

CHAPTER 4

PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF OUTDOOR INFORMATION TRANSFER

Sub-problem 3: What are the nature and extent of user-friendly guidelines for the effective management of outdoor information transfer?

Hypothesis 3: General principles and user-friendly guidelines can be developed for the effective management of outdoor information transfer in order to make the management of outdoor information transfer less subjective and to provide a basis for control and legislative measures. Such principles and guidelines can be used as an objective measurement for the sustainable management of outdoor information transfer.

Some impacts on our senses, such as noise, can be objectively measured. Others, such as aesthetics, are much more subjective and difficult to measure. *The “physiology” of the eye, the “act” of perception, “how” the eyes see, are common to all sighted men; though the “psychology” of the eye, the “art” of perception, “what” is seen is as individual as a fingerprint*²⁸ (Barr, 1970, p.8). The possibility of conditioned perception and blunted senses through the assault of a technological and information age should also be taken into consideration in this regard, since it may have a major influence on the psychology of the eye. According to Barr (1970, p.9), a *diminution of perception... may be happening in varying degrees to all of us; we tolerate ugliness in the landscape, do not really see it*. In the words of John Miller (online):

²⁸ It should be mentioned that human perception does not only include sight but all the other senses as well, although sight might be seen as the most prominent sense. (For a definition of perceptual environment, see par. 1.3.1.)



Billboards...commit the truly indefensible act of assaulting our collective public space and our individual psychic space. To maintain sanity, the public anesthetizes itself. We participate in and comply with the defacement of public space and the negation of our right to privacy by our willingness to desensitize ourselves to these excessive assaults upon our sensibilities. We become oblivious to our immediate environment, sort of functionally unconscious. In compensation, billboards get bigger, graffiti becomes more outrageous.

And in the words of Gossage (1960, online):

...billboards have somehow acquired an easement across our minds just as they have gained squatter's rights on our visual air space. They've been there – everywhere – for a long time and we have grown used to them.

The assault of the technological and information age on the aesthetic environment and the ability to perceive can furthermore be linked to the second law of thermodynamics, which according to Whitcomb's (1990, p.14) interpretation, *states that disorder in a closed system increases with time*. In aesthetic terms this means that aesthetic disorder increases without any conscious management of the aesthetic environment. This also includes *disorder* in terms of blunted senses. Blunted senses may mean that the individual and communities may have lost their appreciation of beauty, or that almost everything may become beautiful as the fancy or whim may take hold of the perceiver. If certain principles and guidelines, based on universal and natural aesthetic principles, can be formulated and applied to the effective management of outdoor information transfer, such management will become more objective, an important contribution can be made in stemming the ever-increasing decay of the aesthetic environment, and blunted senses will be revitalised. Such principles and guidelines will still have to make allowance for a variation in aesthetic values and individual preferences.

Insufficient community participation can be seen as another stumbling block in perceptual resource management. A lack of understanding and communication between designers, environmental managers and the public can be seen as one of the most important reasons for insufficient community participation in perceptual resource management. This can be attributed mainly to the absence of a common language of aesthetic expression enabling a proper debate on aesthetic issues:

... we need [an aesthetic] vocabulary which allows two or more people to discuss and evaluate what they see (or a proposed design) and to discuss its pros and cons in a rational and informed way so that a view on the value of a particular landscape or a proposed course of action which involves aesthetics can be reached which has a broad agreement (Bell, 1996, p.7).

Such a common language of aesthetics will ensure the involvement of the local communities, the outdoor advertising industry and controlling authorities in perceptual resource management and the management of outdoor information transfer. The aim of this chapter is to produce a common aesthetic language for the effective management of outdoor information transfer by formulating aesthetic principles in the form of user-friendly guidelines. The main purpose of such principles and guidelines is to provide an instrument for actualising the need for the effective management of outdoor information transfer as identified in Chapter 3.

It should be recognised that no amount of principles and guidelines will lead to the effective management of outdoor information transfer unless such principles and guidelines are grounded in a proper environmental world-view. In order to be effective such a world-view should not be centred in pragmatism and materialism.

4.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

4.1.1 RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY

These general principles resulted from the conclusions arrived at in the previous chapters. It can be seen as logical point of departure for the effective management of outdoor information transfer, in other words for minimising the impacts of outdoor information transfer and for optimising its benefits. A balanced approach should be followed and a certain amount of leeway should be allowed in applying these general principles. On the one hand, a rigid and fundamentalistic application should be prevented. On the other hand, one should also guard against the attenuation of these principles and its misuse for the mere purpose of *greenwashing* and promoting outdoor advertising at all cost.

When applying these principles a variation in local circumstances, design objectives and aesthetic values and preferences should be taken into consideration.

4.1.2 A BALANCED AND RESPONSIBLE ECONOMIC APPROACH

The management of the impact of consumerism is inseparably linked to economic policy. In a contemporary capitalistic society this impact will always be high. Under the current policy of economic growth commercial advertising forms an important pillar of consumption at all costs. The consumeristic impact of outdoor information transfer cannot be managed effectively and sustainably if a policy of economic growth is not exchanged for a policy of economic development.²⁹

Sustainable development should imply order and a conscious limitation of human activities and should be based on more than a mere pragmatic and materialistic approach to the improvement of the quality of human life. Man must not allow himself or his technology to do everything he or it can do. Outdoor advertising should not be aimed at utilising and maximising every available advertising opportunity and implementing whatever is technologically achievable. *Restraint should be a key word in outdoor advertising display.*

Outdoor advertising should not be aimed at maximum sales and economic growth at all costs. It should rather have a responsible and balanced approach. This is a very difficult principle to apply in our current materialistic and capitalistic society. The problems presented by such an approach become very clear when one considers the fact that the heart and soul of outdoor advertising is to promote the selling of products and services. Economic development and the creation of jobs are important, but there are many ways to achieve this. A balanced approach always needs to consider alternatives.

²⁹ A distinction between economic growth and economic development can be made, where growth is seen as quantitative expansion and development as qualitative improvement, or a distinction between quantity of output and quality of life. Improving the quality of human life in the first place implies qualitative development instead of quantitative growth (Meadows *et al.*, 1992, pp.xvi,xix).

Another important principle to be taken into consideration is that a balance should be found between the right to freedom of commercial speech and the right to live in a psychologically healthy and aesthetic pleasant environment. Freedom of commercial speech should never be treated as an unlimited right. No human right can be unlimited, since individual rights affect other community members and communities affect each other. This argument can be seen as a very basic assumption on which the effective management of outdoor information transfer should be based. The right of each community to aesthetic self-determination must be recognised – the right to define and attain aesthetic values in order to establish and enhance community character and identity. The *Treasury Principle*, which refers to the persuasion of controlling authorities by the financial benefits offered up-front by an outdoor advertising contractor in exchange for billboard or advertising concessions, which might not be to the benefit of local communities, should be tempered and neutralised as far as possible. A balanced and responsible approach should be followed by local authorities, which should not try to obtain an income from outdoor advertising at every opportunity and at all costs. They should remember that they serve as keepers of the aesthetic environment, which belongs to the community. The aesthetic self-determination of communities implies certain limitations to the right of creative self-expression by the design disciplines and the advertiser or advertising contractor.

In the provision and management of outdoor advertisements and signs, and in using outdoor information transfer as a form of architectural expression, the designer should not concentrate solely on expressing economic forces, consumerism and the creation of wealth as the only design philosophy available. Other values such as environmental awareness and cultural identity should also be reflected. The expression of economic forces, consumerism, the freedom of commercial speech and the creation of wealth through the use of signs and advertisements must be handled carefully in both vernacular design and *supplementary* grand tradition of design in order not to dominate and exclude other important values and aspirations. Other values can only develop and find expression in a climate of effective management of visual resources, which includes the management of outdoor information transfer, together with sufficient community involvement and education. It is further imperative that freedom of individual choice in materials and design elements, together with a culture of creating novelties, should also be tempered with responsibility through effective management. Effective management should take place within a framework of certain basic principles such as placeness, unity with variety and the enhancement of local culture and identity. For the sake of

conserving and enhancing tourism resources certain elements inherent to the character and identity of a country or geographical entity should be used as point of departure and reference system for vernacular design and the effective management of outdoor information transfer and visual resources.

The above statement is not an argument against the concepts of architects such as Robert Venturi and Nouvel, who use outdoor advertising as an inspiration and a way to generate income. These concepts have merit in that they present advertisements and signs in a more integrated, harmonious and artistic manner, in contrast to the normal proliferation and utter visual chaos of insufficiently managed billboards and signs. However, such concepts should be applied in relevant locations such as entertainment districts and certain commercial districts, basic management principles should always be taken into consideration and these concepts should still relate and contribute to local character and placeness.

The normal approach to outdoor information transfer aimed at increasing consumption at all costs, through the promotion of products and services, should change to an approach that is more informative and educational in nature. Signs aimed at directing and locating should enjoy a higher priority, while educational messages should also include messages on sustainable living. It is of the greatest importance that outdoor information transfer should give a higher priority to providing a service to the road user or pedestrian by directing, guiding, warning or informing. All effort should be made to break free from the shackles of profit and the creation of monetary wealth as the dominant motive in outdoor information transfer. More effective integration should also be obtained between outdoor information transfer's primary function of transferring messages and its secondary function, which relates to the aesthetic appearance of sign and sign structure in relation to setting.

Finally, the monetary benefits obtained from outdoor information transfer should not be brushed aside, but should be acknowledged. However, these benefits should not be obtained at the cost of aesthetic decay or other serious impacts. Cost benefit analyses should therefore form an important tool in the effective management of outdoor information transfer and should include both monetary and non-monetary aspects, which should be interpreted in monetary terms.

4.1.3 A NATURAL APPROACH

A strong correlation exists between the aesthetic and biophysical environment. To give an example: Order exists in all ecosystems (interrelationship between elements) and all ecosystems need diversity (biodiversity), while diversity within unity is also a basic principle in the aesthetic environment. In formulating and applying guidelines for the effective management of outdoor information transfer a holistic approach should therefore be followed that will find the necessary correlation and integration between the aesthetic and biophysical environment. Man perceives the landscape in terms of natural aesthetic principles through which an inherent environmental order is experienced and interpreted. Guidelines for the effective management of outdoor information transfer should therefore be based on such natural and universal aesthetic principles.

As part of the aesthetic environment outdoor advertising should harmonise with nature and culture rather than clash with it. Outdoor information transfer should respect the character and integrity of both the biophysical and the cultural environments. This principle implies an enhancement of sense of place by outdoor information transfer.

As part of the principle of natural harmony certain high-impacting sign types such as free-standing billboards should not be allowed in natural and rural landscapes. This principle should not be negotiable. All advance signs and directional signs should form part of a tourism sign and road traffic sign system. However, all enterprises and institutions in the countryside should be allowed to be identified by means of signs on relevant buildings or at entrance gates. These signs should be of a limited size. Room should also be left for advertisements as a form of art as discussed under 4.2.15.

As a general principle the countryside should, as far as possible, be kept free of billboards and other visually disturbing advertisements and signs. Control measures in the countryside should be applied rather strictly. Advertisements and signs could be allowed more freely in urban areas due to the concentration of economic activities in such areas. Urban areas should be classified on the basis of aesthetic sensitivity and advertisements and signs should be displayed in accordance with such a classification. Advertisements and signs should be limited and strictly controlled in historical areas and in communities with a strong sense of place.

Outdoor advertisements and signs should not be aimed solely at the motor car to the exclusion of the pedestrian. Advertisements and signs should rather be reoriented towards the pedestrian and more natural ways of locomotion (See Appendix 1.)

4.1.4 A HOLISTIC APPROACH

Since landscapes are generated holistically by a myriad of influences and forces, no single advertisement or advertising structure can ever be perceived in isolation, but should always be seen within the context of a setting.

The management of outdoor information transfer should not be aimed only at areas of outstanding aesthetic value to be enjoyed by the privileged, but should seek to maintain, restore and enhance the diversity and distinctiveness of landscape and townscape character that can be enjoyed by and are accessible to all members of society. Management should therefore include all landscapes and all urban areas.

The principles and guidelines provided in this chapter should not be applied in isolation and should not be taken out of context. They should rather be applied holistically, and should recognise the relationship and balance between various principles and guidelines.

4.1.5 HUMAN SCALE

Since the perceptual environment is essentially anthropocentric and depends on man as the perceiver, aesthetic environments, and especially townscapes, should be characterised by their human scale. In the words of Thomas Sharp (1968, p.109):

[The] qualities and attributes of townscape and town character ... can be properly appreciated only in slow movement about a town and through unimpeded views of the different parts of it... So the townscape pleasures of the street can only be got in any true and full measure by walking there.

Outdoor advertisements and signs may be an important factor in this regard. As society becomes more and more dependent on the motor-car, outdoor advertisements and signs become bigger, taller

and more prominent in order to vie for the attention of the motorist while contributing to the dehumanisation of the environment. It is therefore no surprise that the energies of controlling authorities are focused mainly on billboards along freeways and other important roads and arteries. This tendency is reflected by WISDOT's (1994) definition of outdoor advertising as signs that *display "non-traffic related information"*. (Emphasis added.) Although the perception of the landscape is a kinetic experience, this principle is overemphasised by the motor-car, which leads to advertisements constantly increasing in size. It is essential that outdoor advertisements be provided at a human scale wherever possible.

Through eye-level placement smaller billboards and advertisements in the urban environment might in many cases be as effective as larger advertisements. Fortunately, street furniture, including bus shelters, information kiosks and news stands, is currently the fastest growing segment of the outdoor advertising market, accounting for some 20% of outdoor advertisements in Europe and 5% in the United States (Outdoor Graphics, 2000, Autumn (2)). This trend should be encouraged wherever possible. Unfortunately, many street furniture advertisements are still aimed at passing motorists instead of at pedestrians. As a general rule above-awning signs should be limited in number since such signs are generally larger than those at or below awning level and could therefore dehumanise the city environment.

Advertisements, signs and advertising furniture should play an important role in humanising streetscapes. Although there is a place for the visually pleasant outdoor advertisement in the landscape of the motorist, the emphasis of outdoor advertising should be taken away from the motorist and reoriented towards the pedestrian and slower-moving modes of transport in the interest of the aesthetic environment. This point has relevance to both the impact and benefits of outdoor information transfer. (See Appendix 1.)

4.1.6 MINIMISATION (See also 4.2.2.5 Simplicity)

The principle of minimisation implies, in the first instance, to the minimisation of the inherent impacts and characteristics of outdoor information transfer.

The management of outdoor information transfer should be aimed at counteracting the inherent impact of outdoor advertisements and signs.

4.1.6.1 Competition or snowball principle

Advertisements and signs tend to compete for the attention of the viewer. New additions to the scene tend to be bigger, higher, closer to the street and displaying brighter colours than existing advertisements. This may cause a snowball effect which could very easily get out of hand.

As a general principle signs and advertisements should not be larger, higher, brighter in colour or more numerous than is reasonably necessary to convey basic messages. This is especially true of signs indicating enterprises or facilities.

4.1.6.2 Encroachment principle

Advertisements and signs tend to advance towards the observer by either encroaching onto or even into the roadway or pedestrian route, or by offering information in advance of the actual site where the product or service is provided.

As a general principle advertisements and signs should not be allowed within the road reserve. Signs needed in advance of an enterprise or facility should be concentrated at outdoor information nodes (see Appendix 1), or should form part of an official roads traffic sign system.

4.1.6.3 Attachment or domination principle

Advertisements and signs display the tendency to attach themselves to existing settings or designs and to force themselves upon the visual scene in a very obtrusive and audacious manner. They often strive to dominate the visual scene by taking advantage of prominent elements in a visual setting, such as a bend in the road or other visual focal points, and in the process may destroy both prominent elements and setting.

Advertisements and signs that are attached to prominent elements in the visual scene should be designed with the utmost care in order to harmonise with the environment and to prevent traffic safety hazards.

Commercial advertising also displays a tendency to attach itself to more worthy causes such as fundraising for charities and community services in the form of sponsorships or advertisements, or may be attached to signs providing information to road users and pedestrians. Sponsored signs also bear the names of small and medium enterprises, together with the names of their sponsors. Corporate colours are often used by the sponsor to dominate such signs, thereby making sponsored messages irrelevant. The sponsor's logo and commercial message should not cover more than a quarter to a third of the sign, depending on the design, while corporate colours should not dominate. The commercial message should be subtly integrated into the rest of the sign.

Advertisements also tend to proliferate at enterprises trading in more than one product or brand name. There should be a limit to the number of products and brand names displayed by such enterprises, unless these can be incorporated into a unified design that harmonises with and contributes to the appearance of the shop front and building.

4.1.6.4 Imperialistic or ubiquity principle

Like all other advertising media, outdoor advertising wants to be ubiquitous and therefore tries to conquer new territories by entering or filling new spaces, or by making use of new technologies and advertising methods. Referring to place-based advertising, McAllister (1996, p.85) makes the following statement:

Advertising is ... geographically imperialistic, looking for new territories it has not yet conquered. When it finds such a territory, it fills it with ads – at least until this new place ... has so many ads that it becomes cluttered and is no longer effective as an ad medium.

Certain areas, such as residential areas, should be kept free of advertisements, especially non-locality-bound advertisements, as far as possible.

4.1.6.5 Transition principle

Advertisements and signs display a tendency to change rapidly and constantly since the display periods of individual advertisement tend to be relatively short and can therefore not be seen as permanent visual elements. This feeling of impermanence is worsened by the fact that most outdoor advertisements are aimed at people in motion with limited time at their disposal to take in information. According to an article in PMR by Davidson and Ogston (1995, p.60), the average consumer has only three seconds to assimilate an outdoor message.

This tendency can be counteracted by making use of advertising structures with a permanent appearance, by incorporating advertisements into buildings that make an important contribution to the visual scene, and by focusing on the pedestrian and outdoor information nodes. (See Appendix 1.)

See also 4.2.6 - Visual Continuity and Permanence.

4.1.6.6 Disorder principle

Outdoor information transfer reveals a natural tendency to create visual disorder. It can therefore be stated that where outdoor information transfer is managed insufficiently, visual disorder and deterioration will increase with time.

The only solution to the disorder principle is sufficient and effective management, control and maintenance of outdoor advertisements and signs.

