

**Section 2**

**Historical Context**

## Section 2 - Historical Context

### History of Kew

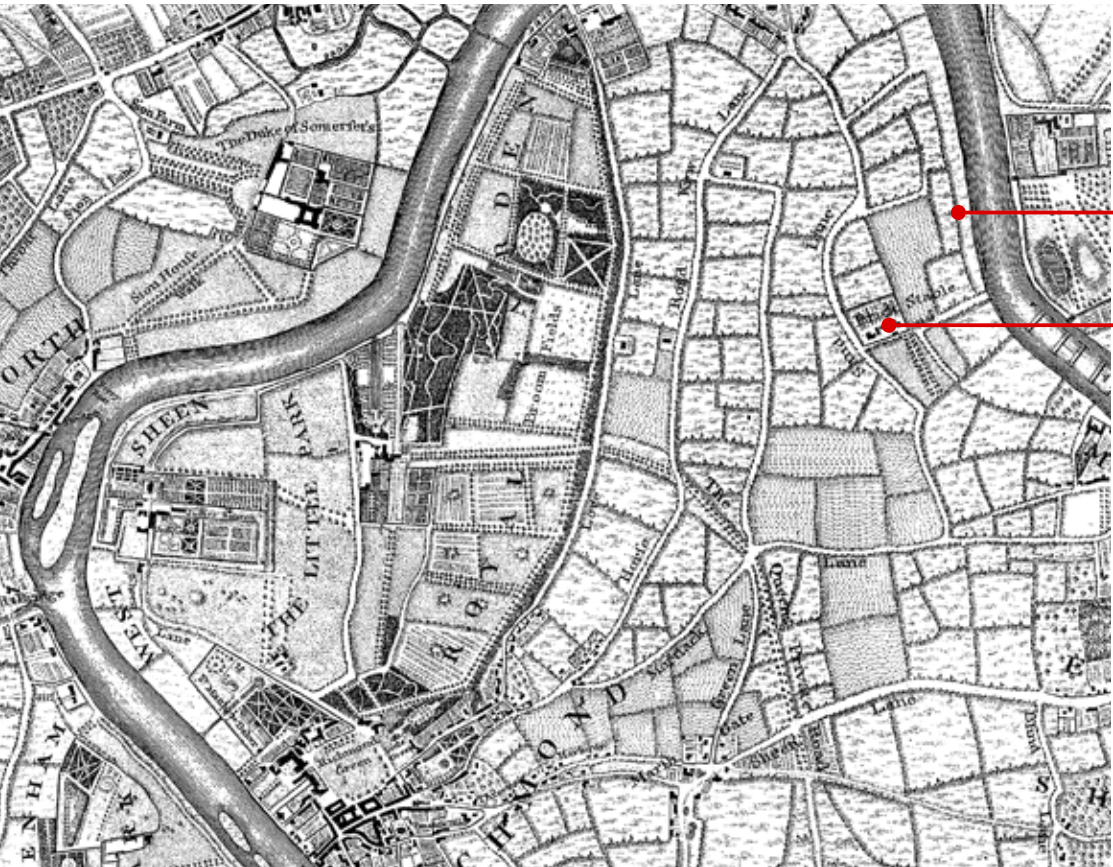
Charles Somerset, 1st Earl of Worcester, was granted lands at Kew in 1517, leaving his estates to his third wife, Eleanor, with the remainder to his son George in 1526. In 1538 Sir George Somerset sold the property to Thomas Cromwell, who later resold it Charles Brandon, 1st Duke of Suffolk. The area has been linked with royalty since, with the likes of Henry Norris living at Kew Farm, and later Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

Properties in the locale were very much palatial, but pre-dated the royal palaces of Kew Palace and the White House. In Elizabeth's reign, and under the Stuarts, houses were developed along Kew Green, with Elizabeth given a household at Kew in 1608.

Up to the 1700's the site was located in open fields, but by this time, land to the west had already been developed with large palaces, mansions and numerous smaller dwellings housing staff and farm workers alike.

During the 1760s Capability Brown carried out radical and controversial work to redesign Richmond Gardens at Kew, for King George III, and when appointed Royal Gardener in 1764 he was commissioned to make changes to the Richmond Lodge estate, the summer home of King George III and Queen Charlotte.

West Hall, which to this day survives in West Hall Road, dates from at least the 14th century with the present house being built at the end of the 17th century. Today, the site is located to the northeast of West Hall.



