



Historic England

Streets for All

Advice for Highway and Public Realm Works
in Historic Places



Summary

This guidance, together with the *Streets for All* regional documents, provides updated practical advice for anyone involved in planning and implementing highways and other public realm works in sensitive historic locations, including highways engineers, planners and urban and landscape designers. It looks at making improvements to public spaces without harm to their valued character, including specific recommendations for works to surfaces, street furniture, new equipment, traffic management infrastructure and environmental improvements. It draws on experience of Historic England's planning teams in highways and public realm schemes, including case studies showing where highways works and other public realm schemes have successfully integrated with and enhanced areas of historic or architectural sensitivity.

This guidance has been prepared by Rowan Whimster and builds on the text published in 2004 with the subsequent *Streets for All* series. It has been prepared with assistance from the Department for Transport and is supported by the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation.

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Front cover: Yarm, Stockton-on-Tees

The aim of the Yarm Public Realm Improvements Scheme was to make the cobbled High Street more accessible for wheelchairs, pushchairs and pedestrians while maintaining the historical integrity of the conservation area. Work in the area of the Grade II Town Hall, its adjacent listed weighbridge and the World War I memorial involved the installation of 1500m² of natural stone paving and cobbled setts as well as new seating, lighting and renovations to the war memorial.

Stockton Borough Council's early consultation with Historic England, Yarm Town Council and local disability groups was critical in agreeing what needed to be done and how disruption could be minimised. This set the precedent for the collaborative working that underpinned the successful delivery of the scheme.

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Contents

1 Streets for All1

Five Goals For Public Realm Enhancement	2
The Public Realm	4
Opportunity into action	6
Identifying local distinctiveness	8
Sourcing local materials	9
Integrated townscape management	10
Creating the Canvas for Public Life in Bath	11

2 Ground Surfaces12

Historic street surfaces	13
Five Lamps Market Place, Boston, Lincolnshire	14
New surfaces	15
Highways and verges	16
Bedlington, Northumberland	17
Kerbs and drainage	18
Footpaths and cycle routes	19
Changes in level	20
Southampton Central Station	21

3 Street Furniture22

Historic street furniture	23
Street signs and nameplates	24
Traffic signs	25
Traffic signals, crossings and guardrails	26
Street lighting	27
Exhibition Road, The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	28
Historic tree features	29
Bollards	30
Seating	31

4 New Equipment32

Telephone kiosks and post boxes	33
Pay and display machines	34
Street cabinets and litter bins	35
Waste and recycling facilities	36
CCTV cameras.....	37
Cycle parking	38
Advertising	39

5 Traffic Management40

Historic Core Zones: Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk	41
Traffic calming	42
Traffic calming: Poynton, Cheshire	43

6 Environmental Improvements44

Street traders	45
Dudley, West Midlands	46
Public art	47
New trees and planting	48
Grey to Green, Sheffield City Council	49
Lighting of buildings.....	50

Further Reading51

Contact Historic England	55
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Foreword



England's extensive and rich heritage provides an essential foundation for our prosperity, our wellbeing and our sense of national and local identity.

The public realm that surrounds and enables access to our heritage – including roads, squares, pavements, parking areas and street furniture such as lighting and signage – has a material impact on the way in which any historic place will be perceived. Historic England has been providing guidance on the design of public realm assets located within or near historic places since 2000. It is widely accepted that a sensitive approach, such as in relation to the positioning of lights or signs within a conservation area, can significantly improve the experience of residents and visitors. This is considered an essential element of good place-making. Too much clutter, such as a multitude of road markings or large flashing screens, can create impressions which severely damage historic landscapes.

Transport technology, highways and design and our understanding of user needs have developed in many ways over recent years. Historic England has taken a pragmatic approach in this updated guidance, placing an emphasis on meeting as wide a range of needs as possible. The advice maintains its emphasis on reducing street clutter, making spaces more open and using durable and visually attractive materials for new works, whilst conserving and celebrating the best of the street furnishings passed down by previous generations. The most visible example of the latter is the iconic red telephone box, designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in the 1920s and found widely throughout the country. Although many are now redundant, many have been saved and adopted as local landmarks, often finding new uses as community spaces and even as places of business.

The case studies and advice presented in this guidance demonstrate how careful and inclusive design has brought fresh vitality to those areas identified as “at risk” in our annual surveys, benefiting businesses and residents. I hope this advice, which is published 51 years after the passing of the Civic Amenities Act and the creation of conservation areas, continues to inspire highways engineers, designers and planners to collaborate on projects and programmes that make our streets enduring, efficient and beautiful historic places for this and future generations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurie Magnus". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sir Laurie Magnus
Chairman, Historic England

1 Streets for All

This document – and the accompanying regional documents – offer guidance on how to manage our historic streets and public open places. It is focused on urban environments, including town and city centres. Nevertheless, many of the principles presented are equally applicable in rural areas.

Many of our historic streets have evolved over hundreds of years and are rich in inherited character. Their appearance is often the product of different agencies, each with its own priorities. Better coordination of their repair, management and enhancement will allow them to provide an environment that is not only safe and enjoyable but also an asset for the future.

The guidance builds on the past work of Historic England and others on issues such as accessibility, local distinctiveness, visual quality and community regeneration. It complements the technical advice on the planning, construction and maintenance of residential streets provided in the *Manual for Streets* (2007) and its companion guide *Manual for Streets 2* (2010).

The aim of *Streets for All* is to show how solutions to common highway problems can be achieved without harm to the valued character of places. The underlying principles are to reduce clutter, coordinate design and to reinforce local character, while maintaining safety and accessibility for all.

Streets for All is intended as a practical manual for everyone concerned in the complicated process of managing changes to the historic public realm. As well as professional highway engineers, landscape and urban designers, town planning and conservation staff, they include elected councillors, amenity societies, contractors and utility companies.

By demonstrating how opportunities can be translated into action, this advice sets a clear agenda not only for councils but also for local communities. It identifies the elements that make an area distinctive: its landscape, its building materials and its traditional detailing. It addresses some of the common problems that can diminish the quality of public areas and explains how integrated townscape management can provide answers.

Subsequent sections consider each of the main components that create the appearance of streets – ground surfaces, street furniture and equipment, traffic management and environmental improvements. Detailed advice is summarised in a set of general principles for the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of spaces.

Streets for All acknowledges that the public realm must evolve to accommodate modern needs. It therefore considers how this can be successfully integrated with 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 setting standards to 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 similar work in their areas.

Five Goals For Public Realm Enhancement

This document sets out principles which ensure that public realm works also consider the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. These principles also support the following overarching objectives for a sustainable public realm:

1. An Inclusive Environment

The historic environment, like the wider public realm, is everyone's to enjoy. Both local authorities and transport providers have a duty to ensure they do not exclude people from the services they provide, including public space. Public realm schemes need to be carefully designed to ensure they provide everyone with equal access, including people with visible or hidden disabilities, and are welcoming and understandable. Working in partnership with disability and road-user advisory groups to understand all users' needs is important to achieve this inclusive design. It may also require careful design to ensure that enhanced access provision sustains what makes historic places special for everyone.

2. Public safety and ease of movement

The movement of people and goods is one of the fundamental purposes of our streets, roads and lanes, and public realm and highways works are most frequently directed to improving this aspect of the public realm. Safety for all users is a fundamental requirement in enhancement schemes, as is recognition that risk exists where different modes of transport share space: all users need to be able to understand the risks and, therefore, move through public spaces with confidence.

Designers of enhancement schemes need to be clear about which transport modes they are promoting, how this will affect the use and character of places and the significance and appreciation of the historic environment, and how they will manage any consequent risks for others. Segregation of users should be proportionate to the risks that are present and should reflect the overall vision for the use and purpose of the space. Using these spaces as routes is also a way in which we experience their history and that has shaped the use of buildings and places around them.

3. A healthy environment that supports our wellbeing and cohesion

The public realm can affect the quality of the air we breathe, the tranquillity of our surroundings and the anxiety or stress we feel. Urban greening can reduce traffic impact on air quality, whilst public realm enhancement can encourage positive social interaction that builds a more cohesive society and provides opportunities for us to be more physically active. Public realm enhancement needs to consider spaces as places for public interaction, not just corridors for movement. Designers need to consider how historic places have functioned in the past as venues of social interaction and recreation that should either be preserved or, potentially, restored through enhancement schemes.

4. A high quality environment

Everyone deserves an environment that is attractive and stimulating. The quality of our environment is a measure of our quality of life and contributes significantly to the experience of visitors and customers. To achieve (or sustain) a high quality environment, public realm and highways works need to be both functional and attractive, using materials of appropriate quality and durability for the setting and purpose (and enabling on-going maintenance), as well as achieving a positive aesthetic impact. In historic places this means ensuring works complement the character of the area, sustain the significance of its historic buildings and spaces, and potentially also enhance access to heritage or understanding of its significance. It is important that designers identify the significance of places and value of historic public realm features (from paving or street furniture to green spaces) where they contribute to the quality or identity of historic places, and seek to sustain this value.



Enhancement schemes can unexpectedly lead to discoveries about the historic fabric of a town, such as this medieval culvert, exposed during redevelopment works.

5. Economic benefit

Sensitive investment in the public realm will conserve the special interest of historic places (including the contribution made by their setting) and unlock the potential of historic places to create new opportunities for businesses and unique experiences for customers. In most cases, schemes are likely to result in a mix of both direct and indirect benefits for the local authority, residents and businesses. It is important that designers of schemes are explicit about the economic benefits they aim to achieve and measure performance before and after works to demonstrate whether their investments are successful. Local communities and businesses are well placed to advise on potential unintended consequences of schemes, such as removing vitality from previously successful areas.

The Public Realm

It is not only fine buildings that give England's historic towns and villages their special character. Just as important are their public spaces – the streets and paths through which people move and the squares and precincts in which they connect.

Protecting the distinctiveness of the public realm is a vital means of creating enjoyable places for people to live and work as well as to visit.

The aim of *Streets for All* is to demonstrate what can be achieved through more thoughtful planning of routine maintenance and one-off improvements to the streetscape, especially in areas rich in traditional character.

Its starting point is the importance of place. Studies of flourishing communities, be they large towns or small villages, show a quantifiable relationship between economic success and the quality of the public realm. Carefully designed, well-managed streets are not merely a desirable outcome of successful economies, they are an important driver of success.

This guide draws on important changes in our understanding of traffic management and road safety. It used to be believed that efficient circulation and public safety depended on clear segregation between traffic and pedestrians. (See Buchanan, 1963, *Traffic in Towns*).

This belief is a fundamental barrier 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 that look drearily the same. Distinctiveness, surprise, intrigue and memorable landmarks are confined to the margins.

By learning from local traditions, materials and street patterns, engineers and safety experts are able to combine design and behavioural psychology to increase driver awareness, reduce traffic speed and improve safety. A distinctive and coherent environment offers not just economic benefits, but is safer and more efficient than one dominated by signs, signals and street clutter.

Streets for All reflects the priorities for the public realm endorsed by government and other agencies. These place a greater emphasis on accessibility for all, walking and cycling, the value of public transport and provision for the safety of children.

This agenda poses challenges for everyone involved in the design and management of the public realm. Successful solutions are unlikely to arise from the slavish application of guidelines. On the contrary, popular urban and rural streetscapes are more likely to be informed and inspired by the distinctive qualities of each place.



