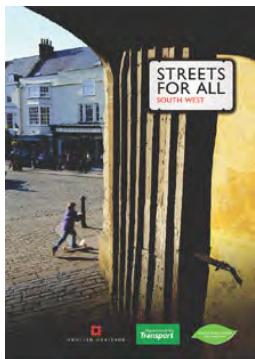




Historic England

Streets for All: South West



On 1st April 2015 the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England changed its common name from English Heritage to Historic England. We are now re-branding all our documents.

Although this document refers to English Heritage, it is still the Commission's current advice and guidance and will in due course be re-branded as Historic England.

[Please see our website](#) for up to date contact information, and further advice.

We welcome feedback to help improve this document, which will be periodically revised. Please email comments to guidance@HistoricEngland.org.uk

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01

Streets for All

- 3 Foreword
 - 4 Purpose of this guide
 - 6 South West – the public realm
 - 8 Regional characteristics
 - 10 Opportunity into action
 - 12 Identifying local distinctiveness
 - 13 Sourcing local materials
 - 14 Integrated townscape management
-

02

Ground Surfaces

- 16 General principles
 - 18 Historic street surfaces
 - 20 Surface materials
 - 22 Highway surfaces and verges
 - 24 Footpaths, cycle routes and shared surfaces
 - 26 Changes in level
-

03

Street Furniture

- 28 General principles
 - 30 Historic street furniture
 - 32 Street signs and nameplates
 - 34 Traffic signs
 - 36 Traffic signals, crossings and guardrails
 - 38 Street lighting
 - 40 Bollards
-

04

New Equipment

- 42 General principles
 - 44 Telephone kiosks
 - 45 Post boxes
 - 46 Pay and display machines
 - 47 Street cabinets
 - 48 Recycling facilities and bins
 - 49 CCTV cameras
 - 50 New design
-

05

Traffic Management

- 52 General principles
 - 54 Traffic management
-

06

Environmental Improvements

- 56 General principles
- 58 Street traders
- 59 Public art
- 60 Street trees and planting
- 62 Lighting of buildings
- 64 Case studies
- 74 References
- 75 Summary of principles



Foreword



Streets are the one public service we all use all of the time, and these communal spaces have a huge effect on our lives. Streets that are safe and attractive places for people to live and work need to be the rule, not the exception. That's why good design needs to be at the heart and be the very fabric of our cities, towns and villages. Good design can be

achieved, for example by avoiding sign clutter or rearranging street furniture, without compromising road safety or accessibility for all. We are pleased to have worked with English Heritage to produce the *Streets for All* manuals, which will be an essential part of the toolkit to help create successful, high quality public spaces.

We already pay great attention to the design and restoration of buildings, now we need to turn to the design and management of the spaces in between. The starting point is to identify streetscape elements of historic, cultural or social value and to review whether other elements are necessary. Redundant items should be removed, and the design of essential items considered in the context of the local environment.

The aim should be to create successful places, not just tackle single issues. To do this, designers must consider all potential uses of the space. Working together is also fundamental to success, regardless of professional background, whilst investment in quality and attention to detail can maximise benefits.

The principles set out in *Streets for All* will help to restore the sense of local identity which can easily be lost if standard solutions are applied across the country. These ideas are not new, and they are all possible within existing regulations, safety controls and disability legislation, although designers sometimes need to go back to first principles and look at reasons behind guidance rather than simply doing things the way they have always been done. It takes planning, foresight, sensitivity to local context, and an understanding of how small incremental changes either can reinforce or diminish local distinctiveness.

Improving the public realm generates enormous benefits: it affects the way we feel about our everyday lives – where we live, work and play. *Streets for All* highlights the challenges that need to be taken up by local authorities, local amenity societies, utility companies and regional government if we are to return quality and distinctiveness to our streets, public places and countryside.

Tony McNulty MP
Minister of State for Transport



Nothing says more, nor more immediately, of how a nation feels about itself, than the way it dresses its streets. England's streets are very important to how it is perceived by the world. For people like me, parachuted in from abroad, the way a nation presents its streets is the first thing they notice.

This is a country thoughtful enough to remind people to look left and right before stepping off the kerb, and stylish enough to produce iconic pieces of street furniture such as the red telephone and letter boxes. It is incumbent upon England to show world leadership in civilised streets.

This manual gives guidance on how to restore dignity and character to our historic streets, largely by removing the blight of unnecessary signs, poles, bollards, barriers, hotchpotch paving schemes and obtrusive road markings under which they currently suffer. It is hard to imagine something that would make more immediate improvement to the world around us that could be so quickly and cheaply achieved.

Bill Bryson
English Heritage Commissioner

0 | Streets for All

South West

Purpose of this guide

This manual offers guidance on the way in which our streets and public open spaces are managed. These spaces, sometimes known as the 'public realm', range from city squares to country lanes. Their appearance is often the product of several different agencies each with its own priorities. A co-ordinated approach can help provide an environment that is safe, enjoyable and appropriate to its surroundings.

The guidance builds on the past work of English Heritage and others on issues such as accessibility, local distinctiveness, visual quality and community regeneration.

The primary aim is to improve the appearance of our public spaces by showing how practical solutions to common highway problems can be achieved and how good practice can become everyday practice. The underlying principles are to reduce clutter, co-ordinate design and to reinforce local character, whilst maintaining safety for all.

The guide is intended as a reference manual of good practice for all concerned in the long chain of decision making, including councillors, highway engineers, landscape and urban designers, town planning and conservation staff, amenity societies, contractors and utility companies.

By demonstrating how opportunities can be translated into action, the guide sets a clear agenda for enriching of the region's public realm for regional and local authorities as well as for local communities. It identifies the elements that make the region distinctive – its landscape, its building materials and its traditional detailing. It then addresses some of the common problems that can diminish the quality of public areas and explains how integrated townscape management can provide answers.

Subsequent chapters consider each of the main components that create the appearance of streets. Broadly, these are ground surfaces, street furniture, traffic management and environmental improvements. Detailed advice is summarised in a set of general principles for the continuing maintenance and enhancement of spaces.

It is important to recognise that the public realm must evolve to accommodate modern needs. The manual considers how this can be achieved with minimal impact on traditional appearance and character. Expectations for accessibility and traffic management are taken into account, and a section of the manual considers the implications of new equipment, such as CCTV and recycling facilities.

Some local authorities have already produced their own streetscape manuals to demonstrate how standards can meet specific local conditions. For them, *Streets for All* may serve as reference for future editions. Other authorities are encouraged to consider how *Streets for All* might provide the basis for more detailed work in their areas.

Accessibility for All

English Heritage supports the aim of making our streets and spaces accessible for everyone. Historic areas can present particular challenges for designers and this report illustrates how some of the most common difficulties have been overcome.

Future legislation is likely to extend the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to cover the local authorities' planning and highways functions. It is therefore desirable to work today to the standards of access that might be required in the future.

One particular area of conflict can arise where whole streets or spaces have uneven historic surfaces that are difficult for wheelchair users or the partially mobile. Whilst often it may be possible to signal an easier route, there will sometimes be the need for a carefully detailed, even path around or across the historic surface, as a necessary intervention.

More information can be found in *Easy Access to Historic Buildings* (English Heritage 2004) and the Department for Transport's guide to best practice *Inclusive Mobility* (DfT 2002).

The South West: the public realm

The South West of England's greatest asset is its infinitely varied built and natural environment. The region combines some of the finest landscapes and architecture of Britain. Its multi-layered geology and extensive coastline enclose a magnificent legacy of great cathedral cities, market and coastal towns and historic villages. The importance of this legacy to the future sustainable prosperity of the region underpins the work of English Heritage and bodies such as the Regional Assembly and the South West Regional Development Agency, reflecting a new confidence in the value of its historic streets, public spaces and rural byways.

Streets for All reflects a significant change in our understanding of the importance of place. Analysis of successful communities increasingly points to a direct and quantifiable relationship between economic success and the quality of the public realm. It appears that carefully designed, well-managed streets are not merely a desirable outcome of successful economies; they are a significant driver of such success.

The South West displays a remarkably rich and varied tapestry of local characteristics, materials and traditions. Fostering this precious resource offers more than mere aesthetic rewards; individuality and distinctiveness provide a vital basis for identity in an increasingly homogeneous global environment. A clear identity is not merely important for tourism. A distinctive characteristic encourages investment across a wide spectrum of economic sectors. Commerce and industry, particularly in the growing knowledge-based sectors, are greatly influenced by the cultural signals provided by streets and the public realm. Good design and management of the built environment are critical components in determining future prosperity.

This guide also draws on important changes in our understanding of traffic management and road safety. Traditional approaches to traffic engineering have assumed that clear segregation between traffic and pedestrians is essential for efficient circulation and safety. In addition, traffic engineering has understandably required consistency and standardisation of signs, signals and road markings.

These two factors are fundamental barriers to achieving quality, coherence and distinctiveness in the public realm. The segregation of traffic and people divides the built environment into two worlds, one defined by traffic engineering and the other by urban design. Standardised traffic engineering solutions have resulted in streets and spaces from Swindon to Penzance that look the same. Distinctiveness, surprise, intrigue and memorable landmarks are confined to the margins.

Traditional methods are beginning to be challenged by a new approach to traffic engineering. This has its roots in the Dutch *woonerf* traditions of street design, but has now developed widely in cities, towns and villages across mainland Europe. The '*woonerf*' is premised on traffic and social activities sharing the same space, and the principles have been adopted in the UK's 'home zone' programme for residential streets. Such an approach offers new opportunities to combine good urban design principles with safety in traffic engineering and should be used where appropriate but ensuring that historic streetscape character and layout is not lost.

Through deliberate emphasis on local traditions, materials and street patterns, engineers and safety experts are combining design and behavioural psychology to increase driver awareness, reduce traffic speeds and improve safety. A distinctive and coherent environment appears to offer not just economic benefits, but is safer and more efficient than one dominated by signs, signals and street clutter.

Streets for All reflects the new priorities for the public environment currently emerging from government policy and from other agencies, such as CABE. These place a greater emphasis on walking and cycling, on the value of public transport, on provision for the safety of children, and on accessibility.

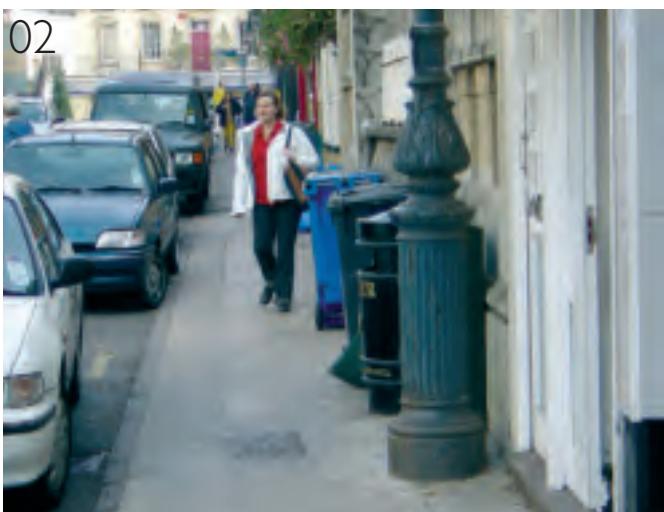
This agenda poses challenges for all those involved in the design and management of the public realm. Successful solutions are unlikely to arise from the application of standard guidelines. On the contrary, urban and rural landscapes that reflect contemporary values are more likely to be informed and inspired by the distinctive qualities of each place.

Interventions must comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and with the Department for Transport regulations. Design solutions should be innovative and inspired by their context.

01 Beach cobbles, originally imported as ballast, give this quayside special historic significance



02 Pavements should be wide enough to accommodate necessary furniture and equipment, whilst leaving space for pedestrians



03 Carefully designed, distinctive and well managed improvements to the public realm are critical to the development and regeneration of tourism in the South West

04 The centre of Bristol is characterised by the floating harbour and the regenerated public spaces associated with it



05 Transport interchanges provide a great opportunity to create a welcoming "threshold" to the town or city. This space in Bath is dominated by clutter



Regional characteristics

The South West contains the most complex geology of the English regions. It straddles the country's Tees/Exe line that divides the two basic geological types, separating the older, harder rocks to the West from the more recent, softer rocks to the East. The geology influences the topography of the region and sets the pattern of the available building and paving stone.

The paving traditions of the South West reflect the richness and diversity of its geology. Most types of stone are represented, from the granites and virtual marbles of Cornwall and west Devon, to the carboniferous sandstones of the Bristol and Forest of Dean areas. The more recent rocks such as lias are found in central Somerset, and limestone from the south east of the region in Purbeck. Pockets of less familiar stone such as Ashburton 'marble' are seen in some streets of Torbay. Cornbrash is found paving the minor spaces of Malmesbury. Portland limestone, although more familiar and effective as a building stone, can be found in less trafficked surfaces of a fairly narrow coastal strip east and west of Dorchester. Delabole slate was a well-known source for centuries. Celia Fiennes, the intrepid traveller of the late 17th century reported from Cornwall

"the... sea which conveys the stone or rather marble which they take from hence at Bole (Delabole) remarkable quarrys for a black stone exceeding hard and glossy like marble very dureable for pavements; this they send to all parts in tyme of peace and London takes much of it".

The streets of the centre of many Cornish market towns and ports are paved in granite – used not only kerbs and setts, but also for steps and large paving slabs. The all-encompassing use of granite extends to building stone, lintels, gateposts and (as coursed rubble) in boundary walls. The unifying effect of the use of granite imparts a strong county character that becomes steadily diluted east of the Tamar. However, granite slab pavements can be seen in parts of Exeter and beyond. Granite is generally either a silvery grey enlivened with specks of quartz or fossilised shells, or a more buff colour.

The other sub-regional area with a consistent paving tradition is Bristol. Pennant sandstone here is used in most elements of the streetscape – flagstones, kerbs, (although they are not robust enough to withstand the heaviest traffic) and setts. Pennant is an excellent paving material, but is less suitable as a building stone due to its friability and the difficulties in working – quoins and lintels have to be formed in Bath stone, a freestone. This gives a characteristic colour scheme to Bristol streets, the purple grey of the pennant offset by the buff colours of the strips of sandstone lintels, cills, mullions and quoins. In Bristol the more heavily trafficked streets have cast iron kerbing, found in few other English cities.

Pennant, despite its suitability as a paving material, is rarely found far from its sources. It is seen in Bath and Wells and a little further afield, but is not as widespread as might be expected. Pennant's close relation, Forest of Dean stone, is still available and a less purple version of the stone is quarried in South Wales. The Bristol pennant quarries are all closed.

As with most of England the default paving material in the South West was cobbles – found in many types throughout the region. Cobbles were the cheapest material, sourced either from riverbeds and alluvial deposits, or as chippings from quarry waste. Thus two types of cobbled surface exist; the compacted flat river cobbles, usually laid end-on at right angles to the kerb, and secondly chippings, normally of hard limestone, laid in random compact format. Some of the best remaining cobbles can be seen in Devon and the western half of Somerset, where colour and texture differences are celebrated in patterns.

Clay paviours are not common in the region, but a distinctive Victorian geometric diamond patterned block was used along an axis (possibly following the railway) between Bristol and South Devon. These buff blue and red blocks were mainly used for forecourts to shops, churches and garden paths. Some Staffordshire blue brick paviours are in evidence in the north of the region and small individual stable block variant designs are found in the markets of Dorchester and elsewhere.

Techniques for carriageway and paving design were constantly debated by civil engineers throughout the 19th century (eg. Henry Law's Treatise on Constructing and Repairing Common Roads c 1850). Macadam was principal engineer for Bristol, and his and Telford's specifications were tried by the various turnpike trusts and paving commissions. Hence the vernacular of local stone was often overlain by the importation of materials with superior durability, workability or traction such as York stone, Caithness stone, Clee Hill or Whin Basalts or the pink granite of Mount Sorrell. Wood block was tried occasionally where noise reduction was important.

The distinctive paving traditions throughout this large region can often be found beneath a coating of later tarmacadam. The macadam itself is often regionally distinctive, if it uses locally sourced aggregate.