4.2 AESTHETIC PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

4.2.1 RELEVANCE AND APPLICATION

The aesthetic principles and guidelines provided in this chapter should not be seen as hard and fast rules to be applied at all costs. Room should be left for variation in aesthetic values, design objectives

and local circumstances and preferences. These aesthetic principles are not applicable under all circumstances and most of them can be interpreted, experienced and applied in more than one way. Figure 4.4 may be used as an example to illustrate this point. The principles and technique illustrated by this figure refer more specifically to traditional and certain historical building facades and might not always be applicable to other facade types. In the case of Menlyn Park (Figure 3.12) some of the aesthetic guidelines presented in this chapter were ignored in order to enhance the architectural style of the shopping complex. Advertising panels and the name of the centre are breaking the roofline which should normally not be seen as good practice according to Figure 4.6. Some of the sign panels are also leaning forward instead of forming part of the flat plane of the wall. (See Figure 4.1.) As the words *principles* and *guidelines* indicate, this chapter only provides a framework and point of departure. The application of these guidelines still requires initiative, creativity and design skill from the design professions involved in the management of outdoor information transfer. All of these guidelines and the application thereof should be tested against the relevance of each situation. Existing perceptual resources should be analysed while architectural style, streetscape character, sense of place and design objectives should be taken into consideration with definite design proposals and an outdoor information plan, where applicable, as the end result. Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) can be seen as an important tool in this regard (See appendix 2).

However, if the guidelines and the visual principles in this chapter are ignored, it should be on specific merits in accordance with local circumstances, while there should be a specific design purpose for such a step in order to make a positive contribution to the perceptual environment. Aesthetic principles and guidelines should not be ignored solely to promote the sale of goods and services at all costs while destroying perceptual resources in the process. Advertisements and signs should never be seen in isolation, but should be used as a design element wherever possible. Although room should be left for a certain degree of aesthetic and artistic subjectivity, such subjectivity should always be contained within a basic aesthetic framework based on natural aesthetic principles - in other words, subjectivity within objectivity. The concept of subjectivity should not be violated or misused just in order to create a novelty. Such a basic framework is indispensable as a *common language of aesthetic expression* to revitalise and stimulate communities' blunted senses caused by a degraded environment, and to provide an instrument for participation.

The aesthetic principles and guidelines in this chapter should also not be seen as the beginning and end or a completed set of aesthetic guidelines on outdoor information transfer, but only as certain elements of aesthetic design, which can still be developed and added to.

The following aesthetic principles should be interpreted against the above background and should be seen as guidelines only.

4.2.2 UNITY AND BALANCE IN COMPOSITION

Balance, unity and order in the environment of outdoor advertisements and signs can be obtained in the following manner:

4.2.2.1 Datum

A datum is a basic element, such as a point, line, plane or volume, used as a reference for other component elements in design (Bell, 1996, p. 167). By placing diverse advertisements and signs on buildings in the same street in a straight line and at the same height a strong sense of order can be achieved amongst a clutter and confusion of signs. This will also make signs easier to read. Advertisements with diverse characteristics can also be ordered by affixing such advertisements onto a plane or advertising panel. Such a panel then serves as a background against which various advertisements are arranged (Bell, 1996, p. 168). Generally speaking an advertisement against a wall makes a much better impression than a free-standing advertisement, especially if the advertising contents harmonise with the character of the building and setting and two or more advertisements are involved. In this manner advertisements can be integrated into the environment by becoming a harmonious part of a building. Harmony between building and sign becomes an even stronger possibility where painted murals are used. (See Figure 4.1.)

4.2.2.2 Proportion and balance

According to this principle, advertisements and signs should have the correct proportion in relation to important elements in building and shopping centre design. The scale of advertising signs should also



Photo date: April 1999



Photo date: April 1999



Photo date: 1998

A datum is a basic element, such as a point, line, plane or volume, used as a reference for other component elements in design. Advertisements with diverse characteristics can be ordered by affixing such advertisements onto a plane or advertising panel. Such a panel then serves as a background against which various advertisements are arranged. This is clearly illustrated by signs fixed onto a building wall at Sammy Marks Square in Pretoria (bottom).

The organising effect of a plane is even more effective in the case of murals as illustrated by examples from the German town of Bingen (top), where intricate scenes are presented as a unity. Harmony in colour also contributes to unity. These relevant scenes furthermore contribute to the character of a jeweller's shop and a hotel as well as to local sense of place.

Figure 4.1

Using a plane to
obtain unity

Photos dates: September 2000



Figure 4.2
Proportion and balance

The Standard Bank sign in Piketberg, Western Cape (top left), is not aligned with the architectural design lines. A better balance could have been obtained if the sign had been aligned midway between the window head and sill. Still this projecting sign does not fit well onto the facade, since the symmetrical design lines do not allow for a projecting sign of this size on one side of the window. A smaller projecting sign lower down the building would have been more appropriate. The bottom sign on the same building (top right) shows perfect balance and proportion.

It is often very difficult to fit internally illuminated projecting signs aimed at the motorist onto existing facades. The projecting sign on a furnisiers store in Hermanus, Western Cape (centre), contrasts sharply with, and dominates the flat elongated panel due to its projecting nature. It is much easier to fit smaller signs which are not internally illuminated and are aimed at the pedestrian onto existing facades. In contrast to signs aimed at the motorist these can make an important contribution to building and streetscape character, as shown by signs in the German town of Oberwesel (bottom).



Photo date: September 2000



Photo dates: April 1999



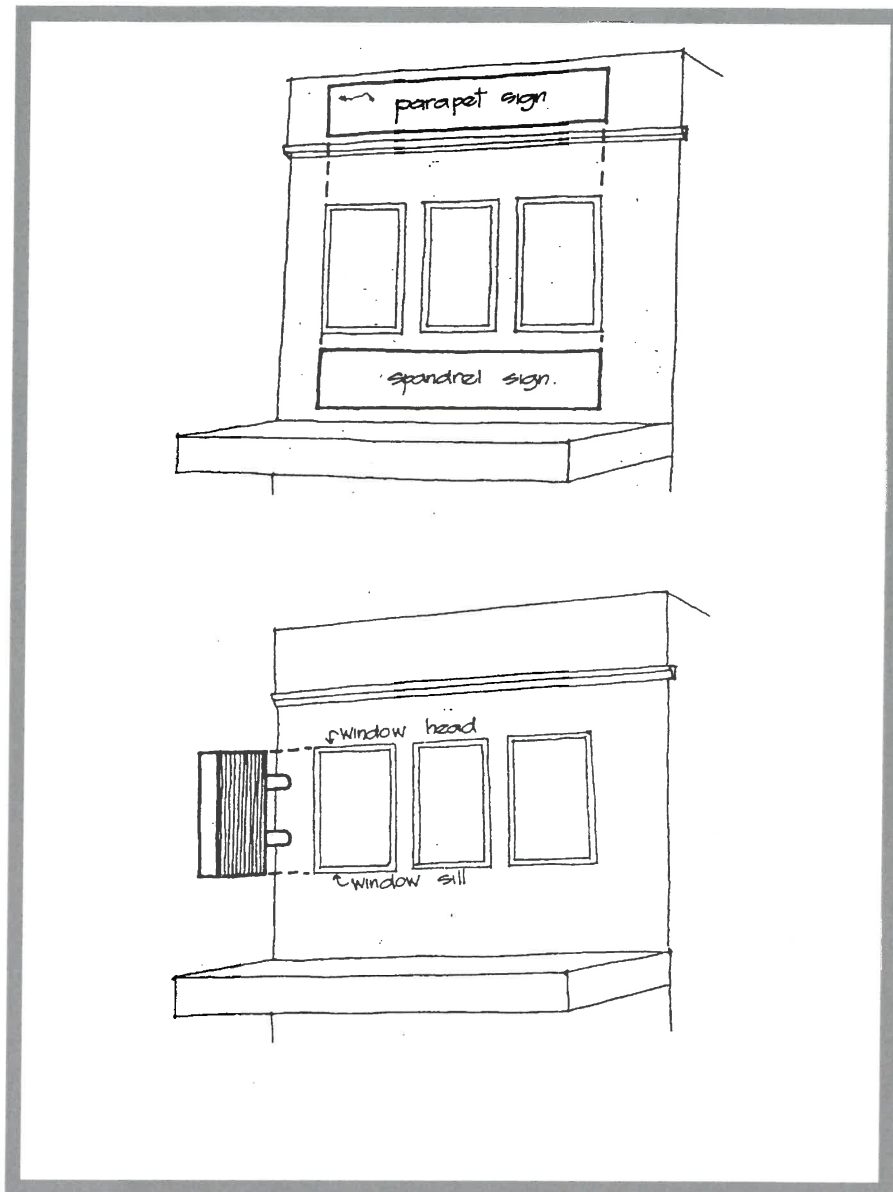
be compatible with nearby buildings, street widths and other existing signs, while the scale of free-standing signs should be compatible with the spaces in which they are placed. However, it should be clearly stated that when existing signs do not comply with basic design principles, this fact should not be used as an excuse for new signs to also violate these basic design rules. Before new signs are added, it would be better to take a new look at the signs of a whole street facade or group of buildings in a holistic manner. In attaching signs to buildings care should be taken that the original architectural character, as set by the lines of awnings, window and door openings, parapet lines and setbacks remain dominant. Signs should complement the architectural design of the building to which it will be added, as well as the designs of adjacent buildings, instead of overpowering them.

Signs attached to buildings should be aligned with and relate to the architectural design lines of the building facade, or in the absence of design detail and decoration, they should relate to the design lines of adjacent buildings. By extending the main design lines of a building, potential sign panels might be identified which, if used correctly, will reflect the necessary proportion and balance. (See Figure 4.4.)

Buildings might be given a horizontal or vertical appearance simply by the way in which the sign panels are arranged across or down a building. In order to achieve this, the proportion of signs to building elements might get out of hand and might dominate the building facade. Signs might become overpowering at the expense of the original architectural character. A far better option would be to take a more holistic approach by using signs as the basis for creating patterns and themes for the streetscape as a whole. This will require an outdoor information plan or sign plan based on a strategic environmental assessment. (See Appendix 2.) However, it might sometimes be desirable to change the architectural character of a building or streetscape, and in such cases advertisements and signs may contribute to a new image for the building or streetscape.

4.2.2.3 Prominent lines

As a general rule advertisements and signs should not break roof and skylines or other prominent lines in the landscape or building design. (See Figures 4.5 & 4.6.) They should not obstruct or affect



Signs on or attached to buildings should be aligned with and relate to the architectural design lines on the building facade in order to obtain the necessary proportion and balance. The following serve as an example:

- ❑ Flat panel signs are to be aligned with the sides of windows or doors and placed on spandrels or parapets.
- ❑ Projecting signs are to be aligned with window heads and sills, or be centred midway between the head and the sill.

Figure 4.3
Proportion and balance

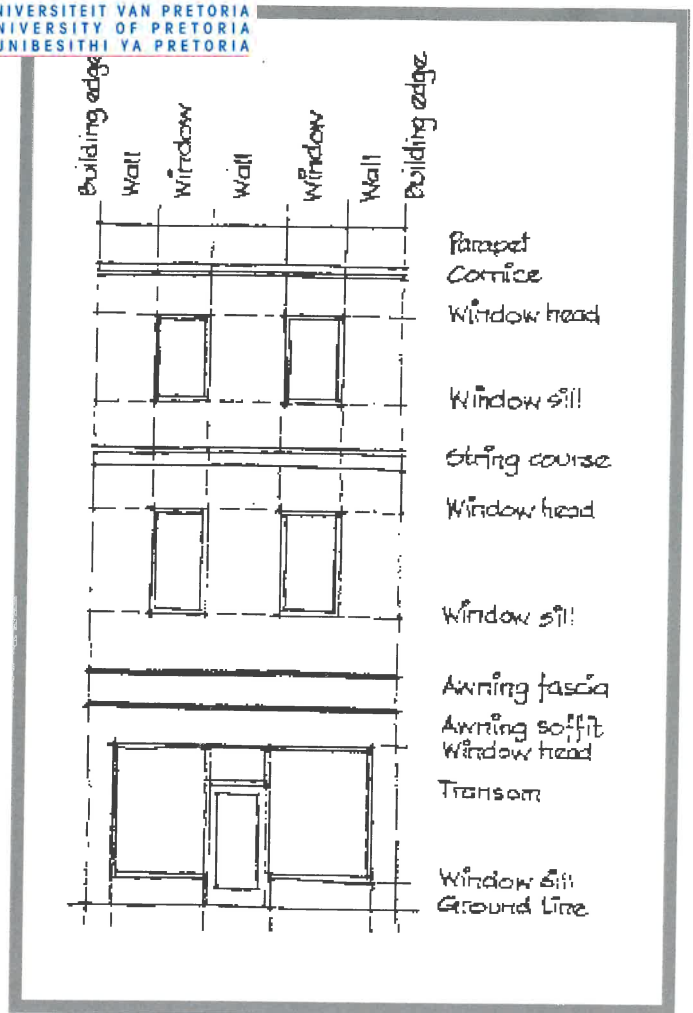
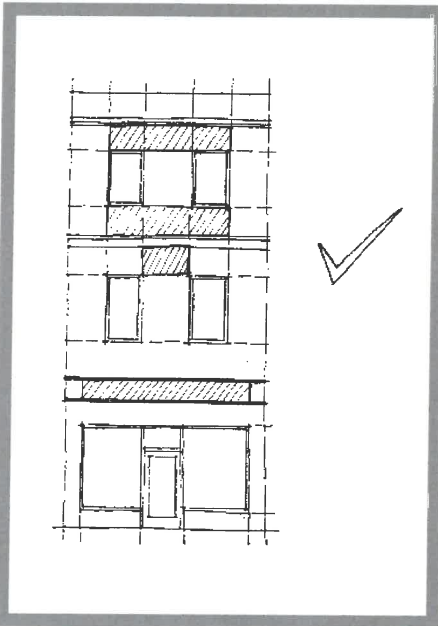
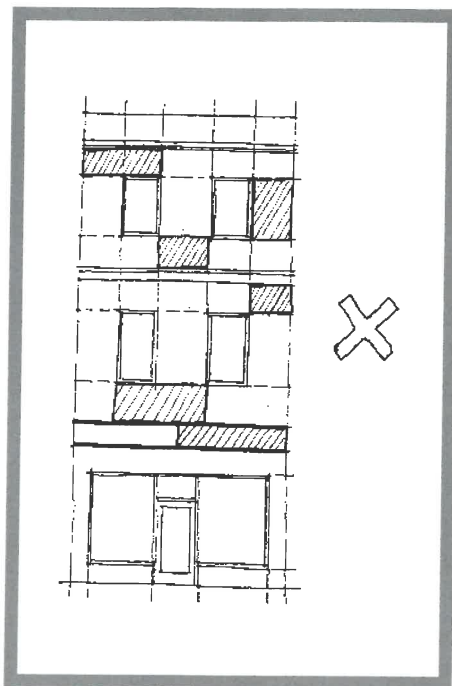


Figure 4.4

Proportion and balance

Identification of potential sign panels

The following simple technique can be applied to identify potential sign panels on a building. While the technique relates specifically to traditional building facades, the principles can also be applied to other building forms.

To identify sign opportunities the facade is subdivided using the main design lines to form a series of panels. Many traditional building designs can be easily divided into a grid based on the alignments of the parapet, cornice, veranda, window and door.

To identify possible panels for sign display the rectangles of the grid might be used separately or be joined together to form horizontal or vertical panels.

After identification of potential sign panels, signs cannot be attached to the building in an indiscriminate manner. The principle of proportion and balance should be taken into consideration (left top & bottom). Needless to say there is also a limit to the number of panels that can be used for signs. It is also not necessary to use the full size of a panel. A less overpowering effect is often achieved when a sign does not actually touch prominent design lines such as window heads and sills, but are smaller than the identified panel. The number of signs allowed will depend on the character of the building and streetscape and the function of the area.

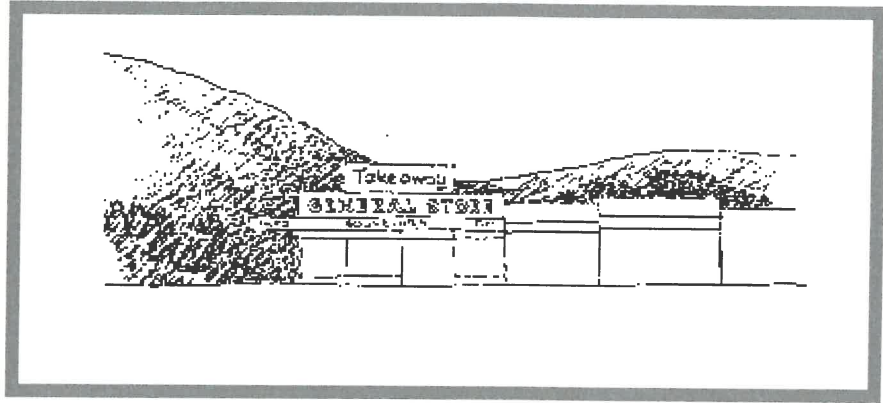


Photo data: December 1999



Photo date: August 2000



Advertisements and signs should not break prominent lines in the landscape, of which the skyline is the most important. This principle is clearly illustrated by the three examples on this page. The hotel sign advertises a hotel near White River in Mapumalanga and was placed on a ridge in order to be visible from a nearby highway. This sign has a major impact on the environment due to its size and the fact that it breaks the skyline. It is totally unnecessary and out of place. A brown tourism sign along the highway and a sign at the hotel's entrance gate would have been sufficient.

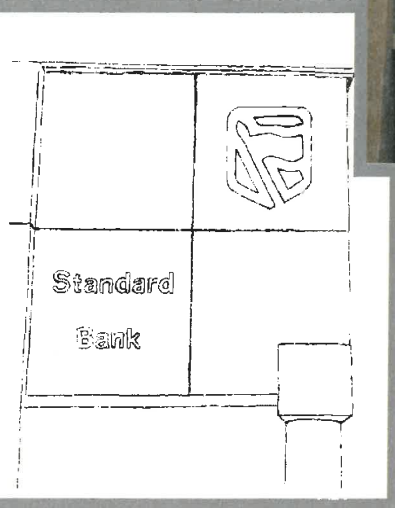
Figure 4.5
Prominent lines in the landscape



Photo date:



Figure 4.6
Breaking rooflines
and prominent
design lines



Advertisements and signs should not break any rooflines or other prominent design lines in a building and it should never obstruct or affect any architectural feature.

The Standard Bank sign (top right) breaks prominent grid lines in the building design. Such grids should rather be used as an element to frame sign elements and to integrate it into the building design (top left).

