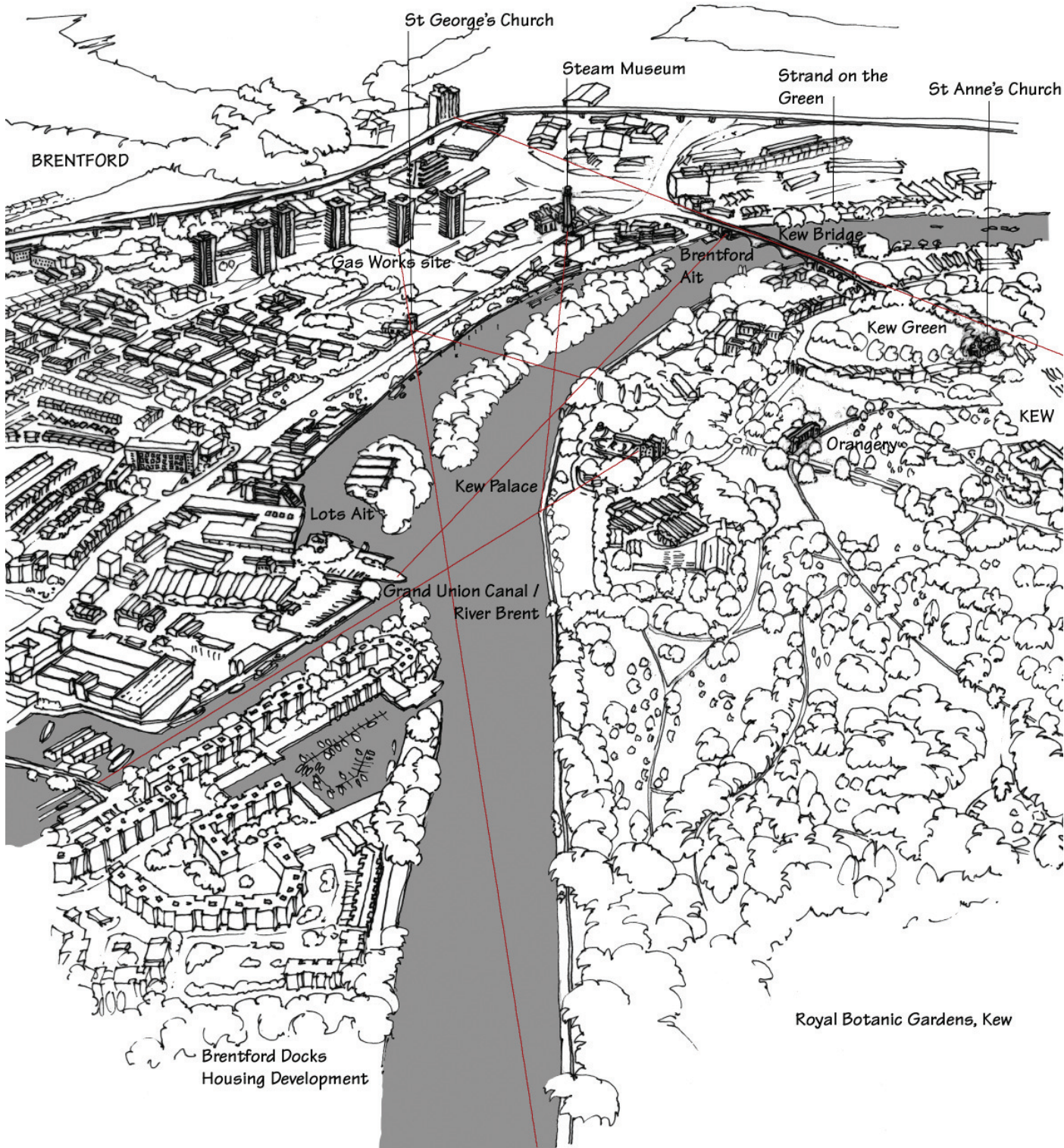


REACH 12

BRENTFORD & KEW





4.12.1 Overview 1994-2012

- The adoption by the London Borough of Hounslow in 2009 of the Brentford Area Action Plan that contains a number of the policy and project proposals of the TLS 1994;
- The redevelopment of Ferry Quays, Brentford with new landscaped walkways along the River Brent and River Thames as part of the Thames Path through Brentford;
- Serviced moorings in Soaphouse Creek
- Improvements at Waterman's Park including a childrens' play area.
- Designation of Kew Gardens as a World Heritage Site
- Publication of the Kew Gardens Landscape Masterplan and World Heritage Site Management Plan 2010
- Opening of the Sackler Crossing, the Xstrata Tree Top Walkway, the Davies Alpine House, the Shirley Shirwood Gallery for Botanical Art within Kew Gardens
- Extension of the Kew Herbarium and a new wing at the Jodrell Laboratory
- Landscaping and streetscape enhancements to Kew Green and around Kew Gardens Station
- Restoration of St. Anne's Church, Kew Green
- Publication of the Richmond and Hounslow Tidal Thames Habitat Action Plan
- Ballymore has acquired many of the former industrial sites between Brentford High Street and the River Brent British Waterways leases its boatyard sites at Brentford to MSO Marine Construction.
- British Waterways published the Brentford Waterspace Strategy Final Draft on 18th October 2010.
- TLS Landscaping to Grand Union Canal in partnership with British Waterways, 1998
- TLS was commissioned by the developers to assist in the landscaping and community outreach programme during the redevelopment of Ferry Quay
- Protection of invertebrate habitat at Ferry Quay through the retention of habitat as advised by the TLS
- Footpath access improvements to Brentford Riverside and tree planting at Waterman's Park, 1998
- Willow tree planting the Hollows 1997
- TLS 'Brentford – A Waterway Town' launched, 2008



Brentford Dock 1911

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.12.2 Along the Brentford/Kew Reach, between the mouth of the Grand Union Canal and Kew Bridge, there is a marked difference between the two banks. The industrial Brentford river frontage, though in need of regeneration, still retains significant elements of its dockland past. On the Surrey bank, by contrast, the history of royal ownership has safeguarded the green spaces of Kew Green and the Botanic Gardens. The two banks are effectively separated by the thick tree-cover of Brentford and Lots Aits.

