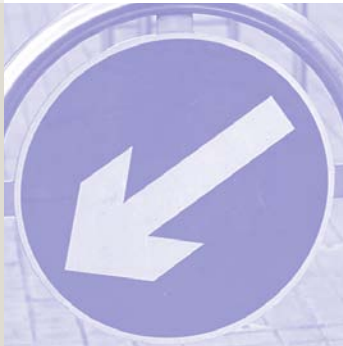


STREETSCAPE



ENTER ➔



Signs and road markings

A good practice guide



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

GENERAL POLICIES →

ILLUMINATION OF SIGNS →

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SIGNS AND ROAD MARKINGS

Eliminate unnecessary signs and markings to reduce visual clutter.

GENERAL POLICIES

- Minimise the use of signs and road markings and use only where they convey essential information
- Use the smallest and simplest format of each sign
- Minimise the number of signs used
- Locate signs on buildings, railings, existing posts and lamp columns rather than new posts
- Only illuminate signs where this is a statutory requirement
- Use fingerpost signs in exceptional circumstances only



ILLUMINATION OF SIGNS

There is a statutory requirement for certain traffic signs to be illuminated. As these can be particularly intrusive, particularly in residential areas, we have explored other alternatives.

UNLIT AND LED LIT HOOP SIGNS

We have successfully obtained authorisation from the Department for Transport (DfT) for an unlit version of the hoop 'keep left signs' provided certain criteria are met and now use this version on traffic islands where they are accompanied by a Belisha beacon or a traffic signal or an illuminated sign facing in the same direction.

Light emitting diodes (LEDs) provide greater energy efficiency and prolonged maintenance periods. At locations where the hoop sign must be lit our preference is to use a LED light source.

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WARNING SIGNS

The purpose of warning signs is to alert drivers to hazards on the road ahead.

Chapter 4 of the DfT’s Traffic Signs Manual provides advice for the use of these signs, including appropriate sizes, location and illumination requirements. Within an urban area like the Royal Borough, many warning signs are unnecessary as vehicle speeds are slower and drivers anticipate restrictions.

Warning signs not only add to street clutter but confuse an already busy environment for drivers. These signs and methods of enlarging them, e.g. backing boards, are only installed if there is a proven need.

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REGULATORY SIGNS

Many regulatory signs, such as parking signs, ‘no entry’ signs and weight limit signs are required for enforcement purposes and the design and siting of signs and associated road markings is controlled by regulations laid down by the DfT. To limit the impact of these signs we limit the number and size to the minimum necessary to comply with the regulations.

At priority junctions ‘give-way’ signs are not usually necessary. At most locations the transverse ‘give-way’ markings across the carriageway are sufficient to alert drivers. If evidence from reviews and safety audits shows the markings to be insufficient, the ‘give-way’ triangle marking will be added. We will only use an upright sign as a last resort.

VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGNS (VMS)

Large information variable message signs have always been resisted as a result of the conflict between the effectiveness of the messages they deliver, their effect on the street scene and their impact on adjacent residential properties.



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PARKING AND LOADING SIGNS AND MARKINGS

The use of signs and markings for parking and loading restrictions is strictly regulated and the relevant advice and guidance is given in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions and Chapter 3 of the Traffic Signs Manual. It is important to ensure that the signs and markings are sufficient for enforcement purposes as drivers can successfully appeal against a penalty charge notice if they can show that the signs or markings were inadequate and they were therefore unaware of the restrictions.

Controlled parking zone entry and exit signs are required at the zone boundary. In addition, each parking place must be individually signed. Careful design layouts and thoughtful designation of bays can take advantage of existing posts and lamp columns to reduce the need for new posts. Where property owners are in agreement it is often possible to attach signs to walls and railings.



Railings are fine for parking signs

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Double yellow lines mean that waiting is not permitted at any time. The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 made it unnecessary to install 'No waiting at any time' signs in these locations. We have already removed all existing signs as part of our streetscape review and no new signs will be installed.

Waiting restriction time plates are not required where single yellow line restrictions correspond with the Controlled Parking Zone hours of operation. Careful consideration should always be given before adopting new restrictions with different operational hours as this will require additional signing.

