



Telephone Boxes  
London School of Economics  
54 Lincoln's Inn Fields  
London WC2A 3LJ

## K2 TELEPHONE BOXES GRAPHICS DESIGN ADVERTISEMENT PROPOSAL

### Design and Access Statement including Heritage Statement

FEBRUARY 2025

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This report has been written to support the Listed, Planning and Advertising Consent for an internally installed Graphic design advertisement on 2 of the K2 Telephone boxes outside the Cheng Kin Ku Building at 54 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3LJ. The graphic design advertisement will allow London School of Economics students, visitors and members of the public to orientate themselves effectively to The Shaw Café entrance.

The K2 Telephone boxes are located at the corner of Kingsway and Sardinia Street outside the Cheng Kin Ku Building and on either side of the Shaw Café entrance, within the Kingsway Conservation Area. The London School of Economics (LSE) is home to a notable cluster of K2 telephone boxes, which stand as an important piece of London's design heritage. These red kiosks are among the few remaining original K2 models in the city.

## 2.0 CONSIDERATIONS

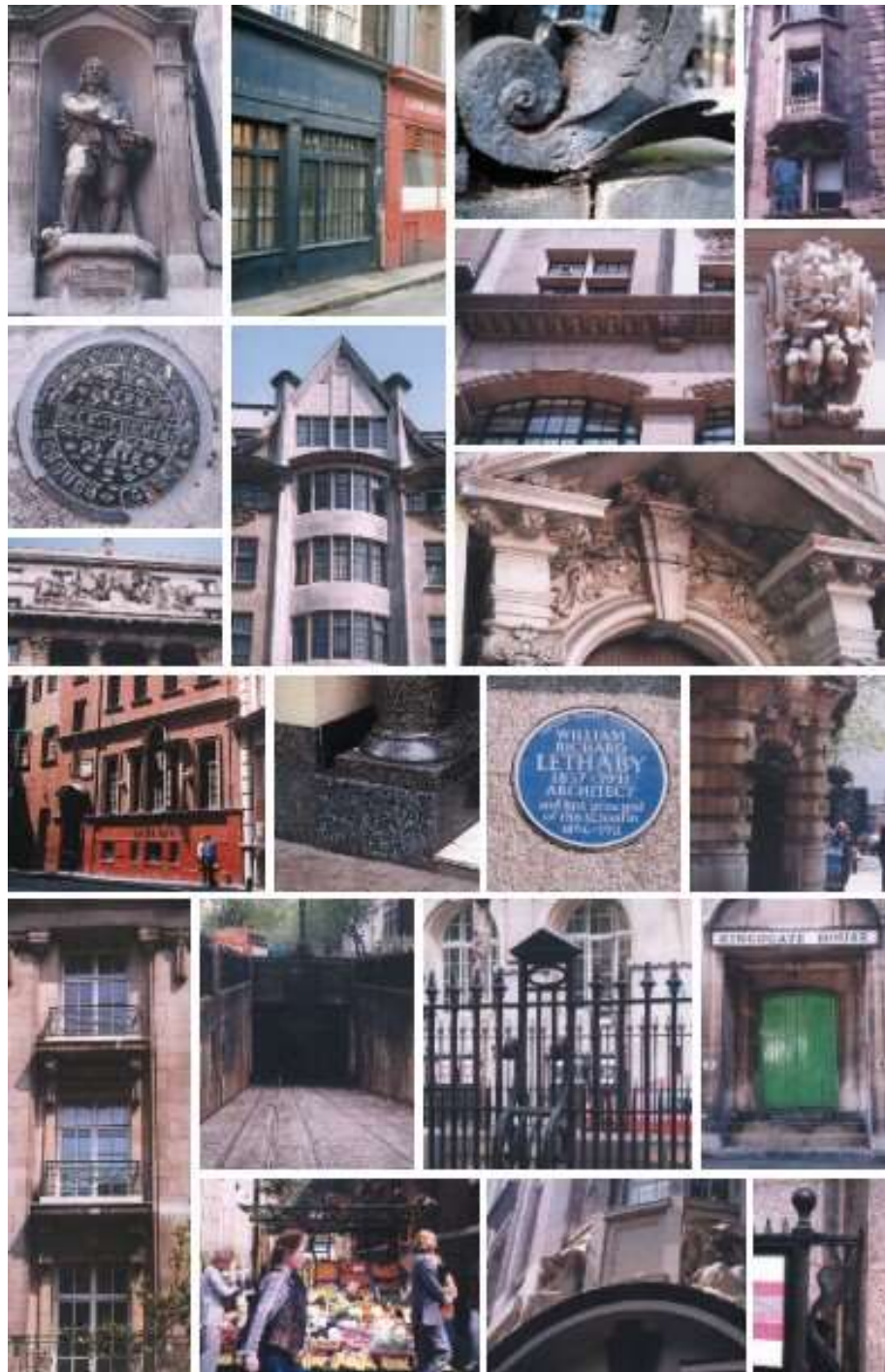
### KINGSWAY CONSERVATION AREA

The Kingsway Conservation Area encompasses Kingsway and its fronting buildings, forming a distinctive Edwardian boulevard. Developed between 1900 and 1922 as part of an ambitious London County Council (LCC) urban renewal scheme, it replaced densely packed medieval streets and deteriorated 16th-century slums. The only remnant surviving from this earlier period is the Grade II\* listed Old Curiosity Shop at Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Designed as a grand thoroughfare, Kingsway exhibits a cohesive streetscape of large-scale neo-classical commercial