

Crown Road and Twickenham Park

CONSERVATION

AREA STUDY



LONDON BOROUGH OF
RICHMOND UPON THAMES

Planning, Transport and Client Services Department

Area nos.

24/49

1. Introduction

The Crown Road and Twickenham Park Conservation Areas lie between the towns of Richmond and Twickenham at the centre of a meander of the River Thames. The British Rail south west line cuts through the area on a north-east, south-west axis. The station, St. Margaret's, is situated at the centre of the Crown Road conservation area. The busy Chertsey Road (A316) traverses the north of the area and the conservation areas are located on, and close to, St. Margaret's Road which marks the landward boundary of the original Twickenham Park.

Policy Context

National

Conservation areas were introduced in the Civic Amenities Act 1967. The definition of a conservation area is "an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance."

Local authorities have continued to designate new conservation areas and to extend existing ones. Crown Road was designated on 14 June 1988, and Twickenham Park was first designated on 3 June 1976 and extended on 7 September 1982. Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local authorities to "formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas."

This Act provides the legislative base for all conservation related matters. The Town and Country (General Permitted 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 Sept 1994) provides in plain English a full statement of Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment.

Local

The Richmond upon Thames Unitary Development Plan (UDP) sets out local planning policies for the Designation, Protection and Enhancement of Conservation Areas (ENV 9 and ENV 10). 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 on the 2nd floor of the Civic Centre, York Street, Twickenham.

This study has been prepared by the Planning and Building Control Division in consultation with other departments of the Council, and most importantly, in consultation with the local community. 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 by the Council, local residents, businesses, developers and statutory bodies. The identification of the area's special character provides a basis for specific problems to be identified, proposals to be made and for general guidelines and useful information to be given.

The study will be in the following format; the Proposals Map should be read in conjunction with the text.

1. Introduction
2. History and development of the conservation areas.
3. Crown Road Conservation Area:-
 - i. Character appraisal
 - ii. Pressures
 - iii. Problems
4. Twickenham Park Conservation Area:-
 - i. Character appraisal
 - ii. Pressures
 - iii. Problems
5. Proposals for the Conservation Areas
6. Implementation

2. History and development

The history and development of the two conservation areas, Crown Road and Twickenham Park, is best understood by studying their origins within a much larger geographical area historically known as Twickenham Park. Twickenham Park was located on the western bank of the river Thames. The extent of the Park is illustrated below.



Extract from John Rocque's 1741 map of London

The southern portion of the original Twickenham Park also gained a new Twickenham Park House which was situated just below the high tide barrier of today. It was built circa 1828 on land which now forms Park House Gardens and survived until 1929 when it was demolished. From the 1820's onwards parcels of land were sold off for development on a regular basis and the old maps show the changing appearance of the area.

