9 Technical guidance: street furniture by third parties

Street name plates

Introduction

The effective design and installation of street name plates is essential for the efficient functioning of the postal and emergency services as well as for the convenience and safety of the general public.

Local authorities are the street naming authority and are responsible for the naming, erection and maintenance of street name plates.

Design criteria

Street name plates are commonly viewed from an angle and therefore it is important that legible lettering is used.

Most local authorities have a particular style they adopt for the majority of streets in their area. The following guidance is provided in order to achieve the required standard.

Street name plates should achieve a good contrast which is usually achieved with black lettering on a white background and coloured postcode and borough name.

The minimum spacing between words should be approximately 50% of the “x” height of the lettering. Top and bottom borders should be approximately 40% of the “x” height. Initial capital letters and lower case lettering should be used for the majority of street name plates. A minimum “x” height of 75mm and a maximum of 90mm are recommended.

The postal area and direction of house numbers may also be included to assist visitors to navigate areas. If district names are to be included on the street name plate, reduced lettering heights should be used.

The preferred material is box-formed vitreous enamel.

Good practice

If it is proposed to move or erect street name plates, the relevant local authority should be consulted.

Street name plates with historic interest (eg, pre-1964 Metropolitan Boroughs) should be preserved wherever possible. It may be possible to leave these in place and provide new street name plates which comply with the design criteria.

Street name plates should be fixed as near as possible to street corners so as to be easily readable by street users.

Street name plates should be mounted so that the lower edge is approximately 1m above the footway surface at sites where they are unlikely to be obscured by pedestrians or vehicles and at approximately 2500mm otherwise.

To reduce street clutter, plates should be mounted on walls or other boundary structures at the back edge of the footway wherever possible. In certain areas it may be appropriate to paint the sign directly on the wall.

When mounted on buildings and structures adjacent to the highway, they should not be mounted at heights in excess of 3600mm. Street name plates should not be mounted on tall poles which add to clutter.

Street names need to be legible throughout the day and night. Where possible, name plates should be fixed so that they will be illuminated by street lighting and free from obstruction by the growth of vegetation.

If it is proposed to rename any street, as part of major streetscape improvement projects, the old name should be crossed out but be clearly legible and should remain for 1-2 years before removal.

Reference

Joint Mobility Unit:

- Sign Design Guide, 2000

London Transport Users Committee:

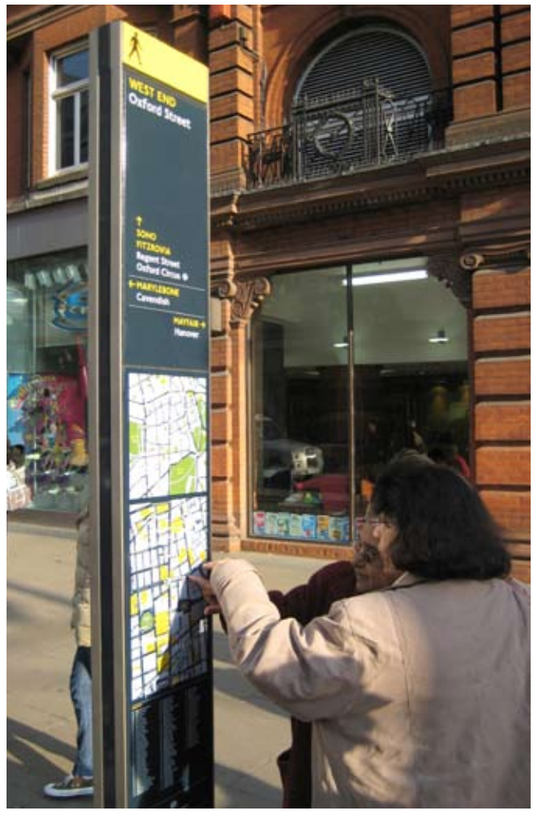
- Where am I? Street name signs in London, 2003

Information signage

Introduction

Information signs on streets are usually supplied by local authorities to help people locate local facilities and amenities. It is important to make information as simple and easily understood as possible for all users.