Site Location 1741  
Open Fields - adjacent orchards







Capability Brown 1764  
Kew Gardens Master Plan



West Hall 1819

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### Site History

In 1820 the Grand Junction Water Works Company (GJWWC) opened a new pumping station at Chelsea taking water from the Thames, and within 10 years, due to the poor quality of the water, largely due to sewage pollution, the company moved its operations to a new site by Kew Bridge.

Kew Bridge Works started supplying water in 1838, but continued concern about the quality of the water taken from the tidal section of the Thames resulted in the Metropolitan Water Act of 1852 which obliged the water companies to take their water from above Teddington Weir, the tidal limit of the Thames.

A Mains Drainage Works and pumping Station were constructed adjacent to the south of the site between 1874 and 1894 with low and high level filter beds, precipitation tanks and a pump house. Four filter beds had been constructed on the site between 1920 and 1935, and remained in use until 1988. Sludge beds to the north extended onto the site by 1974.

The site was developed to the current Biothane Plant in 1997, with Melliss Avenue and Kew Riverside constructed on the filter beds to the west between 1999 and 2004. Woodman and Kelsall Mews were constructed on the Main Drainage Works to the south, and the Motor Works to the west was redeveloped as a retail centre after 1988.

The primary function of the Biothane site was to treat all process effluent from the Stag Brewery approximately 1km to the south-east before discharging it via sewer pipes to Mogden Sewage Treatment Works (STW) over 4km to the east. The effluent treatment process generated biogas, which was burnt off by a flare in the north of the Site.

With the Stag Brewery ceasing production in 2015, the Biothane Plant became redundant, and was made available for redevelopment.

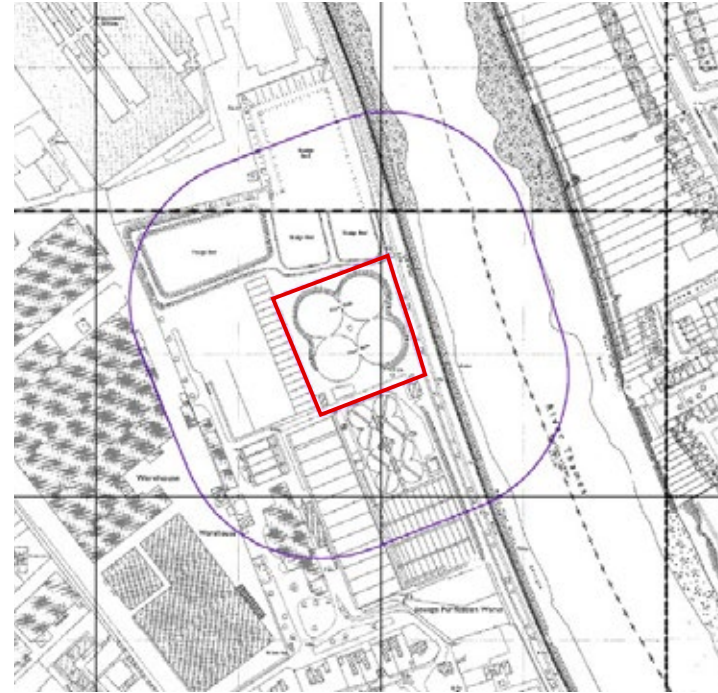


Site Location 1888  
Sewage Works to the South in operation





1935  
Sewage Works expands into site area with four large filter beds



1974  
Sewage Works expands to the north of the site with a series of sludge beds



1999  
Biothane Plant operational by 1999, with the sludge beds now out of use.

*Although the definition of Metropolitan Open Land had not been introduced until 1969, when detailed within the Greater London Development Plan by the then GLC, it is evident that the site and lands to the north and south, were developed and extensively in use as sewage works well before the time at which the MOL zone along this part of the River had been defined.*

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## Planning History

Planning history for the immediate site is limited, with the only recorded application on the LBR planning website being 07/0778/FUL, where permission was granted in 2007 for safety improvements to be undertaken to the existing storm water outfall from the Thames Water site to the north.

However, the site sits within an area which has undergone distinct change over the last 50 years particularly; with a number of significant developments taking place to the north, west and south of the site.

