

Nantucket Signage Aesthetics and Regulations

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Background: Birkelbach, 2022; UF & PIN Logos: UF DCP, 2022

Special Act (1955)

“Special Acts of the Massachusetts General Legislature,
Chapter 601

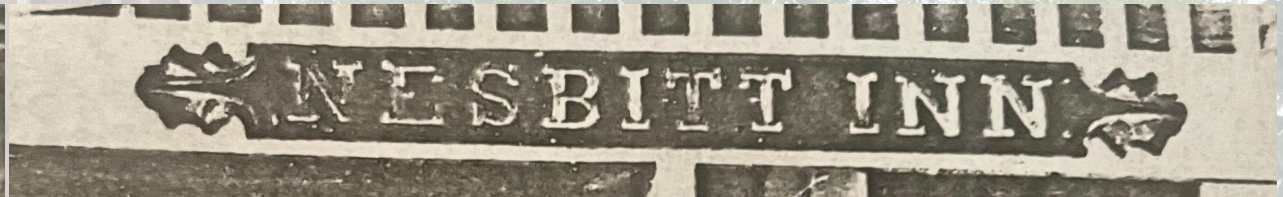
Section 6 states that:

...The erection or display of an occupational or other sign exceeding two feet in length and six inches in width or the erection or display of more than one such sign, irrespective of size, on any lot, building or structure located within the Old and Historic Nantucket District or the Old and Historic Siasconset District [changed in 1972 to the “Historic Nantucket District”] must be approved in advance by the Historic District Commission. Evidence of such approval shall be a certificate of appropriateness issued by said commission.” (The Sign Book, 2021)

Previous PIN Research (1976)



Alig, Turner, 1976

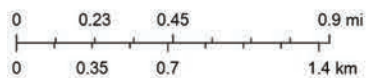
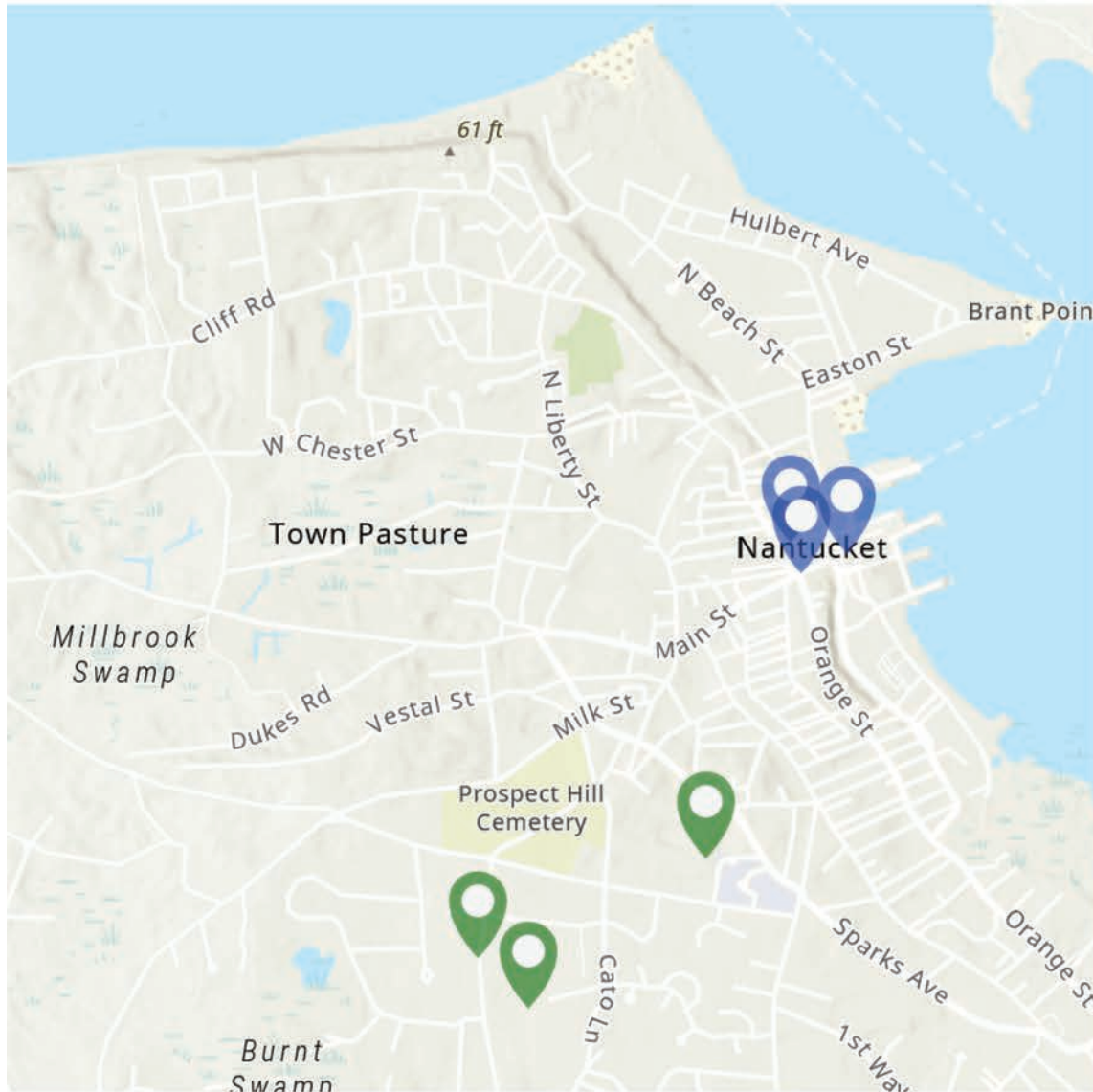


