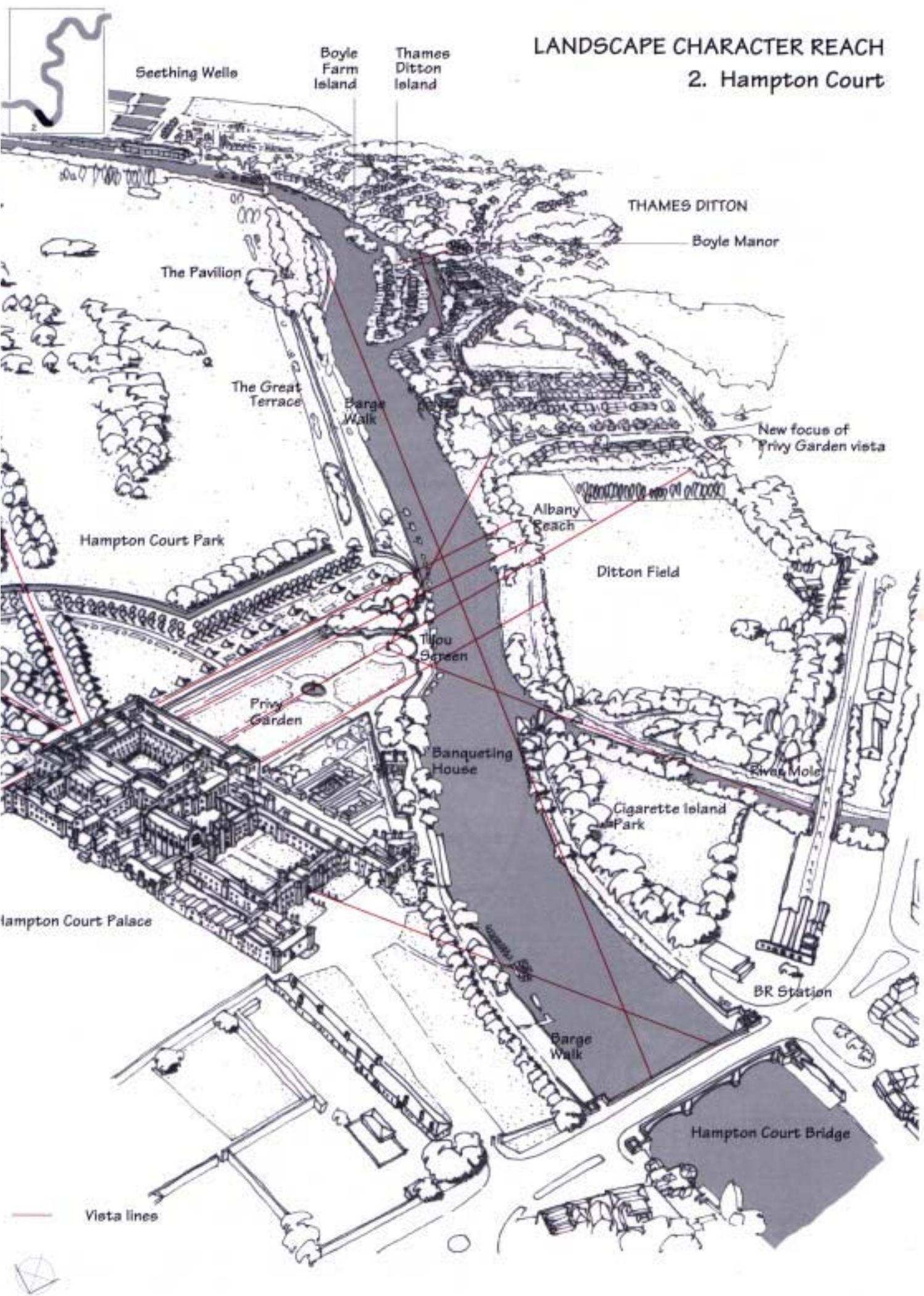


LANDSCAPE CHARACTER REACH

2. Hampton Court



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The reach from Hampton Court Bridge to Seething Wells is dominated by **Hampton Court Palace**. The verticals of the warm, red brick of the turrets and chimneys and the horizontals of the lead and tile roofs combine to create one of the most unusual skylines in London. The Palace Barge Walk, as it curves around the bend of the river, creates a stately sweep of rural open space, backed by Hampton Court Park. The Palace and its baroque setting remain remarkably untroubled by the growth of the surrounding city with much of the developments on the Surrey bank softened by garden trees. Long views of the Surrey hills beyond can still be glimpsed.