The roof sign (centre) breaks the roofline of the shop and affects the chimneys, which constitute an important architectural element. It should have been smaller and fitted lower down the roof. The sign on the stationary vehicle in front of the store (bottom, left) creates a much better impression.

The suspended signs (bottom right) obstruct and affect important architectural features (windows and doors). Smaller signs of the same colour and design, indicating only the name of the enterprise should have been fitted onto the white stoep wall.



Photo date: 1997



Photo date: 1997



Photo date: December 1997

any architectural features. Large signs on top of buildings should be an extension of the building form and skyline. (See Figure 4.7.)

A harmonious effect is obtained when advertisements and signs reflect prominent lines and forms in the building design.

As shown in 4.2.2.2, the prominent design lines of building facades play an important role in obtaining the necessary balance when attaching signs to buildings.

Prominent building lines could also be used to soften the impact of projecting signs, which by their very nature seem to be more obtrusive than most other signs attached to buildings. This result can be obtained by placing elongated projecting signs between or parallel to vertical design lines on a building facade. (See Figure 4.7.)

4.2.2.4 Similarity

Unity, balance and order may be obtained by applying the principle of creating unity through similarity.

The more elements display similarity of shape, size, colour, texture and all the other variables the more we tend to connect them visually. Compatibility of shape, colour and texture are often key aspects creating unity in a design, or a balance in composition. ... Shape is a particular dominant variable where the colour or texture, for example, can vary while the repeated form holds a design together. ... There may be a hierarchy of shapes, with a strong geometric shape repeated which has lesser, more varied shapes within it (Bell, 1996, p. 128-9).

In applying this principle, signs, and especially larger ones, should have the same shape as the basic geometric shape used in a building design or streetscape. (See Figure 4.8.) The contents of individual advertisements, however, may consist of lesser more varied shapes.

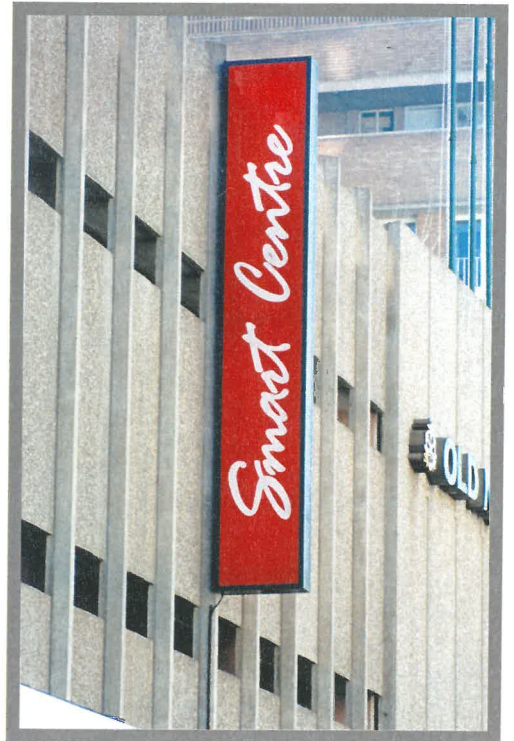
In the same manner individual signs on a shopping complex could be unified by being fixed onto a plane reflecting the main geometrical shape of the complex, while the sign panels and contents of the



Source: OAASA



Photo date: 1997



As a general rule advertisements and signs should not break rooflines or other prominent lines in the building design. Large signs on top of buildings should therefore form an extension of the building form and skyline, thereby reflecting the prominent design lines of the building (left).

The principle of reflecting prominent design lines is classically illustrated by the projecting sign in the photograph at the right. Normally projecting signs are very obtrusive due to their projecting nature. However, in this case unity between building and sign is obtained by means of the repetitive vertical building lines. The rhythmic effect of these lines focuses the attention on the sign, which remains unobtrusive.

Figure 4.7
**Reflecting prominent
design lines and forms**

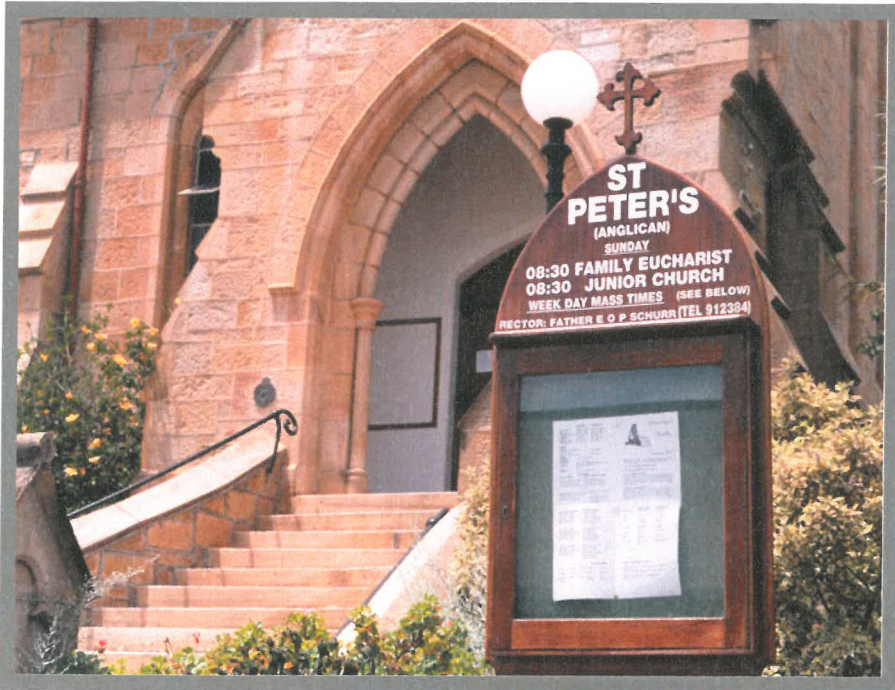


Photo dates: December 1997



The sign in front of St Peter's in Mossel Bay, Western Cape (top) shows a high degree of unity and balance in composition. It reflects the same form and lines used in the building design. The principle of similarity also comes into play. Sign and building show harmony in colour and in the use of natural materials (wood and stone).

In the case of another church in Mossel Bay (bottom) there is no unity, balance and order between sign and building. There is a strong contrast in colour, form, material and style. Although this sign is aimed at the youth, a *dynamic* sign could still have been provided that would have formed a unity with the historical building. The sponsor's logo is also *commercialising* the church by impacting on its status and image. The irony is that this influence can, apart from minimising the sponsor's logo, be prevented only through harmonising sign with landscape and building, and by contributing to placeness and sense of place. The sign in front of St Peter's contributes to a sense of peace and harmony, while the sponsor's sign creates a feeling of contrast and turmoil.

Figure 4.8
Prominent lines and
similarity

individual advertisements consist of lesser, more varied shapes. (See Figure 4.1.) Signs may also take on the same shape as certain elements of a building by being draped around such elements. (See Figure 4.21.)

In some cases it might be necessary to harmonise the colours of advertisements and signs with the surrounding environment. The practice of using a whole building as an advertisement by painting it a bright contrasting colour should be strictly controlled. (See Figure 4.9.) Such a building should preferably harmonise with the rest of the streetscape. The snowball principle could very easily cause this principle to get out of hand. A colourful building might serve as a focal point in drab and dreary environments. However, such a building should be painted tastefully and should integrate and harmonise with the general building style and the rest of the streetscape. If bright colours are used on a dilapidated building, or in a dilapidated area with a proliferation of signs and advertisements, the building and streetscape might even look more dilapidated. By relating to local tradition and culture colourful buildings might contribute to placeness. A good example is the bright colours used in the traditional architecture of the Ndebele people of South Africa.

It must be emphasised that the principle of similarity should be applied wisely so as to avoid monotony and dullness.

Similarity in design style also plays an important role. With regard to advertising contents a formal and more realistic art design will do much better in a historical area than a modern abstract design.

Similarity and harmony with regard to local character or sense of place should not be overlooked. (See 4.2.11.)

4.2.2.5 Simplicity

As a general rule the simpler and less *busy* the art design of an advertisement is, the more easily it will fit into the landscape or streetscape. (See Figure 4.22.) More natural, realistic and formal and less abstract designs tend to form a better unity with the environment. This principle cannot be applied indiscriminately and, if required, a special effect might be obtained by using a busy or abstract design.

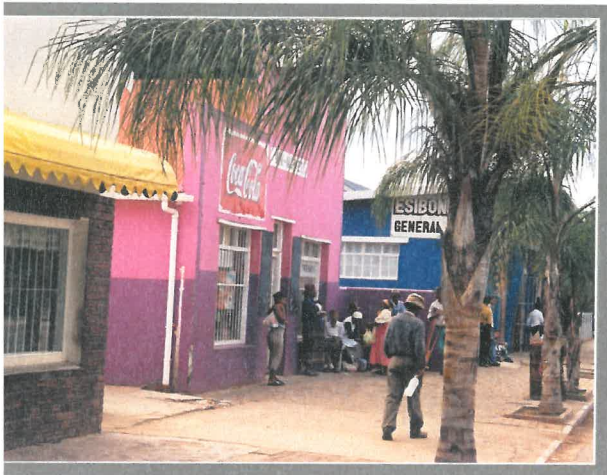


Figure 4.9
Similarity in colour

In some cases it would be necessary to harmonise the colour of advertisements and signs with the surrounding environment in order to obtain the necessary balance. The practice of using a whole building as an advertisement in itself by painting it in bright contrasting colours, as is clearly illustrated by the striking butchery and general dealer in Great Brak River, Western Cape (top), should be prevented as far as possible. Such a practice can very easily get out of hand as a result of the snowball effect as is shown in the case of Kirkwood, Eastern Cape (second from top).

Photo date: April 2001



A coloured building might serve as a focal point in drab and dreary environments. However, such a building should be painted tastefully and should integrate and harmonise with the building design and the rest of the streetscape. If used on a dilapidated building or in a dilapidated area with a proliferation of signs and advertisements the building and streetscape might look even more dilapidated. It is needless to say that this principle should not be applied in historical areas as was done in the historical centre of Cathcart, Eastern Cape (second from bottom) where even the sandstone blocks in the building were painted over.

Photo date: April 2001



Photo date: April 2001

The practice of painting structures in bright colours is even found in the countryside, as illustrated by the curio stall at the entrance of the Addo Elephant National Park (bottom) where natural materials and colours are required

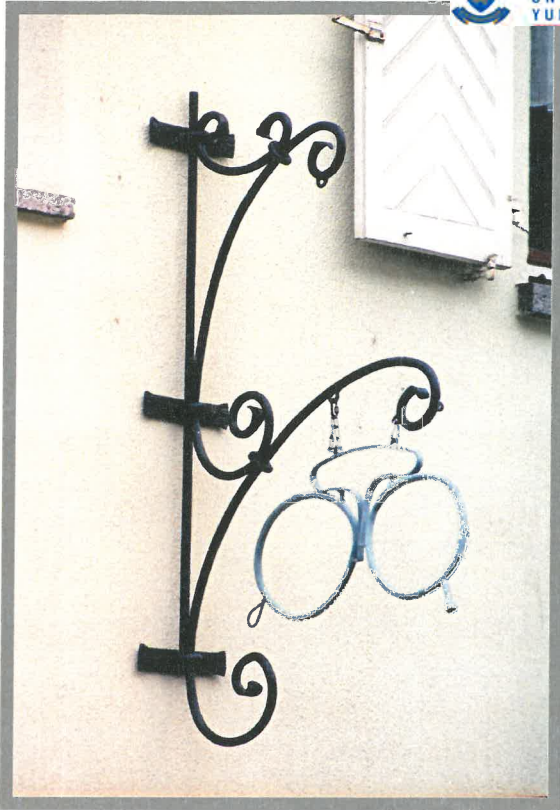


Figure 4.10

Simplicity

Using symbols without words





Simplicity can make an important contribution to unity and balance in composition, whether it be simplicity in graphic design or the use of graphics and symbols without words as illustrated by the examples of shop symbols from the German towns of St Goar and Oberwesel. Apart from contributing to local placeness this is often also a very effective way of advertising. The giant teddy bear in front of a toy shop will surely attract many more children and adults than an ordinary sign.

Figure 4.10
continued

Simplicity is also reflected through the use of symbols and graphics without words, whether it be a art object in the countryside, a shop or trade symbol of yesteryear, shop wares exhibited on the sidewalk, a billboard design or a painted mural. (See Figure 4.10.) Simplicity becomes even stronger when there is a strong relationship between the symbol and the surrounding environment.

The prominent display of street numbers can make an important contribution to simplicity by reducing the need for advertisements and signs. (Figure 4.11.) A system of conspicuous street numbers should be combined with advertisements in other advertising media, referring to a specific enterprise at a certain street number, and with road maps and other aids.

Simplicity in design and style may contribute to road safety since a simpler message is more readily interpreted.

The method of providing electrical services to illuminated signs and billboards might also influence sign simplicity. The supply of electricity for illumination could very easily create an untidy and complicated appearance.

Simplicity in outdoor information transfer plays an important role in natural and historical environments/areas and in creating a specific atmosphere such as tranquillity and sublimity.

It should be mentioned that in extreme cases an over-emphasis of simplicity might lead to monotony. (See 4.2.14.)

4.2.2.6 Framing

Unity and harmony can be obtained by using certain elements in a building to *frame* an advertisement or sign and to integrate the advertisement or sign into the building and the environment. (Figure 4.12.)



Figure 4.11

Simplicity through street numbers

The prominent display of street numbers can make an important contribution to simplicity by reducing the need for advertisements and signs. A system of conspicuous street numbers should be combined with advertisements in other advertising media, referring to a specific enterprise at a certain street number, and with road maps and other aids.



Figure 4.12
Framing



Photo dates: 1997

Figure 4.12
continued

Unity and harmony can be obtained by using certain elements in a building to frame an advertisement or sign and to integrate the advertisement or sign into the building and surrounding environment. Although integrated, the advertisement or sign is also accentuated. This is clearly illustrated by a restaurant in Boppard, Germany (previous page, centre) where there is no need for a large name sign, but the restaurant is rather advertised by means of a framed mural above the door. At another restaurant in Boppard (previous page, bottom) the whole facade serves as a sign, consisting of various framed elements. The principle of similarity is also applied by using bunches of grapes as a unifying theme.

At a hotel in Mossel Bay, Western Cape (bottom), a frame is used to accentuate and integrate both a vodka advertisement and a door.

At Knysna, Western Cape (top), the top part of a window is used to integrate a Konica emblem into the shop facade.

4.2.2.7 Interlocking

Design elements interlock with each other when they overlap, intersect or fit into each other like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Through interlocking such elements appear to become part of one another and thus form a more unified pattern.

Due to their irregular and flowing lines, painted murals have a potential for providing unity between sign and building by way of interlocking. (Figure 4.13.)

4.2.2.8 Rhythm

The aesthetic principle of rhythm can be described as follows:

Similar elements repeated at related, regular or similar intervals create rhythms, especially when there is also a strong sense of direction involved. ... Since shape is one of the strongest variables, repeating similar-shaped elements is one of the strongest means of producing rhythm (Bell, 1996, p.141).

By making use of rhythm, unity can be obtained between various signs by using the same form, colour and/or letter type. Thus contrast between signs, which may create a sense of sign proliferation, may be reduced. When exactly the same sign is used repeatedly to create a sense of rhythm, care should be taken that these signs are not cluttered by other contrasting signs which interrupt the sign repetition. In such cases a clean setting or background is needed.

Rhythm may be promoted by harmonising the shape of the signs with the dominant geometrical shape used in the building or design. Thus greater unity can be achieved between signs and building design by fitting signs into the building design. (See also 4.2.2.4.)

Many of the details in built design can be more successfully brought into the composition and given a decorative as well as functional part to play using rhythm. All of these aspects contribute strongly to unity by linking all the elements together (Bell, 1996, p.144).



Photo data: April 1999

Design elements interlock with each other when they overlap or fit together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Through interlocking such elements appear to become part of one another and thus form a more unified pattern.

With regard to outdoor advertisements and signs, painted murals have a potential for providing unity between sign and building by means of interlocking. This is clearly illustrated by a mural on a hotel in Boppard, Germany, where the coach scene, window frame and the rest of the wall interlock with each other. Unity is enhanced even further by means of harmony or *similarity* in colour. The mural supplements the name and character of the hotel and contributes to local sense of place.

Figure 4.13

Interlock



Figure 4.14
Rhythm

Similar elements repeated at related or regular intervals create rhythm, especially when a strong sense of direction is also involved. Rhythm is an important instrument in obtaining unity in composition. This principle must be applied carefully since it might lead to monotony, sign proliferation and an overkill situation (centre). Banners are well-suited for applying the principle of rhythm in any streetscape (top right). By using banners, even advertisements aimed at the motorists can be kept at a human scale. Monotony may be avoided by using different colours even if the design and the message are the same.

Rhythm can be used to obtain direction and movement of the eye from sign to sign. The individual sign comes alive in this manner and the observer's attention is focused on the individual message or enterprise name on all the signs without the need for individual signs to compete with one another in terms of size, colour, position and height (bottom left).



