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BUILDING · CONSERVATION

*Making Heritage Work*

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Dear Sirs

## **GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF TACTILE PAVING SURFACES**

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) is the professional body for building conservation practitioners and historic environment experts working in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, with connections to the Republic of Ireland. The Institute exists to establish, develop and maintain the highest standards of conservation practice, to support the effective protection and enhancement of the historic environment, and to promote heritage-led regeneration and access to the historic environment for all.

Thank you for inviting us to participate in this consultation. Our responses to the questions posed are as follows:

### **Question 1**

Relaxation of the requirement for the back edge of an area of blister paving to be perpendicular to the crossing direction:

- Do you agree with this amendment to the tactile paving guidance?

**IHBC response:** We have no objection to this in principle but have concerns about practicalities.

- If you do not agree what are your objections?

**IHBC response:** The proposal would increase the the required amount of slab cutting. This would introduce extra cost. But more importantly it would introduce a greater number of smaller pieces of slab into the surface. The smaller the unit the harder it is to fix and thus the greater the propensity for remedial action.

### **Question 2**

Replacement of the requirement for blister paving at a controlled crossing to be red with a requirement for at least a 50% contrast ratio with the surrounding paving:

- Do you agree with this amendment to the tactile paving guidance?

**IHBC response:** In part. This would be a preferable arrangement in many areas and would give designers a choice of a greater range of materials

- If you do not agree what are your objections?

**IHBC response:** In conservation locations such as conservation areas, World Heritage Sites and in the setting of listed buildings the proposal might lead to visual damage to heritage. We think that the relaxation in respect of these areas should be retained.

### **Question 3**

Introduce a universal requirement for the boundary between carriageway and footway to be demarcated with tactile paving wherever they are at the same level:

- Do you agree with this amendment to the tactile paving guidance?

**IHBC response:** We disagree with this in the strongest possible terms.

- If you do not agree what are your objections?

**IHBC response:** Shared surfaces are a feature of many historic areas including town centres with considerable pedestrian traffic. We can think of numerous examples in which application of the proposal would lead to all or most of the delineated pedestrian area being composed of tactile paving to the discomfort of the majority of pedestrians including those with mobility difficulties and those with push-chairs, shopping trolleys and other wheeled devices. For this reason, and to allow for the protection of visual character, we think there should be a relaxation of this requirement for historic areas and any other area in which there is insufficient footway width to accommodate the tactile paving and an adequate width of non-tactile paving.

### **Question 4**

Suggestions for crossing improvements

- Do you agree that where signal controlled crossings have two push button boxes they should both have tactile rotating cones?
- Do you agree that push button boxes at signal-controlled crossings should have tactile arrows indicating the crossing direction?
- If you do not agree with either of the above what are your objections?

**IHBC response:** We have no objection to these proposals.

Yours faithfully



James Caird  
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