buildings, constructed primarily of Portland stone. These structures maintain a uniform height, massing, and building line, with retail at ground level and offices or institutions above. The boulevard typology is reinforced by elaborate façades, enriched with Art Nouveau motifs, sculptural elements, and intricate detailing, including prominent entrances, decorative ironwork, and varied roofscapes featuring parapets, dormers, domes, and turrets.

Alongside Regent Street and Aldwych, Kingsway represents one of London's most significant examples of early 20th-century commercial architecture. Pevsner remarked that it "still retains much of its Beaux-Arts panache, lined with commercial buildings on a colossal scale." The area contrasts sharply with the formal landscapes of Lincoln's Inn Fields to the east and the finer urban grain of Covent Garden to the west.

The Kingsway Conservation Area was designated on 1st June 1981 and has remained unchanged. It is well preserved, with minor concerns regarding unsympathetic shopfront alterations and the lack of an adaptive reuse strategy for the now-disused tramway tunnel. Despite these challenges, Kingsway retains its distinct boulevard character, a testament to Edwardian London's urban ambition and architectural grandeur.



Kingsway conservation area images taken from Camden appraisal and management strategy document.

## 2.1 LISTED STATUS

Grade:II

List Entry Number:

- 1379263
- 1379264

Date first listed: 27-Feb-1987

List Entry Name:

- K2 TELEPHONE KIOSK OUTSIDE PUBLIC TRUSTEE OFFICE (OFFICE NOT INCLUDED) 1379263
- K2 TELEPHONE KIOSK OUTSIDE PUBLIC TRUSTEE OFFICE JUNCTION KINGSWAY/SARDINIA STREET 1379264

GV II

Telephone kiosks. 1927. By Giles Gilbert Scott. Cast-iron. Square kiosk of K2 type with domed roof, perforated crowns to top panel and glazing bars to windows and door.

