



Historic England

Kingston Town Centre Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames Historic Area Study

Susie Barson

Discovery, Innovation and Science in the Historic Environment



**KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE
ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES**

HISTORIC AREA STUDY

Susie Barson

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Front cover: Ceramic mural on side wall of Eden Walk Shopping Centre, Eden Street, Kingston depicting seven Saxon kings crowned at Kingston. Beneath this is the River Thames, with the shield of the ancient coat of arms of the Royal Borough of Kingston. The bottom layer depicts tradesmen, historical figures and ancient buildings that once lined Eden Street. The mural was installed in 1985 on completion of the third and final phase of the shopping centre; the artist is Maggie Humphry. © Rod Allday

SUMMARY

An outline study of the historic growth, development and character of central Kingston upon Thames, produced in collaboration with Historic England's Planning and Listing Groups, in response to emerging redevelopment proposals in the locality.

CONTRIBUTORS

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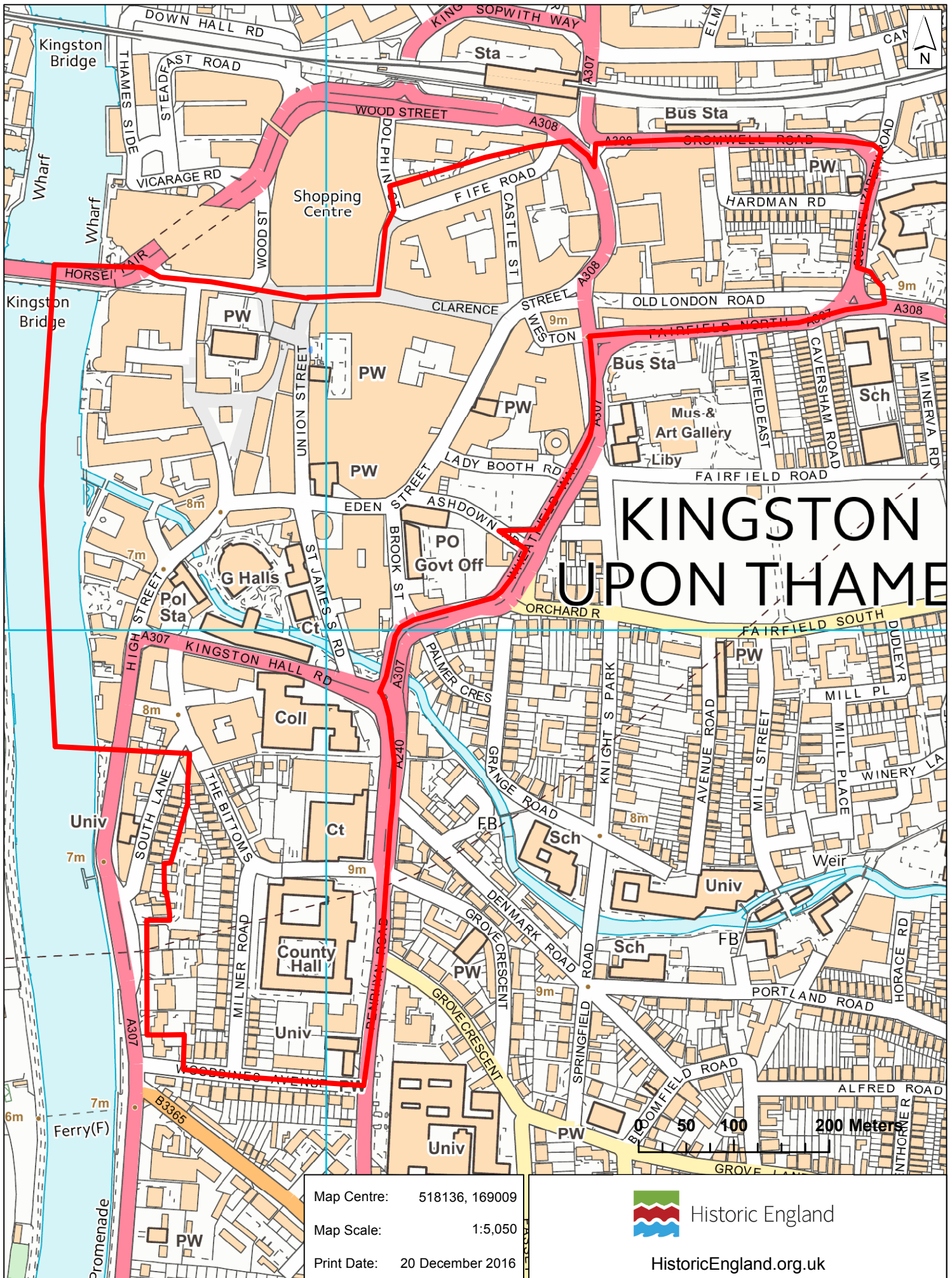
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Kingston



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This historic area study, produced by Historic England, focuses on Kingston town centre in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. By providing historical context and architectural analysis it aims to facilitate the future sustainable growth of this metropolitan centre, by increasing the understanding of Kingston's unique characteristics. This is not a statutory planning guidance document; rather an indication of what may be worthy of retention in future plans and development. This improved understanding should ensure that Kingston's historic environment is managed appropriately to protect its significance and character.

This study expands on the Council's appraisal of the Old Town Conservation Area and the local list of buildings of townscape merit, and:

- Deepens the understanding of the historical development of the area;
- Identifies and describes 'character areas', providing an evidence base for the retention of distinctive character for future master-planning and decision making;
- Documents the survival and significance of Kingston's stock of historic buildings and structures; describes the relationship between the town centre and the surrounding landscape; and provides a clearer sense of the area's archaeological potential;
- Highlights where heritage protection may need strengthening through new or revised designations; and
- Indicates where further research would be beneficial to provide a robust evidence base to understand the town centre and its capacity for change, before any further masterplanning work is undertaken.

Outcomes from the Area Study include the following:

- The identification of townscape and architectural qualities that could be used to inform new development.
- The recognition of the rich archaeological heritage of Kingston and some proposed research themes that could inform future studies to better enhance our understanding of Kingston's ancient past.
- The justification for the potential designation of Old London Road as a Conservation Area or as an extension to The Fairfield and Knights Park Conservation Area.
- The justification for the potential extension of the Riverside South Conservation Area to include the Bittoms, Milner Road and Woodbine Avenue. Alternatively a conservation area for the former Woodbines estate could be considered, encompassing County Hall.
- The identification of sensitive areas, notably on the eastern side of the town centre beside the relief road, which have various historic and architectural qualities. These areas need careful consideration to ensure that the compact nature of the old

town centre and the high quality historic residential suburban developments of the Fairfield and Knights Park Conservation Areas are appropriately addressed in new developments.

These outcomes should contribute to the Council's evidence base for the historic environment and be of value for future plans and proposals for change. Additionally, as part of the work undertaken for this study, Historic England is looking at updating the list descriptions for some nationally designated buildings in Kingston town centre. This should add clarity to decision making by highlighting more of the special features that the buildings were designated for.

INTRODUCTION

The study has been prepared by Historic England staff drawn from Research Group (Historic Places Investigation Team South), the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service and the London Region Planning Group. It has been produced in response to proposed development around the historic core of Kingston Town Centre as set out in *Kingston Futures - Vision & Strategy*, (R.B. Kingston, 2015), and the Council's Eden Quarter Development Brief Supplementary Planning Document (2015). Part of Kingston's strategy for growth includes: the wish to pursue the formal designation of the town centre as an opportunity area in the London Plan; to deliver more quality public space; and to promote increased visitor numbers through promoting heritage and tourism as business assets for the borough. It is with these three objectives that Historic England has sought to engage. The planning context will continue to evolve, but it is hoped that the historic context and assessment set out here will have continuing relevance and will be used to inform the development and subsequent implementation of the emerging development plans.

Kingston upon Thames is a major regional retail centre with an important administrative and business role as well as educational and residential aspects. The town centre has different character areas which reflect its historical development, in which these various activities are still intermixed. It retains an historical core centred on the Market Place, with elements dating as far back as the 12th century. This is now ringed by an area of 19th and 20th-century development that has also experienced a significant amount of post-war redevelopment, beyond which lies a peripheral area of suburban character into which civic and academic facilities have encroached.

Kingston town centre has considerable historical depth. Archaeological evidence confirms prehistoric human activity and Saxon settlement and its emergence as a strategically important town-cum-inland port and gateway to the south and west from the mid-to-late 12th century. There is some architectural evidence of its long existence as a market town, trading and industrial centre, particularly around Market Place but also along the historic route ways servicing the town (Portsmouth Road, Clarence Street, Eden Street). The great majority of buildings date from the last two centuries, a consequence of its growing importance as an industrial centre, with a core trade of brewing, and as a regional shopping centre. Residential

development around the town centre followed the arrival of the railway in the 1860s. During the 19th century Kingston also became a centre for two tiers of local government, the county and the borough. From 1910 Kingston was a major centre for the aeronautical industry, with many plane factories located north of the railway line. Production ceased in the early 1990s. Kingston experienced a significant phase of development in the inter-war years of the 20th century that helped maintain its commercial pre-eminence. Post-war redevelopment around the historic centre has been shaped by highways infrastructure, industrial decline, increasing retail provision and educational expansion.

The most significant and enduring aspect of the town's character is its retail and leisure function, witnessed by its evolution from a market town to a major regional shopping centre. This has played a key role in shaping its townscape. Other significant aspects are its business and administrative functions which have had an increasing presence in the town centre during the 20th century. Residential development, after shifting to the periphery, has in recent years returned to the town centre, particularly the riverside area. Much of this has taken place on brownfield sites, such as former industrial sites, and, as a consequence, this aspect of the town centre's character has changed significantly.

For the purposes of this study Kingston town centre has been broadly defined by the railway line to the north, the late 20th-century relief road (Cromwell Road, Queen Elizabeth Road, Wheatfield Way) and Woodbines Avenue to the south. It includes the Market Place, All Saints church and Riverside, an area designated as Kingston Old Town Conservation Area, as well as the modern town centre, incorporating two key growth areas, Eden Quarter and Station Quarter, that have been defined by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (*Kingston Futures Major Opportunity Areas, March 2015*). The study also extends partly into two adjacent character areas, Norbiton and Grove.

Purpose, methodology and structure

The primary aim of the Kingston Area Study is to provide information on the heritage significance of Kingston Town Centre, which complements the Kingston Old Town Conservation Area Appraisal. The approach is intentionally 'broad brush' rather than detailed; it does not seek to duplicate the information in the appraisal, rather to build on existing documentation by filling gaps (such as understanding post-war development close to the town centre) and identifying which components are of significance and contribute to the unique historic and architectural importance of Kingston.

The emphasis is on looking at buildings or areas that do not enjoy full statutory protection (such as the listed buildings around the Market Place or individual listed buildings) but which nevertheless have some historical and architectural merit that hitherto may have been overlooked, and which continue to contribute to the special quality and character of Kingston's historic built environment. In so doing, this Area Study will highlight opportunities for future developments to build on existing characteristics.

The Area Study does not make specific recommendations for action; rather it aims to inform and guide processes of regeneration through a broad understanding of how the historic development of Kingston has informed its distinctive character and appearance. It will also provide some pointers on how future development can be integrated into the centre in a considered way that may enhance its character, or at least not compound mistakes of the past. Historic England hopes that this document will become a useful and practical tool that will inform the management of Kingston's historic environment in an area where extensive change is being planned to take place in the next 10-20 years.

The scope and methodology of this study broadly approximates to an 'outline area assessment level 1' as set out in the Historic England guidance: *Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments: Principles and Practice* (2010), available on the Historic England website. That is to say it is primarily based on a combination of research, using mostly readily available documentary evidence and secondary sources supplemented by a limited amount of fieldwork, and a study of historic mapping. No systematic primary documentary research on individual sites and buildings has been undertaken, and no internal inspections of buildings were made.

Part 1 summarises the historical development of Kingston under broad thematic sub-headings. These comprise:

- The earliest evidence of the settlement of Kingston based on archaeological information which explains its subsequent strategic importance as a town-cum-inland port and gateway to the south and west;
- The growth of the area as an industrial town in the 19th century with the core trade of brewing;
- The rise of the importance of Kingston as a shopping and commercial centre of the south-east in the first half of the 20th century;
- Its expanding residential development around the core following the arrival of the railway in the 1860s;
- Post-war development triggered by traffic management issues and integration with London-bound transport links;
- Kingston in the wider landscape

Part 2, 'Areas', focuses on the chief interest of the character areas already identified by the local authority and highlights their key architectural attributes. This section includes hitherto undesignated areas of historic and architectural interest.

