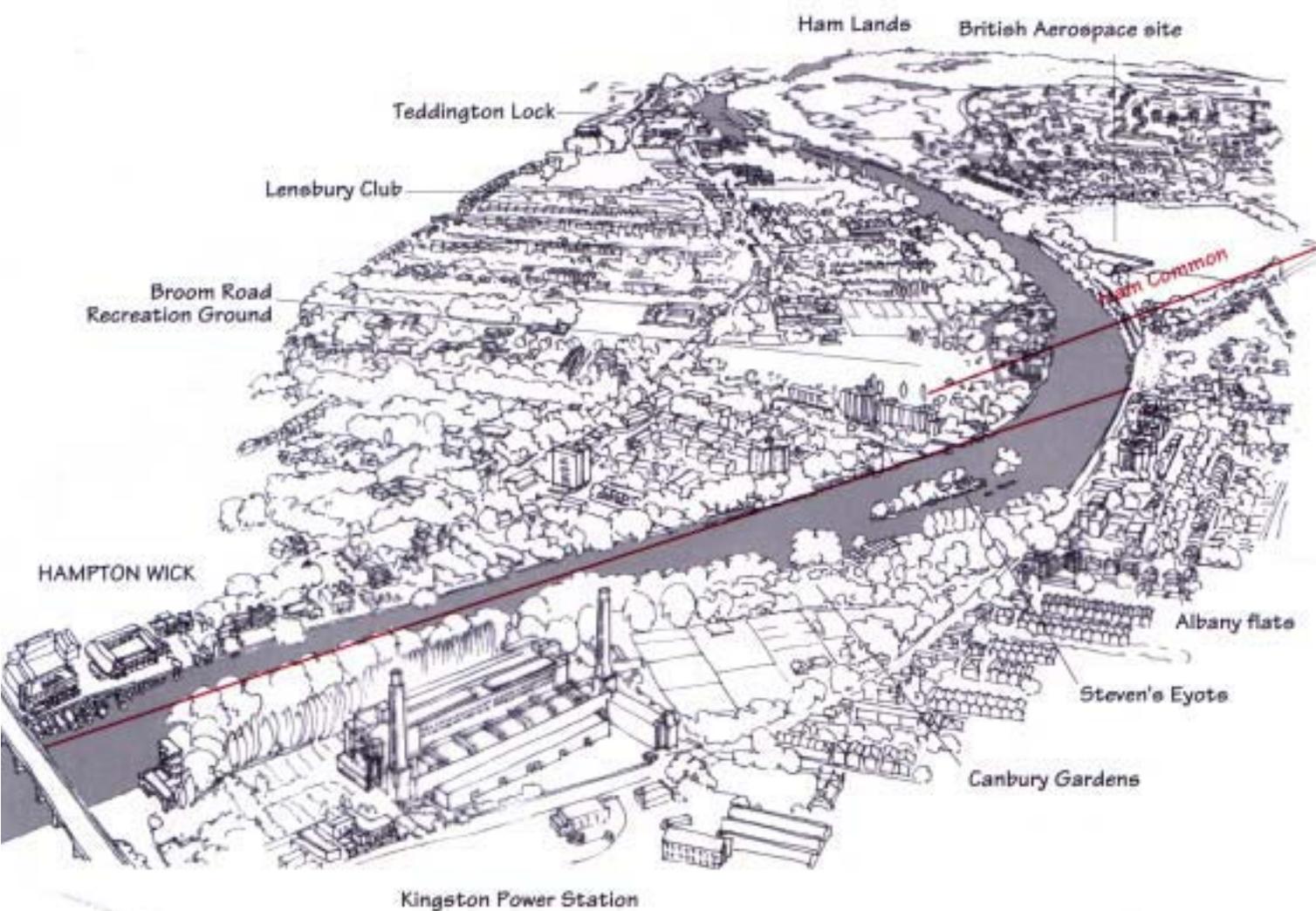




LANDSCAPE CHARACTER REACH

5. Hampton Wick



— Vieta lines



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The Hampton Wick Reach curves from Kingston Railway Bridge to Teddington Lock. The reach is characterised by residential areas interspersed with recreation grounds and dominated by the Kingston Power Station and British Aerospace site. Yet despite these developments and recent apartment blocks, the reach remains remarkably green and well-tree'd. This leafy character should be enhanced by the recent demolition of the British Aerospace Works and the current removal of the redundant power station.

Although the chimneys of the **power station** can be seen from miles around, huge plane trees and lombardy poplars reduce some of its impact on the river. Entering the reach from Kingston, the railway bridge and pumping station arches and the lines of trees beyond provide a distinct gateway, leading to the shaded waterside park. The smooth trunks of the plane trees and the high canopy above, create an arcade-like frame to the river. The cracked asphalt, stained concrete street lamps and broken khaki benches leave the place feeling a little uncared for, but the simple space is thronged with walkers and fishermen on the lower path and people just sitting and watching on the upper benches.

The waterside park leads into the main part of **Canbury Gardens**, a much-valued and popular park. A riverside line of trees is backed by strips of shrubberies, a pub and a rowing club. Tennis courts, bowling greens and pavilions occupy the landward edge of the park, creating a dense complex of formal recreation facilities under the shadow of the power station. Some of the tennis courts are covered by inflated white structures in winter. The condition of the chain-link fencing and minimal planting between facilities is deteriorating, though some new planting is underway.

The three other main **recreation areas** at Broom Road Recreation Ground, the British Aerospace Sports Ground and the Lensbury Club are largely open areas of gang-mown sports pitches with adjacent pavilions and tennis courts. Particularly on the low Middlesex Bank, the glimpses through to open space contrast with the denser tree cover along the rest of the reach. The assortment of exotic trees on the edge of the Lensbury Club creates a slightly discordant note in the river landscape of native willow, alder, oak and ash. The area of scrub woodland on the edge of the British Aerospace site blends better with the landscape. However barbed-wire fencing and dumped rubbish on this site detract from its natural character and interrupt the flow of the upper river walk to Ham Lands.

The **residential areas** divide into two main types. Downstream of the Albany, Edwardian houses line stretches of the river and its side-channels, particularly at Lower Ham Road and Broomwater. The associated domestic boathouses, though often in a state of decay, contribute to the character of the river. The whimsical peaked roofs, barge boards and arched windows of the architecture on the water's edge give the area a special identity. Upstream of the Albany, a number of blocks of flats change the character and scale of the residential areas. The three Albany blocks stand out along the river, built on the site of Point Pleasant with its commanding views to north and south. However the mature cedars, old garden wall and Boston ivy growing on the buildings help to reduce some of the impact. Similarly, riparian trees on the Middlesex bank mask some of the bulk of the modern blocks of flats of up to 8 storeys high. From a distance however, such as the view downstream from the Queen's Promenade, these blocks still stand out harshly in the river scene. Between the flats, opposite Canbury Gardens, a number of older houses with extensive gardens and boathouses offer a softer view across the river.



Blocks of flats built on the site of Repton's Point Pleasant

The trees on the **islands** also play an important part in the leafy character of the reach. Steven's Eyots are surrounded by houseboats and pilings, but the willows help to screen some of the clutter and break the expanse of the reach. Though the upper end of Trowlock Island is covered in wooden bungalows,

the downstream half is densely wooded with alder, ash and willow, creating a narrow, shaded side-channel where the moored boats all appear to be painted in a co-ordinated blue and white.

The islands and recreation areas are dotted with **boat clubs**. Some of the sheds and club houses are relatively new and brightly painted, others date back at least a century. Some of the finest brick boathouses on Lower Ham Road have been converted into design offices. The ramshackle character of the clubs, surrounded by equipment, masts and hulls, bring the river edge alive with activity.

At the downstream end of the reach, the river is dominated by the tall buildings of the Lensbury Club and the Television Studios, and by the pilings, weirs and rushing water of Teddington Lock. The open expanse of **Ham Lands** opposite acts as a rough contrast with the manicured Middlesex banks. This southern end of Ham Lands has been narrowed by the residential development which crosses Riverside Drive. However the 2-storey houses, 100 metres back from the river, are partly screened by the raised river edge and some thin attempts at tree-planting. Where the river bank rises up two short terraces, with parallel paths, there is an opportunity for separating cyclists and pedestrians.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The village of **Hampton Wick** grew up as a hamlet at the point where Kingston bridge crossed over into Middlesex. Its only connection with the village of Hampton, a mile upstream, seems to have been their shared contiguity with Hampton Court and its park. In the Anglo-Saxon period, a single manor of Hampton covered the whole of this peninsula. The lordship was vested by William the Conqueror in Walter de St Valery, who also held Isleworth. The manor remained with the de St Valerys until 1217, shortly afterwards coming to the Knights Hospitallers.

Hampton Wick was one of the many villages and manors amalgamated in the new honour of Hampton Court created in 1539. The honour provided for the making of a new forest or chase for Henry VIII, and was called Hampton Court Chase, *'for the nourishing, generation and feeding of beasts of venery and fowls of warren'* and in which the king was to have *'free chase and warren'*. The Chase was immensely unpopular as the deer flourished at the expense of crops and other stock and *'the country thereabout in manner made desolate'*. After Henry's death, Elizabeth agreed to remove the deer to Windsor Forest.

In three directions Hampton Wick's growth has always been restricted, by Bushy Park, Hampton Court Park and the river. Its 18th century seclusion is implicit in the terms of Steele's dedication of the fourth volume of the Tatler to the Earl of Halifax from the *'elegant solitude'* of his *'little covert'* at Hampton Wick. In 1754 Rocque shows only one house, Broom Hall, on the river between Hampton Wick and Teddington. This whole stretch was dominated by the great 260-acre **South Field of Teddington**. The manor house was owned by the Frederick family between c1720 and 1820 when the estate was broken up. The house was demolished in the 1930s, but the columns from the doorway were incorporated in the house in Manor Gardens built on its site.

After the South Field was divided up by the Teddington Enclosure Act of 1800, a number of villas were laid out on plots fronting the river, some of them still retaining elegant boathouses. There had also been some development around the Sandy Lane gas works outside Hampton Wick after they were built in 1851, but the land remained predominantly agricultural until the arrival of the railway in 1863. Between 1864 and 1868, development of the old South Field proceeded so quickly that it was known as *'New Found Out'*. It later became South Teddington.

On the Surrey side, **Canbury Gardens** today lie in the shadow of the 1947 power station. In the 1850s, despite the presence of the gas works on the east side of the Lower Ham Road, the area was a tract of marshes and osier beds in which only a solitary cottage stood. Steven's Eyot is named after the



The magnificent plane trees lining Canbury Gardens

boatman who lived there in the late 19th century and the site of the cottage is now a pub. After the arrival of the railway in 1863, the land became attractive for industrial use and by 1887 it was an eyesore. The proposal for a public garden was made in terms of a borough motion *'to remove as soon as possible ...the tar paving manufactory, the road materials and other miscellaneous and unsavoury objects deposited there ...that the view from the river shall be a pleasant one and not, as at present, unsightly and obnoxious'*. After initial objections on the grounds that a public garden *'would be used by working men'*, the gardens were laid out to a design by the borough surveyor Henry Macaulay, on topsoil brought in from the nearby reservoir excavations. The Park was opened in 1890.

The site of the **power station** was occupied from about 1877 by the municipally owned Kingston-upon-Thames Fertiliser Department, where raw sewage was toasted in huge ovens to produce a garden fertiliser sold as *'Native Guano'*. King's Passage, at the end of Canbury Gardens, was known as *'Perfume Parade'* after the filter beds which adjoined the avenue. Despite all this Canbury Gardens were immensely popular, with weekly concerts and beautiful planting. The power station was closed in 1980 and PowerGen intend to begin demolition in 1994.

