

## 3.12. SIGNS

### 3.12.1. OVERVIEW

Signs can have an adverse effect on the amenity values of the environment and can also compromise the safety and efficiency of the transportation network. Amenity values are defined by the Act as being:

*"those natural and physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence and cultural and recreational attributes."*

The effects of signs caused by inappropriate design, dimension, and location can detract from these qualities while also causing distraction to drivers using adjoining roads.

These effects will differ according to the particular environment within which the sign is located in, and consequently, policy has been developed for each identified Resource Area.

In addition to the policies and rules specific to each Resource Area, general provisions have been developed to apply throughout the District in order to control signs that are provided for throughout the entire District.

It should also be noted that the erection of signs on legal State highway road reserves other than those relating to driving purposes is controlled by the Transit New Zealand Bylaw 1987/3. This stipulates that no person may erect any- sign on any part of a State highway unless the NZ Transport Agency consents in writing to the construction, maintenance and display of such a sign.

### 3.12.2. THE ISSUES

The following are considered to be significant resource management issues facing the District in terms of signage;

- **Signs provide an important information function throughout both the towns and rural areas of the District.**

#### Explanation

Signs generally have one or more of the following functions - identifying the location of an activity; promoting an activity; directing traffic or customers to an activity. These essential functions need to be recognised and provided for.

- **The location, design and size of signs can adversely affect the amenities of the District.**

#### Explanation

Inappropriate design, dimension and location can adversely affect the amenity values of the District. These issues need to be considered when developing signage policy. Particular areas of scenic or heritage value may need special consideration.

- **The location, design and size of signs can compromise the safety and efficiency of the roading network.**

Explanation

The aim of any sign is to either attract attention or direct attention. Badly designed or located signs can therefore create a significant traffic hazard by distracting drivers when full concentration is required. Road safety is therefore of paramount importance in determining sign policies.

### 3.12.3. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The following provisions are to apply throughout the District and are intended to complement the specific provisions of particular areas.

OBJECTIVE SIGN.1

**To reduce the adverse impacts of signs on traffic and the general amenity values of the District while recognising that signs can be a necessary and acceptable activity throughout the District.**

*(Refer Policy SIGN.1 to 6)*

POLICY SIGN.1

**To enable the use of temporary signs in association with temporary activities while ensuring the dimension, location and duration of such signs avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on amenity values and the safe and efficient operation of the roading network.**

Explanation

A number of activities rely heavily on the use of temporary advertising signs. For example, signs for advertising the disposal of property and construction sites, signs that advertise forthcoming events and elections. While these signs are an important element of these activities, they can have adverse effects in terms of their size, design and location.

*(Refer Rules SIGN.1 to 3).*

POLICY SIGN.2

**To support the establishment of "Welcome To" signs at entrances to townships and tourist regions, and tourist information signs at appropriate locations throughout the District.**

Explanation

"Welcome To" and tourist information signs are important network information signs throughout the District. Well designed "Welcome To" signs can greatly enhance local amenity, while tourist information signs are essential to the success of the growing tourism industry. Tourist information signs do not include signs advertising a commercial tourist facility.

*(Refer Rule SIGN.3)*

POLICY SIGN.3

**To encourage and support the use of international symbols.**

Explanation

With the increasing number of tourists visiting the District, Council considers it appropriate that international symbols are used wherever possible.

*(Refer Method SIGN.1)*

POLICY SIGN.4

**To avoid the adverse effects of hoardings within the District.**

Explanation

Hoardings are signs used to advertise and promote products not grown, produced or sold on the site upon which the hoarding is situated. While such types of advertising may be appropriate in large built up areas, they are not considered appropriate in the predominantly rural setting of the Clutha District.

*(Refer Rule SIGN. 4)*

POLICY SIGN.5

**To ensure that the adverse effects signs can have on amenity values and the safety and convenience of the people of the District are avoided, remedied or mitigated.**

Explanation

The provisions of the plan are designed to avoid signs that will detract from the amenities or compromise traffic safety. However, there will always be instances where signs compromising these values are erected. Where it comes to Councils attention that a sign is causing concern to the general public, Council may, where it considers appropriate, issue an abatement notice or require that a resource consent be applied for in respect of the sign.