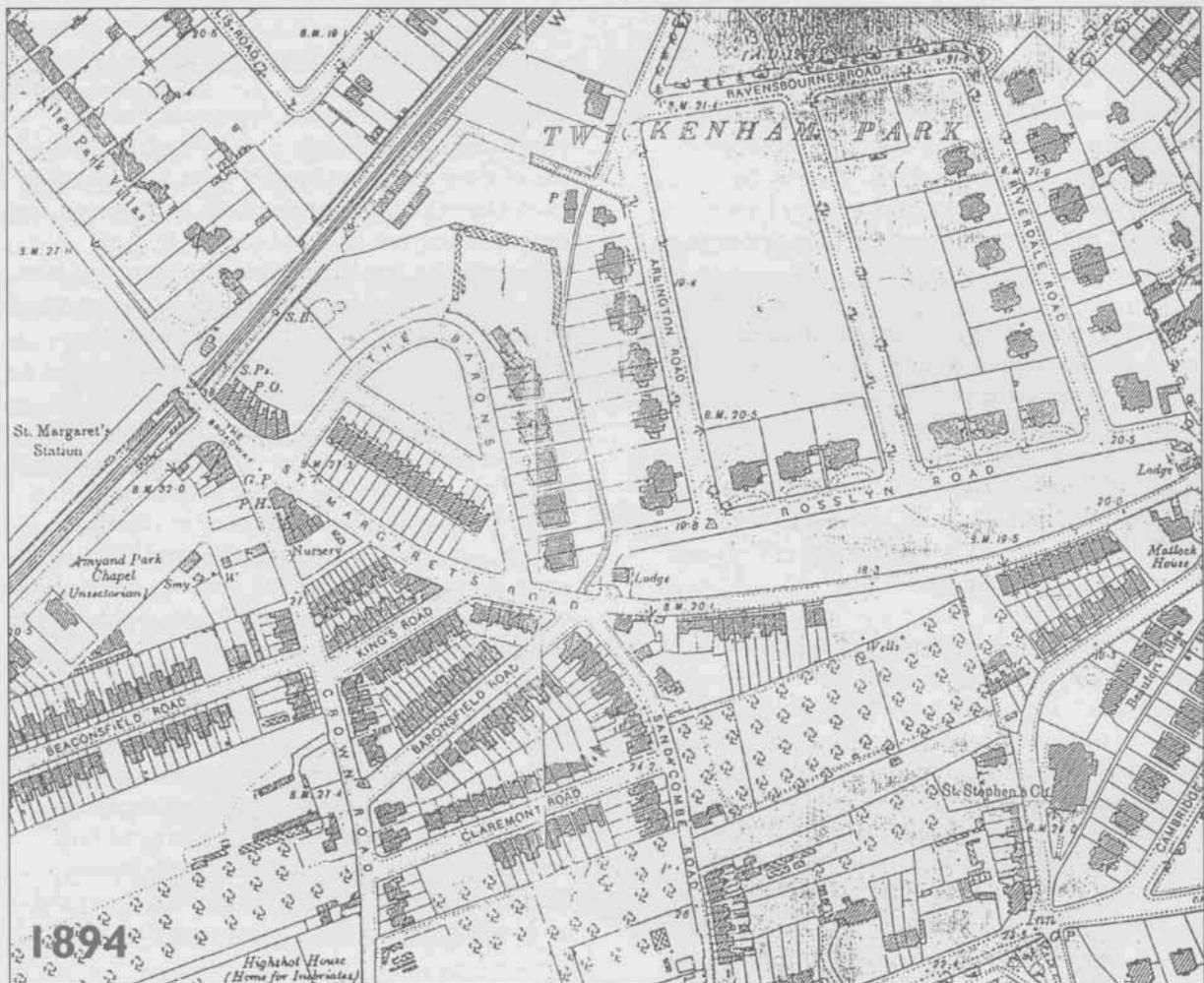
The map of 1863 shows an important development within the old park, the arrival in 1850 of the Windsor-Staines and South Western Railway line. By 1881 St. Margaret's station had been built and the surrounding area was developed at a much faster rate because of the improved connection to central London. As greater numbers of large villas were built, shops and businesses grew up to serve them. The commercial activity was concentrated around the station in Crown Road and St. Margaret's Road. Social and economic change at the end of the 19th century resulted in a change of development pattern to much smaller houses on more modest plots. The area which once consisted of Twickenham Park continued to be developed through the 1930's until no public open space remained and Twickenham Park survived in name only.

3. Crown Road Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

This conservation area is physically centred around St. Margaret's station and consists of the shopping and commercial centre serving the densely developed surrounding residential area. The Crown Road Conservation Area is essentially urban in character with continuous shop-fronts lining the backs of the pavements. Shops tend to be independent traders ranging from newsagents, convenience stores and bakers to more specialist gift, antique and furniture shops. The shops are interspersed with restaurants, cafes and take-away food outlets, which together with the continuous stream of through traffic creates a busy and lively environment.

The buildings within this conservation area date mainly from the 1880's when the area was first developed in response to the arrival of the railway. The predominant use of red brick and slate as building materials provides a unified physical character.



In St. Margaret's Road the shop-fronts and associated advertising provide much colour and interest at street level. There are a number of original shop-fronts remaining and many others retain at least some of their original features. A characteristic of the shops within the conservation area is the generous private forecourt associated with each unit. The existence of the forecourts further widens the perceived pavement area giving a promenade effect to views along the St. Margaret's Road.

