

St Margaret's Estate Conservation Area 19

Designation

Conservation Area designated:
02.11.1971

Conservation Area extended:
14.06.1988
07.11.2005
24.01.2011

Location

OS Sheets: 1674

The conservation area is situated to the west of Twickenham Bridge and straddles the Chertsey Road. It adjoins Richmond Riverside (4) and Old Deer Park (57) conservation areas to the East.

History and Development

The area comprising the residential estate was developed from 1854 following the advent of the railway in the early 1850s. The house and grounds of Gordon House date from 1720.

Character

Designated as part of a Victorian estate, much of which is built on the site of two enclosed private gardens. A variety of styles are represented with many detached two storey houses with intricate brick and stucco details. The majority of the estate was designated by the London Borough of Hounslow as the Old Isleworth Conservation Area. Borough boundary changes in 1994 have brought the entire estate within the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, also including the grounds of Gordon House and industrial sites adjacent to the River Crane.

The area was extended to include buildings in Heathcote Road, The Avenue, St. Margaret's Road and Netherton Road, of similar date.

Its distinctive character derives from the way in which the area was developed as a single estate in the park of St Margaret's House (now demolished). The land was bought by the Conservative Land Society in 1854 and developed along early garden suburb lines making 'material advantage' of the old park, with plots grouped around three private 'pleasure gardens'. Plot sizes were established as sufficient to qualify owners to vote but frequently exceed this minimum requirement. The sense of spaciousness is quite evident with the gaps between each house having a particular significance to the entire group, allowing glimpses of the gardens behind the houses.

The dominant building form is that of detached villas in a deliberate mixture of Gothic and Italianate styles. Third floors are uncommon and where they do occur are only within gabled roof spaces, some with decorated bargeboards. Occasional discreet dormer windows indicate the use of the attic storey. Large and frequently decorated chimney stacks complete the roofscape. Mixtures of gault, yellow and red brick within buildings and throughout the area provide a variety of facing materials. Stucco work features occur as embellishments of style rather than as complete surface treatment. Eaves brackets, band courses and architraves to openings are evident. Some attractive porches and verandahs in timber and iron add further to the delight of the group.

Other roads follow in the same style with the exception of a spectacular Arts and Crafts building at nos.28-30 Heathcote Road and an unusual listed concrete building at no.16 St. Peter's Road. St. Margaret's Road contains semi-detached pairs of larger three storey Italianate villas with paired or tripartite windows in the second floor gables.

Netherton Road is an attractive cul-de-sac of unaltered two storey yellow stock brick houses under shallow slate roofs. First floor redbrick fascias with terracotta pattern detail and fishscale slates to the bays, give the group its own particular identity.

Throughout the area strong boundary definition is apparent, mostly achieved by low brick walls and hedge planting. Trees in front gardens add further colour, light and shade.

North of St. Margaret's Drive and bordering the Thames are the expansive grounds of the West London Institute with Gordon House, a fine 18th century house with work by Robert Adam serving as a nucleus to the establishment. This site is presently undergoing redevelopment for housing. From both banks the grounds form a distinct extension to the open landscape of the river and its natural setting. The scale and quality of Gordon House equally serves to reinforce the essentially 18th century landscape.

The pleasure gardens of St. Peter's Road and the Institute grounds combine to provide an apparent rural backdrop to the Thames from Railshead Road to Twickenham Bridge.

Between the River Crane and Gordon House are the remains of industrial buildings. Railshead Road is narrow with high walls and quality railings. The tight knit and informal nature of the development is typical of heavily used riverside industrial sites and a marked and stimulating contrast to the remainder of the area. Facing the river is an attractive cottage with decorative ridge tiling and segmental bay windows. A distinctive pyramidal roof belonging to a former boathouse stands alongside. At high water the numerous houseboats, some of indifferent appearance, dominate the river frontage when viewed from the Surrey bank.

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

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

Scale: N.T.S.