## 2.2 HERITAGE STATEMENT AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

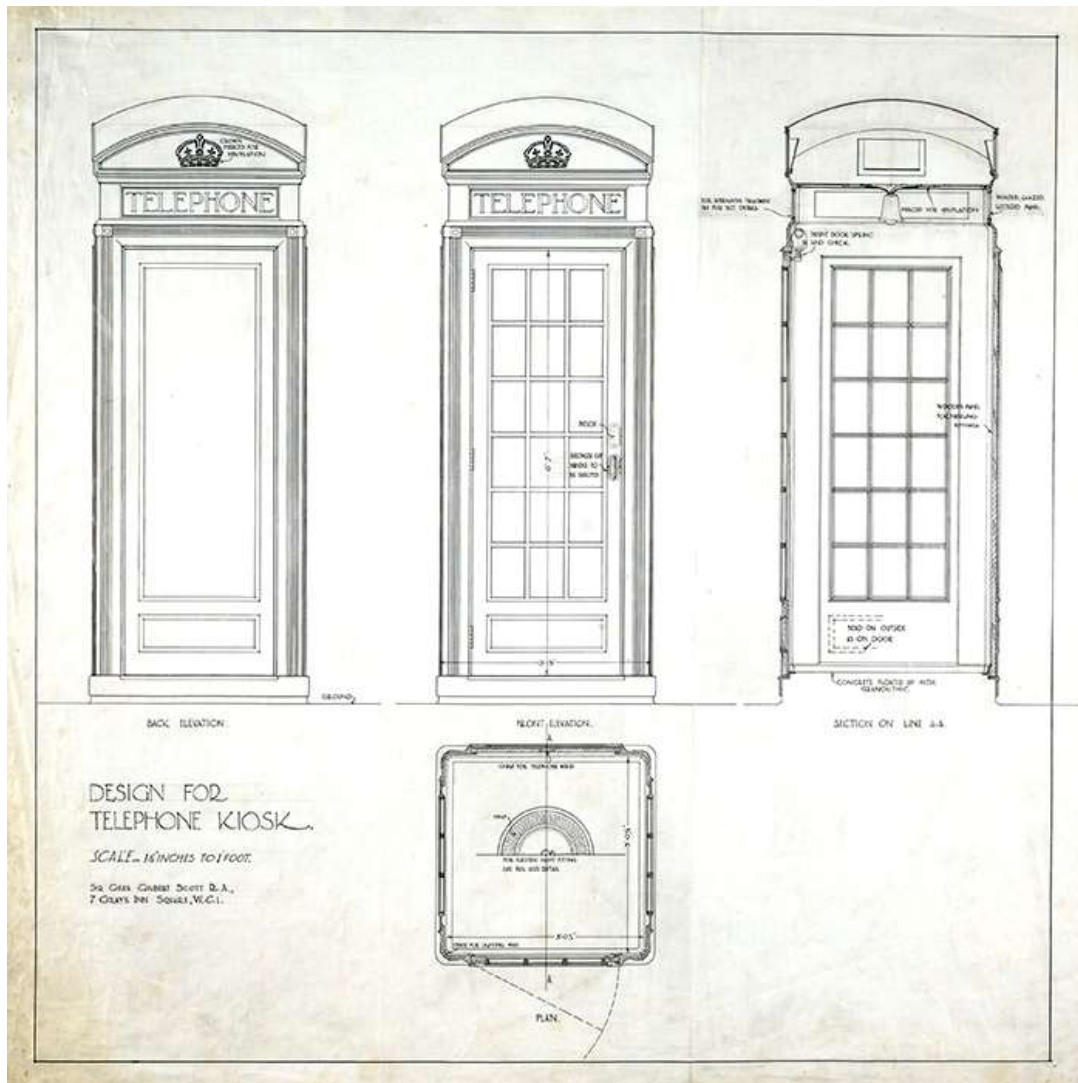
The red telephone box is a telephone kiosk for a public telephone designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, the architect responsible for Liverpool Cathedral.

The telephone box is a familiar sight on the streets of the United Kingdom, its associated Crown Dependencies, British Overseas Territories and Malta. Despite a reduction in their numbers in recent years, the traditional British red telephone kiosk can still be seen in many places throughout the UK, and in current or former British colonies around the world. The colour red was chosen to make them easy to spot.

From 1926 onwards, the fascias of the kiosks were emblazoned with a prominent crown, representing the British government. The red phone box is often seen as a British cultural icon throughout the world. In 2006, the K2 telephone box was voted one of Britain's top 10 design icons, which included the Mini, Supermarine Spitfire, London tube map, World Wide Web, Concorde and the AEC Routemaster bus. In 2009, the K2 was selected by the Royal Mail for their "British Design Classics" commemorative postage stamp issue.

Many of the phone box designs are protected by trade mark registrations and copyright, held by British Telecommunications plc. In 2019, the prototype K2, located at Burlington House in London since 1924, was listed to Grade II\* in "recognition of its iconic design status"





The red telephone box was the result of a competition in 1924 to design a kiosk that would be acceptable to the London Metropolitan Boroughs which had hitherto resisted the Post Office's effort to erect K1 kiosks on their streets.