The needs of people with visual impairments are particularly important. Some boards also have an audio facility for people with hearing impairments.



Design criteria

Information boards must be in accordance with TSRGD, Schedule 4.

The size of the letters used on information boards should be related to the distance from which the sign will usually be read. As a general rule, it is suggested that the letter height should be at least 1% of the distance at which the message will usually be read, subject to a minimum height of 22mm.

Symbols can have the advantage of simplicity and greater clarity but should not be used unless it is known that the readers will understand them.

The characters on information boards should contrast with the background. Apart from signs that are internally lit, dark text on a light background is preferable.

Information boards should have a matt finish and should be well and evenly lit with uniform lighting over the surface of between 100 and 300 lux.

Information boards can be used on the public highway at bus stands or interchange points between routes, subway entrances or other transport interchanges.

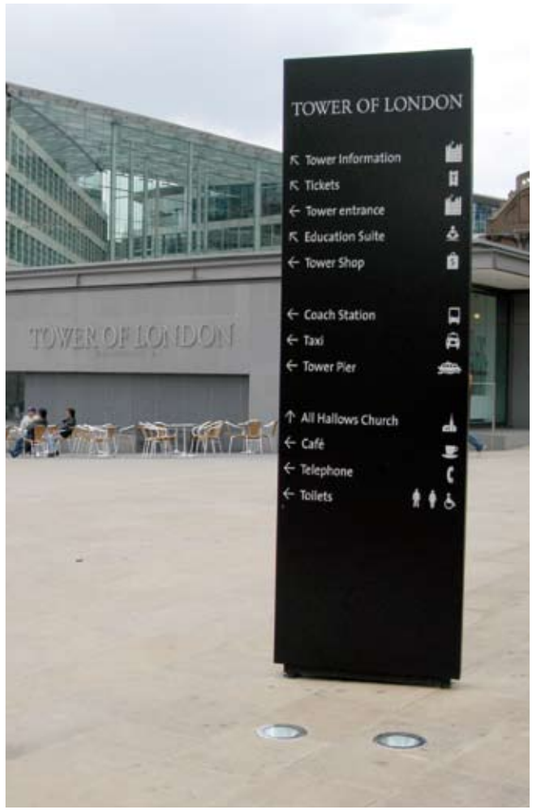
The optimum viewing angles for information boards mounted on walls or other vertical surfaces are ° 30 degrees in the vertical plan and up to 20 degrees either side of a line perpendicular to the sign in the horizontal plane. Wall mounted information boards with timetables and maps should be centred approximately 1400mm from the footway surface and should be placed such that pedestrians will not walk in to the sign face or its edges.

It is expected that the number of information boards on the TLRN will be restricted to areas of very high pedestrian activity.

Good practice

Like signs, pedestrian information boards should be located to minimise visual and physical intrusion into the streetscape. This can be achieved by placing information boards, where practicable, on frontages of buildings, or at the back of the footway parallel to the building facade.

Information boards should encompass all the facilities within the area, particularly any services or facilities for people with a disability (accessible toilets, accessible buses, shop mobility services, etc). Given the limited distances that some ambulant disabled people can manage, it is essential to say how far it is to each facility mentioned.



References

Statutory Instruments:

- Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002

Department for Transport:

- Inclusive Mobility – A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure, 2002

Joint Mobility Unit:

- Sign Design Guide, 2000

Litter bins

Introduction

The provision of litter bins is especially relevant where large numbers of people congregate.

Litter bins are usually provided by the local authority, subject to the approval of the highway authority.

The provision of bins must take account the street cleansing regime as they must be emptied and maintained on a regular basis by the local authority as required by the Environmental Protection Act.

Design criteria

Bins should be robust, functional and of a simple design.

Design teams will need to liaise with the relevant local authority to ensure that the design allows the local authority to empty the bins.

In high security areas, the use of blast-resistant litter bins and litter bins with concealed ground fixing that allow the removal of bins will be required. Advice should be sought from TfL's Transport Community Safety Managers within the Community Safety, Enforcement and Policing directorate.