The conclusion summarises Kingston's historic townscape qualities from Historic England's Planning perspective. This is followed by a note on Listing outcomes which formed part of the project.

Appendix One: ‘Panoramic views of selected Kingston streets’ comprises a pictorial assessment that highlights aspects of Kingston’s townscape qualities that any new development may consider when assessing the historic context. This is necessarily selective rather than exhaustive in its use of representative evidence.

PART 1: SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The origins of Kingston; an evidence-based account

The historic core of the town is within a Borough-designated Area of Archaeological Significance, which covers the historic town centre and riverfront of Kingston, and areas of early occupation (Fig.1). Evidence has come from programmes of excavation from the 1960s to the 1990s, most recently with the major excavation in the 1990s prior to the Charter Quays riverside development.

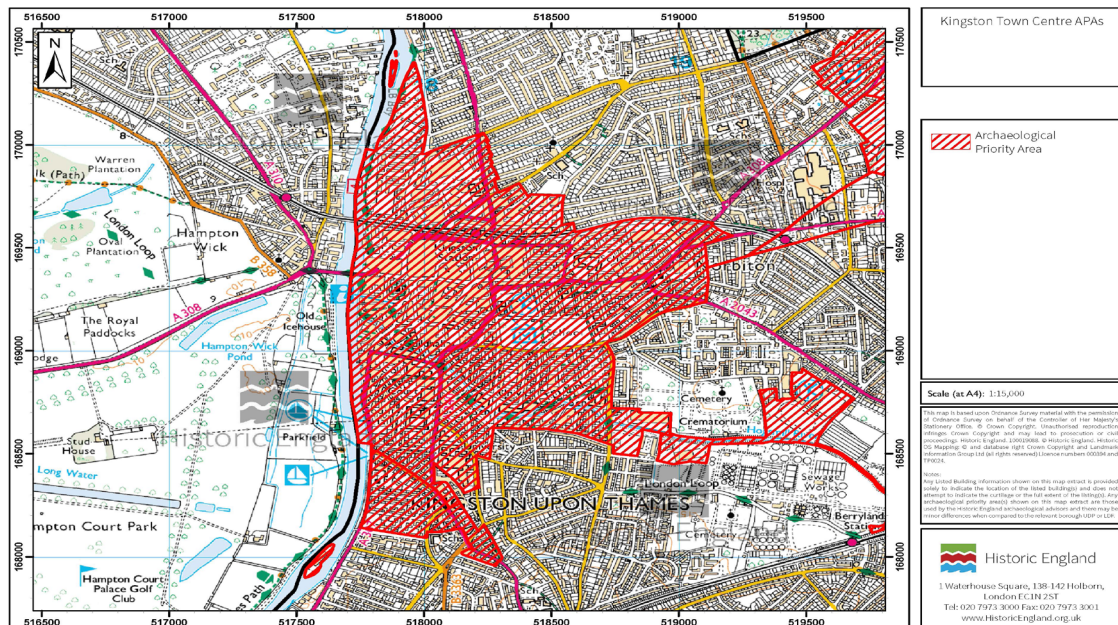


Fig.1 Map to show Kingston Town Centre Archaeological Priority Area. This map shows the rich potential for archaeological material in Kingston particularly around the Market Place, the Church of All Saints and its historic churchyard, where the remains of an earlier chapel on the site are buried. The Bishops Hall complex between the church and the river has high potential for Saxon remains which may be of national importance.

Prehistoric to Roman

The early formation and development of Kingston has been greatly influenced by its geology, topography and complex hydrological systems. In the postglacial period the Thames ran through a wide low-lying floodplain criss-crossed by tributaries, and Kingston was formed on a brickearth-capped gravel island. The island was formed by the Thames on its western side, the River Hogsmill on the south, a now

'lost' channel of the Hogsmill to the east and the braided channels of the Latchmere Stream/Downhall Ditch to the north¹. The lost channel of the Hogsmill ran north-east to south-west and was once a substantial watercourse. This eastern channel made what is now the historic core, containing All Saints Church (Grade I listed) and the Market Place, effectively an island².

As a result of this, much of Kingston's early archaeological evidence comes from waterlogged contexts, alluvial deposits and fills relating to the channel systems with settlement evidence on the higher, drier land between the watercourses³. In addition, the Thames at Kingston was a substantially wider and shallower river, but was canalised from the late 11th century – by around 75 metres at its confluence with the Hogsmill, some 50 metres in the area of Bishops Hall and some 25 metres in the area of the Horsefair, now the site of the John Lewis store⁴.

The prehistoric record for Kingston is fragmentary. There is little evidence for Palaeolithic (500,000 BC to 10,000 BC) activity, but evidence from the Thames and Hogsmill valleys suggests activity in and around the Kingston area probably from the Mesolithic period (10,000BC to 4,000 BC). In 1965 and 1968 excavations in Eden Walk revealed a channel of the Thames silting up from the Neolithic period (4,000 BC to 2,200 BC) onwards. Further excavations in 1974-77 recorded occupation debris from the Neolithic to Roman periods. This included a compact deposit of brushwood and branches sealed by a thick layer of clay. Associated finds (pottery, a human skull, animal bones, stone axes and flint flakes) suggested Neolithic /Bronze Age activity⁵.

In the vicinity of Kingston Hill there appears to have been a Late Bronze Age (c.1500 BC) defended settlement enclosed by a ditch, and there is some evidence for a significant bronze-working industry. Bronze Age settlement evidence was present in the form of post- and stake- holes and finds included loom weights. Cremations in pots in pits were also recovered. Bronze Age artefacts found around Kingston may indicate that it was a centre for the importation of copper and the production of bronze⁶.

Iron Age (700 BC to 43 AD) settlement evidence is present from the excavations in Orchard Road in 1995 and generally later prehistoric activity is evident on the dry gravel island and on the higher, dryer areas beyond the core of the town on Kingston Hill and Coombe Hill.

The spread of Roman (43 AD to 410 AD) finds from several locations across the town suggests a complex landscape peppered with Roman activity and settlement, apparently both sacred and domestic in nature. At Skerne Road, to the north of the town core, *in situ* evidence for Roman occupation has been found spanning the first to fourth centuries and investigations at 2 Clarence Street in 1988 also now appear to represent settlement activity⁷. A channel at 82 Eden Street contained Roman artefacts of possible votive origin, including an assemblage of 355 coins and associated finds including jewellery, lead strips (possibly curses), smelting waste and numerous iron nails⁸. Some building material was also recovered within the channel, including roof tiles, flue tile, painted wall plaster and cut stone and ashlar blocks.

Subsequent investigations at 70-76 Eden Street in 1995 revealed a pit containing Roman finds⁹. Antiquarian references to the discovery of the Roman altar from Eden Street and to the Coombe Neville Roman mosaic pavement, both now in Kingston Museum, are questionable and the origin of these significant heritage assets from the town cannot be confirmed. There are, however, well recorded 19th century records of a Roman inhumation cemetery with grave goods from the Canbury Fields area, now known as the Surrey Basin. Recent investigations in this part of the town constantly reveal finds of prehistoric pottery, although previous brick-earth quarrying and development may have removed much of the archaeological resource.

The archaeological evidence suggests an enigmatic spread of prehistoric and Roman settlement and possibly religious activity across the town and along the valleys of the Hogsmill and the Thames. The interrelationship of the Roman settlements at Kingston with the wider settlement patterns of the Hogsmill valley including the important Roman settlement and probable religious centre at Ewell and possible stock raising centre at Old Malden are key topics for future research. Clarification of the nature of prehistoric and Roman activity to the east of the town around Kingston Hill/Coombe Hill also remains a priority.

Saxon settlement to medieval town

Kingston developed from a rural settlement in the early Saxon period (5th-7th century AD) to an important Royal estate centre by the tenth and eleventh centuries, as recorded in Domesday Book¹⁰. The historic settlement of Kingston upon Thames was important both as a secular and as an ecclesiastical centre from the seventh century, with evidence of a royal connection from AD 838 and in AD 925 Athelstan was crowned here as King of the English. The royal administration may have included an important church - possibly on the site of the 11th century Chapel of St Mary, just south of the present Church of All Saints or just west of this, in the area still retaining the 'Bishops Hall' place-name. Most notably this area of the town could contain important human burial archaeology, relating to the burial grounds of All Saints Church and of earlier iterations of the church and a potential minster burial ground. It is possible that a very large number of human burials dating from the Saxon period, but particularly medieval and post-medieval in date may be present across the historic core.

Early Saxon activity is focused in several distinct locations across the town. In the 1974-76 excavations at Eden Walk, the 1978 excavations at 76 Eden Street and the 1989 excavations at 82 Eden Street/7-17 Lady Booth Street on the east of the modern town centre, quantities of chaff-tempered pottery of 5th-7th century date were recovered. Excavations at Brook Street in 1985 recovered a large quantity of 6th-7th century pottery¹¹. These settlements appear to be broadly domestic in nature, but archaeological remains of possibly high status settlement dating to the 5th to 7th centuries have been found at South Lane and the Bittoms, including a substantial hall building, and evidence of weaving and antler-working¹².

Kingston's urban origins appear to date to the mid-to-late 12th century when it became a thriving medieval market town centred upon a new bridge, a rebuild of the

parish church, the Market Place, and commercial and industrial activity relating to the river system.

The town was awarded its first recorded charter (a document granting the townspeople certain rights) in 1200, and the town's importance grew. King John had a residence here, as did the Bishop of Winchester. The ancient river crossing at Hogsmill was the link between the former counties of Middlesex and Surrey. The earliest documentary evidence for a bridge across the Thames at Kingston is from 1193¹³. Archaeological evidence from the extensive bridge excavation that took place in the 1990s suggests a date of no earlier than 1170¹⁴. Therefore the existence of a Saxon bridge seems unlikely; although it does appear that the Thames was fordable at Kingston during the Saxon period. The medieval road system converged on the bridge and the central island would have been characterised by small bridges across the various watercourses. Of these the Clattern Bridge, crossing the Hogsmill south of the Market Place, is the only survivor, roughly contemporary with the first bridge at Kingston. The Clattern Bridge is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Other medieval bridges are recorded at Kingston¹⁵. There is evidence of extensive flooding in Kingston in the medieval and post medieval periods, particularly around the High Street area, and the course and confines of the Thames and Hogsmill were not stabilised until the end of the 19th century.

The town is particularly significant in the medieval period for the production of the Kingston type of Surrey Whiteware pottery. This was used in London and the Thames Valley from the 13th century onwards. Several sites in the Eden Street, Union Street and London Road area have revealed nationally important pottery remains, including vast collections of pottery, wasters and kilns¹⁶.

Major archaeological excavations at the Horsefair¹⁷ and on the Charter Quays site have provided significant data on the thriving town of Kingston in the medieval and post-medieval periods¹⁸. Many of the town's earliest medieval buildings would have been constructed along the river frontage and around Market Place; extensive foundations of a series of medieval buildings with long plots extending from Market Place to the river were found.

Most of these medieval remains have now gone. The major surviving early building, apart from the 13th to 15th century elements of All Saints Church, is the grade II*- listed Lovekyn Chapel, a chantry chapel founded in 1309 and partly rebuilt in 1352. Elements of the medieval Kingston bridge and a medieval undercroft from the Horsefair excavations have been preserved within the John Lewis development but are not *in situ*. These important monuments are not on regular public display. Part of a medieval pillar, probably from a merchant's house, is on display outside Kingston Library. The King's Stone part of the fabric of St Mary's Chapel is on display outside the Kingston Guildhall. A Jacobean staircase is preserved within Nos 6-9 Market Place.

Notwithstanding these losses, the old core of the town around All Saints Church and Market Place, with its recognisably medieval street pattern, is described as 'the best preserved of its type in outer London', by Pevsner.¹⁹

Archaeological research themes:

The Museum of London 2002 publication *A research framework for London archaeology 2002* sets out the major chronological and thematic research questions for the archaeology of London²⁰. Further excavations and research in Kingston upon Thames offers the opportunity to contribute to these important objectives.

A selection of primary research themes for Kingston includes the following:

- Contribute to the regional model for prehistoric and later activity from analysis of the topography, hydrology, landscape and environment studies;
- Identify the chronology and character of prehistoric and later landscape, river and road transport systems, settlement and land management;
- Examine the role and diversity of religion and belief in Roman and post-Roman society;
- Understand water and river management systems and their utilisation;
- Understand the development of the town, regional context, royal connections, social status, *etc.*;
- Contribute to research objectives on the historic economy, production, distribution, and material culture, e.g. the Surrey Whiteware industry;
- Identify the people and society of Kingston, demography, religion, burial practice.

