



A Development Control policy for advertisement hoardings

Introduction

The control of advertisement hoardings should be exercised on two grounds only : amenity and public safety. While all applications have to be treated on their merits, it is important to ensure that the Council is consistent in its approach. A Development Control Policy for hoardings will also guide advertisers to the few locations where hoardings are acceptable. There will be less excuse for advertisers to erect hoardings in unacceptable locations.

Amenity

The easiest way to look at amenity is to consider whether or not an area is sensitive. This will vary according to the type of area it is.

Open Countryside

Advertisement hoardings are out of place in open countryside areas and will not normally be allowed. In these areas, the large size and bright colours of hoardings introduce a strident and jarring element into the natural landscape.

Main Approaches to Settlements

Advertisement hoardings are also out of place along the main approaches to towns and villages in West Lothian. This is in line with other policies of the Council which aim to improve the appearance of the main entrances into towns. To allow hoardings in these areas would detract from environmental improvements which have already been carried out.

Residential Areas

A high standard of amenity is normally expected in any predominately residential area. Advertisement hoardings are therefore out of place in these areas. If there are mixed use areas with shops or offices interspersed with housing, some poster-type advertisement may be acceptable, provided it is carefully related to the scale of surrounding buildings and designed and positioned so as not to intrude upon or interrupt existing features or landmarks.

Conservation Areas, Areas of Special Control and Listed Buildings

Apart from exceptional cases, hoardings will usually be unacceptable in West Lothian's Conservation Areas since these areas are the most historically and architecturally sensitive. Areas of special control, as defined in the Local Plans, are also sensitive areas where it is unlikely that large-scale advertisement hoardings will be acceptable. There is a strong presumption against advertisement hoardings being erected on, or in a position to affect the setting of a Listed Building.

Commercial/Industrial Areas

In commercial and industrial areas, the standard of amenity people expect is different to that in residential areas or in open countryside. People expect to see commercial posters in commercial and industrial areas and advertisement hoardings can often fit in an acceptable way. Also, the scale of buildings in this type of area is usually larger and can more easily accommodate larger hoardings. However, any hoarding must be in scale with either the building on which it is erected or surrounding buildings if it is free-standing. Hoardings must not be unduly dominant or overconspicuous. They must not cut across any architectural features of the buildings on which they are erected, and should be designed and positioned to be seen as an integral feature of the building.

Advertisement hoardings used as screening

In some circumstances, hoardings can be used to screen derelict or unsightly areas. It can also be possible to incorporate them with fencing and landscaping and/or seating to obtain an overall improvement in the appearance of an area. If they are to be used in this way, careful consideration needs to be given to whether the hoarding is a positive improvement or whether its effect merely serves to draw attention to an eyesore. In general though, the screening of an unsightly area by hoardings has to be balanced against their often jarring and detrimental impact on visual amenity.

Public safety

This relates to road safety and whether hoardings distract drivers. Any proposals for hoardings which are located near to busy roads will be examined very carefully by both Development Control and Highways to determine whether public safety may be affected. Situations where this may occur include busy junctions or where hoardings conflict with road signs, potentially causing congestion.

Summary of criteria

Hoardings are likely to be **unacceptable**:

- In open countryside.
- On main approaches to settlements.
- In residential areas.
- In Conservation Areas, Areas of Special Control on or near Listed Buildings.
- Where public safety is affected.

Hoardings may be **acceptable** in suitable locations:

- In commercial/industrial areas.
- Where they can be considered to be screening a derelict or unsightly area.

Any proposals for hoardings which are considered to conflict with the amenity or public safety principles outlined above will be resisted.

(Revised July 1998)