



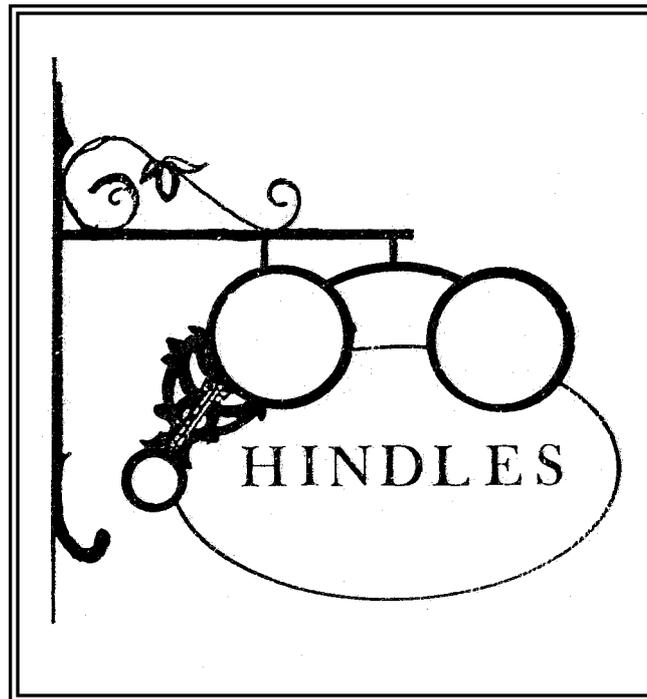
**BLACKBURN**  
*with*  
**DARWEN**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

---

# Outdoor Advertisements & Signs

---



---

**BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN  
BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN**

## **SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

---

This is one of a series of supplementary planning guidance notes prepared by the Council to raise awareness of good design and to improve the quality of new development.

The following titles are available from the Council's Technical Services Department at Blackburn and Darwen Town Halls.

### **Residential and Other Related Uses**

1. New Residential Development
2. Extensions for Detached and Semi-detached Houses
3. Extensions for Terraced Houses
4. Community and Other Uses within Residential Areas
5. Residential Institutions

### **Conservation and Design**

6. Listed Buildings
7. Conservation Areas
8. Outdoor Advertisements and Signs
9. Shopfront Design and Security
10. Industrial and Warehousing Buildings

### **Rural Areas**

11. Agricultural Buildings
12. The Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside
13. Village Appraisals

### **Natural Environment**

14. Landscaping and Wildlife Habitat Creation
15. Species Protection

## OUTDOOR ADVERTISEMENTS AND SIGNS

The Council considers that outdoor advertising is an essential part of commercial life in the Borough. It is a prime means of passing on information and of promoting products and causes. Outdoor advertisements take many forms. Among the most common are fascia signs and projecting signs on shops and business premises, pole signs on petrol station forecourts, poster hoardings and advance signs alongside roads. There can be cases where external painting, if it is of a pictorial nature, can constitute an advertisement or sign.

In order to assist developers in understanding what is appropriate on a particular site the Council has set out the following advice which supplements the policy criteria set out in Local Plan Policy HD7. The Advertisement Regulations are complicated and the Council's Planning Service should always be consulted to see if proposals need consent.

### Consent to display an advertisement

Consent to display may be required under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations. Some categories of signs are exempted from control, such as advertisements displayed within a building and not seen from outside and those on vehicles that can move. Others have "deemed consent" which means that the Council's consent is not needed. However, most types of advertisements do need the Council's "express" consent:

- virtually all posters and illuminated signs
- most advertisements on gable ends
- all advance and directional signs
- signs on shop fronts or business premises where the top of the sign is more than 4.6 metres above ground level or where the letters or logos are larger than 0.75 metres

*This illustrative sketch shows how excessive advertising can cumulatively lead to a garish and untidy street scene.*



### **Considerations**

For those signs and advertisements which fall to be approved by the Council, there are only two considerations which can be taken into account: amenity and public safety. Except in very rare circumstances, what an advertisement says, what it advertises or the illustrations it contains, are not controlled by the Regulations.

The intention is not to stifle original designs or new display techniques but to ensure that signs and advertisements are in harmony with their surroundings.

### **Amenity**

In looking at the amenity aspects of an advertisement, careful consideration should be given to its effect on the appearance of the building or on the visual amenity of the immediate neighbourhood in terms of its location, position and size.