The urban quality of the street scene is emphasised by three dramatic terraced blocks of red brick, pedimented, Dutch gabled design. The gables punctuate and enliven the continuous roofscape. The quality of the elevations is enhanced by moulded, decorative terracotta panels at first floor and above. The block on the northern side of the road differs in that it curves gently to follow the line of the pavement and forms an important element closing the view from Crown Road to St. Margaret's Road.

The station by contrast is an isolated but elegant building which is currently disfigured by a clumsy, poorly positioned canopy to the front elevation. The station forms a local landmark especially when viewed on the rising ground from the A316. The St. Margaret's public house is also something of a local landmark partly due to its prominent position but also partly due to its striking tiled base and "Italianate" stucco decoration at ground floor level. The quirky hexagonal flower stall adjacent to 165, St. Margaret's Road provides a welcome splash of colour and adds to the vigour of the area (see page 11).



St. Margaret's Road: Dutch gabled parades of shops

The remaining part of the conservation area, Crown Road, is also commercial. It does not have such a grand scale as St. Margaret's Road but retains a busy, lively atmosphere. The road is narrower than St. Margaret's Road with correspondingly narrower pavements although the shops still retain their own forecourts. The predominant materials are still red brick and slate and the shops form a continuous facade to the west side of the street. Building style is more varied and idiosyncratic and there is plenty of high quality architectural detail. Unfortunately some buildings have had their original sash windows replaced with modern PVCu units which damage the elevational modelling and the pattern of original glazing bars has been lost.



Shop-fronts in Crown Road

The Crown Road shops have started to become more specialist in nature with several furnishing, gift and antique shops which are beginning to attract custom in their own right. Again, many of the original shop-fronts effectively remain in their original form and most contain some original features which are important to retain.

Crown Road is also occupied by the St. Margaret's public house and car park. This peninsula site is shared with Park Cottages which are sited at right angles to Crown Road. They date from the mid C19th and form a low, compact 2 storey terrace of great charm. They are largely unaltered in appearance and are reached by a path which runs in front of their densely planted, small front gardens. The gardens provide a riot of colour during the summer months and the dense foliage screens the cottages from general view giving them an air of secrecy.

The end elevation of Twickenham Film Studios terminates the view from Crown Road to St. Margaret's Road in a dramatic if somewhat stark fashion.

Pressures

This conservation area suffers from traffic. Through traffic using St. Margaret's Road is often held up by vehicles turning right into and out of Amyand Park Road. Parked vehicles servicing shops and illegally or poorly parked cars also add to congestion. Car parking is a contentious issue within the area; local businesses and shop owners believe that there is a lack of short term parking and that this dissuades potential customers; local residents face competition for on-street spaces from commuters who drive to St. Margaret's station. Recently introduced short-term Pay and Display parking in Crown Road has proved to be successful and similar additional parking would be welcomed locally.

Whilst the recent economic recession and growth of Richmond as a shopping centre have affected the shops and businesses within the conservation area (pushing some to the limits of economic viability). There are only a few vacant shops. There is pressure to change the use of some shop units to office, residential and other business uses and such change will generally be resisted by the Council.

The Crown Road Conservation Area sits within an area known locally as St. Margaret's, the boundaries of which have never been quantified and thus there are few physical signs identifying the area on the ground. The local community identifies strongly with St. Margaret's as a place and feel that the sense of place should be reinforced through improved signage and environmental improvements.

This conservation area is very densely developed and there is no public open space or street trees. All soft landscaping is provided by views into private areas and gardens. The lack of open space reduces the opportunity for seating areas and places to pause away from the bustle of commercial activity.



Obtrusive hoarding on gable end of Park Cottages

Problems

Shops

- Poor condition of and inappropriate alterations/repairs to the surface of shop forecourts.
- Some original shop-fronts survive almost intact but many are in poor condition and require repair and/or renovation.
- Many shop-fronts retain some original features which would benefit from repair and/or renovation.
- Some shop-fronts have been replaced in entirety by modern designs using inappropriate materials, and fail to respect the original proportions of the shop-front or parent building.
- There is much superfluous and obsolete signage above shop-fronts which has a detrimental effect on the street scene.
- Use of unpainted, external, metal security shutters on shop-fronts also has a negative impact on the appearance of the conservation area.

