

# Display of Advertisements

supplementary planning guidance

South Derbyshire District Council  
Planning Services



## I. Introduction

1.1. It is considered appropriate to produce guidance which can be applied generally to all advertisements, irrespective of type and location. Poorly designed and located advertisements can detract from the wider environment and compromise public safety. Especially within conservation areas, and when associated with listed buildings, the detrimental impact of poor design and location can be particularly significant.

1.2. Advertisements and signs are important in the proper functioning of shopping and commercial areas, and the wider economy. However, South Derbyshire District Council considers that the display of advertisements needs to be carefully balanced against the requirement to ensure they do not have a damaging impact upon the environment or jeopardise public safety.



1.3. Signs and advertisements are controlled by the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement Regulations) 1992. The regulations permit the display of certain signs. Most advertisements require specific consent for which application is made to the Council but some categories have deemed consent by virtue of the regulations. These regulations give powers to the Council to restrict the display of advertisements in the interests of amenity and public safety and to issue discontinuance notices requiring the display of an advertisement which has deemed consent to cease.

1.4. The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (D.E.T.R.) has produced a useful booklet which explains the regulations in simple terms. 'Outdoor Advertisements and Signs - A Guide for Developers' is available free of charge from the Services (Planning) reception.

1.5. Environment Policy 12 of the adopted South Derbyshire Local Plan refers to advertisements in conservation areas. The Council has prepared this Supplementary Planning Guidance to expand this policy and to give more detailed direction because it considers it important that standards of good design should be encouraged everywhere. This document provides guidance on the design and display of advertisements and informs applicants of the general context in which advertisement proposals will be considered. The Council has adopted positive policies for the control of advertisements and the guidance details the requirements of the Council in general terms.

1.6. This guidance sets out:

- a) general design considerations which the Council will apply to applications for express consent to display advertisements so as to protect amenity and public safety; and
- b) examples of good practice in the display of advertisements which the District Council wishes to promote.

All applications for the display of advertisements will be considered on their own merits.

## 2. General Policy

2.1. When assessing the suitability of advertisement proposals the Local Planning Authority is required to have regard to the advertisements effect on “the appearance of the building or on visual amenity in the immediate neighbourhood where it is to be displayed. (Paragraph 11; Planning Policy Guidance Note 19 “Outdoor Advertisement Control”; Department of the Environment; March 1992).



2.2. Similarly, the Local Planning Authority must have regard to the effect which the display of an advertisement may have on 'public safety'. This is defined as 'the safe use and operation of any form of traffic or transport on land (including the safety of pedestrians), on or over water, or in the air.' (Paragraph 15; P.P.G.19; D.o.E.; March 1992). The Local Planning Authority must assess whether the display of the advert would be so distracting or confusing as to create a hazard.

2.3. In carrying out its duty to control advertisements the Council will apply the following general policy which aims to ensure that advertisements are not unduly detrimental to the street scene, do not have an adverse effect on the appearance of a building and do not create such a hazard as to endanger public safety.

**ADVI - In determining applications for consent to display advertisements the Council will consider the effect of the proposals on amenity and public safety. The Council will only grant consent for the display of an advertisement where it is satisfied that:-**

- a) it is well located in relation to the building or site on which it is to be displayed;
- b) it is of a suitable size, colour and design, and of materials that are acceptable in the locality;
- c) it is not unduly prominent;
- d) it does not contribute to visual clutter in the street scene; and
- e) it does not adversely affect the safety of users of any form of transport and pedestrians.

2.4. Any advertisement which can be demonstrated to detract from the amenity of its surroundings, or to be detrimental to public safety, will be refused consent.

2.5. Particular care will be taken when considering the display of advertisements on Listed Buildings and in Conservation Areas and the countryside. As advised in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 “Planning and the Historic Environment”, as part of the Council's duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of a conservation area, more exacting standards will be applied to applications to grant consent for a proposed advertisement in such areas.

### 3. Advertisements On Shops And Other Commercial Premises

#### a. Fascia, Wall, Projecting and Hanging Signs

3.1. Advertisements can make a positive contribution to the character of an area. However, poorly designed and incongruous signs can be visually intrusive. Fascia adverts and projecting and hanging signs should always be designed to complement the style of the building and shopfront. The materials, detail and proportions of a fascia sign must be well related to the background (not merely the surface the sign is set out on, but the larger backcloth of the building as a whole) in order to avoid a disruptive and uncoordinated appearance.