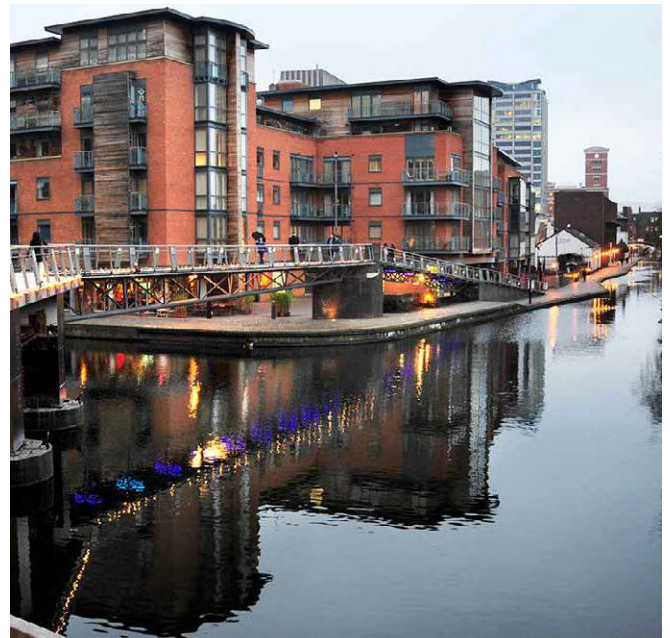
Coordinated planning and partnership working are vital keys to high-quality enhancements to the public realm.



A harmonious combination of historic buildings, and carefully chosen surface materials and street furniture, with integrated parking and successful traffic-calming.



Traditional market squares should be flexible, able to cater for community events and activities, reinforce a sense of place and accommodate vehicles when appropriate.



Investment in public realm that enhances historic interest can inspire distinctive new development

Opportunity into action

The quality of the built environment is central to an area's prosperity and the quality of life of its people. As part of the drive towards a better environment, our streets and public realm need to be managed in a way that reinforces their distinctiveness. What can help achieve these objectives?

Stakeholders

Good design and management of the public realm is essential for a thriving sustainable economy. Historic England has a particular responsibility for advice on the conservation and enhancement of historic areas and is keen to promote good design and encourage joint working to ensure successful historic places.

Close cooperation between highway engineers, planners, urban designers, landscape architects and conservation staff within local authorities is important in this respect. Liaison is also vital between government departments and public agencies.

Similarly, the wealth of knowledge and experience available within the communities that the public realm serves can also play a significant role. Civic societies, residents' groups and disability organisations all have a part to play in safeguarding the character of their areas and helping to adapt them to new needs.

Materials and skills

England's rich variety of paving traditions can only survive if the production of traditional materials and the skills to use them are supported. For instance, the number of quarries able to supply suitable 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 need for more training initiatives to retain the traditional skills of the paviour.

First impressions

Increasingly, towns have to compete with each other for business. It is well known that physical appearance is a critical factor in attracting investment and visitors. While the qualities of historic centres may be distinctive, the edges of settlements often have an 'anywhere' character that fails to provide the same kind of welcome.

There are entry points, such as historical city gates, that offer tremendous opportunities to celebrate a



Well-planned schemes enhance public areas.

sense of arrival. Too often, these critical thresholds have been blurred by standardised highway engineering and urban sprawl. Drably anonymous railway stations and bus terminals can suffer in the same way. *Streets for All* offers a range of remedies, from the use of traditional materials, street nameplates and lighting, to new landmark design.

Pedestrian movement

Opportunities exist to radically transform the streetscapes of England by encouraging accessibility for all. Progressive authorities are increasingly updating their access strategies, which they are basing on much better understanding of pedestrian movement, desire lines and existing barriers. Management of the street environment has too often ignored this vital pedestrian network and thereby severed long-established links between the different component parts of a historic town or city.



Giving due consideration to the historic setting of a place can create new uses of existing public space.

Access for all presents a challenging programme for those working with the public realm. The most successful schemes will go beyond simple compliance with the Equality Act 2010, to review existing practices and exploit the possibilities of fresh approaches. Historic England's twin publications on [Easy Access to Historic Buildings](#) (2015) and [Easy Access to Historic Landscapes](#) (2015) are an invaluable starting point.

New design

Adopting a fresh approach to the public realm is the opportunity to reassess the design of critical elements of the streetscape. Historic England is keen to promote innovation and will work with the Department for Transport, the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation and others to seek technical improvements. These may include systems to assist people with visual impairment, reducing clutter by rationalising signs and signals and making features such as cameras and parking controls less obtrusive.

Legislation

Since the first edition of *Streets for All* there have been a number of significant changes in legislation.

The Equality Act 2010 promotes improved access for people with disabilities but does not include the requirement for barrier-free pedestrian environment that was originally introduced by the now-replaced Disability Discrimination Act 1995. As a result, service providers are still required to make reasonable adjustments to physical features to avoid discrimination. This includes pressure on them to improve access to historic buildings and conservation areas.

The Equality Act does not override other legislation, such as Planning, 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 the Equality Act, taking into account other legislation and other mitigating factors.

Identifying local distinctiveness

Maintaining the character of historic towns and villages depends on a clear understanding of the traditional components of their streetscapes.

Before developing a strategy for future works in the public realm, it is important to establish what it is about the area's streets and footways that is locally distinctive.

Not all historic areas are designated, but Conservation Area Appraisals and other Historic Area Assessments will be an important source of information on the location of valued features of the public realm, including areas of historic paving, street furniture or trees and green space. They should also identify issues affecting the area's character and appearance that are a priority to resolve, including issues such as degraded public realm or accessibility issues. Where an appraisal is not available it will be important to gather sufficient evidence to adequately understand the potential impact of a scheme on a conservation area's character or appearance and on the significance of any other heritage assets that may be affected (including impacts to their settings).

Conservation officers are unlikely to be able to devote sufficient time to undertake detailed audits themselves. However, experience has shown that community groups such as parish and town councils, civic societies, Living Streets, Sustrans, Women's Institutes and neighbourhood planning groups can produce excellent audits after some initial training. Schools may also be interested in auditing as a way to help their students learn about geology, geography, local history and design.

Audits can highlight the condition of both traditional and replacement paving. They can also be used to identify areas which may cause difficulties for people with disabilities.

The audit toolkit needs to be simple and easy to use, but maps and a limited set of notation symbols are an essential component. Surveyors also need cameras and tape measures. For significant projects, it will often be worthwhile to employ a trained geologist to identify distinctive materials used.

In areas where there has been a lot of modern repair, it is important to record traditional kerbs (which are often retained because of their durability) and gullies and to examine any holes in tarmac surfaces that reveal older underlying paving. It is also important to note the areas just off the footway such as crossovers, yards and forecourts that can provide valuable clues.



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



It is important to record the traditional ground surfaces that make places distinctive while reflecting their history.

Sourcing local materials

The distinctiveness of an area is influenced by its underlying geology – the source of the natural materials from which its buildings and streets have traditionally been constructed.



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



Traditional surface materials and laying patterns remain evident throughout the country. They not only reinforce local character but can also inform new streetscape improvements.

The ongoing use of these local materials reinforces the local character of a particular area. In practice this happens all too infrequently. This can often be because of difficulties of supply. Small local quarries are not always able to respond quickly to demands for large quantities of local materials, so building in sufficient time in the procurement process can help to ensure that correct materials are used.

Many local authorities no longer keep stockpiles of materials. Close liaison between the authorities and the suppliers is therefore important. A register of local sources is also needed, including information on their capacity and lead-in times.

The construction industry has worked at partnering suppliers and users to offer a wider selection of materials at lower costs. Consumers benefit from a wider selection of materials and lower costs, while small suppliers, such as local quarries and manufacturers of clay paviours, can increase their production and lower their prices in response to guaranteed sales.

Local needs for traditional paving materials can sometimes be met by opening small temporary quarries, as is done for the restoration of historic buildings that require particular kinds of stone. However, obtaining consent for new quarries can be controversial and time-consuming, so early planning is essential.

Some manufacturers of clay products are also able to offer traditional bricks and paviours for the restoration of existing streets or the construction of new ground surfaces in a locally traditional style.

Integrated townscape management

No single authority or agency has overall responsibility for the public realm. The key to a safe, attractive and accessible streetscape is for everyone responsible for its management to work together.

A high-quality public realm depends on different specialists working together in multi-disciplinary partnership. Local authorities should ideally establish a mechanism for cross-departmental working on their local townscapes. As well as coordinating planning and highway functions this should set the standard for a high-quality and well-orchestrated street scene. Good design is a key aspect in creating sustainable developments which make places better for everyone. Principles to consider include:

Coordinate to integrate

Nominate qualified urban design and conservation staff to act as public-realm champions, or create area-based management teams to coordinate 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 a council's highways, urban design and conservation staff working together. There are benefits in inviting local societies to carry out street audits and other agencies to identify redundant street furniture.

Expertise

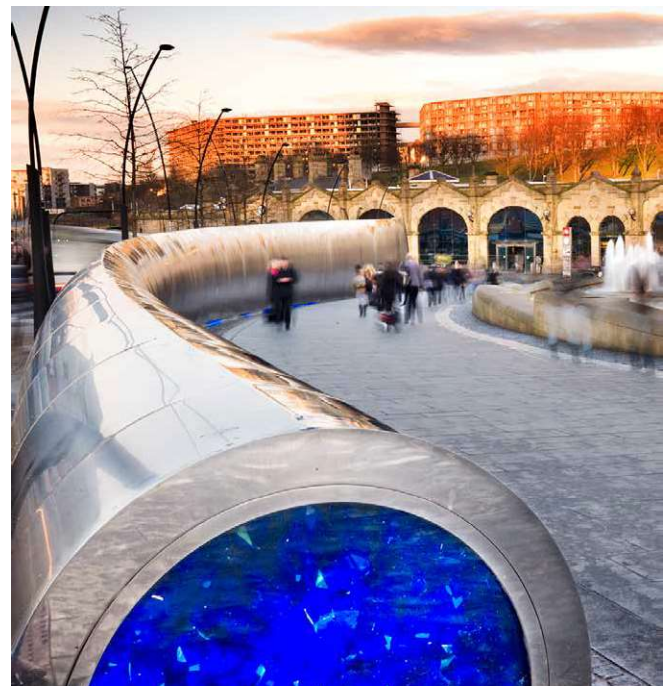
Adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to the presentation and management of the public realm and all highway works and improvement schemes.

Training

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

Policies

Ensure that clear policies for paving, street furniture and the public realm are included explicitly in local plans and associated travel plans and assessments, neighbourhood plans where appropriate, and conservation area appraisals and management plans.



Integrated schemes create special places, accessible to all.

Guidance

Follow the advice in this document and offer clear guidance to other agencies involved with the public realm so that their requirements can be coordinated in a consistent form.

Context

Define and respect local distinctiveness and the contribution of spaces to the historic environment to conserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets.

Quality

Ensure all work in the highway or public realm follows good streetscape practice and principles. Invest in quality solutions that will endure and offer best value for money. If resources are inadequate, do less to a better and higher standard.

Less is more

Much street furniture and signing may be unnecessary, so reduce it to a minimum and take away redundant items wherever possible. Where it is essential, coordinate its location carefully in relation to adjacent buildings and the overall townscape.

Case Study

Creating the Canvas for Public Life in Bath

Traffic growth and decades of under-investment had resulted in a tired, cluttered and disordered city centre which was at risk of undermining Bath's success as a city. The response was a visionary plan to transform its streets and public spaces.

'Like an orchestra without a conductor, the city's public realm currently lacks unity of design and direction.' This was the challenge facing Bath City Council as it sought to defend the city's status as a World Heritage Site and international visitor destination.

The Georgian city centre that was once envied and emulated for its sense of order, coherence and clarity of design had become blighted by cars, lorries and many years of under-investment in its public domain. As a result, its distinctiveness, global reputation and economic potential were all being undermined.