01 A mix of stone including slate paving and local quarry waste provide a varied and interesting surface. Boscastle



02 Detail of watercolour by Samuel Jackson of St Augustine's Parade, Bristol c 1825 showing paving repairs underway. Illustration courtesy of Bristol Museums & Art Gallery



Regional characteristics of street design not only extend to materials, but to design, details and to the form of streets. For instance a number of streets throughout the region retain the medieval practice of channelling watercourses along the street. This can be seen, modestly in Frome, more obviously in Wells and Nether Stowey and in Cotswold villages such as Bourton on the Water.

There is a tradition of using raised pavements throughout much of the region. Examples exist in St Columb Major, Lostwithiel and Fowey in Cornwall, Abbotsbury in Dorset, Wells Cathedral Close in Somerset, Newnham in Gloucestershire, and in Bristol and Bath. These features reflect the hilly nature of the region, attempts to keep footways above flood levels in areas of high rainfall, and from the 18th century onwards, to form promenades for the fashionable.

Within the geological and topographical complexity of South West England, it is the patchwork of sub-regional characteristics that gives the region its rich paving tradition.

Opportunity into action

The quality of the environment is central to the prosperity of the Region and the quality of life of the people. As part of the drive towards a better environment, our streets and open spaces need to be designed and managed in a way that reinforces the distinctiveness of the South West Region.

Stakeholders

Good design and management of the public realm is essential for a thriving sustainable economy. The South West of England Development Agency is promoting quality through a range of initiatives in which urban design is a critical factor. English Heritage has a particular responsibility for the conservation and enhancement of historic areas and is, likewise, keen to promote good design and encourage joint working.

Local authorities should try to ensure that their departmental structures promote close co-operation between highway engineers, planners, urban designers, landscape architects and conservation staff. Liaison is also vital between government departments and public agencies.

It should also be recognised that there is a wealth of knowledge and experience within the communities that the public realm serves. Civic societies and residents' groups have a part to play in safeguarding the character of their areas and helping to adapt them to new needs.

Materials and skills

The rich variety of paving traditions in the South West can only survive if the production of traditional materials and the skill to use them are supported. For instance, the number of quarries able to supply paving stone is a fraction of what it was and there may be a case for re-opening some old quarries to meet specialised needs. There is also a strong case for more training initiatives to retain the traditional skills of the paviour.

First impressions

Increasingly, towns have to compete with each other for business and prosperity. While it is well known that appearances are an essential factor, the edges of settlements often have an 'anywhere' character, despite the qualities of the centre, which does not provide the necessary welcome. Railway stations and bus terminals can also suffer in the same way.

There are further entry points, like historical city gates, that offer the opportunity to celebrate a sense of arrival. Too often, these critical thresholds have been blurred by standardised highway engineering and urban sprawl. *Streets for All* offers a range of remedies, from the use of traditional materials, street nameplates and lighting, to new landmark sculpture.

Pedestrian movement

Opportunities now exist to radically transform the streetscapes of the South West by introducing the concept of barrier-free design and by encouraging accessibility for all. Progressive authorities are increasingly updating access strategies based on a better understanding of pedestrian movements, desire lines and existing barriers. Management of the street environment has often ignored this vital pedestrian network and severed long-established links.

Access for all presents a challenging programme for those working with public realm. The most successful schemes will go beyond compliance with the Disabilities Discrimination Act, to review existing practices and exploit the possibilities of fresh approaches.

New design

A new approach to the public realm provides the opportunity to reassess the design of critical elements of the streetscape. English Heritage is keen to promote innovation and will work with the Department of Transport and others to seek technical improvements. These may include systems to assist people with visual impairment, new design of traffic signals, cameras, street signs and new methods to define parking controls that do not require yellow lines.

Legislation

Since the first edition of *Streets for All* for London was published in 2000, changes in legislation have begun to reduce superfluous signs and street clutter. The 2002 edition of Traffic Sign Regulations and General Directions eliminated the need for some signs in relation to yellow line parking restrictions. The removal of redundant signs should continue, and English Heritage and its partners will continue to press for further updates and revisions to reduce clutter.

Damage and inappropriate reinstatement by statutory undertakers and their contractors continues to degrade the quality of streets and public spaces. Sections 70-73 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 was supplemented in July 2002 by the Department for Transport's *Code of Practice for the Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in Highways*. This code requires practical measures to improve awareness, skills and understanding amongst contractors and statutory undertakers.

01 Strong groupings of "ordinary" buildings can be greatly enhanced by respecting the paving tradition of the locality. Appledore

02 The first sight from the station of the World Heritage site of Bath offers scope for significant improvements



02



03



03 This high quality improvement on the riverfront in Barnstaple incorporates conservation, art and traditional paving with modern furniture to create a focus for movement and activity

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 promotes improved access for disabled people, including a barrier-free pedestrian environment. The final stage of implementation of the Act was October 2004 since when service providers should make reasonable adjustments to physical features to avoid discrimination. There will, therefore, be pressure on service providers to improve access to their premises, including those in historic buildings and conservation areas.

The DDA does not override other legislation, such as Conservation, Health and Safety and Highway Acts. In sensitive locations designers will have to assess whether access adaptations following standard design guidance (Part M 2004 or BS8300) are 'reasonable' under DDA, taking into account other legislation and other mitigating factors.

In considering duties under Part 3 of the DDA, consideration should be given to associated codes of practice.

Identifying local distinctiveness

In many areas, little work has been undertaken to identify and record the traditional streetscape elements. Before producing any guidance or developing a strategy for future works in the public realm, it is important to establish what is there and what it is about the area which is locally distinctive.

It is unlikely that conservation officers are able to devote sufficient time to undertake detailed audits of a local authority area and it is advisable to enlist the help of interested individuals and groups. Experience has shown that Civic Societies, Women's Institutes and individual retired professionals can produce audits after some initial briefing. Schools may be interested in auditing as a way to learn about geology, local history and design. Audits can highlight the condition of both traditional and replacement paving. Audits can also be used to identify areas which may be problematic for disabled people.

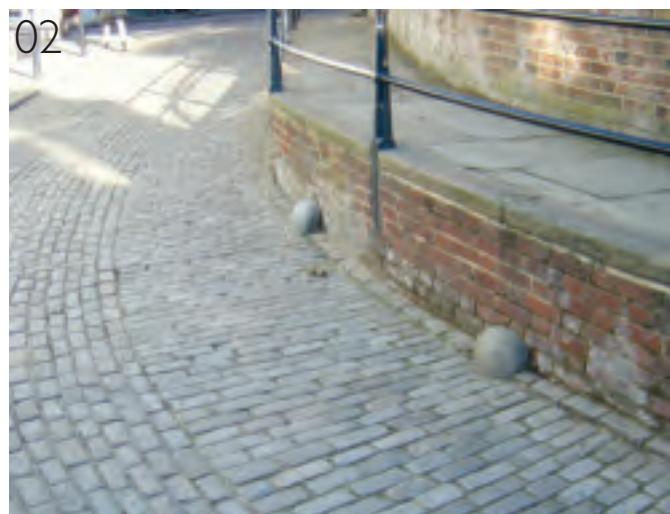
Audit materials need to be simple, but maps are essential accompanied by a limited set of notation symbols. Surveyors also need cameras and tape measures. For significant projects, it will often be worthwhile to engage a professional geologist to identify materials and their sources.

In areas where there are few obvious remains, it is important to note kerbs (which are often retained due to their durability), gullies and to examine any holes in tarmac surfaces revealing paving beneath. It is also important to note the areas just off the footway such as crossovers, yards and forecourts which can provide valuable clues. However it should be remembered that these materials may not be the same as the carriageway or footway.

01 Local groups can carry out audits to identify historic features and redundant furniture



02 Traditional surfaces and patterns are evident throughout the region and are an important contribution to local identity



Sourcing local materials

Local distinctiveness is to a large extent influenced by the underlying geology of the area from which the materials used for its buildings and streets have been sourced.

Ideally the local character of an area should be reinforced through the continued use of these local materials. In practice this happens all too infrequently. Heavy traffic loads may prevent the use of some natural materials, but another reason is often supply difficulties. Although materials may still be produced, they may not be available in sufficient quantities or at sufficiently short notice for today's contractual and tendering procedures.

Small local suppliers and quarries are not always able to respond quickly to immediate demands for large quantities of local materials, so sufficient time must be allowed in the procurements process to ensure that correct material can used.

Many local authorities no longer keep stockpiles of materials. Some no longer have any storage at all. Closer liaison between the authorities and the suppliers is needed. A compilation of local sources needed, including information on the capacity of the sources and the lead-in times needed to obtain local materials.

The use of local materials could be adopted more commonly with the help of the techniques of Strategic Partnering, a process by which suppliers and consumers work more closely together. Strategic Partnering is being developed in the construction industry and encourages suppliers to develop their products and capacity. Consumers benefit from a wider selection of materials and lower costs. Small, local suppliers, such as local quarries and manufacturers of clay pavements, are able to increase their production and lower their costs in response to guaranteed sales.

It may be possible to encourage local supplies by the temporary opening of small quarries to satisfy local needs. This is done in the specialised restoration construction industry and could be replicated to achieve paving work of local distinctiveness. Obtaining consent for new quarries can be controversial and time-consuming, so early planning is essential.

Similarly some clay product manufacturers are able to offer clay products in sizes, specific clays and firing temperatures to emulate local traditional historic materials. Thus reinstatement projects can be undertaken and newly constructed ground surfaces can complement locally distinctive traditions.

01+02 Local traditions and materials can be reinstated and adapted to suit contemporary streetscapes, reinforcing local distinctiveness



The distribution of traditional paving materials throughout the South West.

Traces of these materials can still be seen in many towns and villages, in streets or yards. Sometimes the material lies below later layers of tarmac. It can be seen that the region imported stone for example from Caithness and Yorkshire to supplement local supplies. It also exported paving stone to London and further afield.



	Tertiary – sarsen sandstone
	Cretaceous (Upper) – chalk and flint
	Cretaceous (Lower) – limestones and sandstones
	Jurassic (Upper) – oolitic limestone
	Jurassic (Middle) – oolitic limestones and sandstones and fissile lime
	Jurassic (Lower) – limestones and ironstones
	Triassic – sandstones red and white
	Permian – red sandstones and dolomitic limestones
	Carboniferous (Upper) – coal measures and Millstone
	Carboniferous (Lower) – limestones and sandst
	Devonian – old red sandstone
	Lower Palaeozoic – metamorphic slates purple, grey and green
	Pre-Cambrian – gneiss, schist and marble
	Igneous – granites red and grey

Map courtesy of the British Geological Survey

Integrated townscape management

No single authority or agency has overall responsibility for the public realm. Therefore the key to ensuring a safe attractive streetscape is for those responsible for its management to work together:

A high-quality public realm can be achieved if those responsible for its management work together. A multi-disciplinary approach is essential. Where possible, authorities should set up a townscape 'Public Realm Management Team', responsible for overseeing a quality response to the demands upon the environment. They should lead by example, ensuring co-ordinated planning and highway functions and setting the highest standards, in order to create a well orchestrated street scene. Good design should not be an optional extra; it should be normal working practice. There are various principles to follow:

Co-ordinate to integrate

Nominate qualified urban design/conservation staff to act as public realm co-ordinators, or create area-based management teams, to co-ordinate the activities of the council and other public agencies by providing advice on siting, design, materials and liveries.

Partnership

Street audits should be carried out by council's highways and urban design/conservation staff working together. There are benefits in inviting local societies to carry out street audits for councils and other public agencies to identify redundant and superfluous street furniture.

Expertise

Adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to the presentation and management of the public realm and all highway works and improvement schemes.

Training

Create a shared understanding across professional disciplines of urban design, traffic engineering, management and safety issues.

Policies

Ensure that clear policies for paving, street furniture and the public realm are included explicitly in local development frameworks, conservation area statements and non-statutory guidelines.

Guidance

Follow the advice in this manual and in PPG15 and offer clear guidance to other agencies involved with the public realm so that their requirements can be co-ordinated in a consistent form.

Context

Respect local distinctiveness and ensure that all work in the highway or public realm follows good streetscape practice and principles.

Quality

Invest in quality solutions which will endure and offer best value for money. If resources are inadequate, do less to a better and higher standard.

Less is more

Nothing should be placed in the street unless there is clear public benefit. Much street furniture is unnecessary, so reduce street furniture to a minimum, and take away redundant items. Where it is essential, co-ordinate its location carefully in relation to the buildings and the overall townscape. Use the whole street width. Wherever practicable, locate signs and street furniture on buildings or at the back edge of the footway to minimise their visual impact, on the street scene. However, if signs are required, they must be placed where they can be seen.

02

Ground Surfaces

General Principles

Paving and surface materials define the platform of the built environment. They form the plinth on which buildings are set. The South West has a rich tradition of paving materials and methods that, if well understood and deployed, can continue to meet the practical and aesthetic requirements of streets and public spaces.



01 Bristol paving tradition

Communication through streetscape design. How the 'grammar' of paving traditions can be adapted to make legible streets for all.

Surface dressing of local gravel etc
may be appropriate in areas with a
less formal paving tradition

Crossovers at carriageway junctions
are a tradition in places. This could
be adapted for contemporary use
in places

Flagstones impart the message that
the pavement is a pedestrian-
exclusive environment

Backfilling of closely packed
cobbles or other materials
emphasises a zone of semi private
space outside a property

Crossovers signify locations where
vehicles may cross a pavement for
access. Smaller units of flagstone
material, or setts convey a warning
change of texture/colour and are
more suitable for vehicular overrides

It is important that a material's properties are
understood before incorporating it into a street design.

Natural, local materials are to be preferred to man-made alternatives. They should be used to reinforce the identity of different types of environment – historic and modern, urban and rural. The initial high cost of natural materials is off-set by their appearance, and in many cases, durability.

Ground surfacing should be simple. It should not become a focal point to try to enhance poor quality environments.

Maintaining kerblines preserves the historical form of streets. Where the carriage way is still used for vehicles, even if in restricted hours and for deliveries only, it is important to keep a kerb height of at least 25mm and to use different materials to define the separation.

General Principles

Relate ground surfaces to their surrounding, streetscape context

Retain the historic form of streets by maintaining kerb lines, using dropped kerbs where necessary

Where footway are widened, demarcate the kerb line.

Avoid small paving modules laid in arbitrary colours and patterns

When assessing costs, use sustainable accounting methods and consider life cycle costing

Invest in quality and simplicity

Respect the subtle proportional relationship between the footways, the buildings and the carriageway

Historic street surfaces

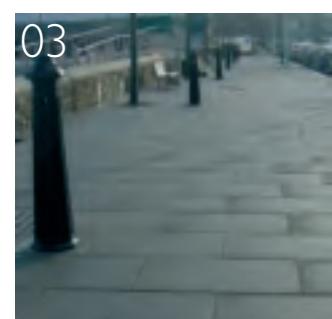
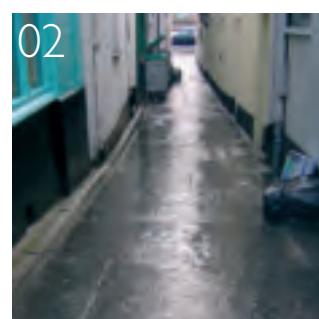
Historic surfacing materials, such as river cobbles, York stone paving and granite setts make a major contribution to the character of the Region's towns and cities. Too often, such materials have been lost or badly repaired. Where historic surfaces survive, specialist advice should be sought before work is carried out.

Settlements in the region that have retained their historic street surfaces, even in remnants, demonstrate that the established physical character and appearance of a place lies not solely in the buildings, but in the public realm as a whole.

Today's development pressures and an increased need for economy, have resulted in historic street surfaces being covered with tarmac. Where appropriate, these may be stripped back and original surfaces restored.

