEN COLORS (RGB) AND PRINTING COLORS (CMYK). COLORS ARE APPROXIMATE AND WILL VARY BY THE MONITOR OR SCREEN DEVICE USED TO VIEW THE IMAGES.

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10ft

BOOZIES

BAR & GRILL

OPEN DAILY AT 11AM

4ft

QTY 1 - ALUPANEL

DESIGNER:

Heather

Excessive changes to proof will result in higher agreed design fees

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▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶ **PLEASE EXAMINE ATTACHED PROOF CAREFULLY**

PLEASE MAKE SURE WORDS ARE SPELLED CORRECTLY, CONTACT INFORMATION IS CORRECT, SIZE IS CORRECT, QUANTITY IS CORRECT AND EVERYTHING ELSE ON PROOF LOOKS CORRECT. PRINTING PLUS TRIES TO CATCH MISTAKES AND IT'S POSSIBLE THERE MAY BE SOME. IT IS THE CUSTOMER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK CAREFULLY AND APPROVE THE PROOF THROUGH EMAIL BEFORE ANY PRINTING BEGINS.

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8ft

BOOZIES

4ft

BAR & GRILL

—————→★
OPEN DAILY AT 11AM

QTY 2 - ALUPANEL

DESIGNER: Heather

Excessive changes to proof will result in higher agreed design fees

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10X4



FREIGHT HOUSE MARKETPLACE

BOOZIES
BAR & GRILL
OPEN DAILY AT 11AM

BOOZIES
BAR & GRILL
OPEN DAILY AT 11AM

River Drive







FREIGHT CHA MIL ST AND

Antonella's II
Sicilian Pizzeria

BOOZIES
BAR & GRILL
OPEN DAILY AT 11AM

Gelato
Antonella's II
Dining 0200

BOOZIE'S
BAR & GRILL
EST. 1974
Elevator Access
Suite 6
BOOZIE'S
BAR & GRILL



Freight House

DAVENPORT
IOWA | USA



- National Register of Historic Places
- Prominent Destination & Cultural Landmark on the Riverfront





FREIGHT AND PACIFIC

Antonella's II
Sicilian Pizzeria

BOOZIES
BAR & GRILL
OPEN DAILY AT 11AM

Calzones

Gelato

Elevator
Access
←



BOOZIES
BAR & GRILL
OPEN DAILY AT 11AM

BOOZIES
BAR & GRILL
OPEN DAILY AT 11AM

421 W IVE



Freight House Signage on River Drive

DAVENPORT
IOWA | USA



Signage

Design Objective:

Reinforce the unique character of downtown Davenport

Signs shall be designed as an integral part of the site and architectural design of proposed projects rather than as afterthoughts.

Discussion:

The economic health of any downtown depends, in part, on the quality of its retailing, promotional activities, marketing and management. Underlying the success or failure of these factors, however, is the physical appearance of the downtown business district. Because first impressions can be lasting, it is important that a commercial district present an appealing image to potential customers, tenants and investors. New and rehabilitated buildings, attractive landscaping and public places, welcoming storefronts, enticing window displays, and clean streets and sidewalks all help to create an inviting environment where people want to work, shop and spend time.

Signs play a particularly important role in the appearance of traditional commercial areas. The prominent locations and design characteristics of signs strongly influence people's perceptions of the downtown and its individual businesses. Signs, if well designed and properly maintained, enhance the unique image of a downtown. However, when designed without regard for the surrounding architecture, and haphazardly placed, signs can detract from the downtown's overall appearance.

In many communities, the visual distinction between traditional business districts and outlying commercial strips has become blurred. Sign manufacturers and designers have encouraged businesses to adopt the large scale signs used on commercial highways. This is unfortunate as downtowns were designed to accommodate pedestrians strolling down sidewalks and vehicles traveling at relatively low speeds. A pace of this nature allows people to take in more of their surroundings, including signs. Signs in this situation can, and should, be scaled more appropriately for a pedestrian environment.



Along the strip, businesses in relatively nondescript buildings compete for attention with large, flashy signs. In contrast, downtown offers an exciting variety of building types, architectural styles, materials and well crafted details that form a distinctive context for individual businesses. Thus, large signs are not only out of scale in traditional commercial districts, they also can overwhelm the very architectural features that make downtown different from its competitors.

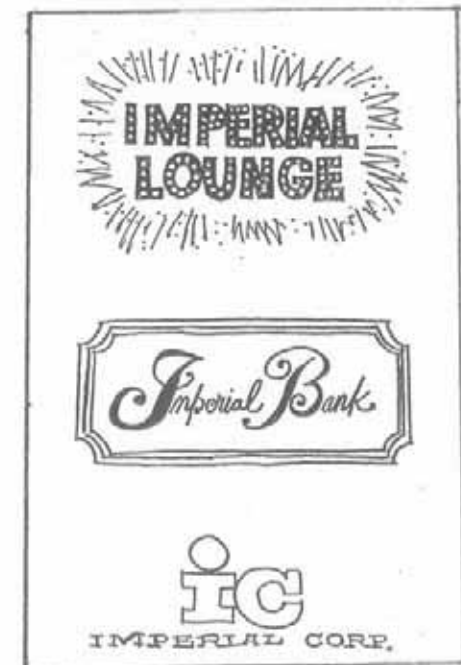
The purpose of these guidelines is to provide information on the design, construction and placement of signs that will enhance and reinforce the distinctiveness of downtown Davenport.

In general, signs should relate in placement and size with the other architectural features of the building. They should not obscure building elements such as windows, cornices, or decorative details. Sign materials should complement building facades. Individual shop signs in a single storefront should relate to each other in design, size, color, lettering style and placement on the building. Franchises and chain stores should adapt their graphics to meet local guidelines and ordinances. This will contribute to a downtown that effectively orients visitors, while supporting an attractive, pedestrian-friendly experience.

It should be noted that within the Downtown Design Overlay District the City is taking something of a different direction with regards to sign regulation. In other zoning districts signs are controlled by restricting their number and size. What signs look like is largely ignored. In the Downtown Design Overlay District, the city, while not ignoring sign numbers, size, etc., is searching for quality by focusing very much on sign design and materials. Given this greater design control, the city may, at its discretion, allow sign types that may not be legal in other districts (projecting signs and sandwich board signs, for example), and approve a larger total number of signs (if they are part of a tasteful and creative sign package) than might otherwise be the case.

General Sign Guidelines

- Creating a network of quality, well-designed signs, clearly announcing the types of services offered makes the downtown an attractive, friendly experience for the downtown visitor. This experience is further enhanced when building signage indicates the names of businesses and reflects the activities that occur within buildings
- Merchants are encouraged to create their own unique signs, symbolic of their personal business.
- The use of lighter letters against a darker background makes signage more legible for viewers and is encouraged. Dark colors have a tendency to recede while lighter or brighter colors stand out.
- Avoid the placement of signs at locations that hide architectural details. Most buildings, both historic and contemporary, were designed with logical places to locate signs that do not negatively impact the architectural design.
- Maintaining a minimum clearance above the public right-of-way for signs that project from buildings helps prevent accidents and promotes pedestrian safety.
- Locating flush-mounted wall signs on a historic storefront along the first floor belt course, at the clerestory, above any awning or on transom windows helps maintain the architectural identity of the building.



