

EDINBURGH PLANNING GUIDANCE: OUTDOOR ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP

1. OBJECTIVE

To provide guidance on proposals for outdoor advertisements and sponsorship.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 This guidance has been revised in the context of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan (2016). A core aim is the protection and enhancement of the built heritage of the city, having special regard to the impact of development on the World Heritage Site, conservation areas and the setting of important landscape features and listed buildings, including scheduled monuments. Policies Des 7 'Layout Design' and Des 8 'Public Realm and Landscape Design' refer to the need to contribute to improved public realm and to ensure that all external spaces are designed as an integral part of the scheme as a whole.

2.2 In addition to the Edinburgh Local Development Plan, a number of policies, strategies and guidance which support the protection and enhancement of the public realm are relevant to this guidance. Key citywide documents include Edinburgh's Public Realm Strategy (2009); Locality Improvement Plan (2017); the Economy Strategy (2018); public Spaces Protocol (2018); Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site Management Plan (2018); the Local Transport Strategy (2014); Edinburgh Design Guidance (2018); and the recently approved decision on 'A' Boards and other Temporary on-street Advertising Structures (2018).

2.3 These policies, strategies and guidance set out the Council's aspirations and vision for a consistent, high quality approach to the city's streetscape and public spaces. This includes minimising street clutter by rationing street furniture and signage. This guidance is consistent with these objectives will inform the assessment of formal applications and proposals for public realm improvements.

3. SCOPE OF GUIDANCE

3.1 This guidance applies city-wide to proposals involving the display of outdoor advertisements with the exception of shopfront signage, flags and banners. Guidance on shop signage is included in the Guidance for Businesses. Flags and banners will be addressed through a review of the Guidance for Businesses.

3.2 The guidance also covers advertising upon the gable elevations of buildings and advertisements on wraps enclosing scaffolding.

3.3 For the avoidance of doubt, 'A' boards and other temporary on-street advertising structures are not covered by this guidance as these items are generally removed at night and enforcement under the planning system is not practical. Nevertheless, the Council recently agreed to a city-wide ban on temporary on-street advertising structures to be enforced under separate legislation.

4. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1 An advertisement is defined in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (Scotland) Regulations 1984 (as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991) as “any word, letter, model, sign, placard, board, notice, awning, blind, device, or representation whether illuminated or not, in the nature of, and employed wholly or partially for the purpose of, advertisement, announcement or direction (excluding any such thing employed wholly as a memorial or as a railway signal), and includes any hoarding or similar structure or any balloon used or designed, or adapted for use and anything else used, or designed or adapted principally for use, for the display of advertisements”.
- 4.2 Under the 1984 Regulations, a wide variety of advertisements can be displayed with deemed consent which means that it is unnecessary to submit a formal application in respect of them. However, many advertisements will require express consent through the submission of an application for advertisement consent. Guidance on the need, or otherwise, for consent can be sought from the Planning Service. The display of any advertisement is subject to a number of standard conditions to ensure that it is displayed with the agreement of the owner of the land, maintained in a reasonable and safe condition and sited so as not to obscure road signs. Notwithstanding the foregoing, proposals that involve a listed building may also require a separate application for listed building consent.
- 4.3 The regulatory powers available under this legislation are only exercisable in two respects: amenity and public safety and these are the statutory tests. In terms of amenity, the Planning Authority to grant express advertisement consent is obliged to take account of the general characteristics of the area, particularly any feature of architectural, historic, cultural or civic interest. In terms of public safety, the local planning authority must have regard to the potential effect of the proposed advertisement on road traffic signs, railway signals or any aid to navigation by water or air.
- 4.4 This guidance constitutes a material factor in the assessment of applications for advertisement consent and will be used by the planning authority in applying the statutory tests. Other considerations may include appeal decisions, but each case will be judged on its own merits.