Local traditions and materials can benefit today's practices. For example, cobbles and setts can be an effective traffic-calming measure. However, in considering their installation, it is important to bear in mind possible disadvantages such as noise, restricted mobility and discomfort for cyclists. Where they are used, a smooth surface should be laid at junctions and crossings in order to increase accessibility for those with pushchairs or in wheelchairs. Consideration should also be given to the needs of visually impaired persons. Thorough consultation with residents, businesses and all user groups will highlight problems and identify solutions.

Expertise is necessary to ensure that traditional relationships of paving to buildings is maintained.



01 Cathedral Close, Exeter

02 The few remaining examples of indigenous design and materials deserve to be cherished. Bideford

03 Careful detailing and restraint in the deployment of street furniture can generate a timelessness without resorting to pastiche. Bideford

04 High standards of workmanship are essential in setting out, cutting and laying paving

05 Paving blocks carefully cut to a new cast iron inspection cover

06 The scoring by cartwheels along the ends of these granite setts is testament to the longevity of well laid traditional paving. Plymouth



07 Cast iron kerbs add local distinctiveness. Bristol

08 Special care and robust detailing are required beside beer drops outside pubs



09 Most historic lanes have a central drainage channel. Chilcompton

10 A satisfying composition of local stone and river cobbles, Totnes

11 The functional requirements of this crossover dictate the strong paving pattern to form an elegant threshold, Somerton

12+13 A variety of natural materials laid to emphasise vehicle and pedestrian movement patterns. Bristol



14 The paving of the public domain at an hotel entrance mirrors the lively detailing of the building. Totnes

15 Hidden heritage. Valuable high quality setts and paving materials can often be found buried beneath layers of tarmac. Bristol

General Principles

Maintain and restore historic paving where it survives

Expose and restore historic paving in appropriate locations

Seek expert conservation advice before carrying out repairs to historic surfaces

Respect local designs and details

Reinstate lost surfaces of high quality that make up important townscape

Adapt local designs to address new problems

Surface materials

Surface materials should form a seamless and neutral floorscape. They should be simple and chosen to complement surrounding architecture and respond to the scale of the street or space.

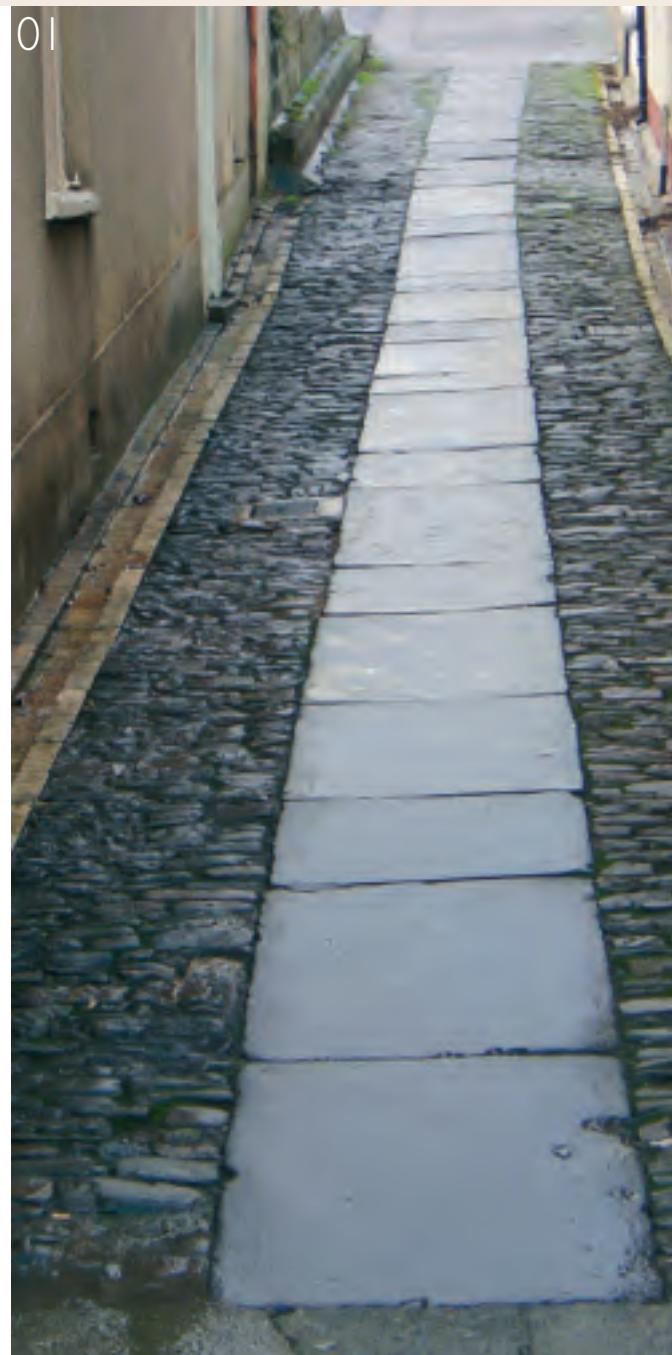
Authorities should identify a hierarchy of streets and spaces in order to prioritise the use of more expensive, natural materials.

Each area should have a palette of materials appropriate to its location which allows new and old work to relate to one another.

Where appropriate, setts and cobbles should be reinstated to reinforce local character. They can have a positive effect in reducing traffic speed, although care should be taken not to reduce the mobility of pedestrians, including those with visual impairments. Good quality workmanship should ensure a smooth surface to meet the needs of cyclists.

Small module paving on footways should be avoided, unless there is an historical precedent. It tends to dominate the street, especially where traditional footways and kerb lines have been removed. In some cases it may be simpler to use concrete flags or asphalt rather than fragment the floorscape. Small modules are best confined to the carriageway and pedestrian crossing points.

Implementation of well-laid paving is fundamental to the appearance and functionality of a street. When detailing corners and dropped kerbs, paving should be laid out before implementation to avoid unresolved junctions and angles. Keep it simple.



01 A ribbon of York stone paving flanked by cobbles. Bideford

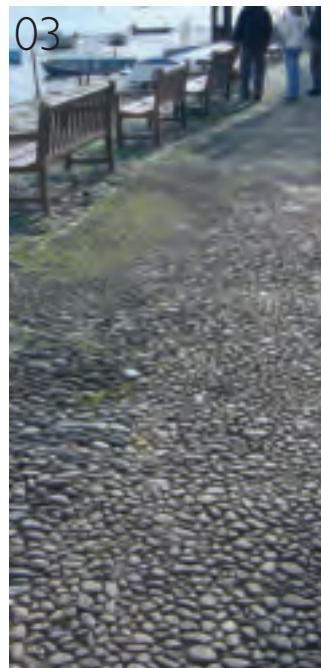
02 A simple hand-rail, stone risers and local brick paving make a pleasing combination. Dartmouth

03 These ancient cobbles have worn down to a smooth surface: repaired areas are quite evident. Dartmouth



04 Carefully retained local limestone spalls. Boscastle

05 Following the installation of new services, paving should be seamlessly re-laid

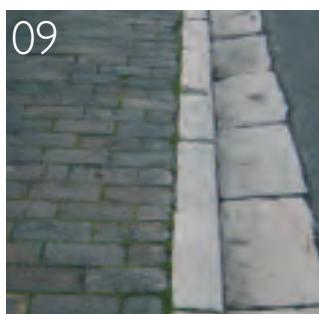
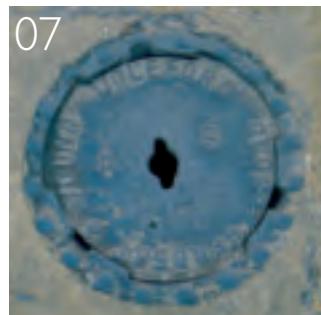


06 Locally made iron covers once proudly displayed the name of the town

07 Historic cast iron cover from the famous cast iron works at Coleford



08 Such perfect craftsmanship should be cherished



09 Local Torbay limestone, channel and kerb with clay block pavings. Torquay

10 Pavement slabs and kerbs. Bristol

General Principles

Surface materials should be appropriate to the surroundings and respect local traditions

Cut slabs at corners to local radius patterns

Cut slabs to conceal inspection covers

Where vehicle over-runs are likely, lay slabs on a concrete base and use robust materials

Install tactile paving where necessary, ensuring that it is an integral part of the design and not an afterthought

Highway surfaces and verges

Roads must be functional and robust, but they are also important public spaces in their own right. The treatment of roads and verges should reflect their purpose and location.

There should be a clear distinction between urban, suburban and rural roads and between high speed roads, such as motorways and dual carriageways and minor roads and residential streets.

In rural areas, the detail of roads and surrounding edges contributes substantially to the visual quality of the landscape. Lights, traffic signs, hard edges and road markings should only be used where necessary, as they urbanise the countryside. For similar reasons, soft verges should generally be retained, although in some heavily trafficked parts of the region, small granite setts have been used to protect the verge. In rural locations, where the scale and concentration of buildings are modest, 'gateways' can be created to encourage a reduction in traffic speed.

Hot rolled asphalt is the most common material for the region's roads. However, surfaces of setts, cobbles or bricks can help to denote a change in use or location, and may reduce traffic speed. In rural or suburban locations, surface dressing is an effective alternative. Where surface dressing is used it should complement surrounding architecture in colour and it is important to ensure that the specification is appropriate to the use.

Road markings used to regulate traffic should be clear, well positioned and kept to the minimum. Assess the need for painted lines, as in some instances they can be replaced by a change of material, paving size or laying pattern, which provides a more durable and visually attractive alternative. In rural settings or built-up areas where there is sufficient lighting, centre road markings may not always be necessary.



01 Restrained paving design can provide an elegant plinth which harmonises a disparate group of historic buildings. Wells

02 Reinforced grass verge maintains continuity and permits occasional parking. Seend, Wiltshire

03 The impact of covers can be reduced through careful design and construction

04 Such dramatic and unsightly measures in an historic area are evidence of a previous failure to reduce vehicle speeds. More sensitive options should be explored



05 Rural village green with no kerbs or markings. Seend



General Principles

Surface treatments should relate to their urban, suburban or rural character

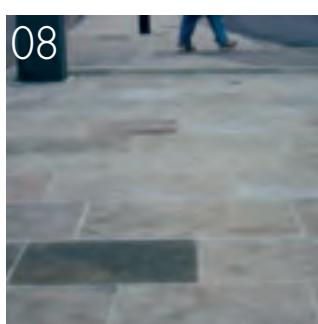
Retain or reinstate setted edges, cobbles and grass verges, taking into account the needs of all users

Avoid the unnecessary introduction of kerbs in rural areas

Use surface dressings to reinforce local distinctiveness

Use road markings sparingly in sensitive areas, consistent with safety standards

Consult local disability organisations on detailed design and consider using specialised access consultants



06 Consideration needs to be given to how to encourage safer driving and pedestrian safety without destroying the character of a village

07 A continuous band of smooth stone paving follows the pedestrian 'desire line' and creates a threshold at the entrance to the historic quarter: Cirencester

08 Hard kerbs are suitable in urban areas with pavements

Footpaths, cycle routes and shared surfaces

Footpaths and cycle ways are key elements throughout the public realm. Their successful integration into urban, suburban and rural locations is fundamental in reducing the use of private cars.

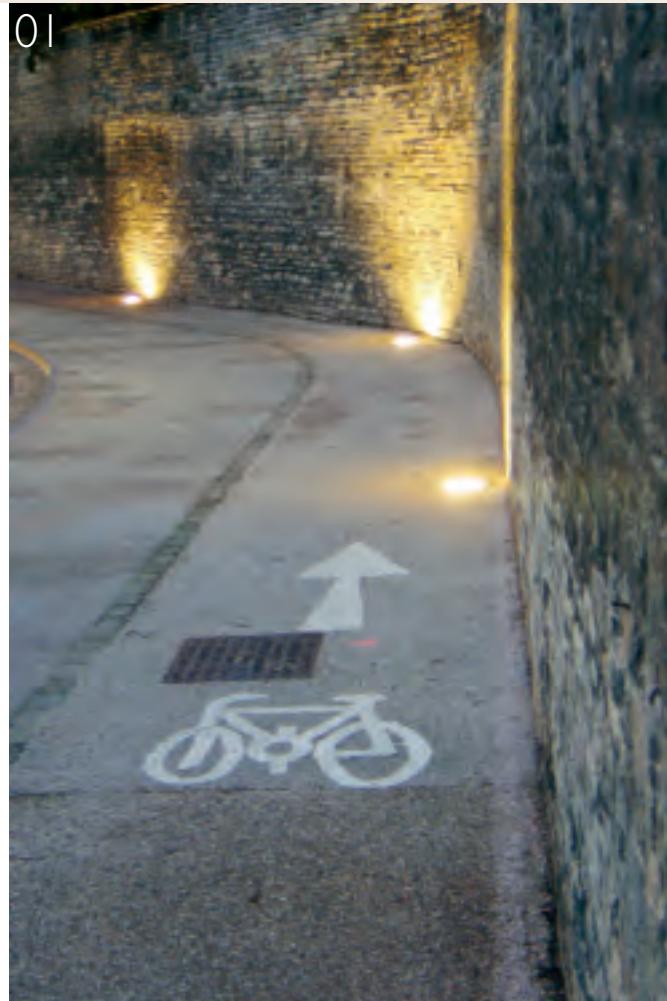
Authorities should respect and build on existing initiatives such as the National Cycle Network, Routes to Schools and the Rights of Way network.

Pedestrian and cycle routes should form a coherent and continuous network. They should follow natural desire lines and take people where they want to go without major detours or restrictive physical barriers. New links should integrate employment areas, high-density housing, public transport interchanges and other high trip generators, with existing routes.

Routes must be safe, attractive and appropriately lit. There should be an element of natural surveillance from passing traffic and housing to instil a feeling of security amongst users.

In historic areas, coloured surfaces, such as those used for bus and cycle lanes, should be avoided wherever possible. Instead the interaction of pedestrian, cyclist and vehicle should be managed to avoid the need for segregation, thereby reducing the need for road markings and physical barriers.

Shared surfaces encourage mixed use and reduce vehicular dominance. For example, country lanes allow horse riders, cyclists and walkers to interact whilst in urban streets pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles can share space safely at low speeds. It is important to consult all user groups on such schemes.



01 Cycle tracks can be subtly delineated

02 A continuous band of smooth stone paving follows the pedestrian 'desire line' and creates a threshold at the entrance to the historic quarter: Cirencester

03 Highway carefully reallocated for pedestrians and cyclists as part of renovation of College Green. Zig-zags are now required at toucan crossings. Bristol



04 Consider whether coloured surfaces on bus and cycle lanes are necessary



05 It is easy for well-intentioned design to become cluttered as more elements are added. Gloucester

06 Skilful alignment and detailing on rural railway path, National Cycle Network Route 27, Lydford, Devon

General Principles

In historic areas, avoid obtrusive colours and markings for cycle lanes

Promote access for cyclists and disabled people and consult user groups

Design footpaths and cycle routes as an integral part of the public realm

07 Clear pedestrian routes across the highway. Bristol

Changes in level

The public realm should be accessible to all without resulting in the street becoming segregated.

Designs should be innovative and inspired by surrounding context as an integral part of the street. Standard solutions should be avoided. Where change in level dictates the need for ramps, they should be 1:20 (5%), and certainly no steeper than 1:12 (8%). Exaggerated paving cross-falls should be avoided.

Careful integration and attention to detail of ramps and steps is required in order to provide practical alternative routes for all users. Steps should be clearly defined with tactile warning strips, contrasting nosing and handrails to entrance visibility and ease of use.

Tactile paving must be well detailed and executed to avoid awkward junctions and relationships with the surrounding streetscape. Colours should co-ordinate with the adjacent materials, whilst providing sufficient contrast for visually impaired people.