Viewed from Hampton Court Bridge, the **Wolsey frontage** of the Palace is at its most spectacular, with the towers and chimneys rising behind the gatehouse and reflected in the river. However concrete block bank retentions and the paraphernalia of tourist boat businesses detract from the visual impact and the whole view of the Palace is gradually being obscured by a line of boundary sycamores. The **Banqueting House**, poised on the edge of the Barge Walk and river, is also becoming hidden. The graceful arches of the brick and stone Hampton Court Bridge by Lutyens stand out as a clear terminus to the reach.

The view of the Wren facade through the Tijou Screen and the **Privy Garden** has recently been revealed for the first time in a couple of centuries. Unfortunately this view is similarly marred by concrete structures and tourist moorings. In fact the whole **Barge Walk** around Hampton Court Park fails to do justice to the setting. Sporadic ornamental purple cherries and pink hawthorns detract from the Pavilion Terrace and complement neither the scale nor the grandeur of the Palace. By contrast a fine old stone pine in the Pavilion grounds and mature cedars in Thames Ditton stand out as landmarks along the river.

The bank protections on the **Surrey side** are in worse condition. Whole concrete panels and metal grills are collapsing into the water. The avenue of mature chestnuts along the southern side of the Cigarette Island towpath screen the railway and create a strong edge to the river, while still leaving the path open to the water. Interplantings of evergreen oak, either side of the towpath will gradually block walkers' views.

The Mole and Ember tributary separates Cigarette Island from Ditton Field. Its wilder banks create an interesting contrast with the trim edges of the Thames and frame the channel to the railway bridge with longer grass and willows.

Ditton Field is given over to formal recreation pitches and sports pavilions. Chain-link fencing, an all-weather hockey pitch and a strong line of boundary lombardy poplars no longer provide the pastoral vista of water meadows from the Palace, but at least the open space and trees leave the view open to the Surrey hills beyond. This particular vista now forms the focal terminus of the Privy Garden and needs to be considered with care.

The group of trees at the southern end of Ditton Field separate the open spaces from the built. Thereafter the Surrey bank becomes industrial and residential. Brick factory buildings and boat clubs scale down to dense single-storey bungalow plots on **Thames Ditton Island** and its side-channel. The fine 19th-century factory buildings and iron bridge, 18th-century Boyle Manor (now the Home of Compassion) and the 17th-century inn create an interesting historic waterfront for Thames Ditton, surrounded by colourful bungalows lining the narrow side-channel.

The trees on **Boyle Farm Island** and the southern end of Thames Ditton Island combine with trees in large private gardens beyond Boyle Manor to create an impression of rural peace before the treeless terraces of 1960s and 1970s housing and 3-storey apartments further downstream.

'A roiall palace of the kings, a worke in truth of admirable magnificence built out of the ground by Thomas Wolesey, Cardinall, in ostentation of his riches, when for very pride, being otherwise a very prudent man, he was not able to manage his minde'

William Camden

'Why (Hampton Court) is pleasant enough for the present, but all these things make death very terrible'

Dr Johnson

'The place can be seen as a kind of early super-suburbia, a mammoth exercise in top executive-style river-living. Here is another great royal boat that treads on London's shaking river'

Norman Shrapnel

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1514, Cardinal Wolsey leased about a thousand acres of land in the beautiful bend of the **Thames at Hampton** from the knights hospitallers of the Order of St John of Jerusalem. The knights had established there, on land granted by the Crown in 1312, an agricultural estate for raising funds for the Order's Priory at Clerkenwell. Henry VII first enclosed an area called 'Hampton Parke' when he was using the hospitallers' *camera* as an outstation for Richmond Palace. Wolsey extended the area, emparking demesne arable land, a process of accretion that was continued by Henry VIII and James I. Vestiges of ridge and furrow in both Bushy Park and Home Park bear witness to the parkland's mediaeval use for arable farming. The central area of Bushy Park contains what has been claimed to be the best preserved mediaeval field system in Middlesex.

