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Hammersmith

PART 4: CHARACTER REACHES

IDENTIFICATION OF CHARACTER REACHES

As detailed in Part 1, the study area has been divided into eight character reaches which have been defined on the basis of a detailed character appraisal which has taken into account factors such as visual analysis, built form, landscape and vegetation, the channel edge, river structures, the character of the public realm, movement and cultural and historical associations.

Each character reach comprises areas of similar character and includes land from both the north and south sides of the River. This section considers each of the character reaches in turn and examines how the historical development of each character reach has helped to determine its visual and cultural associations. The key issues and opportunities for enhancement of the River and riverside environment are highlighted in each character reach.

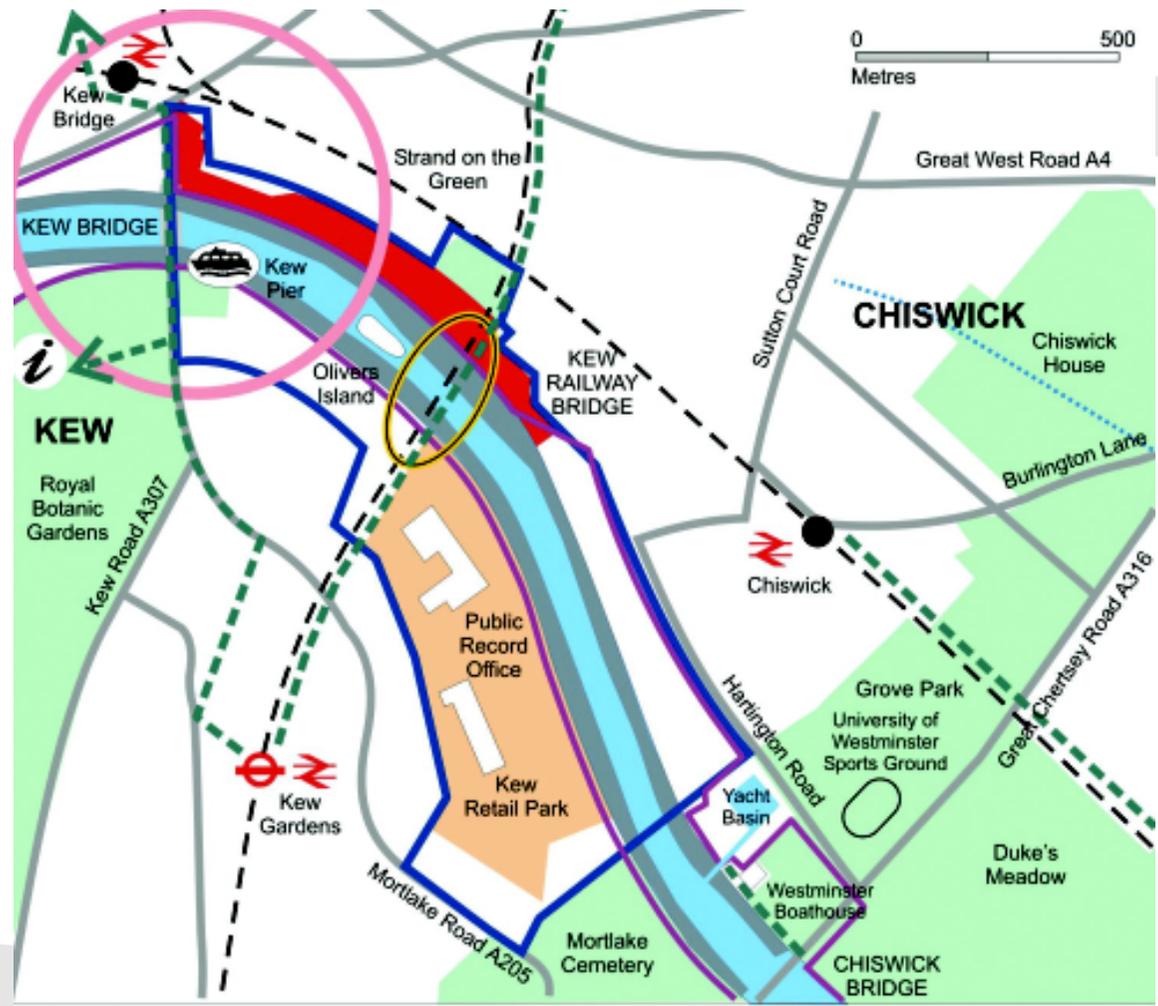
This division of the River into sections and also the chosen boundaries between sections are artificial - the River is, of course, one and the sections merge into each other - but it provides a useful study tool.

The character reaches comprise the following:

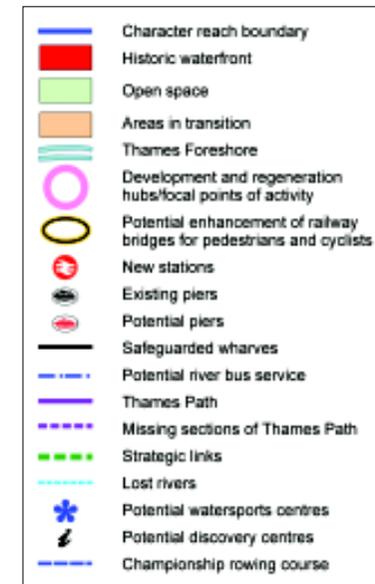
1. Kew and Strand on the Green
2. Mortlake, Barnes and Dukes Meadow
3. Chiswick, Hammersmith and Lonsdale Road
4. Fulham Reach and Barn Elms
5. Putney and Fulham Palace
6. Wandsworth and Sands End
7. Chelsea and Battersea
8. Nine Elms

CHARACTER REACH NO.1 : KEW AND STRAND ON THE GREEN

River Chart Name: Mortlake Reach



Strand on the Green and Kew Railway Bridge



Key Characteristics

This character reach marks the start of the study area and the gateway to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew. It is crossed by two bridges – Kew Bridge (road) and Kew Railway Bridge. Oliver's Island provides a secluded area of natural habitat. On the north bank, the river is bounded by the historic riverside development of Strand on the Green. To the south, is the Kew Public Records Office, and along the River's edge, the fragile fringe of the wooded Kew Tow Path.

Key features of Character Reach No.1 may be summarised as follows:

- Kew Bridge forms a frame to the reach and a focal point in itself;
- Oliver's Island emphasises the historic rural scale of the reach;
- Kew Railway Bridge provides a potential opportunity for improved cross-river links;
- Historic riverside development example at Strand on the Green;
- Kew Public Records Office is an improvement opportunity site;
- The development of Kew Riverside;
- The fragile edge of the wooded Kew Tow Path;
- The visitor gateway to Kew Royal Botanic Gardens;
- Access to river transport services at Kew Pier.



Historical Background

Kew Riverside

Kew for centuries marked the lowest point at which the Thames could be regularly crossed on foot. This ford, and the ferry that succeeded it, just upstream from Brentford Ait, gave Kew its original name of “Cayho” – a quay (cay) on a spur of land (ho).

The **ford at Kew** is one of the two most likely sites (the other is further upstream at Walton), where Julius Caesar crossed the Thames in 54 BC on his way to the British camp which was at St Albans.

The stretch of River between Kew and Richmond became a favoured location for a succession of kings and their followers, attracted by hunting and the desire to escape as far as possible from the stench and disease of London. Henry VII centralised his government on the palace at Shene which was rebuilt and named after his Yorkshire earldom of Richmond. Henry’s relations, the Earl of Devon and Charles Somerset, bought estates at Kew, to be close to the seat of power at Richmond.

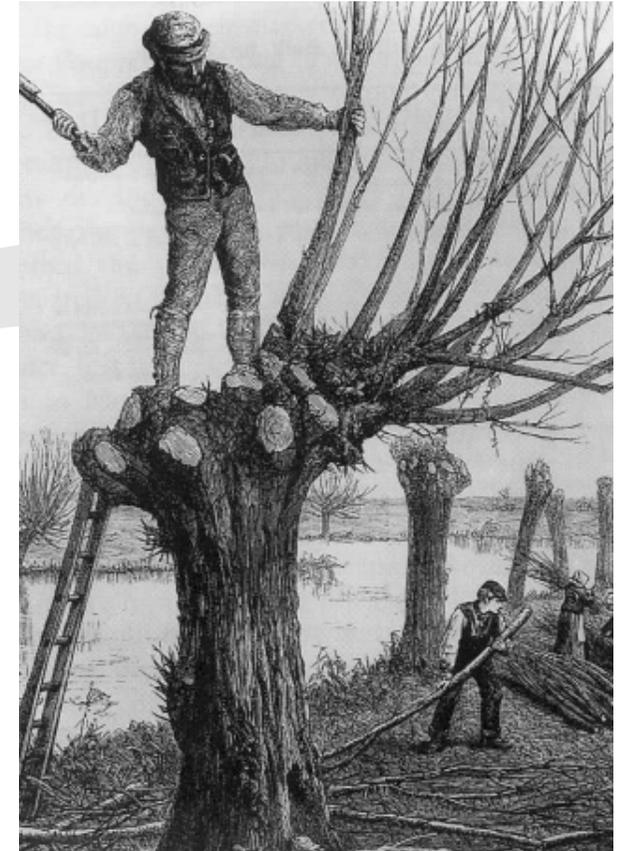
Tudor Kew had an unusual shaped village green. It was longer than it is today and stretched all the way from the pond to the ferry. The riverside, rather than the green, was, however, the focus for the Tudor mansions; while in the river were the fishing weirs from which the **Westerly Ware** takes its name. Next to Kew Bridge is the Westerly Ware local park.

The Civil War interrupted the gentlemanly pursuit of building up estates at Kew. Brentford, on the opposite side of the River, was the site of one of the battles. Oliver’s Island opposite Strand on the Green, is, according to legend, said to have been involved. Oliver Cromwell either withdrew there briefly to discuss his military plans or escaped there from the Bull’s Head on the north bank via an underground passageway.

Downstream from Kew Green, in Mortlake Manor, **West Hall** was growing as an estate. As a name, West Hall is at least as old as Kew, and dates from the 14th century. The house of West Hall itself was built at the end of the 17th century, at which time the manor covered at least 300 acres. Just to the west of West Hall was an equally substantial house initially called Brick Farm.

The land around these two important houses was let out for grazing and market gardening. The banks of the River at Mortlake and Kew were among the first locations for **market gardens** serving the rapidly growing population of London. Vegetables grown by the market gardeners were taken by cart into London daily. The water meadows were also used to fatten up cattle that were driven from other parts of the country.

The restoration of Charles II also ensured the return of the landed gentry to their Kew estates. **The Capels** were a leading family of the Restoration. The whole Capel family was devoted to the fashionable pursuit of gardening and established the first gardens at Kew.



Willows on the river bank were harvested for basket making.

Royalty returned to Kew with the arrival of the Hanoverian Kings and established the Ormonde Lodge Estate along the river bank from Richmond to Kew ferry. Prince Frederick was the first of the royal gardeners. Although Frederick and the Capel family have a claim to be the founders of the **botanic gardens**, its official foundation date is 1759, when William Alton took charge under the



The first Kew Bridge

overall direction of Lord Bute. Sir Joseph Banks became Director of the botanic garden after Bute's retirement and continued in this role for half a century. During this time he introduced nearly seven thousand exotics to Britain. The botanic gardens were opened to the public in 1841.

The first **toll bridge at Kew**, a wooden structure built by John Barnard, was the only bridge at that time between Fulham and Kingston. It proved incredibly popular and on the first day 3000 people crossed. The wooden structure suffered from chronic problems and was replaced by a stone bridge, designed by James Paine, who had just completed Richmond Bridge.

In the early 1800's the **hamlet of West Hall** was a farming community dominated by a handful of master market gardeners. Dung was brought nightly from the City to a dock built two hundred yards from West Hall on a small inlet, known as Kingston Creek. This site remained as a sewage

works until its current transformation into luxury riverside houses. The dung was used for intensive growing of peas, rhubarb, radishes and asparagus.

In 1869 the **railway came to Kew**. It brought large numbers of visitors to see the gardens and also acted as a catalyst for the transformation of the fields of the market gardens into housing estates for the new rail commuters.

The riverside between Kew and the new bridge had altered significantly by the start of the Second World War. There were fields of vegetables and orchards at Pink's Farm but there were substantial buildings too. The Ministry of Labour had built a **Claims and Records Office** next to the Railway Bridge and the sewage works was sited where once the dung barges had dumped their loads. There was also the tall chimney of the rubbish destructor – known locally as The Dust. Further inland next to Gipsy Corner, Dodge were making cars.

The sewage works site is currently being developed with 472 residential units, comprising a mix of houses and flats (including affordable housing) up to a maximum height of 4 storeys. The development has been set back from the River to provide an area of public open space accessible from the wooded Tow Path. Completion of the Kew Riverside development is expected by 2004.



Fishermen in the late 19th century

Strand on the Green

On the opposite bank of the river, Strand on the Green grew up as a small **fishing village**, and has probably existed since the Bronze Age. Hand axes and flint tools have been found and dredging during the last century curiously revealed a large number of human skulls in the River belonging to people living around 600 BC.

The name "strand" means a waterside path; the original fishermen's cottages backed onto orchards and fields, hence the origin of the name Strand on the Green. Most of the houses and workshops had entrances onto both the riverside path and Back Lane (renamed Thames Road in 1907). A number of historic alleys and passages still link Thames Road with the waterfront.

The opening of **Kew Bridge** in 1759 brought prosperity and importance to the village, and led to the building of several large houses with grand Georgian brick facades, alongside the earlier



The Maria Wood, City of London barge

cottages. Small riverside industries were set up including: malt houses serving the local breweries, boat repair yards, barge builders and one of the largest laundries in London.

The riverside location has always been a favoured location for pubs; in 1860 there were six and Strand on the Green is still famous for its old pubs. The Bull's Head was licensed by 1722, the Bell and Crown by 1751, and the City Barge dates back to 1497.

In the 18th century, the **City Barge** public house was renamed after the last of the City of London's ceremonial barges, the "Maria Wood", which was berthed at Strand on the Green. The City of London's Navigation Committee put up buildings on Oliver's Island in the late 1700's and stationed barges for the collection of tolls. A former tollhouse is still present on the opposite side of the River.

In the early nineteenth century the opening of the **Grand Union Canal** at Brentford diverted freight

and traffic away from Strand on the Green which led to a slow decline in its fortunes, made worse by the Royal family moving from Kew to Windsor. Some industries remained until the 1950's but it has now become predominantly residential.

Johann Zoffany, the court painter to the Hanoverian kings, led an ostentatious lifestyle at Number 65 Strand on the Green, one of the fine Georgian houses, from 1790 to 1810. During this time he painted the Last Supper, using local fishermen to pose for the figures of the Apostles. Distinguished residents of Strand on the Green have included Dylan Thomas and Nancy Mitford.

Grove Park

Downstream from Strand-on-the-Green the riverside path has historically diverted inland to avoid the Grove Estate. A building is known to have stood on the site since 1412. **Grove House** was built in the



Strand on the Green, looking towards Kew Bridge, 1832

early 1700's as a desirable country retreat. It was set within fine grounds, with avenues of walnut trees and sweet chestnuts.

In the 1840's the **Duke of Devonshire**, the owner of nearby Chiswick House, acquired the estate. This increased his land holdings in Chiswick to nearly 50% of the parish. The new Chiswick railway station, opened in 1849, was constructed on his land and in 1867 he publicised plans for a spacious estate between the River and the railway, and built the Grove Park Hotel to attract visitors to the riverside.

Grove House was retained within the proposed development, together with Grove End, a turreted mansion built in 1861. The Duke intended the new residential estate to appeal to rich merchants together with the less wealthy middle classes. He built a range of sports and leisure facilities including boathouses on the River, a golf course and facilities for punting on the lake in the grounds of Grove House. The first houses were built in 1871.

Grove House was demolished in 1928 and houses and flats constructed on its site. The large gothic houses on the riverfront near Strand on the Green were built in the 1870's. The remainder of the other riverside developments were built at different stages during the 20th century. The art deco block of flats, **Hartington Court**, was built in 1938 on the site of Grove End. Thames Village was completed in 1956 and **Chiswick Staithe** in 1965. The houses in **Chiswick Quay**, each with its own mooring, were built around the old lake of Grove House, which was commandeered for barge building in World War 1. The riverside developments are served from

Hartington Road, named after the Dukes oldest son, the Marquis of Hartington.

Character Appraisal

Kew Riverside

The Tow Path from Kew Bridge to Chiswick Bridge is raised about the adjacent land. For the majority of this stretch of the riverbank the Tow Path is enclosed by trees and regenerating shrub. The path passes the **Public Records Office**, the filter beds of the sewage works, the site of the Kew Riverside development, which is currently under construction, a refuse depot and Mortlake Crematorium. These land uses are delineated by a variety of fences and boundary treatments, and on the landside of the Tow Path prevent views. Regenerating ash, sycamore and elder growing out of the revetments on the riverside of the path restrict views across the river to Strand on the Green and could be removed in places to enhance views across the River. There are a number of very large plane and horse chestnut trees which were probably planted as part of a 19th century flood defence scheme.

Next to Kew Bridge is the **Westerly Ware** public garden. This small local park is below the level of the riverside path and the river is not visible from it. A fence and hedge prevent small children straying near the river and protect the park from damage and vandalism, which is evident throughout this stretch of the Tow Path.

The gardens include a First World War Memorial, tennis courts, a children's play area, lawns and

flower beds. With the loss of its park keeper some years ago, there was a rapid deterioration and local residents formed the Westerly Ware Association to try to address the many problems. With much hard work they have managed to raise standards and deal with vandalism.

The play area includes a featureless expanse of tarmac and would benefit from new equipment. River access from Kew Green is parallel to Kew Bridge passing the arches under the bridge, used for small engineering businesses. Their private forecourts are fenced and in poor condition.

The **pier at Kew** is the first scheduled stop for tourist boats from Westminster. It is now privately owned by Westminster Passenger Services Association. The ticket office is an unattractive portacabin, and whilst some improvement works have recently been implemented, the pier is in need of further enhancement. The adjacent seats have recently benefited from the installation of a piece of



Kew Pier ticket office

public art. Just downstream from the pier is the start of a surfaced section of the Thames Path National Trail.

The private Priory Park bowls and tennis club is protected by barbed wire and the allotments are fenced by railings and wire mesh. The parapets of **Kew Rail Bridge** are covered with graffiti, and regenerating ash and sycamore currently conceal the brick abutments. This whole area has a feeling of neglect, which is made worse by illegal tipping.

The five storey **Public Records Office** complex is set back from the river. In front is the riverside development proposed by St George which was approved following a recent public inquiry. This development is set in a hollow dominated by large sycamore and ornamental maples which cast dense shade over the area. Nearby is a rare snail reserve site. Occupation Lane runs parallel to the railway line to the Mortlake Road. The landscaped lake and impressive entrance at the front of the Public Records Office is in contrast to its abandoned rear elevation facing the River.

Kew Bridge

The view downstream from Kew Bridge is an **important panorama** with the row of fine riverside houses and pubs on the northern bank of the River at Strand on the Green looking across to the wooded Tow Path of Kew Riverside. **Oliver's Island** divides the River, and in the background is Kew Railway Bridge. The former importance of this section of the river for transporting people and



Oliver's Island

goods is evident from the barge repair grid and several mooring piles within the River. The pier at Kew continues to provide limited passenger services during the summer months.

The busy traffic junction at **Kew Bridge** is in contrast to the relative tranquillity of the riverside (the area as a whole does, however, suffer from aircraft noise). The scale of the buildings is also very different. The start of the M4 at the Chiswick Roundabout is an important transport hub and a focus for high-rise office development, close to Heathrow Airport. The distinctive blue arches of the Vantage West office building, next to the elevated section of the M4, are clearly visible in views travelling north across Kew Bridge.

The large 18-storey office block built over Gunnersbury Station, now the home of the **British Standards Institution** is also clearly visible from the south bank of the River. A new 90,000 square

feet riverside office development – Kew HQ, is currently under construction next to Kew Bridge, and a former 1960's office building opposite Kew Bridge Station has recently been remodelled and transformed into luxury riverside apartments. This increasing urbanisation of the north bank of the River at Brentford and Kew Bridge continues a trend started in the 1960's which saw the building of the five tower blocks at Brentford, which remain the most visible landmarks.

The tall standpipe tower of the **Kew Bridge Steam Museum** is an important visual and historical reference point looking upstream. The square brick tower, built in 1867, contains pipes 70 metres above ground. The function of these pipes was to receive water from the massive steam-driven beam engines and to maintain pressure in the local mains. This former waterworks helped to deliver West London's water supply for over a century, until the completion of the Thames Water Ring Main in the early 1990's.

Strand on the Green

The approach to Strand on the Green from Kew Bridge is often dominated by cars queuing to get onto the bridge. The Thames Path passes under Kew Bridge linking to the **Waterman's Art Centre** on the riverside at Brentford. This route benefits from new information boards, but the quality of the public realm is variable in the vicinity of Kew Bridge.