5. **PRIOR TO APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

- 5.1 Particular requirements apply to proposed advertising on new sites and where they would have an impact on statutorily protected locations such as conservation areas, designed landscapes and listed buildings.
- 5.2 In identifying appropriate locations, applicants will be expected to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the advert on the public realm, urban design and existing and future uses of the place covering both visual impacts. Supporting information covering this assessment should where relevant include:
- the historical context of the wider area, in particular buildings and areas of architectural and historic interest (listed buildings, conservation areas, world heritage site);
 - the visual impact on the amenity of nearby occupiers;
 - the potential impact on local movement patterns;
 - a local character appraisal of the immediate context (including for instance local topography, urban grain, scale and height, streetscape);

- consideration of competing lighting, and physical activities, e.g. local traffic, street lighting and nearby uses; and
- scope for removing competing/unnecessary visual clutter.

6. DIGITAL ADVERTISING

6.1 Digital media is a relatively new method of advertising using public digital screens. It usually takes the form of large-scale TV-style images, which can be either moving or static. They are already found in many shopping centres and transport hubs, and are also increasingly being developed for outdoor use. In some cases the screen can be similar to a television screen carrying many and varied messages. These differ from static screens or other advertisements in that their content is made up of moving images which can draw the eye in the same way as a television in an indoor space. As such they can have a disproportionate impact on public spaces.

6.2 In addition to the Control of Advertisement regulations and the Council's guidance, the Outdoor Media Centre (OMC), the trade and marketing body for the outdoor advertising industry has in place a voluntary code for digital large format roadside advertising (published in January 2011). The code reflects planning regulations in place throughout the UK and states that:

- there shall be no moving images, animation, video or full motion images displayed unless consent has been granted for such displays;
- digital roadside billboards/hoardings shall not change more frequently than every 5 seconds unless consent has been granted for such displays;
- the luminance level of a digital roadside billboards shall comply with the Institute of Lighting Engineers Technical Report No's 5 (2003); and
- roadside digital displays will (in Scotland) conform to the 5 'Standard Conditions' specified in Schedule 1 of the Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements)(Scotland) Regulations 1984.

GUIDANCE

7. Guidance – All Outdoor Advertising Displays

Note: This applies to all applications for advertisement consent, but, should be read in conjunction with the specific guidance relating to different forms and locations for outdoor advertising in **sections 8 – 11** of this guidance.

In determining the acceptability of an advertising display, each application will be assessed in terms of its impact on:

- visual amenity (not only of its immediate backdrop, but, also of its local and wider urban or natural landscape setting); and
- public safety (particularly the safety of pedestrians, drivers and other road users).

7.1 Visual Amenity

To ensure that the visual amenity of an advertising site or the surroundings is not adversely affected:

- all advertising signs should be of high quality materials. The Council will welcome innovative design and will look for the improvement of existing authorised adverts where the opportunity arises;
- the Council will resist the accumulation of advertising clutter;
- all advertising should be designed to carefully integrate with its surroundings to respect the character and appearance of its backdrop, including localised and wider urban and natural landscape settings; and
- in areas where there are listed buildings, and within conservation areas and the World Heritage Site, a higher quality of design and materials will be expected to reflect those areas' special character and appearance.

7.2 Public Safety

To ensure that public safety is not adversely affected, the following will be taken into account:

- proximity to traffic signals; colours and level of luminance should not interfere or cause distraction to road and cycleway users in the vicinity of signals;
- proximity to other hazards on the road where the advertising sign may interfere with visibility or cause driver/cyclist distraction e.g. junctions, queuing traffic and pedestrian crossing points, the approach to traffic signal-controlled junctions;
- cumulative impact relative to existing signage, including road signs;
- proximity to a roundabout or complex priority junction; and
- obstruction of paths and cycleways, including headroom (2.5 metres minimum clearance).

Special care should be taken when a digital advert will be visible from a public highway. The applicant will be expected to undertake a safety audit, taking into account the following:

- Moving images, defined as something that changes more frequently than 5 seconds, should not be used.
- The display should not be:
 - positioned near to the view of anything drivers need to pay attention to, e.g. traffic signals; or
 - positioned to be visible from a point where drivers are expected to be making a manoeuvre, e.g. lane changing or where there is poor inter-visibility to other road users.

7.3 Illumination

In addition to the voluntary code for digital large format roadside advertising, the use of planning conditions to control the luminosity, brightness and operational hours for all formats of illuminated and digital outdoor advertising will be considered in circumstances

where there are implications for visual amenity and/or public safety. The implications of illuminated advertising on the character and appearance, surrounding uses, and traffic conditions within the advert's setting should also be considered during times of reduced daylight hours, when the impact of the illumination on amenity and public safety will be more pronounced.

8. **Guidance: Large Format Outdoor Advertising Displays -**

This includes digital advertising as well as other illuminated and non-illuminated advertising.

8.1 Large format outdoor advertising displays (see definition) include sites known as advertising hoardings, which were usually erected on roadside locations or as temporary features on site hoardings surrounding development sites. Such displays are, in some locations, a long term feature in the streetscape. In such circumstances, proposals for replacement displays of a similar or smaller size including digital displays, where an advert hoarding currently exists, are generally considered to be acceptable in principle unless the circumstances of the site or areas have changed, or the display will have an increased adverse impact on residential properties nearby. However, such displays will need to comply with any conditions.

8.2 Large format outdoor advertising displays will generally be suitable where located:

- within predominantly commercial and industrial areas or transport corridors with an undeveloped setting;
- temporarily, around building sites; and
- to screen exposed, unsightly sites/buildings.

8.3 Large format outdoor advertising displays will not be supported where:

- the site lies within a conservation areas, World Heritage Site or would adversely affect the setting of a natural landscape feature or listed building(s);
- they would be close to and/or directly overlooked by any existing or proposed residential property;
- they would be out of keeping with the scale or character of the buildings or land on which they are displayed;
- they would be likely to result in advertising clutter or adversely affect streetscape or building setting; and
- they are located in, or adjacent to, public realm areas.

8.4 Advertising displays must not give rise to an adverse impact on public safety. Digital advertising where images change frequently can raise particular concerns for traffic, cycle and pedestrian safety. The level of illumination of digital or internally illuminated signs can also have an effect on both traffic safety and amenity. For these reasons, the following additional standards apply to digital and internally illuminated display screens:

- they will only permitted where they do not contain moving or flashing content, particularly where they are considered to have a potentially significant adverse impact on pedestrian and vehicular traffic safety;
- they must not use a slow dissolve between advertisements;

- they will only be permitted in areas which are already busy commercial areas; and
- the cumulative effect of such advertisements will be taken into consideration in assessing the impact on amenity and public safety.

9. **Guidance: Small Format Outdoor Advertising Displays / Advertising on Street Furniture**

9.1 There may be locations where small format outdoor advertisement displays, including adverts upon street furniture, are appropriate, such as in commercial areas. However, such displays will need to be in keeping with the design and layout of the public realm and ensure that impact on the character of the area and on pedestrian safety is not compromised.

9.2 Special care should be taken where proposing advertising in areas of historic interest where important views and vistas or the setting of designed landscapes or listed buildings are present. Particular care should be taken where proposing advertising in residential areas.

9.3 Small format outdoor advertising displays / advertising on street furniture will generally be suitable where located:

- in areas of commercial character;
- on temporary hoardings around vacant / construction sites to include creative / informative content;
- on the following items of street furniture:
 - bus and tram shelters;
 - bicycle lockers;
 - parking ticket machines; and
 - litter bins
- within areas that are the subject of comprehensive redevelopment proposals that comprise comprehensive public realm works as part of the holistic approach to the redevelopment.

9.4 There are locations where small format outdoor advertising displays or adverts upon street furniture are not appropriate. These include areas of exceptional architectural or historic importance, such as George Street and the Royal Mile.

9.5 In these areas, advertising displays would compete visually with the appreciation of the historic townscape character in which its historic buildings, monuments and open spaces of national importance have been carefully planned to provide outstanding vistas.

9.6 The following locations and proposals will not be supported:

- within certain parts of the World Heritage Site where the streets are of exceptional architectural and/or historic interest (e.g. The Royal Mile and George Street) or where advertising would adversely affect important views and vistas or the setting of designed landscapes or listed buildings;

- in predominantly residential areas, including on the returns of buildings into residential side streets, substantially devoid of advertisements, which would affect the character of the area;
- in conservation areas, the World Heritage Site or public realm areas where they would add additional structures in the public realm, thus adding to advertising or street furniture clutter, which could affect amenity, or where they would create an obstruction to pedestrians and cyclists;
- where the advertisement would have an adverse effect on the special character and appearance of a conservation area or the setting of natural landscape features or listed buildings;
- when they do not comply with other Council guidance on de-cluttering streets, design for buses and cycling or obstruct the view from any bus or tram stop; and
- involve a free-standing outdoor advertising display unless exceptional circumstances justify otherwise.

