

# M B DESIGN AND BUILD LTD

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## **DESIGN & ACCESS / HERITAGE STATEMENT – CHANGE OF USE OF 1NO. BT PHONEBOX TO 1NO. RETAIL UNIT @ OUTSIDE 21 SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, WC1B 5HA.**

Please note that BT do not have any means of identifying an individual phonebox, other than by its telephone number. For the purposes of identification during the planning officer's site visit, the number of this box is 020 7404 8443.

### 1. Use

1.1 The proposal involves a change of use.

### 2. Amount

2.1 The proposal does not involve any increase in the size of the development.

### 3. Layout

3.1 The proposal does not involve any changes to the layout of the site.

3.2 As per previous planning consents for similar developments in several locations around the UK, no external paraphernalia will be added to the site.

### 4. Scale

4.1 The footprint of the site remains unaltered by the proposal.

### 5. Landscaping

5.1 The landscaping remains unaltered by the proposal.

### 6. Appearance and Design

6.1 The K2 and K6 red phone boxes are iconic pieces of both engineering and architecture. The aim of this proposal is to redefine their usage to suit modern-day needs and requirements without compromising their external appearance on the street scene.

6.2 The box is not Listed but is adjacent to a Listed structure (the Sicilian Avenue arch) and so careful consideration has been given to preserving both the box and its relationship to the surrounding area. No external alterations are proposed and so the relationship with, and effect on, the surrounding area remains unchanged by the proposal.

6.3 Given their iconic status, careful consideration has been given to update the use of the phone box but at the same time maintain its character. The external appearance of the phone box(es) remains unaltered by the proposal, with the exception of the introduction of a piano-style hinge installed behind the existing "PULL" plate in order to allow access to the locking mechanism. The lock will be a five-lever mortice lock providing out-of-trading-hours security.

6.4 Externally, the phone box(es) will remain painted in BT phone box red, and a rolling maintenance programme will see the kiosks refurbished every two years. The maintenance programme will entail a complete overhaul, to include all exterior and interior paint and associated works. All paint used will be the same as that currently used by BT.

6.5 The existing glass panels will be replaced with 4mm-thick thermally toughened soda lime silicate safety glass to BS EN 12150-1:2000 in order to provide security and longevity of use. The glass used is supplied by Piper Glass and has been fitted in phonebox restorations for the last 27 years by Unicorn Kiosk Restorations, Unicorn Estate, Nutfield Road, Merstham, Surrey, RH1 3ER; [www.unicornkiosks.com](http://www.unicornkiosks.com). Case study reference: <http://www.piperglass.co.uk/case-study-unicorn-kiosk-restorations.php>

6.6 Internally, the existing telephones and associated equipment will be removed back to the original shell. The new fully self-contained modular kiosk unit will not have any fixings to the carcass or floor plate of the phone box and can easily be moved in and out manually within minutes.

6.7 The modular kiosks will be serviced every day in respect of dry stock, water and / or saleable goods. In conjunction with the delivery of goods, waste removal will be part of the same daily process, whereby the operators will remove any waste at the end of each day.

6.8 The units will be staffed at all times, with staff working on a shift basis to allow for comfort breaks and lunch breaks. During such times as a member of staff may have to leave a unit unattended, the phonebox will be locked and all monies will be kept on the member of staff's person in a money belt, in the manner of other street traders. At no time will any cash be left on the premises.

6.9 The modular unit incorporates a drop-down seat and swivel-out basin for staff use. When not in use, these items can be withdrawn into the modular unit, and the whole unit is encased with doors – see photograph 1 below.

## 7. Access

7.1 The existing access to the phone box(es) is almost level, with one low step up, and remains unaltered by the scheme.

7.2 The site is close to public transport links and shopping areas, and parking is not required.

## 8. Appraisal

8.1 The concept of a public telephone box is now outdated as the majority of people own a mobile phone. The proposed new use maintains their iconic appearance but re-invents their use to suit the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The concept of

adapting phone boxes to different uses has been adopted throughout the country with over 2000 to date adapted to varied uses.

