



The Kew Society Newsletter • Winter 2021-22

Welcome....

to our first newsletter of 2022 – certainly 2021 was a year to remember, though not necessarily one that many of us would like to repeat. At the time of going to press, Omicron is beginning to decline in London; we very much hope to return to more normal times soon and hope that you remain well. Our new Chair has many ideas for the future direction of the Society and would love to hear from you – see her article below; do write to us if you have any views or feedback. Similarly, we would welcome your feedback on the quarterly newsletters that we send out: at this time of year you receive a paper copy which we know some of you prefer, and also do let us know what you would like to see covered in future editions.

Message from the Chair



When I was asked if I would consider taking over the chair of the Kew Society, I was more than surprised...I didn't see myself as a potential candidate at all. My 'picture' of the sort of person who would take over this important position would be someone who had a track record of leadership in a large organisation... the civil service, academia, industry or commerce. But then, when I spent time with Roger, Nora and the other members of the Committee, I realised that they would welcome someone who did not come from a conventional mould. Someone who had ideas about how to try to make Kew an even better place to live in for everyone. They wanted to develop the Society to become more representative of the local community, not least so that when we respond to proposals for new developments that may affect the lives of individuals, we are able to truly speak with a voice that represents the views of people across the 88 roads within Kew. We want to introduce changes that will increasingly enhance the wellbeing of our members. We will, of course, continue campaigning to restrict developments or changes that are likely to reduce the quality of life for local people, hopefully with even more effect if – as we hope – our

membership grows and diversifies.

We would welcome your ideas! At the moment, much of the work that we do – monitoring and responding to planning applications, making positive contributions to local environmental initiatives and providing lovely planting on the station and around the village – can be enjoyed equally by members and non-members. Even our wonderful talks and events are open to non-members. We would like to introduce a range of initiatives that will make all people who live or work in Kew really want to join us.

Initial ideas include establishing 'interest groups' to encourage different generations to communicate with one another. An obvious one would be to link up people with interests in 'green' issues, but groups could also have simpler ambitions... for example, a friend who lives in Gloucester Road and is a keen knitter said it would be wonderful to connect with a few people who shared her passion for the craft. Another friend said that he would enjoy linking with neighbours to play a game of chess or backgammon....

I am convinced that there are people all over Kew who would enjoy meeting with neighbours who – in the normal course of events – they may never connect with. And who knows what may result from these groups? Kew is full of interesting people, with many who would enjoy sharing knowledge, skills, or even possessions, to the benefit of others. Do let us know your views and suggestions. Write to me at chair@kewsociety.org.

Other ideas include establishing monthly supper and lunch clubs and launching awards for excellence in small-scale architecture or design and for individual 'green' initiatives.

Watch this space!

STOP PRESS: Kew Society wins grant to produce a leaflet and map of a walk around Kew

We are delighted to have received a grant of £2,700 from Richmond Council to produce a high-quality leaflet of a walk around Kew. This will comprise a map and text showing details of the main fascinating points of interest around the village and its environs. We are grateful to the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames for this generous grant from the Local Area Fund.

Planning Updates

Change in planning legislation

Along with many others, we welcomed the decision by Michael Gove on his appointment as Secretary of State for the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities department, to call a halt to the Bill to implement the proposed complete overhaul of the planning system which had been introduced by his predecessor, Robert Jenrick. There is to be a complete review. This Bill aimed to simplify and speed up the planning system as well as emphasize design codes and “beauty”, but in the process it would, in our view and that of many commentators, have restricted the rights of residents to object to planning applications. Separately, a policy change to permitted development rights would allow, subject to qualification and conditions, a change of use from commercial, business and services use in the relatively new use Class E Planning Use to residential use without full planning permission. This has been criticised for potentially resulting in sub-standard residential housing and undermining attempts to revitalise high streets. Richmond Council has made a non-immediate Article 4 Direction (which restricts permitted development rights) to remove that right in certain parts of the Borough. This Article 4 direction takes effect on 31 July 2022. Here is a link to the Direction which sets out all the specific areas covered – including those in Kew. These are mainly commercial areas but includes the National Archives.

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/21972/article_4_direction_commercial_to_residential.pdf.

General News

Nearly all planning applications since our last report have been for domestic extensions (lofts, side and rear). We read them all! We don't, as a matter of policy, generally comment on these. Amongst other proposals, the revised Caxton House, 110 Kew Green scheme was approved in October. The revisions aimed to meet the many objections to the “glass box” roof extension in the previous proposal.

