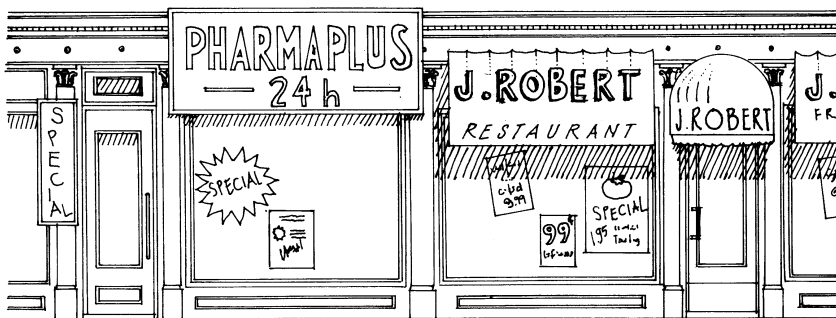
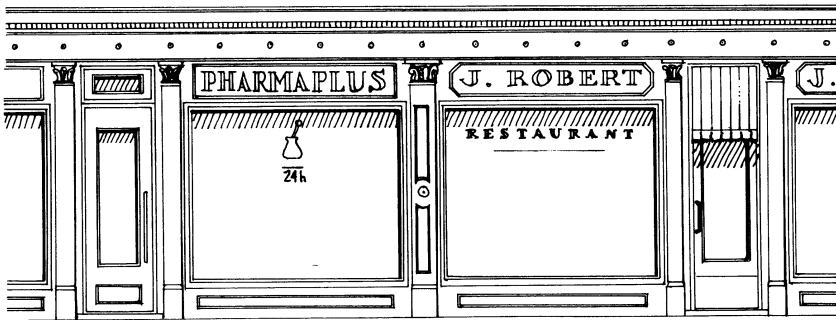


## 7. Storefronts and Signage

The design of storefronts and signage should harmonize with the architectural design of the buildings in which they are located and should reinforce the distinctive, traditional character of Westmount's shopping streets.

*Westmount's traditional shopping streets — Greene, Victoria, Sherbrooke and to a lesser extent St. Catherine, — have a distinctive character. This is largely the result of the presence of storefronts and signage that are well-designed and use traditional materials and techniques.*



*Simple, well-integrated signs (top) help reinforce the character of a building and street and are more effective at communicating a message. The jumbled and disorderly signs in the bottom illustration are unacceptable.*

## Summary of signage provisions in the Zoning By-law

The following is a summary of some key features of the Westmount zoning by-law dealing with commercial signs. The by-law also allows for real estate, construction and professional signs as well as certain signs in residential areas.

Owners and designers should also refer to the full by-law which, of course, take precedence.

### Number and location of signs

A maximum of two signs are permitted for a store or other commercial occupancy facing a commercial street. Names or logos placed on an awning are considered to be signs and must respect the by-laws dealing with signs and these guidelines.

In the case of a corner occupancy, one additional sign is permitted facing the second street. However, if the second street is a residential street, this sign must be a flat, non-luminous (i.e. not lit from inside) sign less than 1.2m<sup>2</sup> and located less than 4.57m (15 feet) from the corner. Show windows or other features of a commercial character are not permitted, on residential streets.

In order to encourage the use of projecting signs, all faces of these types of signs count as a single sign.

## 7.1 Sign location

Locate signs to respect and reinforce the Overall architectural composition of the building.

### 7.1.1 Architectural framework

Signs should fit within and not obscure the architectural framework, structural elements or details of the building (ie. they should not cover columns, cornices or windows).

### 7.1.2 Flat signs

Flat signs should reinforce the shape and proportions of the facade and should not be seen as unrelated objects attached to it. If the design of the building or storefront includes an area for signage, the sign should completely fill this space.

