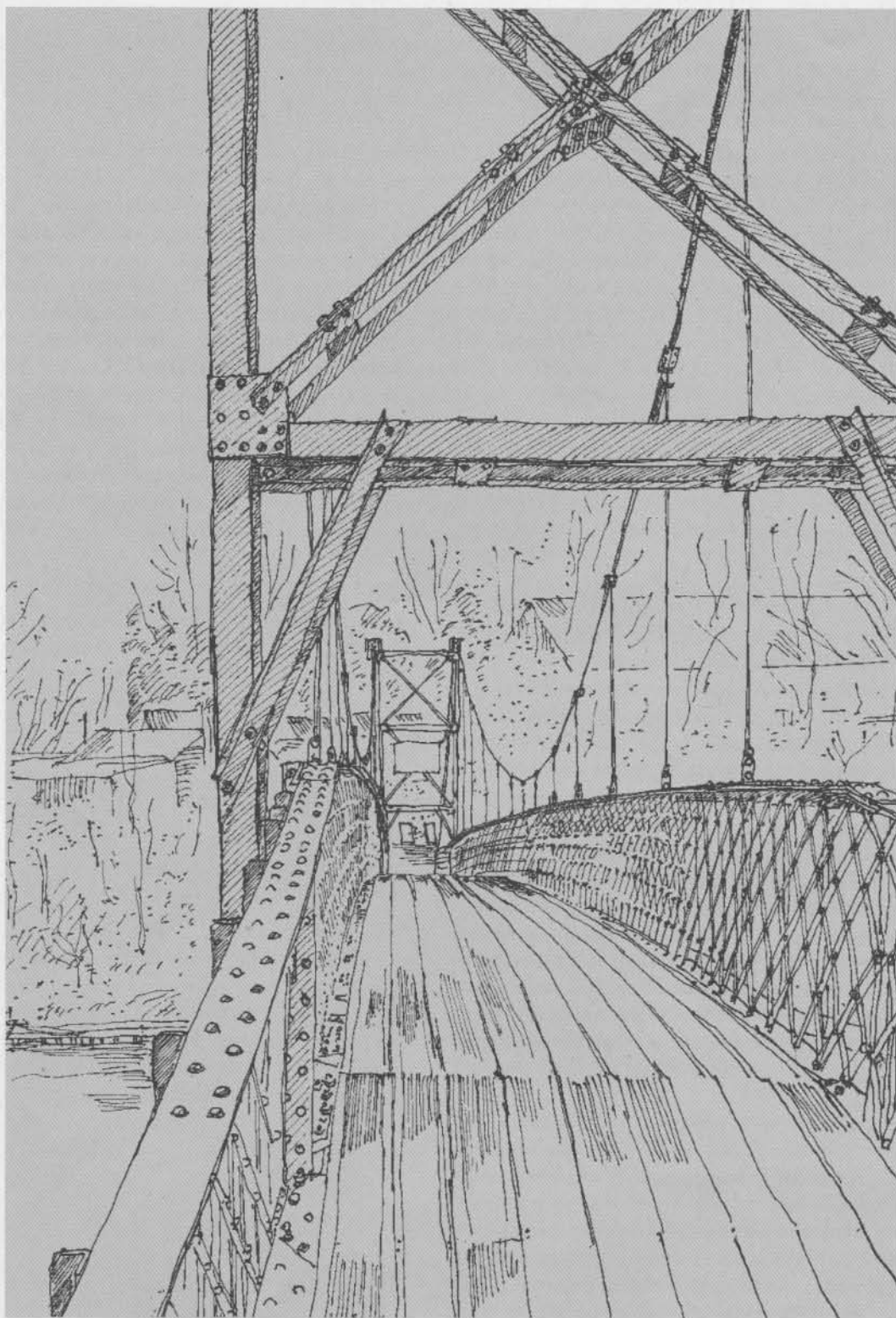


Platt's Eyot

CONSERVATION



AREA STUDY



LONDON BOROUGH OF
RICHMOND UPON THAMES

Environment Planning & Review

Area no.

58

Introduction

This study has been prepared by Environment Planning & Review in consultation with other departments of the Council. By publishing proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the area's character and appearance, the study will take forward relevant policies contained in the Unitary Development Plan, providing a framework for action. The identification of the area's special character provides a basis for specific problems to be identified, proposals to be made and general guidelines and advice to be given.

Conservation areas were introduced in the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and are defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.' Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and the lopping or felling of trees above a certain size.

Platt's Eyot was designated a conservation area on 13 December 1990 because the historic and architectural significance of its buildings, the distinctive topography and trees, and the visual and historic links with the existing conservation area at Hampton, were considered to fulfil the criteria for conservation area designation. The island is an unusual site - for its industrial history, for the architectural and historic interest of the boatsheds, and for being privately owned by one company. Before its current ownership by Port Hampton Ltd., it was owned by Thorneycrofts, the boat builders, through both World Wars and is famous as the yard where many of the Royal Navy's motor torpedo boats were built. Because of its history and its unique (and fragile) character, it is considered essential to set out the nature of its special interest, and the Council's aspirations for the island, in a more detailed form than the UDP proposal allows. It is rare for industrial sites to be set within a landscape of the quality that the River Thames in this reach provides, but the island's present character and the historic landscape and nature conservation value complement each other, and exemplify the liveliness and complexity characteristic of the Thames from Kew to Hampton. At the same time, conflicts arise between the perceived service needs of an industrial site, and the retention of river character and nature conservation value. This study aims to identify the constraints and opportunities which could enable these interests to be reconciled, and the necessary fine balance achieved between retaining the island's attractive informality and sense of history, and maintaining investment and viability as an employment site.