Cast iron K2 Kiosks on Broad Court, Covent Garden, London

The Royal Fine Art Commission was instrumental in the choice of the British standard kiosk. Because of widespread dissatisfaction with the GPO's design, the Metropolitan Boroughs Joint Standing Committee organised a competition for a superior one in 1923, but the results were disappointing. The Birmingham Civic Society then produced a design of its own—in reinforced concrete—but it was informed by the Director of Telephones that the design produced by the Office of the Engineer-in-Chief was preferred; as the *Architects' Journal* commented, "no one with any knowledge of design could feel anything but indignation with the pattern that seems to satisfy the official mind". The Birmingham Civic Society did not give up and, with additional pressure from the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Town Planning Institute and the Royal Academy, the Postmaster General was forced to think again; and the result was that the RFAC organised a limited competition.

The organisers invited entries from three respected architects and, along with the designs from the Post Office and from The Birmingham Civic Society, the Fine Arts Commission judged the competition and selected the design submitted by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. The invitation had come at the time when Scott had been made a trustee of Sir John Soane's Museum: his design for the competition was in the classical style, but topped with a dome reminiscent of those designed by Soane for his own family mausoleum in St Pancras Old Churchyard, and for the mausoleum for Sir Francis Bourgeois at Dulwich Picture Gallery, both in London. However, Gavin Stamp thinks it "unlikely" that Scott was directly inspired by either of these precedents, arguing instead that "a dome above segmental curves is, in fact, a logical solution to the geometrical problem of designing a sculptural termination to a square pillar when a flat top is not suitable".



Prototype K2 at Burlington House (Home of the Royal Academy of Arts) in London

The original wooden prototypes of the entries were later put into public service at undercover sites around London. That of Scott's design is the only one known to survive and is still where it was originally placed, in the left entrance arch to the Royal Academy at Burlington House. In 2019, it was listed to Grade II\* in "recognition of its iconic design status".

The Post Office chose to make Scott's winning design in cast iron (Scott had suggested mild steel) and to paint it red (Scott had suggested silver, with a "greeny-blue" interior) and, with other minor changes of detail, it was brought into service as the Kiosk No.2 or K2. From 1926 K2 was deployed in and around London and the K1 continued to be erected elsewhere.



K1 The first standard public telephone kiosk introduced by the United Kingdom Post Office was produced in concrete in 1921 and was designated K1 (Kiosk No.1). The Post Office had taken over almost all of the country's telephone network in 1912. The K3, introduced in 1929, again by Giles Gilbert Scott, was similar to the K2 but was constructed from reinforced concrete and intended for nationwide use. Cheaper than the K2, it was still significantly more costly than the K1 and so that remained the choice for low-revenue sites. The K4 (designed by the Post Office Engineering Department in 1927) incorporated a post box and machines for buying postage stamps on the exterior. The K5 was a metal-faced plywood construction introduced in 1934 and designed to be assembled and dismantled and used at exhibitions. In 1935 the K6 was designed to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of George V. It was consequently sometimes known as the "Jubilee" kiosk. It went into production in 1936. The K6 was the first red telephone kiosk to be extensively used outside London, and many thousands were deployed in virtually every town and city, replacing most of the existing kiosks and establishing thousands of new sites.

**Crown:** From 1926 onwards, the fascias of Post Office kiosks were emblazoned with a prominent crown, representing the British government, of which the Post Office was an agency. The design was initially the "Tudor Crown", then in widespread use in government service. The same crown was used in all parts of the United Kingdom and British Empire. On the K2, the design was pierced through the ironwork and acted as a ventilation hole. On the K6, a separate ventilation slot was provided, and the crown was embossed in bas-relief.



Close up photo showing the perforated crown



In 1953 the new Queen, Elizabeth II, decided to replace the Tudor Crown in all contexts with a representation of the actual crown used for most English, and later British, coronations, St Edward's Crown; it began to appear on the fascias of K6 kiosks.

St Edward's Crown was initially used on kiosks in all parts of the United Kingdom. However, in Scotland, following protests over the use of English insignia, the Post Office (like other government agencies there) began to use, from 1955, a representation of the actual Crown of Scotland. To accommodate the two different designs of crown on K6 kiosks, the fascia sections were cast with a slot in them, into which a plate bearing the appropriate crown was inserted before the roof section was fitted.

The crowns were originally painted the same red as the rest of the box. However, since the early 1990s, when the heritage value of red kiosks began to be widely recognised, British Telecom picked out the crowns (on both K2s and K6s) in gold paint.

Kiosks installed in Kingston upon Hull were not fitted with a crown, as those kiosks were installed by the Hull Corporation (later Hull City Council, then Kingston Communications). All boxes in Hull were also painted in cream.

