

Design of Signs

- Wherever highway safety allows, finger posts are preferable to standard directional signs. The County Council has developed a finger post which has a traditional style and these should be considered for use in sensitive locations.
- The minimum size of signs should be used that is practicable, legal, safe and enforceable
- The need for the amount of information given must be balanced with the impact it has on the environment
- Signs for cyclists and pedestrians should generally be integrated with other traffic signs
- Where possible, information should be included on a composite sign unless it would result in a size that would have an adverse impact on the environment
- Backing plates are intrusive and should be avoided wherever possible. Yellow backing plates are particularly inappropriate in sensitive environments such as AONBs, conservation areas and special landscape areas and they should only be used where absolutely essential.
- Posts should not project above the top of the sign
- Timber posts could be an alternative to metal ones in sensitive areas
- It is preferable for the back of signs and supporting poles to be finished in black in more built up areas; in the open countryside grey will often be less intrusive especially when viewed against the skyline. Fixings should be the same colour as the poles.
- Generally, cantilevered arms should be avoided except when absolutely necessary on principal routes
- Illuminated signs are an alien feature in the countryside and should only be used if there is a statutory

requirement. In special circumstances the Department for Transport can grant exemption. External illumination is usually preferable to internal.

- Consider narrowing road widths by increasing footways or verges rather than providing central safety reservations which necessitate internally lit bollards
- In certain circumstances the erection of brown tourism signs may be justified on visitor or traffic management grounds. Concerns about their proliferation however, has led to the policy covering such signs being reviewed.

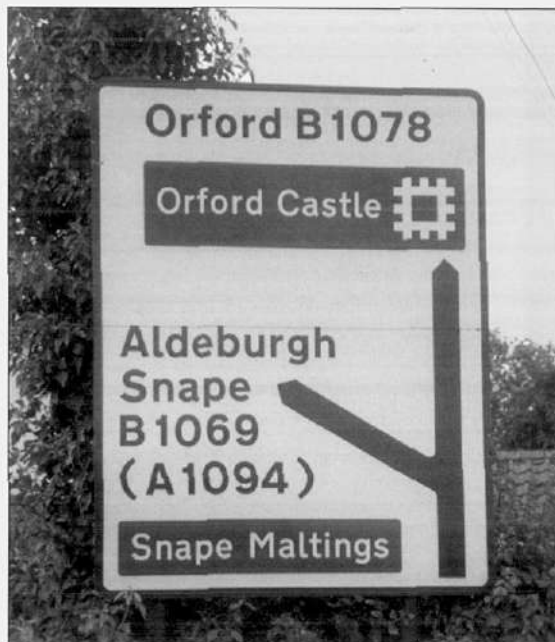
Historic Signs

Surviving traditional finger posts should be retained and maintained as important historic features in the landscape.

Road Markings

Any necessary road markings should be the minimum width and yellow lines should be the palest colour acceptable from a highway safety point of view. 150mm and 100mm wide, and bright yellow lines should only be used where absolutely necessary. Areas of hatching are best avoided; where large areas are thought essential, consideration should be given to altering the carriageway instead.

Signs -



A simple composite sign at Tunstall



(CARTOON BY LOUIS HELLMAN - FIRST PUBLISHED IN ARCHITECTS JOURNAL)

"The number of signs appears to be ever increasing on both major and minor roads. There is a need to examine whether signs are really necessary in some locations, how information can be combined on single signs, and how they can be kept to a sensible size."

(ROADS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE - COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION 1995 REF: CCP459)



Fingerposts are preferable to standard directional signs



A neat solution for a 30 m.p.h. roundel



Three signs on one pole without a backing plate

3.6.5. Pedestrians, Cyclists and Public Transport

Pedestrians

In rural areas, despite increasing car ownership, walking is an essential mode of transport for those without access to a car. Walking for recreation is also an important activity in the countryside. The Highway Authority therefore has responsibility for the safety of pedestrians often walking on narrow roads without footways.

In some cases, a new footway may be essential on roads frequently used by pedestrians, for example, on routes to the village school. [See 3.1.2. Footways]

However, if a footway is inappropriate there may be other ways of protecting pedestrians by introducing:

- speed restrictions
- traffic calming
- pedestrian refuges
- better visibility along roads, for example by improving the maintenance of vegetation
- schools initiatives: such as 'Safely to School' and 'walking buses'
- other safety campaigns

Cycling

Cycling is a popular activity and the Suffolk local authorities encourage cycling as a sustainable form of travel as well as a way of exploring the countryside. The provision of cycle routes is a priority in the Local Transport Plan but they should not detract from the character of rural areas.

