

9 ADVERTISEMENTS AND SHOP FRONTS

Introduction

- 9.1 Advertisements and signs are important to the commercial activities of shops and other businesses in both urban and rural environments. They are an accepted means of communicating a message or information and can be found on most commercial premises in the Borough.
- 9.2 The judicious use of advertising can give life to an otherwise uninteresting building or town centre, but all too often advertisements can cause a building or locality to lose its character and become lost in poorly designed advertising matter and associated paraphernalia.

Deemed Consent for Advertisements

- 9.3 Under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992, certain advertisements can be displayed without the need to gain formal consent from the Council. These advertisements are given "Deemed Consent" so long as they comply with specific conditions defined in the Regulations. In 1986 the Council approved a policy for shop fronts and advertisements in Melton Mowbray Town Centre and in 1992 produced the leaflet "A Guide to the Design of Shopfronts in Melton Mowbray" which gives advice and design guidance on the display of signs and further information on "Deemed Consent" advertisements.

Policy Background

- 9.4 In 1976 much of the Local Plan area was designated an "Area of Special Advertisement Control" by the County Council. In order to reduce their visual impact stricter limits are applied in this area to the height and size of advertisements which have "Deemed Consent". Only Melton Mowbray and the central area of Bottesford are excluded. The majority of commercial premises are contained within the conservation areas in these settlements where high standards of design are still important.
- 9.5 The Planning Policy Guidance Note No 19 "Outdoor Advertisement Control" acknowledges that all advertisements affect the appearance of the building, structure or place where they are displayed, but that outdoor advertising is essential to commercial activity in a free and diverse economy.
- 9.6 The display of outdoor advertisements can only be controlled by a local planning authority in the interests of amenity and public safety. The Guidance Note advises that local planning authorities when assessing amenity considerations, should have regard to the effect of an advertisement on the appearance of a building or on visual amenities in the immediate neighbourhood where it is to be displayed, and its cumulative effect.
- 9.7 The Council acknowledges the need for advertisements, and will encourage well designed signs which are in keeping with the scale and character of buildings on which they are displayed. However, there is concern that signs should not be visually intrusive, over prolific, cause danger to highway safety or lead to a reduction in the quality of visual amenities, especially where the architectural heritage and natural environment of the Borough is involved.

Aims and Objectives

- 9.8 The Local Plan has the following advertisement aims and objectives:-
- 1 to ensure that the visual amenities of urban and rural environments are not adversely affected by the display of incongruous or unnecessary advertisements;

- 2 to encourage good design and the display of advertisements which contribute to the street scene;
- 3 to ensure that advertisements and new shop fronts are designed to respect and harmonise with the character of buildings to which they are attached;
- 4 to protect the appearance and rural character of the countryside;
- 5 to ensure advertisements contribute to the enhancement of conservation areas;
- 6 to encourage traditional features such as pilasters, stallrisers, and finials in new shop front designs.

Policies and Proposals

Buildings and the Street Scene

- 9.9 There are many listed buildings and other historic buildings in the Borough and the Council wishes to ensure that the appearance and integrity of any building is not adversely affected by poor advertising matter.
- 9.10 Signs are mainly displayed in commercial and retail areas and the Melton Mowbray town centre is the busiest commercial area in the Borough where advertisements and signs are most prolific. The greater part of the town centre is in the Conservation Area and the Council wishes to safeguard the visual qualities of the area and other sensitive areas in the Borough from excessive or poor advertising matter.

AD1 CONSENT WILL BE GRANTED FOR A NON - ILLUMINATED ADVERTISEMENT OR SIGN ON BUILDINGS USED FOR BUSINESS AND OTHER COMMERCIAL OR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES PROVIDED:-

- A) THERE WOULD BE NO ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING TO WHICH IT WOULD BE APPLIED OR THE LOCAL STREET SCENE;**
- B) THERE WOULD BE NO ADVERSE EFFECT ON PUBLIC SAFETY;**
- C) THE SIZE, DESIGN AND SCALE OF THE SIGN WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO ITS SETTING.**

The Design of Signs

- 9.11 The Council will generally consider favourably well designed signs in appropriate locations. However, the Council will be concerned to avoid advertisement clutter, especially a proliferation of hanging signs or illuminated signs. No more than one hanging sign per building is considered appropriate in any conservation area.
- 9.12 A sign should always be designed to relate to the scale, character and detail of the building or premises where it is to be displayed. The size and style of letters and motifs should be in keeping with the proportions and architectural detailing of the building; any colours chosen should whenever possible harmonise with the natural materials of the building.