The **drawdock** next to Kew Bridge is often strewn with litter and debris left by the tide, and the river wall has been repaired with a rather stark engineering brick parapet. This section of river wall

could be enhanced by adding new timber fenders, mooring posts and rings.

These measures could form part of a comprehensive enhancement programme for this section of the Environment Agency's flood defence, when the existing wall has to be rebuilt.

The **riverside promenade** between the drawdock and the start of Strand on the Green is a valuable amenity, but would benefit from the provision of new street furniture and paving. The large London plane trees along this section of embankment are an important feature of the riverside, contrasting with the fine Georgian houses just downstream. The two-storey brick Pier House, built in 1914, is on the opposite side of the road. The brick flood defence wall is set back next to the pavement and impedes views of the River. The former Steam Packet Hotel is now a busy Café Rouge restaurant. The first regular steam packet service to operate on this stretch of river – from Queenhithe to Twickenham – began in 1824.



Slipway at Strand on the Green, Kew



Strand on the Green

The sequence of grand **Georgian houses** alongside smaller cottages, many with Dutch gables and shutters, combine with the old riverside pubs along the River at Strand on the Green to create one of the most important historic and architectural waterfronts between Kew and Chelsea.

A unique feature of Strand on the Green is that, unlike Barnes or Hammersmith, it remains one of the few residential stretches of the tidal river never to have been embanked although the Chiswick UDC Act 1911 gave approval for a very substantial embankment.

The close relationship between the houses and the River, and the variety of flood defence measures employed to protect the houses is a key element in defining the overall character. The flood defences here are at a very low level and the narrow riverside path often floods. Many of the buildings are entered via steep steps, and have metal flood defence doors and sliding panels for windows. Balconies

are common on the first and second floors. Number 60, **The Dutch House**, has painted blue shutters. The smaller cottages have delightful front gardens with roses and shrubs spilling over brick walls onto the riverside path.

The path varies between 1.5 and 3 metres in width and is mainly surfaced with tarmacadam, except for sections of York stone in front of larger houses, for example No.1 Strand on the Green which also has its own steps leading to the foreshore. Work commenced on the repair of the supporting structure for the public footpath in front of the Bull's Head near Kew Railway Bridge.

The opportunity exists to improve the appearance of the public realm throughout the length of the strand, in association with future flood defence works. A handful of willows grows out of the flood defences and make a valuable contribution to the



The Dutch House



No.1 Strand on the Green and Kew Railway Bridge

townscape. At the turn of the century there were a dozen or more willows. By the 1950's there were about half a dozen willows remaining, and now there are only two good specimens left. It is important that these are protected and retained in any future riverbank improvements.

The **decline in the riverside industries** and wharves along Strand on the Green has seen these former sites infilled or converted for new residential development. Magnolia Wharf is a 1970's development of 2/3 storey flat roofed townhouses with balconies. The former malt houses have also been converted. Number 23 stands out in contrast to the historic houses with its large modern glass windows and balcony. New infill development is under construction next to the Bull's Head.

The **famous riverside pubs** attract considerable numbers of visitors, particularly during the summer months. The riverside path can be thronged with visitors enjoying the view of the River and its

changing tides, Oliver's Island and the wooded Tow Path on the Kew bank. Sadly, the listed Bull's Head is in a semi-derelict state. The Strand on the Green Sailing Club has its own private slipway next to the railway bridge. The small sailing boats contribute to the visual interest and the vitality of the waterfront.

The view up and down the stream from the riverside path is one of the River's outstanding views over the Reach between Kew Bridge and Chiswick Bridge, an area of great natural beauty and one of the finest "green" elements of the River between Kew and Chelsea.

The elegant 1860's **Kew Railway Bridge** designed by W R Galbraith is notable for its round-headed cast-iron piers supporting delicate lattice horizontal girders. The bridge is in need of repainting and the removal of graffiti. The frequent crossing of the District and North London Line



Kew Railway Bridge

trains impacts on the tranquillity of the waterfront. During the autumn of 2000 Railtrack implemented a programme of noise reduction measures which substantially reduced these problems, and which have greatly benefited residents. The elevated view of the waterfront for rail passengers is one of the most enjoyable river crossings in London.

Next to Strand End is the distinctive blue and white former **Chiswick Yacht and Boat Club** which is now derelict and unused and is the subject of a planning application for residential development. The former Marine Services fuelling station is also located on this part of the riverside and extends into the River on a pier. Both these sites originally formed Bason and Arnold's Boatyard. Just upstream of the club is the Strand End slipway, and upstream of that is a small public area with seating and vegetation. Here the river wall must be rebuilt within the next three years, and there is an opportunity for significant enhancement in association with these works. Just downstream are a couple of fine gothic villas built in the 1870's. The gardens of these large houses extend down to the River and contain important mature trees.

Grove Park

At the junction of Hartington Road and Grove Park Road is **Redcliffe Gardens**. This new residential development, on the site of a former college, has been modelled on the design of the former riverside mansions which once stood on this section of River. The layout includes the riverside stretch of the Thames Path, accessible to the public during daylight hours.



Hartington Court Art Deco mansion block

Proposals for a new Grove Park Conservation Area which will include Hartington Court and extend the existing Strand on the Green Conservation Area has been recommended for approval in January 2002. **Hartington Court**, an Art Deco mansion block of flats, forms an important landmark from the river. This is a long building, with a rectangular central tower rising through four storeys of brick, divided by sweeping bands of concrete balconies, which wrap round the curved ends of the building. Next to the flats is the listed University of London Boat House, which was originally part of the Hartington Court development. The spire of St Paul's Church, Grove Park, can just be seen to the side of Hartington Court when viewed from the opposite bank of the River.

Downstream from Hartington Court is a row of large semi-detached houses with generous gardens extending down to the River. There is no public access to the River over this section as far as Chiswick Quay, which includes Chiswick Staithe



Extended terraces and access to the foreshore from Chiswick Staithe

and Thames Village. The houses along this reach of the River have maximised their riverside location by extending terraces out into the river channel and building a collection of summerhouses.

Chiswick Quay is one of the few off-channel marinas or docks between Kew and Chelsea. The development consists of 3-storey townhouses with balconies enclosing the private moorings. Lock gates impound the marina and control the tides. The Thames Path runs from Hartington Road down



Chiswick Quay, formerly Cubitt's Basin

to the River round Chiswick Quay. The terraced townhouses are set back behind open lawns and walled private gardens. Adjacent to Chiswick Quay, served from Ibis Lane, are two club boathouses. They have a terraced hard shingle slipway, which is busy at weekends.

Oliver's Island

Oliver's Island is situated opposite Strand on the Green and is approximately 100 metres long and 20 metres wide. There is no access to the island even at low tide, and unlike Strand on the Green it is rarely flooded. Most of the island is covered with sycamore woodland, together with small groups of Lombardy poplars, horse chestnuts and several willows. The ground flora over most of the island is not particularly rich, and is dominated by nettle, cow parsley, bramble and ivy. The best flora is found on the upper sections of the revetments. Large amounts of purple loosestrife and other species typical of the Thames foreshore grow in the gaps between the stone blocks. A few specimens of pink water speedwell have previously been reported, which is a very rare species in London. The island is a valuable nesting site and refuge for wildfowl. It is also important for cormorant and heron. The island is included within the River Thames and Islands Sites of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation

The management of Oliver's Island has been the subject of debate since the barge repair facilities closed. At one time, the London Wildlife Trust were in discussions with the PLA on management for

nature conservation, and in 1995 the London Ecology Unit produced a detailed Management Brief for the PLA. It was suggested at the time that the Strand on the Green Association take over responsibility for management, but this was beyond their resources and raised issues of public liability. Management issues remain unresolved and are a source of local concern.

Key Issues and Opportunities

Kew Riverside

- The need to clarify responsibilities for the management and maintenance of the wooded Tow Path to ensure effective and integrated management, including the regular removal of litter and graffiti.
 - The management of riverside vegetation to improve ecological diversity, and reveal and maintain views to the River and Strand on the Green.
 - The conservation and restoration of Kew Railway Bridge, including repainting and the removal of vegetation obscuring the abutments and the possible addition of a pedestrian crossing.
 - The potential for short-stay moorings for small private boats at Kew Pier, in particular for visitors to Kew Gardens.
 - The poor quality of the signage and visitor information between Kew Pier and Kew Green, and the Royal Botanical Gardens and the need to improve the visual quality of this route.
 - The need to liaise with the Westminster Passenger Association about improvements to the ticket office at Kew Pier. Consideration of covered seating and waiting areas, cycle stands and disabled parking
- The feasibility of extending a River Bus service to Kew Pier, given the amount of new housing at Kew Riverside, and Kew Bridge and Brentford.
 - The potential to create a direct link into the Public Records Office from the Tow Path, and of signposting it as a visitor attraction. The lack of permeability and connections from the Tow Path into Kew, which could be improved by upgrading the existing path adjacent to the railway line linking to the Mortlake Road.
 - The benefits of the Kew Sewage Works/St James Homes development currently under construction and potential benefits in terms of: new public open space, additional surveillance and a financial contribution to the management of the Tow Path.
 - The potential impact of proposed development in front of the Public Records Office on the setting of Strand on the Green and its relationship to the River.
 - The importance of Occupation Lane and Kew Meadow Path as a 'snail reserve'.
- ### Strand on the Green
- The responsibility for repairing and replacing flood defences, highlighted by the recent collapse of the river wall.
 - The need to restore and enhance the public realm, using high quality materials, to create a coherent character.
- The need to conserve and re-use the historic steps, slipways, mooring posts, jetties and barge grid.
 - The importance of considering the impact of development away from the river on the A4/M4 corridor and Gunnersbury, which has had a negative impact on the skyline and backdrop to the architectural waterfront.
 - The enhancement of the raised promenade downstream from Kew Bridge and links upstream to Brentford and the Grand Union Canal.
 - The protection and eventual replacement of the riverside willows.
 - The semi-derelict state of the Bull's Head public house and the need to promote its refurbishment.
 - The future of the disused Marine Services fuelling pier, Chiswick Yacht and Boat Club and associated mid-stream moorings.
 - The poor quality of the materials used in the traffic calming scheme introduced a couple of years ago.
 - This corner of Chiswick/Brentford does not have a tube service. Regular river commuter transport could be a major asset.

Grove Park

- The establishment of a separate Conservation Area for Grove Park
- The future of the Hartington Court, an Art Deco mansion block under threat of redevelopment
- The future of the former boatyard at 76 Grove Park Road, which is subject to redevelopment
- The encroachment into the river channel by private jetties/terraces at the rear of the large private gardens along Hartington Road.
- The maintenance of the sloping river walls.
- The importance of protecting and providing for the replacement of the large mature trees within private and communal gardens along the riverbank.
- The sensitive use of signposting to aid continuity of the Thames Path where it is forced to detour along Hartington Road.

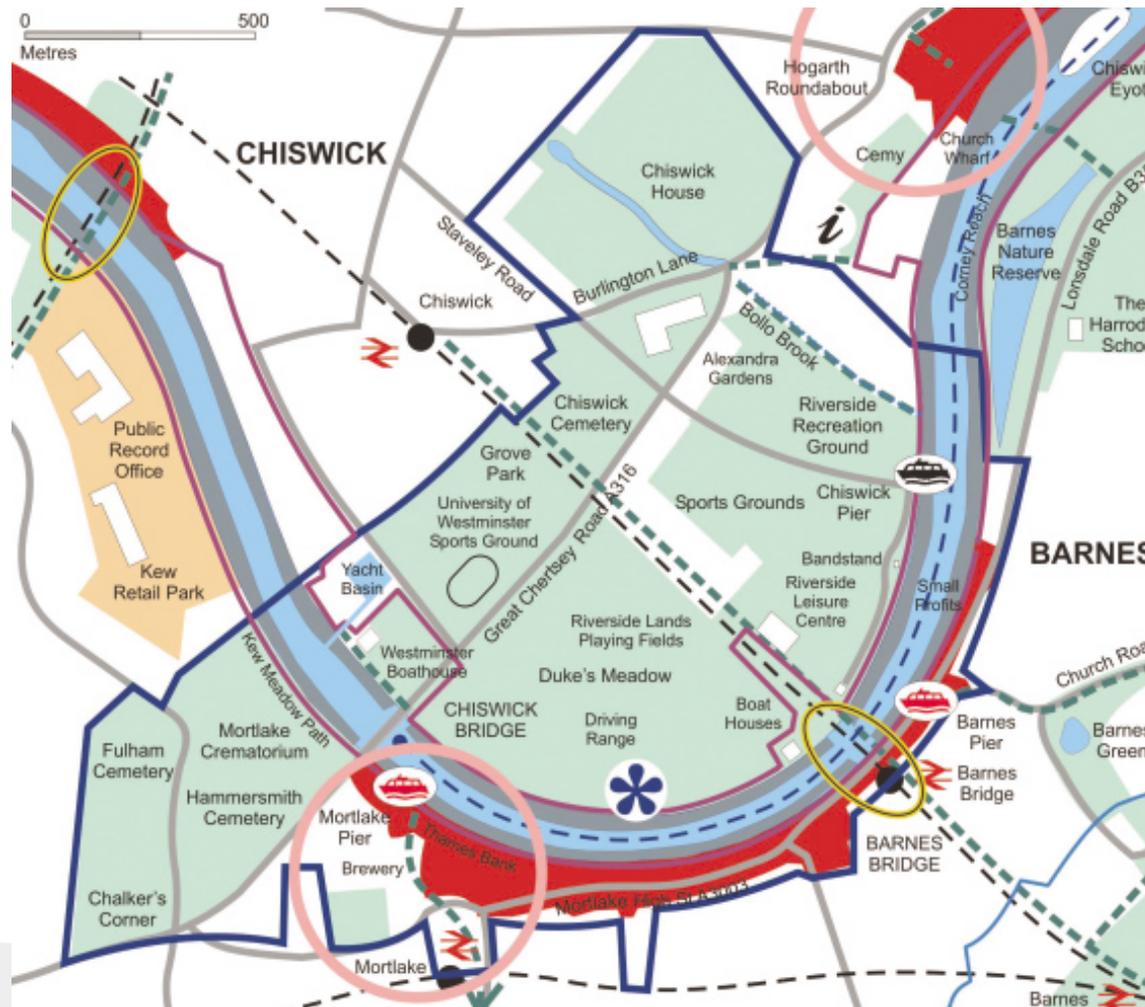
Oliver's Island

- The management of vegetation to reduce the dominance of non-native tree species and increase ecological interest and the need for a management plan.
- The condition of the blockstone flood defences.
- Provision for limited public access.
- Control of Canada geese.

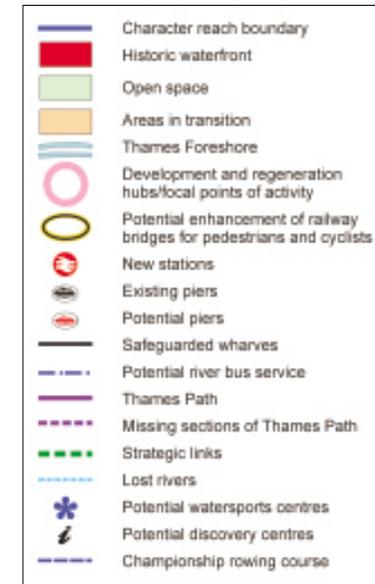
CHARACTER REACH NO.2

MORTLAKE, BARNES AND DUKE'S MEADOW

River Chart Name: Corney Reach - Mortlake Reach



Barnes Terrace



Key Characteristics

This character reach, crossed by two bridges, Chiswick Bridge (road) and Barnes Railway Bridge, is dominated by the fragmented open recreational landscape of Duke's Meadow which faces the historic riverside village of Mortlake. Chiswick House and Gardens are an important reminder of former riverside mansions, although they no longer retain their historic link with the River. To the south of the River, is Mortlake Cemetery, the imposing Stag Brewery, St. Mary's Church, and the historic riverside development of Barnes Terrace.

Key features of Character Reach No.2 may be summarised as follows:

- Chiswick Bridge is an important focal and viewing point;
- St. Mary's Church, Mortlake is a local village landmark;
- Watney's Stag Brewery continues an industrial riverside tradition;
- Historic Chiswick House and Gardens present an opportunity for improved links with the River.
- Duke's Meadow is an example of issues in evolving riverside open space;
- Barnes Railway Bridge presents an opportunity for improved cross-river links;
- The historic riverside of Barnes Terrace is blemished by the existing floodwalls.

Chiswick House and Gardens

Promenade Approach/ Bollo Brook

Great Chertsey Road

Riverside Lands

Duke's Meadow golf course

Stag Brewery



Chiswick Pier

Leg of Mutton Reservoir

Riverside Recreation Ground

Bandstand

Barnes Terrace

Barnes Railway Bridge

Aerial View of Duke's Meadow and Character Reach No.2

Historical Background

Mortlake

Mortlake was already so called in the Domesday Book. The origin of the name is obscure but is probably Saxon or Danish. The wide gravelly foreshore which extends along the western side of the Barnes peninsula would have been an ideal landing place for early settlers.

An **archbishop's palace** or manor house stood on the riverside and the original church and village grew up around it. The manor house had its gatehouse facing Mortlake Green. The manor, which also included Putney and Wimbledon, and possessed certain rights over Barnes, was held by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Several medieval monarchs are known to have visited the archbishops at Mortlake as it was conveniently close to the Royal Palace at Richmond.

During the reign of Henry VIII the church was rebuilt on its present site and the manor house declined in importance and gradually fell into decay.

By the late sixteenth century Mortlake had become a popular residential village, its most celebrated figure being the alchemist Dr John Dee. In 1619 a tapestry works was set up by Flemish weavers. The **Mortlake Tapestries** soon became famous under the patronage of Charles I. After the Civil War the quality of the workshop's products declined, and the weavers began to leave after the Restoration. The Mortlake workshop was closed in 1703.

The Mortlake Tapestry Works served to set the scene for the future industrial character of the riverside. The works were soon followed by a sugar house and by 1703 there were maltings, which were later followed by two small potteries and two small breweries. In 1811 there were five maltings, supplying grain to the many breweries along the river in west London.



Mortlake c.1821, from Thames Bank looking east

The manor house was finally demolished in the 18th century and the site was redeveloped as a brewery, from which the present day **Stag brewery** originates. The brewery expanded rapidly during the 19th century and spread over the whole of the original riverside settlement at Mortlake.

In the eighteenth century, a handful of large houses faced Mortlake High Street at its eastern end with gardens running down to the River. Largest and most impressive of the survivors is **The Limes** (now 123 High Street) built around 1720. In the 1820's J M W Turner painted two pictures of the house and its riverside terrace. The increasing

industrialisation of the riverside and the smell from malting and brewing saw a decline in Mortlake as a fashionable riverside retreat.

St Mary's Parish Church was rebuilt in the mid-19th century. Its unusual brick, stone and flint tower, and cupola is an important landmark throughout Mortlake. The church is the focus of an extensive network of historic passages and footpaths. These paths and their evocative names remain as a poignant record of an ancient settlement, of which only fragments are left.

The slow decline in use of the Thames for commercial freight from the 1850's until the 1960's saw the closure of the **Brewery Wharf** and the **Small Profit** dock at Barnes. The local use of the River for pleasure steamers also declined. From the mid nineteenth century until the First World War, paddle steamers picked up passengers from a wooden jetty at the White Hart. These pleasure boats went as far as Margate.



*The Limes c.1720 (now 123 Mortlake High Street)
painted by JMW Turner*

The widening of Mortlake High Street during the 1960's severed the historic connection between the village and its riverside.



'The Reminder of Harwich' at Mortlake Brewery landing stage

Barnes

Until the early 19th century **Barnes village**, just downstream from Mortlake, was considered remote as the approaches were either from the river or by foot across Barnes Common. The only road led from Mortlake along the River.

The village grew up around **Barnes Green** and is an early settlement, possibly of pre-Conquest origins. It appeared as "Berne" in the Domesday Survey of 1086. The shape of the village centre with its triangular green and pond has remained intact and retains a leafy rural character. The High Street was the route from the Green to the river docking place, mentioned in 1400 as "*le new docke*".



Barnes Terrace c.1827, looking west

The existing terrace of 18th and early 19th century houses overlooking the River at **Barnes Terrace** replaced earlier piecemeal ribbon development. This architecturally important group of buildings has been the residence of a number of famous residents including the composer, Gustav Holst.

Barnes Railway Bridge was designed by Joseph Locke for the London and South Western Railway (LSWR) and opened in 1849. It formed part of the Hounslow Loop linking with the Windsor Line at Feltham. This original slender three-span cast iron bridge was replaced by a larger and more

substantial metal bowstrung bridge built alongside it on the downstream side in 1891-5. The original bridge is now disused. The station at Barnes Bridge was not built until 1916 and was squeezed into a tight site next to The Terrace.