8.2 This is a scheme to convert a number of disused iconic BT Kiosks into small retail outlets, selling ice cream, coffee and other products suited to street sale. Planning Consent has been granted in many cities to date

8.3 The formula is simple and M B Design & Build brings their planning experience to bear on rolling out these proposals nationwide. Working in league with the charity Thinking Outside the Box, British Telecom and registered charities to safeguard many dilapidated and misused Listed phone kiosks, the charity will provide training for jobs within the programme.

8.4 The units will be run within normal business hours and in accordance with all Health and Safety at Work, licensing and hygiene requirements. Opening hours are detailed on the application form.

8.5 The kiosks will vend either pre-prepared packed, cold drinks, ice cream or hot beverages, and no food will be prepared or handled on the premises. No alcohol will be kept on the premises or sold from the premises.

8.6 There will be no seating, parasols or other paraphernalia outside the box at any times. The kiosks are being marketed at the commuter, who will want to stop briefly to pick up a drink or snack and then move on to work, their train etc. All the boxes will have an online presence allowing customers to pre-order their drink by mobile phone / tablet etc. and then pick it up as they walk by. This will further reduce any queueing at the phonebox.

8.7 Consent was granted under delegated powers on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2013 by Brighton and Hove City Council (BH2013/01316) for a change of use for a pair of telephone boxes on New Road, Brighton. The only conditions were the standard ones about implementation of the consent within three years; implementation in accordance with the approved drawings; hours of operation to be between 08.00 and 21.00 Mondays to Sundays, Bank Holidays and Public Holidays; and no tables, seating or other paraphernalia to be located outside the boxes.

8.8 Consent and Listed consent was granted under delegated powers on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2014 by Plymouth City Council (14/00402/FUL and 14/00485/LBC) for a change of use for a pair of telephone boxes on Quay Road, Plymouth, PL1 2JZ. The only conditions were the standard ones about implementation of the consent within three years; implementation in accordance with the approved drawings; no alcohol to be supplied or sold from the units; prohibition of use of the area outside the box for seating, congregation etc.; hours of operation to be between 08.00 and 18.00 Mondays to Fridays, between 08.00 and 19.00 on Saturdays, and between 09.00 and 18.00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays; and no food to be handled or prepared on the premises, other than ice cream and hot beverages.

8.9 Consent and Listed consent was granted under delegated powers on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014 by Nottingham City Council (14/00746/LLIS1 and 14/00540/PFUL3) for a change of use of one box on Low Pavement, Nottingham. The only condition was that no advertising or goods are to be displayed on the exterior of the box or in its vicinity.

8.10 "Thinking Outside the Box" is a charitable trust supporting homeless projects around the country by undertaking to give a percentage of their earnings from

the retail uses of converted phoneboxes. In this, they currently have the support of the "Connections" homeless project in Westminster, together with that of the rough sleepers' project in Westminster and of Westminster Councillor Tim Mitchell.

8.11 In various parts of the UK, change-of-use consent has been granted to telephone boxes for various alternative uses. One such use is in Hexham, where a phonebox has been converted into an art gallery: <http://www.thejournal.co.uk/news/north-east-news/robson-green-opens-regions-smallest-6437349>. In Cheltenham, another organisation has converted four adjacent boxes on a pedestrianised area into an art gallery, which has both browsers and shoppers congregating around it. Similarly, in Lewisham, an organisation has converted a phonebox into a library: <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/lewisham-phone-box-turned-in-to-londons-smallest-library-9218293.html>. This is a Listed box and sited on the A20 into London, which is a major thoroughfare.



BT KIOSKS IN NEW ROAD BRIGHTON - Conversion to retail outlets

Miles Broe RIBA

Photograph 1

**M B Design & Build LLP**