



Case Report

1	Case Number	0148/12
2	Advertiser	Rossdale Homes
3	Product	Real Estate
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	24/04/2012
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The TV advertisement in question shows a couple inspecting their new house from their builder. As they walk through the home, they notice things missing that the salesman points out were 'not' in the contract like door handles, the kitchen sink and even the toilet. The voiceover asks people not to compare apples with oranges and to ask Rossdale Homes about their fixed price guarantee so as to avoid costly variations to contracts.

THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

The man showing the couple around continually objectifies the woman by "checking her out". He starts by looking at her bum at the beginning. It has nothing to do with the advert or product. It is just offensive!

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

The theme of the advert is trust. In order to emphasise distrust with the fictional builder depicted in the advert, he is created with a slick haircut, a cheap suit and a less than moral attitude both in what he is selling to the couple and the mannerisms he has towards the couple. His cavalier attitude coupled with a slightly male chauvinistic approach is critical in delivering this message.

There is no intention to objectify or degrade any actual person. This is not the focus or aim of the advert in any way and the mannerism of the said character is only used to assist in demonstrating the stereotype perceptions that society shows towards the industry and therefore where Rossdale Homes can differ. Again, the main theme is trust and the prime focus for reinforcing this message is by the missing elements in the house.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Board noted the complainants’ concerns that the advertisement features a man admiring a woman in a manner which is objectifying.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.2 of the Code. Section 2.2 of the Code states: “Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people.”

The Board noted that the advertisement features a man showing a couple around a house that they have bought and whilst the couple is despairing over the missing fittings, the man is admiring the woman’s behind.

The Board noted the advertiser’s response that the man in the advertisement was a fictional builder behaving in a manner to emphasis why he should not be trusted.

A minority of the Board felt very strongly that the actions of the builder amount to sexual harassment and considered that the lack of action by the husband made the behaviour worse.

The majority of the Board however considered that the brief admiring glances the builder gives the woman are more likely to be considered as stereotypical behaviour from a person of that character rather than an act which objectifies the woman in a manner which is exploitative and degrading. The Board noted that the woman is fully clothed and that she comes across as confident and in control of the situation, whereas the builder’s overall behaviour is clearly presented as unacceptable.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading to women and that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.