Alig, Turner, 1976

“In several instances, quarterboards have become a fad or have been overused” (Alig, 1976).

“Use of signs increased in the 19th century to the point of excess in the 1890s” (Alig, 1976).

Nantucket Signage Case Study



Rural Sign



Downtown Sign

Downtown is considered the area enclosed by Main St., Broad St., and Centre St.



All maps created with ArcGIS Online

Revisiting Downtown Signs: 7 India Street



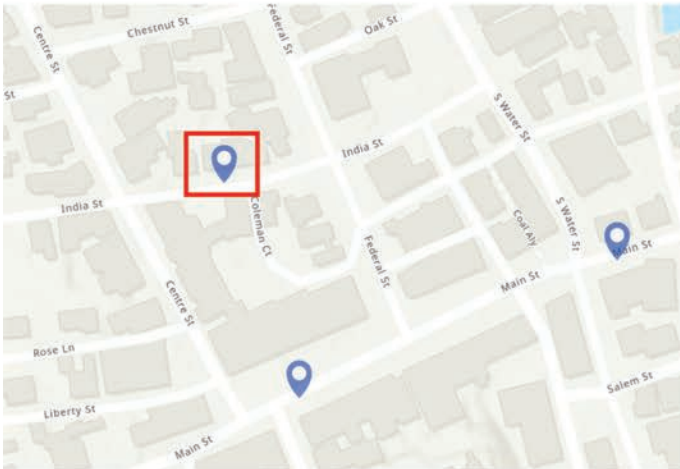
1976

Alig, Turner

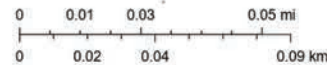


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Downtown Sign



Revisiting Downtown Signs: 54 Main Street



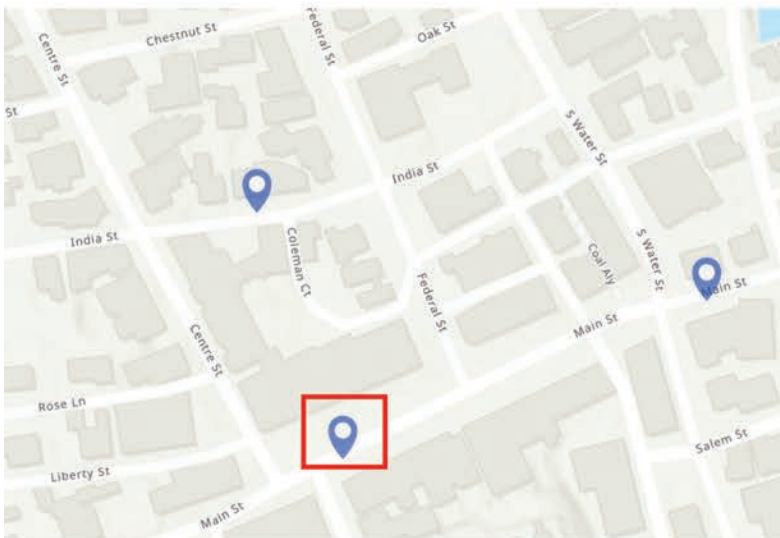
1976

Alig, Turner

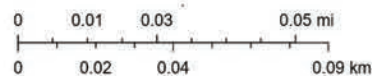


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Downtown Sign



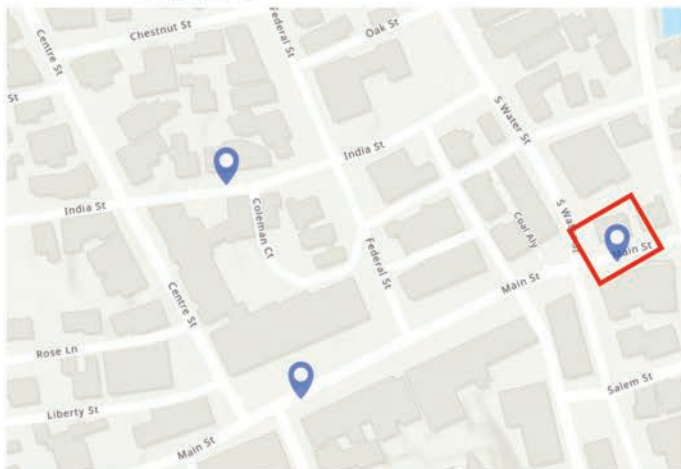
Revisiting Downtown Signs: 12 Main Street



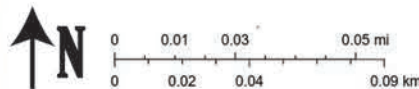
1976 Alig, Turner



2022
Birkelbach



 **Downtown Sign**



Why Regulate Signage?

I. INTENT AND PURPOSE

The purpose . . . is to promote the general welfare of the inhabitants of the town of Nantucket through the preservation and protection of historic buildings, places and districts of historic interest; through the development of an appropriate setting for these buildings, places and districts; and through the benefits resulting to the economy of Nantucket in developing and maintaining its vacation-travel industry through the promotion of these historic associations. . . . The erection or display of an occupational or

