Tender for RIBA Stage 2 Landscape Design Services
Sites: Eagle Brewery Wharf and Memorial Gardens, 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 new 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.

The Covid-19 crisis continues to emphasise the importance of accessible, open, green, flexible spaces as essential components of a successful, social town centre; we see the vital role open spaces play in supporting residents, businesses, employees and students.

2. Project Brief
We are looking to create reimagined proposals for two prime public open spaces in Kingston town centre: Memorial Gardens and Eagle Brewery Wharf on the riverside. Both are relatively modest sized spaces however, we are keen to see each space develop and improve for more people to enjoy through new civic, cultural, relaxing and reflective spaces.

Each space has opportunities and challenges which will need exploring with people who use the spaces, businesses and stakeholders. We outline introductions to the spaces and their opportunities and challenges in this brief, however, as part of the project we envisage a consultation process with those who use the spaces, and live or work close to the spaces, to capture more detailed perspectives, concerns and aspirations for the sites.
a. Eagle Brewery Wharf, Kingston riverside

Overview

Eagle Brewery Wharf (EBW) is a public open space and an access point to view and walk along the River Thames from the town centre. It is used mostly for informal recreational activity and as a meeting point; it is particularly popular during the Spring and Summer when people can sit by the river, meet friends and family, walk through and past the space and where people spill out and socialise from the pubs in the vicinity. It is also used by local employees as a lunch spot. The area has benefitted from and can host small scale events/social activities, ranging from yoga classes, photography exhibitions and community events such as the International Youth Arts Festival.

Its location, current design and close access to the High Street has, in part, contributed to the antisocial behaviour which is particularly frequent in the late evening and at night over Spring and Summer months. The space was temporarily closed due to public health concerns relating to antisocial behaviour during the Covid-19 national lockdown. Mitigating activity since its closure includes a trial arrangement between the Council and businesses adjacent to the site who can occupy the space for outdoor cafe style seating for 12 months (to September 2021). The space is included in a new PSPO and a new gate will also be installed to limit unauthorised vehicle access to the car park from High Street.

We believe there is opportunity to improve the space and how it is used through redesign, engagement with stakeholders and by building on the learnings of the past few months and subsequent changes made to the area.
Approximate budget for future works

- We’re looking for proposals that plan for an indicative capital budget of up to £150,000 to invest in space, all proposals should not exclude options that go beyond this indicative cost

Design Principles for the space

Consultation and engagement will refine the priorities for the space, our initial principles are to develop plans which:

- Improve pedestrian connection and foot flow from the High Street/town centre
- Consider how EBW contributes to the length of the riverside’s activity, for example, as a social space and/or a space for activity on a riverside walk
- Retain and enhance the provision of soft landscaping and green space
- Retain the flexibility of the space to ensure it can be a social space that can accommodate small activations, installations and organised activities
- Ensure there is engagement with businesses and property/landowners in the vicinity and that plans are developed which support them operationally
- Support wider plans for reducing antisocial behaviour and developing a quality social space along the riverside
- Consider how the space can support culture, art and Kingston’s heritage
- Consider maintenance and management arrangements

Supplementary Information

The site is 1457m² made up of 700m² of green space and 757m² space which is primarily hard surface/seating area.

b. Memorial Gardens

Overview

Memorial Gardens was established in 1826 as an overflow burial ground for the All Saints church. It closed in 1855 and was designated as a public garden with features including raised flower beds, public seating and a garden for the blind. Most of the gravestones were relocated to the northern and eastern perimeter of the gardens. The gardens have a war memorial which is Grade II listed. Kingston’s annual Remembrance Day service is held in Memorial Gardens.

The gardens are located centrally within Kingston town with modest sized green space. The historic and community significance of the gardens allows people to learn more about the history of Kingston town centre. However, the current design and the surrounding built environment limits natural surveillance of the space; the soft-landscaping in the space is now of poor quality and is dated. The gates on the western edge have recently been removed to help open up the space and improve its connections to Memorial Square. There can be a perception that it is a private or enclosed space and lack of engaging public activities can also limit people’s interaction and use of the space. Memorial Gardens can be enjoyed as a peaceful space, for example, for people taking their lunch there, particularly during the...
Spring and Summer however, there are instances of antisocial behaviour both in the day and evening. There is currently no through-route for the Gardens.

