

OBSTRUCTIONS

THE LANGUAGE
OF MATERIAL
OBSTRUCTIONS
AND WHAT
THEY TELL US
ABOUT OUR
PUBLIC SPACES

BY PENNY HARTLEY



OBSTRUCTIONS

THE LANGUAGE
OF MATERIAL
OBSTRUCTIONS
AND WHAT
THEY TELL US
ABOUT OUR
PUBLIC SPACES

BY PENNY HARTLEY

Imagine you have to ask or tell someone not to do something. It is never a pleasant task and you have to consider a variety of constituent elements when determining the right approach.

Firstly, you have to take stock of your own position of authority or the leverage you may have in making this request. Next, of the thing you're asking someone not to do, you have to assess it on a scale from petty detail to grave transgression. The closer it is to the former end of the scale, usually the more uncomfortable it is to ask, and subsequently the harder it will be to enforce.

Finally, it is about the person or people you are approaching. If you suspect they will not react well, you may need to cajole. Or you may choose to warn them that there has been recent enforcement (whether that is the case or not) against the activity in question, but you are on their side and simply giving them a heads up. Or you may camouflage your negative request by presenting it in positive language and embedding it amongst other more positive instructions.

Prohibitive signs behave in much the same way with their use of language. But what about objects that are used as obstructions? By design and manipulation of our cultural perceptions, they are the physical manifestation of the pragmatic acceptance that some people will do what they want anyway.

But there is an abstract beauty to be found in obstructions, and their utilitarian sculptural forms speak more clearly of cultural issues when viewed out of context.

This publication seeks to categorize some of the obstructions to be found in and around London by how we interact with them, while decoding the societal factors embedded in their materiality and objectness, and examining what their language tells us about our public spaces.



i.1

We are surrounded by things in the urban environment that are telling us *No* and *Don't*. They are, to all intents and purposes, obstructions: placed to impede or prevent passage or progress; to create an obstacle or blockage.

Of the everyday obstructions we are aware of, we are often so inured to them that we no longer notice they are there. But there are many more than we probably realise, because either we simply never thought of them as obstructions, like railings; or they're not aimed at most of us, like a branded alarm bell box on the front of a property; or they were designed for us to *not* to think of them that way, to be 'invisible' obstructions, like giant well-stocked planters in upmarket business and retail zones.

Our 'blindness' to the real quantity of obstructions around us could be explained away as a mere lack of interest. Indeed, on the basis of *Qui tacet consentire videtur* or 'silence gives consent' we seem wearily accepting of the stated fact that we are the most surveilled country in the world. Our consent is assumed as we recite the government motto 'If you've got nothing to hide, you've got nothing to fear'. We remain silent because silence is easier, and anyway we're too busy ordering, liking, posting and curating in our online lives to worry about the details of the backdrop to our real lives.

Perhaps our blindness could also be attributed to the fact that obstructions take so many forms, ranging from traditional signs to objects, sounds, landscaping and people. Perhaps, when we engage with a public space, the risk of sensory overload leads us to filter our perception as we move through it. From experience and for cognitive efficiency, we only 'read' what we need of the environment to a greater or lesser extent, and this is determined by factors including: what we are doing in the place, how many other people are there, who we are with and the speed at which we are moving through it.

Deborah Parsons (2000) proposed that the urban landscape needs to be studied as 'a feature that brings the psychological and the material into collusion', to 'interrelate the observed and the observer, and to assess how the identity of one affects the other.'¹ What if we were to stop and look more closely at our urban environment and how we interact with the obstructions in the physical landscape?

(i) Objects as obstructions

We are concerned here specifically with objects designed and used as obstructions in the urban environment. In this context an object is defined as something that has not been *built into* an architectural scheme. It is a stand-alone thing, or person. An add-on to the architecture of the space, whether consciously considered or hurriedly installed. Through its design, positioning and materiality, and the cultural perception of it, it is able to deter or block.

While these objects have semiotic meaning, they do not involve words. Their language is purely visual and experiential. They are abstract

forms, and they depend on our knowledge and perception of them in order to perform efficiently. R. & K. Claus (1971) state that 'Perception of our visual environment is largely a culturally controlled phenomenon' and that we do not really see as much with our eyes or hear with our ears but 'with our midbrain, our visual and associative centres, and with our systems of incipient behaviour, to which almost all perceiving leads.'²

Some signs can be included if they have achieved objectness as abstract forms, in that they bear only symbols or icons, and no words. Or conversely, they bear one word only that cannot be universally represented by a symbol or icon. And it is this one word that comes loaded with cultural preconceptions that gives the sign its obstructiveness. The signs have, however, been placed in their own category because, unlike the other objects, due to their feeble physical limitations, they can only say No, they can't *do* anything to deter.

It could be said that CCTV can't *do* anything either, it is passive and reactive. But its power as a deterrent is in its ability to watch and record, and that is why it too is included as an object of obstruction.

Some people also feature. The police, for example, may be considered as objects of obstruction because the physical presence of human beings dressed in recognisable police uniform - consisting of the branded hi-vis jacket, utility vest or belt, walkie-talkies, black trousers, boots and hat - remains the strongest deterrent to 'undesirable' behaviour. When the police are physically present they are proactive as obstructions.

The reality though is that the police cannot be counted on to hang around as objects of enforcement; and in this era of overstretched public resources they generally play a more *reactive* role in response to reports of crime or suspicious behaviour.

This leaves the landlords of high-value mixed-use (business and retail) zones with what they see as no other option but to use 24-hour visible security, as well as CCTV. The uniforms of these private security guards mimic those of the police, with hi-vis vests, walkie-talkies, black trousers and boots. Their uniforms borrow the authority of the police uniforms, but they are *privately funded* objects of obstruction.

It will also be noted that a large proportion of these obstructions are aimed at car drivers, and these objects tend to have their own visual language - which is to shout. In *The View From The Road*, Appleyard, Lynch and Myer (1964) described the driving experience as 'a sequence played to the eyes of a captive, somewhat fearful, but partially inattentive audience, whose vision is filtered and directed forward.'³ And indeed, Henri Lefebvre (1967) described the car as an object that 'has its own code, the Highway Code, a fact that speaks for itself. Volumes are filled with semantic, semiologic and semiotic interpretations of the Highway Code'.⁴

(ii) The public realm

Lefebvre (1974) proposed that every society throughout history produces its own kind of space, and that social space is essentially a social product⁵. And as we watch the slow death of our traditional high streets as con-

sumers move online, perhaps it is time that we re-examined what we understand to be 'public space' and 'the public realm'.

Most of us think of the urban environment as public space, the commons, where we are free to roam, meet our friends, hang out and so on. And on the surface that is true. But every piece of land we walk on is owned by *someone*, and increasingly that someone is a private company.

In *Ground Control* (2012), Anna Minton describes how, over what is now the past fifteen years, a government policy has enabled big private landlords to buy up all the land and property in a given area by forcing businesses and property owners to sell if the landlords are able to prove that the development will be of 'public benefit'. The definition of which was changed quietly by an Act of Parliament in 2004 to automatically prioritise the economic impact of a big new scheme over its effect on the community.⁶

Lefebvre had predicted that in a few years the heart of cities like London would be owned by 'the magnates of power and finance'.⁷ And Minton attests that land and property that has been in public hands for 150 years or more has indeed been moving back into private hands.⁸ She goes on to explain that few people are really aware of what has happened, because so much of it is mired in jargon. 'Compulsory purchase, Section 106, Pathfinder, even the use of the word 'assets' are just a few of the terms which mean nothing to most people. The spread of jargon is a very effective distancing mechanism, undermining our understanding of policies and profoundly affect the culture of our cities and the way we live.'⁹

It is areas such as King Cross Central, which features in this publication, that Minton would describe as one of the new 'malls without walls': private property, where traditional rights of way have been replaced by 'public realm arrangements', which also have the beneficial effect that behaviour can be controlled.¹⁰

She quotes developer Chrispin Kelly: 'The idea that public space needs to be managed and mothered by the state is left over from the notion that when we go out in public we are exercising our role as citizen. In fact now we are largely going out for entertainment and shopping, and the codes developed for shopping centres have turned out to deliver both what the punter wants and the investor needs.'¹¹

Kelly's chilling disingenuousness is reminiscent of Aldous Huxley's prescient dystopia in *Brave New World* (1932), in which citizens are conscripted to consume and *must not* indulge in entertainment that *does not* involve consumption ('You can't consume much if you sit still and read books.') and that 'Ending is better than mending. The more stitches, the less riches'.¹²

In *Explore Everything* (2014) urban explorer ethnographer Bradley L. Garrett describes the modern global city as 'a place where sensory overload and increased securitisation have become the norm, where the only acceptable modes of behaviour are to work and spend money on pre-packaged 'entertainment'. These restrictions are now so ubiquitous that they're almost unnoticeable to the general population'.¹³

So, what do the kind of obstructions present tell us then about the nature of the public space we're in? If, for example, you were to wander around Kings Cross Central to look for objects as obstacles, you wouldn't see many. Apart from temporary cones and safety barriers in the vicinity of works - in which at the time of writing there are still plenty around the periphery - obstructions, prohibitive signs and defensive architecture are remarkably absent. The objects in their place - apart from the CCTV - are the security guards, who must look authoritative in their police-like uniforms to potential transgressors, while seeming welcoming to the general public as 'hosts' in their jaunty red baseball caps.