The Sign Book, 1981

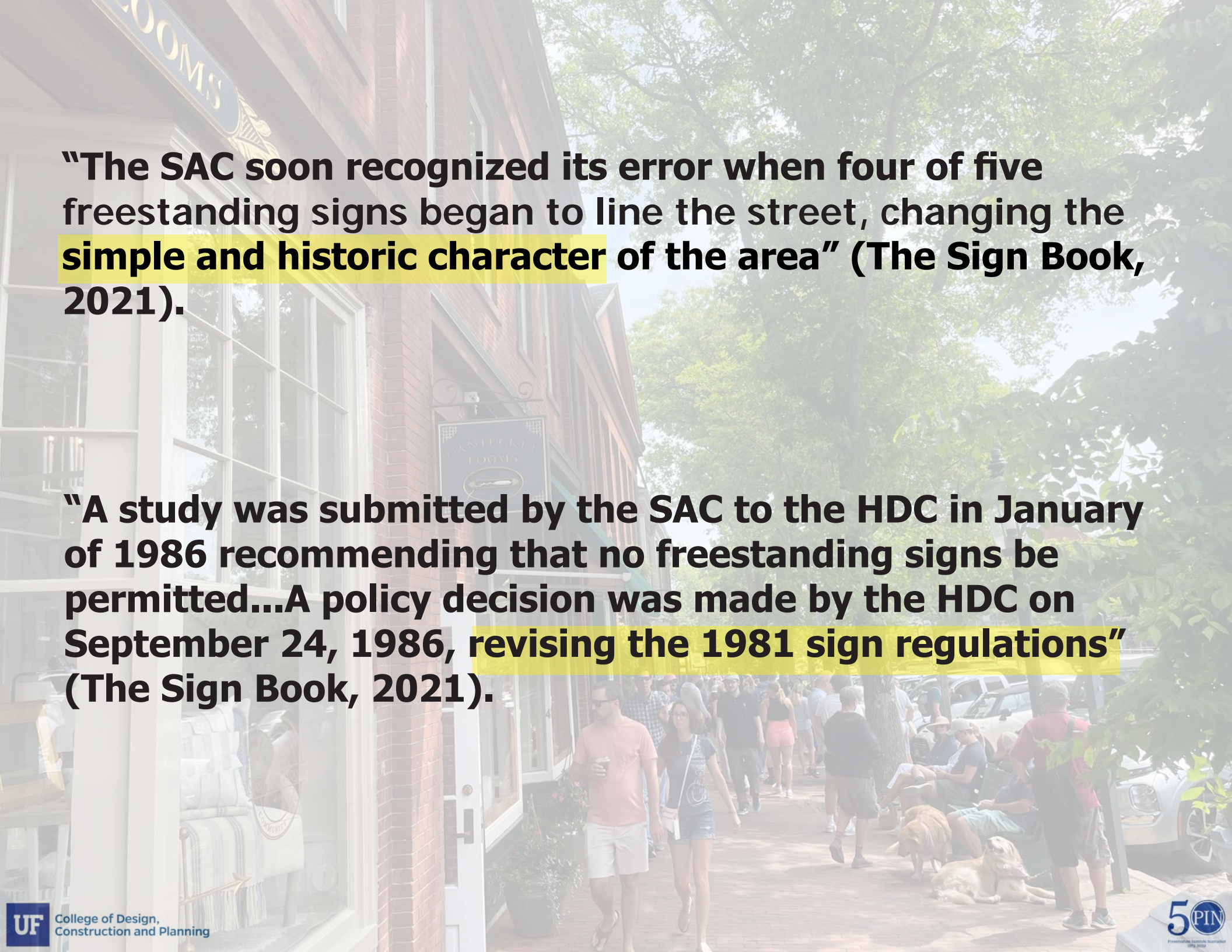
Freestanding Sign Ban

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7. Free-standing Signs

Free-standing signs will generally not be allowed except as directory signs at the entrance to a complex of commercial establishments or as signs for open-lot uses, such as parking. Application for other free-standing signs will be considered on a case-by-case basis. All free-standing signs...

The Sign Book, 1981