3.2. Too many advertisements will detract from the building. More than one projecting sign will only be acceptable in special locations such as on shops with a very wide or double street frontage or where the building is recessed. The amenity of the street is best served when projecting signs are positioned consistently along it, either all to the right or all to the left of the fascia.

3.3. The use of hanging signs and objects is often preferable to box signs which, when illuminated are often standardised. Although these can add to the general interest of a street scene, too many can create clutter. Traditionally designed flat hanging signs attached to plain or decorative iron brackets are particularly appropriate on older buildings. Signs should be carefully sited so as not to be a hazard to pedestrians. Where they denote businesses at upper floors or shops set back under a canopy they should normally hang clear of the building and be positioned no higher than the middle of the second storey.

3.4. The sign should not detract from the scale, proportions and character of the building by being overly large or small. An alternative is a hanging object associated with the trade of the occupier, for example for a chemists (bottle) or barber (striped pole). These add interest to shopping areas and their use will be supported, provided they are of good quality materials and workmanship.

3.5. Within **conservation areas**, and when associated with a **listed building**, advertisements must be designed and located so as to respect the unique character of individual areas and buildings. The number, size, shape, location, colour and detailed design will all have a bearing on this. Consequently, proposals should exhibit a high standard of design and good quality materials. A proliferation of signs will be resisted. Box signs and signs with a shiny or reflective finish will not be encouraged and it may be necessary for applicants, including national organisations with a corporate identity signage system, to tone down colour schemes and produce signs in traditional form and materials. The use of natural materials will be most appropriate for advertisements displayed within conservation areas and in association with listed buildings. However, designs of a high quality, which employ non-natural materials, may also meet the criteria set out in this document.

3.6. Wall signs are appropriate in circumstances where advertisement space is limited on existing fascias and inadequate space is provided on which to identify the business. However, wall signs must be used sensibly and must not be allowed to dominate large wall areas. Care must be taken not to lose sight of the simple message to be conveyed. Their use will therefore only be permissible if they are suitably framed and they respect the proportions of the building as a whole.

*b. Lettering*

3.7. Lettering can evoke an image and provide decorative interest. The choice of lettering and illustration can reflect the use and character of the premises and should also take account of the character of the building.

3.8. The content of advertisements is not the concern of the local Planning Authority. However it is appropriate for applicants to consider the impact of excessive advertising on visual amenity. Therefore fascia lettering should convey the essential message of the retailer. The shop name alone will normally have most effect, and additional lettering (normally advertising) is generally only confusing and will detract from the shopfront.

3.9. Lettering is normally best either signwritten directly onto wooden fascias or if carried out in a traditional manner applied as individual letters. Colours are important: gilding or strong light tones on a dark background reflect light and are clearly visible at night. Rich effects can be achieved by shading and blocking of letters.



3.10. Individual letters can be useful particularly where there is no fascia and the lettering is attached to the natural materials of the building. Simple solid shapes will normally be appropriate and the traditional gilded lettering with a half round section is particularly appropriate for pubs and hotels.

3.11. Within **conservation areas** and when associated with a **listed building** signs painted onto a fascia will be best for traditional shopfronts. It may also be acceptable to provide a hanging painted timber sign or to apply lettering or a logo to the glass of the shop window itself. Where there is no existing fascia any sign should relate to the shopfront, being on it, in it or directly above it. In some instances, painted signs or individual letters fixed directly to the building will be acceptable. In all cases the size, type and colour of lettering should suit the architectural character of the shop front and the building as a whole.

*c. Illumination*

3.12. Illumination of signs can contribute to the street scene where the illumination is treated as an integral part of the overall design and not merely a means of drawing attention to the advertisement. Internally illuminated box signs will not be permitted

where they detract from visual amenity. The most acceptable way of illuminating box signs and advertisements is by internally illuminating the letters or characters rather than their background. This method may be permissible (subject to certain restrictions) under the Advertisement Regulations.

3.13. External lighting can often add character to fascia signs and other forms of advertising. Subtle external lighting can also be used to enhance the appearance of the building itself at night. The Council considers that the use of unobtrusive illumination sources are preferable and wishes to promote the use of concealed 'pelmet' / 'trough' and spot illumination, with the light source being incorporated within the design of the advertisement.

3.14. Within **conservation areas** and when associated with a **listed building** consent is always required to display illuminated advertisements. It may be difficult to accommodate the illumination of signs in a sympathetic way. Non illuminated signs are considered most appropriate. Illumination of signs to public houses, restaurants and similar late opening premises will generally be acceptable, providing the source of illumination is external and the fitting and wiring for its installation are unobtrusive. A proliferation of lights will be resisted. In exceptional circumstances small, internally illuminated, individual letters or characters may be acceptable.