Richmond Draft New Local Plan

Richmond Council is now consulting on its new draft Local Plan. In Spring 2020, we responded to its ‘Direction of Travel’ consultation about a new Local Plan – we had concerns over why a new plan was needed rather than a process of constant review and updating of the Local Plan adopted only in July 2018. The draft local plan is a substantial document which has to be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework and the London Plan. Responses to the consultation are required by 31st January 2022. We will be responding after careful consideration of the draft. Here is a link to the consultation: <https://haveyoursay.citizenspace.com/richmondcecs/localplan-21/>

Homebase, 84 Manor Road

We submitted our detailed objections to the new revised scheme on 15th December, and you will find a link to this on our website. The Mayor had allowed the developer yet again to make substantive changes to the scheme, during the more than a year since the Mayor's hearing in October 2020 when he indicated approval of the previous scheme. Residents, however, were allowed a very short time in December to absorb these changes and comment. The contact and other details in the Mayor's notification were not correct, and even now some residents who responded by post to the address given have had their letters returned as undeliverable. As a result, on 20 January an extension was given up until 10 February to submit comments. The main changes were to the mix of affordable housing.



View of proposed Holly House on the Chiswick Roundabout

Holly House

North of the river, we have, along with many other organisations, submitted our objections to the application for the 24-storey Holly House tower block on the Chiswick Roundabout (the site of the refused Chiswick Curve scheme). Our letter can be seen on the Kew Society planning webpage. We have focused on the harm to heritage assets, pollution, traffic volumes and the inadequacy of public transport infrastructure.

B&Q

In December 2021, Hounslow Council's Planning Committee approved the proposed massive new redevelopment of the B&Q site just north of the Holly House site. It was a close call, with voting tied at 5-5 before the Chair's casting vote tipped the scales in favour. This scheme would put massive additional pressure on pollution levels, traffic volumes and transport infrastructure, quite apart from the impact on nearby heritage assets.

Gillette Corner

In November 2021, the Secretary of State called in the huge Tesco/Homebase redevelopment at Gillette Corner, and a public inquiry chaired by a Planning Inspector has been scheduled for 15th March. We are supporting the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and other organisations in objecting strongly to the materially adverse impact the tower blocks will have on the important and hitherto unspoilt view westward from Kew Gardens across the Arcadian Thames.

See The Kew Society website for letters of objection.

Gardening

Before stopping gardening activities for the winter, we undertook a couple of one-off tasks. In November, with the help of Energy Garden, we chopped back the laurels along the Gunnersbury-bound platform at the station, both to reduce the height of the laurels further, following work by TfL, and to stop them encroaching into the grass planting. We were lucky to have a beautiful, sunny morning to do this.

In contrast, in early December on a cold, wet and very grey afternoon we planted another 1,000 daffodils along Kew Road, between Broomfield Road and Kew Gardens Road. We were helped by Continental Landscapes, who worked at the speed of light and showed us how the professionals do it! Continental Landscapes also replaced the rotten sleepers in the North Road garden and cut back the wild flower planting at St Anne's on Kew Green.



Over the next few weeks we will be planning activities for the spring. We need to mulch all the beds we look after and think about how the existing planting should best be maintained to keep it as beautiful as when it was originally planned. Inevitably some plants try to take over and others just don't thrive so some rethinking will be needed. We are delighted that the team at RBG Kew have offered to share their expertise and help us in this task and to advise us on the best way forward. It's also great that Energy Garden are going to help us manage the large and expanding compost heaps at the station and help to make these tidier and better organised. I would like to thank all our partners – Energy Garden, Richmond Borough and Continental Landscapes for their practical and financial help with our gardening activities over the last year. We couldn't do it without them. Thank you also to the helpful TfL staff at the station and to the band of volunteers who work hard to make all the local planting look lovely and enhance the environment for local residents and visitors to Kew.

Anna Anderson, Head Gardener

Events

Aided by the excellent National Archives team and adhering to their current health and safety regulations, we managed to run our Autumn 2021 programme at The National Archives, albeit with strict restrictions in place.

November saw 20 Kew Society members pulling on their wellies for the 'Draw Off of the Thames' walk led by Becky Law, Thames Landscape Strategy (TLS) to help draw attention to their Rewilding Arcadia project. Becky was a great source of information about TLS work along the foreshore and river from Richmond to Ham, updating attendees on flood prevention, wildlife preservation and general river management, helped by Mary Done's explanations of local history.

