

A Vision for Kew Retail Park Report Back Broadsheet

5 July 2022



"It should be a lively place, somewhere to meet friends and new people!"

Young person, Power Station Youth Club

Artist's impression of a new vibrant public space with new M&S store, retail and other uses

The Vision

A new, mixed use neighbourhood connecting with surrounding residential communities and providing a new community "heart" and green spaces; a new M&S store, retail and other uses set around vibrant public space; a mix of high quality, energy efficient homes, including 1, 2 and 3 bedroom affordable and for sale apartments on tree-lined streets; an attractive green and bio-diverse open space running north/south adjacent to Kew Meadow Path and fronted by active uses and housing; new pedestrian and cycle routes through the site and a car club serving local residents, and; leisure and community spaces and play areas to serve new and existing residents of all ages. These are just some of the ideas to emerge at the Vision for Kew Retail Park Community Planning Weekend held on Friday 24 and Saturday 25 June 2022 at the National Archives.

"Make a really important contribution to the existing community but also the new residents who will come to live in the apartments." Planning Weekend participant

Local knowledge

The Community Planning Weekend gave the local community the opportunity to share local knowledge and help shape the new Vision for the Kew Retail Park site through facilitated workshops, walkabouts and hands-on planning groups. There was also a staffed exhibition explaining the background of the site. The event, attended by around 300 people, was run by JTP on behalf of site owners St George and Marks & Spencer.

Vision Report Back Presentation

Following the public workshop days, the JTP-led team analysed and summarised the outcomes and drew up a Vision for the residential-led redevelopment of the Kew Retail Park site, including an illustrative masterplan. The Vision was reported

back to the local community on Tuesday 5 July at The National Archives. This broadsheet summarises the Vision and was handed out to the audience after the presentation.

"Make it a place where people are happy to live in and know they will have a sustainable lifetime."

Planning Weekend participant

Planning Background

Kew Retail Park is an important site in Kew owned jointly by St George and Marks & Spencer. The site has been allocated in the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames draft Local Plan for comprehensive residential-led, mixed-use development. The redevelopment provides an opportunity to bring forward up to 1,200 high-quality new homes, including much needed affordable housing, a new M&S store and other replacement retail and local amenities, as well as improved public realm and connections through the site.

Next steps

The design team will develop the proposals with the council and the community through an ongoing engagement process. It is anticipated that a planning application will be submitted in June 2023. After the planning application has been determined, it is expected that on-site work will begin at the end of 2024, with a phased construction programme of around ten years. M&S will trade continuously throughout this time.

**Kew Retail Park
Community Site Walkabout**
6.15pm to 7.15pm, Thursday 15 September 2022

Meet at the National Archives, main entrance
from 6pm.

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Illustrative Vision Masterplan

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The illustrative Vision masterplan was drawn up following the Community Planning Weekend public workshops.

Key

1. New village square
2. Kew Meadow Gardens
3. New M&S store with homes above
4. Mixed uses on ground floor with homes above
5. East/west streets
6. North/south street
7. Servicing entrance for M&S
8. Community allotments
9. Resident's roof gardens
10. Resident's courtyards
11. Sustainable drainage
12. Rooftop PV panels
13. Basement car park entrance
14. Pedestrian entrance
15. Pedestrian and cycle routes through green space
16. Spill out area for mixed uses
17. Play space



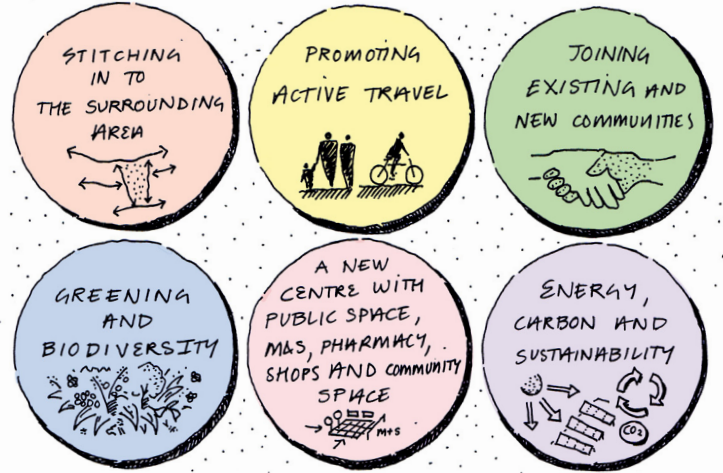
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Community Planning Weekend hands-on planning workshops



Six placemaking principles



Artist's impression of new community space fronting Kew Meadow Gardens



Artist's impression of community allotments

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Key Themes

The following key themes represent a summary of the views of the participants through the community planning process. All quotes are from participants of the process unless otherwise stated.