Sign design in many ways establishes a business' identity.

- Create simple signs with strong graphics.
- Avoid using too many words on signs. If the information provided is more than someone can take in with a glance they will simply turn their attention elsewhere.
- Avoid complex color schemes and garish colors and lighting. Use simple designs that provide a clear contrast between any lettering and/or graphics and the sign background.
- Avoid typefaces that are difficult to read. This often will include signs written in script.
- Avoid complex signs broken into numerous planes (individual boxes or shaped signs).
- As a general rule, signs provided by national distributors are not appropriate. They often appear to be “add ons”.
- Quality workmanship, materials and construction are essential when creating attractive and long-lasting signage.

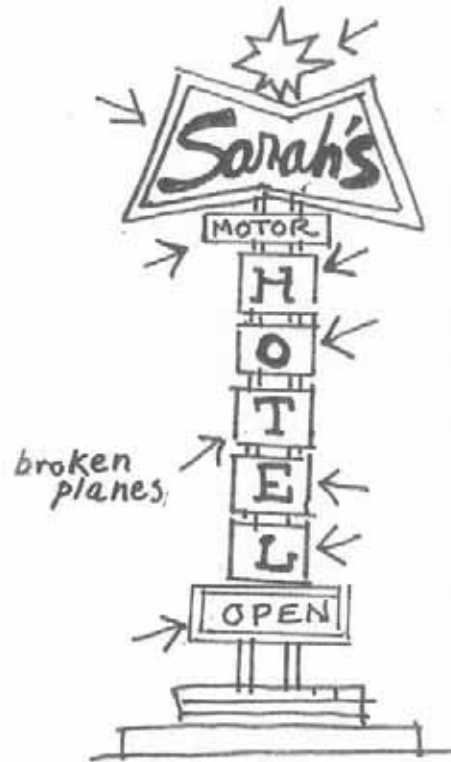


- Centering signs within storefront bays and not extending beyond the limits of the storefront or over elements such as columns, pilasters or transoms and decorative ornament prevents signage from being detrimental to the architectural character of the façade.
- Die-cut letters should be constructed of materials that are consistent with the age of the building, plastic die-cut letters being more appropriate on a contemporary structure rather than a historic one.
- Allowing signs to protrude above rooflines, eaves or parapets creates unsightly facades and detracts from the architectural quality of the building. (The Kahl Building – Capitol Theatre signs is an exception due to its historic significance).
- Firmly anchor signs that project from the building to the building façade with attractive, non-corrosive hardware that will not damage the façade of the building. This prevents accidents and enhances pedestrian safety.
- In the case of large buildings with multiple tenants use signage that relates in terms of height, proportion, color and background value. Maintaining uniformity among these characteristics reinforces the building's façade composition, while still retaining each business' identity.

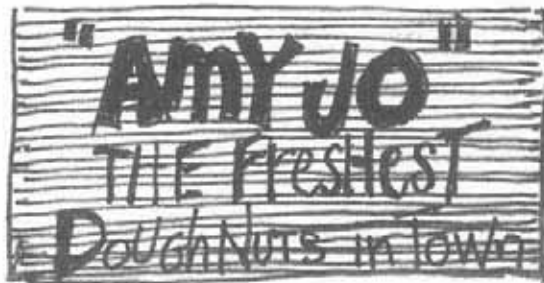




A simple sign with strong graphics is always better than a busy, complicated sign. Avoid having too many words. Best results are usually achieved when the color scheme is limited to no more than three colors. If possible pick up colors in the architecture of the building. In particular, avoid garish, day-glo colors and gaudy lighting techniques.



To the left is a sign that does everything wrong. The pole sign design is more appropriate for a suburban commercial strip than a downtown setting. Second, its complexity creates confusion. The design forces the eye to focus on 18 items of information in a series of uninteresting internally illuminated boxes. There are 9 separate pieces of copy and 9 broken planes. Sign graphics work best when they are kept simple.

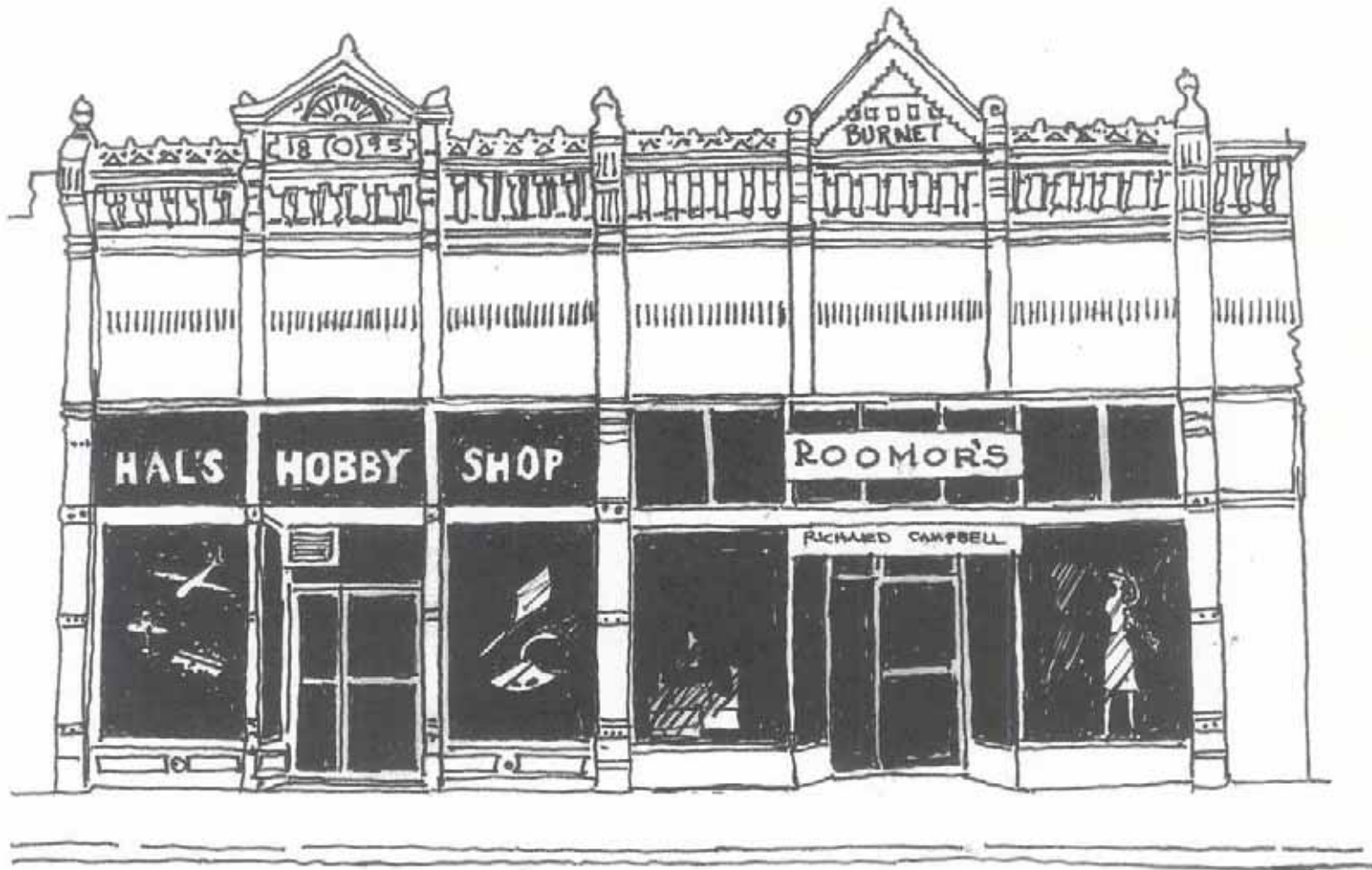


Two possible signs for Amy Jo's Donuts: The sign, above left, uses poor lettering that does not contrast well with the sign's background. By including a selling slogan the sign has more words than is necessary. The sign, to the right above, works better. It has good contrast, legible lettering and a simple graphic design.