The space is consecrated land and alongside retaining its community and historical significance, there is opportunity to consider further ideas for it to be an informal community space and to create an added level of permeability within its surroundings and link to the streetscape adjoining it. Through redesign into the space, we believe it can have a significant positive impact on town centre users.

Approximate budget for works
- We’re looking for proposals that plan for an indicative capital budget of up to £100,000 to invest in space, all proposals should not exclude options that go beyond this indicative cost

Principles for the space
Consultation and engagement will refine the priorities for the space, our initial principles are to develop plans which:
- Retain the historic and community significance of the space as a place that recognises the sacrifices in war that members of Kingston’s community have made
- Improve the permeability and connectivity of the gardens with the town centre
- Retain the gravestones in their current locations
- Retain mature trees but consider re-landscaping of the space
- Explore and facilitate social activity in keeping with the historic and community significance of the space; consider how the space can support culture, art and Kingston’s heritage
- Explore the creation of a new route through Memorial Gardens, to Cloisters Mall
- Ensure there is engagement with businesses, stakeholders and property/landowners in the vicinity
- Consider for maintenance and management arrangements

Supplementary Information
The site has an area of 2524㎡.

3. Consultation
The principles set out above have been drawn from informal consultation with a number of stakeholders. As part of the project, we want to engage with people who currently use the spaces and who could use the spaces, alongside community and heritage groups, businesses, landowners and stakeholders. The commission will be managed by Kingston First.

- Project steering group
We envisage the successful consultant team working closely with a steering group for both spaces or each space separately made up of a variety of partners and organisations including, for example, Kingston First; elected members and officers at Kingston Council; local businesses; landowners and property owners; community and heritage organisations.

- Inclusive consultation and dialogue
The consultant team will be responsible for leading an engaging and accessible consultation and conversation with a wide range of stakeholders and people who are interested in and use the spaces. We expect the team to be able to work in the context of Covid-19 social distancing restrictions and use various ways to open dialogue about the spaces.

4. Expected Deliverables
- Creation and delivery of an engagement and consultation plan to ensure dialogue and engagement with relevant stakeholders and members of the public as set out in section 3. Collation and analysis of the feedback is expected to be set out in a report for the client team.
- RIBA Stage 2 designs in a final report to include:
  ○ A programme for interventions and a plan for delivery; short and medium term
  ○ Evidence for recommendations 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 plans
  ○ Compelling visuals and visual plans 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.

There 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

Emerging:
  - Kingston Vision 2035

6. Consultant Team Specification
We are looking for a team who can demonstrate:
● Excellent knowledge of Kingston town centre and understanding of the opportunities and challenges the town is experiencing.
● Strong experience of working with multi-partner client groups and not-for-profit organisations.
● Strong experience of creating and managing consultations and information gathering to inform and contribute to public space change and evolvement.
● 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 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.

7. Timescales
The successful team will be appointed in December and we aim to have the work completed by 31 May 2021.
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 is up to £30,000 (excl. VAT) and including expenses.

10. Responses and review criteria
   a. Responses
   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

   b. Review Criteria
   We will shortlist and appoint based on the following criteria:

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<td>- understanding of the brief and strategic and local context; knowledge of Kingston town centre and the opportunities and challenges outlined</td>
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<td>- approach to working with the Kingston First team, partners, businesses, community groups and stakeholders</td>
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<td>- the proposed approach and project plan</td>
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   | 30% | Cost: fees and costs based on response. |

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<td>- Examples of team/ consultancy/project experience which show comparable and relevant initiatives showing creativity and pragmatic solutions in comparable place-based character and context;</td>
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<td>- Experience of working in and with multi-partner teams which have wide interests in spaces and outcomes</td>
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<td>- An outline of the project team and their experience</td>
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<td>- A plan for appropriate resourcing for the commission</td>
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   | 10% | Local links: the additionality your team and/or your response can bring to this commission either directly to the project, to the town centre and its stakeholders, or to Kingston First and its wider remit as a not-for-profit, member-led organisation, focussed on supporting the town. |
11. Deadline for submitting your response, shortlisting and appointment
The deadline for submissions is: 5pm on 4th December. Please send your response via email to kirsten.henly@kingstonfirst.co.uk. The outline timetable for appointing the successful team is as follows:
w/c 7th December- shortlisting
w/c 14th December- online interviews
w/c 21st December- appointment
w/c 4th January- begin the commission

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:
Kirsten Henly, Chief Executive, Kingston First
0208 547 1221
kirsten.henly@kingstonfirst.co.uk