For advice on blast-resistant products contact the Home Office Scientific Development Branch (HOSDB). Information Service on 01727816400 or email hosdb@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

The capacity of the bin needs to take account of the intensity of use to avoid spillage of contents onto surrounding footways. The use of integrated cigarette disposal units may be considered.

The finish should be consistent with other street furniture on the TLRN within a given locality.

Where graffiti and fly-posting are a problem, chemical-resistant low adhesion anti-graffiti and anti-fly posting finish should be applied.

Good practice

Litter bins must only be provided where they do not cause an obstruction on the footway. Litter bins design should respect special areas and conservation areas.

Care should be taken to avoid placing litter bins where the footway width would be reduced to below 1.8m wide.

As with other items of street furniture, they should be set back from kerbs by at least 450mm and should not obstruct visibility. Access to adjacent property should not be obstructed.

Ease of access for emptying must be taken into consideration.

Reference

British Standards:

- Publicly Available Specification (PAS) 68 and 69, 2005

Streetscape Guidance:

- Palette of materials: Bins

Streetscape Guidance details:

- TfL/SG15 and SG16.

Recycling bins

Introduction

The provision of recycling bins is the responsibility of the local authority. Their function is to encourage residents to recycle household waste, not to provide disposal facilities for commercial or retail establishments. The demand for and provision of recycling bins are likely to increase in line with sustainability policies, Agenda 21 and public awareness.

Design criteria

The functional design of each particular bin is generally related to the type of material being recycled. The bins should be fireproof, robust and contain explanatory graphics.

Access must be provided for collection and emptying and not prevent access to adjoining properties.

Bins should respect the streetscape and should generally not be placed in special areas or where they detract from listed buildings or heritage features.

Good practice

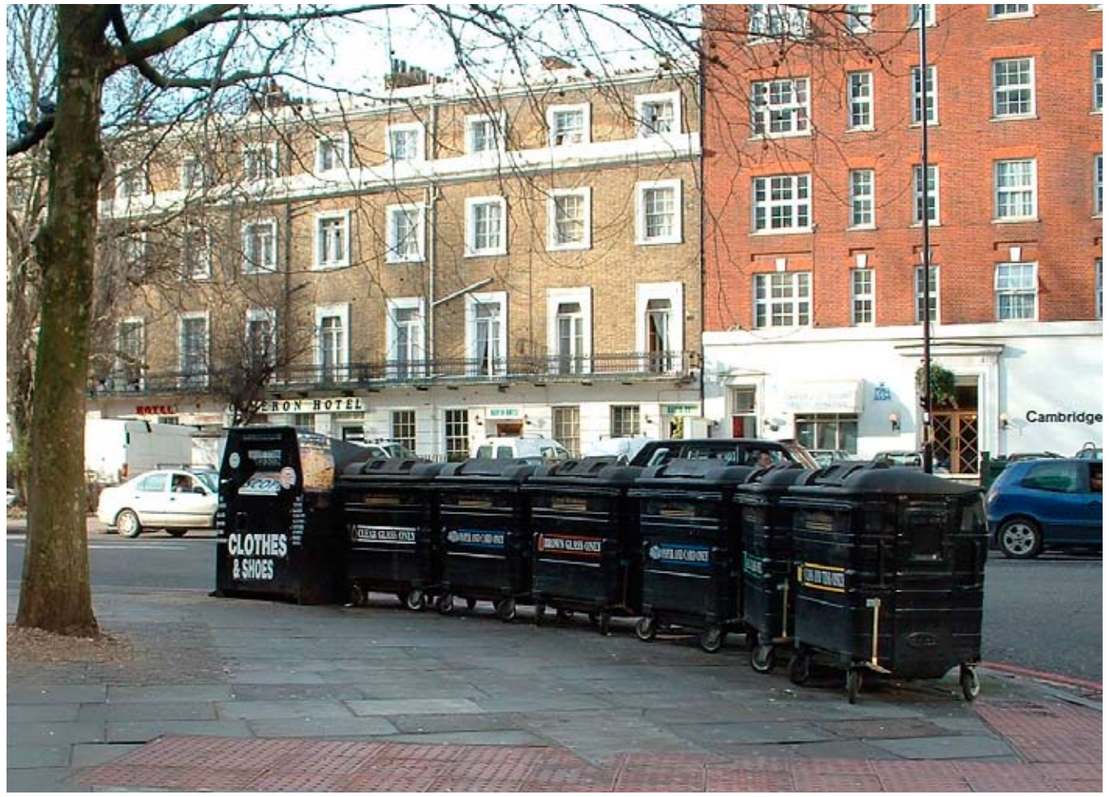
Only in exceptional circumstances should recycling bins be placed on the TLRN. Where this is unavoidable, representatives from the local authority and TfL must agree a suitable location.

