

Ham House Conservation Area 23

Designation

Conservation area designated:
16.09.1975

Conservation area extended:
07.09.1982

Location

OS Sheets: 1772, 1773

Ham House conservation area is focused on the estate of Ham House, situated on the South bank of the River Thames and contained by the settlements of Ham and Petersham to the South and East. It adjoins a number of other conservation areas to the North, East and South.

History and Development

Ham House (listed grade I and scheduled ancient monument) was first built in 1610 for Sir Thomas Vavasour and its formal gardens then laid out. The house was substantially altered in the later 17th century. At this time the house became renowned as the meeting place of the CABAL or the chief ministers to the Court of King Charles II. The gradual development of Ham Street dates from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Here a number of fine 18th century houses were built benefiting from the picturesque setting and this prestigious location, also a number of modest cottages likely to have been built to house the staff of those larger houses. A large estate of houses and flats was built in the 1960s on former river meadows immediately to the West. This area is recognised as being of archaeological importance.

Character

The conservation area is focused on the remarkable Ham House and its estate, an exceptionally fine example of a 17th century country house and grounds in a distinctive rural setting by the River Thames. In recognition of the historical and scenic importance of Ham House, its grounds and riverside setting, this estate is listed grade II* on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Ham House is highly visible from Richmond Hill and from both banks of the river. It is one of the strategic landmarks of the Borough and plays an important role as part of the wider formal landscape of Ham Common, Richmond Park and Twickenham riverside. This has been accentuated by 18th century landscape architects who have planted formal avenues to visually link Ham House with the surrounding landscape and landmark buildings such as Marble Hill. Ham House's relationship with the river is an intimate one with floodwater serving as a reminder of the continued dominance of the natural landscape in Ham.

Ham Street runs North to South from the riverbank and Ham House to Ham Common. It contains an eclectic collection of buildings including a group of elegant 18th century listed mansions of The Manor House, Beaufort House and Newman House, with their enclosing high brick walls and mature gardens, and also a number of terraced cottages and almshouses on a smaller scale. Wiggins and Pointer Cottages is a secluded distinctive and largely unspoilt group of simple Victorian terraced cottages built off at right angles to the street. The resulting mix of styles and traditional materials gives texture and interest to this street. Those gaps between the houses and groups of houses provide glimpses of the wider backdrop of trees and green space, a landscape setting which contributes to the distinctive rural character of this area.

Problems and Pressures

- Development pressure which may harm the balance of the river and landscape-dominated setting, and the obstruction or spoiling of views, skylines and landmarks
- Loss of traditional architectural features and materials due to unsympathetic alterations
- Loss of front boundary treatments and front gardens for car parking
- Lack of coordination, clutter and poor quality of street furniture and flooring

Opportunity for Enhancement

- Improvement and protection of river and landscape setting
- Preservation, enhancement and reinstatement of architectural quality and unity
- Retain and enhance front boundary treatments and discourage increase in the amount of hard surfacing in front gardens
- Coordination of colour and design, rationalisation and improvement in quality of street furniture and flooring

Scale: N.T.S.

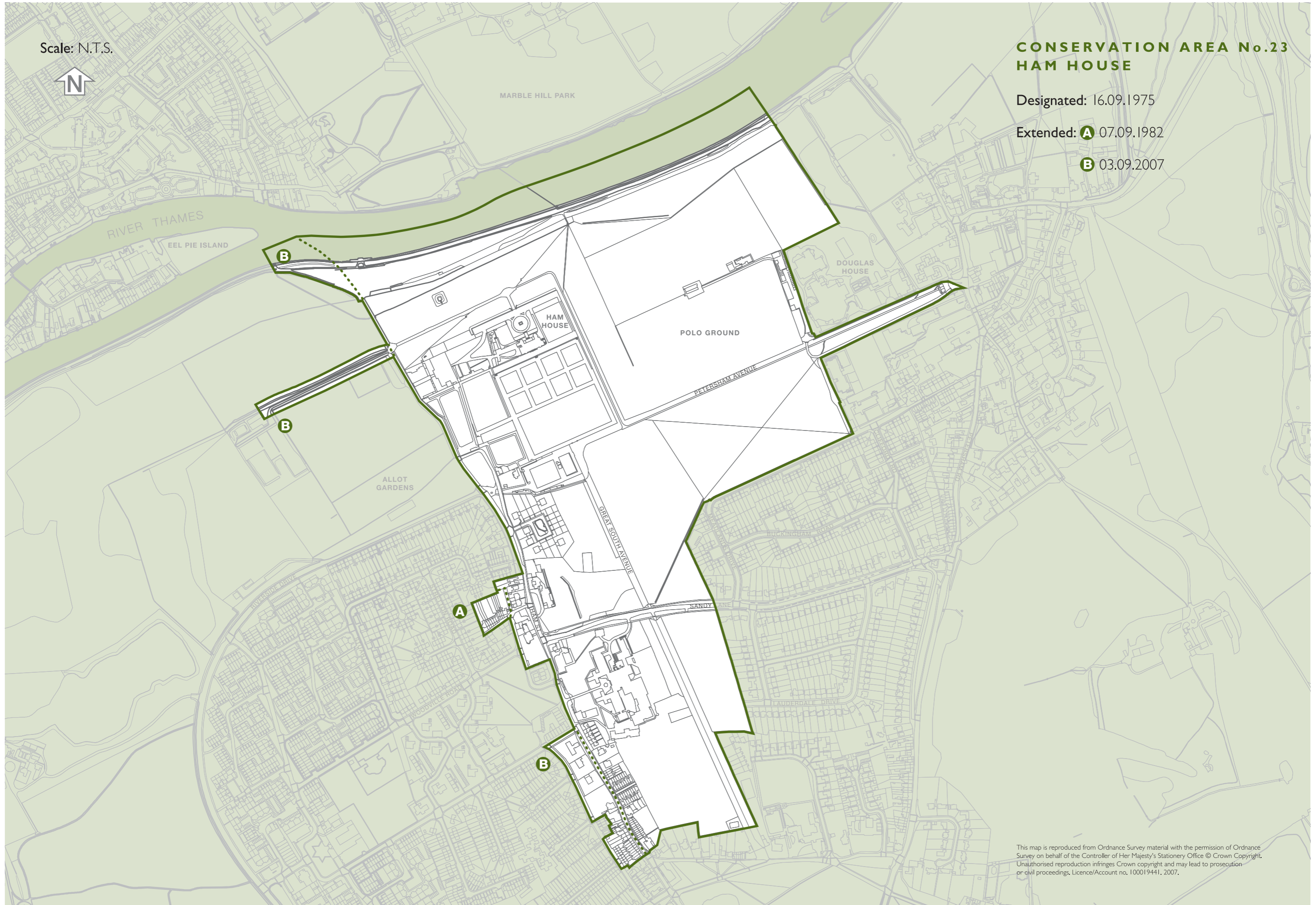


CONSERVATION AREA No.23 HAM HOUSE

Designated: 16.09.1975

Extended: **A** 07.09.1982

B 03.09.2007



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