In November, we were provided with a most interesting and thought-provoking presentation by Marian Mollett – 'More Than Poppies: Commemorating The Dead Of The Great War In Kew'. It was very rewarding to link into Marian's research and excellent knowledge of the local area.

Our last talk for November 2021 – 'Kew and The East India Museum' was by Leila Redpath, a Blue Badge guide. Leila provided a fascinating insight into the rise of the East India Trading Company, which worked out of its headquarters in Leadenhall Street, London (now the site of the Lloyd's building) and the Company's links with corporate power.

The Events team has restarted our 2022 programme, with January and February talks again at the National Archives.

Once life becomes more settled – hopefully by Easter 2022 – we are keen to introduce a half-hour 'drink and chat' slot before the start of talks. This will provide us with an opportunity to hear more about what members enjoy and to share ideas for possible follow-up on future events.



Our 'Draw Off The Thames' walkers

Our first 2022 talk at the National Archives was:

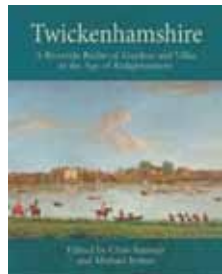
Wednesday 19th January 2022 – ‘A Slice of Eel Pie – Boatyards & Bands, Artists & Inventors’ – a talk by Celia Holman from *The Eel Pie Island Museum* at The National Archives – it was very well-attended and highly enjoyable.

February and March 2022 events include:

Sunday 6th February 2022, 10.00am – 2.00pm – Kew Society will have a stand at Kew Market. We’ll be there – probably freezing(!) but with a warm welcome to anyone who has time to



Eel Pie Island from Twickenham Embankment



pop along and have a chat. If members know anyone who is new to the area, do bring them along to our stand, or encourage them to visit us and say “hi”.

Wednesday 23rd February 2022 - ‘Twickenhamshire - the riverside gardens and villas of eighteenth-century Twickenham’ – talk by Chris Sumner. Again, the venue is The National Archives and the talk starts at 7.00pm.

Sunday 20th March 2022 – Rock ‘n’ Roll Royal Richmond – Swinging 60’s Bus Tour starting and finishing from Station Parade, Kew. Timing is 11.00am – 1.00pm.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Mary, Jane and Sue (Events Team)

The Environment Act 2021- how will it affect us?

After three years passing through Parliament the much-heralded Environment Bill, replacing EU environmental laws, became law in November 2021. George Eustace – Secretary of State for Environment – claims that “it will deliver the most ambitious environmental programme of any country in the world”, but critics such as Kyle Lischak, Head of UK work at ClientEarth, the environmental law charity, say that “it falls short of the world-leading ambition that the Government set out to ensure. Provision for forest protection, clean air and environmental governance have been especially disappointing”. The Act is intended, through The Office of Environmental Protection (OEP) – the ‘green watchdog’ it established, to hold authorities including ministers to account if they fail to comply with the law. However, the OEP lacks independence, being required to heed guidance from the government’s Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Some fear this will prevent it from taking robust action against environmental offenders.



The Act (EA) aims to protect and enhance the natural environment by establishing long-term legally binding targets to increase biodiversity, improve air quality, improve water quality, reduce waste and increase recycling. DEFRA is required to set these targets by late 2022, so we do not know currently how ambitious they will be. The Act also commits the government to publishing a 25-year Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) with interim targets for each 5-year period, but critics say these will not be legally binding and that a golden opportunity has been lost in some areas by the Act itself not setting legal targets. A prime example is for air pollution, where campaigners wanted the Act to adopt the recently revised World Health Organisation recommendations on air pollutant levels. Instead, DEFRA will set the UK targets.

On biodiversity, the Act commits to halting species decline and includes a legally binding target on species numbers by 2030. The UK becomes the first country to have such a limit. A mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is being introduced on developments. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) already requires planning decisions to provide net gains for biodiversity. By providing a mechanism which specifically measures BNG, the EA will strengthen this. Implementation of these policies will require detailed scrutiny of planning applications by local authority planning officers who are already frequently overstretched. The EA will also help to build a Nature Recovery Network across the country. Local Authorities will have to produce a biodiversity report every five years. Tree conservation receives attention: local highway authorities will normally have to consult communities before felling street trees, and the EA also contains a section designed to prevent illegal deforestation abroad for the supply of our commercial needs.

