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OBJECTIVE

To determine principles for the Vineyard District Signage System.

POLICY

Introduction

This code aims to enhance the distinctive character of the Vineyards District as shown on Map 1. The Vineyards District extends across parts of both Cessnock and Singleton Council areas.

This code is to guide the design, materials and siting of advertising structures and signs.

The code is part of a broader Council and community strategy to identify and preserve heritage, enhance the Vineyards landscape, diversify the local economy and promote tourism in the region.

1. Components of the Vineyards Signage System

The following types of sign make up the overall information system for visitors to the Vineyards District:-

1. Gateway signs sited within the public road reserve at entry points to the District welcoming visitors
2. Roadside Maps in information bays within the public road at major decision-points for visitors
3. Road name signs on public roads
4. Fingerboards mounted in the public road at decision points not covered by the roadside maps
5. Property identification and business type signs visible from public places but sited on private property
6. Ancilliary signs within the private property of businesses directing customers to parts of a business or resort complex

2. Citation

This code may be cited as Cessnock Development Control Plan No.18 and Singleton Development Control Plan No.-- 'The Vineyards Signage Code' and was adopted as a Development Control Plan by resolution of Cessnock City Council on 4 June, 1993 and by Singleton Shire Council on ----- pursuant to the provisions of Section 72 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 and clauses 19-24 of the Regulations prescribed thereunder.

3. Application of the Code

This code applies to all existing and proposed advertisements, advertising structures and devices whether fixed or mobile within the area edged heavy black on Map 1 to this Code.

This code applies to the construction, erection, placement, alteration, illumination, relocation attachment, painting or repainting of an advertisement, advertising structure, image, icon or device in, on or above land or water. Development applications are required for private signs on private land where such signs are not commercial signs as defined in Appendix 1.

4. Application Form

Inclusion on visitor map signs or on fingerboards does not require a development application. A separate application form is available from Cessnock Council for inclusion in the visitor signage system.

The Development Application format for private signs on private land is at the rear of this code and may be photocopied for your application to Council. Keep the original for your reference or for your future use. Appendix 4 sets out a checklist of details which should be included. If the subject property is in the Cessnock area lodge the application with Cessnock Council. If the subject land is within Singleton, please lodge your development application with Singleton Council.

5 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this Code is to achieve an effective information system and an appropriate style and standard of signage which strengthens the character of the Vineyards District as a distinctive area of early settlement and as the first commercial wine region. The district retains early vineyard and farm buildings, roadside and remnant woodland and a rolling patchwork landscape with majestic mountain backdrop. Signage should reinforce these characteristics of the cultural landscape. The aim is to avoid 'ruining the Chardonnay with Cherry Cola!'

The objectives of this Code are to:

- Provide relevant information at the appropriate locations to efficiently and cost-effectively guide visitors to businesses in the Vineyards District with an emphasis on visitor information needs rather than on advertising opportunity or exposure for the business.
- Co-ordinate the style of public signage with private signage through the use of common materials, components and design features towards achieving a strong district identity.
- Establish a set of type-approved signs to clearly identify businesses in the valued landscape of the Vineyards and to set out express approval procedures for such signs.
- Advise of requirements for the approval of special signs which are not type-approved signs and which are subject to assessment under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979.
- Advise of Council powers to regularise or require removal of unauthorised signs or signs which are unsafe, dilapidated or otherwise objectionable.
- Set out requirements for tourist direction signs in the Vineyards District.
- Set out requirements for commercial signs in the Vineyards District.
- Reduce visual clutter, driver confusion, landscape detractor and traffic hazards caused by Vineyards District signage.
- Establish user-pays procedures via S.94 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 under which developers will be levied to fund visitor signage.
- Outline procedures for business funding of directory fingerboard signs.

- Ensure that signs placed on or near Heritage buildings do not detract from the heritage significance of the building or place.
- To ensure consistent policy and documentation across the Vineyards District which straddles Singleton and Cessnock council areas.

6 Definitions of Terms

Definitions of the terms used in this Code are given in Appendix 1.