“The SAC soon recognized its error when four of five freestanding signs began to line the street, changing the simple and historic character of the area” (The Sign Book, 2021).

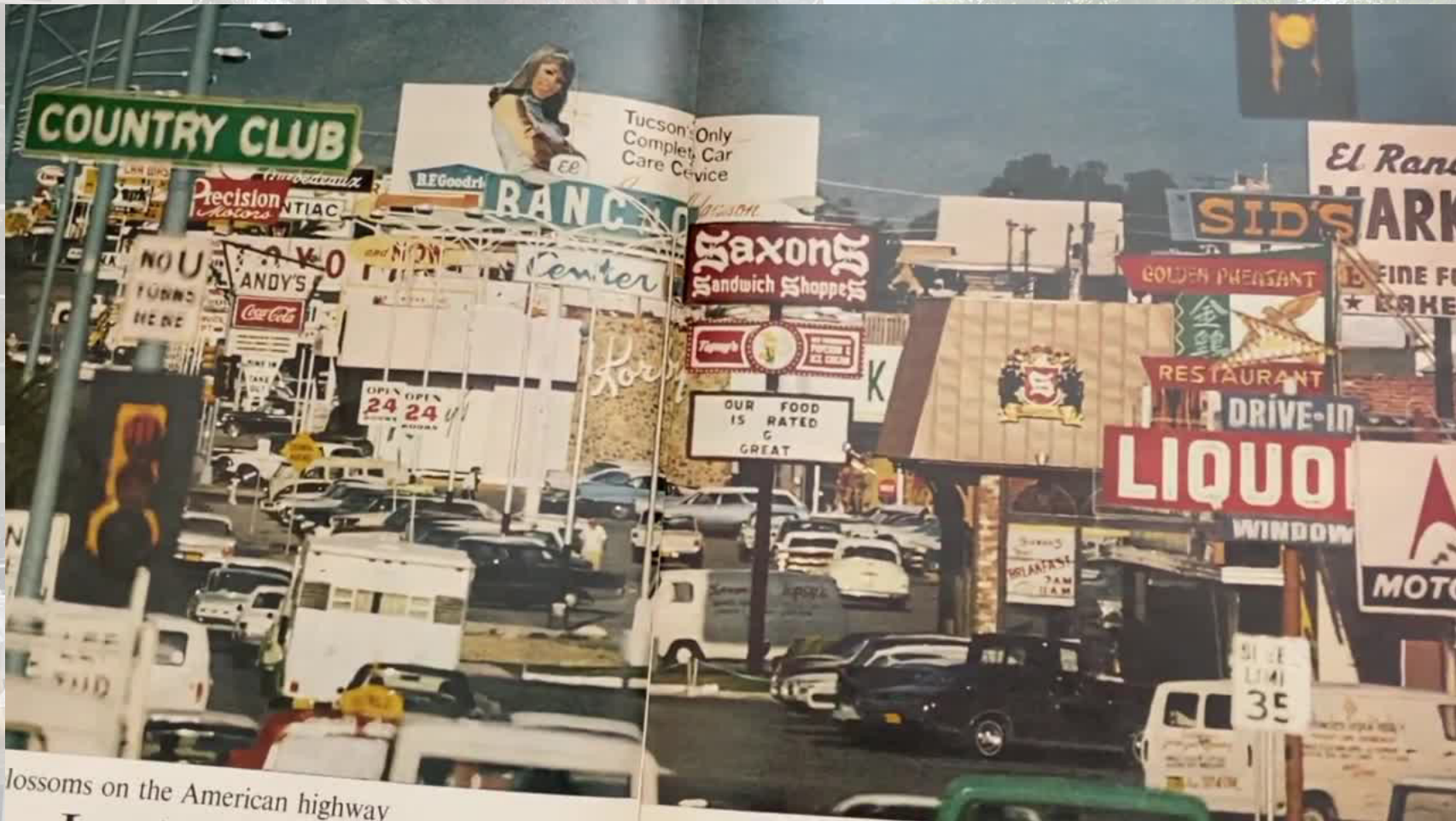
“A study was submitted by the SAC to the HDC in January of 1986 recommending that no freestanding signs be permitted...A policy decision was made by the HDC on September 24, 1986, revising the 1981 sign regulations” (The Sign Book, 2021).