History and development

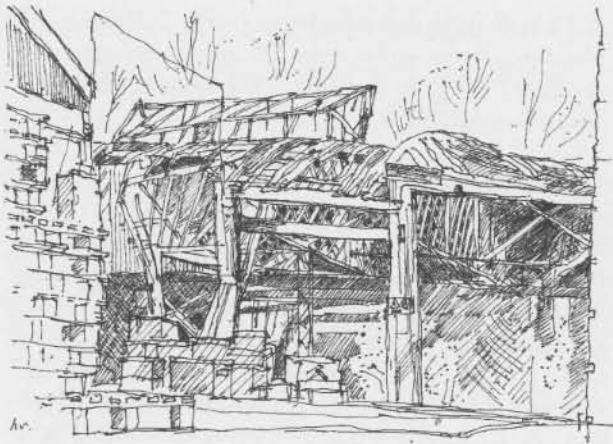
Platt's Eyot was a typical Thames osier bed before any development took place, and it is known that in the C16 the Parish Wharf at Hampton was used to carry bricks by barge for the construction of Hampton Court Palace from the nearby brick fields on the site of Stain Hill reservoir. The remains of the old wharf were visible during the 1976 drought. During the C19, the local private water company, the Southwark & Vauxhall Water Works Company, began taking water from the Thames at Hampton, and slowly built up the Middlesex bank with pumping stations and filter beds. In 1888 they built an intake on the island, on the site of the later wet dock; the cast-iron valves of its collection sump at the head of the island on the Surrey side are still in existence. The distinctive high profile of the western end of the island is the result of the dumping of spoil from the further development of the Hampton Water Works from 1900.

The first boat-building is thought to have been carried on by Tom Tagg, who built a yard in 1866, and a house (now offices), at the eastern end. Tagg moved on to the eponymous Tagg's Island, and the Platt's Eyot boatyard was taken over by a German electrical engineer, Moritz Immisch, who made and operated electric launches as the Immisch Electric Launch & Boat Company. The redbrick building on the southern bank is the former alternator station, and there were charging stations up the river to Henley for the use of customers. The business continued until about 1909 but was probably doomed by the growth in popularity of the internal combustion engine.

In 1904 John Thorneycroft (1843 - 1928), a designer and builder of high-speed motor boats, started an operation at Platt's Eyot. He already had a major boatyard at Chiswick building steel-hulled craft, including destroyers, but until then had subcontracted wooden-hulled boats to other yards, including Immisch's. In the 1870s he developed his fast boats as naval vessels and Admiralty contracts began in the 1880s. The Chiswick yard closed in 1909 and the steel hull operation moved to Southampton. He renamed the Platt's Eyot yard Hampton Launch Works, and it became the base for the firm's wooden-hulled boat operation.



Boathouse no. 5



Boathouse no.5 from the South side

During both World Wars, Thorneycroft's Platt's Eyot yard was famous for its 'CMBs' (coastal motor boats), fast launches carrying torpedoes which could skim safely over minefields. The boat was initially a single-step hydroplane, 40ft long and powered by a Thorneycroft V12350hp engine. It could do 30 knots fully loaded, which was then considered remarkable. The boat sheds on the island were built in 1916 to designs by A.A. Hamilton Scott; the CMBs had to be built under conditions of extreme security. Many of Thorneycroft's other boats took world water speed records, including 'Miss England III' in 1932, a 35 foot boat with Rolls Royce engines which was the first boat to achieve 120mph.

The Thorneycroft yard was still operating in the early 1960s, advertising the building and repairing of "commercial, service and pleasure craft" up to 115ft, and providing a complete mooring and maintenance service for yacht owners, including covered moorings. Later in the 1960s, Thorneycrofts was taken over by Vospers, and much of their equipment was moved down to Southampton, including 'CMB 4', which had the Victoria Cross painted on her side and is now in the RAF Museum at Duxford. The yard was taken over by Port Hampton Ltd., a newly formed company, and the number of moorings was increased by carrying out a great deal of dredging and campshedding. Although some of the older sheds are let for boat repair, most of the work carried on is light industrial rather than river-related, with some media-related and craft-based operations.

The policy context

National policy

Conservation areas were introduced under the Civic Amenities Act 1967. The definition of a conservation area is "an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance." Platt's Eyot was designated as a conservation area on 13 December 1990. Section 71 of the Town & Country Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local

authorities to "formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas." The Act provides the legislative basis for all conservation-related matters. The Town & Country (General Development) Order, (GDO 1995), defines the nature of works within conservation areas which require planning consent. Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG 15, 1994) provides in plain English a full explanation of Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment.