Environment

- Lack of street trees.
- Inappropriate and ugly canopy to station degrades both the building and the conservation area.
- The car park of the St. Margaret's public house is perceived as a local eyesore because of poorly defined, weak boundary treatment.
- Lack of seating areas. One small seating area adjacent to the Catholic Church, just outside the conservation area, is under used and could be improved.
- The concrete post and metal railed fence to the pavement edge of the embankment are unattractive and inappropriate for use in the conservation area.
- The hoarding situated on the gable end of Park Cottages facing Crown Road is visually obtrusive.
- Advertising clutter, satellite dishes and air conditioning units plus alterations to windows e.g replacement with PVCu or removal of glazing bars, cause damage to the integrity of the design of elevations.

Highways

- Lack of short term Pay and Display parking for use by shoppers.
- Junction of Crown Road with St. Margaret's Road is very wide and is difficult to cross on foot.

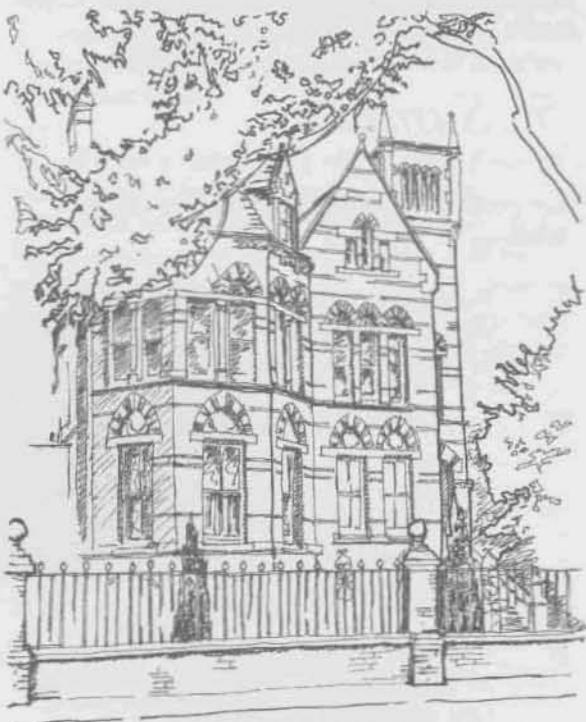
4. Twickenham Park Conservation Area

Character appraisal

This conservation area adjoins the eastern boundary of the Crown Road Conservation Area and extends eastwards to encompass the north side of Rosslyn Road and the whole of Riverdale Road. The area has an air of refined, leafy, residential grandeur which would be difficult to recreate in a modern development.

This sophistication results from the fact that the houses were developed in the 1870's for the increasingly affluent Victorian middle classes on land liberated by the sub-division of Twickenham Park. The massive scale and complex form of these suburban homes is complemented by the spacious grounds they are built within. The survival of a cohesive group of such houses within the Borough is rare.

The west side of Riverdale Road contains the most architecturally exuberant houses. They are an eclectic form of Victorian Gothic, with strong references to Scottish Baronial style with striking polychromatic brickwork. The rooflines are peppered with turrets, finials, gables and chimneys. The houses are well set back from the road behind well kept walls, hedges and railings. The buildings are separated by characteristically large gaps and their generous grounds contain many towering, mature Cedar trees which add to the overall theatrical effect. Most of these houses are still in single ownership.



Exuberant Gothic houses in Riverdale Road



Nos. 1-14 The Barons

The east side of the road is Italianate in style with 3 pairs of equally large semi-detached houses. Most of these buildings have been converted into flats with the physical evidence of this being the unfortunate loss of garden area to car parking, extract vents to windows and a prevalence of bin stores. Despite this change of use, Riverdale Road still retains a quiet, residential dignity.

