

LANGEBERG MUNICIPALITY

POLICY FOR THE DESIGN AND CONTROL OF SIGNS.

1. INTRODUCTION

The design and placement of signs has an important impact on the urban as well as the rural environment. Well designed signs together with tasteful building facades undoubtedly contribute to the quality of an area. Unfortunately the lack of guidelines for the control of signs in many towns and cities has resulted generally in an unacceptable standard of graphic design and that a large number of signs are designed with inconsequent and unimaginative information.

Signs are a very important part of the urban environment as they provide information about the facilities, products, services and opportunities which are available in a particular area. To be effective, therefore, signs must stand out in the environment and communicate in a simple and systematic manner. At the same time it is important from an aesthetic point of view that signs be sympathetic to the surrounding environment.

Signs should already receive attention at the design stage of new buildings or alterations to existing buildings. Sketch plans of new buildings and alterations to existing buildings which are submitted to the Council for approval must indicate where and how signs might be placed and what requirements such signs must meet. In this way developers and architects will make a meaningful contribution to the control of signs from an early stage.

Thus it is important that signs not be seen as something which has to be added to a building, but as an integrated part of the total development which can be planned systematically.

2. DEFINITIONS

3. CATEGORIES OF CONTROL

3.1 Strict Control

- a) This category of control will be applied to any erf, group of erven or area which is considered by the Council and/or declared conservation areas to be of historic, architectonic or other importance as well as erven in the category "Partial Control" which border directly on such erf, group of

erven or area. The Council has designated the following areas for the category "Strict Control":

The extended historical core/designated areas as shown on Appendix 1 and

b) The following areas may also be classified as areas of strict control:

- national parks
- game reserves
- wilderness areas
- areas of extensive farming activity
- beautiful landscape routes and focus points/elements
- areas for passive recreation
- historic and architectonic landmarks and areas
- entrances to towns

3.2 Partial Control

This category of control will be applied to the portion of the municipal area not covered under 3.1.

3.3 Advertising Signs along Provincial roads/road reserves under the control of the Department of Public Transport and Public Works

This category of control will be applied strictly in accordance with the guidelines, policy and procedures of that department.

4. GUIDELINES FOR THE DESIGN OF SIGNS

4.1 Partial Control Category

- a) Signs must be in accord with the general architectonic design of the building. The form, position and size, and the number of signs must create visual unity with the building or basic structure and be in relation to the facade or surface thereof which is seen.
- b) Signs must be sensitive to the character of the immediate environment.
- c) Signs must not conceal architectonic details on the facades of buildings.
- d) Signs should preferably be positioned on places which were originally designed for that purpose.
- e) Signs may not protrude above the roofline of buildings.

- f) No sign attached to a building, other than signs which protrude therefrom, may have visible supports or anchor poles.
- g) No publicity or advertising signs other than those which identify the occupier, the nature of the business and/or products are permitted. Maximum size 0,54 m².
- h) The size, placement, colours and illumination of signs may not create a danger for traffic or pedestrians or create an obstruction for neighbouring residents or tenant(s).
- i) No sign other than signs in windows and freestanding signs may have an unobstructed height of less than 2,4 m.
- j) Signs must be of safe construction and durable materials and firmly attached to the building or structure.
- k) No sign may be painted on the roof of a building.
- l) No sign may be painted on or attached to or between the pillars or supports of a veranda or balcony.
- m) Designs must be tasteful, simple, informative but dynamic and not more than three letter types should be used in one design. Signs which are crowded with names and messages in a variety of letter types and colours must be avoided.
- o) The maximum height of letters in any sign is determined by the surface of the building.
- p) Only the following signs may be used in areas where the dominant use is residential:
 - i) Any temporary sign which is displayed on an erf on which a building, swimming pool, tennis court, paving, fencing, garden landscaping or any other structure is being erected or done and which indicates the name of the contractors or consultants involved.
 - ii) Any sign on a sturdy, corrosion resistant base having a maximum size of 0,1 m² displaying any of the following:
 - the name, emblem and telephone number of the company which owns or manages a particular residential building;
 - the name and profession or occupation of the occupier; and

- the name, address and telephone number of a security company, alarm system or neighbourhood watch system protecting the premises; and
- any sign indicating the name and street address of a building.

q) Estate Agents' Boards

- Boards may only be affixed to the wall or fence of the property which is for sale or to rent or, in the absence of a street boundary wall or fence, free standing on the premises in a purpose made frame.
- Boards may not be affixed to trees, traffic lights or other traffic sign poles, walls, wires, stones or any natural thing.
- Boards may not be larger than 0.3 m².
- Only one board per estate agent per property is allowed.
- No duplicate boards are allowed.
- The Council has the power to cancel the privilege to display boards if it is found that an agent frequently ignores these conditions.

- r) A-frame boards are permitted on properties and shall not exceed 600 mm in width and 900 mm in height.