01 Well laid traditional brick paving provides a smooth surface for wheelchair users, buggies etc alongside (older) beach cobbles. Dartmouth

02+03 Access ramps and steps should be designed to harmonise with the style of the building. Glastonbury



04 Care must be exercised when combining steps and ramps, to avoid confusion for partially sighted people



05 Brass studs drilled into a paved ramp provide a high quality tactile warning. However, it is important to ensure that the resulting surface is not slippery

06 Tactile paving differentiates cycle track from pavement

General Principles

Tactile paving should be integrated with the surrounding paving

Use designs, colours and materials which harmonise with the adjacent surface finish

Ramps should be seamlessly absorbed into the wider context

07 A wide band of smooth setts (Portuguese granite) provides a smoother surface than the traditional dockside granite setts. Bristol

03

Street Furniture

General Principles

A successful public realm comprises a coherent network of streets and spaces, without the need for excessive signs, road markings and physical barriers.

01



01

Less is more. Streets are places in their own right; not just conduits for traffic. The elimination of clutter creates fine townscapes. Axbridge

In many streets and public spaces, the clutter of uncoordinated street furniture and signs gets in the way and masks local character.

The initial stage of any enhancement scheme should be an audit of existing street furniture and the removal of surplus elements. Best practice uses careful siting of street furniture, to manage movement and replace the need for physical barriers. Where guardrails are required for safety reasons, they should be an integral part of the streetscape.

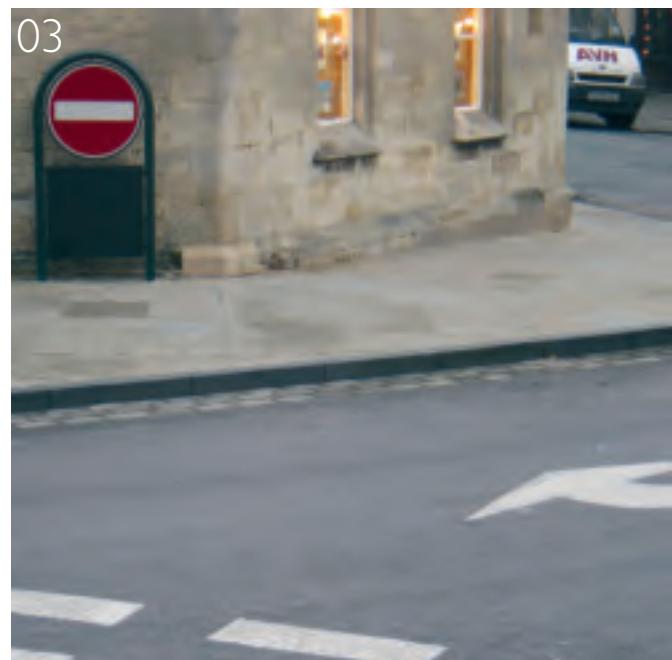
In order to reduce street clutter, consider mounting signs, traffic signals and street lighting onto existing columns, furniture and buildings, or grouping them together, to reduce the number of poles and supports needed. Some signs need to be sited in specific positions to give adequate warning. However, other signs may be co-located if their sitting is not specifically regulated. If a sign is not needed do not have it. The Traffic Signs Manual gives guidance on how to combine signs.

The introduction of multi-functional designs, such as public art incorporating seating and lighting, can contribute to a more visually pleasing and ordered environment. Furniture should be sited to increase visibility in the street and create a safe environment for all. It should not dominate the street scene.

The introduction of street furniture requires co-ordination. Materials, size and form should be inspired by the surrounding context, with existing building and pavement lines used to guide their siting. The best street furniture is often elegant and simple, yet functional and easily maintained. Traffic signs must comply with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (2002). Sign backs must be grey or black, but support posts may be of any single colour. Guidance on appropriate size and siting can be found in the Traffic Signs Manual.

02 Delightful conserved pavement light. Exeter, Dartmouth

03 Simplified design and colour co-ordination can reduce clutter without diminishing the impact or effectiveness of signage. This has to be specially authorised. Cirencester



General Principles

- Identify and remove superfluous or redundant items
- Reduce new furniture to a minimum by good design
- Locate signs, traffic signals and lighting onto existing street furniture and buildings
- Co-ordinate style, colour and siting of street furniture
- New designs should be simple, elegant and appropriate to context
- Consult local access groups or disability organisations

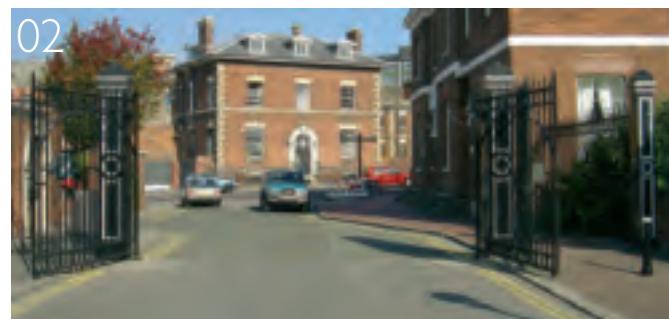
Historic street furniture

Historic street furniture and monuments can enrich our streetscapes, reinforcing local identity through historical association and local distinctiveness.

In many places, old post boxes, bollards, seats, railings, fountains and memorials enrich our streets and public spaces.

Historic designs, including crests or manufacturer's marks, should be retained and replicated where appropriate. Replicas must however be authentic and carefully sited.

To ensure the preservation of historical assets, local authorities should record items of interest and establish programmes for their maintenance or restoration. Sometimes local amenity societies will assist in preparing inventories and even adopt an item where ownership is uncertain. When undertaking works to the public realm, care should be taken to ensure that historic objects are not harmed.



01 Restoration of historic features acts as both a focus and a symbol of civic pride. Somerton

02 Historic gates retain the character of this dockside area and can help to slow traffic. Gloucester

03 Dartmouth



04 Church railings. Cheltenham

05 A simple but elegant seat which requires little maintenance. Clovelly



06 Neglected drinking fountain. Bristol



06



07



08



07 This old kiosk is still in use as a ticket office and, together with its twin, boldly marks the corners of the town dock. Dartmouth

08 Such prominent, carefully restored artefacts emphasize context and act as a signal to travellers of a caring community. Wiltshire

General Principles

Compile an inventory of historic street furniture and make plans for their maintenance

Preserve historic street furniture

Remove old pieces that have degenerated beyond repair

Consider recasting local designs, ensuring details are accurate and authentic

Street signs and nameplates

Street signs and nameplates are fundamental to the understanding and character of a place. Local variations in design, materials and lettering add richness and variety to the street scene.

In the past, street layout, visual order and landmark buildings helped people to get their bearings in a town. Today, however, signs are used much more widely to instruct and inform, and sometimes this leads to a breakdown in the overall comprehension, as the messages compete with each other. Visual chaos results from a proliferation of directions, ranging from street signs, nameplates and finger posts, to electronic information points, maps and pictograms.

Where older signs remain, they should be retained and restored, their siting and style used to inform the design of new signs and nameplates. Where new designs are warranted they should be consistent throughout an area.

Consider the inclusion of pictograms as part of the pedestrian signing strategy, increasing accessibility to those with limited English such as tourists or children. Where bespoke designs are used to reinforce local identity, they must be consistent and easily understandable.

In most cases, street nameplates should be fixed to boundary walls or railings, or placed at the back edge of the footway. Other signs, such as information boards or finger posts, should generally be mounted on existing furniture.

01



01

Too many additions to a lamp post can create clutter

02 Glazed tile street signs unique to Torquay



03+04+05+06+07+08+09

Locally distinctive street signs should be cherished



General Principles

Retain older signs to reinforce local character

Remove superfluous and redundant signs

Locate signs on buildings or at the back edge of pavements

Avoid placing signs on new posts which add to clutter

Traffic signs

Over provision or ill-siting of traffic signs and notices can spoil the visual attractiveness of a place. Too much information can confuse drivers.

Authorities should appoint a multi-disciplinary team of highway engineers, urban designers and conservation officers, in order to achieve an efficient but visually sensitive signing strategy.

Redundant signs should be removed. Where signs are necessary, they should be concise, no bigger than necessary and carefully sited. Backing panels and yellow warning backing boards are visually obtrusive and should be used sparingly (see the Traffic Signs Manual chapter 4, section 1). Wherever possible, use internally illuminated signs, to reduce the need for additional lighting. The use of microprismatic materials might enable lighting to be dispensed with, unless specifically required by regulations.

New signs may now be specified with anti-graffiti film, making it much easier to clean them and remove stickers.

Avoid the need for supplementary poles. Where they are essential, they should be a consistent dark or receding colour and be positioned at the back of footways and clear of circulation routes.

To assist visually impaired persons, signs should not be placed too low, and should have tapping rails where appropriate.



01 Simplified design and colour co-ordination can reduce clutter without diminishing the impact or effectiveness of signs. Cirencester

02a+02b+02c Discreet signs can displace the need for yellow lines in historic areas



03 Signs and the information they provide should be co-ordinated and not cause confusion



05 In rural areas, suburbs and village locations traditional white-painted finger signpost reinforce local distinctiveness. They should be retained or reintroduced to replace the bland uniformity of urban-style lettering and signs.

06 Signs can be subtly applied to existing furniture and walls. Bristol

07 A proliferation of signs can create confusion and clutter

General Principles

Restrict signs to those which convey essential information only

Reduce signs to a minimum size and number

Locate signs and traffic signals onto existing lamp columns, posts or buildings

Use dark or receding colours for posts and the back of signs

Avoid large backing panels and yellow backing boards

Consider needs of visually impaired people

Traffic signals, crossings and guardrails

Appropriate management of pedestrian, cycle and vehicle interaction can reduce the quantity of traffic signals, signs and physical barriers needed in the street.

Where traffic signals are necessary, they should wherever possible, be combined with street lights or other elements, avoiding the need for more poles. Modern compact designs enable signal units to be less obtrusive and they can be integrated with certain traffic signs. This can enhance both the physical and visual order lines of the street, especially at junctions and crossing points.

Traffic signal control boxes should be positioned at the back of footways and designed with raised relief panels to deter fly-posting. They should be painted in a dark or receding colour consistent with other street elements.

In recent years, safety measures relied on physical barriers to segregate pedestrians from vehicles. This has resulted in streets which are dominated by vehicles. In places where direct single stage crossings can be used, guardrails may be removed. This reduces clutter without impairing safety.

Generally, crossings should link with existing routes and desire lines. Raised crossovers (flat-topped humps) can assist the shift in priority between pedestrians and vehicles without always needing guardrails.

Guardrails erected purely to prevent vehicle overrunning should be discouraged. Less-obstructive alternatives include raised kerbs and strengthened pavements.



01 Combining signals and lamp columns is straightforward, but requires inter-agency co-operation

02 There is a strong tradition of flamboyant cast iron on esplanades.



03 Cycle stands can be used to prevent parking on footways

04 A simple rail is an appropriate addition in the historic Queen Square, Bristol

05 Additional signal heads may be unnecessary. The minimum number of 2 per approach is the starting point, with additional signals only fitted where deemed necessary for safety



05



06



07



06 Quayside protection can be low key when the risk is clear and obvious

07 Railings set back to overcome the hazard caused by mooring lines. Bristol

General Principles

Attach traffic signals to other street elements and buildings where possible

Avoid over-provision of signals, rails and signs

Site control boxes unobtrusively

Crossings should be visible, free of clutter and where possible, single stage

Consider raising kerb height and definition to avoid the need for physical barriers

Only use guardrails where other safety measures are inappropriate and use designs that relate to the townscape, such as post and rail or post and metal bar fencing

Street lighting

Lighting is fundamental to any pedestrian street or space. It provides safety and clarity for users and encourages activity in the evening.

Many urban lighting schemes have been designed to produce optimum illumination for vehicles, with little regard to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. In such situations statutory street lighting is often inadequate to light public spaces. Successful and stimulating environments incorporate light sources at varying levels and degrees of illumination to suit the use of the space and to help generate activity.

Lighting schemes should comply with British Standard BS5489. It is important to choose the correct level of lighting for the street in terms of the level of traffic that uses it, and to take account of other light sources, such as floodlit buildings and lit shops. Particular consideration should be given when implementing lighting at pedestrian crossings and intersections. Whiter light from metal halide or high-pressure sodium sources is preferable to orange low-pressure sodium lighting.

Use light fixtures which are appropriate to their context in material, scale, design and illumination. When using traditional designs of lighting, head and column must be in proportion, as an oversized light on a slender or short support will appear awkward and top heavy.

Lights should be effective but unobtrusive. Avoid the temptation to over provide, leading to clutter and potential light pollution. Particular care should be taken in rural settings where over-illumination can generate distinctly urban streets, inappropriate to the location.

Continual maintenance is essential for personal safety and visual attractiveness.



01 Keeping historic lamps such as these in working order reduces the need for lamp posts in the footway

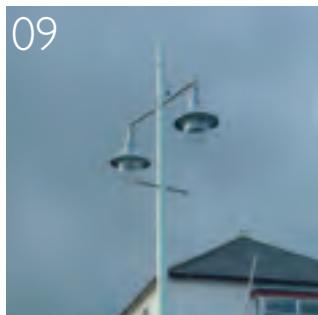
02+03+04 Decorative, unique designs can characterise an urban space, Cheltenham, Plymouth, Bath



05+06 19th century cast iron brackets fitted with traditional lanterns to provide footway lighting



07 Traditional fittings can be adapted to suit modern requirements for energy conservation and protection against light pollution



08 Historic lanterns on boundary railings, and even porch lights, can often provide sufficient light for pedestrian security

09+10 Well chosen, contemporary designs can be perfectly appropriate in historic areas

11 Well designed catalogue lamp-posts include two levels of light (for pedestrians and traffic) and also support CCTV cameras. Bideford

General Principles

Select lighting which reflects the function of the place – urban or rural, commercial or residential

Consider street lighting in conjunction with other light sources, including shop windows and floodlit buildings

Respect local designs and use authentic materials

Avoid light pollution

Avoid clutter by mounting lights on buildings where it is appropriate.

Consider the daytime appearance of light fittings

Bollards

Bollards are used to restrict vehicle movement, segregate user groups and delineate space. However, good design can reduce the need for bollards and other physical constraints.

The delineation of streets and spaces should rely on higher quality kerb definition. A change in level or material and controlled street widths should be used to direct traffic instead of physical barriers. This will generate a safe environment for all and reduce visual disorder.

Where bollards are necessary, standard catalogue designs should be avoided, as they dilute local character. Authorities should adopt a design and implement it consistently. The selected design may be adapted to suit different circumstances.

Surviving historic bollards should be retained and restored as they contribute to local character and identity. For continuity it may be appropriate to use re-cast replicas. However, care should be taken not to detract from the integrity of the original. High-quality local materials and crafts should be used to reinforce local distinctiveness.

Colour at the top of bollards can be helpful for visually impaired persons, and a minimum height of 1m is preferred.