Boflics

Avoid unusual type faces that are difficult to read.

SIGN PROBLEMS



The above illustration suggests two locations for signage on an older commercial structure with architectural integrity. Both the “Hal’s Hobby Shop” and “Roomor’s” signs are shown utilizing the clerestory of the building. Another location is suggested by the “Richard Campbell” sign, which is located at the building entry’s transom. Note that neither of these locations hide or cover important architectural features.

Wall Signs

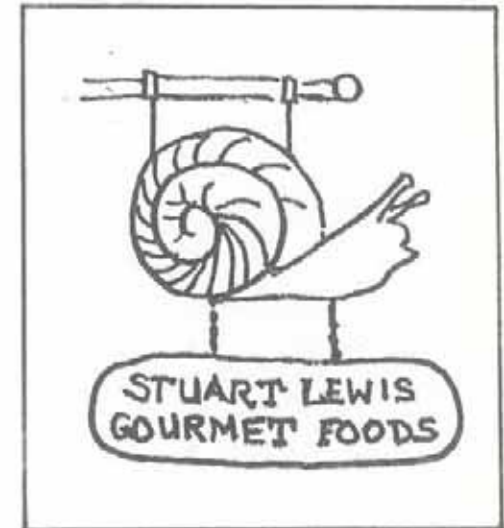
Flush mounted wall signs are signboards or individual die-cut letters placed on the face of a building. Often there will be a horizontal molded board on buildings that was designed to accommodate a flush mounted sign.

- Sizing signs to fit within the proportions of the building façade maintains the architectural quality of the building design.

Projecting Signs

Projecting signs (also sometimes called hanging signs or blade signs) mounted on buildings, perpendicular to the sidewalk are very effective in reaching pedestrians as they are placed only a little higher than eye level. They are also easily visible for drivers and passengers in vehicles given they are also perpendicular to the street. Finally, they are a sign type that historically has been commonly used on older buildings.

- Maintaining a minimum clearance above the sidewalk enhances public safety (minimum clearance 8 feet).
- Designing projecting signs with a sign area of more than three feet makes them obtrusive and unsightly.
- Encouraging projecting signs that use logos, business icons and symbols, creates a user friendly downtown experience for visitors.



Window Signs

Signs etched or painted directly onto glass storefront display windows and entrances were popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Painted signs were often used as they are low in cost; the highest quality were gilded, a thin layer of gold burnished onto the glass. Gold leaf window signs are still popular today, as are signs of enamel or acrylic paints and those using thin vinyl letters affixed directly to the window.

- Well-designed window signs identify the corresponding uses/activities that occur on the premises while preserving a majority of the display area for pedestrian window shopping.
- Exceeding 20% of the total area of the window with signs generally makes the window seem too cluttered for the viewer.
- Window signs that use high quality materials such as paint or gold leaf, or that are etched into glass create an attractive and visually pleasing façade for the viewer.
- The City of Davenport does not regulate signage or displays on the inside of windows. Nevertheless, businesses should consider the use of icons, symbols and product displays that are lively and changing. Window displays can be very effective signage.





Window displays are an integral part of any retail business. An attractive display contributes to

- The character and success of each store;
- The character of the street; and
- The character of the downtown business district as a whole.

The window display featuring an elk, to the left, grabs the eye while more effectively informing passers-by that the business sells outdoor products than the large sign placed immediately below the window.

Think of the window display as a composition; as if it were a sculpture or an oil painting. In effect, it is a large picture framed by a storefront. The building and window should create a single unit that is complemented by the display in both color and proportion. It is best to let products speak for themselves. Displays that exhibit actual products provide immediate communication without words. If words are part of the display, they should be kept to a minimum. Type face for any signage should be simple and easy to read and be in colors that will not conflict with the colors in display merchandise.

Consideration should also be given to lighting. An attractive, well-lit display can entice window shoppers to return during business hours. A well-lit window display also improves public safety by lighting the sidewalk and allowing police to see into the store at night.

Icon, Symbol or Graphic Signs

Icon, symbol or graphic signs illustrate by their shape the nature of the business within. For example, a hanging sign in the shape of a guitar, eye glasses, or a shoe quickly conveys the business' products and services. There are also symbols (such as a striped barber's pole or a mortar and pestle) that have come over time to represent certain types of businesses. When designed well, symbol signs convey their messages quickly and effectively because they are immediately recognizable as bold graphic descriptions of the goods and services offered.

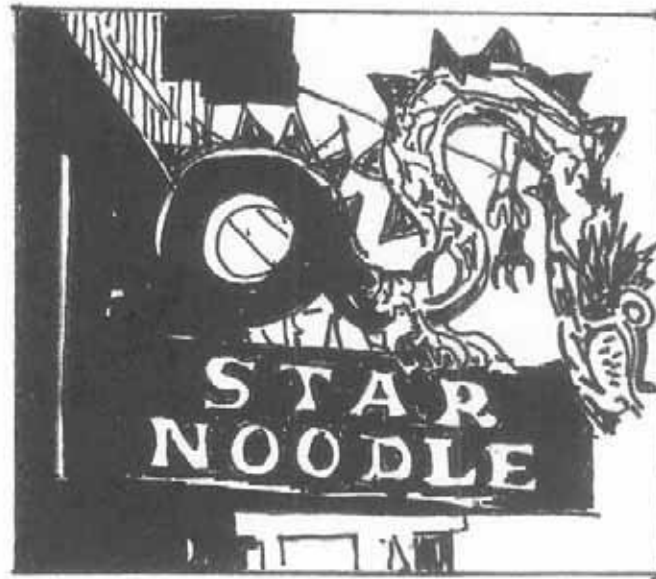
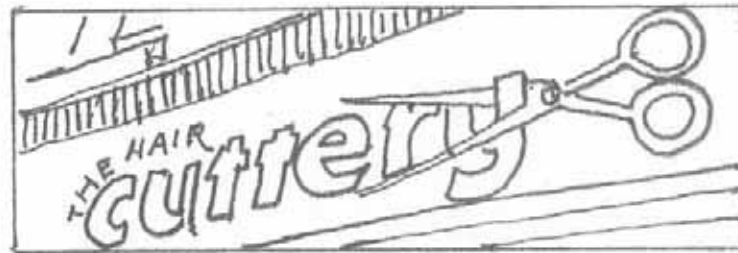
- Encouraging graphic imagery with subservient text makes for an attractive and informative visual experience.

Painted Wall Signs

From the mid-19th Century to the early 20th Century, signs painted directly on buildings were a popular form of advertising. Painted signs do require a sign permit and do fall within the purview of these design regulations.