Duke's Meadow

On the north bank opposite Mortlake and Barnes, within the inner loop of the river is **Duke's Meadow**. This large area has predominantly remained as open space throughout its history. Before flood defences and embankments were built to control the river, Duke's Meadow was a low lying area subject to periodic flooding. The fringes of the river were traditionally important for **growing osiers**. The cut willow were used for basket making. The grazed meadows were sub-divided into a series of large fields. Many of these historic boundaries are still visible today.

John Rocque's map of c.1745 shows the meadows and field pattern of Duke's Meadow and the riverside settlements on the opposite side of the River at Mortlake and Barnes. The open fields contrast with the parks and gardens of Chiswick Grove (see Character Reach 1) and Chiswick House. The planned views and vistas framed by avenues are clearly shown on Rocque's map.

Lord Burlington's classic villa, **Chiswick House** is one of a series of villas built as countryside retreats along the upper reaches of the Thames in London, which also includes Horace Walpole's villa at Strawberry Hill and Henrietta Howard's villa at Marble Hill.

Chiswick House was completed in 1729 by the third **Earl of Burlington**. It was modelled on the Villa Rotunda at Vicenza, and has survived as one of the finest examples of English Palladian architecture. The gardens were created by **William Kent** and were the first ambitious design in landscape style. A long narrow lake runs from the north-west to the south-east and divides the gardens into two. The tithe map of 1846 shows the lake continuing into the Thames, but by 1936 this water feature had been covered by the **Promenade Approach Road**.

The lake is believed to have been formed by impounding the **Bollo Brook (or Duke's Ditch)** which flowed through the grounds of **Sutton Court** before entering the grounds of Chiswick House. The outlet of this watercourse is at the end of the Promenade Approach Road. An avenue of lime trees is all that remains today of this historic connection between Chiswick House and the Thames.

On Lord Burlington's death Chiswick House passed into the hands of the dukes of Devonshire. The 5th Duke and his popular wife, Georgiana spent a great

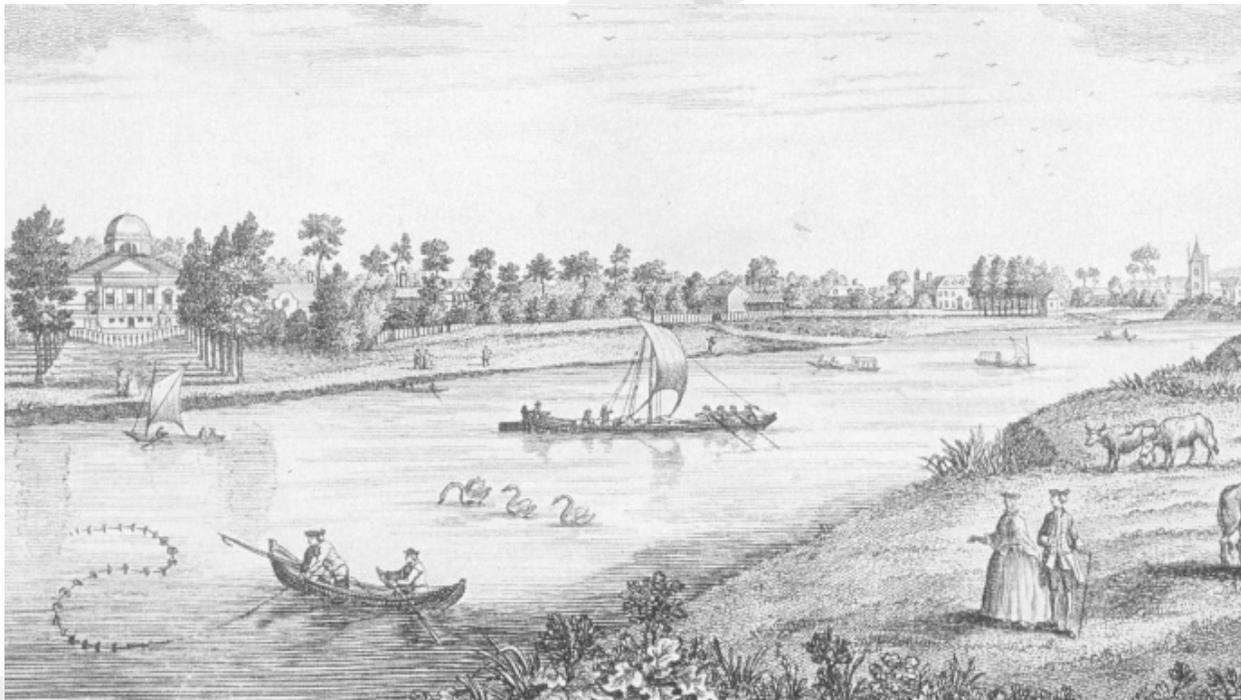
deal of time entertaining their Whig friends at Chiswick.

Duke's Meadow was bought from the **Duke of Devonshire** in 1923 by Chiswick Urban District Council for the purpose of creating a recreational area for the growing residential communities in Chiswick. The meadows were also excavated for the underlying gravels and filled using household waste. This accounts for the poor quality of the soils and drainage on some of the existing sports pitches.

The river frontage was remodelled in the late 1920's as a promenade with a hexagonal **bandstand** and symmetrical shelters looking across the river to the fine Georgian housing at Barnes Terrace. The riverside park was unfortunately bombed during the Second World War, and features such as the ornamental rockery were destroyed.

The Great Chertsey Road (A316) was constructed in the early 1930's as part of the major arterial road building programme, which accompanied the rapid urban growth of London between the First and Second World Wars. The new road divided the remaining open space of Duke's Meadow. The Alexandra Gardens estate was built at the same time on the fields closest to the new road, on its southern edge.

Chiswick Bridge was built to take the new Great Chertsey Road across the River. It was opened in 1933 by the Prince of Wales. Designed by Herbert Baker, it is 700 feet long and faced with Portland stone. The bridge is close to the finishing point of the four mile annual **University Boat Race**.



Chiswick House leading down to the river, c.1750

Character Appraisal

Mortlake

The overall character is green on the north/inside of the bend and built up on the south/outside.

The view downstream from **Chiswick Bridge** highlights the difference in landscape character between the north and south banks of the River. On the north bank are the large expanses of riverside open space provided by the open space of Duke's Meadow, fringed by mature trees. The southern bank of the River is dominated by the view of the large industrial buildings of **Mortlake Brewery**, with the 18th and 19th century houses of Thames Bank in the foreground, at the foot of the bridge.

The river frontage at **Mortlake** is also one of contrasts with the hard urban edge of the brewery, adjacent to fine 18th and 19th century houses, such as the **Italianate Tapestry Court**, with gardens extending down to the towpath. The riverside contains a rich mixture of uses including



View of Chiswick Bridge towards Mortlake

industrial, residential, commercial and rural riverbank which contribute to its robust character.

The gentle curve of the Thames at this point emphasises the panoramic nature of the built frontage in Mortlake, particularly when viewed from Duke's Meadow or the River. The eight storey tower-like 19th century **granary building** is an important local landmark along this elevation and represents its western end.

The variety in the skyline of the riverfront at Mortlake is punctuated by a few key landmark buildings. Now that most of the larger industrial buildings at the brewery have gone, the main buildings on the river front are 2-3 storeys in height. The high walls of the brewery and other industrial sites facing onto the towpath are a characteristic feature of the Mortlake riverside.

The tower and cupola of **St Mary's Church** is another important local landmark particularly when framed in views down the historic alleys and passages which link the towpath to the High Street. Acting as a focal point at the eastern end of the riverside at Mortlake is the domed turret of the **White Hart** public house.

Of negative impact on this riverside conservation area are the large scale advertisements for the brewery and the intrusive residential blocks in the High Street.

A number of **industrial artefacts** remain along the river frontage and are reminders of its rich industrial past. Ancient mooring posts are revealed at low tide. At the former wharves there are the remains of the drawdock, pier and sections of railway track



Stag Brewery, Mortlake

leading out on to the quay from within the brewery compound. There are also old access steps down to the foreshore with fine Victorian railings.

Development proposals have been submitted for a residential scheme on the site of 77, Mortlake High Street.



The White Hart PH, and recent riverside development, Mortlake

Barnes

The view from the footpath across **Barnes Railway Bridge** similarly highlights the contrasting character of the two banks of the River. The bridge provides panoramic views downstream to Chiswick Eyot, and in the foreground is The Terrace at Barnes. The London Eye is also visible from Barnes Bridge. Barnes Railway Bridge is a favoured location for spectators viewing the final section of the Boat Race. As a crossing, Barnes Railway Bridge suffers from a degree of neglect and underuse. The original single track bridge is unused and has been proposed as a major cycle route crossing. The existing pedestrian bridge is in a poor state of repair and needs restoration, in particular the steps at the Duke's Meadow end and existing lighting.

The Terrace has a number of 18th and 19th century buildings of exceptional quality; many are listed or identified as Buildings of Townscape Merit.



Barnes Terrace

It forms part of the Barnes Green Conservation Area. At the junction with Barnes High Street is the Bull's Head. North of the High Street is Lonsdale Road. Barnes High Street leads to the green with its pond and on to the common.

The houses fronting this curved stretch of the River enjoy open views across to Duke's Meadow. The villas along Barnes Terrace have a "seaside" feel about their bow windows and balconies. One carries a blue plaque to record that Gustav Holst lived here from 1908, while he was director of music at St Paul's Girls' School, Hammersmith.

The view from Barnes Terrace to the Thames and the open expanse of Duke's Meadow is protected within the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames Unitary Development Plan.

The Terrace has lost much of its past connection with the River as a result of the heavy flow of traffic along the riverside which acts as a barrier with few safe crossing points and the height and design of the river wall.

The **exposed aggregate concrete flood wall** and raised footway along The Terrace and Lonsdale Road unfortunately impede the view of the River. The engineered embankment wall is unattractive and does not contribute to the setting of the listed buildings along The Terrace. The raised footway is protected by metal railings of poor design and colour.

The point where the High Street reaches the River at Barnes should be a 'major event', but at present it fails due to a lack of vitality in the street frontage.

At the north end of Lonsdale Road adjacent to **Small Profits Dock** is an area where the raised concrete ramp meets a stretch of rough grass. Dumping and casual parking, including lorries, block views and access. The adjacent triangular open space is in need of enhancement.

Duke's Meadow

The views of Barnes Terrace from the riverside promenade at Duke's Meadow is partly obscured by the trees which have regenerated on the riverbank. The original 1920's scheme had a series of semi-circular viewpoints, but these have become overgrown.

Either side of the central **band stand**, with its pagoda style roof, are symmetrically positioned timber shelters and semi-circular terraces. Formal steps lead down to the foreshore and are aligned on this central axis. The steps are broken and fenced off. Over the last decade this whole area



Duke's Meadow

has become neglected and the buildings and associated paved areas are in poor condition and unused. Illegal dumping and graffiti contribute to the overall sense of dereliction.

A lime avenue, **Promenade Approach**, associated with nearby Chiswick House, leads from Edensor Road to the River. It has ornamental gates and a pumphouse surrounded by Lombardy poplars near the River. A raised open area next to the River is used for informal play and exercising dogs. This plateau was probably formed by tipping. It was previously the site of the ornamental rockery.

The **Riverside Recreation Ground** has also suffered from a lack of investment which is reflected in the quality of this area. The children's paddling pools are disused and the play equipment is in poor condition.

The remainder of the Duke's Meadow area is a patchwork of sports and playing fields, together with a golf club. The former hedgerow boundaries that sub-divided the area can still be identified, but have been replaced by rows of Lombardy poplars. The proliferation of fences and boundaries between

Foreshore at Duke's Meadow



different sports clubs and facilities contribute to the poor visual quality of the area. At night the floodlights of the golf driving range are intrusive. The hanger like structures of the Riverside indoor tennis centre are visually intrusive. The view of high mast floodlighting is also unattractive.

Duke's Meadow provides a vital green aspect to views across the River from Barnes and Mortlake.

Duke's Hollow

At the foot of the buttressing of Barnes Bridge, next to the railway embankment is Duke's Hollow, a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. The floor of the "hollow" slopes gently into the Thames and is partly inundated twice a day by the tide.

The ecology of the intertidal zone and the succession of vegetation through herbaceous communities to damp alder and willow makes this a site of particular distinction. Species of the intertidal zone include: jointed rush, soft rush, watercress, hemlock water dropwort and the locally uncommon marsh ragwort.

The relatively undisturbed conditions of Duke's Hollow, its sheltered position and its succession of wetland habitats makes it a valuable site for invertebrates. The extremely rare **two-lipped door snail** can be found here. It is confined to only five locations on the River Thames. The equally rare German hairy snail has also been found here.

The entire riverbank between Barnes Bridge and Chiswick Bridge has been overgrown by **Japanese knotweed**. This extremely invasive and persistent



Duke's Hollow

species has suppressed the native flora. It threatens to spread into Duke's Hollow and further along the River in both directions. The dense stands of knotweed also prevent views of the River from the lower Tow Path.

University Boat Race

Rowing is a popular local sport and there are a number of clubs including: the London, Quintin, Tideway Scullers, Thames Tradesmen, St Paul's and Emanuel Schools. Mortlake is famous as being the finishing post for the annual University Boat Race, which has been rowed from Putney since 1845. The finish is marked by a boundary stone on the riverside at Thames Bank. Commentaries on the race refer to the landmarks on the "Surrey Station" such as Barnes Terrace and the Mortlake Brewery.

The Head of the Rive race is rowed on the same course usually on the weekend before the University Boat Race, and attracts over 400 eights. There are also several local regattas in which local clubs take part.

Key Issues and Opportunities

Mortlake

- It is important that any future redevelopment of the brewery site should strengthen the unique character of the Mortlake riverfront and respect the setting and views of Thamesbank, St Mary's Church, the granary building, and Tapestry Court. In the event of the granary becoming available for development, an appropriate use(s) should be secured which retain the character of the building and add to the vitality of the riverside.
- There are likely to be further pressures on individual sites for redevelopment or conversion of existing buildings. The old Barnes Council Depot building was converted into "The Depot" a popular riverside brasserie, and workspaces. There is a vacant site awaiting development at 77 Mortlake High Street. Any development proposals should take into account the local context and include appropriate provision for river enhancing activities and enhancement of the riverside environment.
- The need to protect and interpret the remnants of Mortlake's industrial heritage and riverside infrastructure, including the slipways and old riverside wharves;
- Repair and restoration of the traditional cobbled sloping revetments and the historic steps that lead to the foreshore and provide safety equipment and information on tides.

- The opportunity exists to enhance the underused Jubilee Gardens on the Mortlake riverside as a contemporary open space.
- Encourage improvements to the visual quality of the existing Stag Brewery, and in particular the control of advertisements.
- The network of historic passages and alleys between the river and Mortlake High Street, such as Bull's Alley, are poorly defined and in need of protection and restoration.
- In conjunction with the repair and replacement of the flood defences, sensitively surface the Thames Path National Trail between Thamesbank and Barnes Terrace, whilst retaining the remnants of its industrial heritage.

Barnes Terrace and Railway Bridge

- The need to maintain the high visual quality and skylines of the architectural waterfront at Barnes Terrace.
- Introduce sensitive traffic management and street scene improvements, to reduce the heavy traffic severing Barnes Terrace from the river, and restore the public realm. Short term measures could include a pedestrian crossing opposite Barnes Bridge Station.
- Protect the view identified in the UDP from Barnes Terrace to the River and Duke's Meadow.
- Investigate opportunities for lowering and replacing the unsympathetic flood defence wall

which detracts from the setting of the listed buildings along Barnes Terrace. The choice of materials and design of the wall and handrails should be sympathetic with the Terrace and include more viewing bays and appropriate tree planting. In the short term consideration could be given to raising sections of the walkway as viewing platforms.

- Selective thinning of riverside vegetation at historically designed viewpoints along Duke's Meadow to open up and frame views to landmarks within Mortlake (St Mary's Church and the granary building), and Barnes Terrace (with suitable screening behind, to protect the views from Barnes).
- Restore and improve the visual appearance of Barnes Railway Bridge, including repainting to a colour scheme agreed with the local community (and English Heritage), repair of the steps at the Duke's Meadow end and improvements to lighting.
- Examine the feasibility of re-opening the upstream older section of Barnes Railway Bridge as a cycle path linking directly into Barnes Bridge Station, with ramped access down the railway embankments at both ends of the bridge.
- Improve and enhance the pedestrian and cycle link from Chiswick Station, across Duke's Meadow, using Barnes Railway Bridge. Signpost connections to the Thames Cycle Route and the Wetland Centre at Barn Elms.

- Enhancement of junction of Barnes High Street and river redevelopment of Barnes Police Station on Lonsdale Road provides the opportunity to replan this area. Consideration should be given to traffic management measures to reduce the impact of traffic in the High Street and appropriate parking controls through the provision of off-street parking. The potential for the creation of a focus of interest such as a pier could be considered, based on the existing access ladders (formerly used by the police).
- The need to restore the Small Profits Dock slipway and adjoining open space on Lonsdale Road.

Duke's Meadow

- There is a need for an integrated approach to the management of both public and private open space at Duke's Meadow, together with the playing fields and sports facilities on the other side of the A316. At the present time there is a lack of investment in public open space and issues relating to maintenance.
- The potential future role of this extensive area of riverside open space needs to be addressed. At the present time investment and management decisions are taken on a piecemeal basis. The area has the potential to act as a Regional Park for south-west London, with the emphasis on watersports and active recreation. The renaissance of the 1920's riverside promenade would be a key element of the overall scheme. A strong landscape

framework based on the historic avenues and hedgerows would provide the overall setting. The Friends of Duke's Meadow have commissioned such a plan, now in its public consultation stage.

- Any schemes for managing or re-landscaping Duke's Meadow should ensure that the tree cover is sufficient to screen the urban elements and retain the green aspect in views across the River.
- The intrusive glare of floodlighting from sports facilities should be minimised by tree screening, modifications to lighting and careful control of the siting of new facilities.
- A consortium of local sports clubs, led by Hounslow Hockey Club, is proposing using Chiswick Boathouse as a "super club house" for all the amateur clubs on Duke's Meadow, together with two all-weather floodlit pitches and the reorganisation and improvement of existing facilities, which raises the question of the appropriateness of such "urbanised" sports activities on MOL. There will be a requirement to examine the potential impact of more intensive recreational facilities and the potential for appropriate mitigation and siting.

Duke's Meadow has an active community group "The Friends of Duke's Meadow". They have been successful in gaining support from the local community, Hounslow Council and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV). The following opportunities for enhancing the landscape, recreation and nature conservation value of the area have been identified:

Landscape

- The renaissance of the 1920's riverside promenade, terraces, bandstand and recreation ground at Duke's Meadow.
- Replant the gaps in the lime avenue (Promenade Approach) linking Chiswick House to the River, and restore the views of the River and the pumping station.
- Screen the large sports buildings associated with the private clubs on Duke's Meadow by tree planting and improved boundary treatment.
- Reduce the visual impact and noise of traffic on Chiswick Bridge Approach by planting, possibly in combination with earthmodelling.
- Selectively thin rows of Lombardy Poplars at Pevral Pier and other locations where they block views of the River.
- Reduce the number of fences within Duke's Meadow and improve their visual appearance. Introduce new tree and shrub planting along boundaries.
- Create new "gateways" at the entrances to the area. Restore the ornamental gates at the entrance to Promenade Approach.

Public Access and Recreation

- Restore the overgrown footpath along the riverside promenade at Duke's Meadow and signpost as the Thames Path National Trail. Cyclists to use Riverside Drive.