Rosslyn Road is lined on its north side by houses of a similar size but its south side (which is just outside the conservation area) is lined by a mundane collection of single storey garages and out buildings associated with houses fronting St. Margaret's Road. Consequently Rosslyn Road lacks the overall grandeur of Riverdale Road. The houses are Italianate in style and polychromatic brickwork is supplemented by the use of white painted stone door and window surrounds. Street trees are deciduous rather than coniferous which gives the street a rather less dramatic appearance than Riverdale Road. Most of the houses have been converted into multiple occupation and the front gardens and boundary treatments have suffered as the consequence of provision of car parking.

The Barons (the site in 1263 where Richard Earl of Cornwall met some of the Barons, who camped in the Park whilst arming to oppose the King prior to the Battle of Lewes) is the closest group of houses to the Crown Road conservation area. They are reminiscent in scale and character to those described in Riverdale and Rosslyn Roads. No.'s 15-24 are pairs of semi-detached villas, simpler in style than those already described in this conservation area, but remaining at an imposing height of 4 storeys. No.'s 1-14 form an

impressive 4 storey terrace which backs on to St. Margaret's Road. The continuous eaves, ground floor bay windows and heavily modelled window surrounds unify the terrace (see drawing previous page). The setting of this terrace has been drastically affected by sub-division causing the wholesale removal of front gardens, and front boundaries for use as car parking. The rear gardens remain well defined by a high brick wall, behind which is a substantial belt of large mature trees. These trees form an important landmark in the view along St. Margaret's Road. Unfortunately the rear elevation of the block is marred by the addition of a number of clumsy, modern dormer windows.

The Twickenham Park conservation area contains two listed buildings: Bute Lodge, a Grade II early C19th Regency house which fronts Park Road, and Victoria Lodge, a single storey stucco gate lodge built in the mid C19th in the form of a Doric temple, which occupies the western corner of Rosslyn and St. Margaret's Road.

Pressures

The Twickenham Park Conservation Area retains its quiet, residential grandeur throughout, however the character does become weakened closest to the Crown Road Conservation Area. This is mainly due to the pressure to provide off street car parking serving each flat within the original houses. There is also competition for on street parking between residents and commuters especially around The Barons which is conveniently close to St. Margaret's station. Additional competition for parking space in the Barons are caused by visitors and employees of the Twickenham Film Studios. Whilst the Studios are not within the conservation area they are an important feature of the area having existed on this site since the turn of the century.

Problems

- Loss of front gardens and damage to boundary treatments as a result of provision of car parking.
- Poor design of altered front boundaries and new parking areas.
- Lack of street trees around the Barons.
- Unsightly garages to south side of Rosslyn Road (see opposite).
- Negative impact of resident's parking signs mounted on galvanised poles.
- Inappropriate and unsympathetic alterations and additions to properties e.g satellite dishes, dormer windows, replacement windows.
- Poor setting of the listed Victoria Lodge on junction of Rosslyn Road and St Margaret's Road.



Unsightly garages facing onto Rosslyn Road

4. Conservation Area Proposals:

for enhancement or preservation of the character of the conservation area.

The detailed proposals are illustrated on the separate Conservation Area Proposals sheet which accompanies this document.

Many proposals fall outside of the Council's control and 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.

5. Summary

The proposals generated by this study affect the following :-

1. **Public areas** including parks, gardens, highways and paths usually owned by the Council or other statutory bodies.
2. **Private houses.** Some alterations may require planning permission and are therefore ultimately controlled by the Council but some alterations will be classed as "permitted development" and will be under the control of the householder.
3. **Commercial sites** particularly those which are perceived to be eyesores and which may offer opportunity for major change or redevelopment.

For the study to be successful everyone involved in property ownership, tenancy and management in both the public and private sector needs to contribute to achieving the proposals. The Council will strictly apply Unitary Development Plan policies and also the detailed proposals listed in the study in order to preserve or, where possible, enhance the special interest of the conservation area.

Buildings of Townscape Merit

These were first introduced by the Council 1982 and included some buildings which used to be listed as Grade III. The Schedule of Buildings of Townscape Merit is a local list, compiled to recognise the value of those buildings which make a positive contribution to the streetscape which are not included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

It is hoped that by drawing attention to the historic, architectural and townscape interest of such buildings, owners and others will regard them more carefully when considering any proposals for alteration, extension or replacement. Within conservation areas permission will not normally be given for the demolition of Buildings of Townscape Merit (BTM's).