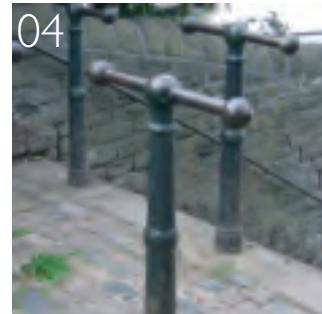
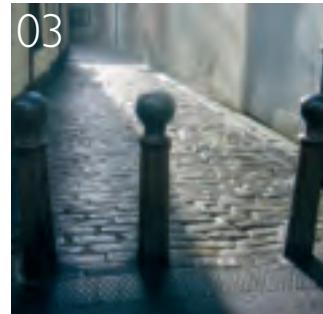


01 Correct and incorrect use of bollards. The one in the foreground is an impediment to pavement users

02+03 Bollards correctly used to block the street and vehicles



04+05 The wide variety of bollard design reinforces local distinctiveness and, where appropriate, can provide models for casting new



06+07 Bollards should be used sparingly if visual clutter is to be minimal



08+09+10+11

Bollards should be carefully positioned to protect pavement users, without being a hazard to visually impaired people

12 Paving can be cut accurately to create a good fit for bollards and posts



General Principles

Bollards should be used as a last resort

Eliminate the need for bollards through higher quality kerb definition and good design

Select designs and materials which are appropriate to function and context

Consider recasting local designs

Contemporary designs should be simple, elegant and where possible multi-functional

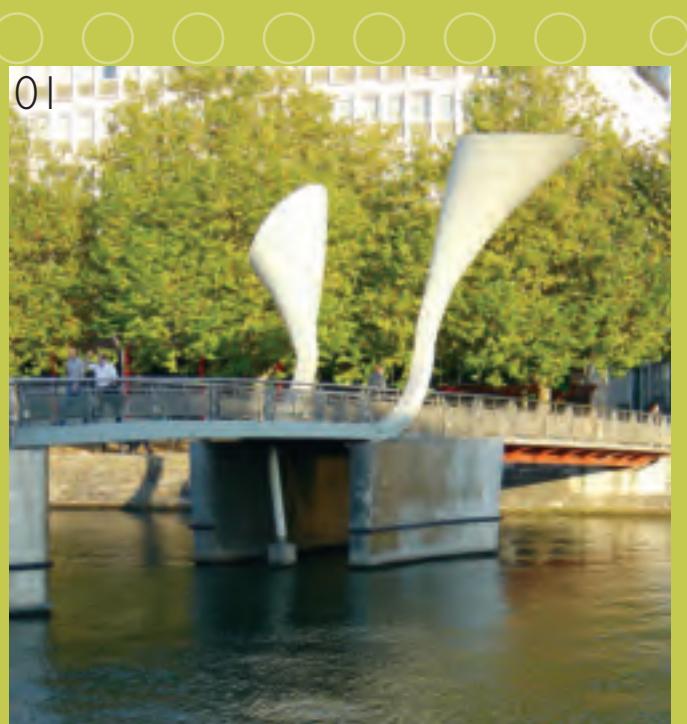
Bollards should be at least 1000mm high preferably with colour contrast to assist visually impaired people

04

New Equipment

General Principles

The appearance of streets is constantly changing as new street equipment is required to answer the practical needs of commerce, traffic or safety. A street or public space can be thought of as an 'outdoor room' enclosed by buildings. Its street furniture should be chosen and placed with the same care as the objects in an indoor space.



01 Style and function: the 'horns' of this bridge act as a cantilever to allow the bridge to open for tall boats

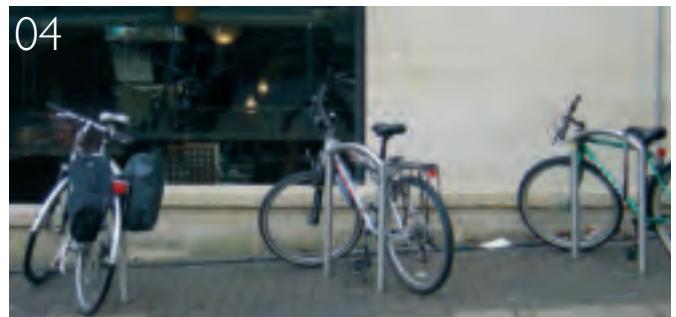
02 Designs for new public spaces should take account of items such as these underground car park vent towers, so that they become part of the space rather than an intrusion. Canon's Marsh, Bristol



03 Existing spaces between buildings can be replanned to align all elements of street furniture to create uncluttered movement areas. Bristol



04 New bicycle stands harmonise with a modern façade



To avoid cluttering the street, new equipment should generally be located at the back of the footway, adjacent to the buildings, rather than at the footway edge where it is more obtrusive. The open aspect of the street should always be maintained.

With the fragmentation of responsibilities for the public realm, each new item of equipment is usually put in place to fulfil a single function with little regard to its total effect on the whole street scene.

Local authorities therefore have a vital role in managing the street environment and ensuring that the design and siting of new equipment is related to the surrounding urban context based on an informed assessment of the character of an area.

Many authorities are under intense pressure to accept packages of new street furniture from major suppliers in exchange for pavement advertisement panels. These rarely offer a satisfactory response to local needs or character. They usually conflict with local policies to minimise street clutter and are best avoided.

Principles for the siting and design of new equipment are the same as those for other street furniture.

General Principles

Site equipment at the back of footway

Take account of the character of the townscape before introducing new items

Telephone kiosks

Assess the need for intervention to avoid insensitive location. Retain the classic traditional phone boxes

The widespread use of personal mobile telephones has reduced the demand for public telephones. However, they remain significant in creating a safe and well-used public realm, particularly in tourist areas and more rural locations.

Traditional K2 and K6 kiosks remain classic examples of public design. Many are listed or in conservation areas and operators are encouraged to retain them wherever possible. Work is being done to improve their accessibility to all users.

Where new kiosks are necessary their design and siting should form part of a coordinated strategy. This will avoid over (or insufficient) provision and minimise inconsistency. Bespoke designs can be used to enrich local distinctiveness. New designs should be simple and unobtrusive. They can be integrated into shelters and other street furniture or public art.

General Principles

Retain traditional telephone kiosks

Select and position new kiosks in relation to the overall townscape. As a general rule, a location at the back of the footway will be more appropriate than one up against the kerb

Kiosks of different design should be located separately and not grouped closely together



01 Well sited K6 boxes incorporated into a townscape remodelling project, Barnstaple

02 Modern boxes do not sit well in all historic locations

03 Some modern designs also have a red livery

04 The use of kiosks for advertising is questionable on safety grounds and undermines the design quality

05 Grouping of similar boxes creates a strong presence on the street. Cheltenham

Post boxes



Pillar-boxes and wall boxes of all periods contribute to local heritage and should normally be retained.



Royal Mail and English Heritage have agreed a policy in which all letterboxes in operational service are maintained in their location, or re-sited into modern streetscapes. Where new equipment is necessary, designs should complement existing stock and the surrounding context.

The progressive removal of attached pouch boxes, in accordance with the national refurbishment programme, should be continued in order to reduce street clutter. Royal Mail guidelines specify if they are needed, pouch boxes should be sited unobtrusively and away from existing post boxes.

General Principles

Retain post boxes of all periods

New boxes should complement existing stock

Site pouch boxes away from pillar boxes at the back of the footway and use a dark livery

01 Wall-mounted boxes add to the character of many villages and small towns

02 Gloucester

03 This Penfold hexagonal box is one of the early pillar box designs, most of which are listed, but this design was reproduced by Royal Mail for historic settings. Cathedral Close, Gloucester

Pay and display machines

Pay and display machines should be used in preference to a line of parking meters to reduce street clutter to a minimum.

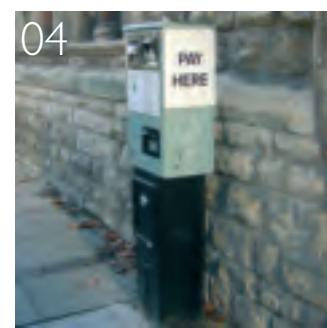
Careful siting of machines and associated signs is essential. They should be sited consistently at the back edge of footways or grouped in a designated area within car parks. Signs should be of minimum size.

It is important to consider the access needs of disabled people. The Department of Transport's document 'Inclusive Mobility – A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure' gives more information.

General Principles

Parking information and warning signs should be incorporated into pay and display machines or placed on existing post or adjacent walls or railing to minimise the need for separate posts

Where separate posts are unavoidable, they should normally be sited at a low level at the back edge of the footway to minimise clutter and obstruction



01 Wherever practicable, signs should be fixed to walls. Bristol

02 Solar powered pay and display machines are now widespread throughout the region. Plymouth

03 Pay and display machine incorporating all necessary information and signs on top. Bristol

04 Pay and display machines should be located at the back of the pavement and painted in the appropriate livery. Cheltenham

Street cabinets



01 Cabinets should be located at the back of the pavement and painted in neutral or dark grey

02 Such attempts to camouflage intrusive equipment are meaningless

03 Redundant equipment should be removed. Where still in use, they should be well maintained



04+05 Electrical cabinets can be unobtrusively set into walls

06 An appropriate means of providing power to temporary users such as market stalls

07 The incorporation of relief details discourages fly-posting

Street cabinets of many types are required for cable TV, traffic signals, telephone services and salt, grit and litter bins. Great care is needed over their colour, design and siting.

Many local authorities no longer use salt or grit bins because of the potential damage to street trees. Wherever possible, they should be withdrawn, or kept on the street for the minimum winter period and then removed. Choose sites carefully.

Litterbins should be robust. They should be fixed to the ground to prevent vandalism and to coordinate with surrounding street elements, in both siting and colour. New units should be designed as part of a family of street furniture.

In order to maintain the quality of streets, authorities are encouraged to adopt a maintenance programme for all street cabinets and bins and remove those which are deteriorating.

General Principles

Street cabinets should be:

- regularly maintained
- robust, with panelled surfaces to discourage flyposting
- sited at the back of the footway and painted on appropriate colour

Recycling facilities and bins

The current policy of encouraging the recycling of waste in pursuit of broader environmental goals is directly in line with the principles of sustainability and Agenda 21, yet paradoxically, in many areas this has led to a proliferation of unsightly waste bins which detract severely from the appearance and amenity of a location. It is important that this conflict of conservation issues is resolved.

By encouraging additional car journeys, the environmental benefits and energy costs of street facilities are being increasingly questioned. In addition street facilities attract the dumping of other types of refuse which create local eyesores. Some authorities have reduced or eliminated the need for pavement bins by promoting the separation of rubbish at source and collection of refuse in different containers.

However, wheelie bins can not only cause clutter if housed on the street, but because of their size may also encourage householders to throw more out.

General Principles

Where street recycling facilities are set up, the following principles should be adopted:

- appropriate sites should be identified in accessible but low profile locations
- sites should be kept clean and regularly maintained with frequent collections



01 The design of litter bins should be co-ordinated with street furniture where possible. They should not reveal their contents (particularly to seagulls) and should be carefully located at the back of pavements; not too close to benches but accessible to passers by

02 Many authorities are avoiding intrusive recycling centres in favour of doorstep collections

CCTV cameras

01



CCTV cameras have become an integral part of our streetscapes. They demand high-quality design, equal to that of other street elements.

Closed circuit television plays a role in combating crime and can instil a sense of safety. The successful integration of cameras into urban and rural environments relies on their appropriate siting. They should be positioned in such a manner that they are noticeable without being obtrusive or reachable.

Where possible, CCTV cameras should be integrated in street lighting columns or mounted on buildings or shelters, avoiding the need for additional supports. Care is required in order to preserve the architectural integrity of buildings, particularly those which are listed. Avoid siting cameras in front of windows and elevation details.

Where freestanding cameras are necessary, they must not obstruct pedestrian circulation. Associated equipment, such as cables and control boxes should be concealed in building recesses or underground, allowing slimmer support columns to be used and reducing clutter.

02



03



General Principles

Locate cameras discreetly on buildings or existing posts

Avoid free-standing columns for cameras or associated signs

01 A wall-mounted camera located at a corner; avoiding the need for a post

02 Pendant CCTV camera: part of a co-ordinated set of lamp post attachments

03 A small camera, fixed unobtrusively to an existing post

New design

High-quality new design can enrich the public realm and promote street activity.

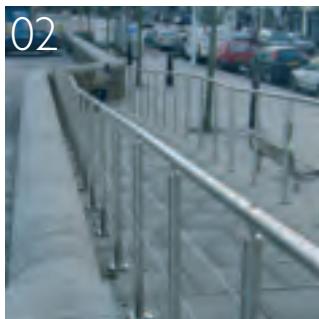
New design should make a positive contribution to the environment, introducing high-quality and innovative solutions, which are both unique and complementary to the surrounding context. New structures should be designed to reflect their function, location and permanence. Where possible, multiple functions should be integrated into one structure.

In some places it will be more appropriate to encourage good quality modern designs than to use traditional products or standard catalogue items.

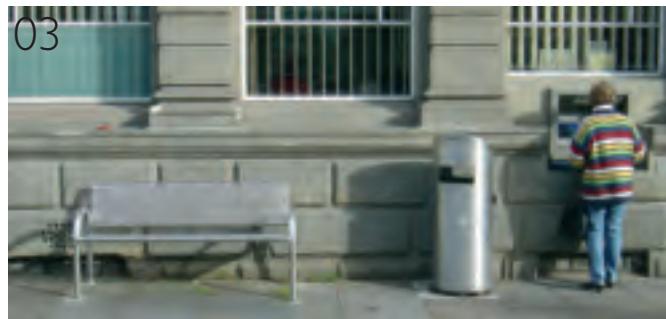


01 A fine modern design in a maritime setting, Torquay

02 A new flood defence project has provided the opportunity to implement a high quality, co-ordinated townscape scheme. Bideford



03 Simple robust standard furniture can work well in historic setting. Wells



04 Tourist information point. Gloucester

05 Good, modern bespoke design in appropriate materials can complement historic settings. Bath

06 New design at the heart of urban regeneration. Bristol



07 A lightweight shelter appropriate to its context. Glastonbury

08 Planned maintenance is essential for all street furniture

09 New public toilet, incorporating a small bench. Cheltenham



General Principles

When considering new design in the public realm, consider:

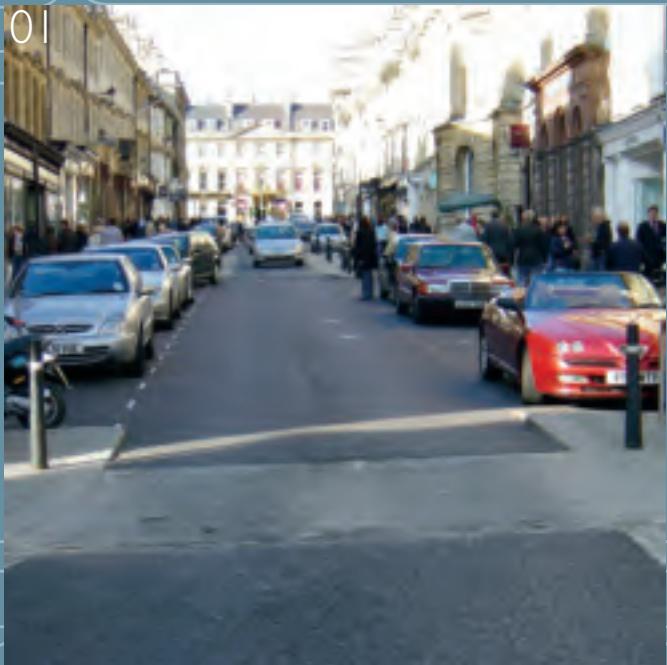
- fitness for purpose
- durability
- vandal resistance
- low maintenance
- architectural quality
- appropriateness to context

05

Traffic Management

General Principles

Traffic calming measures should be fitted sensitively into the street scene as though they were part of the original design of the area. Local highway and planning authorities are encouraged to integrate their activities to minimise the impact of traffic management on the historic environment.



01 A carefully designed scheme with raised pedestrian crossings using the same natural stone as the footway. Bath

Some traffic management designs can be difficult to integrate into an older streetscape and there can be no standard solution. Each feature or device should relate in its design and materials to the overall townscape to ensure that traffic calming reinforces rather than diminishes local character. Traffic calming measures using a combination of traditional materials and devices may help to secure the right balance. Further guidance is set out in Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/96: Traffic Management in Historic Areas.

It is essential to consider the extent to which different kinds of traffic calming measures require signs. They should be kept to the absolute minimum in size and number to ensure safety and comply with legal requirements.

Schemes should not be designed solely by highway engineers without obtaining specialist design advice, as standard solutions will rarely be appropriate. Full consultation and co-operation between highways and urban design and landscape design staff within local authorities is essential.

In conservation areas, particular care needs to be exercised. Local authorities have a duty to ensure that new development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area and that should include highway works and traffic calming measures. Major schemes in conservation areas should always be referred to English Heritage for advice and guidance.

Significant interventions in the horizontal and vertical alignment of the highway may not always be necessary. Simpler approaches, such as alternating kerbside parking, may reduce vehicle speed.

Well-designed gateways, or the use of traditional materials such as granite setts, may be more costly as an initial outlay, but should be seen as a sound investment in the long-term future of the area. Where resources are limited, it is better to do less to a higher standard over a longer period of time than to compromise on quality.

02 Restraint in the use of standard traffic signs and the marking of a village entry with bespoke signs and subtle narrowing can help to lower vehicle speeds



The manner in which a road is treated at an entrance to a traffic calmed area should enhance the locality as well as effectively manage traffic.