Local policy

The Richmond upon Thames Unitary Development Plan First Review (UDP), agreed December 2000, sets out local planning policies for the designation, protection and enhancement of conservation areas. This plan forms the basis for decisions taken by the Council. Copies of the UDP are held in reference sections of local libraries and are available for reference or purchase at the reception desk on the 2nd floor of the Civic Centre, 44 York St., Twickenham. Policies in chapters relating to 'Built & Open Environment and Employment & Economic Activity' are particularly applicable to Platt's Eyot. Objective 21 for Hampton is to safeguard facilities for sport on Platt's Eyot and prevent intensification of existing uses.

Unitary Development Plan (First Review)

Proposal H16: Platt's Eyot Hampton

The proposal in the Adopted Unitary Development Plan (1992) which was current when this Study was first approved has been revised and, following public consultation, the version below has been agreed by the Council's Environment Committee in December 2000:

Proposal H16

Mixed uses which will assist in improving the island's economic viability and regeneration, and in particular its listed buildings, will be encouraged, where the special character or appearance of the island would be preserved or enhanced. Suitable uses include business of industrial (B1 or B2), leisure and residential. Limited vehicular access, subject to meeting the tests below.

The Council recognises the need for planned regeneration of the island which will enable repair and use of the listed buildings, (preferably for boat-building and/or repair, and related or complementary uses), and for the retention of a working community with B1/B2 uses on the island to improve its economy. Supplementary planning guidance (Platt's Eyot Conservation Area Study, December 1998) sets out in detail the special interest, opportunities and constraints which the Council would expect to guide any regeneration proposals. In order to reverse the economic decline on the island, appropriate redevelopment will be encouraged, particularly in those areas identified in the Supplementary Planning Guidance, where it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation

area. Some residential use may be acceptable provided its extent, scale, design concept and layout is consistent with the existing character as set out in the SPG, and recognises and reinforces the unusual nature of the island and its setting. Live-and-work units, incorporating a specifically-identified element of BI use, would be appropriate. Docks, wharves and slipways must be retained, and important trees are to be kept to ensure there is no adverse effect on the Green Belt and Thames Policy Area. Any proposal to provide a bridge for vehicle access, and related enabling development, would be assessed on its merits, including quality and sensitivity of design; the Council would take into consideration the level of overall benefit to the island's economic viability, the consequent contribution to the regeneration of the listed buildings, and the effect on the character of the island and the river environment. Platt's Eyot is part of the River Thames Site of Metropolitan Importance for nature conservation designated by the London Ecology Unit and any proposals would be required to protect and enhance the nature conservation value of the site.

UDP designations

In the UDP the island is included as Thames Policy Area, reflecting the aims of the Government's Regional Planning Guidance for the River Thames (RPG3b/9b) for more unified and consistent protection along the Thames between the Thames Gateway and Hampton. The western end of the island is within the Green Belt

and is also a site of nature importance. The whole island is a conservation area. The former canteen and charging station are included in the Council's Schedule of Buildings of Townscape Merit.

Statutory Protection

The boathouses were included in the statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest at Grade II in 1991, with the office (Tagg's House, or Building no. 14) included for group value. The list descriptions are quoted on the next page because of the importance of these buildings in relation to the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area.

Planning History

In 1990 an application was made by the owners Port Hampton Ltd. for demolition of all buildings on the island and redevelopment for BI and leisure uses, with a road bridge. Following conservation area designation and listing of the boathouses, the application was suspended pending the outcome of the UDP Public Inquiry, at which the proposal (H16) to retain the island as a principally pedestrian environment was the subject of objection by Port Hampton Ltd.. The Inspector's decision indicated that access for emergency vehicles should be permitted. The condition of the boathouses is a cause of considerable concern.

Building no. 14 also known as Tagg's House



Schedule of buildings of special architectural or historic interest

29/27

Boathouse 1

GV

II

Boathouse. Built in 1916 by Augustus Alban Hamilton Scott (1878 - 1944) for the Thornycroft firm to build fast launches carrying torpedoes for the Admiralty. Slipway which adjoins nos. 2 & 4. Timber-framed structure clad in zinc sheeting with cambered roof. End has fixed casement with industrial glass. Right side has 8 mainly blocked-in windows. Double doors. 16 bays long. Square posts with 2 tiers of midrails and wooden bolted feet. Belfast truss roof with central glazed skylight. Side adjoining no 2 has bolted uprights and diagonal braces.

29/28

Boathouse 2

GV

II

Boathouse [date/architect as above]. Slipway which adjoins nos 1 & 4. Timber-framed structure clad in zinc sheeting with cambered roof. 16 bays with Belfast truss roof and central skylight. 6 roof trusses have been modified.

29/29

Boathouse 4

GV

II

Boathouse. [date/architect as above]. Slipway which adjoins nos 1 & 2. Timberframed structure clad in zinc sheeting with cambered roof. Perhaps because of the curved site, no 4 has a different type of frame from nos. 1 & 2. Upright posts on padstones with cross bracing at the top and passing braces from cross bracing to Belfast truss. 15 bays with central skylight and bicycle crane. Riverside wall has a series of outward opening casements with handles. Concertina doors at side. Wall frame has 4 tiers of midrails, the roof has cross braces between bays and the boarding is diagonal.

