Key Issues –

The approach to scoping the EIA for the Albany Riverside and Half Acre proposed developments was driven by the complexity of two separate but inherently linked planning applications. The likely significant effects at each site were different, given the nature of the environment at each, key differences related to Flood Risk, but also Townscape and Visual given the proximity to Kew Gardens, and Ground Conditions given the previous use of the Albany Riverside site as a gas works.

The EIA Scoping Report therefore needed to set out an approach suitable for assessing the likely significant effects for each site independently; and then the aggregated likely significant effects from both schemes.

A pragmatic approach was taken to scoping, seeking where possible to scope out disciplines where no likely significant effects were anticipated for either one or both sites, as appropriate.

Purpose of the project

To deliver residential-led mixed use developments at two sites known as Albany Riverside and Half Acre on behalf of London Green and the London Borough of Hounslow council.

Description of the project

Albany Riverside

The proposed development of the Albany Riverside site, located on the High Street, Brentford comprised the comprehensive redevelopment of the site for a residential-led mixed use development.

The proposals included associated access, infrastructure and landscaping, including provision for Thames Path through the site.

Half Acre

The proposals entailed the comprehensive redevelopment of the former Police Station to provide a new Arts Centre along with residential development.

The proposals include associated access, infrastructure and landscaping.

The development of both sites was inherently linked by the proposed re-provisioning of the Arts Centre, from the Albany Riverside site to the Half Acre site.
Lessons learnt

The project demonstrated how thorough scoping can help to refine an EIA, particularly for schemes which are complex – in this case due to assessing two separate but inherently linked sites. It also highlighted that with a reasoned pragmatic approach, technical disciplines where no likely significant effects are anticipated can be successfully scoped out of the EIA. In scoping a single ES to cover both application sites, consideration was given to the likely significant environmental effects of each site independently, as well as the aggregated effect of both sites. The primary technical discipline where the differing environmental context of the two sites was particularly diverse was Flood Risk. The Albany Riverside site is located partly within EA Flood Zone 3 ‘High Probability’ and therefore required a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) in support of the EIA and planning application. The Half Acre site on the other hand is located with EA Flood Zone 1 ‘Low Probability’, and is less than 1 hectare in size, and as such an FRA was not required for the Half Acre site. The Scoping Report therefore set out that likely significant effects for Flood Risk would be included within the assessment for the Albany Riverside site, but scoped out for the Half Acre site. This approach was accepted by the local authority in their capacity as planning decision maker and as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).

The scoping process for the EIA also successfully scoped out the need to assess transport and access matters for both sites, given the location of the proposed developments in London and that travel would rely on public transport; and ecology and nature conservation, through the submission of an Ecology Technical Note with the Scoping Report which set out that both sites are of very low ecological value.

The proposals pertaining to the two sites have since not yet been brought forward to application stage in the planning process.

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Lessons learnt cont.

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