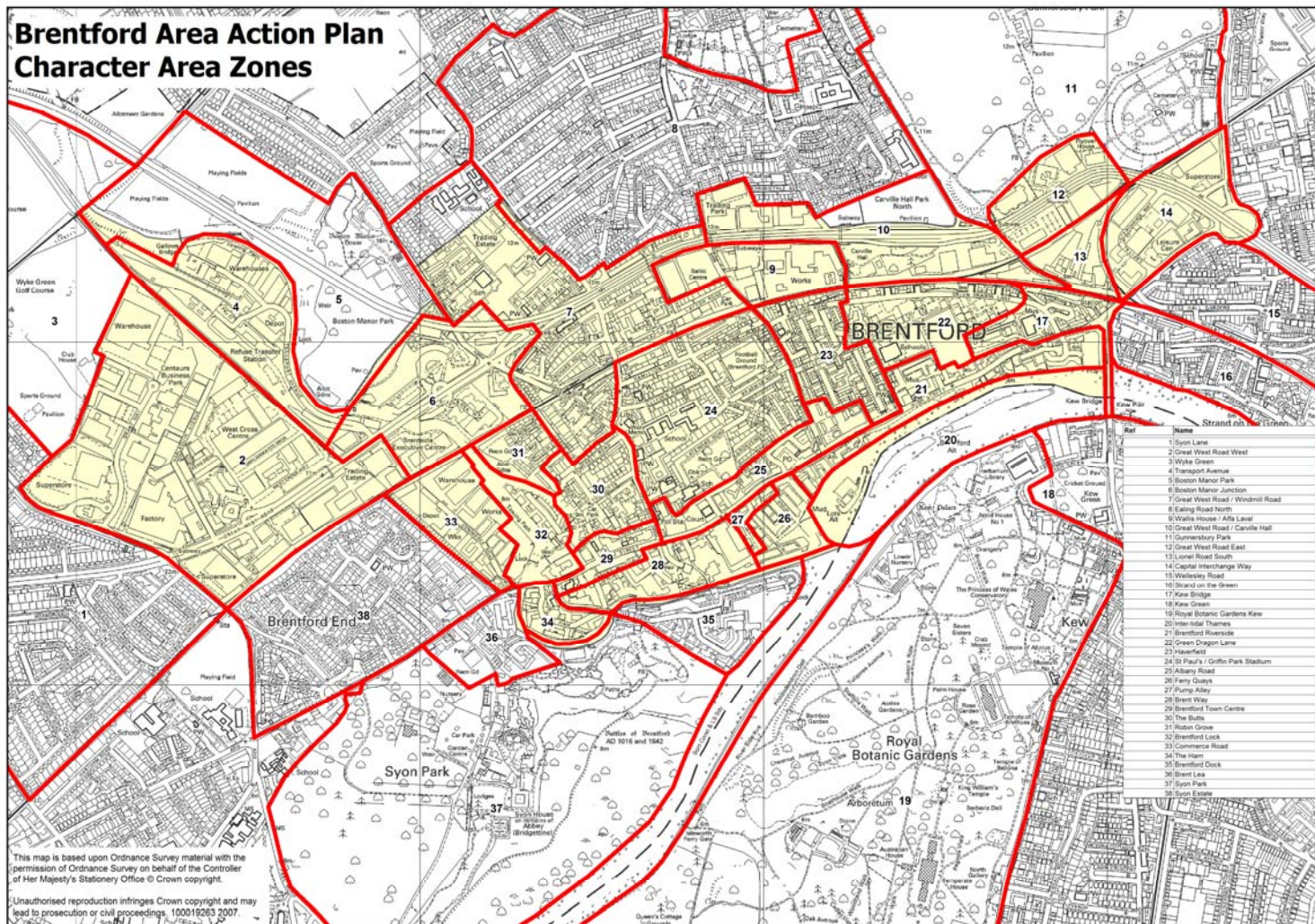


Plan 6 – Character Areas



Appendix 2: Character Areas

The Area Action Plan identifies **38 Character Areas** in and around the plan boundary (including areas outside the London Borough of Hounslow) based on existing activities and built form. The features identified in surrounding Character Areas inform the urban design principles set out in the supporting text that accompanies the Development site policies.