- Painted wall signs may in some circumstances be appropriate. As a general rule new painted signs are more appropriate on an older building than a newer one.
- Painted signs often are found on the side or upper floors of older buildings advertising past businesses that may no longer exist, at least at that location. Usually, faded with age, they are known as ghost or phantom signs. Painted wall signs can be important reminders of a community's commercial history and heritage. There may be occasions when they need to be painted over. However, as a general rule, they should be left exposed for the enjoyment of future generations.

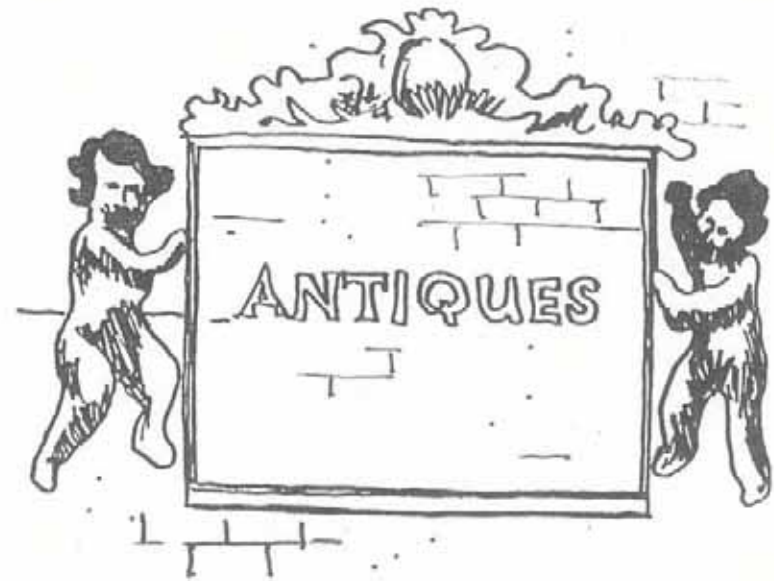




While the barber's striped pole and the drug store's mortar and pestle are perhaps the best known of the symbols that serve as signage, there are many others. The cigar store Indian was once a common symbol or icon for a store that sold tobacco products and it may still be used in that fashion today. In modern times, however, it can also be used as a symbol that says "antiques are sold here." A pair of scissors has perhaps become a more ubiquitous symbol for cutting hair than the barber's pole while adding the information that women or perhaps even both sexes, are welcome here. Oriental dragons or pagodas are often used as symbols for an oriental, particularly Chinese, restaurant. The "Star Noodle" sign above is not just a symbol for a certain type of restaurant but also is a superb, and rare, example of neon lighting (although this cannot be determined simply by examining the drawing).



Ghost or phantom signs, painted signs advertising businesses from the mid 1800's through the early 1900's exist at various locations within the Downtown Design District. Also occasionally, a "new" historic sign will emerge when an adjoining building is demolished exposing a long hidden facade. These reminders of downtown Davenport's commercial past should be left to slowly fade with time when possible.



Painted signs, signs painted directly onto the brick surface of a building, were very common in the 1800's and early 1900's. Given it is a historic sign style, painted signs are more appropriate, if used today, on a historic building. In particular, a painted sign might be appropriate at a bar or an antique store attempting to create a historic ambiance. The style does not lend itself nearly as well for use on more contemporary structures.

Changing Signs

Changing signs are signs where the copy changes such as on an electronically controlled time and temperature sign.

- Changing signs are limited to displaying public information such as the time and temperature and the advertisement of on site services or products or information associated with a business on the premises. A newspaper, for example, may provide newspaper headlines or a stockbroker may provide the Dow Jones averages. Similarly, a retail store could have a reader board advertising on site products and sales.

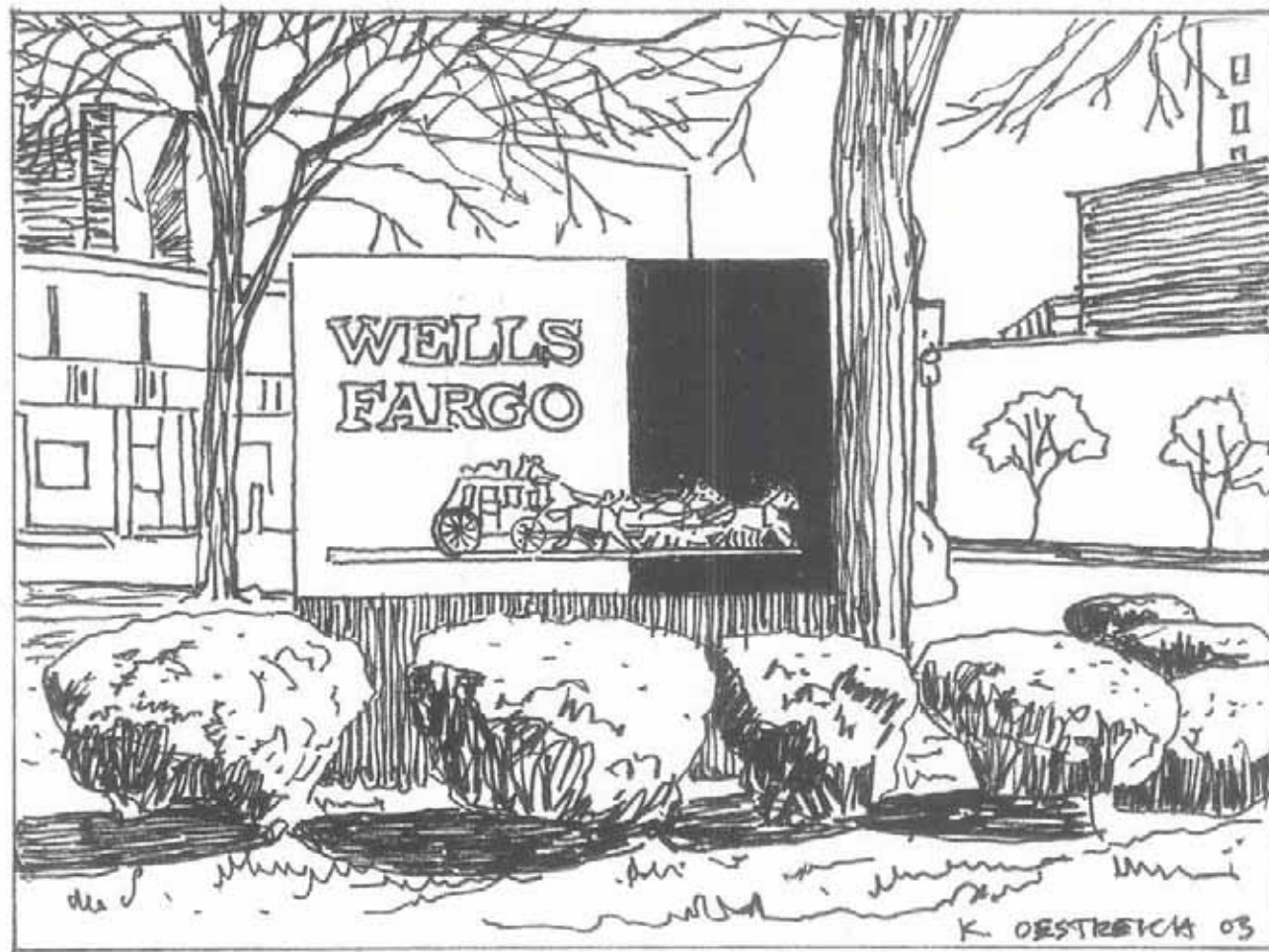
Monument or Ground Signs

Monument or ground signs are signs, often on a masonry base, placed directly on the ground. Monument signs are limited to 48 inches and ground signs to 15 feet.