4.12.3 2012 Update: *Waterside Brentford lies to the south of the High Street where the River Thames and Brent meander through a lost and gritty landscape of wharves, disused docks, boatyards, creeks and islands where water-based industry has flourished for 200 years – remarkable given the town’s position directly opposite the Kew Gardens World Heritage Site. This is set against more recent residential development with a mix of uses that contributes to the area’s contemporary character and environment.*

4.12.4 2012 Update: Historically the town developed because of its position at the confluence between the Thames and the River Brent, the settlement becoming the administrative centre for the County of Middlesex in the 18th century. Brentford’s fortune and character were intrinsically linked with the river and its ford, firstly through market gardening on the fertile river gravels and later due to the important inland port that developed at the strategic canal junction. The area quickly industrialised with a variety of river-related industries clustered along the River Thames, the Grand Union Canal and the railhead (now forming the Brentford Dock estate). The post-war decline in water-based transport and industry left many areas derelict.

4.12.5 2012 Update: *Brentford has seen considerable change since the publication of the Thames Landscape Strategy with large tracts of the derelict industrial land being swept away and replaced by new blocks of flats lining the river. Whilst these new residential areas have opened up long stretches of the river frontage for the public to enjoy, much of the space in between has been left to degrade and despite the best intentions of developers to integrate new developments into the fabric of the existing town, long stretches of the towpath remain in a poor state. This has left a legacy of ‘style ghettos’ reducing the sense of place (in creating a unified C21st Brentford) with each site competing with another. The Thames Path deviates from the river in many places forming an unwelcoming and illegible route. That there was no unifying framework to stitch each new development together in terms of style, materials, street furniture and lighting was addressed in Hounslow Council’s Brentford Area Action Plan (Jan 2009) that provided a framework for development in the area and for the riverside in the TLS’s ‘Brentford A Waterway Town’ document.*

4.12.6 The main area of the Brentford docks and railhead has been replaced by an extensive public housing scheme, built around the old basin. The basin has been adapted by Brentford Dock Marina to provide permanent and visitor moorings. As a major housing development, the scheme seems successful and, where large trees have been allowed to grow up along the river bank, the buildings merge into the surrounding landscape. But the open stretch of mown grass opposite the Botanic Gardens reveals a long 3-storey facade which is not hidden behind a wooded ait and intrudes into the leafy setting of the gardens of Syon and Kew.

4.12.7 The northern bank of the Grand Union Canal has retained a little more of the older industrial character of the area, though many of the buildings are derelict.



Boat repair facilities at Brentford



Low tide off Brentford Ait



Brentford: The Haverlock Towers

4.12.8 *2012 Update: The area, known as the Land South of the High Street is ear-marked for comprehensive redevelopment. An important consideration will be to integrate the site within the historic fabric of the old town and across the canal to link the Thames Path directly with Syon House and Gardens.*

4.12.9 Although modern industrial sheds and security walls of a dark red brick tile have reduced some of the 19th-century charm of the river front, the power of the Thames locks and canal walls and the effect of the dilapidated iron dock transfer shed at the Town Wharf are still enough to evoke the identity and character of the old canal. The gas works beyond have now been demolished, but the yellow brick tower of the Steam Museum still rises over the area as a reminder of the energy of the industrial past.



Tumbling Weir at Brentford

4.12.10 Between Thames Lock and Lot's Ait, at the junction of the Grand Union Canal, water-based industry and infrastructure has survived remarkably intact although its nature has evolved from freight transfer to boat construction and repair. As such, Brentford can lay claim to be one of the most complete surviving working canal junctions in London – a real cluster of water-based employment, expertise and industry set within a landscape of moored boats of all kinds. This industrial heritage provides an important cultural reference to the area's past and puts Brentford on the map as one of the UK's most important waterway junctions at the gateways to the canal network in London.



Brentford Dock

4.12.11 *2012 Update: The Thames Path follows the route of the canal crossing over Dock Road before diverting away from the river to the High Street. Dock Road, although in private ownership, follows a historic street pattern and retains some of the best herringbone cobbles to be found in London. A splendid view from Thames Lock Bridge down the mouth of the Brent terminates on Kew Palace. When Corporation Yard is redeveloped, the opportunity to open up the riverside to connect Dock Road with Brentford Creek would make for continuous access along the canal with splendid views across the muddy creek to the fascinating boat repair sheds on Johnson's Island. The Thames Path alongside Brentford Creek is currently being upgraded to link with the new riverside open spaces created as part of the Ferry Quay complex. The re-development of former industrial sites to provide housing-led mixed use development has provided a continuous Thames Path from the Heidelberg site on the River Brent to Goat Wharf on the River Thames.*

4.12.12 At the foot of Ferry Lane, by Soaphouse Creek, a column marked the supposed crossing point of Caesar and one of Offa's councils. This made an intriguing reference to the long history of Brentford. At present the column has been relocated to Brentford High Street. As part of a new linked waterfront path, the column could be restored to this remarkable spot.

4.12.13 *2012 Update: The Brentford Ferry once connected Ferry Point with Kew Gardens. Plans to reinstate the river crossing are proposed. The view across the river towards Kew is unfortunately marred by the back of the World Heritage Site's maintenance sheds and the riverside*

car park although the derelict boat repair sheds on Lots Ait add much interest and should be restored back into a waterway industrial use.

