

Tender for RIBA Stage 2 Landscape and wayfinding Design Services **Sites: Thames St, Lower Fife Road and outside the station, Kingston town centre**

1. Introduction

Kingston First is a business improvement district (BID) operating in Kingston-upon-Thames. Working with and representing 750 businesses, we deliver projects, services and initiatives to support the town centre. One of our four strategic objectives for our five year business plan, which we adopted in 2020, is to improve the quality of Kingston town centre's streets and spaces.

We work in partnership with a number of organisations in the town centre, including Kingston Council, to deliver many of our initiatives. In 2019, Kingston First, Kingston Council and Kingston University completed a public realm strategy- [Reimagining Kingston Town Centre's Streets and Spaces](#)- to set out a blueprint for how public spaces could be invested in to improve the experience of Kingston, encourage more people to move around all parts of the town and ensure that the town's culture, heritage and riverside assets continue to be developed.

One of the challenges the town centre faces is wayfinding. It's widely acknowledged that there is a myriad of different and outdated signage which often makes it difficult to navigate the town centre. For example, we know from research that visitors often find it difficult to find Kingston's riverside, one of the town's biggest assets. We are working with the local authority to prioritise wayfinding across the town but the investment needed for this work is still to be agreed as are timescales. In the meantime, Kingston First would like to focus on smaller wayfinding interventions that act as a catalyst for more systematic change across the whole town centre.

Our research has highlighted the importance of seating, greenery and planting in the town centre and last year following engagement with local businesses, residents and community groups we introduced temporary seating, planters and greenery in Thames St, Lower Fife road and outside the train station. Coincidentally, these three places are ideally positioned to help people navigate from the train station to Kingston's riverside.

For information; We also introduced a traffic order on Thames St which restricted vehicle access and adapted parking provision. We were unable to fully pedestrianise the street as firstly, we needed to retain some disabled parking spaces as no suitable alternative was found and secondly, some local businesses required vehicle access to the service yard (back of Thames St) for deliveries.

2. Project Brief

[Following evaluation](#) of the temporary schemes on Thames St, Lower Fife road and outside the train station, and given the challenges we face around wayfinding we are looking to explore how we can make seating and greening a permanent feature at these places while also introducing wayfinding interventions that help people find the river. The planters and seating were only intended to be temporary while we 'tested' the appetite for the change and given the positive feedback we want to introduce more permanent interventions. You

may find there are other locations that might benefit from an intervention to help us achieve the objectives below and we are open to further suggestions.

Objectives

- To guide people to and from Kingston train station to the riverside
- To use a clear and consistent visual communication system with concise messaging consistent with Kingston First's [brand toolkit](#).
- To provide improved lighting at the three locations that creates a welcoming space and experience
- To consider safety in respect to nighttime but also with regard to the mix of uses within some of the spaces (there is a vehicle access which is shared with pedestrians and cyclists on Thames St for example)
- To introduce permanent greenery and increase biodiversity in the area
- To introduce outdoor seating at all three locations
- To be fully accessible to all

Design principles

- Consider the flexibility around any wayfinding intervention so it can be adapted as the town evolves and scaled up as more funding becomes available
- Consider how any intervention in the locations can be attractive to current/future tenants
- Consider how the three spaces can be used at all times of year
- Consider how new planting will evolve and adapt between seasons and over time
- Consider any maintenance required and provide a schedule with estimated costs for this
- Consider this as an inclusive place making initiative
- Consider above the ground interventions to allow great flexibility to move street furniture
- Advice and recommendations should include specific attention to inclusive design standards and environmental sustainability objectives (such as micro habitat diversity, drought resistant planting schemes, rainwater capture etc)

We have a committed budget of £125,000 with opportunity to explore avenues for additional funding.

There are different opportunities and challenges for each space which we have outlined below.

a. Thames St

Overview

Our original vision was to fully pedestrianise Thames St, however during the engagement process with local businesses, residents and disabled groups it was agreed some disabled parking would remain and there would be vehicle access on a restrictive basis. The local authority's neighbourhood committee in November will provide more information on requirements for Thames St.

Additional seating, more greening and planting are requirements for this project but we are open to exploring what else the street may benefit from but need to bear in mind any ongoing maintenance costs that will occur.

Feedback on the current scheme has highlighted the need for extra bins but this may be a consequence of the current construction where the planters seem to be attracting rubbish across all three sites. There is also confusion that Thames Street is a mixed use space so how we make it easier for different users/groups should be explored and we are happy to consider different surface treatments and signage for example.

The new seating has been very welcomed by local businesses on Thames St, particularly the food outlets who have experienced customers using the outdoor seating, therefore consideration of type and placement of seating should be taken into account.



b. Lower Fife Road

Overview

Lower Fife Rd is a pedestrianised area, although delivery access is available at certain parts of the day. The introduction of greening and seating has been well received in this space from different users and local businesses. We believe there is an opportunity to use pocket parks or something similar in this space.



c. Outside the train station

Overview

Outside the station is a shared space with pedestrians and cyclists. The additional seating and greening has been welcomed by different groups but consideration needs to be given to how the space is being used, particularly at times when the space is very busy

Given this space is an important entry point to the town centre we'd like to explore how we can better reflect Kingston's Royal Borough status. We also see this space as key to wayfinding and a starting point for helping people to find the river.