In this carefully cultivated environment, where the drive to increase ABC1 footfall is key, the absence of prohibitive signs is of paramount importance. They have been consciously banned. Consumers and business tenants alike must feel able to relax and enjoy the beauty and tranquility of the soft landscaping and the fountain displays, without being troubled by signs associated with deprivation and anti-social behaviour. As David Crow (2016) quotes one of the founders of the science of semiotics, F. De Saussure: 'Language is a system of interdependent terms in which the value of each term results solely from the simultaneous presence of others.'¹⁴

What's not to like in such a pleasing environment? Perhaps the steps that have been taken to keep it that way? When I attempt to question the security guards on what is regarded as 'undesirable' behaviour (this term covers more ills than simply anti-social or unlawful behaviour) they are unforthcoming. This is despite one of them clutching a black document case at all times, which presumably contains the standard private land byelaws in the spoof picture on the right.

The guards do reveal however that they are instructed to move the homeless away from the area, of which there are plenty to be found at the fronts of Kings Cross and St Pancras stations on Euston Road. And it is only when I leave the King Cross Central zone and venture east through the back streets of the old Kings Cross district towards Caledonian Road that the presence of obstructions returns with a vengeance, as if held at bay, like the homeless, around the periphery of the development zone.

Here, the streets and properties are left much to their own devices, with minimal enforcement in the form of police, security guards and CCTV. The streets are indeed dirtier, but they are 'real'. Obstructions are in their element. There are forgotten nooks and corners that Lefebvre described as 'counter-space', a vital form of non-specific space that communities often end up fighting to defend from development. He claimed that these spaces may appear 'to have escaped the control of the established order' but it is just an illusion.¹⁵

Perhaps, as Minton claims, the 'more we legislate for good behaviour, the less likely we are to find it occurring naturally'¹⁶ and the only way to reclaim our cities, 'to counter this trend, in every aspect of our politics, is for a new constitutional settlement that will put the idea of the public good back at the centre of the public realm.'¹⁷



ii.1

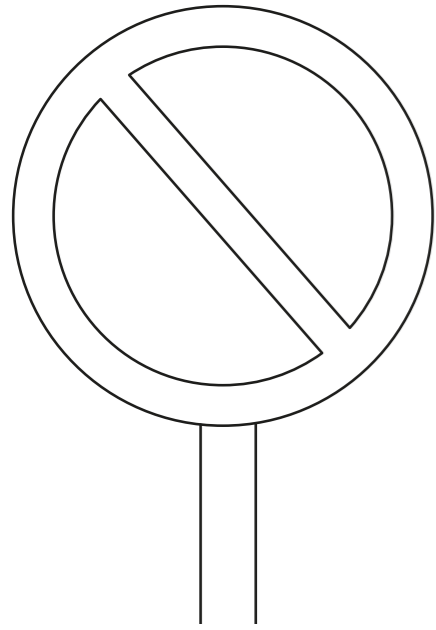
(iii) About the categories

The primary task of all of the following objects, in their capacity as obstructions, is to regulate or impede physical access. By and large, they are categorised by how we interact with them: whether it's in a vehicle or as a pedestrian, but also on a *scale* from impediment to outright ban.

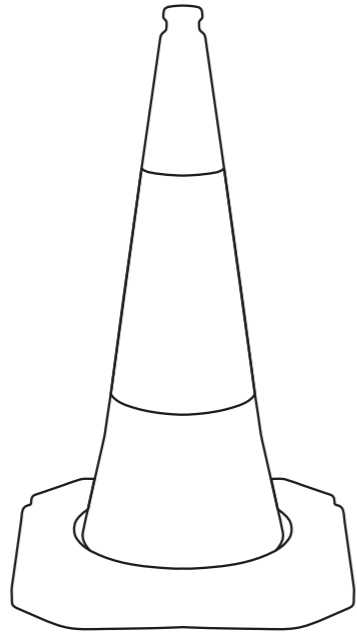
For example, 'No Pedestrian Access *at this Time*' concerns a temporary ban, the next level 'No *Unrestricted* Pedestrian Access' allows some controlled or restricted access, while 'No Unauthorised Pedestrian Access' does not allow access without permission or payment, onto the unequivocal 'No Pedestrian Access'. The category after that, 'No *Unlawful* Pedestrian Access' concerns obstacles to deter an attempted unlawful entry.

However, unlawful behaviour is not the same thing as anti-social or undesirable behaviour. For example, homelessness is not against the law, and neither is skateboarding, but the laws on both remain inconsistent and vague. They are certainly treated as either unlawful, anti-social or undesirable, so their respective obstructions have their own category, along with the legion of CCTV and private security that have sprung up as enforcement.