The type of building, whether it is listed or in a conservation area, and the predominant land uses are all relevant considerations. For instance, a brightly illuminated sign which may be appropriate in a high street may not be acceptable on a corner shop in a residential area. The cumulative effect of advertisements and signs must also be taken into account, which would mean that those which would create a cluttered untidy appearance will not receive consent.

### **Public safety**

Advertisement proposals should not prejudice public safety, particularly if the advertisement is to be positioned close to a road junction where drivers may be distracted. Extra care should also be taken to ensure that illuminated advertisements do not trouble road users because of poor positioning or cause confusion with illuminated traffic signs and signals.

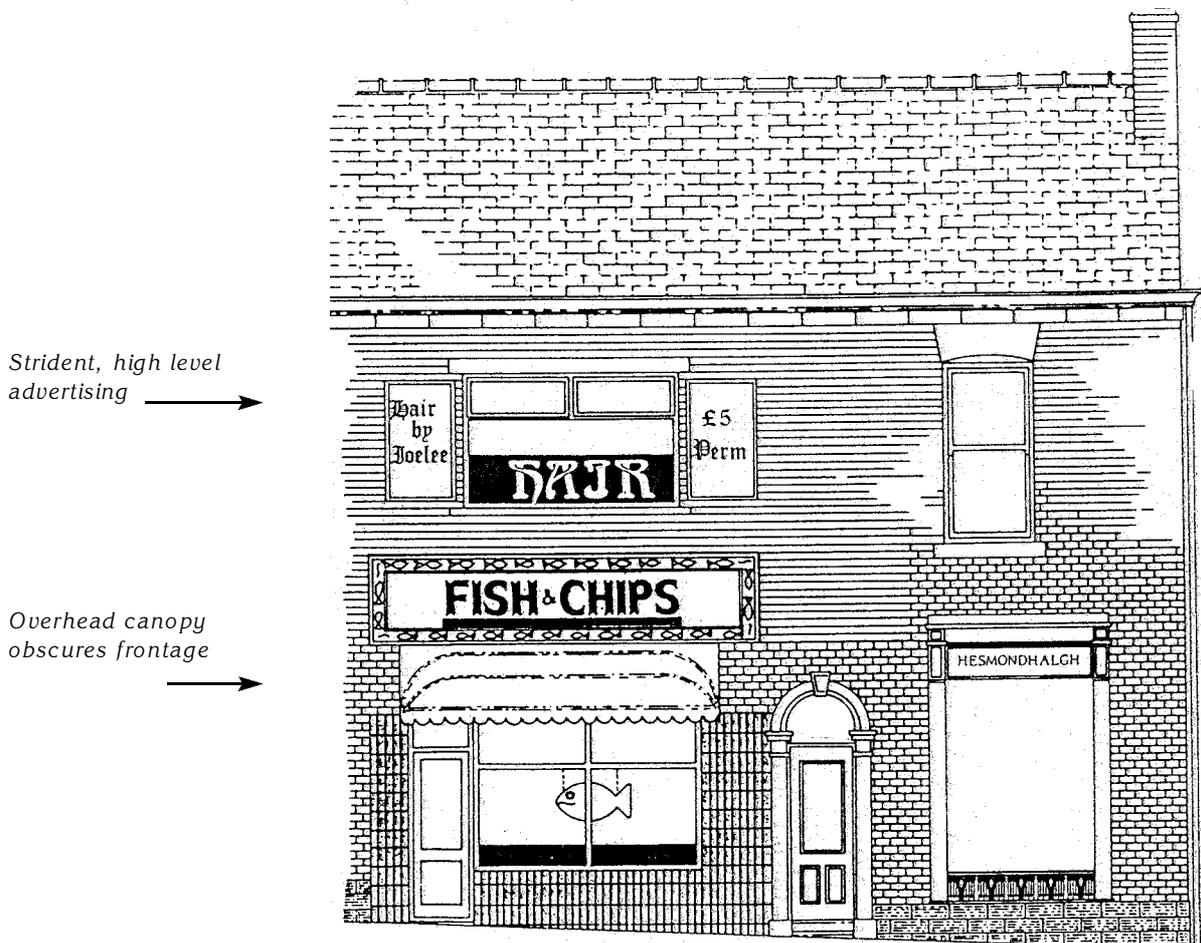
The three areas which are of most concern to the Council are the fronts of business premises (including shops), hoardings and forecourts.

**SHOPS AND BUSINESS PREMISES**

The most important consideration to bear in mind with all advertisement proposals is that they should respect the architectural characteristics of the building and the character and appearance of the local area. Advertisements and signs should not be positioned where they would detract from the appearance of the building or the locality. The size should be appropriate to its purpose and should relate to the scale and proportions of the building to which it is to be attached, and should not appear as a dominant feature in the street scene.