10. **Guidance: Sponsorship**

- 10.1 Sponsorship of certain publicly owned or maintained pieces of infrastructure, e.g. roundabouts can bring benefits to the Council and may be acceptable where it does not create an adverse impact on the amenity of an area.

Recognition of the sponsor should:

- be located on or adjacent to what is sponsored;
- be constructed of high quality materials;
- relate well to its surroundings; and
- Be discreet in size and location. The size should be the minimum necessary to identify the sponsor, bearing in mind the object that is being sponsored and whether it is located within the pedestrian or vehicle environment.

- 10.2 In normal circumstances, no more than one sign will be acceptable for any sponsored item. Recognition of a sponsor should be achieved, where possible, without the addition of new elements into the environment. Where possible it should be carried out in association with existing signage in order to minimise street signage and clutter.

Local sponsorship of single day events such as school sports days will not be subject to planning control.

11. **Guidance: Advertising on Scaffolding**

- 11.1 Adverts on scaffolding will be acceptable providing they form part of a net on the building including a 1:1 photographic image of the completed building under construction or under refurbishment. Alternatively, and under special circumstances, a creative solution may be considered acceptable for the building.

- 11.2 This is subject to the following criteria:

- The building should be located in the city centre, a designated town centre or business and industry area.
- The netting should enclose the entire facade and the advertising space should cover no more than 15% of the elevation within the World Heritage Site and 30% elsewhere and should not be fragmented.
- On corner sites, advertising will be acceptable on both elevations, only when both elevations are covered with a 1:1 photographic image of the building. In these cases the advert shall cover no more than 10% of each of the two elevations covered by the 1:1 photographic image of the building within the World Heritage Site and 20% elsewhere.
- The scaffolding must cover an entire elevation of the building, must be erected only for the purposes of active repair and construction work, and be removed as soon as the work is completed. Adverts proposed for scaffolding around empty or vacant buildings are not generally considered acceptable. The advert should last no longer than the agreed building programme, or one year (after which it may be renewed), whichever is the shorter.
- The fabric used for the image should be of a consistently high quality to ensure a sharpness of image and the colours should closely reflect the building being covered. All shop, contractor and other signage must be appropriately incorporated onto the overall image, to avoid separate signage.
- The use of 1:1 netting images of the building, with no advertising, will be encouraged on scaffolding in all areas of the city, and in particular buildings of special architectural merit or forming part of a key vista.
- In order to ensure the netting advert is genuinely required it is also necessary to ensure that all relevant permissions are in place for the refurbishment works. For this reason, planning permission and /or listed building consent should have been secured for the works to the building prior to the granting of advertisement for the shroud advertisement.

Definitions:

Large Format Outdoor Advertising Displays- Advertisements, not including banners, which do not generally relate directly to the land or premises on which they are displayed. Traditionally, these are paper posters on hoardings, either free-standing or attached to buildings, although modern displays built in metal now include moving prismatic panels or internally illuminated panels.

Small Format Outdoor Advertising Displays - 4-sheet or 6-sheet size panels, either freestanding or attached to street-furniture or the walls of shops and other commercial premises.

A-Boards - These are non-illuminated portable boards/ stands most often placed on the pedestrian footway associated with the advertising of adjoining high street retail/business premises

Public Realm - The parts of the city (whether publicly or privately owned) that are available for everyone to see and use without charge 24 hours a day, including streets, squares and parks.

World Heritage Site - A cultural or natural site considered by UNESCO World Heritage Committee to be of 'outstanding universal value' and therefore one that needs to be preserved as part of the world heritage of humankind. The historic core of Edinburgh, essentially the Old and New Town, was inscribed in 1995. The Forth Bridge was inscribed in 2015.

Conservation Area - An area designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 as being of special architectural or historic interest, the character and interest of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Designed Landscapes – grounds consciously laid out for artistic effect and statutorily protected as part of Scotland’s historic environment and landscape.

Listed Building - A building identified by Historic Environment Scotland as being of special architectural or historical interest as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. Categorised A, B, C(s) to reflect their relative importance.