7 Prohibited Sign Types

The following types of sign are considered inappropriate in the Vineyards District and hence are prohibited by this Code:

1. Roof signs,
2. Neon signs,
3. Pylon signs,
4. Vertical projecting wall signs,
5. Sandwich boards,
6. Banners, balloons or bunting,
7. Trailers, vehicles or equipment bearing advertising material,
8. Internally illuminated signs,
9. Backlit signs,
10. Above-awning signs,
11. Signs with the image extending beyond a licensed rectangular format,
12. Scintillating signs,
13. Moving signs,
14. Signs of odd shape and other novelty attention-getters,
15. Signs using Class 1 reflective materials,
16. Signs using extensive amounts of Class 2 reflective materials,
17. Any sign which in the opinion of the Council is contrary to the objectives of this Code.

8 Number of Signs per Site

Each separately registered business operating on a separately registered land title shall be allowed a maximum of two double-sided signs visible from a public place. These signs must be on the premises to which they relate and the onus is on the operator to position these for best effect consistent with other objectives of this code.

In some circumstances it may be acceptable for signs to overhang the road boundary by up to 1200mm having regard to the minimum height requirements for such signs under the Ordinance.

9 Size of Sign

The onus will be on the business operator to justify the need for any sign visible from the road to be greater than 1.5sq.m. in advertising area to identify the property for the travelling public.

10 Colours and Finish

Use of colour should reflect the character of the Vineyards District as a place of early settlement and a rural , viticultural landscape with heritage places set in it.

11 Traffic Safety

Signs considered by the Town Planner to be a potential risk to traffic in what is largely a 100 kph zone shall be referred to the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority or to the Cessnock Local Traffic Committee for advice.

12 Illumination

Internally lit signs are a characteristic of urban and suburban areas both in their presence and their construction. They therefore conflict with the objectives of this code and so are prohibited by the code (see above).

Moderate intensity external lighting will be considered on its merits however the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate the need for illumination other than vehicle headlights.

13 Visitor Information Maps

Visitor maps shall be provided by Council at its discretion just before major decision points on the road network. Maps will be located in information bays so that drivers pull off the road to read them and do not become a hazard to moving traffic.

14 Fingerboard Signs

Fingerboard signs shall be provided by Council at its discretion at intersections of lesser importance than those referred to in clause 13 in terms of the number of properties directly served. Fingerboard signage rights shall be limited to the nearest intersection along the road from which a registered business takes direct access provided that no visitor map is located to serve that intersection.

15 Developer Contributions

Developers will be levied a monetary or in-kind contribution under Section 94 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 to ensure that all new businesses are entered on the signage system and to part-fund the cost of expanding the system as additional businesses establish in the Vineyards District.

Council's Section 94 Contribution Plan*, defines the City of Cessnock Tourism Contribution District and the Rothbury Traffic Management Contribution District in this regard.

* Contributions Plan for Tourist Development, City of Cessnock, 12 August,1993

16 Council Road Signs

Council will adopt the same materials and design character of the fingerboard and the private type-approved signs for the map structures, road naming signs and Vineyards

District entry signs to ensure a strong design affinity amongst all signage in the Vineyards District to reinforce the local identity as 'Hunter Valley Wine Country'.

17 Sign System Administration

Maps and Fingerboard Signs

System users shall pay a one-off fee for inclusion of a business in the system. This fee covers inclusion on all roadside maps as well as permitting the exercise of fingerboard rights where these exist (see Clause 14).

Type-Approved Private Signs

Application shall be made to Council for a licence for the type-approved signs which Council will endeavour to issue within 48 hours from the time of receipt of a properly completed application form which is provided at the rear of this Code. A specification for these signs is available from the Council.

Other Private Signs

Other private signs will require approval from Council under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. The same application form at the rear of this Code is the one to use.

In this regard it is considered appropriate that wine barrels be used as a structure on which to convey visitor information (see Appendix 2 for detailed requirements).

18 Unauthorised Signs-Public Land

Signs on public land which do not have formal approval shall be removed within a period of sixty days of the commissioning of the maps and fingerboard sign components of the system.

19 Unauthorised Signs-Private Land

Signs which are not licensed on private land will be the subject of a legal notice to be served on the land owner. Following the expiration of a reasonable period for compliance court action will be instituted where notices have not been complied with.

20 Identification of Specific Vineyards

There is a growing public interest in knowing where the grapes are grown for particular wines on the labels of which the vineyard is named. In recognition of this information need, this code permits, subject to Council approval, the placement of vineyard identification signs subject to:

- The sign containing only the company name and the vineyard name in the same size lettering. Corporate typeface may be used.
- The advertising area being in a horizontal format with a frame/ border to the sign face and the whole fitting within a rectangle measuring 600mm x 1200mm.
- The sign being supported by two timber posts of 100x100mm minimum section.