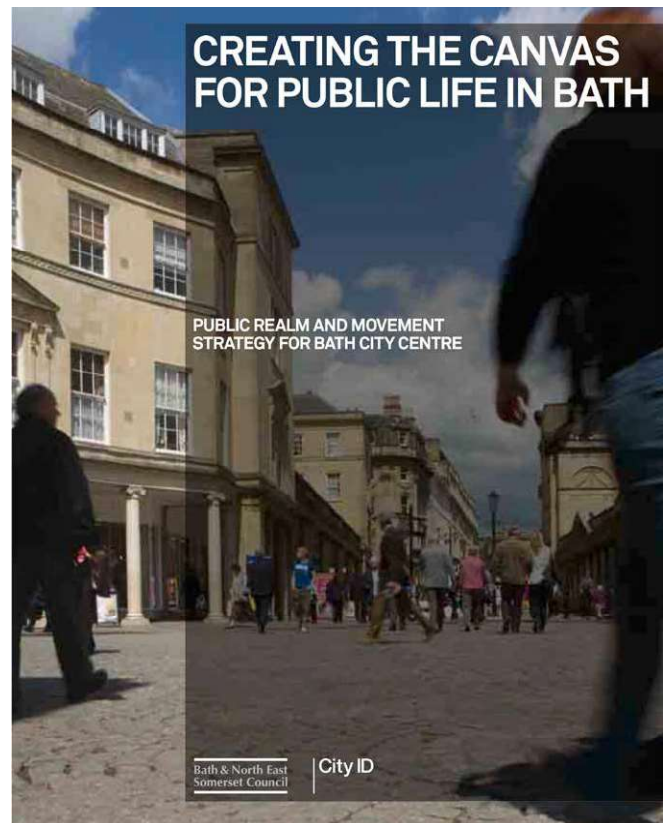
The response was the publication of *Creating the Canvas for Public Life in Bath – A Public Realm and Movement Strategy for Bath City Centre*. This visionary plan was adopted as council policy in March 2010 following an extensive consultation process and high levels of cross-party public and political support.

The Public Realm and Movement Strategy puts forward an incremental plan to transform streets and spaces across the centre and create the canvas for a more animated and inclusive public life. Amongst its key priorities are more welcoming gateways and arrival points, safer spaces for pedestrians and cyclists and increased levels of social and economic activity.

Achieving outstanding modern design that responds to the Vitruvian principles of beauty, functionality and durability will be key to the success of the strategy. Its delivery will be guided by the *Bath Pattern Book*, a manual that sets out the practical design standards to be followed by both the Council and private-sector developers over the next two decades which won a highly commended award in the Landscape Institute's 2016 awards.

Conclusion

Restoring the public realm of an entire historic city centre cannot be achieved overnight. Instead, it depends on long-term investment guided by a coherent vision and robust framework of technical standards.



Extensive public consultation led to this bold new strategy to rebalance the hierarchy of priority towards pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

© Bath and North East Somerset Council

2 Ground Surfaces

Paving materials are the platform of the built environment. They form the plinth on which buildings are set and the surfaces on which people and traffic interact.

England has a rich tradition of paving materials and methods. Properly deployed, they can continue to meet the practical and aesthetic requirements of streets and public spaces.

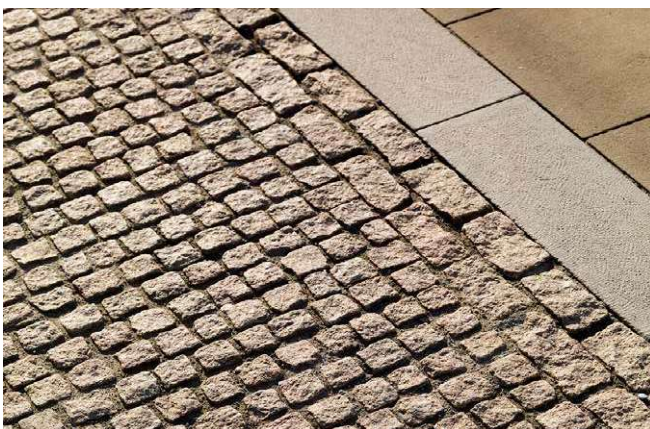
Natural, local materials are to be preferred to man-made alternatives where possible. They can be used to reinforce the identity of different types of environment – historic and modern, urban and rural. The higher initial cost of natural materials is offset by their appearance and, in many cases, durability.

Ground surfacing should be simple and respect the subtle proportional relationship between footways, buildings and the carriageway.

Maintaining kerblines can preserve the historical form of streets. Where the carriageway is still used for vehicles, it is important to keep a kerb height of at least 60mm and to use different materials to define the separation.

General Principles

- Relate ground surfaces to their surrounding streetscape context
- Keep surfaces simple and whenever possible use natural materials
- Retain the historic form of streets by maintaining kerb lines
- Invest in quality and simplicity



Reinstated traditional paving in Sheffield.



A combination of local river cobbles and brick paviours.

Historic street surfaces

Historic surfacing materials, such as river cobbles, granite setts and York stone paving, make a major contribution to the character of towns and cities.

Street surfaces reflect the distinctiveness of a historic settlement: its geology, its history and its links with the wider world. The past prosperity of a place led to the design, materials and the workmanship employed.

Historic surfaces are often lost or badly maintained. Where they survive, seeking specialist advice before work is carried out can help inform decisions about how to conserve and incorporate such surfaces in new public realm schemes.

Development pressures and financial constraints have resulted in many historic street surfaces being covered or patched with asphalt. Where appropriate, these may be stripped back and original surfaces restored.

Local traditions and materials can have practical benefits as well as adding character. For example, cobbles and setts can help to calm traffic. However, they can also create noise, restrict mobility and be uncomfortable for pedestrians, users of mobility aids, cyclists and motorcyclists. Where they are used, smooth surfaces should be laid at junctions and crossings for the benefit of everyone. Where cycle routes are a priority, 'shaved cobbles' have been used to provide a suitable surface for part of the street's width.



Traditionally, back lanes were laid with stone setts or blue scoria blocks, a by-product of the iron industry, and these survive in many areas.

Any plans for the reinstatement of traditional surfaces should be discussed with local residents, businesses and special-interest groups to highlight potential problems and identify practical solutions. For example, some surfaces (e.g. cobbles or Yorkstone) can become slippery when wet, so consider both drainage and maintenance needs when installing them.

General Principles

- Maintain and restore historic paving where it survives
- Seek expert conservation advice before carrying out repairs to historic surfaces
- Respect local designs and details
- Adapt local designs to address new needs
- Invest in locally sourced materials and high-quality workmanship
- Discuss plans for reinstatement schemes with the local community to secure accessibility for all
- Reinstatement in like-for-like materials should be required for all works by statutory undertakers

Case Study

Five Lamps Market Place, Boston, Lincolnshire

Boston's Market Place has been a unique and important asset to the town for more than 500 years but had become degraded through neglect.

Trading fairs have been held in Boston since at least the 12th century – the earliest historic record of a fair or 'mart' is in 1132. Eight hundred years later, Boston Market continues to operate in the Market Place every Saturday and Wednesday.

In recent decades the market had become a tourist attraction in its own right, with over 120 stalls offering a diverse and attractive range of goods and services, including a weekly auction that sold everything from garden plants to second-hand cars. However, many of its surrounding buildings were in such a poor state of repair that in 2010 the conservation area in which it lies was added to the *Heritage at Risk Register*.

Historic England responded by launching an area grant scheme to help regenerate the area. During the first phase of restoration historic shop fronts were reinstated along with a historic cast-iron lantern known locally as the Five Lamps. More

recently, the vast open area of the Market Place has been re-surfaced in York stone, using old maps and photographs as a guide to its historic form and surface treatment.

The twice-weekly market has now returned with a new look and layout, following its relocation during the works. Pavement café culture is being encouraged and programmes of summer events are planned.

The £2.4m project was made possible thanks to a £1.1m contribution from the European Regional Development Fund, in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council and Boston Borough Council.

Conclusion

Restoration of the central public domain can be the vital starting point for the regeneration of run-down historic town centres, but will often require the injection of external capital funding.



Reinstatement of the much-loved Five Lamps was an important element in the regeneration of Boston's historic market place.



Open air cafés and outdoor cultural events are another way of bringing life back to this important but neglected public space.

New surfaces

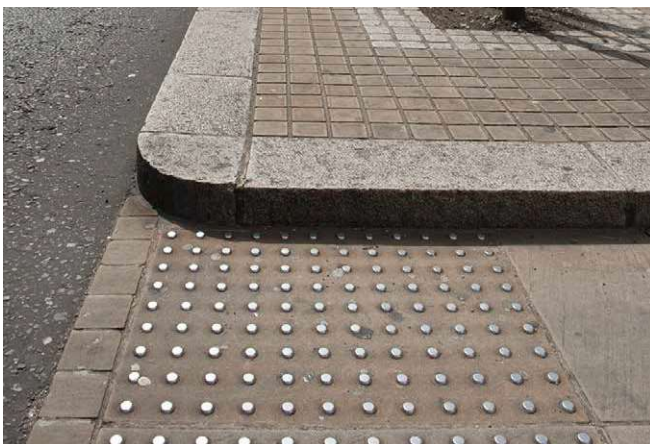
Surface materials forming a seamless and neutral floorscape can complement surrounding architecture and respond to the scale of the street or space.

Using an identified hierarchy of streets and spaces will help to prioritise where to use more expensive natural materials, reflecting the past and present function and status of spaces, while a palette of materials appropriate to the location allows new and old work to relate to one another.

Small-module paving on footways is best avoided unless there is a historical precedent. It tends to dominate the street, especially where traditional footways and kerb lines have been removed. It may sometimes be better to use concrete flags or asphalt rather than fragment the floorscape. Small modules are best confined to the carriageway and pedestrian crossing points, and may not be suitable for areas highly trafficked by HGVs, particularly in areas of braking and turning. When specifying construction material choices it is important to give consideration to likely needs for repair and maintenance, including sourcing replacement materials.

Well-laid paving is fundamental to the appearance and functionality of a street. When installing corners and dropped kerbs, paving and ironworks should be designed to avoid unresolved junctions and angles. Keep it simple.

Schemes should allow for the continued expansion and settlement of ground levels around trees.



Integrated tactile paving at a lowered crossing.

General Principles

- Surface materials that respect local traditions and reflect past uses are most appropriate to surroundings where historic interest and character are important to preserve or enhance
- Consult local disability organisations and specialised access consultants on detailed design
- Lay out and cut slabs to local radius patterns and integrate inspection covers
- Where vehicle over-runs are likely, lay slabs on a concrete base and use robust materials
- Tactile paving should be an integral part of the design and not an afterthought ([Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces](#), Department for Transport, 2004)



Historic paving accurately recreated.

Highways 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.

A clear distinction between urban, suburban and rural roads and between high-speed roads (such as motorways and dual carriageways), minor roads and residential streets influences behaviour and perception of place.

In rural areas, the detail of roads and surrounding edges contributes substantially to the visual quality of the landscape. Hard edges and road markings urbanise the countryside. Soft verges can generally be retained, depending on the drainage regime, and may be important to a rural character, although in some busy areas small stone setts can be used to protect the verge. Give consideration to whether markings are necessary.

Hot rolled asphalt is the most common material for 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 provided that it complements the surrounding architecture in colour.

Road markings need to be clear, well positioned and used only when necessary. Some work has been done to look at possible benefits or replacing painted lines with a more durable and visually attractive change of material, paving size or laying pattern. In well-lit rural or built-up areas, centre road markings may not be necessary at all.



