

Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site

Public Realm Design Guide



Foreword

The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, Public Realm Design Guide was commissioned to provide a cost effective and sustainable framework for the design, management and maintenance within the public realm of the World Heritage Site.

The quality of the public realm is an important component of the World Heritage Site. What it looks like and how it functions are all part of reinforcing local distinctiveness and about contributing to sustaining and enhancing the area and its community.

The purpose of the guide is to protect and where necessary improve the quality of the public realm by helping to reduce, correct and prevent uncoordinated and inappropriate construction details and materials as well as providing guidance to help coordinate the many agencies which are responsible for creating and maintaining the quality of street works.

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Contents

Introduction

The Purpose of the Guide	4
What is the public realm?	5
How to use the guide	6
The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site	8

Part One: Defining the quality

General character	9
How the area has changed	9
Subdivisions within the World Heritage Site	11
Street character types	13
General Conclusions	17

Part Two: The Guide

Introduction	19
---------------------	-----------

Features

Ground surfaces

General	20
1. Road surfaces (carriageways)	20
2. Pavements (footways) and footpaths	21
3. Kerbs	22
4. Verges	23
5. Drainage channels	24
6. Steps	25
7. Handrails	26

Street furniture

General	27
8. Signs	28
9. Lighting and cameras	30
10. Seats	32
11. Bollards and railings	33
12. Bins, boxes and machines	34
13. Structures, kiosks and bus shelters	36
14 Boundaries	37

Planting

General	38
15. Street trees	38
16. Planters and hanging baskets	39

Public art

17. Public art	40
----------------	----

Bringing it all together	41
---------------------------------	-----------

Appropriate design options for the character of each street	41
---	----

Procurement, sourcing and workmanship	42
--	-----------

Part Three: Co ordination	43
----------------------------------	-----------

Part Four: Appendices

Construction details	44
Action to reduce sign clutter	47

Introduction

The Purpose of the Guide

The guide provides instruction and advice on the way in which the public realm in the World Heritage Site is designed, managed and maintained.

It builds upon the experience of English Heritage and its document *Streets for All West Midlands*.

The guide is intended as a reference manual of good practice for all those involved in the long chain of decision making, including councillors, highway, traffic and lighting engineers, landscape and urban designers, town planning and conservation staff, amenity societies, utility companies, including their many tiers of management, down to the people who are actually engaged in physical work to the public realm.

The guide:

- identifies the elements that make the public realm distinctive: its landscape, materials and traditional detailing,
- addresses common problems that erode the distinctive quality,
- explains how good integrated design and management is necessary to deliver a better public realm.

What is the Public Realm?

The term 'public realm' can be defined and understood in different ways. For the purposes of this guide it is defined as all the highway and hard surfaced spaces within the World Heritage Site which are freely accessible by the public. This includes all of the streets, roads, footpaths and public spaces. It does not include the green open spaces and woodland.

This guide specifically addresses the quality of:

- the ground surfaces
- the street furniture

It also reinforces the importance of addressing these issues together in a coherent and coordinated way. It is the combined effect of all features which give the public realm its overall quality and character.

Whilst the guide does not provide information about the architecture, buildings and large scale structures within the World Heritage Site they obviously form an extremely significant and substantial part of the physical, visual and functional context of the public realm and are therefore referred to within the guide where appropriate.

The public realm we see in the World Heritage Site today is the product and accumulation of many years of historic development and change as well as the affect of the continuing activities of many agencies such as highway maintenance, each with its own tasks and priorities.

A challenge for the design and management of the public realm in the World Heritage Site is to value, sustain and enhance the qualities which make the area special whilst meeting contemporary needs.

How to use the guide

The guide is organised into four sections :

Part One defines the quality of the World Heritage Site and identifies the key principles which create that quality and are important to the public realm. It also emphasises the importance of integrated design and management of the public realm.

Part Two contains information about the features which make up the public realm and instructions to ensure that their design is brought together and is appropriate to the character of each street.

This part also provides information about procurement sourcing and workmanship.

Part Three contains information about how to coordinate the agencies responsible for the public realm.

Part Four contains construction details and ways to reduce sign clutter

The document contains two types of coloured box :



Text within green boxes contains key principles and features



Text within red boxes contains key instructions

Background

The Ironbridge Gorge area is “...under pressure from traffic, visitors and worse still from the uncontrollable desire to enhance the place”.

Sir Neil Cossons in ‘Landscape of Industry’

‘The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site is full of historic and visual incident provided by buildings, structures and landscape and the human activity of the area. The public realm should be a complement to this visual and human interest. It should not be in competition with it, either in terms of incremental accumulation of street furniture, signs and markings or in terms of unnecessarily complex and rich design.

Historic surface treatments, street furniture and boundaries should be retained and conserved. For new interventions there will be a hierarchy of design treatments appropriate to different situations and types of thoroughfare and space. These will be informed by our knowledge of what was used throughout the area’s history but the overall policy should be that they should be simple and uncluttered and of the best materials appropriate for the type of space or thoroughfare that are affordable in execution and maintenance.

The public realm should be the stage not the show: the gallery wall not the painting’

Ref. English Heritage

Much of the public realm is the result of a series of uncoordinated activities by different public sector agencies and their contractors, as they carry out their normal day to day functions. As a result, street furniture such as signs, bins and equipment are put in place as they normally would be anywhere in the country without sufficient consideration of the specific context of an area. Gradually and incrementally over time the effect of this becomes very pronounced.

The situation is compounded by the large number of organisations, agencies or individuals within them who authorise, or carry out independent works in the public realm. Eg. one can identify at least fourteen departments within Telford & Wrekin who are responsible for different aspects of the public realm. Add to these the statutory service companies and their contractors and the total could be in excess of forty different responsible bodies.

Every intervention to a street surface or additional item of street furniture is undertaken for a reason eg. it follows public policy, it is an essential repair or for health and safety reasons etc. The purpose of this work is to help provide a level of guidance so that better and more informed decisions and choices can be made and that work by different agents within the public realm is co-ordinated.

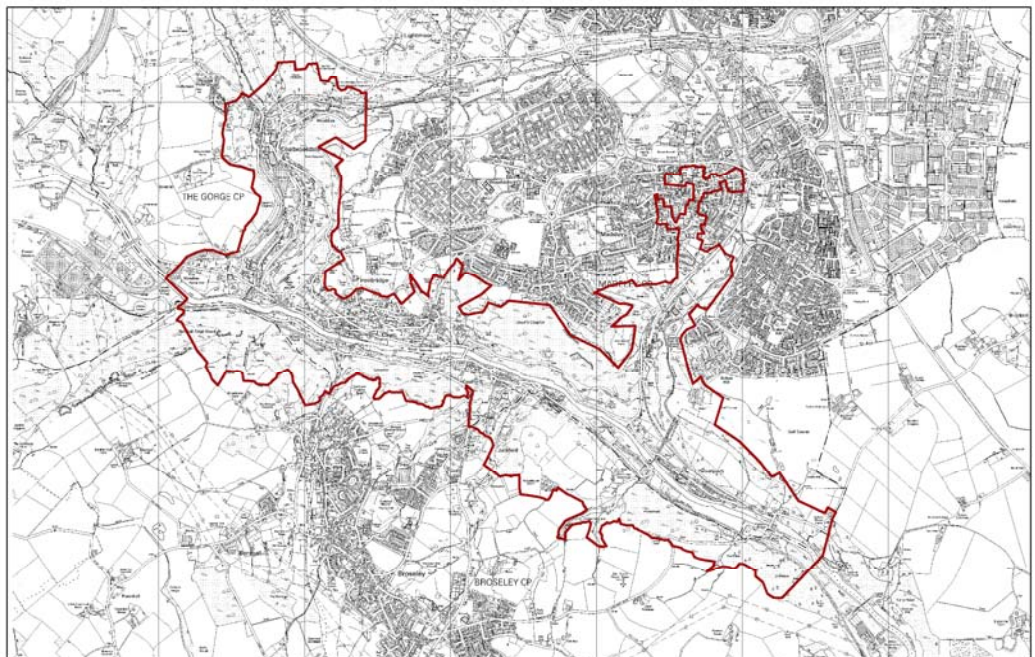
The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site

The World Heritage Site was designated in 1986 and covers an area of 5.5 km² (550ha). Most of it is located in Telford, Shropshire.

The site incorporates a 5km length of the steep-sided Severn Valley together with two smaller river valleys extending northwards to Coalbrookdale and Madeley. The area contains a number of settlements including Coalbrookdale, Ironbridge, Jackfield, Coalport and Madeley

The area offers a powerful insight into the origins of the Industrial Revolution and also contains extensive evidence and remains of that period when the area was the focus of international attention from artists, engineers, and writers. The site contains substantial remains of mines, foundries, factories, workshops, warehouses, ironmasters' and workers' housing, public buildings, infrastructure, and transport systems, together with traditional landscape and forests of the Severn Gorge.

Today the site is a living, working community with a population of approximately 4000 people. It is also a historic landscape that is interpreted and made accessible through the work of a number of organisations, in particular, the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (established in 1967 to preserve and interpret the remains of the Industrial Revolution within the Ironbridge Gorge) and the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust (established in 1991 to manage the woodland and grassland in the Gorge).



The extent of the World Heritage Site

Part One: Defining the quality of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site

General Character

The use of **Iron** has a strong historic association with the area and has been adapted for many uses including building details: lintels and window frames, as well as external details such as posts and gates.

Cast iron kerbs are an appropriate feature of the area but are in fact a late 20th century introduction.

Local **stone** is used in significant and larger buildings. (both for the building and for boundaries.) In some cases boundaries have lower courses in stone with brick above.

Although there is existing use of stone slab pavements, this is not a historic surface material. Roads would have historically been formed of dark crushed stone, which in the later nineteenth century would have been bound or replaced with a tar based material.

Brick is commonly used in buildings, boundaries and ground surfaces such as drainage gullies.

The Ironbridge area was designated as a World Heritage Site because of its unique historic significance as the birth place of the Industrial Revolution and because of its related unique physical quality.

Key features of the unique physical character include the:

- Dramatic natural setting.
- Use of local materials, particularly iron and brick
- Use of local skills.
- Robust, industrial vernacular integrity of design innovation.
- The informal 'vernacular' townscape (see page 13).

