

# **Advertisement Control**

## **Planning Guidance Note**

### **Introduction**

Advertisements play an important role in our lives; they provide information and an awareness of services and products. To serve their purpose, advertisements must command attention through the careful selection of sites, sizes, colours and, in some cases, methods of illumination. If there were no planning controls, advertisers would compete with each other using all of these characteristics and the resulting clamour for attention would have serious effects on the appearance of our towns and on road safety.

### **Format of Guidance**

Where appropriate, this Guidance Note should also be read in conjunction with the Guidance Note on Shopfronts and Canopies.

All planning guidance notes are material considerations in the assessment of planning applications and shall be afforded significant weight in the decision making process. Failure to comply with Guidance Notes may be a reason for refusal of consent.

### **Legislative Framework**

In order to strike a balance between the conflicting interests of a competitive economy and the desire to regulate the impact on the appearance of surrounding areas, the government has provided regulations specifying which advertisements need express consent (see The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (Scotland) Regulations 1984).

### **Planning Framework**

East Dunbartonshire Council Local Plan 2 – Policy DQ2C states that the Council will examine the impact of proposals in terms of amenity and public safety. The principles set out in the 2005 Planning Guidance Note on advertisement control are replaced by this guidance note.

### **Policy Guidance**

In determining applications for consent to display advertisements on buildings, the Council will pay particular attention to design, dimensions, illumination and position of the advertisement, together with its impact on the building. The Council will not permit advertisements which would have a detrimental effect on the amenity and character of the street or on road safety. In the interests of amenity, and in order to avoid clutter, the number of advertisements should be restricted to a minimum. In a town centre, illumination can be attractive at night relieving possible drab surroundings.

### ***On Listed Buildings and within Conservation Areas***

Within Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings (Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest) new advertisements must be properly related to the architectural design of the buildings on which they are displayed. Particular attention will be paid to the size of lettering, and dignified styles should be employed with illumination restricted to lettering only. This also applies in Townscape Protection Areas.

## ***Advance Warning Signs for Individual Premises***

Advanced signs (not at the site of the business to which the advertisement relates) will generally be opposed, except for the purposes of road safety to give information to the public.

Location – Where the principle of an individual sign is accepted, the display should normally comprise one double-sided sign at the public/private road junction leading directly to the premises advertised. A series of repetitive signs will not be acceptable. In cases where two or more businesses require advance signs at one road junction, the use of a composite sign will be encouraged. All signs must be erected outwith the highway boundary. Sites with a visual backdrop of existing trees, bushes and walls will be preferred.

Scale and Design – The overall size of individual advance signs shall not normally exceed 1200mm x 600mm or be more than two metres in height from ground level. The signs should contain only explanatory information (e.g. directions) rather than general advertising. The maximum size of letter will depend on traffic speed.

Illumination – Illumination will be considered where it would be demonstrably difficult to see the sign at night and providing it can be done without prejudice to road safety. External illumination (e.g. downlighting) is preferred. Where downlighting is to be used, preference will be given to downlighting units of the same colour as the fascia.

## ***Shops and Offices***

Location – In general terms, advertisements on commercial premises should be restricted to the fascia area of those premises having fascia displays. Only one projecting sign per commercial frontage will generally be allowed. The lower edge of such a sign must be at least 2450mm above pavement level and must be set back at least 500mm from the kerb.

Scale and Design – The size of any advertisement should be related to the scale and form of the building on which it is displayed. Applicants will be strongly advised to give full consideration to the Shopfronts and Canopies Planning Guidance Note prior to any application that includes fascia advertisement being submitted. The depth of any fascia should either be made to fit the space designed for it or, where no such space exists, its depth should not exceed 700mm or one half of the vertical distance between the top of the shopfront and the sill of the first floor window, whichever is the smaller.

The size of lettering on a fascia should generally be restricted to 300mm in height unless on large scale building in which case it should be proportionate to its depth, and considered on its own merits. Signs consisting of painted letters or individually fixed letters on a plain background are generally preferable to using shiny acrylic panels, as this allows scope for variety, individuality and character.

The display of large projecting signs and advertisements on walls, forecourt walls and fences is discouraged. Projecting box and hanging signs should be in scale and character with the shopfront and streetscene as a whole and should generally not exceed the depth of the fascia.

Illumination – Preference will be given to signs with individual illuminated letters and fascias illuminated by down lighters or trough lighting as will projecting signs with down lighters. Illuminated advertisements should not normally be located above first floor level except where it can be demonstrated that the position proposed is essential in relation to the function of the building. Illuminated signs must not obscure or resemble official highway signs or traffic lights. Care must be taken to ensure that illuminated advertisements do not cause confusion with such official signs such as to create a danger for road users. Illuminated shop signs near residential properties should not cause detriment to residential amenity.