Sensitively laid paving can reflect historic patterns while also obviating the need for line painting.



Soft edges are often most appropriate in more rural areas.

General Principles

- Surface treatments that relate to their urban, suburban or rural character are most appropriate
- Retain or reinstate setted edges, cobbles and grass verges
- Avoid unnecessary kerbs in rural areas
- Use surface dressings to reinforce local distinctiveness
- Consider whether road markings are really needed
- Planned maintenance of verges will help sustain healthy grass and roadside trees

Case Study

Bedlington, Northumberland

Public investment in Bedlington's central Market Place has been the vital catalyst for further private regeneration of its surrounding properties and businesses.

Bedlington is a small market and former industrial town in south-east Northumberland. The conservation area covers the historic backbone of the town, laid out like many old Northumberland towns along a single front street, with a central market place and church.

Bedlington was a crucible of the industrial revolution in the region but was the subject of major economic decline in the second half of the 20th century. The town has a wide range of 18th- and 19th- century buildings, edged with grassy banks and a focal market square at its heart.

During the planning stage of a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) the Market Place was identified as a key component of the conservation area despite being marred by over-fussing modern interventions. As the town's most important public space, it urgently needed improvements to restore its historic character, make it more attractive and practical for markets, and encourage greater shopper footfall.

The new design was developed following extensive public consultation. Northumberland Cragg sandstone from the nearby West Woodburn Quarry was used to re-pave the area, which at public request included a large lawn to soften the space and encourage a village feel. The lawn edging doubles as seating; there are also new planters, trees and an information panel.

Bus and loading bays were remodelled and the road slightly narrowed to make it easier for pedestrians to cross. Improvements to adjacent alleyways, while modest, have further simplified the scene and reduced the visual impact of poor modern materials. A second project to repair and conserve the Market Cross was funded as a direct result of the THI investment in the Market Place.

Conclusion

The enhancement of the Market Place proved to be the crucial first step in persuading the owners of surrounding properties to have enough confidence in the THI to invest in further regeneration projects of their own.



In response to public demand, the regeneration of this small market town began by focusing on the sensitive remodelling of its historic Market Place into an attractive and welcoming space.

Kerbs and drainage

Kerbs help to delineate pedestrian and vehicle space without the need for bollards and physical barriers.

Kerbs need to be high enough for their shadows to show the transition from road to footway. Guide Dogs for the Blind have identified that a minimum upstand of 60mm is essential for visually impaired people to be able to safely detect the edge of the carriageway, except where there is a dropped kerb (see *Manual for Streets*).

If kerbs have to be removed, for example in a pedestrianised street, consider marking their former line in the newly levelled surface as a way of delineating areas for different uses.

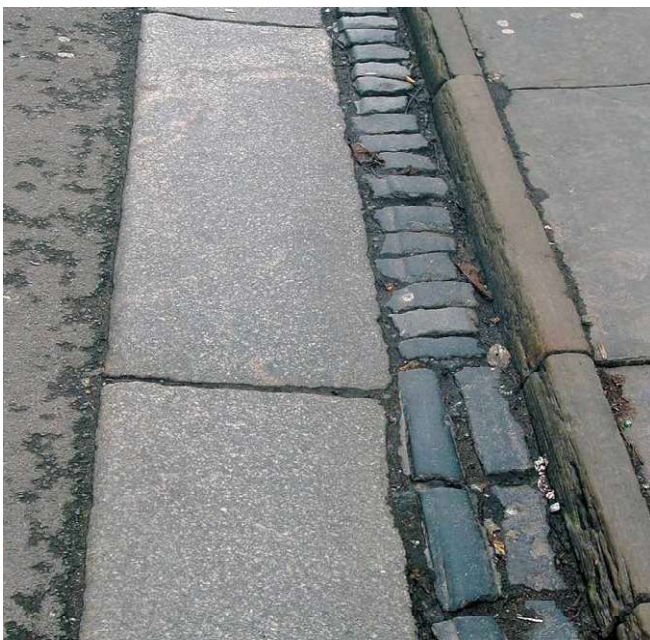
Pre-cast concrete ‘heritage’ kerbs may be a cheaper alternative to natural materials, such as granite and sandstone, but are often less durable. Concrete kerbs are not usually suitable for historic or rural locations. Instead, traditional granite setts or rough-cut stone blocks should be considered.

Traditional drainage channels and gullies should be retained whenever possible. Continuous perforated channels, flush with the ground surface, can be used to reinforce the division or alignment of streets

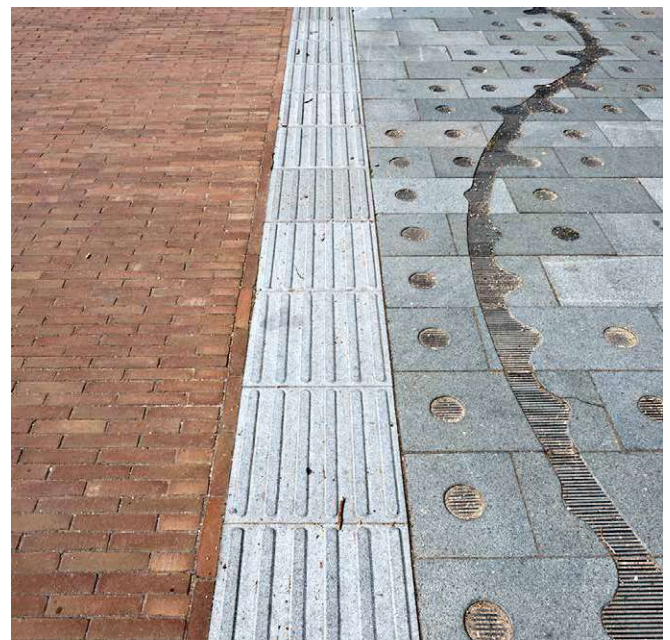
and spaces. However, they are more susceptible to blockages in busy areas or where there are likely to be problems of litter and plant debris. Opportunities to integrate with sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) need to be considered.

General Principles

- Use kerbs to provide definition and reduce the need for physical barriers
- Retain historic kerbing and drainage to reinforce local identity
- Use the line of former kerbs to delineate street areas for different uses
- Consider colour contrasts to support use of space by people with visual impairments



Traditional details and materials can reinforce local distinctiveness.



Below-ground drainage systems can be used to delineate the line of the kerb.

Footpaths and cycle routes

Footpaths, footways and cycle routes are vital elements of the public realm. Their successful integration into urban, suburban and rural locations is fundamental to reducing the use of private cars.

Authorities should build on the historic legacies of the National Cycle Network, Safer Routes to Schools and the Rights of Way network.

Pedestrian and cycle routes are most effective when they form a coherent and continuous network. Following natural desire lines and taking people where they want to go without major detours or restrictive physical barriers is the best way of creating well-used routes.

Routes must be safe, attractive and appropriately lit. Natural surveillance from passing traffic and housing instils a feeling of security amongst users.

In historic areas, coloured surfaces such as those often used for bus and cycle lanes should be avoided where other means to ensure safety can be used. More sensitive means of segregation such as grass verges and bollards as well as reduced vehicle speed, can help to create a less vehicle-dominated environment.

It is important to consult all user groups on new schemes to provide inclusive environments.

General Principles

- Design footways and cycle routes as integral parts of the public realm
- Avoid obtrusive colours
- Promote access for cyclists and people with disabilities, and consult user groups



Rural paths should be as informal as possible.
© Sustrans

Changes in level

The public realm should be accessible to everyone without compromising their dignity.

Flights of steps are very common in historic towns and villages and a significant source of local character. However, they can make access difficult for people with impaired mobility.

Historic England's publications on *Easy Access to Historic Buildings* and *Easy Access to Historic Landscapes* demonstrate how the interests of conservation and accessibility can both be met through the creative and sensitive use of ramps, lifts and tactile surfaces.

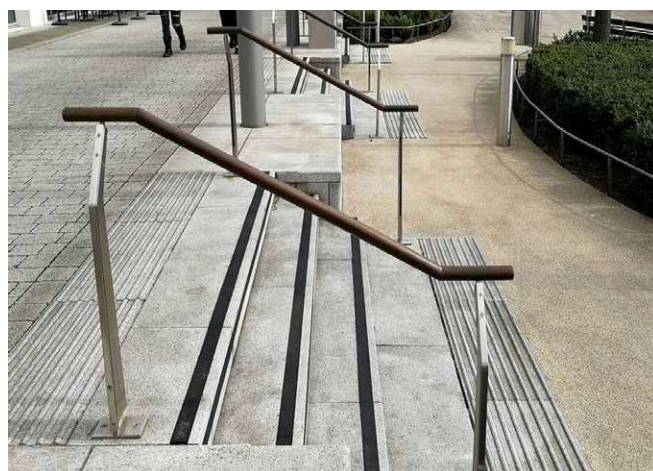
Properly integrated combinations of ramps and steps should provide practical alternative routes for all users. Clearly defined steps with tactile warning strips, contrasting nosing and handrails will make them more visible and easy to use ([Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces](#), Department for Transport, 2004).

Standard or 'off-the-peg' solutions may be ill-suited to historic locations where maintaining a distinctive sense of place is important – innovative designs inspired by the surrounding context will help new works become an integral part of the street.

Well-detailed and well-executed tactile paving can avoid awkward junctions and relationships with the surrounding streetscape. At informal crossings, colours should coordinate with the adjacent materials, while at the same time providing sufficient tonal contrast for visually impaired people, assistance dogs, children and others (see [Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces](#)).



Integrate steps and ramps into the streetscape. Ensure high-quality design, material and execution.



Ribbed paving at the top and bottom of steps acts as a hazard warning to visually impaired people.

General Principles

- Ramps should be seamlessly absorbed into the wider context
- Tactile paving should be integrated with the surrounding paving through choice of material, providing tonal contrast
- Use designs, colours and materials which harmonise with their surroundings

Case Study

Southampton Central Station

Southampton's Central Station is where people gain their first impression of the city, but it had become blighted by buses and cars. What was needed was a scheme that would provide people with new pedestrianised spaces in which to unwind, meet and do business.

The 10,000m² site included the significant local landmarks of the Mayflower Theatre and the listed brutalist Wyndham Court, a small park, extensive car parking and a hard-paved plaza with several large mature trees dating back to the 1960s.

Reconfiguring the provision for buses and taxis was key to the successful resolution of the design challenge. The result is an arrival space that is safe, more open and welcoming, with new bespoke seating and lighting, landscaping, a larger drop-off area, a new taxi rank and cycle parking for 140 bicycles.

The adjacent plaza at Wyndham Place was redesigned to accommodate a diagonal pedestrian desire line from the station to the Mermaid Theatre and the route to the city centre now benefits from a widened footway edged by text and images describing the heritage of the area.

The brief for the £7m project was drawn up by Southampton City Council and a client team made up of local residents and businesses that included Network Rail, Southampton University, the Mermaid Theatre and local bus and train operators. The cost was shared between the Department for Transport, Local Transport Fund, Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, Southampton City Council and Network Rail.

Conclusion

As well as enhancing the experience for those using the city's trains, buses, walkways, cycle paths and taxi services, this multi-partner scheme has created a space that people want to visit and spend time in.



Poorly managed traffic, inadequate parking facilities and a lack of pedestrianised spaces had degraded this key public gateway to the city. © Balfour Beatty



Traditional surface materials and laying patterns remain evident throughout the country. They not only reinforce local character but can also inform new streetscape improvements. © Balfour Beatty

3 Street Furniture

Public spaces can be thought of as ‘outdoor rooms’ enclosed by buildings. Their street furniture needs to be placed with the same care as the objects in an indoor space.