Recycling bins should be located where safe access can be ensured. They should be positioned where adequate and safe access and parking for collection and delivery vehicles can be provided. Care is required to ensure that traffic flows are not impeded by collection vehicles.

Recycling bins should not be installed where the footway width would be reduced to less 3000mm.

The structural strength of the footway and the surface finishing materials needs to be considered with the aim of preventing cracked and broken paving flags, which could be subject to heavy loading by collection vehicles.

Concrete based materials are prone to heavy staining from drink residues around bottle banks. Bins should therefore be leak-proof.



Trade refuse bins

Introduction

The provision of bins for trade refuse is the responsibility of either the local authority or private contractors. Their function is to ensure the safe storage of larger quantities of waste materials from commercial and retail establishments. 'Eurobins' or 'continentals' are the general name for the large movable containers.

Design criteria

Trade refuse bins should be fire-resistant and robust and have wheels to manoeuvre them to collection vehicles and have a facility to enable them to be lifted using modern lifting equipment. They should contain explanatory graphics and be located where access to adjacent properties will not be hindered.

The trade refuse bins should be of uniform style and colour where possible and be co-ordinated with other street furniture. Consideration should be given to using higher quality bins and screening if they have to be located in or near special or historic areas.

In high security areas, the use of lockable or sealed bins will be required. Advice should be sought from TfL's Transport Community Safety Managers within the Community Safety, Enforcement and Policing directorate.

Good practice

Trade refuse bins should preferably be located away from the TLRN and where safe access can be ensured.

They should be positioned where parking for collection and delivery vehicles can be provided and traffic flows are not impeded by collection vehicles. Visibility sight lines must be maintained. They should not be placed where the footway width would be reduced to below 3000mm.

Regular emptying and maintenance are required to prevent collection of 'overflow' material collecting adjacent to bins.

Integral discreet graphics are preferred to stick-on labels which tend to peel off.

To prevent cracked and broken paving flags, which could be subject to heavy loading by collection vehicles, the structural strength of the footway and potential damage to the surface materials must be considered.

Responsibility

Installation is the responsibility of the local authority or a private contractor.

Authorisation

A licence from the local authority may be required.

Utility cabinets

Introduction

Utility cabinets and the equipment of utility companies are having an increasing visual impact on the streetscape and can create obstructions on the footway.

These cabinets are generally located above ground for ease of maintenance and reduction in the cost of installation.

Good practice

Low-profile clear matt anti-graffiti finishes should be applied to facilitate the removal of graffiti and fly-posters.

Doors should open so that utility operatives face oncoming traffic.

Cabinets should be finished in a colour co-ordinated with the colour (black or grey) and finish of surrounding street furniture on the TLRN, as required by this Guidance.

Utility companies should be encouraged to use cabinets of a consistent and simple contemporary design.

When utility companies seek to introduce a new cabinet on the TLRN, a minimum clear footway width of 2000mm must be maintained.

Cabinets must not obstruct loading bays, service access points and crossovers.

Cabinets must be positioned out of sightlines away from loading bays, service access points and crossovers. Cabinets should preferably be located at the back of the footway.

If a utility cabinet is to be installed adjacent to the kerb, a clear distance of 450mm must be maintained from the kerb face.

If utility cabinets are to be sited within a planted or grassed area to reduce its visual intrusion, 500mm wide hard surface must be provided around the cabinet to allow access and to facilitate maintenance of shrubs and grass.

