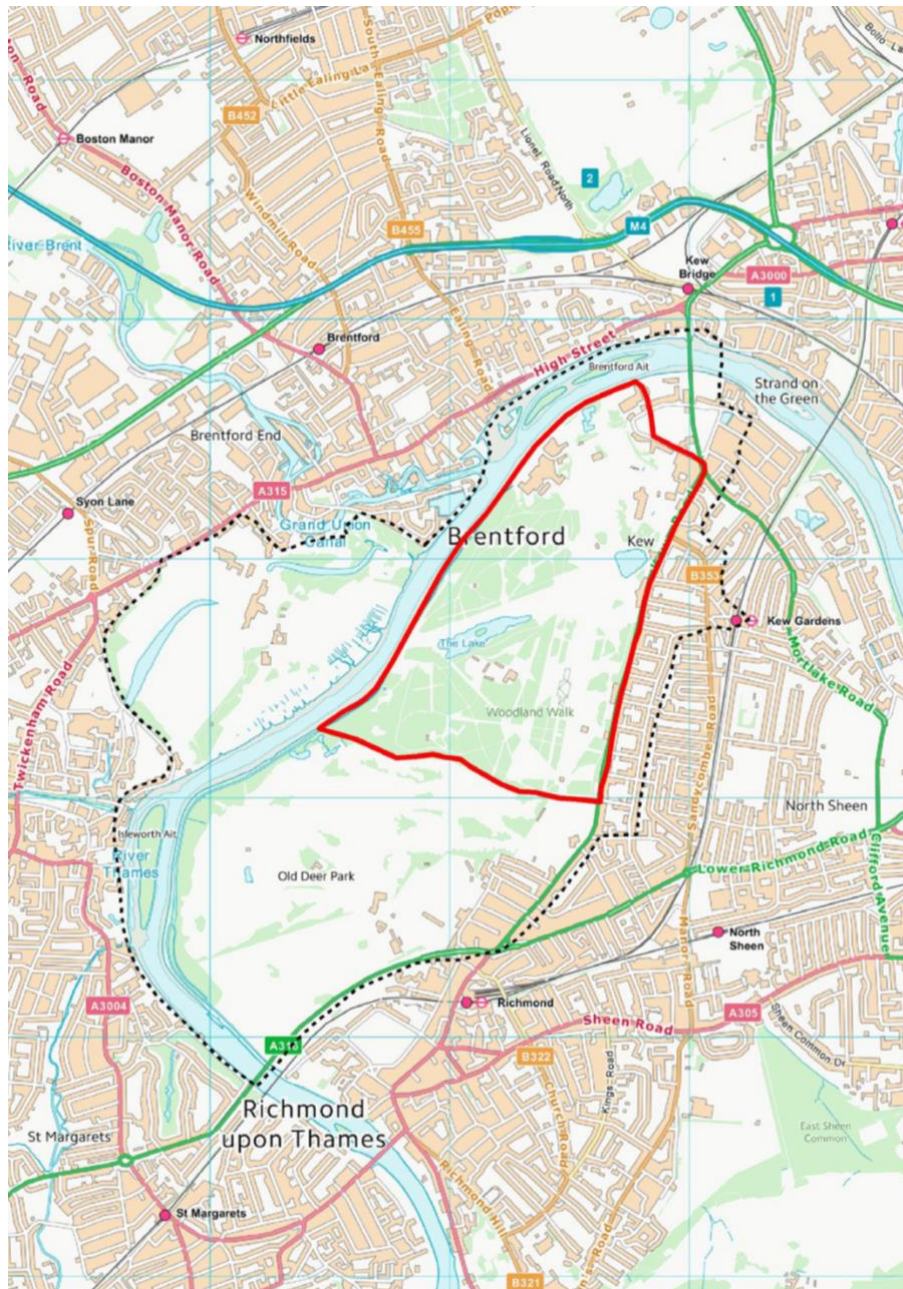


Screening Report – Royal Botanic Gardens Kew WHS / Ealing Local Plan

Royal Botanic Gardens Kew Boundary

(Page 10 World Heritage Site Management Plan 2020-25)

London Borough of Ealing sits outside of the Royal Botanical Gardens Kew World Heritage Site boundary and beyond its buffer zone within the WHS broader setting.



Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

(Pages 27/28 World Heritage Site Management Plan 2020-25)

The World Heritage Site at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew was inscribed by UNESCO in 2003. A new Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) was adopted in 2010. The Brief Synthesis of this Statement of OUV states (UNESCO 2010):

‘Set amongst a series of parks and estates along the River Thames’ south-western reaches, this historic landscape garden includes work by internationally renowned landscape architects Bridgeman, Kent, Chambers, Capability Brown and Nesfield illustrating significant periods in garden design from the 18th to the 20th centuries. The gardens house extensive botanic collections (conserved plants, living plants and documents) that have been considerably enriched through the centuries. Since their creation in 1759, the gardens have made a significant and uninterrupted contribution to the study of plant diversity, plant systematics and economic botany.

The landscape design of Kew Botanic Gardens, their buildings and plant collections combine to form a unique testimony to developments in garden art and botanical science that were subsequently diffused around the world. The 18th-century English landscape garden concept was adopted in Europe and Kew’s influence in horticulture, plant classification and economic botany spread internationally from the time of Joseph Banks’ directorship in the 1770s. As the focus of a growing level of botanic activity, the mid 19th-century garden, which overlays earlier royal landscape gardens, is centred on two large iron framed glasshouses – the Palm House and the Temperate House – that became models for conservatories around the world. Elements of the 18th- and 19th-century layers – including the Orangery, Queen Charlotte’s Cottage, folly temples, Rhododendron Dell, boundary ha-ha, garden vistas to Williams Chambers’s Pagoda and Syon Park, ironframed glasshouses, ornamental lakes and ponds, and herbarium and plant collections – convey the history of the Gardens’ development from royal retreat and pleasure garden to national botanical and horticultural garden, before becoming a modern institution of conservation ecology in the 20th century.’

Specifically, the site was inscribed under three UNESCO criteria for World Heritage Sites, which are:

Criterion (ii): Since the 18th century, the Botanic Gardens of Kew have been closely associated with scientific and economic exchanges established throughout the world in the field of botany, and this is reflected in the richness of its collections. The landscape and architectural features of the Gardens reflect considerable artistic influences both with regard to the European continent and to more distant regions.

Criterion (iii): Kew Gardens has largely contributed to advances in many scientific disciplines, particularly botany and ecology.

Criterion (iv): The landscape gardens and the edifices created by celebrated artists such as Charles Bridgeman, William Kent, Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown and William Chambers reflect the beginning of movements which were to have international influence.

Integrity

The boundary of the property contains the elements that bear witness to the history of the development of the landscape gardens and Kew Gardens' uninterrupted role as national botanic garden and centre of plant research. These elements, which express the Outstanding Universal Value, remain intact. The buffer zone contains the focus of one of the garden vistas on the opposite bank of the Thames River – Syon Park House – together with other parts of the adjacent cultural landscape (Old Deer Park, a royal estate south of Kew Gardens; Syon Park on the opposite bank of the Thames; the river from Isleworth Ferry Gate to Kew Bridge; the historic centre of Kew Green with the adjacent buildings and the church; and then to the east, the built-up sectors of 19th- and 20th-century houses). Development outside this buffer zone may threaten the setting of the property.

Authenticity

Since its creation in the 18th century, Kew Gardens has remained faithful to its initial purpose with botanists continuing to collect specimens and exchange expertise internationally. The collections of living and stored material are used by scholars all over the world.

The 56 listed buildings are monuments of the past and reflect the stylistic expressions of various periods. They retain their authenticity in terms of design, materials and functions. Only a few buildings are being used for a purpose different from that originally intended (the Orangery now houses a restaurant). Unlike the works of architecture, in each of the landscaped garden areas, the past, present and future are so closely interwoven (except in the case of vestigial gardens created by significant artists, such as the vistas), that it is sometimes difficult to separate the artistic achievements of the past in terms of the landscape design of the different periods. Recent projects such as recutting Nesfield's beds behind the Palm House have started to interpret and draw attention to the earlier landscapes created by Capability Brown and Nesfield. Other projects are proposed in the overall landscape management plan subject to resourcing.