*Usually, only rectangular signs or individual cut-out letters applied to the facade are appropriate.*

### 7.1.3 Projecting and freestanding signs

Projecting signs are encouraged as they are quite visible to passers-by and add to the ambience of shopping streets. Free-standing signs are only appropriate where the building is set back considerably from the sidewalk. Backlit "awning-signs" are not permitted because they are not in keeping with the traditional character of Westmount's retail streets

### 7.1.4 Size

The size of the sign should normally be between one and two square feet per linear foot of storefront, subject to the constraints of integrating into the building design. Signs on primarily residential streets (ex. Sherbrooke) and on residential style buildings, where permitted, should be smaller, in keeping with the street's character.

*However, in some cases, a smaller or larger sign maybe called for in order to respect the other criteria above.*

### 7.1.5 Non-retail signs

A sign identifying the name of an office building or its principal tenant should not normally be attached to the building; it should be integrated as part of the entrance or, if space permits, as a free-standing sign at sidewalk level.

Directory signs for multiple retail or office occupancies (without ground-level street frontage and entrances) should be non-luminous, less than 1,2m<sup>2</sup> and located next to the building entrance. On retail streets, the owner of the building can designate that one of the two directory signs permitted in the by-law can be used for a major tenant.

The provision for real estate signs larger than 0.5m<sup>2</sup> would only be considered for large new buildings or major redevelopment projects.

## 7.2 Sign design

Design the sign to be simple, modest and harmonize with the character of the building and streetscape.

### 7.2.1 Materials

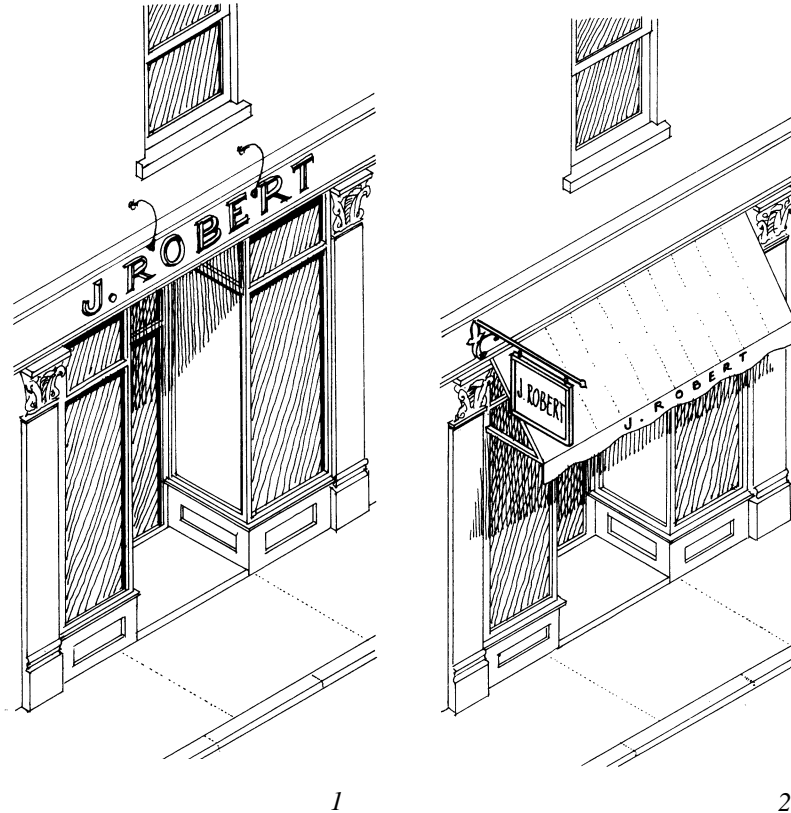
Signs should be in wood, metal, glass or plastic.

### 7.2.2 Graphics and colours

Lettering and other graphics should be simple and legible with a minimum number of elements. The number of colours should also be limited. Muted colours are favoured. Avoid fluorescent colours and reflective surfaces.