### 3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

12/00187/ADV & 12/00185/FULL: Installation of two free standing wayfinding navigation points for the LSE campus on Clements Inn and the junction of Portugal Street and Portsmouth Street

12/00348/ADV & 12/00347/FULL: Installation of two free standing wayfinding navigation points placed at two locations on the LSE campus. One on Houghton Street and one at the junction of Clare Market and Sheffield Street.

2015/0664/P Change of use of 2 listed BT telephone boxes opposite Imperial Hotel Southeast side of Russell Square London WC1B 5BB to 2 x self-contained retain kiosks (Class A1)

### 3.1 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

This design and access statement highlights national and local planning policy relevant to the graphic advertisement on 2 of the K2 Telephone boxes in 54 Lincoln's Inn.

### 3.2 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 130a: *Achieving Well Designed Places*

Planning Policies and decisions should ensure that development will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.

National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 130b: *Achieving Well Designed Places*

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.

National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 197c: *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*

In determining applications local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

### 3.3 LONDON PLAN

London Plan Policy D8: *Public Realm*

Development plans and development proposals should consider the use, design and location of street furniture so that it complements the use and function of the space.

### 4.0 EXISTING BUILDING K2 TELEPHONE BOXES

The K2 kiosk is constructed of cast-iron sections, bolted together, standing on a concrete base. Its general form is a four-sided rectangular box with a domed roof. Each side has fluted architrave mouldings at the outer edge. At the base is a blank rectangular panel with trim molding-surround.

The K2 kiosk is characterized by:

- A cast-iron frame with a rectangular footprint.
- A domed roof, inspired by Sir John Soane's tomb in St. Pancras Old Churchyard.
- Narrow glazed windows with multiple glass panes.
- The embossed "TELEPHONE" sign and the royal Tudor Crown, symbolizing its official status.

### 5.0 DESCRIPTION OF SIGNIFICANCE

The K2 kiosks at LSE serve as a reminder of British telecommunications history and are considered part of the school's urban character.

Their placement near LSE's campus reflects the traditional streetscape of central London, preserving a link between the past and the modern city.

While no longer used as functional telephone booths, they remain a popular photo spot for students and visitors, symbolizing British design and academic life in the heart of London.

The kiosks at LSE have been well-maintained, retaining their original red color and design features, including the Tudor Crown insignia (a detail later replaced with St. Edward's Crown on newer models).

While some K2 kiosks in London have been repurposed into Wi-Fi hubs or micro-businesses, those at LSE have been preserved in their traditional form, standing as part of the university's streetscape.

Their proximity to historic and modern architecture at LSE highlights the juxtaposition of heritage conservation with the institution's contemporary developments.

A cultural icon of the UK, the red telephone box has appeared in British pop culture. In music it has featured in Adele's video for the 2015 single "Hello", the front cover of One Direction's 2012 album *Take Me Home*, and the back cover of David Bowie's album *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* (1972). It was the subject of the 1980 single "Red Frame/White Light" by OMD. It also featured in Peter Gabriel's 1993 tour *Secret World Live*, being on stage for the opening of the show, and used in the song "Come Talk to Me". A phone receiver also features on the live album cover.

In film it features in Alfred Hitchcock's thriller *Blackmail* (1929) when Frank (John Longden) reveals a glove that Alice (Anny Ondra) left behind at the scene of a murder inside the phone box of her father's tobacco store. It appears in a scene in the 1955 black comedy *The Ladykillers* where a motley gang of crooks led by Professor Marcus (Alec Guinness) cram into one. In the gangland drama *Get Carter* (1971), Jack Carter (Michael Caine) makes a critical call from a phone box in his hometown. In the cult black comedy *Withnail and I* (1987), Withnail (Richard E. Grant) calls his agent from a telephone box, and complains about its coin-operated system. A red phone box near Scotland Yard appears in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2007) as Harry Potter and Arthur Weasley enter the Ministry of Magic.

In 2016, British chef Gordon Ramsay opened a British-themed fish restaurant in the Las Vegas Strip, with the doors to the entrance resembling the red telephone box.

## 6.0 PROPOSED WORKS

The scope of work includes repainting two K2 telephone boxes in their original red colour to preserve their traditional aesthetic.