**Residential areas**

In predominantly residential areas, advertisements will generally be restricted to business premises, perhaps on corner shops or in local shopping centres and the minimum amount of signage should be used. The priority in housing areas is to protect the amenity of residents and for this reason, careful regard should be had to issues such as the position of the advertisement or sign, its size and level of illumination. Fascia or projecting signs below or above fascia level would be out of sympathy with the character and design of the building and are likely to be refused. The overall amount of advertising on one property or a group of properties should also be taken into account because it will affect residential amenity.



### **Commercial areas**

In the more commercial parts of the Borough i.e. Blackburn and Darwen Town Centres and neighbourhood shopping centres such as Mill Hill, Whalley Range and Johnston Street, a greater variety of signage will be acceptable although the number should still be kept to the minimum.

The Council's overall objective in these areas is to ensure that advertisements, either individually or cumulatively, are not damaging to the character and appearance of individual buildings, streets or areas of the Borough.

### **Rural areas**

Businesses in the countryside are entitled to advertise their whereabouts. However, the open nature of the countryside means that the type, size, colour and location of advertisements and signs need to be carefully considered against landscape character, including landform and landscape features.

### **Conservation areas and listed buildings**

Conservation areas have been designated because the Council considers that they have a special historical and architectural character which is worth preserving. The Council therefore has greater powers of control over advertisements within conservation areas, although it is sensitive to the fact that many designated conservation areas such as Blackburn and Darwen Town Centres are also thriving commercial areas where the normal range of advertisements is to be expected, providing they do not detract from visual amenity.

In conservation areas the Council will ensure that advertisements preserve or enhance the character of buildings or streets. The size, form, colour, positioning and lettering of advertisements are all important considerations. They should be designed to relate to the character of the buildings on which they are attached and should be visually compatible with the traditional appearance of the street.

Extra controls apply to advertisements on listed buildings because most constitute an alteration and therefore require listed building consent in addition to any advertisement consent. They must be designed and attached to the building with particular care and must not harm its character or obscure architectural features. Advertisements close to a listed building need to be designed with regard to its character or setting.

### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

#### **Position on a building or in the street**

Advertisements should be confined to the ground floor or basement area of buildings. Projecting signs should be fixed to the pilasters or columns between buildings, or the fascia above the ground floor window, if one exists.

The Council will discourage advertisements fixed above ground floor level. Upper floors should not be used to advertise businesses on the ground floor unless they cannot reasonably be fixed at a lower level.

Where advertising is required by separate business users of upper floors, lettering should be painted onto the lowest part of the window.

#### **Avoiding clutter**

The number of advertisements should be kept to the minimum necessary to convey essential information, even in commercial areas. The appearance of a large number of advertisements on a building or in a street can create clutter and be disruptive to the appearance and character of an area. When preparing designs for new signage or adverts, the opportunity should be taken to rationalise the number of signs on a building and remove those which are redundant.

#### **Lettering**

The style of lettering should reflect both the type of business and the architectural character of the building. It should be in scale with the fascia to which it is to be attached.

For traditional shopfronts it would be appropriate for the lettering on fascias to be hand painted or formed from separate letters of wood, bronze or brass. For modern shopfronts plastic letters may be considered. A company's corporate image can be incorporated providing it has regard to the building's character, particularly if it is listed or in a conservation area.

#### **Materials and illumination**

In general, traditional materials such as painted timber, wrought iron and bronze will be more appropriate than acrylics and other types of plastics, especially within conservation areas and on listed buildings. Bright gaudy fluorescent colours which are unsympathetic to the building should be avoided.

Illuminated signs and adverts can help to draw attention to the shop or service but it is important that they do not prejudice highway safety by dazzling drivers.

External illumination is preferable, either by hooded spotlights or concealed strip lighting. Internally illuminated signs may be acceptable in certain circumstances such as in commercial areas where pubs and restaurants are open late at night. However, their use in sensitive locations like conservation areas or on listed buildings should be restricted to a minimum and relate well to the buildings to which they are fixed. Internally illuminated signs are not considered appropriate in primarily residential areas because of the detrimental effect on residential amenity.

Wherever illumination is used it should be restrained and used sparingly. The colour and brightness of any illuminated sign will be restricted to a level appropriate to the sign, the location and highway safety. Intermittent (flashing, pulsing or sequential) illuminated signs will not be permitted.