Utility cabinets should be placed away from windows or walls where they could assist unlawful entry into properties.

Telephone boxes

Introduction

Telephone boxes are a very recognisable feature of the streetscape with a mixture of traditional and modern corporate designs. Telephone boxes are also being incorporated into some bus shelter designs.

Design criteria

Telephone boxes should not be installed where the footway is less than 2000mm wide.

They should be located away from loading bays, service access points and crossovers and preferably located in recesses at the back of footways. The doors should not open into the path of pedestrians.

If located close to the kerb, the box should be no less than 450mm from the kerb face.

Good practice

Boxes should be positioned to ensure that there is sufficient space to allow mechanised cleaning.

The Telecommunications (services for disabled persons) Regulations 2000 require that 75% of all telephone boxes are accessible by reasonable means by wheelchair users. When telephone companies seek to place a telephone box on the TLRN, they should be reminded of this requirement. Further advice is available from the Advisory Committee on Telecommunications for Disabled and Elderly People.

Design teams should ensure that there is sufficient space around telephone boxes (1850 x 2100mm) for wheelchair access.

Each telecommunication operator has their own design style but they should be encouraged to co-ordinate the box with other street furniture in the vicinity and to respect the surrounding area.

Responsibility

Telephone boxes are the responsibility of the telecommunication operators.

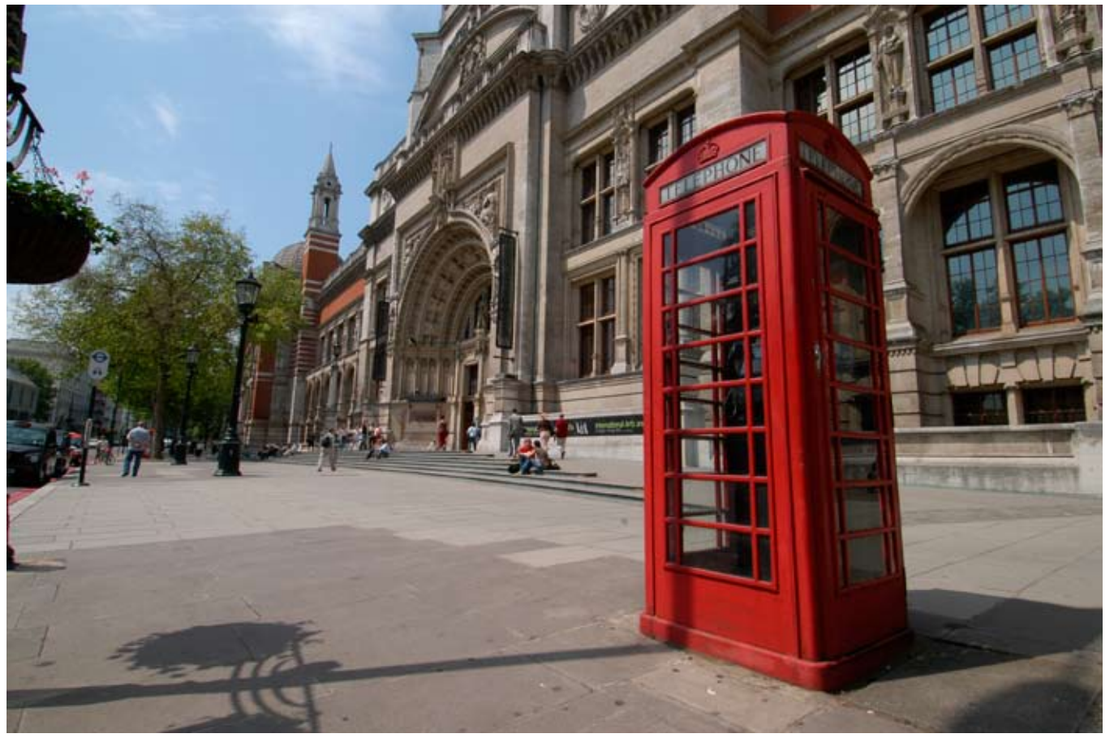
Authorisation

Telecommunication operators have to seek determination from the relevant local planning authority whether prior approval is required for siting and appearance.