- Monument or ground signs can be effective signage. They, however, need room and are only appropriate where building setbacks are sufficient to create an appropriate space.
- Monument or ground signs should, when possible, be placed in a landscaped base and repeat materials and colors used on the building it is advertising.



The Wells Fargo Bank drive-through facility at Third and Main Street provides an example of a monument sign that has a number of positive design elements. To begin with, the scale of the sign fits well with both the site and the building. In designing the sign, the bank has resisted the axiom that "the bigger the sign the better." Also the sign has been set within a landscaped base of evergreen shrubbery and has been placed at a location where there is enough room for a sign of this nature. Monument signs need space. Another feature of interest is the Wells Fargo logo itself, a picture of a stagecoach being pulled by a team of horses. At a glance the logo tells the viewer that this is an old and venerable company with a colorful history closely tied with America's own history.



Signs on Awnings

Painting signs on the valance (vertical flap) of an awning is an inexpensive and simple method of creating signage.

- Individual letters painted directly on the valance of an awning facing the street makes for a distinguished and informative sign.
- Limiting signage on the sloping surface of an awning to small graphic symbols or logos unique to a particular business helps prevent the information on the signage from getting too cluttered for the viewer.
- Traditional awnings generally are more appropriate on older buildings than modern “bubble” type designs.
- Consider down lighting awnings (if they are lighted), particularly on older buildings, rather than using internal illumination.
- Some colors work better as awnings than others. The colors should not be too abrupt or jarring.

Freestanding Pole Sign

A freestanding pole sign is a sign mounted on one or more poles, uprights, or braces mounted in the ground and not attached to any structure other than the poles, uprights, or braces.

- The freestanding pole sign is the signage type most closely associated with suburban strip commercial development. These signs are typically large and flashy being directed at capturing attention of drivers moving at fairly high speeds on suburban roads. As a general rule, this type of signage is inappropriate in the downtown.
- One type of pole sign that may be appropriate are smaller signs on double posts. Like monument or ground signs, these freestanding signs need space and look best if they are set in landscaping.

Neon and Bare Bulb Signs

Signs illuminated by electrified gas in slender glass tubes first appeared in the 1920's and became popular in the following two decades. Although various gases are used in these signs, over time, they have come to be called "neon" signs.

Although neon and bare bulb signs are becoming increasingly rare, they can add to the historic quality and uniqueness of the downtown.

- Continuing the use and maintenance of neon and bare bulb signs helps in maintaining the historic character of downtown.
- The use of neon and bare bulb signs in areas such as bars, restaurants, dance clubs, and other entertainment related businesses, is consistent with the traditional uses of such signs.

Banner Signs

Banner signs may be used for special events in the downtown.

- Decorative banner signs can be used to add color and create a festive atmosphere for special events, holidays and seasonal events.
- Banners may be attached to light standards (with an encroachment permit if they are on the public right-of-way) or project from building facades.
- Banners should be removed or replaced when they show signs of fading or unattractive wear.





Banners are a relatively inexpensive way to add color and create a festival atmosphere in the downtown. Banners can have words and graphics intended to inform the public about special events at retailers, the convention center, libraries and museums. Alternatively, banners can be there just to add color and do not have to say anything.

Note that the design and placement of any banners must be approved by the Downtown Design Review Board. Designs must be attractive (in the opinion of the Board) and must be constructed of quality materials. Be aware that the plastic pennants sometimes used at car dealerships and suburban grand openings would not be appropriate downtown and would not be allowed under the banner provisions of these guidelines.

Lighted Signs

Both internally or externally lit signs are appropriate in the downtown area. Internally illuminated signs, however, are more appropriate in some situations than others.

- Plastic is a modern material and generally fits better on more modern buildings rather than older ones.
- White internally illuminated boxes are particularly unappealing. Shaped plastic or cut plastic letters generally look better.
- Light letters on a dark black or colored background tend to be more legible from a distance.
- On older buildings, matte finishes generally are more appropriate than shiny finishes.
- Orienting and shielding spotlights such that the source of light is not directly visible focuses the attention of the viewer.



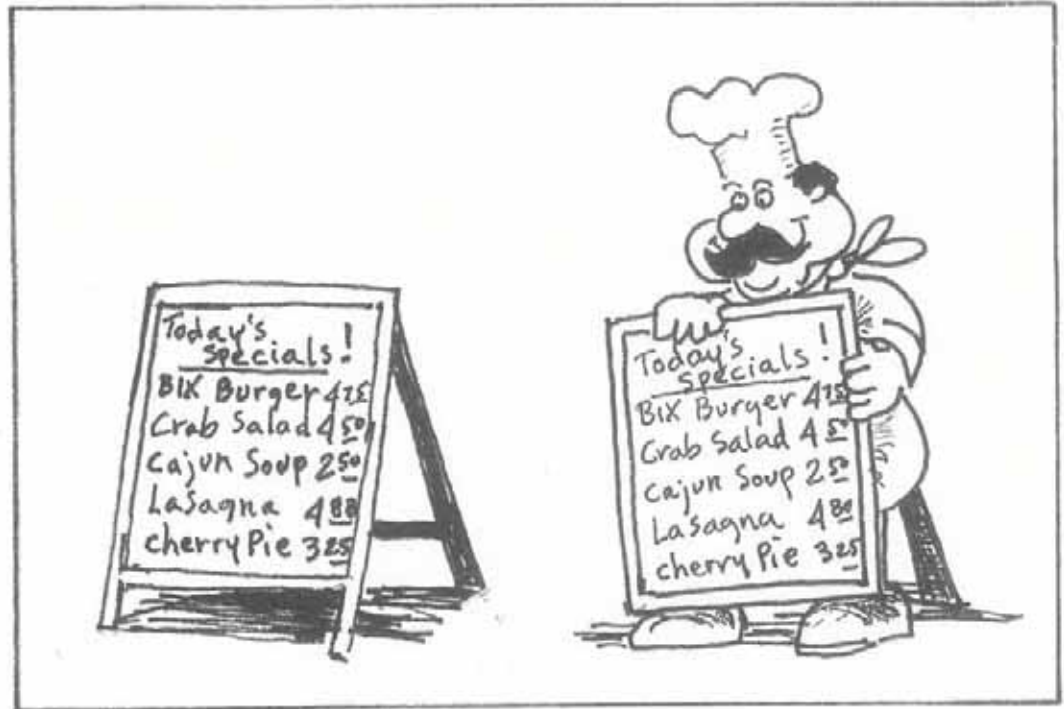
Directional Signage for Parking Lots

- Directional signs marking entries and exits to parking lots are to have no more than one commercial image, logo or message, which shall be subservient to text identifying the parking lots as “customer parking” makes the direction signage easily comprehensible.
- Limiting each driveway to no more than one directional sign, located on private property, near the sidewalk makes the signage more user friendly.