The Bank Farm estate, owned and renamed **Point Pleasant** by General St John was the subject in 1796 of a Red Book by Humphry Repton. The proposals included a new house by Nash, the first completed collaboration by the two men. The scheme's aim was to take advantage of the views both up and down the river, and Repton praised the *'quite new and unexampled'* solution which his *'ingenious friend Mr Nash'* contrived. This was a house very close to the water's edge, turned at an angle to the river, with three bows on two fronts. The Repton plan indicates too the undiverted footpath along the river's edge through the estate. By 1899 it was the Albany club, but the house has been demolished and the site is now occupied by three blocks of flats. The raised situation still commands the river bend and the two fine Lebanon Cedars which survive may date back to Repton.

The recently demolished **British Aerospace Works** evolved during the First World War from Sopwith and Hawker's in Kingston. The Works were built on part of the Ham Lands, and this southern part of the Lands is now squeezed between the Works' site to the east and 1960s housing to the north. The housing, Wates' Riverside Estate, swallowed up 60 acres of the Ham Lands in the 1960s, much of it the former Lammas lands whose copyholders forfeited their rights to the Dysart family under the 1902 Act for the Preservation of the View from Richmond Hill. However, the remaining land not already in public ownership was then bought by Richmond Council. After the Council had developed five acres in 1983, there was public outcry, leading to the designation of the rest as Metropolitan Open Land.

NATURE CONSERVATION

The river bank at **Canbury Gardens**, grazed by geese, ducks and other waterfowl, is virtually bare of vegetation. Management is required to restore the vegetation while still providing a useful area for waterfowl. The bank edges could be stepped to enable birds to move more easily to and from the water. The rest of the gardens, though suburban in nature, have a number of trees providing a sheltered habitat for urban wildlife.

Steven's Eyot has a number of pollarded willow trees and a hard concrete edge around its banks. There is a tiny island downstream of the Eyot with just a few trees which provide a quiet refuge for birds - cormorants can be seen roosting in the top of the trees. Similar to many of the other river islands, these two would both benefit from more sympathetic bank treatment and more trees.

The British Aerospace works before demolition in 1993

On the Middlesex bank, **Broom Road Recreation Ground** presents a hard concrete wall topped by a chain link fence to the river front. As well as grading and vegetating the river wall, the fence could be set back or indeed removed and the lower part of the recreation land managed as a grassy hay meadow.

There is some mature woodland on **Trowlock Island**, but regular mowing has reduced the areas of understorey and value to wildlife. As the trees start to die and decay they will become more valuable for woodpeckers, but the woodland should be managed to provide a shrub layer, a more natural woodland ground flora, and a more diverse age-range of trees.

The towpath beside the **British Aerospace** factory site has an attractive green swathe of grassland on either side of it and the river banks are well-vegetated. The future management of the British Aerospace site needs to incorporate sympathetic landscaping and management for wildlife.

Ham Lands lie just to the north of the British Aerospace land and are discussed more fully in Reach 6. The part of Ham Lands which lies within the Royal Borough of Kingston, comprises riverside grassland with a few bushes and trees. The grassland has been mown regularly in the past and is consequently not as diverse as the grassland cut as a hay crop over the remainder of Ham Lands. There is a range of common grasses, including oat grass on the slope up to Ham Lands, beside the towpath. The remaining grassland is mown regularly. Amongst the grasses can be found wild flowers such as crow garlic, sorrel, yarrow and hardheads. While pathways can be kept closely mown, a late hay cut, with the removal of all the cuttings to avoid fertility build up, would enable more flowers to set seed and thereby ensure their survival and spread.

At **Teddington Lock** the long narrow island in the centre of the river has a number of trees and demonstrates well how green areas can be built artificially in the river. Although the river is only partly tidal between here and Richmond Lock, areas of mud are exposed at low tide and black-headed gulls, mallards, coots and other waterfowl hunt for invertebrate morsels. Sea trout and even salmon swim upstream to breed in the Thames' upper reaches. To assist their migration, Teddington Weir has been altered so that they can now gain passage at high tide.

PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATION

This is one of the main reaches for boat clubs. Rowing, sailing and canoeing clubs cluster along the banks, interspersed with private boathouses and moorings. A ramp allows canoes and small boats to bypass the lock.

Canbury Gardens, Broom Road Recreation Ground and the Lensbury Club provide substantial areas of formal recreation, with tennis courts, bowling greens, putting greens, football and cricket pitches and playgrounds. The Ham Lands and towpaths offer extensive spaces for informal recreation, cycling and walking.

Public access, using the Thames Path along the Surrey bank, is continuous from Kingston right through to Kew and beyond. The re-development of the British Aerospace site presents an opportunity to make a pedestrian link between Ham Common and the river through the Cassel Hospital and British Aerospace sites. The Middlesex bank is divided between private gardens and clubs.

Boatyards: None

Water recreation: Ariel Sailing Club
Albany Park Canoe and Sailing Centre
BP Leisure Teddington Club
'Leander' (Kingston) Sea Scout Group
Kingston Rowing Club
Royal Canoe Club
Small Boat Club
Twickenham Sea Cadets Corps
Tamesis Club

Land recreation:	Former British Aerospace Sports Ground	Arlington
	Broom Road Recreation Ground	LBRuT
	Canbury Gardens	RBKuT
	Ham Lands	LBRuT
	Lensbury Club	Private
	Teddington Sports Centre	LBRuT
	Thames Path	

Refreshment: The Boaters Inn

Landmarks:	Albany Apartment Blocks	Private
	Kingston Power Station	PowerGen
	Kingston Railway Bridge	British Rail
	Teddington Lock	NRA

LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS:

Amenity and Local History:

- Borough of Twickenham Local History Society
- Canbury and Riverside Association
- Hampton Wick Association
- Kingston Society
- River Thames Society (Teddington-Windsor)
- Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society

Nature Conservation:

- London Wildlife Trust
- Richmond & Twickenham Friends of the Earth

PRINCIPAL LAND USES

With the demise of the power station and the British Aerospace Works, the reach becomes equally divided between residential and recreation uses. Many of the houses are Edwardian, but a number of prominent blocks of apartments have also been built on both banks. The recreation areas form substantial open spaces of sports pitches and formal facilities, regularly alternating from bank to bank along the river. The recreation areas are interspersed with a large number of riverside boat and sailing clubs.

SIGNIFICANT SITES UNDER PRESSURE FOR RE-DEVELOPMENT:

Sites

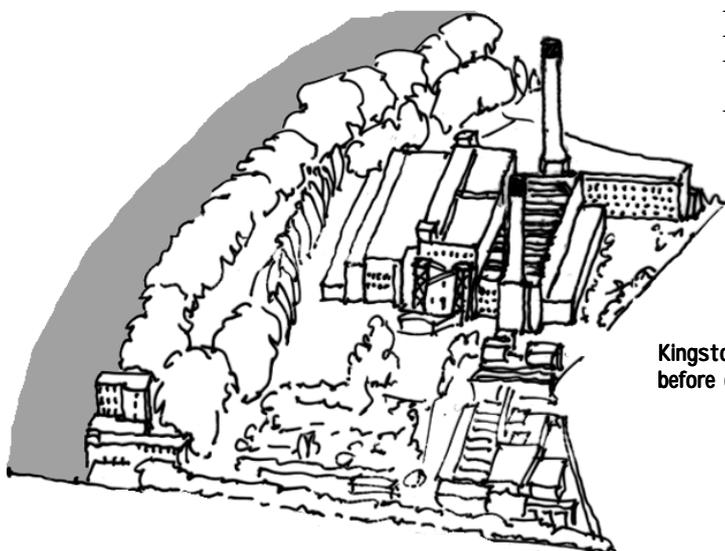
Kingston Power Station site

Main landscape factors for consideration

- importance of mature plane trees and lombardy poplars
- scale of development between downtown Kingston and surrounding two-storey row of houses
- relationship with Canbury Gardens
- possible contamination of land from gas works and power station

British Aerospace site

- importance of existing trees and extent of open space
- views of river re-opened from Ham Common and Richmond Road
- impact of scale and use on predominately residential area
- significance of open space associated with sports pitches
- potential footpath link from the river to Ham Common through the Cassel Hospital site
- potential for enhancing nature conservation value fence treatment along the river boundary



Kingston Power station before demolition in 1994

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

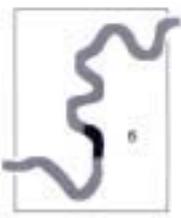
	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Pol 5.1	Conserve and enhance the leafy character and extensive recreation use of the reach.	RBKuT LBRuT: RIV 5
Pol 5.2	Conserve and enhance the nature conservation interest of the river and its corridor, with particular attention to Ham Lands, Trowlock Island, the British Aerospace site, Canbury Gardens and the recreation grounds.	RBKuT:STR 15 LBRuT: RIV 12
Pol 5.3	Retain and supplement the important tree planting along the banks.	RBKuT:STR 15,UD11 LBRuT:RIV 2,ENV 8
Pol 5.4	Restrict building heights to no more than 4 storeys in general.	RBKuT: UD 19
Pol 5.5	Extend the Metropolitan Open Land designation into Canbury Gardens.	LPAC: EN 8 & 9

Project Proposals

	<i>Project</i>	<i>Initiative</i>
Proj 5.1	Upgrade the path surfaces and benches in Canbury Gardens and replace the concrete street lamps with more sympathetic lighting, such as low level path lights and uplighters into the canopies of the mature riverside plane trees.	RBKuT: UD 31
Proj 5.2	Redesign the northern half of Canbury Gardens to make more of river views, currently cut off by linear strips of shrubberies.	RBKuT: UD 1
Proj 5.3	Consider upgrading and integrating the formal recreation facilities of Canbury Gardens with the redevelopment of the power station site.	RBKuT: UD 1
Proj 5.4	Modify the bank edges of Canbury Gardens to enable wildfowl to move more easily to and from the water.	RBKuT: STR 15, OL23
Proj 5.5	Encourage the Lensbury Club to plant its riverside with more appropriate native deciduous trees.	LBRuT: ENV 8 Private landowner
Proj 5.6	Open the wooded area on the edge of the British Aerospace site to the public to continue the line of the upper river path and remove unsightly fencing.	RBKuT: OL 15 Private Landowner
Proj 5.7	Replace the failed trees on the edge of Ham Lands and plant the length of the upper river path as woodland to help create a sense of enclosure back from the river's edge and to screen housing and proposed industrial developments to the north.	LBRuT:ENV 8,RIV 2 13.21 (11) RBKuT
Proj 5.8	Open permanent views from Ham through the British Aerospace site to the river.	RBKuT: STR 121,15, UD 1 Private Landowner
Proj 5.9	Separate cyclists and pedestrians along the parallel paths on the Ham Lands river edge terraces.	RBKuT: OL 15 LBRuT:RIV 2 TRN 8,6
Proj 5.10	Identify a cycle link between Bushy Park, Teddington station and Teddington Lock.	LBRuT: TRN 8
Proj 5.11	Soften the river edge of the Broom Road Recreation Ground and construct a public slipway.	LBRuT: RIV 12, 13.53 (7)

