

# THAMES LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

## HAMPTON TO KEW

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Maggie Urquhart  
London Borough of Hounslow  
Civic Centre  
Lampton Road  
Hounslow

Dear Maggie

### **Albany House 41 High Street Brentford**

The Thames Landscape Strategy proposes a 100-year vision for the Thames corridor between Hampton and Kew that has been agreed through the Memorandum of Agreement by all the TLS partners. After 14 years it has been decided that the Thames Landscape Strategy report should be updated to bring it in line with the Mayor's Plan for London. This process has now begun with WS Atkins carrying out the first part of the work. In the meantime I would advise that the 1994 report remains the working document.

I enclose the Thames Landscape Strategy draft action plan for Brentford (Brentford a Waterway Town!) – in essence a document setting out the Thames Landscape Strategy's goals for the area (that build on the character study and aims included in the 1994 report) The action plan will be used to inform the forthcoming TLS review and form the basis of our work in Brentford over the coming years. The aspirations of the document have been agreed by the London Borough of Hounslow representatives on the TLS. It embraces the section of riverside at Albany House, 41 High Street Brentford.

You will note that a key element to achieving the vision of the Thames Landscape Strategy in Brentford is the completion of the Thames Path between Syon House and Kew Bridge with the re-introduction of the Brentford Ferry. At Albany House it is important that the any riverside footpath that is created is wide, legible and safe for users. It is also important that the footpath is placed on firm ground – a boardwalk or similar structure would not be suitable in such a location (as we advised to the Scottish Widows site). I would refer you to the new sections of Thameside footpath created at Ferry Quays in 2000 – an excellent example of good practice and a model for future development in the area.

I do not see the footpath as planned in the Albany House development coming anywhere near to fulfilling the aims of the TLS being too narrow with blind corners. Unless these 'missing links' of the Thames path are completed in a safe, legible and accessible way that link with their wider setting it is unlikely that the TLS vision for Brentford as set out in the action plan will ever be achieved. Please note the following section of the TLS brief for Brentford (Brentford – A Waterway Town!)

#### *8.4 Watermans Art Centre to Ferry Quays*

*Although the Waterman's Art Centre footpath affords wonderful high level views across the Thames to Lots Ait access is extremely poor in this section and the potential of the art centre to make the most from its waterside location has*

*not yet been fully realised. It is proposed to work with the Arts Centre to improve the connections between the facility and the river and to improve access between Watermans Park and Ferry Quays through the provision of a level and welcoming access route. The missing link of the Thames Path between the Watermans Arts Centre and Ferry Quays should be created when the redundant building at 41 High Street is redeveloped. This should be legible and welcoming designed as an integral part of the building. The new path should be wide and constructed on the riverbank itself rather than jutting out over the mud flats. Care must be taken in all riverside developments to take into account bat populations when designing lighting schemes. All new developments should undertake a full bat survey as part of any planning permissions that are needed particularly around the wildlife sensitive sites of Lots Ait.*

I would also advise that the proposed development is too close to the river edge and of a height that is inappropriate for its location immediately opposite Kew Palace. A low rise building would respect the setting although the immediate use of the area should be accounted for. The TLS action plan and the Brentford Area Action Plan identify Lots Ait for wildlife and riverside industry. These uses live side by side at present and are mutually beneficial but I doubt whether housing immediately opposite directly on the river edge would be as appropriate. It is proposed to restore the Lots Ait industrial area as a working boat yard set within a wider Waterspace Cluster for the Brentford canal junction. Experience elsewhere on the Thames shows that homes and river related industry are not always happy bedfellows.

Finally, I would also expect that a full bat survey should be carried out in such an environmentally and wildlife rich area. This should include a full summer survey of possible feeding grounds and a winter nesting survey to Lots Ait. From this survey it can be decided whether the development would affect bats in any way.

I hope that these comments are useful and please do contact me if you require further details.

Kind regards



Jason Debney  
Co-ordinator Thames Landscape Strategy

**Patron: Sir David Attenborough CH FRS**