SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING FRAMEWORK

July 2022

1.0   Introduction and Background

1.1   Inclusive signage and wayfinding

There are four basic principles [1] in sign design:

- Signs should only be used when **necessary**;
- Sign location should be **part of the process** of planning the building and the environment;
- Messages should be **short, simple** and **easily understood**;
- Signs should be **consistent**, using prescribed typefaces, colours and contrast

Most signs can be divided into four functional groups:

Information signs: for **orientation** and include the building, car parks and other internal signs identifying main locations inside the building and include directories, maps and plans covering the whole site, internally and externally.

Direction signs: for **directing visitors to destinations** using arrows and can include directional text.

Identification or location signs: these signs – always without an arrow – are installed at individual destinations to **indicate the location of a facility or service, a room or a person**, once the destination has been reached.

Safety, fire safety and mandatory signs: these are essential for the safety of users and can be either warning or prohibition signs. They will be **positioned in strategic locations** to give warnings. They include exit signs, fire exit signs and details of fire equipment.

1.2   Wayfinding as architecture

In the context of Alexandra Park and Palace, wayfinding should be considered as **an architectural layer** – critical to helping visitors not only find their way around but also to **create a sense of place** that positively impacts on their experience on site.

The following issues require consideration when planning for wayfinding interventions:

Orientation: at the most basic level, visitors need to be able to find what they need – Where's the front door? Where is the bus stop? Where is the bar? Where do I get my tickets from?

Graphic identity: having a strong graphic identity based on both historic and contemporary qualities of the Park and Palace will strengthen and reinforce the experience visitors will have on site.

Material language: wayfinding should be informed by the historic significance of the site in the same way new materials are used for architectural interventions.

Hierarchy of spaces: wayfinding should help visitors understand the importance of spaces and help them quickly choose where they want to be and know how to get there.

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[1] Sign Design Guide: a guide to inclusive signage (JMU and the Sign Design Society)

<u>1.2   An ever-evolving site</u>

Both Palace and Park have been modified considerably over a period of 150+ years, with the Palace in particular experiencing sizeable change as it has been reincarnated many times over. Serious damage from fire, war, significant adaptations, underuse and closure, lack of resources and general neglect has resulted in a number of challenges, including how to maintain a relevant and coherent decorative scheme, including signage and wayfinding.

<u>1.3   Why a Signage and Wayfinding Framework is needed</u>

There are two main reasons why a Signage and Wayfinding Framework is needed:

Considering the needs of everyone

It is important that the built environment caters for everyone, and Alexandra Park and Palace are no exception; even more so given the Charity's purpose. Signage and wayfinding play and important role in creating a barrier-free environment, so that everyone has the opportunity to engage with and enjoy what the Park and Palace have to offer.

Consistency in an ever-changing site

Both the Park and Palace are in a constant state of evolution – this presents a challenge in how to ensure a consistent and relevant wayfinding identity. The site is complex with many different approaches, entrances and exits. It is important that any intervention enhances the sense of the Park and Palace as a destination, worth visiting at any time of the day or evening.

As well as ensuring signage is simple and inclusive, a clear expression of the sense of 'place' through design is critical, and it is important that there is consistency across the site. This sense of place further help cement the Park and Palace's vision to be a destination, and not just somewhere you come to with a ticket for a specific event.

There are three major new and extant challenges that are of concern. The current provision of wayfinding and signage in general is inconsistent and does not take into account accessibility requirements; the existing signage around the Park is insufficient; and information and directional signage is not effective - attendees regularly show up at the wrong entrance (Palm Court/ Great Hall visitors trying to access the site via the East Court).

In order to ensure coherence and consistency, a Signage and Wayfinding Framework is needed to bring the Park and Palace together under one graphic and material identity, with a consistent, simple and inclusive design process and implementation.

