

Confusion reigns after council vetoes community road sign

Residents are surprised the new sign has been ruled out.

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IT SEEMED like a simple solution to the problem of visitors getting lost.

But plans by a community group to put up a new sign in their neighbourhood have been vetoed by the city council – because it would prove too confusing.

The situation has left members of the Juniper Green Village Association, who commissioned renowned artist Jane Brettle to create the sign, scratching their heads.

Ms Brettle, whose work has been exhibited at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and The National Gallery of Scotland, designed road signs for Juniper Green, where she lives, and neighbouring Baberton Mains, after residents grew concerned at the number of people getting lost in the area.

While the city council has given the Juniper Green notice, right, the go-ahead as an official road sign, it says it cannot do the same in Baberton Mains, because the area already has too many signs and another could be a safety hazard.

Village association member Val Hawkins said she had initially been told by the council that Baberton Mains was not entitled to an official village sign as it was not a village.

"The council didn't want it on the grounds that there's no provision for signage on what they call housing estates and for them it's clutter. They don't see it as a nice art object, which it is – or it would be if we could get it up."

Local residents say there are actually too few road signs in the area, meaning people frequently drive into Baberton Mains in search of Juniper Green. As Baberton has very few entry and exit roads, they then find themselves "trapped" in the estate, hoping to find a through route to Juniper Green, which does not exist.

Ms Hawkins added: "Quite a few of the roads in Baberton Mains share similar names to those in Juniper Green, so that causes confusion, even for the postmen sometimes."

She said council officers had been helpful at a site meeting, but added: "They are bound by regulations and their policies, and they're simply following them. I can understand that, but at the same time I think there's a move generally for more appreciation of our heritage and identity as a community."

The signs, along with a 7ft-high green stone monument for Juniper Green, were first proposed in 2007, when the village celebrated the 300th anniversary of its first mention in print. After long discussions to ensure the Juniper Green notice will meet road sign regulations, the association hopes it will soon be made and put in place, as will the monument. But at Baberton, it seems, drivers will continue on the road to confusion.

A council spokesman said the Baberton Mains sign would not be considered as an official road sign, but the association could consider applying for planning permission for a decorative sign. They would, however, have to go through a formal planning process and convince officers that it was not a road safety hazard.