

**Interim**

# Planning Guidance

## Shop Front Signs & their Illumination

## **INTERIM PLANNING GUIDANCE**

As part of the Local Plan process, supplementary planning guidance was prepared to supplement policies and proposals in the Local Plan. The Borough Council consulted the public on the guidance at the draft deposit and revised draft deposit stages of the Local Plan preparation process. Some of the comments on the Draft Deposit Guidance were taken into account in formulating the Revised Draft Guidance.

It was not appropriate for the Borough Council to adopt the guidance as supplementary planning guidance because this can only supplement an adopted local plan and the Tamworth Local Plan 2001-2011 will not be adopted until 2006. Furthermore, under the new development plan system, supplementary planning guidance has been replaced with supplementary planning documents.

This guidance was approved as interim planning guidance by the Borough Council's Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2005. Appropriate guidance will be replaced with supplementary planning documents in due course. This is in accordance with the Council's Local Development Scheme that came into effect in March 2005.

August 2005

## INTRODUCTION

Advertisements can make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area. The design and location of signs and advertisements can affect the character of a building and the appearance of a shop. Well designed and suitably located signs can be attractive whereas clutter, unrelated, oversized or brightly lit signs detract from the building, shop front and street.

Shop front advertising can take many forms including fascia signs, projecting and hanging signs and sign writing applied to windows. The key to good quality signage is to recognise that it should be seen as an element within the design of the shop front. To ignore the relationship between the various elements of shop fronts results in clutter which detracts from the intended attractive result.

## FASCIA SIGNS

Traditionally, fascia signs were either hand painted or used individual letters and other decorative techniques, sometimes under glass. This type of sign can be

adapted to suit most buildings. Modern boxed fascias which project from the face of the building are clumsy and should always be avoided. It is always necessary to integrate the design of the sign within the shop front so lettering is normally best sign written onto the fascia or applied as individual letters. New fascias should not be added over the top of existing ones, and sign writing should always be applied on to the fascia rather than being applied to boards, which look clumsy. The fascia sign is also a good place to incorporate the street number of the property.

## PROJECTING AND HANGING SIGNS

Projecting and hanging signs may not always be suitable for buildings within the historic area. Where appropriate, traditional hanging signs in the form of a swinging sign hinged from a wrought iron bracket are usually the most acceptable. Hanging symbols denoting the trade carried on in the premises might be considered as an alternative to a hanging sign.

Although it is difficult to predetermine the size and design of hanging signs, a general principle to use is that they should be of a high quality design and relate to the size and scale of the building's façade, not appearing either over intrusive or ridiculously small. Projecting box signs and signs forming a projecting part of the fascia sign will not be appropriate within the conservation areas.

There should normally be only one hanging sign on any building and its positioning should take into account the architectural design of the building. The sign should not normally be placed below the fascia level nor above the first floor cill height.

## **LETTERING**

The use of traditional forms of lettering, as practised by a good sign writer can be more attractive and eye catching than, for example, overly large individual plastic letters. The choice of lettering and illustration should reflect the use and character of the shop and can also take into account the character of the building. On traditional fascias, the lettering should always be hand painted

Where there is no fascia, simple solid individual lettering applied to the natural materials of the building are most appropriate.

Colours are important. Gilding and strong tones on a dark background reflect light and are clearly visible at night, and should be considered as an alternative when preparing proposals for new signs.

## **ILLUMINATION**

Illumination of signs can contribute to the street if it is treated as an integral part of the overall design of the building and not merely as a means of drawing attention to an advertisement. Where lighting is considered appropriate, the source of illumination should be discrete, perhaps using halo illumination, pelmet or trough lighting. Internally illuminated box fascias, swan neck and projecting spot lights will normally look out of place in a conservation area. It is generally unacceptable to illuminate projecting or hanging signs, unless they belong to a public house, restaurant or similar late opening premises.

## **WHAT PERMISSIONS ARE NEEDED?**

Owners, tenants and those proposing alteration or replacement to advertisements are encouraged to approach Development Control Service at an early state to determine the consents required. The Advertisement Regulations are extremely complex and if your building is listed, you may also require listed building consent. It is always better to seek advice prior to installing any means of advertisement.