- Signs and markings should be kept to a minimum acceptable for highway safety and direction
- Wherever possible, signs should be carefully fixed to or incorporated into existing signs
- Coloured surfacing may be inappropriate in rural areas. If a cycle route must be marked, the use of crushed shingle dressing, or a simple narrow white line on the side of the carriageway is preferable.
- The cycleway should be designed to avoid damage to existing features such as trees, hedges and walls. There is a need to avoid the removal of important landscape features.
- Cycle stands should be simple and functional. Over-elaborate styles are inappropriate in the countryside: simple oak posts and metal rails or hoops are preferable.

Cycling -



Cycle stands and bollards should be kept simple

Public Transport

The Highway Authority, through its Local Transport Plan, has policies relating to the development of the rural public transport system throughout the County. Buses can be a lifeline for those living in the countryside and work within the highway should consider the needs for access by public transport vehicles.

- Easy access buses require 160mm kerb height and these kerbs can have a significant visual impact, albeit over a limited area. The choice of kerbs and the detailed design of bus stops should be carefully considered.
- Avoid bus laybys, except where absolutely necessary on safety grounds, as they introduce an inappropriate character with large areas of hard surfacing and associated kerbs, lines and other markings
- Provision of bus shelters encourages use of public transport and there are a wide variety of off the peg shelters available. However, many of these are inappropriate in a rural setting. Locally made, wood clad shelters are traditional and they also have the benefits of sustainability and supporting the local economy. Brick shelters should be constructed with materials and details which reflect the character of local traditional outbuildings. Standard metal framed shelters with large areas of glass or plastic should not be used in sensitive areas. However, individual modern designs may be appropriate where a shelter needs to form a focal point in the streetscape.
- Materials should be of a high quality and easily maintainable. Roofing materials should be clay plain tiles, pantiles or slate. Metal roofs such as lead, zinc or copper can also be particularly attractive. Concrete tiles, artificial slates and roofing felt are inappropriate in many instances.

- Vandalism may be a problem. Shelters could be located where there is good surveillance from nearby properties but local residents should be consulted.
- A shelter in a village setting can also be used for other purposes, such as a parish and tourist information point or for informal seating
- The location of a shelter beside a building, wall, trees, or hedgerow will reduce its impact. Care should be taken to avoid damage to vegetation.
- Arrangements should be made for cleaning and maintenance of shelters

Bus shelters -



Combined bus shelter and information point at Framlingham



New bus shelter at Kelsale

Bus shelters -



These shelters would be suitable in rural locations



This green metal shelter looks good on the edge of Newmarket

3.7. Street Lighting

3.7.1. The Need for Lighting

Lighting in rural areas is sometimes necessary on safety grounds but it can be highly intrusive and environmentally damaging. Lighting in sensitive rural areas should be avoided if at all possible. When it is necessary then a well designed scheme using good quality equipment will give even light distribution and minimum pollution.

In order to reduce the effect of lighting on the countryside:

- Avoid introducing junctions that must be lit (e.g. roundabouts)
- Consider selective lighting of problem areas, rather than complete schemes (e.g. a footway to a village hall may be a priority due to frequent evening use of the building, but it may not be necessary to light the whole of the village)
- Ensure that the scheme will not damage environmentally sensitive areas such as SSSIs, County Wildlife Sites and known bat roosts. This can be identified by carrying out an EnCheck.

3.7.2. Choice of Lighting Equipment

- Existing lighting should be matched if it is of appropriate type and size
- New lighting should be simple. Over decorative heritage style lighting is rarely appropriate in Suffolk's villages and countryside.
- All equipment should minimise light pollution and visual impact