REGULATIONS SPECIFIC TO SIGN TYPES

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------------|------|---------------------------|
| 4.1 | Wall Signs | 4.8 | Directory Signs |
| 4.2 | Projecting Signs | 4.9 | Quarterboards |
| 4.3 | Symbol Signs | 4.10 | Menu Boxes |
| 4.4 | Street Name Signs | 4.11 | Wharf Signs |
| 4.5 | Window Signs | 4.12 | Fence Signs |
| 4.6 | Flag Signs | 4.13 | Public Information Signs |
| 4.7 | Awning Signs | 4.14 | Traffic/Directional Signs |
| 4.8 | Directory Signs | | |

The Sign Book, 1989

“...Nantucket is still a small community and unlike large, sprawling mainland towns, businesses are still known more by word-of-mouth, reputation, newspaper advertising, and yellow pages, than by visibility from a passing car” (The Sign Book, 2021).



Tucson, AZ, Speedway Boulevard: Voted Ugliest Street in America (Kgun9, 2021)

The Sign Book (2021 Revised)



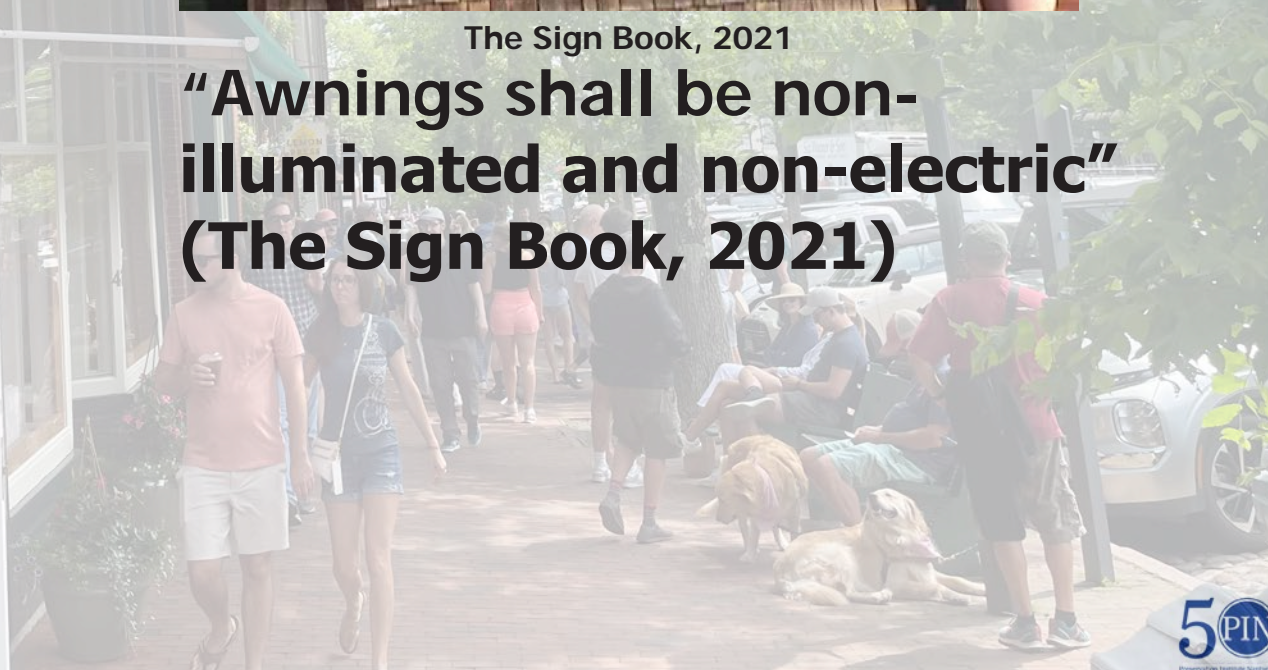
Birkelbach, 2022

Real Estate signs prohibited, including "For Sale by Owner" (The Sign Book, 2021)