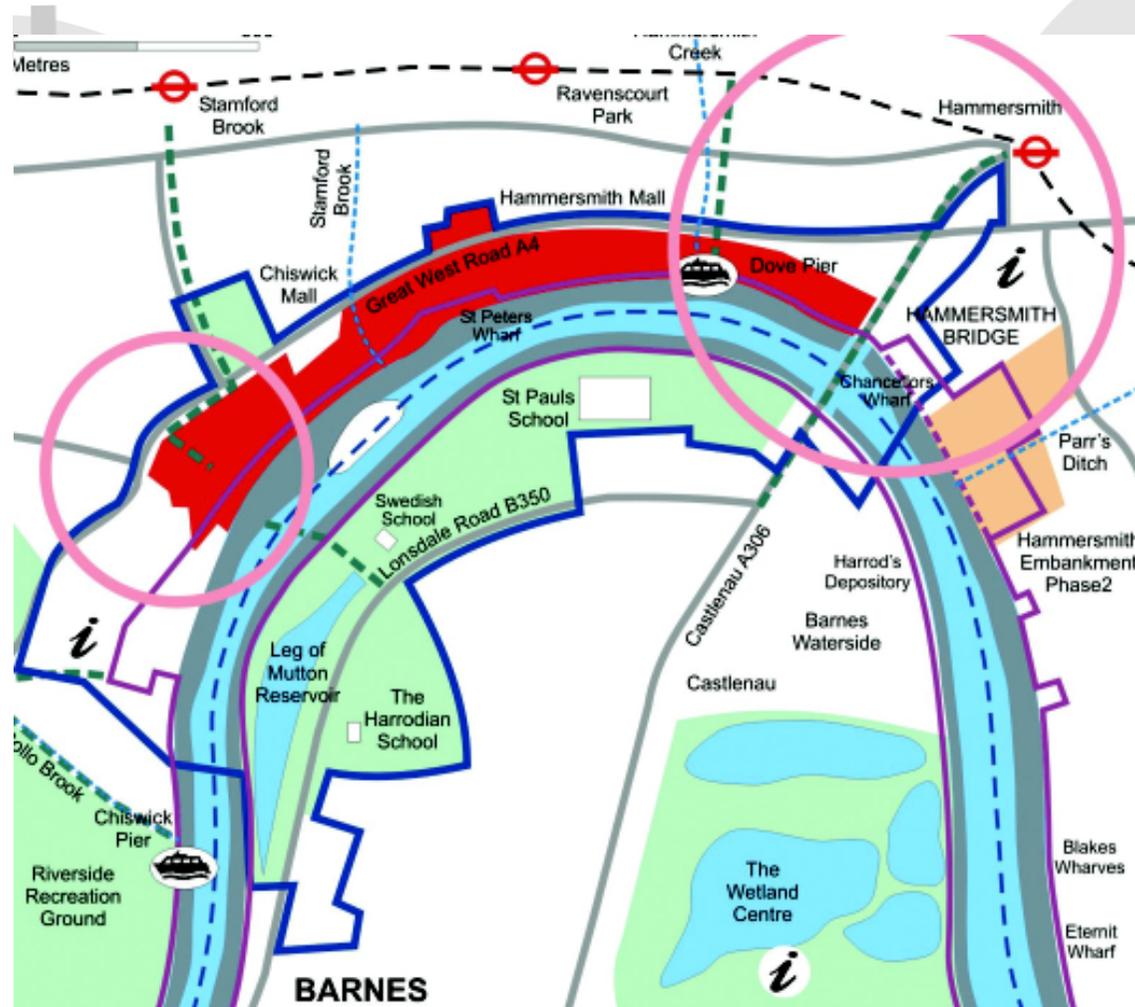
- Open up the remaining arches under Chiswick Bridge to provide a direct connection for the Thames Path, avoiding the busy A316 Chertsey Road. Realign path to follow foot of embankment.
- Examine the feasibility of creating a tunnel through the railway embankment to the north of Duke's Hollow, to provide a direct route for the Thames Path.
- Signpost Chiswick House from the River and vice versa, using the historic avenue along Promenade Approach.
- Maximise the potential of the local authority owned Chiswick Boathouse, possibly as a focus for a wider range of watersports.
- Provide for large numbers of spectators to view the final section of the University Boat Race, which ends at Chiswick Bridge, subject to safety considerations.
- Promote new events and activities, for example the farmers' market in the pavilion area.
- Eradicate the invasive Japanese knotweed which has colonised most of the northern riverbank between Chiswick and Hammersmith Bridges. Establish a long-term management regime for riverbank vegetation.
- Introduce a management regime for the trees along the riverside removing over time the non-native sycamore and Lombardy poplars and replace them with native alder and willow.
- Extend the range of inter-tidal habitats by localised modifications (for example at under-used car parks) to the flood defences, subject to safety considerations, to create retired defences with a succession of wetland habitats.
- The potential exists to create a significant new wetland area on the north bank of the river immediately upstream of Chiswick Bridge. This would involve taking under-used space from the playing fields and creating retired flood defences.

Nature Conservation

- Protect the integrity and ecological value of the mudflats and shingle habitats within the River channel.
- Protect and manage Duke's Hollow as a local nature reserve.
- Examine the feasibility of "rediscovering" the Bollo Brook and opening up its outlet with the Thames

CHARACTER REACH NUMBER 3: CHISWICK, HAMMERSMITH & NORTH BARNES

River Chart Name: Corney Reach/Chiswick Reach



Lower Mall, Hammersmith

	Character reach boundary
	Historic waterfront
	Open space
	Areas in transition
	Thames Foreshore
	Development and regeneration hubs/focal points of activity
	Potential enhancement of railway bridges for pedestrians and cyclists
	New stations
	Existing piers
	Potential piers
	Safeguarded wharves
	Potential river bus service
	Thames Path
	Missing sections of Thames Path
	Strategic links
	Lost rivers
	Potential watersports centres
	Potential discovery centres
	Championship rowing course

Key Characteristics

This reach is crossed by Sir Joseph Bazalgette’s landmark, the Hammersmith Suspension Bridge. The new riverside development at Corney Reach has provided a pier and is one of the few that allows visitors to berth their boats. Chiswick Eyot, accessible at low tide, together with the Leg of Mutton Reservoir, provide ideal habitats for nature conservation. St. Nicholas Church survives as the feature around which the village of Chiswick developed. The exemplary historic riverside houses and gardens of Chiswick Mall run adjacent to the River. Further east, there is the popular and always busy Hammersmith Upper and Lower Mall, with Furnival Gardens, a number of boating clubs, and permanently moored boats, taking full advantage of their riverside location. To the south of the River, is St Paul’s School.

Key features of Character Reach No. 3 may be summarised as follows:

- Residential development of Corney Reach includes the boating base at Chiswick Pier;
- Chiswick Pier is a model of how to secure the provision of improved river related facilities including moorings and a community building in association with riverside development;
- Lonsdale Road Reservoir and nature reserve show the evolving historic land uses associated with water supply;
- St. Nicholas Church provides a continuing focus of the historic village of Chiswick;

- The exemplary houses and gardens of Chiswick Mall show historic adaptation to riverside living;
- Chiswick Eyot is the last island of rural scale before the increasingly urban riverside downstream ;
- Hammersmith Terrace and Upper and Lower Mall are “strand” developments of grander 18th and 19th century terraces;
- St. Paul’s Church, Hammersmith is a local historic landmark surrounded by 20th century development;
- Furnival Gardens represents an important townscape feature and local amenity;
- The restored Hammersmith Bridge frames the reach.

St Paul’s School Wooded Tow Path Hammersmith Upper Mall Dove Pier Mr See’s Moorings Furnival Gardens

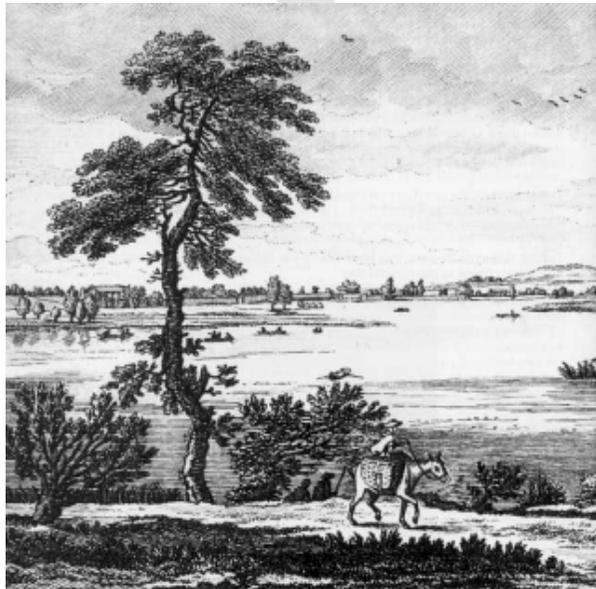


Aerial view of Character Reach No.3

Historical Background

Chiswick Mall

The earliest settlements in Chiswick and Hammersmith were based along the northern bank of the river. The original village of Chiswick was clustered around the old parish **Church of St Nicholas**, along what is now Church Street and the southern end of Chiswick Lane. The Parish Church is dedicated to St Nicholas, the patron saint of fishermen and sailors.



View of Thames from Chiswick by Charles White

The church is an important visual and historical landmark. William Hogarth, whose house is nearby, is buried in the churchyard and inside the



Hogarth's Tomb, St Nicholas Churchyard

church Lord Burlington is buried in his family vault. His friend and protégé William Kent lies next to him.

Chiswick was an important **fishing village**. The Bishops of London had a salmon fishery extending from Fulham Palace upstream to Chiswick Eyot. The fishing community lived in the small cottages next to the church, in Fisherman's Row, or Slut's Hole as it used to be called. During the 19th century there were more than a dozen eel boats operating from Chiswick. These were known locally as Peter boats. The last of the eel boats was photographed in 1898.

During the 17th century, and perhaps earlier, Chiswick was regarded as a healthy resort to escape from the overcrowding and insanitary conditions in London. Handsome riverside houses began to be built along the River extending from the original fishing village, and along Church Street.

Church Street still retains a village atmosphere with buildings such as Latimer House dating back

to the 16th century. The Old Burlington is a beautiful example of a former Elizabethan inn. It was here that the famous highwayman, Dick Turpin, is supposed to have had his marriage breakfast.



Chiswick, 1745

The **Lamb Brewery**, just behind Church Street, was founded by John Sich in 1733. It was originally the brewhouse of Bedford House. It stayed in the Sich family until sold to the neighbouring Fuller's Brewery in 1923; the premises then became the headquarters of the Standard Yeast Company. Since 1950, this distinctive tall structure has been used as offices.

In 1701 Thomas Mawson bought the brewhouse belonging to Bedford House on Chiswick Mall and founded what was to become the **Fuller's Brewery** by the Hogarth roundabout. In 1816, it acquired its name the Griffin Brewery, and a few years later, John Fuller was invited to join the firm. In 1845, his son took on Henry Smith, a partner in the Romford firm of Ind and Smith, and their head brewer John Turner, forming Fuller, Smith and Turner. The

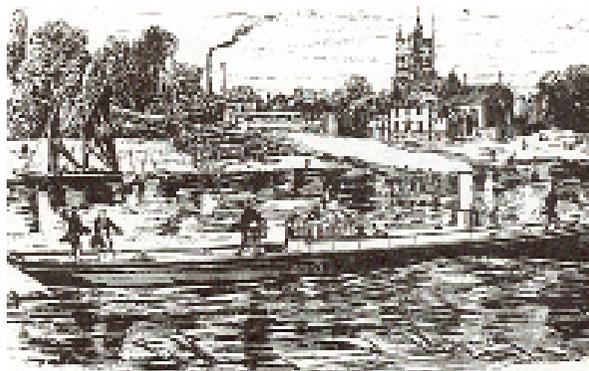
present brewery is still managed by their descendants and remains an important local industry.

The **Hard**, opposite Chiswick Lane, and the drawdock at the bottom of Church Street also provided employment for bargemen and lightermen during the 19th century. At low tide barges unloaded their produce, which included timber, coal, hops and malt for the brewery. Goods loaded included the osiers cut on **Chiswick Eyot**. These were made into baskets for fish and market garden produce. The river still floods into the Mall at the Drawdock and Hard when there are high tides.

The Drawdock was also the boarding point for **the ferry** that crossed the River to Ferry Lane on the opposite side of the Thames in Barnes. The ferry continued in use until the Chiswick Bridge was built in the early 1930's.

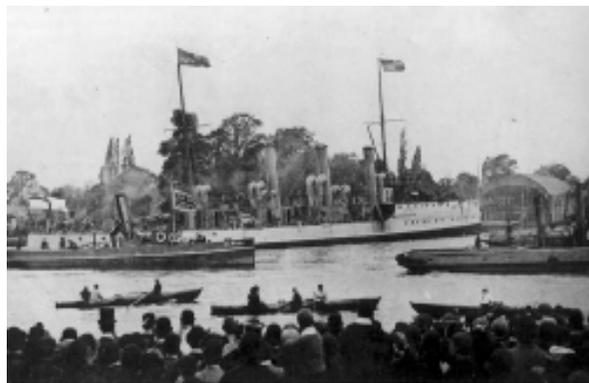


Cut Osiers, Chiswick Eyot, 1920



Church Wharf, Chiswick, 1874

Boats, and later barges, were built in Old Chiswick and Strand-on-the-Green from the beginning of the seventeenth century. In 1866 **John Thornycroft** started the shipbuilding yard near the old parish church which grew into a world famous firm, building ships for the British and foreign navies, and which finally transferred to Southampton in 1904, after which the Chiswick yard was gradually run down.



Launch of H.M.S Speedy, 18th May 1893

The Thornycroft sheds were taken over by Gwynne's Works. They made pumps and in World War I aero engines. The original sheds were destroyed by fire from incendiary bombs in World War II. The site of Thornycroft's Works is now occupied by town houses built in the early 1980's.

The Chiswick Press was founded by Charles Whittingham in High House on Chiswick Mall, moving to College House in 1818. The riverside location was chosen because of its proximity to the drawdock, where old ships' ropes from London and other dockyards were unloaded. The hemp fibres were used to make fine paper, and the extracted tar used to manufacture ink.

To the east of Church Street, Chiswick Mall runs along the River to the border with Hammersmith. These imposing riverside mansions appear to date from the 17th century, but it is likely some are older and have been refaced. **Bedford and Eynsham Houses**, not far from the junction with Church Street, were originally one. Red Lion House opposite the drawdock, was the Red Lion Inn until the First World War.

Walpole House is named after the Walpole family. The house is said to have been the home of the Duchess of Cleveland, favourite of Charles II. Later it was a school at which Thackeray was a boarder. It is believed to be the inspiration for Miss Pinkerton's Academy in *Vanity Fair*.

Corney House was a sizeable mansion just upstream of St Nicholas Church, on the site of the Regency Quay development in Pumping Station Road. It was the home of the Russells (the family name of the Earls of Bedford).



Chiswick Mall c.1834 drawn by Havell

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the established separate villages of Chiswick Mall, Strand-on-the-Green, and Chiswick High Road were rapidly joined up by new middle class housing developments. The railway made it easier for those who worked in London to return in the evenings to the countryside.

The **Homefield Estate**, between the Chiswick High Road and the Homefield Recreation Ground, was begun in the 1890's but not completed until after the First World War. The Homefield Recreation Ground was cut in two by the new Great West Road. The terraces of Victorian villas which extend south of Chiswick High Road have generally protected the skyline and backdrop of Chiswick Mall from high-rise building.

Further upstream from the site of **Corney House** along Pumping Station Road, Chiswick sewage works was built in 1879, behind the present Edensor Gardens. These were altered and enlarged a few years later, and a pumping station built. They operated until 1936 when the West Middlesex

Sewage Disposal Scheme was introduced and Chiswick's sewerage was transferred to the new central works at Mogden, Isleworth. The site then became a council depot.

The **Corney Reach** residential development was started in 1994 on the site of the old council depot, which adjoins the former pumping station. The redevelopment consists of 325 houses and apartments focused on two central 5-storey apartment blocks and smaller terraces of houses. There is also a café/restaurant, a valued community building, boathouse, a pier with pontoons and permanent moorings for houseboats. It includes facilities for sea cadets, and a canoe club, and is shortly to become a River Lifeboat Station.

The pier and pier house are managed by the Chiswick Pier Trust which is committed to the creation of an active waterfront and the provision of access to the River for all.

Hammersmith Mall

The heart of early Hammersmith was the area around **the Creek** between Upper and Lower Mall. By the seventeenth century a small dock had been developed to supply the Cromwell brewery nearby, and to take the produce from the Hammersmith market gardens to the City markets. The Creek was navigable by barges as far as Cromwell's brewery in King Street. A 1929 photograph shows the outlet of the Creek with sailing barges and the brewery oasthouses. By 1936 the Creek was filled in, the water channelled through a culvert into the Thames at the west end of Furnival Gardens. This

former congested dockside area was known as **Little Wapping**.

Queen Catherine, widow of Charles II, was among the first to appreciate the charm of the Hammersmith riverside with views over open countryside. In 1687 she took the house that was to be known as **Rivercourt**. She planted three elm trees on the embankment as a memorial to her late husband; these survived until the late 1950's. During the second half of the eighteenth century, a number of substantial houses were built along the River. The south facing river bend and rural setting were regarded as healthy, and also attracted educational establishments for this reason.

The riverside at Hammersmith has had a large number of celebrated residents and visitors. The most illustrious of those who made the riverside their home was **William Morris**, who started a studio in **Kelmscott House** in 1878. This connection with printing and engraving has since been maintained by a series of residents. Other notables include Sir Nigel Playfair, doyen of the early years of Hammersmith Lyric Theatre.



Hammersmith Creek



The “Queen’s Elms” on Upper Mall.

The first bridge across the River at Hammersmith was designed by William Tierney Clark and opened in 1827. In 1887 Clark’s bridge was replaced by the present structure designed by **Joseph Bazalgette**. The bridge improved communications with Barnes, Richmond and Kingston and attracted new residents, but it also made the area more attractive to industry which was already creeping along the north bank of the river from Fulham. Early in the 19th century the **West Middlesex Water Company** had established a pumping station on a three-acre waterfront site. This was linked to the new reservoirs established on the opposite side of the river at Barnes by a 30-inch main. The pumping station is included in the Local List of Buildings and Structures of Merit and it is considered that the site

may provide the potential for reuse/redevelopment in the future.

The 20th century has seen significant changes to the urban fabric brought about by the building and then widening of the **Great West Road**, together with wartime bomb damage. The street pattern historically linked King Street and the Chiswick High Road to the River. The A4 has severed these connections both physically and socially. Post-war developments have not been of a uniformly high standard, which has inevitably led to a dilution of the character and scale of the area.

A number of other landmarks and features contribute to the character of the River and riverside in this location, including the listed Hammersmith Town Hall overlooking Furnival Gardens, the Dove Pier and residential houseboats at Hammersmith Pier.

The Hammersmith skyline behind the riverside is dominated by a number of large buildings, including the Vencourt Hotel on King Street, the Novotel 640-



The Rutland in Lower Mall with a temporary grandstand for the Boat Race on the roof

bedroom hotel by Hammersmith flyover, built in 1973, the London Ark Development designed by Ralph Erskine in 1990 and other buildings in the vicinity of Hammersmith Broadway.

North Barnes and Lonsdale Road

The land within the Barnes Peninsula on the southern bank of the River, remained in agricultural use with large common fields until the nineteenth century. Meadowland by the riverside at Barnes, known as Westmead or Lotmead, was divided into lots and shared among the tenants of Putney. It became known as **“Putney Detached”**, and it was not until 1906 that it was officially designated as part of the parish of Barnes. These former “lots” were purchased by the West Middlesex Water Company for reservoirs.

The Lonsdale Road Reservoir or “Leg of Mutton Reservoir” as it is known locally due to its shape, is a disused reservoir now managed as a nature reserve. The reservoir was built to store water for the local area in 1838 and fulfilled this role until it was decommissioned in 1960. Its embankments are of earth and clay construction. The inner slopes are faced with brick and concrete and are mostly rather steep. Since it was decommissioned water levels have been kept low. The higher levels of past years are marked by lines of fresh-water mussel shell deposits on the inner slopes.

In 1968 **St Paul’s School**, together with its preparatory school Colet Court, relocated from Hammersmith to North Barnes and occupied a former reservoir site in Lonsdale Road. Nearby is the Swedish School.

Character Appraisal

Corney Reach

After leaving the riverside recreation ground in Duke's Meadow (Character Reach No. 2) the character of the Thames Path National Trail abruptly changes as it enters the new waterfront residential development at **Corney Reach**. A promenade has been provided along this length which opens up into a square at Chiswick Pier. Cycling is prohibited along this section, a restriction which is commonly flouted. The design of the riverside walk makes it appear like a private area but the Chiswick Pier Trust is actively promoting the community use of the waterfront in this location. The signposting of the route at Church Street is poorly defined.

Chiswick Pier has permission for eight residential moorings. It is an ideal location on the tidal Thames to arrive by boat to sample the delights of river-based activities and to explore the foreshore.

Chiswick Pier



Chiswick Mall

Chiswick Mall is a succession of elegant 17th and 18th century houses that are separated from their riverside gardens by a road. This section of the river is prone to flooding, so the houses all have flood doors, and their garden walls are topped by 30 centimetres of thick glass, to keep the water back. This is an exemplary riverside development, and shows that the residents are prepared to live with the River, rather than obscuring it behind high flood defence walls.

Most of the gardens next to the River along Chiswick Mall were made over a century ago, when the riverside was embanked. Early 19th century engravings show open land shelving down to the river. The **riverside gardens** are very well maintained, with their own distinct identity.



Chiswick Mall

The series of mansions that form this important architectural waterfront are best appreciated from the river or the towpath on the southern bank. The shared Georgian pediment of **Bedford House** and **Eynsham House** is an important element, together with the 1930's curved glass bow window of The Said House.

Walpole House has features dating back to the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Its garden is on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. **Strawberry House**, next door to Walpole House was built in the early 1700's. Its attractive cast iron porch is an eighteenth century addition. Other important listed buildings include the late 17th century red brick Woodroffe House, Morton House, and the Old Vicarage on the corner of Church Street. The mature trees in the gardens of these large riverside houses make an important contribution to the overall character.

The public realm along Chiswick Mall is of a high quality with York stone flags used for the footpaths, together with granite kerbs and setts.

Chiswick Eyot

Chiswick Eyot is situated opposite Chiswick Mall on the outside of the large northward loop of the Thames and is accessible at low tide. The island is covered with low-growing willow pollards, originally used in the traditional practice of osier cultivation, a practice which continued until 1935. The willows are still cut every 2-3 years. It also supports an interesting wetland flora and provides nesting habitat for waterfowl. It has been designated as a Local Nature Reserve.