On water pollution, the government has to produce a plan to reduce discharge from storm overflows into inland or coastal waters, and there will be a legal duty on water companies to progressively reduce (note, not prevent!) the impact of sewage pollution from storm overflows. Critics say that the EA provisions on sewage pollution will be weaker than those set out by the EU Urban Wastewater Directive – which were frequently breached! Nevertheless, the EA makes the creation of, and reporting on, a 5-year drainage and sewerage management plan a statutory duty for the water sector for the first time. On air pollution, whilst the EA does not contain targets to reduce pollutants in line with WHO guidelines, it does impose a duty on government to come up with air quality targets by October 2022, these to be set in secondary legislation after consultation. Fine particulate matter (PM2.5) is now recognised as particularly dangerous for human health, and the EA will establish both short-term and long-term targets (minimum 15 years) to reduce its level. Local air quality management will be strengthened. Domestic wood burning contributes 38% of PM2.5 emissions, and the EA introduces measures to enable local authorities to more effectively enforce penalties for smoke emissions in a smoke-control area. The Act will also compel vehicle manufacturers to recall vehicles if they do not comply with the legal emission standards required.

The EA is undoubtedly a legislative landmark. Much is included in it which cannot be discussed in this short article. Whilst the EA has shortcomings, some of which have been mentioned, it may also provide great opportunities for improving our environment. For this writer, the EA is more a ‘work in progress’ and we shall have to wait and see over the next few years before judging its success or failure.

Roger Mason

The State of the Thames 2021

The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) was founded in 1826 and is today an international conservation charity working to create a world where wildlife thrives. ZSL’s work is realised through ground-breaking science, field conservation around the world and engaging millions of people through two zoos. Working in partnership with other organisations, the ZSL has been conserving the 153 miles of the tidal Thames environment since 2003. The State of the Thames 2021 Report, using a series of indicators, sets out the



environmental health and trends of the Thames Estuary; it is not all doom and gloom and makes for interesting reading. Using 17 indicators, long-



Seals are now thriving on the Thames

and short-term trends were calculated to evaluate the current state of the estuary as a healthy, thriving ecosystem that not only sustains wildlife populations, but also provides mental and physical benefits to people.

The State of the Environment section shows that the water quality of the tidal Thames has exhibited some promising improvements: seals are now seen regularly, the historic, migratory pathways for the European eel have reopened, and there is evidence that the Thames is an important breeding ground for smelt and seabass – this despite the influences of climate change, which are seen in the rise of both water temperature and sea levels. Importantly, a benchmark for plastic levels in the



Litter on the Thames



.... and clean-up in progress

Tidal Thames has now been set.

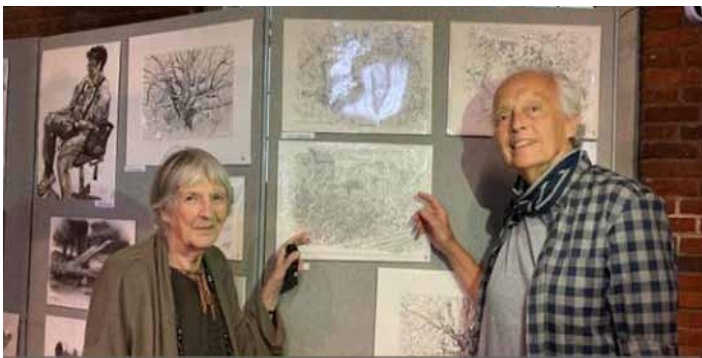
The picture is brighter for the State of Nature section, with improving short-term trends identified for natural habitats, birds and marine mammals. There are positive indicators of change such as the creation of new 'estuary edges' and saltmarsh habitats, and plans for the re-wetting of floodplains. This last point refers to the Rewilding Arcadia project being led by Jason Debney of The Thames Landscape Strategy which the Kew Society will be supporting.

The State of Play section has now set baselines for future analysis of recreation by the river and on the river. The Tidal Thames provides a valuable outdoor space where millions of people can improve their physical and mental health and enjoy the water.

To read the full report, see

https://www.zsl.org/sites/default/files/ZSL_TheStateoftheThamesReport_Nov2021.pdf

THE DIANA ARMFIELD DRAWING COMPETITION



Last year's winner of the Diana Armfield Drawing from Observation Competition

Richmond is offering a prize of £250 to the winner, who will also be allowed to keep one of her beautiful framed drawings for a year. Diana wishes to encourage artists to draw directly from life, not from photographs nor by using devices nor other means.