Sandwich Board Signs

Sandwich board or “A-frame” signs may, at the City’s discretion, be placed on city sidewalks listing restaurant menus or advertising special sales or events if the City approves an “encroachment permit.”

- Sandwich board signs will only be allowed where sidewalk width allows signage without interference with pedestrian or wheelchair access.
- Signs of this nature are encouraged to be attractive and creative adding to the ambiance and character of the downtown.
- Sandwich board signs should be on City sidewalks only during business hours, being removed at the end of each day.

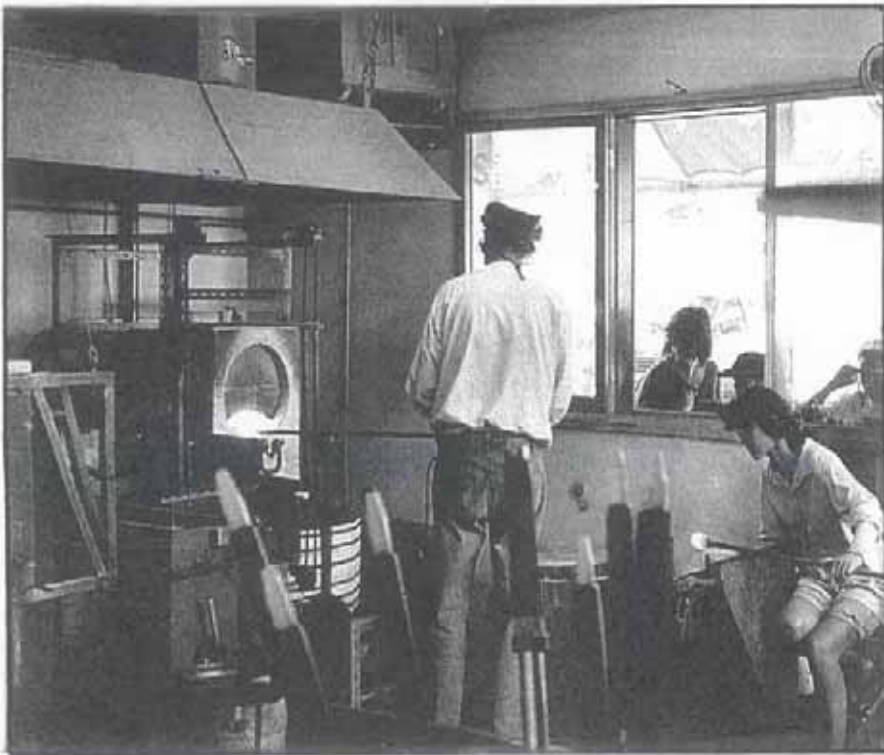


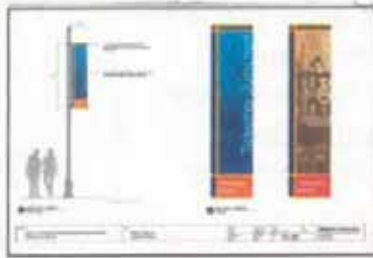
Sandwich board or A-frame signs are allowed on city sidewalks in the Downtown Design District at the city's discretion with an encroachment permit (assuming the location does not overly restrict pedestrian or wheelchair movements). Consider this an opportunity to be a little whimsical or creative. Of the two examples directly above, staff would suggest that the sign on the right would draw more attention than the sign on the left while making the downtown just a little more interesting. The sign on the far left at Trash Can Annie's Antique Clothing on Brady Street is an excellent existing sandwich board sign with considerable design merit.



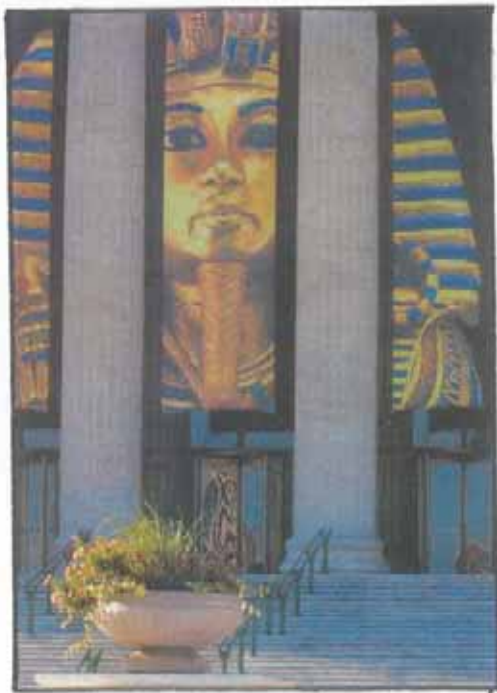
Left: A vibrant shop window enlivens the streetscape while clearly advertising the types of merchandise sold within this retail shop. The neon sign in the interior further colorfully identifies the business. (The City of Davenport does not regulate signage located on the inside of a building).

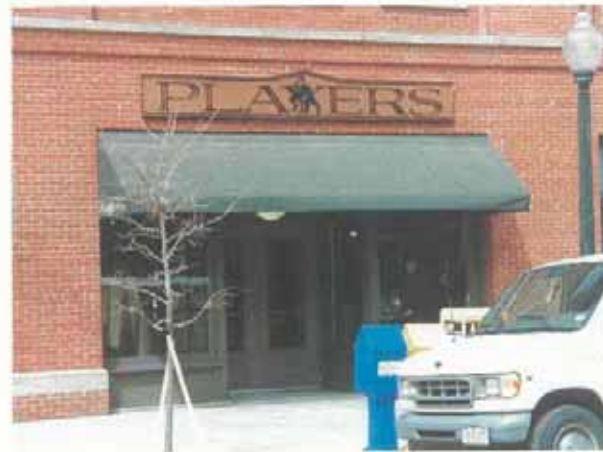
Below: An even more interesting way to use a store front window as signage is to allow the public to actually watch the work taking place inside. There are few things more engaging than to watch other people work, especially when the worker is skilled and the work is intriguing and involving. In this case, the glass blowing shop allows the public to see the creation of a glass object from raw material to finished product.





The Design Review Board may at its discretion allow banners and signs advertising events of a civic or cultural nature. This would include museum shows and theatrical events and/or public festivals. Community special event banners and signs shall not be considered to be billboards and may be located "off premises". The Board may allow banner poles in the public right-of-way with an encroachment permit but only in locations that the Board deems appropriate.