A new residential-led, mixed use neighbourhood

The draft Local Plan allocates Kew Retail Park for mixed use redevelopment, including the substantial provision of new housing. Participants were delighted to learn that M&S will remain on site, trading continuously and moving from the existing store to a new purpose built store, built as part of Phase One of the redevelopment, with homes above. Many people recognised that the single storey, single use retail park and surface car park is an inefficient and unattractive use of this valuable site and supported redevelopment to provide much needed new homes, including affordable housing, and create a new community hub benefitting and connecting neighbouring communities. Concern was expressed by some about the proposed scale of the development, whilst others recognised that the provision of apartments opens up the opportunity to provide significant publicly accessible green space.

“We want the development to make a positive contribution to the existing community as well as the new community who move into the apartments.”

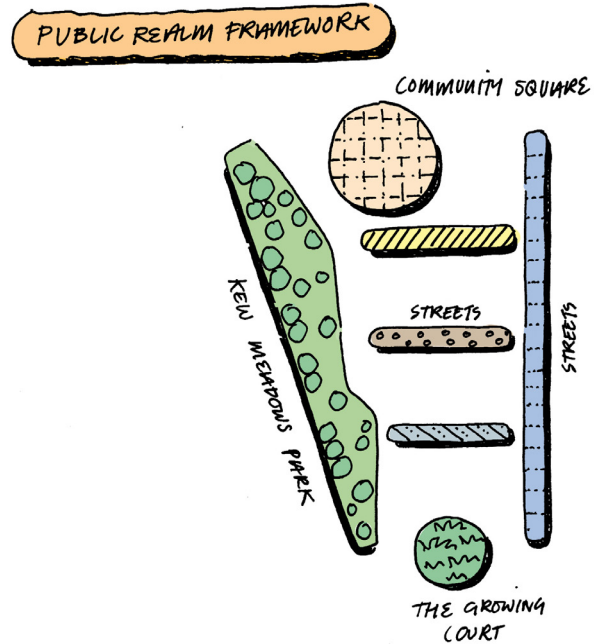
“Rejuvenation and design of the site will be exciting, bring life into existing and new communities, and offer interesting retail and artisan opportunities.”

Kew-ness & integration

The arrival of the railway in the 19th century led to the development of Kew's Victorian and Edwardian housing and tree lined streets. However, the railway line created a physical divide in terms of uses and character. To the east, the sites adjacent to the river, including the retail park site, were principally used for larger scale, industrial purposes. In more recent times many of these sites have been repurposed as new residential neighbourhoods, including apartments. Participants want improved integration and connectivity between “New Kew” and “Old Kew”, and saw that the redevelopment of the retail park could play a key role in creating a community hub and connecting communities. Participants also emphasised Kew's heritage and wanted the new neighbourhood to reflect “Kew-ness”.

“New Kew’ is divided from other parts of Kew, but a space here could help bring communities together.”

“We hope the new development will reflect the Kew-ness - heritage is so rich here.”



Getting about

Kew's 'peninsula' location, bounded by bridges and major roads, along with a high car ownership, has resulted in bottlenecks, air pollution, and personal frustration. Participants welcomed the initial view from project transport consultants Arup that, compared with the current retail park use, the redevelopment is likely to have a neutral or reduced impact on the local road network. Moving M&S customer parking and residential parking underground will allow for the creation of an attractive, green and less vehicle dominated public realm. Kew is well served by public transport although services can be crowded at times. Most people do not intend to give up their car, but there is a growing awareness that “active travel” should be promoted and that the redevelopment can play a key part in facilitating walking and cycling and improving connectivity in this part of Kew. A car club can also help reduce car ownership and encourage active travel.

“We need a better environment to encourage people to walk and it needs to be better for those with mobility difficulties.”

“We need more sharing to happen, so we can share cars & bikes.”