4.12.14 2012 Update: Demolition is currently underway at both 41 and 42-50, High Street Brentford for mixed-use developments that include the requirement to extend the Thames Path from Goat Wharf to the Waterman's Arts Centre site.

4.12.15 2012 Update: The Waterman's Arts Centre is a thriving complex of theatre, cinema and galleries. A couple of wooden balconies have been extended out towards the river, but for the rest, the complex barely takes advantage of the view of the water and the wild, willow-covered islands. Window sills and walkway walls cut the view off too high and deprive the Centre of an exciting relationship with the river and adjacent park. The heavy red brick and dark expansion joints of the building also look clumsy as compared to the quality of the waterfront treatment at Ferry Quays.

4.12.16 Beyond the Arts Centre, Waterman's Park extends 380 metres along the river towards Kew Bridge. The water's edge of granite sets, board-walks and open railings provides a good view of the activity on the river when the tide is in.

4.12.17 2012 Update: Most of the moored vessels on the Waterman's Park frontage are unlicensed, many are in poor condition and some are wrecks. There are conflicts between occupiers of the unlicensed boats and the adjoining licensed occupiers. The unauthorised moorings were the subject of a formal call for action by a Brentford ward councillor in April 2009 and the Council is now looking into options to formalise the moorings. The Park has been upgraded in recent years.

4.12.18 A few trees and the change in level help to protect the Park from the worst effects of the traffic, while recent openings in the wall reveal glimpses of the river from the road. There is scope for making more of the dockland context. The Steam Museum tower, St George's Church and the Brentford tower blocks - all now seen together in a rather confusing jostle of major landmarks - could be separately framed as viewpoints from the Park.

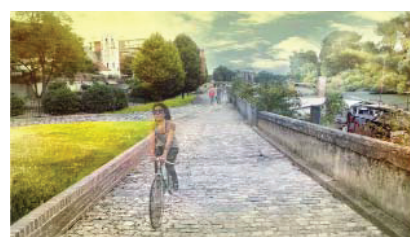
4.12.19 2012 Update: St. George's Church became redundant in 1961 and was occupied by the Musical Museum in 1963. The Museum relocated to a new building in High Street, Brentford some 200 metres to the east in 2007 with facilities that include a concert hall complete with a rising Wurlitzer console dating from the 1930s.

4.12.20 The Blomfield church now sits on the edge of the gas works development site but its river connections remain. It is aligned on a vista straight down the Kew/ Syon Reach between Lots Ait and the Brentford Aits as well as across the Thames to the Kew towpath, from where it can still be glimpsed, framed between the Brentford Aits.

4.12.21 2012 Update: Hounslow Council approved plans to convert the church to residential use in August 2009.



Queen Elizabeth's Lawn, now a car park



Waterman's Park



Entrance to Waterman's Park

4.12.22 The 6 tower blocks which now dwarf the church are visible from a great distance. They dominate many of the views from the Royal Botanic Gardens and the river itself. Interestingly in 1986, when the Thames-side Guidelines were drawn up, the gas cylinders were condemned as intrusive. Today they would probably be identified as part of the industrial character to be conserved. Perhaps the grouping of tower blocks may also one day be seen as an interesting part of the townscape.

4.12.23 Between Waterman's Park and Kew Bridge the path is interrupted by a couple of private yards before ducking down into an inaccessible tunnel of willow and balsam, serving a series of colourful houseboats.

4.12.24 2012 Update: The Hollows could be greatly enhanced and is subject to flooding depositing large amounts of flotsam and jetsam. Whilst retaining the public right of way, it may be appropriate to re-direct users of the Thames Path along the High Street, this would have the additional benefits of improving access whilst showcasing the cluster of attractions including the Kew Bridge Steam Museum and the Musical Museum.

4.12.25 From across the river, the frontage of houseboats and trees does much to reduce the impact of new office developments. An effort has been made to vary the roofline of the new buildings, to use a brick stock which complements the yellow London stock and to retain the trees which mask the base and bulk of the development.

4.12.26 2012 Update: The Kew Bridge London residential development is currently under construction and will provide a riverfront public piazza alongside Kew Bridge and the River Thames.

4.12.27 The yellow and red buildings group together with the strong stone arches of Kew Bridge, with the houseboats and trees, and with the Steam Museum tower beyond. The flat-roofed office block in bright blue and white on the Strand-on-the-Green side of the Bridge jars on the scene. Downstream of the town is Strand-on-the-Green, arguably one of the most picturesque locations along the River Thames containing many fine buildings and waterside pubs.

4.12.28 2012 Update: Brentford High Street has an interesting mix of shops, civic buildings and pubs. Of particular note is the Butts, a street and square of red brick houses developed from the 1680s, that was once the town's market place. At the end of the High Street beyond Brentford Bridge a redundant industrial site has been redeveloped along the Grand Union at Brentford Lock to form an attractive riverside quarter of housing, hotels and offices. The historic gauging station has been restored and is interpreted by British Waterways. Between the lock and the Great West Road, the derelict area known as Commerce Road is proposed to be redeveloped in the near future, re-using some of the magnificent canal side industrial buildings.

4.12.29 Across Kew Bridge to the Surrey bank, the character changes. One moves from the robust dockside of Brentford to the elegance of

Kew Green, lined by trees and fine brick Georgian and Victorian houses around the cricket square and St Anne's Church. At present the Kew waterfront does not reflect the elegance of the Green. Connections to the Green are poorly signed back alleys. The houseboats, the willows of Brentford Ait, the Steam Museum tower and Kew Bridge make a fine view looking out to the river, but the Kew waterfront itself is sadly neglected.