### 7.2.3 Lighting

The method of illumination should complement that of the building. The use of luminous signs is not permitted. Signs can be illuminated from an external source.



1

2

Here are two types of signs appropriate in Westmount: individual cut-out letters installed directly on a building (1); a projecting sign attached to a building by means of a bracket perpendicular to the building (2). A retractable canvas awning with signage on the flap provides shade and adds ambience to a shopping street.

## Summary of Signage Provisions in the Zoning By-law (cont'd)

### Height of signs

Exterior or luminous interior signs may not be installed above the second floor window sills.

### Content

Signs may only indicate the name of the establishment and the nature of the occupancy (a brief description of the type of goods or services offered, but not a list of products sold or telephone numbers).

### Design and Colours

Flashing or rotating signs are not permitted.

### Upper floor occupancies

Signs for stores or other commercial occupancies above the ground floor (without street frontage) must be directory type signs (ie. a single sign which lists the names) located close to the entrance leading to these occupancies.

## Summary of Signage Provisions in the Zoning By-law (cont'd)

### Permissible sign types

Only sign types which are expressly permitted in the zoning by-law are allowed. Signs must take one of the three following forms. (Other types of signs, such as billboards, luminous box signs i.e. lit from within, or luminous "awning-signs", are not permitted.)

**1) Face Sign:** This is a flat sign mounted flush against the building. It may not project more than 150mm from the surface on which it is mounted. A face sign must be one of the following:

- a panel sign;
- individual cut-out (channel)

letters installed directly on the building.

**2) Projecting sign:** This is a flat or three-dimensional sign attached to a building by means of a bracket perpendicular to the building. It may not project more than 1.25m (4'-0") beyond the building, nor more than 1m (3'-3") over City property. A clearance of 2.44m (8'-0") is required underneath. The area of the sign may not exceed 2m<sup>2</sup> (21 sq.ft.) per surface or a total of 4m<sup>2</sup> (43 sq.ft.).

**3) Free-standing sign:** This is a sign supported on a pole or base that is not attached to the building. It may not exceed 6m (19'-8") in height. It may not project more than 1m (3'-3") over City property. A clearance of 2.44m (8'-0") is required underneath. The area of the sign may not exceed 2m<sup>2</sup> (21 sq.ft.) per surface or a total of 4m<sup>2</sup> (43 sq.ft.).

## 7.3 Storefront design

Design storefronts to reinforce the commercial character of retail streets.

### 7.3.1 Design features

Reinforce the commercial character of retail streets by ensuring that the ground floor of a building is made up primarily of shops. These should be directly accessible from the sidewalk with signage, awnings and other design elements which are akin to others on the street. The width of new shops should be similar to others typical of the street.

### 7.3.2 Physical and visual access

Locate the ground floor level of a store at sidewalk Level. Unless the physical constraints in an existing building make this impossible, provide easy and open access inside the building to shops located below or above the sidewalk level.

### 7.3.3 Signage area

Make provisions for signage in the storefront and building design.

## 7.4 Existing storefronts and signs

Restore, rather than replace, the few examples of original or early storefronts or signage in Westmount.

However, if the ownership or name of a store, company or building changes, there are no acquired rights for the type or design of the previous sign, even if part (eg. a box or canopy) is still installed. A new proposal must be submitted in conformity with these guidelines.

## 7.5 Multiple occupancies

If there are many shops in the same building, integrate their storefronts and signage into an overall design concept.

### 7.5.1 Sign guidelines

In order to ensure that all storefronts and signs of a given building adhere to an overall design concept, the owner of every existing and new building must prepare a storefront and signage plan and guidelines for the whole building for approval by the Architectural and Planning Commission before any individual application can be considered. Each storefront or sign on the building is subsequently required to respect these guidelines.

*Note that this has already been done for a large number of commercial buildings in Westmount; tenants should check with their landlords or the City.*