2.0   The Brand

A significant amount of work has already been undertaken and agreed with regards to the brand. Any new proposals for signage and wayfinding will need to refer to both the Framework and the brand guidelines documents. Branding guidelines can be accessed here: \\fileserver\general\Marketing Assets\Brand Assets

3.0   The Scope

The Signage and Wayfinding Framework applies to the following areas:

- **All internal areas** of the Palace;
- **All external areas** of the Palace;
- **All buildings and structures in the Park** (lamp posts, benches, gates etc.)

4.0   Signage and Wayfinding Objectives

There are two objectives of the Signage and Wayfinding Framework:

1. To define the **Principles** that should be applied when considering signage and wayfinding;
2. To define **an Implementation Approach**, so there is consistency in how decisions on wayfinding and signage are taken particularly with regards to permanent wayfinding signage that requires consent.

1. Principles

a) Signage should be **easy to understand, consistent and concise** and people with a visual impairment should not be placed at a disadvantage – the language should utilise words which the visitor understands and should relate to their needs;
b) Wherever appropriate, signage should incorporate information which includes the following elements:
    i. Visual
    ii. Embossed and Braille
    iii. Audible
c) Where possible, wayfinding should **include an interpretative layer:** graphics for orientation and wayfinding should not simply be a change in surface treatment – where possible they should look to respond to an aspect of the character, context or history of the site;
d) **Wayfinding in the parkland should integrate placemaking and amenity:** improving local access points into the Park and establishing an improved network and **hierarchy of pathways and routes** access the Park will improve the overall experience;
e) Wayfinding should be **a multi-channel system,** through a variety of communication channels including web-based, mobile tech, printed products and on-site signage as well as human interfaces (volunteers, Visitor Services etc.);
f) Colours, design and materials (other than the brand) should be appealing and **relevant to today's audiences**, creating interest, whilst **complementing the heritage setting**;
g) Products and materials should be **commercially available, durable and cost-effective**;
h) **Consistency** for permanent wayfinding signage is key; design and messaging of event signage can be dynamic to suit each event. Permanent wayfinding **should unify the Park and Palace, and be distinctive**

2. Implementation Approach

a) Guidelines on **sign location, sign content, language wording and punctuation**, as set out in the '*Sign Design Guide: a guide to inclusive signage*' should be adhered to (see Appendix 4)
b) For consistency, colours, designs and materials that have **already been agreed** for other parts of the Park and Palace should be **taken into consideration** (see Appendix 3) – it is important however to avoid colours that have a safety meaning i.e. green which is used for fire exits.
c) Any new permanent wayfinding signage, in the Park or Palace, may require some form of consent whether it be Listed Building Consent or Advertisement Consent. Advice can be sought from the Strategic Vision team.
d) A **short project brief** should be drafted, setting out the reasons for the proposed works, the preferred colour/ material choices and the justification for those;

e) To ensure economies of scale, consistency and value for money, the services of APTL's Designer should be utilised, and extant suppliers invited to price for work;

f) Any permanent wayfinding, regardless of whether the project is being delivered internally or in partnership/contract with a third party, **the approach will require sign off from the Alexandra Palace CEO**. The CEO will assess whether the proposals achieve the aims of the project and guidance contained within the Framework, over and above personal taste.