Chiswick Eyot is currently only about half of its size in the early 1900's. In the 1950's the island was disappearing so fast that erosion had to be halted at the western end with balks of timber and many barge loads of shingle. In 1978 Hounslow Council considered removing the entire island

because eroded material was becoming a nuisance to boat-owners. The idea was abandoned and further protection measures implemented.

The island is protected at either end by blockstone embankment, but the majority of banks are still natural. The soft mud and peat of these banks have proved to be an attractive habitat for the non-native Chinese Mitten Crab, which are having a significant physical impact by burrowing, causing vegetation loss and erosion.

Hammersmith Mall

Chiswick Mall extends across the borough boundary into Hammersmith Mall, which continues in a gentle curve up to Hammersmith Bridge. The character of this conservation area is derived from the historic built form and its relationship with the River. This provides an exceptional townscape to the river edge, with three principal groups of buildings: Hammersmith Terrace, Upper Mall and Lower Mall.



Chiswick Mall and Chiswick Eyot with the causeway of Chiswick drawdock in the foreground

Hammersmith Terrace is an elegant row of mid-eighteenth century houses with gardens leading down to the River. These houses form one continuous block of buildings and are favoured with three blue plaques. Of special note is the house where Sir Alan Herbert, 'author, humorist and reformist MP', lived and died by his 'beloved' Thames. His novel 'The Water Gypsies' is set on the River near Hammersmith.

Immediately to the east after Hammersmith Terrace the riverside opens up and the '**Bell**' stairs lead down to the river. The stretch of riverfront eastwards from here was cleared in the 1960's. Lord Napier Place is a modern housing development that extends to the riverfront, on the sites of the former Atlanta and Albert Wharves. The riverside footpath passes beneath the projecting end block.

Linden House (Grade II) is the elegant early Georgian home of the London Corinthian Sailing Club, founded in 1894. Built with a central pediment above the main entrance, it is an important highlight along this stretch of the River. The private



Linden House on Chiswick Mall, home of the London Corinthian Sailing Club

forecourt contains three mature trees, which contribute to the setting of the listed building. An elevated signalling box for starting yacht races is, however, an interesting feature.



Hammersmith Terrace is an elegant row of mid-eighteenth century houses

The signalling box marks the beginning of the **Upper Mall**, the riverside walk that extends up to Furnival Gardens. The riverfront is an attractive mixture of buildings of different periods and styles. **River Court House** dates from 1808 and is now part of Latymer School. Opposite Rivercourt Road the riverfront widens out at the two curved bastions dating from 1650. (The river wall between nos. 20 and 36 is listed Grade II). These bastions give the opportunity for panoramic views both up and downstream, but are unfortunately reserved for private parking. This stretch of the Mall is shared by vehicles and pedestrians and has an asphalt road surface with standard street furniture and a river wall which could have some potential for a lower design.

The Upper Mall open space next to the **Old Ship Inn** has been recently refurbished, with a new play area. On the north side of the Inn a seventeenth century brick porch (listed Grade II) survives from the original building of the Old Ship. This small pocket park enjoys good river views, both upstream and downstream.

The gabled brick houses from Weltje Road to Furnival Gardens form a strong built frontage onto the riverside walk. **Kelmscott House** dating from c1785 is listed Grade II* and is a three storey house, with a bowed addition. **William Morris** lived here from 1877 to his death in 1896 and established his design workshop and printing press on the premises. One of the works produced here was the "Kelmscott Chancer". The William Morris Society occupies the basement. The local authority's Visitor Strategy suggests

possibly developing the William Morris theme into an interior design and arts/crafts museum, promoting both contemporary and historic designs. A previous occupant of Kelmscott House was Sir Francis Ronalds (1788-1873), inventor of the electric telegraph in 1816 who installed eight miles of cable in the garden to demonstrate his machine.

Upper Mall ends at a narrow passage. The path, which curves to the left, is paved with York stone slabs and is visually articulated by the hanging sign for **The Dove** public house, half way along its length. The pub (listed Grade II) which dates to 1790, was originally a coffee house, and forms part of a group of historic properties facing the riverfront. The pub possesses a grapevine covered riverside



*Kelmscott House on Chiswick Mall,
home of William Morris*

terrace and used to be frequented by watermen, when sailing barges unloaded cargo here.

The picturesque narrowness of the passageway space, which opens out dramatically into **Furnival Gardens** to the east, is one of the most important sequence of townscapes along the river between Kew and Chelsea. **Sussex House** (listed Grade II*) is on the northern side of the footpath at the entrance to the gardens.

Furnival Gardens named after Dr Frederick Furnival, known for promoting the sport of rowing, separates Lower Mall from Upper Mall. This was laid out as a sequence of landscaped spaces in the early 1950's after war-time bombing destroyed one of the oldest parts of historic Hammersmith centred on **the Creek**. All that is visible of the former Creek is the outfall to the Thames. The grounds also include an enclosed garden that covers the site of a Quaker burial ground.

The gardens are well used, particularly by office workers at lunchtimes. The open space is affected by the traffic on the adjacent A4 Great West Road, although there is some screening provided by existing vegetation. There are good views along the Thames in both directions. Viewed from the river, the frontage is dominated by the four-storey Riverside Gardens block of flats and the southern elevation of Hammersmith Town Hall. The height of the existing river wall could be reconsidered.

At the south-western corner of Furnival Gardens, **Dove Pier** was constructed by Hammersmith Council in 1951 to celebrate the Festival of Britain. The pier is no longer used for regular river



Dove Pier, Hammersmith

services, but is open to visiting boats for a fee. The owners of the pier have undertaken improvements to the facilities available at the pier and it is understood that they would wish to carry out further enhancement works, including the extension of the pier to increase the number of moorings and the potential for increased use by river services. The **houseboats** moored at Hammersmith Pier provide interest and activity at the water's edge. With Chelsea, this is one of the few places on London's river with permanent residential moorings.

The wide dual carriageway of the A4 Great West Road severs the historic link between Chiswick High Road/King Street and the River. The important link to the river and Farnham Gardens, via the underpasses at Nigel Playfair Avenue and Macbeth Street/Black Lion Lane, could be improved.

Links to Hammersmith Broadway have been improved in recent years. The Broadway is an important **commercial centre and public transport interchange** and a 'gateway' to the Thames. This important connection needs, however, to be reinforced. Pedestrian signage/

interpretation facilities should be provided at the tube and bus station and in the town centre. This could include a local circular trail via Queen Caroline Street to the historic riverside, Hammersmith Mall and Dove Pier.

Lower Mall is the final section of The Mall conservation area and extends up to Hammersmith Bridge. This pedestrianised section is one of the liveliest and most rewarding stretches of the River, although a review of the river wall height is required. The Lower Mall has a long association with rowing and the headquarters of the Amateur Rowing Association is located here.

The **Rutland** and the **Blue Anchor** are famous traditional pubs with outdoor tables overlooking the Thames. There are a number of rowing clubs and boathouses with walkways leading down to

floating pontoons. On Boat Race Day the Lower Mall is packed solid with spectators. A distinguished iron balcony at first floor level continues across the facade of the Rutland and Blue Anchor pubs. **Kent House** (listed Grade II) is part of an attractive group of houses with iron verandas at different heights, and is now used by the Association of Hammersmith Clubs. **Digby Mansions** forms a fitting end to this group, with its Victorian corner dome providing a landmark when viewed from Hammersmith Bridge Road.

The **quality of the public realm** through Lower Mall does not do justice to the setting of the many listed buildings. Improvements could be made to the surfacing of the river walk and associated public spaces in Hammersmith Mall if possible using traditional materials. There remain fragments of



Lower Mall, Hammersmith



Hammersmith Bridge looking upstream

historic paving in Doves Passage, and at the eastern end of Hammersmith Terrace by the Bell Stairs (also known as Black Lion Steps).

Up until the 1950's sections of the **shingle foreshore** in front of Hammersmith and Chiswick Malls were used as beaches. While strong currents in the River make it unsuitable for bathing, the foreshore is used for walking and relaxing. The Upper Mall has sets of steps leading to it. The steps need to be restored and cleaned regularly in order for it to be accessed safely, and tidal information displayed for safety reasons. Suitable arrangements need to be considered for the maintenance and management of steps.

The river wall protecting the historic Chiswick and Hammersmith Malls varies in its age, condition and design. Sections such as in front of Hammersmith Terrace have timber fendering, which adds character and texture to the river wall. The wooden jetties and moorings for houseboats also make an important contribution to the river landscape.

Hammersmith Bridge is an important landmark along this reach of the River and is particularly dominant in views along Lower Mall. The suspension bridge is another fine example of Sir Joseph Bazalgette's work. It replaced the earlier bridge built in 1827, which was the first suspension bridge in London. Bazalgette incorporated the old piers and abutments into his design. The bridge, which is listed Grade II, has decorative cast iron

supporting towers, and has been repainted recently in an original dark green and gold colour scheme.

The Southern Bank and North Barnes

The inside bend of the meander is protected by a vegetated sloping revetment which is constructed using stone sett blocks. In places these have become dislodged and are in need of repair.

The riparian vegetation along this stretch is not particularly well developed. The tree species lining the towpath include ash, sycamore, horse chestnut, grey poplar, white poplar and crack willow. Beneath these, in places, are elm suckers regenerating where mature trees, stricken with Dutch Elm disease were removed in the 1970's.

The Thames Path National Trail on the southern bank of the river, between Lonsdale Road in Barnes to Hammersmith Bridge, has not been surfaced with hoggin as have other sections of the towpath. The route throughout this section is enclosed within a narrow corridor of woodland. The path can become muddy and its northerly aspect and the shade of the trees means it takes time to dry out.

The **Ferry Lane** access to the River from Lonsdale Road is poorly signposted and in need of enhancement. If the ferry could be re-introduced it would allow a direct connection to Chiswick along Verdun Road/Ferry Road, from Barnes, Barnes Common, St Paul's School and the new Wetland Centre at Barn Elms.

The playing fields and buildings of **St. Paul's School** occupy the southern bank of the River opposite Hammersmith Mall. The sports fields are

set behind a narrow strip of woodland which encloses the towpath around the inside bend of the River to Barnes.

In places the school buildings are very close to the Tow Path and the boundary fence is intrusive. The slipway from the school boathouse is also built over the foreshore. The future development plans for the school need to ensure that the setting at the River is properly respected.

From the River and the Tow Path on the southern bank of the Thames, a sequence of views to the historic townscape along the riverside between and Chiswick and Hammersmith unfold:

- The spire of St. Nicholas Church and the tower of the former Lamb Brewery.
- Chiswick Eyot with its pollarded willows.
- The houses along Hammersmith Terrace with their gardens extending down to the River.
- Linden House and the Victorian Pumping Station to the south of the Great West Road.
- Upper Mall including River Court House and to the north the spire of River Court Methodist Church.
- Kelmscott House and the historic group of buildings clustered around The Dove pub.
- Dove Pier and Mr See's Moorings with their collection of houseboats.
- Furnival Gardens which allows views through to the south flank of Hammersmith Town Hall.

- The skyline of Hammersmith Broadway with its modern office blocks and the tower of St. Paul's Church and the distinctive form of The Ark.
- Lower Mall with its two famous pubs The Rutland and Blue Anchor.

Lonsdale Road (Leg of Mutton) Reservoir

There is a **strip of dense woodland** between the reservoir and towpath. Sycamore is the dominant species, with ash, elder and oak present. A line of huge poplars, planted about 150 years ago, runs beside the reservoir and along the Tow- Path to the south; most of these are hybrid black poplars, but at least one is a **native black poplar**, now a rare and declining species.

Despite the artificial banks of the Lonsdale Road Reservoir, there is a considerable amount of marginal vegetation. Conservation volunteers have assisted colonisation by creating shallow, soil-filled berms. There is a small reed bed at the northern end and the southern end has a well-developed marginal zone where watercress, gypsy wort, celery-leaved crowfoot, bur-marigold and the London rarities, bogbean and frog-bit, can all be found.

The reservoir is of considerable **value to waterfowl** throughout the year. Floating rafts have successfully attracted common terns to nest.



Leg of Mutton Reservoir

Much larger numbers of ducks are present in winter, including significant numbers of shoveler, pochard and tufted ducks. Eleven species of mammals have also been recorded, including the declining water vole and three species of bat. The scarce and protected great crested newt is also present, as are green parakeets.

The site was declared a **Local Nature Reserve** in 1990 and a management plan has been written by local community groups who regularly organise refilling from the River by local volunteers. Management work has included thinning of sycamores, footpath maintenance, and tree and hedge planting. The Council has placed interpretation boards and the entrances to the reserve, which is open to the public at all times.

It is an important site for bird watching and educational resource for local school children.

Issues and Opportunities

Chiswick Mall

- The need for the continued conservation and restoration of the surviving fragments of 17th, 18th and 19th century old Chiswick, which includes listed buildings valued for their historic and cultural associations
- Improving the connections to Chiswick House and Gardens and Hogarth House via Church Lane and the Hogarth Roundabout.
- The protection of key views along and across the River to St Nicholas Church, former Lamb Brewery, Chiswick Mall and the Barnes bank.
- The continued traditional pollarding of the willows on Chiswick Eyot to maintain its importance for nature conservation.
- The control or eradication of the Chinese Mitten Crabs which are destroying the soft banks of Chiswick Eyot.
- The promotion of Chiswick Pier as a river bus stop and part of an active community waterfront
- The possible reintroduction of the ferry from Chiswick drawdock to Ferry Lane on Lonsdale Road, if only on a seasonal or weekend basis.

Hammersmith Mall

- The need for the continued conservation and restoration of the 18th and 19th century riverside mansions and terraces, and interpretation of celebrated residents and visitors.

- The protection of key views along and across the river to Hammersmith Terrace, Kelmscott House, Lower Mall, Chiswick Eyot, Putney and the Barnes bank.
- The control of further development which would have a negative impact on the skyline and setting of the riverside conservation area.
- The potential to develop the William Morris Gallery in Kelmscott House into an interior design and arts/crafts museum promoting both contemporary and historic designs.
- The need to restore the quality of the public realm, including the riverside roads, Furnival Gardens, and the pedestrianised section of Lower Mall to provide a coherent character throughout the conservation area.
- Encourage rowers, scullers and sailing clubs to continue to use this reach of the river, consulting and where practical involving clubs in river management programmes.
- The conservation and restoration of the historic river related structures, pontoons, mooring posts, and steps.
- Improved accessibility to the foreshore subject to safety considerations and the promotion of a new leisure hub/area around Becket's wharf and Queen's drawdock as a key part of the visitor strategy assisting the regeneration of Hammersmith.
- Encourage the retention of the residential moorings as a key part of the vitality and interest of the River. Legally enforceable measures and regulations are in place to

minimise problems of pollution on the ecology of the River.

- The increased use of Dove Pier for regular River bus services and linking the services with the public transport interchange at Hammersmith Broadway.
- Enhancement of the Hammersmith Mall Conservation Area through planting a mulberry tree at Mulbery Place and replacing the three 'Queens Elms' outside Riverside House.

North Barnes

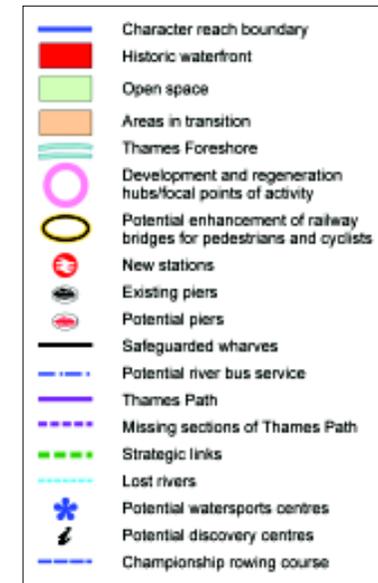
- The continued management of the Leg of Mutton reservoir as a nature reserve, working to an agreed management plan.
- The potential exists to extend the former reservoir as an educational resource.
- The protection of the rural tranquil nature of the wooded southern bank and the Tow Path.
- The management of riverbank vegetation to increase ecological diversity and reveal and frame views to landmarks along Chiswick and Hammersmith Malls.
- The enhancement of the boundary to St Paul's School and additional planting to break up and conceal the impact of educational buildings close to the river.
- The protection of key views to Barnes Bridge, Chiswick Eyot and Hammersmith Bridge.
- The conservation and restoration of the cobbled sloping revetment along the inside bend of the river.

CHARACTER REACH NO.4 : FULHAM REACH AND BARN ELMS

River Chart Name: Barn Elms Reach



Harrod's Depository



Key Characteristics

Although this character reach is not crossed by any bridges, it is defined by Hammersmith Bridge and Putney Bridge. As a result the area includes a substantial area of rural open space with no cross-river links. It is now most notable for the newly created Wetland Centre, a haven for birds. This is connected by a series of open green spaces, along the Beverley Brook course, right down to Richmond Park, creating an important green corridor. This area also includes significant pockets of commercial development on the river frontage, notably at Hammersmith Embankment and at Thames Wharf, including the distinctive offices of the Richard Rogers Partnership. To the east of the Thames, there is piecemeal, new strand housing development of variable quality with higher buildings beyond and the riverside Fulham Football Ground at Craven Cottage, with its dominant lighting columns.

Key features of Character Reach No.4 may be summarised as follows:

- Harrod's Depository is a landmark and residential reuse of an historic riverside commercial building;
- The Wetland Centre reuses former arable, market gardening and water storage land at Barn Elms;
- The lack of existing cross-river bridge links increases the severance of south bank communities and attractions;
- Craven Cottage is a riverside landmark and the subject of major development proposals;

- The poor setting of Beverley Brook is a reminder of the diminished role of Thames tributaries;
- The skyline of Hammersmith and Fulham announces the urban nature of adjacent town centres;
- Charing Cross Hospital has a significant impact on views of the River and riverside due to its height and bulk;
- The mixed urban character of the north bank has a piecemeal architectural composition and quality.

Charing Cross Hospital
Hammersmith Bridge
Hammersmith Embankment Phase 1
Castelnau
Harrod's Depository
Barnes Waterside



Aerial view of Character Reach No. 4

Historical Background

“Fulham Reach”

“Fulham Reach” is edged by a narrow corridor of land following the broad outer bend of the river from Hammersmith Bridge down to the Fulham Football Ground at Craven Cottage. The historic boundary between Hammersmith and Fulham is the watercourse known as **Parrs Ditch**, a tributary of the Stamford Brook, which has its outlet to the Thames near the present Riverside Studios. This watercourse is now culverted underground and one of ‘London’s Lost Rivers’.

At low tide there is a high and dry **sandbank** along this stretch of the Thames and there may well have been a ford across the river in earlier times. The area has been occupied since the Neolithic period and until the 19th century there was evidence of pre-Roman earthworks along the riverside.

The boundary between Hammersmith and Fulham also marks the transition between the heavy clays underlying Hammersmith and the rich fertile loams of Fulham. John Rocque’s map of Fulham (1741-1745) shows the large **Fulham Fields** as a sparsely inhabited agricultural and horticultural acreage extending inland from the River.

The River was wider and shallower than it is today and the low lying meadows at Fulham were frequently flooded. The banks were fringed with osiers and reeds.

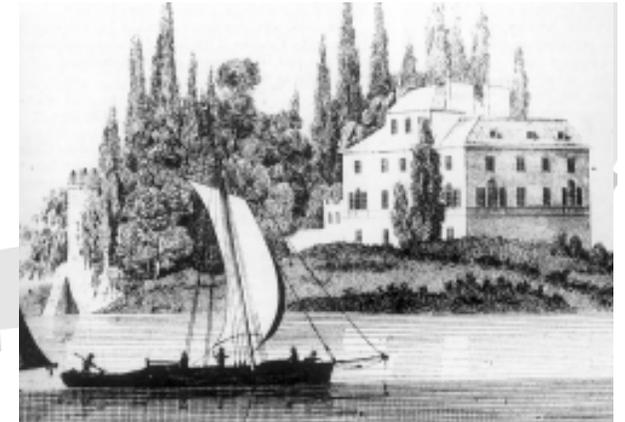
“Fulham Reach” remained rural in character until the mid-nineteenth century with a series of market

gardens and nurseries interspersed with several grand homes and estates. On the Hammersmith borders with Fulham’s riverside stood **Brandenburgh House**. In 1792 the house came into the possession of the Margrave of Brandenburg and his wife built a Gothic theatre by the river. The house was later occupied by Queen Caroline of Brunswick, wife of George IV. She died there in 1821 and is commemorated by **Queen Caroline Street** which extends from Hammersmith Broadway to the River. Her death also marked the end of Brandenburgh House as one of the most impressive riverside residences in London.