4.12.30 A road has been constructed behind high flood defences from Kew Green to a car park on Queen Elizabeth's Lawn. The impact of the cars on the river is partly screened by the raised flood defences, but the severe engineering of the embankments from the water and the view down into the car park from the towpath do not contribute to the rural peace of the area. The Royal Botanic Gardens have turned their back on the Thames and significant development including storage and office buildings has taken place adjacent to the river since 1994. Queen Elizabeth's Lawn was the site of George III's Castellated Palace, commemorated in Turner's and Rowlandson's paintings, and the promenade along the river was a major feature of both Bridgeman's and Brown's designs. Kew Palace is now cut off from the river and the separation from the water deprives the Gardens of one of their big assets.

4.12.31 *2012 Update: In 2010 however, the draft Kew Gardens World Heritage Site Master Plan demonstrated a new attitude towards the Thames, recommending the re-location of the inappropriate car park elsewhere within the Gardens and the subsequent landscaping of the site (subject to funding). The potential to link these improvements with a new river crossing and a restored Georgian quarter clustered around Kew Palace is to be explored. This new approach places landscape at the heart of Kew's future – one which looks outwards to embrace change and enhance the visitor experience.*

4.12.32 *2012 Update: The draft Royal Botanic Gardens Kew World Heritage Site Management Plan says "An improved relationship with the River Thames provides a unique opportunity to create a historic, cultural and ecological dialogue between the Gardens and its setting. The improved relation to the River Thames is proposed by a series of interrelated projects including contemporary riverside gardens in place of the current riverside car park, provision of a riverside café, opened up views and consideration of a foot bridge across the River Thames. The river frontage project could also include a series of integral designed flood protection and mitigation projects including extended wetlands and redesign of the currently deteriorating ha-ha boundary."*

4.12.33 *2012 Update: In 2002, Kew Gardens was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The boundary of the Kew Gardens UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) is located entirely within the London Borough of Richmond - however, the WHS buffer zone extends to the opposite river bank and embraces a strip of land along Brentford's riverbank, Syon Park, Lot's Ait and Brentford Ait. The purpose of the buffer zone is to provide protection of significant views in and out of Kew, to include land that has a significant historical relationship with the WHS and to include areas that have a bearing on the character and setting of the Gardens.*



Kew Gardens Car Park

4.12.34 2012 Update: *The existing Buffer Zone boundary of the WHS in respect to Brentford is regarded as insufficient and does not encompass all the necessary areas of protection. ICOMOS for example, has indicated that the six 22-storey tower blocks at the Haverfield estate seriously diminish the visual experience at Kew and recognises that the greatest future development pressures relating to the setting of Kew Gardens are all situated in Brentford.*



Aerial view of the Kew Gardens Landscape Master Plan

4.12.35 2012 Update: *The possibility of extending the Buffer Zone further into Brentford has been explored by Kew during the preparation of their WHS Management Plan, setting out the potential benefits for both Kew Gardens and the London Borough of Hounslow's regeneration aspirations for the area. Defining the scope of any potential changes to the Buffer Zone boundary however, would more than likely require a re-nomination of the WHS and has therefore been ruled out in the short term although in the medium to long term a wider appraisal of the Buffer Zone could be undertaken. This makes the need for careful consideration of the impact of new developments on the setting of Kew a key consideration for the Thames Landscape Strategy. It is important that view lines and their visual envelopes that extend outside the WHS Buffer Zone, but are an integral part of the site's Outstanding Universal Value, should have additional consideration. Care must be taken for potential future intrusion within the visual envelope of Kew Gardens to be minimised as new developments in Brentford arise. New developments should respect riverside views and the setting of Kew Gardens and Kew Palace on the opposite side of the river whilst enhancing the established character of Brentford.*



Orangery, Kew Gardens

4.12.36 2012 Update: *The key protected Thames views are set out in the Thames Landscape Strategy whilst the Kew Gardens WHS Management Plan identifies a further series of sight lines and views that are integral in the conservation of the Gardens. This approach does not reduce the potential for the continued regeneration of Brentford – the two sides of the river have long been planned as a single landscape. Future developments could celebrate this intrinsic relationship with each other and with the Thames, providing a unique opportunity that benefits both riverbanks. This approach would be given a real boost through the re-instatement of a restored foot ferry or pedestrian bridge linking Ferry Quays at Brentford with a restored Kew Riverfront on the site of the existing car park. This would open up possibilities in access, parking, hotel accommodation, open space provision and interpretation. A new river crossing would physically link the Capability Brown landscape on both sides of the Thames and the cluster of historic parks at Gunnersbury, Boston Manor and Chiswick. The connection would have the added benefit in providing a valuable boost to Brentford's economy as visitors move between Syon and Kew through a regenerated town centre, enjoying the historic canal interchange en route.*

4.12.37 The Aits which divide the river into two channels form a significant buffer between industrial Brentford and Kew Gardens. Lot's Ait has a special wild character of willows, rotting boats and gently rusting dock roofs. The Ait has become a haven for wildlife and the

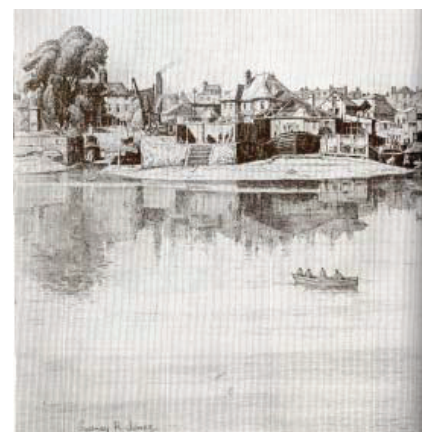
slow progress of industrial decay into natural habitat has picturesque as well as a philosophical resonance. The Brentford Aits are similarly covered by willows and alder, creating a significant heronry as well as an important line of wild green in the river landscape. Vegetation hangs over the vertical cam-shedding, reducing its severe lines, and the bird sanctuaries can be enjoyed by the public from the river banks without actual physical access. The Aits, reflected in the dark water, form the major element in the views from Brentford, Kew and Kew Bridge, disguising and revealing vistas to make the river seem larger and more mysterious.