Telecommunication operators with a licence under Section 7 of the Telecommunications Act 1984 may install public call boxes on the public highway.

The Highways Act 1980 provides that the local highway authority has to give consent for objects on the highway.

Listed building consent is required where there are proposals to alter or remove a listed telephone box, or those set in or adjacent to a listed building. Refer to Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.



Parking control equipment

Introduction

Throughout many parts of London paid parking (metered, residents' permit or pay and display) controls exist. There is, however, very little paid parking on the TLRN.

Paid parking is excluded from the Red Route controls and is enforced by the local authority.

More recently, the need to control commuter parking adjacent to the central London congestion charging zone has seen an increase in controlled parking zones.

Residents of the area apply to the local authority for a permit and pay an administration charge for a parking permit. Some of these zones extend onto the TLRN and are enforced by TfL.

Design criteria

A range of differing styles and design of paid parking equipment is produced by manufacturers. Meters and pay and display machines are produced in a range of colours, size and finish. These should match that of the rest of the street furniture when located on the TLRN.

Payment equipment should be located at positions convenient for motorists to use.

Parking schemes also require the introduction of signing and road markings to advise motorists of the nature and times of operation of the scheme.

Good practice

Pay and display equipment is preferred to rows of parking meters on the TLRN. This will require the agreement of the relevant Local Authority. The number of signs used to advise motorists of the time and nature of the controls should be kept to the permitted minimum.

Within controlled parking zones waiting and loading signs only need to be erected where yellow line controls differ from the hours of operation of the zone. Parking bays must be signed to indicate who may use them and for what periods.

Signs indicating the hours of operation of yellow line controls and parking bays should be located at the back of the footway or fixed to other items of existing street furniture (eg, lamp columns) to minimise clutter. Signs can also be placed on adjacent building, subject to the necessary consents. The size of sign used should also be the minimum permitted by the TSRGD.

Where Blue Badge holders are required to pay for parking this must be clearly signed adjacent to the bays.

Special consideration is required in the mounting height of payment or ticketing equipment to ensure that it is accessible to wheelchair users. They must be no less than 750mm and no more than 1200mm above the footway.

Any message displays or instructions should be centred approximately 1500mm above the footway.

Instructions should be clearly set out in 16 point lettering with a mixture of cases and unambiguous illustrations.

Push buttons should be 20mm in diameter and slightly raised from the surface of the payment machine.

There should be sufficient space (1850mm x 2100mm) to manoeuvre a wheelchair to the machine.

Signs showing tariffs should not be visually dominant.

Reference

Statutory Instruments:

- Traffic Signal Regulations and General Directions 2002

Post and pouch boxes

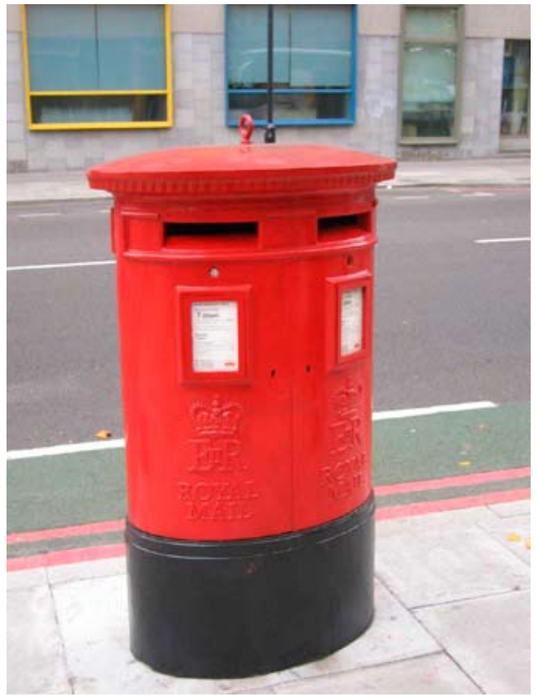
Introduction

The post box is a very recognisable feature within the streetscape and some heritage designs are listed. Free-standing and linked pouch boxes, however, contribute to street clutter and should be removed from the streetscape where possible.