APPENDIX 1

GOOD EXAMPLES OF EXISTING SIGNAGE

ADD PHOTOS

BAD EXAMPLES OF EXISTING SIGNAGE

ADD PHOTOS

APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 2

PREVIOUS SIGNAGE APPLICATIONS AND PROJECTS

Year	Project	Location	Rationale
2013	On-building signage	34no windows across the site	The core value of this project was to articulate, through imagery, 'windows to the past, present and future'. This was inspired by the desire to reinvigorate the look and feel of the building for people walking past – there are a number of windows that have been blocked up and covered with plywood. The new signs will deliver directional and way-finding functions, whilst also greatly improving the exterior and visitor experience.
2016	Ice Rink signage	East Lightwell entrance, steps and South Terrace	In advance of the East Wing Restoration Project, the Ice Rink entrance was moved to the East Lightwell. New signage is required to maintain a good level of customer service and a welcome to IR visitors, and to improve the look and feel of the East Lightwell entrance.
2018	East Wing hoardings	Around East Court and BBC perimeter	In advance of the East Wing Restoration Project, 14m of hoarding was installed around the project site. Instead of plain / contractor branded hoarding, the Trust applied for advert consent to use the hoarding as a storytelling tool, with imagery, text and a timeline of the Park and Palace's history, to engage with passers-by and visitors.
2019	On-building and directional signage	34no windows across the site	Following the reopening of the East Wing, the on-building signage that was installed in 2013 is now out of date. The Trust has undertaken a brand refreshing exercise, and the signage needs updating to reflect the changes to ensure a holistic and modern look and feel across the site.
2021	Park signage and lamppost banners	Alexandra Palace Way and park noticeboards	To enable consistency of messaging across the site, consent was sought to change/ update existing park signage and install advertising banners on the lampposts along AP Way.

APPENDIX 3

EXISTING PERMANENT SIGNAGE

Location/ Item	Detail	Colour code	Swatch
East Court entrance	Gold lettering in Palace Display		
East Court Creativity Pavilion	Monogram on doors		
Theatre FOH	Gold lettering in ? mounted onto mesh		
Theatre BOH	Hand painted, in Palace Display ?		
Palm Court	Gold lettering in ?		

Materials/ products already agreed

APPENDIX 4

SIGN DESIGN GUIDE: A GUIDE TO INCLUSIVE SIGNAGE

Most signs can be divided into four functional groups:

Information signs: for orientation and include the building, car parks and other internal signs identifying main locations inside the building and include directories, maps and plans covering the whole site, internally and externally.

Direction signs: for directing visitors to destinations using arrows and can include directional text. Note, in accordance with the '*Sign Design Guide: a guide to inclusive signage*' the use of finger posts should be avoided.

Identification or location signs: these signs – always without an arrow – are installed at individual destinations to indicate the location of a facility or service, a room or a person, once the destination has been reached.

Safety, fire safety and mandatory signs: these are essential for the safety of users and can be either warning or prohibition signs. They will be positioned in strategic locations to give warnings. They include exit signs, fire exit signs and details of fire equipment. This category also includes mandatory signs which are usually characterised by a special colour and shape, i.e. a white letter on a blue square.

Some basic guidelines on sign location

1. Think carefully about **possible obstructions** of signs. It is no good choosing a location for a sign in a reception area if it will be regularly obscured by deliveries, for example. Remember that external signs may become partially covered by plans or trees in leaf during the summer.

2. Consider whether **the sign itself may become an obstruction**. Suspended and wall mounted signs should be located at an adequate height to avoid obstruction, but care must be taken not to place them too far above a person's sightline. Placing a sign in the middle of a route on the basis that they will be more easily noticed will cause problems for people with sight impairments. A floor mounted sign will cause an obvious hazard. A suspended sign placed in the middle of a route **may cause difficulty** in locating or reading a sign due to a changing or inconsistent background.

3. Consider whether a sign will be read **from a distance** (such as across a car park or at the end of a corridor) **or close-up**. This will have a bearing on text height and consequently on sign size.

4. Remember that locations for signs **require good illumination**; avoid areas that are gloomy and cannot receive supplementary lighting.

5. Room identification signs should ideally be located **at eye level**, on the wall immediately adjacent to the latch side of the door. Where a sign cannot be placed on the wall, for example, where there is no available space, the sign can be placed on the door. Ensure that all room identifications are positioned **at the same height** throughout the building, ideally within the 1400 – 1700mm band.

Some basic guidelines on sign content

1. Information can be better understood if it is **grouped together** either alphabetically, or by floor or by department.

2. **Too many messages on a sign should be avoided**. A hierarchical system may be used, with a further breakdown of information provided as progress along a route to a destination. **Several small groups of messages are easier to read than one long one**.

3. Room identification signs should be simple and concise. **Once a name has been chosen, it should be used consistently** throughout the building.