How the area has changed

The Ironbridge Gorge area has changed considerably over the past 200 years. Dramatic changes began to take place with the expansion of iron working in the early 1700's. By the mid 1800's the area was an intensive and aggressive area of industrial activity but by the beginning of the 20th century it had become a place of decline and dereliction.

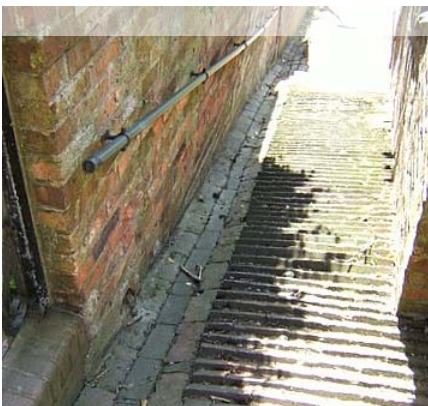
Today it is a thriving attractive place. Most of its buildings and structures have been repaired, its monuments to the industrial past restored and valued and the natural garden and woodland features have matured and clothe the area in a generous context of trees and vegetation.

The WHS is a place which has to balance a number of needs and qualities including:

- A place which supports a living 21st century community.
- The conservation of an historically authentic place.
- A place which provides an attractive experience of the historic past.
- The management of a very green natural landscape.



Cast iron was used for windows, lintels and garden gates; brick for most buildings and for draining channels



After intensive industrial activity in the 1800's, by the beginning of the 20th century the area had become a place of decline



The area is now a thriving place with the fabric of the industrial past restored and valued within a generous context of trees and vegetation

Subdivisions within the World Heritage Site

The World Heritage Site is an assembly of several different areas. Each area has its own slightly different quality created by subtle differences of location, position, orientation, settlement, form and use and indeed local residents will often identify themselves with these areas first - rather than with the larger Ironbridge Gorge or World Heritage Site.

The area contains 5 named settlements. These are:

- Ironbridge
- Coalbrookdale
- Coalport
- Jackfield
- Madeley

Ironbridge is located on the south facing steep slopes of the north side of the River Severn. It is the prime destination for most tourists because it is central to the area and it contains the iconic Iron Bridge. It provides the immediate setting for the bridge and is the retail centre of the area.

Coalbrookdale still retains industrial activity and is located in its own north-south subsidiary valley. Large industrial buildings occupy the limited areas of flat land in the valley bottom with the rest of the settlement scattered across the valley slopes.

Coalport is a separate hamlet, at the east end of the gorge. It includes a mix of development including the Coalport China Museum and an eclectic range of housing from different historic periods inc. the 20th century.

Jackfield is a diverse development mix on the south side of the river including housing, small scale commercial and museum uses.

Madeley is located above the steep valley and is now surrounded by the more recent development of Telford. Whilst its position means that it is slightly different to those areas located down in the gorge itself, it is an essential part of the history of the World Heritage Site and it still retains much historic built fabric which relates to that shared history. It retains a high street rising up a steep slope flanked by houses, shops, pubs, chapels and church, as well as a variety of historic streets and a distinguished parish church.

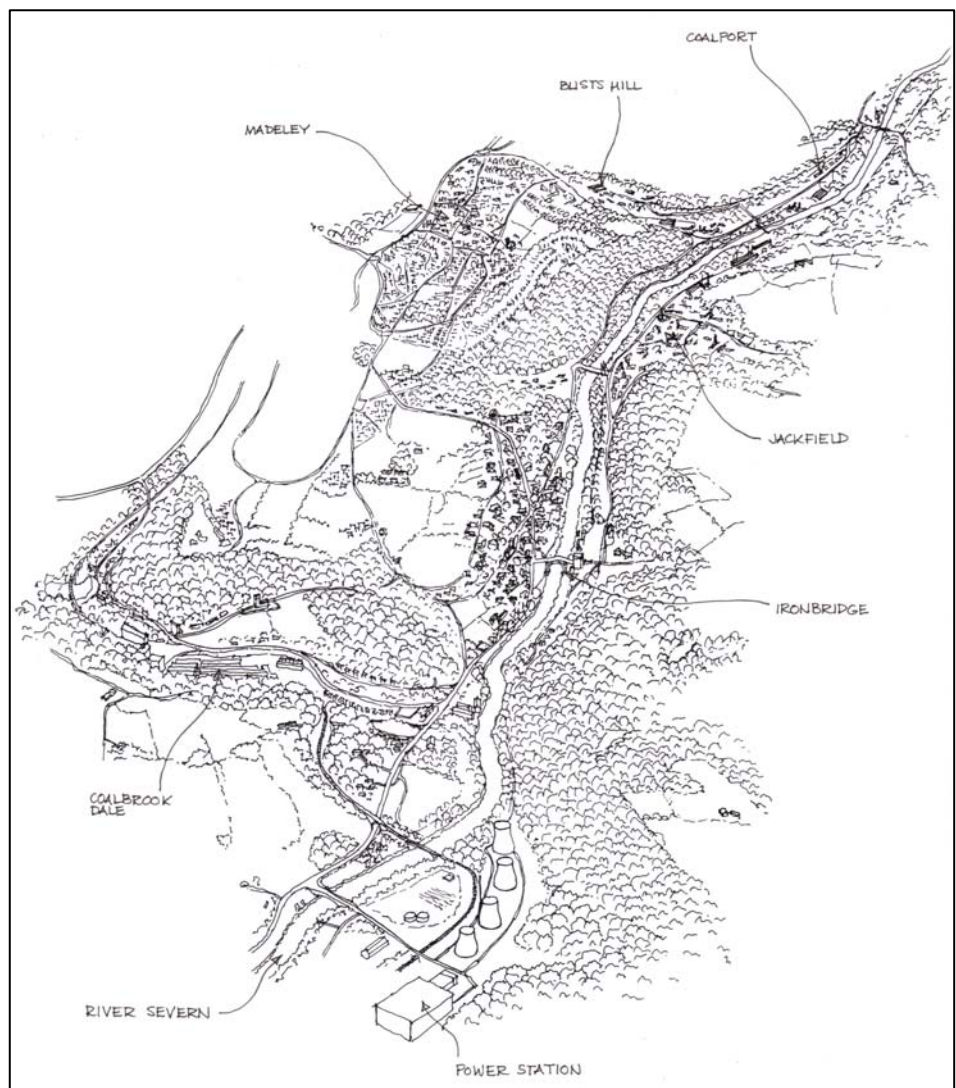
Whilst each area displays a different character, and local residents identify with their own settlements, those differences appear to be derived from features other than the public realm ie. there are few if any public realm features that particularly distinguish one area from another. There are no traditional ground surfaces that are distinct in one settlement but not in another and there are no particular themes of historic street furniture in one settlement that marks it out as being different from the others.

It would therefore appear that to a large degree, it may be possible to provide a set of general 'rules' for the design and management of the public realm in the WHS responding to the overall character of the place and further, that this should not undermine the local distinctiveness of the individual 'sub' areas.

What is evident however is the detrimental effect of the use of 'fake' and 'anywhere' materials and street furniture as this will undermine the distinctive character and quality of both the overall WHS and that of the individual areas.

Key principles:

- Local distinctiveness is undermined by the cluttered and wide use of 'anywhere' street furniture.
- To accentuate the local characteristic of each locality, it is important to remove and reduce all the extraneous clutter and street paraphernalia.
- Adhere to rules on design and management deemed acceptable and appropriate for the World Heritage Site.



Street character types

Whilst it would not appear that the public realm has a significant effect upon the distinctiveness of individual areas within the WHS, the same cannot be said of its individual streets and spaces.

The public realm of the World Heritage Site is formed by its streets and urban spaces. These streets and spaces can be grouped into different categories which share similar visual and functional characteristics.

The WHS Public Realm Guide identifies the following street character types:

1. Urban main road
2. Urban minor road
3. Urban wider footpath
4. Village main road
5. Urban narrow footpath
6. Suburban minor road
7. Rural main road
8. Rural minor road
9. Rural footpath
10. Sui Generis (unique streets and spaces) eg.
 - Wharfage
 - Madeley High Street
 - Market Square, Ironbridge.

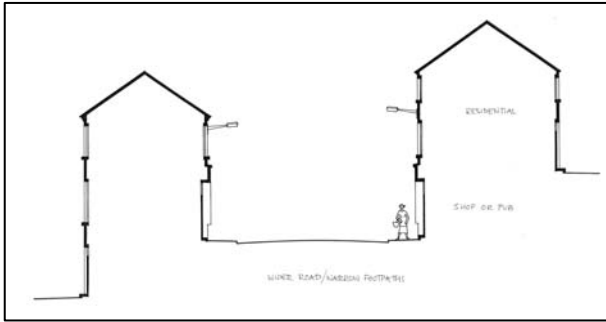
The key features of each street character type are analysed on the following pages:

- Road: purpose, surface material and width.
- Drainage channel: style, material.
- Kerb: style, material.
- Pavement: surface material, width.
- Verge: width.
- Boundary (back edge of pavement): building height and purpose, wall height, railings, fences or hedges.
- Beyond the boundary: buildings, height and purpose, gardens, park, open space, countryside.

Informal Vernacular Townscape

The settlements of the World Heritage Site have developed over time and are not laid out according to a formal grand plan. A quality and the beauty of the townscape in the World Heritage Site is partially derived from the 'organic' layout. This not only creates ambiguities in what is *public* realm and what is not, but also produces a sequence of streets and spaces which are interesting and stimulating to experience and explore.

It also means that there are many unadopted spaces.



