



BRIXTON

STREETSCAPE MANUAL



A STREETScape MANUAL

The Brixton Streetscape manual sets out policies and practices for co-ordinating design, choice of materials, management criteria and quality of workmanship for Brixton town centre's streets, pavements, market and public squares.

The manual has been adopted by the London Borough of Lambeth and Brixton Challenge Company Ltd for the period 1996-2000. The policies and practices in the manual will apply to all new public realm infrastructure and development schemes.

The document brings together the activities of all the agencies who have a responsibility for a service affecting the appearance of Brixton's streets. It is a statement by those authorities of agreed policies and practices and is intended for use by the public and local businesses as well as statutory authorities and their contractors.

Streetscape defined

Streetscape is a term for what we see in the street. The design and appearance of buildings is important but we are mainly considering here the quality of the spaces between buildings and the equipment and structures that occupy those spaces.

Brixton's multi-cultural identity

Most visitors to Brixton have a pre-fixed image of the place in their minds. Brixton is a dynamic, urban part of London with a significant retail, entertainment and market economy. Brixton has become one of the busiest connections on the London Underground. It is now an important strategic transport interchange.

Brixton's multi-cultural community is a major asset and gives the town centre a distinctive character which is acknowledged in the policies in this manual.

The document is designed as a working tool, part of well considered and co-ordinated programmes to improve the appearance of the centre for the benefit of customers and business and encourage economic growth and competitiveness. We believe the manual will help to make Brixton town centre a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

CONTENTS

The quality of Brixton town centre

The total picture	2
Partnership is essential	2
Joint policies and practices	2
Implementation	3
Organisation of the manual	3

Appreciating Brixton's past

Brixton in the nineteenth century - a leafy suburb	4
Brixton in the twentieth century - a lively centre	6

Visual appraisal and aspects of the Vision

Overall impression	Cared for place	8
A separate place	Defined edges	10
Zones of character	Distinct zones	12
Identity	Clear landmarks	14
Brixton's image	A unique market	16

Vision into action

Ten groups of adopted policies and practices	18
--	----

Co-ordinated policies and practices

Specify paving	York stone and concrete slabs	20
Adjust changes in level	Kerbs and tactile surfaces	22
Clear rubbish	Litter, market rubbish and flyposters	24
Reduce clutter	Audit of redundant posts and signs etc	26
Tidy up	Position and colour of street furniture	28
Co-ordinate design	Shopfronts and hoardings	30
Build boundary walls	Repair walls and gates near footpaths	32
Enhance landscape	Tree planting and a new town square	34
Accentuate landmarks	Floodlighting and shop signs	36
Emphasise the market	Market art and direction finders	38

Conclusions

The total picture	40
-------------------	----

Acknowledgements

Partnership	ii
-------------	----

Jointly commissioned and published by:
Brixton Challenge Company Ltd
English Heritage
London Borough of Lambeth

October 1996
British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Davis, Colin J. Brixton Streetscape Manual
A Catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library. ISBN 1 870257 618

A streetscape manual for Brixton town centre

QUALITY IN BRIXTON TOWN CENTRE

London, it is often said, is a collection of villages. Certainly London is made up of many local centres which people are happy to acknowledge. Brixton, like many London centres, started as a rural hamlet. It gradually developed over two hundred years into its present vibrant multi-cultural character.

The way in which the area evolved, the reason for its grand collection of historic buildings and the modern social and economic activities create a centre which is unique.

The quality of Brixton town centre has an impact on London as a whole. It is important to the role of London as a world city that each local centre continues to have its own distinct characteristics. The rich variety of London depends upon each locality and centre making the most of its distinguishing features.

THE TOTAL PICTURE

In many places those essential distinguishing features or street scene landmarks are hidden behind a uniform mist of litter and visual clutter.

In this manual we stress the importance of the foreground of a street scene, the things that we see on the pavements. Being close at hand they appear larger and have more prominence than objects further away.

Street furniture and paving surfaces usually form the setting of a street scene. They have an overwhelming influence on the impression that a customer or resident has of the quality of an area. They affect the total picture.

PARTNERSHIP IS ESSENTIAL

To co-ordinate a street scene is much more complex than controlling the appearance of a single building. Instead of one owner in the case of a building there are many agencies at work in the public street.

Each agency has its own separate objectives and responsibilities. If we consider the street scene as a total picture, several hands are at work painting the picture.

There is no overall legislation to co-ordinate all the activities that affect the appearance of a street. Much has to be done purely through co-operation, both between as well as within the agencies.

Often it is necessary to bring together those agencies who normally operate on their own. Partnership is essential.

JOINT POLICIES AND PRACTICES

The primary authorities concerned with Brixton feel it is important to set standards and take the lead. As a result a series of joint policies and practices have been agreed by:

Brixton Challenge Company Ltd.
English Heritage
London Borough of Lambeth

Other land owners, statutory authorities, the public service companies and their contractors have also been involved in the formulation process. They have kindly given their valuable and essential support.

IMPLEMENTATION

Some programmes have already been put in hand. Some will take effect over a longer term through adjustments to on-going highway maintenance. Some will be carried out through the town planning process.

However a start has been made. It is envisaged that within five years most of the policies and practices will have made a real impression on the overall well-being of Brixton.

ORGANISATION OF THE MANUAL

The process by which the manual has been produced would apply equally to other parts of Lambeth and London as a whole. As at Brixton the aim in each case would be to identify and emphasise each of the positive characteristics of a location and present them in an exemplary way.

The manual first looks at the historic context of Brixton town centre to understand the reason for the street pattern and the richness of its historic buildings.

A series of visual analyses follow and suggest five aspects of a streetscape vision.

On page 18, a simple cross-referencing chart demonstrates how the combination of ten groups of agreed actions in the form of joint policies and practices can contribute towards the practical realisation of the vision.

On the subsequent pages each action group is examined in detail. Finally on page 40 the agreed list of new initiatives is summarised.



The Tate library in its setting at Brixton Oval. A total picture



Small shops in a Brixton arcade. A result of partnership

Brixton in the nineteenth century, a leafy suburb

For several centuries before the railway age, Brixton was a small settlement surrounding common grassland on the road to London. Cattle and sheep would be grazed on Rush Common as they were driven to London.

The boundary of the former common land can be traced in the position of some modern streets and the setting back at an angle of a few older buildings on Brixton Road. St. Matthew's Church was built on rising ground at the end of the village.

Brixton Lodge, possibly the oldest house in the middle of Brixton, is shown on the 1870 map, facing the common. It now fronts onto Bernay's Grove, a road built along the line of the edge of the common.

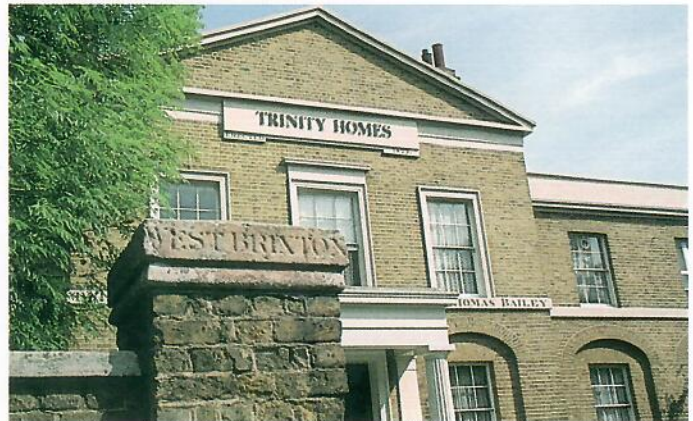
By the middle nineteenth century, Brixton had become a fashionable leafy suburb of London with easy access by the new railways to the centre of London and the coast.

The common no longer had a commercial purpose. Part of it was divided into private front gardens or completely built over. Part, such as Brixton Oval, was retained under the Rush Common Act as a public garden.

Some of the spacious Victorian mansions in Acre Lane are set back from the road in what were once large private gardens.

The Victorian houses of Angel Terrace are set back from Brixton Road on a private road at numbers 337 - 365, see page 15.

Smaller Victorian houses and gardens, little changed in one hundred years, can still be seen close to the town centre in Nursery Road and Trinity Gardens, pages 10 & 34.



Parts of Acre Lane still have the flavour of the early nineteenth century



Acre Lane in 1900



Brixton Road in 1900



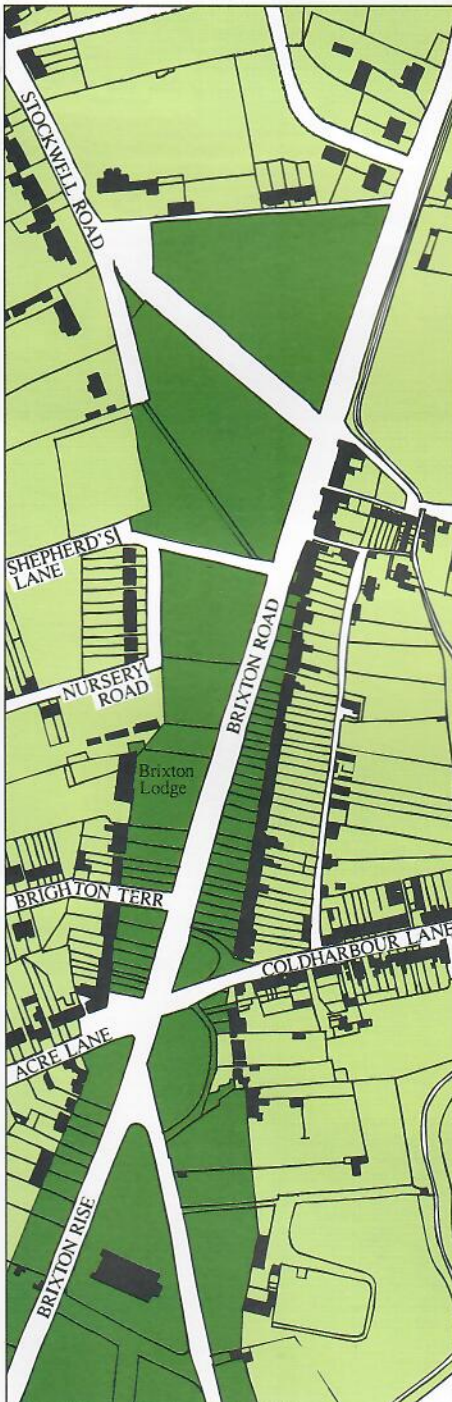
Electric Avenue from Brixton Road, 1900



Brixton Lodge in its probable nineteenth century setting



Brixton Lodge 1996



The village of Brixton in 1840



Brixton the leafy London suburb in 1870. Former common land is shown in dark green

© Crown copyright

Brixton in the twentieth century, a lively centre

As London spread outwards in the early twentieth century, Brixton could no longer claim to be near to the countryside.

The population increased. Clifton Mansions in Coldharbour Lane and several other five storey blocks of flats were built at the beginning of the century.

Commerce developed. Large new shops such as Bon Marché, 1877, were built and later the market became well established. Electric Avenue and two market halls were built. Trams ran along the main roads from Brixton to central London.

There were some five cinemas or places of entertainment: The Ritzy, first known as the Electric Pavilion, 1911, is one of the earliest in the country still in use as a cinema.

The Tate Free Library built by Henry Tate the benefactor, overlooks Brixton Oval, itself preserved by the Rush Common Act.

The Town Hall, at a key corner position has a tower bearing the four sculptures of Justice, Science, Art and Literature, a fine example of Edwardian civic pride.

RECENT TIMES

By the nineteen sixties the area was becoming known for its multi-cultural character. The market continued to flourish and there was a long period of housing redevelopment and renewal primarily by Lambeth Council.

Now, in this comprehensive enhancement of the street scene, at the beginning of a new century, there are opportunities to take into account the rich history of Brixton.



The Tate library with a fifty year old painted wall sign



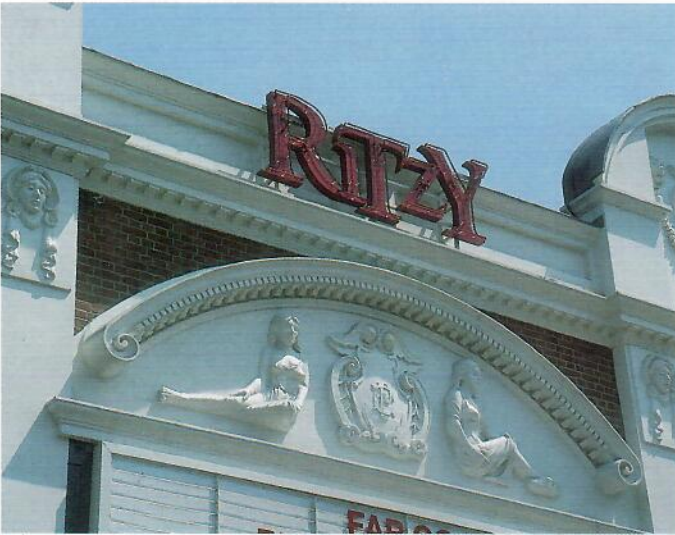
Brixton Road looking towards what is now the tube station, 1930



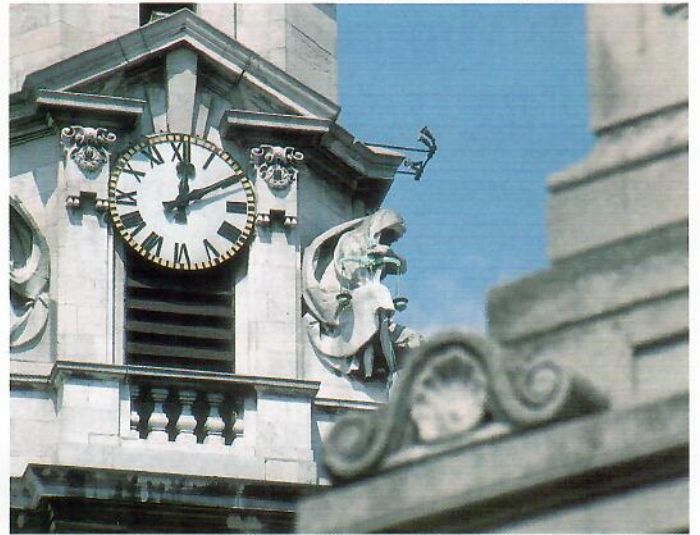
Brixton Road looking towards St. Matthew's Church, 1930



