

# 03

## Street Furniture

### General Principles

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



01 Careful design should enhance accessibility and pedestrian dominance in major public spaces. Buckingham

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

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

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

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

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

**02** At this junction in Winchester, bollards and signage have been kept to a minimum

**03** Streets are transformed by a lack of clutter: Lewes

**04** Over-use of street furniture can lead to clutter. Changes of height and paving may be all that is needed to distinguish footway from road. Normal height kerbs and the careful siting of other items of street furniture can reduce the need for bollards and reduce clutter

**05** Avoid over-emphasis on the location of furniture



## General Principles

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

# Historic street furniture

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

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

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

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



01a+01b Preserved historic furniture can lend character to the most modern of settings

02 If well maintained, historic furniture will last indefinitely



03 Street fittings can be powerful makers of local identity: the gate post to the former iron works in the city centre inspired the design of the 'Canterbury Bollard'



04 Carefully restored drinking fountain. Lewes



05a+05b It is worth recasting local designs like these



06a+06b The retention of fittings at ground level gives texture and interest to the public realm. a Guildford. b Winchester

07 A parish boundary, indicated on the historic marker stone and highlighted in the modern paving

08 An elegant device to provide respite in a sunny spot

## General Principles

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

Preserve historic street furniture

Remove old pieces that have degenerated beyond repair

Consider recasting local designs, ensuring details are accurate and authentic

# Street signs and nameplates

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

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

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

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

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



01 Finger post, designed as part of a co-ordinated suite of street furniture for Tunbridge Wells

02 A myriad of signs and posts helps no one. Horsham



02

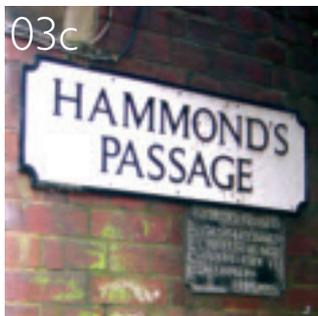
03a+03b+03c Traditional cast iron streets signs are to be cherished



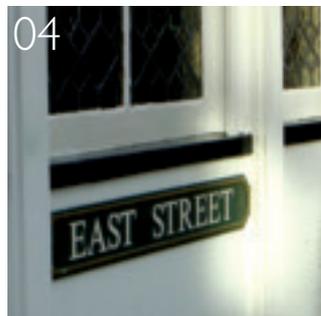
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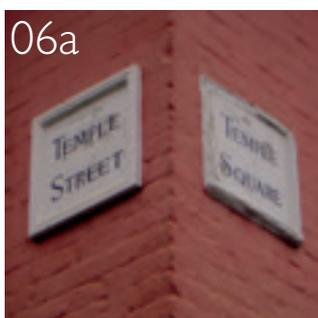
04



05a



05b



06a



06b

## General Principles

- Retain older signs to reinforce local character
- Remove superfluous and redundant signs
- Locate signs on buildings or at the back edge of pavements
- Avoid placing signs on new posts which add to clutter

04 A Horsham street sign designed to co-ordinate with street furniture

05a+05b Local signage tradition should not be sacrificed for the sake of standardisation

06a+06b New signs b, can be designed to match historic signs, a

# Traffic signs

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

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

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

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

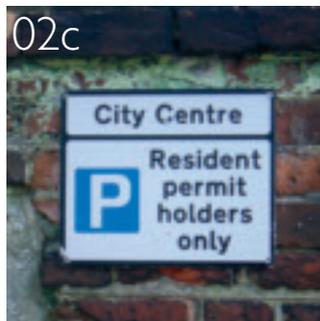
Avoid the need for supplementary poles. Where they are essential, they should be a consistent dark or receding colour and be positioned at the back of footways and clear of circulation routes.