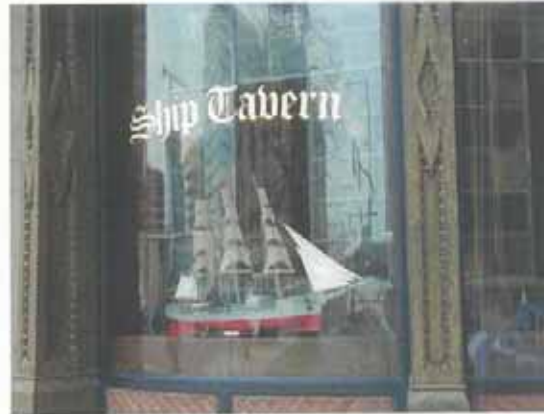
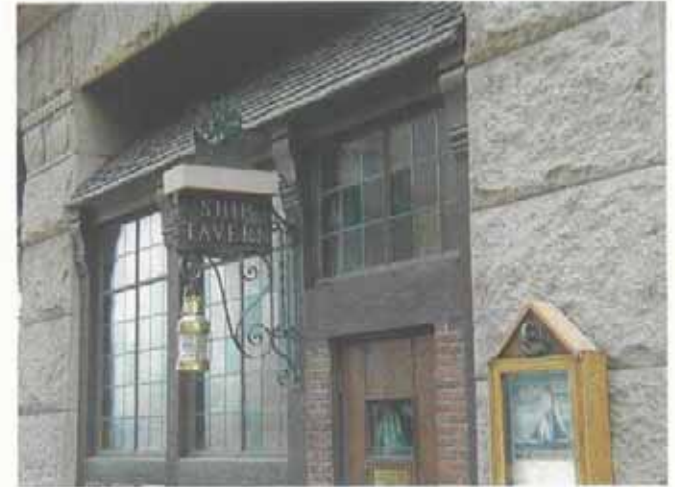
Signage: various forms of attractive signage meeting the guidelines



Signage: various forms of attractive signage consistent with the guidelines

The Ship Tavern:

The Ship Tavern, a restaurant in another city, provides a good example of a well thought out signage plan. The signage is creative and works on many levels. It uses every opportunity to create an appealing identity for the restaurant and while doing so it makes its downtown neighborhood just a little more interesting. Among its various signs is a plastic, molded “shaped sign” in the form of a shield back lighting the form of a sailing ship. The words “Ship Tavern” are also spelled out in “cut letters.” These signs are oriented to passing automobiles. Note they do not hide any of the building’s architectural features. A second, more intimate, projecting sign oriented to pedestrians marks the restaurant’s entry. The sign includes, once more, the restaurant’s name coupled with a unique wrought iron sailing ship in silhouette and a ship’s sea lantern. On the window, a painted window sign once more tastefully repeats the restaurant’s name. Visible through the glass is a model of a clipper ship that helps grab the eye. Not shown are other windows which also feature model ships. Finally, a menu board placed by the door repeats the restaurant’s sailing motif. Of course, not every business has this much to work with. Every business, however, should use every opportunity to create a unique image for itself.



SIGNAGE PLANS

Sign Types Not in Keeping with the Urban Character of the Downtown

- Building signs advertising products and vendors rather than business types and services.
- Flashing, animated, blinking, rotating, reflecting or revolving signs.
- Standard product and logo signs provided by national distributors (merchants are encouraged to create their own unique signs, symbolic of their personal business).
- Pennants and balloons (other than as holiday decorations).
- Signs using fluorescent material.
- Signs using a graffiti art style.
- Advertising signs, other than graphic symbols or logos unique to a business, located on the sloping surface of awnings.
- Chalkboards or blackboards, other than for use as a restaurant or café menu board.
- Large freestanding pole signs on a single pole.
- Signs on privately owned benches.
- Any sign, except a menu board of a drive through restaurant, emitting sound other than the normal for their internal operation.
- Signs of such brightness that they constitute a hazard to pedestrians, vehicles or aircraft.



- Signs which are affixed to trees, utility poles, fire hydrants, fire escapes, bus stop shelters, or other structures in a public right-of-way except signs permitted by these standards with all of the appropriate permits.
- Any signs listed as prohibited by Section 17.45.030 of the Zoning Ordinance entitled "Prohibited Signs" unless specifically listed as allowable in the Downtown Design District by these standards.

NR listed National Register DOC
 11/14/85 82-010-353 7/28/83

ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORICAL SURVEY

DAVENPORT, IOWA

The Architects Office
 Wehner, Nowysz, Pottschiull and Pfiffner
 901 day building Iowa city Iowa 52240

DAVENPORT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
 IOWA DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

SITE # 82-10- RP-S102 MAP # 1
 HIST. DIST. _____
 NAME Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific (H) C
Freight House
 ADDRESS 102 S. Ripley Street
 LEGAL DES. Original Town 17
SUB-DIVISION BLOCK PARCEL SUB-PARCEL
 UTM 15 7102100101451911110 ACREAGE 2 ZONE C-4
EASTING NORTHING
 OWNER Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific R.R. Co.
Union Station, 516 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL
 TITLE H. City of Davenport - Levee Comm. 60606
(IF DIFF) of Land (Tract G)



MAP

(See continuation sheet)

SITE SHEET

DESCRIPTION

FORM 2-story office block at one end of long 1-story loading dock CONST. DATE 1917
 MATERIALS Concrete floors, columns, brick walls ARCH STYLE _____
 FENESTRATION 3/1 D.H.S. in simple brick surrounds
 DIST. FEATURES none of significance
 ALTERATIONS none of significance
 SITE & RELATED STR. on levee south of Central Business District

STATEMENT

This building is significant chiefly as a well-preserved and still functioning example of its type. The form and plan are wholly typical: 2 story office block at one end of a long, low freight warehouse and loading dock. It is architecture at its most functional, each element appropriate to its use.

ARCHITECTURE

SOURCES

SIGNIFICANCE The C.M., St. P. and P. RR Freight Station is associated with an expansive period in Davenport's railroad freight industry. Because of its central levee location, the freight station chiefly served the city's large retail and wholesale businesses. Freight stations of the CB and Q and CRI and P RR also remain, but do not continue their rail freight uses.

DESCRIPTION The CMSt.P and P freight station was built in 1917 in response to the growing freight traffic in the city before the first world war. Station construction followed erection of the Crescent RR Bridge in 1901 which served the CMSt.P and P RR, as well as the CB and Q RR.

The railroad freight business was a major factor in Davenport's wholesale and retail commercial vitality from the 1890's on. The City's location meant favorable eastern rates and western rates could be used, giving the city a distinct advantage over instate communities.

Siting and design of the freight station demonstrate the functions of such a rail facility. Located between rail siding and the street, cargo could be easily transferred from one transportation system to another.

- SOURCES**
- * City Directories, 1916-1919
 - * Railway Age Gazette (July 20, 1917) p. 127
 - * Espenshade, E. B., "Urban Development at the Upper Rapids of the Mississippi," Chicago, Illinois, 1944.
 - * Christiansen, Thomas P., "An Industrial History of Scott County, IA." Annals of Iowa (July, 1940)

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN: Martha Bowers HISTORIAN: MARLYS SVENDSEN - ROESLER SURVEY COMP 1981

EVALUATION

ARCHITECTURAL

I. ARCH. EVALUATION Local

II. ENVIR. STATURE Supportive

III. INT OF CONTEXT Poor

IV. INT. OF FABRIC 1

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE:

NAT. STATE LOCAL N ELIG.