Electric Avenue from Brixton Road, 1930



The Ritzy, first known as Electric Pavilion. The E P can still be seen



Justice rests on her scales. One of the Town Hall tower sculptures



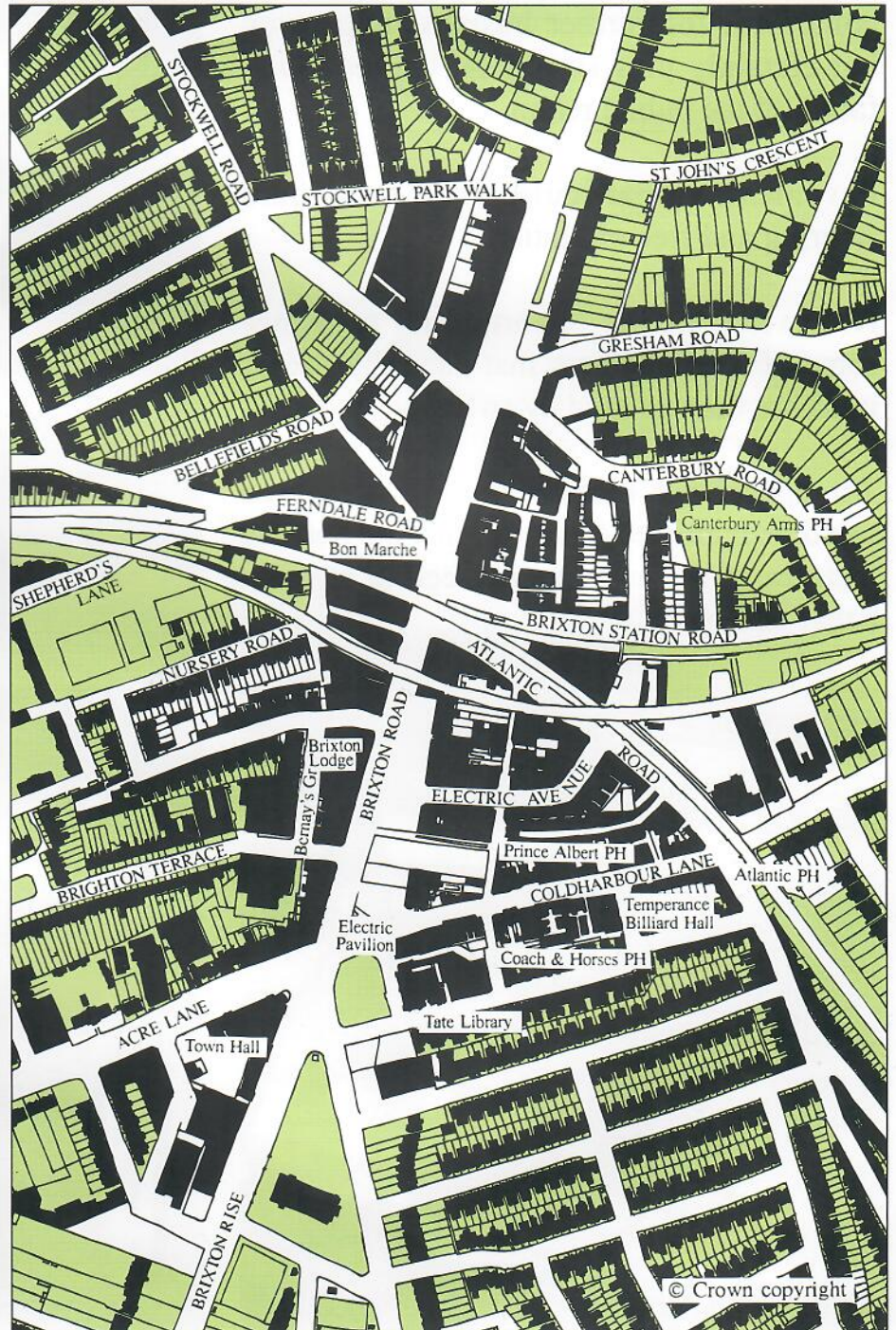
The former Atlantic PH, 1868, Coldharbour Ln.



The Coach & Horses, 1910, Coldharbour Ln.



The former Temperance Billiard Hall, 1911



Brixton in the 1930s. Several late Victorian and Edwardian public houses still survive

© Crown copyright

Overall impression

A first impression of Brixton is of a typical high street with heavy traffic dividing a local shopping parade at an important cross roads.

The existence of a tube and over-ground railway stations are not particularly unusual. But the 24,000 people who use the underground station each day make the pavements some of the busiest in London.

This constant crush of people provides ideal conditions for further business expansion but certainly puts strains on the structural fabric of the public realm.

Pavements in particular need to be hard wearing and free of clutter.

However there are opportunities to reduce some of the untidiness that naturally occurs in places that are used by so many people.

The appearance of some streets in Brixton could be improved further so that the positive features of the area can be seen in an even better setting.



The Town Hall tower is seen in the background of many views of Brixton



There are opportunities to improve the foreground of most views



Accurate craftsmanship contributes to the overall quality of a street



Even traders' crates, by encouraging other rubbish, can reduce quality

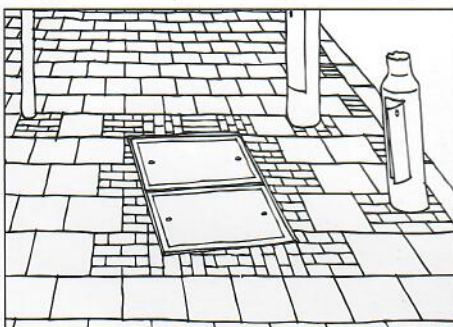
VISION: A cared for place

The first aim of the vision for the Brixton streetscape is that the centre should appear cared for. It should be clean, tidy and well maintained. Streets should be inviting to pedestrians and deter crime.

A town centre manager helps to keep Brixton looking good. This is an essential element in encouraging further business expansion and employment.



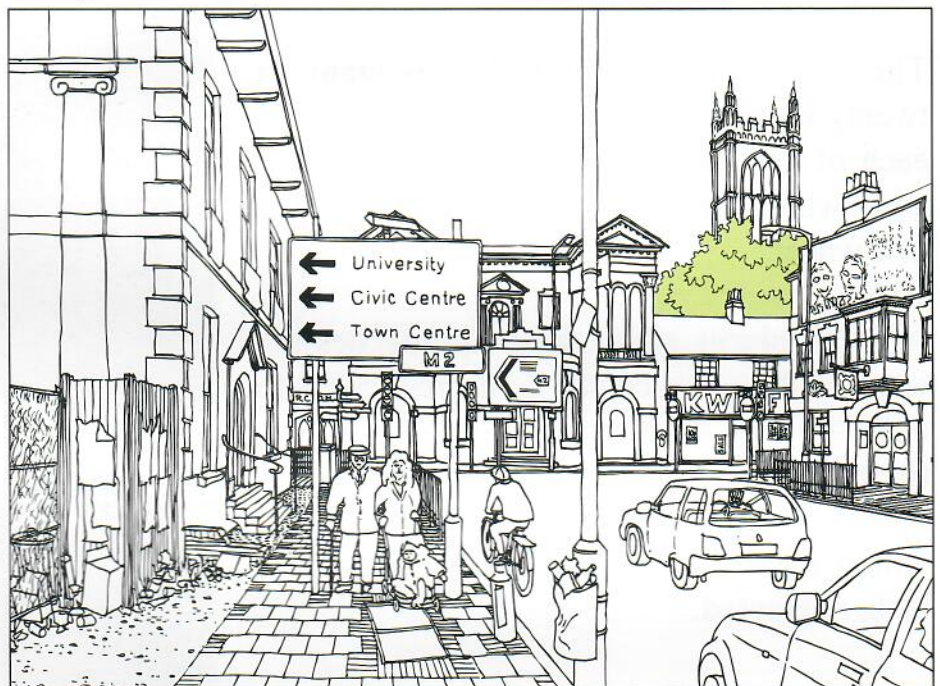
Many fine buildings including their settings have been refurbished



Poorly laid and maintained paving



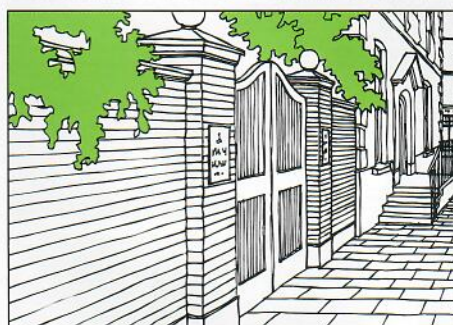
An accumulation of litter and graffiti



An imaginary street in need of more care



Hoardings are removed and shopfronts tidied



Boundary walls and landscape fill the gaps



The same street but cared for

A separate place

For somewhere to be recognisable and truly memorable it needs to be seen as a separate place. Ideally it should be different from the surrounding locality. We should feel it is a pleasure to arrive.

Although most visitors may come to Brixton town centre by tube and therefore emerge at street level right in the middle of the centre, local residents approach on the surface by bus or on foot from every direction.

The town centre therefore has as many as twenty entrances: at the very middle and at each of the approaches from the residential areas which join at the centre like the spokes of a wheel.

In some places along these approaches the edge of the town centre is blurred. Next to almost all of the paths that people use on their way into the town centre there are opportunities to tidy-up small areas of land which for various reasons have become a little neglected.



Most of the streets surrounding the centre are quiet and green



People walk into the centre from every direction



The town centre itself is full of colour



A place to meet friends



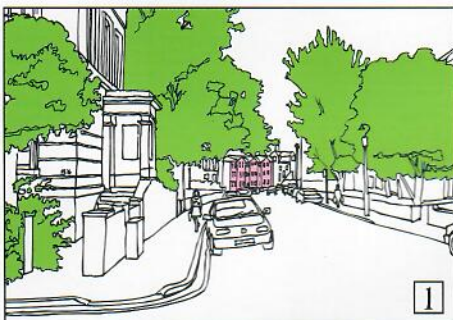
The walk down Brixton Hill past Rush Common into Brixton

VISION: Defined edges

The town centre should be seen as a separate place with a clearly defined edge.

The centre itself should have a more positive urban character than the surrounding area.

Paths into the centre should be safe, pleasant and green. Entrances to the town centre should provide a welcome and convey the message that one has arrived.



At present a typical walk to the town centre...



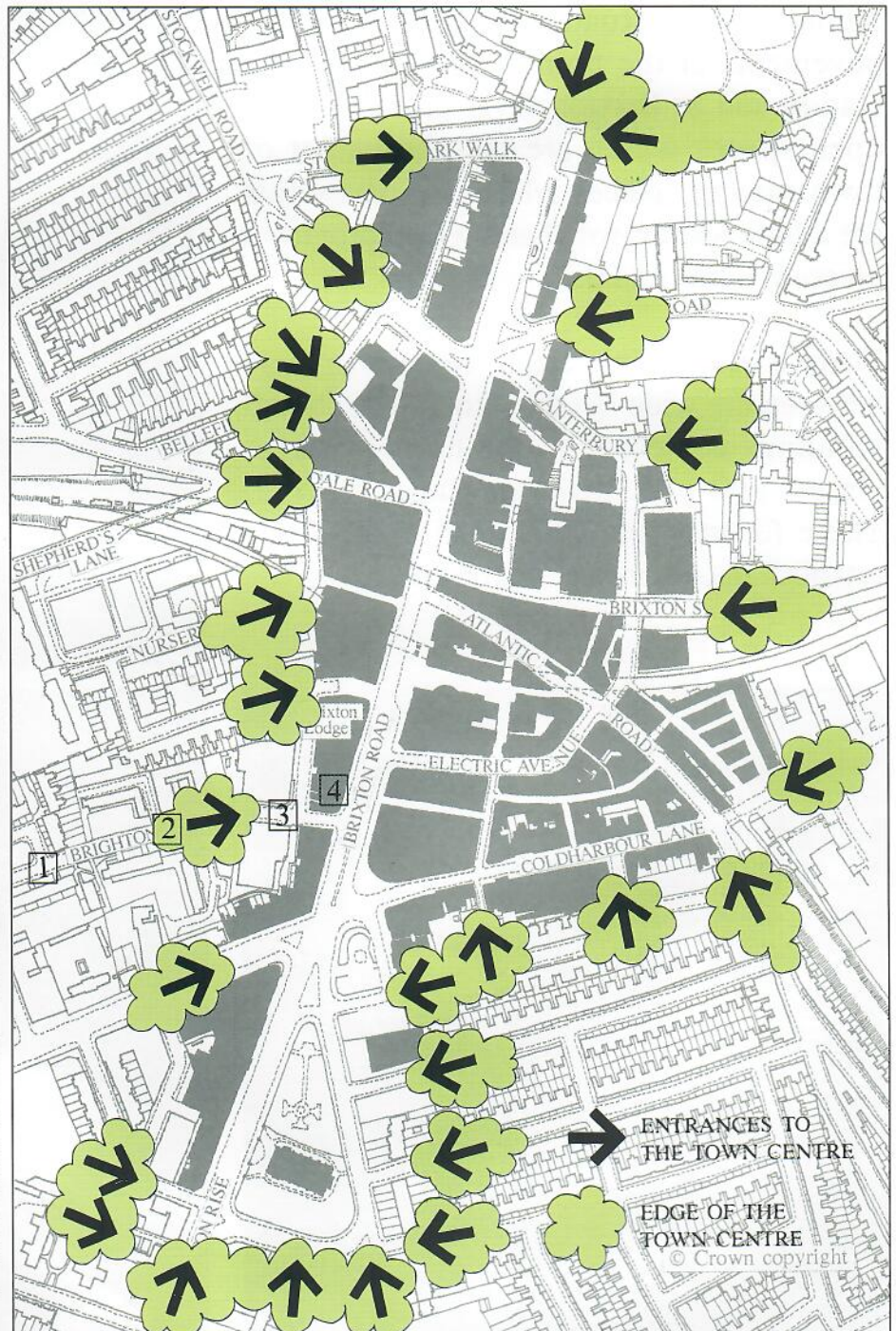
from the green residential neighbourhoods...



passes commercial service yards...



before arriving at the heart of Brixton



The town centre should be seen as a separate place with welcoming entrances

Zones of character

When we visit a town we look for things that help us recognise it as a particular place. We look for things that are different from any other town centre.

For instance the high street, Brixton Road, is not simply regular and uniform. It has landmarks and other features such as the double railway bridges and the green spaces created where buildings are set back from the road.

Along Brixton Road the widening of the pavements at the police station, the tube station and at Brixton Oval provide urban open spaces which are the equivalent of town squares: places where the pavements are a little less crowded and which provide a pleasant variety to the street scene.

There is also an interesting contrast in scale between the wide Brixton Road with its tall buildings compared to the narrow market streets and pedestrian passages behind. These features and their relationships help establish the character of Brixton.



The open space of Rush Common between the Town Hall and library



The green lung at the north of the town centre



The covered market halls become a series of pedestrian streets



Narrow spaces between the market stalls in Pope's Road

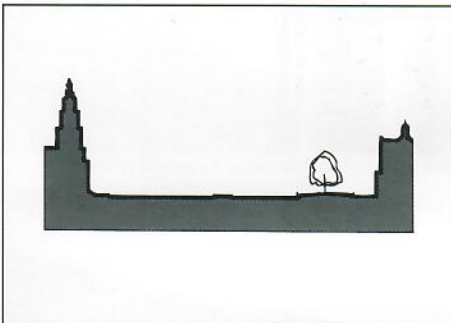


Lively pavements in Brixton Road

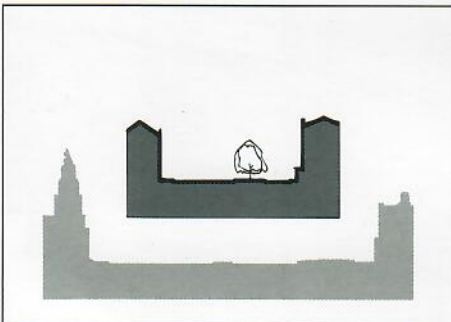
VISION: Distinct zones

The relationship between zones of character helps make Brixton unique. Each zone should be seen clearly and be appreciated.

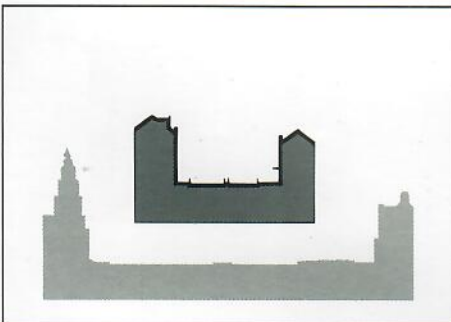
For instance the contrast in atmosphere between the large scale street of the wide, heavily trafficked Brixton Road compared to the market area of narrow pedestrian streets and small shops should be retained and enhanced.



