

Richmond Hill Conservation Area 5

Designation

Conservation Area designated:
14.01.1969

Conservation Area extended:
16.09.1975
05.07.1977
17.01.2000

Location

OS Sheets: 1773 1774 1873 1874

Richmond Hill conservation area spans the river to include the open landscape on both banks of the Thames south of Richmond town centre, and rises up to include the townscape along Richmond Hill, overlooking the river, as far as Richmond Gate of Richmond Park. The conservation area is almost entirely surrounded by other conservation areas towards Richmond, Petersham and Twickenham.

History and Development

This area had been part of the Royal Manor of Richmond since Domesday, until the enclosing of Richmond Park by King Charles I (including most of Petersham Common) around 1635. Mostly agricultural land in the early 18th century, it was in this period that the number of large houses in their own grounds increased significantly, such as Halford House and Vineyard House. The formal Terrace Walk was laid out in the later 18th century followed by further important houses such as Downe House, Ancaster House, Wick House and The Wick on the hill, as this area became an increasingly fashionable place to live. Richmond Bridge was completed in this period, in 1777. With the arrival of the railways in Richmond in 1846, development of this area increased with newly laid out residential streets (such as The Hermitage, Halford Road, Cambrian Road and Chisholm Road) and shops along the Hill Rise. In 1887, part of the grounds of Buccleugh House on the riverside was opened to the public as Terrace Gardens. In 1902 the Richmond Petersham and Ham Open Spaces Act was passed by Parliament to safeguard the famous view (as recorded by Turner and Reynolds) from Richmond Hill. The modern period has witnessed further infill development of houses and blocks of flats in the area.

Character

Richmond Hill conservation area is a distinctive and well defined area containing a variety of building types and mix of uses such as residential, commercial, educational, institutional and important public open space. The conservation area can be divided into a number of distinct character areas, although the whole conservation area is unified by its relationship to Richmond Hill.

Riverside and Rural Richmond

The historic open landscape encompassing both banks and the river Thames south of Richmond Bridge, Terrace Gardens, Petersham Common and Richmond Park provides a distinctive rural setting to the important 18th and 19th century townscape of Richmond Hill. This townscape is subservient to this landscape, trees and the topography of the hill. Along Petersham Road fine groups and individual houses from the 18th to 19th centuries address the Thames, affording gap views to the river from the road. There is a general transition from more isolated buildings in the south to the more cohesive development along the road into town. The natural curve of the river allows unfolding views along the towpath and exceptional views to and from Richmond Hill and the town. The view from the hill, west towards Ham House, presents a dramatic panorama of rural riverside landscape. Within these strategic views key landmarks are: Richmond Bridge, Petersham Hotel, Star and Garter Home and St Matthias Church spire on the hill. The

Twickenham bank is an open landscape of large gardens, trees and spaces, reinforcing the rural character of the wider area and offering a transition between Richmond town and Marble Hill Park.

The Vineyard

The Vineyard area began as the tending outskirts of the Mediaeval Richmond town. The present 18th and 19th century townscape still follows the ancient field pattern of this area. The building scale is generally two to three storeys in a mix of styles, retaining many traditional materials and fenestration. This area forms part of the wider residential development of Richmond Hill to the north and east, continued within the adjoining St Matthias conservation area. Key landmarks are: Halford House and the Church of St Elizabeth of Portugal.

Richmond Hill

The Richmond Hill area is characterised by the exceptional quality of its 18th century architecture, and its distinctive groups of fine later Regency and Victorian housing, historically overlooking the river landscape from the hillside above. These buildings form a varied and distinctive landmark skyline in views from the river. The townscape is unified by the general use of face brickwork in a limited palette of colours. The repetition of similar architectural features, fenestration and materials, and their scale and proportions, further draws the character of these buildings together. Traditional narrow colourful shopfronts characterise Hill Rise. Key buildings also include the lodges of Richmond Gate to Richmond Park.

Queen's Road

The Queen's Road area is characterised by streets of two storey mid-late 19th century houses in Cambrian and Chisholm Roads and complimentary modern residential development, set in a wider area of mature planting along Queen's Road. This area offers an important transition between the townscape of St Matthias conservation area to the west and the open landscape of Richmond Park to the east. Key buildings include the late 18th century Kingsmead, former Richmond workhouse, and Richmond College.

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 and poor quality of street furniture and flooring
- Domination of traffic and poor pedestrian safety leading to clutter of signage and street furniture
- Loss of original or quality shopfronts and unsympathetic alterations and advertisement

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 and improvement in quality of street furniture and flooring
- Improvement of highways conditions and pedestrian convenience, and rationalisation of existing signage and street furniture
- Retain and improve the quality of shopfronts and advertisement
- Areas identified for environmental improvement include: Warren Footpath, Cambridge Park Gardens, Car Park to rear of Odeon, Richmond Landing Stage, Three Pigeons PH, Chitty Hole and Richmond Park Gate

Scale: N.T.S.



CONSERVATION AREA No.5 RICHMOND HILL

Designated: 14.01.1969

Extended: **A** 16.09.1975

B 05.07.1977

C 17.01.2000



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