1. Urban main road

Two lane road, blacktop, 7 – 8 metres wide

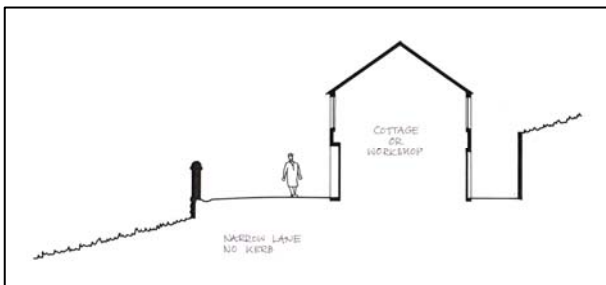
No distinct drainage channel

Concrete kerbs

Narrow pavements on both sides, 1-1.5 metres wide

Boundary walls and buildings at back edge of pavement

Beyond boundary: no front gardens, two and three storey shops, businesses and houses



2. Urban minor road

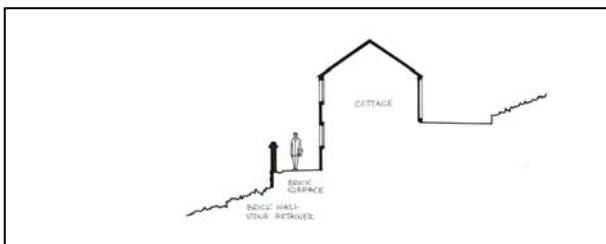
Two way road, blacktop, 6 metres wide

Brick drainage channel

No kerbs or pavements

Boundary walls and buildings

Beyond boundary: no front gardens, two storey houses



3. Urban wider footpath

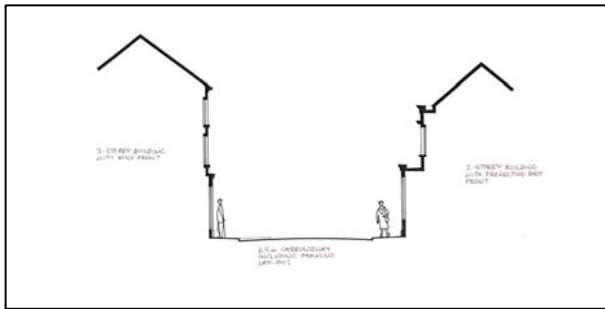
Path for pedestrians only, blacktop, 2-3metres wide

Brick drainage channel

No kerbs or pavements

Boundary walls and buildings

Beyond boundary: no front gardens, two storey houses, open land



4. Village main road

Two way road, blacktop, 6 metres wide

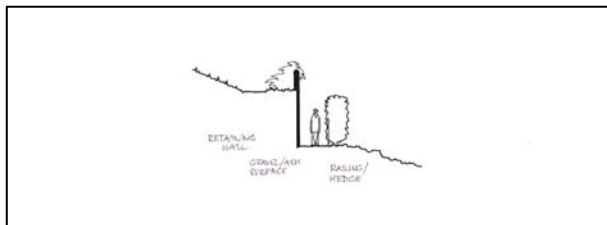
No distinct drainage channel

Concrete kerbs

Narrow pavements, blacktop, on both sides, 1 metre wide

Boundary walls and buildings

Beyond boundary: no front gardens, two and three storey buildings



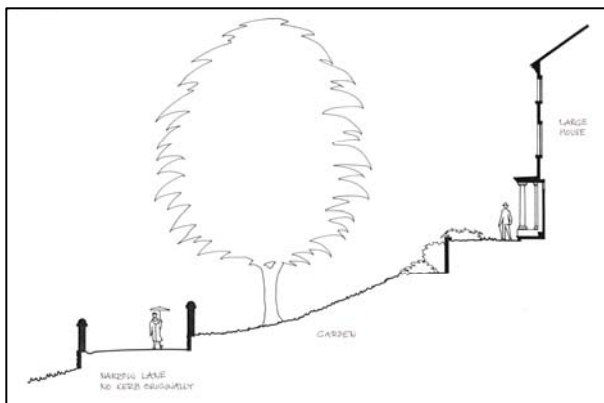
5. Urban narrow footpath

Footpath for pedestrians only, clinker or engineering brick surface, 2 metres wide

No distinct drainage channel

No kerbs or verges

Boundary walls and hedges



6. Suburban minor road

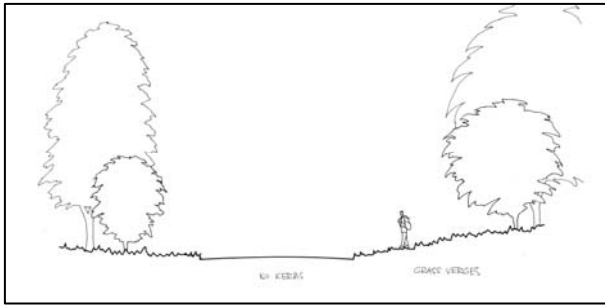
Two lane road, blacktop surface, 5 metres wide

Brick drainage channel

No pavement or verges.

Boundary walls

Beyond boundary: gardens and two storey houses



7. Rural main road

Two way road, blacktop surface, 7 metres wide

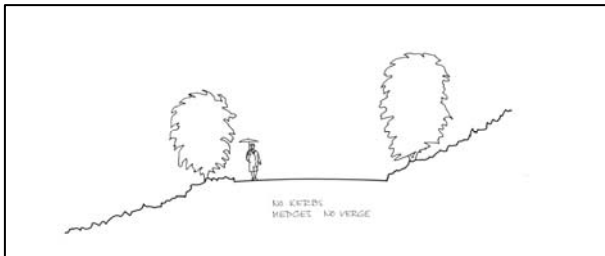
No distinct drainage channel

No pavements

Grass verges

Boundary rural fences and hedges

Beyond boundary: open countryside



8. Rural minor road

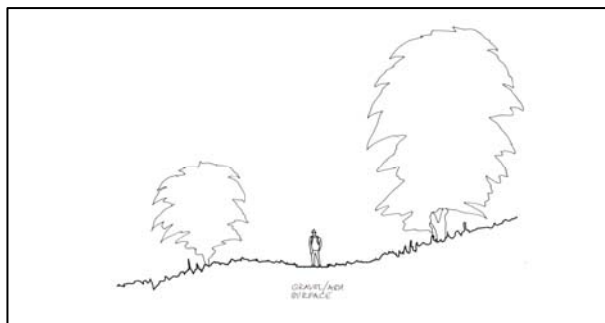
Two way road, blacktop surface, 6 metres wide

No distinct drainage channel

No pavements or grass verges

Boundary walls and fences

Beyond boundary: gardens and countryside



9. Rural footpath

No vehicles, blacktop surface, 2-3 metres wide

No distinct drainage channel

No pavements

Grass verges

Boundary indistinct

Beyond boundary: countryside

Key Principles:

- The appropriateness of the design and management of the public realm is significantly determined by the type of street and space in which they occur.

General Conclusions

Context

The quantity, quality and distribution of the public realm in the Ironbridge Gorge area **effects** the character and quality of the World heritage Site (how it looks, how it is experienced and how it functions) and in its turn – the public realm is **affected** by the overall historic and physical quality and character of the WHS ie. it both helps determine and is determined by the overall character and quality of the WHS.

'Contemporary' design or 'traditional' design

There is a common misconception that in deciding upon items such as street furniture, the fundamental choice is between the use of 'contemporary design' or 'traditional' design. This is both an impractical and an unhelpful distinction, not least because the words 'contemporary' and 'traditional' can mean different things and be defined in many different ways by different people.

Whichever approach is taken they must always be informed by the following:

- At the height of its industrial past the area was at the forefront of innovation and indeed, the challenging uniqueness of the area will often call for creative 'innovative' solutions. ie. innovation was and continues to be a legitimate design approach in the World heritage Site.
- Features which we expect today such as street lighting and litter bins were largely not part of the local landscape in the historic period which has made the area famous. The way to approach this issue should always be :
 - is it needed ?
 - can its visual intrusion be minimised.

This will often result in the choice of design which is 'minimal' and 'contemporary' in appearance.

- there is a wealth of distinctive design in the area which provides a rich reference source from the key historic periods for both new contemporary and traditional design.

Change and the 21st Century

The quality of the public realm has evolved and changed over time and will continue to change in response to changes in the way we value and use the area. To be successful the design, maintenance and management of the public realm in the World

Heritage Site will have to continue to respond to change **and** in ways which preserve the integrity of the existing character.

Sustainability

By the designation of the area as a World Heritage Site we are sustaining an area of special historic and physical quality for future generations. All design and management decisions for the public realm must also adhere to sustainable principles : be environmentally responsible, socially equitable and economically viable

Key principles:

- The public realm is the stage, not the show. It should be simple and uncluttered.
- Details and materials should reflect the local industrial vernacular.
- Design, management and maintenance should be informed by the type of street or space.
- Innovation and contemporary design is welcomed but must be informed and directed by the existing quality.
- Design and management decisions must adhere to sustainable principles: be environmentally responsible, socially equitable and economically viable.

Part Two: The Guide

Introduction

This part of the guide is divided into three sections:

1. **Guidance about the design and application of features** which make up the public realm. It includes information about what is appropriate and how details should be used.
2. **Bringing it all together.** A simple matrix to help explain the appropriate use of different details as applied to each street character type.
3. **Procurement, sourcing and workmanship.**

Features

Ground Surfaces

General

Traditional simple, robust designs, carried out with good workmanship are an essential part of the quality of the World Heritage Site.

The main challenge for the design of ground surfaces within the World Heritage Site is to reflect the type of surface historically used in the area whilst meeting contemporary needs of robustness for vehicles and pedestrians. This applies to the main road (carriageway) surface, pedestrian surfaces as well as at the kerbs and surrounding edges.

A second challenge is to provide higher quality surfacing, e.g. stone slabs in key areas such as around the Iron Bridge, the Market Square or in Madeley High Street without compromising the integrity of the local character.

Key to achieving this is simplicity, using traditional detailing and good workmanship.

DESIGN
Blacktop is not only a contemporary and cost effective highway surface material but also an appropriate surface material



1a. Blacktop road surface



1a. Blacktop road surface



1a. Blacktop road surface

I. Road (carriageway) surfaces

Road surfaces form the foreground to most scenes of the public realm. They are a neutral setting for whatever is seen beyond. They do not need to draw attention to themselves. They are the stage not the star.

Roads (carriageways) are defined as the part of the highway which is primarily used for vehicles. We use the term street to refer to the whole width including pavements where they exist.

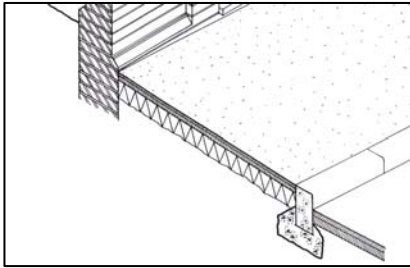
Many urban streets in the WHS function as shared surfaces where there is no pavement and vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists use the same surface. Most rural roads have soft verges and no pavement.

Use blacktop: macadam or similar.

No coloured areas for cycle lanes or any other purpose, including skid resistant surfaces, are to be used.

White and yellow line road markings are to be reduced to the minimum legal requirement.