Lighting -



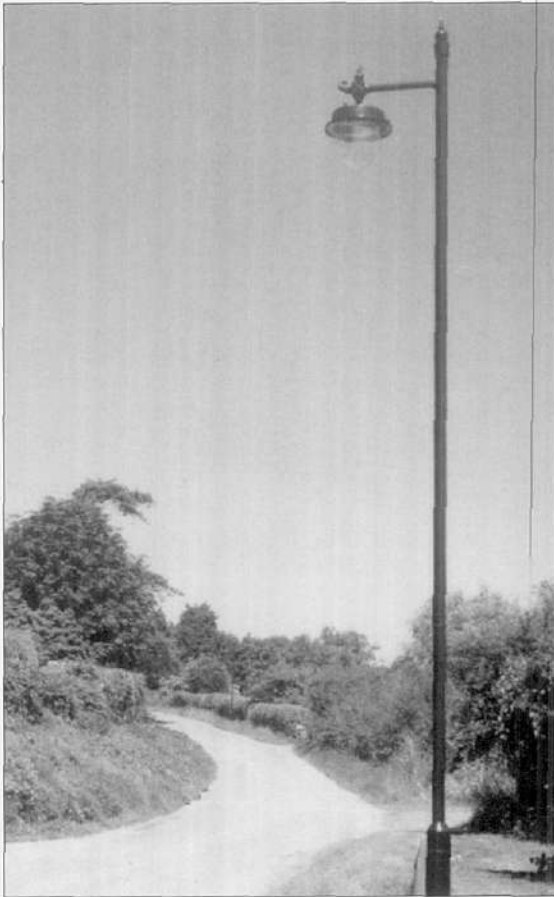
Bulkhead lights, simple bracketed lights fixed to buildings or mounted on existing poles are preferable to column mounted lights

3.7.3. Location of Lighting Equipment

- The location should be determined by local circumstances. Design standards should take into account environmental considerations.
- Column mounted lights can be a significant feature in the landscape. Wherever possible place lanterns on existing buildings, structures or posts.
- If a column is necessary then it should be located so that it relates well to buildings, vegetation and the street scene generally



Lighting -



Simple designs should be used where column mounted lights are necessary



3.8. Redundant Highway Land

This can result from highway improvements, realignment or creation of a new bypass. Often, the Highway Authority returns such land to the frontagers of the road through 'stopping up' procedures. However, this is a complex legal process and may be the subject of objections from both the frontagers and the public. In addition, such lengths of road may contain statutory undertakers' plant which must be retained and protected.

If stopping up is not an option the length of road remains as highway with possible ensuing problems:

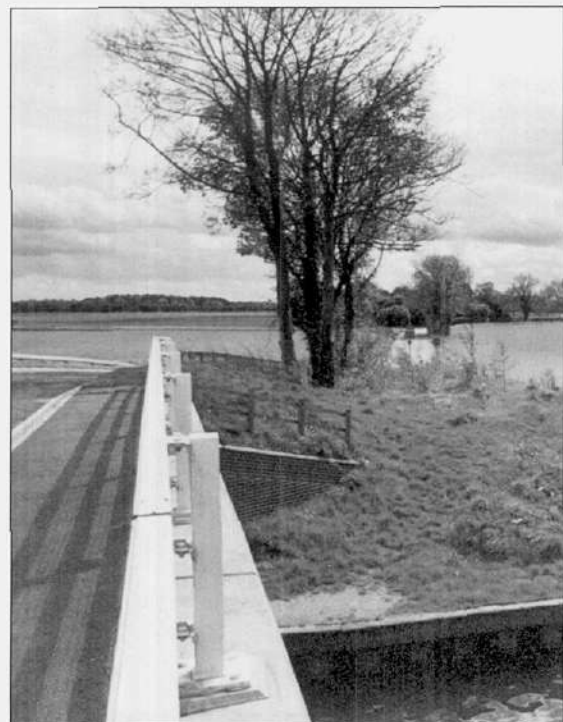
- abandoned vehicles
- fly-tipping with potential health risks
- occupation by travellers
- inappropriate storage of materials
- maintenance liabilities
- spread of invasive weeds

Measures can, however, be taken to avoid these problems. These could have a cost implication which may need to be borne by the scheme that resulted in the land becoming redundant.

These may include:

- breaking out superfluous carriageway, topsoiling and planting these areas with appropriate species
- introducing a traffic order to restrict use. This option must be weighed against the resulting need for additional signing.

- erection of suitable gates or barriers to restrict use to approved vehicles and activities
- bunding the area to prevent unwanted access. Bunds should be profiled to give a natural look.
- arranging for the site to be managed as a recreational or wildlife site
- avoiding storage of materials as this encourages illegal tipping



The redundant approach embankments to the old Jude's Ferry bridge were removed and the land regraded and planted