

6 Tactile paving

Tactile paving was introduced by the Department for Transport's Accessibility and Equality Unit to ensure a standard approach to the mobility of blind and partially sighted people. Historic areas are more sensitive to the colour and types of paving used, so the standard red and buff coloured concrete blistered paviors can often be inappropriate for their surroundings, being in close proximity to buildings of special architectural and historical interest. A sensitive interpretation of the guidance which incorporates both human and environmental needs is required.

Many visually impaired people still have partial sight and can distinguish between contrasting shades, which helps them recognise where crossing points or hazards exist. Using another light/dark contrast for tactile paving in combination with the change of surface texture is preferable in aesthetic terms and is permitted in the guidance in sensitive environments. Textures can be used, created by stone machining or by the insertion of metal studs.

General Advice

1 In sensitive built environments like conservation areas or near listed buildings, consideration should be given to the use of a contrasting stone tactile paving where buff concrete is considered inappropriate. This provides the colour and texture contrast but with a more natural colour effect within the streetscape. Granite and York stone tactile paving are generally easily available from suppliers. If the budget for a project does not allow for this then a concrete mid grey or charcoal grey colour can be a viable alternative.

2 The natural stones most widely used are granite, Caithness and York stone. These can create a strong contrast to the surrounding paving and should avoid matching colours exactly. Granite is available in a wide range of colours and is more stable than pigmented concrete alternatives.

3 Red tactile paving is recommended for use at controlled crossings by Department for Transport (DfT) in their guidance, except in conservation areas or in the vicinity of a listed building, where relaxation of the colour requirements is acceptable. In these circumstances the tactile surface may be provided in a colour which is in keeping with the surrounding material. This guidance

suggests no relaxation to the use of red paving at controlled crossing points such as at pelicans and zebras: not being a traffic sign, a view can be taken after proper safety audit consideration. Red tactile paving should not be used at uncontrolled crossings. Numerous examples of alternatives are beginning to appear, though in each case clear contrast of materials is still retained. Before any decision is taken by the highway authority, discussions should take place with local groups of visually impaired people and local accessibility / rehabilitation officers and the local conservation officer.

4 Metal studs (stainless steel or brass) machined to the DfT guidance profile, can be used to form the texture in a natural stone paving. The tops need to be textured to provide grip in wet conditions. The metal finish reflects the light to provide the colour contrast necessary. There are reports of some disabled and infirm people experiencing difficulties with this though, and the highway authority would have to be satisfied that they have met the requirements of all disabled users.

5 For additional information and advice regarding the use of tactile paving please refer to Section 2 Ground Surfaces, in all regional *Streets for All* guidance documents produced by English Heritage and guidance on use of tactile paving surfaces published by DfT.



Procedures

- 1 Research and visit other new schemes where the new approaches have been implemented and are successful, including Guildford, Shrewsbury, Colchester, Dorking, Kensington High Street and Norwich. A wide range of machined stone and metal stud examples are now used. Studs should be designed based on the DfT guidance.
- 2 Carry out an intelligent behaviour based survey of pedestrian movement on site. Collate and analyse reported accident data to gain an understanding of any issues with road safety for disabled people in the area.
- 3 Consult with local disability groups to ensure their needs can be incorporated into the design.
- 4 At key stages a check should be carried out to ensure that there is compliance with legislation.

Relevant Documents and Legislation

- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Guidance on the use of Tactile Paving, DfT 2005
- Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)
- Disability Rights Commission (DRC) (2006) Planning, Buildings, Streets and Disability Equality. A Guide to the Disability Equality Duty and Disability Discrimination Act 2005 for Local Authority Departments Responsible for Planning, Design and Management of the Built Environment and Streets. London: DRC.
- Adjacent Facilities for Pedestrians and Cyclists, Joint Committee on Mobility of Blind and Partially Sighted People, June 2002
- Walking Strategies, *Joint Committee on Mobility of Blind and Partially Sighted People*, November 2002
- Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot, *The Institution of Highways & Transportation*, 2000
- Centre for Accessible Environments, 2004 *Designing for Accessibility*. London: RIBA Publishing.
- Manual for Streets, Chapter 3 The design process – from policy to implementation, DfT 2007
- All regional *Streets for All* guidance documents produced by English Heritage.
- Manual for Historic Streets *English Historic Towns Forum*, May 2008
- Traffic Management and Streetscape LTN 1/08 *Department for Transport*, March 2008