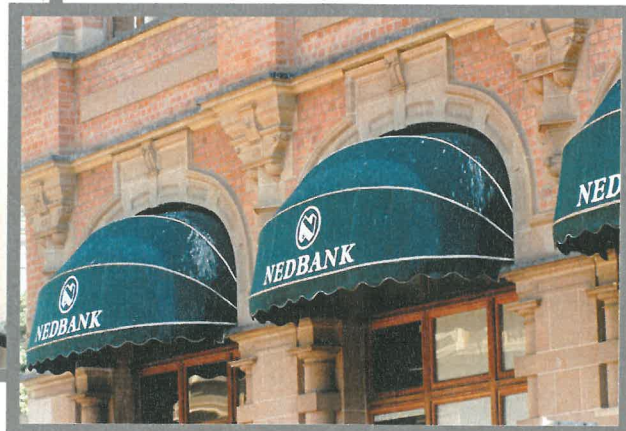
Date of photos: 1997



Date of photo: 1997



Date of photo: September 1996



Date of photo: 1997

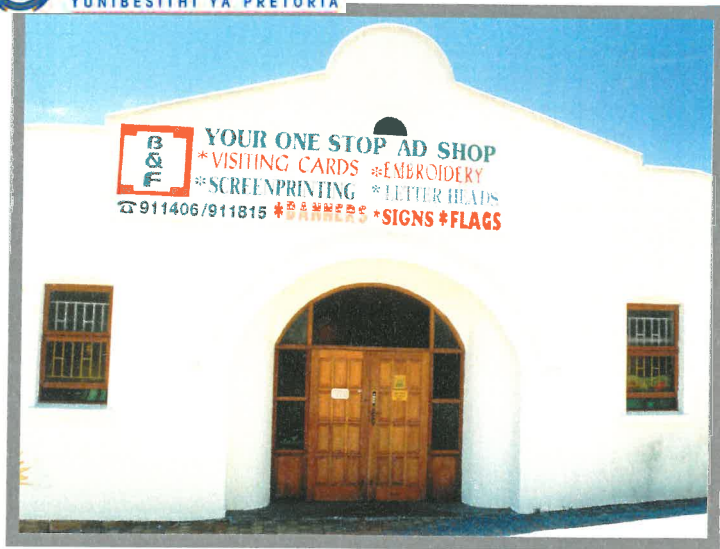


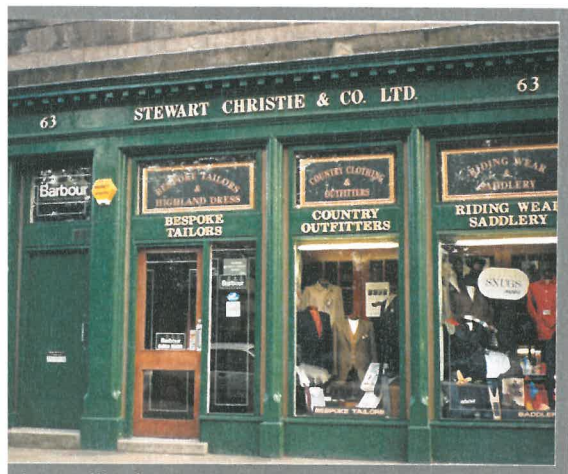
Figure 4.15
Balance and unity in composition

Just as the sign in Mossel Bay is out of proportion, the sign on the ad shop in Mossel Bay, Western Cape (top right) is also out of proportion. Too much information is provided on one space. The information should be divided between various panels. However, the architectural design lines do not allow for sufficient panels. Greater simplicity could be achieved by limiting the sign to the name and main function of the enterprise. The existing sign also obstructs an important architectural feature above the door.

In contrast to the Mossel Bay sign the shop facade in Edinburgh (bottom left) is a good example of how shop signs should look like. Information is divided between various panels created by the architectural design lines, while the principle of similarity is applied by using only two colours. The information is furthermore organised by using the straight lines above the windows as a datum. A large amount of information can therefore be presented without creating an overpowering effect.

The art studio sign in Hermanus, Western Cape (top left) is limited to the name of the enterprise and lacks of simplicity, style, proportion and balance.

In the case of the sign in Oberwesel, Germany (bottom right) unity, balance and order are obtained by the use of similarity in colour. The sense of balance is also strengthened by aligning the sign with the main architectural design lines. Notice that the projecting sign is aligned with the main sign.





Date of photos: April 2001



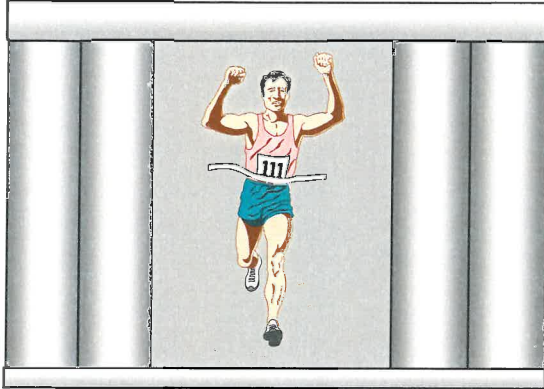
Figure 4.16
Impact on the
aesthetic
environment

The advertisement on the side of the tourism information bureau in Beach Road, Port Elizabeth (top) impacts on aesthetic unity in the following ways:

- **Proportion:** The billboard overshadows the building housing the tourism information bureau.
- **Prominent lines:** The billboard breaks the roofline of the information bureau, while the broken horizontal line of the billboard does not reflect the straight lines used in the building.
- **Similarity:** The colour and abstract design of the billboard form a rather sharp contrast with the building, which has a more formal and historical appearance. It also does not harmonise with the natural stone-wall below the billboard. (The rectangular sign on the facade of the building should reflect the rounded lines of the facade.)
- **Simplicity:** The complicated and *busy* design, both in terms of text and lines, does not harmonise with the formal and historical character of the building.
- **Sense of place:** The abstract and complicated design, together with the contrasting colours, create a restless atmosphere where a more tranquil atmosphere would have been more appropriate. This is even more true of the oceanarium next door to the information bureau (bottom) which presents even bolder colours.

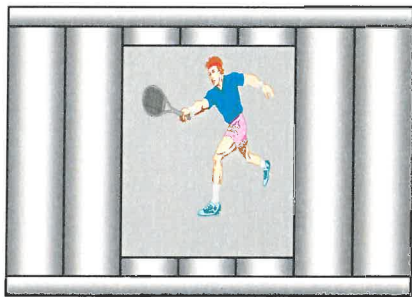
Figure 4.17

Megasign against a silo structure along an urban freeway

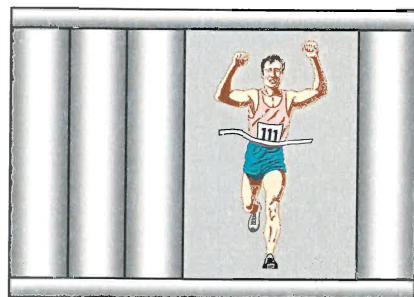


Two silo units on each side are used for framing the sign.

The sign reflects the prominent vertical lines of the silo.



Vertical lines above and below the sign are visible, which means that prominent vertical lines are broken by the sign, resulting in a lack of unity between sign and silo structure.



Sign and silo composition has wrong proportions and is out of balance.

Sign and structure form a pleasant visual whole and are used as a *landmark*. Although the sign tends to dominate the silo structure in terms of size, a harmonious integration between sign and structure is obtained by applying the principle of *framing*. Sign dominance can also be counteracted through *simplicity* by using a harmonious design style with subtle colours and a minimum of wording, or none at all. This principle will also benefit traffic safety, which can be enhanced even further by making the sign message interpretable from a distance.

Rhythm can be used to obtain direction and movement of the eye from sign to sign. This will bring individual signs to life and focus the observer's attention on the individual messages of all the signs without the need for individual signs to compete with one another in terms of size, colour and more prominent position and height.

Banners are well-suited for applying the principle of rhythm in any streetscape. By using banners even advertisements aimed at the motorist can be kept on a human scale. Monotony may be avoided by using different colours, even if the same design and message are repeated.

4.2.3 DOMINANCE OF ADVERTISEMENTS AND SIGNS AND HIEARCHY OF VISUAL ELEMENTS

A hierarchy of visual elements refers to those aspects of design that require some parts of the design to be visually more important or dominant. In more complex compositions a clear hierarchy is desirable to establish order in the relationship between the parts and the whole (Bell, 1996, p.163-4).

As a general rule, advertisements and signs should normally be of a lower hierarchy and should not be visually dominant with regard to visual scene or setting, but should rather fit into it. However, there are certain exceptions. In the case of entertainment districts and central business districts (CBDs) of cities and larger towns signs and advertisements may play a prominent or dominant role to a greater or lesser extent since a commercial character will be the essence of placeness. However, in such instances each setting should still have its own individual character. It should not become part of a uniform world culture and global commercialised cityscape. The Pretoria CBD should differ from the Tokyo CBD. Advertisements and signs should not dominate and neutralise elements unique to specific CBDs or entertainment districts. Rather, they should promote placeness by using advertising and street furniture with a unique character, local sounds and sign structures, and by advertising contents reflecting local culture, tradition and history.

When advertisements and signs form part of a building or are attached to a building they should be seen as architectural elements of secondary importance and should not dominate and become elements of primary importance. (See Figure 4.18.) There are also exceptions in this case such as a

huge sky sign on top of a skyscraper serving as a prominent landmark, huge murals on the sides of buildings, or architectural styles which make provision for advertisements to form a dominant part of the design. However, such advertisements dominating buildings should serve a logical aesthetic purpose, be limited in number and should also take cognisance of both the location and the local character and sense of place. Advertisements dominating buildings would be allowed more readily in the central business district or industrial area of a large city than in the business area of a tranquil tourist town. For the same reason, signs on top of buildings would not normally be allowed in local shopping centres unless they are compatible with the scale of development.

As a general rule above-awning signs should be limited in number since such signs are generally larger than those at or below awning level and could therefore be too dominant and could affect the architectural character of a streetscape.

Due to the encroaching character of projecting signs, such signs should either be aimed at the pedestrian or should be limited to enterprises relying on the passing trade of road travellers.

Increasing diversity tends to reduce scale. This principle plays an important role in entertainment districts with both huge signs and a large diversity of advertisements and signs. Such diversity therefore tends to humanise the scale of entertainment districts.

The non-dominance of advertisements and signs is important in terms of visual continuity and permanence. Continuity and permanence are represented by the durable, long-term structures in the landscape. They provide a permanent framework within which change can take place, therefore allowing change to take place without chaos. Advertisements and signs of which the actual contents may change very quickly should therefore not dominate a visual scene or setting since this will destroy any sense of visual continuity and permanence.

In certain streetscapes and settings a functional hierarchy of signs might be necessary. More important functions and enterprises might require more dominant signs in terms of size, height and colour. However, this principle should not be overemphasised. Only a limited number of functions



Photo date: September 1996



Apart from certain exceptions, outdoor advertisements and signs should normally be of a lower hierarchy and should not be visually dominant with regard to visual scene or setting, but should rather fit into it. When advertisements and signs form part of a building or are attached to a building, they should be seen as architectural elements of secondary importance and should not dominate and become elements of primary importance. Ngee Ann City in Singapore is a classical example of the non-dominance of outdoor advertisements and signs. Unlike most other shopping centres, almost no advertisements and signs are visible from the outside, except the centre's name. This is in line with Singapore's clean and green image.

Figure 4.18
Non-dominance of
advertisements and
signs

should be considered as important. In a shopping centre such functions should normally be seen as the main businesses attracting visitors to the centre, such as the larger chain stores.

4.2.4 FOCAL POINTS

4.2.4.1 Feature and background

Some forms or objects may stand out as features against a more general background, such as a sculpture in a square. By applying this principle to outdoor information transfer, advertising furniture or other advertising features could be used as features against a background or even as a strong focal point to give more interest to streetscapes, shopping centres or open spaces. Although such features are usually relatively strongly contrasted with the background, exaggerated contrast may be a drawback in certain instances. A balance should be maintained between contrast and harmony and the contrasting element should still form part of the whole, especially where advertisements are the contrasting features or form part of contrasting features. In some instances it might not be desirable for a sign or advertisement to stand out too strongly from its surroundings since it may become intrusive, for example a sign in a natural environment or in an urban open space with a natural character. In such cases the intrusive effects could be mitigated by reducing contrasts to a minimum, by using natural materials for instance, in an attempt to attach the sign to its background and even to convert it from feature to background.

Focal points can make a very important contribution to sense of place. They should always contribute instead of impacting negatively on placeness. However, not every sign can be a focal point since this will defeat the very purpose of focal points and will lead to visual chaos. Other signs on a square or at a shopping centre will have to be more humble. A focal point should benefit more than one enterprise, or an entire shopping centre, if possible. (Figure 4.19.) It should contribute to the character of the whole area. The problem of signs competing for prominence can also be solved by using a combination sign which can be seen as a feature against a background. (See 4.2.16 for more information on combination signs.) However, combination signs do not always contribute to local character and sense of place. Instead of providing a sign for each and every enterprise on a

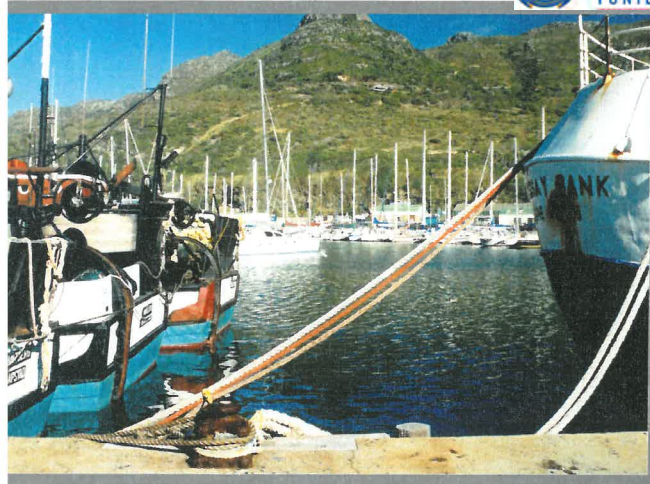


Figure 4.19

Feature and background

Outdoor advertisements may be used as features standing out against a general background. Such focal points can make an important contribution to sense of place and may give interest to streetscapes and shopping centres. Not every sign can be a focal point. Signs serving as focal points will therefore have to benefit more than one enterprise, or even a whole shopping centre, while contributing to the character of the whole area. Mariner's Wharf (centre) at Hout Bay harbour (top) is South Africa's first harbourside emporium. The boat forms a very striking focal point which benefits all the shops in the emporium. It is a much more effective advertising medium than a standardised combination sign indicating the various shops. It might have been even more effective if it was placed a bit further from the background.

The photograph at the bottom shows an Impala aircraft at the Aviations Pub in a shopping centre next to Port Elizabeth airport. This plane can be seen as a feature against the sky as background. It benefits not only the pub but the whole of the shopping centre, which is associated with the airport. The hangar-like structure of the pub enhances local placeness even further.

combination sign, a single and unique sign feature or emblem, which reflects and enhances the character of the shopping centre, might be much more effective in attracting visitors.

4.2.4.2 Vistas

A vista can be defined as a confined or framed view and consists of a viewing station, intermediate ground and a terminal or focal point.

An advertisement, whether a flat plane, a sculpture or a piece of advertising furniture, could be used as the focal point of a vista. The advertising structure and contents should harmonise with the viewing station and intermediate ground of the vista. Since great vistas have a sense of permanence, such advertisements should be displayed for longer periods and advertising contents should not dominate the advertising structure or furniture.

An advertisement that forms the focal point of a vista should not be too complicated in terms of both design and text. Basic shapes should be visible from the viewing station. Text or copy should be limited to a minimum, while blending with the advertisement design instead of contrasting with and dominating it. In cases where a billboard or another advertisement forms a focal point along the axis of a road, text should be limited to one or two words and should be large enough, while complicated and detailed designs should be avoided at all costs. In such cases the advertising structure is normally placed at the bend of a road to obtain a vista effect with the car window providing the necessary frame. The advertising contents and message should be visible from quite a distance in order to prevent the driver from having to focus on advertising detail and lengthy or small text when he has to concentrate on the task of driving while approaching and entering the bend.

4.2.5 LANDMARKS

Advertisements on aesthetically pleasing structures, such as skyscrapers, may be used as prominent and striking landmarks. Such advertisements should harmonise with and complement the host structure, while the advertising contents should not dominate either the scene or the structure. (See Figure 4.7 top & Figure 4.17.) Advertisements might even brighten up less appealing or mediocre

structures. However, the bottom line is that structure and advertisement should form a visually pleasant whole that might serve as a prominent and striking landmark. In order to provide a sense of permanence to an advertising landmark, advertising contents should be of a more permanent nature. Such advertisements should also not form part of structures that have great landmark value on their own and which will be devalued by any advertisement. (See Figure 4.20.)

In exceptional cases free-standing billboards might also serve as landmarks. However, such billboards will need custom-designed structures of a very high aesthetic quality. Community towers, consisting of an illuminated billboard, a television screen and electronic advertising, may serve as landmarks and community gathering points for lower-income communities. Such community towers should not consist of standardised structures, but should reflect the character of individual communities and should enhance the identity of those communities. Local character can be further enhanced by means of landscaping. As a rule, welcome signs to cities, towns and villages should not be used as advertising structures. Such signs normally make an important contribution in creating the first image of a city, town or village in the mind of the visitor. If advertisements are incorporated, these usually overshadow welcome signs and dominate their character, which is not at all conducive to placeness.

Art objects provide interesting opportunities for landmarks in the landscape. (See 4.2.15.3.)

It is also important to notice that a prominent and unique building or building complex that constitutes a landmark and is associated with a certain corporate institution or function such as a shopping centre, might in itself be seen as an advertisement. This would reduce the need for elaborate signage.

4.2.6 VISUAL CONTINUITY AND PERMANENCE

Continuity and permanence are represented by the durable, long-term structures in the landscape and provide a permanent framework within which change can take place, therefore allowing change to take place without chaos. Since the contents of outdoor advertisements tend to change over short periods of time, advertisements might have a very negative impact on sense of permanence. This



Source: Henderson & Landau 1981



Figure 4.20
Landmarks

An advertisement forming a landmark should harmonise with and complement the host structure. It should not obstruct or affect any architectural feature and should not dominate the scene or the structure. It should also not form part of a structure that has a great landmark value on its own and which will be devaluated by such an advertisement. The Citroën sign on the above photograph breaks all these rules.

Photo date: September 1996



Figure 4.21
Continuity and
permanence

Continuity and permanence are represented by the durable, long-term structures in the landscape. They provide a permanent framework within which change can take place, therefore allowing change to take place without chaos. Since the contents of outdoor advertisements tends to change over short periods of time, advertisements might have a very negative impact on sense of permanence.

Creating a sense of permanence is even more important in the case of temporary advertisements. Although temporary advertisements need to be easily removable, they should nevertheless have a tidy and *permanent* appearance. One way of achieving this is by covering a structural element such as a pillar with a tight-fitting banner, as illustrated by this example at a shopping centre in Orchard Road, Singapore. The banner thus obtains the shape and permanent appearance of the structural element.

tendency can be counteracted by fixing advertisements onto permanent structures such as buildings. However, as a general rule, such signs should not dominate the more permanent structure but should be made a harmonious part of the structure by using appropriate design principles such as framing. (See 4.2.3.) Due to their conspicuousness, dominant signs will enhance the sense of impermanence created by outdoor advertisements and signs. Exceptions to this general rule of non-dominant signs are possible, for instance when advertisements are used for screening unsightly views or buildings or when a huge advertisement is used as part of a *total design* to obtain a special effect.