### TYPES OF SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

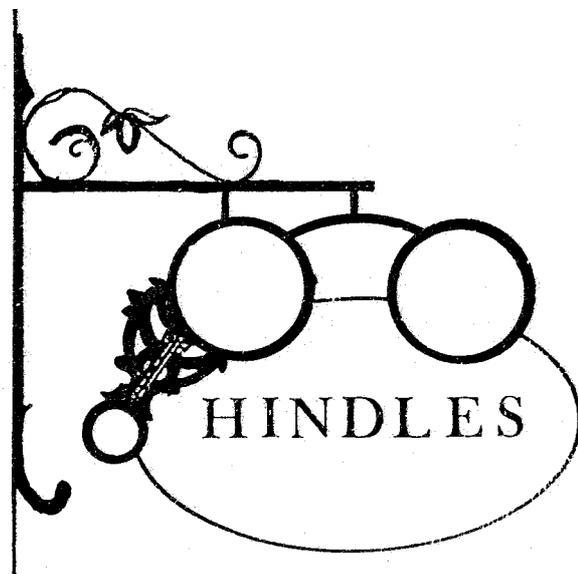
#### Fascia signs

These should be contained within the original architectural fascia of the building if it has survived. Where original fascias have survived the Council will encourage their restoration. In sensitive locations such as conservation areas and on listed buildings the Council will encourage the use of fascia signs constructed of timber and painted or with individually applied letters.

#### Projecting and hanging signs

Projecting signs are traditional features in the street scene but can result in a cluttered appearance if allowed to proliferate. They should be neat and compact and preferably positioned at fascia height. Hanging signs on metal brackets are preferable to projecting box signs. The underlying requirement is that the appearance and materials used, including that of the fixing bracket, should be in keeping with the character of the shopfront. Acceptable materials would be painted timber or metal with a moulded edging, although plastic signs may be acceptable on modern shopfronts.

There is deemed consent for projecting signs provided they do not project more than one metre from the face of the building (including fixing brackets), or two thirds of the footpath width and are not more than one metre high. There are constraints on the height of the characters and symbols used and the sort of illumination for which deemed consent is given.



*A neat hanging sign of character is often preferable to the standard illuminated projecting box sign*

In neighbourhood centres and in residential streets, projecting signs will not be appropriate and permission will not be given for any sign exceeding deemed consent restrictions. They will be restricted to one per building even where the premises occupy a corner site.

#### Signs on windows

Professionally painted non-illuminated signs on windows are a traditional alternative to projecting signs. They can be a useful alternative to projecting signs for businesses operating from the upper floors of a building.

### **Signs on canopies and awnings**

Traditionally designed retractable awnings can contribute to the character of the street but are seldom the best means for permanently displaying advertisements, because they require permanent maintenance and tend to obscure the front of the building and other signs beneath them.

Where they are used they should be retractable, made of canvas or other non-reflective material, and properly integrated within the design and construction of the shopfront as a whole.

Modern Dutch blinds and balloon canopies in shiny plastic can be unattractive and should not be used in conservation areas or above ground floor level elsewhere. Where such canopies are used, avoid garish strident colours which are inappropriate and soon fade and look shabby.

### **Hoardings**

The Council recognises that hoardings have a part to play in outdoor advertising. However there is an over-riding need to ensure that the siting and setting of hoardings contribute to and do not detract from the quality of the built environment. The Council has for a number of years endeavoured to ensure that inappropriately designed and sited hoardings are not permitted and that unsatisfactory hoardings are removed. The main emphasis has been on the enhancement of the main radial roads but the same principles apply throughout the Borough.

It is considered that suitable sites for 48 and 96 sheet hoardings are limited within the Borough. Proposals for such hoardings need to be considered in the context of the scale of nearby buildings, their character and the cumulative effect of other advertisements and signs which already exist in the vicinity of the proposed site. Hoardings are almost without exception only appropriate in areas which are wholly commercial in character.

### **Garage and other forecourts**

Garage forecourts in particular are prone to be cluttered up with signs. An accumulation of signs gives an untidy appearance and the Council will therefore encourage a co-ordinated approach to signs and advertisements on forecourts.

Pole signs will be restricted to one per site. On a filling station their height and position should be related to the canopy. On other forecourts, pole signs should be related in design and position to other structures. The display of portable signs such as "A" boards on forecourts and pavements will rarely be permitted because of the obstruction they cause to disabled people, elderly pedestrians and people with prams. They also give the street a cluttered appearance.