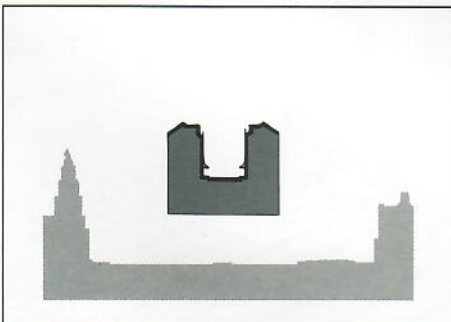
Wide spaces between the Town Hall and Ritz



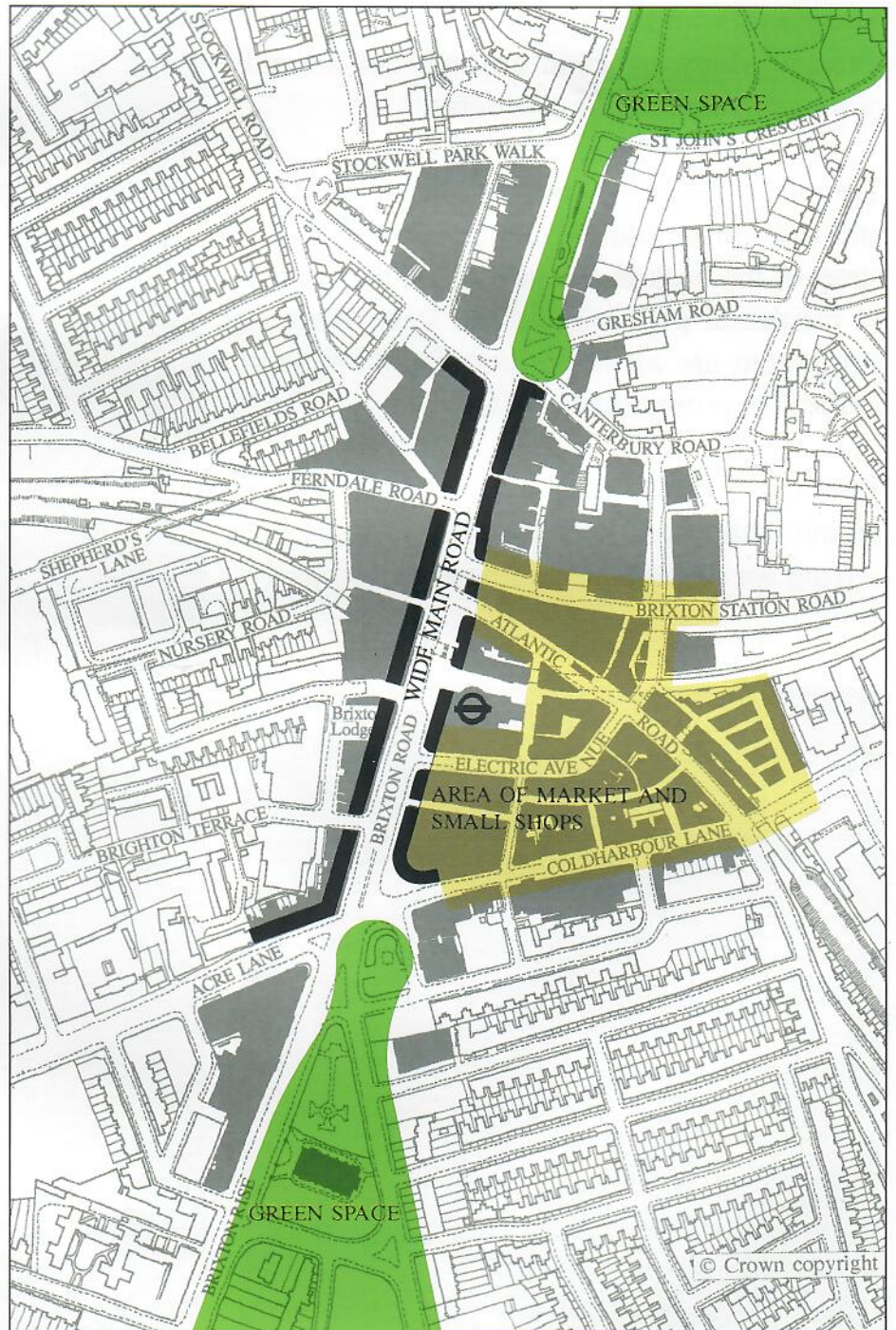
The green space, Angel Terrace, Brixton Road



Brixton Road at the tube station



Electric Avenue and the market stalls



Zones of character: green spaces and a wide main road contrast with the market area

Identity

Distinguished local landmarks such as the tower of the Town Hall certainly have value as pieces of architecture.

They also help to form a unique identity for the town centre and provide direct links with Brixton's past.

Far more reliable than sign boards, they help visitors and residents find their way about.

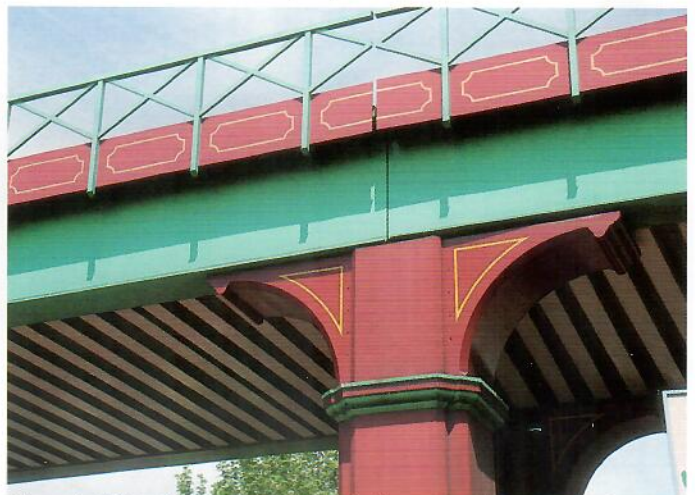
Shopfronts and shop signs provide added interest. Many are good examples of art and craftsmanship in their own right.

The maintenance of small private forecourts and sides of buildings, the appearance of the street at the back of the pavement, the quality of incidental planting and the state of street equipment are all important. They are seen in the foreground of most views.

The appearance of all these details has greater relevance because they provide the setting for important landmark buildings.



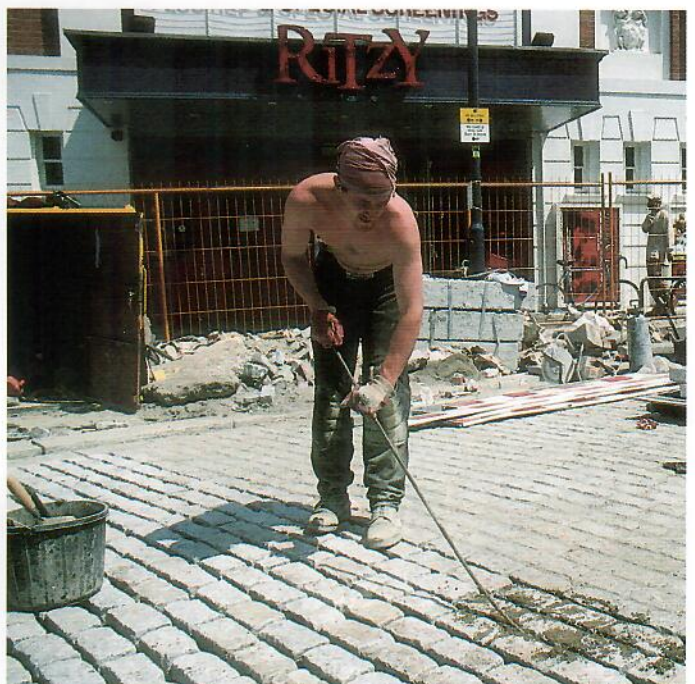
The classical architectural style of St. Matthew's church tower



The refurbished high level railway bridge across Brixton Road



The Ritz cinema has been restored as a London wide venue



A traditional granite sett road being reinstated in front of the Ritz



Victorian houses, Angel Terrace, Brixton Road, behind a green space

VISION: Clear landmarks

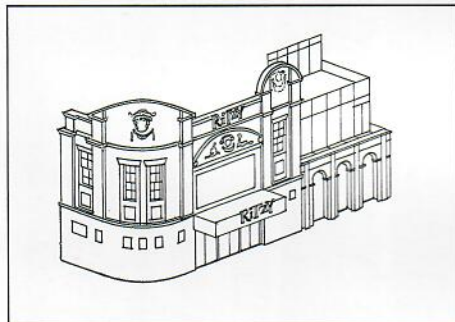
The well known landmarks of Brixton should be accentuated. They give the town centre its identity.

Care should be taken in the design and on-going maintenance of all the objects that appear in the foreground of a street scene.

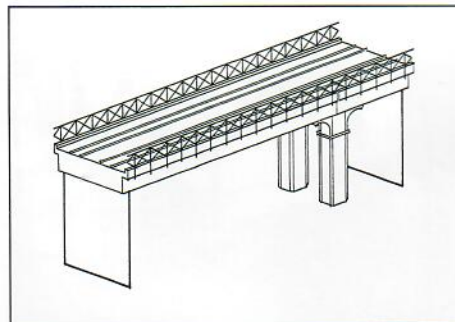
Co-ordinated colour themes and equipment design all help landmarks to be seen clearly.



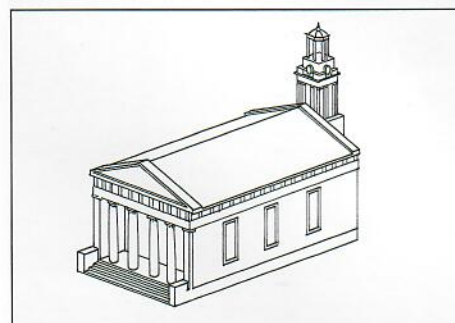
The Town Hall



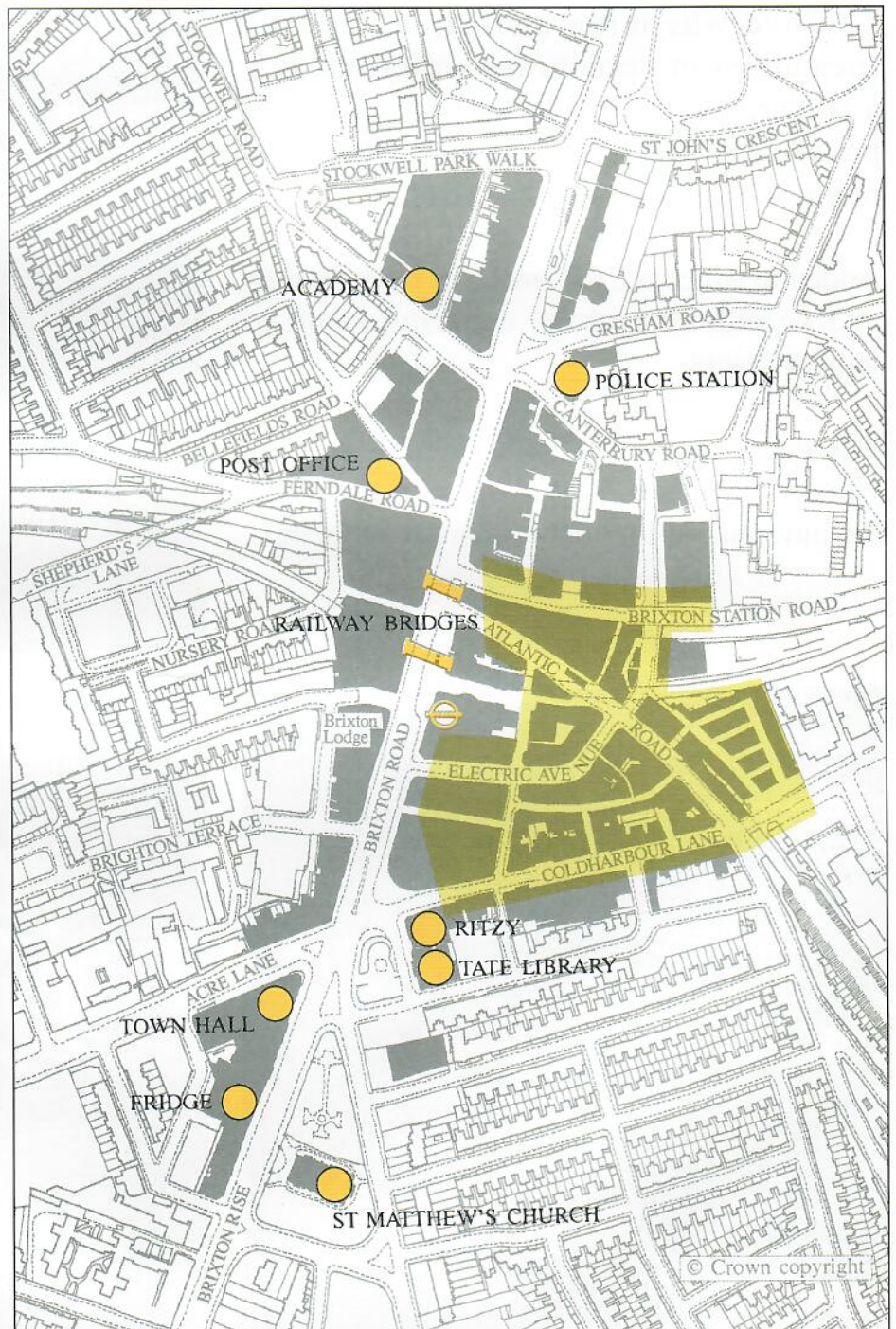
The Ritzy cinema



The high level railway bridge, Brixton Road



St. Matthew's Church, The Brix



Landmarks help us to recognise where we are and find our way about

Brixton's image

The market is unique for its size and range of produce. Considered to be the largest Afro-Caribbean market in Europe, it spreads out along a network of interlinked double rows of stalls.

Some stalls and small shops are in covered market halls, some along narrow streets. The total effect has a Casbah quality where strangers can explore and even feel lost.

The overwhelming attractions are the friendliness of vendors and customers. It is a colourful place to meet friends, compare prices and admire the artistic displays of produce in an area safe from traffic.

Added to which are the smells of fresh flowers and vegetables and the constant sound of human voices.

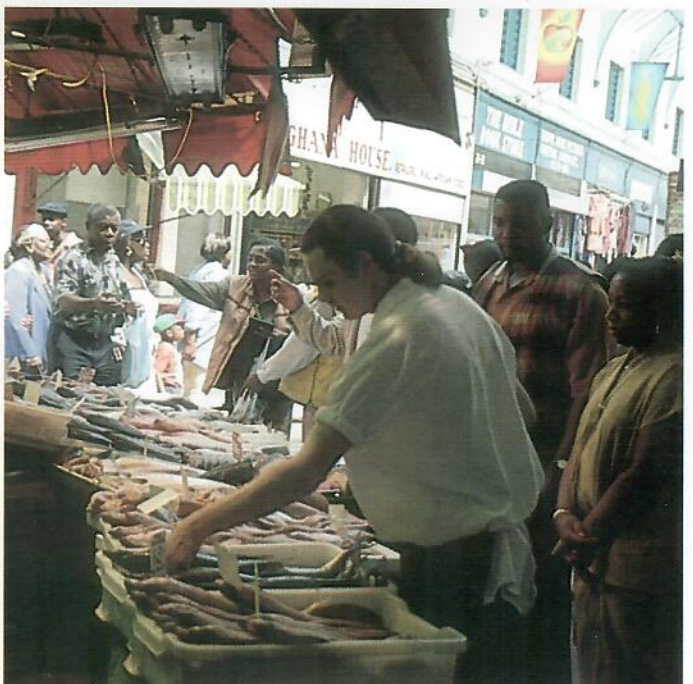
There are still some opportunities to help visitors find their way about and to reduce the amounts of inevitable market rubbish.