The creation of a sense of permanence is very important in the case of temporary advertisements. Although temporary advertisements should be easily removable, they should nevertheless have a neat and tidy appearance since an untidy and degenerated appearance intensifies a sense of impermanence. This can be obtained in the following manner:

- ❑ Covering a structural element such as a pillar with a tight-fitting banner, so that the banner obtains the shape and permanent appearance of the structural element.
- ❑ Fitting posters into permanent poster-holders on lampposts.
- ❑ Sense of visual permanence can also be given to posters on construction boundary walls by placing them at the same height and interval.
- ❑ Huge banners hung onto the walls of shopping centres or other buildings can also be used as temporary signs. Such walls should form a flat plane and should have no architectural detail and a minimum of other signs. The plane of the wall serves the purpose of unifying banner with building and giving it a more permanent appearance.

4.2.7 CONTEXTUALITY

Contextuality refers to the relationship between signs and advertisements on the one hand, and local character, aesthetic context and sense of place on the other hand, with special reference to franchise companies, petroleum companies and chain stores.

Such corporations and enterprises are interested in creating an instantly recognisable image that can be perceived by passers-by from moving cars. This tendency is not limited to signs and logos only. Buildings and premises are used as advertisements in themselves through the provision of standardised buildings, facades and landscaping.

Franchise companies, filling stations and similar enterprises should be prepared to make a contribution to placeness and should not allow too much uniformity, for instance with regard to building structures.

According to Burke (1976, p.112), one should *advocate greater respect for local building materials and textures, and for particular characteristics of scale, vertical emphasis, plot-frontage width and similar local circumstances, so that redevelopments can be modern, but still mannerly, neighbours.*

In the case of historical buildings and districts the colours of corporate logos should not be allowed to contrast to sharply with the colours of traditional materials. Such logos should be incorporated into buildings and settings in a visually harmonious manner.

Visual guidelines on contextuality should be set by communities, not only with regard to advertisements and signs, but also with regard to structures.

4.2.8 INCORPORATION OF ADVERTISING SPACE IN NEW DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Inserting new elements, such as advertisements and signs, into any setting or structure can have far-reaching visual consequences. It might either lead to excessive order or diversity, in other words it can distort the balance between unity and diversity. (See 4.2.14.) In the case of advertisements it will mostly lead to too much diversity or visual chaos. Sufficient space should be provided for advertisements and signs when designing buildings, shopping complexes and pedestrian streets as part of the overall design, while allowance should also be made for a hierarchy of signs. (See 4.2.3.) Signs should become a recognised design element. They should not appear to have been pasted onto a design at a later stage.

As a general rule, the principle of integrating advertisements and signs into building, shopping complex or streetscape design should be aimed firstly at locality-bound advertisements and then at non-locality-bound advertisements in order to prevent advertisements getting out of hand and dominating the design. The number of advertisements and signs to be used in any design and the prominence of these advertisements and signs as a design element will depend on various factors such as the architectural style, the character of the streetscape and the urban character. An office precinct or complex, for example, will allow for less signs than a commercial district or complex, and a residential area for even fewer. The strategic environmental assessment (SEA) procedure might be a very handy instrument for integrating advertisements into shopping complex and streetscape design. (See Appendix 2.)

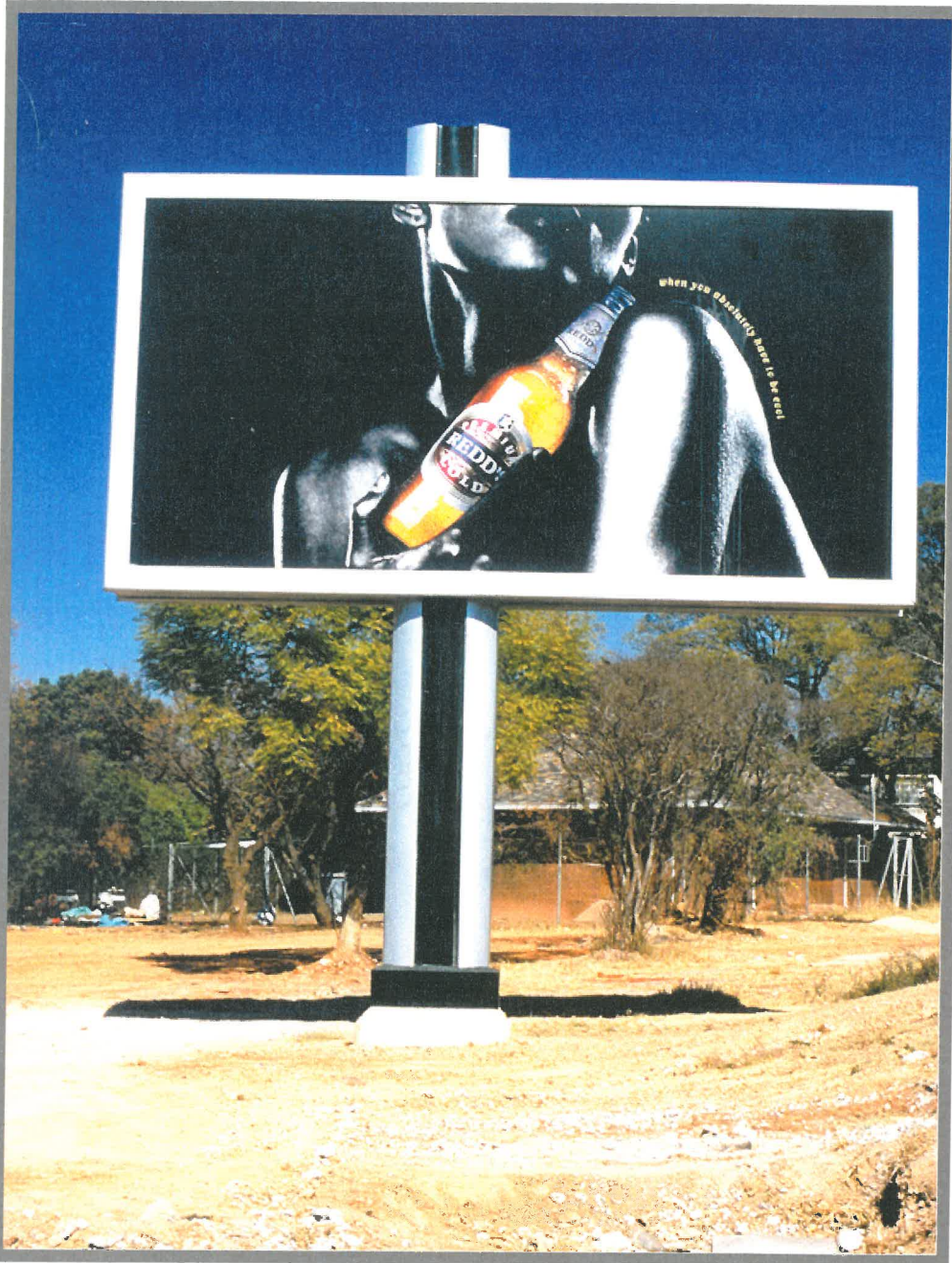
The use of prominent visual elements in a building, shopping complex or streetscape for the purpose of advertising, such as a focal point in a vista, should be treated with the utmost care since such elements could be very easily destroyed if misused and exploited.

4.2.9 INFORMATION LOAD AND INFORMATION RELEVANCY

Wherever possible the aim should be to establish a strong correlation between the information load and information relevancy of outdoor advertisements. A higher information load may be allowed if the relevancy of the information is also high. Not only the visual relevancy should be taken into consideration, but also the relevancy of the actual message in terms of location. This will mean that third party or non-locality-bound signs will have a low relevancy and should therefore be limited to the brand logo and a very short message. In this case minimalism should be the key word. This principle is of importance not only to traffic safety, but also to aesthetics. By applying the principle of minimalism true art can be created and in this way advertising content may make an important contribution to the aesthetic environment. (See Figure 4.22.) In its ultimate form the layout is of such artistic quality that it gives rise to wordless communication. Such advertisements *rely on the message from the logo or product image to reinforce the manufacturer's or product's presence, rather than explain its importance or persuade us to buy* (Fraser, 1991, p.154). (See 4.2.2.5.)

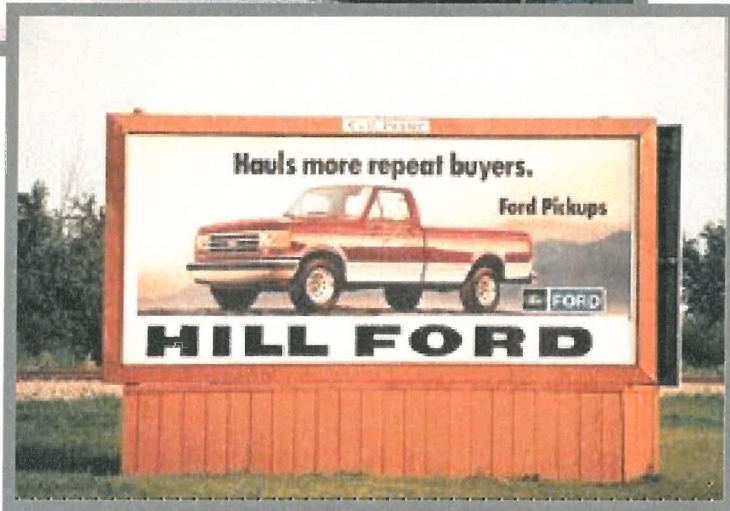
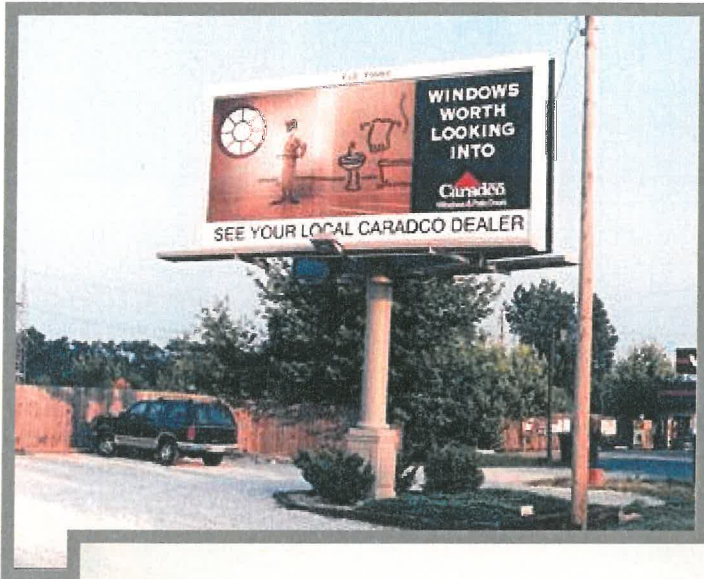


Photo date: November 2001



The relationship between advertising contents and billboard structure plays an important role in obtaining unity and balance. Unity between billboard graphics and structure is an important factor in integrating a billboard with the surrounding environment. The billboard on this page shows extraordinary unity between graphics and billboard structure. This was obtained by means of *similarity* in colour, *simplicity* in both graphics and structure and the *framing* of billboard contents. With the necessary landscaping around this billboard it might serve as an important example of the *commercial art along the road* concept.

Figure 4.22
Harmony between
billboard structure and
contents



The relationship between advertising contents and billboard structure plays an important role in obtaining unity and balance. Unity between billboard graphics and structure is an important factor in integrating a billboard with the surrounding environment. The billboards at the top and centre of this page show unity between graphics and billboard structure through a harmony in colour. Unfortunately, the scaffolding, external illumination and pole supplying electricity to the top billboard impair upon this harmony to a large extent. Harmony can also be enhanced by means of framing (centre and bottom). The historical billboard from the early twentieth century (bottom) provides an extraordinary sense of harmony through a special framing effect.

Figure 4.22
continued



4.2.10 INTEGRATION OF ADVERTISEMENTS AND SETTING OR EXTERNAL MEDIA CONTENT

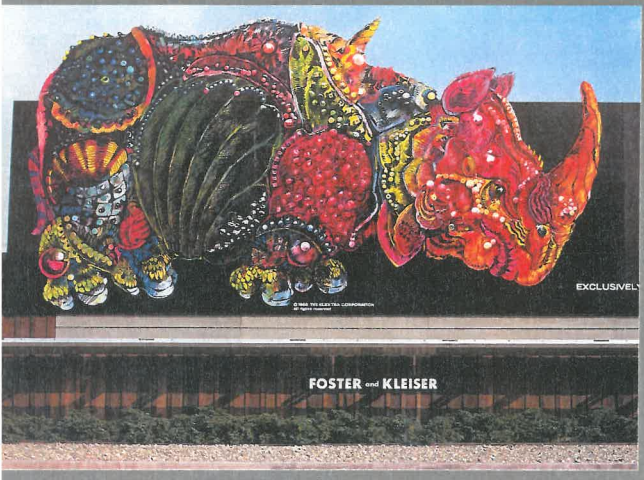
In terms of outdoor advertising the surrounding environment has been defined as the external media content. (See 3.2.2, second paragraph.) Care should be taken to ensure that the external media content is not manipulated and exploited for advertising purposes in the sense that such manipulation leads to major changes in setting, which may be detrimental to placeness. As a general rule advertisements and signs should not manipulate the character of the setting, since the danger exist that placeness may be commercialised by creating a cheap, universal commercial character, which will lead to placelessness. Setting and existing sense of place should rather manipulate or influence advertising structure, and in certain cases even advertising contents.

Advertisements can be integrated into a setting in the following ways:

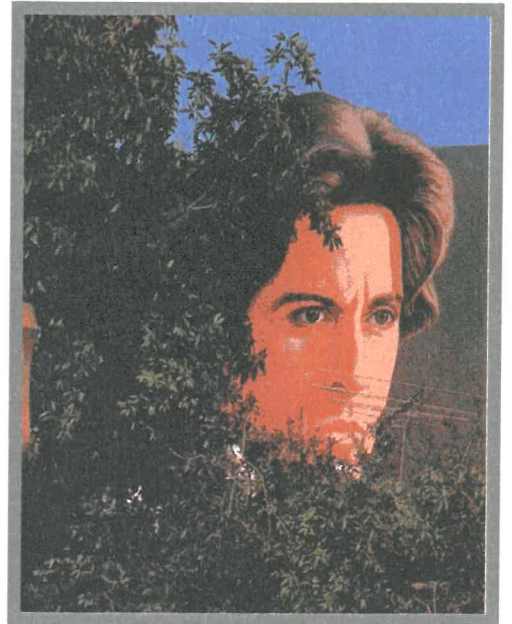
- Prominent lines of free-standing advertisements can be softened by making use of vegetation, thus integrating outdoor advertising structures into a visual scene. (Figure 4.23.) In the case of larger advertisements, it would be preferable to use existing vegetation or larger trees that can be readily transplanted.
- The more flowing lines of free-form billboards may harmonise well with the environment if vegetation is used to blend the billboards into the environment. (Figure 4.23.) This is especially true if only a free-form image without any text (copy) is used, which can be easily linked to a specific product, service or enterprise. Free-form billboards without copy have a huge potential in supplementing, confirming and expanding the television coverage of an advertising campaign. However, in an environment with a proliferation of other structures the free-form billboard may actually contribute to the existing problem of clutter and visual complexity. In such a case conventional billboards with strong geometric lines, which are reflected by the other structures, might be more appropriate.
- In general, advertisements and signs have a much better appearance in a street scene with street trees than in treeless streets, since the trees serve as an integrative and unifying element that softens the harshness of advertisements, signs and any service structures. Street furniture



Source: Henderson & Landau, 1981, p.80



Source: Henderson & Landau, 1981, p.60



Advertisements and signs can be integrated into the environment in various ways:

Prominent lines of free-standing advertisements can be softened by making use of vegetation (top). In this case huge palm trees were used that could be easily transplanted on the site.

Due to their more flowing lines, free-form images may blend very well with the environment if vegetation is used (bottom right).

By linking billboards to the ground, harmony can be obtained between billboard and environment. At the beginning of the twentieth century the so-called *Lizzies* introduced the use of lattice-work as an integrated part of the billboard structure for this purpose (black and white, bottom, next page). In the case of the rhino billboard (bottom left) a wooden fence as well as other landscaping elements were used to obtain an aesthetically pleasing link between billboard and ground. An extraordinary effect is obtained by a stone-framed billboard in the old part of Shanghai (centre, next page), which apart from linking the advertisement to the ground, also harmonises with the historical stone buildings in this part of the city.

Figure 4.23

Integration between advertisement and setting

Source: C&U Poster Advertising Co., online



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA



Source: C&U Poster Advertising Co., online



Source: NEOS, online



Figure 4.23
continued



Source: C&U Poster Advertising Co., online



Source: Henderson & Landau, 1981, p.29

and artefacts such as traffic lights, street lamps and overhead service lines must be taken in consideration when managing advertisements and signs. These elements may be an important contributing factor to visual impact and the visual complexity of the street scene.

- Advertising contents could play an important role in integrating advertisements into the environment by using design elements representative of the surrounding environment. (See Figure 4.24). Local character and sense of place should be taken into consideration when designing sign contents and sign structure. In the case of bigger signs and billboards an even more effective integration should be achieved through being site specific. Excuses are often offered by advertising contractors that they have no control over the contents of an advertisement to be placed on their structures after obtaining a client. They cannot prescribe to the advertising agency or the client in this regard. However, in order to achieve an integration between advertisement and environment the advertising agency, together with the client and the contractor, should be involved in the process of managing outdoor advertisements and signs and therefore the visual environment. Such an approach should not be seen as a limitation of creative self-expression or artistic abilities. Rather, it should be seen as a challenge to the artist at the advertising agency to express true artistic skill by integrating advertising content, sign structure and the surrounding environment. The right of creative self-expression should not be seen as an unlimited right, but should be tempered and adapted so as to express local character and placeness. Progress in digital printing technology is not only creating possibilities for mass-producing advertising images, but also creates exciting possibilities for digitally adapting the design (artwork) of specific advertisements to make them more site specific. In designing advertising contents the advertising agency should not only be responsible to the client, but also to the public and to the communities who are the owners of the aesthetic environment. By contributing to sense of place the commercial artist will also promote the interest of the client by creating a vivid image in the mind of the observer, which will be remembered over extended periods of time and which will also include the specific advertisement.