For the advertisement installation, a non-permanent internal plastic graphics film will be applied to 54 glass panes (16x3 per side x 3x2=108) across both telephone boxes. Three sides of each box will feature graphics, while the side facing the adjacent wall will remain unchanged.



LSE Telephone Box – Mock-Up



Design repeated  
x3 street facing  
sides

Design repeater  
x3 street facing  
sides



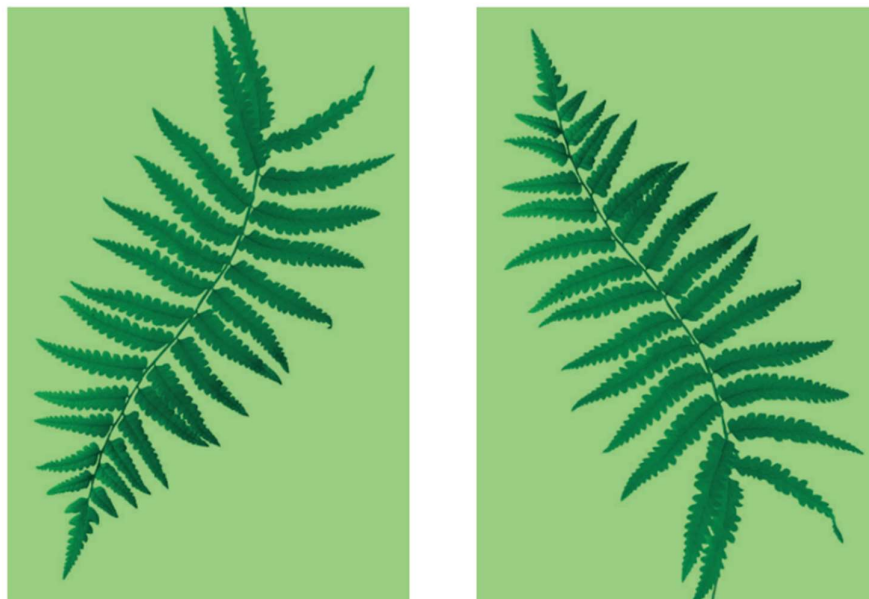
The original door, crown emblem, and signage will remain unaltered, ensuring that the defining characteristics of the K2 design are retained.

In total, 54 glass panes (16x3 per side x 3x2=108) across both telephone boxes will feature a non-permanent internal plastic film advertisement. The missing telephone sign to be reinstated to the top of the phone box on the right-hand side of the entrance to the café.



155x230mm

#### LSE Telephone Box - Graphics



155x230mm



x3 155x230mm

### LSE Telephone Box – Graphics

K2 telephone boxes across the UK have been subject to various adaptive reuse projects, including conversions into information hubs, defibrillator stations, and art installations. These precedents demonstrate the feasibility of respectful modifications that align with heritage conservation principles.

These adaptations highlight the heritage value of the K2 telephone boxes while allowing them to serve modern functional needs.



2012 Commissioned “ London Calling” artwork displaying Joe Strummer of The Clash. BT helped celebrate the 25th anniversary of the UK's free-phone charity ChildLine by commissioning eighty artists to design and decorate full-sized K6 replicas.



Somerset: Converted into a library or book exchange replacing the services of the mobile library.



Following a competition by a Girl Guide unit in 2011 to find a use for their local disused telephone box in Glendaruel, Argyll, it has been fitted with a defibrillator.

## 7.0 IMPACT OF PROPOSAL

The non-permanent nature of the graphics ensures that the telephone boxes can be restored to their original state without any residual impact.

Adaptive reuse of these heritage structures aligns with broader conservation strategies that prioritize maintaining relevance through functional adaptation.

Similar projects have been successfully implemented across the UK without compromising the heritage value of K2 telephone boxes.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed advertising graphics provide a respectful and reversible means of enhancing the use of the K2 telephone boxes without undermining their historic significance. The project maintains the integrity of the structures while supporting local business visibility in a manner consistent with heritage conservation principles.

Listed Building Consent is therefore sought on the basis that the proposal offers a low-impact, temporary intervention that upholds the historic and architectural character of these Grade II listed telephone boxes.

The proposal will be in keeping with the character of this heritage asset and the Kingsway Conservation Area it sits within. The proposals will enhance and help to maintain this Grade II Listed building for the future.