29/31

Boathouse 5

GV

II

Boathouse. [date/architect as above]. Open shed on upright posts set in concrete padstones. Owing to the curved slipway this shed has a most unusual curved roof of Belfast trusses with passing braces and cross ties. Remainder of this boathouse [apart from 13 easternmost bays] not of special interest, having been rebuilt.

29/30

Building No 14

GV

II

Offices marked "Est 1864" but probably c.1890. Built of stock brick in Flemish bond. Hipped tiled roof with ridge tiles and 3 ribbed brick chimneystacks. 2 parallel ranges. Front has projecting gable on brackets with bargeboards, pendant and timber framing. 1st floor has large 5-light bay with French window and left side corner window of similar type. Wooden balcony on brackets. Ground floor has 2 double doors and 3 casements. Set back to right is a three-storey tower with hipped tile d roof surmounted by ogee-shaped cupola, brick cornice and blank panels. Hoist door to 2nd floor. 1st floor and door leading onto balcony and 2 sashes. Rear elevation has 3 casements. Included for group value.

Character Appraisal

Topography

Platt's Eyot is a cigar-shaped island with a distinctive high profile to the western end. The island has significance as the gateway on the River Thames western approach to the Greater London area, and is identified as such in the former GLC's Thames-side Guidelines (1986) and in the Thames Landscape Strategy (1994). From upstream, the island's high banks are masked by tree foliage for much of the year, and from downstream the view is dominated by the bulky boatsheds and prow-like pavilion at the eastern end. It is an important element of views upstream from the Hampton Conservation Area. Its southern bank, facing the open space of Hurst Park, has the wharves and 'Taggs House' as a focus of this more attractive frontage; the northern bank, facing the Middlesex bank wharf and car park, is rather more forbidding. It is linked to the mainland by a suspension bridge which is primarily a footbridge, although small vehicles can pass over it. Internally, the island divides into three areas of distinctly different character. The eastern end has the listed boatsheds, slipways, dry and wet docks and wharfs. The central area and part of the western end has industrial buildings of the last thirty years, and the extreme western section is the large garden of Thornycroft Cottage.

Uses

On both the northern and southern banks, the presence of moored boats makes a major contribution to the character of the island, even though some of these are modern boats of little visual interest in themselves. On the northern bank, the boats at the eastern end are usually those awaiting repair in the boatsheds, and at the western end include the police launches. On the southern side, there are both permanently-moored leisure craft and those used for transport of goods and


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5


Area no.