Wolsey gave his ostentatious palace to Henry in 1525 in a vain effort to save his fall, but in 1529 his goods were seized and he was arrested for treason. He died in the next year. It has been deduced that the palace's puzzling location - away from the Hampton village and thus not on the manor house site - derives from its being on the site of the hospitallers' *camera*, which was located here in order to be close to their sheep walk. After Wolsey's death, Henry began further work on the palace, spending more and more time there. Henry's passion for hunting led him to develop the park and some of the 17th century vistas followed the lines of his straight rides.

The interleaved gravel and sand in this vicinity provided building materials throughout Hampton Court's history, as did the local clay for the bricks. Henry VIII had bricks made on site, as well as at Kingston, Hampton and Hampton Wick and further afield. An engraving of 1736 shows what appear to be smoking brick kilns or clamps to the west of the palace, apparently on Hampton Green. What had been thought to be a moat north of the Privy Garden seems to have been a gravel pit in Wolsey's time, and Knyff's bird's eye view of Hampton Court in 1702 century shows a gravel pit on Hampton Green.

The earliest gardens at Hampton Court were laid out in the area between the palace and the river, first for Wolsey and then for Henry. In 1690-91 William III remodelled Charles II's simple parterre in the **Privy Garden** with fashionable grass cutwork, overlooked by the terrace known as Queen Mary's Bower. The Garden extended only as far south as the first basin in which stood the garden's centrepiece, the statue of Arethusa. The statue is now called Diana and has been removed to the basin in the Bushy Park Chestnut Avenue.

Hampton Court was essentially a joint enterprise between William and Mary, who had already laid out extensive gardens at Het Loo. Defoe said that '*both ordered everything that was done*' and, when Mary died of smallpox in 1694, William was too dispirited to continue the building and gardening projects. Only the fire which four years later destroyed Whitehall Palace forced him to proceed with the plans for Hampton Court in order to receive the Court.

William demolished the Water Gallery and in 1701 extended the Privy Garden to the Barge Walk, where Jean Tijou's wrought-iron screens (originally intended for the Great Fountain Garden) were erected. Henry Wise lowered the garden in order that William should gain a view of the river from the Orangery, and redesigned the parterre in a *fleur de lys* pattern centring on the Arethusa fountain, with clipped yews and hollies in each of the quarters.

Capability Brown suspended the clipping in the Privy Garden and Fountain Gardens, but unlike the Fountain Garden, Privy Garden clipping was not resumed under Ernest Law's restoration-minded management in the early 20th century. The Privy Garden gradually became more and more overgrown and the relationship between the palace, the garden and the river was lost. Now, with the decision to restore the Privy Garden and the clearance of the site, we can look back from the Barge Walk, through the Tijou screens to Wren's facade and see the whole ensemble. Archaeology has revealed, in a remarkable way, the whole outline of Wise's *fleur de lys* parterre, which will be restored by 1995.



Knyff's bird's-eye view of Hampton Court in 1702



Sisley's view of the Hampton Court waterfront from Thames Ditton

The castellated **Banqueting House**, containing some of Grinling Gibbons' carvings from the demolished Water Gallery, was built on a raised terrace overlooking the Thames and the compartmented gardens, made from the Tudor pondyards, where Queen Mary had indulged her passion for florists' flowers and exotic botanical collections in new 'glass cases'. The Banqueting House above the Barge Walk is a delightfully evocative Thames-side garden building. William, who died in 1702, also had the **Great Terrace along the Thames** made, extending half a mile from the end of the Broad Walk to an oval bowling green around which Wren built four pavilions, one of which survives. This was designed, unlike the earlier straight rides and avenues, for the enjoyment of the panorama of the Thames landscape beyond the park and Stephen Switzer admired it as '*the noblest work of that kind in Europe*'.

Hampton Court is a royal landscape without equal, but on the **Surrey side** the Thames is a landscape of popular pleasure. Despite its unpicturesque name, Cigarette Island - the tail of land at the confluence of the Ember, Mole and Thames - was much admired for its picturesque qualities and the view of the palace from here was depicted by among others Sir James Thornhill and Thomas Girtin. However at the turn of the century, the view was obscured first by the houseboats which up until 1931 lined the Surrey bank at this point - Cigarette Island used to be called Davis's Ait and was renamed after a particularly grand boat moored here - and second by the mass of weekend holiday homes made from wood and corrugated iron, converted railway carriages, buses and caravans, known ironically as Venice on Thames. In the early 20th century, the holiday homes covered the Island and adjacent meadows. The final solution to what was felt to be an eyesore was found when the Office of Works bought the Island in 1935 and turned it into a public park. This was done with the express aim of preserving the view from and of Hampton Court.

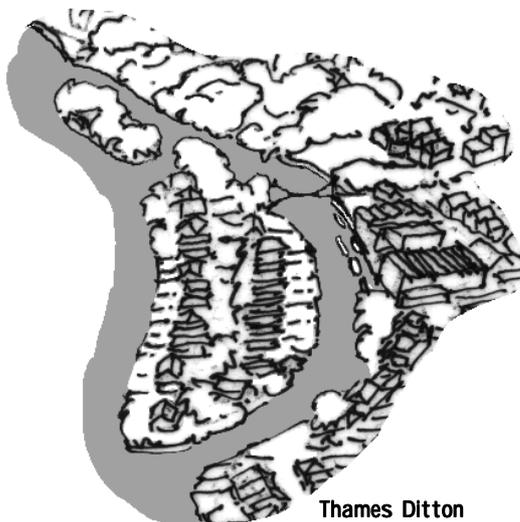
There appears to have been a ferry on the site of **Hampton Court bridge** from at least Tudor times. The ferry was first replaced in 1753 by a bridge in chinoiserie style, which had successors in wood and iron. The present brick and ferro-concrete structure, designed by WP Robinson, the Surrey County Engineer, in collaboration with Lutyens, was opened in 1933.

In the 18th century, **Thames Ditton** had a small coterie of fashionable houses with the grounds of Ditton House and Boyle Farm sharing the river frontage below Ditton Island. In 1911 the Victoria County History noted that the latter estate was '*gradually being cut up*' and that Ditton House's '*beautiful sweeping lawns once famous for their smoothness are now only a rough field*'. However, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries Boyle Farm rivalled Strawberry Hill as a fashionable centre for society. Its famous Dandies' Fete of 1827, memorialised by Thomas Moore, reputedly cost £2,500 to stage. In 1787 Walpole remarked that Miss Boyle, who carved sculptures for a chimney piece and painted panels for the library, had '*real genius*'. The garden, with its cedars, would have commanded fine views across Thames Ditton Island to Hampton Court, as the island remained undeveloped until the early part of this century.

Thames Ditton Ferry Works of 1879-88 boasted the earliest known example of a saw-tooth northern light. Symbolically, the Works were taken over in 1911 for the manufacture of cars. The Works have now been restored and sub-divided for other uses.

NATURE CONSERVATION

The **Barge Walk** river bank at Hampton Court has an interesting range of plants, some preferring wet situations and some the drier bank top, but all thriving in the open, unshaded conditions of this stretch of river bank. The very narrow strip of unmown grass along both sides of the towpath possesses a surprisingly rich flora including agrimony, hardheads, and meadow sweet. A number of plants which are rare in London are also found here - wild clary, vervain, meadow cranesbill and many others. By extending meadow management, much of the grassland along the Barge Walk could be equally rich.



Thames Ditton



Thames Ditton Ferry Works, now converted into offices, retain the scale and character of the old waterfront

The Barge Walk trees take three forms: a self-sown woodland against the park wall, planted hawthorns and cherries in the grassland, and alder and other trees growing at the water's edge. A management plan is needed for this important area to maintain the woodland strip without losing the valuable views into the park and to avoid damage to the wall and grassland. The planted ornamental trees are not contributing to the wildlife value of the grassland. The river edge could be improved by coppicing the alder and willow trees.

Cigarette Island is bordered by the outflow of the Mole to the south and the Thames to the north. Cormorants and herons can be seen fishing from its banks where it might be possible to create a marshy habitat by regrading the river edge in places.

The river passes by **Thames Ditton Island** and the tiny **Boyle Farm Island**. Thames Ditton Island has relatively few trees among the bungalows while Boyle Farm Island has a much wilder character with woodland growing at one end.