Yellow lines can be particularly intrusive but cannot always be avoided. Where we need to provide yellow lines to prevent waiting we minimise the impact of these by using as our standard the minimum allowable width of 50mm with the least intrusive shade of yellow, BS 381c No. 355 Lemon. As roads are resurfaced we are systematically changing the older 100mm lines to 50mm lines although on some surfaces, such as cobbled mews, where there are adhesion problems the 100mm wide lines will be retained.

Signs to enforce the Borough-wide overnight lorry-parking ban, for vehicles weighing over 5 tonnes, were erected when the ban was originally introduced about 30 years ago. However, owing to the limited space available on the majority of residential roads in the Royal Borough, lorry parking rarely occurs. These signs are therefore no longer considered necessary. Where we receive complaints about lorry parking and enforcement is required we will consider replacing these signs.



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DIRECTION AND INFORMATION SIGNS

Nowhere is the Council's approach to evidence based management of the street scene more apparent than in its consideration of requests for directional and information signs for vehicular traffic. There must be clear evidence that these non-regulatory signs are strictly necessary for the public to be able to locate the destination before they will be considered. All the primary destinations in the Borough are already signed and it is very unlikely that any additional signs will be needed.

LEGIBLE LONDON WAYFINDING BOARDS

Transport for London (TfL) has developed the Legible London wayfinding scheme to help people to find their way around London. The system displays maps, directional information and walking times on information boards known as 'monoliths' or smaller 'miniliths' and fingerpost signs placed at key locations along walking routes. Similar mapping is also used on the terminals at the docking stations for the Mayor of London's Cycle Hire Scheme.

TfL has trialled the scheme at various locations in Central London and the first example in the Royal Borough is in South Kensington, associated with the Exhibition

Road project. Our second Legible London scheme was introduced in the Portobello Road area and was followed by a third in the Olympia area, including Kensington High Street.

We will consider future schemes in town centre areas where there are large numbers of pedestrians unfamiliar with the area.

Where we adopt Legible London signage in the Borough we will remove any existing unnecessary directional, signs creating a less cluttered environment.



Consulting a minilith at South Kensington



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TEMPORARY SIGNS

Temporary signs are discouraged. Since the introduction of brown tourist destination signs for Earl's Court and Olympia in 1996, the Council does not permit the erection of AA or RAC signs advertising events at these venues.

Temporary signs are allowed for events at Kensington and Chelsea Town Halls to assist drivers trying to locate these venues. Occasionally signs are agreed for one off events in the Royal Borough or for locations outside the Borough (e.g. Battersea Park).

When permitted, signs must conform to regulations, be limited to the minimum required and be removed immediately after they cease to apply. Anyone wishing to place signs on the highway needs authorisation from the Council before signs are erected.



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NON-TRAFFIC SIGNS

In addition to the regulatory signs, warning signs and other signs required for traffic management, we receive numerous requests to place a number of other signs on our streets. The use of these signs needs to be carefully controlled to ensure that they are effective and not simply adding clutter to the public realm.

We do not support their use on a permanent basis but where the provision of a sign can be effective in dealing with a particular issue we will allow temporary signs. These should always be attached to existing lamp columns rather than on new freestanding posts and be removed promptly.



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At multi-lane junctions it is usually necessary to use arrows on the approach to indicate to drivers which lane to use. However, supplementary worded markings (e.g. 'left turn' and route destinations) should not be used unless the existing arrow markings have proved to be insufficient.

Hatching at corners or along the centre of roads is not acceptable, unless there is a proven safety issue and yellow box markings should only be introduced if there is a proven problem of obstruction of the junction.

'School keep clear' markings should only be laid at pedestrian entrances to schools, which are used by children. There is no need for vehicular entrances to be marked in this way unless they are also used by pedestrians. Each case should be examined in detail to take into account road layout and conditions.

The use of centre-line markings should be limited to the approaches to junctions and other locations where they are necessary for reasons of road safety.

For all new pedestrian crossings the standard length for zigzag markings will be two marks except where there is insufficient visibility on the approach to the crossing. Zigzags should not extend into side roads.



There is no need for longer zigzag markings – Kensington High Street



Minimum markings at crossing near Holland Park