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

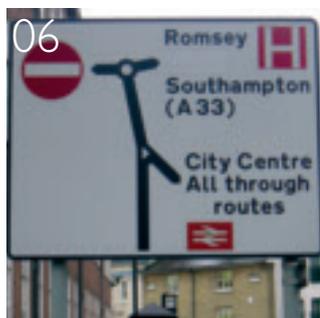


01 A single traditional finger post provides useful directions to pedestrians at an uncluttered junction. Winchester

02a+02b+02b Fixing signs to buildings avoids posts, but proper execution and maintenance is important



03 A profusion of signs: too much for drivers to read, and a mess visually



04 Lots of signs on the same post reduces clutter; but consider whether all the signs are really necessary

05 Historic signs should be retained whenever possible

06 The clarity of this traffic sign benefits from the use of symbols

## General Principles

Restrict signs to those which convey essential information only

Reduce signs to a minimum size and number

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

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

Avoid large backing panels and yellow backing boards

Consider needs of visually impaired people

# Street lighting

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

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

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

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

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

Continual maintenance is essential for personal safety and visual attractiveness.

01



01 Lamps fixed to buildings reduce pavement clutter

**02a** Design co-ordination at Winchester ensures that all street furniture is located at the back of the pavement. Here pedestrian signs are fixed to a lamp standard, avoiding the need for another post



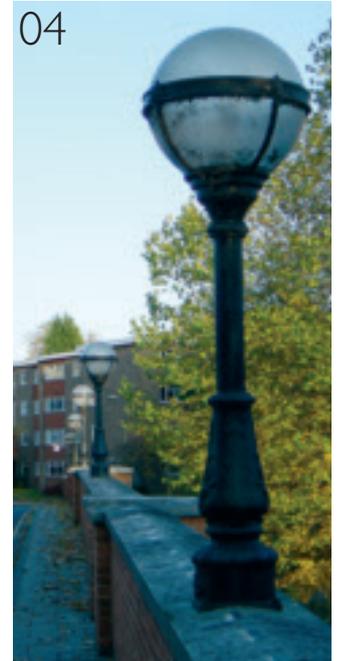
**02b** The effect here is probably the result of an historic accident, but it is attractive, none the less. Lewes



**03** Elegant new lighting and furniture designs are preferable in most cases to 'heritage style' products



**04** There is a strong tradition of 'bespoke' lamps on bridges



**05a**



**05b**

## General Principles

- Select lighting which reflects the function of the place – urban or rural, commercial or residential
- Consider street lighting in conjunction with other light sources, including shop windows and floodlit buildings
- Respect local designs and use authentic materials
- Avoid light pollution
- Avoid clutter by mounting lights on buildings where it is appropriate.
- Consider the daytime appearance of light fittings

**05a+05b** Authentic details are essential where new lanterns are used on traditional posts or brackets. The Causeway, Horsham

# Bollards

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

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

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

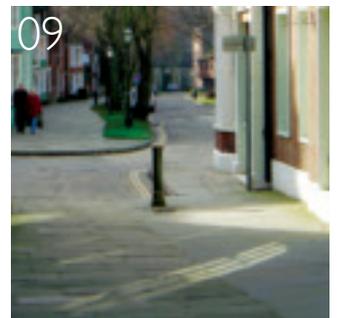
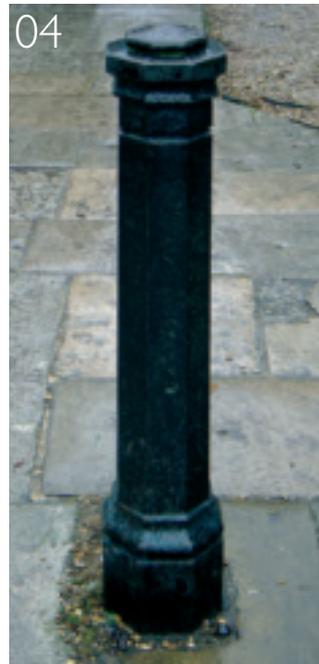
Surviving historic bollards should be retained and restored as they contribute to local character and identity. For continuity it may be appropriate to use re-cast replicas. However, care should be taken not to detract from the integrity of the original. High-quality local materials and crafts should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

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



01 Cast iron bollards can be designed to break off cleanly and safely at ground level if hit, rather than lifting surrounding paving