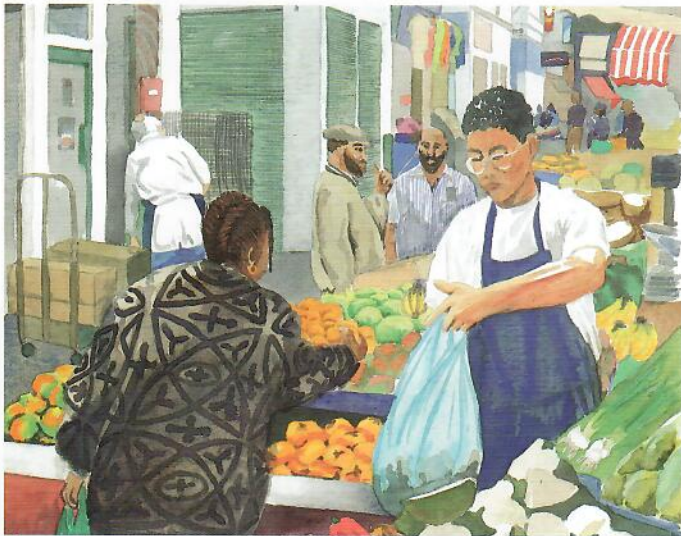
Above the crowd: a little noticed sprig...



growing from the tiled entrance of an Egyptian style arcade



Rows of street market stalls continue into a dozen covered arcades that have a Casbah quality where strangers can explore and even feel lost



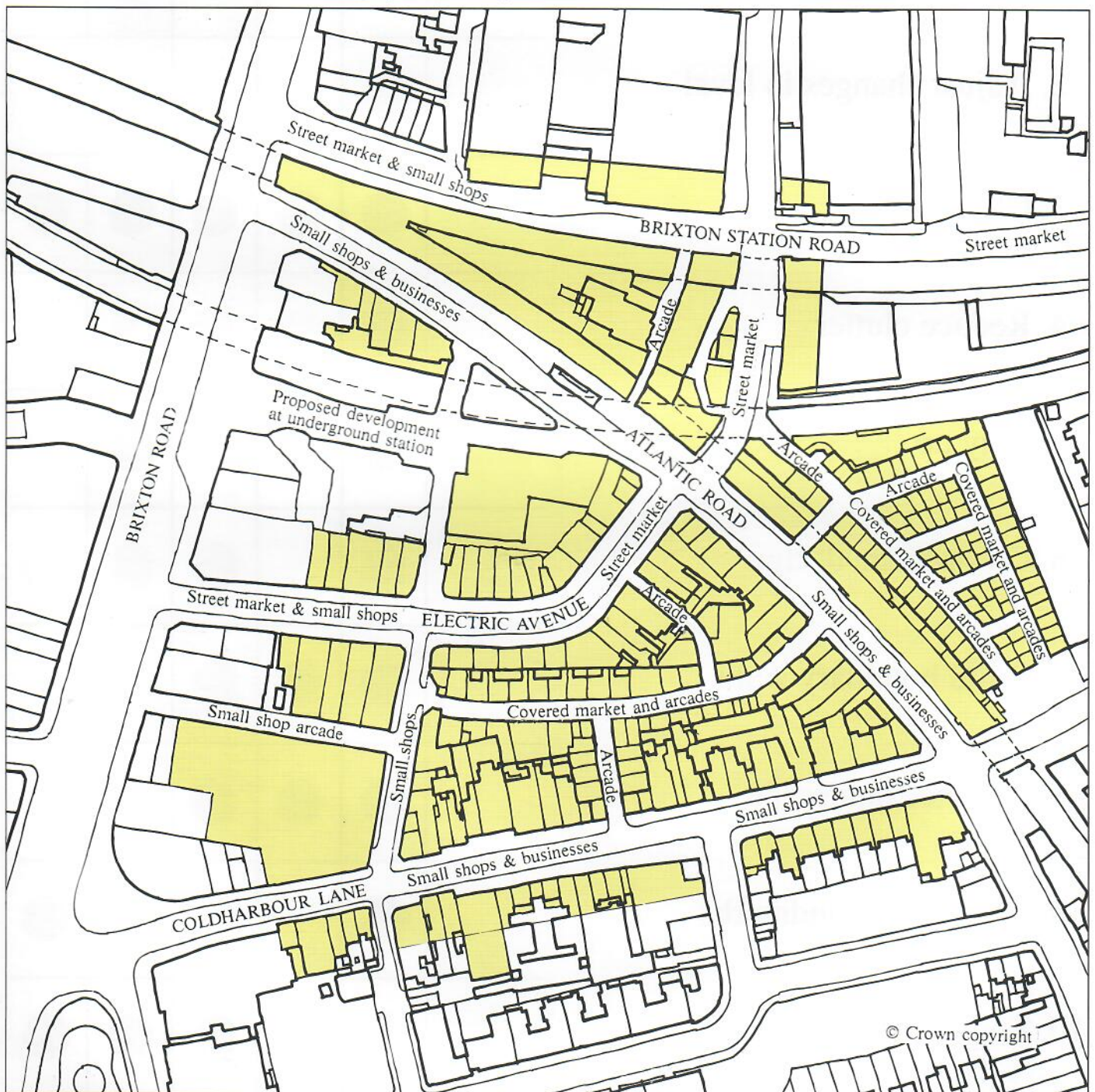
The market. A place to meet friends and where many businesses begin

VISION: A unique market

The market and area of small multi-cultural shops, the feature which helps to create Brixton's image, should be emphasised.

The practical problems of litter in the streets, collecting market rubbish and the removal of flyposters need even more attention.

The special attractions such as the multi-cultural art and crafts could be enhanced.



Brixton market and the area of small shops and businesses

© Crown copyright

VISION INTO ACTION

The five aspects of the VISION for Brixton town centre are described on the preceding pages.

The vision is being realised by ACTION through the policies and practices below and on the following pages:

- 1. Cared for place
- 2. Defined edges
- 3. Distinct zones
- 4. Clear landmarks
- 5. Unique market

1. Specify paving

2. Adjust changes in level

3. Clear rubbish

4. Reduce clutter

5. Tidy up

6. Co-ordinate design

7. Build boundary walls

8. Enhance landscape

9. Accentuate landmarks

10. Emphasise the market

	1. Cared for place	2. Defined edges	3. Distinct zones	4. Clear landmarks	5. Unique market
1. Specify paving	●			●	●
2. Adjust changes in level	●			●	
3. Clear rubbish	●	●	●	●	●
4. Reduce clutter	●	●	●	●	
5. Tidy up	●	●		●	
6. Co-ordinate design	●		●	●	●
7. Build boundary walls	●	●	●		
8. Enhance landscape	●	●	●		
9. Accentuate landmarks	●		●	●	●
10. Emphasise the market	●		●	●	●

Though important in its own right,
each separate ACTION adds to the value of the others

Quality in the design and construction of pavements
often sets the tone of an area

Kerbs, dropped kerbs for wheel chairs and tactile
surfaces for people with disabilities need special care

Market rubbish, fly posters and street litter
need to be constantly cleared

Reduction of clutter involves several agencies and
has to be carried out over a long time scale

Tidying up includes the careful positioning
and colouring of all street furniture

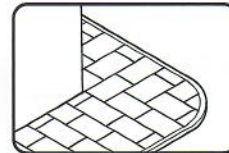
Co-ordinating shopfronts and removing large
advertisement hoardings creates a unified scene

Maintenance of boundary walls adjacent to public
pavements has a dramatic effect on the town centre

A landscape strategy helps define the edge of the
town centre and emphasises areas of greenness

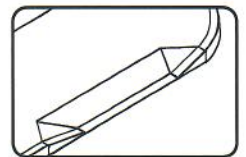
Street lighting, floodlighting and shopsigns all help
accentuate Brixton's characteristics

The market is Brixton's unique feature. It is where
people meet and enjoy the multi-cultural society



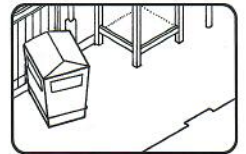
page 20

page 22



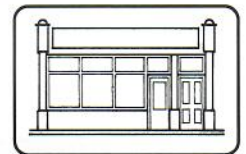
page 24

page 26



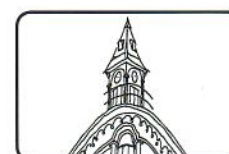
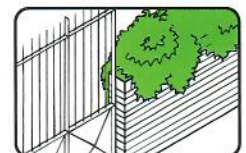
page 28

page 30



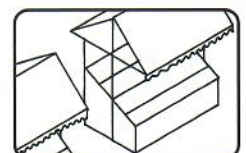
page 32

page 34



page 36

page 38



Paving is seen in the foreground of every scene. Quality in the design and construction of pavements often sets the tone for an area. High standards of workmanship in the laying of paving materials, whether natural York stone or concrete slabs, is essential.

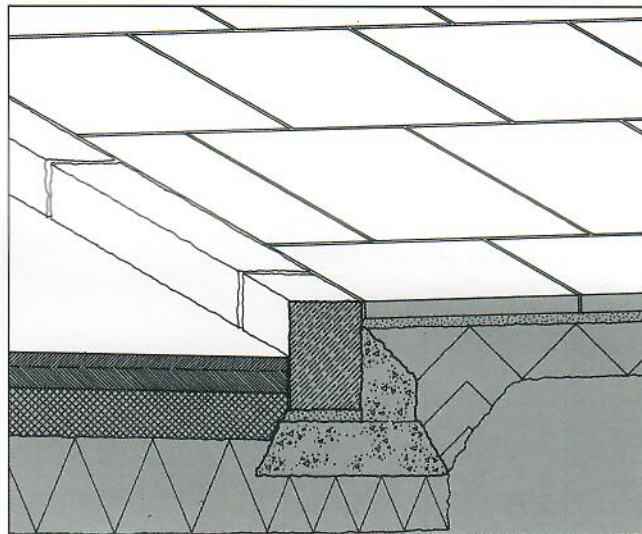
Large stone paving slabs extensively used in Victorian times, have an uninterrupted smooth surface which complements the intricate design of buildings. A simple straightforward but well constructed paving pattern unifies the whole town centre and co-ordinates the various styles of architecture.



York stone paving at the Town Hall is well laid and provides a durable easily cleaned surface

At some locations natural York stone paving is justified but generally well laid concrete slabs are satisfactory.

In Brixton Road 600mm x 600mm pre-cast concrete slabs are laid. Elsewhere an appropriate paving is achieved by the careful use of normal 900mm x 600mm precast concrete slabs and these will replace the smaller slabs as stretches of paving are renewed.



TYPICAL SPECIFICATION TO REPAIR EXISTING FOOTWAY PAVING AT BRIXTON ROAD

FOOTWAY
600mm X 600mm
PRECAST CONCRETE PAVING
SURFACE COLOUR AND
TEXTURE TO MATCH EXISTING
ON 25mm SAND BED
PAVING BOND GENERALLY
300mm, min 150mm
JOINT WIDTH 3-6mm
SUB-BASE 150mm

KERBS
AS PAGE 22

ROADWAY SPECIFICATION FOR
BRIXTON TOWN CENTRE
TRADITIONAL ROLLED
ASPHALT WEARING COURSE,
BASE COURSE & ROAD BASE
TO ENGINEERS SPECIFICATION

Setting out paving slabs.

They are aligned across the pavement direction. Odd sizes are cut on the inside of the pavement and shaped to the profile of the building. At street corners the slabs patterns are woven together. At rounded corners the slabs are cut to the radius of the corner.

Slabs are tightly cut and fitted round inspection covers, other obstructions and unavoidable changes of surface direction of material. The aim is to maintain a neat uninterrupted smooth surface. Cutting slabs is a highly skilled craft. The filled space at the edge of the slabs should not exceed 10mm and should be the same width each side.



A mixture of paving materials can look odd

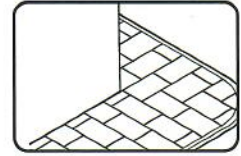


Inspection covers often need to be adjusted

Additional posts and structures are often needed in the pavement. Slabs are cut neatly to their profile or the posts or structures are inserted through a hole or slot cut in the slabs.

Where vehicles are likely to cause damage, the paving is strengthened with a base of in situ concrete, so that the smooth uninterrupted appearance of the pavement is maintained.

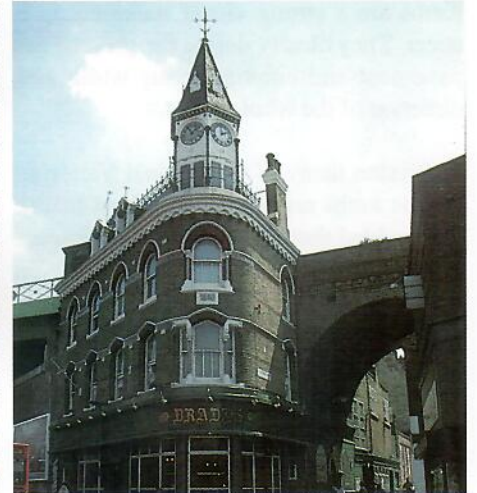
SPECIFY PAVING



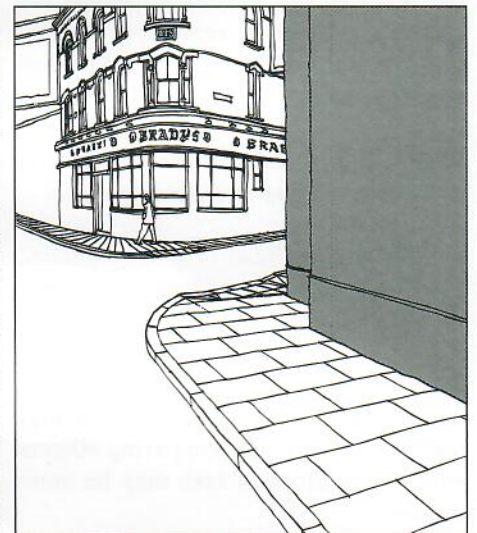
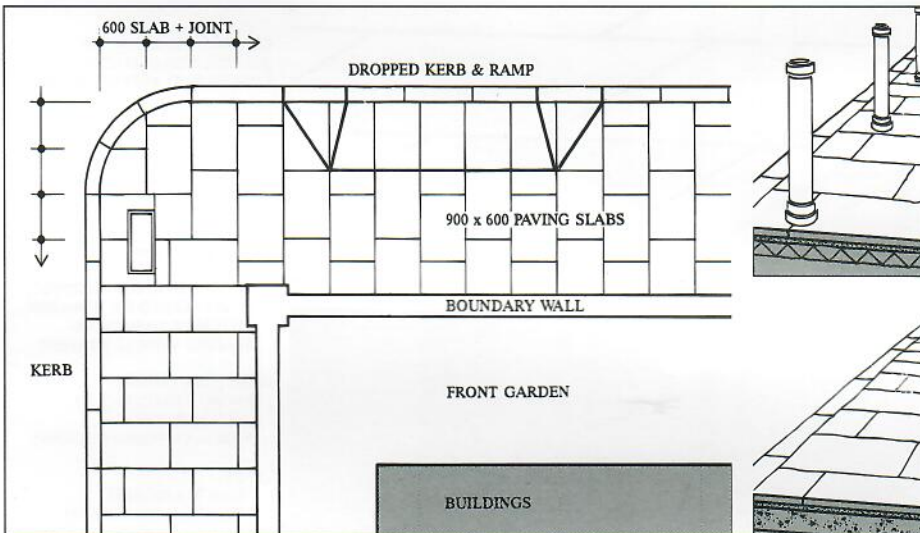
York stone and concrete slabs



Renewed railings and sets in the road provide a more suitable setting for the Tate library



Brixton has many similar landmark buildings



Care in the design, specification and workmanship of ordinary pavements provides a suitable and practical setting for the whole of Brixton



Ordinary concrete paving in Brixton is designed, cut and laid with the same care that is given elsewhere to expensive York stone paving

The construction of changes of levels is very noticeable. Kerbs, usually made of granite, dropped kerbs for wheel chairs and tactile surfaces for people with disabilities, all need special attention.

Kerbs are a strong visual statement in a street. They clearly define the limit of the pavement and emphasise the width and direction of the whole street.

In Brixton many of the original Victorian granite kerbs remain. Their robust nature has enabled them to withstand the impact of modern heavy traffic.