DESIGN Appropriate detailing



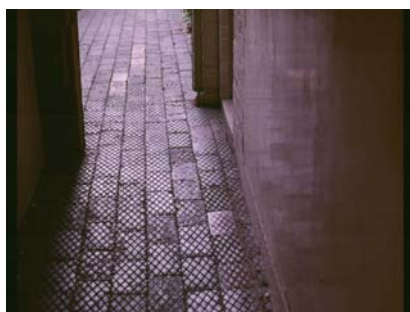
2a. Blacktop



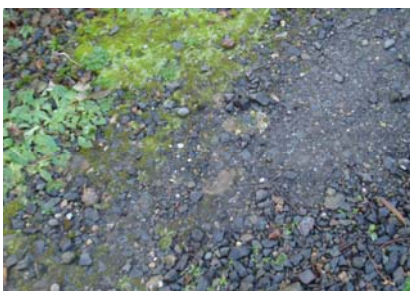
2a. Blacktop



2b. Yorkstone. Only to be used for repairs and special schemes



2c. Engineering brick



2d. Clinker

2. Pavements (footways) and footpaths

The main purpose of a pavement is to provide pedestrians with a safe and clean walking surface. They also contribute to the visual character of a locality. The majority of the pavements in the World Heritage Site are formed of straightforward blacktop (a satisfactory, practical and visually low key material). Other materials can be considered for special locations where there is a fully justified reason.

Pavements are associated with the main roads in each of the settlements such as Tontine Hill and Dale Road/Wellington Road and Madeley High Street.

The area is also notable for the number of separate footpaths, many of which are steep and include steps i.e. separate footpaths which do not share the same space as the highway.

The type of surface used for pavements and footpaths will vary depending upon the type of path, street or space and how it is used in combination with associated details such as kerbs, edging and drainage channels.

In the majority of locations surface dressed blacktop is to be used.

In locations where they are already used, and at specially identified other areas, the following are also to be used:

- Yorkstone (or local sustainable version) in the central and key visited areas e.g. The Wharfrage, High Street, Tontine Hill.
- Selected brick paviors – independent footpaths.
- Narrow castellated cast iron kerb – central and key visited areas when used in combination with Yorkstone.
- Rural paths - crushed clinker.

The following materials must not be used:

- Concrete block paviors.
- Small unit concrete paving slabs.
- Imprinted concrete slabs.
- Impressed mastic.

Unacceptable materials include:

Clay paviors laid in paving bonds other than running bond.
Fake stone sett patterns impressed into mastic.



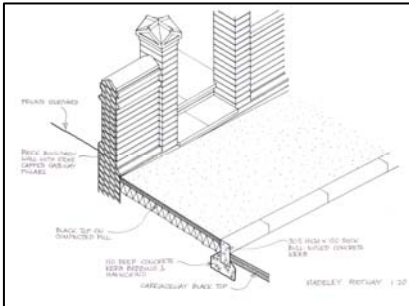
3. Kerbs

DESIGN Appropriate detailing

The eye is always drawn towards edges. The kerb line is an important edge between two surfaces – between the highway surface and the pavement and between the highway surface and the land or building.

In urban areas kerbs help to define the direction of a street. ie. the eye is drawn to the kerb line and this emphasises its alignment.

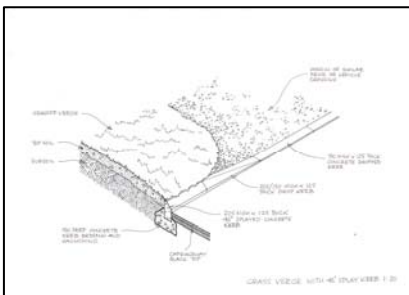
The visual prominence of the kerb line means that it has a significant impact upon the character of the street. This is most evident in the way in which the use of a standard pre-cast concrete kerb can change the character of a rural road and make it ‘feel’ more like a semi-urban place.



3a. Concrete. Urban style

In urban areas kerbs help to define the direction of a street. Where a street curves, a kerb helps emphasise its alignment and character.

The detailed design of a kerb should relate to the adjacent pavement (footway) material.



3b. Concrete. Rural splayed style

Kerbs need to be sufficiently robust to withstand wear and tear, with minimal maintenance.

Many of the surfaces in the World Heritage Site are constructed using straightforward blacktop. In these situations a plain vertical faced kerb such as the BN3 (914x150x125) British Standard kerb should be used as they reflect the urban industrial nature of the area.

Reflect existing historic detail where possible. In locations where the surface is constructed using Yorkstone or brick paviors the use of cast iron kerbs is appropriate



Kerbs are to be simple and robust and must be designed as part of a co ordinated detail with the design of and materials used for the adjacent pavement.

3c. Cast iron

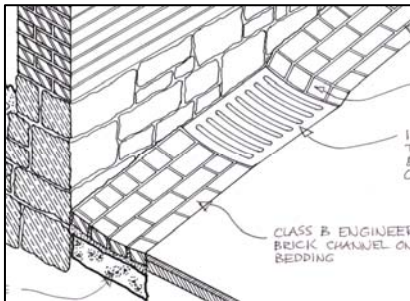
Whilst cast iron is a material which is strongly associated with the area, cast iron kerbs were only introduced in the 1970's . They should only be used in agreed locations.

5. Drainage channels

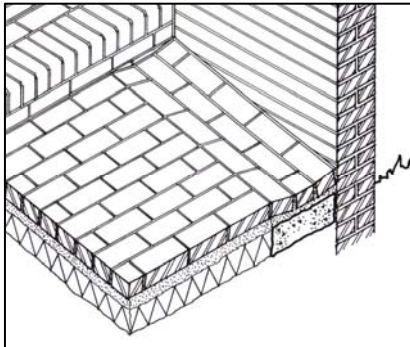
DESIGN Appropriate detailing



5a. Drainage channel within blacktop road



5b. Four engineering brick channel with matching cast iron grating



5c. Three engineering brick channel with cast iron grating

Many of the narrow roads in the World Heritage Site do not have pavements. In these and other similar footpath locations with steep gradients, variations on a brick drainage channel design are used.

Drainage channels help to define the character of an area. The brick channels running along the edge of the steep paths and narrow roads, together with their iron gratings, are a strong feature of the World Heritage Site

For the majority of streets, a drainage channel incorporated within the road construction at the edge of the kerb is appropriate.

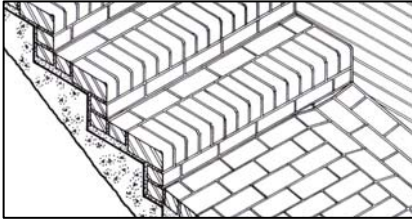
The exact design will be determined by the patterns used in the vicinity. In each case, gratings will be carefully aligned and be of a similar width to the channel.

Drainage channels, kerbs and verges are to be reinstated and maintained in accordance with the relevant identified street character type.

Drainage channels are to be constructed in engineering brick in accordance with the detailed designs, see appendices, page 44

6. Steps

DESIGN Appropriate detailing



6a. Engineering brick on edge

Steps are a common feature in the World Heritage Site because of the steep topography. Many form part of the network of steep footpaths that provide short cuts between the streets which are generally more closely aligned with the contours of the Gorge.

The large quantity and individual design and construction of steps is a distinguishing feature which positively contributes towards the distinctive quality of the World Heritage Site. They vary in design and construction in response to when they were constructed (old or new) where they are constructed and how they have been repaired.

As with all other public realm details, the design and construction of steps should be informed by the overall WHS design character and directed by the immediate context. Steps constructed of engineering quality bricks laid on edge is an appropriate detail in many locations as is the importance of employing the skill and ingenuity of the designer/ builder to creatively respond to the situation.

Steps are an important feature of the area.

The construction of new steps and the repair or replacement of existing steps should always be informed by the general and specific context.

See appendices page 44

7. Hand rails

DESIGN Appropriate detailing



7a. Simple pole or tube fixed to adjacent wall



7a. Alternative wrought iron rail, as part of railing, fixed to low wall

Hand rails, associated with flights of steps, and above retaining walls, are part of the traditional character of the World Heritage Site. They have a simple, straightforward and robust appearance which typifies the area. They are commonly made of iron tube or wrought iron and are frequently fixed to adjacent walls with simple brackets.

Modern designs that are unnecessarily over elaborate, decorated or 'stylistic' will detract from the robust simplicity of the World Heritage Site character, and should not be used.

Existing hand rails are to be retained and maintained. The design of new rails should take their reference from the wealth of existing historic examples.

Street Furniture

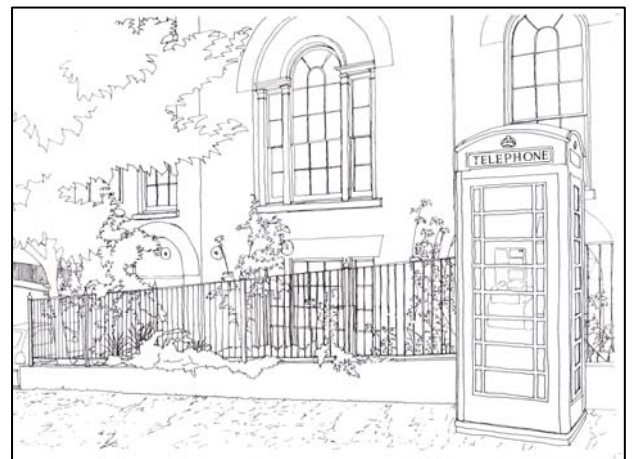
General

Street furniture includes all of the fittings and fixtures within the public realm: signs, lamp posts, bins, seats, barriers, etc. Whilst the majority of the items described are fixed to the ground surface or to surrounding walls and buildings, street furniture also covers features such as shop boards placed on the pavement and temporary art installations such as banners and flags.

The clutter of unsightly, inappropriate or unnecessary street furniture is detrimental to the quality of the World Heritage Site.

Because the street furniture is seen in the foreground to any view (with the buildings and structures beyond) it can have a significant impact upon the total quality and experience of the area.

Many items of street furniture such as signs, boxes and equipment are not necessary and in some cases are not legally required and should be removed.



'Less is more'. Reduce street furniture clutter to the absolute minimum. The public realm is the stage not the star

- 'Less is more'. Reduce street furniture to the absolute minimum. The architecture, general townscape and landscape provide the interest.
- Use simple robust designs based upon industrial vernacular.
- Do not use 'style' designs, e.g. those from a distinct historic period.
- Do not use concrete or plastic.
- Use dark colours: black or very dark green.
- Where historic street furniture exists, reinstate it and use it for its original purpose at its original location
- Locate signs, traffic signals and lighting onto existing street furniture, walls and buildings where possible
- Approach street furniture as a coordinated suite or family of details.
- Time limit temporary installations.
-

8. Signs

DESIGN Appropriate detailing



8a. Minimal signs fixed to walls

The excessive number and inappropriate design of signs represent one of the main detracting 'street clutter' elements in the World Heritage Site.