HISTORICAL

I. THEME(S) OF SIGNIFICANCE

A PRIMARY Transportation

B SECONDARY Railroad

II. LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

NAT. STATE LOCAL

III NRHP

ELIGIBLE NOT ELIGIBLE

HISTORIC DISTRICT CLASSIFICATION

A B C

FOR DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION USE ONLY

1 DATE RECEIVED _____

2 DATE OF STAFF EVALUATION _____

	A ARCHITECTURAL	B. HISTORICAL
ELIGIBLE FOR NRHP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NOT ELIGIBLE FOR NRHP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3 NRHP ACTION

A STATE REVIEW COMM. APP. DISAPP. TABLED DATE _____

B FEDERAL REVIEW APP. DISAPP. TABLED DATE _____

4 D.H.P. SOURCES

COUNTY RESOURCES DET. OF ELIGIBILITY

W'SHIELD SURVEY R. B. C. _____

NRHP DAVENPORT A/H SURVEY

GRANT _____ _____

5 SUBJECT TRACES

6 PHOTO

1604-7,8



Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul
and Pacific Railroad Company

RECEIVED FEB 18 1983

516 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Phone 312/648-3000

February 15, 1983

Dr. Adrian D. Anderson
State Historic Preservation Officer
Office of Historic Preservation
Historical Building
East 12th and Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Re: Statement of Objection to National Register Listing

Dear Dr. Anderson:

I am in receipt of a letter dated January 25, 1983 from Mr. James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator, informing us that Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Freight House, Davenport, Iowa, will be considered by the State Review Board for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. This letter will confirm that Richard B. Ogilvie, Trustee of the property of Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company, Debtor, is aware that said property which we fully own may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. We also recognize that said property is scheduled for nomination at the forthcoming National Register State Review Committee meeting. We are further aware that various property and tax-related benefits are associated with National Register status.

On behalf of Richard B. Ogilvie, Trustee of the property of Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company, Debtor, I am hereby exercising our right to object to the proposed listing in the National Register of our property located at 102 S. Ripley Street, Davenport, Iowa. I attach my signature along with a notarized signature and seal.

Yours truly,

N. E. Smith

N. E. Smith
Assistant Vice President-Chief Engineer

NES/mef

Subscribed and sworn to before me by *N. E. Smith*,
this 16th day of February, 1983.

Jane E. Kot
Notary Public in and for the State of Illinois.

My commission expires:

July 17, 1983

IOWA STATE HISTORICAL DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ADRIAN D. ANDERSON, Executive Director
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

RE: Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad Freight House
102 S. Ripley
Davenport, Iowa

27 May 1983

Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific R.R. Co.
Union Station
516 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, Illinois 60606

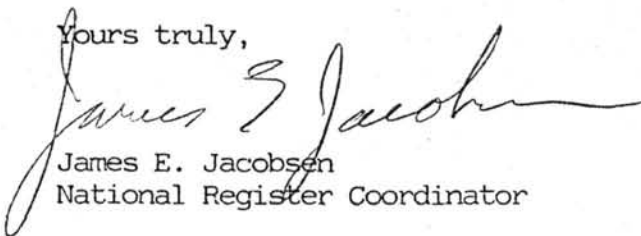
Dear Friends;

The property listed above was approved for submission to the National Park Service for a determination of eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the State Nominations Review Committee at its May 24 meeting.

As I noted in an earlier letter to you, a determination of eligibility is not the same as placement on the National Register. Our Committee can not recommend placement because of owner opposition to such a listing. A determination of eligibility simply means that a property has been deemed eligible and that sufficient documentation has been submitted to support that eligibility. In the event that an owner or a future owner changes his/her mind about listing a property, a determination of eligibility can be readily processed without further action on your or our part into a Registered property.

The National Park Service will have 45 days in which to review and accept this property for DOE status. Our office will submit your property in the very near future, and I will advise you by letter if and when your property is accepted.

Yours truly,



James E. Jacobsen
National Register Coordinator

OCT 14 1985

George Gleason Architect
918 East Tenth Street
Davenport Iowa 52803
(319) 323-9336

September 17, 1985

The Keeper of the National
Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

This letter is to inform you of the fact that I am now the owner of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Freight House located at 102 South Ripley Street, Davenport, Iowa. This building was determined to be eligible for the Register on July 23, 1983.

I am aware of the incentives related to a listing on the National Register and therefore wish to remove the previous objections to listing and hereby approve that the building be entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

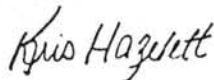
Please notify me at your earliest convenience as to the date of listing.

Thank-you

Sincerely yours,


George Gleason, Architect

GG:tr



An Iowa Corporation
Member of the American Institute of Architects



Iowa State Historical Department

East 12th and Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50319
(515) 281-5111

3 April 1986

The Honorable Patrick J. Deluhery
State Senate
State Capitol
L O C A L

Dear Senator Deluhery:

It is my pleasure to inform you that the following property has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places as of 14 November 1985:

✓ Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Freight House (George Gadson)
Davenport, Scott County *102 S Ripley*

We are delighted to help identify and list Iowa's significant historical, architectural, and archaeological sites on the National Register and appreciate the participation and support of the individuals in your area. National Register listing is a distinct honor not to be taken lightly and reflects highly upon both the historical quality and interest in your district. We commend the participants and welcome future participation.

With all best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Crosson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

David Crosson
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

DC/jr

cc: Mr. George Gadson

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Historical Context

Item number

8B

Page 1

In 1832 the U.S. government concluded a treaty with the Sauk and Mesquakie tribes that opened to white settlement a 50-mile-wide strip of land on the west side of the Mississippi, between the Yellow River on the north and the Des Moines River on the south. One of the beneficiaries of the Black Hawk Treaty was Antoine LeClaire, a French-Indian trader who acted as interpreter during the treaty negotiations. For his services, LeClaire was granted two tracts of land, one at each end of the Mississippi's Upper Rapids. When land was officially available for purchase, LeClaire acquired additional land adjacent to his lower tract. Three years later, in 1836, LeClaire was one of eight men, among them Indian Agent George Davenport, who laid out the first plat of the future city of Davenport. The town was incorporated by special charter in 1839, and the following year became Scott County seat.

By 1840 there were some 600 people in the new community, most emigrants from Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York. Ten years later, the population had increased threefold, and included the first wave of German immigrants who soon dominated much of Davenport's commercial and social life. By 1860 Davenport's population stood at 11,267, and the once struggling village was well on the way to becoming a major city.

Davenport's early growth was in large part a function of its location. In the city's first decades, the Mississippi was one of the nation's primary transportation routes. Davenport acquired its share of population, goods and merchandise moving west down the Ohio and north from New Orleans and St. Louis. In turn, as settlement in the Iowa interior increased, the city became a logical point from which farmers shipped produce back east. Looking to the future, however, Davenport businessmen, among them Antoine LeClaire, Hiram Price, James Grant and Ambrose Fulton began in the late 1840's to contribute money and time to railroad development: the Chicago, Rock Island Railroad from the east, and the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad west from Davenport to Council Bluffs. The lines were connected by the Mississippi River's first railroad bridge, completed in 1856.

After the Civil War, railroads replaced the rivers as the principal arteries of transportation in the midwest. In Davenport, this development was reflected in the increasing number of rail lines, freight stations and other support structures, and in the gradual reorientation of the central business district, and particularly the hotels, away from the waterfront. With the exception of sawmill owners, for whom the river remained an important aspect of their business, most people in Davenport began to see the Mississippi primarily as a barrier to be crossed. The first railroad bridge was replaced in 1872 with a double deck "combined" bridge (for both rail and wagon traffic) and yet again in 1895, when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers gave Ralph Modjeski his first major bridge commission. In 1900 the Davenport, Rock Island and Northwestern Railroad built the Crescent Bridge, subsequently acquired by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul, and the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroads, bringing the latter line to the city for the first time.