The appearance of traditional private access crossings over a pavement often adds to the visual interest of a road. This characteristic can still be retained even if a continuous smooth surface is required by raising the level of the cross-over to the level of the pavement. It has the added advantage of reminding drivers that they should give way to pedestrians on the pavement.

People with disabilities and parents with pushchairs need special consideration.

At zebra and pelican or other signalled crossings, red tactile surfaces are normal on dropped kerbs and across the footway.

At other crossings where tactile paving is needed and at some controlled crossings matching or buff concrete paving 800mm wide at the dropped kerb may be more suitable.

To reduce discomfort to wheelchair users at dropped kerbs, the upstand should be no more than 10mm.

Unintended visual distortions caused by inspection covers can be overcome by continuing the tactile surface within the depth of the inspection cover.

Demonstration examples of design and workmanship for paving, kerbs and dropped kerbs have been constructed.

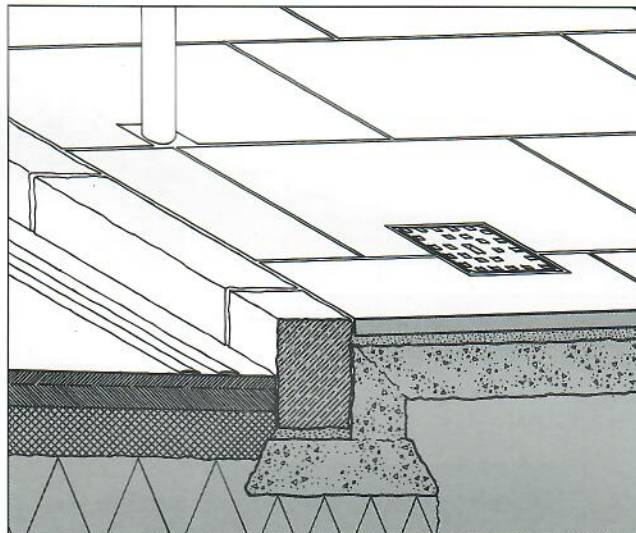
They set the standards for the whole of Brixton town centre.



Victorian granite kerbs and access ramp



Similar care given to a recent Brixton design



GENERAL SPECIFICATION AND FOR REPLACEMENT FOOTWAYS AT BRIXTON ROAD

FOOTWAY
900mm X 600mm
PRECAST CONCRETE PAVING ON 25mm MORTAR BED
PAVING BOND GENERALLY 300mm, min 150mm
JOINT WIDTH 3-6mm
SUB-BASE 150mm

AT VULNERABLE POSITIONS SLABS BEDDED ON 100mm MIN. CONCRETE CAPABLE OF BEARING VEHICLE LOADING

INSPECTION COVERS
PAVING NEATLY CUT TO CAST IRON COVERS
15mm MAX. PERIMETER JOINT

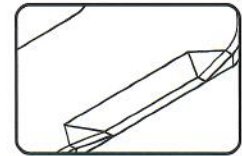
KERBS
200mm W x 300mm H
GRANITE, 12-20mm JOINTS

Setting out ordinary concrete paving slabs at a kerb.



Added strength is needed to prevent damage near kerbs. Care is needed in finishing

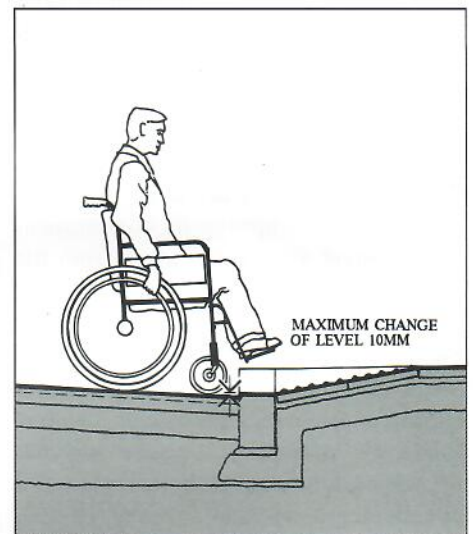
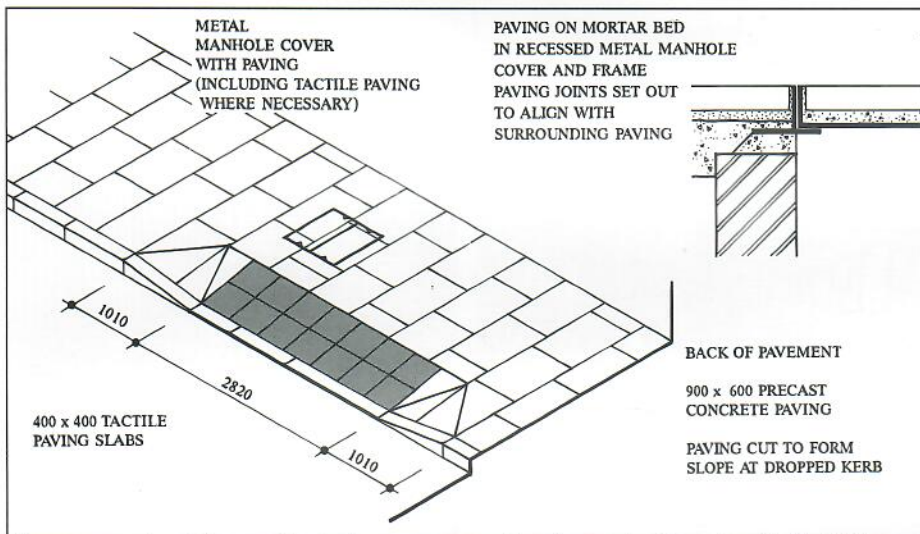
ADJUST CHANGES IN LEVEL



Kerbs and tactile surfaces



Remnants of Victorian wood block street paving can still be seen near the Town Hall close to where modern setts have been laid

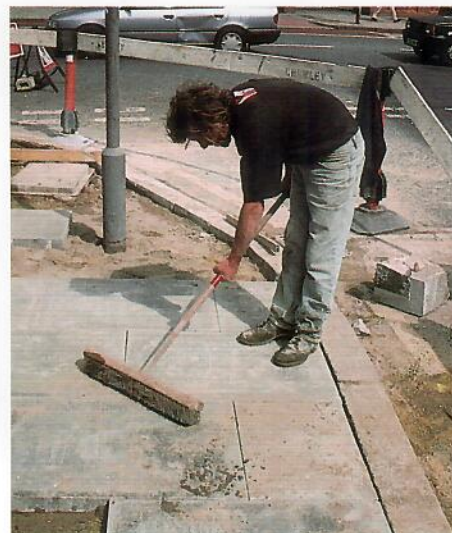


The construction of dropped kerbs has to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities

Wheel chair users need easy ramps



Accurate measurement and cutting



York stone or concrete paving is continued as a smooth or tactile surface across inspection covers



Brixton is a busy town centre and market. This creates large amounts of rubbish and attracts flyposters. They have to be constantly cleared up in order to maintain the appearance of a cared-for town centre.

As pavements form the foreground to nearly every scene, so litter and neglected flyposters, seen close at hand, spoil the appearance of an area.

Litter is easy to clear from wide, smooth surfaced, uncluttered pavements which abut solid boundary walls.

Problems occur when litter gets stuck between crevices or blows onto places which are not frequently swept such as private back yards and open forecourts.

The design and maintenance of paving and the space immediately at the back of pavements affect the collection of litter and rubbish. The bottom edge of guard-rails should be no less than 150mm from the ground to ease sweeping.

Rubbish is unavoidable in a street market. New arrangements are being made to clear rubbish, improve its containment on the street and take it away from the market more frequently.

Posters can provide useful information about local events but their effectiveness is reduced when they are torn or illegible. Public information posters are only put up where they can be maintained and updated regularly.

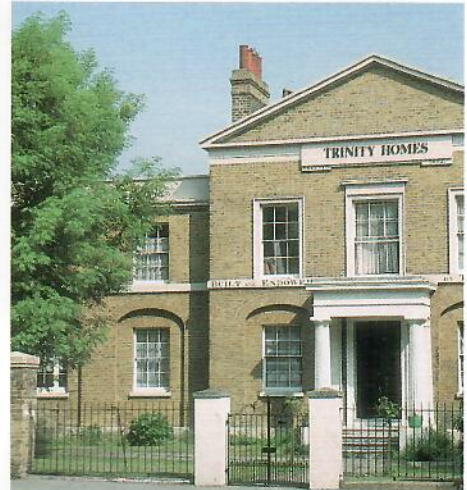
Flyposters are inappropriate in some places and are discouraged by a textured surface and regularly removed. Sites for informal posters are identified so that it is easier to discourage flyposters in other locations.

Trade crates are a form of litter and the council can insist that they and business rubbish is only put out on the pavements within an hour of being collected.

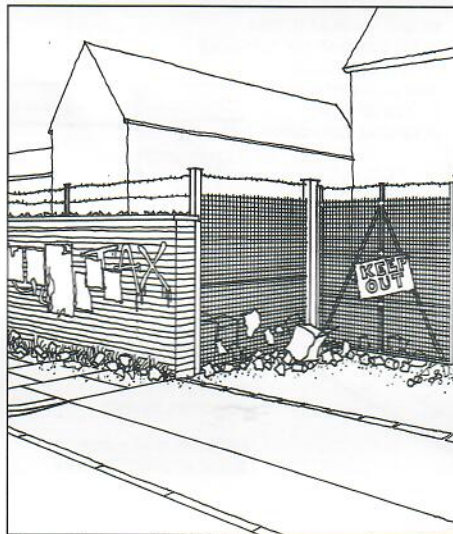
Graffiti needs to be cleaned regularly. Places which are particularly vulnerable are being treated to discourage marking. For instance the use of climbing plants is an effective way to deter graffiti.



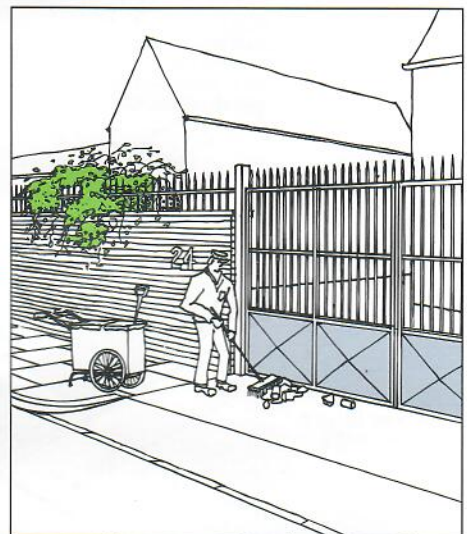
Litter is easy to clear from smooth pavements



Front walls and railings are usually kept tidy



Street litter and rubbish is easier to clear from pavements that are smooth and uncluttered



Litter collects in backyards near pavements



Market rubbish bins are unsightly

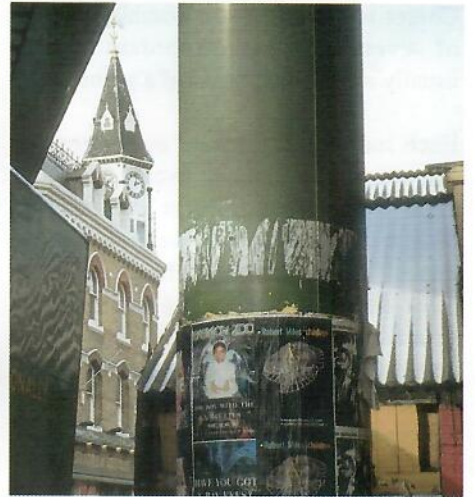
CLEAR RUBBISH



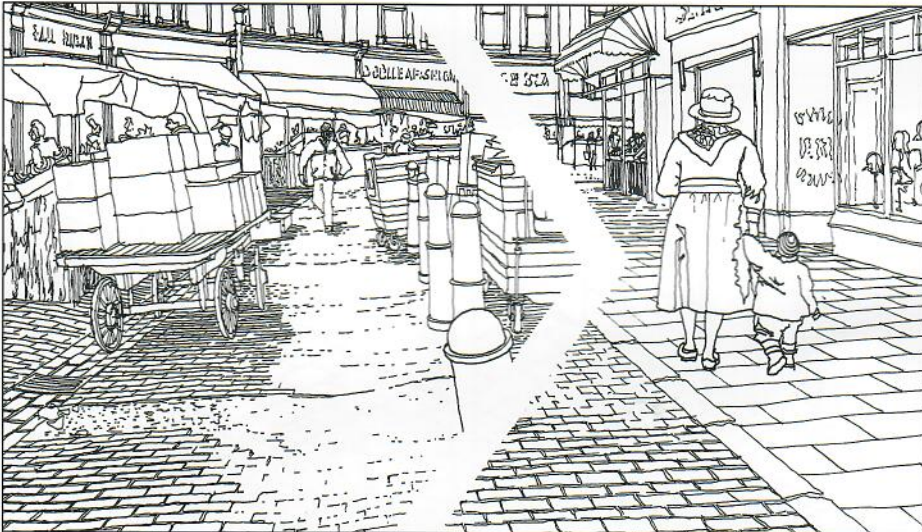
Litter, market rubbish and flyposters



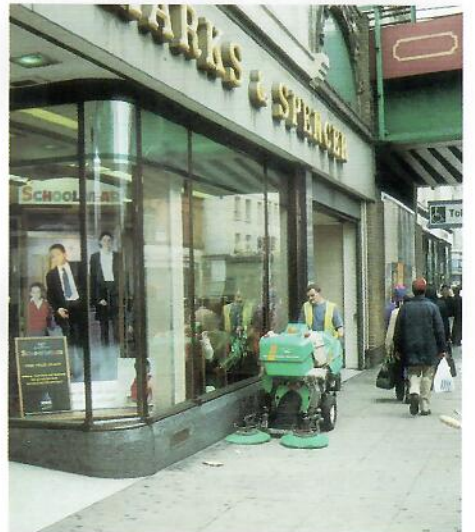
Brixton's buildings have many fine landmark towers, turrets, domes and spires



The foreground should be of equal quality



Market rubbish has to be kept to an acceptable level



Street sweeping. A constant task



The task of cleaning graffiti, removing flyposters and clearing rubbish is given a high priority



Having cleared away litter and rubbish we see more clearly the detrimental effect of clutter on the pavements and streets. The reduction of clutter is more complex, involves several agencies and has to be carried out over a long time scale.

Clutter is a term for the combined effect of several visually discordant objects usually in the foreground of a scene.

Each individual piece of equipment or structure may have a useful purpose. Each, looked at by itself in a show-room or in a catalogue, might well have visual appeal. Unfortunately when seen with other damaged objects in a street as part of a haphazard group, they only add to an overall impression of clutter.

To remove or adjust one of the objects makes little impact. Therefore all the items of street furniture, structures and equipment on the Brixton town centre streets and pavements have been audited.

Those that are redundant or no longer have a useful purpose are being removed.

For instance the traditional street name signs in Brixton were formed in Roman lettering on plates set on the walls of houses or shops. This is a tidy answer to a problem and avoids the need for extra support posts which add to clutter and obstruction on pavements.

Traditional street name signs are being reinstated throughout the town centre.