Growth of Kingston (1600-1945)

The 1813 map in Fig.2 shows the principal routes (Portsmouth Road running north-south, London Road running east-west), field boundaries, relative plot sizes and shapes, the earliest bridge, the open spaces of Horsefair and Market Place, the Hogsmill River, a tributary of the Thames. In the centre is a topographical view of the Market Place looking north, with the former Market Building in the foreground and the church with its re-built tower in the background. In the right-hand bottom corner, the prominence of the church tower in the wider landscape is depicted, and can still be appreciated today from Richmond Park, from the south west.

For centuries the river has been the hub of Kingston's commercial and social life. Because of the Thames, Kingston was a busy inland port, serving as the main connection from London to western Sussex and central Surrey. Goods sent from London to Kingston by boat completed their journey by road. Conversely, goods sent by road to Kingston went on by barge to London. In a charter granted by Charles I in 1628, Kingston is described as a 'very ancient and populous town situated on the banks of the celebrated and navigable river Thames...from which town, by means of river, different goods and merchandizes, laden wherries and boats, are daily transported backwards and forward to our City of London and the adjacent parts.' Raw materials such as timber and sea-coal, and produce such as wine, malt and hops were some of the cargo items being transported up and down the river between Kingston and the port of London. Charles I stated that no other town within seven



Fig. 2 Plan of the Town and Parish of Kingston upon Thames drawn by Thomas Horner 'Land surveyor, Pictorial and Descriptive Planner of Estates etc,' 1813 © British Library Board/K.top.40.15.3.11.Tab

miles was to hold a market, a right still in force today. Because of this right and because of its position as a crossing point on the Thames, Kingston has always been a major shopping centre attracting traders and customers alike from a wider area.

Industrial growth

Kingston's historic trades and industries – malting and brewing, tanning, salmon fishing and timber exporting - were indivisibly linked to the town's excellent communications with the rest of Surrey and points southwest via the Portsmouth Road and towards London via the River Thames. During the 17th century malting and brewing flourished in the town as the dry ingredients arrived easily via road or river. The Thames and Hogsmill rivers provided the water for beer and London provided an invaluable source of custom for the products. The rivers were also the site of waterside industries such as boat-building, tanning, and pottery. Kingston grew into a thriving inland port as it provided fast access into the heart of London's Thameside wharves, suitable for the transportation of large quantities of bulky goods such as timber and coal. These industries and the trades associated with the port were therefore concentrated in two spines through the town, east-west along the Hogsmill river and north-south along the High Street and the Thames itself between Horsefair and the Bittoms.

Kingston was also an agricultural and market town until the 19th century when several industries developed. On the riverside there was a tannery, a timber yard, and boat-building. Grinding of linseed oil took over from grain milling for flour. Brewing dominated Kingston at the end of the 19th century.

Changes which made most impact on the spread of the town came in the 19th century. The medieval bridge across the Thames was replaced with another built between 1825 and 1828 on a new site upstream from the old bridge. It was built to the designs of Edward Lapidge, the Surrey County Surveyor, and opened by the Duchess of Clarence, hence the renaming of the street approaching the bridge as Clarence Street. The 1825 Act for the rebuilding of Kingston Bridge necessitated the destruction of houses in order to align the new road with the bridge approach. Clarence Street was the name given to the short strip of new road (nos 7-19) and at a later date, in the 1840s, the name was applied to the whole of the street from the foot of the bridge to the junction with Eden Street. Just north of this was the old Horsefair. All this has been covered over by the John Lewis building (completed in 1992) but excavations in Old Bridge Street and Horsefair in the 1980s revealed medieval vaulted cellars, one of which has been retained on the riverside walk by the John Lewis building.

Gas light came in 1833; the railway arrived in 1863, and encouraged the growth of the residential suburbs around the town. This was late in terms of railways around London, later than Surbiton to the south (1840), which helps explain the tightly defined town centre and proximity to high status, pre-railway suburban housing. William Woods was a developer who built much of Surbiton and Grove Road and constructed the first portion of the riverside walk, Queen's Promenade, in the early 1880s. Canbury Gardens just north of the bridge was opened in 1890. Traffic in the Edwardian period increased, and in 1911 the engineers Mott and Hay were engaged to widen the bridge on the downstream side. It was reopened in 1914; the addition is clearly visible on the underside of the bridge. Growth in both the resident population and visitors meant more customers for the consumption of beer, and a large number of pubs were built in Kingston's town centre.

Certain industries such as malting were rendered commercially unviable once the railway arrived and considerably lowered the transport costs (and therefore the price) of malthouses beyond Kingston's vicinity, but brewing itself continued to thrive well into the 20th century. Four key firms dominated the Kingston brewing trade: Hodgson's, Nightingales, East's and Fricker's. Hodgson's was the largest, operating on a sprawling site on Brook Street adjacent to the Hogsmill River that had been developed through the second half of the 19th century. After the site finally closed in 1965 and the buildings burned down in 1971, it was developed alongside the relief road with large-scale office buildings and a multi-storey car-park (see 'Post War Kingston' below). Fricker's Eagle Brewery operated between the High Street and the Thames and ceased operations in the early 20th century after a takeover by Hodgson's; the site is now primarily landscaped open space adjacent to the river. Nightingale's operated along the Thames at Horsefair until the site was acquired for municipal housing in 1891 and later redeveloped as John Lewis in the 1980s. East's operated further east along the Hogsmill at Villiers Road and following a series of takeovers became a large winery that was eventually redeveloped as housing after its closure in 1989. During the 1870s and 1880s new roads and houses were built on the old Kingston Brewery site south-east of the Market Place down to the Bittoms (Fig.3).



Fig.3 Map redrawn in 1900. The map indicates the number of pubs around the Market Place area and the site of the Kingston Brewery to the south east.

These breweries would once have made a collective visual impact on Kingston, making it appear a town of industry, but due to redevelopment this is now difficult to appreciate overall in terms of townscape. Only along the Thames at the empty site of the Eagle Brewery is it possible to gain the sense that large-scale functional buildings were once characteristic of this working quarter of the town. Neighbouring schemes such as Charter Quay, the Riverside complex and the John Lewis building all have a largely successful visual relationship with the river and contribute to a sympathetic redevelopment of an area that would have enjoyed an architectural scene varied in scale and function and had an animated, busy atmosphere of trade and industry.

Commercial Growth

The Market Place and Thames Street were Kingston's prime shopping areas from the medieval period until the latter part of the 19th century. Thereafter, Clarence Street began its transformation from an unfashionable thoroughfare to an important shopping location. This was exemplified by the rise of Bentsalls Department Store, which had started as a small drapery store at No 31 Clarence Street in 1867 and gradually expanded until it became the largest privately owned store in Europe until 1946. By the turn of the 20th century, if not earlier, Kingston had become a major regional shopping centre, along with Croydon to the south east. They both formed important foci of shopping, leisure and entertainment for the greater metropolitan area, while in the same period districts located more closely to London's centre were becoming equivalent suburban shopping centres (in south London, located in

Brixton, Lewisham, Peckham, Woolwich and Bromley). What characterised major regional and shopping centres were the range of facilities they provided, including banks, building societies, insurance offices, cinemas and theatres, as well as shops supplying goods that ranged from the all-important necessities such as clothes to

more expensive items such as furniture. Local department stores and multiple and chain stores, which had begun to proliferate towards the end of the 19th century, were also very characteristic of such centres.



Fig.4 Castle Street: 1939 shopping parade with flats above, accessed from the rear. © Historic England



Fig.5 Halifax Building Society, 86-88 Eden Street. The building was opened in 1935 as part of a circle of offices in outer London to expand home ownership. It was designed by architects Gale, Heath and Sneath. Above the main entrances are two relief groups containing neo-classical figures holding a panel decorated with blue and gold painted squares, and a relief head of John the Baptist with the Lamb and Flag. At the top of one panel the word 'Halefaz' appears, from the Old English meaning 'holy face'. The name of the artist is not known. © Historic England

Inter-war growth in outer London resulted in increasing numbers of people settling within easy reach of Kingston. Apart from the formation of a new road to the bridge, the old principal routes shown on Horner's map of 1813 – Church Street, Thames Street, Wood Street, Eden Street (formerly Heathen Street) and Brook Street - continued to be used until an increasing amount of traffic on the A3 to London road persuaded the local authority to build the Kingston by-pass in 1927. It was one of the first arterial roads to be built in Britain, and led to the expansion of Kingston southwards. Bentalls department store was re-built in 1935 on a site bounded by Wood Street, Clarence Street and Dolphin Street (Wood Street was widened at this time). Several historic buildings were demolished to clear the site: the Jubilee Temperance Hotel, All Saints School and the public swimming bath. Bentalls was built to the designs of Maurice E. Webb, son of renowned architect Sir Aston Webb, in the 'Wrennaissance' style embodied by the William and Mary Wing at Hampton Court; an architectural reference to Kingston's illustrious neighbour. It bears fine stonework reliefs by Eric Gill.



Fig.6 HSBC Bank, 52-54 Clarence Street at the junction with Eden Street. Architects F.C.R. Palmer with W. Holden for clients National Provincial Bank, 1929. © Historic England

The rebuilding and expansion of Bentalls in 1935, and other developments in the interwar years represented a significant expansion of the retail area in Kingston, as it continued to spread outwards from the historic centre particularly to the north (e.g. Bentalls repository). Even in the Market Place itself, retail use was placed in premises formerly associated with brewing and beer consumption. Following the rebuilding of the railway station in 1934-5 a new shopping thoroughfare was created in 1939 between Clarence Street and Fife Street, called Castle Street (Fig.4). This improved the connection between the station and the town centre. Castle Street was a single-phased development comprising shops and showrooms, with flats above, on both sides of the street.²¹ Examples of well-designed commercial buildings of the interwar period survive in this area: the Halifax Building Society building (1935, Gale, Heath and Sneath, architects; Fig.5) and the former National Provincial Bank, now HSBC (1929, F.C.R. Palmer, with W. Holden; Fig.6).

Administrative growth

The population of Kingston leapt from c.8,000 in 1841 to 37,000 in 1901. Suburban residential development followed the coming of the railway in 1863, with much of Kingston's open land developed by the 1890s. East of Kingston, Norbiton was soon built up along London Road as a residential area; Surbiton to the south developed quickly after the arrival of the railway there in 1838 – 25 years earlier than Kingston.

Kingston became an urban district council in 1894 and carried out its administrative and civic duties from a regency mansion named Clattern House. By the 1930s this building had proved increasingly inadequate, and was demolished to make way for the new Guildhall built in 1934-5, to the designs of Maurice E. Webb. The Borough of Kingston was formed in 1936, and the new local authority was housed in the Guildhall. Inside this handsome Grade II-listed neo-Georgian building was a public hall and gallery, with law courts on the lower ground floor. In 1965, The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames was created out of the amalgamation of the former Surrey boroughs: Kingston, Surbiton, New and Old Malden, and Coombe. In the 1970s and 1980s new blocks Guildhalls One and Two (Ronald Ward and Partners) were added to either side of the Webb's Guildhall to provide extra office

accommodation. A proposed fire station was not built, but a late 20th-century red-brick county court and a police station were built nearby, strengthening the civic character of this area.

Surrey County Council relocated to Kingston in 1892 from Newington Sessions House in London to purpose-built premises in Portsmouth Road. The County Hall was extended in several phases in the 1930s, '60s and '70s - see 'Areas' below. Other significant surviving public buildings include the police station in London Road of the 1860s (Grade II, Fig.7); Kingston Library and Museum (Grade II); the post office and telephone exchange on Brook Street (Grade II), and the 1970s Magistrates' Court in Portsmouth Road.