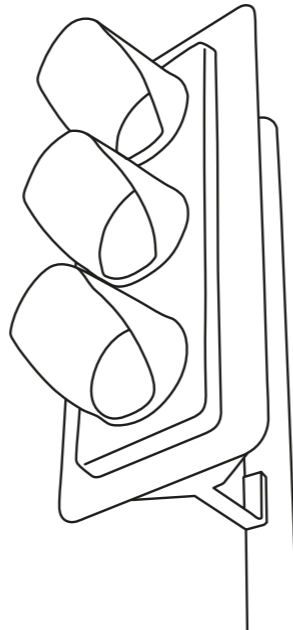
(iv) The categories of obstructions



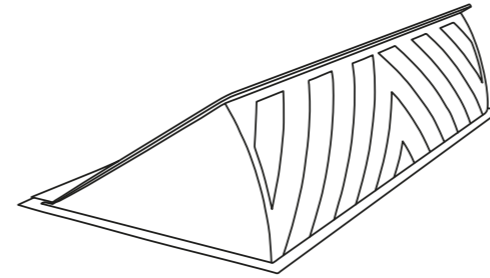
1. SIGNS AS OBJECTS THAT SAY NO



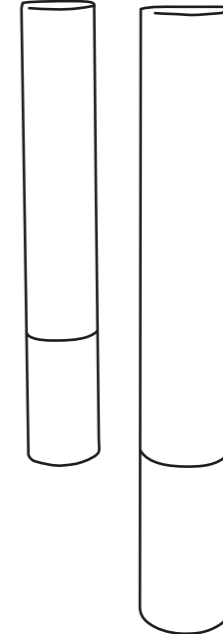
2. NO VEHICLE ACCESS *AT THIS TIME*



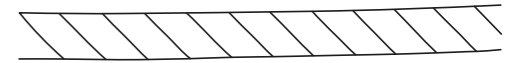
3. NO *UNRESTRICTED* VEHICLE ACCESS



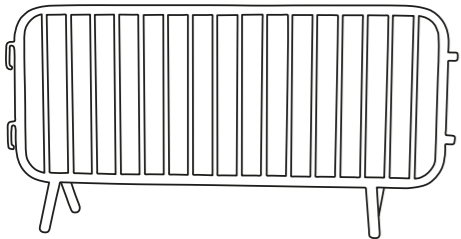
4. NO *UNAUTHORISED* VEHICLE ACCESS



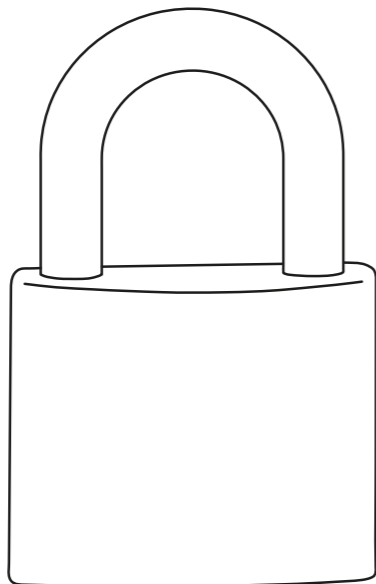
5. NO VEHICLE ACCESS



6. NO PEDESTRIAN ACCESS *AT THIS TIME*



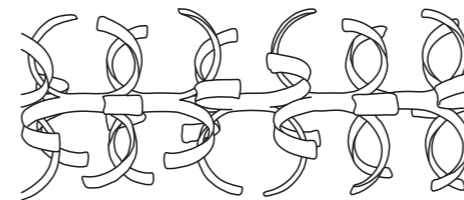
7. NO *UNRESTRICTED* PEDESTRIAN ACCESS



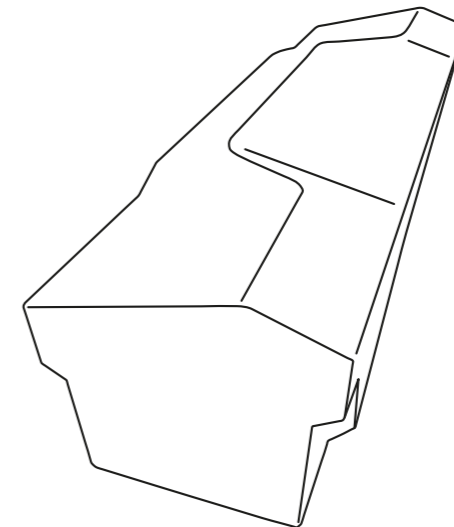
8. NO *UNAUTHORISED* PEDESTRIAN ACCESS



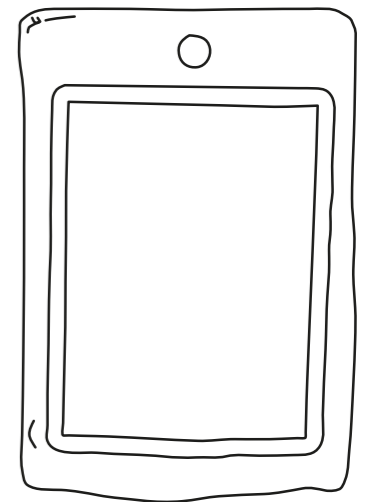
9. NO PEDESTRIAN ACCESS



10. NO *UNLAWFUL* PEDESTRIAN ACCESS



11. NO *ANTI-SOCIAL* OR *UNLAWFUL* BEHAVIOUR



12. DO NOT USE, OUT OF ORDER

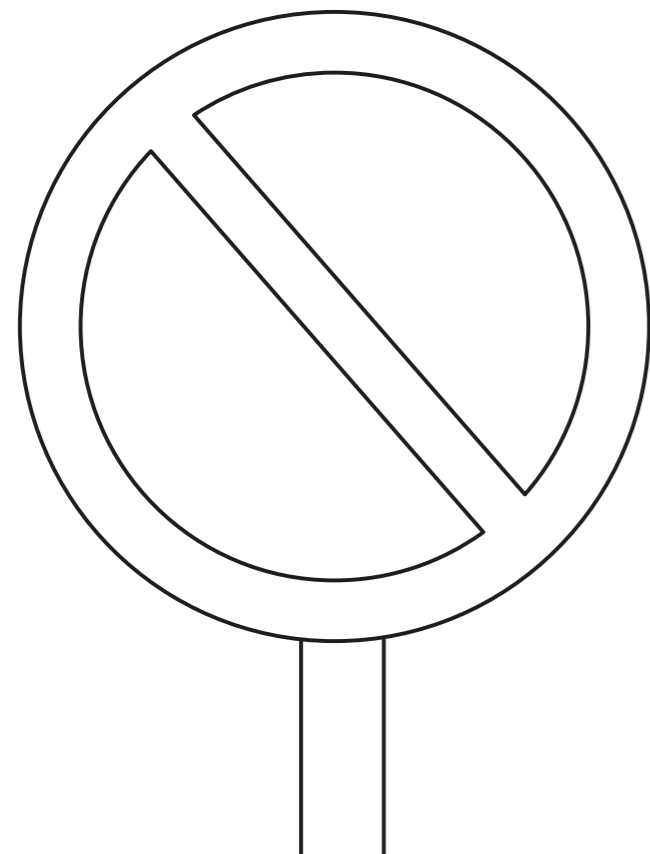
1. SIGNS AS OBJECTS THAT SAY NO

Some road signs, like these bearing only a symbol or icon and no attendant written qualification of their message, have a greater level of abstractness, and therefore a more relevant level of *objectness* in the context of this study. They can be described quite literally as - a picture on a metal pole.

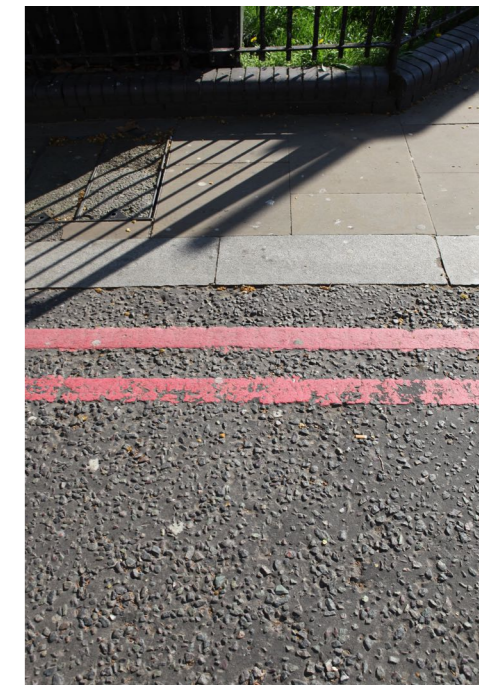
Their presence, and efficacy, rely on the knowledge, understanding and acquiescence of the actors they are aimed at; and their abstractness lend them an impersonality and anonymity to everyone else.

This is not the case for the Private and Reserved signs. They will be viewed at close quarters, not at speed (like the road signs) and by any and all interested observers. There are no adequate symbols or icons that are universally understood to replace the words on these signs, so they have to be spelled out - they have to be explicit. And their spelled-out-ness can carry other, less desirable messages of territorialism, entitlement and privilege.

These signs as objects have been grouped together because, unlike the objects you will see on the following pages, they can only say No. They have no other leverage, by virtue of their feeble physicality as mere pictures on poles (albeit steel) or pieces of timber with words on them. The potential transgressor can simply choose to ignore them, and there's nothing these objects can do about it because they lack the physical properties to actually deter.



1.1 1.2
1.3



1.4
1.5 1.6



2. NO VEHICLE ACCESS *AT THIS TIME*

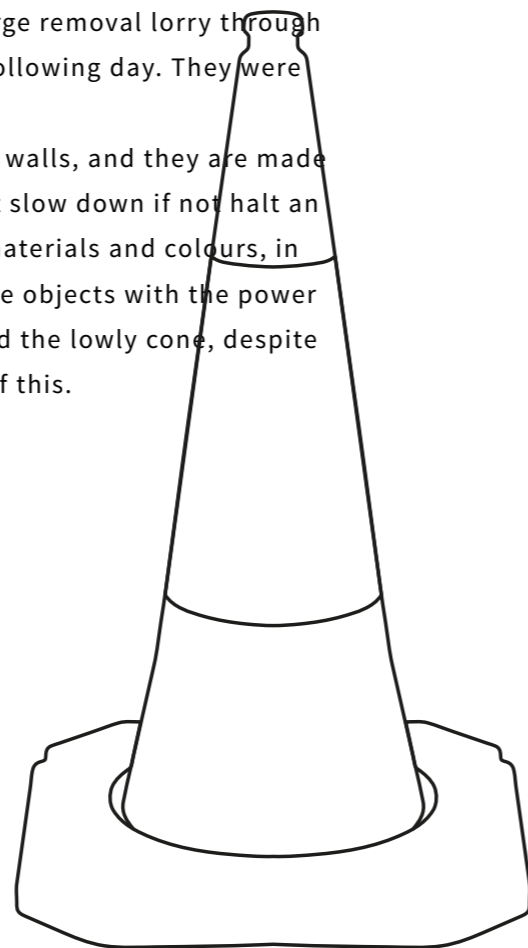
Cones are the go-to small-scale object for temporary vehicular prohibition; they are temporary bollards. Along with their family of related safety barriers they share a language of materials and colours, which is primarily heavy-duty polypropylene in Safety Red and white but occasionally with a dash of yellow as well.

Cones will normally have arrived as a result of an identified temporary need, by an agency, company or even individuals - for they are freely available to buy online - and they often stay for years, even decades. Sometimes they can be spotted piled high in the back of Highways Agency flatbed trucks, like workers being driven to a day on site.

Cones are mainly deployed to create a visual deterrence. If they suffer an incursion, they will cause noise more than any significant damage to the offending vehicle. When their impact is thought to be waning they will often be linked by tape or chains to create a visual wall, until it is finally decided that a visual wall is indeed all they are and it is time to graduate on to safety barriers - or permanent bollards.

The portability of cones makes them prone to theft by casual builders and drunken teenagers; and I must confess to once 'borrowing' about twenty in one night to ease the passage of a large removal lorry through a narrow street with unrestricted parking the following day. They were all returned after the move, of course.