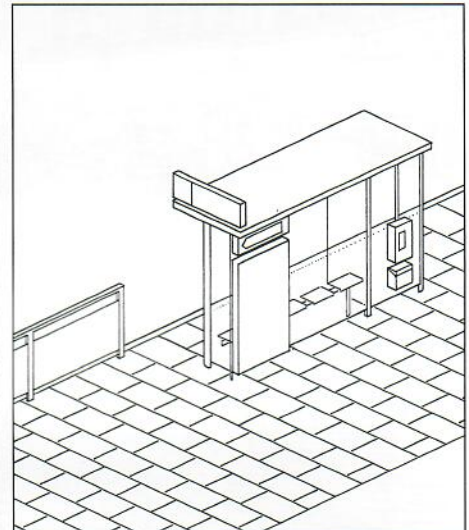
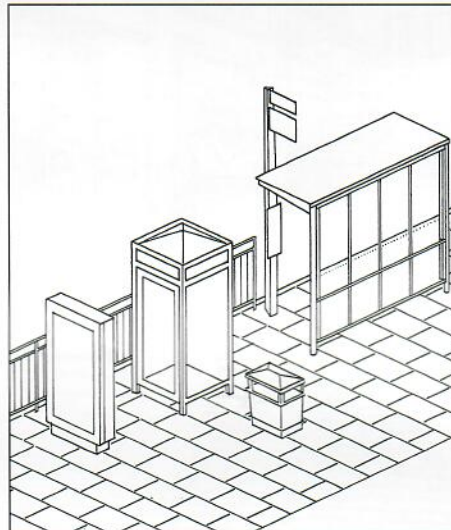
The street scene audit has identified some two thousand items of street furniture and equipment. Many are the responsibility of private companies outside the control of the public authorities. Each company has however agreed to co-operate and when requested to consider the removal or re-location of their equipment.

Objects identified in the audit include:

- Bollards
- Bus shelters
- Guard rails
- Lamp columns
- Litter bins
- Telephone kiosks
- Traffic signs



Damaged or redundant posts and signs can reduce the positive impact of restored buildings



Co-ordination of street furniture can give more useful space for pedestrians in crowded streets

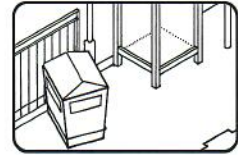


Redundant posts are removed



Damaged railings are repaired

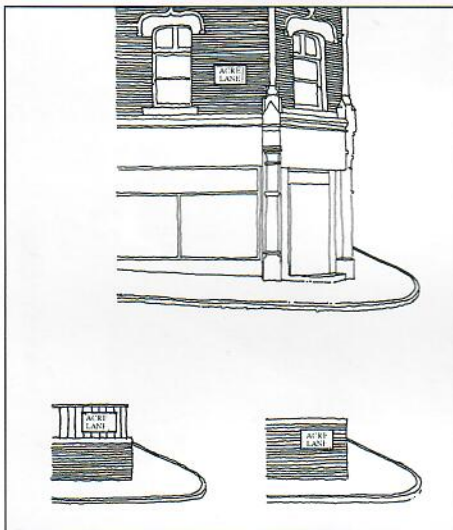
REDUCE CLUTTER



Audit of redundant posts and signs etc

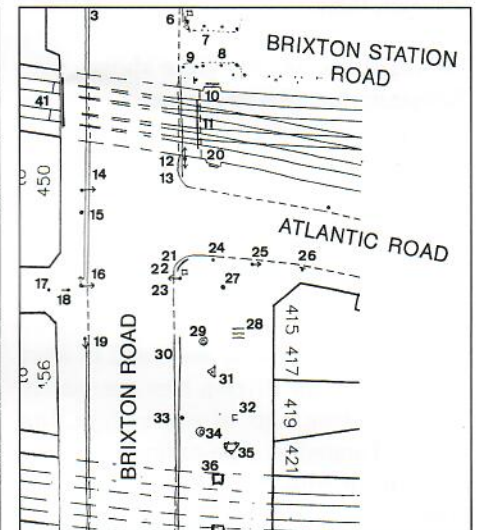


Traditional street name signs replaced earlier painted signs. They are clear and as they do not need separate posts, reduce pavement clutter



Alternative wall mounted street name signs

Ref	Agency	Item
D5		ATLANTIC ROAD BRIXTON ROAD BRIXTON STATION ROAD DORRELL PLACE
D5-1	7	Telephones BT double, modern style
D5-2	4 & 3	Lamp column, grey with separate post to support traffic direction sign
D5-3	2	Guard rail, grey
D5-4	2	Guard rail, grey
D5-5	1	Litter bin, square style, green
D5-6	3 & 6	Traffic signs, two. No entry, illuminated on grey post with direction signs to toilet and Brixton Market Area
D5-7	2	Bollards, cast iron, three, two grey, one black
D5-8	2	Bollards, cast iron, five, three grey, two black
D5-9	1	Street name sign post only
D5-10	10	Advertisement hoarding on bridge abutment
D5-11	10	Traffic signal on bridge abutment
D5-12	5	Guard rail
D5-13	2	Guard rail
D5-14	5	Traffic signal, grey post
D5-15	1 & 4	Lamp column, mid blue+white
D5-16	5	fly posters with Toilet sign
D5-17	4	Traffic signal



A section of the street audit schedule and location plans. It has identified necessary action



Brixton's pavements are well used



Some street structures can be improved



Every detail adds to the overall quality

Where it is not practical to reduce clutter by removing items of street furniture, the scene can be tidied up by grouping them into an orderly visual composition. They can also be painted in a co-ordinated colour. The theme colour for Brixton town centre is Midnight Blue.

In several streets in the town centre there are a number of types of street furniture which often are seen together as a group.

Bus shelters, bus stop signs, telephones, information boards, local advertisements, benches and litter bins are often needed in the same position. They could be grouped together in a visual composition.

For instance telephones fixed directly to walls cause less obstruction on valuable pavement space than free standing kiosks.

News-stands, where necessary can be designed and constructed to include other services, thereby reducing overall clutter.

Photographs on this page show some European examples of tidy street furniture and visual co-ordination.

Where it is not practical to change the position of street equipment, a sense of co-ordination and identity can be created by painting it all the same colour.

For instance litter bins are found in most town centres. In Brixton they are mostly free-standing and of more than one design. Painted in a co-ordinated colour to conform with the colour theme, they appear, as other pieces of street furniture, part of a tidy background service.

The other categories of street furniture that are suitable for being painted in a co-ordinated colour are:

- Bus shelters
- Bus stop posts
- Guard rails
- Lamp columns
- Parking meter posts
- Telephone switch boxes
- Traffic control boxes
- Traffic signal posts
- Traffic sign posts

A colour theme for the street furniture within the town centre can also help to clearly define the edges of the town centre.



These three sketches trace the process...



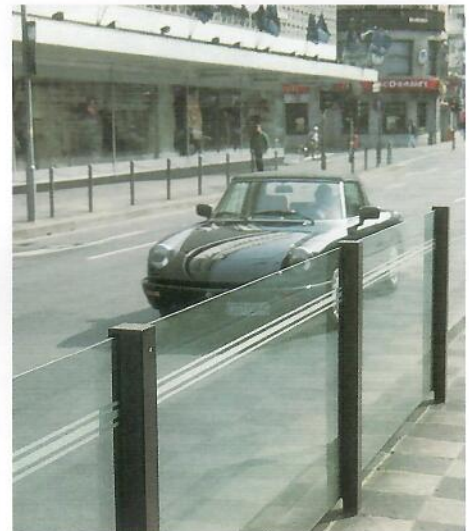
to reorganise street furniture more tidily...



and add a direction finder shown on page 39



For comparison, three examples from Europe



Glass guard rail, Dusseldorf city centre



Textured stone on bollard and road, Denmark

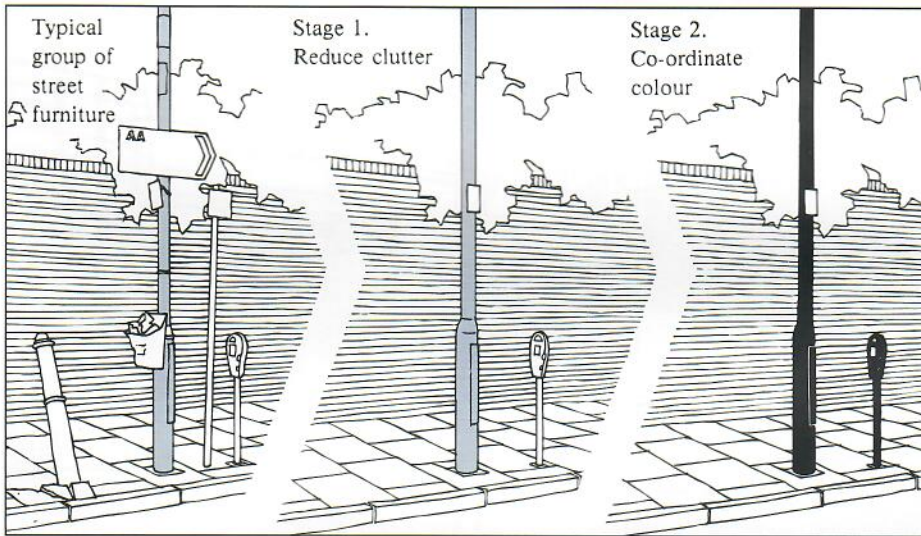
TIDY UP



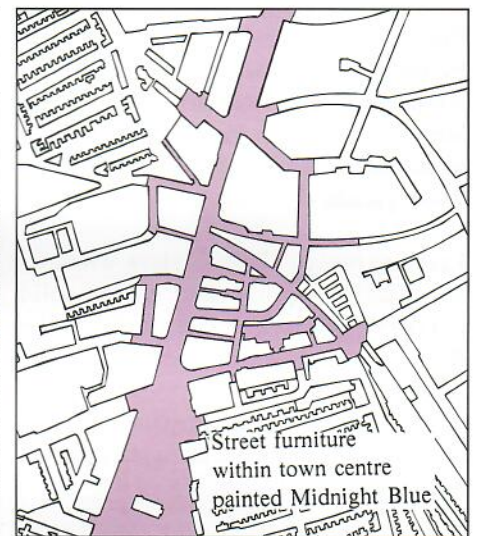
Position and colour of street furniture



The principles of colour co-ordination are well known. There are several examples in Brixton town centre. Usually stone is matched with brick



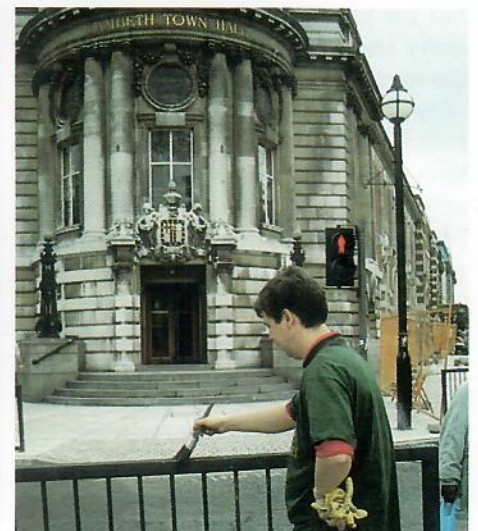
Painting street furniture in a single colour helps create a tidy appearance



It defines the boundary of the town centre



Posts for traffic signs, guard rails and tree guards are painted in the town centre colour, blue



The agencies have agreed to co-operate

Shopfronts are an important part of the street scene. They should relate visually to the overall design of the building. Large advertisement hoardings, often as big as shopfronts, can obscure the architectural detail which helps to create the character of an area.

Most of the shopfronts in Brixton town centre are an important part of listed buildings or other buildings of character.

Traditional shopfronts relate visually to the individual shop unit. They are no wider than a single shop or bay and are usually made up of the same parts: fascia, clerestory and main windows, mullions, transoms, cills and stallrisers.

Often there are stone or solid pilasters and capitals between each shopfront. These form part of the architectural design of the whole building and provide a visual support for the upper storeys.

The position and size of a fascia is dictated by the design of the console bracket and cornice. There is normally a continuing horizontal line, allowing each shop to have an identity without unduly dominating the whole parade.

Large expanses of plate glass windows are usually inappropriate, as are solid external shutters particularly in the Brixton town centre conservation area.

The council expects that separate doors to provide street access to an upper unit will be retained.

The design of each shopfront may vary but the presence of these elements in every shopfront creates the feeling that the street is complete.

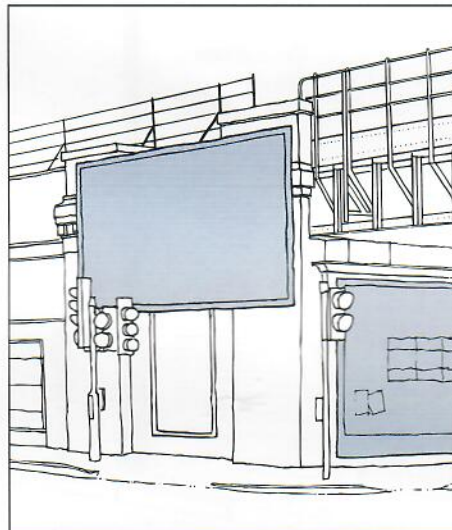
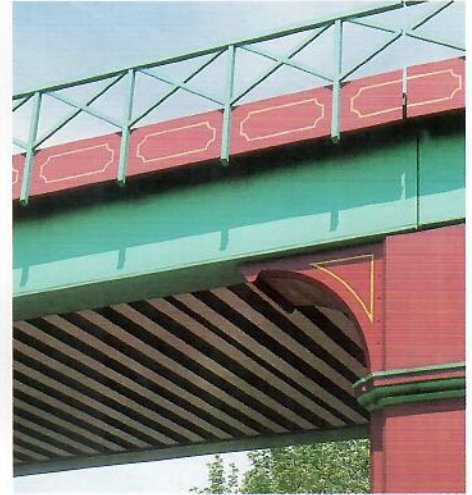
Large national advertisement hoardings have almost as much impact on a building as shopfronts. They tend to obscure the architectural quality of buildings and railway structures in Brixton town centre.

As they do not provide information relating to local businesses or in any way contribute to the special character of the area, they are being removed.

The co-ordination of all these design details adds to Brixton's special character.



Most of the landmark buildings and structures in Brixton are free of advertisement hoardings



It is interesting to imagine what a structure would look like with the hoarding removed

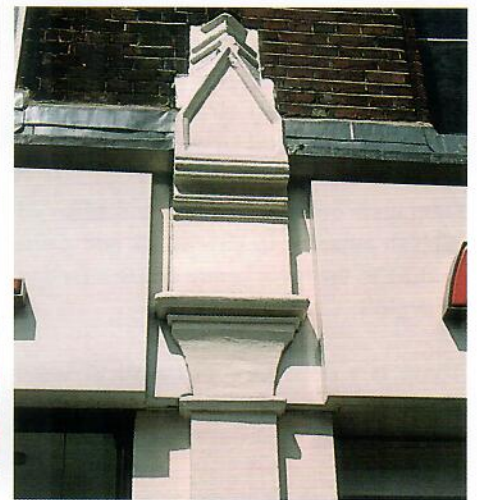


Large advertisement hoardings do not contribute to the special quality of Brixton

CO-ORDINATE DESIGN



Shopfronts and hoardings



A traditional shopfront including fascia, stallriser and solid pilaster with capitals

Capitals separate individual shop signs



The shopfront policy ensures that each shop retains its own individuality but respects the visual rhythm of the whole street



The door panel is as high as the stallriser



Similar components but a different design



Solid pilasters visually support the building

The care with which gates and boundary walls of private properties are maintained, particularly at the edge of the town centre, has a very dramatic effect on the overall impression of the town centre.

A boundary wall at the front of a property is likely to be cared for by the owner. Walls and gates at the side or rear of properties, particularly if the property is vacant, usually need attention.

Damaged boundary walls and piles of rubbish adjacent to pavements and paths leading to the town centre create a feeling of neglect.

There is a derelict appearance at some places where people enter the town centre and form their first impressions.

At Brixton as in many town centres, peripheral business sites at the edge of the centre become vacant and are often left unmaintained and untidy until new tenants are found.

In the interests of Brixton as a whole, all these sites should be kept tidy. Assistance is given for the reconstruction of walls and gates adjacent to public paths and pavements at the edge of the town centre.

This programme together with those described on page 24, will ease the task of keeping the pavements free of litter.