Post-war development (1945-2015)

By the mid-20th century Kingston was a major business, shopping and administrative centre serving Surrey and Greater London. Little redevelopment had yet taken place but the town centre was being increasingly affected by traffic congestion. Kingston had one of the few bridges over Thames in the area, heavily used by traffic moving between south-west Middlesex, south London and metropolitan Surrey (and for access to the growing airport at Heathrow). Its shops and entertainment facilities drew visitors from the surrounding area and the town centre was a focal point in the regional bus network. In the early 1960s the local authority sought to address both the congestion issue and the centre's future development needs through a major town planning scheme. Staff from Surrey County Council's planning department and Kingston's Borough Surveyor Department worked for two years on a plan for a Comprehensive Development Area. The plan, overseen by E. G. Siebert (Deputy County Planning Officer) and K. M. Beer (Borough Surveyor), was published in 1963.²² It proposed a local ring road around the town centre and separate roads, described as 'throughways', for non-local traffic (Fig.8). The latter ran east-west and north-south and would have necessitated a new bridge across the Thames. The 'master design' also identified areas for redevelopment within the ring road, including space for shops, offices and multi-storey car parks. The principles of the plan included isolating the centre from traffic, preserving the historic Market Place area, creation of paved pedestrian areas and safe (i.e. traffic free) retail areas in the centre, provision of 10,000 car-parking spaces near the ring road and giving bus passengers 'equal privileges' with motorists by providing routes within the ring and a 'near-in' bus station. The 'master design', planned as a 20-year programme of works,



Fig.7 Former police station, Old London Road, Charles Reeves for the Metropolitan Police, 1865 (Grade II). © Historic England

provided the context for much of central Kingston's redevelopment in the following decades but key elements such as the ring road and throughways were casualties of local government reform and changing planning approaches.

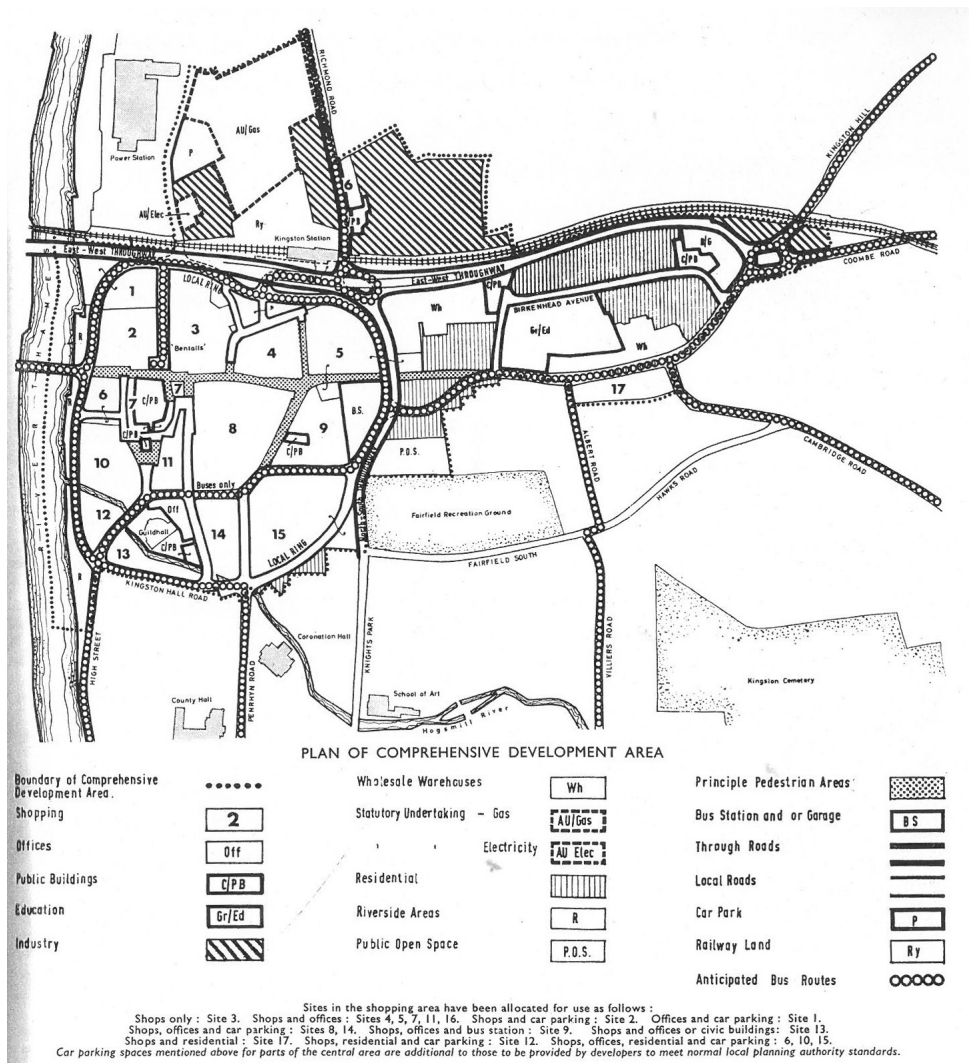


Fig.8 Kingston Upon Thames Town Centre Scheme, 1963, published in 'Official Architecture and Planning' June 1963 pp 529-35

The proposals were submitted to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government by Surrey County Council in 1963 and a public inquiry was held the following year. However, the minister's decision was overtaken by the creation of the county of Greater London in 1965. The road scheme was then incorporated into the initial thinking about Greater London planning in 1967 but detailed consideration had to await the completion of the Greater London Development Plan, then in preparation. By 1969 the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, faced with a worsening traffic situation in the town centre, were pressing for construction to begin. Approval for an initial phase of development was obtained but work had not started by 1974. By this time the Greater London Council (GLC), who were responsible for the major road elements, had undergone a change of heart and refused to support the ring road, which they thought 'incompatible with the conservation of the important medieval centre of Kingston.'²³

In 1974 a joint working party was formed with staff from the GLC and the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. The priority for the GLC was to not jeopardise the unique character of Kingston, while for the council the key concerns were maintaining the town centre's importance as a regional shopping centre and re-routing through traffic. Consideration now turned to a relief road from the bridge and passing around the north, east and south of the town centre following, in places, the general line of the abandoned ring road. Various schemes were proposed, including ones submitted by Kingston's Labour councillors and the Kingston upon Thames Society, an amenity group that had been battling against the ring road. Deliberations continued until 1979 when the present road arrangement was agreed, described as 'the best solution to a number of complex problems'.²⁴ One interim improvement scheme at the Cromwell Road/Queen Elizabeth Road intersection was completed in 1978, while construction of the relief road scheme, which included Horsefair, Sopwith Way and Wheatfield Way, was finally complete by 1990.

The 1963 proposals that related to future development in the town centre are worth quoting in full:

Shopping is to predominate within the ring. Grouped around the old nucleus of Bentalls, Clarence Street and the historic Market Place will be a number of new shopping precincts with car parking, offices and residential over. The main existing shopping areas to be retained will be turned into pedestrian ways as traffic is progressively removed. The precincts grouped to form a regional centre are linked by a system of pedestrian ways. Each precinct is designed to be a separate entity with visual characteristics of its own. All are bound together in a master design which represents an amalgam of low masses of shops with the solid bulk of car parks and slender blocks of offices and flats set at strategic points in relation to them and to existing features of the urban scene, e.g. the Parish Church and the Market Place. There will be an interweaving of open areas throughout. Along the riverfront a new river scene will be created with linked pedestrian areas and walks on an intimate scale and with the provision for pleasure craft.²⁵

Some elements of the 'master design', notably new shopping precincts, car parks and office development, were carried out in the 1960s and 1970s. One scheme was the Eden Walk Shopping Centre, a group of malls and multi-storey car park built in three stages, 1964-5, 1977-9 and 1985 (Fig.9). This was designed by Ronald Ward and Partners, who had been appointed consultant architects to Kingston Council during the development of the master design. The shopping centre, and other less extensive redevelopments nearby, significantly altered the townscape of Eden Street and Union Street and required the demolition of a number of historic buildings. Ronald Ward and Partners was a successful and prolific architectural firm specialising in commercial buildings in the immediate post-war period. The firm carried out a number of comparable schemes including its first tall building, St George's House in Croydon in 1959, the year that the scheme was approved as part of the central development scheme made possible by the Croydon Corporation Act of 1956. This building is currently being converted to flats by EPR architects.



Fig.9 Eden Walk Shopping Centre, Eden Street (Ronald Ward and Partners, completed 1985) © Historic England

Once the threat of the ring road had been averted, the historic core around the Market Place and the Thames-side buildings to the west were designated the Old Kingston Conservation Area in 1974. The protection of its historic buildings was reinforced by a listing review in 1985, which added a number of buildings of architectural and historic interest to the national statutory list.

One of the 'solid bulk of car parks and slender blocks of flats' to be built was a block designed by Owen Luder and Partners on Wheatfield Way (then Fairfield West), completed in 1975. This late example of a mixed commercial development in the Brutalist manner is now part of the Premier Inn hotel chain (Fig.10). This occupied part of a site intended for a bus station in the 1963 master design. In 1979 the local authority returned to the provision of multi-story car parks, producing a report that identified a number of possible sites including Kingston Hall Road, that were subsequently developed. The early 1980s saw a significant amount of office provision in central Kingston. The largest single office development, Kingsgate House, Wood Street, was completed in 1986.



Fig.10 Combined House (Premier Inn and car park), Wheatfield Way (Owen Luder, 1975) © Historic England

*Fig.11 John Lewis
Department Store,
Kingston (Ahrends, Burton
and Koralek 1979-92) ©
Historic England*



A subsequent wave of commercial redevelopment to the north of Clarence Street was carried out in the 1990s in conjunction with the relief road. John Lewis began planning for a large new riverside store around 1980. The site was eventually redeveloped by architects Ahrends, Burton and Koralek in 1992 as a 5-level department store for John Lewis, including terraces stepping down to the riverside, and 4-level shopping centre with 100 retail units (Fig.11). The Horsefair section of the relief road runs diagonally through the site and beneath the store. The high-quality building has impressive vaulted atrium and large single-truss escalator encased in a soft yellow brick-faced envelope that sits well on the riverfront. On the adjacent block Bentalls teamed up with Norwich Union in 1986 to undertake a new four-storey shopping mall and department store, the Bentall Centre, retaining the Grade II listed Wood Street façade of the 1935 building by Maurice E. Webb (see Panorama, Appendix One). The redevelopment was completed in 1992. A new Marks and Spencer opened on Clarence Street in 1995 and by 1997 Kingston had 3.5million square feet of retail space making it one of the major shopping centres in the south-east of England.

The construction of the road improvements and relief road necessitated the demolition of five large town centre pubs. The first to go, in 1975, was the Kingston Hotel (1879) opposite the station. Next the 300-year-old Row Barge in Old Bridge Street in 1982. This was followed in 1985 by The Castle on the corner of Fairfield Road and Fairfield West (now Wheatfield Way). The Royal Charter in Canbury Place, The Magnet in London Road and the Jolly Brewer had all gone by 1988. The Three Compasses, an Edwardian rebuilding of a Tudor building, was demolished in the 1980s. The completion of the relief road allowed for the final elements of proposals for pedestrian-only areas to be implemented and the relocation of the bus and coach stations. The diversion of traffic away from London Road allowed for its re-landscaping in 1989 and the installation of David Mach's notable sculpture 'Out of Order', a row of historic red telephone boxes leaning one upon another in a domino effect.

Since the 1990s residential development has begun to have an impact on central Kingston. Much of this has been focused to the north of the railway, including the redevelopment of a number of sites related to the aeronautical industry. A major scheme on land bounded by the Thames, Market Place and the High Street took place between 2000 and 2003, the Charter Quay scheme by developers St George. The re-opening of the riverside to public access is another legacy of post-war planning policies.

Kingston in the wider landscape

To the west of Kingston, across the natural border of the River Thames and the village of Hampton Wick, lie the extensive grounds of Hampton Court Palace. Hampton Court Park, sometimes called Home Park, is a Royal Park managed by Hampton Court Palace. It comprises a walled deer park of around 700 acres in area and has been open to the public since 1894. The A308 (Hampton Court Road) and the River Thames form its boundaries; north of the A308 is Bushy Park.

One of the main features of the park is the long straight canal, Long Water, created in the 1660s, under Charles II to the designs of Andre Mollet in the strong French tradition of Andre Le Nôtre. The canal runs roughly eastwards from the back of Hampton Court Palace, and terminates in the Wilderness (completed in the 1690s). Two avenues radiated out from the palace, either side of the Long Water. These are clearly shown in a bird's eye view engraving by Daniel Marot published in 1689 (Fig.12). The most northerly radial avenue, leads away from the palace and the Grand Parterre (created by Marot), towards Kingston, denoted by the church spire in the drawing. (The wooden spire was removed in 1703 after severe storm damage). Kingston Avenue, more or less 30 feet from the Long Water, was, according to Simon Thurley's book on Hampton Court published in 2003, 'aligned upon the spire of Kingston church, and the Ditton Avenue terminated in a semi-circle; the Kingston Avenue stopped in its tracks in order to preserve the view of the church spire. The planting of these avenues locked the geometry of the park on the east front parterre



Fig. 12 Daniel Marot perspective drawing for the Grand Parterre at Hampton Court facing East 1689. Kingston church spire can be seen terminating the alleé, Kingston Avenue, on the left hand side © Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

and the park itself into the wider landscape.’²⁶ This relationship between the Palace and Kingston is shown on royal gardener Charles Bridgeman’s plan drawn up in 1711: ‘A general plan of Hampton Court Palace Gardens and Parks’ (Fig.13).

