DS.208
Effective footway widths for pedestrians

Ver.	Status	Created by	Date	Approved by	Date
1	Rev A	D.Farnham	12.03.12	D.Waters	27.03.12
2	Rev B	D.Farnham	17.09.12	D.Waters	02.10.12
3	Rev C	D.Farnham	03.02.13	D.Waters	08.02.13
4	Rev D	G Lake	15.07.19	D Foden	15.07.19

1 Introduction

1.1 Notes

a. This standard explains requirements about the minimum effective widths of footways for the purposes of their use by pedestrians. It is important to note that these values are distinct from the minimum width of the footway itself which is likely to be somewhat greater.

b. See the SSDM webpages at www.southwark.gov.uk/ssdm.

1.2 Discussion

a. Provision of adequate footway space is essential to comfort and accessibility for users. Footways that are too narrow may impede movement and provoke uncomfortable conflict. At extreme narrowings, wheel chair users and other people with mobility difficulties may not actually be able to pass. Possible causes of obstructed footways include:
   i. Insufficient overall pavement widths.
   ii. Inappropriately placed street furniture.
   iii. Inappropriately placed trees, and trees that have outgrown their pits disrupting the surrounding footway surface.
   iv. Dropped kerbs and other access features with very long ramps that create uneven plateaus.
   v. Uneven surfaces owing to rocking or poorly bedded slabs, uncomfortable cobbles or rutted bituminous pavements.

b. Whilst occasional width restrictions are always likely to be necessary because of constraints, these should not be habitual. The clear expression of standards will help minimise and avoid these. Necessary widths need to take account of functional minimums for passage by wheel chair and mobility scooter users, and avoidance of crowding given the level of likely general use. This is likely to be more intense in town centres and busy areas.

2 Requirements

2.1 General

a. Except where 'b' applies, no new item of street furniture should be located in any footway (or other route for pedestrians) where this would result in an effective width less than the values given in section 2.2. Any request for departure to do so will need to demonstrate that alternative options to avoid this have been substantively explored and would not be feasible (see note).

NOTE: Such efforts are likely to include:
(1) Reconfiguring the proposals in a manner that would avoid the need for the item in that location.
(2) Combining the item with an existing other item (e.g. combining CCTV provision or traffic signals with an existing lighting column).
(3) Widening of the footway.
(4) Where the proposals are in relation to an application for Planning Consent, mounting the item to private property.

b. As a permitted exception to 'a' bollards may be used to create a width restriction of as little as 1200mm, narrower width restriction restrictions require a level 1 departure. It will need to be demonstrated that the purpose of these would be to prevent vehicles from accessing a pedestrian route and that the frequency of obstruction to pedestrians posed by the bollards would be proportionate to the risk posed by vehicle use of the route.

2.2 Effective widths

NOTE: The effective width of a footway (or other route for use by pedestrians) is that width which is unobstructed by any vertical feature, uneven surface, or the Use Envelope of items of street furniture (see section 2.3). Unbounded private demis areas adjoining the highway are not included within the effective width and may not be factored in when determining whether minimum values are met. In the event that designers wish to rely upon such areas to meet requirements then they will need to be offered for adoption as highway maintainable at public expense.

a. Unless specified otherwise in this or other standards the minimum effective width of a footway (and other route used by pedestrians) should be as per Table 1. Where they apply, the additional values in Table 2 should be added or subtracted (as indicated) from these. For very simple pre-dominantly maintenance based projects in existing streets and spaces (e.g. Road Renewal Schemes) modestly reduced widths may be acceptable subject to agreement to a level 1 departure.

