

## **Class 3e ~ Advertising on towers, bridges and pylons**

Electricity pylons and power lines have a very negative influence on the aesthetic environment in general. The same is true of similar structures such as radio masts and cell phone towers. These structures tend to be visually intrusive, complex and dominant.

Outdoor advertising allowed on such structures should reduce the aesthetic impact thereof instead of increasing the existing impact. However, due to the visual complexity of cell phone towers, radio masts and electricity pylons this goal might not be achieved all that easily. The uniform surfaces of solid structures such as silos, water reservoirs and cooling towers provide far better opportunities for displaying visually pleasant advertisements than is the case with towers, pylons and masts.

According to the existing SAMOAC (April 1998) **no large advertisements are allowed in rural environments**, including free-standing billboard structures and advertisements on towers, bridges and pylons. However, it is the intention of the new EIA regulations to make allowance for larger advertisements in rural areas to a limited extent. The Revised SAMOAC will therefore have to accommodate this concession. The best option will be to make provision for such larger advertisements by allowing advertisements on silos, water reservoirs and cooling towers instead of introducing large free-standing billboard structures into the countryside. By utilising existing structures for displaying larger advertisements in rural environments the introduction of additional advertising structures with an additional visual impact may be avoided. Such an approach may also have cost saving implications for the outdoor advertising industry.

Making allowance for larger advertisements in rural areas through Class 3(e) signs should not be interpreted as an opportunity of putting up an advertisement against each and every tower, bridge, pylon or silo in the countryside. Due to the visual prominence of such structures all Class 3(e) signs and advertisements will have to be subjected to a SEA while in rural areas all of these signs and advertisements larger than 18m<sup>2</sup> will also have to be subjected to an EIA.

In rural areas and urban areas of maximum control Class 3(e) signs and advertisements should harmonise with the environment in terms of colour and theme. No bright colours should therefore be allowed. In urban areas of partial and minimum control brighter colours might be allowed in accordance with the preferences of local communities. All Class 3(e) signs and advertisements should enhance the local character or sense of place, while all advertisements should have a permanent appearance – no banners should be allowed.

The dominant position of signs on bridges right in front of the approaching motorist may very easily interfere with traffic signs and signals on high-speed roads thereby creating a traffic safety hazard. In order to prevent such a situation no signs on bridges will be allowed on any road with a speed limit higher than 70 km.p.h. This will effectively mean that no signs on bridges will be allowed outside built-up areas.

These electricity pylons illustrate the visual complexity of towers, masts and pylons which make them unsuitable for displaying advertisements. In the central image an attempt was made to break the dominant visual lines of the pylon and to reduce the visual dominance and intrusiveness of this structure.



It may be a good idea for the outdoor advertising industry to launch an incentive for designing visually pleasant advertising structures to be displayed on towers, masts and pylons and which will soften the visual impact of such structures.

Being right in front of the driver advertising messages on bridges are very distracting and should therefore not be allowed on roads with a speed limit of more than 70 kph.

The straight line at the top of the advertising panel does not harmonise with the arched line of the bridge (top left). As is the case with Gantry Billboards (Class 1b) the advertising panel and bridge structure fits well into the environment by making use of street trees (bottom right).



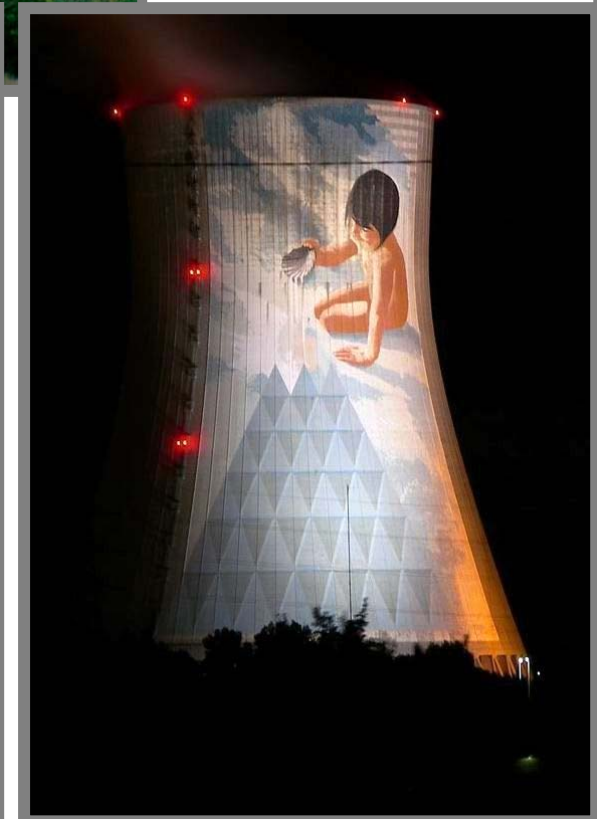


The surface of structures such as cooling towers provides ideal opportunities for painted or wrapped advertisements which may enhance the visual environment.

By making use of themes that reflect local culture, history and landscape elements these advertisements may make an important contribution to local sense of place

Images from Orlando Towers and Wikipedia

<http://www.orlandotowers.co.za>



Due to the size and dominance of structures such as silos, cooling towers and reservoirs it is necessary to use subdued colours in urban and rural areas of maximum control and to keep advertising contents visually uncomplicated. The graphics on the right hand tower at the Orlando Dam in Soweto (top and bottom left) may be seen as a bit too complicated and 'busy'. However, these graphics enhance the local sense of place exceptionally well and brighten a dreary environment. This area may also be classified as an urban area of partial control in accordance with the local inhabitants' needs and visual perceptions which justifies brighter colours and a more complicated graphic composition. The Orlando Towers are now also being used for adventure activities such as bungee jumping which justifies the use of exciting graphics even further.

The browns and greys used for the simple graphics on the tower in the bottom right image will harmonise with most rural environments.

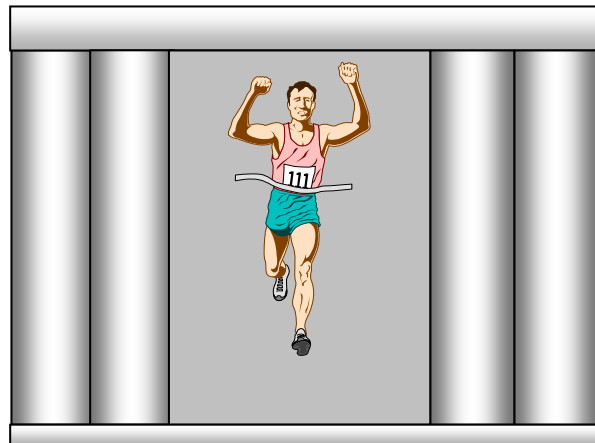


It is of the greatest importance that any advertisement displayed on a cooling tower, reservoir or silo should harmonise with the dominant visual lines of such structures. The best way to achieve this is by painting advertisements onto these structures.

Advertising panels may have a very negative visual impact if not treated correctly. On the silo to the left the dominant horizontal lines of the advertising panel clash with the dominant vertical lines of the silos. It is clear that in this case the only consideration was obtaining maximum height and maximum visibility of the advertising message..

In the case of the silo to the right almost perfect visual harmony is obtained by means of:

- The two silo units on each side of the panel which are used for framing the sign.
- The vertical lines of the silo which are reflected by the vertical lines of the sign.
- More simple but more striking advertising contents.



Compiled by Frans Jordaan