All safety barriers connect to make effective walls, and they are made from such heavy material that they will at least slow down if not halt an incursion. This family of objects' language of materials and colours, in particular the Safety Red, bestows each of these objects with the power of authoritativeness - we do what they say - and the lowly cone, despite its relative insubstantiality, basks in the halo of this.



2.1 2.2



2.3

2.4



3. NO *UNRESTRICTED* VEHICLE ACCESS

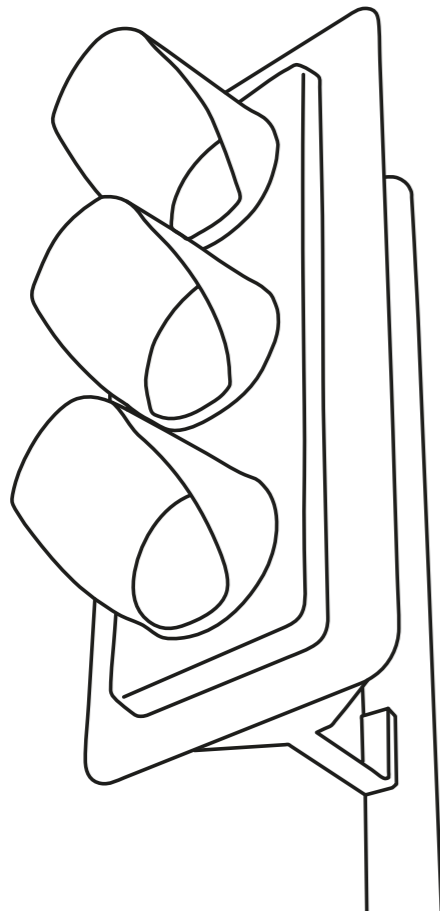
These objects accept that traffic must move through but they are there to control what it can and can't do with regard to flow, speed and access.

The bollard width-restrictors, the height-restrictor frame and the speed bump all share a passive defensiveness, whereby they have been designed and / or installed in such a way that an approaching vehicle runs the risk of damage if it does not comply with their specific requirements as it engages with them.

Usually they are permanently secured into the ground, in order to withstand any impact. But objects like heavy-duty polypropylene safety barriers are sometimes installed on a temporary basis (often accompanied by temporary traffic lights) to perform functions such as controlling traffic direction.

We learn to obey traffic lights as pedestrians and cyclists as well as drivers - again, we do what they say. As drivers we will wait for a red light to change in the middle of the night when no one else is even around - a conformance perhaps less questionable than it once was with the proliferation of CCTV.

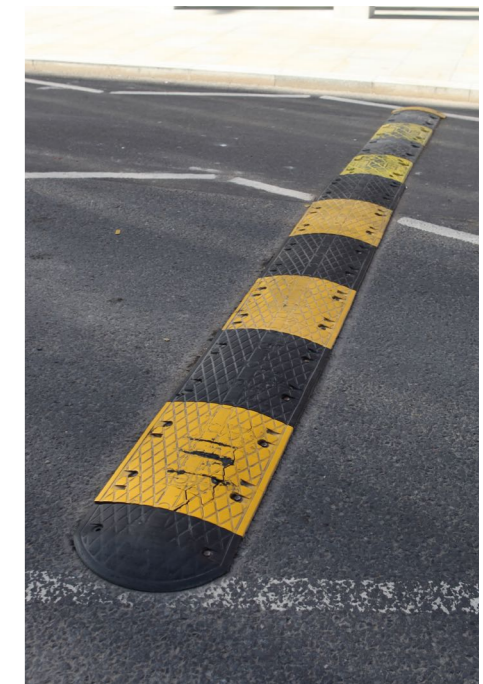
The symbolism of the traffic light's colours red, amber and green creeps into other aspects of our lives and our speech, for example: a project that's been 'green-lit', amber weather warnings and traffic light labels on food.



3.1 3.2



3.3 3.4
3.5



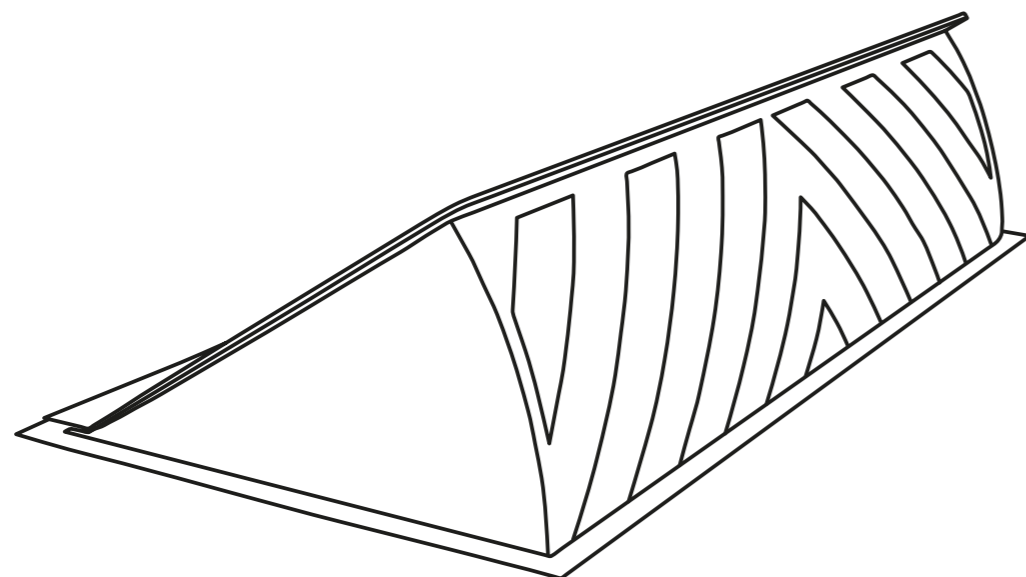
4. NO UNAUTHORISED VEHICLE ACCESS

These objects are normally kept closed but can be opened in some way, or removed, to allow entry.

The red and white barrier and the black and yellow Road Blocker do not attempt to deter the observer from seeing what is beyond them. On the contrary, the former's single slim pole serves more as a visual impediment only, to prompt a ticket to be taken, whereby the driver of the vehicle will have to pay later when they wish to leave; while the brutal obduracy of the latter demands that only the highest authority will see it lowered to allow the visitor to pass.

The removable bollard's apparent removeableness suggests that for the most part it is a permanent presence, but there are occasions when, to allow access, it will be unlocked by a keyholder and taken away. This bollard is at the vehicle entrance to Granary Square on Goods Way in Kings Cross. A decision must have been made by the landlords not to install something more substantial, because on the face of it, this bollard and two security guards are all that stand between the hugely popular pedestrian area of Granary Square and a terrorist vehicle rampage like those seen in London in 2017.

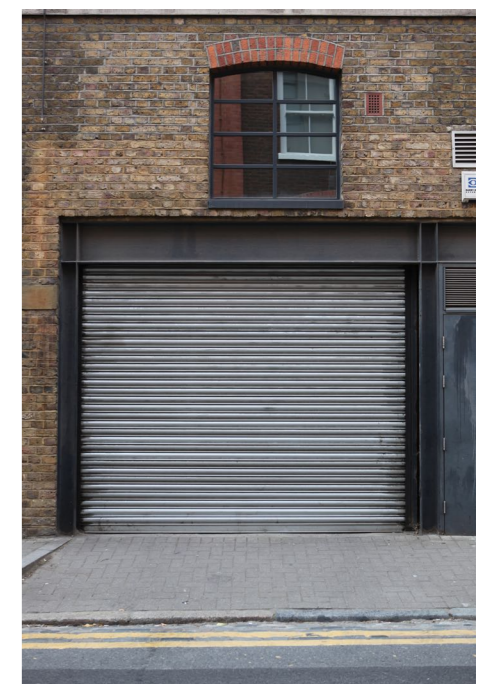
The sliding green gate and the steel shutter share a desire to either restrict, on the part of the former, or deny, with the latter, any view of what is beyond them. The signs and a communication bollard at the green gate would suggest that authority may be given for access. But the steel shutter has none of that and is clearly for the owner's use only and is operated from the inside or remote control.



4.1 4.2
4.3



4.4 4.5



5. NO VEHICLE ACCESS

These objects have been designed and installed to stand up to vehicular incursions. They have been added after the landscaping, sometimes in response to planners' or local stakeholders' concerns; and to remove them requires not inconsiderable means, hence their quality of permanence. There is no conditionality inherent to their presence, they are simply there to deny access.