4. **Abbreviations should be avoided** as they can be particularly confusing for people with a visual impairment.

5. Descriptive words such as 'Personnel' or 'Accounts' do not need to be qualified by the use of Department or Division.

6. Visually impaired people can recognise numbers more easily that names and numbers can of course be larger than text without occupying too much space.

When a decision has been made about the hierarchy of information to adopt within a building, it should be applied consistently to avoid confusion.

Language, wording and punctuation

Clarity: If messages are technical or complicated in their wording, many people will be discouraged and will need to seek assurance from others. **Official terms which may be unfamiliar should be avoided.**

Consistency: terminology should be consistent i.e. the words used on the entrance should be identical to those found on a specific department door.

Conciseness: Keep information to a minimum. Too much information confuses people and will be ignored or forgotten.

- Signs should be short enough to read in passing;
- Floor plans are a useful complement to directories as they can carry the detail whilst the directory can list each main destination;
- Use capital letters for the first letter of each key word;
- Names for specific job titles, places or people should have capitals at the beginning of each word;
- Exceptions are specific words required by legislation i.e. EXIT or TAXI;
- Punctuation should be used sparingly – avoid full stops;
- Avoid abbreviation

Arrows

Arrows are one of the most useful symbols in signage systems. However, they are misused more than any other graphic form. It is advisable to always use the ISO 7001 recommendation, an arrow whose ends are parallel with the main stem, not cut off at a 90 degree angle.

On large board signs where a number of messages are listed, e.g. at entrances to buildings, a group of messages should be preceded by a single arrow, rather than using individual arrows for each message. On combination signs, where several arrows are required in close proximity, they are more intelligible if they are arranged according to direction:

- Left up
- Left

- Left down and straight ahead
- Right up
- Right
- Right down and straight ahead

Messages on signs should be aligned in accordance with the direction of the arrow:

- Arrows indicating direction left, straight ahead or down should be placed on the left hand side of the message
- Arrows indicating direction to the right should be placed on the right hand side of the message.

When positioning arrows of a 45 degree indication, care must be taken in their use as they have no inherent exactness and can be open to misinterpretation. In general they should be reserved for stairs, escalators, ramps and diagonal routes through open areas only.

Symbols

Some signs, particularly directional signs, are often supplemented by specific pictorial devices such as arrows and/or symbols. **Well-recognised symbols are often better than words for most types of vision,** but are particularly useful for visually impaired people because they can be larger than the equivalent text. In addition many symbols are internationally recognised, overcoming language barriers.

Letterform selection

Letterforms or typefaces should be **legible** and **easy to obtain**. One of the most universally used typeface for signs is Helvetica Medium. The choice of the letterform however will depend on the building, or site and **its historic context**. The best effect will be achieved by the **appropriate choice of letterform, colour and materials**.

Sizing of letters and symbols

Sizing depends on the location of the sign and the reading distance:

Long distance	At building entrances and house numbers, a minimum character size is 150mm
Medium	Identification signs in reception areas, or directions in corridors, a minimum character size is 50-100mm
Close-up	Directories and wall-mounted information signs, a minimum character size is 15-25mm
Symbols	Where space permits, symbols should be at least 100mm in height

Embossed signs

By their nature, these signs are always read close-up and should be positioned where they can be easily touched. The ideal range of heights for positioning should be between 1400mm and 1700mm above finished floor level.

Signs should be embossed, **not engraved**. Characters should be raised from around the surrounding surface by 1mm-1.5mm and the thickness of each stroke of the letter should be such that both sides of the stroke can be felt with the finger in one pass. The minimum character height will vary between 15mm and 50mm depending on the space available and the reading distance

required. The stroke width should be between 1.5mm and 2mm and for a 15mm letter height and pro rata for larger letters.

Inter-character spacing should be increased between 20 and 30 per cent, depending on the selected font; the inter-word spacing should be increased by approximately 25 per cent. Characters should not have sharp edges but should be clearly defined with rounded or chamfered edges. A sans serif typeface should be specified.