Other important riverside retreats along Fulham Reach were: Dorset Villa, Rosebank and Craven Cottage. Dorset Villa possessed a long terrace walk with landing steps to the Thames and Craven Cottage was an attractive cottage destroyed by fire in 1888. Its name became attached to the later



Rocque’s map of Fulham, 1741-1745



Brandenburgh House c.1810

football ground on the site. To prevent the inundation of the tide, an elevated terrace was built along the river in front of the cottage’s grounds. At the southern end of this embankment a flight of steps, the **Craven Steps** led down into the water and part of these remain today.

During the second half of the 19th century the market gardens and the country houses were replaced by industry. The first and largest of the industrial development schemes was on the site of Brandenburgh House. The **Haig Distillery** was erected in 1857 on part of the former grounds and in 1872 Alexander Manbre built his sugar refinery on the remainder.

Dorset Villa was demolished in 1890 and the grounds built on for the warehouse and wharf of the corn merchants, Hood and Moore. The Anglo-American Oil Company established **Dorset Wharf**. This was the start of a sustained period of wharf construction. Tea Rose Wharf was built soon after

Dorset Wharf, followed by Blakes Wharf, at the end of Stevenage Road just after the turn of the century and Eternit Wharf in 1910.

Between 1870 and 1910 there was a rapid growth in the population of Fulham and new housing developments were built on Fulham Fields and elsewhere to accommodate the workers in the new riverside industries. This stock of late Victorian and Edwardian housing still forms the hinterland to the riverside corridor.



Riverside view of Manbre & Garton factory

The riverside wharves and industries began to decline in the 1970's. The **Manbre and Garton sugar refinery** was closed down in the late 1970's and **Blake's Wharf** was demolished in 1980. As these and other companies left, developers arrived. Industrial development has been replaced in a series of phases by residential and office developments linked by a riverside walkway. **Palace Wharf** remains largely unaltered and has become established as the focus of an artists' complex.

Barn Elms

The former **manor house at Barn Elms** stood on the eastern side of the pronounced bend in the River that encloses the Barnes peninsula. It was part of the demesne estate, which extended to Barnes Common in the south and the road to Chiswick Ferry in the west. The lease of the estate was held by Sir Francis Walsingham, the Secretary of State to Queen Elizabeth 1, between 1579 – 1590. There were two farms on the estate, Home Farm on the east of the peninsula near the house and Windmill Farm to the west.



Former industrial site at Blake's Wharves

In the seventeenth century the most marked change in the area was the growth of **market gardens and orchards** in place of arable farming. The 1838 Tithe Map of Barnes shows only the manor house at Barn Elms, Barn Elm Farm and Mill Farm on the peninsula. The opening of the first **Hammersmith Bridge** in 1827 provided a direct route to London for the fruit and vegetable produce from the market gardens. Each night a steady stream of loaded wagons crossed Hammersmith Bridge bound for Covent Garden. Yet by the end of the nineteenth century, landowners started to sell the market garden enclosures for building land.

The **Hoare family** took over the occupation of the manor house at Barn Elms in the eighteenth century. The formal canal to the west of the house was extended to create a large ornamental lake with a grotto, island and footbridge. The Barn Elms Estate also included a large house called **Elm Grove**, close to the Beverley Brook and Barnes Common. The last member of the Hoare family at Barn Elms, Henry Hugh Hoare, refused to give the Hammersmith Bridge Company permission to build access across his land, and forced the company to buy the entire estate. Following the enforced sale the estate was broken up into parcels for development, the manor house remained however set within 120 acres. Housing developments began around 1840 with large riverside mansions and villas by Hammersmith Bridge. The original developer was Major Charles Boileau of Mortlake, whose ancestral home in France was called **Castelnau**.

The house and grounds of Barns Elms became the elite and fashionable **Ranelagh Club** from 1894 until 1939. It moved from Ranelagh House in Fulham. There was an eighteen-hole golf course, and open-air theatre, behind which an old domed brick icehouse provided dressing rooms for the performers. In the mid 1930's the freehold of the former manor house was obtained by developers from the Church Commissioners, and agreement reached with the local authority to build flats over most of the grounds. The outbreak of war postponed development and in 1946 the London County Council and Surrey County Council used compulsory purchase orders to acquire the estate for the **Barn Elms playing fields**. The mansion burnt down in a fire in 1954. Only a truncated part of the ornamental lake system and the icehouse provide the slightest reminder of the former grounds.



Barn Elms c.1840

In 1858 Cowan's Soap and Candle Works was built to the east of Castelnau, near to the bridge. It was destroyed in a fire in 1888. **Harrods Furniture Depository** was built on its site. It was built for the customers of the Knightsbridge emporium to store their belongings. The building is reminiscent of the main shop with its cupolas and red terracotta tiles.

The **water storage reservoirs at Barns Elms** were built between 1886 and 1897, and were among the first in London. The roughly square raised reservoir was divided by causeways into four square, concrete-sided basins of approximately equal size. The four basins had surface areas of between 7.4 and 9.8 hectares, with capacities of 280,000 to 380,000 cubic metres. They were designated Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). The reservoirs were decommissioned by Thames Water in 1990 following completion of the London Ring Water Main. The now redundant reservoirs became available for a new use with housing at the north end which part financed a new Wetlands Centre project as part of a legal agreement. The reservoirs had long attracted wintering wildfowl, and following debate, the decision was made to turn the site into a **Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Centre**, the first created wetland habitat in any capital city, with extensive lagoons, reed beds, grazing marshes and observation hides. The site extends to some 105 acres and has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The centre is closely associated with the lifetime work of Sir Peter Scott. The Peter Scott Visitor Centre provides a Discovery Centre, Observatory, lecture theatre, art gallery and restaurant.



The Wetland Centre today

The area to the north of the reservoir, although MOL, has been developed for new housing, **Barnes Waterside**. The total cost of the new Wetland Centre was £16 million of which Thames Water and Berkeley Homes provided £11 million.

Subsequently the Harrods Depository site became surplus to Harrods' requirements and has been partly refurbished/partly redeveloped as enclosed, luxury housing. A small public park has been provided on the Riverside and a footpath/cycle track through the development from the towpath to the land behind, is open during daylight hours. The access to the towpath is gated, and locked during hours of darkness.

Character appraisal

Fulham Reach

Overall character is green on Barnes bank and built-up on Fulham bank. Fulham Reach forms a significant stretch of the Championship Rowing Course and provides important viewing areas for events.

The view from Hammersmith Bridge looking downstream is one of a mix of uses, contrasting scales and heights of development, with a variety of different architectural styles; reflecting the piecemeal nature of re-development over the last thirty years. The riverside is predominantly urban in character, with little vegetation and few open spaces. The floodlights of Fulham Football Ground are a local landmark, and in the distance can be seen the ICL Tower at Putney and the Arndale Centre in Wandsworth.

The urban character of the northern banks of the River, contrasts with the predominantly open nature of the southern bank. The views across the rural south bank and the open expanse of the Wetland Centre are an important element in defining the character of the conservation areas.

There is a drawdock at **Queens Wharf** at the southern end of Queen Caroline Street. This is next to the proposed **Hammersmith Steps**, which were originally conceived by the Architectural Foundation, as part of an overall regeneration strategy for Hammersmith. The proposals are subject to review following public consultation.



Queen's Wharf and Riverside Studios

The Old Kensington Vestry facilities were converted into studios for the BBC and were later converted into the current **Riverside Studio's Arts Complex**. These are a potentially important focus of activity and visitor attraction along the riverfront and present a possible opportunity for extended activities and extension of the riverwalk in this location. Unfortunately the riverside elevation of the studios lacks quality.

The **Chancellors Wharf** mixed use development marks the beginning of the riverside walk. This early 1990's development is characterised by its distinctive brick patterning.

The first phase of the **Hammersmith Embankment** office park is completed and the second phase is approved. The five storey offices are set behind landscaped grass lawns with seating overlooking the River. The vacant Phase 2 site is the subject of a current planning application for further office development, but at present creates a gap in the riverside frontage and allows views to the 900 bed **Charing Cross Hospital**.

Designed in the form of a cross, this 17-storey building dominates views of this reach of the River, particularly the view from the southern bank. The impact of high rise buildings, close to the Hammersmith flyover on the setting of the River is also evident.

The residential element of the overall Hammersmith Embankment development is **King Henry's Reach**. This five-storey development has distinctive triangular metal balconies extending over the riverside walkway. Immediately downstream is **Thames Reach** which consists of three groups of flats designed by the Richard Rogers Partnership, and built between 1985 – 88. This development also abuts directly onto the riverside walk and has white tubular steel balconies and glass curtain walling.



King Henry's Reach/Thames Reach

The former Duckham oil refinery offices at Thames Wharf on Rainville Road were converted by Lifschutz Davidson for the Richard Rogers Partnership. The architectural studios have a barrel vaulted steel roof, and the large semi-circular window is protected from the afternoon sun by green blinds, which unfurl like sails. In the courtyard is the celebrated **River Café**, which is set behind an attractive open space, which includes pots of fresh herbs and vegetables for the restaurant.

Moving downstream the river walk passes late 1970's council housing, which is generally three storeys in height and built of brick. Between the former **Dorset Wharf** and **Greyhound Wharf** the houses are set back behind communal gardens, separated from the river walk by a change of level and railings. The Thames Path National Trail returns to Rainville Road to pass round the former Rathbone Works at Palace Wharf and the Crabtree drawdock next to the **Crabtree Public House**. There are two willow trees growing on the shingle foreshore at this point, which is also an historical ferry crossing. The riverside inn provided refreshment for the basket makers in the osier beds of **Roseberry Mead**, and the workers in the nearby orchards.

The 1970's residential development continues with Adam Walk and Wheatsheaf Lane on the sites of the former Crabtree and Wheatsheaf Wharves. The **Rosebank Tower** is in contrast to the remainder of the housing over this section. The residential development is clearly visible from Hammersmith Bridge and the southern bank of the river and lacks architectural interest.

The bases of the former oil tanks in front of the **Queens Manor School** have been incorporated into a small park known as Rowberry Mead. This small but welcome open space allows open views to the river from Rainville Road, but unfortunately is the target of graffiti and vandalism.

The former oil depot at **William Cory Wharf** has recently been developed for housing. Industrial artefacts have been incorporated into the walkway, together with an interpretation panel.

The **Old Stevenage Wharf** site was one of the first developments of luxury riverside flats, River Gardens (built between 1974 – 77) along the River between Kew and Chelsea. The distinctive dark brick balconied flats are grouped in clusters, around mature private gardens.

The derelict thatched Craven Cottage was acquired by **Fulham Football Club** in 1896 and the 'cottage' pavilion type office building and the iron-framed ground stand (both listed Grade II) were designed by the Glasgow engineer Archibald Leitch. The later stands do not contribute to the



River Gardens and Fulham Football Club

setting of the river, with a blank elevation extending almost directly from the river wall. Planning permission has recently been granted for a new 30,000 capacity stadium.

The quality of **the links** along Fulham Reach to the riverfront are often not inviting or welcoming to the user. Long narrow alleyways, with a perception of poor safety fail to highlight the riverfront and draw in people to interact with the River. The riverside walkway is often poorly designed in terms of the relationship of buildings to the public realm.



Riverside Walk at River Gardens, Fulham

The **public realm** throughout Fulham Reach lacks continuity and coherence between the different developments. The phased release of the various sites has resulted in different styles of street furniture/lighting and types of paving.

The **river wall** along the north bank reflects the use of the riverbank for wharves and industry and exhibits a variety of treatment. It consists of vertical walls throughout Fulham Reach except for the drawdocks at Queens Wharf and Crabtree Public House. The treatment of the parapet varies between developments. In many cases a new capping beam



Barn Elms Reach

with railings has been added to the walls of the former wharves. The original timber fendering is often in poor condition or has been lost. The crevices between brick/ stone facing provide an important habitat for invertebrates and plant life. A review of the river wall is required, including issues relating to future maintenance.

The foreshore along Fulham Reach is particularly wide with bars of sand, mud and shingle. This allows foreshore walks in some areas at low tide. There are few access points to the foreshore along Fulham Reach, although the existing situation could be improved by the proposals at **Hammersmith Steps** and the restoration of **Craven Steps**, as part of the future redevelopment of Fulham Football Ground. Provision for future access to the foreshore must take into account safety considerations.

Castelnau

The four story red brick riverside mansion blocks along Riverview Gardens, in Castelnau create a strong visual anchor next to Hammersmith Bridge, on the southern bank of the Thames.

The cupolas of **Harrods Furniture Depository** are an important landmark along the river. The distinctive terracotta and cream banding of the original depository have been continued through into the new 5/6 storey luxury apartments behind



Harrods Depository

the original riverside block. The former wharf in front of the depository is derelict and fenced off. The wharf is faced in dressed stone, which contrasts with the sloping revetment elsewhere along the southern bank.

The Harrods Furniture Depository and the associated new residential development occupy a large frontage to the Thames Path, which is fenced off to the general public. This restricts accessibility to the riverside from the wider area, thereby privatising access to this part of the Thames. This reduces the amount of users and thus the vibrancy of this part of the waterfront.

The **Barnes Waterside Development** consists of 321 housing units made up of two large 5 – storey riverside mansion blocks, and large and small townhouses in a neo-Georgian style. The development is served from Trinity Church Road. Large detached houses overlook the northern lagoon within the Wetland Centre. The new planting within the development is still small. The existing vegetation between Hammersmith Bridge and the Wetland Centre is thin and intermittent, there are groups of Lombardy poplars and willows of sufficient stature, but they do not sufficiently integrate the new development with the riverbank.

The **Wetland Centre** retains the earth banks and fencing of the former Thames Water Reservoir, along the boundary with the riverside path. This mound rises four to five metres above the Thames Path National Trail and prevents views into and out of the Wetland Centre. There is a lack of tree planting along this boundary section, in order not to restrict the flight paths of migratory wildfowl.



Barnes Waterside



Queen Elizabeth Walk



Wetland Centre

Even before the creation of “Europe’s largest urban wetland” the former reservoir was of sufficient importance for its wintering waterfowl to be notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1975. A mosaic of lakes, ponds and marshes extending

over 105 acres have been created, with 27 separately controlled hydrological units, over 300,00 aquatic plants and 27,000 trees planted.

Signage for the Wetland Centre could be improved at the junction with the **Queen Elizabeth Walk**, so that users of the Thames Path National Trail may be made more aware of the Wetland Centre. Similarly, visitors to the Wetland Centre are likely to be unaware of the Thames from within the Centre despite their close relationship. Earlier schemes for the Wetland Centre included closer integration with the river.

The **Barns Elms Playing Fields** are separated from the river, visually and physically, by a 1.8 metre high concrete retaining wall, which forms the riverside perimeter of the sports pitches. The additional security fencing and belt of mature trees reinforces the separation. There is a proliferation of

fences separating the playing fields from the **Beverley Brook** and the Queen Elizabeth Walk. The pitches are intensively used, particularly on Saturday, and there are proposals for additional facilities.

Within the large expanse of playing fields and sports facilities are the remaining fragments of the former grounds of **Barn Elms Manor House** - a small but attractive lake, an icehouse and a rectangular block of woodland. The lake is fringed by large trees including poplar, plane, oak and sycamore. The woodland lying to the south of the lake occupies the site of an old garden as indicated by the presence of exotic shrubs. The woodland is dominated by a single enormous London Plane, one of the first to be planted in Britain, and with a girth at chest height of 10 metres.

Key Issues and Opportunities

Barn Elms

- The poor visual and physical connection between the new Wetland Centre and the River.
- The potential of the new Wetland Centre to fulfil a wider role as a “discovery” centre for the tidal Thames. The potential development of a River Thames discovery and interpretation centre provides the opportunity for strengthening linkages between the Wetlands Centre and Thames Path. This could provide a second point of entry to the Wetland Centre in closer proximity to the River.
- The lack of east-west link to the river between Hammersmith Bridge and the Beverley Brook, with the exception of the Queen Elizabeth Walk and the daytime-only footpath/cycle track through the Harrods Depository development.
- The trees along the riverbank are intermittent and in need of reinforcement with new planting.
- The privatisation of the riverside in front of the new Harrods Estate development, and the inappropriate suburban character of the landscape. Consideration could be given to enhancing the small public garden through providing improved public access and seating areas.

- The future of the derelict wharf in front of the Harrods Depository. This could provide a viewing area.

Barn Elms Playing Fields and Sports Centre

- The lack of any visual or physical connection between the playing fields and the River impeded by a 1.8m concrete retaining wall and security fencing.
- The landscape and visual implications of intensifying activity on the sports fields, by the introduction of all-weather pitches and flood lighting.
- The riverside sports grounds offer considerable scope for improving their landscape and habitat diversity.

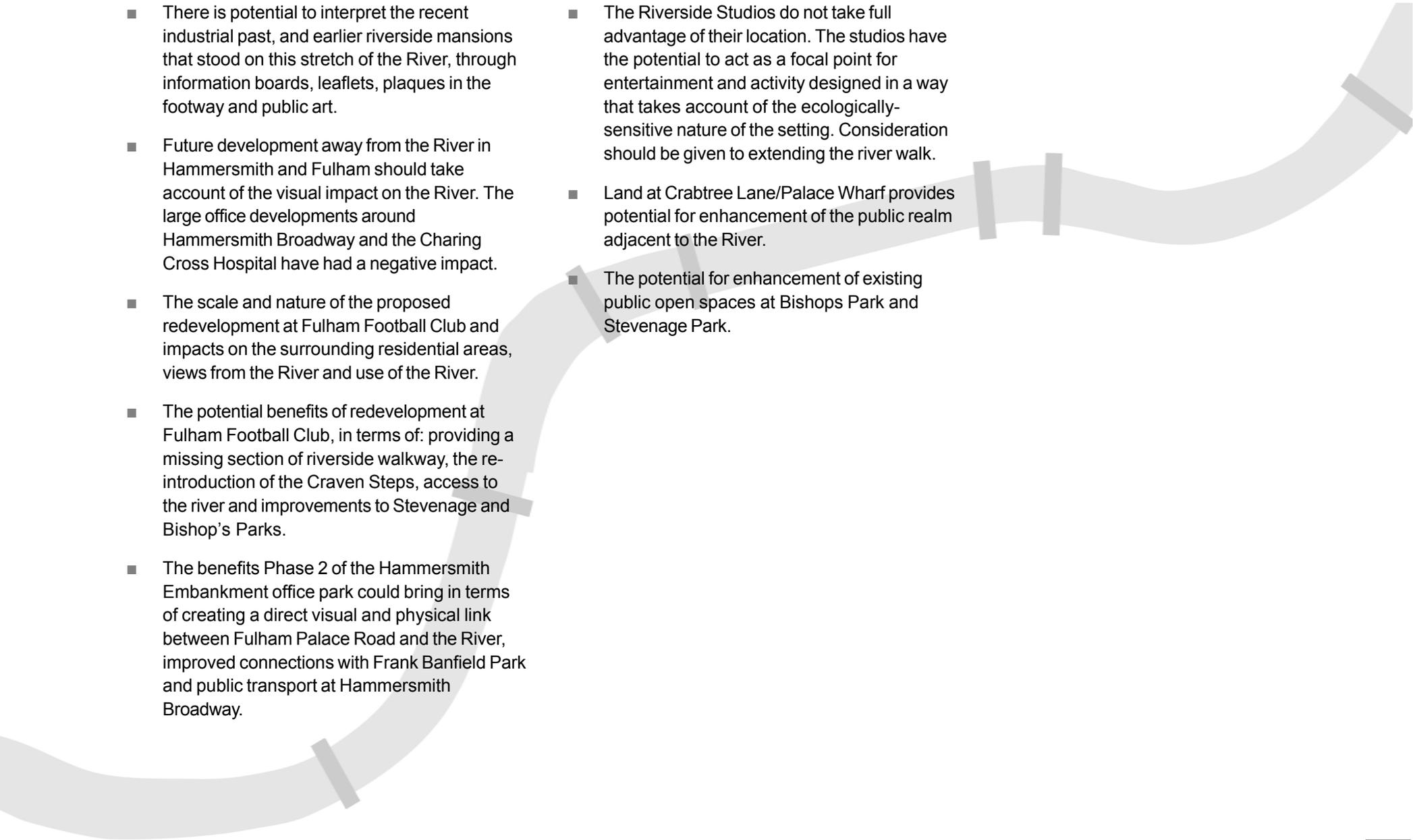
Beverley Brook

- The confluence of the tributary with the Thames is enclosed, and protected by security fencing. It is also dangerous in its present form, unless well fenced.
- The feasibility of removing or modifying the control structures at the mouth of the Brook to create a more natural appearance and range of habitats, and to prevent problems of siltation. Discussions are ongoing between the Environment Agency and Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators on the possible removal of the tidal flap at Ashlone Wharf.

- The Brook is part of a “green chain” of open space linking the River to Richmond Park and Wimbledon Common, which requires an integrated approach to landscape management, recreation and nature conservation.