Defining Character Areas is intended to assist the consideration of urban design issues when considering major development proposals and ensure that they take account of local distinctiveness and enhance the overall quality of Brentford's varied townscapes.

1. Syon Lane

Well-established residential estate of inter-war, semi-detached and terraced two-storey housing bisected by the Great West Road. The suburban character of the area provides a high standard of residential amenity with large rear gardens. The uniform architectural style of the properties, the regular spaces between buildings and the road layout incorporating cul-de-sacs are very distinctive of the period in which the housing was completed.

2. Great West Road West (Gillette Corner)

An Industrial Business Park featuring low-rise warehousing-style units with large floor plates. The area is given local distinctiveness by some significant remaining examples of art deco architecture fronting onto the Great West Road, which are protected as listed buildings and structures.

3. Wyke Green

This area is semi-rural in character with open land in the north, the canal in the east, playing fields in the south, and the majority in use as a golf course. The area is cut in half by the London Underground Piccadilly Line and the M4 provides a northern boundary.

4. Transport Avenue

The quality of this character area reflects its current uses creating an industrial townscape of ageing metal warehousing open yard operations, and large volumes of heavy goods traffic. Taller buildings have created some strongly industrial shapes on parts of the skyline. A railway line in the west and the Grand Union canal in the east create strong physical boundaries emphasised by tree cover, assist in creating a sense of seclusion that limits the impact of the industrial activities on surrounding waterside and parkland areas.

5. Boston Manor Park

Open parkland linked historically with the Grand Union Canal when a section of the Boston Manor's grounds were compulsorily purchased to form the canal and associated floodplains. The grounds of the Manor at the bottom of the slope have been over ridden by the supports of the M4 motorway, and are visually intruded upon by its elevated section, which has no noise attenuation measures. Consequently, although the canal and River Brent feature in a scenic parkland landscape, the whole

area is overwhelmed by the noise and visual intrusion of the motorway and the fifteen-storey plus GlaxoSmithKline headquarters on its southern border, which shields it from wider view and closes off the river valley.

6. Boston Manor Junction

A cluster of high-rise office buildings and advertising columns create a focal point at the junction with Boston Manor Road, and function as strategic gateway to West London. The elevation of the M4 roadway and the taller office buildings has created uniformity within the character area and a number of landmark structures. However, the overall scale of this area is out of context with surrounding residential areas and parkland.

7. Great West Road/ Windmill Road Junction

This area consists of residential streets from different periods united by their largely domestic use, as well as the impact of the Great West Road and related commercial buildings on their residential amenity. The character area also provides the only domestic scale buildings that front directly onto the Great West Road. The townscape itself has the sense of an area that has been interrupted and overwhelmed by the major roadways at its centre. Much of the housing is late Victorian and Edwardian arranged in long terraces, but there has also been a significant amount of infill development since the mid-twentieth century including the introduction of a trading estate.

8. Ealing Road North

This area is characterised by a mixture of two-storey Edwardian and inter-war housing with a small amount of infill development. The area provides an attractive residential environment interspersed with local amenities. The residential scale of this area contrasts significantly with commercial developments on the Great West Road.

9. Wallis House/ Alfa Laval

This commercial area of empty, outdated offices is in a period of transition. The height and derelict condition of the buildings has made them prominent but unattractive townscape features for many years although a number of them have recently been demolished. This area does also include the listed art deco Wallis House and its landmark tower. The entire area has been subject to interest for mixed-use/residential development, some of which have been granted planning permission whilst others are under consideration. The approved elements will renovate the listed building and replace other buildings with new structures generally between 4 to 10 storeys in height but also include a landmark 25-storey tower. This was considered the maximum bearable height in relation to the visual impact on Kew Palace and Kew World Heritage Site in general. The overall character of the area is likely to become more residential in occupation.

10. Great West Road/ Carville Hall

Characterised by standard low-rise warehousing units set amongst areas of parkland, this area is severed by the elevated M4 and its access ramps. The elevated roadway as the tallest feature dominates the appearance of the area, creating a strong feeling of enclosure, and splitting the area visually and physically in two. The two areas of parkland are largely hidden from roadside views, and under

utilised as landscape features and recreational assets as well as being affected by noise and pollution.