An audit of existing street furniture is the best place to begin. Which pieces are useful or important to the area’s character or appearance and which can be removed? Could the remaining pieces be repositioned so that they improve the movement of people and vehicles, thereby eliminating the need for physical barriers?

To reduce street clutter, traffic signals, and street lighting can be grouped together so that they can share the same supports. If a sign is not needed do not have it. The Traffic Signs Manual gives guidance on how to combine signs while still complying with the *Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions* (2016) (TSRGD). It should be noted that the TSRGD

restricts the signs that can be placed with traffic signals to avoid driver distraction.

Layouts that integrate new public art, seating, trees and lighting can contribute to a more visually pleasing environment, while furniture sited in ways that increase visibility helps create a safe environment for all. It should not dominate the street scene.

The introduction of street furniture requires coordination. Its style, colour and materials should all be inspired by its surroundings and it should be sited with reference to existing building and footway lines. The best street furniture is elegant and simple, yet functional and easily maintained.



Street furniture should be positioned along the same alignment and out of main pedestrian circulation routes. Where possible, street furniture should be designed as a ‘family’ of elements.

General Principles

- Identify and remove superfluous or redundant items
- Keep new street furniture to a minimum
- Seek permission to attach signs, traffic signals and lighting onto existing street furniture and buildings
- Coordinate style, colour and siting of street furniture
- New equipment should be simple, elegant and appropriate to context
- Consult local access groups or disability organisations

Historic street furniture

Old post boxes, telephone kiosks, bollards, seats, railings and memorials can all enrich our streetscapes. Their familiarity and historical associations reinforce a sense of local identity.

Retaining historic designs (such as crests or manufacturers' marks) where appropriate can help this process. Replicas need to look and feel authentic and be carefully sited.

New works will need to avoid harming the significance of any affected heritage assets. Local amenity societies may be happy to help in preparing inventories to assist in their conservation or even 'adopt' items where ownership is uncertain.



Preserved historic street furniture can lend character to the most modern of settings.

General Principles

- Compile an inventory of historic street furniture and its condition
- Encourage the preservation and maintenance of historic street furniture
- Identify and conserve street furniture that contributes to the area's significance or that may be a heritage asset in its own right
- Record and remove old pieces that have degenerated beyond repair (except those deemed of historic importance)
- Consider recasting local designs, ensuring details are accurate and authentic



Careful choice of replacement street furniture may be needed where the historic public realm makes a strong contribution to sense of place.

Street signs and nameplates

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

In the past, the main purpose of signs was to guide people around a town's streets and landmark buildings. Today, they are used to provide a much wider range of information about local sights and services. An uncontrolled proliferation of nameplates, finger posts, electronic information points and maps results in visual chaos. It hampers effective communication and is in nobody's interest.

Where older signs remain, they should be retained and restored. Using their siting and style to inform the design of any new signs considered to be necessary will also help consistency of appearance throughout an area.

The inclusion of pictograms as part of the pedestrian wayfinding and information strategy makes places more accessible to those such as tourists or children. Where bespoke designs are used to reinforce local identity, they must be consistent and easy to understand.

Street nameplates should be normally 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 whenever possible be mounted on existing furniture.



Traditional milestones are small but important links to the past.

General Principles

- Retain historic signs and styles to reinforce local character
- Remove superfluous and redundant signs
- If possible, locate signs on buildings or at the back edge of footways
- Avoid placing signs on new posts which add to clutter



Locally distinctive street signs should be cherished.

Traffic signs

Too many traffic signs and notices can spoil the visual attractiveness of a place. Too much information can be as confusing to drivers as too little.

A multi-disciplinary team (which might include highway engineers, urban designers and conservation officers) is the best method of developing an efficient but visually sensitive signing strategy. Sign design should be undertaken by a competent professional who has received proper training.

Redundant signs should be removed wherever possible. Where signs are required, they should be concise, no bigger than necessary and carefully sited. Yellow warning backing boards are visually obtrusive and are best used sparingly.

The *Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions* (2016) (TSRGD) removed the need to light many signs. The use of microprismatic retroreflective sheeting may also allow lighting to be dispensed with, unless it is specifically required by the regulations.

New signs can be provided with an anti-graffiti coating that makes it much easier to clean them and remove stickers. TSRGD allows the colour of the posts is optional, allowing these to be selected to be sensitive to the location. A consistent dark or receding colour and positioning at the back of footways and clear of circulation routes is most effective. Clutter and the need for supplementary posts can be reduced by rationalising numerous signs into a single board.

Where signs are erected above footways and cycle tracks, adequate clearance must be allowed for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. Interim advice Note 195/16 *Cycle Traffic and the Strategic Road Network* requires a minimum height for such structures of 2300mm for pedestrians and 2400mm for cyclists. However, to minimise the environmental impact of these signs, particularly large directional signs, consideration should be given to adopting lower mounting heights. A minimum clearance of 2100mm should be maintained over footways, 2300mm over cycle tracks or shared-use facilities and 2700mm over equestrian routes.

Sign supports located in footways can create hazards, particularly for people with a visual impairment, and obstructions for people with pushchairs and wheelchairs. Where posts are erected on footways, there should preferably be 1500mm, with an absolute minimum of 1000mm, of unobstructed width. Supports not readily visible to pedestrians or cyclists may be provided with a white or yellow band in accordance with direction 8(2) in TSRGD.

General Principles

- Restrict signs to those which convey essential information
- Reduce signs to a minimum size and number
- Locate signs and traffic signals on existing lamp columns, posts or buildings
- Use dark or receding colours for posts and the back of signs
- Avoid large, and especially yellow, backing boards
- Consider the needs of people who cannot see well



Poorly coordinated signs which are distracting for drivers.

Traffic signals, crossings and guardrails

Sensible management of pedestrian, cycle and vehicle interaction can reduce the number of traffic signals, signs and physical barriers that are needed.

To avoid more posts, compact modern traffic signal units can be combined with street lights. This can enhance both the physical and visual appearance of the street, especially at junctions and crossing points. To avoid distraction TSRGD restricts the signs that can be placed with traffic signals.

Positioning traffic signal control boxes at the back of footways and designing them with raised relief panels deters flyposting. They should be painted in a dark or receding colour consistent with other street elements, although they still need to be detectable by people with visual impairments.

Physical barriers used to be routinely used to segregate pedestrians from vehicles, with the result that streets became dominated by vehicles. It has more recently been found that direct single-stage crossings can allow unsightly guardrails to be safely removed, allowing people to move around as they see fit.

Integrating crossings wherever possible with existing routes and desire lines helps create a more coherent pedestrian network. Raised crossovers (flat-topped humps) with appropriate tactile paving can help to shift the priority from vehicles to pedestrians without the need for guardrails.



Combine traffic signals and certain signs into one unit to avoid supplementary columns.

Guardrails erected purely to prevent vehicles from mounting the footway can in certain circumstances be replaced with less obstructive and more attractive alternatives such as bollards or planters.

General Principles

- Attach traffic signals to other street elements and buildings where possible
- Avoid over-provision of signals, guardrails and signs
- Site control boxes unobtrusively
- Make sure crossings are visible, free of clutter and where possible single-stage
- Increase the height and definition of kerbs to avoid the need for physical barriers where segregation and awareness are important to create a safe environment
- If guardrails are unavoidable on safety grounds, use designs that relate to the townscape and provide proper visibility of and for pedestrians



Carefully considered designs for street crossings can be implemented to create local identity.

Street lighting

Street lighting is fundamental to any street or public space. It keeps people safe 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. Successful and stimulating environments incorporate light sources that encourage people to use and enjoy the space.

Lighting schemes should comply with British Standard BS5489. It is important to choose the correct level of lighting for the traffic that uses the street, especially near pedestrian crossings and intersections, and to take account of other light sources, such as shops and floodlit buildings. Whiter light from metal halide, high-pressure sodium or LED sources is preferable to orange low-pressure sodium lighting although choices between warmer and colder tones (reflecting the difference between historic gas lighting and more natural moonlight) will help to conserve the different characters of historic town centres and villages. [The Institution of Lighting Professionals' report](#) on lighting for subsidiary roads may be of particular help in considering schemes in residential areas.

Use light fixtures of the right scale and illumination for their context. When using traditional designs of lighting, the head and column must be in proportion; an oversized light on a slender or short support will appear awkward and top heavy.

Lights can be effective while still being unobtrusive. Avoid the temptation to over-provide as this can lead to clutter and unnecessary light pollution. Particular care is usually needed in rural settings where over-illumination can generate an inappropriately urban atmosphere.

Continual maintenance is essential for both safety and visual attractiveness.



Well-designed modern street lights are often a better choice for historic areas than catalogue 'heritage' lamps.

General Principles

- Select lighting which suits the place – urban or rural, commercial or residential
- Consider street lighting in conjunction with other light sources
- Respect local designs and use authentic materials
- Avoid light pollution
- Avoid clutter by mounting lights on buildings where possible
- Consider the daytime appearance of light fittings

Case Study

Exhibition Road, The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Exhibition Road is one of London's major destinations but had become blighted by vehicle traffic and street clutter. The aim of this visionary project was to transform it into the most accessible cultural destination in the world.

Exhibition Road, which runs south from Hyde Park to South Kensington, is home to some of the world's leading educational and cultural institutions. The Natural History Museum, Science Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, Royal Geographical Society and Imperial College have together made this one of England's most popular destinations for tourists from home and abroad.

Though used by millions of visitors, as well as students, local workers, and residents, the public realm was filled with street clutter and vehicle traffic; it was confusing to visitors and unfriendly and obstructive to pedestrians.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in partnership with Historic England, Exhibition Road Cultural Group, City of Westminster and Transport for London worked together to convert the old road into an elegant pedestrian-prioritised boulevard. The redevelopment required an extensive public and stakeholder consultation to make sure the historical

context of the street is respected and that the needs of local residents and institutions were considered.

A chequered granite street design features a single surface running from South Kensington Station to Hyde Park that is as distinctive as the institutions it serves. The speed limit was reduced to 20mph. Street clutter was removed and new high-quality street lighting was installed.

Conclusion

Major enhancement schemes of this kind depend on two vital ingredients – a strong and coherent vision and the willingness of a group of partners to bring it to fruition.



Wider footways and better management of traffic were the key ingredients to humanising this major tourist destination.

© Transport for London / Mike Garnett



Replacing a proliferation of ill-assorted clutter with well-designed new street furniture has introduced a new sense of place.

© Transport for London / Mike Garnett

Historic tree features

Trees and historic green spaces, such as verges, greens, gardens, and avenues, are often defining features of streets.

Trees may be historic features in their own right either as surviving relics of a past landscape or part of an historic layout. Mature and veteran trees are valuable assets. As well as their historic importance, trees may be notable within the townscape as fine specimens, unusual species or for their seasonal colour. They may have cultural associations with the area or be related to the place or street name. Trees are important for shade, air quality, noise amelioration, and as wildlife habitats. Trees need to be protected and cared for in order to thrive in urban environments.

As living features, trees have a limited lifespan and do sometimes need to be replaced. How to sustain trees and planting needs careful consideration, especially avenues where a formal design may be harmed through loss of individual trees. Expert advice is needed to assess issues and any tree works, including pruning, felling and replanting. Tree works, especially felling, generate lots of concerns. Local communities need to be briefed and involved in decisions. Felling and replanting must be programmed and carried out promptly and to a high standard. Local authority tree officers can advise.

Historic streets, parks, cemeteries, other green spaces, rivers and canals are significant elements of every community's green infrastructure and the network of features and links should be considered strategically. These historic green spaces are popular oases in the urban environment. Inadequate maintenance or inappropriate use such as car parking on verges can also quickly turn these green spaces into an eyesore. These green elements are increasingly important in helping to manage climate change impacts and good maintenance can help increase performance.

