

Letter boxes

Historic Building	Thematic survey
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Street furniture – letter boxes	LLHA0254
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Description:

The 1840 postal reform led to the introduction of Royal Mail letter boxes, in association with the construction of post offices in all towns and many villages. The first pillar boxes were hexagonal in form; a variety of designs followed. In 1859 the first standard national design was produced; utilising a cylindrical design. One of two still-in-service First National Standards is located on the corner of Montpelier Road and Western Road (grade II listed). Another standard design was introduced in 1866 – the Penfold – which returned to a hexagonal design. A replica Penfold was installed on Madeira Drive in 1989/90. The cylindrical design however proved more effective and the 1879 design returned to this shape. Subsequent designs all largely followed this design; radical departures from it only appeared in the 1960s and 1980s. Wall boxes were introduced from 1857 and ceased in the 1980s due to the additional costs incurred in maintaining and removing boxes from within walls. Lamp boxes were introduced in 1896 in London and later rolled out across the country. Originally green in order to blend in to their surroundings, the iconic ‘pillar box red’ was adopted in 1874.

The design for letter boxes incorporated a royal cipher. For a few years under Victoria’s reign, this was omitted (1883-1887). Those boxes without a royal cipher are commonly known as ‘anonymous boxes’.

There are now over 85000 boxes in England alone. English Heritage and Royal Mail (with the approval of DCMS) agreed a policy in principle of retention and conservation for all letter boxes in operational service in their existing locations. Further letter boxes will therefore not usually be added to the statutory list. A number of post boxes in the city are already statutorily listed, as identified in the table below.

Sources: <http://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/dlsg-street-furniture/>, <http://www.postalheritage.org.uk/page/letterboxes>, <http://www.lbsg.org/>, <http://www.wicks.org/pulp/stats.html>,

<http://cvphm.org.uk/release/RM%20and%20EH%20Policy%20on%20Postboxes.pdf>

A	Architectural, Design and Artistic Interest
ii	The pillar box, wall box and lamp box are iconic designs
C	Townscape Interest
iii	The iconic status of the letter box means that – whether in a conservation area or not – they contribute to the historic streetscene

iv	The letter box can be of particular interest when viewed in association with listed buildings, historic parks or where they form part of a group with other historic street furniture such as phone boxes	
D	Communal Value	
ii	An iconic element of the British streetscape	
E	Rarity and Representativeness	
i	There are over 85000 letter boxes in England alone, and therefore a degree of selectivity is required based on relative rarity.	
Criteria for inclusion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All Victorian and anonymous pillar boxes. As the most historic post boxes in the city, these boxes merit inclusion on the local list - All wall boxes and lamp boxes dating to or predating the reign of Edward VIII, as these are much rarer in the city. The location of a number of wall boxes is known; no examples of lamp boxes dating to this period are currently known. - All Edward VIII letter boxes. These are rare across the country due to the short time Edward VIII was on the throne prior to his abdication. There is one known example within the city. - Pillar boxes that form a clear group with other historic street furniture - Pillar boxes with a clear association (visual or historic) with listed buildings 	

The known locations of letter boxes matching the above criteria are itemised on the below list and included on the local list. This will be added to if further examples come to light.

Location	Cipher	Pillar Box/ Wall Box/ Lamp Box
Beaconsfield Road, in wall between numbers 84 and 86	EVIIR	w
Buckingham Road / Albert Road	VR	p
Carlisle Road / New Church Road	VR	p
Chailey Avenue, junction with Lenham Road West, Rottingdean	GR	w
Church Road, Portslade, opposite junction to Eastbrook Road	GR	w
Church Street, junction with New Road, outside Waggon and Horses	VR	p
Clermont Terrace, between 25 and 26, near church	VR	w
Davigdor Road at junction with Osmond Road	VR	p
Denmark Villas, outside number 35	ANON	p
Dyke Road, corner with Leopold Road	VR	p
Dyke Road, outside 109, south of Seven Dials	VR	p
Eaton Gardens, near junction with Eaton Villas	VR	p
Eaton Place, outside number 34	VR	p

Elm Grove, junction with De Montfort Road	VR	p
Falmer Station, downside buildings	VR	w
First Avenue, outside 11 Prince's Court	VR	p
Florence Road, outside number 46	VR	p
Fonthill Road, opposite Ranelagh Villas	VR	p
Freshfield Road, outside number 97 (near junction with Evelyn Terrace)	VR	p
Goldstone Street, junction with Ellen Street	VR	p
High Street, junction with Steyning Road, Rottingdean	GR	w
Kingsway, junction with Brunswick Square (east)	VR	p
Ladysmith Road/Kimberley Road (west end)	VR	w
Lansdowne Road, junction with Brunswick Place	VR	p
Marine Drive, junction with Cranleigh Avenue (south)	GR	w
Marine Parade, junction with Broad Street	VR	p
Old London Road, Patcham Post Office, number 120	GR	w
Ovingdean Road, opposite The Vale, Ovingdean	GR	w
Pelham Square	VR	p
Preston Park Gates North, Preston Drove opposite 67 (near junction with Surrenden Road)	VR	w
Preston Road, outside number 80a (beside viaduct)	ANON	p
Richmond Road, number 5	EVIIR	w
Richmond Terrace	VR	p
Robertson Road / Kingsley Road, Preston Park	EVIIR	w
St Catherine's Terrace, outside number 3 (Kingsway)	VR	p
Springfield Road, in wall outside number 37	ANON	w
Stanford Avenue, outside number 79, near junction with Southdown Road	ANON	p
Stanford Road, opposite junction with Brigden Street	VR	p
Stanford Avenue, outside number 37, junction with Waldegrave Road	VR	p
Town Hall outside Bartholomews	VR	p
Upper Hollingdean Road, junction with Hollingbury Road	EVIIR	w
Warmdene Road / Dale Crescent	EVIIR	p
Western Road, junction with Lansdowne Place	VR	p

Not included:

Location	Cipher	Pillar Box/ Wall Box/ Lamp Box	Reason for not including
Greenways by St Wulfrans, Ovingdean	VR	w	Curtilage Listed
Montpelier Terrace near Montpellier Road	VR	w	Curtilage Listed
Temple Gardens / Norfolk Terrace	VR	w	Curtilage Listed
The Green, Hillside, Rottingdean	VR	w	Listed
Trafalgar Street, outside Brighton Station	GR	w	Listed
Montpelier Road	National Standard	p	Listed
Madeira Drive	Penfold	p	Replica