The use of signs in the World Heritage Site is a particularly significant issue. Whilst there are many practical and pragmatic reasons why signs are needed in the area, uncoordinated and excessive numbers of signs in the wrong locations and of inappropriate design undermine the visual qualities that make the area special.

Much of the visual interest of the World Heritage Site is created by subtle diversity and variety within a unifying character.

It is not possible to create an overall family of signs using a common design palette as most signs are governed at least in part, by individual regulations and standards beyond the control of this guide.

It is however within the scope of this guide to require that each type of sign must adhere to a number of principles and rules in terms of their number, location and design.

There are four types of signs in the World Heritage Site:

- Traffic signs (of which there are several sub categories).
- Street name signs and name plates.
- Pedestrian and way marking signs.
- Information and Interpretation signs.

Traffic signs

Whilst traffic signs are necessary for the safe and efficient movement of traffic it is important that their numbers, style and size are kept to the minimum required by law. The complexity of the rules for the provision of traffic signs and how a reduction of clutter is to be achieved is explained further at the appendices, page 46.

DESIGN

Appropriate detailing



8a. Cast iron, street name sign, black lettering on white ground, fixed to walls



8a. Traditional style, fixed to walls and fences



8a. Minimal unobtrusive styles, fixed to walls

Street name signs and name plates

Street name signs and name plates contribute to the decoration of the public realm and serve a practical way finding function. There are a number of different designs from different periods the most successful, and oldest, of which are those signs which are simple in design: simple rectangle with edge detail to accommodate fixing, black lettering on a white background. Traditionally they are fixed directly to walls not posts.

Street name plates should be:

- Simply designed.
- Be mounted on walls or railings.
- Have black lettering on white background.

Pedestrian direction signs and way marking signs

Way marking signs include all of the signs which direct people to places and include all pedestrian and cyclist finger posts as well as signs which direct people to the museum and other important sites in the area.

Whilst these signs are important to help visitors use the area their excessive use and inappropriate design and fixing can clutter and detract from the very quality which has brought the visitor to the area.

Pedestrian direction signs and way marking signs should only be introduced where they are supported by a coherent and co-ordinated sign strategy.

- Minimise the use of signs.
- Simple designs.
- Mount on structures wherever possible.

Information and Interpretation signs

The World Heritage Site is home to a living working community but it is also an internationally important historical site which justifies the provision of information and interpretation signs so that visitors can understand and learn about the area.

A careful balance must be achieved between providing the right quantity and the right quality of information in a way which does not detract from the very quality which people have come to see and experience.

A balance must also be achieved between providing sufficient quantity of information whilst preserving the sense of exploration and discovery which is part of the excitement and beauty of the area.

To reduce clutter any sign which is out of date or superfluous to requirements should be removed.

See Appendix B for further action to reduce sign clutter.

DESIGN

Appropriate detailing



9a. Wall mounted street lighting



9a. Wall mounted street lighting



9b. Simply designed free standing lamp column

9. Lighting and cameras

Street lighting

With few exceptions, such as the decorative light column erected to celebrate Queen Victoria's Jubilee, street lighting is not a historic feature of either the public realm or the architecture of the World Heritage Site and therefore in terms of historic accuracy and the conservation of the historic character it is an inappropriate component of the public realm.

Whilst lighting is not an entirely historic detail it is accepted that to meet contemporary needs for the safe use of the public realm it is necessary to provide adequate levels of lighting.

The solution to this dilemma lies in providing supporting structures which are as minimal and as discreet or hidden as possible. The objective is to provide the minimum possible lighting provision in ways which do not bring attention to the lighting unit. The four key ways in which this can be achieved are:

- Wherever possible light units should be wall fixed.
- Any wall fixing must not be prominent and detract from the architectural character of a building.
- The supporting structure including any brackets or pole should have a minimal and simple structure.
- Any supporting structure should be dark in colour.

The issue of street lighting concerns the design of the light unit, the number and location of the units and the quality and quantity of light emitted.

Use simple uncomplicated fittings.

The default position is to fix equipment to walls.

Do not locate on a prominent building elevation unless fully integrated with its architectural design.

Do not use fake 'historic styles'.

Fittings and support structures are to be plain black, a very dark colour or a similar colour to the background.



Example of appropriate lighting
(Urbis Furyo)

DESIGN

Appropriate detailing



A rare example of ornate 'decoration' to a light column.

Although appropriate in this instance, more ornate decoration should be used with restraint and it is generally preferable to use simple forms and design



CCTV cameras must be located as discreetly as possible

Other lighting

Other lighting includes all permanent and temporary lighting which is used for purposes other than practical street illumination, e.g. floodlighting of the Iron Bridge. The objective in this type of lighting is the lighting effect and to illuminate a specific object such as a sign or building.

Permanent lighting of this kind is generally inappropriate in the World Heritage Site and should only be used sparingly in agreed locations, e.g. Madeley High Street, the Iron Bridge and in all cases fittings including cables and control equipment must be minimal and be hidden from sight.

Similar restrictions do not apply to temporary lighting which provides opportunity to create special effects and to mark events, though any fittings associate with a temporary event must be hidden from sight and removed after the event.

Fix fittings neatly to existing walls and structures, not to separate posts.
Paint fittings the same colour as background.
Fix control equipment and cables out of sight.

CCTV

Where possible avoid the provision of CCTV cameras. All unnecessary or redundant units should be removed.

Where they can be justified they must be located in discreet positions. Where they are located on buildings they must be very simple and small in design to minimise the visual impact upon the architecture.

All control equipment and cabling must be concealed.

Fix cameras neatly to existing walls and equipment, not to separate posts.
Paint cameras the same colour as background.
Fix control equipment and cables out of sight.

DESIGN

Appropriate detailing



I0a. Urban style



I0b. Traditional timber seat



I0c. Sturdy rural bench

I0. Seats

Seats are a useful element in the public realm, particularly where there are many visitors as is the case in the World Heritage Site.

However, in addition to the need to select the appropriate design it is also important to remember that whilst addressing the needs of visitors, the World Heritage Site is also a living community and care must be exercised when locating seats to respect the privacy of local residents.

The provision of seating is determined by the overall character of the World Heritage Site and the specific location.

The appropriate type of seat is determined by the overall character of the World heritage Site and by the type of street and space in which it is located.

The three primary seat types are:

- Urban context: iron, steel and timber.
- Rural context – Timber.
- Parkland context - lightweight (narrow section) steel.

Many streets and spaces do not have and should not have seating as, while visitors are freely allowed to roam these streets, their main function is as semi private local residential spaces.

There are number of streets, footpaths and spaces however (such as Tontine Hill and Madeley High Street, The Sabbath Walks) which are the focus of public activity. In these and similar 'public' areas it is appropriate to provide seating.

Seats are to be constructed of iron or steel and/or timber from a sustainable source.
Fake 'historic styles' are not be used.
Only dark colours such as black, dark green or natural timber are to be used.

I I. Bollards and railings

DESIGN Appropriate detailing



I I a. Simple cast iron bollard



I I a. Wrought iron



I I a. Cast iron with steel rails



I I b. Rural fence

Bollards and railings have a role in the public realm of the World Heritage Site but their design and installation must be managed to prevent unnecessary clutter. They should be used sparingly and should relate visually to the character of their location.

Bollards can provide a boundary distinction, to highlight a change and transition between one area and the next as well as providing a subtle way to prevent or control access into an area. They should only be used where absolutely necessary.

Unless it can be demonstrated otherwise, in general bollards should have a slim and simple form and overall design and be constructed in cast iron.

Colour: Black or very dark green e.g. Deep Brunswick Green (BS 381 227 or darker).

The steepness of much of the area gives rise to sharp changes in level where railings are required to prevent falls. They are a feature of the area.

New railings performing this function should be slim in section and simple in design and black in colour.

Unless they can be thoroughly justified, traffic railings should be removed. No new traffic railings should be installed.

Bollards should only be used where they are needed. Those which serve no useful purpose should be removed.

Where they are proposed to protect pavements, the preferred alternative is to provide a strengthened pavement which will not be damaged by overrunning vehicles.

Remove all but essential bollards and railings.
Remove majority of traffic guard rails.
Those that remain should be designed and installed to respect the visual character of the street.

12. Bins, boxes and machines

The appearance of several streets and spaces in the World Heritage Site is marred by the existence and prominence of damaged or poorly maintained bins, boxes and cabinets.

Litter and dog waste bins and other cabinets

There is an assumption that in areas of greatest visitor numbers such as in the vicinity of the Iron Bridge there will be a requirement for litter bins and other cabinets.

Whilst it may be prudent and necessary to provide a number of bins, it is not always the best course of action and indeed there is evidence to suggest that people will often take their rubbish home in the absence of litter bins. A balance must be achieved which manages the appropriate number, design and the location of bins.

Bins should be located in as discreet locations as possible i.e. away from prominent locations and their design should be plain and simple. Bins should also form part of a coordinated range of street furniture in terms of colours and simplicity.

It is recommended that salt bins be removed during the summer months.

Trade waste bins

Trade waste bins are the responsibility of the relevant local trader. Their poor appearance and prominence has a considerable negative effect on the immediate vicinity of an area.

Trade waste bins must be located out of sight, kept clean and well maintained.



Post boxes

A number of historic post boxes such as the recessed box at Darby Road, (still at its original location though damaged and not in use) remain in the World Heritage Site and are a welcome decorative addition to the visual interest of the public realm.

All existing historic boxes should remain and be repaired.



Parking ticket machines

Parking ticket machines are a necessary part of the function of the World Heritage Site and by their very purpose are located in car parks which for many visitors are the places of arrival where the scene is set for the total visit. It is essential that car park equipment, including ticket machines are neat, tidy and visually fit in to the overall scene

To minimise the impact they must be black/dark in colour, be the minimum size possible and all related signage must be incorporated together as part of a single coordinated and tidy collection of objects.

Store out of sight all bins, boxes or equipment that the public do not use.

Bins that are needed all the time by the public, such as litter bins, to be of simple unobtrusive design.