Reading an embossed sign in a vertical plane is not comfortable, so if the face of the sign can be inclined at 45-60 degrees from the horizontal, it provides a more natural position for the hand.

Braille

Braille is a system of raised dots, which enable visually impaired people to read with their fingers. It is made up of a pattern of six dots allowing 63 possible combinations, which corresponds to the letters of the alphabet, numbers, punctuation and letter groups or words.

Grade 1 Braille: letter-for-letter transcription which can be read by all Braille users, but because it is bulky it is usually replaced by Grade 2 Braille which is a contracted form. As a general rule, Grade 1 Braille should be used for single words and short descriptions e.g. 'push bar to open'. Grade 2 Braille should be used for longer sentences and descriptions.

Grade 2 Braille: consists of contractions added to the combinations to represent common letter groups like 'the' and 'for'. Grade 2 Braille is used for the production of books, magazines and leaflets.

Layout and spacing

There are three types of spacing:

- Spaces between letters
- Spaces between words
- Spaces between lines

For visually impaired people, it is desirable to **increase the space** between letters, words and lines **between 20 and 30 per cent**, depending on the selected letterform.

There are three types of text ranging:

- Ranging left (aligning on the left-hand side, ragged on the right)
- Ranging right (aligning on the right-hand side, ragged on the left)
- Centred (aligning on a centre point)

Ranged left text is the easiest to read.

Capital letters and lower case

- Sans serif typefaces are **more legible** than serif typefaces;
- Signs showing **more than five messages creates confusion** and may be ignored;
- From tests with both sighted and visually impaired people, signs which use **a mixture of both capitals and lower case letters** are the most satisfactory solutions for most types of vision
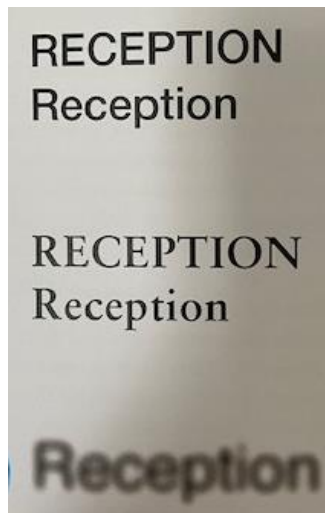
Colour and contrast

Basic principle

Difference between all the elements of the sign is essential:

- Between the background (bricks, trees etc.) and the signboard and
- between the signboard and the text or symbol on it

Some people have low colour vision which affects their perception of some colours, for example, **people with visual impairments tend to have a reduction in their ability to recognise some reds, greens and blues.**

Tonal differences are much more effective than differences in hue (i.e. red, green, blue).

Some sign systems use a different colour for each level of a building, but the success of this relies upon the user's ability to recognise the difference between colours. Some of the most **successful signing systems use white with one or two additional colours** – for example motorway signs, road warning signs, and original British Airports signs. If in doubt, use as few colours as possible and avoid colours which may conflict with fire and safety signs.

Black and white provide the most obvious contrast, however white lettering on a dark signboard (not necessarily black) gives good legibility if accompanied by a matt surface.

It is important to **check the background** against which the sign is to be seen – black letters on a white sign would not be helpful positioned on a white wall.

External colour contrasts

Contrast derives from the **light reflectance factor of the colours used**, not the difference between the colours, e.g. light green against dark green.

Ideally the contrast between wall and sign panel should be 70 per cent; the gloss factor should be 50 per cent which will give adequate legibility but still facilitate cleaning.

Illumination and glare

To minimise glare:

Use materials with **a matt finish;**

Do not place suspended signs against a light source, i.e. at the end of corridors which have windows or glass doors or against overhead fitted lights;

Do not position signs directly onto external glazing;

If the existing lighting system is inadequate, localised lighting of the signs may be necessary, but **internally illuminated signs are not recommended**. If possible, all light sources should be concealed or shaded.

For more detailed guidance and information, please speak to Visitor Services for a full copy of the Sign Design Guide.