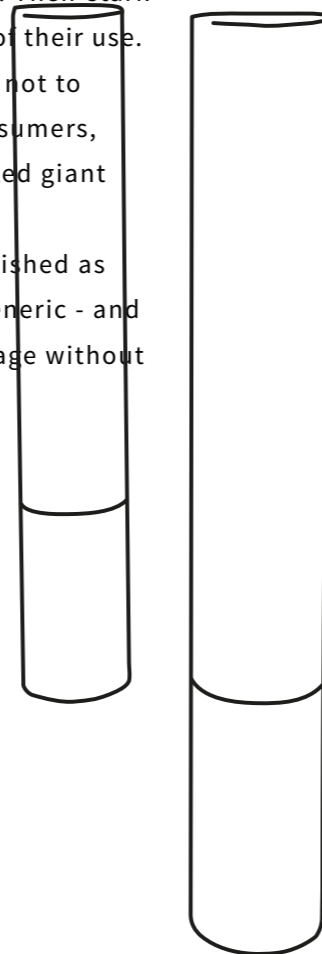
Bollards are perfect for micro-targeting vulnerable pockets of urban land or denying vehicular access through pedestrian walkways. If done with thought, they can blend in by complementing architectural lines and mimicking the materials used in the vicinity. Bollards are so ubiquitous they can often become 'invisible' to the casual observer. The examples here are made from various forms of steel, which tends to prevail as a material in urban environments.

After the 2017 London terrorist attacks involving vehicle rampages against pedestrians, anti-terrorist barriers started to appear around the City of London and other vulnerable areas with high pedestrian footfall. The barriers were made from steel or concrete to withstand vehicle impact, but their visual appearance varied enormously depending on where they were going to be.

The City along with areas of state importance deployed black steel lozenge-shaped City of London liveried blockades, with yellow detailing. Their stark brutalist appearance reflecting the authoritative pragmatism of their use.

Meanwhile landlords such as Kings Cross Central, at pains not to alarm their high profile business tenants and ABC1 retail consumers, deployed far less 'visible' blockades in the form of well-stocked giant corten steel planters.

Black and yellow diagonal stripe has become firmly established as the signifier of 'hazard' and the bottom, a somewhat more generic - and (presumably) temporary - concrete blockade uses that language without any refinement.



5.1
5.2



5.3
5.4
5.5



6. NO PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AT THIS TIME

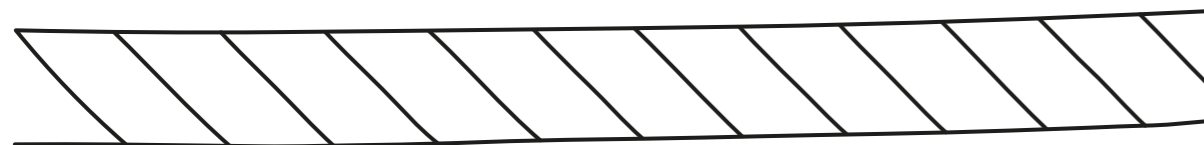
Temporarily denying pedestrian access is fraught with grey areas and practical limitations. The presence of a cone can be ignored or mistaken for a prank without an additional written notice confirming the veracity of the ban. Indeed, cones are less effective in a pedestrian context than they are in a vehicular one.

The single safety barrier can suffer a similar identity crisis, of seeming out of context, and having been ‘borrowed’ from a local roadworks or building site to create an ‘unofficial’ ad-hoc barrier.

The use of tape to enclose an area, however, is more effective. It creates a walled zone, often closer to our eyeline, and we have been taught to be mindful of the safety red and black and yellow hazard warning colours. We are generally accepting of its use and the fact that we will have to circumvent the prohibited zone it has created.

There is another almost counter-intuitive element that contributes to tape’s efficacy. The ephemeral material that it’s made from imbues it with a quality that says: ‘this has just happened, this situation is live and dynamic’. A quality possibly borrowed from the use of police incident tape, but real nonetheless.

It is interesting how those associations, and therefore reactions, change when the material changes from tape to velvet rope. We use the term ‘velvet rope’ to describe soft rope running between two or more silver or gold coloured poles, a visual as well as verbal shorthand for situations normally associated with leisure, tourism and VIPs. A velvet rope comes loaded with messages of luxury, aspiration, glamour - and deference, and it is often used to contain hopeful queues and hold back adoring fans.



6.1

6.4



6.2

6.3

6.5

6.6 6.7

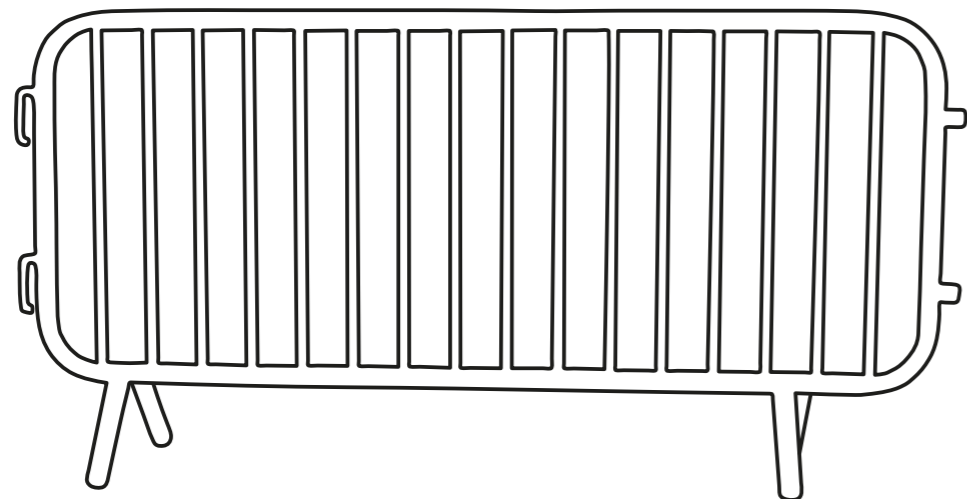
7. NO UNRESTRICTED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

The giant King Cross Central planters are used as much to direct the flow of pedestrian traffic as they are to block vehicle access. They may be obstacles to cars but they play a softer, more passive role in the pedestrian context, and they are beautiful.

Softness is used judiciously in the sympathetic form of timber bollards and rope to stop walkers wandering onto the vulnerable grasses of the sand dunes; and it is used with tape in airports to manage queues waiting to go through security. The tape's softness can reduce the sense of feeling agitated and 'hemmed-in' and it can be quickly reconfigured as the queue rises and falls.

Not so the metal barriers. They are of course used more in an exterior pedestrian context than their brightly coloured road counterparts, because visually they blend in more. They are often to be found permanently installed in a chicane configuration on steep pedestrian walkways to deter dangerous skateboarding and cycling; and in airports to confound and enrage travellers as they struggle to wheel their suitcases past them.

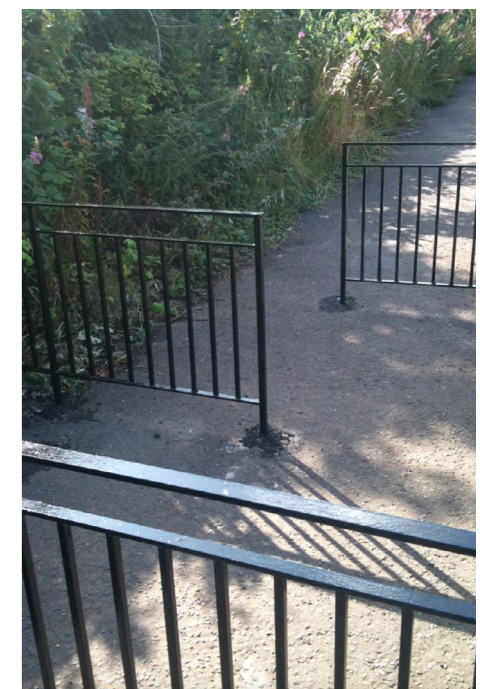
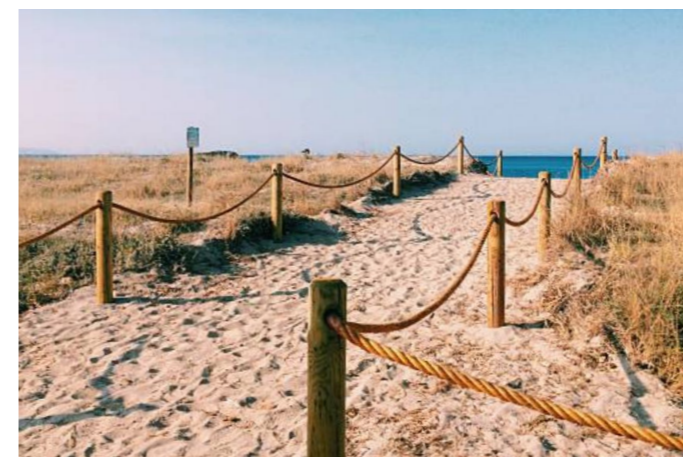
The use of single free-standing metal barriers that connect together have a number of civic applications, like controlling the flow of pedestrian traffic and blocking off specific areas. They can also be configured to create vast enclosed queueing pens for large events, or to separate viewers from marchers or processions. At scale, these metal barriers are used for containment.