View of both banks of the river at Kew Palace

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.12.28 Samuel Leigh's drawing of c1830 illustrates the vitality and contrast of this reach of the Thames. Old Kew Palace stands opposite a manufactory and there is a brewery across the river from Kew Gardens. The two islands, Lot's Ait and Brentford Ait, previously osier beds, had just been planted with trees to hide the view of Brentford Gas Works from Kew Palace. Osier beds can, however, be seen along the river, the willows binding the bank and supplying the basket manufactory. The Elizabethan ecogniz Hentzner had commented on the numbers of barges on the river laden with wicker baskets piled high with vegetables and fruit for London. For several centuries the area was important for fruit-growing and a wholesale market was established at Brentford where London traders could meet local suppliers. Even when



Brentford Ferry by Sidney R Jones c.1926

the Great West Road was cut through Brentford in 1925 it ran through miles of apple and cherry orchards. Suburban development soon took over and there is little scope for fruit growing today.

4.12.39 The area at the delta of the Brent, which became Brentford Dock and now comprises housing and a marina, has traditionally been known as 'old England' owing to its immemorial associations. It was a Roman settlement in AD 1 and in 1929 a pile dwelling of AD 200 was excavated. It is an area of great archaeological importance. Excavations in the area bordering the Syon estate have yielded Stone Age tools belonging to passing hunters. The Thames, curving from a northerly to an eastern direction at Brentford, cut into the edge of a gravel terrace to expose a layer of workable fertile brickearth. The sub-soil, recognizable by its vegetation, would have indicated an attractive place of settlement for the early farmers. A bronze sickle found in the area, now in the Museum of London, is a reminder of their activities. A large oak and bronze tankard, with a capacity of about four pints, found in the Thames, suggests that life before the Roman occupation of Brentford was not all work but there was time for communal drinking feasts amongst the Celtic Catuvellauni tribe and their chief, Cassivellaunus.

4.12.40 Brentford is one of several places that claim Caesar's crossing of the Thames in 54 BC. Bede noted the remains of the palisade of stakes, cased with lead above and beneath the water, put up by the early Britons to guard a shallow stretch of the river. One such stake is on show in Syon House. Caesar mentioned both ford and stakes at the crossing in a statement in his *De Bello Gallico*, the first recorded piece of British history: 'I led the army to the river Thames and the territory of Cassivellaunus. There is only one place where the river can be forded, and even there with difficulty. When we reached it, I noticed large enemy forces drawn up on the opposite bank. The bank had been fortified with sharp stakes along it, and, as I discovered from prisoners and deserters, similar stakes had been driven into the riverbed and were concealed beneath the water'.

4.12.41 Whether or not Brentford can ever prove the claim to Caesar's crossing recorded on the memorial stone erected in 1909, the strategic importance of the ford is unquestionable and is demonstrated by the Battle of Brentford between Edmund Ironside and Canute in 1016. The ancient ford over the Thames at the confluence of the River Brent, which had given the town its Saxon name, was replaced in mediaeval times by a ferry. Brentford became a river port of some significance at the end of the 18th century when the Grand Union Canal was built linking it with the Midlands and, via the Regent Canal, to London. The area was architecturally enriched when the Kew Bridge Waterworks, built in 1867, erected its triumphantly elegant industrial stand pipe giving Brentford and Kew an eye-catching Venetian campanile. The tower is now part of the Steam Museum.



The unveiling of the Brentford Monument in 1909

4.12.42 The Surrey bank of the river has a totally different appearance from industrial Brentford. Today there is the same contrast between commercial development and landscaped pleasure grounds seen in Leigh's panorama. Kew first appears in documents as a tiny hamlet in

the early 14th century and only began to be known when members of the royal family or courtiers went to live there to be near Richmond. Among the first were Henry VII's daughter Mary, James I's daughter Elizabeth and Queen Elizabeth's favourite, the Earl of Leicester. Kew first became a viable community at the beginning of the 18th century, when more houses were built and a small chapel, much enlarged later, was built on the Green. Hitherto the residents had gone to church at Richmond or by ferry to Brentford. Kew Bridge was not built until 1758. Kew Green itself has changed little in spite of extensive surrounding development in the area between the two World Wars.

4.12.43 Kew Palace was originally known as the Dutch House and was built in 1631 by a merchant from Flanders. Its first royal association was with Queen Caroline who rented it in 1728 for the accommodation of her children. She was then living at Richmond Lodge. In 1730 Frederick Prince of Wales set up a rival court at Kew House, which had belonged to the Capel family. William Kent was employed to improve the house, which became known as the White House to distinguish it from the red-brick Dutch House. After Prince Frederick's death in 1751, the Princess Augusta continued to live in the White House until her own death in 1772, when it was taken over by George III. The Kew Palace garden was restored in the 1970s and a mount raised to view the river.

4.12.44 The White House was demolished at the end of the century when the shell of a new castellated palace was built by the river, only to be demolished in its turn by George IV in 1828. George III became increasingly confined to Windsor and Queen Charlotte only visited Kew occasionally, but as she spent the last five months of her life in 1818 in the Dutch House, it became known as Kew Palace thereafter. It is now managed by Historic Royal Palaces within the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew. The Gardens, evolved from the contiguous estates of Kew and Richmond, were opened to the public by Queen Victoria early in her reign.