Footway extensions and gateways should be designed in a form that would have been adopted had they been part of the original road design. These additional features should be designed to relate to the original geometry of the road and the architecture of the buildings.

Places for cycles and pedestrians to pass easily and safely are important. They should be integrated into the total design. For example a smooth surface for cyclists can be made by the subtle adjustment of a perimeter drainage channel.

Bollards should only be used if they are essential. They should be designed to be compatible with the style and materials of the surrounding area, and should be individually positioned to fulfil a precise task.

Full consultation with all user groups will ensure that a scheme meets all the desired functional and visual aspirations.

03 An improved Somerset village centre. The strong rhythm of formal tree planting, together with the small scale lamp posts, serves to reinforce the 20mph beside the primary school at the entrance to the village

Traffic management

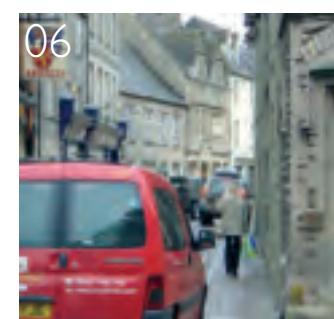
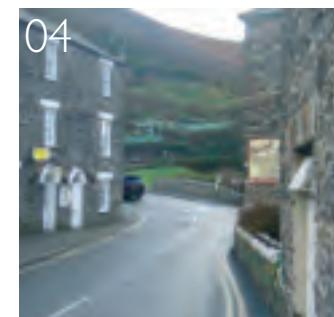
Current best practice seeks to reduce the speed of traffic, allowing the removal of unnecessary road markings and the reduction of the size of traffic signs.

Traffic management measures must be considered in conjunction with the overall design of the street. All layouts must comply current traffic regulations. Use guidance to steer traffic projects, without stifling innovative design solutions.

Details are important. Pedestrian crossings should be designed to reinforce pedestrian priority and be visible to drivers without the need for added signs. Junctions should be determined by the surrounding built form instead of road markings. Controlled sight lines and reduced road widths may also contribute to speed reduction.

Car parking is a dominant feature that detracts from the visual coherence of the public realm. Authorities are encouraged to adopt comprehensive initiatives, such as the Historic Core Zones project and integrated transport strategies.

These strategies encourage alternative modes of transport by reducing through traffic, and restricting cars from central areas, implementing pedestrian-oriented schemes, and providing more comprehensive networks.



01 This plateau slows traffic at the pedestrian 'desire line'

02 Part of the centre of Wells awaiting regeneration

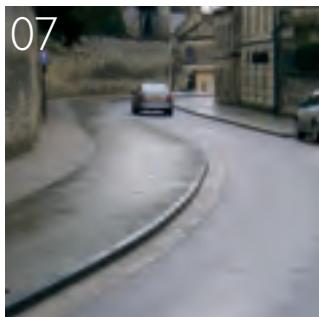
03 Such gateway treatments are unsightly and obscure context. More subtle, structural interventions will be more effective in the long term

04 Traffic is calmed due to the clearly perceived increase in risk at a narrowing formed by two buildings

05 Traffic access restrictions have allowed space to be reallocated to pedestrians. Note the absence of yellow lines. Bath

06 Severe narrowings that encourage vehicles to ride over footways should be avoided

07+08 The restriction of carriageway width gives generous amounts of space back to pedestrians and cyclists and reduces speeds. Cirencester

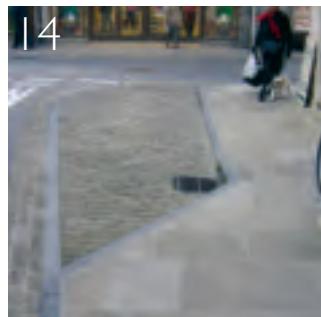


11 Structured parking is effective in moderating speed in busy areas. Wells

12 Parking for delivery vehicles can be effectively incorporated into carriageway narrowing. Wells

09 Unlawful temporary measures should be avoided. Bath

10 A simple gateway design which avoids reliance on signs and lines. Cirencester



13 Prefabricated speed cushions are undesirable in their temporary nature, and should not be used in historic settings

14 A service parking bay, which doubles as a "roll-over" narrowing of a junction radius. Cirencester

General Principles

A traffic management strategy should be part of a wider townscape management plan. It should be based on a careful urban design analysis of the character of the area.

Consider establishing 20mph zones create a safer environment for all.

Adopt a minimalist approach. Physical measures should involve minimal visual interference with the established street scene. Keep signs and other street furniture to a minimum.

Where practicable, all new devices should reinforce or enhance local character using traditional features or elements already found in the area.

Only use traditional materials in the highway, for example asphalt and granite setts. Colour contrasting surfaces and materials are usually unnecessary and undesirable and should only be used when they assist visually impaired people. Road marking should be confined solely to those necessary for highway safety.

Adopt devices which are easily integrated into the existing townscape. These include:

- stone setted surfaces, which may help reduce traffic speeds, and are traditional elements in many streets.
- rumble strips of stone setts laid slightly above the level of the existing carriageway at entry points or other locations
- entry treatments which reinforce the character of existing gateways into an area using traditional designs based on local materials and planting

Detailed designs, construction methods, materials and workmanship should be of the highest standards.

06

Environmental Improvements

General Principles

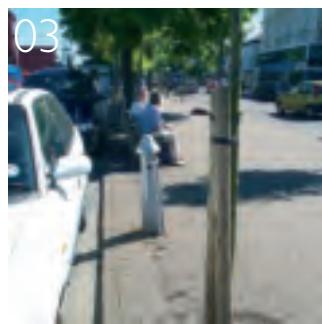
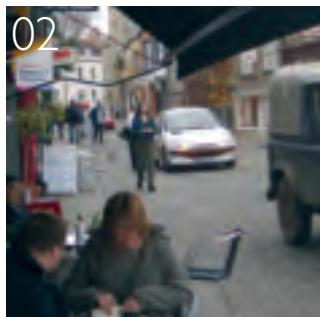
Environmental improvements should enhance the qualities that make a place special and enjoyable to its users. Even small improvements can reinforce local distinctiveness and encourage greater public use.



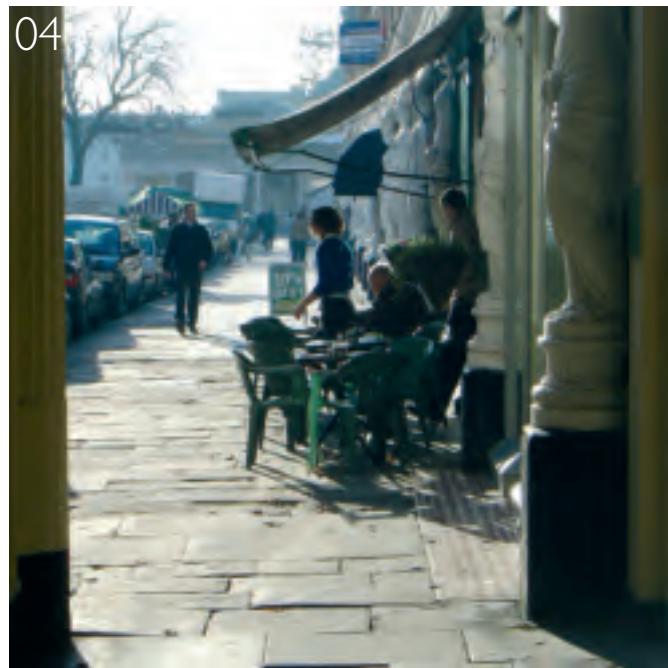
Queens Square, Bristol restored to its C17th form with appropriately detailed accommodation of modern requirements. It has become an "urban oasis", well used and loved by all

02 The recent growing popularity of pavement cafés is encouraged by well designed streetscape. These need to strike a balance with the needs of pedestrians. Wells

03 Before. A traffic dominated scene at the waterfront. Bideford



04 A modern café is casually accommodated in this generous traditional pavement. Cheltenham



05 After: An elegant restructuring of the streetscape. Note the positioning of the listed bollards to demarcate sitting areas

06 Environmental improvements as part of a regeneration scheme. Carefully sourced paving slabs are made from recycled waste from local china clay pits



Where there is insufficient funding available to implement a scheme to the requisite standard, it is better to do less, in phases, and to a higher standard, as a long term investment in the future of an area, rather than to compromise on overall quality. Short-term solutions using cheap materials usually fail and detract from local distinctiveness. Projects should not be embarked upon unless adequate revenue provision has been made for their subsequent management and maintenance.

Pedestrianisation schemes require particular sensitivity. The key to success is to maintain rather than eradicate common features of the street. Kerb lines should always be retained to maintain the visual continuity of the street and to eliminate the need for bollards. Wall to wall surfaces should be avoided, with a clear definition maintained between the footway and the carriageway to provide a plinth for the adjacent buildings. The proportions of the footway to carriageway must be maintained.

Elaborate patterned or artificial coloured paving materials are seldom successful. Apart from the problems of maintenance and construction, the valuable function of a footway as a neutral and unifying element can be lost.

General Principles

Pedestrianisation schemes require particular sensitivity

Kerb lines should always be retained to maintain the visual continuity of the street and to eliminate the need for bollards

Wall to wall surfaces should be avoided in historic areas, with a clear definition maintained between the footway and the carriageway to provide a plinth for the adjacent buildings

Attempts to introduce patterned or artificial coloured paving materials are seldom successful and can be difficult to maintain

Consult access groups and disability organisations

Street traders

Activities define places as much as buildings; markets and shops are at the heart of many historic areas.

Outdoor cafes and street traders can add spontaneity and animation to the street scene. Street markets offer some of the regions most delightful and exciting experiences, but it is worth trying to avoid undue clutter, especially out of hours.

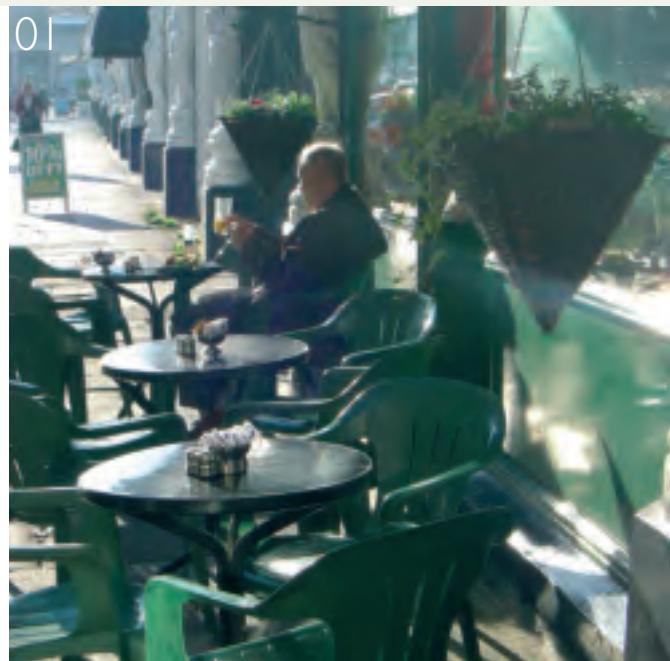
Street cafés can add colour and vitality to the townscape. Tables, chairs and umbrellas on the highway require the consent of the local authority and there should be times when they are cleared away so that the quality of the street itself can be appreciated.

Amendments to the Street Trading Licence laws would enable local authorities to insist on higher design standards.

General Principles

Kiosks for the sale of such things as newspapers, fruit and vegetables add to the liveliness of streets

Encourage quality designs for kiosks, canopies and street furniture

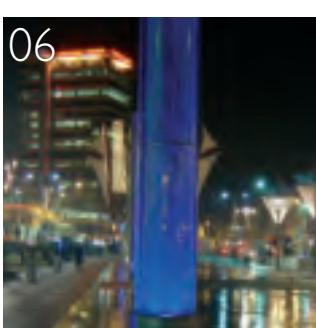


01 Café tables and chairs, stalls and A-boards add character and clutter: authorities need to strike a balance between animation and obstruction of the footway. Cheltenham

02 Traditional markets bring colour and life to public spaces. Wells

03 Shopfronts can make a vibrant contribution to the vitality of streets. Appledore

Public art



01 Traditional statues can be celebrated in new street design and add gravitas to civic spaces. Bristol

02+03 Intriguing and memorable details incorporated into the new flood protection wall at Bideford

04 Sculptural seat strengthens the pedestrian domination of the town centre of Gloucester

05 A powerful symbol of maritime history. Plymouth

06 Artists worked with the designers of Bristol's revamped 'Centre'

Public art can enhance our experience and understanding of a city, town, village or space. It should be used to enhance, orientation and identity, reinforcing a sense of place.

Public art covers a wide range of work both permanent and temporary. Permanent pieces include freestanding sculptures, monuments and street furniture. Temporary elements extend to murals, signage and performance events. All have the potential to increase the vibrancy of a space and provide visual interest.

The earliest forms of public art were probably preaching crosses, but from the 17th century patronage of the arts became more common. The 19th century witnessed a large increase in public art as statues and monuments were erected to celebrate local personalities and events. More recently fine new sculpture has been installed with innovative new designs.

Authorities should adopt a public art strategy. This will enable guiding principles relating to size, content, appropriateness to context, siting and maintenance costs of potential work to be clearly specified.

General Principles

Promote temporary public art in order to maintain evolving visual stimulation

When commissioning public art, always consider:

- a clear brief
- scale
- durability
- lighting
- visibility from all sides
- landscape context

Street trees and planting

Tree planting and landscape features should be used to enhance the space between buildings, reinforcing an area's character and appeal.

Throughout the South West region, types of landscaped areas range from urban green spaces, to smaller scale town or village greens.

Close co-operation between arboriculturalists, highway engineers, landscape architects and urban designers is vital to preserve and enhance the range and quality of street trees.

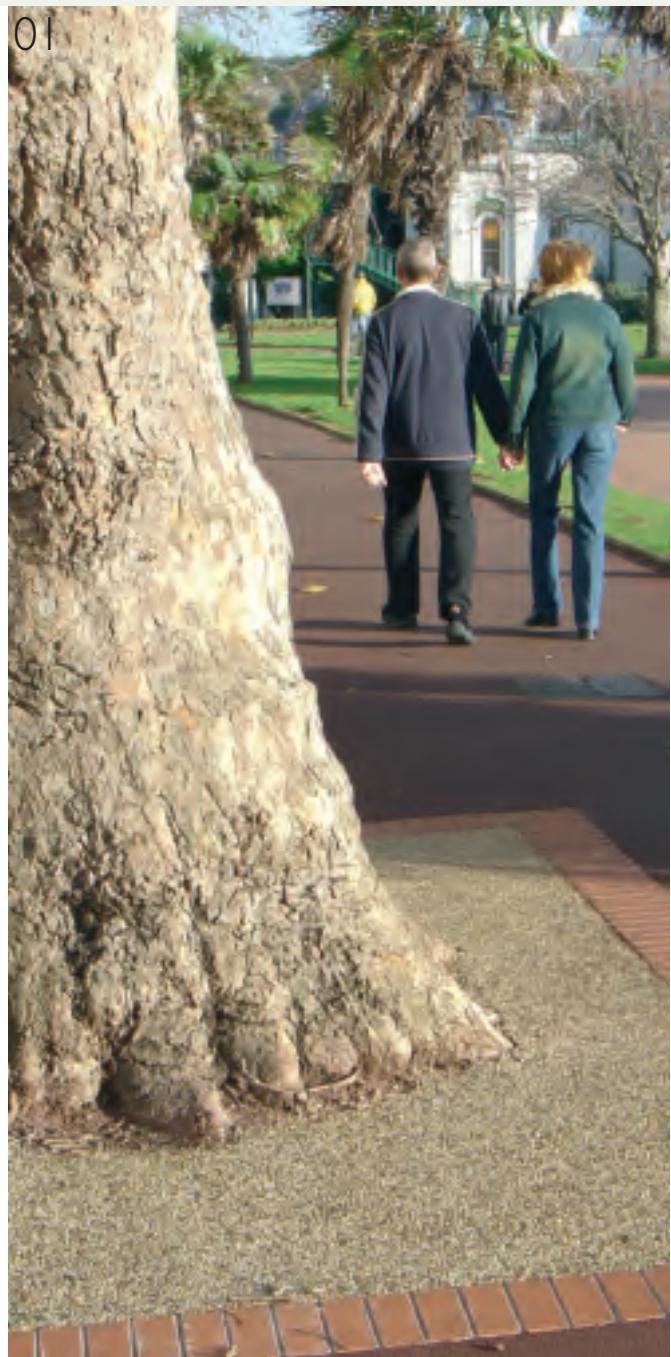
Avenues, boulevards, town squares and formal spaces, and informal rural locations all demand the application of different planting principles to be adopted.