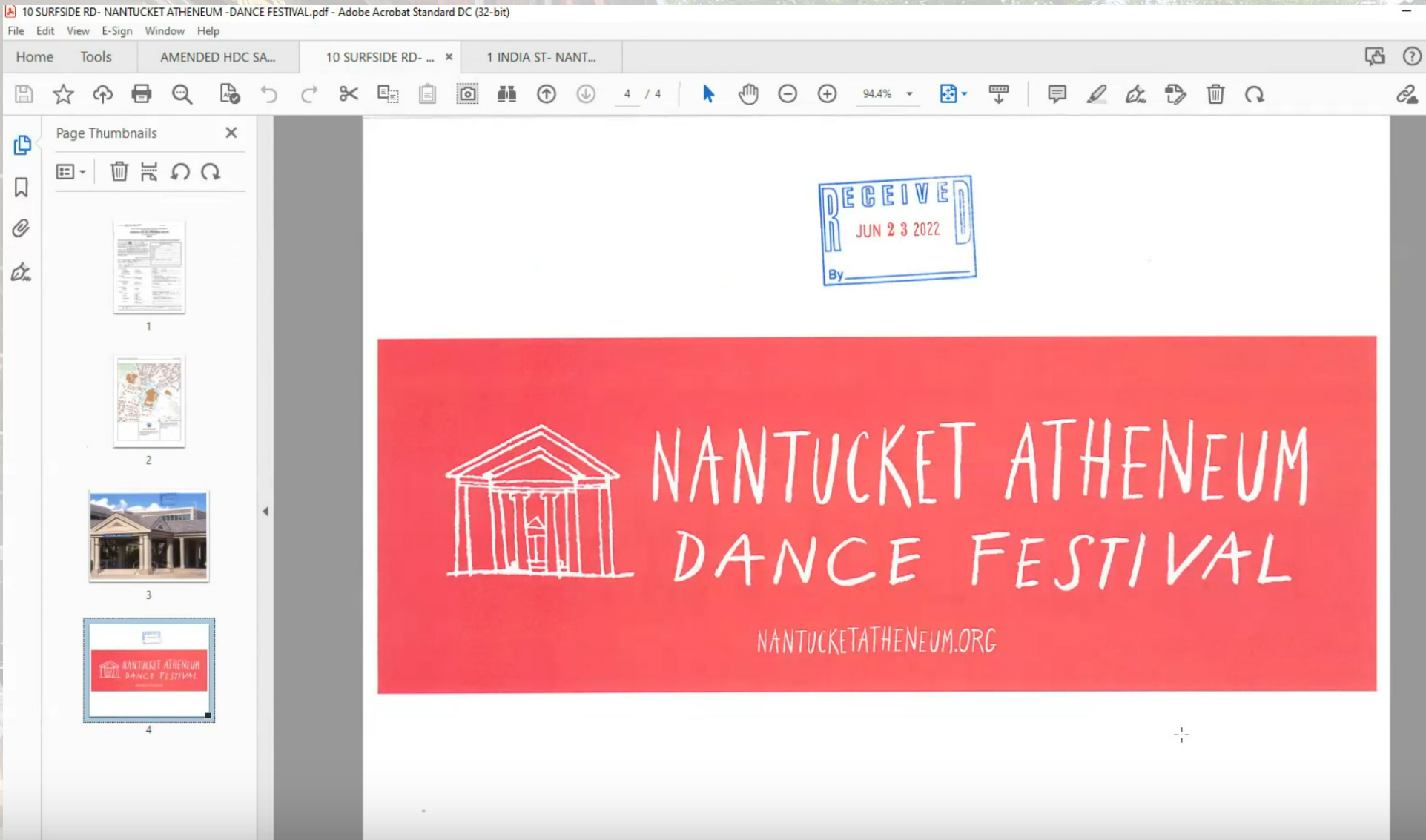


The Sign Book, 2021

"Awnings shall be non-illuminated and non-electric" (The Sign Book, 2021)



Example of SAC Review 7/5/22



Courtesy of: Nantucket Government TV, 2022

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- Town of Chatham Sign Code, Section 65. Chatham, Mass., N.D.
- Worcester: A New England Cityscape. Worcester Heritage and Preservation Society, Vision Inc., Cambridge, Mass., N.D.

**1976 PIN report
was not used**

**Several other
towns referenced**

The Sign Book, 1981

Current Challenges



Courtesy of:
Greenwich Time, Greenwich,
CT, 2022

“In the several decades that I’ve been on this board, we’ve never had anything quite as noticeably polarizing” (Sign Advisory Council Member, 2022).



Photos by Birkelbach, 2022

Where are Flowers Regulated?

As a general rule, silk flowers and potted plants will be allowed on graves:

*For a period extending 10 days before Easter Sunday to 10 days after.

*For a period extending 10 days before Memorial Day to 10 days after.

*Christmas wreaths, potted poinsettias, and other seasonal adornments may be placed on graves from December 10th through January 10th.

Artificial Flower Rules for National Cemeteries, 2018

Has Regulation Become Arbitrary?



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From owner Lee Milazzo:

