

Class 3b ~ Roof signs

Due to its prominent nature and a tendency to be added to existing buildings only after such buildings have been erected, roof signs may have a very negative impact on the architectural design of buildings and the rest of the aesthetic environment. It may also impact on traffic safety.

These signs should be used as an **alternative** to [Wall signs \(Class 3c\)](#), [Signs painted on roofs \(Class 3d\)](#) and [On-premises business signs \(Class 3f\)](#) and should not be used to supplement any of these signs. This means that either a Roof sign, Wall sign, On-premises business sign or a Sign painted on a roof might be used to indicate the name of a building used for commercial, office, entertainment or industrial purposes or to indicate the names and logos of enterprises in such a building or products and services provided by such enterprises. These signs are therefore mutually exclusive. Only one of these 3 sign types may be used – whichever one fulfils the above-mentioned function in the most effective manner.

In recent times roof signs have been misused to a large extent. The roofs of buildings are now often used as convenient elevated structures for displaying non-locality-bound advertisements – many of them contrasting with and even dominating the host building, thereby contributing to the proliferation of advertisements and signs, information overload and visual degradation. This was never the intention of this sign type. Its sole purpose is to **identify specific enterprises and services as an alternative** to sign types [3c](#), [3d](#) and [3f](#).

Roof signs may make a more positive contribution to the visual environment if structures for such signs are incorporated in original building design instead of functioning as 'architectural add-ons'.

The following important changes were made to the existing SAMOAC (April 1998):

- Roof signs are now also allowed in urban areas of maximum control and at centres of economic activity in rural areas.
- Square and rectangular shaped sign structures are now allowed which makes provision for 4 advertising panels per roof sign instead of the previous maximum of 2 panels.



Roof signs at Glen Fair Shopping Centre, Pretoria (top, left & right). Although a bit dominating it seems as if these signs have been incorporated into the original architectural design. Unfortunately, they are in a state of disrepair. Since roof signs form such dominant visual elements they should be maintained adequately in order not to degrade the whole building visually. The *Wimpy* roof signs duplicate an existing wall sign and should therefore not be allowed.

A roof sign structure being erected (centre). It is positioned diagonally in order to obtain a larger size. Both the position and size of this sign will totally dominate the building.

The *Hokaai Meat* sign (right) on a pitched roof duplicates an existing sign lower down and only contributes to sign proliferation





Roof signs as part of tradition. In the past the names of hotels used to be displayed on roof tops. This roof sign integrates harmoniously with the rest of the Victorian architecture of the Lord Milner Hotel in Matjiesfontein, Western Cape Province (top).

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