58


Key

 Conservation area boundary


 Listed building

 Building of Townscape Merit

UDP Designations


 Thames policy area


 Green belt


 Other site of nature importance

Proposals


 View to be protected

 Landmark character to be retained

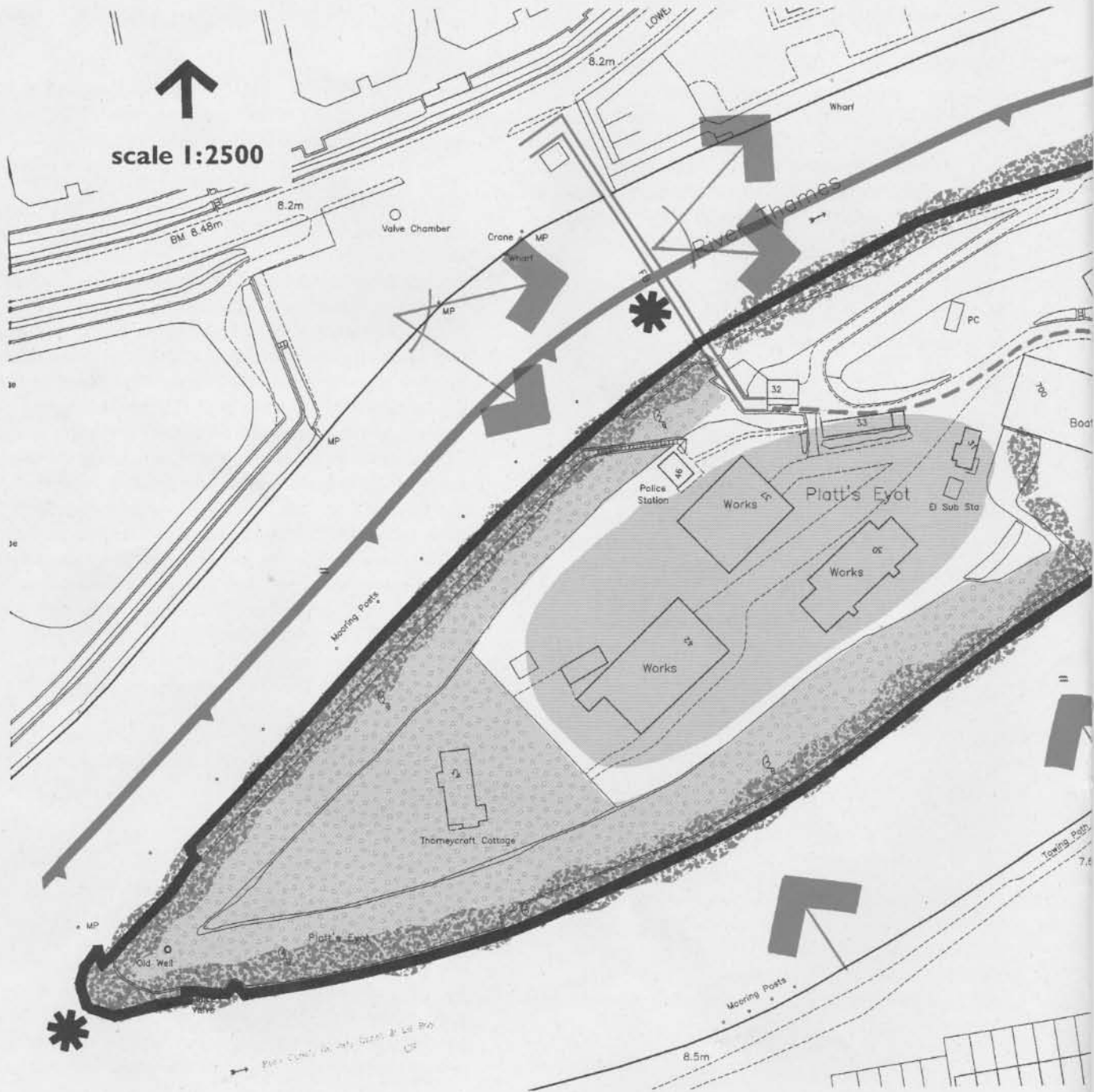
 Area for selective tree planting

 Area for selective redevelopment

 Area for enhancement

 Character of route to be protected

scale 1:2500



Platt's Eyot

Conservation Area Study



Conservation Area
Proposals

It should be noted that current financial constraints on the Council mean that proposals for which it is responsible may take longer than is desirable to implement.

materials to the eyot from the mainland. The character of the Middlesex bank opposite the eyot is dominated by the wharf and working boats and cranes, and therefore closely linked to the eyot in its visual character and land use. The wharves on the Middlesex bank and on the eyot itself are strong reminders of the function of the eyot as a home for river-related industries and their associated trades, and other businesses which rely on river transport for delivery of bulky goods.

The river-related industry and services that dominate the eastern end of the island gradually give way towards the western end to other light industrial uses that have no physical relationship with the river. Many of these businesses appear to be thriving, to have been established relatively recently, and to be dependent on new technology. Many appear to be media-related, for example a rehearsal studio, graphic design and stage-set production workshops, and workshops for crafts such as joinery.

Architectural, archaeological and historic interest

The boatsheds and associated buildings and features of the Thorneycroft era dominate the downstream end of the island and provide the principal architectural and historic interest of the conservation area. They were listed Grade II in January 1991. There were four listed sheds, known as Boatsheds nos. 1, 2, 4 and 5. Boathouse 4 is now demolished as it became dangerous. Numbers 1 and 2 are in some sense a single shed, but though the two arcades that articulate them are regular, there are

three slipways and their relationship to the water causes each aisle to stagger forward in plan, independently of its neighbour. Shed 5 is much longer and wider, and its bend follows the line of the outfall of the Southwark & Vauxhall Company's sluice, which survives as a wet dock for part of its length. All the sheds are of timber-framed construction and clad in zinc sheeting, with cambered roofs; the roof structures are Belfast trusses. The angled footprint of shed 5 gives its trussed roof structure an unusual curve. Only part of this shed is listed, the remainder having been rebuilt. The other listed element of the complex (included for group value) is that referred to as Building no. 14 in the list description, but also known as Tagg's House. It is used as offices, and its exuberant Edwardian elevation to the river, with a tower and a wooden balcony, is an important feature of the river frontage.