“...two to three people on an obscure unelected advisory committee can be so inconsistent in their assessment of what is ok for a sign.... They are threatening my business and me with civil and criminal penalties because they don't like the 'Latin vibe' of the font and color” (Graziadei, 2022).

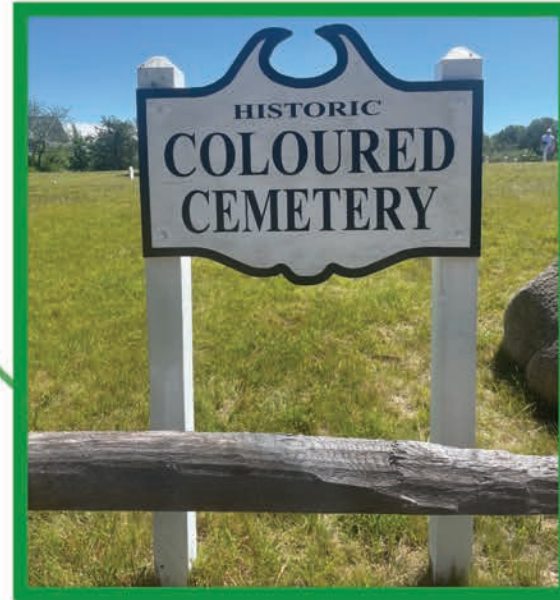
“The use of subdued colors is encouraged. The number of colors should be limited. A darker background with lighter lettering and graphics is encouraged as a traditional and aesthetically pleasing presentation” (The Sign Book, 2021).



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“A sign designed with a trademark, logo, logo type, or logo mark of a specific business or commodity that uses a non-historical font style may be used provided that the trademark occupies no more than fifteen per cent (15%) of the total area of the sign” (The Sign Book, 2021).

Rural Signs



 **Rural Sign**

Photos by Birkelbach, 2022

Stone Signs



“Points along these ancient ways were marked with prominent stones, upon which passers-by piled more stones or small branches” (Karttunen, 2008).

“If there were such marked trails on Nantucket, they have been lost” (Karttunen, 2008).



Photos by Birkelbach, 2022

Stone Signs are Freestanding



"The HDC defines freestanding signs to include any sign attached to, or part of a completely self-supporting structure, other than a building or a fence, including rock signs for commercial purposes" (The Sign Book, 2021).