New homes

Kew is an attractive and popular area to live, with good transport links and local amenities. Residential prices are high and participants identified a need to provide a mix of one to three bedroom apartments within the new neighbourhood, to suit people of all incomes. A priority is to provide affordable housing, including for key workers and families, to support a balanced community and enable people to live near where they work. Apartments will enable more first-time buyers to live in Kew. Participants also mentioned that existing Kew residents who wish to downsize often want to stay in Kew - the new neighbourhood will provide opportunities for them to remain in their community whilst freeing up larger homes.

“There's a lack of affordable housing for key workers.”

“There's hardly anywhere to downsize!”

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Key Themes (continued)

Village feel

Kew residents have a strong sense of community which they wish to see incorporated in the new neighbourhood. The building of the new M&S store in the first phase of development will allow for the creation of a public piazza surrounded by active uses that will benefit the community. Suggested uses include shops and cafes, including a pharmacy, flexible community space, small workshop and workspace units, and leisure/recreation space. The development should offer new and existing residents the opportunity to come together and enjoy the "village feel" complementary to and not competing with Kew Village.

"Everyone loves the feel of Kew Village - build the same kind of village feel here!"

"There could be a market square with independent shops & cafes."

Training, jobs and construction

The redevelopment will provide training and job opportunities for the local community through the construction period, and when fully operational. There was concern about the potential impact of construction particularly for those living close to the site, and questions about the potential cumulative impact of other developments in the wider vicinity being built to a similar programme. A construction management and communications plan will be drawn up and participants welcomed the opportunity to discuss concerns and possible mitigation at this early stage.

"You must take care during the building process. Be mindful that many people live nearby!"

"The development will impact on us a lot, so it was good to have a chance to air our concerns."

An exemplar of sustainable development

Many participants saw the opportunity for the new neighbourhood to be an "exemplar of sustainability" across a range of criteria, including through the construction process, the energy efficiency of the buildings and the use of renewable energy. The provision of shops and services in the heart of the new neighbourhood fits the sustainable "20 minute neighbourhood" concept that lies at the heart of the draft Local Plan, providing for daily needs to be an easy walk or cycle away. Green spaces and green roofs will reduce the urban heat island effect and provide community wellbeing, enhanced biodiversity and sustainable drainage.

"Plan for a sustainable development from the get-go - create a beacon of sustainability!"

"Biodiversity, biodiversity, biodiversity!!!"

A social focus

The retail park is a valued local amenity and many people expressed sadness that it will go, whilst acknowledging that the site provides a good opportunity for new beneficial uses. The existing shops and cafe act as a local destination and participants were keen that the new development should create a new social focus. There is an opportunity to provide an accessible and inviting public space that celebrates Kew-ness and offers a friendly and welcoming destination for everyone.

"Lots of people feel sad about losing the retail park."

"I hope the site will make a positive contribution to the sense of community in Kew."

Kew Meadow Path and other linkages

Participants felt that whilst Kew Meadow Path is an important historic feature, it is currently little used, unloved and in need of better surfacing and lighting. There is an opportunity to integrate the path into an extended green space running north/south through the development, offering amenity for existing and new residents, whilst enhancing biodiversity and providing sustainable drainage. Opportunities should be investigated to create new pedestrian and cycling connections to the river, whilst being sensitive to the wishes of neighbouring residents.

"The river is a great asset but it's difficult for lots of people to access it."

"I'm sure the Kew Meadow Path can be vastly improved."

Greening the grey

As well as providing a site for the new M&S store, homes of all tenures and other uses, the current expanse of retail sheds and tarmac should be replaced by a variety of green spaces, for different uses, including at ground level and green roofs. Good maintenance and management of the green spaces will be key and ideas included informal wildflower areas, children's play, space for active use including outdoor yoga and an outside gym. Private amenity space for residents will also be designed in.

"People feel comfortable with greenery - we need more of it."

"Initiatives for a swathe of outdoor green spaces could transform this area for all - young, old, special needs."

Continuing the process

Participants welcomed the opportunity to be engaged at this early stage to discuss concerns and aspirations and help to shape the Vision for the new neighbourhood. There is a keenness for the process to continue, and many ways were suggested to keep local people engaged and informed through the design stages. Ongoing communication is crucial, making use of digital and in-person updates, as well as advertising future events through existing groups, including the Kew Society, and at Kew Market and Kew Gardens station. The consultation process will extend to local schools and ensure widespread knowledge about the forthcoming new neighbourhood.

"What's important is consultation, consideration, and care."

"There should be feedback channels and events throughout the planning process."