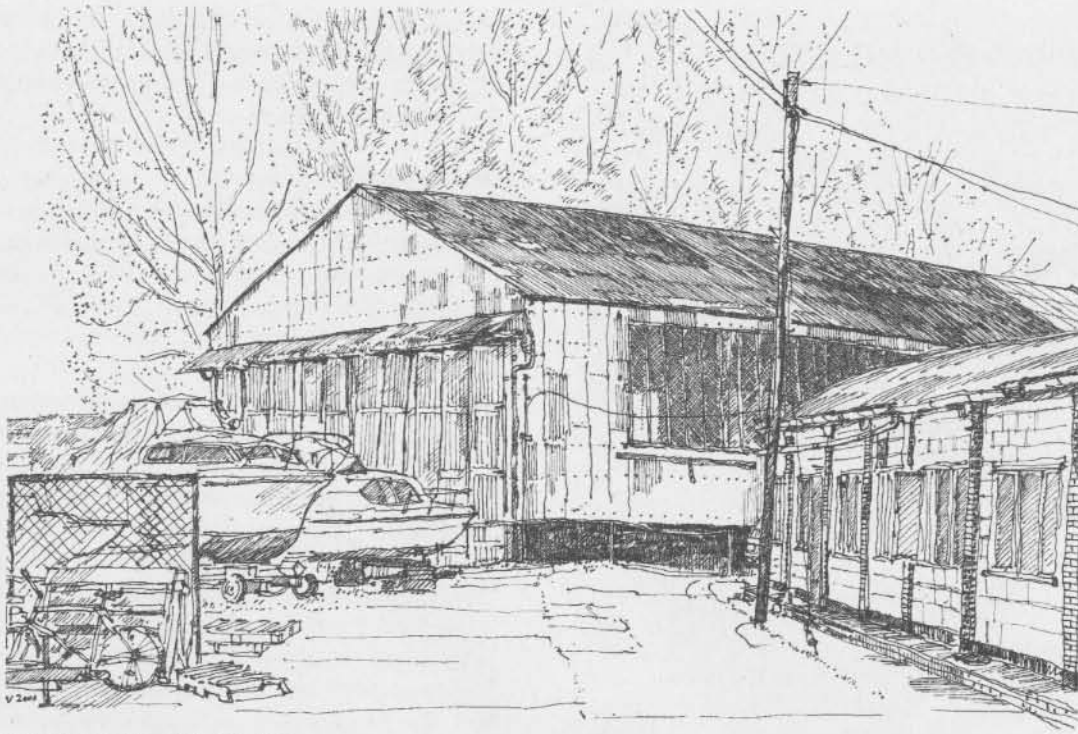
There are additional buildings and structures which are not listed but which make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area. The pavilion at the eastern end is thought to have been built as a canteen and to have been used by the famous Thorneycroft Brass Band for its rehearsals. The former alternator house, a small well-detailed brick building further west along the southern bank, was in use as a chandlery after ceasing its function for the Electric Launch Company. There is another (later) boathouse, centrally on the south bank, with the same tall green-painted folded timber doors that are a feature of sheds 1 and 4. The suspension bridge, assumed to date from the Thorneycroft period, is a light structure which blends well with the heavily-treed aspect of the northern bank, its support gantries forming a frame and gateway to the interior of the island when viewed from the Middlesex bank.

Character of spaces

The interior of the island is enclosed by the tree cover of the northern and western banks, and by the bulk of buildings on the eastern end. At the entrance, the narrowness of the space provided by the bridge access, the scarcity of vehicle traffic, and the slopes up to the built-up areas, give an intimacy and enclosure to this part of the interior of the island, reinforced by the internal vegetation and the winding paths leading off the main track. To the eastern end, the views of the northern channel through gaps between buildings, and the wharf to the south, re-establish the close connection with the river. This area contains most of the buildings which are of architectural or historic interest, whether or not they are listed. Despite the poor condition of the buildings and the rebuilding of parts of the fabric, and the diversification of uses to other light industrial purposes, there is still a strong sense of the history and presence of the boat industry with which the island has long been associated. The walk east along a route lined with workshops and grounded boats, with the focus of the exuberantly-detailed Tagg's House and the interiors of the sheds partly visible, anticipates the wharf area onto which it opens out, and which is the focus of the island's activity and visual interest. On the wharf the



Boathouses nos. 1, 2 & 4.



Boat House on south side of Platt's Eyot

fine chestnut trees, industrial artefacts, and open views of the main channel and the Surrey bank, combine to create a strong sense of the island's importance in the landscape and its place in local and national history. The subsidiary route to the pavilion at the eastern end establishes an even closer relationship with the river setting; there are uninterrupted views from its confined access path to St. Mary's Church and the river edge at Hampton, and to the Garrick Temple. The experience of walking around it is reminiscent of being on the prow of a ship. Conversely, the pavilion is extremely important in the view from Hampton.

To the western end, there is a sharp contrast between the modern and functional industrial character of the newer buildings, and the more private and overgrown area to the extreme west around Thorneycroft's Cottage which is reached by way of the industrial estate. This area has nature conservation value and is included in the Green Belt.

Nature conservation interest, landscape and trees

The island is included - as are all Thames islands in this Borough - as part of the River Thames and Islands Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation, which forms a vital corridor of habitat spanning the capital. It is part of the uppermost stretch of the river in the Borough and is the only completely non-tidal part of the Thames in London. The report in the London Ecology Unit's Handbook no. 21 describes the island as follows: "Platt's Eyot is the first major feature to be met on a journey downriver from the Borough's western limit... much of the eyot is occupied by light industry, including boat repair workshops, and this built up section is excluded from the Site of Metropolitan Importance. However, steep banks around the

periphery of the eyot support a strip of woodland that screens the buildings of the interior from the Richmond side of the river. A fairly diverse mix of trees comprises this woodland fringe: sycamore predominates with ash, hawthorn, crack willow, oak and Lombardy poplar providing plenty of cover for common birds. At the eyot's western end is a delightfully secluded cottage garden with a lawn, consisting of acid grassland, surrounded by shapely oaks, hawthorns and willows on the woodland slopes that fall away to the water's edge. In summer the lawn is a haze of red sheep's sorrel flowers, studded with the white and yellow blooms of oxeye daisies and the dancing orange forms of small heath butterflies."

The island is also designated by the Borough in the UDP as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. It is described in the site report in the survey by the London Wildlife Trust (1986) as "...an interesting woodland community in a part of the Borough with few other such habitats. Mostly undisturbed but too small to support many species."