7.2
7.1 7.3



7.4 7.5
7.6



8. NO UNAUTHORISED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Each of these objects suggests in a different way that, by default, access is denied, but it may be possible, subject to authorisation.

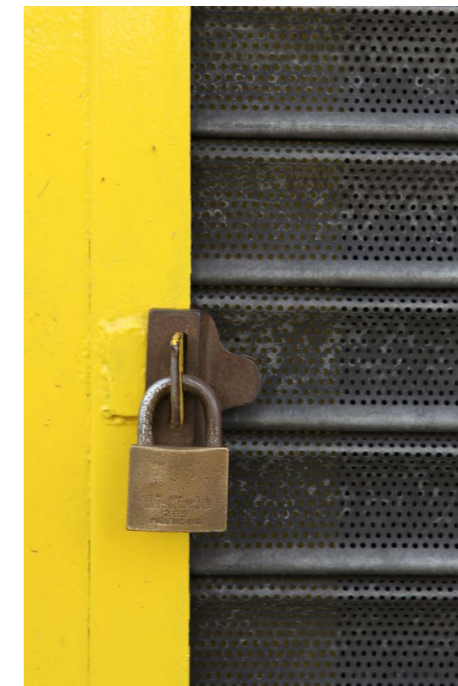
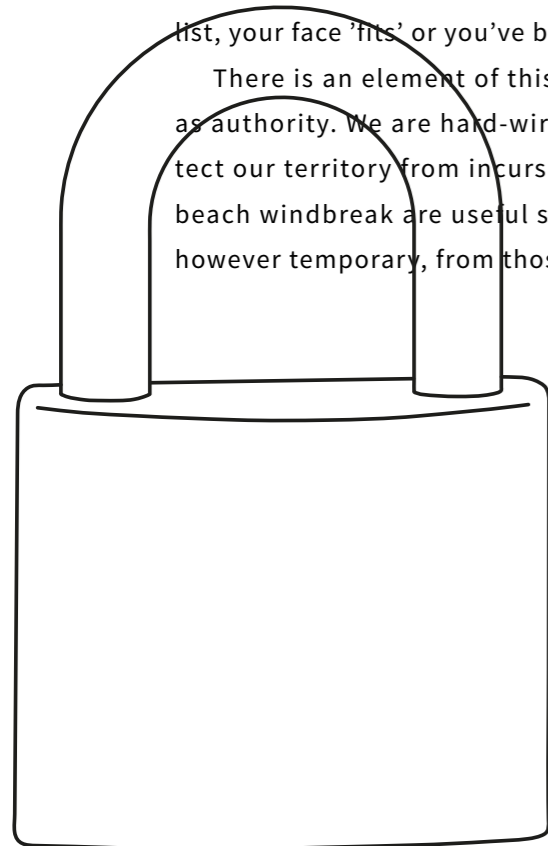
The alarm bell box is positioned on the front of the house to tell all observers that the property has been installed with an alarm by the reputable company Banham and that an attempt to gain anything other than authorised access from the owner at the front door will result in a loud alarm ringing and potentially the prompt appearance of police, security or a nervous keyholding neighbour.

Which one it is of these three will be determined by the type of contract the householder has with Banham. However, judging from the old phone number on the box (these numbers were phased out in 2000) there is a strong chance a contract no longer exists. Meanwhile, the lock on the metal shutters presents a more straightforward proposition. It will remain shut until someone with the key unlocks it.

The tube barriers remain closed until a passenger holds their mobile phone or Oyster card against the barrier's electronic reader to debit payment or receive verification and exchange data with their travel card - where the virtual meets the real.

Security and a velvet rope perform a less democratic function to the tube barriers. Access will be denied, unless you're a VIP, you're on the guest list, your face 'fits' or you've been waiting long enough in the queue.

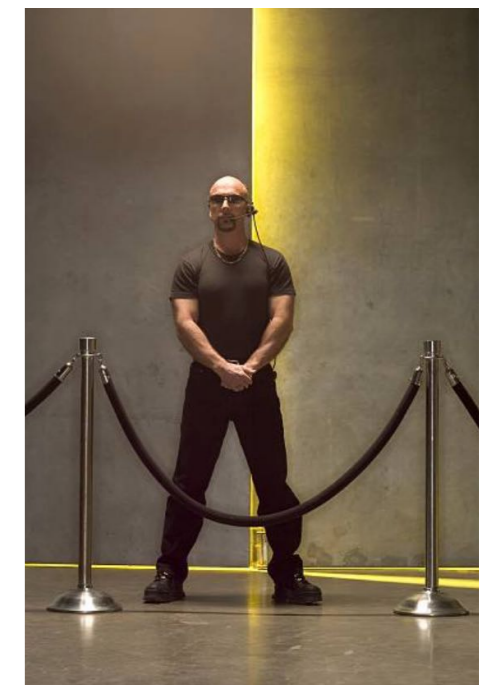
There is an element of this category that concerns territory as well as authority. We are hard-wired to be territorial and take steps to protect our territory from incursion. Blacked-out windows and the humble beach windbreak are useful small devices for protecting our boundaries, however temporary, from those who would enter without our permission.



8.1 8.2



8.3 8.4



8.5 8.6

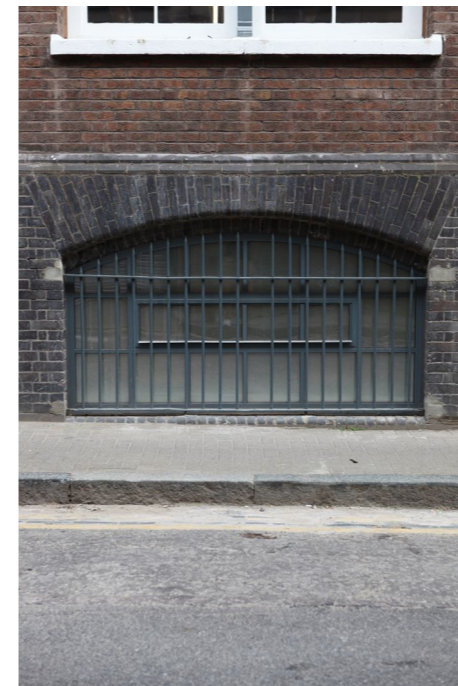


9. NO PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

These objects are intended to block pedestrian access. The permanent window security bars here represent a whole range of security bars and grilles on doors and windows. Their primary quality is their passive defensiveness. There is no negotiation, no conditionality, they are simply secured shut.

The security bars share properties with a police kettle in that both are intended to block pedestrian access and both are non-negotiable. In a bid to control a situation of agitated mass gathering, the police engage in a form of passive offensiveness. They are trained, in well-rehearsed and choreographed manoeuvres, to turn themselves into an object - a kettle.

Unlike the permanence of the security bars however, a police kettle is temporary. They enclose the demonstrators with seige-like tactics over many hours, until they are authorised to release them.