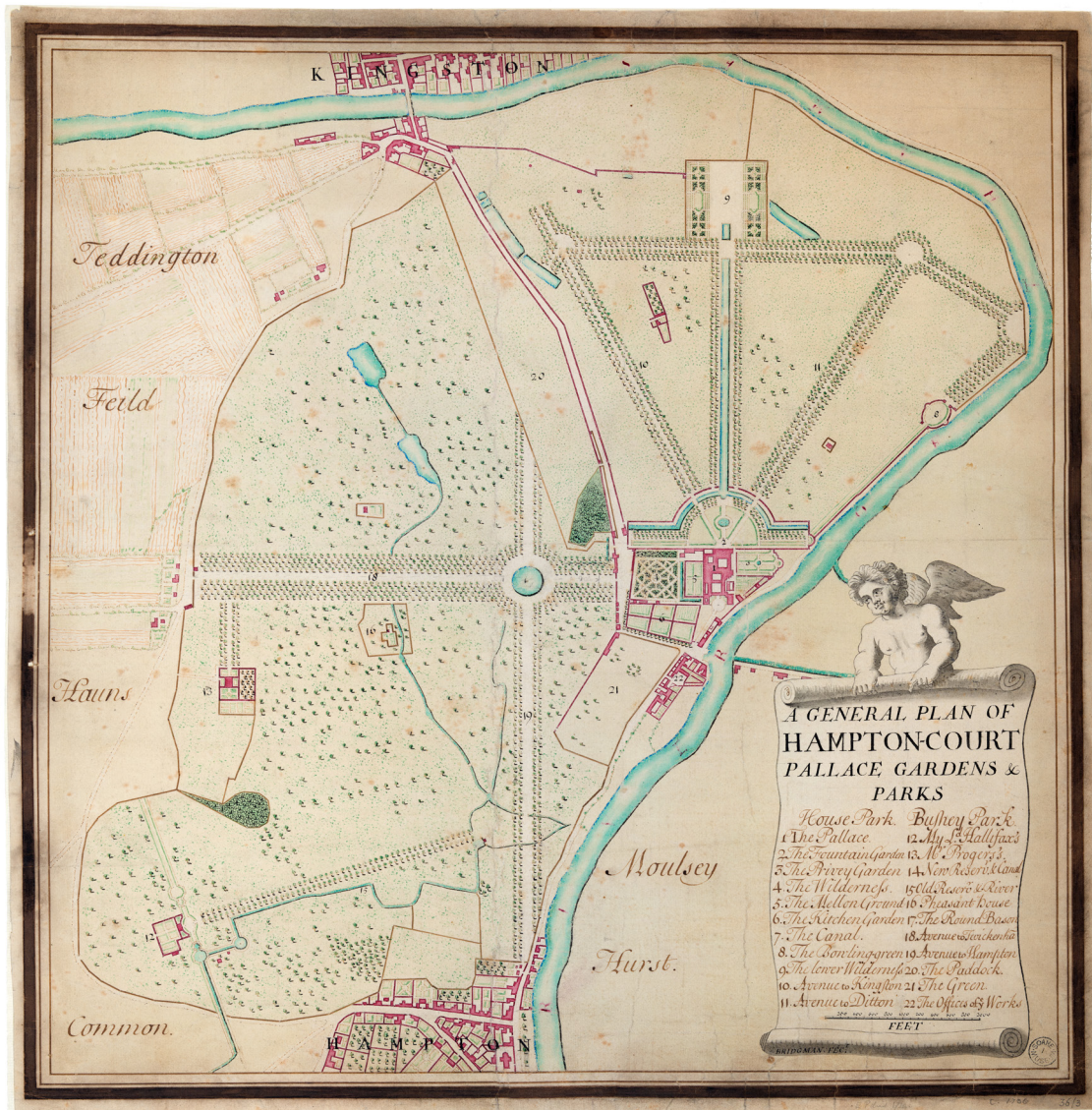
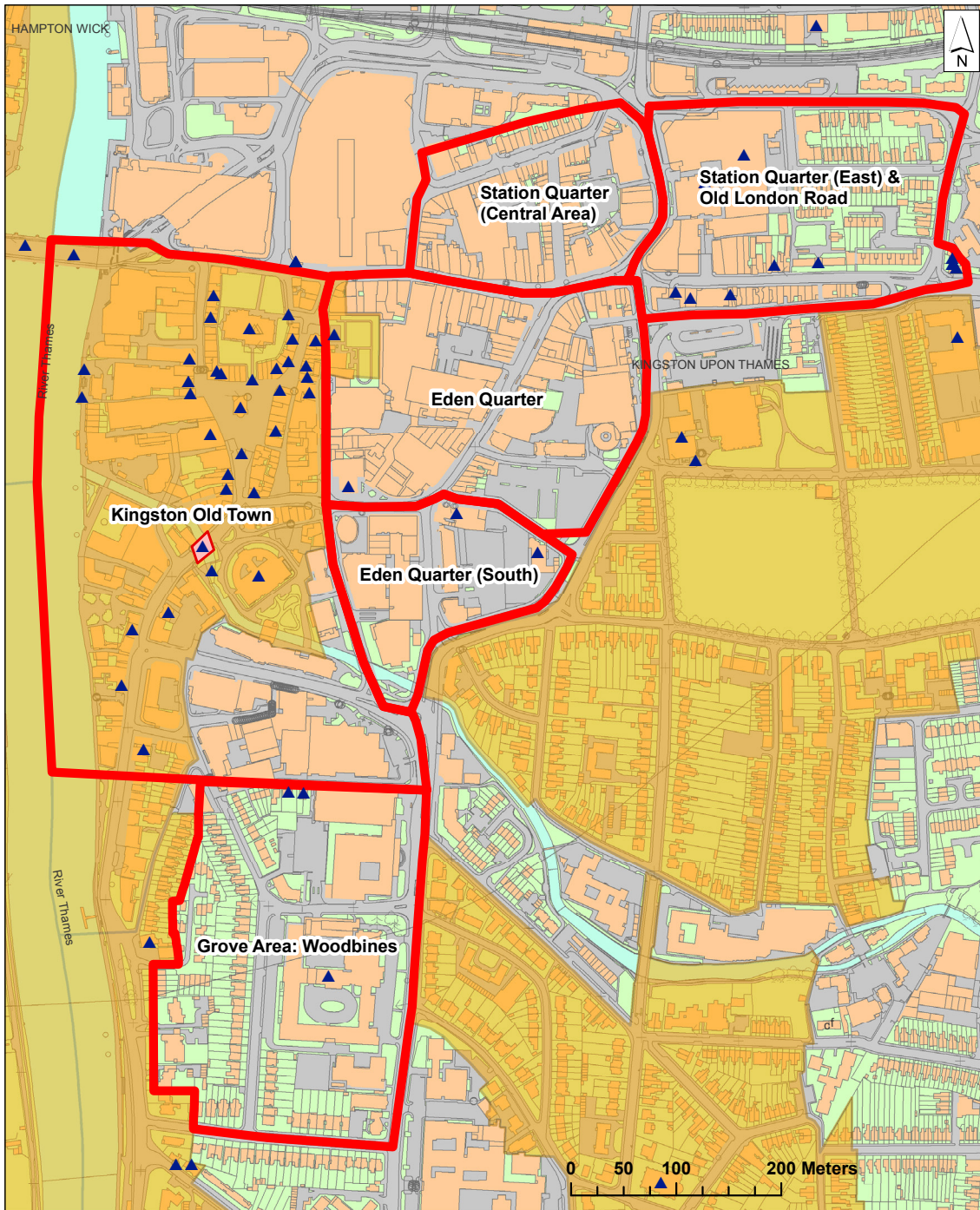


Fig. 13 Charles Bridgeman ‘A general plan of Hampton Court Palace Gardens and Parks’ 1711 © Sir John Soane’s Museum, London

At present, the view to Kingston has been interrupted by the presence of yew trees around the Grand Parterre, which are not in line with the traditional design scheme; in the future it may be considered desirable to re-instate the view to Kingston from Hampton Court Palace by thinning some of the later planting, as has been done with the southern formal gardens. The scholarly reinstatement of the original planting design would enhance the significance of the registered park, and enhance the setting of the Palace.

Kingston



Map Centre: 518097, 169032
 Map Scale: 1:4,750
 Print Date: 20 December 2016

- ▲ Listed Buildings
- Scheduled Monuments
- Conservation Areas



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PART 2: CHARACTER AREAS

These areas have broadly distinctive characters. The area up to the railway line includes the early high street Clarence Road with its diverse mixture of Victorian terraced houses and shops interspersed with inter-war banks, a single-phase shopping parade with flats above in Castle Street, and post-war commercial offices. Eden Quarter comprises substantial areas given over to post-war car parks, offices, shopping malls, and civic buildings as well as residential streets of historic and/or architectural interest to the south and eastern fringes of the historic centre. Station Quarter includes the historic Old London Road.

Kingston Old Town Conservation Area, including Riverside

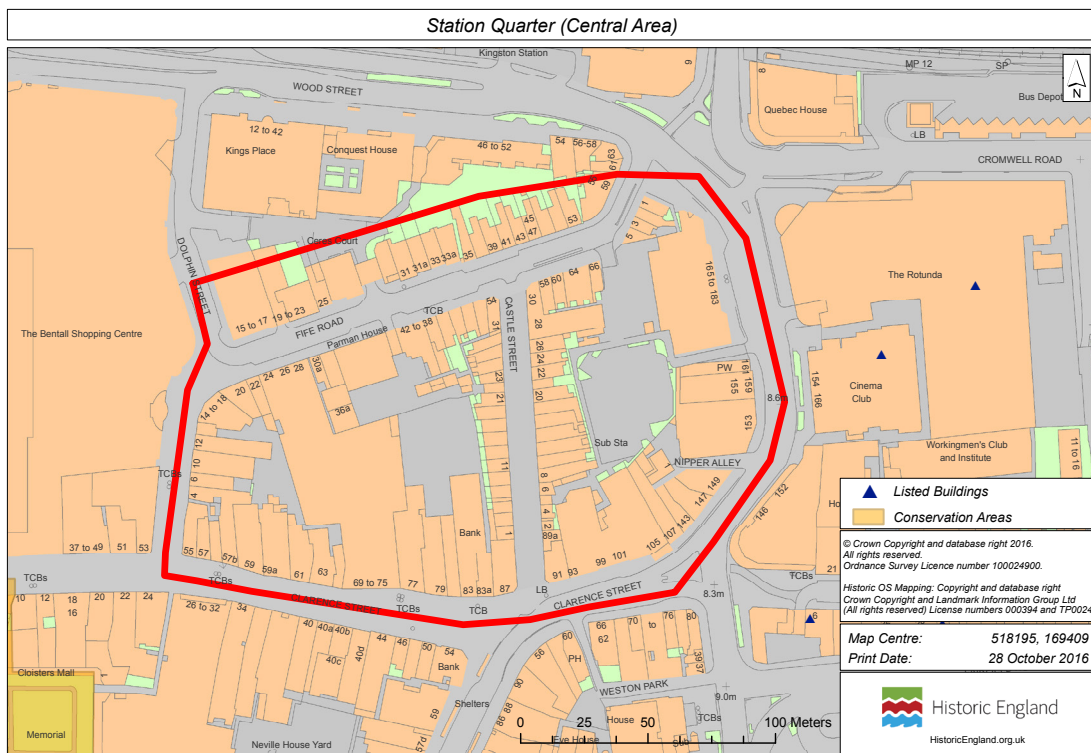
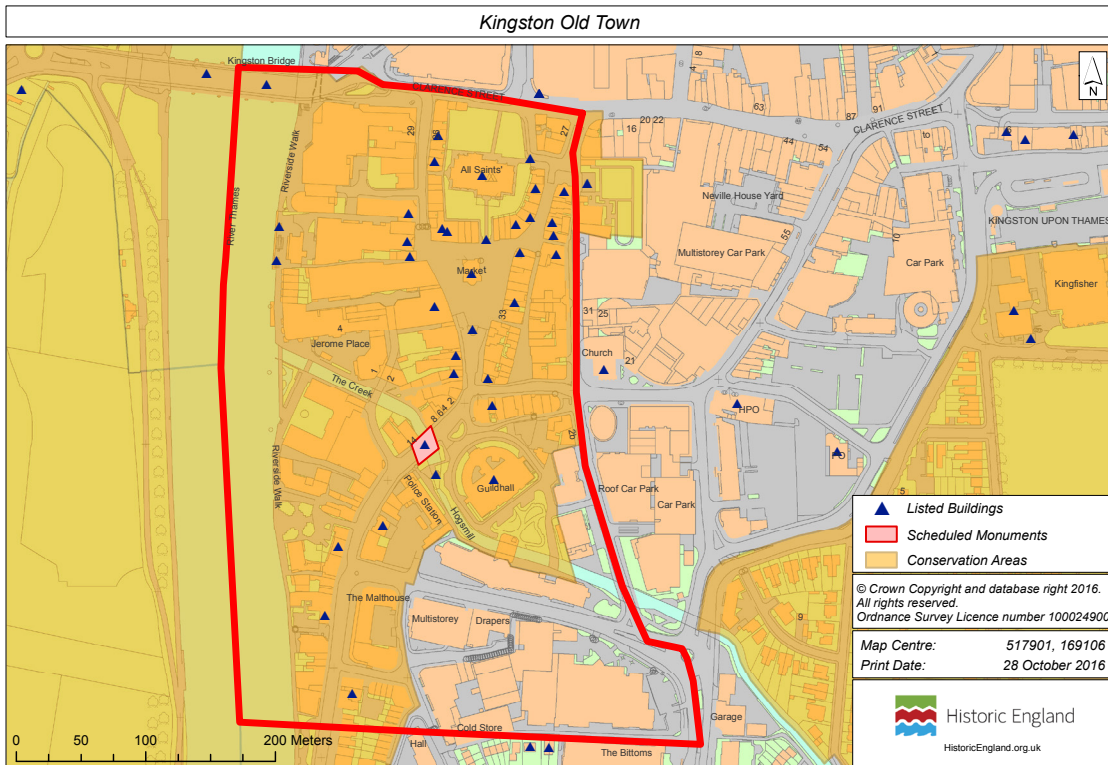
The historic centre of Kingston is clustered around the ancient parish church of All Saints and the Market Place, which has the Kingston Market House (1840) listed Grade II* at its centre.