A design which includes new shrubs and trees would be applicable at the vehicle entrance to the multi-storey car park at Canterbury Crescent.

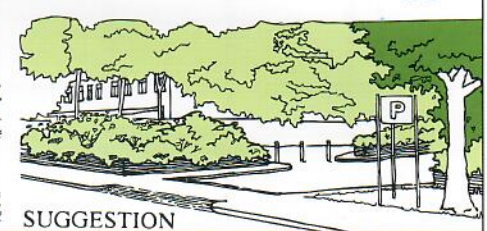
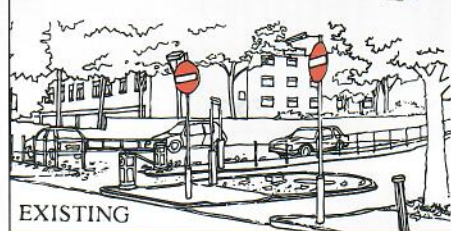
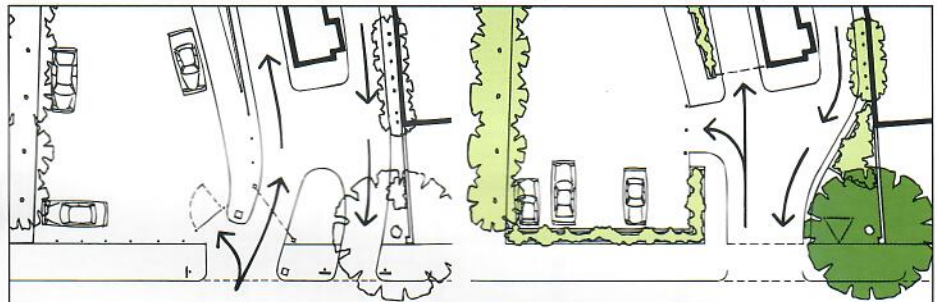
The diagram of the landscape and tree planting strategy on page 35 indicates the importance of soft landscape at this car park entrance. It continues the greenness of the surrounding residential areas and helps define the edge of the town centre.

The illustrations on page 33 show some alternative designs for boundary walls depending upon the purpose for which the site is used.

The designs follow the traditional brick walls and railings often seen in the neighbourhood of Brixton.



Residential areas are green but you often have to walk past some scruffy back yards...



More landscape at the car park will improve the welcome at the entrance to the town centre

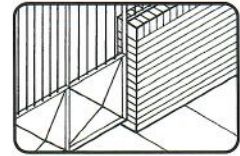


Back yards need to be solidly enclosed



Landscape walls need to be maintained

BUILD BOUNDARY WALLS



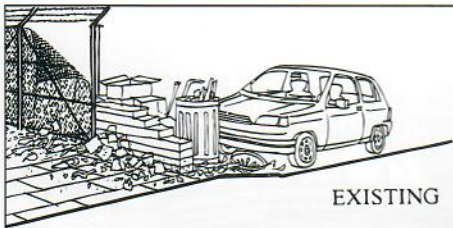
Repair walls and gates near footpaths



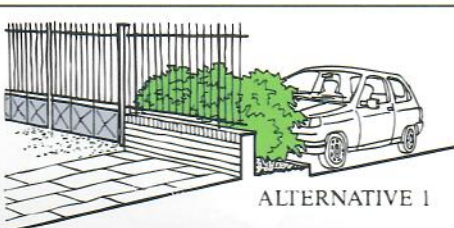
and service courts...



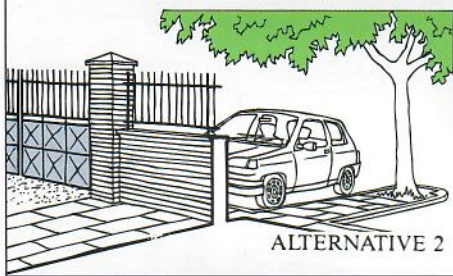
before you reach the town centre



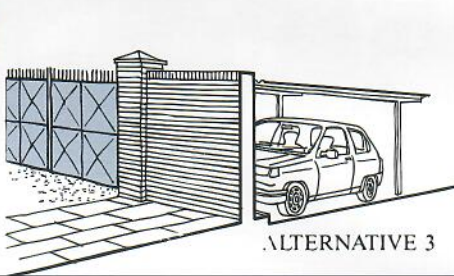
EXISTING



ALTERNATIVE 1

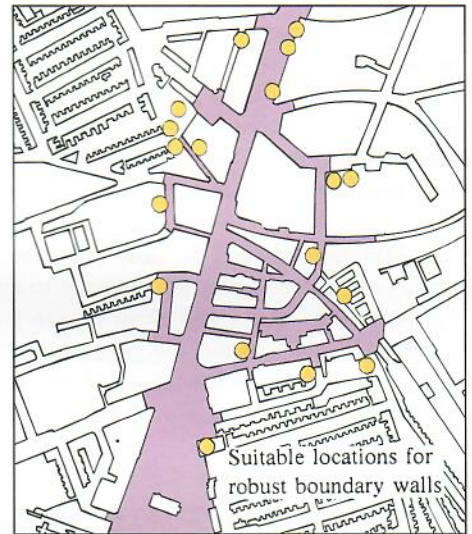


ALTERNATIVE 2



ALTERNATIVE 3

Robust boundary walls keep the entrances of the town centre tidy and create a sense of welcome



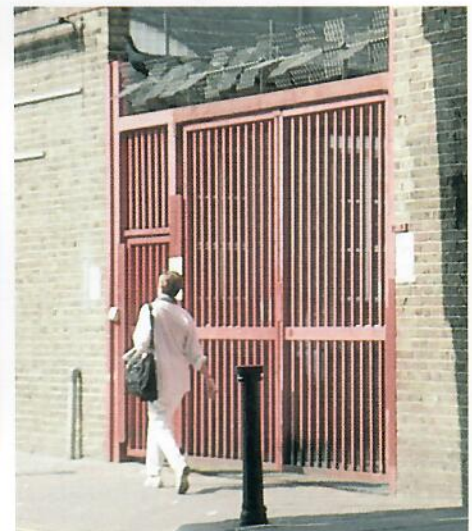
There are several opportunities



A traditional robust boundary wall



One of the opportunities to provide a wall



A tidy commercial property

The landscape strategy helps to define the edge of the town centre by adding to the surrounding greenness. It extends two green lungs into the town centre and creates an urban space right at the tube station.

The Edwardian view on page 4 shows a seemingly leisurely age of suburban living. Although Brixton is now more densely populated it is possible to create the same greenness in the residential areas around the town centre.

The landscape strategy follows a few simple principles. There is no tradition in the area for avenues of street trees. Rather trees were planted in groups, many in private gardens or spaces where they can be appreciated by the public. This tradition is being continued.

The diagram on page 35 shows how trees planted up to the town centre help define its edge. The trees make the pedestrian walk into the centre more pleasant. Odd patches of under-used ground are being planted with native indigenous species such as hawthorn. They need very little attention and encourage wild life.

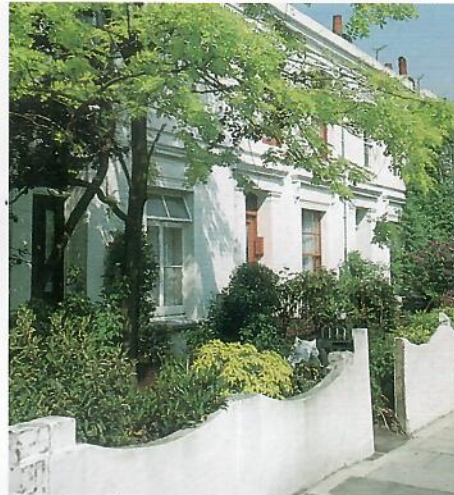
The sketches on page 32 show how the strategy is interpreted at the entrance to a car park. New trees and shrubs have a softer appearance so that the greenness of the residential area is extended right up to the edge of the town centre.

Within the town centre tree planting is concentrated at the larger open spaces. Elsewhere, given the lack of space in the town centre there are few opportunities for additional tree planting.

Natural colour is provided by the variety of produce for sale on the market stalls. Flower baskets which are lovingly kept in trim are very appropriate for private sites and buildings in the town centre.

At the focal point of the town centre, near the tube station, where there is the greatest concentration of people, a town square is being created.

Here the primary characteristic during the lively twenty four hour day of Brixton, is human activity.



Front garden colour near the town centre



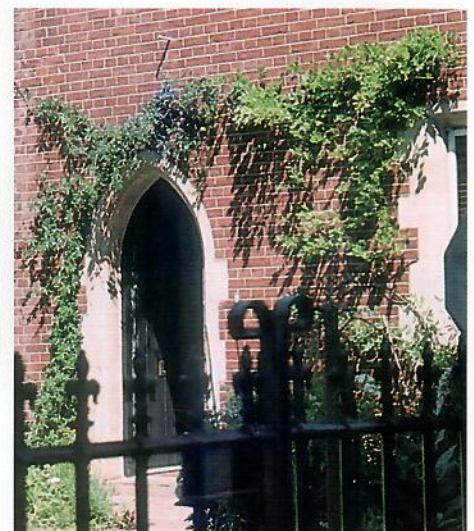
Meeting and greeting on Brixton Road



A more welcoming urban open space could be created in Brixton Road at the tube station



For comparison, a European pavement kiosk



Climbing plants in a town centre garden

ENHANCE LANDSCAPE



Tree planting and a new town square



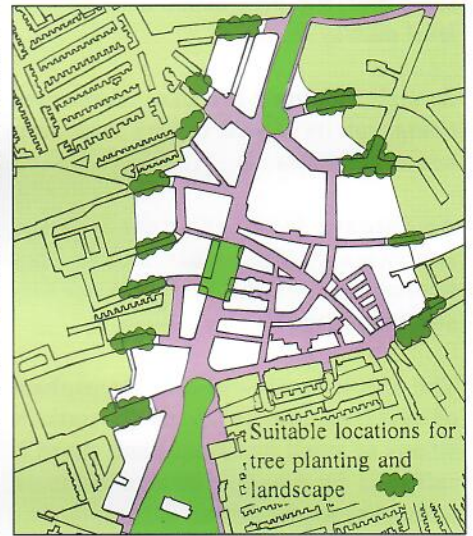
Lush window boxes, Coldharbour Lane



Trees on Rush Common at the edge of Brixton town centre



Tree planting in residential areas could continue right up to the edge of the town centre



Tree planting helps define the town centre



People walk to the centre from every direction



Trees and climbing plants help to soften the back yards at the entrances of the town centre



A special characteristic of Brixton is the relationship between the substantial buildings along Brixton Road and the intimate multi-cultural area of the market and small shops. These are accentuated in a strategy for areas of intensive street lighting, floodlighting and shop signs.

Several of the substantial and historic buildings along Brixton Road have been refurbished. This manual sets out policies to add to their value for Brixton by giving them more suitable settings.

At night it is possible to make some of these buildings appear almost magical. Floodlighting concentrates on buildings which stand back from the main road, such as the post office, police station, the Ritzy cinema and the Tate Library.

It also draws attention to the exquisite detail of the spires and towers in Brixton seen against the night sky, such as the town hall, the post office and the high level railway bridge.

At night Brixton's life takes on renewed energy as its famed twenty four hour action continues.

An intense level of street lighting increases public safety and is very appropriate for the non stop activity available in the centre.

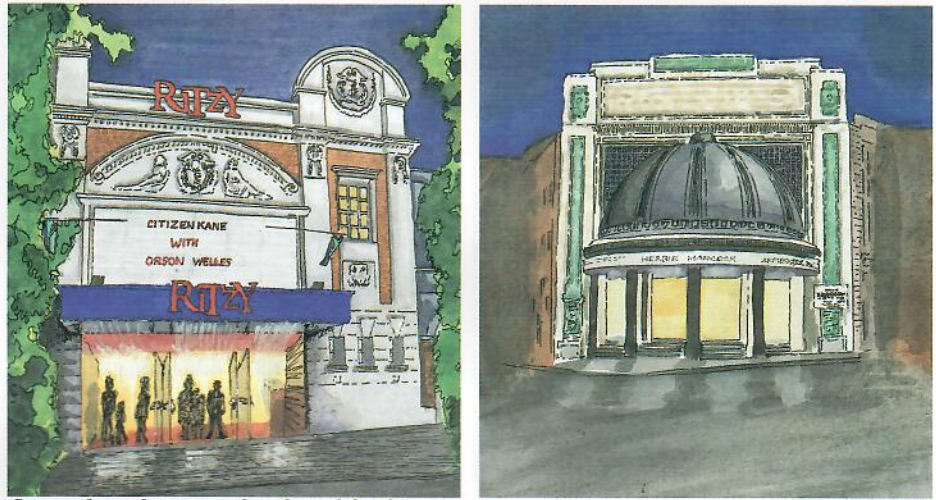
The special multi-cultural atmosphere of Brixton market with its narrow streets of small businesses and shops is sufficient for it to be seen as a landmark within the town centre.

The variety and quality of the multi-cultural goods and services are being highlighted by a programme to encourage well designed shop signs appropriate to the individual culture of the business.

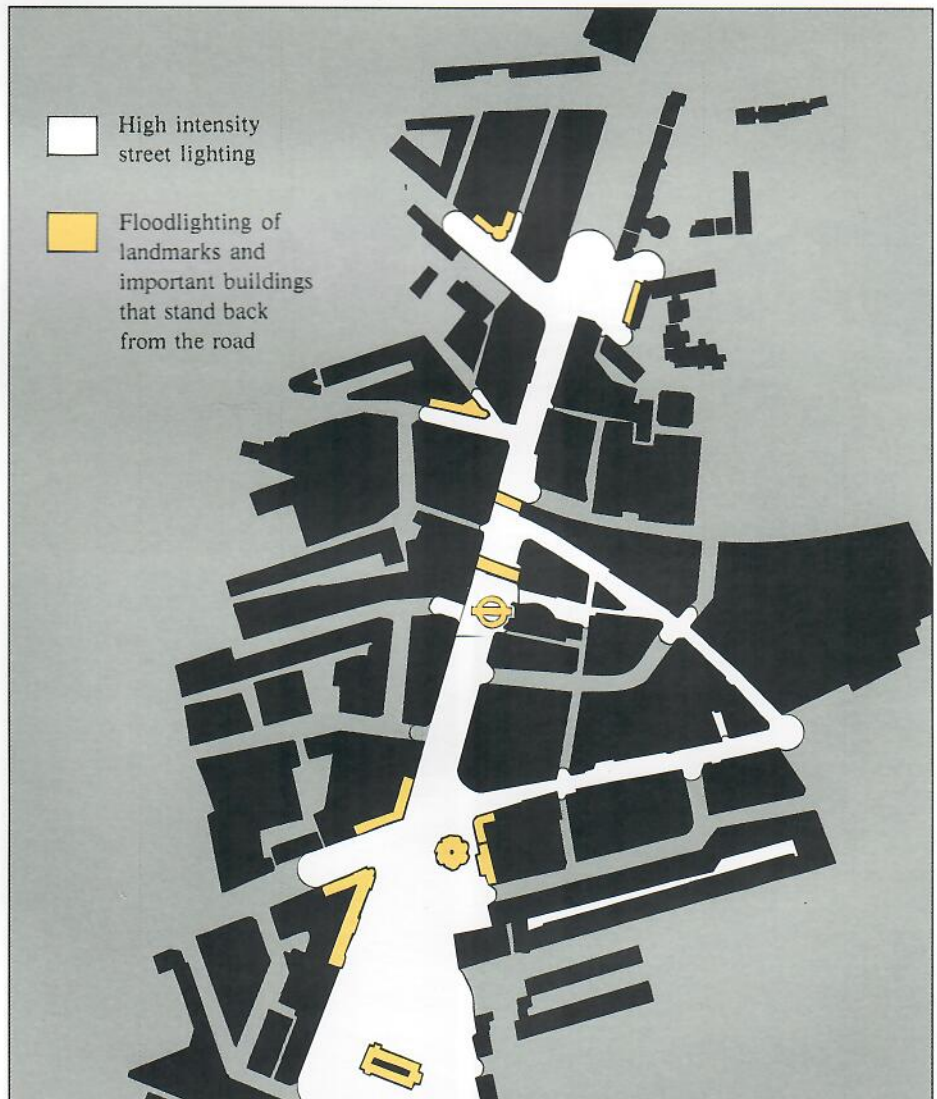
Three dimensional symbols, models and displays are being used.