- Maximum height to top of sign structure being 1800mm above ground level.
- The posts and sign frame being painted in grey-green (Dulux 'Koala' or equivalent) colour.
- The sign face being painted in darker grey-green (Dulux 'Alligator' or equivalent)
- Lettering being painted in non-reflective light grey (Dulux 'Silver Grey' or equivalent)
- The application being accompanied by wine bottle labels as evidence that the vineyard name is being used as part of a long-term marketing strategy. Two vintages should be so represented.

21 Real Estate Signs

Real estate signs are to be removed within one month of the date of property settlement and in default Council will impound such signs and levy an administration/ rent charge for their release.

22 Product Advertising

The advertising of specific products or services is prohibited. Signs shall contain only the names of properties, the names of businesses, specific vineyard name (see Clause 18 above), the style of the business eg. winery, guest house etc and traffic directions such as entry and exit signs.

23 Hoardings

Advertising Hoardings are unacceptable in scale and type in the rural environment of the Vineyards District. Hoardings are accordingly prohibited and those with licences will not have their licences renewed upon expiration.

24 Resorts, Complexes & Special Events

Large or complex developments requiring a variety of signage and special events utilising temporary signage, flags etc. shall be subject to Council approval under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979. A comprehensive site signage plan shall be submitted with the enclosed application form.

In the case of resort or complex developments, the site signage plan shall be a development control plan under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 and as such it shall run with the land.

25 Temporary Signs

Application may be made on the standard application form at the rear of this Code for the display of a temporary sign such as that required to advise of a special event. Consents for such signs shall be limited to two months duration or such shorter period as the Council may determine and notify in the letter of consent. Council may impose other conditions as it considers appropriate and these shall be notified in the consent.

26 Maintenance

Signs which in the opinion of the Council have become unsafe or unsightly will be required to be repaired, renovated or removed as appropriate in the circumstances.

APPENDIX 1

DEFINITION OF TERMS

'Advertisement' means a sign, notice, device or representation in the nature of an advertisement visible from any public place or from adjoining property.

'Advertising area' means

- a) the entire surface area of a sign face including any border, margin, frame or other embellishment which forms part of the sign;
- b) In the case of an advertising structure with more than one sign face, the maximum area viewed from any direction.

'Advertising Site' means a separately registered company under the Companies Act which is occupying a separately registered allotment under the Land Titles Act.

'Advertising Structure' means a structure or support used for the display of an advertisement whether or not this is its primary purpose but shall not include a 'temporary sign' or an advertising structure used exclusively for the display of a 'commercial sign'.

'Commercial Sign' means an advertisement whether illuminated or not which:

- a) has an outline that would fit within a rectangular figure 1.2 metres in length and 0.6 metres in height; and
- b) In respect to any place or premises to which it is affixed contains only:
 - i) a reference to the identification or description of the place or premises;
 - ii) a reference to the identification or description of any person residing or carrying on an occupation at the place or premises;
 - iv) particulars of any occupation carried on at the place or premises;
 - v) such directions or cautions as are usual or necessary relating to the place or premises or any occupation carried on thereat;
 - v) particulars or notifications required or permitted to be displayed by or under any Act;
 - vi) particulars relating to the goods or services dealt with or provided at the place or premises;
 - vii) a notice that the place or premises is or are for sale or letting;
 - viii) particulars of any activities held or to be held at the place or premises; or

- ix) a reference to an affiliation with trade, professional or other association relevant to the business conducted on the place or premises;

'Complex' means a group of businesses operating in close proximity so as to benefit from synergy and having common property rights, management, land title, development programme or development application.

'Existing sign' means a sign for which the Council has issued an advertising sign licence under Ordinance 55 to the Local Government Act.

'Sign' is a plain English term used in this Code to mean an advertising structure or an advertisement as defined above.

'Heritage item, Heritage Building or Conservation Area' means any building, place or item included in Schedules to the current Cessnock or Singleton Local Environmental Plans, The Hunter Heritage Regional Environmental Plan, a Permanent Conservation Order, an Interim Conservation Order or a National Park.

'Special event' means an extensive business, cultural, sporting or educational promotion expected to draw a significantly greater volume of visitors to a locality than the average visitation for the period of the event and requiring special promotional, advisory, informational or directory signage.