3. Consultation

We engaged with different users of the spaces/streets, including residents, visitors, community and access groups and local businesses before we introduced the temporary scheme at the above mentioned sites and recently engaged the same audiences to capture their feedback and produce an evaluation which can be found [here](#). We are open to considering your experience on engagement and recommend you outline what this might look like in your proposals. We expect the design proposals/plans/models etc created at the end of this commission to be subject to a consultation before we proceed to delivery.

- Project steering group

We envisage the successful consultant team working closely with a steering group made up of Kingston First; elected members and officers at Kingston Council; local businesses; landowners and property owners; community and heritage organisations.

4. Expected Deliverables

- RIBA Stage 2 designs in a final report to include:
 - A programme for interventions and a plan for delivery;
 - Evidence for recommendations and illustrative materials and plans presented
 - Engagement with and links to existing strategic plans and policies
 - An engaging and clear narrative- graphically and in written form- to inspire and help understanding of the design proposals
 - Compelling visuals and visual information to communicate proposed ideas
- Costs for the programme and interventions proposed and recommendations for delivery; working with the project team to explore scaleable options and phased delivery if necessary.
- Outline approach for the ongoing management and/or maintenance of any changes proposed and provide estimated costs for this

There is an opportunity for continuation to RIBA Stage 3 to be agreed at the end of the project.

5. Existing policy/ place strategy

Useful documents to assist with your response include:

[Reimagining Kingston Town Centre's Streets and Spaces Strategy](#)

[Kingston Riverside SPD](#)

[Kingston First's Renewal Proposal](#)

Supplementary information

We recently launched a new consumer brand and [website](#) to help position Kingston as a destination and to highlight its diverse offer to visitors and local residents. As well as marketing campaigns to raise awareness of Kingston we are bringing the brand to life across the town with a unique style of colours, photography and messaging. To help build recognition and ensure consistency this project should support, reflect and enhance the new brand. Some examples of the new brand execution are included in the Annex.

6. Consultant Team Specification

We are looking for a team who can demonstrate:

- Strong experience of working with multi-partner client groups and not-for-profit organisations.
- Comparable experience of designing public realm improvements in town centres leading to successful delivery and use; experience of working on delivered landscape based improvements.

- Experience of designing robust and resilient planting schemes which apply horticultural best practice along with a clear commitment to working towards the most sustainable design solutions that address climate resilience.
- Experience of working in historic spaces, conservation areas, market towns and/or riverside locations.
- Ability to inspire client teams and their partners to develop their ambitions for spaces and be creative to approaches in delivery; ability to support client teams communicate aspirations and vision.
- Understanding of local and regional political and strategic landscape and funding opportunities.
- Ability to draw on national and international examples of best practice.
- A commitment to work flexibly throughout the project and take into consideration challenges and opportunities of remote and online working.
- We welcome submissions from local landscape practices

7. Timescales

The successful team will be appointed in December and we aim to have the work completed by late Spring

8. Contacts and governance

The commission will be sponsored by Kingston Council and project managed by Kingston First. A project steering group will oversee the commission with day to day client management undertaken by Kingston First.

9. Project Budget

The budget for this initial work is up to £25,000 (excl. VAT) and including expenses. We have a committed budget of £125,000 with opportunity to explore avenues for additional funding.

10. Responses and review criteria

Please send your response to the brief by outlining the following:

- Your approach to working with us, our partners and stakeholders and your approach to the brief, including an outline project timeframe
- Three examples of your team's relevant experience and comparable work/projects
- Details of the project team and their experience
- A breakdown of costs

Review Criteria

We will shortlist and appoint based on the following criteria:

45%	<p>Quality of response including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - understanding of the brief and strategic and local context; - approach to working with the Kingston First team, partners, businesses, community groups and stakeholders - the proposed approach and project plan
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30%	Cost: fees and costs based on response.
25%	Relevant experience including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examples of team/ consultancy/project experience which show comparable and relevant initiatives showing creativity and pragmatic solutions in comparable place-based character and context; - An outline of the project team and their experience - A plan for appropriate resourcing for the commission

11. Deadline for submitting your response, shortlisting and appointment

The deadline for submissions is: **Friday 25 November** Please send your response via email to shareena.merzi@kingstonfirst.co.uk. The outline timetable for appointing the successful team is as follows:

w/c 28 November - shortlisting

w/c 5 December - interviews

w/c 12 December- appointment of designer

w/c 4th January- start the commission and deliver by late Spring

Shortlisting, interviews and decisions on appointment will be made in partnership with Kingston Council.

12. Further information

For further information about the process or to have a short information chat about the brief contact:

Shareena Merzi, Director of Communications and Corporate Development, Kingston First
07436345580

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