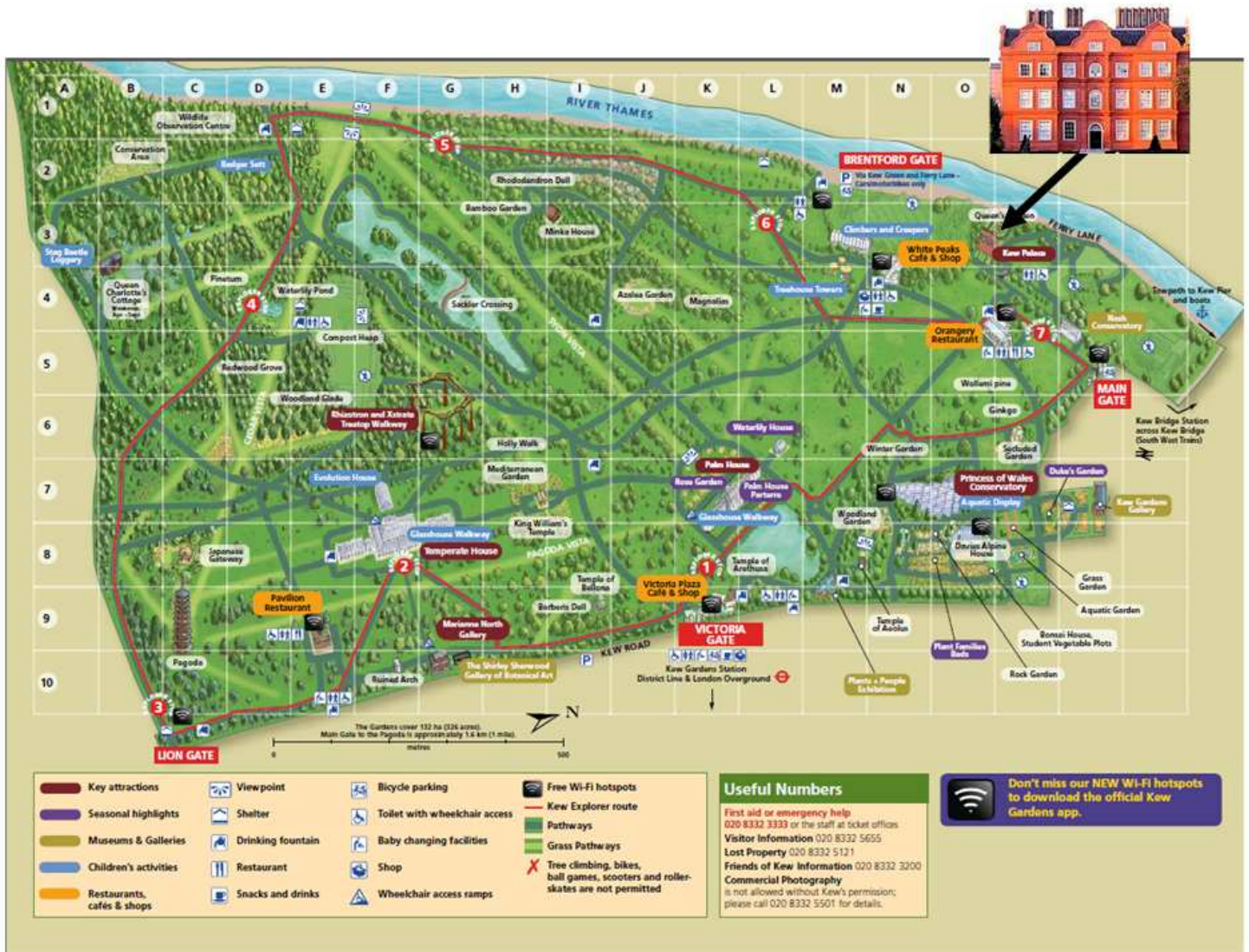




# Borough of Richmond upon Thames

## Kew Palace



Kew Palace

**Please note: admission tickets to Kew Gardens must be purchased to gain access to Kew Palace - for gardens admission prices, please visit [www.kew.org](http://www.kew.org)**

For visits 2 April - 4 November 2012	Gate price	Group rate (min. 10 visitors)
<b>Adult</b>	£6.00	£4.77
<b>Child under 16</b>	Free	Free
<b>Concessions</b> Student with ID or senior citizen (over 60)	£4.50	

The so-called 'Old Palace', sometimes referred to as the Dutch House because of its Dutch gables, was built in 1631 by Samuel Fortrey. The building formerly belonged to the Smith family, and by marriage became the property of Samuel Molyneux, Esq., secretary to George II.

The house contained some good pictures, among which were a set of Canaletto's works; the celebrated picture of the Florence gallery, by Zoffany, (who resided in the neighbourhood). The pleasure-grounds, which contained 120 acres (0.49 km<sup>2</sup>), were laid out by Sir William Chambers, one of the greatest masters of ornamental English gardening.



The building was taken on a long lease by George III from the descendants of Sir Richard Levett, a powerful merchant and the former Lord Mayor of the City of London, who had purchased it from the grandson of Samuel Fortrey.

Originally from Sussex, the Levett family (whose name derives from the village of Livet in Normandy) retained ownership of the house, as well as other lands in the Kew complex, until October 13, 1781, when the Dutch House was purchased by King George III from the Levett family for £20,000. But members of the Royal Family had occupied the house as early as 1734, when they leased the house from the Levett heirs.



A musical portrait of Frederick, Prince of Wales and his sisters by Philip Mercier, dated 1733, uses the house as its *plein-air* backdrop.

On ascending the throne in 1837 Queen Victoria gave most of Kew Gardens to the nation, retaining only a small summer house once belonging to Queen Charlotte for her own use. Known as "Queen's Cottage" Queen Victoria seldom visited it and to mark her Golden Jubilee in 1887 she presented this also to the country.