Residential property

What the Council can do:

The Council is able to control new development through its powers under the planning acts and is always willing to give advice to those who want to undertake new work. There is a range of guidance leaflets available on development requiring planning permission. If you are in any doubt about the need to obtain permission for intended works, you should contact the Planning and Building Control Division at the Civic Centre.

Where a particularly good group of single dwellings would suffer if work, exempt from planning permission, were to be carried out (e.g changing windows, demolition of front boundary walls etc) then the Council may apply an Article 4(2) Direction after consultation with the owners. Such Directions mean that certain permitted development rights, as specified within the Direction, are removed and owners must then apply for permission to carry out the intended works.

This approach is considered to be necessary for the following properties in the study area :-

nos. 1-13 Park Cottages

Separate guidance will be published to assist owners of properties covered by these Article 4(2) Directions.

What residents can do:

Under present legislation, residents are entitled to carry out certain minor works to their houses as "permitted development" i.e no planning permission is required. This freedom places a great responsibility on owners to consider the overall quality of the street and the area when considering alterations to their property. There is plenty of opportunity to preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area by paying attention to small details on houses.

Without care even apparently minor alterations accumulating over time can degrade the quality of the area, their cumulative effect having a major impact. Examples of this type of change are replacement of original windows with aluminium or PVCu versions or the painting of one house within a brick terrace.

What constitutes "permitted development" can be a complex matter and residents should contact the Council in the first instance if in any doubt. Importantly, local residents and local groups, in particular, can help preserve or enhance the conservation area by helping to record original features and passing on useful information about local craftspeople and suppliers of local materials.

When considering undertaking works which do require planning permission, the best approach is still to contact the Planning and Building Control



View along nos. 1-13 Park Cottages

Division for advice. Of particular concern are proposals for dormer windows and extensions, both of which can have a negative impact on the street scene. In this context it should be noted that rear elevations are also often visible from the public domain. Of equal impact is the breaking down of front boundaries and the destruction or adaptation of front gardens for car parking. Supplementary guidance is also available on these subjects from the Council.

Shop fronts

An important objective of this study is to retain and improve the quality of shop-fronts within the Crown Road conservation area. As part of a number of measures intended to promote their survival, discretionary shop-front grants may be available from the Council. These grants are suitable for those wishing to repair original shop-fronts or replace an existing ill-considered newer shop-front with a design more sympathetic to the character of the conservation area.

Crown Road and St. Margaret's Road have a variety of building styles and shop-fronts, including some very poor modern and replacement shop-fronts and also much indifferent signage. There are several near complete original shop-fronts surviving in these roads and many others retain a large proportion of original features. In order to improve the appearance of the shopping area and therefore help to encourage increased patronage, every effort should be made to raise the standard of design for shop-fronts: demands for speed and cheapness in shop fitting should not result in harsh materials, lack of detail, standard fascias, inappropriate blinds and poorly modelled fronts.



Flower kiosk, St. Margaret's Road

The following shop fronts are of sufficient architectural or historic interest to justify their retention and applications for their replacement will normally be refused:-

- no.s 109-111 (odd) St. Margaret's Road
- no. 126a St. Margaret's Road
- no. 131 St. Margaret's Road
- no.s 139-141 (odd) St. Margaret's Road
- no.s 133-5 (odd) St. Margaret's Road
- no. 32 Crown Road
- no. 123 St. Margaret's Road



No. 126a St. Margaret's Road

Those shop fronts listed below not already designated as Buildings of Townscape Merit will be designated as such :-

- no.s 116-124 St. Margaret's Road
- no.s 109-111 (odd) St. Margaret's Road
- no.s 6-10 (even) Crown Road
- no.s 26-32 (even) Crown Road
- no. 123 St. Margaret's Road

The following are areas where groups of shop fronts are of a sufficient quality to justify restoration of missing features as opposed to wholesale replacement of the entire front. Where a recent shop front of poor standard already exists in the group it is expected that any new scheme will reinstate the proportions and materials originally typical to the group. The objective is not to produce a slavish reproduction but to avoid a strident conflict between the new and old frontages and to create a streetscape with some interest and continuity.