The use of pavements or forecourts for signs and displays will be discouraged and may lead to formal enforcement action by the Council.

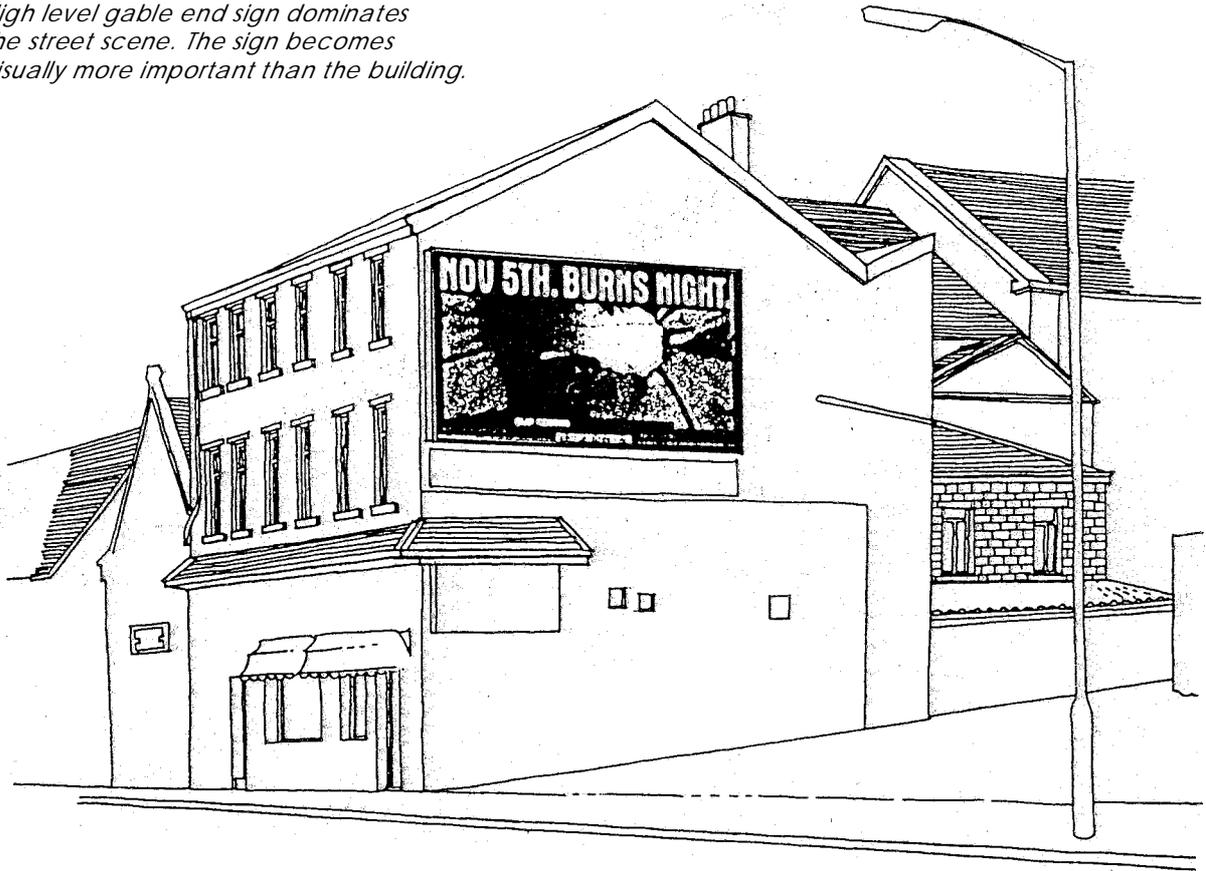
### **Flags and banners**

These usually require consent. In some commercial areas flags may be a suitable form of display. The Council will be concerned to safeguard the character and appearance of an area and individual buildings.

## OUTDOOR ADVERTISEMENTS AND SIGNS

---

*High level gable end sign dominates the street scene. The sign becomes visually more important than the building.*



## SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

---

Further information is available from:  
Development Control Group ☎ (01254) 585638  
Forward Planning and Transportation Group ☎ (01254) 585356



### **BUILDING CONTROL**

- Once you have received Planning Approval you will then need to consider obtaining Building Regulation Approval - Can we help?
- ◆ We are happy to give informal pre-submission advice.
  - ◆ We will deal with your plans quickly.
  - ◆ Our approach is flexible and can be tailored to meet your particular requirements
  - ◆ We will provide a same day inspection service.

**For more information telephone (01254) 585747**