**02+03+04+05** Historic bollards reflect an astonishing range of local traditions, and should be retained or recast. Consider increasing the colour contrast at the top to aid visually impaired people



**06** An appropriate use for a bollard is to prevent overrun to protect pedestrians on tight corners. A square base would make it easier to integrate this on to paving

**07** If new bollards are really needed, they should be of an unobtrusive and appropriate material

**08** A bold and simple design of new bollards. A core cutter has been used to give a perfect fit into stone slabs

**09** An appropriate use of a single bollard to prevent vehicle access. Horsham

## General Principles

- Bollards should be used as a last resort
- Eliminate the need for bollards through higher quality kerb definition and good design
- Select designs and materials which are appropriate to function and context
- Consider recasting local designs
- Contemporary designs should be simple, elegant and where possible multi-functional
- Bollards should be at least 1000mm high preferably with colour contrast to assist visually impaired people

# 04

## New Equipment

### General Principles

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



01 Careful siting of co-ordinated furniture and equipment has created a comfortable sitting area. Tunbridge Wells

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

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

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

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

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

## General Principles

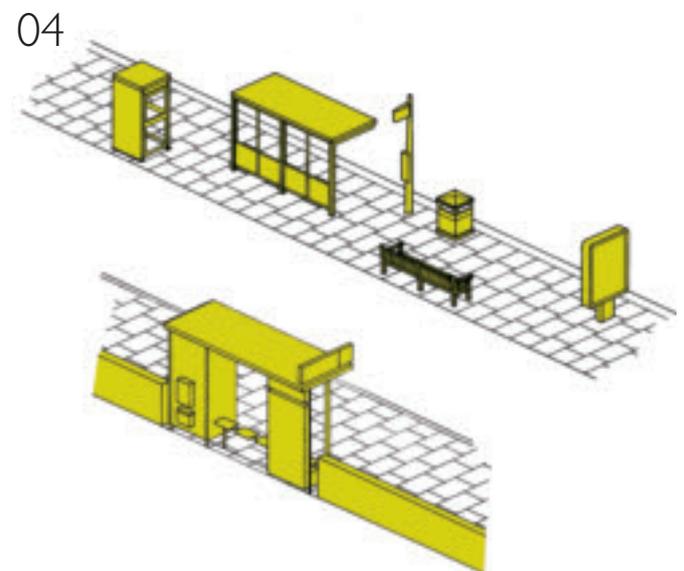
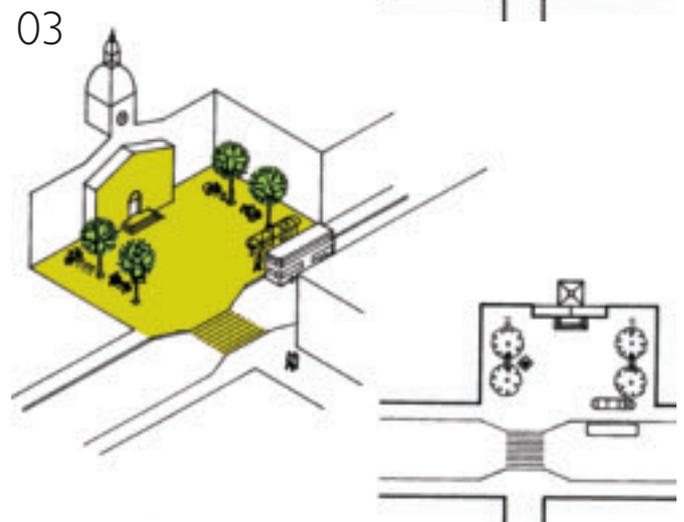
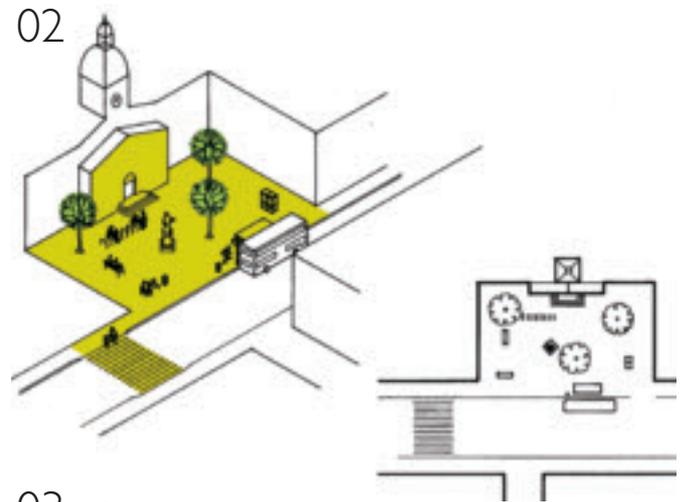
Site equipment at the back of footway