The Castellated Palace at Kew

NATURE CONSERVATION AND FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

4.12.45 Lot's Ait is a small island narrowly separated from the much larger Brentford Ait at high tide. Together the islands provide shelter to the backwater and continuity of habitat for woodland birds and wildfowl. Apart from the derelict boatyard buildings, Lot's Ait is dominated by a ruderal and scrub community which has developed from the osier bed which once covered the island. Brentford Ait, or Aits as it is actually two islands connected at low tide, is covered by tall woodland, mostly of crack willow. Again this woodland was probably once osier, but a variety of trees were planted on the island in the 1920s specifically to screen the former gasworks. Many of the island's trees were felled and replaced by further planting between 1962 and 1964 because they were considered to be in poor condition. Today, kingfishers regularly fish from the willows which overhang the water on Brentford Ait. The banks of the islands are constructed of vertical metal campsheets and would be improved by a more gently graded, vegetation-holding surface. Lot's Ait provides an excellent opportunity for a variety of



TLS litter pick, Brentford

natural history studies. Despite the presence of derelict buildings, Lot's Ait and the surrounding inter-tidal mudflats are of considerable importance for nature conservation. The natural character should be retained and it would be inappropriate for any new development to be allowed on the island or mudflats. The largest area of inter-tidal mud habitat in the upper Thames is exposed at low tide around the islands. The muds have a rich invertebrate fauna including flatworms, freshwater shrimps and six species of leech. Twenty species of gastropod (mostly snails) have also been recorded and two of these, the ear snail and the trumpet ramshorn snail, have very restricted distributions. On Lot's Ait and within a small inlet at Ferry Quay, the endangered German hairy snail and two lipped doorsnail are found. Seals have been known to bask in the sunshine on the river gravels that form at the mouth of the Brent. The muds are therefore a rich feeding ground for birds. Teal and wigeon visit the muds during the winter months, while other birds feed year round and nest on the islands.

4.12.46 The steep concrete revetments on the Surrey side of the river at Kew support no vegetation and cannot be used by animals.



Proposed riverside tidal gardens at Kew Gardens

Image courtesy of RBGK

PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATION

4.12.47 Once the interruptions in the Brentford Waterfront and Grand Union Canal paths are linked up, the public will have a unique walk through the full range of the Thames history. Starting at the PLA pier, visitors can cross Kew Bridge to the Waterman's Park and Arts Centre, the Steam Museum and the Musical Museum. From there the path will follow the old industrial Brentford Waterfront to Caesar's supposed ford at Soaphouse Creek and then up the Grand Union Canal towards Syon and Osterley.

4.12.48 If a connection is made through Syon, visitors will then be able to walk through Syon Park directly to old Isleworth. Were the ferry or footbridge to be re-instated, it would then be possible to cross back to Kew and enter the Royal Botanic Gardens through the Isleworth

gate. In the space of 4.5 kilometre walk, one could experience the 17th- and 18th-century landscape of Syon, the 19th- and 20th-century plant collection of Kew, the industrial docklands of Brentford and the wild landscape of the Aits and the Kew towpath.

Boatyards:

MSO Marine Construction

Water transport:

Kew Pier

Water recreation:

Brentford Dock Marina

Brentford Boating Arch

Land recreation:

Musical Museum

Steam Museum Thames Path

Waterman's Art Centre

Waterman's Park

Landmarks:

Kew Bridge

Lot's Ait

Pumping Station tower

Royal Botanic Garden Gates

St Anne's Church, Kew Green

St George's Church, Brentford

Musical Museum

LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS:

Amenity and Local History:

Brentford and Chiswick Local History Society

Brentford Society

Friends of Waterman's Centre

Friends of the Steam Museum

Friends of the Musical Museum

Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Kew Society

Richmond Local History Society

River Thames Society (Upper Tidal)

Nature Conservation:

London Wildlife Trust

PRINCIPAL LAND USES

4.12.49 Brentford waterfront is now a mixture of regeneration and former industrial areas. New development is dominated by residential floorspace with ancillary development comprising hotel, café/restaurant and office uses. Many former industrial sites are vacant

pending redevelopment. Important industrial sites remain such as the print machinery and services suppliers Heidelberg and the boatyards of MSO Marine Construction that adjoin the River Brent. Parks and museums have been introduced into historic buildings and spaces and new office developments have established at points along the river frontage.

4.12.50 On the Kew side the principal use is for the Royal Botanic Gardens, though some housing has been built by Kew Bridge. The towpath and car parking dominate the waterfront itself. There are houseboats on both sides of the river by Kew Bridge.