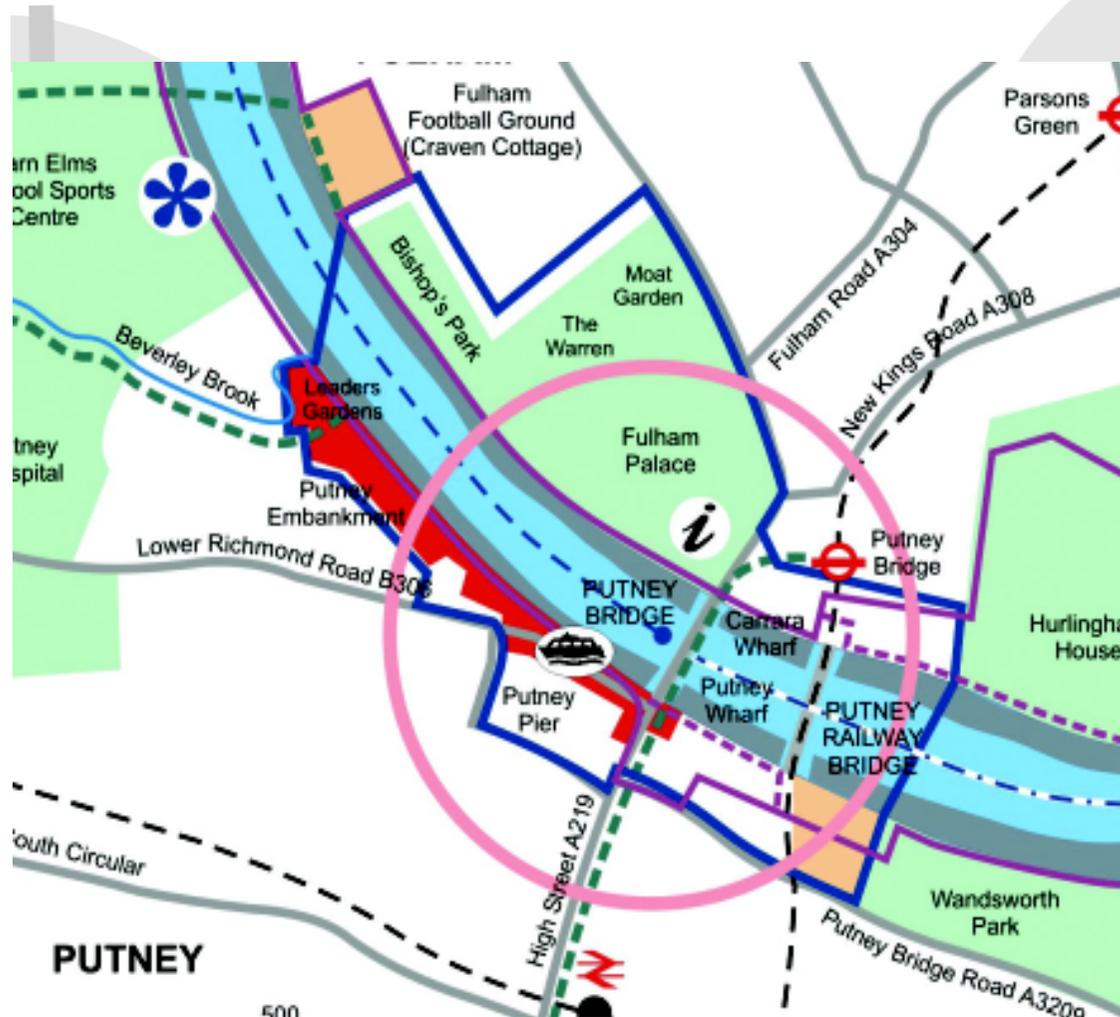
Fulham Bank

- The availability and timing of riverside sites has resulted in incremental development, with little or no relationship between neighbouring sites.
- The view from the southern bank of the River is one of a range of architectural treatment with a pleasing variety of styles, built forms and heights, all relatively low, although the trend is towards increasing height and commensurate visual impact.
- The riverside walkway lacks coherence in terms of materials, street furniture and lighting. There are still missing sections.
- Existing open spaces such as Rowberry Mead provide an important local amenity, but do not take full advantage of the riverside location, and are subject to vandalism and graffiti.
- Access to the River walk through private residential development is not always easily identifiable or welcoming.
- Access to the River is limited. Opportunities for access to the foreshore should be investigated subject to safety considerations.

- 
- There is potential to interpret the recent industrial past, and earlier riverside mansions that stood on this stretch of the River, through information boards, leaflets, plaques in the footway and public art.
 - Future development away from the River in Hammersmith and Fulham should take account of the visual impact on the River. The large office developments around Hammersmith Broadway and the Charing Cross Hospital have had a negative impact.
 - The scale and nature of the proposed redevelopment at Fulham Football Club and impacts on the surrounding residential areas, views from the River and use of the River.
 - The potential benefits of redevelopment at Fulham Football Club, in terms of: providing a missing section of riverside walkway, the re-introduction of the Craven Steps, access to the river and improvements to Stevenage and Bishop's Parks.
 - The benefits Phase 2 of the Hammersmith Embankment office park could bring in terms of creating a direct visual and physical link between Fulham Palace Road and the River, improved connections with Frank Banfield Park and public transport at Hammersmith Broadway.
 - The Riverside Studios do not take full advantage of their location. The studios have the potential to act as a focal point for entertainment and activity designed in a way that takes account of the ecologically-sensitive nature of the setting. Consideration should be given to extending the river walk.
 - Land at Crabtree Lane/Palace Wharf provides potential for enhancement of the public realm adjacent to the River.
 - The potential for enhancement of existing public open spaces at Bishops Park and Stevenage Park.

CHARACTER REACH NUMBER 5: PUTNEY AND FULHAM PALACE

River Chart Name: Barn Elms Reach - Wandsworth Reach



Fulham Palace

	Character reach boundary
	Historic waterfront
	Open space
	Areas in transition
	Thames Foreshore
	Development and regeneration hubs/local points of activity
	Potential enhancement of railway bridges for pedestrians and cyclists
	New stations
	Existing piers
	Potential piers
	Safeguarded wharves
	Potential river bus service
	Thames Path
	Missing sections of Thames Path
	Strategic links
	Lost rivers
	Potential watersports centres
	Potential discovery centres
	Championship rowing course

Key Characteristics

This character reach is crossed in close succession by two bridges - Putney Bridge and Putney Railway Bridge. The Parish Churches of Putney and Fulham face each other across Putney Bridge. The north bank of the River is bounded by a long, tree-lined riverside promenade through Bishops Park and Fulham Palace and Gardens – a well utilised recreational resource. Putney exemplifies the continuing historic relationship with the River, taking full advantage of its riverside location, with slipways, piers and boat clubs and supporting refreshment uses and the vitality of urban character.

Key features of Character Reach No. 5 may be summarised as follows:

- Bishops Park open space is an important resource on the River frontage in need of improvement;
- Fulham Palace and Gardens is an important visitor attraction with an improvement action plan;
- All Saints Church, Fulham is a local landmark of the historic village settlement but the area is now dominated by traffic;
- St. Mary's Church, Putney is an overshadowed local landmark of the historic settlement;
- The impact of the former ICL office adjacent St. Mary's on the River;

- Putney riverside is the 19th century origin of river rowing, exemplified by the annual University Boat Race;
- Putney Bridge is a major river and town centre focal point for the reach;
- Putney Railway Bridge is an important opportunity for improved cross-river links.



Aerial view of Character Reach No. 5

Historical Background

Putney

Putney is one of the few places, between the Strand and Richmond, where higher land formed by gravel terraces touches the River's edge. This provides a flood-free location for settlement as well as a relatively firm approach for a river crossing. There is likely to have been a **ford** at Putney in prehistoric times. A settlement has existed at this important river crossing since the prehistoric period.

There was a possible Bronze Age settlement site near the mouth of the **Beverley Brook**. This location is also the probable site of a late Iron Age defended settlement. On the opposite side of the Thames, the former moat around **Fulham Palace** and associated earthworks may be a similar low-lying fort.

Considerable evidence of **Roman occupation** has been found near the River at Putney, close to the present day Star and Garter and Spring Passage. The Thames was used to link the settlement at Putney with Roman Londinium. It has been suggested that the Romans may have had a wooden bridge here on the line of the ancient trackway from Londinium to the south-west.

The name "Putney" derives from Anglo-Saxon and means "**Putta's landing place**". The first documentary evidence reference is in the Domesday Book, although only a toll from the fishery is mentioned. By this time there may have been a relatively substantial settlement at Putney

supported by farming on fertile soils on the Flood Plain Terrace, fishing and the tolls collected from the **ferry** across the River.

In later centuries the short ferry crossing to Fulham and the route to the long ferry from London to Putney, and then by road into Surrey and towards Portsmouth became increasingly important. Edward I used this route in 1290.

During the Tudor period it became common for London merchants and members of the Court to acquire a '**place in the country**' in convenient riverside parishes like Putney, a fashion which gradually worked its way down the social scale until the mass suburban building of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Putney was a rapidly **expanding and prosperous community** in the 17th century. The increasing influence of London was indicated by the new mansions, the spread of market gardening and the growing traffic by river and road. In the 1660s 40% of the householders working in Putney were watermen making their living from the River.

A church is known to have existed on the site of **St. Mary's Church** since 1291. Parts of the original building may have survived until its rebuilding in 1836. The architect of the new church was Edward Lapidge who had earlier designed St Peter's Hammersmith. In 1973 this church was largely destroyed by fire – it was rebuilt within the old walls.

During the 18th century Putney continued to grow as a fashionable outer suburb and the increase in traffic made a bridge necessary. There was heavy

opposition from the watermen and vested interests in the City of London. In 1729 the ferry was replaced by a 15-arch wooden bridge, known as **Fulham Bridge**. In order that it could connect Fulham and Putney High Streets without a lengthy diagonal course, the approach road curved around the north side of Putney Churchyard.



Putney viewed from the bridge in 1750

The bridge was expensive to build and the costs were recovered through the payment of tolls. Despite which it attracted increased foot and carriage traffic. The tolls were collected at a large covered tollhouse, astride the roadway on the Fulham side and a small tollhouse against the churchyard wall on the Putney bank.

A **tow path** for horses to haul barges was built beside the Thames in 1776-7, westwards from the foot of the new bridge. For the first time it was possible to walk along a substantial part of the Putney foreshore. The barges used the drawdock and slipway next to the present bridge.



Barges at Alchin's Wharf c.1880

Growth continued in the early nineteenth century and **Putney Palace** was the first of the great houses to be demolished for development. Gay and River Street were laid out on part of the site in 1826. In 1846 the Waterloo to Richmond railway arrived, and made Putney even more accessible for Victorian commuters. In 1880 the District Railway arrived in Fulham, giving direct access to the City. The following year the Metropolitan Board of Works purchased Putney Bridge and freed it from tolls, as were Hammersmith and Wandsworth Bridges.

The old bridge was becoming increasingly unsatisfactory both for road and river traffic and the Board decided to build a new one on the line of an aqueduct built by the Chelsea Waterworks Company in the 1850s. This new bridge was designed by **Sir Joseph Bazalgette** who had earlier completed the Thames Embankment. The mains of the former aqueduct were incorporated in the footways of the bridge. The five span bridge is faced in Cornish granite and was opened by the



Putney Bridge soon after construction

Prince of Wales in 1886. It has remained unaltered, except for widening in 1931-3.

The **Putney Railway Bridge** was built immediately after the new road bridge between 1887-9 for the London and South Western Railway, by William Jacomb, Brunel's assistant on the ship, the Great Eastern. It has five spans of lattice girder construction.

The 1880s were the key decade in Putney's development. As well as the two new bridges, **the Embankment** was constructed in 1887-8 and was a great source of pride to the growing town. The last of the great houses along the High Street disappeared at this time and new shops were built. Mansion blocks, such as Kenilworth Court, were built facing the River at the turn of the century.

The London and Westminster Steamboat Company began to serve Putney in 1838 and provided competition to the new railways during the late nineteenth century. However **Steamboat services**

on the Thames ceased in 1909. There have been a number of initiatives since to establish regular services on the River, but without lasting success. The pier at Putney was a stopping point for tourist boats running from Westminster to Hampton Court, until 1999.

Putney was the focus of the boom in **amateur rowing** during the mid-nineteenth century. Organised amateur rowing began in Oxford, Cambridge and the metropolitan Thames in the 1830s. There had been rowing on the Thames by professionals, for example in the annual Doggett's Coat and Badge Race, for much longer. The London Rowing Club, Putney's first, was founded in 1856, with its headquarters in the Star and Garter until its present boathouse was built in 1871. The Thames Rowing Club was founded in 1861 and Putney Rowing Club followed in 1888.

The popularity of rowing provided much needed employment to Putney's watermen and some, notably the Phelps, combined boatbuilding with coaching and directing the amateur crews. The event for which Putney is most famous is the annual **Boat Race** between Oxford and Cambridge Universities. The present course between Putney and Mortlake was adopted in 1845.

The riverside Star and Garter public house benefited from the popularity of rowing and was rebuilt in 1900 as a grand hotel and mansion block, which included a boathouse. The adjacent Dukes Head also had 'club rooms'. A number of other riverside pubs have, however, been lost. The Embankment was a popular venue for bathing up



The London Rowing Club boathouse c.1882

until the 1930s. Professional swimming championships were contested in the late nineteenth century and there were still swimming races in the River in 1922.

Compared to other riverside settlements between Kew and Chelsea, Putney has never had much riverside industry. The longest lasting was brewing, with a brewery close to the river on Brewhouse Lane. The nearby **Douglas Wharf** was the site of William Douglas and Sons Machinery factory. Putney Wharf was also used for the transfer of building materials. The major post-war change to the waterfront at Putney was the building of the 17-storey ICL office block next to St Mary's Church. This was followed by the redevelopment of the ABC cinema and a new police station.



Putney Embankment c.1930

Fulham Palace

The section of riverbank at Fulham and Putney has been a favoured location for a **ford or ferry** since prehistoric times. The initial fording point was located at what is now the south-east corner of the Palace Grounds. **A Saxon settlement** was probably focused near the river crossing, perhaps in the vicinity of All Saints Church. The parish church would have been in existence at this time, with the manorial centre probably next to it.

The manor of Fulham was granted to Waldhere, the fifth Bishop of London around the beginning of the eighth century, when the Bishop of the East Saxons bought the estate of **Fulhanham** from the Bishop of Hereford.

By the time of the Domesday Book, Fulham appears to have been a considerable estate with ample ploughland, meadows, woodland and fishing

rights. The tolls collected from the ferry (ten shillings) were also significant.

The formal delineation of the great moated enclosure partly on the site of earlier earthworks was the work of the 13th century bishops, who also built the new Palace courtyard house. This site is now marked by the eastern courtyard.

The 14th century saw the Bishop's Palace evolve into a coherent whole by creating an enclosed courtyard. In the late 15th and early 16th centuries Tudor bishops built the present day **Great Hall**, a second courtyard and more service accommodation. This rambling Medieval and Tudor complex continued to expand until around 1750 when Bishop Sherlock and later Bishop Terrick remodelled the Palace and reduced it in size. The latter occupant introduced the fashionable new "Strawberry Hill Gothick", a taste acquired during his time as Vicar of Twickenham.

The grounds of Fulham Palace were from the 16th century one of the most important **botanical gardens** in London, which were enriched in the late 17th century with many exotic species. George London, one of the great English formal garden designers, began his career as a gardener here. The layout of the **Great Stuart Gardens** were recorded by John Rocque in his map of 1741 – 45 which shows the palace to have been still surrounded by formal gardens. These were swept away by Bishop Robinson in favour of the fashionable landscape style of the late 1700's. Long walks were created around a great lawn, through shrubberies and along the moat.

The Moat, which surrounded the palace, was one mile in length. It appears in early illustrations as an idyllic stream with water lilies. It relied on the flooding tides to keep it fresh, but there were many times when it was dank and stagnant. This led to complaints and it was finally drained and filled in 1924.

The Thames was used by the Bishops of London as the means of transport from their winter residence close to St Paul's Cathedral to their summer residence at Fulham Palace. This would have been a quicker and more ceremonial way of travelling than by road. The **steps and landing stages** to accommodate the Bishop's boats and barges still remain, but are now unused.



Fulham Palace

The Warren is referred to in the early 18th century as a small park adjoining the gardens. The light gravel soils once supported a rabbit warren and there is evidence of past quarrying for ballast. Part of the redundant inner moat was sectioned off and used as fish ponds in the 17th century. During the First World War it was used as a parade ground to drill troops. At the end of the war it was divided up into allotment plots.

The 20th century has been a period of neglect, low maintenance and deterioration of garden buildings and structures. The Church Commissioners leased Fulham Palace to the then Hammersmith Council for one hundred years in 1975. The garden was opened to the public in 1976. In 1988 a management plan for the site was agreed by the Council but funds were unavailable to implement it. The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham has recently prepared a **draft Conservation Plan** as the first step in an overall strategy for the restoration and enhancement of the Palace and its grounds.

The sturdy late Medieval west tower of **All Saints Church** is the only part of the original Medieval Church, which remains. Stone was brought from Kent in 1440 to build the tower, under the direction of the masons, Richard Garald and Piers Chapell. The churchyard contains a number of the tombs of the Bishops of London. Adjacent to the churchyard there used to be a garden, which belonged to the Lord of the Manor; the site of this is now occupied by Sir William Powell's Almshouses.



All Saints Church c.1817

Bishops Park

The demesne meadows along the Thames and to the west of the Palace were embanked and opened to the public as Bishops Park in 1893. The park was enlarged by the extension into **Pryors Bank** (1900), Fielders Meadow (1903) and the opening of Moat Gardens in 1924. The old Pryors Bank house, next to Putney Bridge, was demolished, but its ornamental garden remains largely intact. The house was so ornate with battlements and turreted chimneys that many visitors mistook it for the Palace itself. The Victorian and Edwardian layout of Bishops Park has survived, together with features of the period such as the balustrading and steps down to the landing stages in the embankment. The focus of the park was the paddling pool and boating pond, which in the early years of the last century served as a popular 'seaside resort' for hundreds of local families.



Bishops Park

Putney Bridge

Putney Bridge is the name given to the conservation area between Putney Road and Railway Bridges and bounded by Putney Bridge and Fulham High Street to the west and to the east by the Hurlingham conservation area. Before the construction of the **old Fulham Bridge** over the Thames this was the location of the ferry. The approach to the ferry was over the site of the **Swan Drawdock** to the west of the old wooden bridge.



Coal barges at Putney Bridge, 1889



Old Fulham Bridge, 1881

As a result of the construction of the present Putney Road Bridge, a new rising approach **Putney Bridge Approach** was formed from the High Street at its junction with Church Street. This required the partial removal of the Vicarage Garden close to All Saints Parish Church. Today the Putney Bridge Approach is the main traffic route and the High Street a back lane. **Swan Wharf** adjacent to Putney Bridge was the site of the Swan Maltings built in 1800.

In between the present Putney road and rail bridges, stood an elegant riverside house **Willow Bank** built in the 1750s. It had terraced gardens extending to the river. In 1889 Willow Bank was bought by the District Railway Company and demolished to make way for the new railway bridge, linking with Putney Bridge Station, which was opened in 1880.



Ordnance Survey map of Putney in 1865, showing the alignment of the old Fulham Bridge

Character Appraisal

Important Views

The view upstream from Putney Road Bridge is an important local prospect and highlights the key features that help define this reach of the Thames. It is identified in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham UDP as an important local view.

On the southern bank of the River is Putney Embankment with its five storey, red brick mansion blocks, built at the turn of the last century and dominated by the Star and Garter. In the middle distance are the succession of rowing clubs' boathouses with direct access to the gravel foreshore by means of the continuous 'hard' or slipway. The activity generated by the pubs and boathouses is an important element in creating its "genius loci"

On the northern bank of the Thames the view is of a continuous promenade of mature London Plane trees extending from Pryors' Bank to the grandstands of Fulham Football Club. The Victorian



Putney Pier



All Saints Church, Fulham and Bishop's Park

designed embankment with its masonry detailing and formal steps down to the foreshore is a strong visual feature.

The **Parish Churches of Putney and Fulham** face each other at either end of Putney Bridge. The raised approach roads compromise the settings of both churches, as do post war office blocks. The 17-storey former **ICL tower** (now part of the St George's Homes Putney Wharf development) completely dwarfs the adjacent St Mary's Church. This former office block is most intrusive when viewed at right angles looking downstream from Putney Embankment and from Barn Elms Reach upstream. It is currently being refurbished and converted for predominantly residential use. To a lesser extent the setting of All Saints Church Fulham, is compromised by the seven and half storey tower blocks of Bridge House North and South. The latter has been converted into a hotel.



St Mary's Church and Putney Bridge

The view looking downstream from Putney Bridge is similarly an important local prospect, identified in the Hammersmith & Fulham UDP. The view is dominated by the five lattice girder spans of Putney Railway Bridge. The bridge includes a pedestrian link on its downstream side, which enjoys views to the wooded riverside of the Hurlingham Club and the promenade of mature trees defining Wandsworth Park. In the distance can be seen the Western Riverside Waste Transfer Station and the Arndale Centre in Wandsworth.