Design as permanent structures and integrate into the walls, etc. of their location, all roadside grit or salt bins that are needed permanently.

Grit/ Salt bins

Grit/Salt bins need to be located close to where they are needed. However, since they are used by people who know the locality, they can be placed in relatively 'out of sight' discreet locations.

Permanent well constructed salt bins are preferable to poorly maintained, primary coloured plastic designs.



Poorly maintained and damaged bins can have a significant and detrimental impact upon the quality of the public realm.

DESIGN

Appropriate detailing



13a. Many street structures are not strictly necessary. In most cases alternative and neater ways to provide the services should be found



13. Structures, kiosks and bus shelters

Because of their visual prominence all existing structures which are of historic relevance should be maintained in good condition. All structures that are not functional or visually relevant should therefore be removed.

Structures in the public realm have a significant visual impact because of their size and often because of their colour.

Whilst it is beyond the scope of this guide to provide information about every type of structure in the World Heritage Site, there are a number of general rules regarding their suitability and appropriateness.

Because of the visual prominence all existing structures which are historically relevant to the area should be maintained in good condition. All structures that are not functionally and visually relevant to the context should be removed.

Proposals for all new structures must demonstrate that they are functionally and visually relevant to their immediate context otherwise they should be removed.

Traditional red K6's telephone boxes are an icon of British design to the extent that they have become a naturalised part of the British landscape.

Those which exist within the World Heritage Site must be identified, repaired and maintained to good condition.

Bus shelters are seemingly dumped on a pavement and left to rot. Yet they are virtually permanent buildings, much needed by the public, particularly residents. They should be designed as permanent structures, integrated to suit the character of their individual location and incorporate all the services and fittings that are needed for the convenience and comfort of passengers.

Remove all non essential structures.

Bus shelters are almost permanent buildings and should be designed as such to suit their individual location.

Any related bins, timetables, real time information signs, phones, seats and information sheets as well as the bus stop sign, to be integrated into the total design.

DESIGN
Appropriate detailing



I4a Ashlar stone boundary wall



I4b. Brick wall built along incline



I4c. Traditional railings

I4 Boundaries

Boundary walls and fences at the back of the pavement or edge of a road help to visually contain the street scene. Their variety reflects the rich range of buildings in the World Heritage Site, from well built stone walls, brick walls sometimes following the contours of the road, to elegant iron railings, often with cast iron details.

Boundaries are a crucial component but they are also difficult elements to manage as whilst they have an extremely significant impact upon the quality and function of the public realm they are also mostly in the ownership and the responsibility of private individuals.

The full implications and ability to control the quality of boundaries is beyond the scope of this document – however principles regarding their design include:

- Respect the pattern established in the immediate locality
- Boundaries should always be considered within the context of overall type of street/space.
- Boundaries should always be considered as an extension to the house as well as the ‘walls’ of the public realm.

Planting

General

Trees and woodland are a significant and integral part of the history, function, visual composition and considerable attractiveness of the World Heritage Site. Despite this, there is very limited vegetation within the public realm itself i.e. its impact and contribution has more to do with providing the context rather than as elements within the streets and spaces.

The WHS has a broad woodland context combined with extensive ornamental trees and vegetation located in private gardens.

15. Street Trees

With few exceptions such as The Wharfage, it is inappropriate for the streets and spaces of the World Heritage Site to have street trees as this is not a historic characteristic of the area.



Trees and scrub being cleared to maintain the view of the bridge and gorge from the main central visitor car park

Only plant street trees in exceptional circumstances or where there is a historic precedent.

16. Planters and hanging baskets

DESIGN Appropriate detailing



16a. Flowers in traditional but removable tubs

Whilst hanging baskets and planters can bring prettiness and colour to the public realm, they are not part of the historic character of the World Heritage Site.

Hanging Baskets

Hanging baskets have strong popular appeal because they bring 'prettiness and colour' to the public realm. Equally, a key objective of the World Heritage Site and its related Conservation Area designation is to help conserve and promote the unique and distinctive character of the area. This presents a difficulty in resolving the tension that exists between recognising the undoubted contribution that hanging baskets can make to the public realm whilst also recognising that they are not an inherent part of the historic character of the World Heritage Site.

Hanging baskets are to be used only with discretion. Their brackets must be inconspicuous. The planters themselves are to be completely removed during winter months or when not in use.

Tub Planters

Issues relating to planting tubs are similar to those relating to hanging baskets. They do have a role in providing colour and interest but whilst pots and planters feature within private gardens, they are not inherently a locally distinct feature of the public realm.

Planting tubs should only be used with discretion. They should be completely removed when not in use.

I7 Public art

DESIGN Appropriate detailing



I7a. The Iron Bridge is the key work of art.

An aim of public art is to provide visual and symbolic interest in the public realm. This must be viewed within the context of a World Heritage Site which is already rich in both historic and visual interest.

Public art and artistic objects provide visual and symbolic interest to the public realm. The environment of the World Heritage Site is already rich in both an historic, symbolic and visual interest and therefore apart from very exceptional circumstances such as the war memorial or to help mark and announce the entrances to the World Heritage Site, it is generally not appropriate to introduce further permanent public art.

Art can of course be defined and provided in many other ways including a celebration of local skills embodied within the architecture.

There is also a role in providing temporary art: installations as part of festivals and events which help bring added special interest and variety to the area for short periods. Because of their transient nature they do not permanently compromise the integrity of the local character.

The physical fabric of the World Heritage Site is itself an internationally acclaimed example of beauty and interest, with a distinctive visual quality - with the Iron Bridge at its heart.

Principles :

- The introduction of new art must robustly explain and justify its relationship and contribution to the existing context.
- There is little need for further public expressions of art.

Bringing it all together

A key to the appropriate application of details in the public realm is to design them holistically and to understand the context.

The following is a simple table which attempts to *aid* the process of design and choice by relating the details described in part 2 of the guide with the street types listed in Part 1.

Street feature / street character matrix

	1 Urban main road	2 Urban minor road	3 Urban wider footpath	4 Village main road	5 Urban narrow footpath	6 Suburban minor road	7 Rural main road	8 Rural minor road	9 Rural footpath
1 Road surfaces	1a	1a	na	1a	na	1a	1a	1a	1a
2 Pavements/ft paths	2a	2a	2a/c/d	2a	2a/c/d	2a	2a	2a	2a
3 Kerbs	3a	3a	na	3a	na	3a	3b	3b	na
4 Verges	na	na	na	na	na	na	4a	4b	4b
5 Drainage	5a	5b	5b	5a	5c	5b	5a	5a	5a
6 Steps	na	na	6a	na	6a	na	na	na	na
7 Handrails	na	na	7a	na	7a	na	na	na	na
8 Signs	8a	8a	8a	8a	8a	8a	8a	8a	8a
9 Lighting	9a	9a	9a	9a	9b	9b	9b	9b	9b
10 Seats	10a	10b	10b	10b	10c	10b	10b	10c	10c
11 Bollards & railings	11a	11a	11a	11a	11a	11a	11b	11b	11b
12 Bins & boxes, etc.	12a	12a	12a	12a	12a	12a	12a	12a	12a
13 Structures	13a	13a	13a	13a	13a	13a	13a	13a	13a
14 Boundaries	14a	14b	14a/c	14a	14b/c	14a/b	na	na	na
15 Trees	15a	15a	na	15a	15a	15b	15a	15a	na
16 Planters	16a	16a	na	16a	na	na	na	na	na
17 Public art	17a	17a	17a	17a	17a	17a	17a	17a	17a

Procurement, sourcing and workmanship

Two key themes form the basis of procurement, sourcing and workmanship:

- Local distinctiveness.
- Sustainability.

Local Distinctiveness

Preserving and conserving local distinctiveness is a central theme in the World Heritage Site. It is substantially maintained, enhanced and (if needed) created by adopting a locally specific response to the local circumstances (local geology, topography, materials, local skills etc.) when procuring and sourcing materials and applying details.

The uncontrolled use, the use of a wide range of generic detailing and the very wide range of materials are all factors which work against the achievement of local distinctiveness.

Sustainable

There is an environmental need and a policy (national and local) obligation to adhere to sustainable principles in the procurement and application of details. Whilst the World Heritage Site is the location of the birth of the Industrial Revolution – and as such can claim to be key in the history of unsustainable industrial growth, paradoxically, the promotion and use of local materials and local trades is now both a more sustainable approach and it reinforces local distinctiveness.

Procurement must also be economically sustainable and in this respect a balance must be achieved between preserving the integrity of the quality of the World Heritage Site whilst adopting materials and skills which are economically viable.

The solutions to this challenge is beyond the limited scope of this document but they lie in applying sensitive creative design which has understood the distinctive qualities of the area and has employed that knowledge in a creative way.

Key principles:

- Sustainable sourcing.
- Use local materials wherever possible.
- Use local trades and skills wherever possible.
- Use the selected palette of materials such as those described in this guide.
- Use historically established details.
- Expect high standards of workmanship.
- Use the construction details such as those prescribed in this guide.

Part Three: Coordination



Coordination is important. The public realm is delivered in parts yet perceived as a whole

Coordination is of paramount importance. The public realm is delivered in parts yet perceived as a whole.

The complexities of delivery stem from the many agencies that are involved. Each has its own remit, budget and time scale. The result is that at any one time there will be change taking place to a part of the public realm.

Without increasing expenditure, but simply through greater coordination, the accumulation of the changes could be seen as being greater than the sum of the parts.

Key principles:

- Nothing in the public realm is seen in isolation.
- Informal as well as formal procedures for coordination are needed.

Methods to achieve coordination

It is proposed that coordination is achieved by a pragmatic mixture of the following formal and informal procedures.