SIGNIFICANT SITES UNDER PRESSURE FOR RE-DEVELOPMENT

Sites Main landscape factors for consideration

Brentford Waterfront, Land South of the High Street

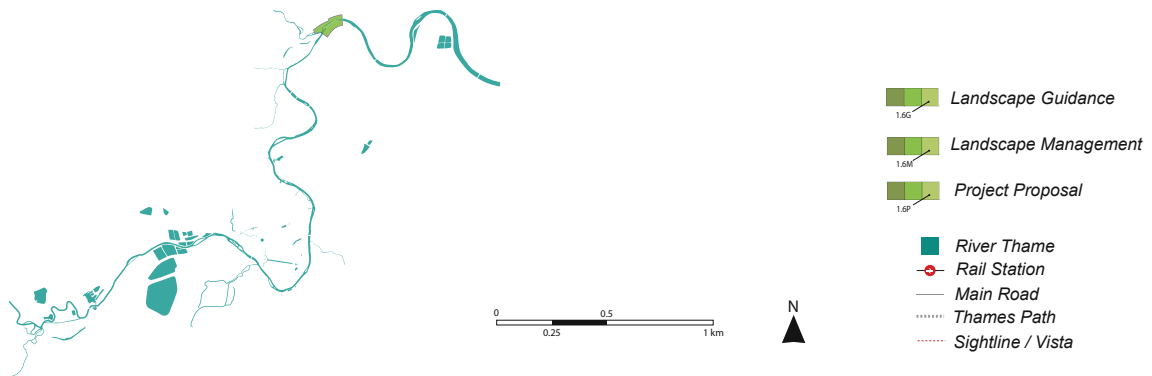
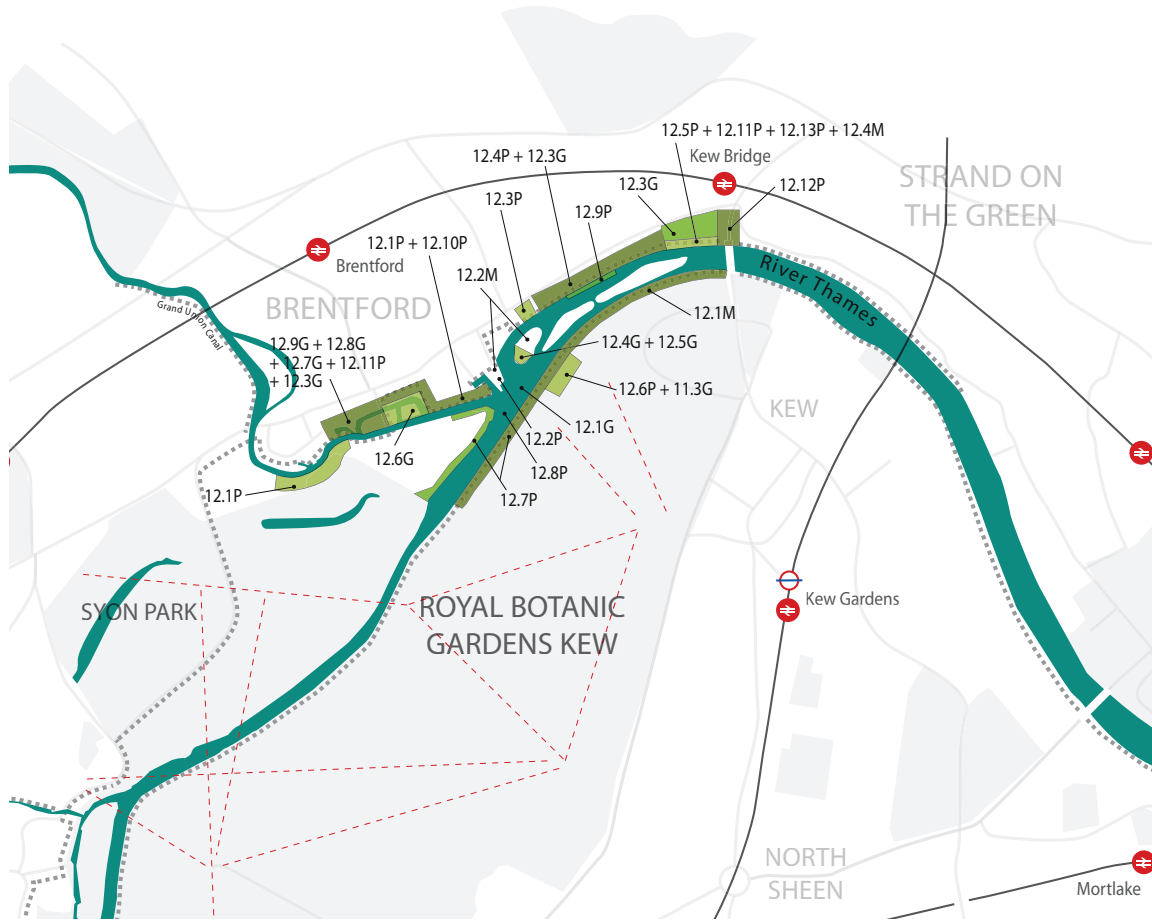
- views into site from Kew, Royal Botanic Gardens and river
- views of the Royal Botanic Gardens from the Brentford waterfront
- long history of settlement, industry and docklands
- potential for tourist interest
- need to link path from Kew Bridge along Waterfront and up Grand Union Canal to Syon and Osterley
- existing vocabulary of dockland materials of granite, London brick, cast iron and board walk
- landmarks of St George's Church & Steam Museum tower
- traffic pressure on Brentford High Street
- relationship to Waterman's Park
- nature conservation and scenic value of Lot's and Brentford Aits
- siting of footbridge to link Kew towpath / Brentford Gate to Brentford.

Review of Guidance, Project and Management & Maintenance

Projects and management proposals will evolve over time, with details and priorities set in the TLS Annual Action Plan and project briefs. The Action Plan provides greater detail for each project and provides the basis for ongoing monitoring. Please refer to the Appendix for a copy of the 1994 Policy, Project and Management Proposals.