In certain cases a setting may have to be changed by landscaping the area around an advertising structure in order to promote more effective integration between setting and advertising structure. This should not be seen as a case of advertising structure manipulating setting as long as such

Source: Henderson & Landau, 1981, p.63



Date of photo: November 2001

Figure 4.24

Integration between advertisement and setting

Design elements from the surrounding environment

Advertising contents can play an important role in integrating advertisements into the environment by using design elements representative of the surrounding environment. The free-form clouds of the Tahiti scene (above) blend well into the blue sky behind the billboard. The landscaping in front of the billboard and the closeness of the billboard to the ground contribute to harmony between billboard and environment. The only negative factors are the fence visible on either side of the billboard and the contrast between graphics and copy. In the case of the gantry billboard in Hatfield, Pretoria (below), integration with the environment is obtained by the thorn tree on the billboard and the presence of a real thorn tree in the foreground.

landscaping contributes to placeness and as long as the main purpose of the landscaping is not to focus attention on the advertisement. If landscaping serves to focus attention on the advertisement it becomes an integral part of the advertising structure and internal media content.

A very important principle is that if contrast or diversity is used to focus the attention of the road-user on individual signs or advertisements, such contrast should still be within the framework of order and recognisable pattern. Individual signs and their effectiveness should not be treated in isolation, but the visual relationship between advertisements and the rest of the setting should be seen as an issue of great importance.

4.2.11 PLACENESS AND SENSE OF PLACE

Placeness and *genius loci* can be very easily destroyed by uncontrolled advertisements and signs. It is very sensitive, fragile and vulnerable since factors contributing to it may be difficult to identify. *It is certainly vulnerable to damage or destruction if not recognized or valued and treated with sufficient sensitivity* (Bell, 1996, p.108). Advertisements and signs should be presented in such a way as to support and restore placeness. Although it might be difficult to identify all factors contributing to placeness, as well as the interrelationship between these factors, the key elements and essence of placeness should be identified in order for advertisements and signs to be supportive to *genius loci* and placeness. It is not only concrete visual elements that should be taken into consideration, but also aspects such as local culture, tradition, history and climate.

In order to save costs the outdoor advertising industry prefers standardised outdoor advertising structures, which have a very detrimental effect on placeness in most instances. In contrast to such an approach custom-made structures, especially advertising furniture, could make a very positive contribution to placeness. Outdoor advertisements and signs could also play an important role in enhancing the local character of a shopping centre and even in establishing a unique character for such a centre by limiting standardised advertising structures and by integrating outdoor advertisements and signs into shopping centre design. Sign systems and sign themes can make an important contribution to local sense of place not only at shopping centres, but also in towns and villages as a whole. These may include carved wooden signs indicating various facilities at a



Date of photo: April 1999



By using design elements that reflect local character and placeness, sign contents can play an important role in integrating signs into the environment. A high degree of integration can be achieved by being site specific, as is illustrated by this directional sign to Burg Rheinfels just outside Boppard in Germany. The image of a knight is used which, can be associated with castles, while Burg Rheinfels can be seen in the background.

Figure 4.25
Integration between sign and setting
Reflecting local character

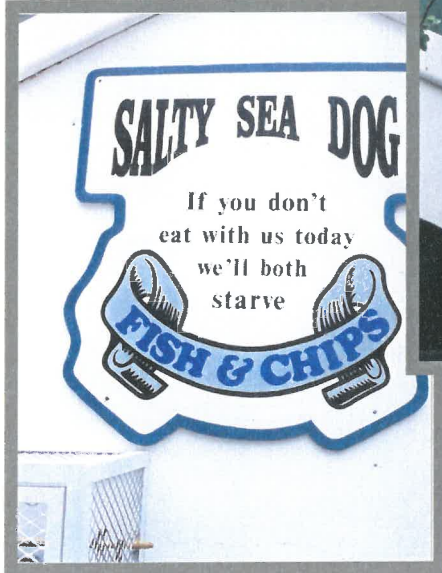
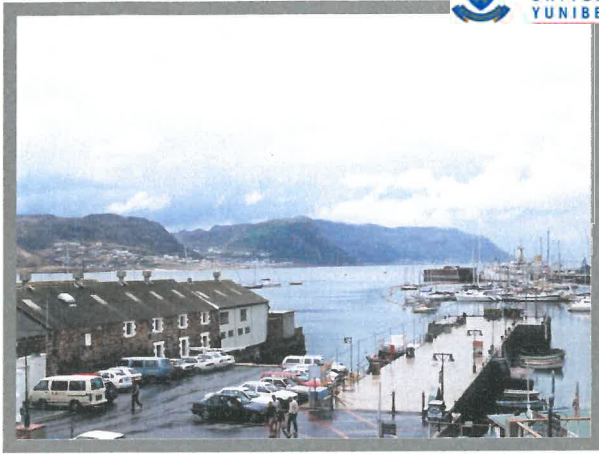
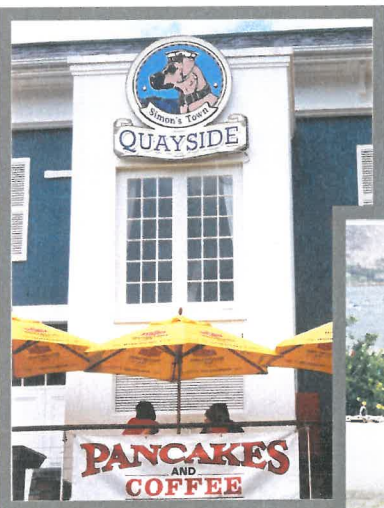


Figure 4.26
Placeness

In order for outdoor advertisements and signs to enhance local placeness the key elements and essence of placeness should be identified and advertisements and signs should then reflect these elements. This should include not only concrete visual elements, but also aspects such as local culture, tradition, history and climate.

Simon's Town on the Cape Peninsula has for long been a British naval base. This harbour town therefore has a noticeable British character (top). This character is enhanced by the *Salty Sea Dog* signs (centre). One of the most colourful characters of Simon's Town was the naval dog, *Just Nuisance* (bottom right). This part of local history is reflected in the Quayside sign (bottom left).





Date of photos: October 2001

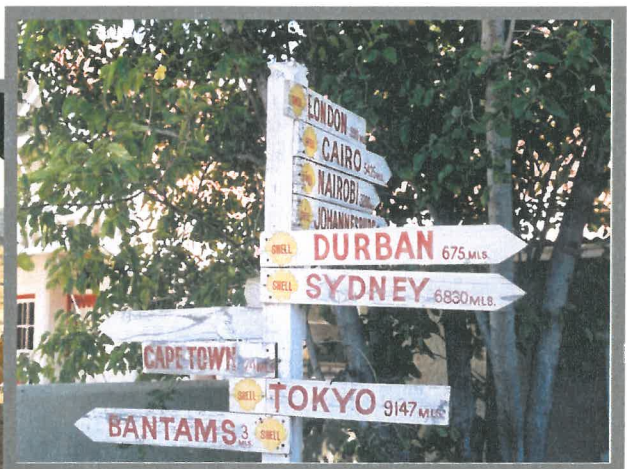


The sign of a photo studio in Church Street, Pretoria (top left and right) enhances the cottage character of the studio. This is placeness on a very local scale. The distance signs at Matjiesfontein highlights the isolation of this Karoo town and the long distances one has to travel in this region (bottom right). The multi-coloured resort sign reflects the colourful decorations on local Ndebele huts, as well as cultural artefacts (bottom left).

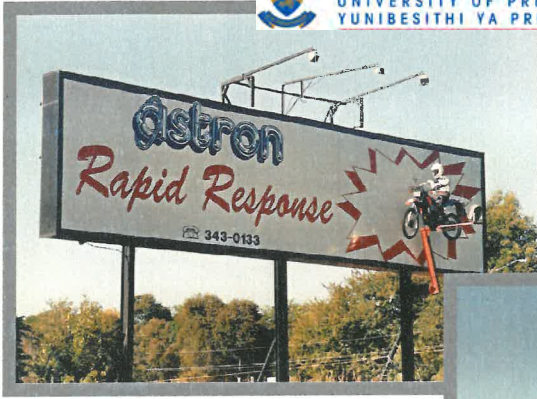
Figure 4.26
continued



Date of photo: 1992



Date of photo: December 2000



Date of photos: 1996



Source: C&U Poster Ad. Co.



Figure 4.27

Creating placeness through non-standardised advertising structures

In order to save costs the outdoor advertising industry prefers standardised outdoor advertising structures, which might have a very detrimental effect on placeness. Certain standardised structures, and especially slender pole-like or frame-like structures, also appear very untidy (top). This effect can be minimised by using non-standardised structures and by improvising on existing structures in order to express and enhance local character and placeness (centre and bottom). Care must be taken not to allow non-standardised advertising structures to become standardised by using them too often, or by using them at localities where they contrast with local placeness or architectural style.



Source: C&U Poster Advertising Co.

Source: C&U Poster Advertising Co., online



The transformation of an unattractive billboard: The photographs on this page show what can be done with some additional funds and a little bit of ingenuity. The additional funds are well spent since the *new-look* billboard will attract more attention and the message will be remembered over a longer period of time. Notice the attractive appearance of the reverse side of the revamped billboard.

Figure 4.27
continued

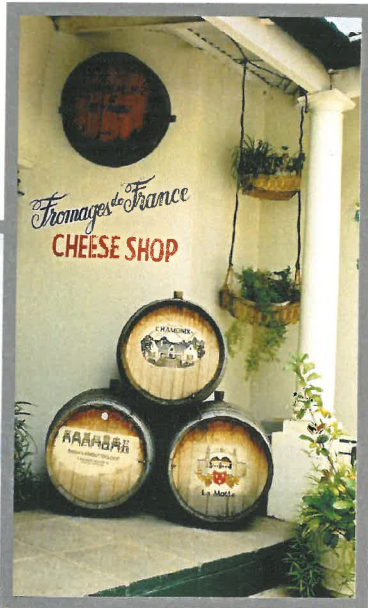
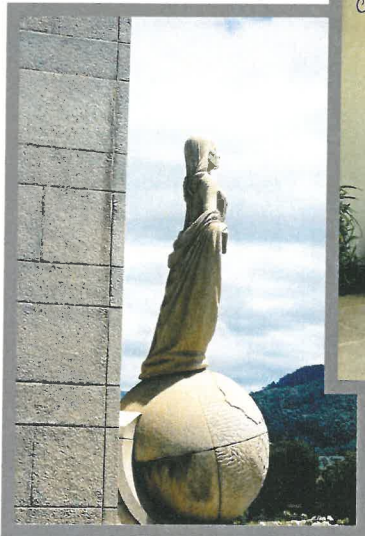


Figure 4.28

Placeness through sign systems and sign themes

Sign systems and sign themes can play an important role in enhancing placeness. The town of Franschoek in the Western Cape uses a uniform design of framed signs with rounded corners (top).

Date of photos: February 2002



This town also has its own guidance sign system (bottom left). Although this design is somewhat modern for a historical town like Franschoek, the French national colours were used, which reflect the French character and tradition of this town (centre right). This tradition can be traced back to the French Huguenot refugees of 1688 (centre left) who were settled in the vicinity of this town.

A mascot or emblem, which reflects local tradition or history can be used to enhance local character, while a common design element, such as a flower theme, can be used for shop signs. The flower sign at the bottom right hails from the town of Knysna in the Western Cape. The wooden sign reflects the indigenous forest bordering the town. If wooden signs with a flower theme could be repeated in Knysna it would do much to enhance local sense of place.



Photo date: Feb. 2002

Date of photo: 1996

shopping centre or in a town or village, or hand-painted guest house signs in traditional inn-sign style. (See Figure 5.3.) A mascot or emblem could also be used that reflects local tradition or history, while a common design element such as a flower border can be used for shop signs.

The use of sound for the purpose of outdoor advertising can also play an important role with regard to sense of place. The use of universal pop music to attract customers may diminish placeness. Sounds unique to a specific location or region (e.g. traditional music) should rather be used. The whale crier in Hermanus, announcing the sighting of whales, is another good example of promoting placeness by means of sound. (See Figure 3.7.)

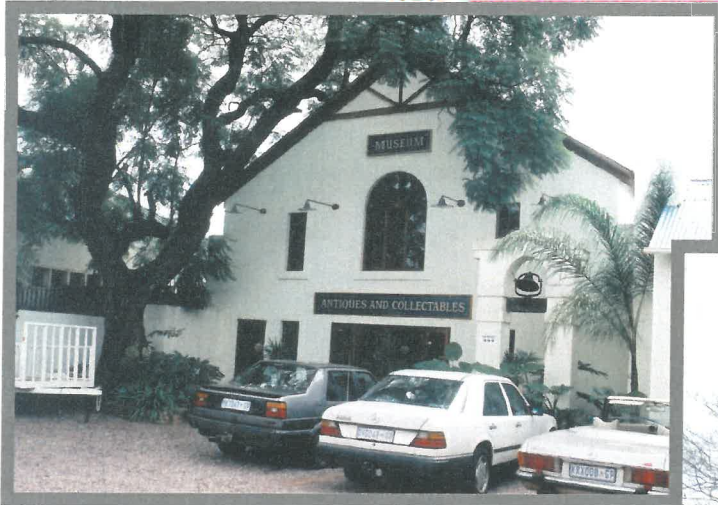
One should not always rely on signs as the main or even the only means of orientation and direction, but should rather concentrate on the creation of placeness which should include the effective management of outdoor information transfer. Urban design should be used as an important mechanism for orientation while signs should rather supplement the orientation and guidance role of placeness and urban design elements instead of working against and impeding upon them.

4.2.12 STATUS, TRADITION AND IMAGE OF INSTITUTIONS

In the case of institutions with a special status, tradition or image, such as prominent government buildings, institutions portraying an environmental image, churches and educational institutions, sense of place plays an important role in maintaining such status, tradition and image. The ineffective management of outdoor information transfer could very easily devalue status, tradition and image.

If any advertisement or sign is to be provided at such institutions, advertising and sign structure should not dominate but should rather harmonise with architecture and landscape while enhancing local placeness. For instance, custom-designed advertising structures should be provided by using the same building material and style used for existing buildings and other structures.

The environmental message portrayed by environmental institutions and organisations should not be hijacked through corporate sponsorship for the mere purpose of providing such a corporation with a greenwashed image. (See Figure 4.30.) The corporate message should blend into the environmental



Advertisements and signs can play an important role in providing any enterprise with a certain image, character and placeness. This is clearly illustrated in the case of De Merindol Collector's Gallery and Restaurant in Pretoria, where signs made an important contribution in creating a stylish image. The only false note is the unattractive temporary signs that are used during the holiday season.

Figure 4.29
Business image



Figure 4.30

Status, tradition and image of institutions

Bayworld in Port Elizabeth is a prestigious environmental institution consisting of a natural and cultural history museum (the third oldest in South Africa), an oceanarium (famous for its dolphins) and a snake park. Although a famous tourist attraction it also represents higher values such as environmental sustainability, natural and cultural conservation and research. Unfortunately, the environmental message portrayed by this institution has been hijacked through corporate sponsorship. The corporate name, colours and product dominate the entire facade. (Also notice the advertisement on the bus shelter in front of Bayworld.) This full-facade advertisement actually undermines Bayworld's credibility as an environmental institution and its educational and research function. The gaudy colours and abstract design of the mural and the plastic sign at the main entrance, announcing happenings at Bayworld, contribute even further to creating an image of a mere amusement park aimed at maximum profit, insustainability and consumerism.

A much more tranquil and environmentally friendly atmosphere could have been created by a more natural and less abstract mural consisting of various shades of sea-green and turquoise, which would also enhance the Bayworld and Oceanarium theme. Corporate logo and product could have been integrated into the mural in a much more subtle manner through product placement, or could have been limited to Bayworld brochures. A more environmentally friendly entrance sign constructed from natural materials would also have improved the environmental image of this institution to a large extent.



image and message provided by the environmental institution in a subtle manner and should be subordinate to it. This can, for instance, be obtained by using non-corporate colours sympathetic to the environmental image, by allowing only relatively small corporate logos and by not implicating the corporation directly in any text used.

4.2.13 OVERKILL

Overkill takes place when an enterprise makes use of a large number of advertisements or signs in order to attract attention where one or two might have been sufficient, whether it be a variety of signs or a repetition of the same sign. (Figure 4.31.) However, in certain circumstances the same sign might be used repeatedly to create a sense of rhythm. (See 4.2.2.8.) Overkill should be discouraged as far as possible since it will fuel the competition principle, which means that various enterprises will compete against one another to provide the largest number of signs.

4.2.14 UNITY AND DIVERSITY OR ORDER AND SPONTANEITY

The balance between unity and diversity is a key element in creating and enhancing placeness: *The ultimate visual objective in any design is to balance unity with diversity and to respect the spirit of the place* (Bell, 1996, p.93).

Advertisements and signs can be seen as important elements in any streetscape. If advertisements and signs are managed effectively, they could make an important contribution with regard to placemaking and the creation of a balance between order and spontaneity. However, if advertisements and signs are not controlled effectively, they may destroy placeness and create visual chaos. According to Motloch (1991, p.286), any design variable can contribute to order or spontaneity, but certain variables and certain scales are more important for creating order and others for creating spontaneity. Smaller advertisements and signs, such as shop signs and street furniture, can play a very important role with regard to spontaneity and variety.

However, there are limits within which spontaneity and variety should be applied. *While contrast is important for vitality and interest, too much will cause a loss of unity in the resulting visual confusion*



Figure 4.31
Overkill

Overkill takes place when an enterprise makes use of a large number of advertisements or signs in order to attract attention where one or two might have been sufficient, whether it be a variety of signs or a repetition of the same sign. The examples on this page are from Hermanus in the Western Cape, one of the best spots in the world for land-based whale watching. Carit Estates (top) has five signs (including the small one in the window on the right) for people approaching from the north, where one would have been sufficient. Aida Properties (centre) has four signs, including the two smaller ones on the veranda, and Absa Bank has three indicating their autoteller. Overkill should be discouraged as far as possible since it will fuel the competition principle, resulting in various enterprises competing against one another to provide the largest number of signs. As sign proliferation takes place the value of individual signs is diminished. The above examples are all in the same street not far from one another. It is therefore quite clear that the competition principle has already kicked in in Hermanus.

(Bell, 1996, p.94). Diversity may very easily get out of hand, ending in visual chaos. The principle of relatedness and information relevancy should always be taken into consideration. Order, understanding and relatedness form the framework within which spontaneity and diversity may be applied and within which detail can be perceived or processed. Bell (1996, p.94) refers to *complementary unity*. *Complementary unity involves the deliberate use of opposites or contrasts which nevertheless relate to the whole... Unity concerns the relationship between parts of a design or landscape as a whole.* Sharp (1968, p.13) talks about: *...a variety that is not so much of contrast but "variety within the same kind, variety within an established rhythm," variety (one might almost say) within similarity, within a broad unity of character.*

Various design principles can be applied to obtain unity, e.g. rhythm and similarity. In displaying advertisements design elements such as form, style, scale, colour and texture could be used to obtain a balance between diversity and order. This implies an interaction between design elements, some representing order and others diversity.