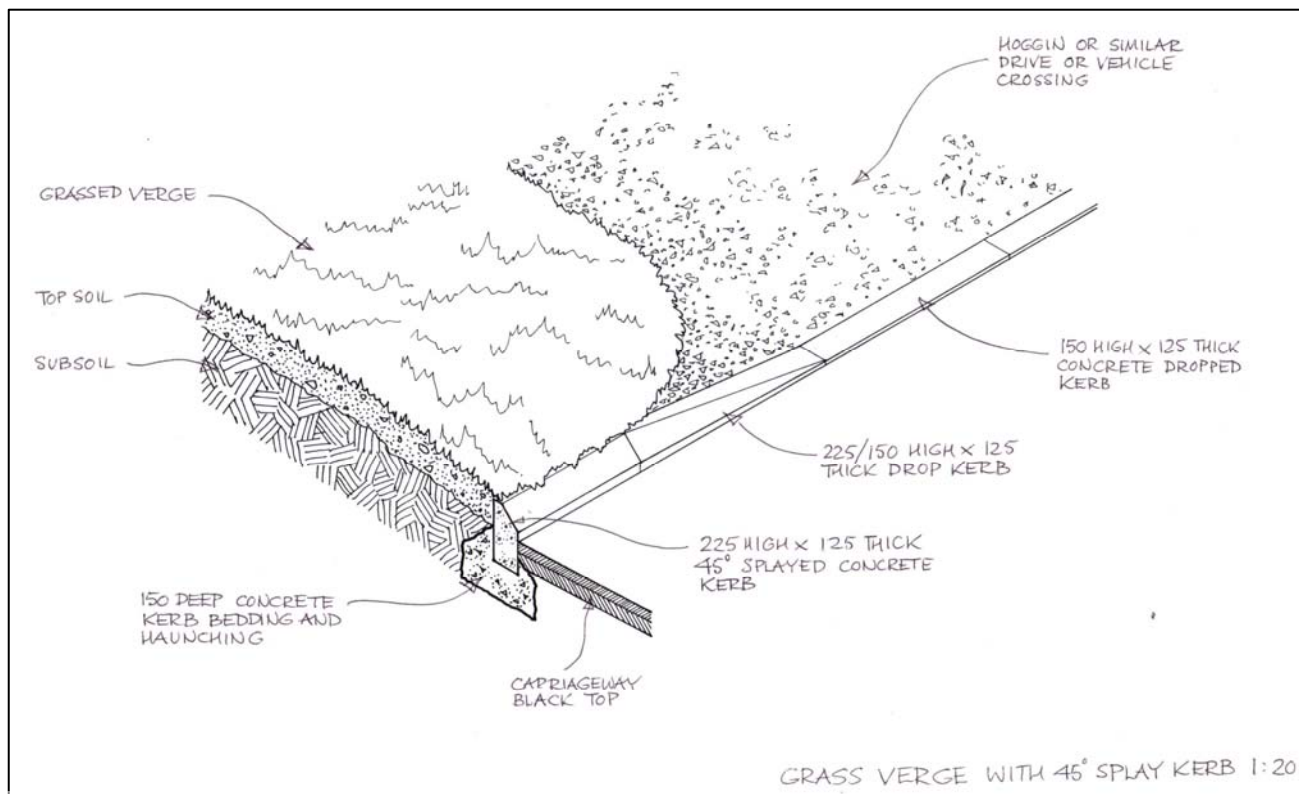
1. Regular meetings of relevant agencies – particularly for those engaged in regular work (at agreed intervals such as monthly or bi monthly) at which forthcoming programmes are offered for comment and resolution e.g. engineering, maintenance, highways, Conservation Officer.
2. All programmes put on a dedicated website, so that all agencies can see what the others are doing – particularly for less frequent 'one off' projects.

Part Four: Appendices

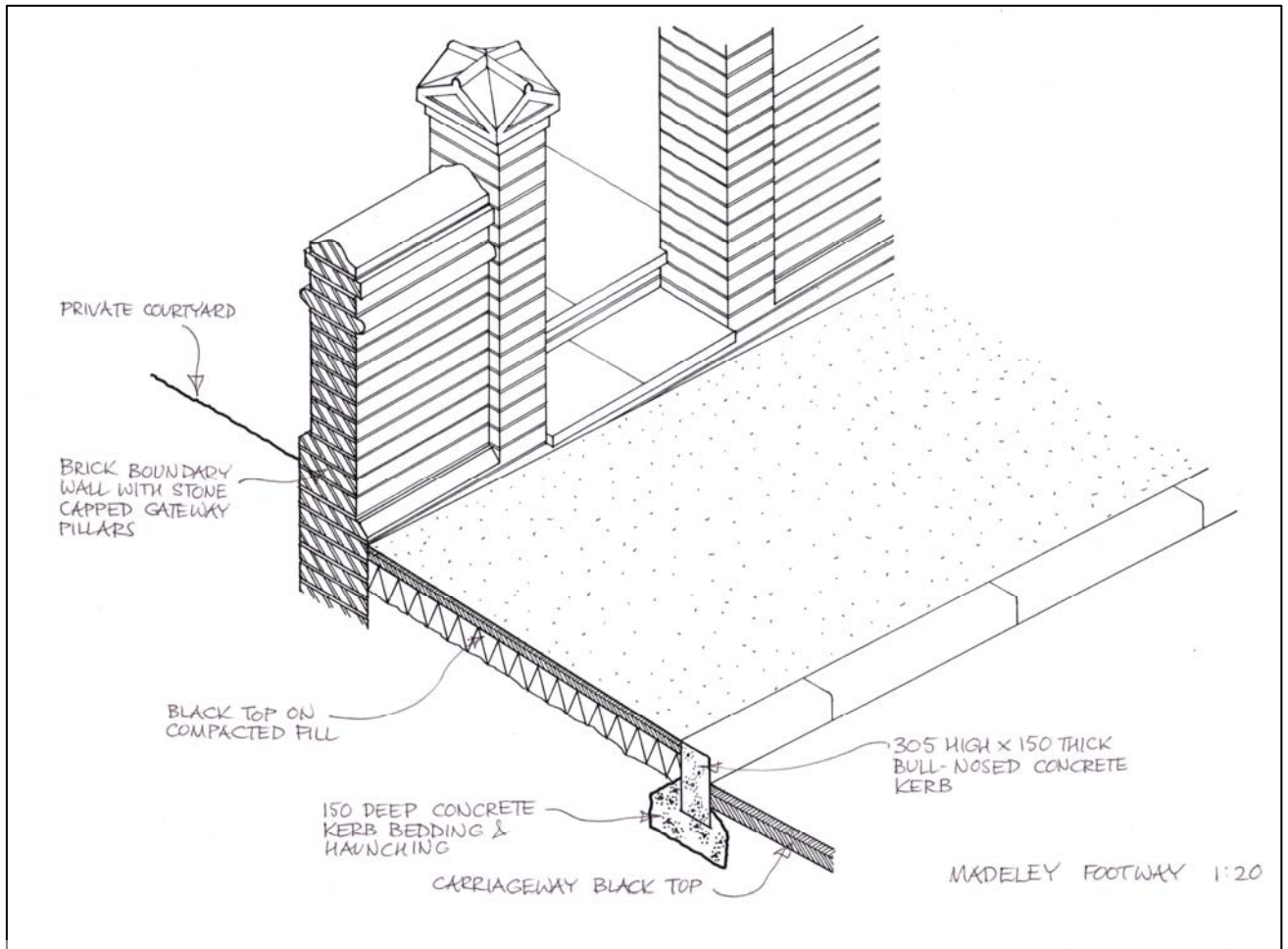
Appendix A. Construction details

The following illustrations are included as a guide to the type of construction details which are both visually and structurally appropriate within the World Heritage Site.

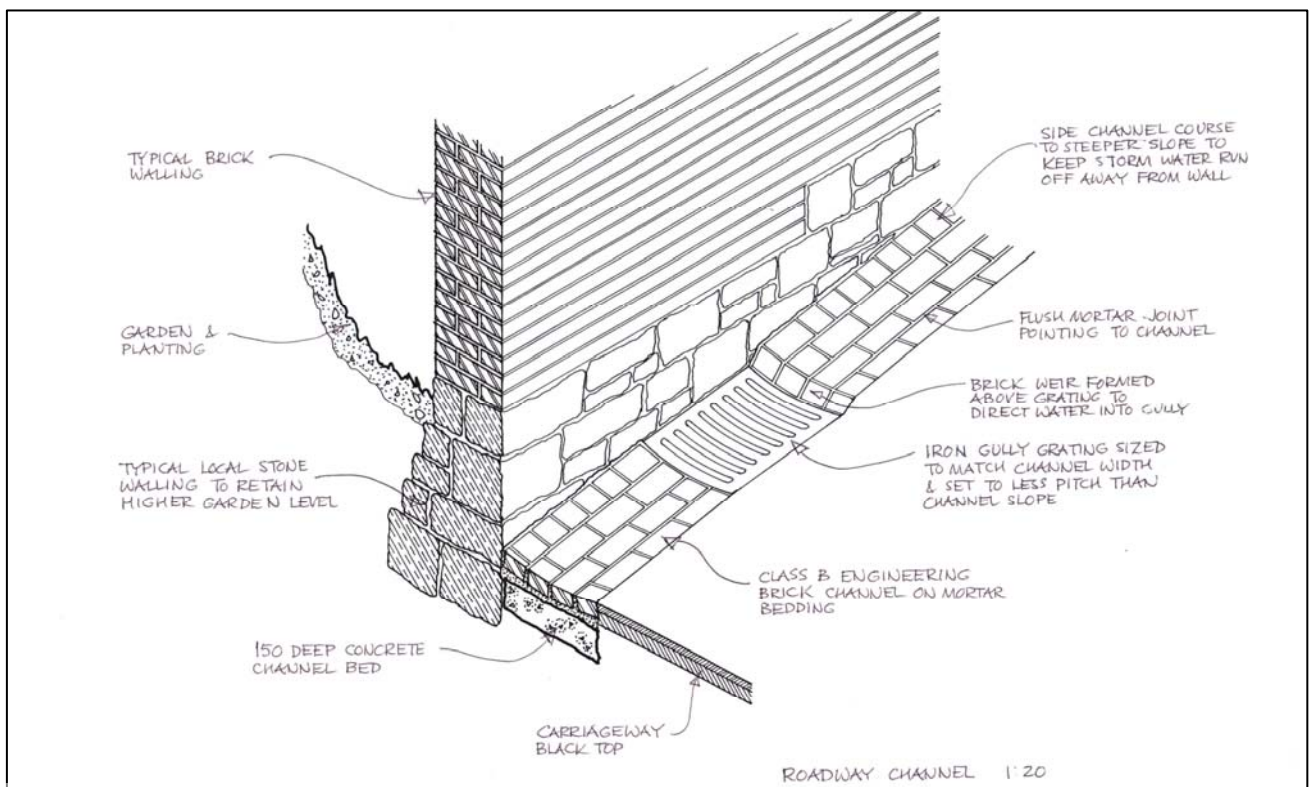
The precise application of details will differ according to different locations and contexts within the area. Information regarding their precise application can be found in the street feature / street character matrix on page 41.