Attributes

(Page 28 World Heritage Site Management Plan 2020-25)

- | | |
|------|--|
| i. | a rich and diverse historic cultural landscape providing a palimpsest of landscape design; |
| ii. | an iconic architectural legacy; |
| iii. | globally important preserved and living plant collections; |
| iv. | a horticultural heritage of keynote species and collections; |
| v. | key contributions to developments in plant science and plant taxonomy |

The development set out in Ealing's local plan will not physically affect any of the identified attributes of Kew WHS. However, tall buildings allocated in the plan may affect the broader setting of the Gardens and in turn to impact upon Attribute i and by extension ii given the unity of buildings and landscape. To quote the management plan (p79);

“The historic landscape design, the built architecture of the site, and the experience of place that is derived from these, are all central to the OUV of the property. Kew Gardens is, with a few

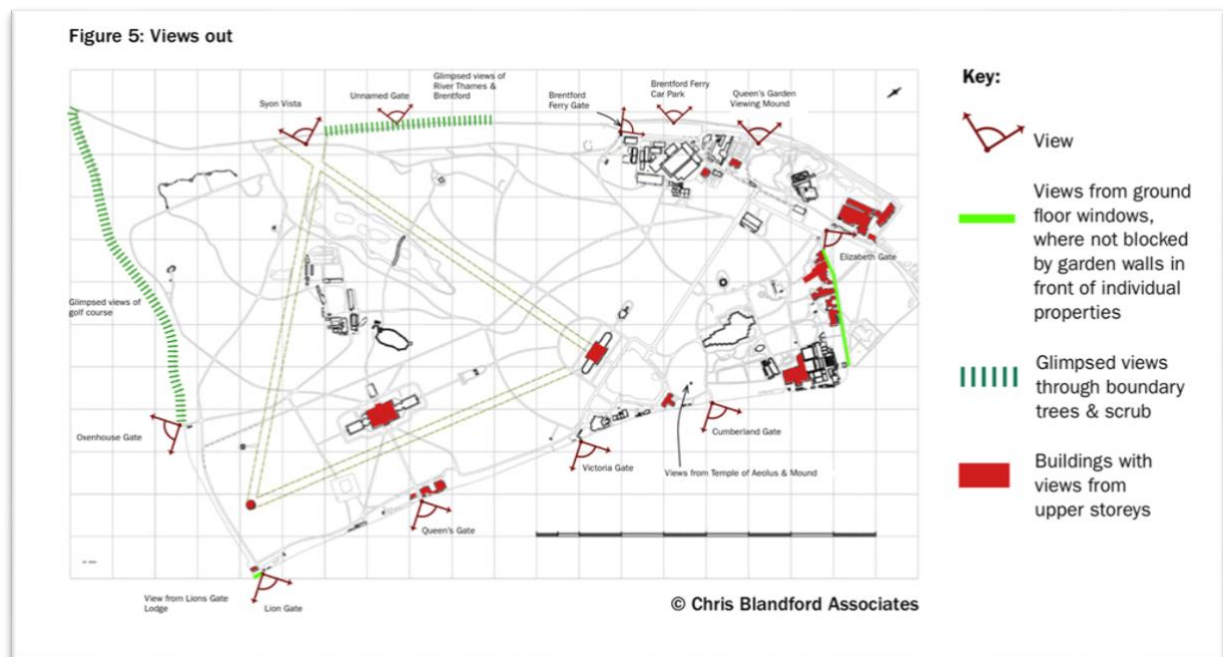
key exceptions (such as Syon Vista), an internally oriented landscape, and preserving the integrity of this setting from external intrusions plays a fundamental role in supporting its OUV.”

Methodology

This screening assessment has been carried out according to the UNESCO Resource Manual for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context (2022). The attributes assessed here are i. and ii., which have been assessed against the heights set out in Ealing’s Site Allocations and modelled in Vu.City. In all of the views set out below, the proposed allocations are shown in red and any buildings that sit between the WHS and these allocations are shown in grey.

Views Analysis

A full analysis has been made of relevant views described in the Appendix D of the World Heritage Site Management Plan 2020-25, specifically the Views Out described on p130.



Views comprise;

- Thamesfront views at Syon Vista, Unnamed Gate, Brentford Ferry Gate, Brentford Ferry Car Park, and Queen's Garden Viewing Mound
- Internal vistas toward Kew Palace from the top of the Broadwalk and two vistas across the Great Lawn, and and a further vista toward the Palm House along the easternmost limb of the triangle of vistas

Most of these views show no impact upon the WHS, with development invisible either with or without trees. In the case of Syon Vista, and internal vistas toward Kew Palace, the Palm House, and vista I across the Great Lawn, the views without trees show the West Ealing and Central Ealing clusters as a distant and minor elements on the horizon. All views are set out in the Appendix.