Design criteria

The integration of pouch box within post boxes should be encouraged. Post boxes should not be installed where the footway is less than 2000mm wide.

They should preferably be placed at back edge of footway next to buildings or blank walls and not obstruct visibility sight lines.



Good practice

Post boxes should be placed on a hard surface to allow for easy emptying.

There is a national rolling refurbishment programme removing linked post pouches. When streetscape improvement projects are being undertaken, the Royal Mail should be contacted with a view to removing any linked post pouches within the scheme.

Where pouch boxes are to be located on the TLRN, they should be at the back of footway in recesses, ensuring that there is sufficient space to allow cleaning. Particular care will be required if they are to be sited in special areas.

Responsibility

Post and pouch boxes are the responsibility of the Royal Mail.

Authorisation

Planning consent is not normally required for a post box or self-service stamp machine. However, consent is required for pouch boxes.

Consent must be obtained from the highway authority for installation of post and pouch boxes on the public highway.

Listed building consent is required where there are proposals to alter or remove a listed post box, or those set in or adjacent to a listed building. Refer to Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Smoke vents

Introduction

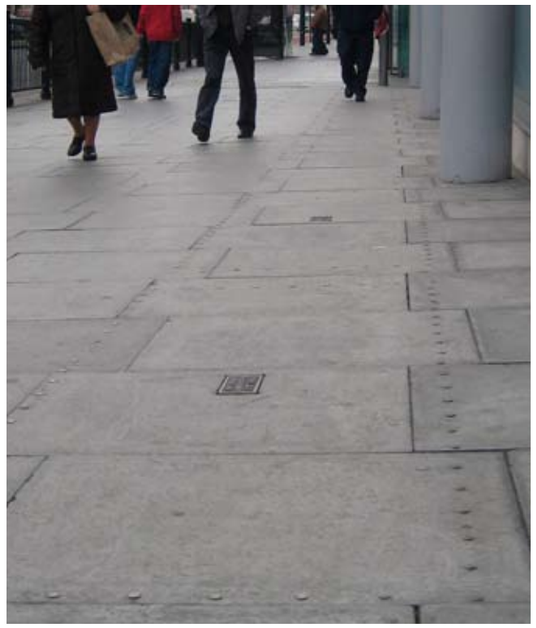
Smoke vents allow the fire brigade to vent smoke from basements by breaking the panels. These are generally located on land belonging to the building they serve. There may be circumstances in which vents occur in the adopted highway, usually by grant of an undersailing licence.

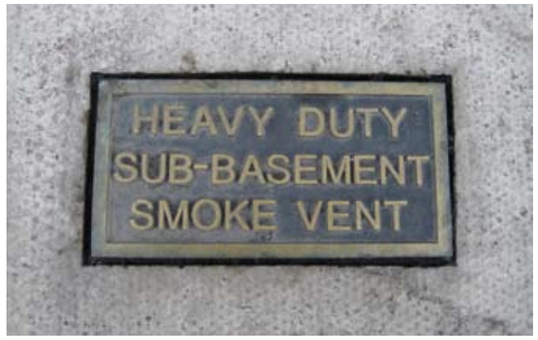
Good practice

Smoke vents should be slip resistant and sufficiently robust to meet appropriate loadings, as well as performing their fire safety function.

Responsibility

Where smoke vents are within the adopted highway, footway maintenance lies with the highway authority. Responsibility for repair of the smoke vent lies with the owner.





Pavement cafés

Introduction

Pavement cafés on the TLRN are usually licensed by the relevant local authority who grant a highways amenity licence in accordance with set criteria for the purposes of eating and drinking or selling of goods.

The Local Authority can also grant licences for various street activities or street trading in order to control the type and style of activity.

Good practice

Pedestrian movement must be taken into consideration, allowing clearance for access and emergencies.

Areas can be demarcated by a variety of means. The most common and visually acceptable is the use of metal studs.

Reference

Department for Transport:

- Inclusive Mobility – A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure, 2002