*(Refer Rules SIGN.7 and 8 and Rule AME.5).*

POLICY SIGN.6

**To provide for the placement of signs necessary for reasons of public safety and information within the District.**

Explanation

There are numerous situations where it is necessary for the display of warning or safety information signs. These can include warning signs for overhead or underground wires, boating safety, safety information in wilderness areas and so forth.

#### POLICY SIGN.7

**In circumstances where advance warning and/or directional signs are considered necessary, to promote and encourage the co-ordinated development of signs where more than one activity is involved.**

##### Explanation

The development of one advance warning or directional sign that incorporates all service providers/activities will assist in reducing the effect of such signs on amenity values and the safe and efficient operation of the adjoining road.

#### POLICY SIGN.8

**To determine the suitability of signs in any given location by having regard to the signs effect on the following matters;**

- (a) the safe and efficient operation of the roading network**
- (b) the amenities of the locality**
- (c) the character of the landscape**
- (d) the character and scale of the building, site or area**
- (e) any heritage, historical or cultural values present**

**while recognising the positive contribution signs make to the social economic and cultural wellbeing of the District's people and communities.**

##### Explanation

Signs generally have one or more of the following functions:

- to advertise goods and services
- identify the location of an activity
- promoting an activity or event
- directing traffic or customers to an activity

These central functions need to be recognised and provided for. However, the erection of signs must be managed to ensure that amenity values and the safe and efficient operation of the roading network are not compromised.

### **3.12.4. RULES**

These rules apply throughout the District. It should be noted that each Resource Area contains specific provisions in relation to signs.

#### RULE SIGN.1 MESSAGE CLARITY

The message on all signs must be clear, concise and of a clear lettering style. Clarity of the sign message is determined by the speed limit of the adjacent road. Table 12 comprises the NZ

Transport Agency guidelines to acceptable lettering sizes in relation to speed limits and can be used as a guideline.

**Table 12: Minimum Lettering Sizes Lettering Height (mm)**

Regulatory Speed Limit Km/h	Main Message	Property Name	Secondary Message
50	150	100	75
70	200	150	100
80	250	175	125
100	300	200	150

**RULE SIGN.2 PERMITTED ACTIVITIES**

The following signs are permitted activities throughout the District;

- (i) A sign not exceeding 1m<sup>2</sup> in area advertising the disposal of land or premises on which it is located.
- (ii) A sign not exceeding 3m<sup>2</sup> in area erected on a construction site for which a building permit has been issued or for a property development involving the sale of several allotments or premises. No such sign shall be displayed for a period exceeding the duration of the construction period and shall include only details of the project and the names of parties connected therewith.
- (iii) Any sign erected to direct, control or warn traffic with its dimensions fixed by Regulations, or any sign not exceeding 0.5m<sup>2</sup> in area serving to denote the name of the street, the number or name of the premises, or indicating the location or timetable or other details of any public utility or facility.
- (iv) Any sign erected to display public safety information or to warn the public of the existence of a hazard provided the sign is no larger than is necessary to adequately convey such information.
- (v) A sign not exceeding 2m<sup>2</sup> in area erected on land held or managed under the Conservation Act 1987 or any of the Acts referred in the First schedule of that Act which provides information about the land upon which it is erected.
- (vi) A sign displayed for electioneering purposes, or advising of forthcoming cultural, religious, educational, sporting events or other temporary activities provided such signs:
  - are not erected earlier than six months before the event
  - do not exceed 3m<sup>2</sup> in area or 2.5 metres in height
  - are removed within seven days of the event finishing
  - are not reflective, illuminated or flashing
  - are located so driver visibility is not obstructed at accesses or intersections.
- (vii) Signs located within Council owned land, local reserves or road reserves that comply with the NZ Transport Agency "Manual of Traffic Signs and Marking" in relation to motorist service and tourist signs. (*Note: no person may erect a sign on Council owned land without Councils consent or on a reserve or road reserve without the consent of the reserve administrator or road owner.*)

*With respect to roads, the Owner will be either Council or the NZ Transport Agency. The reserve administrator/road owner may control the design and location of any sign to be erected in these circumstances).*

All signs identified in (i) to (vi) above shall comply with Rule SIGN. 1, Rule SIGN.5 and Rule SIGN.7.