The conservation area appraisal for Kingston Old Town written in October 2003 comprises a sound historical summary of the development of early Kingston, and a detailed description of the buildings and features of historic and architectural significance which will not be repeated here. What this appraisal doesn't quite do is bring out the overall character of the area that we see today: an architectural and historical palimpsest, with some re-fronting of earlier fabric, some replacement, but small-scale change rather than the extensive rebuilding on large plots. The cumulative significance of the historic buildings in and around the Market Place is vulnerable to the intrusion of very tall buildings. The skyline comprises buildings both listed and unlisted and can still clearly be read; it contributes to our understanding of the medieval scale and grain. Consideration should be given to the impact of tall or bulky buildings close to the Market Place.

The relief road planned in 1963 that was intended to complete the encircling ring road with a section alongside the river was abandoned in 1971. The low-rise brown brick Riverside development of shops and restaurants by Raymond Spratley Partnership began a move to re-engage with the riverfront. A recent residential development to the south, Charter Quay (2000-03), characterised by blocks descending in height down to the river front, and broken-up massing, makes this a more successful 'fit' in Kingston than the Canbury development north of the bridge which is monolithic and over-scaled. Good public realm/landscaping at Charter Quay make this a very successful pedestrianized area which animates the river front.

Station Quarter (Central Area)

Castle Street was created in 1939 as a new route between Clarence Street and Fife Road, and as a single-phase speculative development. It was named after Sydney Castle, a local J.P. and the head of a firm of ship breakers and timber merchants, who lived at Woodbines, Portsmouth Road.²⁷ The new road was intended to improve the pedestrian connections between the town centre and the railway station, which



had been rebuilt at the junction of Ceres Road and Clarence Street in 1934-5. It comprises a development of three-storey brick terraces of ground floor shops with maisonettes above accessed from the rear (some now in office use), bookended at the north and south ends by larger stores, also of three storeys. The style is a stripped back neo-Georgian; the terraces of shops have a simple iron balustrade above the

ground floor, with art deco/Regency flourishes, and occasional classical 'stone' surrounds to the first and second storey windows (see Fig. 4). The larger corner stores are differentiated by a giant order and stone cornice for both the Castle Street frontages and return elevations on Clarence Street and Fife Road. Carriageways on Castle Street provide rear access to the residential areas. The street has subsequently been completely pedestrianized.

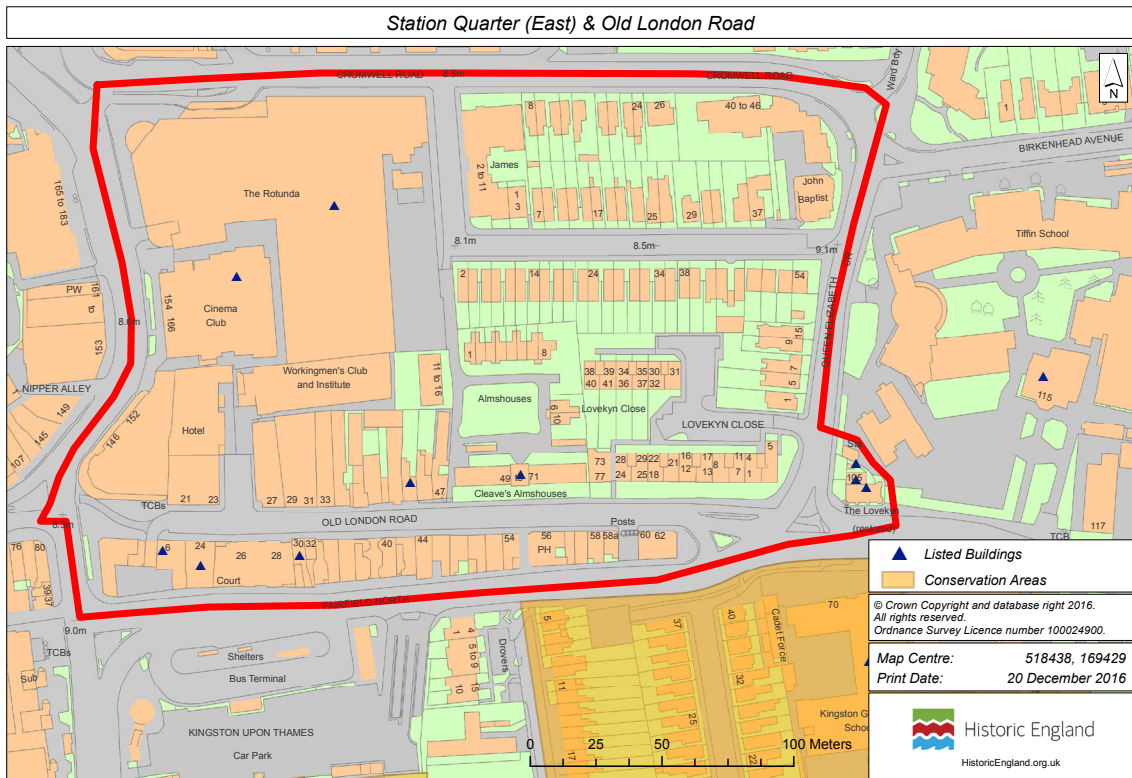
Castle Street is an attractive piece of inter-war town planning. The parades have a suburban quality that suits the scale of surrounding development (particularly towards Fife Road).

Station Quarter (East), including Old London Road

Road-widening carried out in the 1980s was not as extensive as planned twenty years earlier but clearly some demolition and rebuilding has taken place, such as the bus station east of the rail station. The listed Bentalls repository building of the 1930s survives and now incorporates the Odeon cinema. An enclave of mid-to-late 19th-century terraced houses survive along the south side of Cromwell Road, while in Hardman Road, there are distinctive semi-detached houses of two storeys in yellow stock brick with red brick dressing. These houses have hipped roofs – originally of slate, and would have housed lower-middle class families. The Baptist church on the corner with Queen Elizabeth Road was rebuilt on the same site in a dark red brick in the 1970s/80s. Opposite, on the south side of Hardman road is a group of interwar semi's, with pebble-dashed and brick frontages. Some houses on the corner of Cromwell Road and Queen Elizabeth Road were casualties of the widening of the latter in the 1980s.

South of here, on the east side of Queen Elizabeth Road is the Tiffin Boys' School occupying a large plot which is terminated at the junction with Fairfield North (A307) with the listed Lovekyn Chapel. Opposite, on the west side of Elizabeth Road, are some handsome turn-of-the-century red brick semi-detached houses with carved brick details. On the corner of Queen Elizabeth Road and Old London Road is what appears to be a 1960s council development of 3 and 2-storey flats and cottages of pale buff brick, an infill development on the site of the former Blackwood Engineering works. It is possible that this is an example of the municipal housing provided after the adoption of the plan for Kingston, which identified the need for housing for 'displaced people.' At the junction of Fairfield North and Old London Road, some houses and a pub were casualties of the widening of this junction. A neat 1950s former bank building now terminates the east of London Road.

Old London Road has historic wealth and diversity in the eastern portion of the town centre, far from the ancient market place. As a whole, the street acts as a high quality setting for some of the borough's most important heritage assets and oldest built fabric. It also represents some of the more organic processes of change that were denied to the areas affected by the construction of the relief road and the large floor plate shopping centres that have undermined the historic character of the town centre without a heritage designation.



Old London Road has only been named as such since 2002 when the council were successfully lobbied by local businesses to revitalise the economy of the immediate area through a series of promotions and improvements to the physical environment. Before that time, the street remained the first stretch of the radial London Road heading due east out of the town centre. The closure of the street to through traffic from the town centre in 1989 and the installation of David Mach's 'Out of Order' telephone box sculpture at the same time created a number of challenges as the local shops struggled to adjust to their separateness from the town centre proper. The erection of two branded archways in 2004 at either end of the traffic calmed section of what is now Old London Road appears to have stemmed the decline – what is apparent to a contemporary visitor is an area of the town centre that is filled with independent and interesting businesses and which possesses an enormously varied and rich streetscape from the 17th to the 21st centuries.

There is no unified historic character *per se*; instead, interest is primarily derived from the diversity of the buildings which are nevertheless constructed on a similar scale and with the intimacy of a relatively high density corridor street. The north side of the road between the Wilkinson's store and Cleave's Almshouses is characterised by mostly 19th-century buildings between two and three storeys high, with varying plot widths and architectural treatments of the largely commercial ground floors. Nos 43-47 are three late 18th-century houses listed at Grade II. The Cleave's Almshouses are listed at Grade II* and described in the Buildings of England London 2: South as one of the architectural and historic highlights of the entire borough of Kingston. Certainly, they constitute some of the oldest built fabric in the centre of the town, dating from 1668.

The eastern end of the north side of the street is the only point at which the historic integrity of the area has been noticeably compromised by a reduction in density. A 1970s modernisation included the demolition of a range of three buildings including a pub, presumably to improve capacity at this major junction on the relief road route.

The southern side of the street is even more consistent in scale than the northern side, combined with a similar degree of visual and historic variety. Some sites have maintained their original narrow and deep plots, for example No 30, a c.1660 grade II listed townhouse, whilst elsewhere there has been some merging of plots to create larger scale schemes. Generally this updating took place in the 19th century with a modest evolution away from the narrow sites and gardens shown on the 1869 town plan. The 20th-century changes tend to be obvious whilst remaining sympathetic to the character and scale of the street. Chandler's House (Nos 34-43), a mixed commercial and residential scheme of c.1980, is notable not just for its size and visual impact on the southern side of the street but also for the sensitivity of its design. Employing a simplified neo-vernacular in brick, the first floor is jettied out over the ground floor retail premises with corbels and its mass is broken into differing projecting sections.