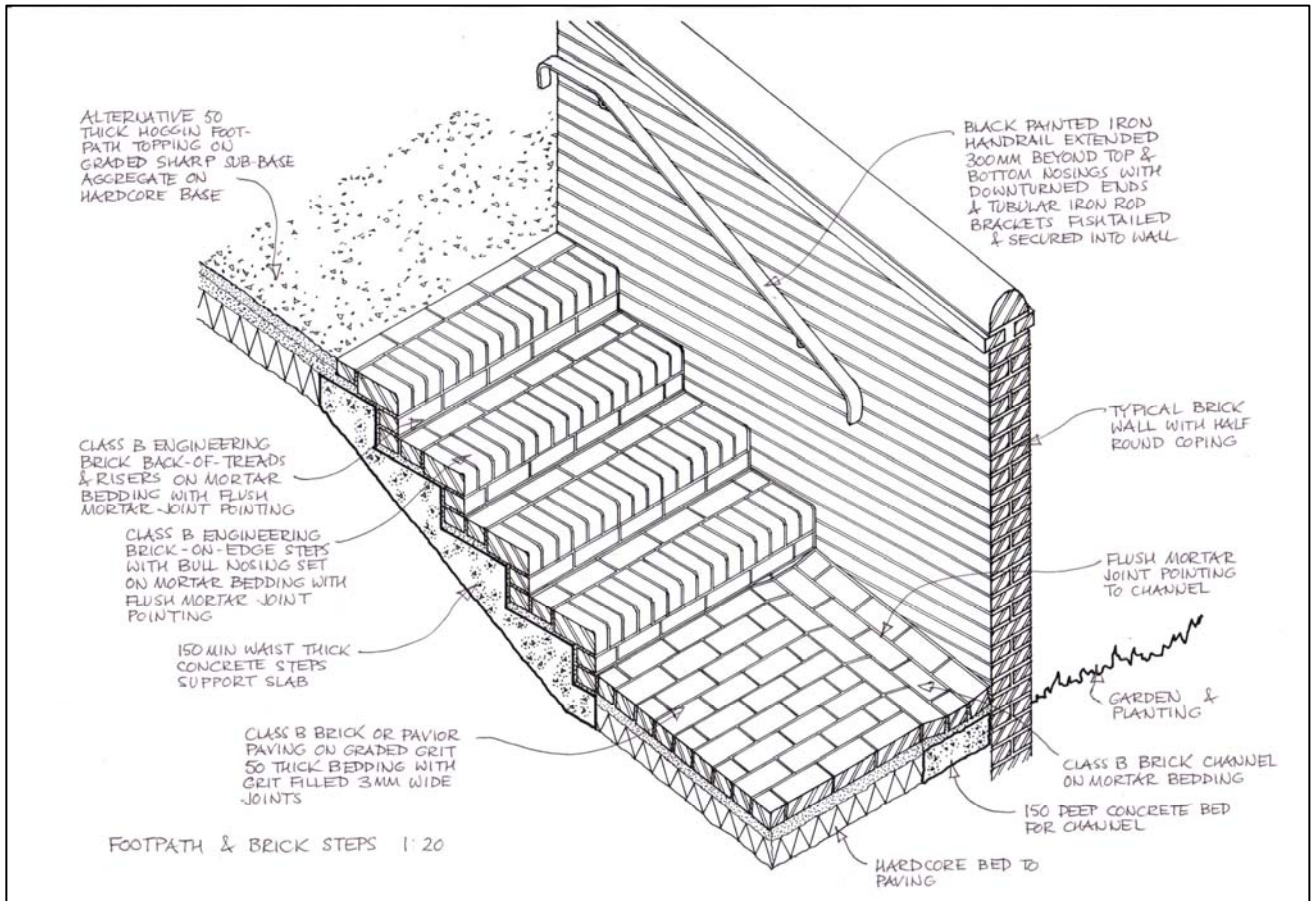
Grass verge with 45 degree splay kerb



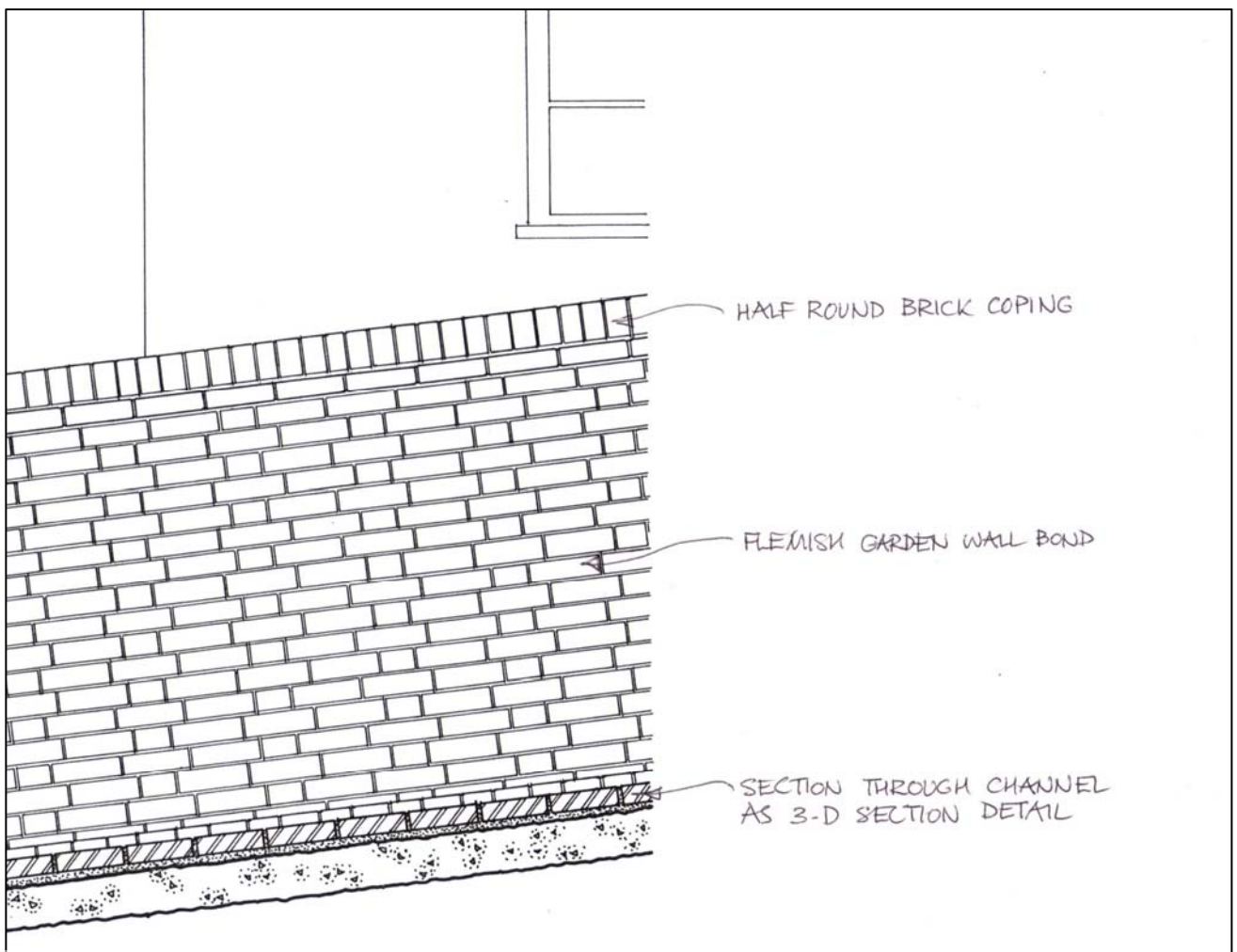
Town footway: blacktop and concrete kerb



Drainage channel with gully grating to fit exactly



Steps of engineering bricks and drainage channel



Boundary wall coursed to follow the contour

Appendix B. Action to reduce sign clutter

Because signs are such a significant proportion of unnecessary street clutter, it is necessary to deal with each type in some detail. Signs fall within a number of functional and legal categories. The action required to reduce sign clutter therefore varies according to the category of each sign.

Category of sign	legal requirement	Action to reduce sign clutter
Traffic signs		
Regulatory signs		
One way street No entry, etc Traffic signals Belisha beacons	Needed by law to enforce traffic management orders	<p>Reduce numbers by changing or simplifying traffic management orders.</p> <p>Fix to walls and existing posts, if available. Otherwise use slim black post with no backing boards.</p> <p>Use most simplified option.</p> <p>Reduce requirement by redesigning controlled crossings (zebra, pelican) and mini roundabouts as informal crossings and junctions (as Shrewsbury High Street).</p>
Yellow lines (parking restrictions)	Needed by law to enforce parking restrictions	<p>Consider "Restriction zone" with no lines, though zone entrance signs and some repeater signs are necessary.</p>
Warning signs Keep left Roundabout Roundabout ahead Centre of road white lines Chevrons	Not required by law	<p>Remove.</p>

Direction signs

To town or locality
Status of road
(A, B, etc)

Not required by law.
Though some are
expected by drivers

Simplify layouts.
Reduce information.
Reduce size.

**Pedestrian direction signs
and way marking signs**

Not required by law.
Though helpful to
pedestrians

Many alternatives to the standard
DfT pattern are possible.

Relate designs to the character of
the locality. Fix to walls and fences,
not to individual posts.

Cycle way marking signs

Not required by law.
Though helpful to cyclists

Many alternatives to the standard
DfT pattern are possible.

Relate designs to the character of
the locality. May be mounted at
low level, Fix to walls and fences,
not to individual posts.

Car park signs

Not required by law.
Though some are
expected by drivers

Reduce the number of signs, their
size and their layout to the
minimum necessary to convey the
desired message.
Integrate thoroughly into the
street scene.

Street name signs

Expected to be at
every street

Use traditional cast iron style with
black letters on a white ground.
Fix to walls and fences, not to
individual posts.

Private advertisement signs

Mostly subject to
planning legislation

Integrate thoroughly into the
street scene.

**Information and
interpretation signs**

Signs relating to cultural,
institutions, etc.
of 1.2 sq metres on the
premises, are exempt from
planning legislation

Reduce the number of signs, their
size and their layout to the
minimum necessary to convey the
desired message.
Integrate thoroughly into the
street scene.