For any design to possess an identifiable, if not unique character, there should be an all-embracing, unifying theme, a sort of constant idea behind it (Bell, 1996, p.94). In many cases certain features stand out as dominant contributors to landscape character. A unifying theme and dominant features can be seen as the essence of placeness. Such features must be identified before the effective management of outdoor information transfer can take place.

Various factors will influence the amount of variety that is needed within a unifying theme. In the case of historical buildings and towns a strong visual harmony often exists between buildings and local environment due to the use of a limited variety of local building material. In such cases the contrast between sign and building should not be too prominent. (Figure 4.34.)

4.2.15 ADVERTISEMENT AND ART

In contributing to art, billboards and other outdoor advertisements and signs have an untapped potential. A contribution to the arts cannot be limited to advertising contents. The relationship between advertising contents, advertising structure and the surrounding environment should be



Figure 4.32

Balance between unity and diversity

One of the most important visual objectives is to balance unity with diversity. Advertisements and signs can be seen as important elements in any streetscape. If advertisements and signs are managed wisely, they can make an important contribution with regard to placemaking and the creation of a balance between order and spontaneity. However, if advertisements and signs are not controlled effectively they may destroy placeness and cause visual chaos.

The colour of the bus shed in Westminster, London (top) harmonises with the building in the background, while the colours of the advertisement provide the necessary diversity. A good balance between unity and diversity is obtained.

Another good example of harmony between unity and diversity is the large advertisement against scaffolding in Paris (bottom). It contrasts with the building and environment in terms of size, but sufficient harmony is obtained in terms of colour. The softer lines and small letter size of advertising content also contribute to harmony while the rectangular pattern in the centre of the advertisement reflects the detail of window lines. The enormous size of this advertisement is made acceptable through harmony in colour.

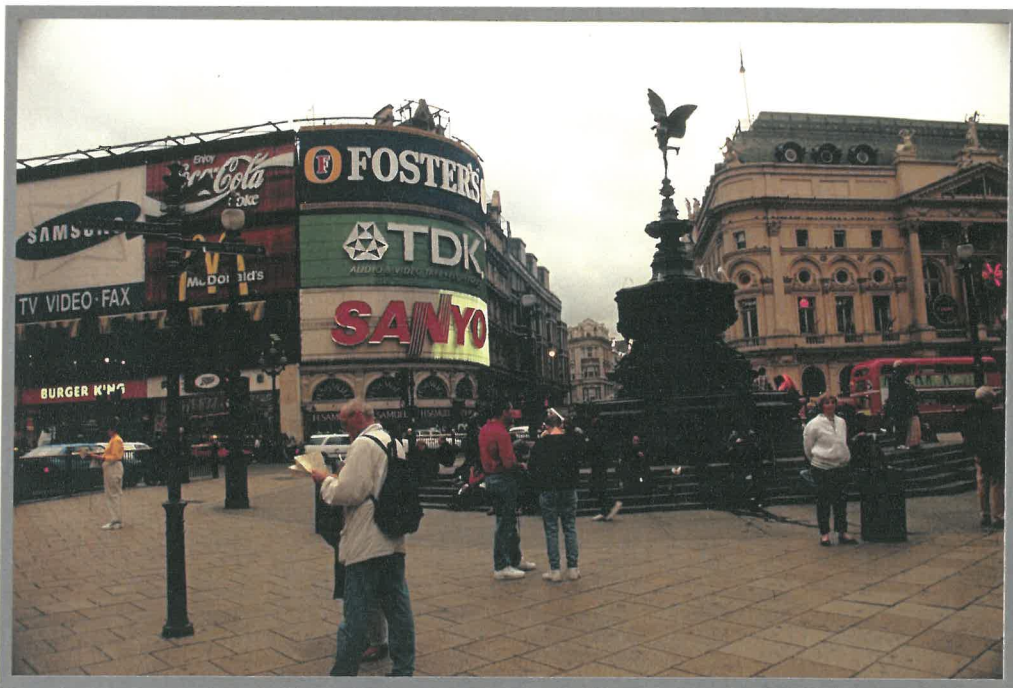
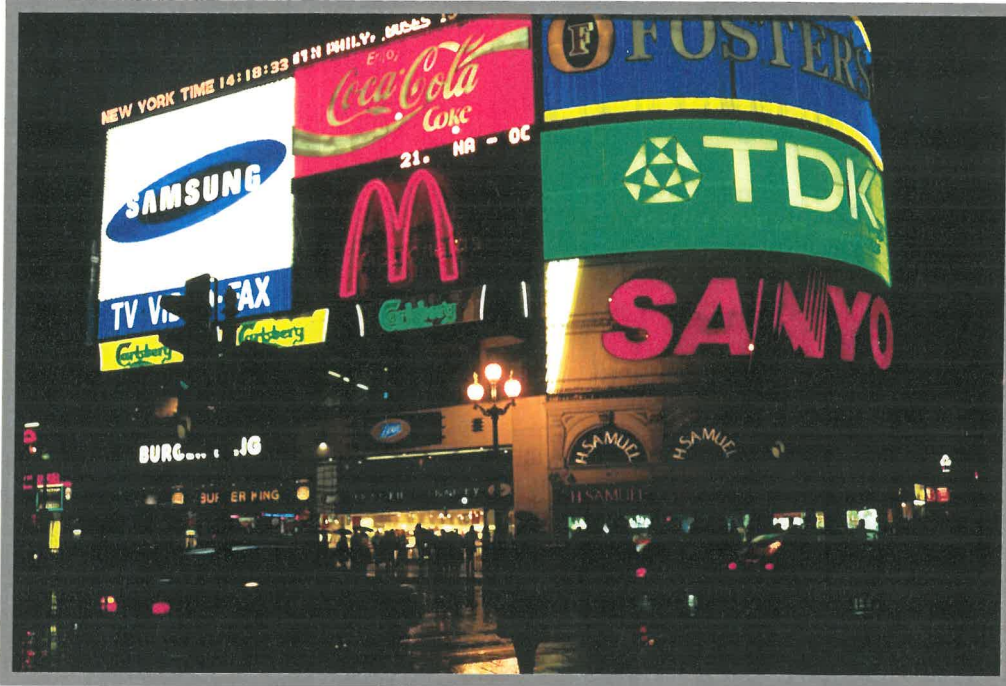


Figure 4.33
Balance between unity and diversity
Entertainment districts

With so much diversity and contrast between signs with regard to design elements such as colour and form, it seems impossible to achieve a balance between unity and diversity in entertainment districts. A unifying factor does exist in the form of sign illumination with the night sky as background, and in this manner the necessary balance is obtained. However, during daylight hours this unifying factor disappears.



Date of photo: September 1995



To obtain a balance between unity and diversity all diversity and contrast should always take place within a unifying theme. Various factors will influence the amount of variety that is needed within a unifying theme. In the case of historical buildings and towns a strong visual harmony often exists between structures and between structures and local environment due to the use of a limited variety of local building materials. In such cases the contrast between sign and building structure should not be too prominent. The banner pictured here was used with no contrast in colour.

Figure 4.34
Balance between unity
and diversity
Historical buildings

approached in a holistic manner. (Figure 4.22.) The lack of a holistic approach has been the main shortcoming in outdoor advertising's artistic contribution up till now. The artwork on certain billboards might be of a very high standard, but these contributions may be neutralised by the visual impact of the billboard structure.

The following artistic possibilities of outdoor advertising need mentioning:

4.2.15.1 Commercial art in the park

Free-form advertising images and even replicas of commercial products have a very exciting potential in this regard. They might be displayed in a subtle manner by making use of plant material to integrate such images into the landscape design, or they could be used as focal points. Free-form images may consist of painted boards or sculptures. Advertising furniture and other appropriate structures carrying various sizes of posters and billboards might also be used with success. Apart from making art accessible to the ordinary citizen, another benefit may be the landscaping and maintenance of the urban park by the advertisers or outdoor advertising contractor in exchange for obtaining the advertising rights. Adequate control by the local authority and community is a prerequisite before such a project can be undertaken. Advertising structures and contents should be of true artistic value and should not consist of standardised and *mass-produced* structures, while advertising campaigns should not be misused by unscrupulous advertising contractors by aiming such advertisements at the motorist passing the park. The advertising node concept provides exciting possibilities for art in the park in a more concentrated form. (See Appendix 1.)

As is the case with *art objects as landmarks*, pop art also forms an ideal style for expressing commercial art in the park due to its affinity for commercialism, consumerism and mass produced items.

4.2.15.2 Art along the road

If a holistic approach is followed of harmonising advertising content and advertising structure with the surrounding environment and of contributing to sense of place, outdoor advertising can also make an

important artistic contribution along urban freeways and even along higher-order non-urban roads under special circumstances, as shown below.

Artistic advertisements might even be allowed within road reserves. Erecting advertisements and signs within road reserves is a contentious issue. As a general principle advertisements and signs are not allowed within the road reserve, with certain exceptions. One of the exceptions provided for by the South African Manual for Outdoor Advertising Control (SAMOAC) is *Sponsored Road Traffic Projects*. This sign class consists of signs relating to the sponsoring of projects specifically intended for the road user and aimed at the provision of road services, the promotion of road safety or the management and conservation of roadside environments such as scenic roadways. According to SAMOAC such signs should not exceed a maximum size of 4,5m² and a maximum height of 3m (DEA&T, 1998, p.119). This size is adequate, even for free-form boards or sculptures which allow for almost unlimited possibilities. A specific character or mascot, consisting of a series of postures, might be created for a specific campaign. Copy or text should be limited, while all copy, sponsorship logos and brand names should be integrated into the free-form design. The advertising character may carry a banner with a road safety message and may have a certain brand of soft drink in his other hand or wear a certain brand of clothing. In the case of the traditional geometric sign, standardised sign structures should not be used. Custom-made structures and frames should be developed for a specific campaign. Regional variations in free form images or custom-made sign structures and sign content might also be necessary in order to reflect regional character and sense of place. Apart from sponsoring the design of sign contents and sign structures, the actual signs itself, the landscaping at the signs and the management of the sign campaign, sponsors might also contribute to other facets of the campaign and even to amenities along the road. The right to put a certain logo and product on the signs for a specific campaign might be put on *tender* to obtain the best sponsorship and benefits for the controlling authority. The possible involvement of outdoor advertising contractors in such projects should be approached with caution. Since the driving force behind outdoor advertising contractors is maximum profit, sign quality and campaign efficiency might be jeopardised. The involvement of advertising contractors might also mean that sponsored signs will serve as the thin end of the wedge for obtaining the right for other advertisements and signs inside the road reserve by

applying the *Treasury Principle*³⁰ or similar measures. This might lead to a proliferation of signs along roads and the destruction of the aesthetic environment. Therefore ownership of all advertising structures by the relevant roads authorities as well as the control of advertising contents by such authorities is a prerequisite of sponsored road traffic projects, while design review by public involvement should also be possible. By applying the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) procedure, *Sponsored Sign Plans* might be developed for a whole campaign, route or road section with the necessary conditions, design and other specifications. This procedure will also provide for the necessary public involvement and design review inputs. However, owing to the scale of many of such projects public involvement and design review cannot be too emphatic.

Sponsored signs could also be used to combat driver fatigue along long stretches of road. Sponsored signs indicating tourism attractions such as historical sites or natural features could play an important role along roads. However, care should be taken to exclude tourist facilities which might lead to a proliferation of signs along the road. Care should also be taken that the reverse sides of especially free-form signs do not present an unattractive appearance. This might be prevented by repeating the same image on the reverse side of the sign.

4.2.15.3 Art objects as landmarks

Huge art objects or sculptures can be used as a form of advertising and as important landmarks in the landscape. (Figure 4.35.) However, due to its prominence this type of advertisement should be treated with the utmost care.

Pop art forms an ideal style for expressing such advertising objects in the landscape owing to the affinity of pop art to mass-produced everyday items symbolising a contemporary consumeristic lifestyle and owing to its affinity for commercial art techniques.

³⁰ The *Treasury Principle*, refers to the persuasion of a controlling authority by the financial benefits offered up-front by an outdoor advertising contractor to obtain an outdoor advertising concession, which might actually not be to the benefit of the public since it might impact on tourism resources and the local living environment.

The following are prerequisites for art objects in the landscape:

- ❑ They should preferably be placed in the rural landscape where rural land use can form a backdrop to such objects. Since they are treated as important landmarks, settings should be chosen with care.
- ❑ Such landmarks should not be placed in natural landscapes or landscapes of high scenic or historical value.
- ❑ Art objects should not be cluttered by other advertisements, signs, structures or infrastructure, such as power lines, since they will then contribute to and become part of the visual clutter. No written message should be allowed on such objects. These objects should be easily recognisable, while their design should not be complicated and too busy. In urban areas art objects should be treated with special care. They should be treated as focal points, in harmony with the rest of the urban landscape, while avoiding sign and advertisement clutter. Setting should therefore be chosen with care. Owing to the large number of buildings, structures and services in urban areas such objects can very easily contribute to visual decay.
- ❑ The numbers of this type of advertisement should be limited and they should not be repeated too often. A specific area, landscape or district should be limited to a single art object with which that area, landscape or district can be associated. If this advertising type is applied too often the idea of landmark and uniqueness will be destroyed and the landscape will be transformed into a mere *Disney World*.
- ❑ Although an art object may advertise a specific enterprise or institution it should have a broader advertising value. It should always be associated with local activities, cultures or land use. It should never be misused for advertising a single enterprise or franchise without a broader reference to the area, landscape or district. No corporate or commercial logo or mascot should be allowed on an art object or should become an art object.
- ❑ Art objects should form permanent landmarks.

Date of photos: April 2001



The Big Pineapple on Sunninghill Farm at Bathurst in the Eastern Cape: This art object is a well-known landmark to local inhabitants and visitors to the Eastern Cape. Apart from advertising pineapple production on the farm and the Eastern Cape pineapple industry in general, it also advertises and draws attention to various tourist activities and facilities on the farm without using any written messages or any supplementary signs. It is also associated with pineapple research on the farm and the Pineapple Growers Association, which has its offices on the farm. The Big Pineapple is well-placed within the landscape and its meaning and message are enhanced by the surrounding pineapple fields, which emphasises its association with pineapple production in the Eastern Cape. The advertising value of this object is therefore not limited to Sunninghill Farm, but has a broader and more universal application. By contributing to the character and sense of place of this particular region of the Eastern Cape it plays an important part in promoting tourism. It is therefore not by chance that the Big Pineapple is well-featured on the tourism brochures of the Eastern Cape.

Figure 4.35
Art objects as landmarks

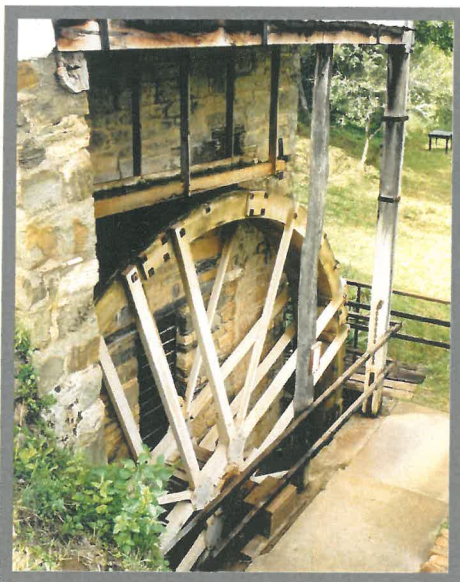
There is one false note. This pop art object is located at the entrance of the village of Bathurst and forms a strong contrast with the historical character of this village (see next page). Seen in this light the Big Pineapple has a rather negative impact on the local sense of place. This criticism must be seen against the background of the relatively few historical villages and towns in South Africa. The Big Pineapple would have made a much better contribution had it been located further away from the village of Bathurst or any other historical or scenic attribute.



Figure 4.35
continued



The village of Bathurst forms an important part of the history of the British Settlers of 1820. The village was founded in the same year and named for Lord Bathurst, colonial secretary of the time. Various historical buildings remind one of the British Settlers. The Anglican Church of St John (1837) (top left) not only served as a place of worship, but also as a place of refuge during the three frontier wars. Bradshaw's mill (1821) (bottom left) was the first water-driven wool mill built in South Africa. The powder house (top right), a historical home (centre) and a penny-farthing against the wall of a shop (bottom right) contribute even further to local character and placeness.



- ❑ Art objects need not be limited to objects portraying a consumeristic lifestyle, but may also portray deeper environmental values.
- ❑ The *strategic environmental assessment* (SEA) procedure should be used to obtain the best location for a landmark in a specific area or district.

4.2.16 UNIFICATION AND SHARING OF INFORMATION

The proliferation of advertisements and signs could be prevented by the unification and sharing of information.

- ❑ A popular solution is to use combination signs at locations such as shopping centres and the entrances of arcades. Care must be taken to prevent a too complex composition. The necessary unity should be obtained between the individual signs included in the combination sign by applying principles such as similarity and framing. As a general rule, the messages and graphics of individual signs should be kept as simple as possible and should be limited to enterprise name and logo. Competition between individual signs in terms of colour and size should be prevented. If the number of enterprises becomes too large more than one combination sign should be used in succession. An *overutilised* combination sign is not only visually unattractive, but also poses a traffic safety hazard. Owing to the large number of enterprises at larger shopping centres the efficiency of combination signs is limited to smaller shopping centres. Excessive signage is often used for rectifying poor shopping centre design and functionality. Effective shopping centre planning should therefore include an outdoor information plan from the start. The SEA procedure provides a mechanism for developing such plans. (See Appendix 2.)
- ❑ The most acceptable option visually would be to provide a free-standing sign indicating the name of the shopping centre only. The only signs indicating enterprises at the shopping centre will be integrated into the structure of the shopping centre. An indoor sign displaying a list containing all the enterprises at the shopping centre will be one of the most visually effective advertising mechanisms for presenting these enterprises to the public. This approach also highlights the

important principle of not relying solely on outdoor advertising, but to combine outdoor advertising with other advertising media. This implies that there is no need for potential visitors to a shopping centre to be dependent solely on a proliferation of signs or an oversized combination sign for providing information on the various enterprises at the shopping centre. Shopping centres will also have to rely on other advertising media such as the press and radio. By limiting the number of signs displayed at a shopping centre, and by concentrating on the name and appearance of the centre, opportunities are developed for creating a more stylish and attractive image, which may attract more visitors than a proliferation of signs. This approach implies that the various enterprises at the shopping centre are represented by the image, name and character of the shopping centre. This approach to advertising at shopping centres might be seen as the ultimate way of information sharing.