Trees and planting should reflect the history, architecture and tradition of places. Small pockets of poor quality planting can undermine the quality of the streetscape.

Street trees and planting are not appropriate in every instance. Many fine urban streets and spaces can be enhanced by pruning or the removal of inappropriate or excessive planting. Trees and planting should always form part of the overall urban context, and not be added or preserved without question. Care must also be taken to maintain sight lines and the visibility of traffic signals.

Detailing of paving and protection of tree roots should allow for the continued expansion and settlement of ground levels around trees and careful routing and protection of services is essential to avoid damage and interruption. Water sources should also be protected. British Standard 5837 (1991) provides essential guidance.

Insurance companies frequently blame trees for subsidence (especially after dry summers). Pressure to remove or replace trees for insurance purposes should be countered.



01 Resin bound gravel provides an easy surface for wheelchairs and buggies. Torquay

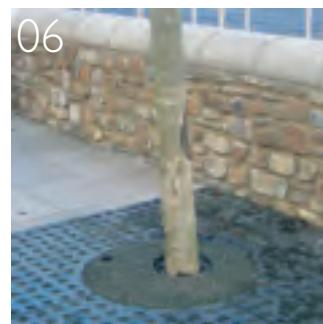
02 Traffic islands do not have to be a sterile no-mans land. Good landscaping can enhance local character. Torquay



03 A single mature tree makes an enormous impact on a public space. Paignton



04 This row of plane trees has helped to transform the industrial dockside into an elegant civic space. Bristol



05 Street trees can help mark a change in street character between old and new. Exeter

06 Pedestrian-friendly tree grid infilled with permeable resin bound gravel. Bideford

07 An avenue of trees meeting over a footpath to form an arbour. Clifton. Bristol

08 Mature trees can create a sense of calm in urban areas. Bristol



General Principles

Select and locate trees in relation to the overall townscape with specialist advice

Avoid damage to fragile root structures

Use planting only where it makes positive contribution to the townscape

Avoid creating litter traps or maintenance liabilities, or hazards for visibility impaired people and wheelchair users.

Lighting of buildings

Lighting is an integral part of streetscapes and should be considered in conjunction with all other streetscape elements. It can give a city, town, and village or space another dimension, enhancing visual stimulation, orientation and legibility.

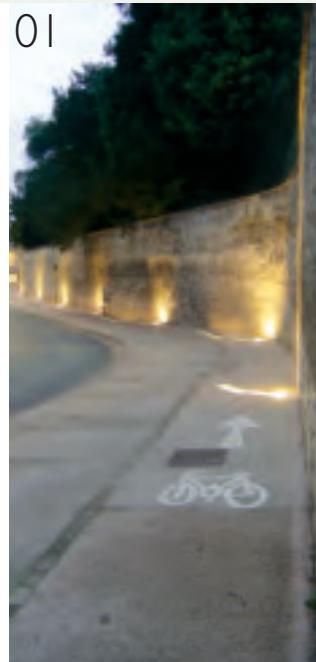
Carefully designed lighting is an integral, not an additional, ingredient to creating successful spaces and streets for all. The lighting of buildings, trees and places animates the stage for the activities and exchanges of successful towns and cities.

With well-designed, co-ordinated lighting towns and cities can become pleasant places to enjoy by night as well as day. Street crime can be reduced and industry and commerce benefit through increased prosperity.

Local authorities should prepare outdoor lighting strategies for key buildings and areas to ensure that schemes are co-ordinated properly. An integrated plan can help to reduce ambient light levels, whilst possible energy savings can reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and light pollution. Care should always be given to energy efficiency, and the reduction of glare and light pollution.

The appropriate balance between lighting levels and the quality of the night sky is one that is best resolved through consensus amongst local communities. Well-directed, low-level lighting can be an important contribution towards such a balance.

Well-designed and co-ordinated schemes can add momentum to urban regeneration, enhance personal safety and improve the presentation of the environment. The 24-hour economy and social change place greater emphasis on the quality of the nighttime environment.



01 A new cycle track in Cirencester: Floodlighting substitutes for street lighting as part of a general improvement scheme



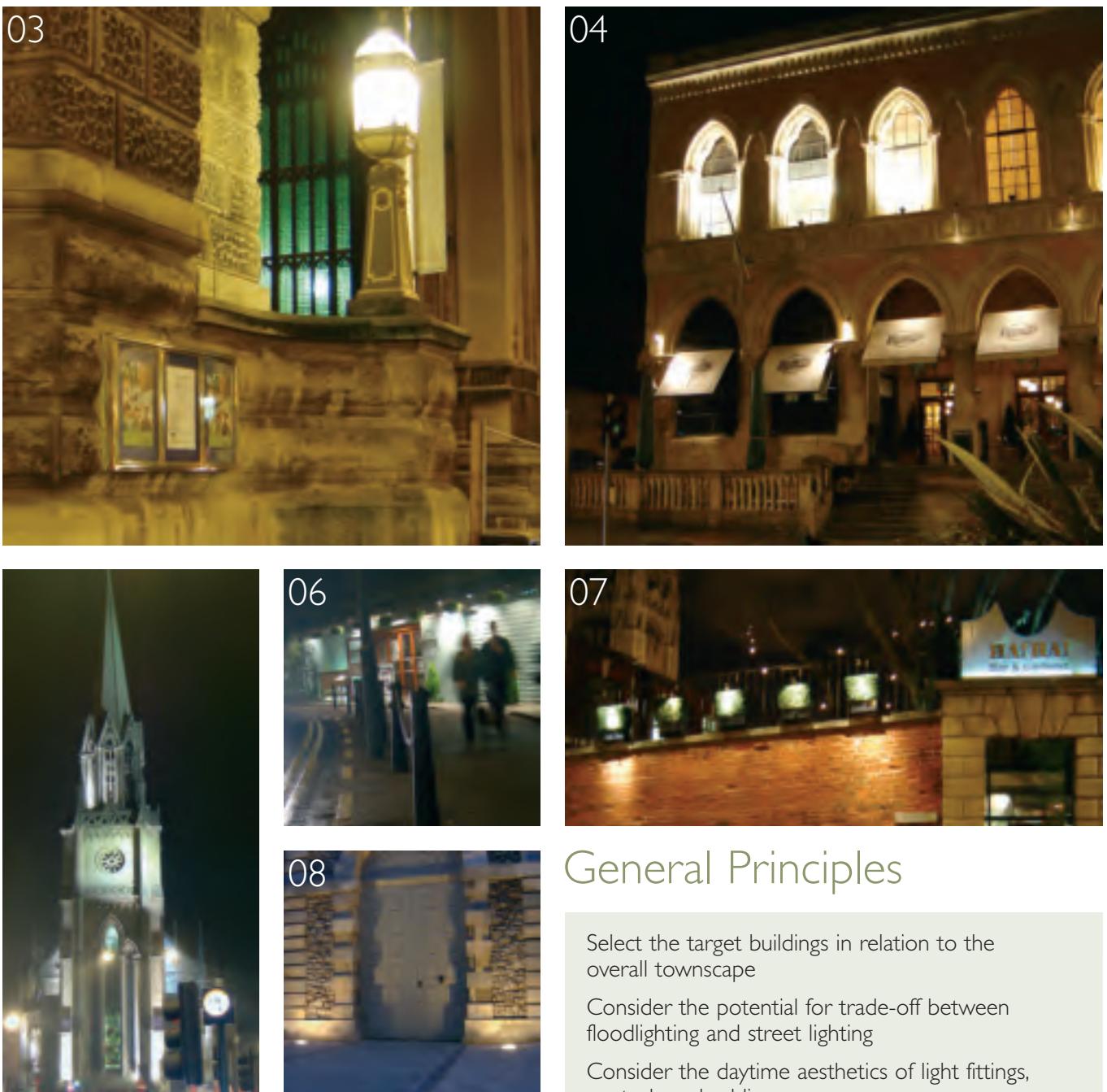
02 Concealed flood lighting integrated into paving

When executed with care and sensitivity, subtle external lighting can provide a whole new architectural dimension to a building's façade – painting with light. Distant views and monuments can be given greater emphasis. However when done poorly, it can be damaging by throwing the balance of a building or a view out of equilibrium.

Trees, public art and street furniture provide a range of opportunities for imaginative lighting, in addition to the illumination of buildings.

Care needs to be taken to conceal fittings and cables, and to ensure that fittings and light sources complement the urban composition during daylight. It is vital that lighting schemes be designed as an integral part of any development or street improvement, and not added on at the end of the process or at a later date.

03+04+06+07 Flood lighting can light the adjacent pavement to enhance security



05 Dramatic flood lighting can transform the night time environment. Bath

08 Underlighting can heighten texture and architectural detail. Cirencester

General Principles

Select the target buildings in relation to the overall townscape

Consider the potential for trade-off between floodlighting and street lighting

Consider the daytime aesthetics of light fittings, controls and cabling

Minimise the work needed for connections so that there will be no scars when installations are removed

Maintaining and implementing a programme of enhancement
Sustaining a long-term view – over thirty years
Making best use of limited resources

Wells, Somerset

Wells, one of England's smallest cities, has been the focus of a programme of coordinated street design and enhancement schemes since European Architectural Heritage Year in 1975. The long-term view has been sustained by Somerset County Council through consistent in-house action.

Enhancement schemes in Wells have combined urban design and conservation in a continuous process, carried out incrementally as opportunities and resources become available. Throughout, an overall vision was maintained so that individual schemes become components of a whole. The gradual process meant that lessons could be learnt from earlier projects. This set of projects in Wells reflects a commitment to quality in design and management in the long term.

Achieving environmental improvements

Wells Market Place was used primarily as a car park and the Conduit Head, once a significant landmark, was eroded and attracting clutter. To improve the quality of these key public areas, it was proposed that traffic was removed and the area resurfaced. Following discussion with local traders, an element of parking was included. It is now generally accepted that the scheme has improved the setting of local shops and retail environment in the city centre. The success in reducing the impact of the car has led to demands that the Market Place is closed to traffic in the summer, for the annual fair and the weekly market.

The public support for the Market Place scheme helped to promote projects in Sadler Street and High Street, which were funded by the Department for Transport as a traffic calming project. A Steering Group included local businesses, councillors and the town centre manager. Cyclists, the access group and the local community were also consulted through exhibitions and a community planning event.

The local Pennant sandstone was unavailable, so York stone was used as flagstones, kerbs and large setts at crossovers. Kerbs are set low to the carriageway. The characteristic gullies along the edges of the carriageways, almost continuously running with water (from the Wells) have been realigned, not for the first time in the history of the City, along the new carriageway. The frames for the gratings which bridge the gullies in various places were formed locally in Glastonbury.

A highway engineer joined the Historic Environment Service and became closely involved with the design philosophy of the scheme. A protocol has been approved whereby any works within the highway in a conservation area are referred to the Historic Environment Service. The overall concept was to produce a restrained, uncluttered environment, with local features. The area is a 20mph zone. Footways have been widened and parking only permitted where indicated (by signs fixed to walls). Cars parked outside the indicated areas cause an obstruction, so the scheme becomes self policing. There are no double yellow lines and hardly any signs or other markings.

Timeline of Wells enhancement schemes.

1975-84 VICARS CLOSE

Refurbishment of houses was complemented with work to repair the historic street surface of cobbles and setts.

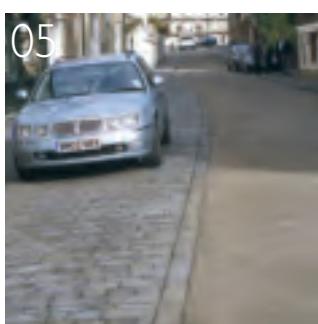
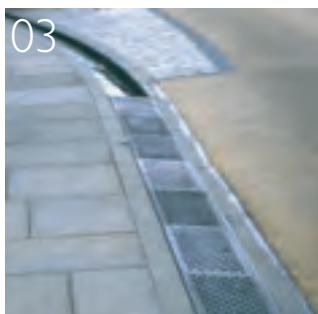
1987-89 CATHEDRAL GREEN

The improvement of footpaths provided better accessibility and a paved area in front of the Cathedral.

01+02 The improvement of the Market Place in the early 1990's has been part of a continuous programme of public realm improvements since the mid 1970's



03 Water channels incorporated into pavement design



04+05 Simple, uncluttered design details, good craftsmanship and the use of a limited range of materials, are appropriate to the quality of buildings and streetscape of the town



1990 UNION STREET

Introduction of a shared surface enhanced the link between the City's major car parks and the High Street.

1992-93 MARKET PLACE

A major scheme to resurface the Market Place, using traditional paving, provided an improved setting for fairs and markets. It also resulted in a significant reduction in car parking.

1997 RELIEF ROAD

This significantly reduced the volume of traffic through the City centre.

2001 SADLER STREET

As a result of the relief road works it became possible to widen the footways in Sadler Street and reduce the need for signs and parking.

2002 HIGH STREET

The High Street scheme continues from Sadler Street using the same materials. It links earlier schemes in Union Street and the Market Place.

BROAD STREET

The possible future treatment of Broad Street would complete the linear improvements. The project aims to enhance the "entrance to the city" by recreating a tree-lined avenue.

Conclusion

These projects have largely been undertaken by the Historic Environment Service of Somerset County Council, with most of the funding and implementation through the County Highways Department with whom a continuing and creative relationship has been forged. Few counties retain this level of direct design of conservation projects.

The success of this programme shows the value of long-term commitment. It is rarely easy to raise funds for capital programmes. However, an important factor in Wells' success has been to invest what was available in quality.

Promoting best practice through the publication of manuals
Co-ordinating corporate action
Achieving design-led results

Tunbridge Wells, Kent

In Tunbridge Wells, urban design and conservation are seen as key elements in the creation and maintenance of the public realm. The Tunbridge Wells Streetscape Manual and its rural counterpart reflect a commitment to involving all those charged with designing and managing work in the public realm.

The Tunbridge Wells Streetscape Manual stemmed from a Town Centre Management project and has been in use since 1996. The project included a sign culling exercise, leading to a comprehensive signing strategy, and also resulted in fewer guard rails on pavement edges.

The manual has formed the basis for negotiations with all stakeholders in the public realm, including the highways authority who use it as a good practice guide. It has been used in proactive negotiations with utilities companies for routeing cable laying and siting inspection boxes.

A working group was established in 2000, comprising the Planning Department, County Highways, Environmental Health, and Tourism and Leisure, to agree key principles and develop co-ordinated actions. Over a number of years a high level of co-operation has been established, delivering coherent projects within a formal design framework. These include the creation of a market and public activity space in front of the Town Hall, funded through the transportation strategy.

The manual covers both the wider context of urban design and the morphology of the townscape, and details such as the details of paving and street furniture. Much of this is specific to the town.

The Pantiles is an early Victorian neighbourhood adjacent to the central core. Its restoration illustrates the manual in action. The authority prioritised the conservation of the existing brick pavements. The distinctive ragstone 'spall' chippings were supplemented with material from a new quarry. The manual emphasises the distinctiveness of each neighbourhood, keeping the design approach simple and restrained.

A rural counterpart was developed in 2003. Similarly, it establishes the character of the rural public realm and develops an approach which incorporates principles of sustainability, access for all users and safety. It highlights the need to respect soft, informal boundaries and edges to the carriageway. Road markings are discouraged as far as possible. The reduced engineering standards of rural roads are recognised and designers are directed to these for models.