Key: Green: Taken from the 1994 TLS Report with minor amendment where appropriate
Blue: New proposal for 2012 Review
Yellow: Deleted since 1994 due to completion or changing policy or priority

Policy and Project Review



Guidance Promoted by the Thames Landscape Strategy and How this Relates to Planning Policy		
TLS Ref.	2012 Guidance	Related Planning Policy Cross Reference
12.1G	Conserve the industrial character and scale of the Grand Union Canal and Brentford Waterfront, contrasting with the thick trees of the aits and the Royal Botanic Gardens	LBH Brentford Area Action Plan (BAAP), particularly Policy BAAP 5 Regeneration and protection of Brentford's river and canal support facilities, infrastructure and activities
12.2G	Protect the visual links between: - Kew Palace and the Grand Union Canal entrance - Kew towpath and St George's Church - Kew towpath and the Steam Museum tower Kew /Syon Reach and St George's Church	London Plan – 7.12 LBRuT – DM HD7 LBH Policy BAAP2 Urban Design, UDP (2003) Policies ENV-B.2.8 Views and Landmarks and ENV-W.1.3 Important Views and Structures in the Thames Policy Area
12.3G	To carefully consider the effects of scale and bulk of regeneration schemes to avoid visual intrusion into the massing of Brentford Waterfront. Prevent any further flat-roofed, high-rise buildings from intruding into the Brentford Waterfront massing.	LBH Policy BAAP2 Urban Design, UDP (2003) Policies ENV-B.1.1. New Development, ENV-B.1.2 High Buildings or Structures Affecting Sensitive Areas and ENV-W.1.1 Design in the Thames Policy Area
12.4G	Restore the covered dry dock and wet dock at Lot's Ait for boatyard use. Conserve the wild character of the undeveloped part of Lot's Ait, by restricting new development and controlling public access.	LBH Policy BAAP 5 Regeneration and protection of Brentford's river and canal support facilities, infrastructure and activities
12.5G	Conserve and enhance the nature conservation interest of the river and its corridor, with particular attention to Lot's Ait and the surrounding inter-tidal mudflats	London Plan – 7.19 LBRuT – CP 4, CP 11, DM OS 5 LBH UDP Policy ENV-N.2.2 Sites of Regional / Local Nature Conservation and Hounslow Biodiversity Action Plan (2011-2016)
12.6G	Conserve the working character of the Brentford waterfront by safeguarding and improving the cluster of boatyard facilities around Thames Lock, Johnson's Island and Lot's Ait.	LBH Brentford Area Action Plan (BAAP), particularly Policy BAAP 5 Regeneration and protection of Brentford's river and canal support facilities, infrastructure and activities
12.7G	As new developments arise explore ways to provide active river-related ground floor uses that complement flood risk management policies	LBH BAAP, particularly Policy BAAP 5 Regeneration and protection of Brentford's river and canal support facilities, infrastructure and activities
12.8G	Retain and where possible re-instate the ancient network of alleys and lanes that led to the river from Brentford High Street	LBH BAAP - Policy BAAP2 Urban Design, Policy BAAP3 Regeneration of Brentford Town Centre
12.9G	Promote Brentford as a visitor destination linked to the town's industrial and waterman heritage	LBH BAAP, in particular Policy BAPP3 Brentford Town Centre, and Policy BAAP 5 Regeneration and protection of Brentford's river and canal support facilities, infrastructure and activities

Project Proposals		
TLS Ref.	2012 Project	Other Stakeholders
12.1P	Complete the Thames Path Connections between 1. Syon Park and Grand Union Canal towpath; and, 2. Dock Road and the Thames Path adjoining the Heidelberg site / River Brent.	
12.2P	Return the memorial column to the end of Ferry Lane, once the waterfront path is completed.	
12.3P	Remodel the Waterman's Arts Centre river frontage to take more advantage of the water. Modify windows and walkways to improve access and so that visitors can see the river and create more board-walk platforms and balconies for sitting out.	
12.4P	Continue the re-instatement of Waterman's Park to enhance its riverside setting. Explore the opportunity for improved planting with an input from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew as an 'outreach' project.	
12.5P	Complete the Thames Path connections between Goat Wharf and Kew Bridge.	
12.6P	Relocate the car park on Queen Elizabeth's Lawn to an alternative site, opening the possibility of restoring the relationship between the Royal Botanic Gardens and the river through the creation of a new riverside garden.	
12.7P	Explore ways of installing vertical foreshore on the banks facing the campshedding on the Aits, at Brentford Creek and on the Kew concrete flood defence walls to encourage the growth of vegetation and reduce the visual impact at low tide.	
12.8P	Reinstate the ferry or a public footbridge from Ferry Quays, Brentford to the towpath adjoining Kew Gardens.	
12.9P	LB Hounslow and the PLA should work together to regularize the unauthorised moorings by providing fully serviced moorings and removing abandoned vessels at the former wharf at Waterman's Park.	
12.10P	Enhance the appearance of the Thames Path along Brentford Creek to include a viewing platform	
12.11P	Adopt a palette of materials for Brentford Riverside as set out in the TLS 'Brentford a Waterway Town' report	
12.12P	Enhance the visual appearance of the Kew Bridge entrance to Brentford High Street improving access between Kew Bridge Station and the river	
12.13P	Enhance the Hollows, considering the opportunity to re-direct the Thames Path along the High Street	
12.14P	Eliminate car parking along the edges of the Grand Union Canal	
Completed	Plant groups of trees along the Brentford Housing Estate to soften the impact of the building on the Royal Botanic Gardens.	Complete
Completed	Enhance Kew Pier and the approach to Kew Green from the river.	Complete
Completed	Re-surface Kew waterfront path with fine grade hoggin.	Complete
Delete	Review the need for the huge flood protection revetments at Kew now that the Thames Barrier has been built. When the flood protections eventually need to be repaired, consider more sympathetic alternatives.	See 12.7P

Management and Maintenance Proposals		
TLS Ref.	2012 Proposal	Stakeholders
12.1M	Manage Brentford and Lot's Aits for nature conservation, maintaining the woodland cover	
12.2M	Retain some riverborne debris in the creeks as habitat for invertebrates	
12.3M	Manage Himalayan balsam along the Hollows through volunteer action	
12.4M	Consider the potential for Waterman's Park to form part of a Kew Gardens outreach scheme.	

