

# Supermarket bid for flagpole rejected

**Supermarket giants Lidl have lost their bid to put a store sign on top of a flagpole after it was ruled it would clash with an historic cemetery.**

The food chain appealed to Scottish Ministers to allow the 6 metre high totem style sign at their store on St Kentigern Way, Penicuik, after Midlothian planners rejected it saying it was not in keeping with the nearby conservation area.

The appeal came after they successfully overturned planners objections to an illuminated sign on the store itself which had been described as 'garish'.

But while Scottish Ministers had agreed the store sign was an acceptable, and expected, addition to the supermarket building itself, they drew the line at the flagpole advertising sign at the edge of its car park.

Throwing out Lidl's appeal over the flagpole, the Scottish Government Reporter said its height would make it stand out.

He said: "The visual environment to the east of the location of the supermarket and the car parks includes the buildings of the historic town cemetery on Kirkhill Road.

"The cemetery includes a number of significant vertical elements, including the unusual square tower of Old St Mungo's church. I consider that a tall illuminated sign at the proposed location will be experienced as a significantly

discordant element in views of the cemetery buildings and surrounding trees, and will substantially detract from the interest and visual amenity which these buildings and the cemetery location gives to the town centre."

He added that local residents who overlooked the store and car park would also be affected by the sign adding: " in my view, it is probable that an illuminated sign on a 6 metre pole at the proposed location will be visible from their windows, particularly in lower daylight levels, and when the trees are bare.

"I take the view that the tall illuminated sign is likely to adversely affect the amenity of these houses, even if none of the residents have objected to the proposed sign."

The flagpole appeal is the latest round in a battle over signs at the Lidl store which has spanned more than 15 years, and comes months after the store won an appeal to put illuminated signs on the shop front, which planners had also tried to ban

Midlothian Council repeatedly refused to give the food chain permission to replace the standard sign at their Penicuik store with ones which lit up with planners describing the illuminations as 'garish'.

However Lidl argued that the council had allowed the modern store to be built in the conservation area and should have expected them to want modern signs.

The Reporter allowed the store sign but rejected Lidl's claim that the flagpole was "to be expected in the town centre location and as part of a retail foodstore to provide awareness of the use of the building".

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter