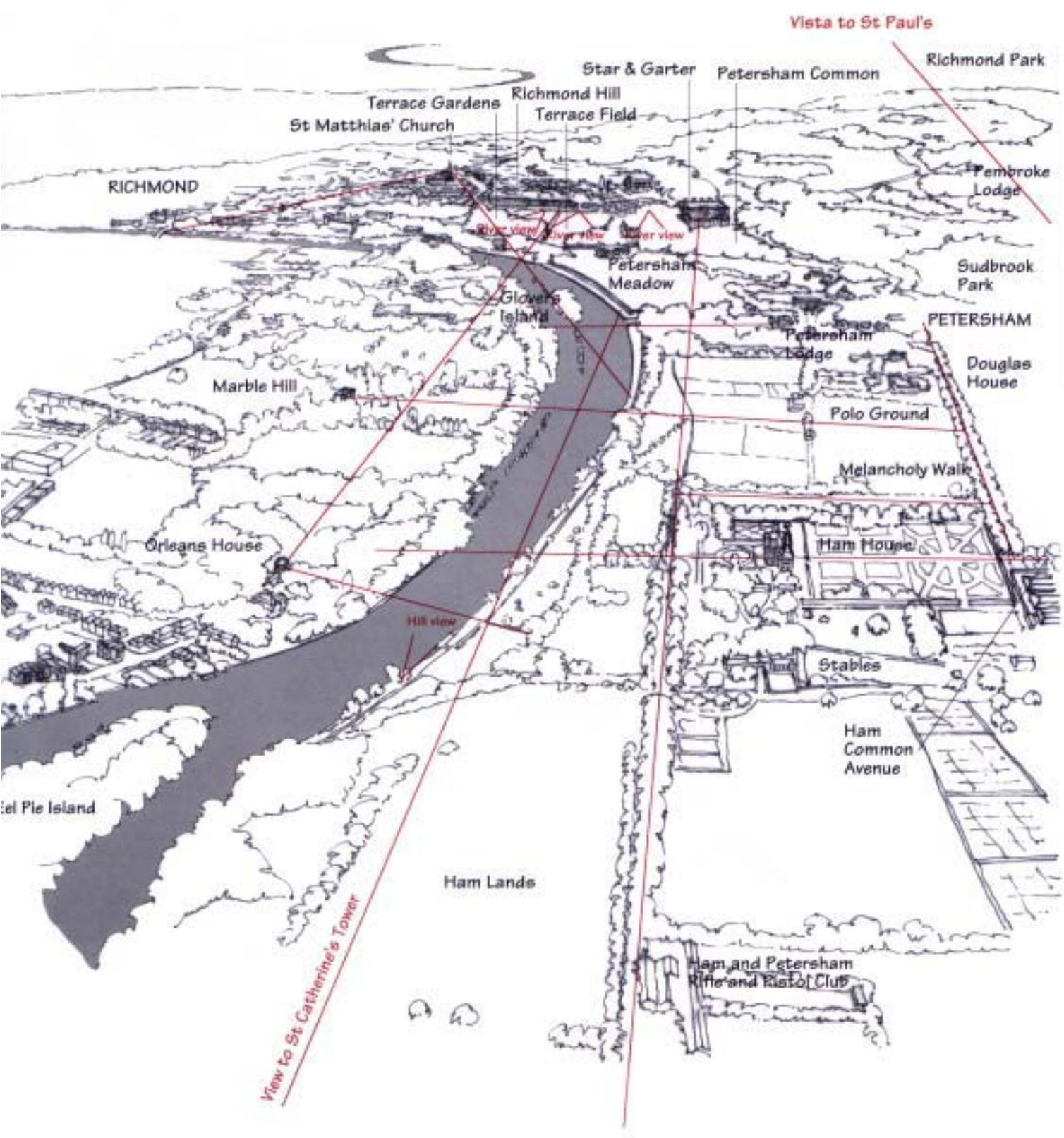




# LANDSCAPE CHARACTER REACH

## B. Ham



— Vista lines



## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



The view from Richmond Hill, protected by Act of Parliament in 1902 in response to local 'indignations' about proposed developments in the floodplain

The Ham Reach curves from the edge of Twickenham to the edge of Richmond. Some of the most dramatic landscape features on the Thames are concentrated along this mile of the river. Richmond Hill and the wooded escarpment of Richmond Park rise above the lush flood plain of villas, meadows and avenues. The grounds of Orleans House, Marble Hill, Ham House, Douglas House and Petersham Lodge stretch down to the water's edge, uninterrupted by roads or suburban development. And the fine 17th- and 18th-century architecture extends into the little villages of Ham and Petersham, nestled between the park and the river, and into Montpelier Row beside Marble Hill.

The panoramic view from **Richmond Hill** today sweeps over much the same Arcadian landscape which had such influence on the taste and designs of the 18th century. It is a view which has inspired painters and poets from around the world and raised such local feeling for the landscape that in 1902 it became the first view to be protected by Act of Parliament. From the top of the hill you can see the sun setting over the Chilterns.

Looking back from the river, the view glides up the **Terrace Field** to the strong line of the houses and the spire of St Matthias' Church behind, along the crest of the Hill. The broad hoggin terrace in front of the houses is an extremely popular viewing point, set below the level of the road with plenty of wooden memorial seats, beside a pub and protected by fine Victorian rods and bollards. A display board explains the view and some of the history of the landscape. The 18th century line of pollarded trees has been replaced by limes and American oaks, many of which are dying, and a privet hedge has been planted on the front of the terrace. Although some trees are useful for shade, the division between the terrace and the field should be kept minimal.

The field is managed for hay and wildflowers, creating a natural appearance which links to the water meadow below and in summer provides a popular hill-side for picnickers, spread out on the long grass. In winter, the hillside is a favourite tobogganing slope. The Terrace Field is enclosed by the Wick and the Petersham Hotel to the south, and to the north, by the elaborate **Terrace Gardens**, a fine example of a manicured Victorian park. The Terrace Gardens are concealed within a frame of mature trees, but the lower section juts out into the Terrace Field, lining the path which leads from the top of the hill to the river with chain-link fencing and the back of a shrubbery. Were the fence to be set further back to the north, where the ground drops away, it would be more discreet and the long grass of the field could continue under the trees. The straight path is aligned on Orleans House and with selective tree pruning across the river, it should be possible to glimpse both the Octagon and Marble Hill. Were the trees thinned, the public lavatories relocated and the concrete crazy paving and burnt out shed at the bottom of the hill removed, one would also have a fine vista and route to the river.

Along from the Terrace, the **Star and Garter** stands out prominently from the wooded escarpment on the edge of Richmond Park. The home for disabled soldiers and sailors forms the eastern focus of the main Ham avenue. The mass of the huge red brick building is disguised by the oaks around its base. These trees are a critical part of the landscape frame, but where they have grown between Wick House (built for Reynolds to enjoy the view) and the Star and Garter, they have closed the view of the river painted by Turner and Rowlandson. Some minimal pruning could reveal the vista again without altering the wooded effect of the hillside.

**Petersham meadow** at the foot of the hill is still grazed by cattle, an amazingly rural scene within the capital. The grasses and wildflowers of the meadow form the critical middle ground to the view between the river and the hill. Broken fencing and a clumsy concrete flood defence wall around the perimeters of the meadow need attention. The disused waterworks beside



Knyff's view from Richmond Hill in the mid-18th century showing the network of avenues around Ham House



Richmond Terrace and the view north to the town centre (also attributed to Knyff)

the meadow could be dismantled and re-instated as a meadow. The white of Petersham Lodge gleams against the bright green of the meadow and the darker backdrop of cedars and the horse chestnut avenue which links the house to the river. The avenue has suffered over the past years and needs tree surgery and some replanting.

The **Ham towpath** is regularly inundated by high tides. The re-instatement of the east-west Ham Avenue would present an opportunity to re-align the inland footpath down the middle of the avenue on slightly higher ground, linking to the Petersham Lodge avenue and providing a dry path for walkers when the tide is high. Invading balsam, elder and elm suckers along the river bank tend to catch water-borne rubbish. River litter collection has greatly improved over the last two years, but scrub control along the towpath would keep views open and reduce the problem. The sloping granite set banks covered in low vegetation are attractive and the stone steps are well-used by fishermen. The River Lane slipway is extremely popular with boaters.

Behind the towpath and meadow, the village of **Petersham** clusters picturesquely to the side of St Peter's Church. The fine houses of the village, set along a narrow winding road, are besieged by through-traffic to Kingston. The white wooden tower of St Peter's Church and the red brick tower of All Saints' Church stand out as landmarks against the wooded escarpment of Richmond Park. Further to the south of the escarpment, there is a glimpse of the white buildings of **Pembroke Lodge**. The Lodge has a public restaurant and a terrace with a fine view over the Thames Valley to Strawberry Hill. The Royal Parks are planning major improvements for the public use of the building.

Within the grounds of Pembroke Lodge, **King Henry VIII's Mound** offers both the magnificent keyhole vista of St Paul's Cathedral, 10 miles away in the City to the north east, and to the south west down over Sudbrook Park and Petersham to the river and Marble Hill. Though the vista to St Paul's is now protected by government directive, the Mound is not well-known, the view is not identified and the design of the space is disappointing. The Walk from Pembroke Lodge to Richmond Gate, designed as a viewing terrace when Petersham Park was recovered into Richmond Park, no longer has any views of the river. The Royal Parks and Crown Commissioners are currently reviewing the design of Pembroke Lodge Gardens.

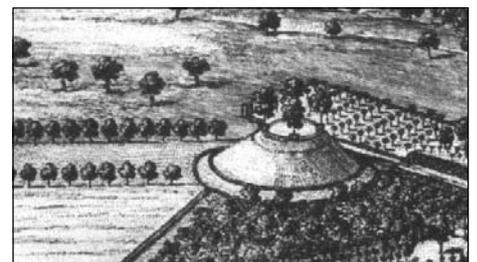
Beneath the Mound, **Sudbrook Park** has been converted to a golf course, but the traces of the great mound, pond and avenues can still be seen in the grounds and ideally features would be restored where they can work with the layout of the course.

Richmond Park connects to **Ham** through the wooded ride of Ham Common, opening onto the village green. The green, with the village pond, is surrounded by fine houses and crossed by the southern avenue to Ham House. Gradual replacements along the avenue have affected its form and the whole line will need re-planting within the next 10-20 years. Interrupting white picket fencing and adjacent boundaries and playing fields could be enhanced at the same time. There may have been a mound at the Ham end of this avenue (1745 Rocque map), which if re-instated, would offer views through the recently re-opened British Aerospace site to the river as well as forming a terminus to the view from Ham House.

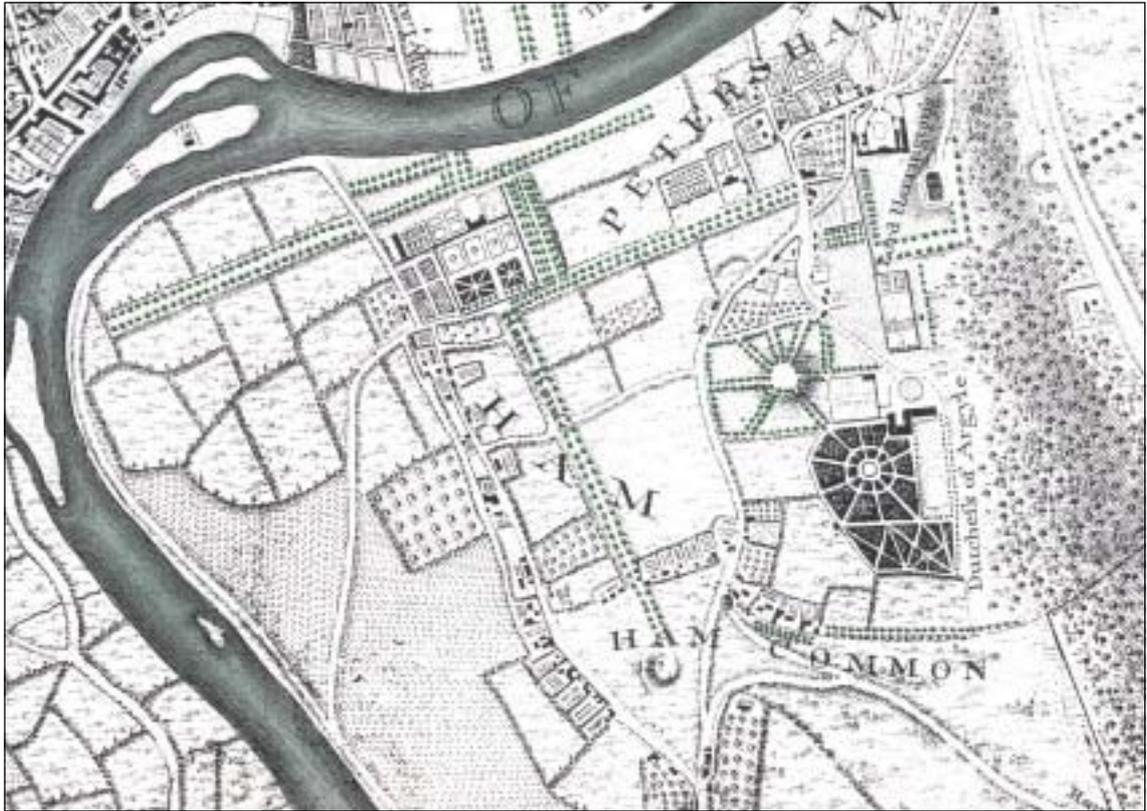
**Ham House** and its gardens are being meticulously restored by the National Trust, within the walls of the property. The House's significance in the wider landscape since the 17th century is marked by its lime avenues which extend across the surrounding flood plain. It is remarkable that such a network of avenues and vistas should survive within the capital. In addition to the southern and east-west avenues already mentioned, there are the remnants of Melancholy Walk, a long quincunx of trees between the eastern edge of the garden and the Polo Ground. The Walk used to have raised pavilions and vistas across to Douglas House, originally the Ham dower house and now the German School. A further avenue survives from Ham House to Ham Lodge.



The bright white of Petersham Lodge stands out against the greens of the meadow and backdrop



King Henry VIII's Mound and the avenue framing the vista to St Paul's in the centre of London, 10 miles away



John Rocque's map of 1745, showing the network of avenues around Ham House, most of which survive today

Ham House was designed to be approached from the river, but the waterfront has become something of a disappointment. The axial river avenue has been replanted, but intervening scrub and cherries block the view for much of the year and the disused lavatories across the water are an anti-climax as a terminus to the vista.

The **public car park** at the end of Ham Street further detracts from the scene. The bright gravel surface and glinting cars can be seen from miles around and disrupt the rural landscape character. The riverside car park is popular and offers an approach to the water for the disabled, but if the parking area were kept back from the water's edge behind low earth bunds and shaded by tree planting, it could be much less intrusive.

From the Ham House river edge, there are fine views to St Catherine's Tower, Twickenham Riverside and, in winter, to the **Orleans Octagon** and neighbouring Riverside House. Recent clearance has re-instated some of the connection between the gallery and the river, but there is greater scope for managing vistas through the gardens and re-instating some of the Regency setting.



James Gibbs' Octagon at Orleans House

The **Orleans Gardens riverside** park has some fine waterside horse chestnuts, but the crazy paving paths, concrete street lights and vandalised benches are a disappointment. The rather neglected municipal treatment continues along the length of the Middlesex side. The raised river banks have harsh engineered sides, chain-link fencing, sodium lights and a broad asphalt surface which contrasts uncomfortably with the rural gravel towpath on the Surrey side. In places riverside scrub conceals the river completely from the path. The London Borough of Richmond and the National Rivers Authority are experimenting with softer edges of willow and rushes along part of the Middlesex bank and the dense willows on Glover's Island help to screen the impact from Petersham Meadow, but the character of the whole path is inappropriate in such a distinguished landscape.

The urban character of the footpath is particularly intrusive along the **Marble Hill** waterfront. The villa was designed to be seen from the river, framed by a stage set of trees, but riverside scrub and fencing obscure the park from the water. The villa has been restored by English Heritage and opened to the public. The grounds of the house are now a very well-used public park with sports pitches, a cafe and a popular playground. In summer, concerts are mounted on the southern terraces. The re-instatement of the visual connection to the water and tree'd frame to the villa could complement contemporary uses in the park and greatly enhance the setting of the exceptional building in the wider landscape.

Downstream from Marble Hill, the developments at **Meadowside and Meadowbank** do not complement the surrounding villa landscape and though set back behind mature trees, they intrude into the view from Richmond Hill, particularly in winter.

**Hammerton's Ferry** provides a highly popular connection between the Surrey and Middlesex banks. This is the only ferry left in the study area and forms a much-appreciated link for tourists and locals alike between Ham, Marble Hill and Twickenham. The viability of the ferry needs to be safeguarded, but the extent of associated moorings in front of the Marble Hill river frontage should be re-examined in the light of any proposals to re-instate the villa's visual connection to the water and the LPAC advice on permanently moored vessels in front of historic buildings.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The top of **Richmond Hill**, which has been called England's *Frascati*, has been a well-known viewpoint for centuries. By the 1650s a seat had been placed overlooking the view. A few cottages were developed on the east side of the road during the 17th century and in the 1620s a windmill was built on the site of the current Richmond Gate Hotel.

From the 1630s onwards, the northern end of the Hill Common, on the slopes above the river, was granted out to tile-makers and a complex of tile-kilns grew up along the Petersham Road. Digging for clay made considerable inroads into what was left of the lower slopes of the common. The first improvement came about in 1700 with the laying out of the Terrace Walk with its double row of pleached trees, and the replacement of a group of cottages by substantial houses on the sites of 1-3 The Terrace. The Star and Garter Tavern was built at the top of Petersham Common in 1738 and the great era of development at the top of the hill followed in the decade 1765-75. During the decade new buildings were added to the Star and Garter, 3 and 5 The Terrace were rebuilt, and Wick House (by Sir William Chambers for Sir Joshua Reynolds), Downe House, Ancaster House and The Wick (by Robert Milne) were all built.

The tile kilns were closed down in 1767 and the land was sold to the Duke of Montagu to extend the pleasure grounds of his house by the riverside. He linked the two parts of his grounds by a grotto tunnel under the Petersham Road and in 1786 acquired some more land when the remaining part of Hill Common was granted by George III and Queen Charlotte to Richmond Vestry - to become the **Terrace Field**.



Secretary Johnstone's House, later Orleans House in 1816



Orleans House by Pringret in 1846

**'The Emperor of Russia seemed gratified and observed to some of his illustrious companions that (the view from Richmond Hill) was the most beautiful situation he had ever seen.'**

The Times 11 June 1814

**'no doubt very pleasing and pretty in fine weather'**

Duke of Saxony

'They pause for a moment... to gaze the unrivalled landscape which it presented. A huge sea of verdure, with crossing and intersecting promontories of massive and tufted trees... tenanted by numberless flocks and herds, which seemed to wander unrestrained and unbounded through the rich pastures. The Thames, here turreted with villas and there garlanded with forests, moved on slowly and placidly'  
Sir Walter Scott

The **Star and Garter** continued to grow during the 19th century until it became the most fashionable place for London society to visit for a day's excursion or for an evening meal. In World War I it became a hospital for disabled servicemen and was replaced in 1924 by the great red-brick Royal Star and Garter Home designed by Sir Edwin Cooper. Below The Wick, on the hillside, a new purpose-built hotel (now called the Petersham Hotel,) was erected in 1864 to the design of John Giles.

In the 1870s the grounds of Montagu (later Buccleuch) House were extended into the gardens of the demolished Lansdowne House and the entire hillside grounds were acquired by the Vestry in 1887 to become the public **Terrace Gardens**. In the 1930s Buccleuch House itself was bought by Richmond Council and demolished. Devonshire Lodge, another old mansion which stood by the Petersham Road, was also acquired by Richmond Council and demolished in 1968 and its grounds added to Petersham Meadow to improve the view from Richmond Hill.

The river valley beneath Richmond Hill, with all the elements of an idealised designed landscape, was captured to perfection by Turner (a great admirer of Thomson's *The Seasons*) in his *View from Richmond Hill* in 1819; the pale green foreground of the Petersham water meadows contrasting with the darker groves of 'umbrageous Ham', the wide silver-blue curving river with Windsor Castle (now no longer visible) in the distance and the villas shining through the trees. Goethe's romantic friend Pastor Moritz found the view unforgettable, 'one of the finest prospects in the world... Nothing I had ever seen is to be compared with it'.

Richmond's situation overlooking the curving Thames so impressed the American William Byrd, while he was staying with his friend the Duke of Argyll at Sudbrook, that he gave the name Richmond to the town which he founded in 1733 on the hill above the James River in Virginia.

Down in the valley, many 18th-century tourists commented that the little jewel of a Palladian villa, **Marble Hill**, gave the Thames a look of the Brenta. Built in 1724 for Henrietta Howard, George II's mistress, Marble Hill soon attracted a circle of courtiers and literati including Pope, Swift, Gay and Dr Arbuthnot. Amateur architects and garden designers had flocked to offer their services when the Prince of Wales advanced the money to build the villa. Colen Campbell's original plan was modified by Lord Pembroke and carried out by Roger Morris.

Lord Islay, later Duke of Argyll, of Whitton Park, who was one of the trustees appointed to take care of Henrietta Howard's allowance, gave expert arboricultural advice and a huge black walnut tree from his nursery, one of the largest in the country, can still be seen. Alexander Pope was 'the contriver' of the Marble Hill garden and he certainly would have advised on the sunken grotto, which has been partially restored by English Heritage. Charles Bridgeman was involved professionally and the garden, as seen on a c1750 survey had a green colonnade and theatre, wilderness walks and quincunx groves, which can be compared with the conjectural classical retreat garden, from Castell's *The Villas of the Ancients*, with its hippodrome-shaped green and semi-circular arcade of trees. The Heckel drawing of Marble Hill in 1748 shows the neat stepped down effect as seen from a boat on the river. The house is still as described by Henrietta Pye in the 18th century rendered as 'white as snow' and stands out conspicuously in views painted from Richmond Hill. Missing from the river landscape now is the gothic barn designed by Walpole and his Strawberry Hill committee for the Countess of Suffolk, which at least one traveller mistook for a church.

The red-brick house next door, built for Johnston, Secretary of State for Scotland, by John James, had a totally different appearance. All that now remains of the house is the baroque octagon, built by James Gibbs in 1720. Secretary Johnston entertained Queen Caroline in the Octagon when she was visiting by river from Richmond or Hampton Court. The greater part of the house, which later became known as **Orleans House** when the Duc d'Orléans went to live there in 1815, was demolished in 1926 when sold to the Crane River Sand and Ballast Co. The Octagon and a small adjoining



Richmond, Virginia, inspired by a similar bend in the James River

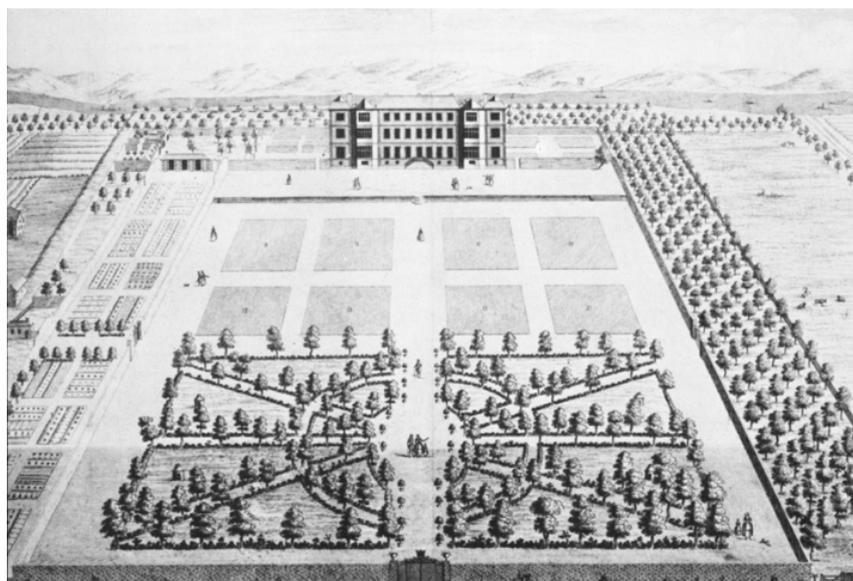


Heckel's drawing of Marble Hill in 1748

wing, however, were saved by the Hon. Mrs Ionides, who collected many prints and paintings of the area. On her death in 1962 she left the paintings to the local authority. The wing has been converted into a picture gallery adjoining the restored Octagon. 200,000 tons of gravel were extracted from the site which has now grown into a wild woodland area, but there are still traces of the Regency shrubbery type of planting shown in the Pringet watercolour.

Across the river, the setting of **Ham House** has hardly changed since Evelyn praised it '*as inferior to few of the best villas in Italy*' with its gardens, groves and avenues '*on the banks of the sweetest river in the world*'. Built in 1610 for a courtier at the time when Prince Henry was established at Richmond Palace, it was altered in 1671, the date on the urns surmounting the gate piers, for the Duke of Lauderdale, one of Charles II's most powerful ministers. Ham House has been restored by the National Trust and is still '*furnished like a great Prince's*' as it was in Evelyn's day.

Walpole was dismayed by the walled-in, old-fashioned gardens, still in place in 1770. '*Close to the Thames, in the centre of all rich and verdant beauty, it is so blocked up and barricaded with walls, vast trees, and gates that you think yourself 100 miles off and 100 years back*'. The National Trust has been able to restore the gardens to the 17th-century plan hanging in the house, making it, as the virtuoso, Roger North, saw it in 1695 '*one of the most beautiful and compleat seats in the kingdom*'. The wilderness huts and the cockleshell backed seats seen in the Danckerts painting showing the Lauderdale's walking in the garden have been copied and tea can be taken in the original redbrick orangery. The avenues extending into largely unspoilt countryside preserve a strong feeling of Evelyn's day.



**Bird's-eye view of Ham House and the surrounding avenues circa 1730**

Ham's '**embowering walks**' along the river to Richmond are as rural now as when they were first extolled by James Thomson, who struck a new note in the appreciation of natural scenery. In Dr Johnson's words, '*the reader of 'The Seasons' wonders that he never saw before what Thomson shews him*'. The Arcadian Muse had ventured forth from '*Twitnam's bowers*' and grottoes and walked into the countryside when Thomson went to live in Richmond:

*Which way, Amanda, shall we bend our course?  
The choice perplexes. Wherefore shall we choose?  
Say shall we wind  
Along the streams? or walk the smiling mead?  
Or court the forest-glades? or wander wild  
Among the waving harvests? or ascend.  
While radiant Summer opens all its pride,  
Thy hill, delightful Shene?*

**Petersham's 'smiling mead'** is, in fact, more rural now than in Thomson's day as the old brick kilns have been removed. The Earl of Rochester's seat at New Park with its great vistas has now vanished and its grounds, known as 'Petersham Park' have been restored to Richmond Park. The mount seen in Kip's engraving, formerly a standing in Henry VIII's chase, remains with its remarkable vista of St Paul's. The elegant 18th-century out-of-town houses entered from the Petersham Road, Douglas House, Petersham Lodge and Sudbrook Park still remain and their grounds, although mostly in recreational use, still keep the area green and free from development. John Gay spent much of his time in the Queensberry household at Douglas House, where his *Beggars Opera* was rehearsed and trees were planted to celebrate its success. Much of his writing was done in the summerhouse, now destroyed, which his patrons built for him by the river. Sudbrook Park, styled as a villa in James Gibbs *Book of Architecture* and built by him in 1726-28, for John, 2nd Duke of Argyll, was probably planted with trees supplied from his brother's Whitton nursery.

## NATURE CONSERVATION

The walled garden of **Orleans House** has become dominated quite recently by woodland, but has long had shrubberies much favoured by birds. In the late 19th century the owner, John Dugdale Astley, '*was not infrequently lulled to sleep by the rippling song of the nightingales, who never deserted the shrubberies*'. Woodland birds, such as robins and wrens, are still plentiful. The sycamore-dominated woodland has little in the way of a shrub layer.

**Marble Hill Park** is very different in character from the grounds of Orleans House. The grass is closely mown for sports pitches and edged with mature horse chestnut trees and some fine old oaks and beeches. There are some small areas of limited wildlife interest beside the house where the ornamental shrubberies contain a few native shrubs beneath mature trees providing cover for one or two pairs of robins and blackbirds, the only such cover in the park.

Once part of Ham House grounds, the **Copse and Holly Hedge Field** is now owned by the local authority. Relics of the old lime avenue can still be found along the northern edge of the field, as well as the old holly hedge which gives the field its name. Much of the field is dominated by cow parsley, but in one area the delicate white flowers of meadow saxifrage can be found; it is a plant of undisturbed grasslands which is rare in London. The ancient oaks of the Copse, their trunks gnarled and twisted, form dense woodland stands in places, while elsewhere they are more widely spaced as wood pasture. The trees provide nest sites for many birds and probably bats, all of which feed on the large numbers and diversity of invertebrates supported by these stately trees. Many of the insects rely on dead wood. Until recently, the grass under the trees was closely mown, preventing the development of any significant shrub and field layers. This management has now been stopped, allowing elder, bramble and Swedish whitebeam to form a shrub layer. In one part of the Copse, ornamental trees have been planted very closely and now cast such a dense shade that nothing can grow beneath them. The trees should be thinned or removed to allow ground vegetation to re-establish and to encourage regeneration of the oaks.

Once the grounds of Petersham Lodge, **Petersham Lodge Wood** is now managed jointly by the London Borough of Richmond and the London Wildlife Trust, with assistance from the Richmond and Twickenham Conservation Volunteers. The central avenue of horse chestnuts is flanked by many fine, mature trees of which a colossal Oriental plane is the most noteworthy, being probably the largest in the country. There is little shrub layer, indeed meadow would be a better description than woodland for this place as there is prolific growth of flowering plants encouraged by the open canopy and the periodic flooding from the Thames on high spring tides. Spring flowers include lesser celandine and lady's smock while in summer these give way to sizeable populations of meadow-sweet and meadow cranesbill. Management of the site aims to maintain the historic central avenue and open character, while

encouraging a shrub layer to develop around the edges. The embankment between the woodland and the river has been deliberately breached to facilitate flooding.

To the west of the land, woodland continues in a strip between the river and the grounds of a Sea Scout hut. This wet woodland, dominated by crack willow and grey alder, is much more overgrown, with a dense understorey of elder. There is lush growth of damp-loving plants, such as nettles, cleavers, wild angelica, Himalayan balsam and hemlock water dropwort. Similar tall herbaceous vegetation extends beyond the woodland in a narrow strip alongside the river, merging towards the west into drier, species-poor horse pasture.

**Petersham Meadows** slope gently down to the river, with cattle grazing on the lush grass and wild flowers, showing how much of London's riverside would have looked as pastoral meadow land. The flora of the meadows is less diverse than it might be, following partial 'improvement' in the past, as is evidenced by the frequency of perennial rye-grass among the sward. A reasonable range of wild flowers is still to be found among the grasses, however, some of them in abundance. Bulbous buttercup produces sheets of golden flowers in spring and early summer, especially in the two smaller fields furthest from the river. The long grass is an ideal habitat for grasshoppers, while the flowers provide nectar for a good variety of common butterflies, such as meadow brown, common blue and small and large skippers. The meadows are owned by the London Borough of Richmond and leased to a farmer who grazes the land, a regime now under a formally agreed Countryside Stewardship Agreement with the Countryside Commission. In time, this sympathetic management should increase the diversity of plant life, providing no fertilisers or herbicides are used. The larger field beside the Thames used to flood in winter until the 1950s when the low wall beside the towpath was erected. Although the field is still damp in places it would be very beneficial for wildlife to re-introduce occasional flooding.

The **towpath** becomes more open as it passes Petersham Lodge and Petersham Meadows and this is a particularly good place to watch bats on balmy summer evenings. Pipistrelle, noctule, serotine and Daubenton's bats hunt for insects over the river and around the trees. The many old buildings and large trees in the vicinity are valuable as bat roosting sites. During the London Bat Project of 1985-86, 415 pipistrelles were counted at one roost in Teddington. The river banks along this reach are generally very good for wildlife, particularly adjacent to Petersham Meadows where there is almost a fen-like flora.

Opposite Petersham Meadows, **Glover's Island** is an undeveloped and wooded haven for wildlife. Sycamore, ash and willow cover the island, and herons can be seen roosting in the trees. Nesting rafts nearby are used by great crested grebes. The island would be more attractive to waterfowl if the sheet piling edges could be modified to vegetated gradual slopes. The trees should regenerate successfully without intervention.

On the steep western slopes of Richmond Hill, the **Terrace Field** consists of grassland of only moderate floral diversity, dominated by meadow foxtail and cock's foot. Common wild flowers such as meadow vetchling, common vetch and bulbous buttercup provide some colour throughout the spring and summer. The grassland is managed by taking an annual hay cut in late summer, a regime which should encourage a greater diversity of flowers. There are several large trees along the top of the field and additional young trees, mostly field maples, but care should be taken to keep the land as open grassland.

**Petersham Common** lies on London clay but the steep slope assists drainage, so there is less of a wetland influence on its flora and fauna. The Common was almost completely open and bare of trees until well into the 19th century, except for some scattered trees and scrub on the lower slopes under the Petersham Road. At the top of the slope majestic oaks now tower above a dense and varied understorey containing ash, hawthorn, holly, elder and many other native shrubs. There is also a varied woodland ground flora including Lord-and-Ladies, enchanter's nightshade, and foxglove. A large clearing

**'Richmond Park is one of the four remaining parts of the old world of romance... where I vow there are dryads and fauns, where you might find a Viking asleep, where there are outlaws and knights in armour and ladies who exist solely to be succoured.'**

DH Lawrence

behind the Star and Garter Home is vegetated with tall herbs and this sunny spot is a favourite area for butterflies. Further down the slope, the woodland becomes rather more scrubby and is dominated by hawthorn and regenerating elm. The land is owned by the London Borough of Richmond but regulated and managed by the Petersham Common Conservators. Management largely involves periodic thinning of young trees and maintenance of the paths.

**Richmond Park**, scheduled as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, has an undulating landscape and lies on the London Clay, with superficial deposits of High Level Terrace and River Terrace Gravels forming higher ground and Flood Plain Gravels and Alluvium covering some of the low-lying areas. This mixed geology and topography has given rise to a rich mosaic of dry acidic grassland, marshy and unimproved neutral grassland grading into more improved grasslands and bracken, with areas of woodland and numerous ponds and ditches. The park's acidic grasslands are the most extensive in Greater London and contain many plants which are rare in the capital. Scattered throughout the grasslands are numerous ancient oak and beech pollards, which support a large and unique assemblage of invertebrates, especially beetles, some of which are known nowhere else in Britain. Other rare beetles are associated with deer dung or are found in the park's wide variety of wetland habitats.

Unimproved neutral grassland covers much of **Petersham Park** (now part of Richmond Park), to the west of Pembroke Lodge. The sward is composed of a wide variety of grasses; hammer sedge is frequent and star sedge, which is very rare in London, can be seen in a few places. Harebells can be found, but generally the neutral grasslands are not particularly herb-rich. The Department of National Heritage, which manages all the Royal Parks for the Crown, is drawing up a detailed management plan for the park, including individual specifications for each of the 486 ancient oak pollards. As much dead wood as possible will be left to encourage invertebrates.

Adjacent to and contributing to the extent of the park's grassland, **Sudbrook Park Golf Course** consists mostly of closely mown grass but the roughs between the fairways and numerous mature trees provide some ecological interest. All that remains of the Sudbrook stream and ponds is a single small waterbody. Management of the roughs with no chemicals or fertilisers and a late summer cut will help to maintain the habitats. Restoration of the stream and ponds would greatly enhance the nature conservation interest of the park. And appropriate planting of trees would contribute to a future generation of large trees.

**Ham Common** lies on the western edge of Richmond Park and the area immediately adjoining the park is mostly wooded and provides a valuable extension of the park's habitats. The remainder of the common is open, close-mown grassland bordered by trees. The pond has recently been dredged and supports amphibians. Ham Common lies on River Terrace Gravels which have produced well-drained, slightly acidic soils, and the whole of the common was once grazed heathland and acidic grassland. However as grazing declined from the latter part of the 19th century, the woodland of birch and oak has colonised. The fauna of the woodland includes purple hairstreak butterfly and a good variety of woodland birds.

## PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATION

This is the most extensive area of public access in the study area. The Thames Path is continuous along both sides of the river, connected by a ferry and linking back to Petersham Meadow, Richmond Park, Ham Lands, Ham Common, Ham House, Marble Hill and Orleans House.

River access is provided by steps on both sides of the river and by slipways at Ham Street car park and River Lane.

The possible new footpath connection through the Cassel Hospital and British Aerospace sites would link Ham Common to the river on the edge of Kingston.

Informal recreation on both land and water is complemented by public sports pitches and tennis courts at Marble Hill and Ham Lands. Stables at Ham and the Polo Ground at Petersham make use of the extensive network of bridleways, extending through Ham Common into Richmond Park.

<b>Boatyards:</b>	None		
<b>Water recreation:</b>	Informal especially from River Lane slipway		
<b>Land recreation:</b>	Fishing from Petersham meadow edge		PLA
	Ham House	Grade I	National Trust
	Ham House Stables		Private
	Ham Lands walks and bridleways		LBRuT
	Ham Polo Club		Private
	Ham Scouts		
	Orleans House Gallery	Grade I	LBRuT
	Marble Hill	Grade I	English Heritage
	Richmond Golf Club		Crown Estate
	Richmond Park		Royal Parks
	Thames Path		
<b>Refreshment:</b>	Ham House		
	Marble Hill		
	Petersham Hotel		
	Roebuck		
	The Rose of York		
<b>Landmarks:</b>	Ham House	Grade I	National Trust
	Marble Hill House	Grade I	English Heritage
	Orleans House Octagon	Grade I	LBRuT
	Pembroke Lodge	Grade II	Crown Estate
	Petersham Hotel	Grade II	Private
	Petersham House	Grade II*	Private
	Petersham Lodge	Grade II	Private
	Richmond Terrace (various buildings)	Grade II	Private
	Richmond Park Escarpment	Grade I	Royal Parks
	St Catherine's Convent tower		Private
	St Matthias' Church	Grade II	Church Comm.
	St Peter's Church, Petersham	Grade II*	Church Comm.
	Star and Garter Home	Grade II	
	The Wick	Grade I	Private
	Twickenham Riverside (various buildings)	Grade II	Private

## LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS:

### *Amenity and Local History:*

Borough of Twickenham Local History Society  
 Cambridge Park Residents' Association  
 Friends of Marble Hill  
 Friends of Orleans House  
 Friends of Richmond Park  
 Ham Amenity Group  
 Ham & Petersham Association  
 Marble Hill Society  
 Orleans Group  
 Richmond Local History Society  
 Richmond Society  
 River Thames Society (Upper Tidal)

### *Nature Conservation:*

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers  
 London Wildlife Trust  
 Richmond and Twickenham Friends of the Earth  
 Richmond and Twickenham Conservation Volunteers  
 Petersham Common Conservators

## PRINCIPAL LAND USES

Farming, parkland, commons and golf courses are interspersed with villas, large houses and villages.

## SIGNIFICANT SITES UNDER PRESSURE FOR RE-DEVELOPMENT:

### *Sites*

Meadowside/Meadowbank

### *Main landscape factors for consideration*

- surrounding landscape of villas set back in wooded parks
- view from Petersham Lodge avenue
- fencing along public footpath

The following proposals have been identified as part of the survey and analysis of the Thames Landscape Strategy. The policy proposals amplify the issues raised in Chapter 2 to be included in Supplementary Planning Guidance. The project and management proposals are recommended for incorporation into national agency and local government work programmes, co-ordinated by a Project Officer and Officers' Steering Committee (see Chapter 5). All proposals would require full consultation before implementation:

## Policy Proposals

	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Pol 8.1	Conserve the remarkable Richmond Hill view and its relationship with the open water meadows, the graceful bend in the Thames and the historic landscape of villas, parks, avenues and villages.	DoE Directive LBRuT: RIV 1, ENV 2 13.21 (7), 13.46 (1)
Pol 8.2	Promote and organise tourism in the remarkable river landscape, linking to public transport and river boat networks and explaining the history and nature conservation.	LBRuT: CET 8, RIV 4, 13.46 (25/27) Common Ground, BTA, PLA, Public Art Develop Trust
Pol 8.3	Consider designating the river landscape as part of a Thames World Heritage area.	
Pol 8.4	Control moorings in front of historic vistas and reaches of particular rural character and consider the re-instatement of landing stages for river access.	LPAC, LBRuT: RIV 5
Pol 8.5	Conserve and enhance the nature conservation interest of the river and its corridor, with particular attention to Petersham Meadows.	LBRuT: RIV 12

## Project Proposals

	<i>Project</i>	<i>Initiative</i>
Proj 8.1	Extend the Terrace Field through part of the Terrace Gardens, relocating the fence & public lavatories, and thinning trees at the foot of the hill to reveal a glimpse of the water and the view to Marble Hill and Orleans House. Thin some of the trees in the Terrace Gardens to reveal the downstream view from the Terrace.	LBRuT: ENV 2, RIV 1 Petersham Common Conservators
Proj 8.2	Conserve the wooded escarpment around the Star and Garter, pruning a view of the river as painted by Turner and others.	LBRuT: ENV 2, RIV 1

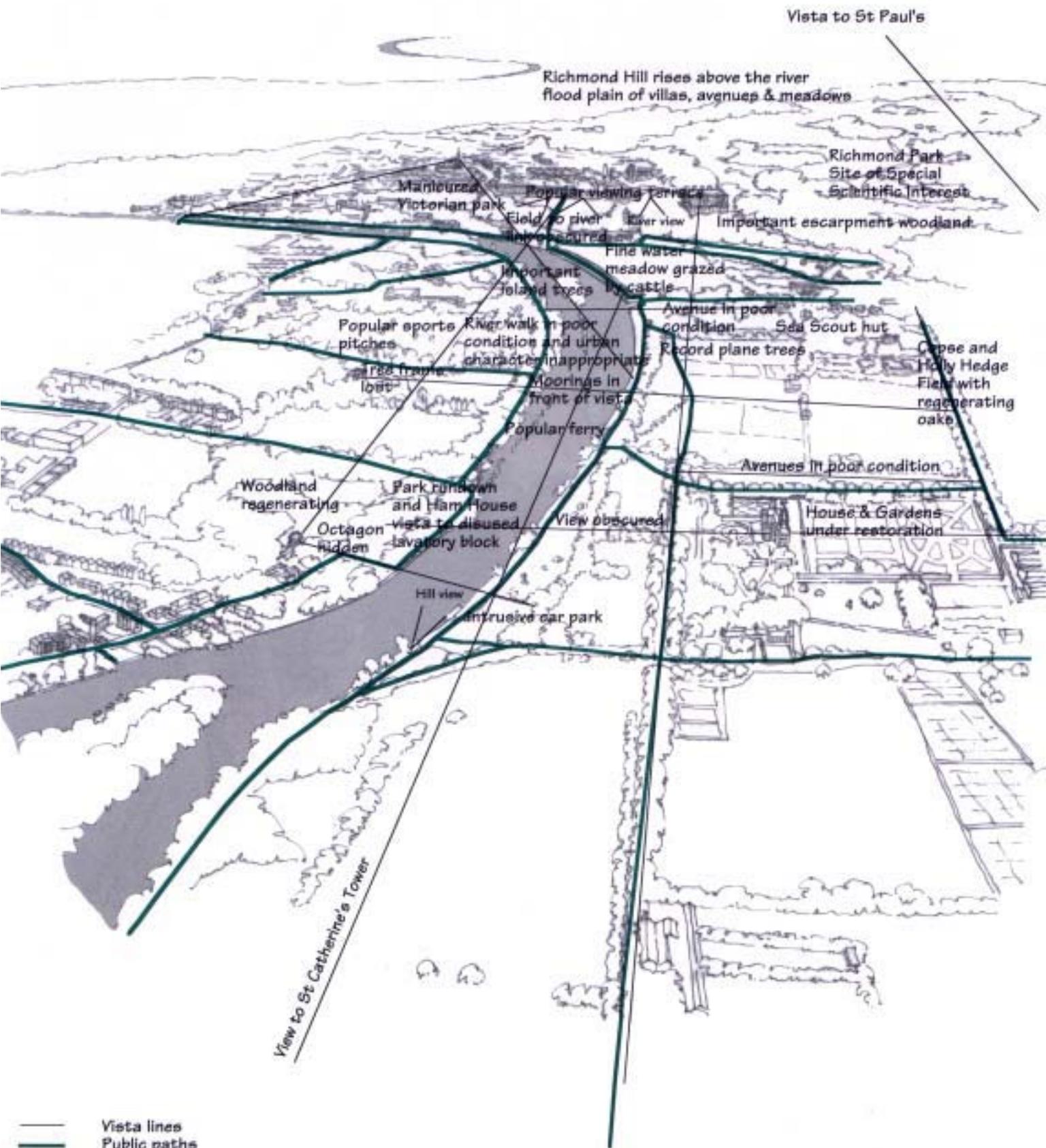
Proj 8.3	Repair the estate fencing around Petersham Meadow, remove the base of the burnt-out shed and consider the long-term possibility of replacing the concrete flood wall with an earth bund and returning the meadow to a regime of flooding.	LBRuT and tenants NRA, PLA Countryside Comm English Nature, LWT, LEU LBRuT: ENV 8
Proj 8.4	Remove the remains of the redundant Petersham water works and re-instate the site as meadow.	LBRuT and tenants German School
Proj 8.5	Re-align the inner river footpath through the eastern end of the replanted Ham Avenue to provide a dry route at times of high tide.	LBRuT: ENV8,RIV12 LWT, Rich&Twick Volunteers, private landowners LBRuT, NRA, PLA
Proj 8.6	Restore the Petersham Lodge avenue of horse chestnuts and re-instate meadow management, cutting the area at least annually and maintaining woodland edges to keep the site sheltered. Consider re-instating John Gay's riverside summerhouse.	
Proj 8.7	Investigate the possibility of modifying the banks of Glover's Island to enhance the nature conservation value.	
Proj 8.8	Enhance public facilities and the viewing terrace at Pembroke Lodge.	Royal Parks Crown Estate Royal Parks Crown Estate LBRuT: ENV 12
Proj 8.9	Enhance the setting, surfaces, seating and information boards at King Henry VIII's Mound. Re-instate Oliver's Mount (shown on the 1745 Rocque map). Retain wooded scarp and beech walk with occasional river views from the Richmond Park terrace.	
Proj 8.10	Consult on the long-term re-planting of the southern Ham Avenue to Ham Common on the correct alignment, improving the boundaries and fencing. Investigate the possibilities of re-instating a focal mound at the end of the avenue.	LBRuT: ENV 8,12, 13.21 (2) National Trust Ham & P. Assoc. LBRuT: ENV 8,12, 13.21 (2) National Trust Polo Club Ham & P. Assoc. LBRuT: ENV 8,12, 13.21 (2)
Proj 8.11	Replant the quincunx of limes along Melancholy Walk and failures along the Ham Lodge avenue.	
Proj 8.12	Re-open the view between Ham House and the river, relocating the disused public lavatories which now form the focus of the axial view across river.	

## Management Proposals

	<i>Management</i>	<i>Initiative</i>
Mng 8.1	Continue to manage the Terrace Field for hay and wildflowers.	LBRuT: RIV 12, ENV 18, 13.46 (5) Petersham Common Conservators LBRuT: RIV 12, ENV 18, 13.46 (5)
Mng 8.2	Continue to maintain the Terrace hoggin, fences and seats in good condition and reduce the trees and scrub which obscure the view.	LBRuT
Mng 8.3	Conserve and maintain the escarpment woodland.	LBRuT: RIV 12, ENV 18 & tenants Countryside Comm LBRuT RIV 3, PLA
Mng 8.4	Continue to graze Petersham Meadows, controlling thistle and nettle invasion and considering the long-term possibility of restoring management as a flood meadow.	LBRuT RIV 12, NRA
Mng 8.5	Control scrub growth/litter between the Ham Lands footpath and the river.	
Mng 8.6	Manage the willows on Glover's Island for nature conservation and to maintain the wooded appearance.	
Mng 8.7	Prune up the Lime Avenues around Ham House to retain the axial vistas.	LBRuT: ENV 2,12, RIV 1 Nat Trust LBRuT ENV 18, RIV 12
Mng 8.8	Manage the Ham Copse and Holly Hedge Field to allow ground vegetation to re-establish and to encourage regeneration of the oaks.	
Mng 8.9	Manage the King Henry VIII's Mound key-hole and avenue to keep open the vista to St Paul's.	Royal Parks LBRuT: ENV 2
Mng 8.10	Manage the woodland in Orleans House gardens to create a more varied habitat for birds.	LBRuT: ENV 18
Mng 8.11	Manage the Richmond Golf Course roughs as a hay crop, clearing around the pond and re-instating historic landscape features where these can work with the layout of the course.	LBRuT: ENV 18, RIV 12 Rich.Golf Club Crown Estate

# LANDSCAPE CHARACTER REACH

## 8. Ham



— Vista lines  
— Public paths



ANALYSIS