There are often opportunities to plant new trees and create green spaces and this is covered in the Environmental Improvements section.

Trees are often blamed for subsidence (especially after dry summers). Pressure to remove or replace trees for insurance purposes should be countered.

[The Forestry Commission web site](#) provides further advice about the Joint Mitigation Protocol on subsidence claims where trees are implicated as being the cause of building movement.



This Horse Chestnut tree stands on the 'Front Lawn' of King's College Chapel, Cambridge and has been an element of the composition of the space for over 150 years. It has received care, including the use of steel cables to provide support of some limbs to ensure it continues to contribute to the scene. Horse Chestnut trees have a lifespan of around 300 years.

General Principles

- Research the history of tree planting and green spaces
- Identify and protect existing trees and green spaces that are valued as part of the area's historic character
- Include planting and green street spaces and public realm in Green Infrastructure Strategies
- Involve the community in the care of their street trees and green spaces

Bollards

Bollards restrict vehicle movement and delineate space. However, good design can reduce the need for bollards and other physical constraints.

The delineation of streets and pedestrian spaces can be achieved through a distinct change in level or material rather than physical barriers. As well as generating a safe environment for everyone the absence of barriers will reduce visual disorder.

Surviving historic bollards contribute to local character and identity and should be retained and restored wherever possible. For the sake of continuity it may be appropriate to use newly cast replicas. However, care should be taken to use high-quality materials and craftsmanship so as not to detract from the integrity of the originals.



Bespoke bollards enhance identity.



Corner stones or bollards reinforce local traditions, provided they are not a hazard for pedestrians.

Where new bollards are necessary, standard catalogue designs may dilute local character but consistency of approach and design is important. Choice of materials may also be important to reflect the different character of urban and rural contexts. Timber or natural stone bollards may be more appropriate in villages, country towns or remote rural locations, while cast metal bollards are more characteristic of urban centres and industrial districts and historic examples may merit conservation in their own right. In some historic coastal towns bollards were created in the past using obsolete cannon, providing a strong visual connection with their naval history, which should be retained.

Colour at the top of bollards can be helpful for people with visual impairments, and a minimum height of 1000mm is preferred.

General Principles

- Reduce the need for bollards through better kerb definition
- Select designs and materials which are appropriate to their 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

Seating

Seats and benches offer places for people to meet, rest or enjoy their surroundings. They need to be designed and sited in conjunction with other street furniture.

Elegant, functional and robust works best in historic areas. Seating needs to be durable, repel water and be easy to maintain. Timber benches may be historically appropriate to a location, are attractive and also very comfortable but may be susceptible to vandalism. Programming in regular maintenance will help to conserve their quality.

In certain locations, bespoke seating may be appropriate. This can reinforce a local sense of place, but too much variety can visually fragment the street and should be carefully considered. Care should also be taken over the design and siting of new types of seating in historic places. 'Smart benches' offering wi-fi and phone-charging capability make public space more functional but need careful design to ensure they contribute positively to an area's character and appearance.

Make sure that new seats and benches are positioned to take in a view, ideally enhancing appreciation of historic buildings and places. As many as possible of them should also be on the sunny side of streets, squares or gardens.

Seats should not be placed where they might prove an obstruction.



Seating should be simple, comfortable and robust. It should be located in places of public activity but not impede pedestrians or be a hazard to people with disabilities.

General Principles

- Design seating as an integral part of the street and consider ongoing maintenance needs
- Locate seats in places of interest or activity
- Seats should not impede movement or create a hazard
- Seats should be simple, functional and robust
- Continuous maintenance is crucial
- Create a 'seat with a view'



Low-key but high-quality seating that enhances its traditional surroundings.

4 New Equipment

The appearance of streets is constantly changing. Provided that it is of high quality, new design can enrich the public realm and encourage its greater use.

In some places it will be more appropriate to encourage good quality modern designs than to use traditional products or standard catalogue items. Where this is the case, focusing design to reflect function, location and durability will help to integrate new equipment.

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

The fragmentation of responsibilities for the public realm means that each new item of equipment is usually installed to fulfil a single function with little regard to its total effect on the whole street scene.

Give consideration to whether new equipment can be combined or mounted with existing to reduce street clutter. Local authorities should make sure that the design and siting of new equipment is based on an informed assessment of the character of its urban or rural surroundings. This includes the provision of on-street charging points for electric vehicles, for which local authorities receive permitted development rights but will still need to discharge their duty to protect the significance of listed buildings and conservation areas.

Authorities often find themselves under pressure to accept packages of new street furniture in exchange for footway advertisement panels. These rarely offer a satisfactory response to local needs and can too easily create street clutter.



A carefully selected palette of street furniture located to avoid obstruction and address space complements the architectural interest of this historic location.

General Principles

- Encourage designs that are durable, easily maintained and visually pleasing
- Site functional equipment at the back of the footway
- Take account of the character of the townscape before introducing new items
- Consider whether potential 'harm' to historic character might be avoided or reduced through choices of the design of new equipment.

Telephone kiosks and post boxes

Mobile phone technology has reduced the demand for public telephones but they are still an important part of a safe and well-used public realm. Pillar boxes and wall boxes of all periods contribute to local heritage and should normally be retained.

Traditional K2 and K6 telephone kiosks remain classic examples of public design. They were designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in 1924 and 1935 respectively and are now considered an 'icon of England'. 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.

In rural areas, local communities are encouraged to adopt de-commissioned telephone kiosks whenever possible and many have already been converted for public uses, such as micro-libraries, defibrillation locations, wi-fi hotspots or local picture galleries. In urban locations kiosks have also been adapted for new commercial use including cash machines and refreshment or souvenir kiosks.

Royal Mail and Historic England have agreed a [policy](#) in which all post boxes in operational service are appropriately maintained in their location, or re-sited into modern streetscapes. Where new equipment is necessary, designs should complement existing stock and the surrounding context.

General Principles

- Retain traditional telephone kiosks and post boxes
- Encourage local communities and businesses to find new uses for redundant kiosks
- New post boxes should complement existing stock



Historic styles vary and add to local character.



A K6 kiosk given pride of place in an open space. Note the smooth natural stone setts inserted into an area of cobbles to facilitate access.

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 positioning of machines and associated signs is essential – for example being sited consistently at the back edge of footways or grouped in a designated area within car parks. Signs should be of minimum size.

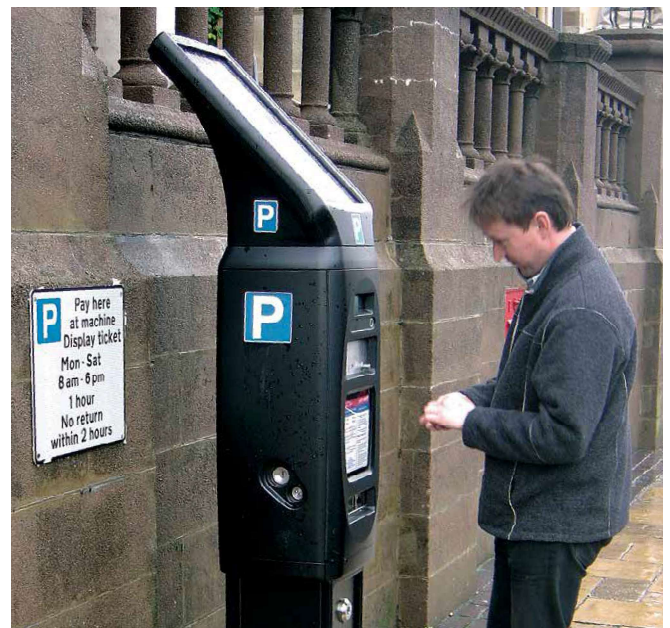
It is important to consider the access needs of people with disabilities. The Department for Transport's document *Inclusive Mobility – A guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure* gives more information.

General Principles

- Incorporate parking information into pay and display machines or place it on adjacent posts, walls or railings
- Site any unavoidable new posts at the back edge of the footway to minimise clutter and obstruction



Machines should be a consistent dark or receding colour with simple instruction panels – not like this unsightly example.



A modern, solar-powered machine sited at the back of the footway.

Street cabinets and litter bins

Litter bins and service cabinets are essential components of the street scene but 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, such bins can be withdrawn, or kept on the street for the minimum winter period and then removed. Sites need to be chosen carefully.

Litter bins need to be robust. They should be fixed to the ground to prevent vandalism and coordinated 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 and utility companies are encouraged to adopt a maintenance programme for all street cabinets and bins and replace those which are deteriorating.



Litter bins need not be an eyesore. This stylish yet unobtrusive wooden bin complements the weathered timber of this seaside location.



Flyposting on street furniture significantly detracts from the visual attractiveness of a place. Replace street furniture that is beyond repair.

General Principles

Street cabinets and litter bins should be:

- regularly maintained
- robust, with surfaces that discourage flyposting
- sited at the back of the footway and painted an appropriate colour
- sited to avoid intruding into key viewlines

Waste and recycling facilities

We are all encouraged to recycle waste, yet paradoxically this has led to a proliferation of unsightly bins that detract from the appearance and amenity of many historic towns and villages.

Most local authorities now provide wheelie bins for general household waste as well as boxes or bags for sorting recyclable waste. It is important that these containers are stored away from the footway between collection days, otherwise they become a source of unsightly and hazardous clutter. In areas where access to storage space for bins is difficult, several councils have installed communal 'street bins' incorporated into wider public realm enhancement, while several councils have installed underground bin storage and collection facilities.

Another potential source of clutter is the large wheeled containers used to collect waste generated by open-air markets and food outlets. Local authorities should ensure these are removed and stored elsewhere when not in use on market days.

Public recycling facilities are best located in easily accessible but low-profile locations such as car parks. The bins for different materials should be of a consistent design and subdued colour. It is also important that they are arranged in ways that allow the space around them to be kept tidy.



Bins should be grouped together and kept out of the path of pedestrians.

General Principles

- Encourage householders to store their domestic waste bins off the street, or provide facilities reducing need for wheelie bins
- Make sure that bins provided for street markets are removed when not in use
- Provide public recycling facilities in accessible but low-profile locations
- Keep recycling sites clean and the subject of frequent collections



Waste and recycling bins at markets need to be removed when the market is closed.

CCTV cameras

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

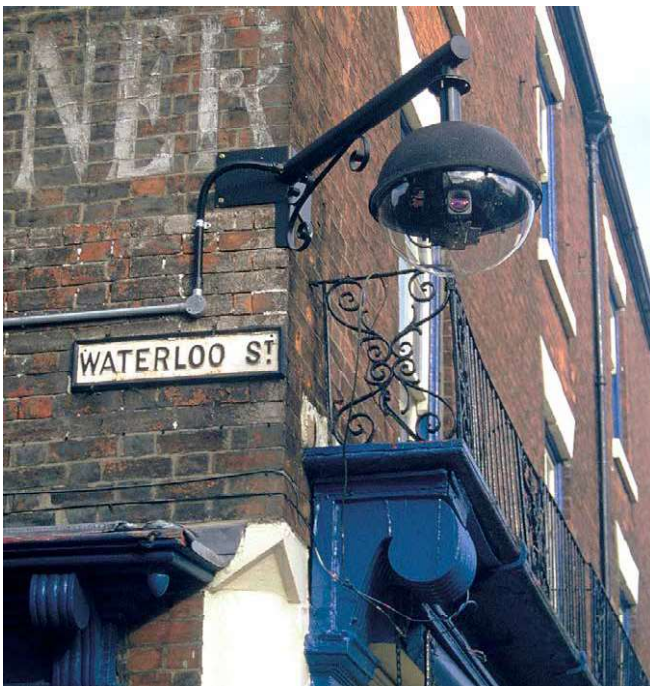
Closed circuit television plays a role in detecting crime and can instil a sense of safety. The sensitive integration of cameras into urban and rural environments relies on careful siting. This needs to make sure they are noticeable without being obtrusive or reachable.