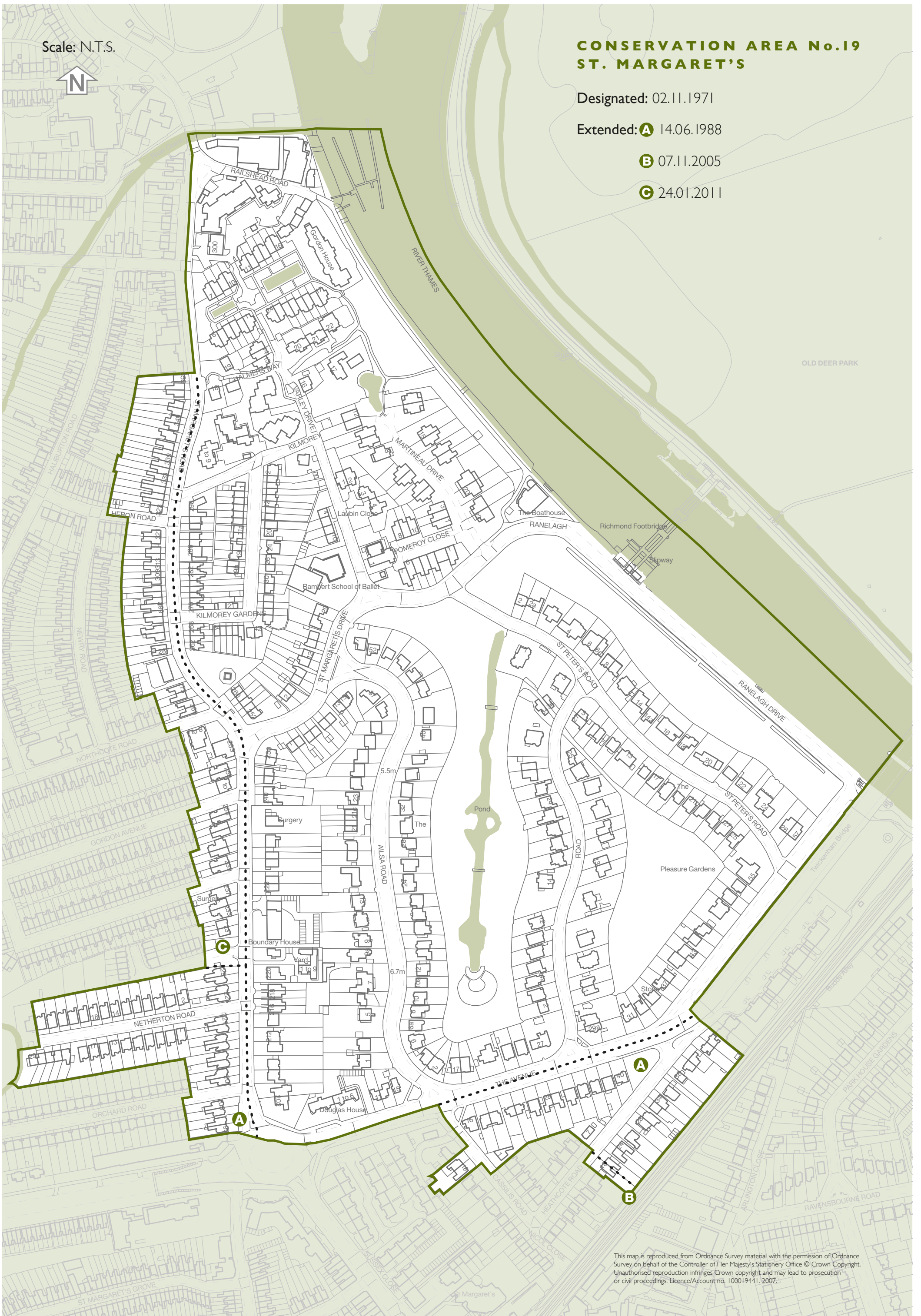
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