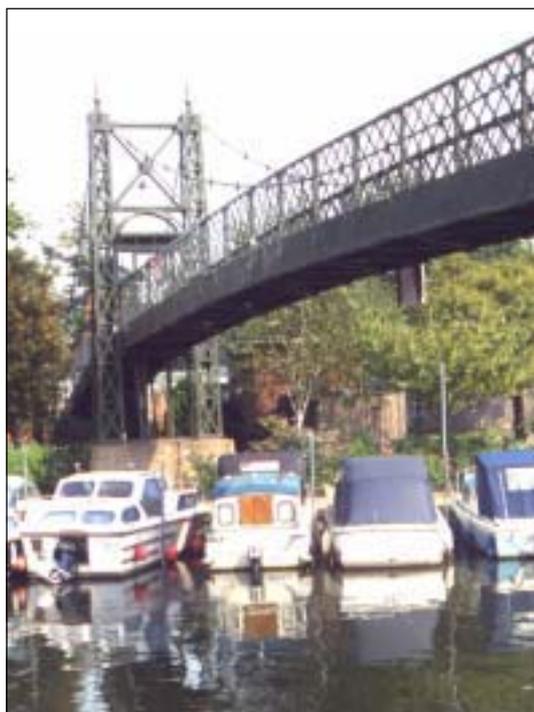
PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATION

On the Middlesex bank the Barge Walk towpath runs continuously from Hampton Court to Kingston, with pedestrian entrances into Hampton Court Park. The gravel towpath works well with the rural character of the bank, though the occasional wooden benches have an incongruous municipal character.

The Surrey bank is less accessible. The East Molesey embankment is interrupted by Hampton Court Bridge, forcing walkers to run the gauntlet of the busy road above before descending to the Cigarette Island walk on the other side. After 250 metres even that path then terminates in the Ember tributary. The *Thames-side Guidelines* recommended a pedestrian link through the towpath arch on Lutyens bridge³² and the Elmbridge Local Plan proposes a footbridge linking Cigarette Island and Albany Reach³³. These improvements would create a continuous riverside path from Weybridge to Thames Ditton. An iron footbridge connects to Thames Ditton Island. Boyle Farm Island can only be reached by boat.

The British Rail station at East Molesey brings visitors to the area and particularly to Hampton Court.

From the Albany Hotel access ducks back to the residential streets. These are not ideal for walking but a good cycle route could be made on the quiet roads, particularly with a link at the bottom of the River Park Recreation Ground.



The footbridge to Thames Ditton Island

Boatyards:	Hoseasons Scouts Boatyard		
Water recreation:	British Motor Yacht Club (Sailing Section) Ditton Skiff and Punting Club		
Land recreation:	Albany Reach Barge Walk Cigarette Island Ditton Ground Hampton Court Park Thames Path		ElmbB Royal Parks ElmbB ElmbB/Kingston G.S. Grade I Historic Royal Palaces
Refreshment:	Hampton Court Palace cafe The Albany Ye Olde Swan Inn		
Landmarks:	Banqueting House Boyle Manor Farm Cedar in Thames Ditton Hampton Court Bridge Hampton Court Palace Hampton Court Pavilion St Nicholas' Church, Thames Ditton Stone Pine in Hampton Court Park Thames Ditton Island Bridge	Grade I Grade I Grade II Grade I Grade I Grade II Grade II	Historic Royal Palaces Private Private LBRuT / SCC Historic Royal Palaces Historic Royal Palaces Church Commissioners Historic Royal Palaces Private

LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS:

Amenity and Local History:

Borough of Twickenham Local History Society
Building Conservation Trust
Hampton Court Action Group
River Thames Society (Teddington-Windsor)
Thames Ditton Conservation Area Advisory Committee
Thames Ditton and Weston Green Residents' Association

Nature Conservation:

London Wildlife Trust
Surrey Wildlife Trust

PRINCIPAL LAND USES

The Middlesex bank is devoted to the Palace and the Park with tourist facilities for visitors to the buildings and gardens, and boating jetties for visitors by water.