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

02 Sense of space in an "outdoor room" ignored

03 Sense of space in an "outdoor room" enhanced

04 Co-ordination of phone box, bus shelter; bus stop sign, bench, litter bin and advertisement hoarding



# Telephone kiosks

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

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

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

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

## General Principles

Retain traditional telephone kiosks

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

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



**01** A K2 kiosk given pride of place in an open space in Rye. Note the smooth natural stone setts inserted into an area of cobbles to facilitate access

**02** This group of modern kiosks, prominently sited in the Carfax, would benefit from replacement with K6 kiosks to complement the co-ordinated street-scape of this historic area of Horsham

# Post boxes



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

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

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



## General Principles

Retain post boxes of all periods

New boxes should complement existing stock

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



01 An early Victorian post box, proudly restored. Tunbridge Wells

02 A rare listed example in the Vale of Aylesbury

03 The siting of this box in Winchester avoids creating a pavement obstruction

04 Are bollards really necessary here?

05 This prominent re-siting in Chichester replaces any need for bollards to deter indiscriminate parking

# Pay and display machines

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

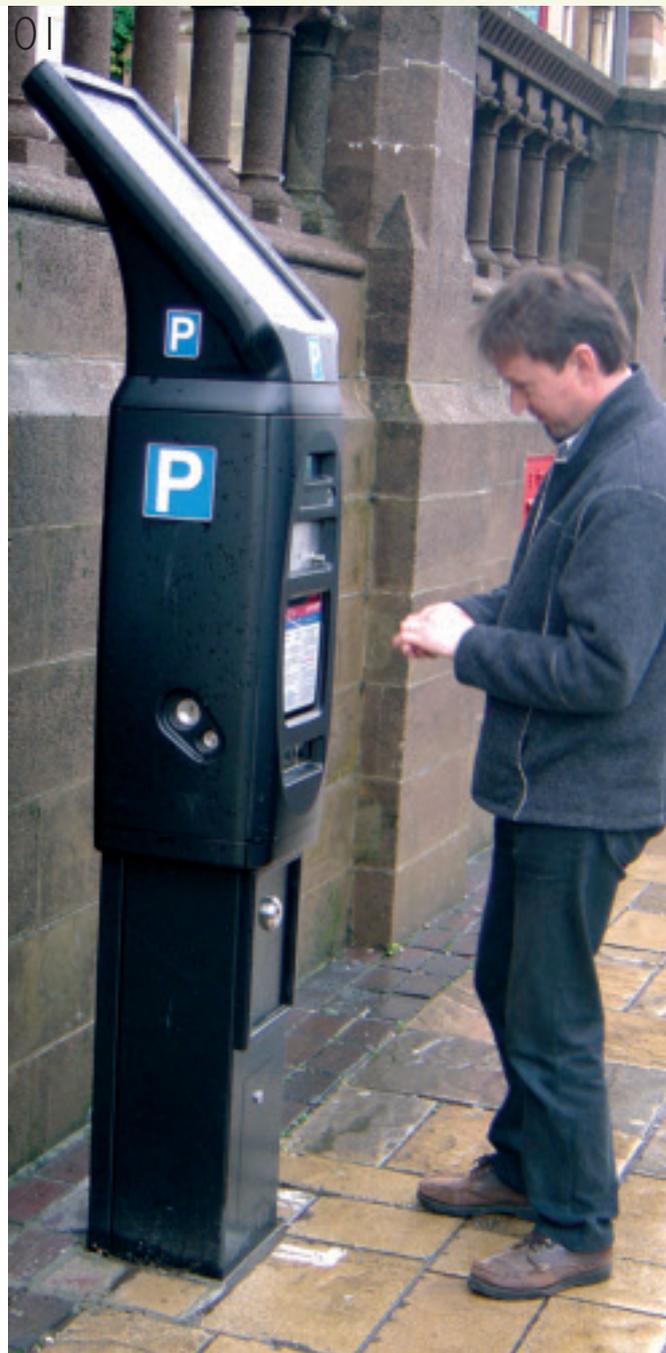
Careful siting of machines and associated signs is essential. They should be sited consistently at the back edge of footways or grouped in a designated area within car parks. Signs should be of minimum size.