To the north, the Inland Revenue site on Bessant Drive was sold with Taylor Wimpey eventually developing the site in 2016 as Emerald Gardens; providing approximately 170 2 bed units over a series of 5 storey unit blocks. *(image 2)*

Directly to the north, west and south, Kew Riverside was developed between 1999 and 2004 by St. James. Surrounding the Biothane and Thames Water sites, the scheme delivered a masterplan of over 500 new, mixed-tenure homes with a range of housing types and sizes ranging from 1 bedroom units to larger four-storey town houses. *(image 1)*

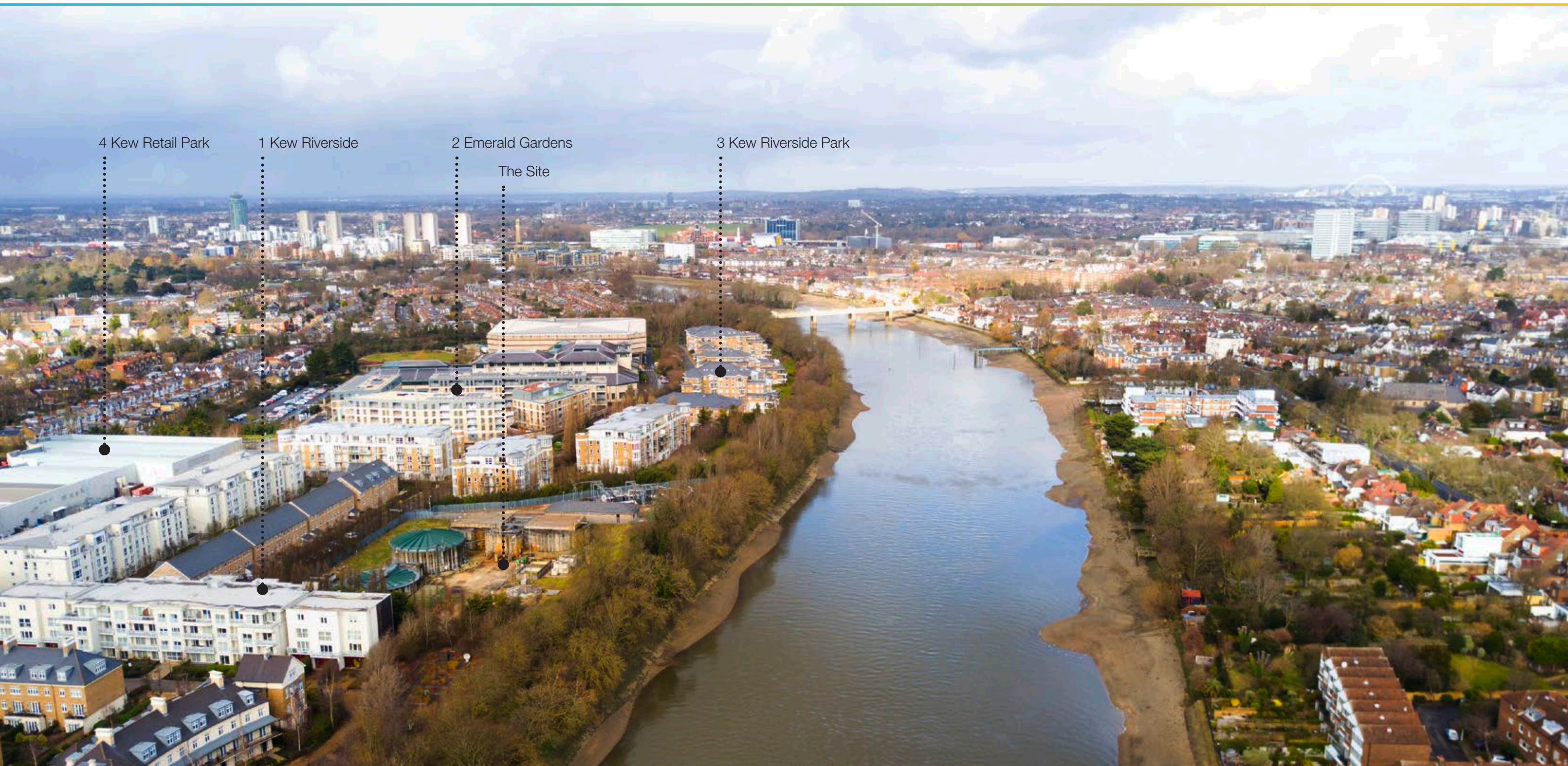
Further west, Kew Retail Park was delivered in the mid 90s, providing 139,200 sq. ft of A1 retail accommodation with 558 parking spaces, and is the main shopping park serving a substantial catchment across South West London. *(image 4)*

