

Twickenham Riverside Conservation Area 8

Designation

Conservation Area designated:

14.01.1969

Conservation Area extended:

07.09.1982

29.01.1991

23.02.2009

20.02.2019

Location

OS Sheets: 1672,1673,1773

The Conservation Area is situated on the Middlesex bank of the River Thames from Marble Hill Park to Radnor Gardens. It is surrounded by a number of other conservation areas.

History and Development

The village is of medieval origin and is focused on the Parish Church of St. Mary which dates from the 14th century. The pattern of Georgian and early Victorian development illustrates that growth took place based on this core. There was also some 18th century villa development along the river. With the advent of the railway in 1863 the focus shifted towards the current centre of Twickenham. York Street was built in 1890 and became the main route to Richmond, bypassing the original centre.

Character

The area was originally designated in recognition of the historic and architectural value of the original village core and river frontage. It was extended to include the C18th splendour of Marble Hill Park and the setting of important surrounding buildings, particularly Montpelier Row. It was further extended westwards to include Radnor Gardens, which now forms a secluded and individual area of public open space alongside the Thames with a surviving summerhouse that is a listed building. The gardens are adjacent to St. Catherine's Convent, once the site of Alexander Pope's house and still host to the original grotto of his own design. Ryan House, a listed building, is also important in its contribution to the setting of the gardens. The area was further extended to include part of an early isolated development along Richmond Road that shares many of the Georgian and Victorian/Edwardian design characteristics as the surrounding properties that are within the conservation area.

Sandwiched between the river and the principal road to Richmond, both landscape and townscape have been determined by the proximity of the River Thames. A double curve of the river gives continuing unfolding views of both banks framed by mature trees and foliage. The Conservation Area is classed as being of significant archaeological interest and the 17th century York House, and its grounds are listed.

The Village core, on the raised river terrace including Church Street and its associated alleyways, forms a focal point when viewed from the Thames and is closely linked to it. The medieval settlement is clearly visible from as far away as Radnor Gardens, Ham House and Richmond Hill. Physical and visual links between the original village street, Church Street,

and the Thames are very important as evidence of the village's historical development and present day character.

The topography is one of narrow streets and alleyways lined with two and some three storey buildings. Many of these are listed and date from at least the 18th century, although burgage plots have survived since their medieval foundation. New development has respected this scale and the listed St. Mary's Church has remained the village's focal point.

The 17th and 18th century development along the Thames is characteristic of the period's grand formal approach to landscape and buildings. The Palladian Marble Hill House, set in extensive grounds running down to the river, is a nationally important example of such development. Together with York House, Orleans House and Montpelier Row it contributes to an exceptionally fine area of integrated architectural and landscape design. These buildings also have a strategic role in visually linking up with other houses in the area such as Ham House and Strawberry Hill and viewpoints such as Richmond Hill. While Radnor House and Poulett Lodge may be gone, their gardens survive to play their part in this network as well as making their own contribution by opening up views of the river to the public. Trees play an important role in framing views and providing the setting to the buildings.

Lebanon Park is a distinctive sub-area of Edwardian housing built in the former garden of Lebanon House which also no longer remains. Its special character is formed by the repetition of ornate features, the use of red brick and well-defined front gardens. The largely unaltered slate roofs form a strong rhythm in the street scene as the road runs downhill towards the river. Mature trees make an important contribution to the greening of the streets and add to the sense of enclosure.

The riverside area, from Hammerton's Ferry to Cross Deep, demonstrates Twickenham's history of river-related activity, both recreational and industrial. In places, particularly between Water Lane and Orleans House, there is a semi-rural character created by 18th century residential dwellings fronting the river and linked to the village core by the leafy Riverside lane. York House Gardens straddle this lane and provide a more formal gateway to the Embankment area. Here views and spaces open out as a promenade where the public have maximum access to the water's edge.

Visual, as well as physical links to the centre of Twickenham also perform an important function in tying the river to the settlement's historic core on the terrace. There are design opportunities for the pool site, temporarily landscaped, which would strengthen these links as well as restoring a use sympathetic to its riverside location. To the west, 20th century development along Cross Deep has kept to a predominantly two storey scale. Spacious gardens and glimpses of the Thames and its associated landscape serve to enhance connections with the river.

Eel Pie Island has its own distinct character as an eclectic mixture of river-related industry and residential development. Single storey purpose-built bungalows dominate parts of the island although these are mostly screened from the Twickenham bank by mature tree growth and semi-formal landscaping. The northern section of the island is characterised by boat building yards and related activities on an informal layout. This is the closest part of the island to Twickenham and makes a significant contribution to the area's character. At both ends of the island there is no development at all, allowing the island to be enjoyed as a natural feature when approached from either down or upstream. Because of this the island

continues to play an important function as part of Twickenham's setting and in the context of the wider Thames landscape.