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

## General Principles

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

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



01 Modern, solar powered machine sited at the back of the pavement. Winchester

# Street cabinets and litterbins



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

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

Litterbins should be robust. They should be fixed to the ground to prevent vandalism and to 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 are encouraged to adopt a maintenance programme for all street cabinets and bins and remove those which are deteriorating.

## General Principles

Street cabinets should be:

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

01 Bevelled street cabinet designs deter flyposters

02 Salt bins should be removed each spring

# Recycling facilities and bins

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

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

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

## General Principles

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

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



01 A well integrated on-street facility. Guildford

02 There is an urgent need for co-ordinated campaigns against gum litter. Horsham

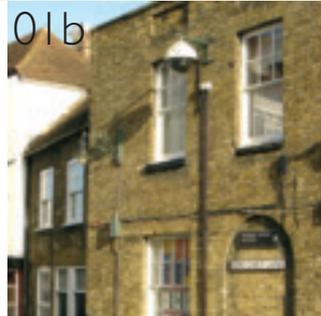
03 Local authority efforts to improve this back street have been undermined by lack of concern from traders. Horsham

04 Commercial waste skips thoughtlessly located at the entrance to a medieval castle

# CCTV cameras



01a



01b

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



01c



02

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

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

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



03a



03b

## General Principles

Locate cameras discreetly on buildings or existing posts

Avoid free-standing columns for cameras or associated signs

### 01a+01b+01c

The fixing of cameras to existing lamp posts and buildings moderates their visual impact

02 Ugly and obtrusive, mast supported cameras such as this should be avoided wherever possible

03a+03b Cameras can be attached to the corners of buildings and painted appropriately to be less visually obtrusive

# New design

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

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

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



01 An elegant modern lantern co-ordinated with other furniture and fittings and designed to reduce light pollution. Horsham

02 A simple, well designed 'off the peg' bench which can fit into a wide variety of contexts and easily maintained. Winchester



03 Excellent, unobtrusive modern design is usually preferable to pastiche traditionalism



04 Well-designed cabinet comprising recycling and litter sections, however it would be better placed at the back of the footway

## General Principles

When considering new design in the public realm, consider:

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

# Cycle parking

The provision of secure cycle parking is important to making streets accessible for all and meeting current sustainability objectives.

The siting and design of cycle stands should be inspired by the surrounding context, with particular care in rural or historic locations. Stands must be robust, 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 adequate lighting. This will deter vandals and thieves and generate a feeling of security amongst users.

## General Principles

Select simple, robust units that will require little or no maintenance

Position the stands where they are convenient for cyclists without obstructing other users



01 Cycle stands should be simple, robust and convenient

02 In some areas, security or long term cycle storage may justify enclosed units, although a less garish colour would be more appropriate

# Advertising

01



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

The visual sensitivity of historical and rural settings and the need to reduce clutter suggests that advertising is not generally acceptable. Where advertising is allowed, it should not be obtrusive or impede pedestrian circulation. Advertising can be incorporated into existing street furniture such as bus shelter panels, or specifically designed litterbins.

02



03



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

## General Principles

Prepare a strategy for advertising that takes account of the special character and distinctiveness of each area

**01+02** Footway 'A' frame advertising can be an obstacle course for pedestrians, and a hazard for visually impaired people

**03** If used, 'A' frames should be sited away from the pedestrian flow