The Sign Book, 2021

Proposal

Ease regulations to allow for more Public Information signs.

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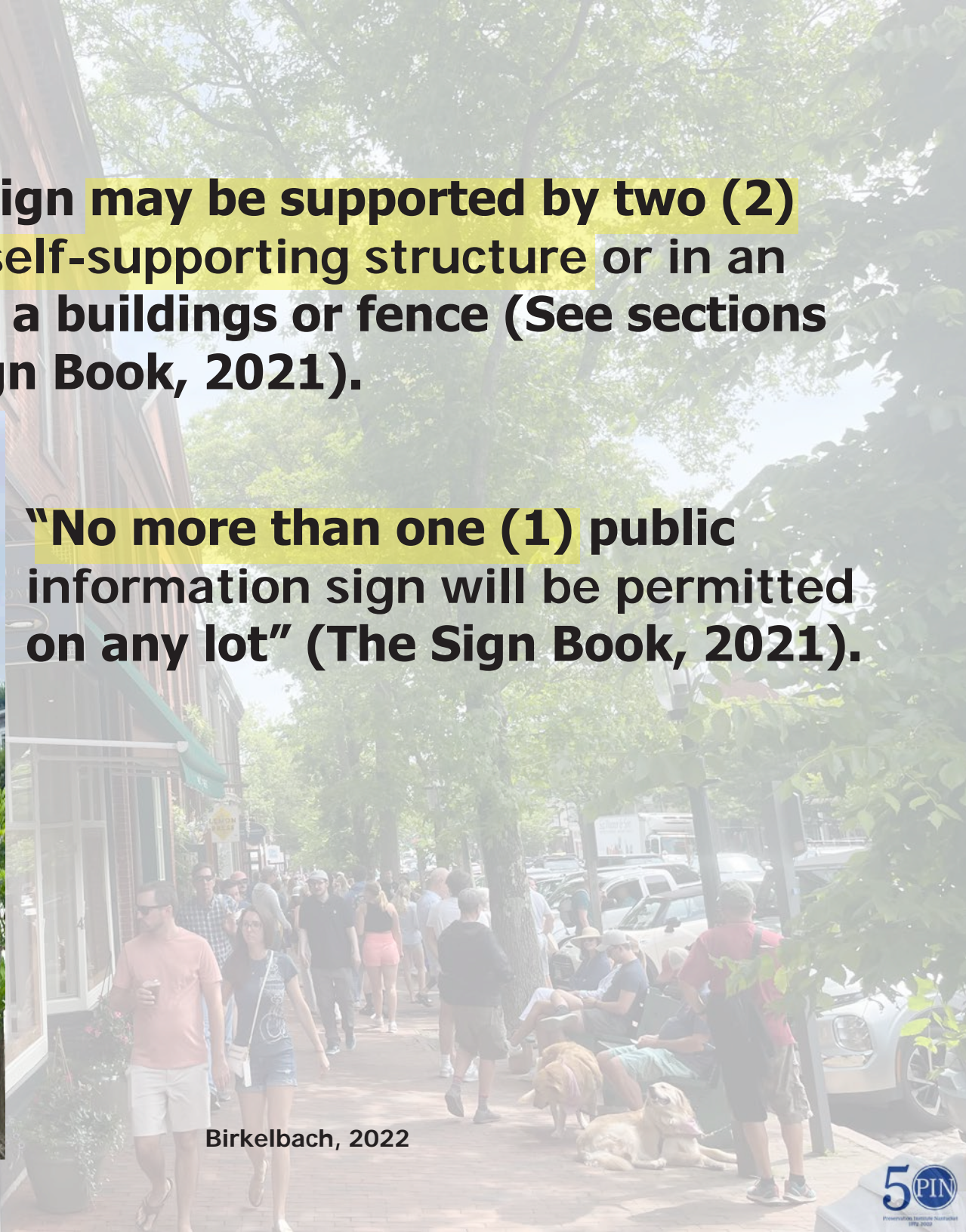
The Sign Book, 1981

Typologies

“A public information sign may be supported by two (2) posts as a completely self-supporting structure or in an approvable location on a buildings or fence (See sections 4.4 and 4.18)” (The Sign Book, 2021).



“No more than one (1) public information sign will be permitted on any lot” (The Sign Book, 2021).



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Photos by Birkelbach, 2022

Is Signage Effective? - Next Steps



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