Conclusion

This example shows the value of clear written guidance, which is then used to produce tangible results of high quality. Streets for All aims to encourage all authorities to prepare local manuals so that best practice can become everyday practice.

Co-ordinating strategy
Learning from a pilot project
Tackling the skills deficit

Devon County Council

Devon County Council has taken practical steps to identify shortcomings in the delivery of streetworks. It is now developing a comprehensive training programme to improve standards.

Following involvement in the Designing Streets for People report of 2002, the County Environment Directorate recognised the need for a Public Realm Strategy, which was published in 2003. Early on, the Strategy identified the need to improve design awareness, including political decision makers, designers and specifiers, contractors and maintenance personnel.

A working party of highway engineers, councillors, maintenance and conservation staff visited the Dartmoor market town of Moretonhampstead to identify problems and issues in the design of the town centre public realm. A schedule of improvements was drawn up and the maintenance contractor was instructed to undertake the works as an "as normal" specification contract. The process was monitored by taking before and after photographs.

The exercise highlighted problems in implementation, such as poor pointing quality in paving and insensitive location of signs in relation to buildings and street furniture. Significant limitations were also identified in specification writing and in the training of the personnel undertaking the works.

The working party, joined by the maintenance contractor, visited the eight local services offices throughout the county to publicise the issues and problems that were identified in the case study.



01 The importance of accurate specifications, choice of materials and quality of workmanship is emphasised in a session demonstrating traditional paving organised by the Faculty of the Built Environment of the University of the West of England, Bristol

The Environment Directorate is now building on the lessons learnt in the Moretonhampstead study, developing a training programme for all those involved in procuring quality for the public realm. The programme is in partnership with the Faculty of the Built Environment of the University of the West of England, Bristol, building on their Traditional Paving Research Project. The first stage has been a mapping exercise to identify the scope and content of a training programme.

Conclusion

This case shows the added value possible when the separate disciplines of engineering, conservation and urban design are located in a common Directorate. The County Council has deliberately set itself a learning process that identifies shortcomings and is developing programmes to address them.

Applying management techniques to reduce traffic speed and volume

Relating lower speeds to reduced traffic sign requirements

Making use of local materials and skills

Crossley Street, Halifax

A range of traffic management techniques were used to reduce the conflict of traffic speed and volume with significant pedestrian flows across the street. This gave the opportunity for innovation in traffic signs and surface detail.

Halifax was one of four historic towns participating in the Historic Core Zones Pilot Project promoted by the English Historic Towns Forum with support from the Department for Transport, English Heritage and the Civic Trust.

The key feature of the Halifax scheme was the division of the town centre into five zones with no access between them except for buses, taxis, delivery vehicles and cycles. This 'zone and loop' system has reduced traffic volume by 28%. The central Market Quarter is protected as a Pedestrian Zone during the day by rising bollards. People moving between the Pedestrian Zone and the carparks have to cross over Crossley Street and one of the aims of the Project was to minimise the potential for conflicts with vehicular traffic.

Local York stone was used to widen footways, and smooth sandstone setts provide crossing 'tables' level with the pavements. The resulting reduction in traffic speed has allowed the use of less obtrusive traffic signs mounted on tubular hoops just 1.1 metres high. The Department for Transport gave a special dispensation for the signs to be treated with a high reflectivity finish so that they do not have to carry their own external illumination.

Brass studs, manufactured locally, were used at crossing points instead of concrete tactile paving. Holes were drilled on site into the finished stone paving and the studs were bonded into the holes with resin.



01 Crossley Street, Halifax, 1995.
This scheme was one of the first to include metal stud tactile paving. The project included narrowed carriageways and raised crossings, resulting in greater safety and speed reductions of 8mph

02+03 The non-illuminated low level traffic regulations signs pioneered at Halifax have not been repeated, but the simple, clutter free, concept has been used more recently, here at Kensington High Street, with recessed up-lighter external illumination

Although expensive, the studs avoid the need for special cutting and wastage associated with moulded slabs.

The scheme has reduced traffic flows by 28%, pedestrian activity has increased significantly and in a survey, 82% felt that the appearance of the street had been improved.

Conclusion

This case has succeeded through multi-disciplinary co-operation. Reducing the speed of traffic meant that a reduced number of signs were needed, which in turn could be of a small size. The scheme shows how a town can be enriched by minimising sign numbers and taking advantage of quality materials.

Minimising traffic signs
Minimising road markings
Improving pedestrian accessibility

Shrewsbury High Street

A series of twenty “courtesy crossings” along the High Street encourage drivers to give way to pedestrians. No formal crossings are used so the surfaces, road markings and street furniture associated with them are not needed.

Shrewsbury was one of four historic towns participating in the Historic Core Zone Pilot Project promoted by the English Historic Towns Forum with support from the Department for Transport, English Heritage and the Civic Trust. This experimental scheme was promoted by Shropshire County Council. Its purpose was to reduce street clutter in a historic town centre and improve the environment for pedestrians.

Shrewsbury High Street is used predominantly by buses during the day, though cars and service vehicles are not excluded. Physical alterations to the carriageway, rather than traffic regulation orders, have been used to reduce speed.

The carriageway was reduced to a minimum width of 3.5 metres and footways were widened accordingly. Clearly defined crossing places were constructed using smooth-faced York stone setts. The distinctive design and close spacing of the informal crossings (at an average of 30 metres) encourages drivers to maintain low speeds and give way to pedestrians. Speeds are seldom above 15 mph, giving ample time for eye contact between drivers and pedestrians.

The whole street is a restricted parking zone, so no yellow lines are necessary. Parking and loading bays are indicated by black basalt setts, a material found elsewhere in the town. The Department for Transport sanctioned a reduced size of loading restriction signs which are fixed to robust timber bollards at the edge of the pavement. The posts also help define the crossing



01 A series of “courtesy crossings” at close intervals encourage low speeds. The crossings relate to pedestrian desire lines and to the precise architectural features of historic buildings along the street

02 Delivery bays and bus stops are carefully designed in a limited range of materials and construction details. Traffic speeds were reduced by 7mph

points. As there are no controlled crossings, such as zebra or pelican crossings, there is no need for associated road markings or posts such as Belisha beacons or pedestrian and traffic signals.

The scheme has resulted in a 34% reduction in traffic volume, a 22% reduction in traffic speed and a high level of public approval.

Conclusion

As an alternative to traffic regulation orders, physical methods can be effective in reducing the clutter of signs, lines and signals as well as promoting safety. However, care is needed to combine engineering and design solutions that relate to the precise conditions of the location.

Creating a high quality scheme by removing clutter

Reducing the length of guardrails

Using risk-assessment to aid design decisions

Kensington High Street

High Street Kensington was comprehensively refurbished using high quality paving and street furniture. It was recognised that this quality should be supported by a reduction in clutter, particularly superfluous guardrails. An assessment process was devised to determine where guardrails could be removed or reduced in length.

Conventional wisdom on the effect of guard rails is being reconsidered. A parliamentary committee has questioned the need for the extent of guard rails, particularly those on pedestrian refuges that are likened to sheep pens.

At the intersection of Kensington Church Street and Kensington High Street, pedestrians formerly crossed the road using a three stage crossing. This required pedestrians to cross each lane and a left turn filter lane as a separate and distinct stage, each stage defined by guardrails and with its own press buttons and stop signal for pedestrians. There were four rows of guardrail in all.

This arrangement has been replaced with a single crossing over both lanes of the carriageway and the left turning traffic lane, with the stages no longer separated by refuges. More significantly, a risk assessment concluded that the guardrails could be removed on all but one side of the junction.

This required a safety audit and a design statement to justify the decisions that were taken. These were fully documented and approved by elected members of the Council. The scheme is constantly monitored with a view to erecting guard rails should the need arise.



01

02

01 Until recently pedestrians had to cross the road in three stage and therefore wait, frustratingly, at three consecutive red lights

02 The new signal arrangements allows the road to be crossed in one stage. All traffic signals, signs and guard rails have been reduced to what is considered to be a safe and lawful minimum. Disability groups were consulted during the redesign. The safety of this and other innovations in the street are being constantly monitored. After some two or three years the council has not found it necessary to change the scheme

Where the guard rails have been retained, it is because the risk of removal was considered to be too great. This is at a place in the road where there are no pedestrian refuges and traffic crosses from four directions

Conclusion

The effect of high quality materials can be undermined by the clutter of street furniture, such as bollards and guardrails. However, their removal must be supported by sound decisions that have full regard for safety as well as engineering and design. Risk assessment is an important technique for reducing precautions to a necessary minimum.

At High Street Kensington, the redesigned junction has improved the streetscape and the setting of historic buildings. It has also added to the comfort of pedestrians crossing the road without compromising safety, which is continuously monitored.

Removing redundant traffic signs
The Nottingham 'Clutterbuster' initiative

City of Nottingham

Several local authorities now have comprehensive programmes for the systematic removal of redundant street furniture and clutter. A high profile programme is being undertaken at Nottingham.

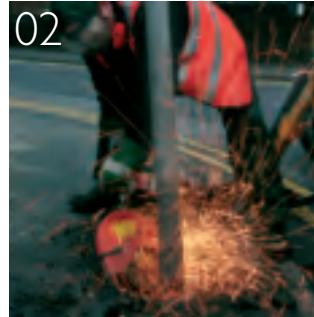
Street clutter often accumulates because there is no single responsibility for the removal of redundant street furniture. Capital budgets exist to carry out new works, but maintenance budgets seldom extend beyond statutory requirements to allow for simple tidying up. Where authorities have embarked on such programmes they have been surprised at the amount of street furniture that has no current purpose.

All signs and equipment are originally erected for a specific purpose, but over time signs are duplicated, adjustments to traffic schemes make some unnecessary, and views on the need for some signs are also changing.

In addition, the legislation governing the need for signs may change. A notable recent change took away the need to provide the small yellow sign indicating no parking "at any time". The accompanying double yellow lines in the road are now deemed sufficient to enforce the restriction. At a stroke, thousands of these signs and their supporting posts can be removed from every town and village across the country.

Nottingham City Council's Clutterbuster seeks out and removes these signs and other redundant street furniture, such as small lengths of unnecessary guardrail.

The Clutterbuster with his van is active throughout the City and has removed over 2000 signs since 2003.



01 The clutter buster programme has a high profile and is an innovation of which the City is justly proud

02 Another post removed from the streets of Nottingham

03 The amount of redundant signs and metal is staggering
Photographer: Louise O'Gorman

Clear guidance means he is confident in what has to be done, and he is provided with a schedule prepared in consultation with relevant departments of the Council. This is important because historic street furniture has often survived the test of time by default rather than by design. Now it needs to be identified and, where possible, kept in use.

Conclusion

A clutter removal programme can have fast and dramatic effects, and it is readily appreciated by the general public. It is a simple way to enhance public spaces and it can be justified financially by the consequent reduction in maintenance costs.

Integrating highway engineering and urban design

Promoting corporate action

Discreet treatments for sensitive areas

Benefits of research into local solutions

Suffolk County Council

A series of manuals giving guidance for highway works in sensitive areas has been published by the Suffolk Local Authorities. They are a product of a long standing collaboration between the County and seven district councils, and are one of a raft of procedures aimed to achieve more sensitive work on Suffolk's roads.

For the past fifteen years, officers of the transport and environment divisions of Suffolk County Council have been working with the conservation officers of the district councils to forge better interdisciplinary understanding and working practices.

This is in marked contrast with experience in many other counties where good conservation practice in respect of historic buildings can be undermined by inappropriate work in public spaces. Similarly some highway authorities see a failure of planning colleagues to understand basic engineering and safety requirements.

The procedures developed in Suffolk are not unique, but they do go further and are more structured than other counties. Since 1993, a Conservation Forum is held twice a year and is attended by the conservation officers of the County and district councils and representatives of each of the transport divisions at the County. Concerns are aired and good practice examples are presented, often with an accompanying site visit. The networking opportunities of Forum often resolve problems before they become an issue.

As a result of problems identified at Forum, conservation officers and engineers went on to write a series of good practice manuals to assist in the carrying out of work in a sensitive manner. These manuals are approved by Councillors as policy documents and include critical reviews of some of the work already carried out in the County.

When undertaking work, the engineer also refers to an electronic checking system EnCheck, to see if the scheme affects any sensitive areas. EnCheck will refer the designer to the relevant expert or external body for advice.

Wherever possible highway schemes are designed to be multifunctional: a well designed speed reduction scheme may also enhance a village conservation area and assist in attracting visitors to stop and contribute to the local economy – often thereby tapping into additional urban conservation, economic development and tourism funding.

The effect on the ground has been remarkable. Standard solutions are adapted to create schemes which respond to the special character of individual locations. Examples of such work in Suffolk include the planting of a hedge in an area of outstanding natural beauty as a speed reduction feature to visually narrow the width of the carriageway. In another place a need for a speed reminder feature was resolved by painting white an existing traditional railing around a culvert, thereby creating a visual narrowing.

Much of this work is small scale but the incremental effect of the continuous pressure to make roads safer, unless carefully thought out, can have a huge impact on the environment.

01 Features such as buff coloured surfacing, simple road markings and timber bollards are considered more appropriate to the Suffolk countryside



02+03 Build-outs using surface dressing and granite setts are simple, inexpensive and effective



04 The hedgerow on the right will, when matured, visually narrow the carriageway and is the first stage of a speed reduction scheme



05 This gateway reflects the character of a traditional toll gate which existed previously nearby



05



06



06



07 A timber footway neatly solves a local safety problem at Holbrook

Conclusion

Suffolk does not profess to always do the right thing, but the close co-operation between conservation and design officers and the highway authority has led to significant improvements in the environmental and visual quality of highway works. In particular the unique quality of Suffolk is being protected from being overwhelmed by the excesses of standard highway solutions.

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Principles of good practice

Ground Surfaces:

Relate ground surfaces to their surrounding streetscape context

Avoid small paving modules laid in arbitrary colours and patterns

When assessing costs, use sustainable accounting methods and consider life cycle costing

Respect the subtle proportional relationship between the footways, buildings and carriageway

Maintain and restore historic paving where it survives

Respect local designs and details

Retain or reinstate setted edges, cobbles and grass verges, taking into account the needs of all

Avoid the unnecessary introduction of kerbs in rural areas

Use road markings sparingly in sensitive areas, consistent with safety standards

Consult local disability organisations on detailed designs and consider using access consultants

Street Furniture:

Identify and remove superfluous or redundant items

Reduce new furniture to a minimum by good design

Co-ordinate style, colour and siting of street furniture

Compile an inventory of historic street furniture and make plans for their maintenance

Consider recasting local designs, ensuring details are accurate and authentic

Locate signs on buildings or at the back edge of pavements

Avoid placing signs on new posts which add to clutter

Avoid large backing panels and yellow backing boards

Consider street lighting in conjunction with other light sources, shop windows and floodlit buildings

Eliminate the need for bollards through higher quality kerb definition and good design

Retain traditional telephone kiosks and post boxes

Traffic Management:

A traffic management strategy should be part of a wider townscape management plan. It should be based on a careful urban design analysis of the character of the area

Adopt a minimalist approach. Physical measures should involve visual interference with the established street scene. Keep signs and other street furniture to a minimum

Adopt devices which are easily integrated into the existing townscape. They include: Stone setted surfaces, which may help to reduce traffic speed, and are traditional elements in many streets; rumble strips of stone setts laid slightly above the level of the existing carriageway at entry points or other locations; entry treatments which reinforce the character of existing gateways into an area using traditional designs based on local materials and planting

Environmental Improvements:

Pedestrianisation schemes require particular sensitivity

Wall-to-wall surfaces should be avoided in historic areas, with a clear definition maintained between the footway and the carriageway to provide a plinth for the adjacent buildings

Promote public art in order to maintain evolving visual stimulation

Select and locate trees in relation to the overall townscape with specialist advice

Consider the potential for trade-off between floodlighting and streetlighting

Consult local access groups or disability organisations