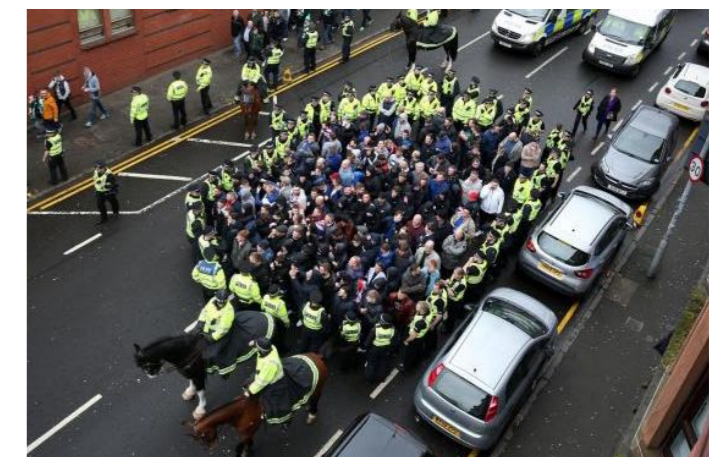
9.1

9.2



9.3

9.4

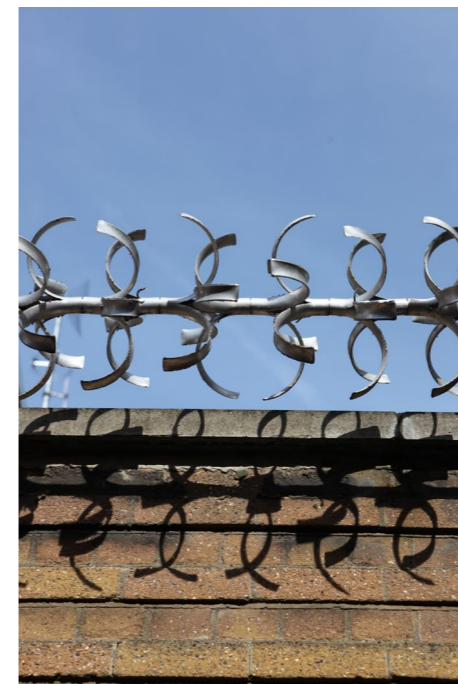
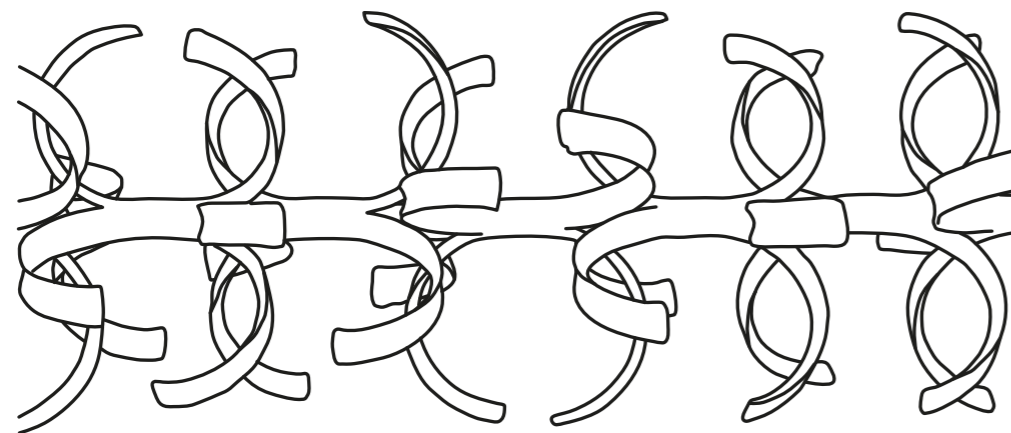
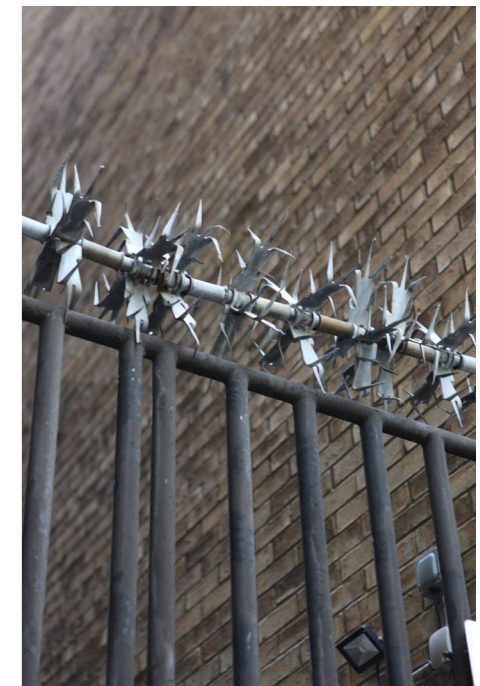


10. NO *UNLAWFUL* PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

These defensive objects are present because it is accepted that some people will attempt to climb over the property's walls or gates. It is also likely that the property's insurers insist upon it.

The dangerous physical qualities of the spikes and razor wire are very much on show, and they are accompanied by a nearby sign warning that they are there. This is in part a reaction to Britain's archaic and confusing laws, whereby a landowner has a duty of care to trespassers. This means that a burglar can sue the owner for personal injury if the former gets hurt trying to climb over, but a warning sign is said to reduce the owner's liability.

It is arguable that anti-climb paint is not in fact an object at all, but a surface. But it is an obstruction. In any event, it is largely invisible, so in order to be fully effective as a deterrent it has to be accompanied by a sign warning of its presence. This inevitably leads to some owners simply erecting the sign without using the paint.



10.1 10.2
10.3 10.4



11. NO ANTI-SOCIAL OR UNLAWFUL BEHAVIOUR

This category is concerned with obstructions in the form of objects of enforcement that are present or available in all the previous categories - typically the police, private security or CCTV - and objects with particular defensive properties against anti-social or unlawful behaviour in the public realm.

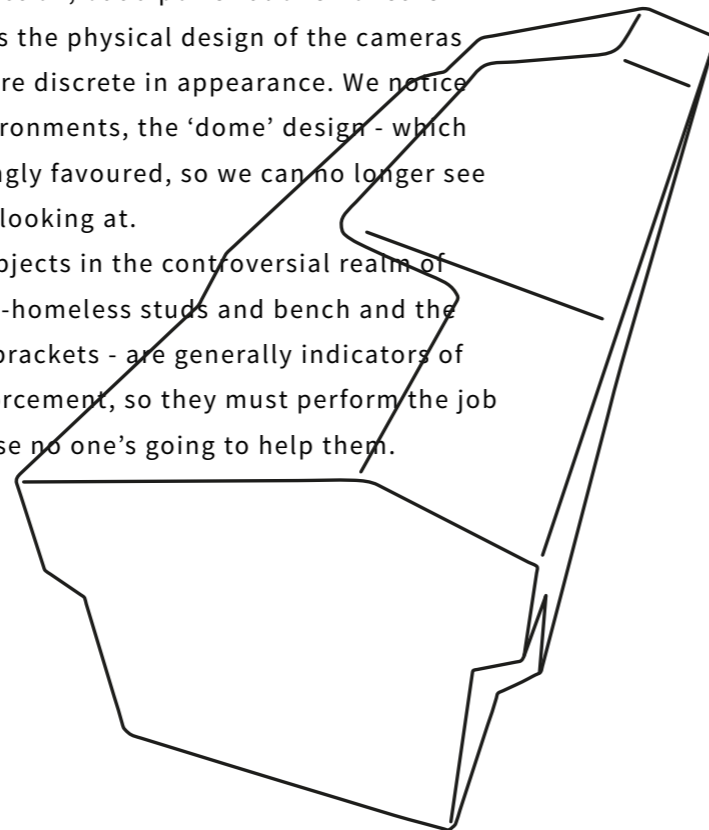
The police, as objects of obstruction: human beings with branded hi-vis jackets, utility vests or belts, walkie-talkies, black trousers, boots and hats - remain the strongest deterrent to undesirable behaviour.

The uniforms of the private security guards mimic those of the police, with similar hi-vis vests, walkie-talkies, black trousers and boots. Their uniforms borrow the authority of the police uniforms, and they are *privately funded* objects of enforcement.

The security guards' presence mean that prohibitive signs, visible obstructions and defensive architecture can be kept to a minimum, preserving the cultivated vibrancy and tranquility of the space. But while being proactive objects of obstruction, the guards' red caps indicate their other role as area 'hosts', a friendly face to the majority of law-abiding visitors.

CCTV has become normalised, an accepted presence. It remains a passive, reactive object as obstruction, but a powerful one nonetheless due to its ability to record. As the physical design of the cameras develop, they get smaller and more discrete in appearance. We notice them less, and in pedestrian environments, the 'dome' design - which conceals the camera - is increasingly favoured, so we can no longer see where it's pointing, and who it's looking at.

These are some examples of objects in the controversial realm of 'defensive architecture' - the anti-homeless studs and bench and the anti-skateboarding metal bench brackets - are generally indicators of areas of negligible proactive enforcement, so they must perform the job as obstruction themselves because no one's going to help them.



11.1 11.2
11.3



11.4
11.5 11.6

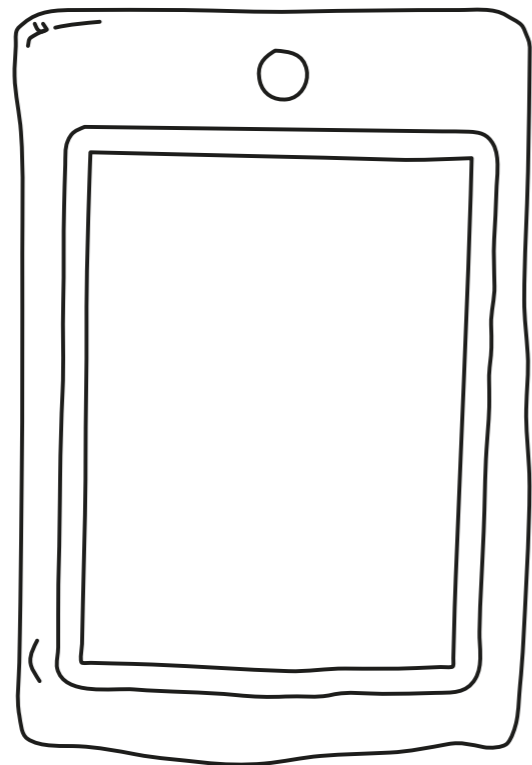


12. DO NOT USE, OUT OF ORDER

This last category concerns temporary objects as obstructions that are covering other objects that are currently out of order.