St. Margaret's Road	no.s 113-119(odd)
	station kiosks
	no.s 125-131(odd)
	no.s 137-165(odd)
	no.s 116-126(even)
Crown Road	no.s 2-22(even)
	no.s 26-32(even)

The Council will publish separate and more detailed guidance for shop fronts within the Crown Road Conservation Area, which will be available on application. This will assist in negotiations on planning applications and guide owners and tenants concerning repairs or minor alterations not requiring planning permission.

Whilst the appearance of shop fronts is vital to the character of an area, other factors such as traffic movement, parking arrangements, amenity area, local support and the economic situation all contribute towards the creation of a successful "bustling" shopping area. Other proposals made within this study are intended to enhance the appearance and encourage greater use of the shopping area.

Landscaping and Planting

In the absence of public open space, private gardens both front and rear, have a significant role to play in the character of this conservation area. Rear gardens frequently provide the only views of uninterrupted semi-natural habitat (see below). There will be a presumption against backland development unless it can be demonstrated that there would be no significant detrimental effect on amenity and the quality of the local environment.

Trees in conservation areas which are not already subject to a Tree Preservation Order, are protected automatically by the requirement that six weeks' notice must be given to the Council before any proposed work is carried out. There are plenty of opportunities for residents to restore front boundary walls and railings and the Council is happy to give guidance on this.



Implementation

This study contains wide ranging proposals intended to preserve or enhance the character of the Crown Road and Twickenham Park Conservation Areas.

The Council will implement those proposals under its control as and when appropriate funds become available and will give advice on grants and action that can be taken by other groups and individuals

The Council will monitor the effectiveness of Article 4 (2) Directions and the up-take of grants and will review the progress of enhancement proposals on a regular basis.

Acknowledgements

The co-operation and input of the Twickenham Park Residents Association and Mr A.C.B Urwin is gratefully acknowledged by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

The cover illustration and the drawings of the flower kiosk were produced by James Openshaw for the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

This study was approved by the Planning and Transport Committee in January 1996, and was published in February 1997.

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 Shop-fronts 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 Guidelines for Small Housing Sites
- no. 7 Guidelines for the Siting of Satellite Dishes and other Communications Apparatus
- no. 8 Design Guidelines: Wildlife in Gardens
- no. 9 Design Guidelines for nature Conservation and Development
- no. 10 Security by Design

Conservation Area Studies

Area 1:	Barnes Green
Area 2:	Kew Green
Area 9:	Twickenham Green
Area 10:	Trafalgar Road
Area 11:	Hampton Court Green
Area 12:	Hampton Village
Area 18:	Hampton Wick
Area 25:	Castelnau, Barnes*
Areas 27 & 37:	Teddington Lock and High Street, Teddington
Areas 30 & 31:	St. Matthias and Sheen Road
Area 38:	Hampton Hill High Street*
Areas 49 & 24:	Crown Road and Twickenham Park, St. Margaret's*
Area 57:	Old Deer Park

Article 4 Guidance

Barnes Green Study:	The Lion Houses
Hampton Wick Study:	10-12(even) Lower Teddington Road, 75-79(odd) High Street, 52-58(even) and 60-70(even) Park Road.*
Crown Road and Twickenham Park Study:	nos. 1-13 Park Cottages*
Castelnau Study:	nos. 1-7 Castelnau Row*
Hampton Hill Study:	91-93 High Street*

Shop-front Guidance:

Barnes Green Study:	Shop-fronts, Policies and Guidance
Hampton Wick:	Shop-front Guidance*
Crown Road Study:	Shop-front Guidance*
Castelnau:	Shop-front Guidance*
Hampton Hill Study:	Shop-front Guidance*

These leaflets and documents are available from Planning Reception on the 2nd floor of the Civic Centre. Those marked * are available in draft form and are awaiting printing at the date of this publication.

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