Where possible, CCTV cameras should be integrated in street lighting columns or mounted on buildings or shelters, thus avoiding the need for additional supports. However, they should not harm the architectural integrity of buildings, particularly those which are listed. Avoid siting cameras in front of windows and elevation details. Using columns that are of similar materials and finish to historic lamp standards in the surrounding area may also reduce their prominence to a degree.

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 and less intrusive support columns to be used.

General Principles

- Locate cameras discreetly on buildings or existing posts
- Avoid freestanding columns for cameras or associated signs



A camera designed as a street lamp, and not mounted on a pole, is less obtrusive.

Cycle parking

The provision of secure cycle parking enables healthy and sustainable transport without cluttering the public domain.

The siting and design of cycle stands should be inspired by the local surroundings, especially in sensitive rural or historic locations. Stands must be easy to use, constructed of durable materials and be designed as part of a consistent family of street furniture.

Cycle parking should be located in an area with natural surveillance and good lighting. This will help deter vandals and thieves and generate a feeling of security amongst users. Consider providing stands in small groups more frequently rather than large cycle parks, as these are more convenient to users and less visually intrusive. In some instances cycle parking may need to be removable when street events occur.

General Principles

- Select simple, robust units that will require little or no maintenance
- Position the stands where they are convenient for cyclists but do not obstruct others
- Choose units that form a 'family' with other local street furniture including railings by using similar materials and finishes



Cycle parking on this central reservation makes good use of otherwise wasted space.



Tapping rails allow cane users to identify bicycle racks.

Advertising

Advertising panels tend to be incompatible with the visual sensitivity of historical and rural settings. They can also be an unwelcome source of clutter.

Many authorities are invited to accept packages of new street furniture from suppliers, in exchange for footway advertising panels. These rarely meet local needs or character and can add to street clutter.

As a rule, advertising panels tend to be incompatible with the visual sensitivity of historical and rural settings and the need to reduce clutter. Where advertising is allowed, it should not impede pedestrian circulation.

Advertising can be incorporated into existing street furniture such as bus shelter panels, or specifically designed litterbins, but particular care is needed in the case of internally illuminated digital displays.

Authorities should produce an advertising strategy to control the amount and location of advertising in the public realm.

General Principles

- Prepare an advertising strategy that takes account of the special character of each area
- Advertising using 'A' boards should not impede pedestrians or disadvantage people with visual impairments and can be controlled through licensing.



Poorly sited advertising can have a degrading effect on the character of conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings, especially when digital screens and internally illuminated signs are used.

'A' frame advertising can be an obstacle course for pedestrians, and a hazard for people with visual impairments.

5 Traffic Management

A successful public realm is one in which the differing needs of all road users, including people on foot, in cars or using bicycles and others, are served without the need for excessive signs, road markings or physical barriers.

Reducing the speed of traffic makes places safer for pedestrians and cyclists. It may also allow a reduction in the number of road markings as well as use of smaller traffic signs.

Traffic management measures must be considered in conjunction with the overall design of the street. Innovative designs are to be encouraged providing that they comply with current traffic regulations (*Traffic Management and Streetscape*, LTN 1/08, Department of Transport, 2008).

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

Car parking 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 restricting cars in central areas, implementing pedestrian-oriented schemes and providing more comprehensive links between parts of a town.

General Principles

- Adopt traffic management strategies that respect the character of the area
- Introduce 20mph zones that create safer environments for all
- Minimise the visual impact of new layouts and signage on the established street scene
- Choose equipment and signing that reinforces local character
- Use traditional surface materials and avoid unnecessary colour-contrasting surfaces
- Only use road markings when they are necessary
- Use traditional stone setts to reduce traffic speed and define entry points

Case Study

Historic Core Zones: Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

The Historic Core Zones (HCZ) project was an initiative from the English Historic Towns Forum. It investigated how traffic management schemes could be designed to suit areas with special historic character.

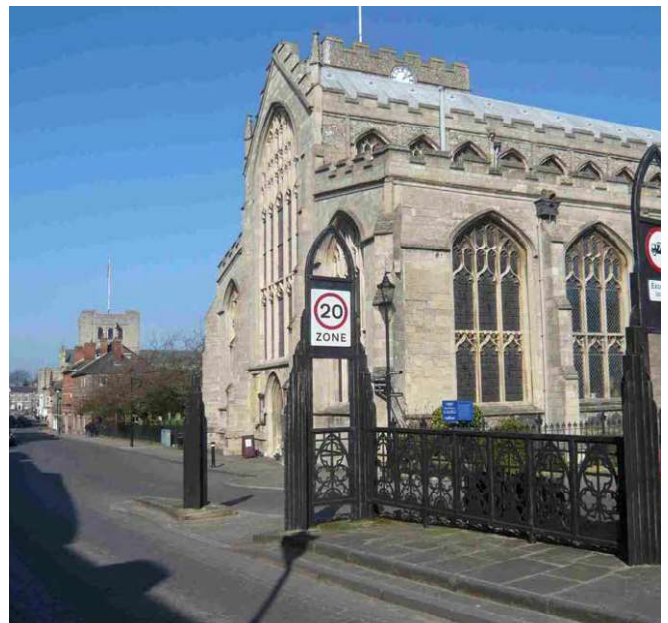
Each of the four HCZ projects in Bury St Edmunds, Shrewsbury, Lincoln and Halifax had different challenges and varying solutions, but the principles were consistent:

- well-designed traffic measures can meet traffic management and conservation objectives
- there is no standard solution but historic streets deserve special treatment
- a lot can be achieved within the current regulations
- adequate investment in quality is essential and reduces maintenance costs
- good design can equal self-enforcement.

Bury St Edmunds is a traditional historic market town. The centre preserves its medieval grid pattern of narrow streets and listed buildings. The Historic Core Zone lies within a larger conservation area and attracts many visitors. It was designated to address increasing traffic (more than 12,000 vehicles a day, including large numbers of lorries) and parking pressures which created conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles, as well as excessive visual intrusion from traffic signs.

After extensive consultation it was agreed that the key solutions would be to define entrance thresholds to the core zone, introduce a 20mph zone with minimum traffic calming measures and HGV weight restrictions, rationalise traffic signs and provide more space for people by pedestrianising three of the town's principal historic streets.

The project was supported by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (now Department for Transport), English Heritage (now Historic England), the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, the Civic Trust and the County Surveyors Society (now ADEPT).



The key to solving the town's long-standing traffic problems was the introduction of a 20mph zone and the pedestrianisation of three of its most important historic streets.

Conclusion

The Historic Core Zone project concluded that the four pilot towns had come up with a palette of measures that could be applied elsewhere. It also recommended that additional core zones should be developed in other towns.

Traffic calming

Traffic calming measures should be fitted sensitively into the street scene as though they were part of the original design of the area.

Some traffic calming designs can be difficult to integrate into an older streetscape and there is no standard solution. It is important that schemes are designed in partnership between highways engineers, urban planners, landscape specialists and user groups to ensure all the desired functional and visual aspirations are met. Further guidance is set out in *Traffic Calming* (LTN 1/07), Department of Transport, 2007.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that new traffic calming measures respect the character of designated conservation areas. Major schemes should always be referred to Historic England for guidance.

Well-designed gateways, or the use of traditional materials such as granite setts, should be seen as a sound long-term investment. Where resources are limited, it is better to do less to a higher standard over a longer period than to compromise on quality. Chicanes might increase requirements for traffic signs and should be designed to reduce their intrusiveness to the wider townscape, whilst providing appropriate visibility for drivers.

Footway extensions and gateways should 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 also important.

Signing should be kept to a minimum size and number to ensure safety and comply with legal requirements, taking advantage of opportunities to rationalise signs onto a single clearly laid out board where practicable. Railings should only be used to segregate users where absolutely necessary to ensure safety, bearing in mind that they may, in fact encourage motorists to increase speed.

General Principles

- Make sure traffic calming schemes respect the existing streetscape
- Plan traffic calming schemes in consultation with design specialists and end-users
- Take special care in conservation areas to protect the area's character
- Invest in high-quality materials and workmanship
- Minimise the use of signs and physical barriers



Gateway signing for villages and town centres should respond to context and the higher mixing of motorists with people on foot, bicycles or other means of transport to raise awareness of risk and encourage slower speeds.
© Ben Hamilton-Baillie

Case Study

Traffic calming: Poynton, Cheshire

In this award-winning scheme, the barriers separating traffic and pedestrians were stripped away. As well as doubling the space for pedestrians, this innovative solution cut traffic speed and enhanced the centre.

Poynton is a crossroads town on the London Road. Its centre, Fountain Place, consists of the intersection of London Road with Chester Road and Park Lane. The very high volume of traffic with significant numbers of HGVs – up to 26,000 vehicle movements every day – had resulted in a wide, cluttered, signal-controlled multi-lane junction.

Attempts to reduce congestion and delays through adjusting signal timings had been unsuccessful. What's more, the barrier effect of the junction was having an adverse impact on the economic health of Park Lane and the town centre. In 2010 there were empty shops and declining investment. There were concerns that a new supermarket development to the east would finally kill off the high street.

The regeneration of Poynton's town centre involved a bold approach to the busy traffic intersection in Fountain Place. New paving materials, planting, lighting and street furniture combined to re-establish a sense of place at the town's major and minor intersections. This has been reinforced by strong transitional gateway features which reference the area's industrial heritage. At present, paving materials are noticeably bright but are expected to mellow over time.

The Poynton Project was commissioned by Cheshire East Council. Architects worked alongside a street designer to simplify and remove all traffic signals, road markings and barriers, creating free-flowing, low-speed, integrated streets.

'An extremely courageous scheme which has succeeded in achieving significant economic and social benefits through the enhancement of 'place' whilst continuing to provide a route for significant volumes of traffic.' CIHT Award Judges, 2013.



A wide, cluttered, signal-controlled multi-lane junction had made life increasingly difficult for the residents of this small Cheshire town. © Ben Hamilton-Baillie



Replacing the signal-controlled junction has given a new lease of life to the previously declining town centre. © Planit-IE

Conclusion

This exercise in re-balanced streetscape design demonstrates the rewards of thinking radically: increased footfall, improved retail performance, better road safety and security, as well as a general uplift in village vitality.

6 Environmental Improvements

Well-designed environmental improvements will 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.

Where funding is restricted, it is better to do less, but in phases and to a higher standard, than to compromise on overall quality. Short-term solutions using cheap materials usually fail and detract from local distinctiveness. It is important to ensure that budgets for subsequent management and maintenance are in place before projects commence.

Pedestrianisation schemes require particular sensitivity. The key to success is to conserve rather than eradicate common features of the street. Kerb lines should be retained (but may be moved to reallocate space for pedestrians) because they maintain the visual continuity of the street,

help to zone activity - even in pedestrianised areas - and eliminate the need for bollards. Wall-to-wall surfaces should be avoided and a clear definition maintained between the footway and the carriageway. The proportions of the footway to carriageway must be maintained.

Elaborate patterned or artificially 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.



Simple, low maintenance improvements have enhanced the historic character and improved accessibility.