The Surrey bank offers a combination of public open space, private recreation grounds, boat clubs, small scale industry and housing. The Hoseasons operation at Thames Ditton is one of the main tourist boating centres for this part of the river. The northern end of Cigarette Island is popular with fishermen.

SIGNIFICANT SITES UNDER PRESSURE FOR RE-DEVELOPMENT:

Sites

Hampton Court Station site

Main landscape factors for consideration

- importance of public transport access point
- views from Hampton Court Bridge and Palace
- relationship with Cigarette Island open space

Ditton Field

- views from Privy Garden
- existing recreation uses
- existing public access network
- impact of fencing, lighting, hard surfaces, pavilions and parking on views from the river

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 2.1	Conserve character of the reach with the open sweep of the Barge Walk and Hampton Court Park on the Middlesex bank and the tree-lined parks and gardens on the Surrey bank.	ElmbB: W4 SCC: PE 10-11 LBRuT: 13.53 (5)
Pol 2.2	Protect the visual links between: Hampton Court Bridge and Hampton Court Palace Hampton Court Palace and the Surrey Hills with the leafy foregrounds of Cigarette Island and Ditton Field The Privy Garden, the Tijou Screen and the river Boyle Manor and the Hampton Court Barge Walk	ElmbB: W1 LBRuT: RIV 1, ENV 2
Pol 2.3	Conserve the long views of the tree-covered Surrey hills skyline.	SCC: PE 7
Pol 2.4	Conserve and enhance the nature conservation interest of the river and its corridor, with particular attention to Cigarette Island, the Barge Walk, Hampton Court Park and the outflow of the Ember.	LBRuT: RIV 5, RIV 12 ElmbB: EN 40
Pol 2.5	Examine the possibilities of extending the Thames Area of Special Character designation into the Borough of Elmbridge.	LPAC: EN 8 & 9

Project Proposals

	<i>Project</i>	<i>Initiative</i>
Proj 2.1	Redesign the benches, railings, signs, planting and tourist facilities along the Barge Walk to re-instate the original, open simplicity of the 17th century Great Terrace and its designed landform.	Hist. Royal Palaces
Proj 2.2	Remove trees which block views of Hampton Court Palace and the Banqueting House from the river and the Bridge and reinstate the river viewing terrace.	Hist. Royal Palaces
Proj 2.3	Plant the edges of the playing fields at Ditton Field/Albany Reach as an appropriate focus for the vistas from the Privy Garden.	ElmbB: Private landowner
Proj 2.4	Eliminate moorings in front of the Tijou Screen.	LBRuT: RIV 5 Hist. Royal Palaces
Proj 2.5	Repair the Ditton Field/Albany Reach and Palace banks, replacing concrete panels with wood or brick.	ElmbB: NRA
Proj 2.6	Plant trees to soften the harsh lines of new housing along the Thames Ditton waterfront.	ElmbB: Private landowner
Proj 2.7	Make a pedestrian link between Albany Reach and the Albany Hotel.	ElmbB:
Proj 2.8	Make a pedestrian link under Hampton Court Bridge to link the towpaths on the Surrey bank.	ElmbB:
Proj 2.9	Construct a foot bridge to link Cigarette Island with Albany Reach.	ElmbB:
Proj 2.10	Consider opening a cycle link through Thames Ditton between Riverbank and Riversdale Road, perhaps through Summer Road Recreation Ground.	ElmbB:
Proj 2.11	Encourage native tree planting on Thames Ditton Island.	ElmbB: Private landowners
Proj 2.12	Create marshy areas by modifying some of the edges of Cigarette Island.	ElmbB: NRA

Management Proposals

	<i>Management</i>	<i>Initiative</i>
Mng 2.1	Manage the outflow of the Mole River for nature conservation.	ElmbB: NRA
Mng 2.2	Manage the riverside parks so as to reduce the areas of close-mown grass and increase the potential for areas of riparian nature conservation interest.	ElmbB: SCC: PE 14
Mng 2.3	Manage the Barge Walk to maintain the woodland strip without losing the valuable views into the park and to avoid damage to the wall and grassland.	Hist. Royal Palaces
Mng 2.4	Coppice alder and other species along the river edges in selected areas.	ElmbB: SCC: PE 14

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER REACH

2. Hampton Court