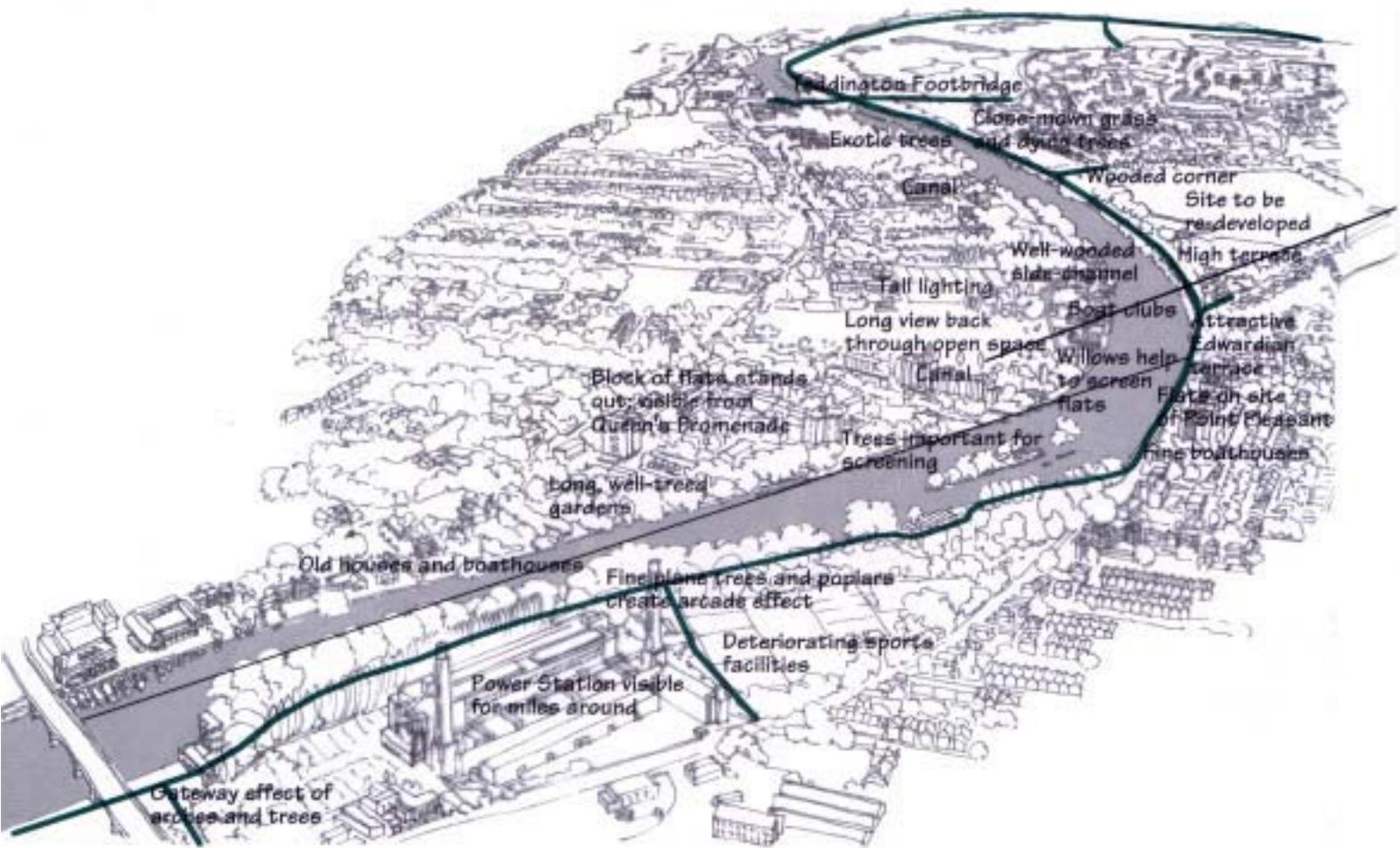
Management Proposals

	<i>Management</i>	<i>Initiative</i>
Mng 5.1	Limit the areas of close-mown grass in recreation areas, to reduce maintenance costs and increase nature conservation interest.	LBRuT:ENV 18,RIV 12 RBKuT
Mng 5.2	Control scrub growth between the Ham Lands footpath and the river and manage adjacent grasslands as hay meadow.	LBRuT:ENV 18,RIV 12 RBKuT
Mng 5.3	Manage the islands more sympathetically for wildlife, drawing up positive management plans for each island.	LBRuT:ENV 18,RIV 12 RBKuT
Mng 5.4	Manage the banks of Canbury Gardens to restore riparian vegetation and encourage wildfowl.	RBKuT



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER REACH

5. Hampton Wick



— Vista lines
— Public paths

