

St. Matthias Conservation Area 30

Designation

Conservation area designated:
05.07.1977

Location

OS Sheet: 1874

St Matthias conservation area lies on the plateau and northern scarp of Richmond Hill. It is situated on the north slope of Richmond Hill to the south of Sheen Road, and bounded to the east by Queen's Road. It adjoins Richmond Hill (5) to the West and Sheen Road (31) conservation areas to the North.

History and Development

The area was largely fields with a few large 18th century dwellings until the mid 19th century. The arrival of the London and South Western Railway at Richmond in 1856 led to substantial development in the form of new streets and high class villas on the slopes of the hill. The church of St Matthias was consecrated in 1856 and early development building took place around Frairs Style Road, Park Road, Marlborough villas (now road), Montague Villas (Rosemount Road) and Cardigan Road.

Character

Centred on St. Matthias' Church at the top of the hill this high quality residential area was designated for its cohesive form of varied architectural styles. Mostly developed between 1860s and the 1880s the area is dominated by three main roads with a few cross streets which climb up the hill. There are also interesting paths, such as Albany Passage, which derive from the paths between former fields. There are many short distance views and vistas due to the rise in ground level and the Church of St. Matthias is a major landmark which can be seen from some distance.

There is a mix of mid and late Victorian building styles and forms, from terraced mews to large detached villas and all maintain a consistently high quality of townscape. The building styles are noticeably different ranging, for example, from the three storey grandeur of Montague Road to the interesting brick detailing and symmetry of Rosemont Road of the terrace cottages in the Alberts. The dwellings are mostly set back from the road and many have retained their front gardens and these form an important feature throughout the conservation area.

Friars Stile Road is a mix of residential and business uses which has retained its village atmosphere and its intimacy in contrasts with the grand vista from Richmond Hill at its south west end. The small business area is centred between Rosemont Road and Marlborough Road junctions and the area contains several interesting shop-fronts. The rear gardens of Cardigan and Montague Road make a contribution to the street scene and provide greenery.

Park Road, Marlborough Road and Queen's Road are in a more secluded part of the area running down the south and east slopes of the hill towards Richmond Park and bounded by the large detached dwellings of Queen's Road. There is a gradual reduction in the scale of the houses from the grand late Victorian red brick of Queen's Road and the bottom of Marlborough Road to the two storey domestic scale at the north end of Park Road. Trees are an integral part of the street scene here and important part of the setting to the houses. Equally important is the pattern of long back gardens which create a feeling of space between the buildings and are well planted with mature trees.

The Alberts and Houblon Road are characterised by tight groups of two storey brick terraced houses with slate roofs. Houblon Road is particularly interesting as it has undergone little alteration.

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

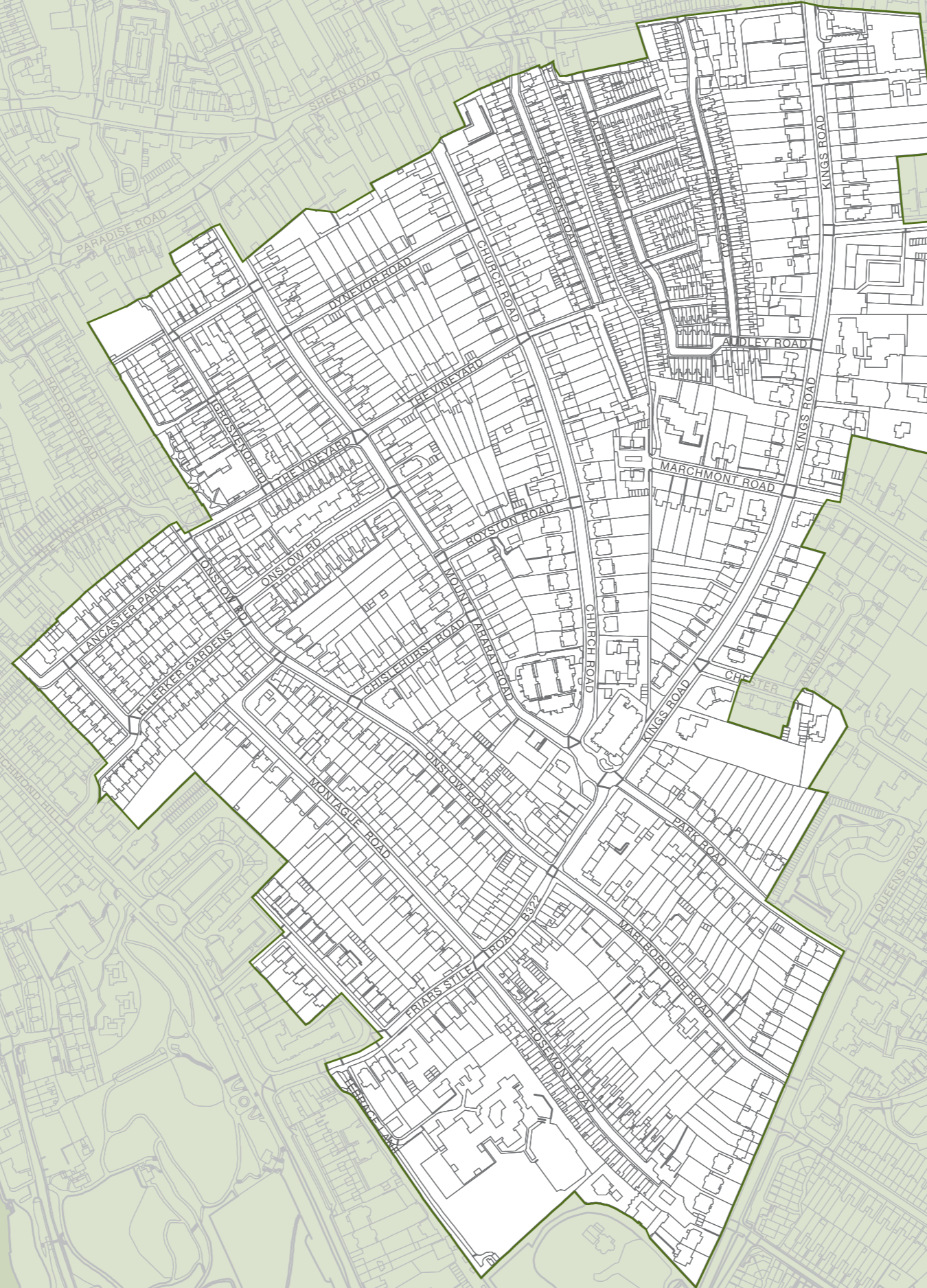
- Improvement and protection of river and landscape setting
- Preservation, enhancement and reinstatement of architectural quality and unity
- Retain and enhance front boundary treatments and discourage increase in the amount of hard surfacing in front gardens
- Coordination of colour and design and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

Scale: N.T.S.



**CONSERVATION AREA No.30
ST. MATTHIAS, RICHMOND**

Designated: 05.07.1977



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