

Keeping you informed

A More Inclusive Exhibition Road

Blind and partially sighted people will be able to distinguish between pedestrian and traffic zones on the new, kerbsless Exhibition Road, thanks to special tactile paving.

The 800mm 'Corduroy paving', has been undergoing months of testing, in lab conditions, and on a section of Exhibition Road itself and early results are very encouraging. They indicate that the paving will be readily detected by visually impaired people without causing additional difficulty for people with mobility problems.

The way is now clear for it to be fully installed along the Exhibition Road, though the Council will continue to monitor its impact in case issues arise.

Testing followed concerns expressed last year by The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association about the possible impact on visually impaired visitors of the Council's single surface Exhibition Road scheme. In response, the Royal Borough restated its commitment to creating the most accessible Exhibition Road ever and promised to work with Guide Dogs on finding a "tactile delineator" that would effectively mark the pedestrian and traffic zones.



Tactile paving being tested

Councillor Sir Merrick Cockell, Leader of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, said:

"From the outset we wanted Exhibition Road to be one of the most accessible cultural quarters in the world and to work with disability groups to make that ambition a reality. We are glad to have had Guide Dogs as a critical friend of the scheme and we think we now have a way forward.

"Next year the world can look forward to the unveiling of a breathtaking new Exhibition Road, which we believe will be genuinely accessible to disabled people for the first time in its history."

David Cowdrey, Head of Public Policy and Campaigns for Guide Dogs, said:

"We welcome the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's research and commitment to the testing programme. The initial results are encouraging but until there has been some longer term monitoring, it is too early to think of this as a design solution you can pick off the shelf and apply anywhere. Only by using inclusive design principles can we hope to create streets that are fit for the 21st Century."

Visit www.rbkc.gov.uk/exhibitionroad for details of the testing and a full report of the results.

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THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
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AND CHELSEA**

New London Awards

The Exhibition Road project received its first award on 12 July at a ceremony at Guildhall in the City. The project was the unbuilt winner of the Placemaking category of the New London Awards. These awards celebrate the best schemes in the capital both built and on the drawing board – they recognise the impact projects have on their surroundings and their contribution to London as well as their architectural quality.

Award-winning schemes will be displayed at a 12 month public exhibition at NLA, The Building Centre, 26 Store Street, London WC1E 7BT. See www.newlondonarchitecture.org/newlondonawards for more details.



Bartok returns



We will be bringing Bartok back to South Kensington at the end of the month. The two metre high bronze statue of the Hungarian composer Bela Bartok by the eminent Hungarian sculptor Imre Varga will be located on the pavement in Old Brompton Road near the junction with Pelham Street, in front of Malvern Court.

Crossing Pelham Street

The new road layout in South Kensington has transformed the area by replacing the 1960's one-way gyratory with a much more pedestrian friendly scheme with simple straight-across crossings and a new public space outside the station. But we know that some of you have concerns about the give way junction of Pelham Street with Old Brompton Road.

The new traffic system is working well, but we have found that more traffic is using Pelham Street than we anticipated. Because of this and the numbers of pedestrians crossing Pelham Street we have decided to introduce a raised entry treatment in Pelham Street at the junction.

We cannot put traffic lights in Pelham Street without causing gridlock. We cannot put a zebra crossing on the Pelham Street junction with Brompton Road because the Department for Transport do not allow zebra crossings on junctions. It would be pointless and dangerous to put a zebra crossing some way back from the junction where pedestrians would not use it.

Our experience in Kensington High Street shows that raised entry treatments are successful in helping pedestrians to cross at busy locations. We will start work in the autumn and expect it to take about ten weeks. We will let you know when we have finalised the dates and the diversion routes.

This newsletter is delivered to all homes, businesses and organisations in the Exhibition Road area. Every month we will let you know how the project is progressing, as well as introducing you to some of the people and the work they are carrying out on this £25 million project.



A face on the street

This month we introduce a team member who is more 'behind the scenes' than 'on the street'.

This is Wayne Solman who is our Site Project Manager. He works for Schal, an international project management company who we employ to help deliver this scheme. Wayne was part of the original team put forward by Schal, so he has been with us from the very beginning. Before that he worked on the redevelopment of Trafalgar Square so he is used to high profile London projects. Wayne is based in our site offices in Queen's Gate working alongside the contractor and our supervisory teams. His role is to act as the link between the designers, the Council and the contractor to ensure that the project is built on time and on budget.



MAYOR OF LONDON

City of Westminster