11. Gunnersbury Park

This historic character area includes Gunnersbury Park and Kensington Cemetery, areas of open land based on the Mansions and earlier great house. Statutory listing has highlighted the mansion, small mansion, garden buildings, outbuildings and park. The Park is also on the Register of Parks and Gardens by English Heritage. The Park's higher ground level than to the south makes development along the Great West Road particularly visible from Gunnersbury Park and its mansions. Vantage West and adjacent properties that back on to the park, particularly those with light or reflective cladding, have a negative effect on its setting and skyline.

12. Great West Road East

A small group of high-rise office buildings completed or refurbished in the last 20 years. There are all of a contemporary design with glass and metal exteriors. Vantage West is the most prominent building in the area at 15 storeys high, scaling itself to the elevated roadway and is a focus seen from Kew Bridge. The buildings to the north also shield the historic Gunnersbury Park from views through the character area. All of the buildings are set back from the roadside and have frontages dominated by car parking.

13. Lionel Road South

At the centre of three railway junctions and within a dip in the landscape this triangular area is well contained from surrounding areas. There are very few buildings, and the open yard works taking place within the area dominate its appearance. However, there are some remaining Victorian industrial-related structures that link this area with the character of the adjacent Kew Bridge Conservation Area.

14. Capital Interchange

The similar style, age and layout of buildings within this area give it a uniform character as a small-scale industrial business park. It relates well to the commercial character of the Great West Road to the north and east but contrasts starkly with the Victorian buildings to the south and west.

15. Wellesley Road

An historic thoroughfare surrounded by early to later Victorian buildings, the majority domestic, but with those on the main roads incorporating some commercial elements at ground floor. The buildings are mostly in classical style, with brick with stucco dressings. The Victorian commercial elements on the Kew Bridge end of Chiswick High Road are incorporated as taller four storey buildings in the same style as surrounding domestic properties. Some of the other streets have a calm, self-contained quality whilst other elements make the area cohesive and contribute to the quality environment, such as the tree-lined roads. Other than street trees this is an intensively urban area, with all open space within private gardens.

16. Strand on the Green

The overall character is that of a variety of buildings but of common interest and scale, with narrow lanes and alleys connecting the riverside promenade that adds to the leisure value of the pub and restaurant destinations. There are a number of

water-related features, large eighteenth century private houses and modest 2 to 4 storey Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing.

17. Kew Bridge

The overall character and appearance of the area is derived from the interrelationship between its three main parts - Kew Bridge, Kew Bridge Steam Museum, and the 2 to 4 storey domestic scale buildings leading up to and including the railway station. Influenced by the water, rail and river crossings and past industries, the enduring characteristics of the area are the settings of the historic listed structures together with the road, rail and river patterns that connect them.

18. Kew Green

Kew Green is an historic open space in the London Borough of Richmond, surrounded by high quality eighteenth century developments and in a riverside setting. Approaches to the Green include mostly 2 storey Victorian and Edwardian terraces. The area is made attractive by its abundance of mature street trees, and it forms a visually cohesive area with an easily identifiable sense of place. It has a definite village character.

19. Royal Botanic Gardens Kew

Kew Gardens was inscribed on the list of World Heritage Sites in July 2003. The area is also designated Grade I on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Of international importance as a botanic garden and research establishment, Kew Gardens also features the landscape designs of Capability Brown amongst others of note. There are a number of high quality listed buildings in the gardens including Kew Palace, the Temperate House, the Palm House, Queen Charlotte's Cottage and the Japanese Gateway. Links between Kew Palace across the River Thames to the entrance to the Grand Union Canal at Brentford and views from the towpath to St. George's Church and Kew Bridge Steam Museum campanile are extremely important to the setting and character of the Gardens.

20. Inter-tidal Thames

This area incorporates Brentford Ait and Lots Ait, both Thames islands, the latter of which has been part developed as a boat yard, now derelict. Both Aits are designated nature conservation areas of high ecological and landscape value. They are important in views from the Kew side of the river obscuring some of Brentford's riverside developments.