*Note: No person may erect any sign on any part of a State highway unless the NZ Transport Agency has consented in writing to the construction, maintenance and display of such a sign.*

The written consent of Council's Chief Executive Officer will be required if a sign is to be located on road reserve other than a State highway.

## REASON

Temporary signs advertising the sale of property or a construction site can only serve their purpose if located on the property to which they relate. A restriction on the size of such signs will mitigate any adverse effects arising from their erection. Signs directing traffic and identifying public facilities are considered essential for information purposes.

With respect to Rule SIGN.2(vii) the NZ Transport Agency has developed standards for motorist service signs that are recommended for all local road controlling authorities through the country. Adoption of this standard will ensure a consistency in traffic signs throughout New Zealand. These signs are designed to ensure adverse effects on the safe and efficient operation of the road and amenity values are avoided or minimised. Control will be retained over the specific location of the sign by the road owner to ensure motorist safety is not compromised. However, because no resource consent is necessary, flexibility is maintained. For such signs that are located outside the identified areas, consent will be needed (see Rule SIGN. 3(i)).

For the sake of clarity, the following definitions are a useful guide to what falls within these categories:

"Motorist services" include rest areas; accommodation; camping grounds; caravan parks; vehicle refueling and service stations; refreshments and meals; information; medical services; public facilities (telephones, toilets, waste disposal points); parking areas; airfields; boat ramps.

"Tourist facilities" include the following:

- Tourist features, including scenic lookouts, historical markers and geographical features:
- Tourist establishments being commercially operated enterprises which cater primarily for tourists including museums, historic homes/buildings, parks, wineries, galleries, craft centres, potteries etc;
- Major tourist attractions such as national parks, coastal towns, resorts, historic towns, water storage areas, recreation areas;
- Tourist or scenic drives.

### RULE SIGN.3 RESTRICTED DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES

The following signs are restricted discretionary activities:

- (i) Signs that do not comply with *Rule SIGN.2*
- (ii) Signs placed on, or affixed to, vehicles and/or trailers which are parked on private or public property or streets, where the apparent purpose is to direct people to a business or activity

on a nearby property (*Note: this does not restrict signs placed on, or affixed to, vehicles, such as lettering, where the sign is incidental to the primary use of the vehicle*).

Council shall restrict the exercise of its discretion to the design, location and size of these signs, and their impact on amenity values and the safe and efficient operation of the roading network.

Written approval of affected parties and notification of the application will generally not be required except in circumstances where a rural State highway (defined as 70 km/h speed limit or greater) is affected, in which case the NZ Transport Agency approval will be required.

#### **REASON**

The above signs have been given "discretionary activity" status to enable Council to have control over the location, design and size of such signs. Notification will only be required where there may be an element of public interest, for example, the design may not be considered appropriate and accordingly it may be appropriate to have public input.

#### **RULE SIGN.4 NON-COMPLYING ACTIVITIES**

The following signs are non-complying activities throughout the District;

- (i) Hoardings (defined Section 5).

#### **REASON**

Such signs are erected for purely commercial reasons and do not relate to the site to which they are attached. These signs greatly detract from the amenities.

#### **RULE SIGN.5 SIMILARITY TO TRAFFIC SIGNS**

Signs shall not be designed so as to conflict with the colour and shape of recognised traffic signs.

#### **REASON**

Signs coloured and shaped similar to standard traffic control warning signs can create confusion and therefore danger on the road.

#### **RULE SIGN.6 SIGNS NOT REFERRED TO**

Signs or signage not referred to in the Plan or not meeting the criteria in the Plan shall be considered discretionary activities (unless otherwise stated in the Plan). Council may notify any proposal if, in Council's opinion, the amenities of the environment or safety of the roading network is adversely compromised.