Supporting Case Study

Guildford – Chapel Street

Chapel Street is a narrow street in the heart of the Guildford Town Centre Conservation Area which runs perpendicular to the historic High Street. It links to Castle Street which runs parallel with the High Street. The street is lined with a number of listed and locally listed buildings, and other buildings of clear townscape merit, most of which are in retail use at ground floor. The street itself is traditionally paved using granite setts and lined with York stone paving.

The design of the scheme concentrated on reducing the width of the junction at Castle Street end thus creating larger areas of paving for potential café use. It also incorporated the installation of a gate which is closed daily to coincide with the closure of the adjoining High Street, allowing pedestrian priority during the busiest time of the trading day.

Traditional materials to match those already present were essential elements of the scheme but additional features were essential including dropped kerbs at the crossing point. The use of brass studs within York stone paving was considered to be the most sensitive solution. The Guildford Access Group was consulted to ensure that these would be acceptable. There was some surprising discussion including the difficulties that some people in wheelchairs experience traversing the conventional concrete tactile paving, and some indifference to the need for coloured distinction between tactile and surrounding paving materials. The Access Group approved the use of brass tactile paving and welcomed the design of the scheme overall.

Surrey County Council approved the use of brass studs but have since advised that they would no longer approve them since their maintenance contractor does not keep them in stock and they wish to minimise the range of materials used throughout the county.

The scheme has been installed for some 2-3 years now and there have been no complaints regarding the choice of materials, but compliments have been received about the overall effect of the enhancement.

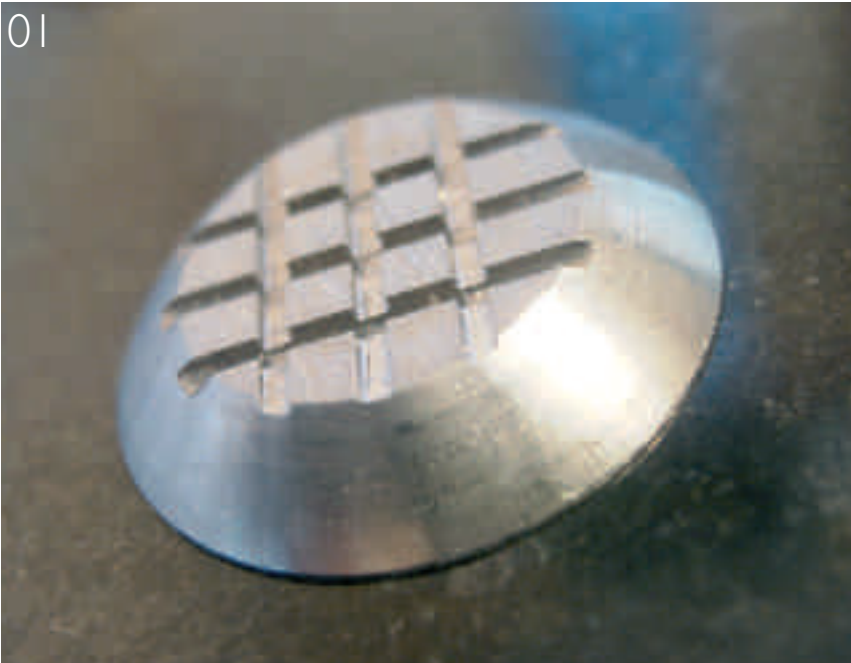


01 Before: There is no tactile paving to indicate that there is a crossing and change in surface texture

02 After: A dropped kerb is provided and brass studs are drilled and fixed into the surface of the York stone paving. This gives a particularly subtle and appropriate appearance for very sensitive areas

03 Crossing points have used tactile paving in a subtle way, however; this example provides little in the way of colour contrast

01



01 A blistered tactile metal stud which incorporates grooves to improve its slip resistance

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