Directly north lies the existing Thames Water transfer station, which is foreseen to be in operation for the considerable future, and north of the Thames Water site is the Kew Riverside Park development, where buildings are among the tallest in the locale at 6 to 7 storeys. *(image 3)*



Kew Riverside 1  
Emerald Gardens 2  
Kew Riverside Park 3  
Kew Retail Park 4





Existing Site Aerial View



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## Planning Policy Review

The new Local Plan for the borough of Richmond was adopted in July 2018, and replaces previous policies within the Core Strategy and Development Management Plan. The Local Plan sets out policies and guidance for the development of the borough over the next 15 years, and sits below the National planning hierarchy of the various Planning Acts, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), and due to the sites location, the London Plan.

There are a number of key policies against which the proposals must be considered, and as detailed in the Local Plan, this proposal seeks to deliver the aspirations of the Council, in development of those policies, within the proposed development.

Within the framework of policy as described above, the site is identified as being particularly sensitive to the following Local Plan policies:

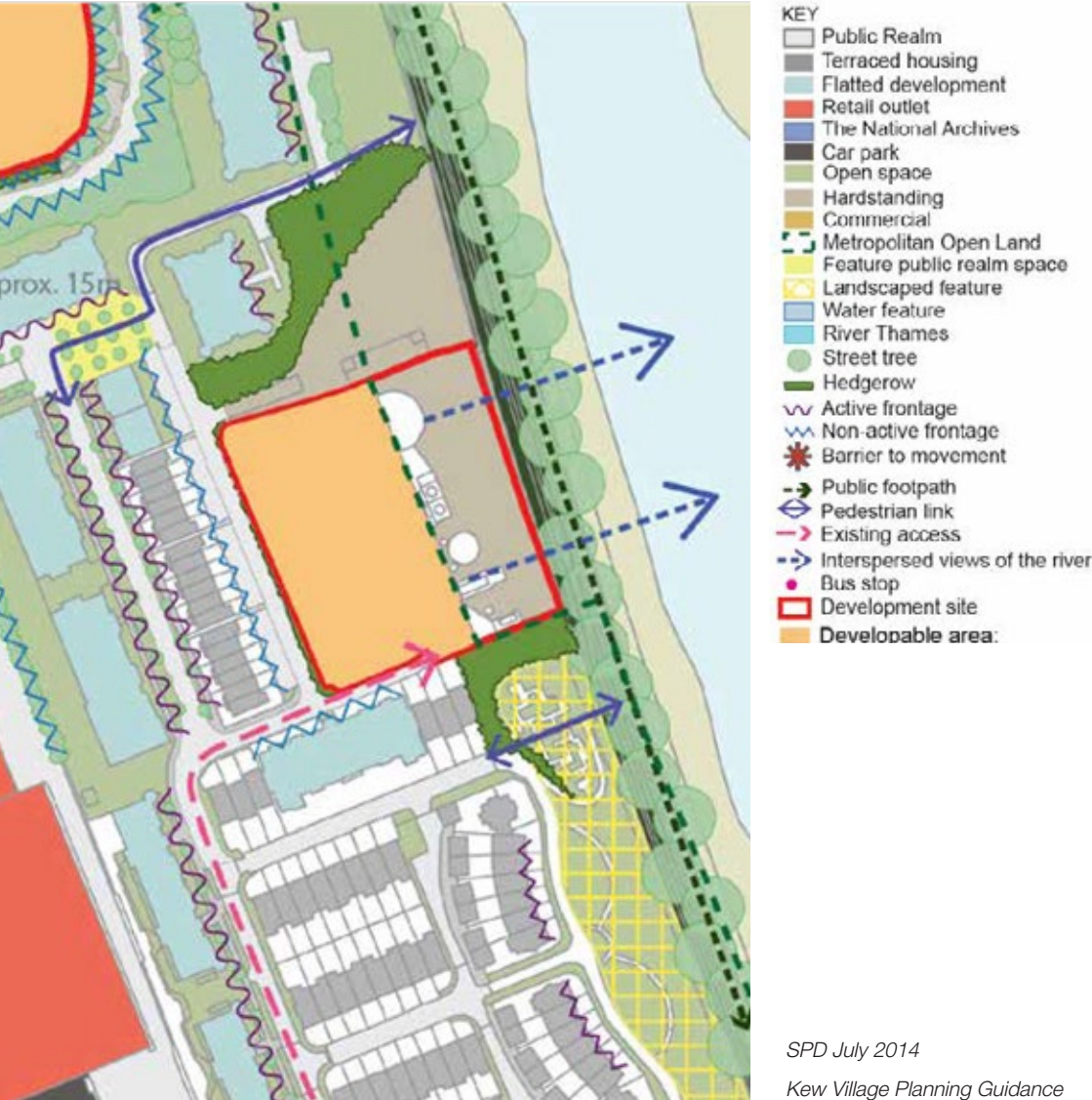
### MOL

Policy DM OS 2 states that the borough’s Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) will be protected and retained in predominately open use. Appropriate uses including public and private open spaces and playing fields, open recreation and sport, biodiversity including rivers and bodies of water and open community uses including allotments and cemeteries.

Further to this, the NPPF (section 9: Protecting Green Belt Land) and the London Plan (in particular policy 7.17) provides further policy/guidance relevant to the context of the site in question. Policy DM OS 11 relates to the Thames Policy Area and states that the special character of the Thames Policy Area will be protected and enhanced.

### Site Allocations Plan

The site is also designated as a key development site within the Council’s emerging “Site Allocations Plan” as Site SA 26 Kew Biothane Plant, Melliss Avenue. This designation details and confirms that the council would support the redevelopment of this site to provide for residential, and open space provision, due to its location in a largely residential area.





The understanding of the development and design principles for the site have therefore taken account of relevant policy direction, particularly the Kew Village Planing Guidance of July 2014, and detailed advice and feedback through a series of pre-application meetings. In summary of these meetings, and local and national policy guidance, we have identified the guiding principles for the ongoing design and delivery of the project as to:

1. Preserve and enhance the Metropolitan Open Land as part of the character of the area