Appendix – Views

Syon Vista with and without trees



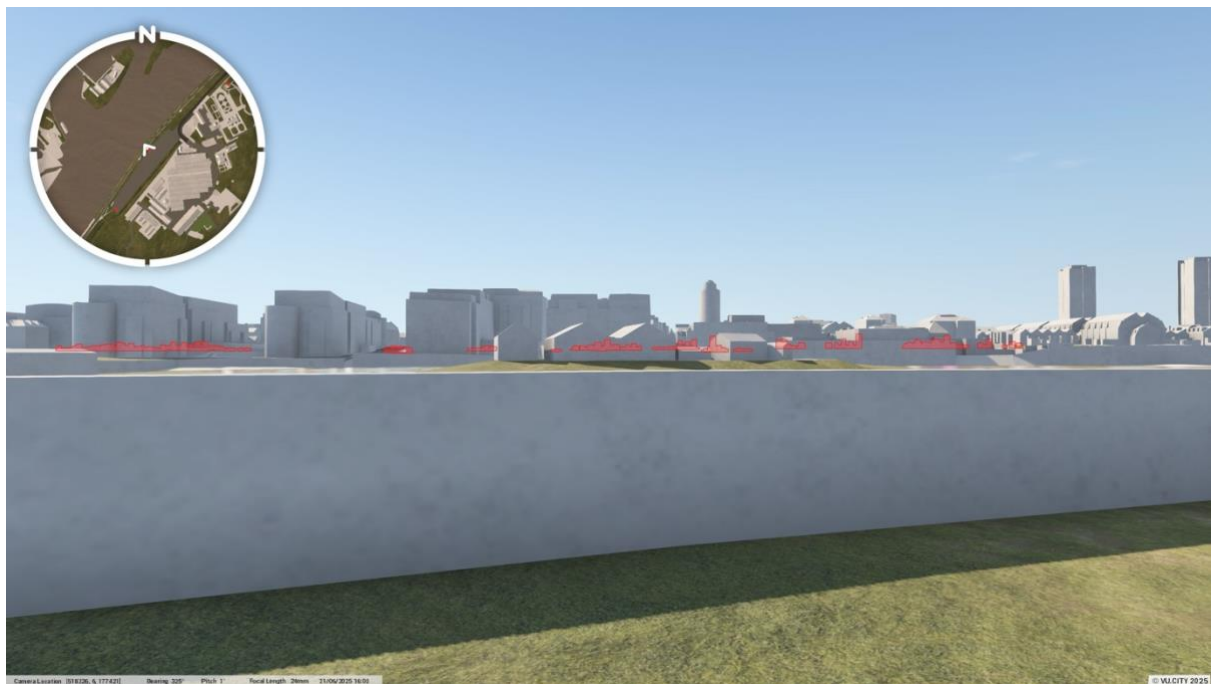
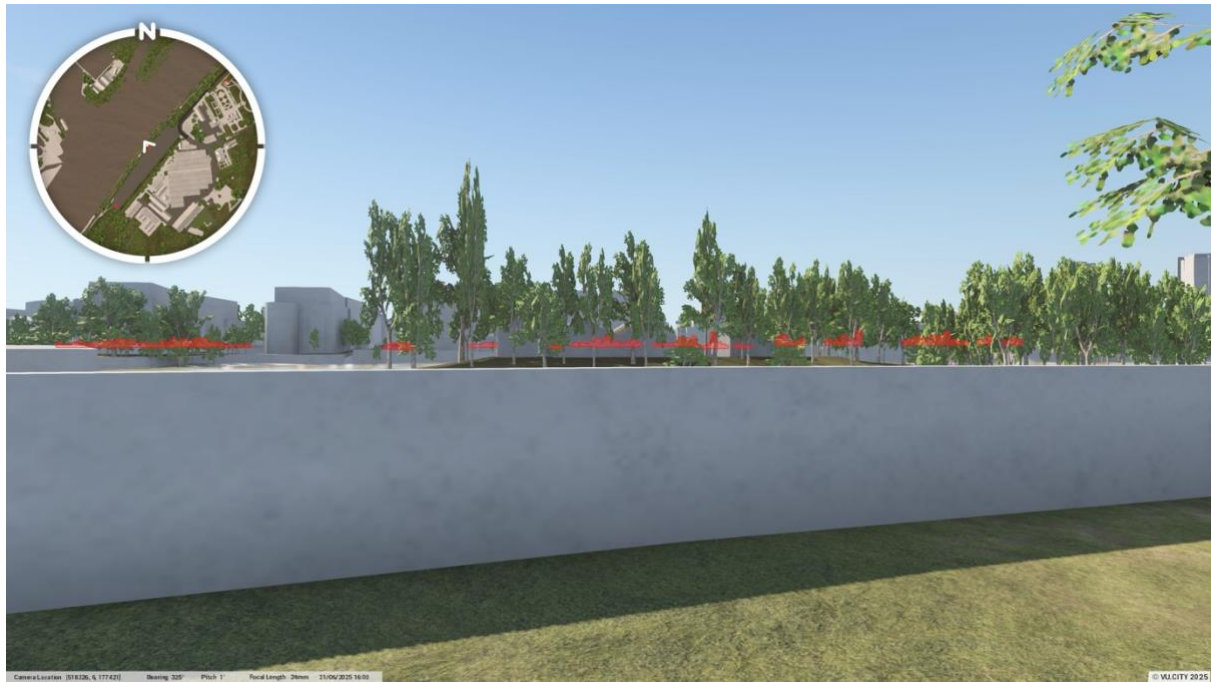
Unnamed Gate with and without trees