#### **REASON**

Due to the significant effects that signs can have, Council considers it wise that signs not provided for be considered as discretionary activities. This enables Council to refuse a sign that will have a significant adverse effect. Where non-compliance is minor, Council will not note the proposal, but where there are potentially significant effects and matters of public concern, such applications will be notified.

#### RULE SIGN.7 SIGNS AFFECTING TRAFFIC SAFETY

Signs shall not be located where they would add to driver distraction in a situation where road conditions demand full and uninterrupted driver concentration.

If at any time Council is of the opinion that the erection, construction or display of any sign may have an adverse effect on traffic safety or on the requirements of traffic control, the Council may issue an abatement notice or require that a resource consent application for a discretionary activity be made for the sign.

#### REASON

Signs can have a significant impact on traffic safety and where this is apparent a resource consent will be necessary.

#### RULE SIGN.8 SIGNS AFFECTING AMENITIES

If at any time the Council is of the opinion that the erection, construction, or display of any sign will detrimentally affect the amenities of any land or will detrimentally affect fire egress from any building, or will be visually inappropriate to the locality or architecture of the locality, the Council may issue an abatement notice or require that an application for a discretionary activity be made for that sign.

#### REASON

How signs are designed and where they are placed affects the character of the environment. Consequently, to enhance and contribute to the area in which they are located signs should respect the scale and character of the environment. Where Council is of the opinion that a sign does not respect these issues, Council may require that a Resource Consent be received for that sign.

### 3.12.5. OTHER METHODS

#### METHOD SIGN.1 INTERNATIONAL SYMBOLS

Council shall, where it considers it appropriate, encourage the use of international signs and symbols.

#### REASON

With the increasing numbers of overseas tourists visiting the District, international symbols should be used where appropriate. This also helps create a uniformity in the Districts information and tourist signs.

#### METHOD SIGN.2 THE GRID ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

This simple technique can be used to identify appropriate sign opportunities for developers and occupants. While the technique relates specifically to traditional building facades (such as those commonly found in strip-shopping centres), the principles apply to all building forms.



Signs do not have to be on a building's front facade. For example, they can be placed on side-walls provided they do not interfere with the adjoining development. In these circumstances the principles of the technique still apply.

## THE TECHNIQUE

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### **Step 1:**

To identify sign opportunities the facade must be subdivided using the main design lines to form a series of panels. Many traditional building designs can be easily broken into a grid based on the alignments of the parapet (skyline), cornice, verandah, window and door. An example of this procedure is shown in Figure 14.

### **STEP 2:**

To identify possible sign panels the rectangles of the grid may be used separately or be joined together to form horizontal or vertical panels. Figure 15 shows examples of such panels.

The scale of advertising signs should be compatible with the buildings they are on, as well as with nearby buildings, street widths and other existing signs. In most cases, appropriate dimensions are achieved by restricting signs to grid locations or panels. This ensures that the original architectural character (set by the lines of awnings, window and door openings, parapet lines and setbacks) remains dominant.

On buildings with decorative facades, signs should not be placed on the decorative forms or mouldings. Instead, they should appear on the undecorated wall surfaces, unless architecturally designed sign panels are provided.

Figure 15 also shows that a building may be given a horizontal or vertical appearance simply by the way in which the sign panels are arranged across or down a building.

### **STEP 3:**

Applying the technique to a series of buildings shows the possible panels for the streetscape and provides the basis for developing patterns themes. Figure 16 shows how the technique produces a uniform and clean series of sign possibilities instead of a haphazard array.

Figure 16 also shows that sign panels do not have to be rectilinear in design or contained in a perimeter margin unless these impose an architectural formality or introduce a continuity with the surrounding area which is presently lacking in the building.

Figure 17 shows how a variation of the technique can be used to help correct any discontinuity in the streetscape. The lines of adjacent building may be projected across the facade of the building, thereby defining horizontal panels in which signs may be located. This will achieve visual continuity with neighbouring buildings.

### **STEP 4:**

Not every panel identified using this technique should be used to display a sign. In designing signage, a theme can be developed by placing signs in location compatible with those on adjoining buildings.

In deciding which of the panels is the appropriate space for advertising, the following matters should be considered:

- existing signs;

- the quality of the streetscape;
- the suggestions contained in Method URB.1.