Illumination

- 9.13 Illumination can in some instances add interest and appeal to a well designed sign. Fascia signs with individually lit letters applied to an unlit background are generally

less garish than fully illuminated box fascias. Conservation areas and other sensitive areas require more exacting standards of control.

AD2 CONSENT WILL BE GRANTED FOR EXTERNALLY ILLUMINATED SIGNS AND OTHER SIGNS WHICH ARE LIMITED TO INDIVIDUALLY ILLUMINATED LETTERS ON AN UNLIT BACKGROUND, PROVIDED THERE WOULD BE NO ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDINGS TO WHICH THEY WOULD BE DISPLAYED OR THE LOCAL STREET SCENE.

9.14 Illuminated box signs by their very nature have a much greater impact on visual amenities and can often be a garish element and have an adverse effect on the street scene, especially in a conservation area or other visually sensitive area. The Council therefore wishes to discourage the proliferation of this type of sign. The following Policy will therefore apply:-

AD3 CONSENT WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR THE DISPLAY OF AN ILLUMINATED BOX FASCIA SIGN OR INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED PROJECTING SIGN WITHIN A DESIGNATED CONSERVATION AREA SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP UNLESS ALL THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA IS COMPLIED WITH:-

- A) THE SIGN WOULD PRESERVE OR ENHANCE THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA;**
- B) THERE WOULD BE NO ADVERSE EFFECTS ON VISUAL AMENITIES OR PUBLIC SAFETY;**
- C) THE SIZE, SCALE, DESIGN AND APPEARANCE OF THE SIGN IS IN KEEPING WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE BUILDING OR STRUCTURE TO WHICH IT WOULD BE DISPLAYED.**

The Open Countryside

9.15 The beauty of the open countryside can be spoilt by the proliferation of direction signs at locations distant from the premises referred to. Once consent is granted for one such sign a precedent is set which can make it difficult to resist other signs. The Council does not wish to encourage unnecessary signs in the open countryside and will therefore be concerned to ensure that any signs permitted respect natural contours, landscape character and background features against which they will be seen. Wherever practicable, the Council will encourage the combining of essential advertising to avoid a proliferation of signs in the countryside.

AD4 CONSENT WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR THE DISPLAY OF ADVERTISEMENTS AND SIGNS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AT LOCATIONS SEPARATE FROM THE PREMISES TO WHICH THEY REFER OR RELATE UNLESS THE ADVERTISEMENTS:-

- A) WOULD NOT CAUSE ANY ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE VISUAL AMENITIES OF THE AREA;**
- B) WOULD BE SITED IN A LOCATION AND OF A DESIGN WHICH RESPECTS THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE SETTING,**

NATURAL CONTOURS AND OTHER BACKGROUND FEATURES;

C) WOULD NOT CONTRIBUTE TO A PROLIFERATION OF ADVERTISEMENTS WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE APPEARANCE OF THE LOCALITY.

Shop Fronts

- 9.16 A new shop front can become in its own right an advertisement. For example the comprehensive use of company colours and logos can clearly identify a national operator. A shop front completely changes the character of a building, particularly if the building has not previously been used as a shop. The impact upon listed buildings can be particularly dramatic and the Council wishes to ensure that any shop fronts and advertisements are complementary and in harmony with the character of buildings to which they are applied, and do not appear obtrusive or garish in the local street scene. Further design advice is contained in the Council's leaflet "A Guide to the Design of Shop Fronts in Melton Mowbray".

AD5 CONSENT WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR ANY SHOP FRONT PROPOSAL WHICH IS NOT IN KEEPING WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE BUILDING TO WHICH IT WOULD BE APPLIED OR IN VISUAL HARMONY WITH ADJACENT SHOP FRONTS AND THE GENERAL STREET SCENE.