General Principles

- Apply particular sensitivity to pedestrianisation schemes
- Retain historic kerb lines
- Maintain a clear definition between the footway and the carriageway
- Avoid patterned or artificial coloured paving materials
- Consult access groups and disability organisations about their needs to ensure these are fully integrated into enhancements

Street traders

Activities define places as much as buildings; lively markets and shops are what bring historic areas to life.

Outdoor cafes and street traders can add spontaneity and animation to the street scene. Street markets can be delightful and exciting experiences and in many cases historic towns have been built around the activity of a medieval market place, contributing to their unique sense of place. Nevertheless, it is important to avoid clutter, especially out of hours, and to provide flexible public spaces suitable for multiple uses.

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.



Streets are for people. Exploit street spaces or squares for markets and events which create a focus for public life and enhance a sense of place.

General Principles

- Recognise that kiosks for the sale of newspapers, fruit and vegetables add to the liveliness of streets
- Encourage quality designs for kiosks, canopies and street furniture
- Unsightly waste containers should be removed when street markets are closed



A café is informally accommodated on this generous footway.

Case Study

Dudley, West Midlands

Dudley's open-air market dates back to the 12th century. Once owned by the Lord of Dudley, it has undergone a complete rebuild as part of a £6.7m refurbishment of the town centre.

The market place has been cleared of its original clutter and replaced at the south-west end with a more elegant approach in the form of large natural granite planters that create an avenue effect leading to the Grade II* listed drinking fountain. As well as being the subject of a prize-winning restoration, the fountain has been given a new setting in the form of tumbled York-stone setts and a surrounding black granite band inlaid with a specially commissioned poem in white silver granite letters.

Castle Street was made narrower and paved with large flat-topped granite setts. Pink granite kerbs were laid and kept to a minimum height to achieve a more intimate feeling for the pedestrian as well as a reference to this roadway's medieval past as the main route between the castle and marketplace.

For the benefit of people with visual impairment, dark tactile bands next to the pink flush kerbs provide guidance routes along each side of the market place. Although new, these 'pink' kerbs replicate the historic kerbs found elsewhere in the town centre and

delineate the historic footway edges alongside the roads that once ran through the marketplace.

The Grade II-listed statue of the Earl of Derby was given a new setting in the form of a simple raised lawn that acts as an informal seating area at an important gateway to the town centre. Nearby, a sculpture of Duncan Edwards, the local England and 'Busby Babe' footballing legend, was repositioned to serve as a focal point at the entrance/exit of the new market stalls.

Conclusion

Having decided that a vibrant open-air market needed to be a key element in its ten-year programme of economic regeneration plans, Dudley Borough Council made sure that each component of the project was executed using high-quality materials and exemplary craftsmanship.



Dudley's restored town centre is intended to be enjoyed at night as well as during the day.

© Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council



The historic statue of the Earl of Dudley has become a popular meeting place in Dudley's newly restored Market Place.

Public art

Public art and performance can increase our enjoyment and understanding of a historic city, town or village. As well as reinforcing a sense of local identity it can provide refreshing visual stimulation.

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, signing 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, the statuary of religious guilds and advertising of inns and craftsmen, 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, events and industries. Public war memorials represent an important addition to our public art. More recently there has been a resurgence in fine new sculpture by leading contemporary artists.

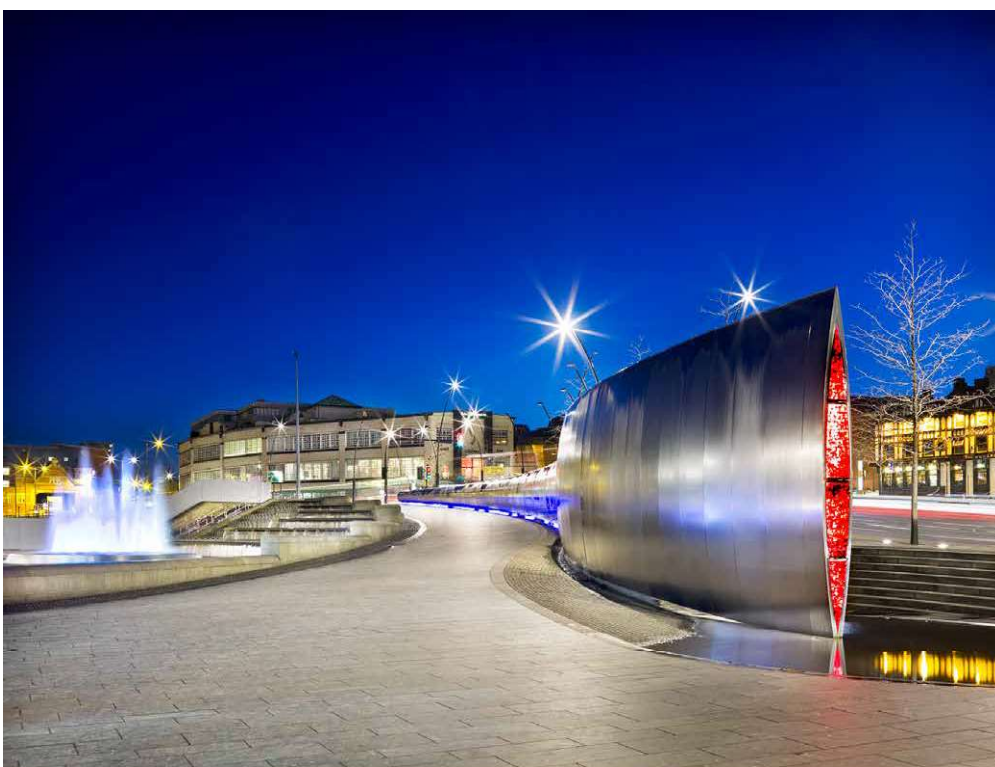
Authorities should adopt a public art strategy in consultation with practising artists and the general public. This will allow clear guiding principles to be

agreed about the size, content, appropriateness to context, siting and maintenance costs of potential works of art.

See our published guidance on care and protection of public art at: www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/post-war-public-art-protection-care-conservation/

General Principles

- Promote temporary displays and performances that vitalise public spaces and include flexible space for them in enhancement schemes
- Think carefully about the context, scale and durability of new pieces of permanent public art



The award-winning water sculpture in Sheaf Square, Sheffield, presents a stunning entrance to the city. It is part of the Gold Route which guides visitors from the train station to the city centre.

New trees and planting

Trees and planting add life and colour to streets and can enhance an area's character and appeal. There are also opportunities to retrofit streets with planting to address climate change issues as well as improving local amenities.

In historic areas, new planting schemes need to be considered and designed to respect the history, architecture and tradition of places. Street trees and planting may not be appropriate in every instance.

The choice of tree, planting layout, and tree protection needs to be appropriate to the character, setting and function of the area. Large tree species should be favoured where appropriate, and ecological benefits and long term resilience need to be considered. New landscaping should not impede access for users, or create hazards for less able people. Care must also be taken to ensure sight lines and the visibility of traffic signs and signals, and to protect trees from moving or parked vehicles. Tree roots are easily damaged by compaction.

The establishment and long term care of trees need to be programmed. Trees need space below and above ground, and water, soil and air to grow and mature. The investment returns are long lasting if the trees are well looked after.

New design should also look to incorporate climate change adaptation features such as sustainable urban drainage systems. The key is to identify solutions appropriate for the historic setting. Streets, highway



New trees need to be planned with care to provide appropriate growing conditions. They have potential to provide significant benefits in addition to their contribution to visual amenity.

verges and roundabouts have been transformed with new planting and management schemes like wildflower meadows. High quality design and installation is key to the success of these schemes.

Excavation of planting pits, use of 'engineered' soils and installation of irrigation systems may have consequences for archaeological remains, particularly in central urban locations. Consultation with the council's archaeological advisors is recommended in these situations. Careful routing and protection of underground services is also vital to avoid future disturbance. British Standard 5837:2012 provides guidance.

Close cooperation between landscape architects, tree professionals, highway engineers and urban designers is vital. Further advice on trees is available from the [Trees and Design Action Group](#) and the [CIRIA SuDS Manual](#) provides comprehensive guidance on designing and integrating sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) in landscaping and highway schemes.

General Principles

- Create places where tree species can thrive and deliver a full range of benefits without causing harmful nuisance
- Involve the community
- Seek specialist advice about the choice and location of trees
- Develop and integrate tree and green space strategies, including long term care, in improvement schemes
- Adopt the SuDS principles in designing new planting schemes and find solutions appropriate to historic setting.

Case Study

Grey to Green, Sheffield City Council

Grey to Green is bringing living colour into the city centre, turning once-dull streets into vibrant public spaces.

In 2013 Sheffield City Council published a masterplan for the city centre that included an innovative new approach to transforming redundant roads into beautiful new linear spaces.

One of Sheffield's greatest urban assets is its green legacy of 2 million trees, beautiful ancient woodland and beautiful expanses of parkland. The aim of the Grey to Green project was to bring this colour into the city centre.

The project sought to transform redundant roads into attractive new linear public spaces that incorporate innovative perennial meadows, an interlinked sustainable urban drainage system, rain gardens, high-quality paved footways and street furniture. Five new works of public art, made from steel and stone, provide insights into the former lives of this significant part of the city centre.

The first phase of the scheme, from West Bar to Castlegate, is complete and has introduced wild flowers, trees and shrubs into areas once dominated

by tarmac. Attractive new pathways have been laid and benches provided so that people can linger to enjoy the sights and scents of this new green space.

Once completed, the scheme will extend from Sheffield's historic medieval core, centred on the site of Sheffield Castle, to the vibrant former industrial area of Kelham Island and provide echoes of the linear series of Porter Valley Parks.

The project is being funded by the European Regional Development Fund and Sheffield City Region Investment Fund.

Conclusion

As well as transforming redundant roads into pleasant gardens, the project has created public spaces that double up as a rain garden, thus helping to moderate the flow of water in a part of Sheffield that has twice been ravaged by floods.



A generously broad pedestrian pathway winds its way through newly planted garden beds – a thoroughly contemporary scheme that also respects the city's historic street pattern.

© Sheffield City Council

Lighting of buildings

Artificial lighting can give historic buildings and spaces another dimension. As well as providing visual excitement it can make them easier to understand.

Carefully designed lighting is integral to the creation of successful spaces. The lighting of buildings, trees and artworks sets the stage for the activities and exchanges of successful towns and cities. It allows them to become pleasant places to enjoy by night as well as day. Street crime can be reduced and industry and commerce benefit through increased prosperity.

Subtle external lighting can provide a whole new architectural dimension to a building's façade – painting with light. However, when done poorly, it can throw the balance of a building or a view out of equilibrium. Lighting technologies have developed to allow pinpoint, spot and halo-lighting in addition to more traditional floodlighting, which may reduce light pollution, including spill and reflection.

Local authorities should prepare outdoor lighting strategies to ensure that schemes for key buildings and areas are coordinated properly. An integrated plan can help to reduce ambient light levels and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and light pollution.

An appropriate balance between lighting levels and the quality of the night sky is one that is best resolved through consensus within the local community. Well-directed, low-level lighting can make an important contribution to that balance.

Care needs to be taken to conceal fittings and cables. It is vital that lighting schemes are designed as an integral part of any development or street improvement, and not added on at a later date.



Bold lighting schemes can bring historic and contemporary buildings to life in dramatic ways.

General Principles

- Select the target buildings in relation to the overall townscape when scoping a public realm enhancement scheme
- Consider the potential for trade-off between floodlighting and street lighting
- Be aware of the impacts of lighting schemes on energy use, light pollution and wildlife
- Consider whether spot, pinpoint, or halo-lighting should be given preference over floodlighting at the outset of designing schemes
- Consider the daytime aesthetics of light fittings, controls and cabling

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