Problems and Pressures

- Development pressure which may harm the balance of the commercial river-based uses and landscape-dominated setting in many parts of the area, and the obstruction or spoiling of views, skylines and landmarks
- Loss of traditional architectural features and materials due to unsympathetic alterations and extensions
- Loss of boundary walls and garden space in residential areas for hard standing, front lightwells and vehicular parking and hard surfacing.
- Use of poor quality products in building works such as UPVC, roofing felt and GRP products;
- Lack of coordination and poor quality of street furniture and pavements
- 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 advertisements such as disproportionate signage, excessive illumination, loss of detailing such as plinths, pilasters etc;

Opportunity for Enhancement

- Improvement and protection of the river based commercial uses and landscape setting
- Preservation, enhancement and reinstatement of architectural quality and unity that is preferably based upon historic evidence;
- Seek the reinstallation of boundary treatment and front garden planting alongside planning applications for refurbishment and seek that any lightwells are placed to the side and rear of properties and that hard standing is reduced;
- Coordination of colour and design and improvement in quality of street furniture and pavements
- Improvement of highways conditions and pedestrian convenience, and rationalisation of existing signage and street furniture
- Retain and improve the quality of shopfronts and advertisements, seeking that illumination is minimised and justified;

Scale: N.T.S.



CONSERVATION AREA No.8 TWICKENHAM RIVERSIDE

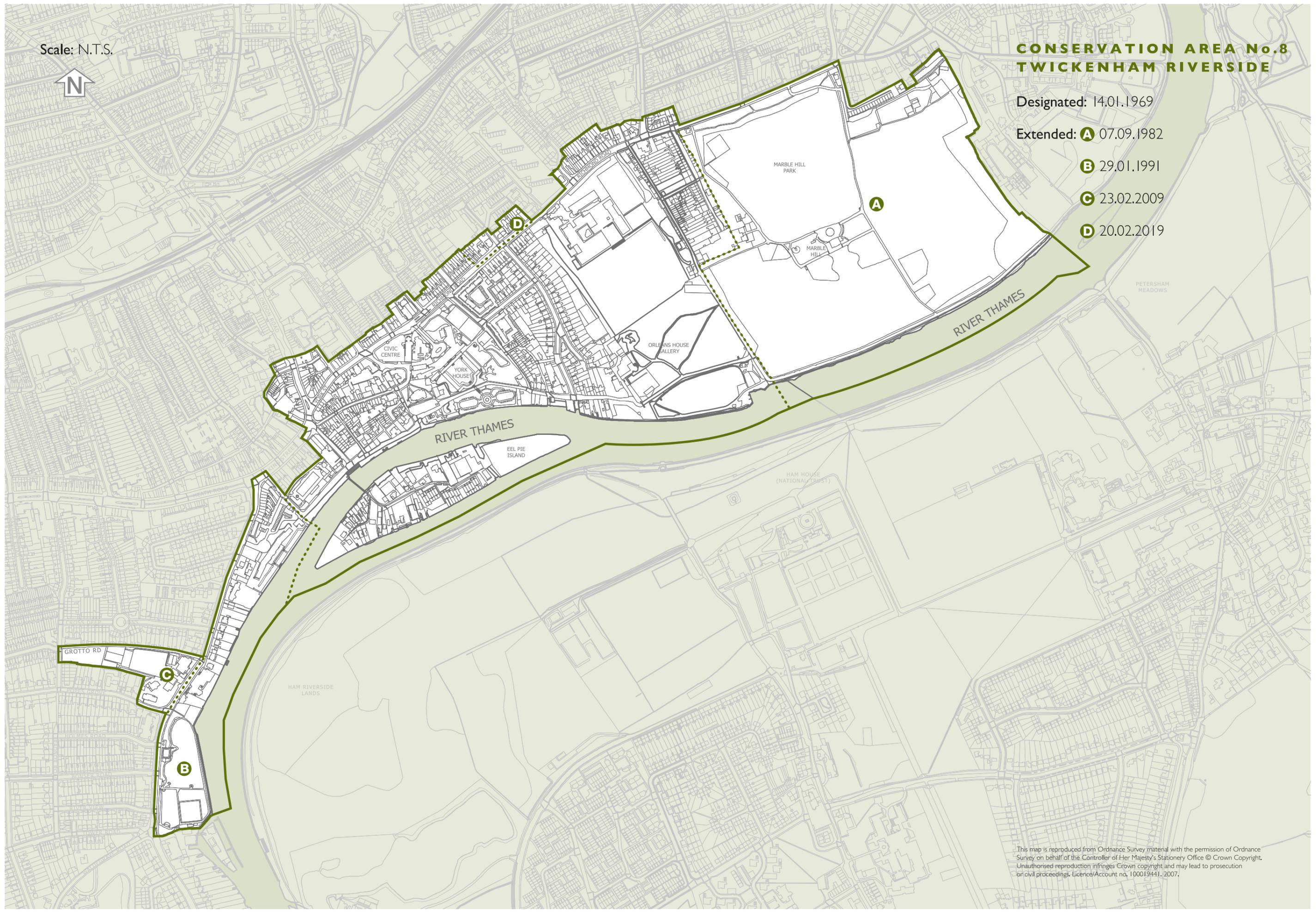
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GROTTO RD

C

B

RIVER THAMES

EEL PIE ISLAND

HAM RIVERSIDE LANDS

HAM HOUSE (NATIONAL TRUST)

ORLEANS HOUSE GALLERY

MARBLE HILL PARK

MARBLE HILL

PETERSHAM MEADOWS

RIVER THAMES

A

D

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