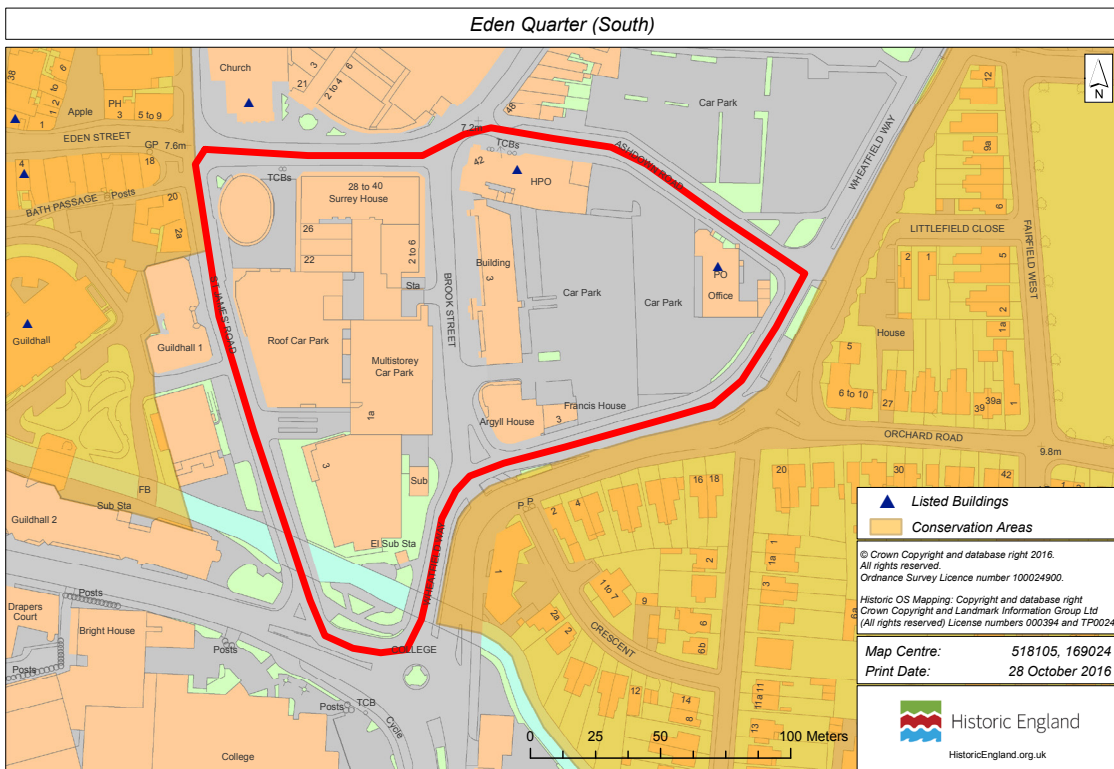
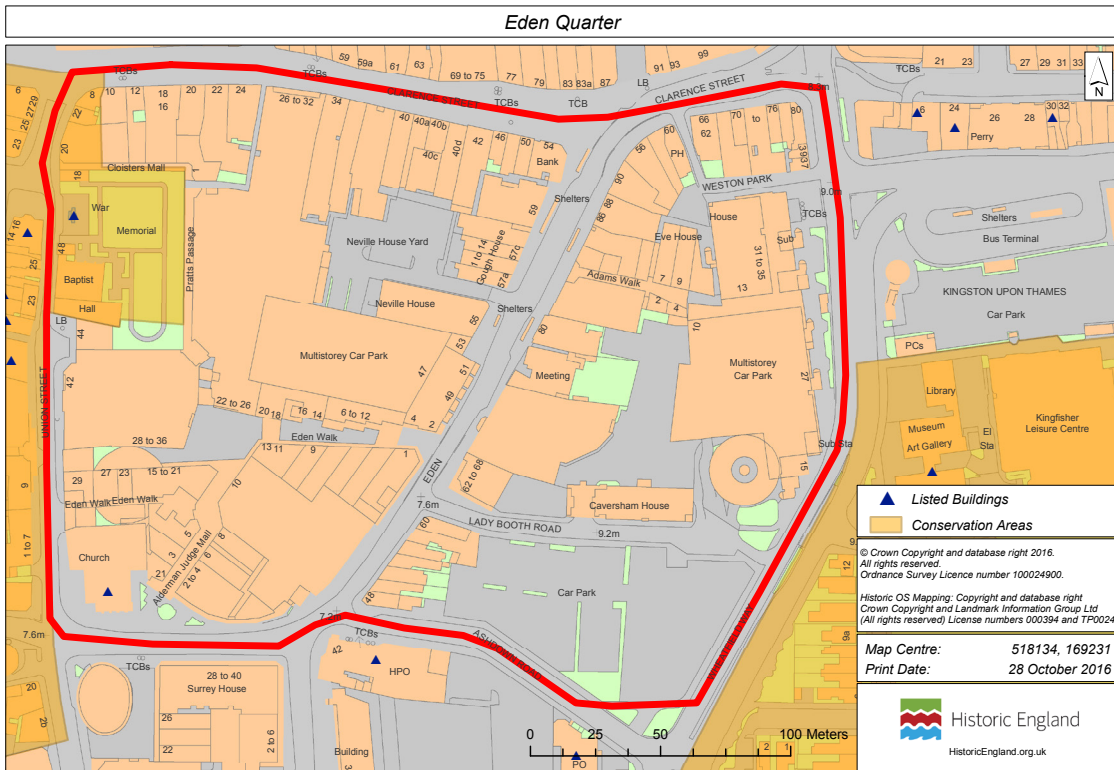


Fig.14 Old London Road, south side looking west, with mid to late -19th century domestic/retail buildings which are diverse in character.

There are two further designations on the western end of the southern side which add much to the considerable historic diversity of the street. The former police station of 1864 (Grade II listed) is a handsome classical building with deep rusticated channelling in yellow brick (Fig. 7) whilst next door at No 24, F.W. Paine has been listed as a nationally rare survival of a complete Edwardian funeral directors' interior. Adjacent, and terminating Old London Road, is a 1980s development including the 3-storey Travel Lodge and Bensons bed showrooms - all faced in brick, a favoured finishing material in Kingston in the 1980s.

Eden Quarter

The northern part of Eden Quarter has considerable and possibly under-valued architectural interest. The interwar development of shops and offices which flank Castle Street, and a number of bank or building society buildings around the junction of Clarence Street and Eden Street are of intrinsically high architectural quality. These are: the HBSC Bank (Fig. 6), the Halifax Building Society (Fig. 5), Santander and Skipton Building Society. These may not be quite of the quality and standard of intactness required for addition to the national statutory list, but they are good



examples of their type for the period, highlighting the status of this town centre with its long history of shops and shopping, also evident in the bigger developments of the Guildhall and the Bentalls Centre. As design cues they show the quality of place and contextual relationship with older elements of the town centre that can be gained from working on a smaller plot size. Positive architectural responses to this finer

grain of commercial development might mitigate the effect of the larger plot sizes on the Eden Walk shopping centre to the south.

With the relief road cutting through from Fairfield West to Brook Street (now called Wheatfield Way) a number of 19th-century buildings were demolished. To the east, on the site of the former cattle market, another bus station was built in the 1980s. To the south is the listed Art Gallery and Library building. Directly opposite (west) rises Combined House, the prominent residential block and car park completed following the cutting through of the relief road, by Owen Luder Partnership (1975, Fig. 10). This late example of Brutalism does not respond to the Fairfield/ Knights Park Conservation Area of residential houses to the east, but rather forms a baffle or barricade against the busy road.

The middle section of Eden Street is lined with buildings developed in a piecemeal fashion. The buildings are taller, the footprint is bigger and the multi-storey car park and shopping centre, planned in the Council plan of 1963, have been realised in built form. Eden Walk Shopping Centre by Ronald Ward and Partners dates from three phases building from the east to the west. The predominant and unifying material is brick, except for the concrete circular ramps of the car park that jut out into the spaces between the three main blocks. The effect is a mixed, accretive assembly of shopping units with little sense of designed entrances and exits, little natural light, and no clear permeability through the site to Union Street. Fronting Union Street is the last phase (1980s) in red brick and awkwardly abutting Kingston Baptist Church and church hall, the edge of Kingston Old Town Centre.

Eden Quarter (South)

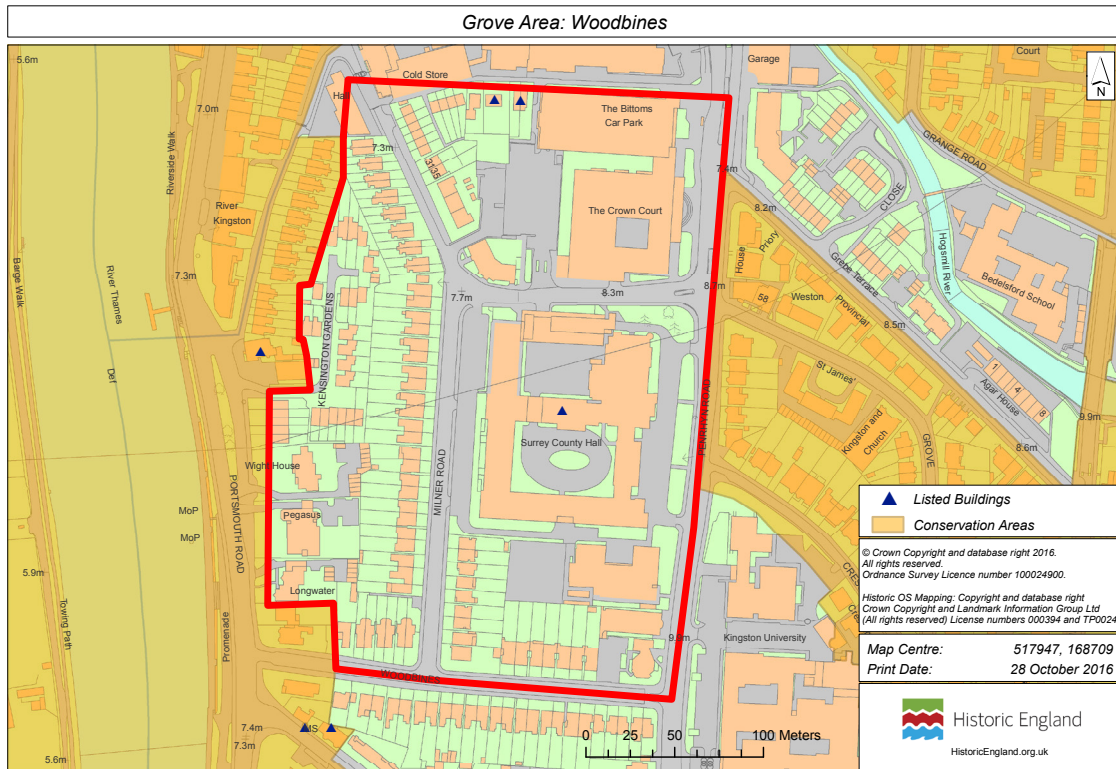
Formerly dominated by industrial buildings related to the former Kingston Brewery, and a paint works to the south, the block bounded by Brook Street, Wheatfield Way, Eden Street, and St James Street contains a number of commercial office blocks of the 1960s/1970s: Surrey House; a multi-storey car park and a 1960s mixed development, all of negligible architectural quality. Because of its proximity to the Kingston Old Town Conservation Area and the Market Place, this is a sensitive site.

This site bound by Eden St, Ashdown Street, Wheatfield Way and Brook Street has seen much erosion in recent years. The only surviving historic buildings - both listed – are the former Post Office (1875) and the Sorting Office/ Telephone Exchange (1907). A drill hall that was once to the south of the sorting office, along with a stationery-making works and a bowling green and pavilion, have disappeared and redevelopment is under way.



Fig.15 Post Office, Brook Street (listed Grade II) and job centre (right)

In consultation with Historic England historic building recording and archaeological safeguards have been recommended. The relationship with the old town centre and the low-lying residential area directly to the east and now part of the Fairfield Conservation Area, i.e. the mediation between two strong character areas, is an important consideration for development in this part of the town centre.



Grove Area: Woodbines

Milner Road, Woodbines Avenue and The Bittoms are residential streets lined by early 20th-century suburban houses that edge the block occupied by Surrey County Hall on Penryhn Road. The area lies to the east of Portsmouth Road and the Riverside South Conservation Area.

Before the construction of the County Hall in 1892-3 most of the land between Penrhyn Road and Portsmouth Road was occupied by a large house called Woodbines and its grounds. The occupant at the time was Sydney Castle J.P. (after whom Castle Street was named). Surrey County Council acquired two acres of the Woodbines estate for their new building in 1891 and a further two acres in 1905, presumably for future expansion²⁸. Not long after the entire estate appears to have been redeveloped and by 1913 the house and grounds had been replaced by two streets of solidly middle-class houses on Milner Street and Woodbine Avenue. The Bittoms was an older routeway (known until the early 20th century as Bittoms Lane), its curious name apparently derived from a characteristic Surrey word for a low-lying meadow. However, all of its pre-20th-century buildings have been cleared.



