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Sidcup High Street, London

Case Study

Contractor: **FM Conway**
Architect: **Untitled Practice**

Materials supplied:
Granite Paving, Kerb, Steps and Benches

Sidcup High Street was in decline, both visually and economically. As part of a multi-faceted scheme to regenerate the street, improve access and restore the civic and social fabric, the street itself has been repaved. Not in a flamboyant way, but with sensitivity to the existing street form and that of its buildings. While using materials that have the potential to remain in good condition for many, many years, it has been done economically.

Attention to detail has been exceptional wherein lies the success of the design. Technically the design is in accordance with the requirements of BS 7533 parts 10 and 12 so ensuring the physical surface is competent. The materials themselves are all of the relatively low water absorption to minimise the staining that naturally occurs in proportion to the water absorption but the pavement is also made up of a subtle mixture of granites. What dirt and stains there might be at any time are thus masked.

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The water that drains across the pavement from the building downpipes is channelled through three parallel slots so keeping the actual footway surface free of running water. The slots continue through the top of the kerbs taking the rainfall onto the road surface and thence into the gutters.

There are shared surfaces at the entrances to the adjoining streets. Each entry is individually detailed with single pieces of granite, side by side, providing the uplift from the main street, coupled with special quadrants. The vehicular routes are surfaced with mechanically textured stone, thus optimising the skid resistance after the surface has been much used compared to a flame-textured surface. The footway surfaces are, however, flame-textured as this gives sufficient macrotexture for slip resistance while being the form of surface that is most easy to keep clean.

There is a shared surface across the main High Street which takes a great deal of traffic. It was designed in accordance with Annex A of BS 7533 Part 7 which, in effect, holds the granite surface within a concrete dish. This is hugely beneficial compared to the oft-used haunched flush kerb at either end where the result is usually a very slight crack between the flush kerb and the setts, developing into a larger crack, a crack along the next mortar joint and a cascade failure of the surface.

The granite steps leading up from the end of a short side street are in solid granite pieces, with the nosing a 55mm square section of a darker colour having a 20mm radius rounding. This gives the visual clarity needed to meet the DDA regulations and, with the generous rounding, the steps will be unlikely to be chipped, even if abused. These details are all inexpensive, indeed quite trivially so, but they provide both the technical and visual quality to last a lifetime.

The design has won the 2016 Landscape Institute award for providing most added value from the landscape and deservedly so and we are proud to have worked in association with Untitled Practice, the designers and then to have supplied the products to FM Conway, contractors for the London Borough of Bexley.