The objects shown here are in the form of plastic hoods, sheaths and tape, with some kind of symbol - be it wording or simply hazard-associated colours - to deter the potential user, and temporarily subvert the objectness of the thing they are covering.

Except for the tape, the hoods and sheaths have been designed to cover and protect the objects underneath, and in order to appear authentic and convey authority to the potential user, they employ colours and design in keeping with those of the out of order object and its environment.



- 12.1
- 12.2
- 12.4



- 12.3
- 12.5

NOTES

¹ Parsons, D. (2000) *Streetwalking the Metropolis - Women, the City and Modernity*, London, England; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, p.1.

² Claus, R.J. and Claus, K.E. (1971) 'Introduction' and 'The influence of Culture and Environment on Perception' in *Visual Environment - Sight, Sign and Byelaw*, Ontario, Canada: Collier-Macmillan Canada, pp.1,6.

³ Appleyard, D., Lynch, K. & Myer J.R. (1964) *The View From The Road*, Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, p.5.

⁴ Lefebvre, H. (1967) Original translation by Rabinovitch, S. [1971], (2002) 'The Bureaucratic Society of Controlled Consumption' in *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, London, England: Continuum, p.103.

⁵Lefebvre, H. (1974) Original translation by Nicholson-smith, D. (1991) 'Plan of the Present Work' in *The Production of Space*, Oxford, England; Malden, MA; Victoria, Australia: Blackwell, pp.26,31.

⁶ Minton, A. ([2009] 2012) 'The Death of the City': 'Who Owns the Streets?' in *Ground Control, Fear and Happiness in the Twenty-First-Century City*, London, England: Penguin Books, p.22.

⁷ Lefebvre, H. (1967) Original translation by Rabinovitch, S. [1971], (2002) 'Linguistic Phenomena' in *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, London, England: Continuum, pp.127-128.

⁸ Minton, A. ([2009] 2012) 'The Death of the City': 'Who Owns the Streets?' in *Ground Control, Fear and Happiness in the Twenty-First-Century City*, London, England: Penguin Books, p.21.

⁹ Minton, A. ([2009] 2012) 'Moving Forwards': 'Reinventing the Public' in *Ground Control, Fear and Happiness in the Twenty-First-Century City*, London, England: Penguin Books, p.197.

¹⁰ Minton, A. ([2009] 2012) 'The Death of the City': 'Estate Management' in *Ground Control, Fear and Happiness in the Twenty-First-Century City*, London, England: Penguin Books, pp.29,31-32.

¹¹ Minton, A. ([2009] 2012) 'The Olympics and the Public Good' in *Ground Control, Fear and Happiness in the Twenty-First-Century City*, London, England: Penguin Books, p.xiii.

¹² Huxley, A. ([1932] 1993) *Brave New World*, London, England: Harper Collins, pp.41/62

¹³ Garrett, B,L. (2014) 'The UE scene' in *Explore Everything - Place-hacking the City*, London, England; Brooklyn, NY: Verso, p.14.

¹⁴ Crow, D. (2016) 'How Meaning is formed: Value' in *Visible Signs - An introduction to Semiotics in the Visual Arts* London, England: Fairchild Books (Bloomsbury), p.40.

¹⁵ Lefebvre, H. (1974) Original translation by Nicholson-smith, D. (1991) 'Contradictions of space to Differential Space:xxv' in *The Production of Space*, Oxford, England; Malden, MA; Victoria, Australia: Blackwell, p.389.

¹⁶ Minton, A. ([2009] 2012) 'Fear of Crime, 'Respect', Trust and Happiness: Is behaviour worse?' in *Ground Control, Fear and Happiness in the Twenty-First-Century City*, London, England: Penguin Books, p.xiii.

¹⁷ Minton, A. ([2009] 2012) 'The Olympics and the Public Good' in *Ground Control, Fear and Happiness in the Twenty-First-Century City*, London, England: Penguin Books, p.xxx.vii.

Picture credits

i.1 David Hartley (2012)

ii.1 Penny Hartley (2018)

iv Penny Hartley (2018)

1.1,1.2,1.4 Penny Hartley (2018)

1.3 David Hartley (2016)

1.5, 1.6 Getty

2.1,2.2 Penny Hartley (2018)

2.3 barriersdirect.co.uk

2.4 kingspan.com

3.1 David Hartley (2012)

3.2 autopa.co.uk

3.3 Dion / flickr (2008)

3.4 Penny Hartley (2018)

3.5 Nico Hogg / flickr (2005)

4.1 Automatic Systems / flickr (2015)

4.2,4.3,4.4,4.5 Penny Hartley (2018)

5.1,5.2 Penny Hartley (2018)

5.3 Odd Anderson / AFP Photo (2017)

5.4 urbisdesign.co.uk

5.5 concrete-barrier-blocks.co.uk

6.1 David Hartley (2015)

6.2 Lars Ploughmann / flickr (2009)

6.3 Craig Rodway / flickr (2009)

6.4,6.5 Getty

6.6 Penny Hartley (2018)

6.7 Stuart Bannocks / flickr (2009)

7.1 urbisdesign.co.uk

7.2 Badly Drawn dad / flickr (2011)

7.3 Mark / flickr (2011)

7.4,7.6 Getty

7.5 Chris Hill / flickr (2009)

8.1,8.2 Penny Hartley (2018)

8.3 Office of Rail and Road / flickr (2016)

8.4 Getty

8.5 dhgate.com

8.6 edg1ee / flickr (2008)

9.1,9.2 Penny Hartley (2018)

9.3 Getty

9.4 heraldscotsman.com

10.1,10.2,10.3 Penny Hartley (2018)

10.4 Kevan / flickr (2011)

11.1 theguardian.com

11.2 Alan Stanton / flickr (2014)

11.3 Ged Carrol / flickr (2010)

11.4 sontrolwesterncanada.com

11.5 Penny hartley (2018)

11.6 networkcommunicationsnews.co.uk

12.1 Alamy (2015)

12.2 David Hartley (2016)

12.3 Penny hartley (2018)

12.4 Ian / flickr (2012)

12.5 mirror.co.uk (2012)

Last page Penny Hartley (2018)

READING LIST / BIBLIOGRAPHY

Minton, A. ([2009] 2012)
Ground Control, Fear and Happiness in the Twenty-First-Century City
London, England: Penguin Books

Lefebvre, H. (1967) Original translation by Rabinovitch, S. [1971], (2002)
Everyday Life in the Modern World
London, England: Continuum

Lefebvre, H. (1974) Original translation by Nicholson-smith, D. (1991)
The Production of Space
Oxford, England; Malden, MA; Victoria, Australia: Blackwell

Lefebvre, H. (19--) Translation by Kofman, E, and Lebas, E. (1996)
Writings on Cities
Oxford, England; Malden, MA; Victoria, Australia: Blackwell

Huxley, A. ([1932] 1993)
Brave New World
London, England: Harper Collins

Garrett, B.L. (2014)
Explore Everything Place-hacking the City
London, England; Brooklyn, NY: Verso

Parsons, D. (2000)
Streetwalking the Metropolis Women, the City and Modernity
London, England; New York, NY: Oxford University Press

Benjamin, W. ([1938] 1983)
Charles Baudelaire A Lyric Poet in the era of High Capitalism
London, England: Verso Editions

Gilloch, G. (1996)
Myth & Metropolis Walter Benjamin and the City
London, England: Polity Press;
Malden, MA: Blackwell

Crow, D. (2016)
Visible Signs An introduction to Semiotics in the Visual Arts
London, England: Fairchild Books (Bloomsbury)

Thaler, R.H, and Sunstein, C.R. (2009)
Nudge Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth and Happiness
London, England: Penguin Books

Appleyard D., Lynch, K. & Myer J.R. (1964)
The View From The Road
Cambridge MA: The MIT Press

Venturi, R., Scott Brown, D. & Izenhour ([1972] 1977)
Learning From Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form
Cambridge MA and London, England: The MIT Press

Baeder, J. (1996)
Sign Language Street signs as Folk Art
NY, New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc

Claus, R.J. and Claus, K.E. (1971)
Visual Environment Sight, Sign and Byelaw
Ontario, Canada: Collier-Macmillan Canada

Barthes, R. ([1972] 2009)
Mythologies
London, England: Vintage

Matthews, H. (2017)
To Note: Notation Across Disciplines
Melbourne, Australia: Perimeter Editions