Fig. 16 Edwardian houses in Milner Road



Fig. 17 Staggered semi-detached houses in The Bittoms



Fig. 18 Pairs of semi-detached houses in Woodbines Avenue

The Milner Road/Woodbine Avenue housing of c.1910 may have been the work of several builders/developers. Perhaps the best group are the six pairs of semis at the north end of Milner Road, Nos 4-26. These good-quality middle-class houses are nicely detailed with gables over double-height curved bays, semi-circular flat porch heads carried by ornamental iron supports and porthole windows in the gable heads (Fig. 16). Elsewhere on Milner Road and Woodbine Avenue, the houses are more varied in size and detailing. On The Bittoms, there is staggered run of early 20th century semis; these are mirrored on the east side of South Lane and are clearly part of a single development. In appearance these houses, like some of the groups on Woodbine Avenue (and elsewhere in the suburban periphery of Kingston Town Centre) sit stylistically somewhere between the Victorian terrace and the full-blooded semi. The Milner Road houses form an interesting foil to the classical stone elevation of the County Hall's eastern range. The survival of original features such as doors and windows, and front gardens is quite good throughout these streets, but is particularly impressive for Nos 4-26 Milner Road.

Surrey County Hall is a multi-phase complex, partially listed grade II, situated between two conservation areas (Grove Crescent CA and Riverside South CA). The building has a rather basic list description (done in 1983), that has little or nothing to say about its interior, its later phases or its setting.

The decision by Surrey County Council to relocate to Kingston was taken in 1891, and construction of the county hall, designed by C. H. Howell, followed soon after in 1892-3. This now forms the northern range of the building fronting Penrhyn Road. The architect E. Vincent Harris was responsible for two extensions, in 1930 and 1938, and further additions were made in 1963,

when a west range was built ‘in a classical style’, the work of the county architect John Harrison.²⁹ In 1972 the County Architect’s Department was responsible for the Surrey County Staff Club to the south of the complex. Around the same time a northern range was added to County Hall, a raised block carried on piers that incorporate a ground floor arcade. This wing appears to have been built after plans for a new county headquarters in Stoke Park in Guildford fell through and may have been designed by Harrison’s successor as County Architect, Raymond Ash (1963-78) or Henry Chetwynd Stapylton (1976-86). The range is referred to as not being of special interest in the list description, which may merit revision in the light of recent understanding and appreciation of the architecture of this period.

CONCLUSION

All historic places change, and their character constantly develops. In the 20th century Kingston changed drastically. However, due to the avoidance of a ring road cutting the centre off entirely from the surrounding area, it managed to retain a better balance between the old and the new, when other town centres in London became sterile due to over-scaled developments and hostile road layouts.

Historic England welcomes the on-going commitment of the Council, of businesses and residents, to sustain this town centre. Building on the work undertaken for the Old Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal, this area study has set out in more detail how parts of Kingston beyond the designated conservation area, notably those affected by changes in the 20th century, fit into its wider story. It has shown that decisions were made to ensure that this historic commercial town retained one of its defining functions: that of a major retail centre, while other land uses were squeezed out of the town centre. This pattern of development now forms part of the history of this place. It also means that Kingston has great potential for future development that could reinforce its unique character.

Future development can be enriched by responding to both the diverse architectural context, and a more subtle yet equally rich historic context. These have created a multi-layered sense of place that is still evident in many of the historic buildings; their plot widths, human scale and fine grain, as well as the street layouts and the design and location of existing landmark structures. For example, the architectural quality, scale, and diversity of type and materials in the Clarence Street, Castle Street and Fife Road area, and the Old London Road, can impart ideas for new architectural interpretations.

Historic England promotes a three-step approach to planning for growth in historic town centres, of which this area study and the conservation area appraisal are the first part. In order to effectively plan for sustainable growth it is first necessary to understand the town centre. This is both in terms of its current uses and patterns of movement, but also, and importantly in terms of it having a sense of place that people wish to visit and spend their time and do business in, its history and heritage.

Once that is understood, it is essential to assess the capacity of the town centre in order that its character and identity can be sustained and enhanced. Rather than imposing generic floorspace and housing figures it is essential to appreciate the unique qualities and its ability to accommodate additional capacity. As an aid key questions such as those provided below should be answered:

- Which buildings have the capacity to be changed or perhaps should be replaced?
- What elements of setting or views contribute to the special interest of key buildings and overall character and appearance of the place?
- What should be the focal points of the town centre in the future?

With this analysis and knowledge it will be easier to assess the capacity for change, and therefore be possible to tailor future plans and development to the specific character of the town centre and its significance.

Historic England has welcomed the work carried out by the Royal Borough of Kingston. However, as this study has demonstrated, additional background evidence should be collected to ensure that Kingston town centre retains its unique selling point, that it is the best preserved medieval market town in outer London, and facilitate its sustainable growth. This townscape, designed over centuries for shopping, is diverse and intriguing, drawing people in, and encouraging them to stay. Areas that we would encourage the Council to consider further include:

- The potential extension of, or designation of some new, conservation areas;
- Considering if there are other buildings of townscape merit outside the existing Old Town Centre Conservation Area that are not currently recognised;
- Completing the tall building/views study that formed part of the evidence base for the Eden Walk SPD.

Historic England would encourage the Council to use this study to help review how the heritage significance it identified can be better revealed through the plan-making process. Such an approach may also prove helpful for other parts of the borough as Kingston plans positively for the future, and we would be happy to offer our on-going support to achieve this.

Listing Outcomes

In tandem with work by Historic England Research and Planning Teams, and as part of the project, the Listing Team has reviewed the portfolio of List entries, most of which date from the 1980s, for listed buildings in the historic town centre, that is, the area bounded by the inner arterial roads of Wood Street to the north, Wheatfield Way to the east, Kingston Hall Road/The Bittoms to the south, and including the historic routes, Old London Road and High Street. Details can be searched via the National Heritage List for England (NHLE): <https://historicengland.org.uk//listing/the-list/>

Given the number of buildings and level of readily available information on each, we have adopted a pragmatic approach, but would be able to look at individual buildings in more detail as need arises in the future.

We provided expanded List entries for a small group of the most significant buildings and structures in and near the Market Place: Market House (listed Grade II*, NHLE 1358428); 15-16 Market Place the former Boots store (listed Grade II, NHLE 1184764); Clattern Bridge (listed Grade I, NHLE 1080068 and also a scheduled monument NHLE 1002021); as well as the Library, Museum and Art Gallery (listed Grade II, NHLE 1080102)

The memorial gates at the south entrance to the parish church have been added to the List at Grade II, for their interest as a First World War memorial and commemorative gateway (NHLE 1432596).

To provide clarity for future management we have assessed a number of commercial buildings in the Eden Street area (Halifax Bank, 86-88 Eden Street; HSBC Bank, Clarence Street; Combined House (Premier Inn and multi-story car park) 15 Wheatfield Way. Although the bank buildings did not meet the criteria for statutory listing in a national context, the local planning authority may wish to recognise their local significance.

Finally, we have enhanced 43 List entries for the balance of listed buildings in the town centre, adding a paragraph of text that captures the historic significance of the town.

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APPENDIX ONE: PANORAMIC VIEWS OF SELECTED KINGSTON STREETS

This selection of images presents some areas of Kingston town centre that display a high degree of historic and visual interest. They do not form part of any of the existing Conservation Areas nor are they particularly rich in listed buildings or other designated assets. Instead, they offer examples of how organic commercial development over time – including some relatively recent schemes – has contributed a good deal to the townscape of Kingston by adding notable architectural quality, respecting historic street patterns and building plots, or simply by means of materials or massing that has blended or contrasted in a pleasing way with neighbouring buildings along these streets.

These streets were identified after fieldwork visits by members of the Historic England Historic Places Investigation Team with reference to the current maps of the opportunity areas and the gaps between the Conservation Areas. Assessments of quality and interest were made based on the visual impact of individual buildings, their group visual value and the variety drawn from differences in date, material, function and massing.

Four grades of indicative architectural quality were determined, with other assessments being made based on the visual variety shown along the streets.

KEY

Indicative architectural quality of buildings:



Arrows indicate groups of buildings with attractive variety:



A high degree of textural/material difference



A high degree of difference in height, massing or density

Clarence Street: South side, east to west



Nos 44-54: High quality architectural expression at a consistent scale



Nos 38-40: A high degree of variation in massing and materials, especially facades, seen on mostly very modern buildings



Nos 22-32: An attractive landmark department store is flanked by smaller buildings of different eras, adding textural and other visual interest



Nos 10-24: A range of early 20th century commercial buildings contribute an elevated architectural tone to the street



Nos 4-6: A classical bank building imaginatively extended in the 1970s

Clarence Street: North side, west to east



John Lewis: a significant building by Ahrends, Burton and Koralek (phases 1979-90); architecturally impressive and useful connection of Clarence Street over Horse Fair to the Thames



Nos 20-53: The original Bentalls alongside the Bentall Centre (1992) and its near neighbours, a high quality scheme which adds retail space with architectural flair whilst respecting the surrounding historic environment



Nos 37-57: Materials and massing are largely consistent but the use of different brick across schemes creates a pleasing visual variety



Nos 61-83: Interest is derived from sheer variety of style and massing rather than a markedly high architectural standard

Eden Street/Clarence Street Junction



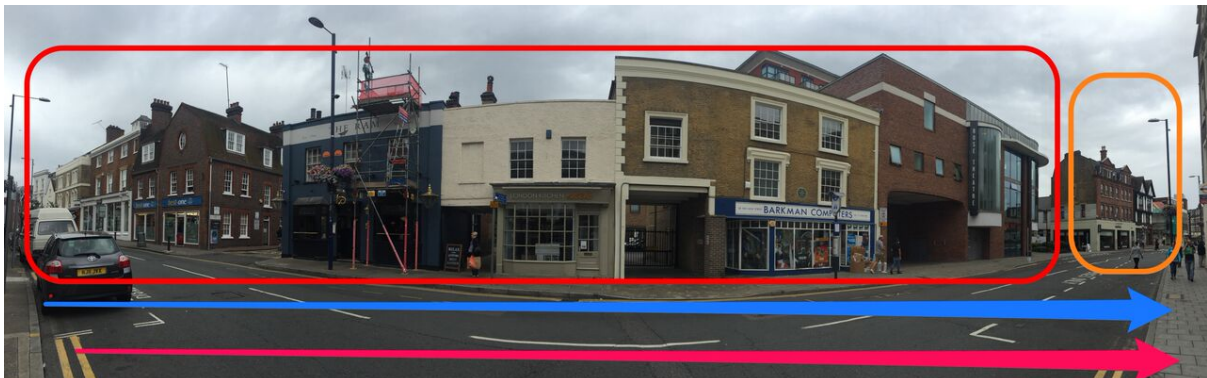
A cluster of dignified bank buildings on Eden Street meets the retail variety of Clarence Street and the neo-Georgian consistency of Castle Street. A visually important junction in Kingston with a tangible sense of layered historic development

Eden Street: East side



Nos 42-60: Fragments of mid-19th century Kingston (including the Grade II listed Post Office) survive at the edge of the modern large floorplate schemes of the Eden Street area

High Street: West side



Nos: 12-42: In a more consistently historic area of town there remains a high level of contrast and visual interest, from modern additions including the Rose Theatre

Fife Road: South side



Nos 24-54: To the east, the 1930s Castle Street scheme blends well into the 19th century character of Fife Road where multiple narrow plots have been developed in blocks but retained separate identities

Old London Road: South side, east to west



Nos 56-62: At the eastern section, a range of materials and styles defines the eclecticism of the road



Nos 46-54: A largely consistent series of 19th century ranges



Nos 34-44: A housing/retail scheme of the late 1970s/early 1980s that fits comfortably into the diverse historic setting of Old London Rd, with a designed-in variety of massing across a large structure which acts to break up bulk



Nos 6-28: A low-quality historicist scheme of the 2000s which adversely affects listed buildings either side of it



Nos 2-6: The Grade II listed old Police Station has low quality neighbours but historic patterns are maintained by the retention of a carriage arch

Old London Road: North side, west to east



Nos 19-23: The Travelodge has an unimaginative elevation but maintains the scale of the western (town centre) end of the road. David Mach's 'Out of Order' sculpture is a landmark that creates a strong sense of place



Nos 27-47: A highly mixed section of the road where buildings of very variable quality have been developed in a somewhat random fashion. Historic plots have been maintained and the overall visual interest is considerable



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