4.2 Strict Control Category

Over and above the guidelines set out in 4.1, signs on an erf, a group of erven or in an area falling under the category "Strict Control" must comply with the following guidelines and requirements, unless the Council approves otherwise on aesthetic grounds:

- a) No signs may protrude on the side or above a building.
- b) All illumination must be by means of concealed lighting and all back lighting must be restricted to the surface of the sign.
- c) No flashing signs are permitted.
- d) Signs on buildings of historic importance may only be illuminated by means of concealed lighting.
- e) Lettering should be applied directly onto facades rather than on panels or boxes which are attached to the walls.
- f) Signs must comply with the following design requirements:

- i) The maximum length of any line of letters is 8 metres.
- ii) Signs must be maintained to the satisfaction of the Council.
- iii) The maximum total surface area of all the permanent signs on a building shall be calculated on the basis of 0,5 m² for each running metre of the street façade of the building on which the relevant signs are to be affixed, which maximum total surface area shall be approved on aesthetic grounds by the Council;
- iv) The maximum surface area of any protruding sign is 1 m² and the placement and design thereof may not put the public in danger in any way;
- v) No sign may protrude by more than 2 metres from the surface of the façade of the building;
- vi) The maximum surface area of window signs may not exceed 20% of the total glass window surface area of the shop or business;
- vii) No advertising sign other than a suspended sign may be placed/fixed to a proclaimed national heritage building(s).
- g) Only one protruding sign per street façade may be affixed for each ground floor business or shop in the building.
- h) Estate **Agents' Boards**
 - Boards may only be fixed to the wall or fencing of the property which is for sale or to rent.
 - Boards may not be fixed to trees, traffic lights or other traffic sign poles, walls, wires, stones or any natural thing.
 - Boards may not be larger than 0.3 m².
 - Only one board per estate agent per property is allowed.
 - No duplicate boards are allowed.
 - The Council has the power to cancel the privilege to display boards if it is found that an agent frequently ignores these conditions.

5. **SIGNS REQUIRING COUNCIL APPROVAL**

None of the following signs may be erected without written Council approval:

- a) "Blow-up Signs"

- b) Any sign which crosses the boundary of a property
- c) “Billboards” and other high impact, freestanding signs.
- d) Flickering signs, floating signs and signs on banners and flags, on paper, plastic or other similar soft material or on cloth or other woven material.
- e) Moving signs (ie airship, trailer).
- f) Signs against tower structures (silos, radio masts, telecommunication structures).
- g) Signs on bridges, towers/masts, power masts.
- h) Replicas of products and three dimensional signs.
- i) Fixed roof signs.

A representation of any sign on an erf, group of erven or in an area falling under the “Partial Control” category, however, must be handed in at the Department of Planning and Economic Development of the Municipality.

6. PRINCIPLES CONCERNING TOURISM SIGNS

- The objective is to provide the tourist with directions and information;
- It does not serve commercial and/or competitive ends for the various facilities, activities and/or services;
- It will not be used for direct marketing;
- The display of a large number of signs at one place must be avoided;
- The same standard for each sign will be applied (white on brown);
- A sign will not be used if there is a logical indication for the tourist that the facility exists;
- More than one symbol (smaller symbols) may be approved only if more than one facility to be shown.

7. APPROVAL OF SIGNS

- Tourist facilities in the central part of the town may erect name signs in the CBD and also on the main road (as approved by the Provincial Roads Engineer) or as identified by the Council, with an additional name board for those facilities which are situated in streets which are parallel to the main street. The latter signs will be considered on the request of the owners and, if approved, will be erected at owners' cost.

- The name boards of tourist facilities in areas outside the central town may be erected at the entrance to the residential area, with a further, follow-up sign at a suitable crossroads at which a turn must be made.
- Provision will be made to erect two name signs on one panel of the boards.
- Tourist signs in urban areas must be treated in a system of indicator boards and follow-up signs.
- An application for a sign will only be considered if all town planning requirements have been met.

8. Requirements for applications

An owner or tenant of an erf or building, or part of an erf or building who wishes to erect any sign for which Council permission must be obtained to erect, introduce or display, must apply in writing to the Municipal Manager for such permission. An application for the consent of the Council must be accompanied by:

- a) Name, address and contact telephone number.
- b) A site plan of the relevant property on a scale of at least 1:500 on which every building on the property as well as the proposed position(s) of the signs are shown.
- c) A sketch of the relevant sign(s) in colour and on a scale of at least 1:20 on which all details and measurements in connection with the design are shown.
- d) A sketch on a scale of at least 1:50 and/or a clear photograph of the environment in which, or of the building façade or other surface on which the sign(s) will be erected or displayed. The relevant sign(s), in colour, any existing signs, as well as the most important architectonic details in the case of a building façade, must be shown on the sketch or photo.

The method of illuminating, if any, must be shown.

9. PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS

- a) Prescribed application forms (administered by the Town Planning Section), completed and signed by the applicant.
- b) Application fee paid and receipt attached to application form.
- c) Complete basic information.
- d) Building section of Municipality receives, date stamps and registers.

- e) Referred to appropriate internal departments and others involved. Referral of application to the Aesthetics Committee concerned will be at the discretion of the Head of Department, on the understanding that applications within proclaimed conservation areas must be referred automatically to the Aesthetics Committee.
- f) Additional information may be requested from the applicant.
- g) Application is evaluated.
- h) Application approved or rejected in writing according to Council delegations.
- i) Applicant informed in writing (date registered).
- j) Right of Appeal to Council.

10. RIGHT OF APPEAL

When an application for the erection of an external advertisement sign is refused in terms of delegated powers or is approved conditionally, the applicant has the right to appeal to the Council, which right must be exercised within 21 days of the decision being made known to him/her. Appeals must be in writing, properly dated, signed and motivated.

11. ILLEGAL SIGNS

1. Any sign which is erected or displayed after the acceptance of this policy without the written approval of the Council will be deemed to be an illegal sign.
2. The Council can/must notify the owner and beneficiary of an illegal sign the sign is illegal whereafter the sign shall be removed within 14 days.
3. Delay to remove a sign in accordance with 9.2 above shall be an offence and will be dealt with according to law enforcement measures.
4. The Council's Building Section's Schedules of Fines shall apply as if the illegal sign was a small building work.
5. The Council may remove the relevant signs once the advertiser(s) has been notified in writing that they do not comply with the Council's policy and the advertiser has been given an opportunity to remove the sign(s) himself within 30 days and/or has obtained permission for an alternative (correct) sign.