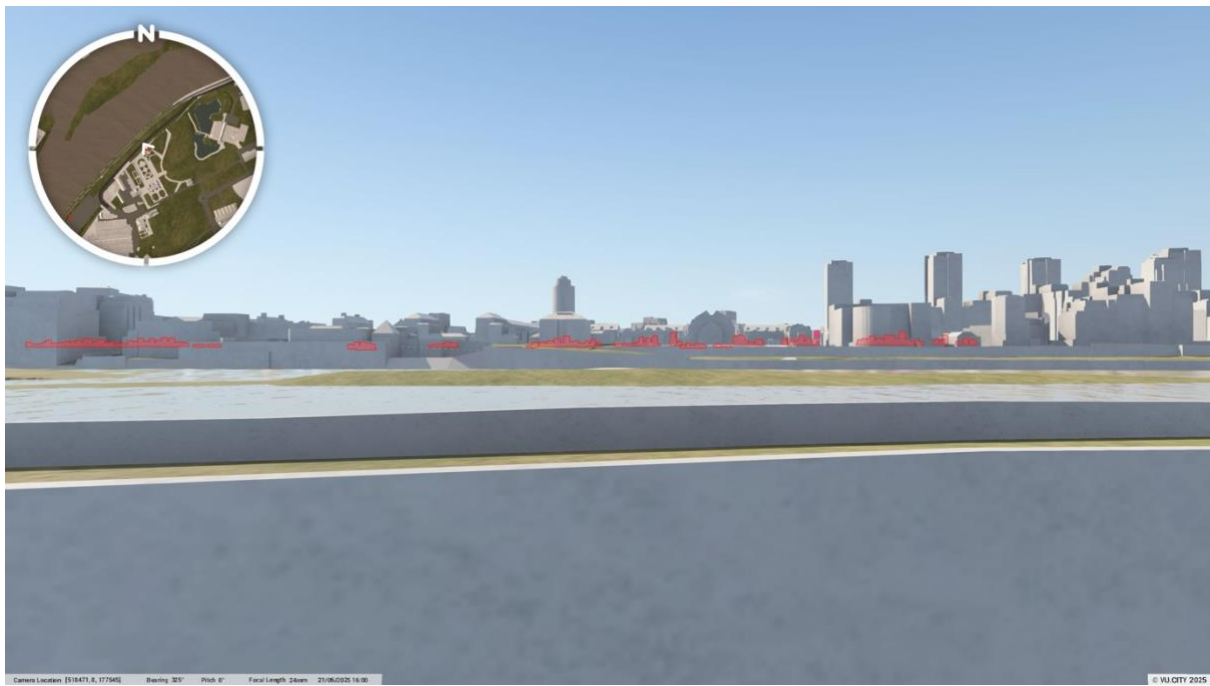
Brentford Ferry Gate with and without trees



Brentford Ferry Car Park with and without trees



Queens Garden Viewing Mound with and without trees



Vista towards Kew Palace with and without trees



Vista towards the Palm House with and without trees



Vista I across the Great Lawn to Kew Palace with and without trees



Vista II across the Great Lawn to Kew Palace with and without trees