3.15. Similar principles of design, including lettering and illumination, apply to offices and other premises as they do to shops, in that the advertisements should respect the character and scale of the building. The character of some buildings such as restaurants and pubs can be enhanced by good signage.

**d. General Design Considerations:**

**ADV2 - The Council, in assessing applications for consent to display advertisements on shopfronts and other commercial premises will ensure that the following general questions can be answered AS INDICATED:-**

**a) Do the proposed advertisements detract from the general visual amenity of the immediate area or the overall street scene? - NO**

**b) Do the proposed advertisements create a hazard which is likely to endanger public safety? - NO**

**c) Do any proposed hanging or fascia signs detract from the character of the building, or relate poorly to the scale or proportions of the building to which they will be attached? - NO**

**d) Does the cumulative effect of the proposed advertisements create clutter? - NO**

**e) Are mounted signs on modern buildings incorporated into areas designed for that purpose? - YES**



f) Does an appropriate visual relationship exist between individual buildings and lettering, symbols, figures or similar features proposed? - YES

g) Are any proposed light sources well related to both the advertisement and building or site where it will be located? - YES

h) When located within a conservation area, does the proposed advertisement preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area? - YES

i) When located on a listed building, does the proposed advertisement detract from the buildings architectural or historic character or its setting? - NO

#### 4. Freestanding Advertisements

##### a. *Advance Directional Signs*

4.1. The Council is concerned at the display of poorly designed and located advance directional signs, particularly in open countryside and adjacent to major arterial routes, and wishes to ensure that this practice does not continue. These signs attempt to divert attention to the provision of goods and services from the amenity of those areas where they proliferate and have the potential to create a hazard for highway users. Accordingly the Council, as Local Planning Authority, will apply the following policy:

**ADV3 - The Council, as Local Planning Authority, will grant express consent for the display of advance directional 'signs where it is satisfied that:-**

- a) they do not have a detrimental impact on the amenity or character of an area;
- b) they do not create a hazard to public safety be reason of distracting road users; and
- c) they are sympathetically located to complement existing features and buildings.

##### b. "A" Boards

4.2. The use of "A" Boards is not generally confined to town centres. These advertisements usually take the form of poorly designed and constructed boards, usually located on or adjacent to footpaths or paved areas, which is usually adopted highway. The display of advertisements on adopted highway requires consent from the Local Highway Authority, Derbyshire County Council. Lack of good design can detract from the appearance of individual shop units and other commercial premises as well as cluttering entrances to industrial estates. They can cause obstruction and be a hazard to normally sighted and visually impaired people alike.



**ADV4 - In most cases consent will be given for free standing "A" Boards where they do not have a detrimental impact an the visual amenity or the historic character of an area by creating the impression of clutter.**

## 5. *Advertisement Hoardings*

5.1. Large poster hoardings, which are often part of the fabric of commercial and industrial areas, are usually out of place anywhere else, and are entirely inappropriate to the scale and character of residential areas and predominantly rural settings. However, they can help to add some colour in older industrial areas which were developed without the high standards of landscaping and screening required today. They can visually enhance areas of generally poor environmental quality, where their scale and location is in keeping with the surroundings, and they provide screening to unsightly developments where alternative methods of screening are unlikely to be secured.

5.2. Consent in most cases is unlikely to be given for advertisement hoardings in conservation areas and within the setting of listed buildings because they are likely to be an incongruous feature, be visually intrusive in the historic street scene and have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the area.

5.3. The Local Planning Authority is keen to ensure that where larger poster hoardings other than those permissible under the Regulations are sought, they do not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the area. For example, in predominantly industrial and commercial areas posters on the gable wall of buildings are ideally located centrally on the wall, obscuring no significant architectural features and are of a size which reflects the overall scale of the building. Further guidance on the display of advertisement hoardings is provided in the Annex to Planning Policy Guidance Note 19 "Outdoor Advertisement Control".

## 6. **Further Advice and Information**

### *Making an Application*

6.1. To make an application for consent to display an advertisement it is necessary to submit details of your proposals along with completed application forms. Copies of the form are available from the Services (Planning) reception.

6.2. The Local Planning Authority (L.P.A.) will undertake consultations with neighbours and other relevant bodies. The L.P.A. will seek to determine the application within eight weeks of receipt.

This document was the subject of a public consultation exercise. Following consideration of the responses received it was adopted by the Planning and Economic Development Committee at its meeting on the 16 December 1999.