*(Source: Department of Planning Sydney, Department of Planning and Housing, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia).*

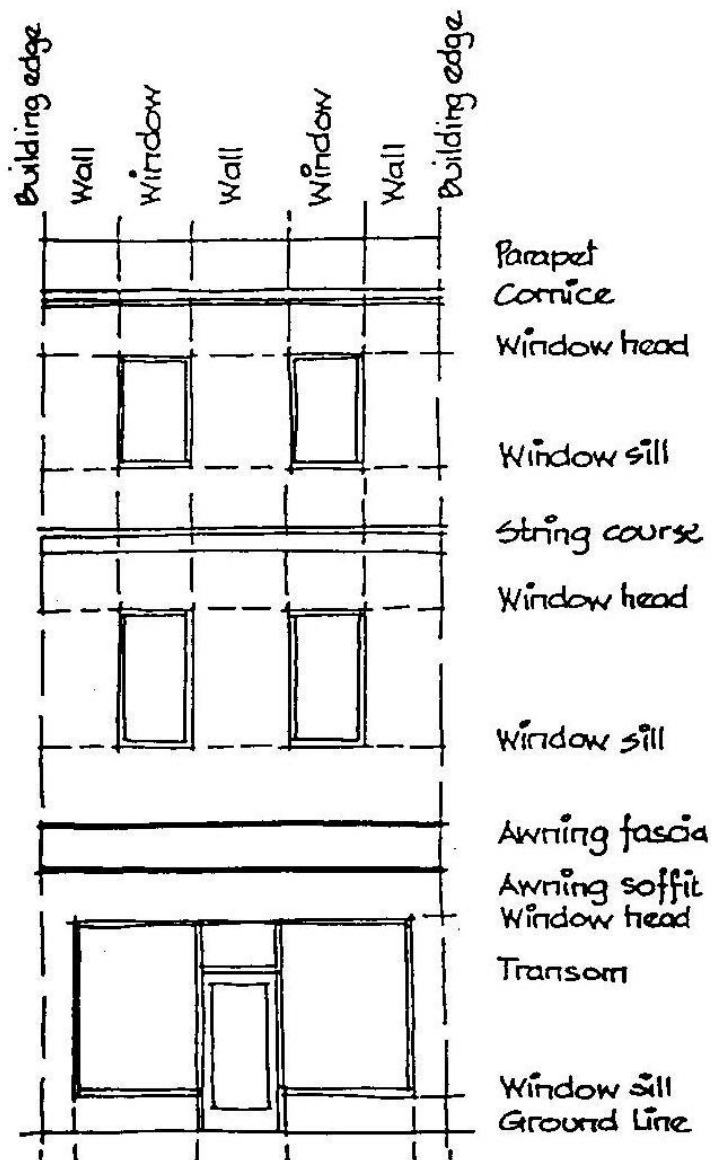


Figure 14 - Establishing the Facade-Grid

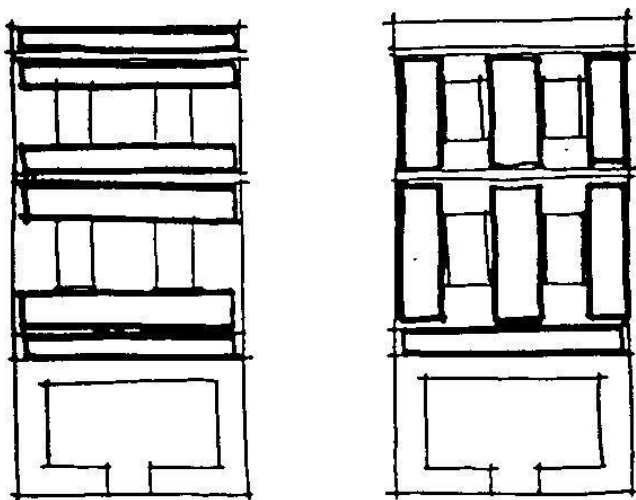


Figure 15 - Horizontal or Vertical Panels

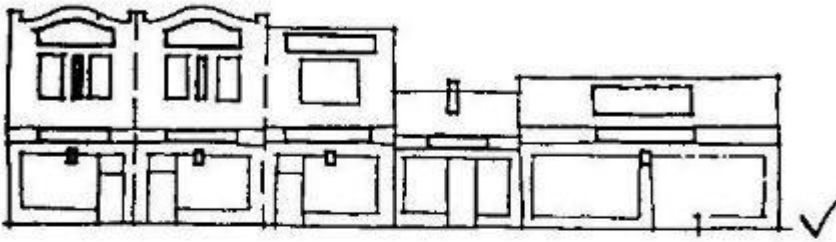
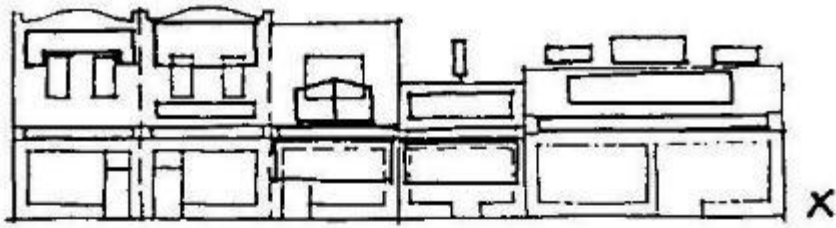


Figure 16 - Developing Patterns and Themes

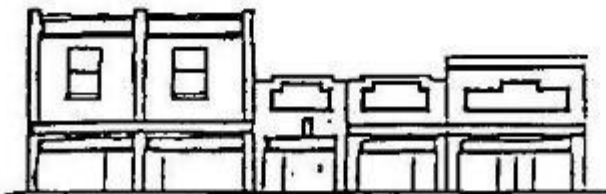
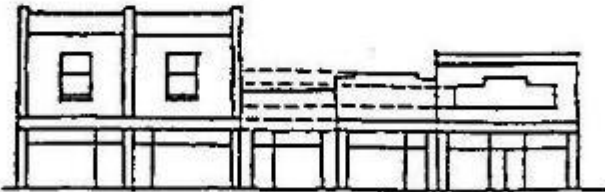
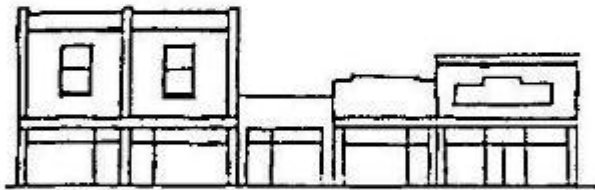


Figure 17 - Improving Discontinuities in Streetscape

#### METHOD SIGN.3 CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT

Signs requiring resource consent will be assessed against the following criteria, unless otherwise stated;

- (i) Does the sign:
  - Conform to the desired future of the area (as described by the desired environmental outcomes for the area)?
  - Complement the dominant character of the landscape?
  - Complement the character and scale of buildings, site or area?
  - Rationalise or reduce the number of existing signs?
  - Adversely affect traffic safety?
- (ii) In considering any application the following design factors are relevant and shall be supplied with any applications:
  - Number of existing signs on the building subject to application.
  - Placement (i.e. visibility)
  - Dimensions, scale, shape and colour.
  - Materials, construction details (e.g. means of attachment).
  - Purpose of sign (i.e. identification, directional, general advertising).
  - Reflectivity.
  - Means of illumination.
  - Provision of services, such as electricity, to the sign.
  - Durability.
  - Maintenance provisions.
- (iii) The guidelines shown in Method SIGN 2 and where appropriate Method URB.1 Sign Guidelines.
- (iv) The publication “Advertising Signs and Road Safety: Design and Location” Land Transport Safety Authority and Transit New Zealand, 1993.

#### METHOD SIGN.4 MONITORING

To assess the effectiveness of these policies and rules Council shall

- monitor the District for the erection of non-complying signs
- monitor the impact of the Plan’s sign provisions on town centres.

### 3.12.6. ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

1. Signs to have no adverse effect on traffic safety throughout the District.
2. Signs complement the amenity values of the district rather than detract from those values.