Entries for this year's competition close on Saturday 26th February 2022, after which an exhibition featuring many of the entries will be held at The Exchange, 75 London Road, Twickenham, TW1 1BE, between 14th - 27th March 2022. See Arts Richmond website for further details.


Finally, her gallery – Browse and Darby – has now fixed the dates in 2022 for her exhibition: 7th to 28th July, with the private view and book launch 6th July.

Distinguished and highly respected local Kew artist – Diana Armfield – has again in collaboration with Arts Richmond agreed to sponsor a Drawing Competition to encourage artists aged 16 years and upwards to draw from observation (i.e. from observing actual three-dimensional forms and objects). It is in memory of her husband – Bernard Dunstan – another eminent artist, who died at the age of 97. Both Diana and Bernard were well-known Royal Academicians for very many years and were members of prestigious Art Societies. Arts

ARTS RICHMOND PRESENTS

THE DIANA ARMFIELD RA NEAC

PRIZE FOR DRAWING FROM OBSERVATION



Closing date Saturday 26th February 2022
 Details of how to enter at artsrichmond.org.uk
 Exhibition to be held at:
 The Exchange Twickenham, TW1 1BE
 14th - 27th March 2022

CHRISTMAS IN KEW



Once again, The Kew Society has collaborated with local traders and others in the community to provide a Christmas tree outside the west-bound entrance to Kew Gardens station. The Kew Society has for several years contributed £500 towards this annual event, and is proud of that tradition, which it intends to maintain.

Combined with the regular Kew Sparkle initiative, this provides a delightful seasonal welcome both to all returning residents and to those arriving or departing by train to visit Christmas at Kew.

The picture shows the tree and the accompanying notice proclaiming our contribution to the Christmas festivities.

LOOKING ACROSS THE RIVER THAMES Strand-on-the-Green & The Grove Park Estate

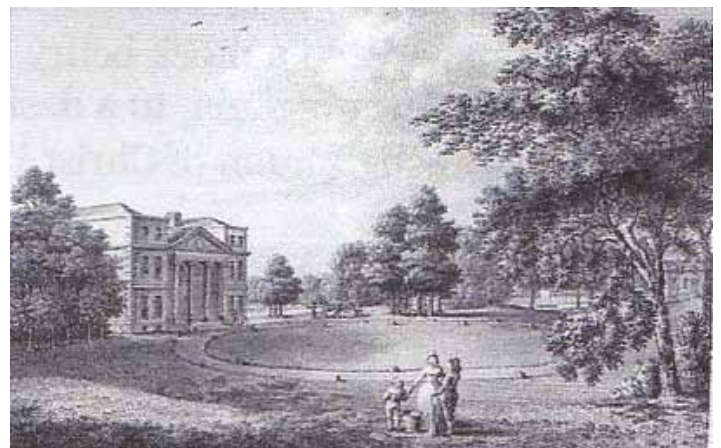


Strand-on-the-Green today

here, partly because of the building of Kew Bridge – to replace the ferry – and partly because George III was using Kew as his summer retreat. The first Kew Bridge, built of wood in 1759, was replaced by a new bridge in stone in 1789, designed by James Paine, who also designed Richmond Bridge. The present bridge was built in 1903 and is about 100 metres downstream from the earlier bridges. Near Kew Bridge, on the north side, was the one of the largest London laundries, built in 1860 and closed in 1973. Recently refurbished, it is now the offices of the brewers Fuller, Smith and Turner.

The most famous of fine Georgian houses facing the river is Zoffany House, named after the artist – Zoffany – who lived at No. 65 from 1790 to his death in 1810 and is now marked by a GLC plaque. There are three pubs here – The Bell and Crown, The City Barge (which dates back to the 15th century) and the Bull's Head. Further down river are almshouses known as the Hopkin Morris Homes of Rest. There had been almshouses here since 1658, but the present buildings date from 1724. Right up to the end of 19th century there were a number of malt houses here. An important addition was Kew Railway Bridge, built by the London and South Western Railway (L&SWR) to take its trains from north of the river to Kew and Richmond, but it had little direct impact on this immediate area as the L&SWR had already built a line here (now known as the Hounslow Loop) as early as 1842; and Chiswick Station – originally known as Chiswick and Grove Park station – was built in 1849. Yet

Strand-on-the-Green faces Kew across the river, and there has been a hamlet there since the Middle Ages. A bit further down river and behind Strand-on-the-Green is where the Grove Park estate used to be. It stretched from Grove Park Terrace and Sutton Court Mansions right across to Duke's Meadows. In the 18th century Strand-on-the-Green became a popular place to live and a number of fine 18th century houses were built