When seen from the car park off Lower Sunbury Road, the edge of the island appears almost entirely wooded, an impression which is accentuated by the contours. It has a woodland appearance in summer, but a somewhat less natural appearance in winter where columnar coniferous trees take on a dominant visual role. The steep wooded boundary continues for about half the length of the island on the southern bank, although further towards the north east there are a number of substantial chestnut trees along the river edge. They provide an important foil to the suburban development on the Surrey bank. The island lies at an important transition point in the river; and this is reinforced by tree planting funnelling attention towards Hampton, with its important vista to Garrick's Temple.

Problems & Pressures

The present character of the island is to a great extent the result of the survival - relatively unaltered other than by minor pragmatic amendments and repairs - of a distinctive and discrete enterprise, its singularity reinforced by its physically isolated setting and the restrictions on vehicle access. This isolation was no doubt a distinct advantage when under wartime conditions extreme security was required! However, the scale of the buildings, the minimal facilities and services, the gradual decline of demand for large boats, and the consequent low investment levels, have brought about a situation where varying degrees of decline and dereliction form the predominant impression.

Ad hoc adaptations to structure and fabric, mainly functional and unsympathetic, have blurred the architectural forms, and continued lack of use in some parts of the buildings has accelerated the decline. The scale of the slipways and docks makes maintenance a heavy liability on tenant and owner; this has been identified as a problem with all the river-related industry in this area.

At the same time, the scale of these facilities is what makes them valuable because they are unique on the upper Thames, and their removal would seriously affect the chance of any future revival of fortunes. Because of the strong sense of history on the site, and the picturesque setting, the physical decline has its visually attractive aspects and there is an element of 'time-warp' about the island's character; but it is not ultimately sustainable in this form, as the currently serious condition of the listed buildings attests. However, one boatshed has now been reoccupied and repaired by a new user for narrowboat repair, and the slipway and winching equipment repaired.

Some of the island's buildings are occupied by small enterprises which probably could not afford the rent of better-equipped or more accessible premises, and these buildings are therefore fulfilling a valuable function despite their condition. Securing uses for the buildings is complicated by the fact that parking for workers or visitors - the demand for which is accentuated by the lack of good public transport access - is dependent on another landowner and leaseholder as the car park is not owned by Port Hampton Ltd.. This car park is badly laid out and in poor condition, and therefore difficult to use and visually unattractive.

The trees on the island are very important visually and for nature conservation, but the conifers are inappropriate and sycamore is invasive. The nature conservation value and habitat diversity may become limited in the absence of active management. The problems and pressures can be summarised as follows:

Poor condition of buildings, resulting from:

- Vacancy, due to decline of demand for large boat building and repair
- The scale and complexity of structures
- Limited services which limit tenant choice
- Minimal tenant resources for repair
- Scarcity value of facilities and infrastructure, which limits re-use options
- Distance from public transport
- Single ownership of island, reducing investment sources
- Owner's objective of better vehicle access may conflict with character of conservation area and river setting
- Active nature conservation management is required including gradual replacement of conifers with native forest and riverside trees
- Island setting is affected by the appearance of the car park on the Middlesex bank. It has remnants of granite setts and wharf, but appearance could be improved by tree planting at western end
- Difficulty of securing a future which will retain the current informal character and low-key activity on the island.

Proposals for protection & enhancement of the conservation area

Relevant areas and sites are indicated on the Conservation Area Proposals Map included with this Study. See pages 6 & 7.

General principles

- The Council's objectives for the island are broadly as stated in the UDP proposal H16 reproduced on Page 3 of this study. These are explained in more detail in the following section. The protection and conservation of the listed buildings and other early buildings and associated artefacts, together with the protection of the special character of the island as defined in this document, are priorities. In this respect the key issues are:
- the retention of the informal character of the island's routes, spaces and buildings which demonstrate its history as a working community
- the retention and restoration of the listed buildings and BTMs which are associated with the boat industry, and of related artefacts and structures such as wharves, slipways and cranes which enable river-related industrial use of the island to continue
- the repair and economic use, preferably for river-related industry, of the listed buildings and buildings of townscape merit, by means which do not compromise their architectural and historic interest, the informal character of the island generally, and

the river landscape setting; with possible limited re-development at the western end in keeping with the island's character to meet the needs of modern industry, improve the environment, and maintain the viability of the island as a whole

- the retention of a predominantly pedestrian environment, with appropriately scaled routes, and without access for vehicles (other than emergency vehicles) larger than those currently able to reach the island
- the retention of the moorings around the perimeter of the eyot, in order to retain the use and appearance of the island as mainly dominated by boats
- the retention and enhancement of the existing tree cover and nature conservation interest, including improvement of habitat diversity
- The Council will strictly apply Unitary Development Plan policies, and as opportunities arise, pursue the detailed proposals listed in the study in order to preserve or, where possible, enhance the special interest of the conservation area.