Lettering and authentic calligraphy is of the highest standard.

Hanging shop signs in three dimensions add to the unique interest of the market area and, being owned by individual traders, are likely to be well maintained and cared for.



Scenes from the twenty four hour life of Brixton town centre



The floodlighting strategy emphasises the important buildings which stand back from the road

ACCENTUATE LANDMARKS



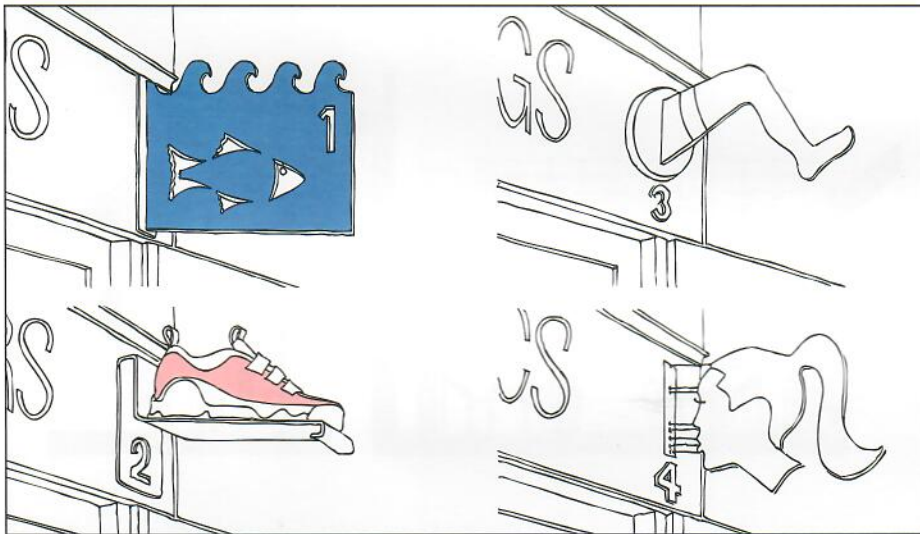
Floodlighting and shopsigns



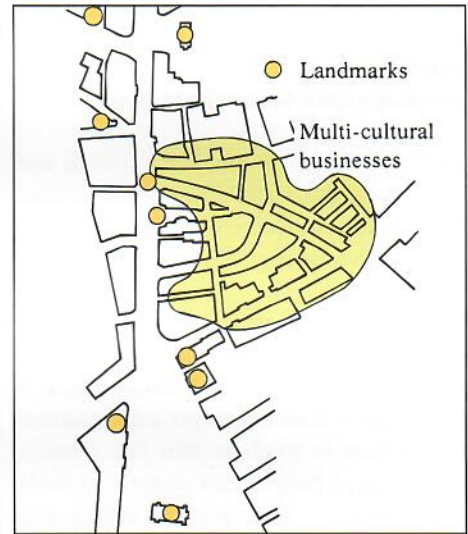
Egyptian influences at the Reliance Arcade



International flavour and multi-cultural vitality expressed in a shop sign



Examples of possible three dimensional shopsigns for multi-cultural businesses



Multi-cultural area and individual landmarks



There is already a wide range of shopsign art and innovation in the market and area of small businesses. This policy builds on the tradition

Brixton Market and the special area of small shops is the unique feature of Brixton. It should be emphasised as a place where people meet and enjoy the variety of a multi-cultural society.

This is where the policies outlined in the manual come together. The worst of the problems of clutter and rubbish have been dealt with. Graffiti and fly posters are brought under control.

A suitable setting has been provided for the landmarks which create the identity of the centre.

The specialities of the multi-cultural small shops and stalls are pointed out by the variety and quality of the displays. Two and three dimensional art relates to the produce and services for sale.

Brixton market is being given greater emphasis. The covered markets are being extended to provide new units and the entrances have been refurbished.

The problems of market rubbish are being tackled. There is constant tidying up and the need for unsightly rubbish containers is being reduced.

The character and scale of the whole market area contrasts with the larger buildings and spaces of Brixton Road. It is a place of constant surprise and interest for visitors to explore and yet a place where local people can chance to meet their friends and enjoy the sights and sounds of the market.

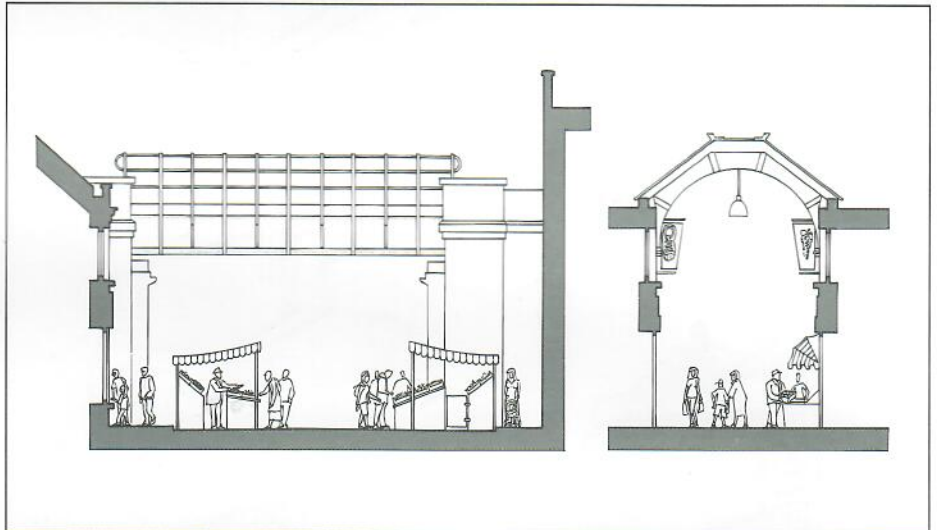
Path-finding models are being fixed to help visitors find their way to the main entertainment attractions as well as the market area and public transport.

Traditional red phone boxes near the market and places of entertainment act as landmarks for visitors and provide a useful service for residents.

All these policies act together and are intended to emphasise the special, even unique quality of Brixton.



Two of the small public houses that have stood at the edge of the market for over a century



The human scale of the street market continues into the pedestrian streets of the market halls

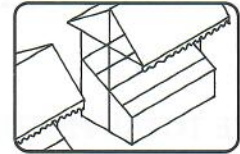


Colourful fresh produce

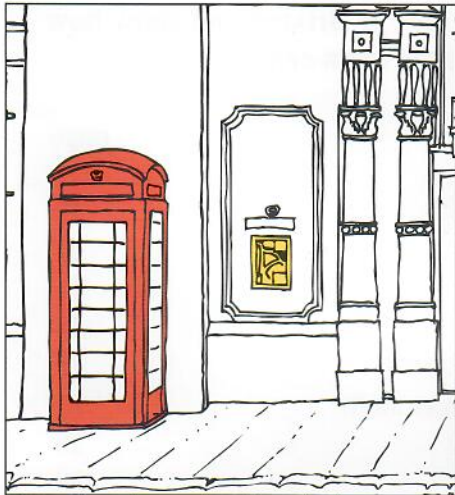


Traditional market graphics

EMPHASISE THE MARKET



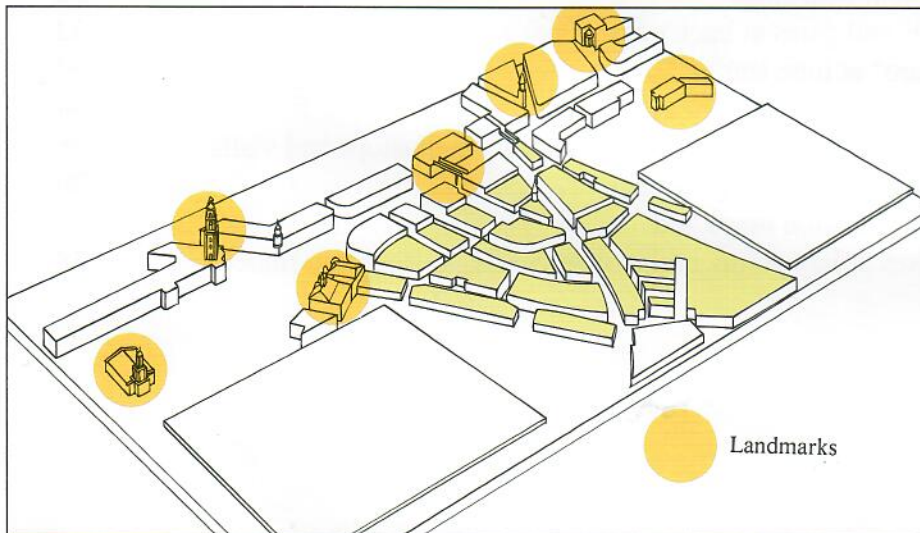
Market art and direction finders



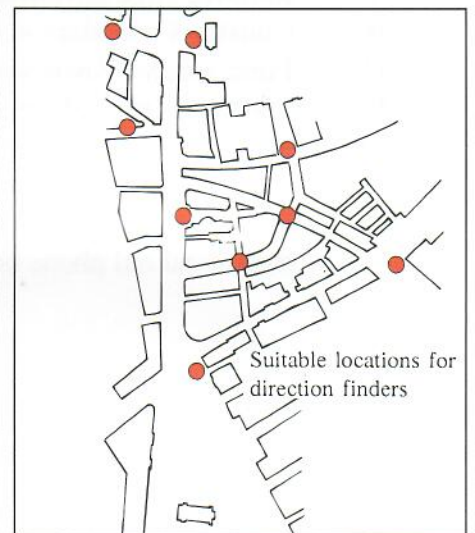
An easily understood guide to find your way



Early on a summer's morning at the corner of Electric Avenue and Brixton Road

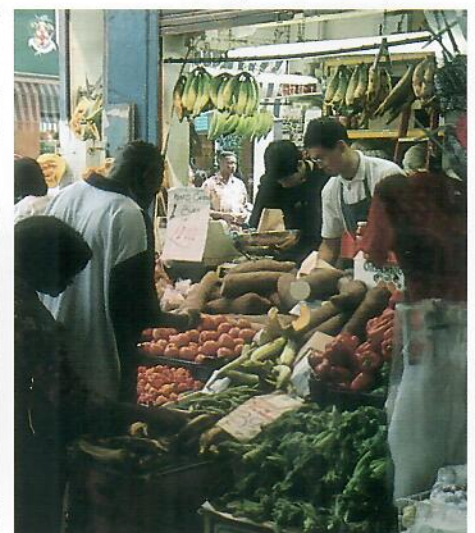


Landmarks



Suitable locations for direction finders

A three dimensional plan of Brixton town centre shows the contrast between Brixton Road and the market area and identifies the landmarks



The street market continues into a dozen covered pedestrian streets selling meat, fish, fruit, vegetables, clothes and goods from many cultures

CONCLUSIONS

THE TOTAL PICTURE

We have stressed that co-ordinated design, the choice of materials and quality of workmanship all contribute to the quality of streetscape.

The object of the manual is to emphasise the existing visual qualities of Brixton and show how a range of co-ordinated policies and practices will help to enhance the town centre.

The agreed policies and practices are:

	page
1. Specify quality of paving and standards of workmanship	20
2. Reduce market rubbish	24
3. Improve containment of market rubbish	24
4. Clear flyposters and keep surfaces clean	24
5. Mount street name signs on walls	26
6. Remove redundant street furniture clutter identified in the street audit	26
7. Co-ordinated design, position and colour of street furniture	28
8. Control and encourage good design of shopfronts	30
9. Remove large advertisement hoardings	30
10. Construct boundary walls and gates at back edge of pavement	32
11. Form a new "Town Square" at tube station Brixton Road (Red Route)	34
12. Plant trees to conform to a landscape strategy	34
13. Encourage shopsigns and hanging signs on multi-cultural small shops and stalls	36
14. Adopt a street lighting and floodlighting strategy	36
15. Provide three dimensional location maps and traditional red phone boxes at key points in the town centre, as direction finders	38

REFERENCES

Brixton Challenge Company Ltd and
London Borough of Lambeth publications are available from:

Brixton Challenge Company Ltd
The Bon Marché Centre
444 Brixton Road
London SW9 8EJ
tel 0171 926 3200

and

London Borough of Lambeth, Environmental Services
Courtenay House
9-15 New Park Road
London SW2 4DU
tel 0171 926 6800

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PARTNERSHIP

Members of the Brixton Town Centre Streetscape Manual Working Group

Kimberly Paumier	Brixton Town Centre Manager, Brixton Challenge
Antony Rifkin, Chair	Brixton Challenge / Civic Trust Regeneration Unit
Lesley Fraser	English Heritage, London & South East Region
Colin Davis	Colin J. Davis & Associates, CJDA Ltd.
Colin Bentley	L B Lambeth, Environmental Services, Transport
Mel Clinton	L B Lambeth, Environmental Services, Regeneration
Marian Girdler	L B Lambeth, Environmental Services, Planning
Aine McDonagh	L B Lambeth, Environmental Services, Conservation Officer
John McDonald	L B Lambeth, Environmental Services, Grimebusters
Sam Samaranayake	L B Lambeth, Environmental Services, Civil Engineering
Roy Thabrew	L B Lambeth, Environmental Services, Civil Engineering
Vassu Turrwani	L B Lambeth, Environmental Services, Civil Engineering

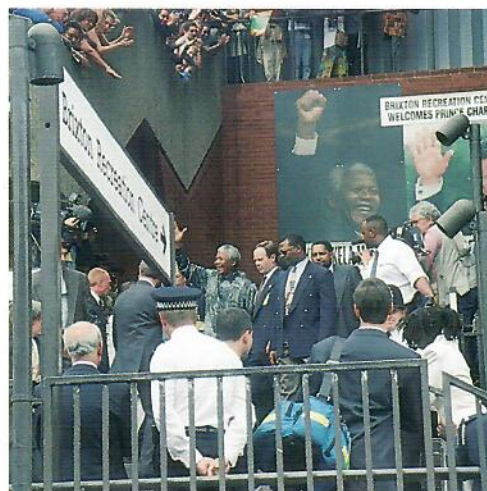
The group wish to thank:

Bernadette Marjoram	Chief Executive, Brixton Challenge Company Ltd
Paul Duffield	Director of Environmental Services, London Borough of Lambeth

Thank you to those who joined us in the streetscape seminar and meetings which helped shape this manual:

Brixton Challenge Board Members
L B Lambeth Councillors
Representatives of:
British Telecom
British Gas
Brixton Challenge Community Forum
Brixton Society
John Crowley (Maidstone) Ltd
Greater London Record Office
Richard Griffiths Architects
Lambeth Archives
Lambeth Contract Services
London Electricity
Metropolitan Police
Traffic Control Systems Unit

Designed and illustrated by
Colin Davis, William Spencer and Ben Neves
Cover by Alison Davis
Printed by Clifford Frost Ltd





Brixton Challenge Company Ltd
The Bon Marché Centre
444 Brixton Road
London SW9 8EJ



Civic Trust Regeneration Unit
17 Carlton House Terrace
London SW1Y 5AW



CJDA Ltd

ENGLISH HERITAGE



English Heritage
23 Savile Row
London W1X 1AB



London Borough of Lambeth
Environmental Services
Courtenay House
9-15 New Park Road
London SW2 4DU