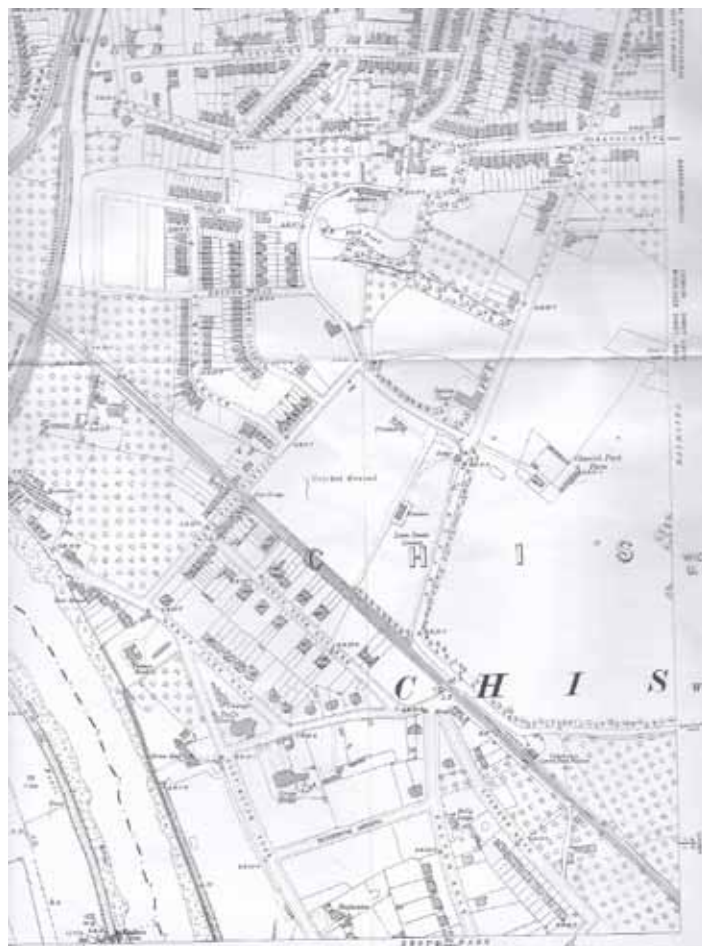


An engraving of Grove House by Wade dated 1792

unlike the coming of the railway to Kew, there was little immediate urban development here. From the 1865 Ordnance Survey map, one can see that little had changed since the coming of this line, and development only began slowly in the late 19th century. There was still a country lane leading to the footbridge (just west of Grove Park Terrace) known as Dead Donkey Lane, shown in the Ordnances Survey map dated 1894.

Grove Park was dominated by Grove House. There had been a house there since 1412, but a Palladian style mansion replaced the earlier house in 1705. In the 18th century, according to Rocque's map of 1746, the estate was then known as Chiswick Grove. In 1840, the sixth Duke of Devonshire bought Grove House and let it. The Dukes of Devonshire owned Chiswick House and much of the land around there. In 1872, the seventh Duke paid for the building of St. Paul's Church and a large vicarage. Grove House was not demolished until 1928 when the present Kinnaird Avenue was built. Among the first part of this area to be developed were houses just beyond Strand-on-the-Green, including the Redcliffe Missionary Training College and the grand houses in Grove Park Gardens. Some of these houses have portals with magnificent Caryatids. Development here continued at a pace between the wars, including a large block of flats facing the river – built in the Art Deco style – known as Hartington Court. The principal house to the north of the Grove Park estate was Sutton Court, built in 1795. It had replaced an earlier house known as Sutton Manor, which appears to date back to 1181.

Sutton Court was demolished in 1905 and replaced by the large block of flats known as Sutton Court Mansions. With the growing urbanisation of the area, the Church Commissioners agreed to build a new church where there had been a fishpond, known as St. Michael's, Sutton Court. The foundation stone was laid in 1908 and the church was completed in the following year. It was built in the Arts and Craft style by William Caröe, a leading ecclesiastical architect. The cost was financed out of the sale of St. Michael le Strand in Burleigh Street. While most of the Grove Park Estate has been developed, a lot of the land on both sides of Chiswick Bridge is still used as sports ground, allotments and marinas, thus preserving some of its earlier rural character.



A detail from the Ordnance Survey map of Kew, Gunnersbury and Old Brentford dated 1894

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www.kewsociety.org

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