2. Deliver a high quality architecture and aesthetic which is anticipated to be a response to the adjacent plots, but also pay tribute to the historical character of Kew, drawing on high quality materials and achieving excellent design
3. Consider bulk, massing, height and density in response to the established rhythm of the local area and minimise visual impact on properties of Melliss Avenue
4. Consider views from buildings to the north and south
5. Ensure open green areas are appropriately landscaped, respecting the site's location
6. Sensitively consider the view into the site from the riverside path and from across the river
7. Enhance the connectivity of the area, allowing permeability from the river and to adjoining areas
8. Provide sufficient parking for residents, in line with policy, and minimise the use and visual impact of parking
9. Consider housing policy in relation to unit size and mix

#### Response

In response to the development principles described opposite, and as described and detailed in the following pages, the proposed development therefore seeks to:

1. Reinstate, enhance and open up the (currently fenced off, industrial use) Metropolitan Open Land, with the inclusion of publicly accessible outdoor areas; and will additionally provide a children's play area, toilets and cafe / restaurant

2. Deliver high quality architecture and aesthetics, reflecting excellence in design and paying tribute to the historical character of Kew with the use of high quality masonry, timber and metalwork in a contemporary manner
3. Deliver consistency in bulk and massing with the surrounding developments, and ensure the building respects and improves (where possible) on the required setbacks to adjacent buildings
4. Retain views for buildings to the north and south - maintaining generous river views, whilst providing a carefully considered approach to the landscaped garden areas and façade design, ensuring a pleasant outlook for neighbouring properties
5. To provide as much appropriate soft landscaping as possible, whilst creating an open and inviting destination, developing new linkages and permeability through the site; connecting the Thames towpath, new children's play area and MOL garden space
6. Retain the large majority of the trees and shrubbery along the exiting towpath (works to be mutually agreed), reflecting feedback from local user groups by retaining the character and quality of this environment, ensuring the site is barely visible from the towpath
7. Articulate the upper levels of the building with the use of different materials / colour treatments and setbacks, cutting back the massing behind the existing river tree line; thereby softening and reducing any visual impact to the residents on the opposite bank of the river
8. Provide rationalised parking at a reduced rate, due to residents' significantly reduced driving needs
9. Provide residents with appropriately sized units, where downsizing from family homes requires larger units, with the ability to store a lifetime of belongings and memories
10. Ensure specialist extra care units are readily accessible and adaptable so the residents can age in place and receive specialist care



