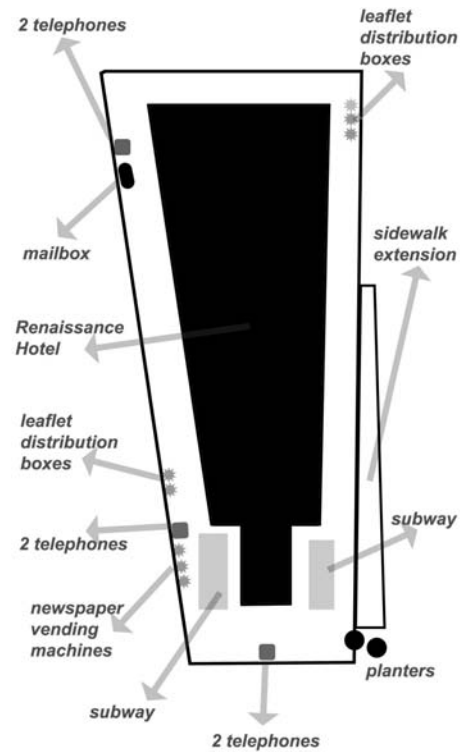


9.12 Diagrammatic plan of element 11



9.13 Diagrammatic plan of element 12

ELEMENTS 1–6 AND 13–18 (AROUND THE BOW TIE)

A number of characteristics shape the public space in the area surrounding the six bow-tie elements described above. Street furniture was one of these, and in this area consisted of: free publication distributing boxes, newspaper vending machines, mailboxes, and public telephones. Street furniture was often clustered together on the street, often near the corners of the block. Total numbers are shown in Table 9.2.

Bus stops, public telephones, litterbins and mailboxes are part of the essential infrastructure of modern civic life. The quantity, arrangement and condition of these pieces of furniture (unlike elsewhere in Manhattan) suggested a concerted effort to bring an element of civility and identity to the square, although with ever-present advertising. The hotdog vendors were the centre of activity on almost every street corner in Times Square, and while clearly a commercial activity, they create a focus of life in the public space and give it character. Another key characteristic was the lampposts, nearly all of which (immediately post-9/11 displayed one or

more Stars and Stripes flags. The vending machines/distribution boxes contained a multitude of publications and leaflets. While many of the publications were ‘free guides’ (mainly consisting of advertising), there was also a strong civic role reflected in their content and by the numbers of distribution boxes in a six block area (Table 9.3). Another noticeable feature of the area was the lack of greenery, although in the summer the planters in the bow-tie spaces contain some planting. Beyond this, there were several small trees outside the 45th Street side of the Marriott Hotel and some placed evenly along Broadway.

Regarding the position and occurrence of sitting spaces, if Whyte’s (1988) analysis is accepted that a lack of sitting space is an explicit code for eschewing civil space, then Times Square fares poorly. Loitering space could equally be described as hanging-out or relaxing space, and is defined here as space that one can stand still in. This could be a space to meet someone, observe activity going on around, or to stand quietly. Loitering space is also vital for the civil and social nature of public space.