

Bollard use

Bollards are primarily used to protect a footway area from access by vehicles. This may be to prevent parking, to guide moving vehicles and protect pedestrians at a tight junction or crossover, or just to highlight an informal pedestrian crossing. They may also be used as part of traffic calming or cycle priority measures.

Bollards are used more out of expediency than design, as pavements tend not to be constructed sufficiently strongly to support over running vehicles. Many towns and cities have wide pavements in areas of parking control, and highway authorities will use bollards to prevent pavement parking either on the pavement itself, or on the forecourts behind them.

Over use of bollards results in visual clutter, and obstruction to the mobility impaired. Classically beautiful streets can have their character degraded and very ordinary streets can start to appear over managed as bollards get used as a cheap and simple solution to a greater problem that may need more time, consultation or resources to resolve.



Figure 1 An incorrect used of multiple bollards - a temporary traffic device that has become permanent



Figure 2 Low budget traffic calming using plastic reflective bollards in an historic area

Bollards should be avoided if possible and, if used, should be part of a coordinated street furniture design, and even then, only in moderation. Where they are used careful design can make their use elegant and characterful. Good design also involves using other street furniture in the line of bollards to prevent replicating their function.



Figure 3 Bollards used to protect pavements and keep vehicles clear of the footway where there is a low or no kerb



Figure 4 Bollards used to stop pavement parking even where restricted



Figure 7 A short kerb can be less intrusive than a bollard - as here in the Netherlands



Figure 5 Narrow pencil bollards fit a smaller scale street



Figure 8 Classic old bollards add character and are rightfully retained. New ones may not be necessary.



Figure 6 Bollards should be coordinated with other street furniture so an excess of poles isn't created - here the traffic signal could have been used to do the job of one bollard



Figure 9 Simple stone cubes can provide informal seats, blend in and look less cluttering in reasonable quantities



Figure 10 Timber or granite bollards can be simpler and more rustic, suitable for more historic or market towns



Figure 11 Simple, small bollard in Brussels where the same type is used throughout the city

Policy framework and regulations

Highway authorities have powers to erect bollards under the Highways Act 1980. Town and parish councils do not have express powers to erect bollards though they have a power to maintain footways.

Parking on private forecourts is legitimate (though planning powers exist that mean conversion of a garden to hardstanding requires planning permission) however access to such parking space is usually illegally across a footway and prevention of this often involves bollard installation. In London local authorities have powers to prohibit forecourt parking.¹

Bollards are not erected at any regulated or standard distances, though they should be clear of the main carriageway, usually 450mm minimum from the kerb.

Should they stay or should they go?

There should be a presumption against installing bollards unless absolutely necessary. Strengthening pavements and improving pavement parking enforcement should be reviewed first. Bollards might be retained where they prevent access to the pavement where there is a high probability of pavement parking or casual over-run that might endanger a pedestrian, particularly those with mobility impairment.

Removing bollards is justifiable where the circumstances of vehicle overrun are substantially reduced to only occasional, and where the likelihood of conflict with pedestrians is or can be made negligible.

The alternatives

The first steps for alternatives are to see if the vehicle control can be carried out in another way. This may mean reviewing whether the highway might be altered to accommodate more parking, or improving parking enforcement. Reinforced paving slabs are now available that allow occasional vehicle over-run on the footway, for use where street clutter reduction is a priority².

Other traffic control methods include:

- raising the kerb height to dissuade vehicle over-run
- raising the pavement height using a double kerb
- using cycle racks and lamp posts instead.



Figure 12 Bollard iconography in Peckham Photo
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Figure 13 Bollards used with lamp columns to enhance a pedestrian space

Shared surface pedestrian zones are often cluttered with bollards to delineate a vehicle track. There are plenty of pedestrian schemes that do not use bollards that show this is not necessary.



Figure 14 Pedestrianised areas do not need long lines of bollards - service vehicles will use the centre of the space in any event

Where bollards are used, alternatives to the standard functional types can add character to the street. Regeneration schemes are excellent opportunities to provide bollards that are locally distinctive and provide an opportunity for public art.

References

LTN1/08 Traffic Management and Streetscape, DfT 2008

www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/tpm/ltnotes/ltn108.pdf

PRIAN, www.publicrealm.info

¹ Local Authorities Act 1990

² Camden Footway Details - see RUDI
www.rudi.net/system/files/file/required_file/Camden+Footway+Details.pdf

This Briefing is part of Civic Voice's Street Pride campaign. Further information is available from www.civicvoice.org.uk/campaigns/street-pride, including other briefings on signs, posts and guard rails and copies of the Street Pride campaign pack.

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