

## Class 3a ~ Sky signs

Sky signs on top of skyscrapers, which may carry **non-locality-bound** advertisements, should be distinguished from Roof signs ([Class 3b](#)) on top of buildings lower than 10 storeys, which may only carry **locality-bound** advertisements.

This sign type can make an important contribution to the aesthetic environment in two ways:

(a) By serving as important **landmarks** thereby contributing to the local character and identities of specific areas. The following criteria are critical in this regard:

- Only a **limited number** of sky signs per geographical area or visually defined spatial entity can be allowed – preferably not more than one or two. Too large a number of sky signs will lead to visual complexity which will destroy the basic function and uniqueness of a landmark. Where more than one sky sign are allowed in a specific urban area or visually defined spatial entity, such signs should preferably supplement each other in terms of location and advertising contents.
- A **sense of permanence** is needed in order for a local community to make a landmark their own and to use it as a point of reference. This include both skyscraper, advertising structure and advertising contents. Advertising contents should be displayed for a minimum period of at least 4-5 years.
- A sky sign should function as a prominent landmark in both daytime as well as night-time.
- Any sky sign should enhance the basic architectural design elements of the host skyscraper and should not influence its appearance in a negative sense. It may be used to conceal unattractive infrastructure on top of a building such as reservoirs.

(b) Sky signs can also contribute to the visual complexity and excitement of **entertainment districts**. Due to the nature of such nightscapes a larger number of sky signs can be allowed than is the case with sky signs functioning as landmarks. Times Square and Las Vegas may serve as important examples of such entertainment districts and nightscapes. This contribution of sky signs may however only be of academic value in South Africa since there are currently no real entertainment districts with striking nightscapes in this country.

Based on an input from the outdoor advertising industry the following important changes were made pertaining to the conditions for sky signs:

- The Draft Revised SAMOAC (July 2008) places no limitation on the maximum number and size of sky signs. The size and number of signs for each metropolitan area will rather be determined by means of a [SEA](#) in accordance with basic visual principles and factors such as the size and character of central business districts and surrounding areas, the lifestyle of local communities, the nature of host skyscrapers and traffic safety.
- The previous limitation on the period of display was also removed and will be determined through a [SEA procedure](#). In order to obtain a sense of permanence a minimum display period for advertising contents is now required.



A sky sign functioning as a prominent landmark, in Hillbrow, South Africa (top left). Sky signs may contribute to the visual complexity and excitement of entertainment districts such as Las Vegas (top right & centre) and Times Square (bottom left & right).

Compiled by Frans Jordaan