21. Brentford Riverside

The riverside has a history of development, dominated until the Second World War by industrial manufacturing operations using the river for distribution. Post-1945, there has been piecemeal redevelopment of the riverfront for a mixture of non river-related uses including commercial and residential, and public open space. The fragmentary nature of redevelopment is also reflected in the different scale and architectural styles of the waterside buildings. In particular, taller buildings in the east of the area have been described by a Planning Inspector at a recent Planning Appeal as not representing 'examples of good urban design which should be followed as a precedent'. The orientation of the buildings frontages means that they do interact with the riverside and their larger footprints shield views of the river from the road and in some places prevent physical access to the waterside.

22. Green Dragon Lane

The area contains six identical tower blocks creating a strong sense of architectural unity and a distinct sense of place, although the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have considered their impact on Kew World Heritage Site to be detrimental. They also function as strategic landmarks for Brentford. The tower blocks are set back from the roadside in large areas of green open space. The school playing field and covered reservoir to the south and west of the towers also add to the green, parkland feel of the area, but this will reduce when Thames Water implement their planning permission for 350 apartments to be provided in nine residential blocks of between 6 and 16 storeys over the current covered reservoir.

23. Haverfield

This post-war housing estate consists of four storey residential flats and two-storey terraces typical of their time and lacking distinctive architectural features. The layout of the buildings has led to a predominance of dead ends, on-street parking, visible backs and undefined frontages.

24. St Paul's and Griffin Park Stadium

This area is characterised by Victorian and Edwardian two-storey terraced housing arranged around areas of local open space. Griffin Park stadium and St Paul's recreation ground are the focal points of this area. There is also a strong uniform building line, rooflines and patterns of architectural features on many of the streets. A complete Victorian New Town the area has retained its public, amenity and religious buildings which act as landmarks within the local townscape. In particular the spire of St Paul's Church is a prominent landmark in the area terminating a vista from London Road across the Brentford Lock. The formal layout of St Paul's recreation ground is also essential to the planned Victorian character of the area. Griffin Park stadium is a distinctive exception to the overwhelmingly residential character of the area, but is a significant and historic part of the area's identity.

25. Albany

This character area contains a varied mix of residential, retail and civic developments. The range of ages and styles reflects the piecemeal basis on which development took place. However the area is given character as an area of post-war infilling with large footprints, with some taller elements at over four storeys. The mix of street-level uses in the character area increases as you move west towards the town centre and the scale peaks with the police station as the tallest structure in the town centre at over 10 storeys. The police station building vies with the spire of St Paul's and is visible over a wide area. The buildings are largely set back from the High Street or with inactive High Street frontages. In particular the allocation of space at Somerfield supermarket, with a large area of surface parking visible from the roadside, has created a poor quality gateway to the town centre.

26. Ferry Quays

The recent development of this area has created a distinctive residential townscape of 4-6 storey blocks mixed with some leisure uses and waterside areas of public spaces. There are also some strong north-south vistas that allow views of the river from the High Street and reflect the historical pattern of development.

27. Pump Alley

This character area consists of a small cluster of historic brick buildings dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth century's. It includes the distinctive red brick former fire station building, the Corporation Sewage works at Town Meadow, Georgian and Victorian domestic scale buildings and Waterman's Public House. This interesting group of buildings form an important historic ensemble that enhances the street scene. The former fire station is a local landmark that improves the legibility of the High Street and the buildings at Town Meadow have retained their early engineering character.

28. Brent Way

Located immediately south of the High Street, this area has an industrial character with a mixture of buildings, some built at a time where the proximity to the Grand Union Canal had little relevance to their operation interspersed with older buildings that were wholly dependant on their waterside location. The area retains some features of its past as a working dock such as wharf buildings, boatyards, cranes and Victorian warehouses. The general former-industrial, almost unkempt appearance of the area and the remaining boat building activities give character to the area. The historic street pattern in this area, which was characterised by narrow alleyways running north to south to the waterfront, has largely been replaced although some important links remain. The current meandering layout of buildings and roads impedes visual and physical access to the Grand Union canal.