## ***Hotels, Public Houses and Restaurants***

Location – Generally, a greater flexibility is appropriate due to dependence on passing trade, although strict control will be applied in relation to listed buildings or buildings located in Conservation Areas. One projecting sign on each frontage is the preferred arrangement, with any further signs being wall mounted. Where the building is set back, consideration will be given to a free standing sign and directional signs. In general, the use of standard signs for specific products (e.g. brewers signs) should be avoided.

Scale and Design – Scale should be carefully related to that of the building and should not mask architectural features. Encouragement will be given to the use of individual designed signs in preference to standard ‘company’ signs.

Illumination – Illumination of signs is acceptable for these types of uses. External illumination of fascia, projecting or free standing pole mounted signs are preferable to internally illuminated box signs. In some instances floodlighting may be appropriate and applicants should contact the Planning Office on this matter.

## ***Garages and Petrol Filling Stations***

Location – The appropriate levels of display would normally comprise of a pole mounted sign or identity sign, either on the fascia of the building or on the canopy. It has become usual to allow a further sign affixed to the pole mounted sign to display price or special offers.

Scale and Design – There has been considerable rationalising of advertisement by the large petrol companies, and this has been a generally satisfactory trend. However, proliferation of associated uses, such as car washes and general shops, could lead to pressure for a greater amount of advertising. This will only be allowed where the collective level of advertising is not excessive.

Illumination – It is appropriate for the pole mounted sign, and the company name and logo, to be illuminated. Additional illumination, of the entire canopy fascia in particular, is considered excessive and will not be allowed.

## ***Industrial Buildings***

Locations – Advertisements identifying businesses or their products should generally be confined to the walls of the building, although free standing signs may be allowed where there are large yards or forecourts.

Scale and Design – Generally, the scale of signs and lettering should not be excessive in relation to the size of the building.

Illumination – Illumination of advertisements may be appropriate for the identification of individual properties within an industrial area, but not be of a level which would cause nuisance to neighbouring residential areas.

## ***Free Standing and Functional Signs (Hoardings and Display Panels)***

Location – These signs may be acceptable in small gap sites in urban areas, where it is proposed that a new building is to be erected, to have a positive effect on amenity and where the scale and character of the surroundings is considered appropriate. In all cases they will be considered on their own merits in the interests of amenity and public safety. New hoardings are unlikely to be acceptable in rural areas, Conservation Areas, Townscape Protection Areas, predominantly residential areas, open areas within the urban area and on or beside Listed Buildings.

Scale and Design – The scale and design of a hoarding should be related to the size and layout of the site. Where a gap site is involved, a generous landscaping treatment should be

incorporated. If free standing, it should be integrated into the framework of a wall, fence or purpose designed structure.

Illumination – Discreet illumination may be permitted in already well lit areas, where this does not harm amenity (including residential amenity) or public safety.

### ***Tourist Signposting***

All signing for the purpose of tourism should adhere to the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Signposting Policy. This policy is available from East Dunbartonshire Council Planning Service.

### ***Boundary Signs and Place Names***

Signs erected by the Council to identify locations within its area (including entry points to towns and villages at the East Dunbartonshire boundary), even where they bear a sponsor's details, will be considered to be permitted development, where the sponsor's details are clearly subservient to the primary nature of the sign (both in area and design of lettering and colours).

Unauthorized advertising (see 'Enforcement' below) on public infrastructure (street furniture) will not be permitted and will be removed without notice. The Council will be particularly vigilant at the above locations in order to avoid visual clutter and road safety concerns.

### ***Enforcement***

Unauthorised advertising can have a serious effect on the appearance of our towns and villages and on road safety. The Council will therefore take a robust and consistent approach over these matters.

It is an offence under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to place obstructions including unauthorised signs within the road boundary. Advertising signs and banners erected on a public road (including pavements and verges) without the Roads Authority's consent are considered unauthorised and may be removed without notice. Advertisements on street furniture will be removed without notice.

In the case of unauthorised signs in other locations, the Planning Authority will use its standard enforcement procedure and will secure the removal of unacceptable signs through the powers contained in the Planning Regulations.

The Planning and Compensation Act 1991 Part II gives Planning Authorities power to remove flyposting (including banners, posters and placards) where these cause a nuisance or harm the amenity of an area. The Planning Authority will exercise its powers to remove flyposters where appropriate.