SSDM/RP/Specification Area	Required minimum effective passing width – see note 1	
	General access	Restricted access – see note 2
World Centre	2.4m	1.8m – see note 3
Town Centre (Zone A – see note 4)	2.4m	1.8m – see note 3
Town Centre (Zone B – see note 4)	1.8m	1.5m – though see 'b'
Heritage	1.8m	1.5m – though see 'b'
Village	1.8m	1.5m – though see 'b'
Docks	1.8m	1.5m – though see 'b'
General	1.8m	1.5m – though see 'b'

Notes

1) Beside bus stops and shelters the minimum width should always be 2.4m. This excludes the use envelope of shelters. 2.4m should also be used outside busy accesses or forecourts to shops and public buildings. This may be instructed by approving officers. In such locations, no reduction permitted by Table 2 may be made where this would result in a passing width less than 2.4m.
2) This applies to streets that are either (a) restricted to access for pedestrians and pedal cyclists only (except for emergency response and occasional waste/recycling collection vehicles); or (b) no-through routes for motor vehicles of a length not exceeding 75m that provide access to ≤ 50 off-highway parking spaces (e.g. private courtyard parking, driveways or under-croft parking). Peak hour vehicle flows should not exceed 25 vehicles per hour. Subject to agreement to a level 1 departure it may also be suitable for use in streets in which access for users other than pedestrians, pedal cyclists, emergency response vehicles and waste/recycling collection vehicles is restricted to small numbers of resident's motor vehicles and/or service vehicles only. This will require agreement to suitable access restrictions using traffic regulation orders. Physical restriction using bollards and gates may also be required in some circumstances.
3) Regular sections having a passing width of not less than 2.4m and being not less than 5m long should be provided along such routes. The distance between these increased width sections should not exceed 25m.
4) Zone A streets and spaces are all those including shop, restaurant, cafe, sales office or other similar active commercial frontage (or along which new shop frontages are proposed). All other streets and spaces shall be assumed to be Zone B.

Table 1 - Minimum required effective widths

b. Where by reference to Table 1 and Table 2, the resulting effective width would be less than 1.8m then regular lengths of a minimum 1.8m effective width will need to be provided along the route to allow two wheel chair users to pass. Such sections should not be less than 5m in length. The distance between such sections should not exceed 25m. Where by reference to Table 1 and Table 2 the resulting effective width would be less than 1.5m then the maximum length of footway having such a reduced width may not exceed 2.5m. The distance between two such instances should not be less than 10m.

Feature	Width increase or reduction vs. values in Table 1 – though see note 1	Circumstances when required/requirements
Hedge or other areas of shrub planting	+ 300mm	Where hedges/shrubs bound a side of a route. This is to account for the possibility that the hedges may not be maintained by owners and may so overgrow the route from time to time. Where the reduced widths in 'b' are permitted then this increase should be added to these reduced values.
Perpendicular parking	+ 800mm	Where perpendicular parking immediately adjoins a footway and no upright physical measures are provided to prevent the boots or bonnets of cars from overhanging the footway.
Lighting columns in existing streets & spaces	- 300mm	In existing streets and spaces subject to agreement to a level 1 departure.
Lighting column/sign posts/tree guards in busy areas	+300mm	Beside lighting columns, sign posts, tree guards (and other vertical post type features to which pedal cycles could be secured) in World Centre and Town Centre (Zone A) SSDM/RP/Specification Areas. This requirement may be omitted by agreement to a level 1 departure. It will need to be demonstrated that local cycle parking provision would substantially exceed demand and is conveniently located very nearby.
New tree pits in existing streets.	- 300mm	In existing streets and spaces only subject to agreement of a level 1 departure. It will need to be demonstrated that it would not be possible to accommodate a new tree otherwise.
Expansion of existing tree pits	- 600mm (see notes 2 and 3)	In existing streets and spaces only to allow for the expansion of existing tree pits where these have disturbed (or are likely to disturb) footway surfaces. However, this will be subject to the agreement of a level 1 departure demonstrating that it would not be possible to accommodate a tree otherwise.
NOTE 1) Not withstanding any permitted reduction, the absolute minimum acceptable passing width (except for beside expanded existing tree pits - for which see note 2) should not be less than 1.8m in World Centre and Town Centre (Zone A) SSDM/RP/Specification Areas, and 1.5m in all other Specification Areas. See also '2.2b'. 2) Not withstanding this reduction, the absolute minimum passing width should not be less 1.5m in World Centre and Town Centre (Zone A) SSD/RP/Specification Areas, and 1.2m in all others. See also '2.2b'. 3) This reduction only applies to the expansion of existing tree pits where the existing tree is being retained. It is not applicable to existing tree pits that are being replanted.		