'The Council' or 'Council' means Cessnock Council or Singleton Council as appropriate to the Local Government Area in which the sign or sign proposal is situated.

'Temporary sign' means an advertisement or advertising structure which is to be displayed for a period not exceeding two months or such shorter period as Council may otherwise determine and specify in the terms of the approval.

'The Ordinance' means Ordinance 55 of the Local Government Act.

'Resort' means a development offering overnight accommodation alongside of retail, winery, sport, leisure, educational or other visitor attraction(s).

APPENDIX 2

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR SIGNS SUBJECT TO A DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION UNDER THIS CODE

In assessing development applications for signs which are not type-approved signs the Council will use the following criteria:

Provisions of Policies and Plans

- A State Environmental Planning Policy.
- A Regional Environmental Plan.
- The Hunter's Heritage Regional Environmental Plan, 1990.
- A Local Environmental Plan.
- Development Control Plans.
- The Vineyards District Development Control Plan, Cessnock City Council, 1988.
- Recommendations of the Cessnock Heritage Study, 1993 Final Report.
- Impact of the sign on the environment in terms of external lighting intensity, duration of illumination and light scatter as well as any noise emitted from electrical equipment in a quiet rural area. It is noted that internal illumination is prohibited under this code.
- Impact of the sign on the landscape or scenic quality of the area.
- Visibility of sign above the horizon or with landscape as a backdrop.
- Integration of the sign with buildings or with landscape elements.
- Character of the area eg. settled, commercial, wild etc.
- The effect on the nature and intensity of advertising in the locality and potential for clutter.
- Sign materials congruent with a district of early settlement, rural character and high scenic value.
- Sign construction, bulk and scale to be typical of turn-of-the-century technology.
- Scale of the sign relative to buildings nearby and to reasonable viewing distance.
- Style of the sign relative to the style of development within the visual catchment area of the proposed sign.
- Where a sign proposal is in or adjoining a Conservation Area or near a freestanding Heritage Item, the sign shall relate to the character, style, colour, design and materials of the Heritage item or to the architecture of the Conservation Area so as to reinforce that character rather than dilute it.
- Impact of the sign proposal on adjoining development or on the use or enjoyment of nearby buildings or land.
- Impact on pedestrian and vehicle movement and safety.

- Horizontal and vertical alignments of road(s) addressed by the sign and traffic speeds and volumes thereon.
- The effect of the proposal on natural or man-made landscape.
- The existing and likely future amenity of the area.
- The appropriateness of the size of sign proposed having regard to all of the above.

APPENDIX 3

WINE BARREL SIGNS

The wine barrel is an appropriate symbol for use as a medium carrying visitor information and through usage these have become strongly associated with the Vineyards District.

Barrels may be used as a distinctively Vineyards District symbolic sign structure subject to the following provisions:

1. Appropriate size for the location.
2. Preservative being used rather than a painted finish so as to retain the natural colour of the wood.
3. The barrel being safely and attractively mounted on a substructure, cradle or footing such that it cannot be pushed over or rolled with consequent risk to the public or traffic.
4. Barrels being complete and intact rather than halved or sculpted.
5. The structure being integrated with other built forms or landscaping such that barrels do not appear as abandoned by-products of the industry but rather as carefully placed design elements.
6. Barrel size and siting not obstructing visibility for pedestrians or drivers on, entering or leaving the road.
7. The visitor information being professionally sign-written directly onto the barrel using the Australian traditional colour range.
8. No background colour being used and any required additional impact being achieved using traditional sign-writing techniques of highlighting.

APPENDIX 4

INFORMATION TO BE SUPPLIED WITH YOUR DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION

- a) Position on the property - Attach a sketch showing the proposed sign position related to buildings and other permanent features on the site. You may find it easier to mark your sign proposal on photographs of the site. (A useful tip is to include a 300 mm ruler in the picture to help you to get the scale right when drawing the sign on the photograph.)
- b) Show how the sign is to be supported, eg posts, on a building etc.
- c) Add the following dimensions to a sketch of the proposed advertisement:
 - Height of the lowest part of the advertisement above ground level.
 - Overall height of the advertisement (include structure size separately).
 - Overall width of the advertisement (include structure size separately).
 - Distance of the proposal from the nearest public road or public area.
- d) Any other details that support your application.

Please lodge your application with Cessnock Council if the property is in the Cessnock area or with Singleton Council if the property is within Singleton.