29. Brentford Town Centre

The current High Street is a bewildering mix of old and new from converted Georgian houses and Victorian shops, to 1960s retail and residential units. Some buildings within the town centre are also listed, recognised for their townscape merit or located within the Thames Policy Area because of their historic association with the river. The coherence of the area is the focus on development along the High Street. Key historic landmarks within the town centre include the Church of St Lawrence, the Magistrates Court and the Beehive public house, all of which aid navigation along the High Street and provide local distinctiveness. Within the primary retail parades, the condition of shop fronts is mixed with a number of vacant, boarded up units on the south side. This gives the High Street a run-down, unkempt feel that blights the appearance of the area. Narrow pavements combined with poor quality street furniture, a lack of landscaping, on-street parking and heavy traffic has created an unsafe and poor quality environment for pedestrians. The heavy traffic also serves to disconnect the two sides of the High Street from one another, with crossings that prioritise vehicle movement. Past redevelopments have also blocked visual and physical links between the town centre and the waterside.

30. The Butts

The Butts is an exceptionally attractive and unspoilt group of largely three storey houses of c1700 focused on a large irregular square. The central space is part surrounded by Georgian properties of similar scale and materials. Many of these are listed, some wide-fronted of simple but gracious and symmetrical style with railed front gardens, others straight onto the footpath. It is approached from an avenue of similarly scaled properties to the east, and other similar properties are to be found in streets to the north. There is a particularly coherent sense of place to The Butts.

31. Robin Grove

This relatively small character area is made up of a pair of residential cul-de-sacs leading onto a riverside recreation ground. The two-storey domestic properties date from the mid twentieth century and are uniform in their architecture style and scale. The regular spacing between the housing is also key to their overall character.

32. Brentford Lock

A heavily urbanised residential development with some small commercial units, hard-landscaped areas of public open space and narrow-boat moorings, all focused on the canal at Brentford Lock. The scale of the buildings at 4 to 7 storeys is significantly taller than surrounding areas. The Island site has more variety of form to link with its river fronts and the tallest buildings relate to the High Street with an 8th storey feature. The scale and design within the character area creates an internal sense of place. However, the Lock and the vista along the canal to GSK provide the only connections to the wider Brentford townscape.

33. Commerce Road

Canal side area of warehousing and works reaching a maximum of three-storeys in height, and including overhanging wharf built to enable covered goods transshipment. Much of the industrial activity in this area has receded, but the scale of the buildings reflects current and former uses, and by being low-lying give spatial priority to the water. However, other than the overhanging canopy, the buildings have their backs turned to the canal. The towpath along the canal is used for boat mooring. The buildings of the area, whilst not dependent on waterborne transport, are still of an appropriate scale and character.

34. The Ham

Located in a loop of the Grand Union canal the Ham is an mixed-use enclave of late twentieth century four-storey residential apartments and two-storey industrial units, inter leaved with remnants of the area's early history including the saw mill, the former school building and the brick railway arches from the dismantled line into Brentford Dock. There are also a significant number of boats moored along the canal that add colour and interest to the waterside.

35. Brentford Dock

Located on a peninsular between the Grand Union Canal and the River Thames, Brentford Dock is a residential estate of six-storey brown brick built apartments completed in the late 1970s by the Greater London Council. The uniform style of the architecture and landscaping create a sense of seclusion from surrounding areas and a distinctive identity.

36. Brent Lea

Small group of 4 - 6 storey concrete apartments on the west bank of the Grand Union Canal and adjacent to Syon Park. The area also contains a small, dilapidated recreation ground. The residential blocks are of a uniform architectural style and their urban character contrasts with their waterside, parkland setting.

37. Syon Park

Syon Park is listed Grade I on the English Heritage register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest; all Syon Park and the Thames foreshore is an Archaeological Priority Area, and Metropolitan Open Land, and a nature conservation area; and is

partially in the buffer zone of Kew World Heritage Site. The park provides a picturesque setting for the Grade I and II listed buildings and features. The river frontage of Syon Park is described in the Thames Landscape Strategy as being one of the river's finest remaining naturalistic landscapes along the Thames.

38. Syon Estate

This character area is a well-established residential estate of inter-war, semi-detached and terraced two-storey housing. The suburban character of the area provides a high standard of residential amenity with large rear gardens. The uniform architectural style of the properties, the regular spaces between buildings and the road layout incorporating cul-de-sacs are very distinctive of the period in which the housing was completed. The landscaping of the estate is also important in extending the parkland seen through the Lion Gate from Syon Park.



London Borough
of Hounslow

LDD3

BRENTFORD AREA ACTION PLAN

Adopted 27 January 2009

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