Table 2 - Additional width requirements to be added or subtracted from values in Table 1

c. Where introduction of licensed street furniture is proposed on the adopted highway (e.g. A-boards or outdoor cafe seating) the requirements in 'a' and 'b' will be used as guidance. However, actual requirements will be determined on a case specific basis. See the Southwark Network Enforcement Policy for further information.

2.3 General requirements for use envelopes

NOTE 1: Use Envelopes are the notional area around an item of street furniture or other feature (as seen in plan) that is likely to pose an obstruction – either because of the purpose of that item or the fact that pedestrians are likely to try and avoid it. For instance, in the case of pedal cycle stands, the space taken up by cycles secured to the stand must be considered. In the case of litter bins, people will generally try to avoid passing too close for fear of getting dirty.

NOTE 2: Use Envelopes should not be used to establish the necessary clearance between items of street furniture and the carriageway edge unless instructed otherwise in other design standards

NOTE 3: Use Envelopes for common items of street furniture are provided below for ease of reference. Further information about Use Envelopes may also be provided in other design standards.

2.3.1 Seating and benches

a. The Use Envelope should be drawn off-set from the maximum extents of the item (as seen in plan) with the value of the off-set being as follows:
   i. From any side of the seat off of which pedestrians can sit (e.g. where their legs could extend off the item) – 500mm.
   ii. From all other sides of the item – 250mm.

2.3.2 Waste and recycling bins

a. The Use Envelope should be drawn off-set from the maximum extents of the item (as seen in plan) with the value of the off-set being as follows:
   i. From any side of the bin that includes an aperture for depositing waste or recycling – 250mm.
   ii. From all other sides – 100mm.

2.3.3 Pedal cycle stands

a. The Use Envelope should be drawn as follows:
   i. The Use Envelope should extend 300mm to either side of the stand to which a bike may be locked, parallel to this. This will account for the width of the pedal cycle, the most significant aspects of which on most models will be the handlebars and pedals.
   ii. The Use Envelope should extend 1300mm in either direction about the centre point of the stand along an imaginary line drawn parallel to the length of the stand, and not less than 800mm beyond either limit of the stand along the same line. This will account for the length of the pedal cycle locked to the stand. Whilst the overall length of a pedal cycle will be somewhat less than the combined minimum 2600mm length that follows from this requirement, cycles may not always be fixed centrally to the stand by users. Where a stand is placed close to a wall or other obstruction such that the 800mm off-sett beyond the nearest limit is not achievable, that off-set provided beyond the other limit should be increased to directly compensate up to a maximum of 1250mm. This is approximate to the length of a cycle secured to a stand by its front wheel only (with no other part of it being against the stand).

NOTE: The above requirements are appropriate for 'Sheffield' type stands that allow pedal cycles to be lent against a long central support. Where alternative types of stands are used then Use Envelopes will be agreed with approving officers on a case specific basis. Usually this will be through extension of the above general principles to those stands.

2.3.4 Legible London boards, notice boards and the like

a. The Use Envelope should be drawn off-set from the maximum extents of the item (as seen in plan) with the value of the off-sets being as follows:
   i. From any side of the board containing information that pedestrians are intended to view – 800mm.
   ii. From any other side of the item – 200mm. In addition, the overall centred width of the Use Envelope should not be less than 1200mm (see note 2)

NOTE 1: These requirements are appropriate for simple one or two sided planar boards. Where rotundas or other novel shaped assemblies are used then Use Envelopes will be agreed with approving officers. Usually this will be through extension of the above general principles to those items.

NOTE 2: This is sufficient for two people to look at a board together.

2.3.5 Tree pits

a. See standard DS.501.