Proposals

1 Opportunities for renewal

Appropriate redevelopment of the more recent industrial sheds could benefit the viability of the island as a whole, and enhance the character of the conservation area including the views into it from both banks. While there is a need to retain cheap rented accommodation for small businesses, some redevelopment of the western part of the island could have benefits for both employment and the visual character of the island. The more modern industrial buildings at the western end of the island, (within the area indicated by hatching and a broken line on the map), and Thorneycroft Cottage, are not of any architectural interest. However, the former unlisted boatshed at the southern edge has some historic and townscape value, and its retention is desirable at the river end of the building, in particular for the character of the doors over the river. Some of the modern and rebuilt structures within the area of the listed buildings at the eastern end do not complement the historic buildings or the special interest of the conservation area, and could be renewed. These are indicated on the map. The massing, height and profile of any redevelopment must take into account the already prominent profile of the island, and the visibility of buildings on the higher ground, particularly in winter when views of the interior are not blocked by trees in leaf. The predominantly tree-clad impression of this end of the island from both banks, and from the river, must be retained.

2 Views

The character of the main wharf areas and their adjoining buildings on the south, east, and north east parts of the island, including the access bridge, should be maintained and enhanced by retention and restoration, and by ensuring that any minor new building or rebuilding in this area complements its setting. The wharf on the south side is very important in the view from the Surrey bank. Its character is formed by the mature horse chestnut trees, the profile and detail of the listed Tagg's House, and the remaining unlisted but important C19 buildings and artefacts such as the former charging station or battery house, the crane, and the pavilion at the eastern point. The retention of the moorings all round the island is essential to the protection of the use and visual character of the island.

3 Protection and enhancement of unlisted buildings and structures

It is proposed to include the access bridge and the crane on the south side of the island in the Council's Schedule of Buildings of Townscape Merit. Buildings and artefacts on the wharfs associated with the river-related industry, and with the use of boats as transport for goods to and from the island, should be retained and restored. The former canteen and the former charging station are already included in the Council's Schedule of Buildings of Townscape Merit, and in accordance with policy the Council will as far as possible treat BTMs as listed buildings in considering proposals for alteration or demolition. The former canteen is particularly important because of the contribution it makes to the character of the conservation area in the view from Hampton.

4 Landscape

Existing vegetation should be positively managed, with trees selectively replanted (using locally native trees appropriate to the island's environment) to improve habitat diversity and visual contribution. As the island is part of the River Thames and Islands Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation, and a Site of Nature Importance in the UDP, an ecological management plan should be prepared. This could include proposals for future planting of a mix of trees and low growing berry-bearing shrubs. Use of locally native species is essential in order to benefit local wildlife and help the region's balance of flora, and to help prevent the spread of invasive alien species within the island. The high level of tree cover should be retained, but it would be desirable to gradually replace the conifers and sycamores on the island with more appropriate native forest and riverside trees. In consultation with the island's owners, a tree survey will be carried out to determine where replanting and reinforcement planting would be desirable. The car park would benefit from tree planting at the western end, and from improved granular surfacing while retaining the existing setts.

Buildings of Townscape Merit (BTMs)

The Schedule of Buildings of Townscape Merit is a local list, introduced in 1982, compiled to recognise the value of those buildings which make a positive contribution to the streetscape but have not been included on the statutory list of buildings of architectural or historic interest. It is hoped that drawing attention to the historic, architectural and townscape interest of such buildings will encourage owners, developers and others to regard them more carefully when considering any proposals for alteration or extension. In a conservation area permission will not normally be given for the demolition of BTMs.

Acknowledgements

The co-operation and input of all individuals and organisations who took part in the consultation process for this study is gratefully acknowledged by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. The illustrations for this study were produced by Howard Vie for the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

This study was approved by the Council's Environment Committee in December 1998.



Former Thorneycroft canteen

Other Publications

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames has also published the following information.

Planning Information Leaflets

- no. 1 Conservation Areas
- no. 2 Listed Buildings
- no. 3 Historic Buildings
- no. 4 Historic Buildings: Maintenance and Repair
- no. 5 Trees: Legislation and Procedure
- no. 6 Buildings of Townscape Merit

Design Guidance Leaflets

- no. 1 Design Guidelines for Shopfronts and Shopsigns
- no. 2 Design Guidelines for Car Parking in Front Gardens
- no. 3 Design Guidelines for External Alterations to Houses
- no. 4 Design Guidelines for House Extensions
- no. 5 Trees: Landscape Design, Planting and Care
- no. 6 Design Guidelines for Small Housing Sites
- no. 8 Design Guidelines: Wildlife in Gardens
- no. 9 Design Guidelines for Nature Conservation and Development
- no. 10 Security by Design
- no. 11 Design Guidelines for Shopfront Security

Street Design Guide

Tree Strategy

Conservation Area Studies

Studies for the other conservation areas in the Borough are available or are in preparation.

These leaflets and documents are available from the Environment Planning & Review reception on the 2nd floor of the Civic Centre

Illustration on front cover: Suspension bridge crossing River Thames to Platt's Eyot

If you would like a copy of this leaflet in Braille, large print, on audio tape, or in a community language, please contact the Communications & Media Unit on 020 8891 7162

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Produced by the Policy & Design Group, Environment Planning & Review

Printed on recycled paper Published April 2002