- Another unobtrusive manner of sharing information is to make use of one or two sign structures at the entrance to a shopping centre to display special offers and sales at the various enterprises in the centre alternatively or just to show the names of the various enterprises on a rotational basis.

4.2.17 NATURAL AND CULTURAL DESIGN

Natural design can be seen as fitting advertisements and signs into the biophysical or natural environment by using natural materials or applying any other relevant measures to achieve this purpose. Natural design is of special relevance to conservation areas. Cultural design can be seen as the use of traditional materials for signs or sign structures, or the application of any other relevant measures to give signs and sign structures a historical or cultural appearance. Cultural design also implies harmonising signs and sign structures with historical buildings and historical areas. (cf. Bath City Council, 1993, pp.55-62)

In the case of natural and cultural design, advertising opportunities and acceptable sign types are more limited than in other areas.



Photo date: September 2000

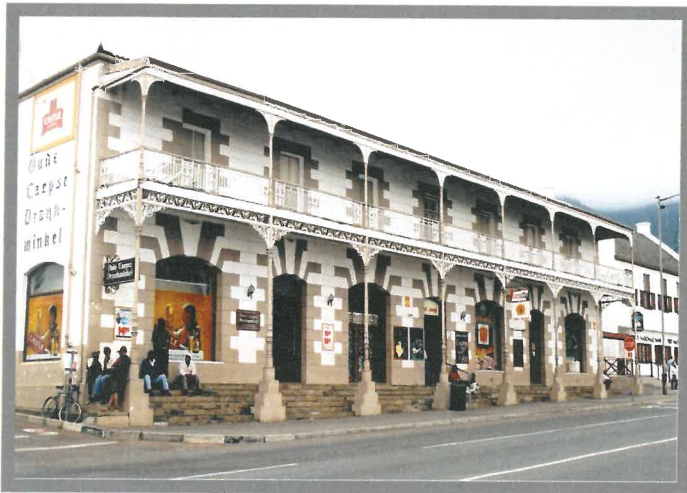


Photo date: December 1997



Historically signs were placed so as to allow the architectural details of buildings to remain prominent. The architectural characteristics of a historical building should therefore always dominate. On buildings with decorative facades, signs should not be placed on the decorative forms or mouldings. For example, signs should not be placed on first-floor veranda balustrades or veranda frieze-work. This point is illustrated by a shop in Beaufort West (top) where a first-floor veranda balustrade was covered by a white board to make provision for advertisements and shop signs. A historical shop in Swellendam (centre) shows what a first-floor veranda should look like. Signs should rather appear on the undecorated wall surfaces of historical buildings (bottom).

Figure 4.36
Cultural design



The use of signs of limited size and number allow the architectural details of these historical buildings in Grahamstown, Eastern Cape, to remain prominent.

Figure 4.36
continued

The following may serve as pointers for natural and cultural design:

- Historically signs were placed so as to allow the architectural details of buildings to remain prominent. The architectural characteristics of a historical building should therefore always dominate. On buildings with decorative facades, signs should not be placed on the decorative forms or mouldings. For example, signs should not be placed on first floor veranda cast-iron work or balustrades or veranda frieze work. They should rather appear on the undecorated wall surfaces. Generally speaking, signs on historical buildings or in historical areas should be discreet and should complement the building or area.
- Advertisements and signs should be placed in locations on the building which would traditionally have been used for such purposes. If the building has no such locations, advertisements and signs will usually be inappropriate and should be limited to what is absolutely necessary. In cases where decorative facades allow no traditional sign locations, projecting signs constructed from traditional materials and of limited proportions may be provided.
- As a general rule, no signs should break the historic roof-line or parapet of a building. A possible exception may be single-storey veranda roof-lines where historical signs sometimes projected across the veranda roof but not above the main roof-line.
- Side-walls of historical buildings provide opportunities, but their use for displaying signs should be considered carefully.
- In certain cases advertising and sign graphics and lettering on historical buildings should have an authentic *historic* appearance, while traditional materials should also be used in sign construction. In most cases modern standardised *trademark* advertising would be inappropriate. Such presentations can be modified by placing the modern sign in a framed panel. The use of plastics as sign material should also be avoided as far as possible.
- In the case of historical buildings and areas, or any other area or building where local, traditional or natural building materials are dominant, the colour of signs should not contrast too sharply with

Source: Philateli



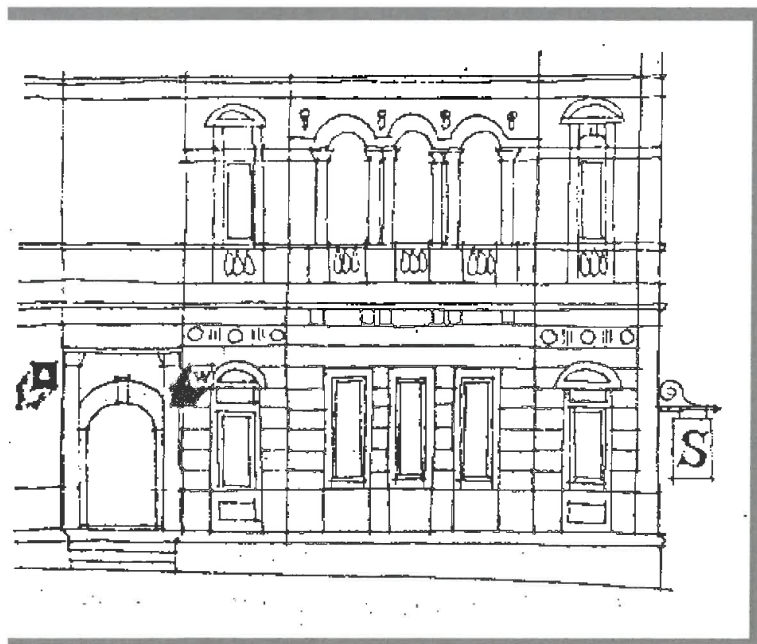
UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA



Source: Philatelic Services, South African Post Office



Figure 4.37
Cultural design
Historical buildings
with limited sign
opportunities



Source: OAASA, undated

Advertisements and signs should be placed in locations on the building which would traditionally have been used for such purposes. If the building has no such locations, advertisements and signs will usually be inappropriate and should be limited to what is absolutely necessary, as is the case with the Palace of Justice (top) and the Old Raadsaal (centre) on Church Square in Pretoria. In cases where decorative facades allow no traditional sign locations, projecting signs of traditional materials and of limited proportions could be provided (bottom). The style of such signs should harmonise with the building



Photo date: April 1999



In some cases advertising and sign graphics and lettering on historical buildings should have an authentic *historic* appearance, while traditional materials should also be used in sign construction. In most cases modern standardised *trademark* advertising would be inappropriate. This modern advertising sign in Boppard, Germany has a historic appearance, although internal illumination and perspex panels are used, which are normally not recommendable for historical areas.

Figure 4.38
Cultural design
The use of traditional materials

the dominant colours of such materials. Advancing colours (the red, orange and yellow range) should be used carefully in such circumstances. If the colours of corporate logos contrast with historical buildings or traditional materials they should be adapted to obtain the necessary unity.

- In order to obtain authentic signs the colour ranges, material and lettering styles of signs of the various historic periods should be researched.

- Internally illuminated and electronic signs should be avoided

- In the case of country towns with a historical appearance, particular attention should be paid to the view from the road as one enters the town. Careful consideration should be given to the placement of any advertisements so as to not detract from historic townscapes. The proliferation of signs at the town entrance to direct the visitor to enterprises and attractions should be avoided at all costs.

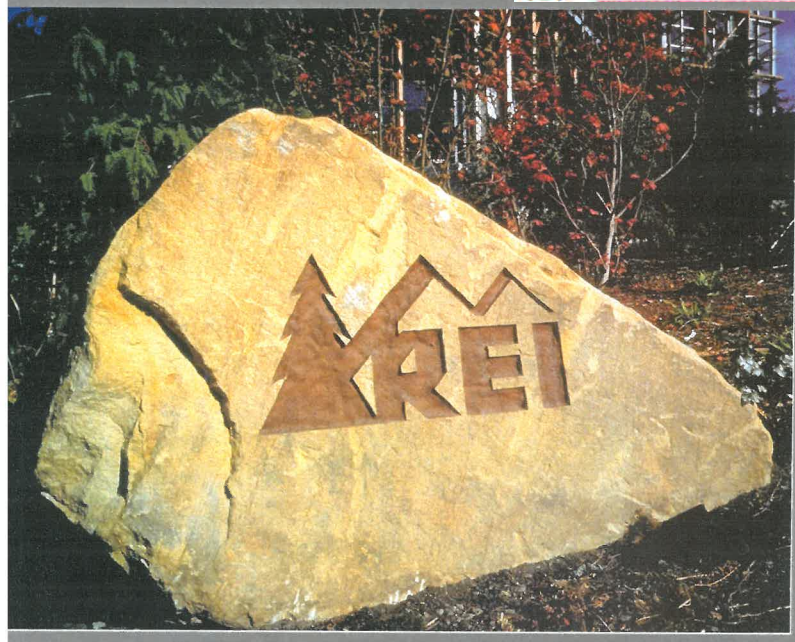
In the case of natural design, custom-made signs reflecting the character of the area should be used.

Simplicity plays an important role in harmonising advertisements and signs with the natural or cultural/historical environment and complementing natural or historical features, whether it be simplicity with regard to advertising graphics, copy, advertising structure or number of signs.

4.3 CONCLUSIONS AND VERIFICATION OF HYPOTHESIS 3

The aim of Chapter 4 was to look at the nature and extent of user-friendly guidelines for the effective management of outdoor information transfer

In order to solve this problem a third hypothesis was formulated which states that general principles and user-friendly guidelines can be developed for the effective management of outdoor information transfer. Such guidelines would make the management of outdoor information transfer less subjective

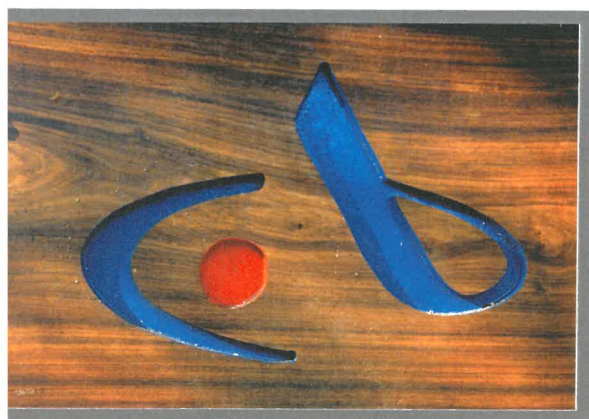


Natural design can be seen as fitting advertisements and signs into the biophysical or natural environment by using natural materials or by applying any other relevant measures for obtaining harmony between sign and natural elements.

Simplicity plays an important role in natural design. This is clearly illustrated by the four-ton engraved boulder marking the beginning of an outdoor test track at REI's flagship store in Seattle (top, left).

Colours used for signs should not contrast too sharply with the natural colours of the surrounding environment. The advancing colours (the red, orange and yellow range) in particular should be used with care. A sign in Singapore (top, right), indicating the southernmost point of the Asian continent, uses crowns which blend with soil and rock, while the blue blends with the ocean. The red in the corporate logo of a sign in the Letaba rest camp of the Kruger National Park (bottom) is small enough not to be disturbing, while the natural wooden colours blend with the environment. Exceptional harmony between sign structure and natural environment is achieved through the use of natural tree trunks.

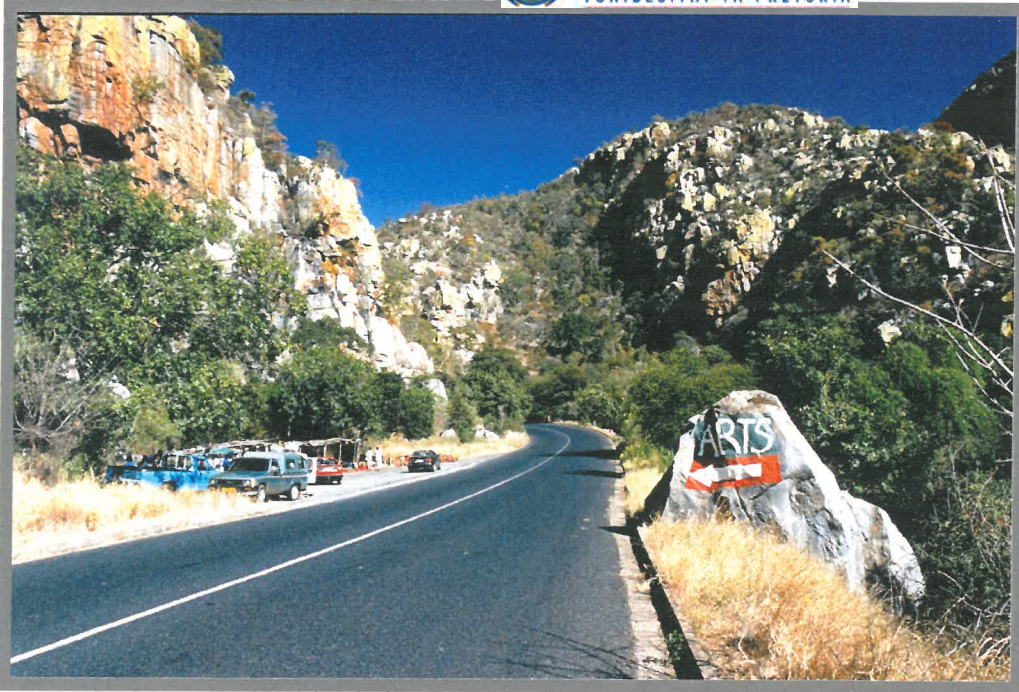
Figure 4.39
Natural design



Date of photo: July 2001



Date of photo: July 2001



Signs and advertising messages should not be painted directly onto rocks or other permanent features in the natural environment, as indicated by this sign advertising a curio stall near Strijdom Tunnel in Mapumalanga. Such practices can very easily get out of hand and create a *don't care attitude* towards the environment. Also notice the impact of the red used. An official brown tourism sign would have been more appropriate.

Figure 4.40
Natural design
Preserving natural
elements

and would provide a basis for control and legislative measures. It was also assumed that such principles and guidelines could be used as an objective measurement for the sustainable management of outdoor information transfer.

4.3.1 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from Chapter 4:

- **Nature and extent of user-friendly guidelines:** Chapter 4 produced a variety of user-friendly principles and guidelines aimed at addressing the issues and concerns identified in this study. User-friendliness was obtained by means of a large number of illustrations and cross-references. From these principles and guidelines it may be concluded that the nature and extent of guidelines needed for the effective management of outdoor information transfer can be seen as far-reaching, requiring a revolutionary and dedicated approach by outdoor advertising contractors, advertising agencies and controlling authorities.
- **Moral basis for principles and guidelines:** No amount of principles and guidelines will lead to the effective management of outdoor information transfer unless such principles and guidelines are grounded in a proper environmental world-view. The formulation of an effective environmental world-view, which is not centred in pragmatism and materialism and which can serve as main source of motivation for the effective management of outdoor information transfer, will have to be investigated.
- **Basis for control and legislative measures:** *The South African Manual for Outdoor Advertising Control (SAMOAC)* was developed in 1998 to provide detailed conditions for the management and control of outdoor advertisements and signs. This manual recognises the differences in local needs and circumstances and suggests that controlling authorities should adapt conditions in this regard (DEA&T, 1998, pp.v-vi). Cape Town, for instance, with mountains and sea and a rich history and cultural resources, and which is known as South Africa's most important tourism city, finds SAMOAC too lenient and has therefore adapted this document to serve their need for stricter control. In contrast to Cape Town, Johannesburg has a strong commercial character and

is known as South Africa's *economic capital*. It is therefore no surprise that Johannesburg is applying the conditions in SAMOAC less strictly since advertisements and signs will benefit the city's commercial character. The principles and guidelines provided in this chapter may form an objective basis for adapting SAMOAC to suit local circumstances. It may serve as an objective tool to develop any control measures or legislation pertaining to outdoor information transfer, while it can also be used by outdoor advertising contractors and advertising agencies in planning, managing and designing outdoor advertisements. As another application these principles and guidelines may serve as an objective instrument for evaluating strategic environmental assessments and environmental impact assessments on developments regarding outdoor information transfer.

- **Principles and guidelines as an objective measure for the sustainable management of outdoor information transfer:** Since placeness plays an important role in analysing and expressing the benefits and impacts of outdoor information transfer, as was shown in Chapter 3, and since placeness serves as a mechanism to express and measure the sustainability of the perceptual environment, placeness will undoubtedly play an important role in the sustainable management of outdoor information transfer. It has been shown that the principles and guidelines in this chapter are important in actualising placeness and sense of place. It can therefore be said that these guidelines and principles may serve as an objective *measuring tool* for the sustainable management of outdoor information transfer.
- **A common language of aesthetics for the effective management of outdoor information transfer:** The principles and guidelines in this chapter provide a common language of aesthetics for not only involving the outdoor advertising industry and controlling authorities in the sustainable management of outdoor information transfer, but also local communities. Such a *common language of aesthetic expression* is needed to revitalise and stimulate communities' blunted senses caused by a degraded environment, and to provide an instrument for participation.
- **Subjectivity within objectivity:** Although the guidelines in this chapter provide an objective framework for legislation and control measures and for the sustainable management of outdoor information transfer, they should not be interpreted as having to be applied to the letter of the

word, at all costs and under all circumstances. Sufficient scope is left for a variation in aesthetic values, individual preferences and local circumstances. A certain amount of subjectivity is therefore possible within a framework of objectivity provided by these guidelines. The term *objectivity* or *objective tool* might also be interpreted in the sense of the proposed guidelines providing a point of departure against which any design might be evaluated. If any of these principles and guidelines is rejected, it should be for a logical reason in accordance with local circumstances, while there should be a specific design purpose for such a step in order to make a positive contribution to the perceptual environment.

4.3.2 VERIFICATION OF HYPOTHESIS 3:

From the above conclusions it is clear that Hypothesis 3 can be accepted.