In the foreground, on the northern bank the 1980's residential development at Swanbank Court and Carrera Wharf are prominent features and there are glimpses through to the Ranelagh Gardens Mansions. The high rise blocks on Upper Richmond Road impact on the views from the northern bank of the River

Putney Embankment

The former Putney and Douglas Wharves have now fallen into disrepair on the southern bank of the River and together with the broken windows and vandalised ICL tower create an impression of dereliction, which detracts from the **setting of St Mary's Church**. The mature trees and vegetation within the private riverside gardens of the houses fronting on to Deodar Road provide a welcome contrast next to the urban waterfront at Putney Wharf.



Putney Embankment

The enjoyment of the views to the River from Putney Bridge, the Lower Richmond Road and the southern end of the High Street, are heavily influenced by the amount of traffic. Putney Bridge is one of the **busiest of London's river crossings** and there are often tail-backs on the approach roads. The proliferation of road signs and traffic related furniture also generates visual clutter.

Recent traffic management measures and associated street scene improvements have reduced the amount of traffic on Putney Embankment and made it more comfortable and enjoyable for pedestrians and cyclists.

The **Putney Bridge Restaurant**, designed by Paskin, Kyriakides, Sands Architects in 1997 makes an important contribution to the townscape, at the Putney Bridge end of the Embankment. The glazed restaurant overlooks the former slipway and pier, both of which are now underused. This new building, which was recognised with a Civic Trust Award in 1998, successfully occupies a tapering space and helps conceal and reduce the impact of traffic on the Lower Richmond Road. Its clean-cut modern architectural style is in contrast with the adjoining red brick, five storey, decorated mansion blocks, which were built at the turn of the last century. Kenilworth Court built between 1902 – 3 is the largest of these blocks

The embankment in front of the **Dukes Head** is an important focus of activity in the summer months with views across the river to the 300 metre continuous tree lined promenade of Bishops Park. Next to the public house is Winchester House, one of the few buildings kept during the reconstruction of the Embankment in the late 1800's

A walk along the embankment road that separate the boathouses from the river can be full of interest, with eights, fours, sculls and other craft filling the tideway and the sloping shore. The original two and three storey Victorian boathouses have been modified with wide balconies, often enclosed with

large glass windows, where members of the historic rowing and sailing clubs congregate to enjoy the activity.



Putney

Fulham Palace

The value of the **Palace's proximity to the River** has been of paramount importance in the past and remains so today. Views to and from the River have been lost in the course of the 20th century.

English Heritage has confirmed their support for the extensive removal of dense understorey shrub to open up the Long Avenue and create a broad sweep of grass under the mature London Plane trees. Some local concern has been expressed about the loss of screening provided by existing vegetation. Some shrub removal could enhance the visual links between the Thames and Fulham Palace. A gated entrance from Bishop's Meadow with a footbridge across a **reinstated moat**, may

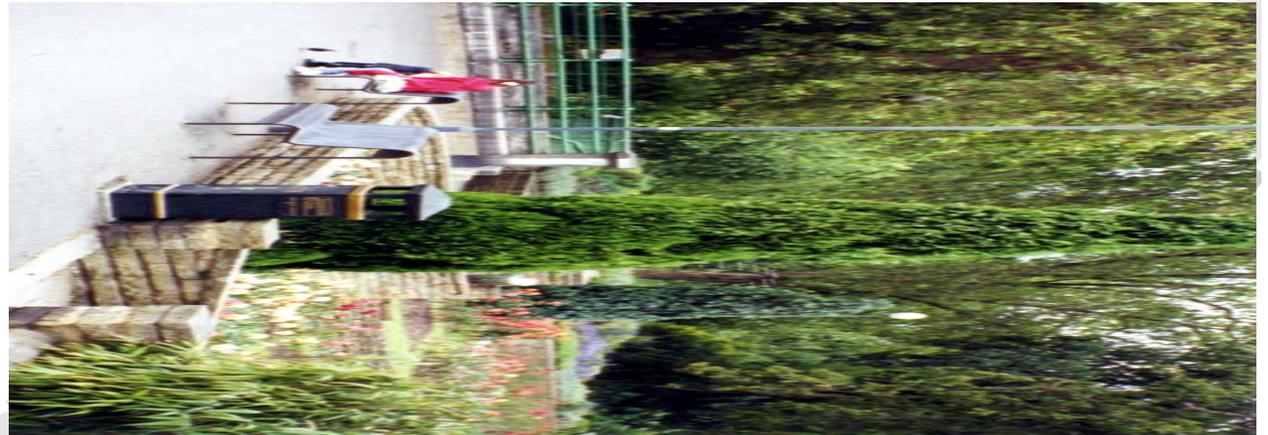
have potential for use as a visitor entrance to the Palace from the Thames Path. This will be considered as part of the Conservation Plan.

The draft Fulham Palace Conservation Plan also recommends that consideration should be given to the reinstatement of the west and south sections of the moat. English Heritage support reinstatement on the basis that some clearance and **re-excavation of the former moat** would improve the visual and physical integrity of the grounds and make better sense historically. Any reinstatement of garden features will need to be preceded by a full archaeological evaluation and will require Scheduled Monument Consent.

The construction of the **HAPA Playground** adjacent to the Butterfield Lodge has proved a visual intrusion into the Palace grounds. The feasibility of re-locating this valuable facility for disabled children, into an archaeologically less sensitive location needs to be considered. The entrance gates, bridge and lodges create an important feature and have significant visual unity. The Lodge is a listed building and is on the Register of Buildings at Risk.

Increased vehicle access to the grounds over the Moat Bridge could cause further damage. It is recognised that a strategy for vehicle access and visitor parking needs to be prepared.

The Conservation Plan also recommends the selective reinstatement of lost garden features, such as the formal knot gardens to the north and south of the Palace building. It also suggests that consideration should be given to developing one or



Bishops Park

more specialist uses for the **walled garden**, which could involve the restoration of the vinery and the development of a herb and sensory garden.

Bishops Park

Due to the mature riverside Plane trees and their dense understorey of shrubs, everything within the main body of Bishops Park is concealed from the southern bank of the River and the riverside walkway on the Fulham side.

The Victorian house at **Pryor's Bank** was once a successful teahouse associated with the adjacent formal gardens. Its current use as offices does not realise its full recreational potential, it could revert to its former use as a café, linked to an improved entrance to Bishops Park and the Palace, from Putney Bridge and the Thames Path.

Bishops Park has five distinct spaces providing a variety of formal and informal recreational activities:

- The central recreational area including: the site of the former theatre and bandstand (now used for rollerblading and skateboarding); a boating lake and paddling pool; sand pit and play areas. The area is enclosed by brick boundary walls with ornamental balustrading.
- Bishops Meadows with its parallel avenues of mature London Planes with their dense understorey of shrubs separating the Palace from the river.
- The open grassed extension with sports pitches on the former Fielders Meadow, south of Fulham Football Ground.
- The tennis courts, pavilion and bowling green on the site of the former Kent Meadows.
- The Moat Gardens to the north and west of the Warren parallel to Bishops Avenue, which forms the principal entrance to the park and the palace from Fulham Palace Road.



Riverside Walk, Bishops Park

The London Plane trees along the riverside were planted at the same time as the construction of the river wall in 1893. The management and long term replacement of the framework of mature trees within Bishops Park and the grounds of the Palace is an important issue.

The decorative metal gates and railings form an impressive entrance into the park and the church, from Putney Bridge Approach. There are areas of original Yorkstone paving and good granite kerbstones, which enhance the setting of the church.

The quality of the paving, lighting and street furniture within Bishops Park is generally poor. The 1970s Macemain furniture and globe lighting look dated and are in need of replacement. The footpaths and circulation areas are generally surfaced in macadam, which has been cracked by tree roots. The original ornamental balustrading is in need of repair and restoration and there is a proliferation of railing and barriers. Despite the lack of recent investment the park is a popular local



Steps at Bishops Park

resource, with 92% of users of Bishops Park, in a recent Council survey mentioning things they like about the park. (Parks and Open Spaces – A survey of residents in Hammersmith and Fulham, May 1998)

Putney Bridge

The quality of the riverside walkway and spaces in front of the 1980's **Swan Bank Court and Carrera Wharf** residential developments is not of the

quality expected within a conservation area. The lack of a continuous Thames Path along the riverside in front Hurlingham and Rivermead Courts and the adjoining Hurlingham Club results in this first section of path downstream from Putney Bridge being underused.

A subway beneath Putney Bridge links Bishops Park to the downstream riverside walk, which extends up to the London Underground Railway Bridge. The path crosses the former **Swan Drawdock** via a footbridge. The vegetated inlet is now separated from the river and is designated and managed as a local nature reserve. At the railway bridge the Thames Path National Trail is forced to detour away from the river and links under a railway arch to the footpath across the railway bridge to Putney. The spaces beneath the bridge have been fenced to prevent vandalism.

The alternative and more direct route to Putney Bridge Station, passes through a sequence of pedestrianised spaces to the south of the former Bridge House (south) office block, now used as a Travel Inn. The historical link with the former **Willow Bank House**, which stood on this site, is continued in the name of this route.

Key Issues and Opportunities

Putney Embankment

- The UDP encourages improvements to the boat clubs and boatyard premises along Putney Embankment, subject to their impact on amenity. It is expected that facilities relying on access to the Thames will not be prejudiced and that the area will maintain its historic association as a location for river sports and activities.
- The potential refurbishment of Ashlone Wharf and establishment of a permanent Discovery/Education Centre and community/youth river related uses.
- The potential for increased use of Putney Pier and the feasibility of introducing a river bus “hopper” service for commuters and tourists.
- The need for further upgrading and introduction of facilities at Putney Pier.
- The conservation and restoration of Putney Hard and the slipways, combined with further streetscene improvements and traffic management measures, in accordance with the London Borough of Wandsworth UDP and improvements for the Conservation Area.
- The visual impact of the former ICL Tower which dominates views from the River, and is out of scale with the neighbouring St Mary’s Church.
- The potential benefits in terms of the provision of a riverside path and square, improved links with Putney High Street, and a possible future

link with the churchyard of St Mary’s Church associated with development at the former wharves.

Fulham Palace

- The archaeological and heritage importance of Fulham Palace, which is listed Grade 1, and its grounds (including The Warren and Moat Garden) which are a Scheduled Ancient Monument
- The untapped potential of the Palace and its grounds as a heritage and visitor attraction. The promotion of the Museum of Fulham Palace. The gardens and grounds are on the English Heritage Register.
- Consideration could be given, subject to Scheduled Monument Consent, to re-excavating the historic moat and enhancing views between the Palace and the River.
- The potential re-creation of the Bishops Stairs landing place facing the Palace, which existed until the late 19th century.
- The possible restoration of lost garden features, including the 19th century vinery.

Bishops Park

- Protection of the strategic view from Richmond Park to St Paul’s Cathedral which crosses Bishops Park.
- The protection of the view of Bishops Park from the River and the opposite bank.
- The protection and long term replacement of the mature London Plane trees along the

riverside and Bishops Walk, which are important in defining the character of the park.

- The possible removal of some of the shrub layer beneath the riverside trees, to open up views of the River and Putney Embankment from within the park, and improve safety and security.
- The restoration and further enhancement of the central area including the site of the theatre and bandstand, pond, playground, boating lake, paddling pool and sand pit.
- Restoring and reopening the wide flight of steps down to the foreshore from the embankment, possibly linked to a new events square, subject to safety considerations.
- The need for a comprehensive renewal of street furniture, lighting and signage.
- The introduction of new, or upgrading of existing, café facilities and toilets, together with play equipment for older children.
- The restoration and enhancement of the old garden of Pryor’s Bank, which was added as an extension to Bishops Park in 1900.
- The restoration and enhancement of the Warren (Fulham Palace Meadow Allotments) which acts as an important buffer to the surrounding urban area, and is part of the Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- The restoration and enhancement of the Vicarage Gardens and the adjacent churchyard, which contribute to the visual setting for All Saints Church.

Putney Bridge

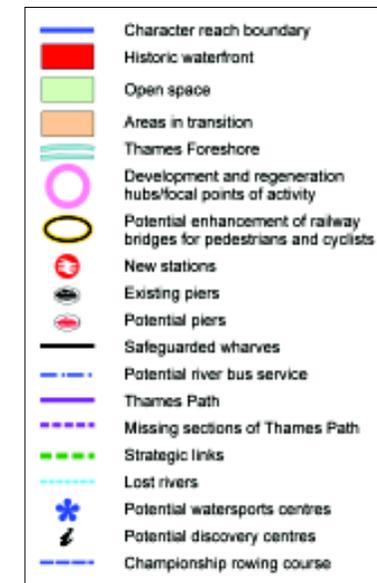
- The negative visual impact of the 1960's and 1970's office blocks (Bridge House North and Bridge House South) on the setting of Fulham Palace and Parish Church, and the River.
- The archaeological importance and potential of the riverside and foreshore. There have been discoveries of remains from the Saxon, Medieval and the early industrial period.
- The conservation and restoration of the late 19th century metal latticed Putney Railway Bridge.
- The enhancement of the pedestrian and cycle links to Putney Bridge Underground Station and bus terminus.
- The enhancement of the footpath from the underground station and bus station to the footbridge.
- The enhancement of the riverside walkway in front of Swan Bank Court and Carrera Wharf.
- The conservation and continued enhancement of Swan Drawdock, which is now a local nature reserve.

CHARACTER REACH NO.6 : WANDSWORTH AND SANDS END

River Chart Name: Wandsworth Reach - Battersea Reach



Mid-stream moorings off Ranelagh Gardens



Key Characteristics

This character reach, bisected by Wandsworth Bridge and framed, downstream by Battersea Railway Bridge, is dominated by industry, softened by the green spaces of Hurlingham House and Park on the north bank, opposite Wandsworth Park on the south bank. The River Wandle joining the Thames via a half-tidal weir and Chelsea Creek have both helped define the historic industrial evolution of the uses and forms along the reach. There are a number of safeguarded wharves within this reach, showing that this area has had a long industrial/working river past. The heliport is well utilised, and helicopters landing and taking off are a frequent sight and sound.

Key features of Character Reach No.6 may be summarised as follows:

- Hurlingham House and Grounds are an evolution of the private 18th century trend of riverside mansions;
- Hurlingham Park provides opportunities for improvements to recreational facilities and pedestrian routes. There is no direct access between Hurlingham Park and the River;
- Wandsworth Park is a formal Victorian public park with opportunities for landscape improvement;
- The Wandle Delta provides a focus for regeneration and presents opportunities for improvements to the Thames Path and riverside;

- Further opportunities to link the riverside to Wandsworth Town Centre and east-west bridging of the Wandle;
- Wandsworth Bridge is dominated by vehicle traffic levels, particularly on the south bank;
- The impact of continued redevelopment of former riverside industrial sites for residential and mixed use schemes;
- The lack of variety in design of recent riverside developments and generally poor integration with the surrounding area;
- The limited provision of river-related facilities;
- The generally poor quality of the riverside walk on the northern bank of the River;
- Battersea Railway Bridge presents an opportunity for improved cross-river links;



Aerial view of Character Reach No.6

Historical Background

Wandsworth

It is thought that a Saxon noble called **Wendle** gave his name to the village of Wandsworth which developed by the River Wandle. There is evidence to suggest that there were settlements at Wandsworth both during the Iron Age and in the Roman period. In Anglo-Saxon times Wandsworth was part of the Battersea Estate. In the Domesday Book there were seven mills recorded as part of the Estate, most of which were probably on the Wandle.



View of Wandsworth c.1750

Wandsworth's position both near to London and on the fast flowing River Wandle – one of the most powerful rivers for driving mills in the country - made its early development as an industrial area inevitable. It was used intensively, originally for milling and later for other industries.

Other industries recorded in the area during this period include hat making, dying, iron and copperware, calico printing, fur making and in the 19th Century, war munitions. Brewing was also well established by the middle of the 16th Century and the **Young's Brewery** is still based in Wandsworth

The fast flow of the Wandle and the many mills made the River unsuitable for navigation, but the many industries needed transport for heavy goods. In 1799 a group of Wandsworth industrialists joined forces and commissioned advice from William Jessop the leading canal engineer, who recommended a railway instead of a canal. The **Surrey Iron Railway**, an eight-mile double track line, the world's first public railway, was constructed between Wandsworth and Croydon and opened in 1802. It was capable of holding 30 barges. All its waggons were horse drawn. Users provided their own horses and waggons and paid a toll per ton carried per mile for use of the track.

Together with the iron railway, goods were mostly transported from the channels round the Wandle's mouth. There were also several wharves on the Thames and a landing place by the Waterman's Arms. An arm of the Wandle east of Sudlow Road was converted into a small dock between 1838 and 1866. From 1805 coal and other commodities were brought from the north and Midlands via the Grand Junction Canal, Brentford Dock and the Thames.

In 1811 a barge builder and lighterman kept 50 lighters, each capable of carrying 60 tons, at Railway Wharf on the Cut. After the iron railway closed the Cut became known as **McMurray's**

canal after one of its owners. However, in 1932 the gas company, which had bought the Cut and needed land, filled it in.

By the end of the 19th Century the importance of the water mills was declining rapidly. Water extraction from the Wandle at Croydon caused falling water levels and other forms of power were being used more widely. But as long-established industries disappeared, new ones took their place.

The most important of these was **the gas works**, which opened on the west side of Fairfield Street in 1835. By 1912 the gas works occupied the whole of the Thames-side between the Cut and the tramway depot, extending inland as far as Worple Way, destroying a large part of historic Wandsworth in the process.

The company's success hinged to a large extent on the efficiency with which it handled the coal which it used to make gas. In 1906 the coal was delivered by collier, rather than the less efficient barges and in 1909 the company commissioned the first of its own **steam colliers** to bring coal direct from Newcastle. In 1907 the company's gas was the cheapest in London.

By 1867, Wandsworth also boasted a paper-making industry, chemical works, colour manufacturers, horsehair suppliers, artificial manure manufacturers and match makers. There were also smaller trades and crafts such as boat building and coach building. There were two fireworks factories. Gas mantles were Wandsworth's main source of factory employment for women.



Wandle Riverbank

Later still, in the 20th Century APV holdings was founded on the east side of **Point Pleasant** and by 1914 was established as a specialist fabricating firm supplying welded vessels such as petrol tanks. It outgrew the Point Pleasant area in 1955 and moved to Crawley.

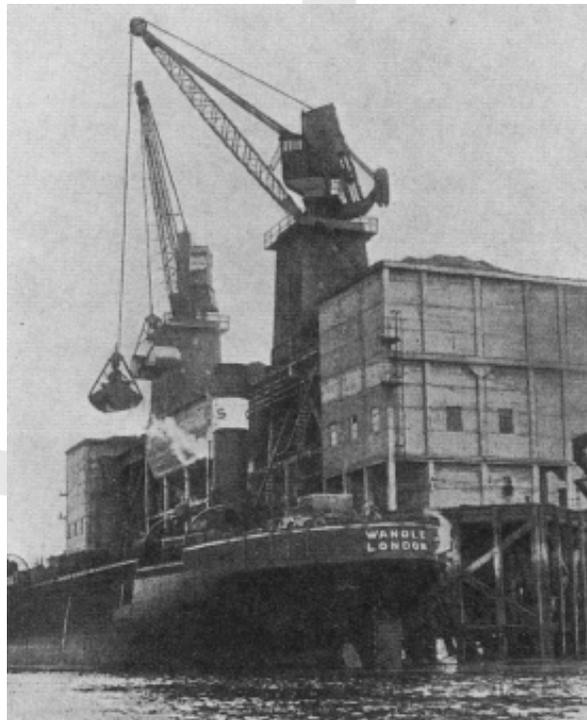
Other notable new arrivals included Columbia Gramophone, Benham and Sons, the oil terminal, Wandleside Cable Works, Redifon, Airfix and numerous smaller companies. The industrial area spread from the Wandle valley and beside the Thames to Merton Road, Standen Road and the area now known as **Osiers Road**.

The post war years, however, saw industrial decline. At **Prospect Quay** industrial employment has been replaced by residential development and many other Thames-side sites within this character reach are in the process of being developed, such

as Riverside West, Point Pleasant, Imperial Wharf and Gargoyle Wharf.

Wandsworth Bridge was originally a private enterprise intended to be a toll bridge and to provide access to the proposed Hammersmith and City Railway terminus on its northern side. The bridge was opened in 1873 and bought by the Metropolitan Board of Works in 1880.

The bridge was badly constructed, with awkward approaches. It was also too narrow and too weak for heavy traffic. Not surprisingly it was the least popular bridge for traffic in London.



New coal-discharging pier at the gas works in 1934



The first Wandsworth Bridge c.1874

From 1912 demands for the bridge to be rebuilt grew and in 1940 the present bridge was opened. A new southern approach linking the bridge to Trinity Road was opened in 1969.

Wandsworth Park was acquired as an open space by the LCC in 1897, using funding from the LCC, Wandsworth District Board and public subscription. It was then an area occupied by market gardens and rubbish dumps and was one of the few remaining undeveloped areas in the north of the parish. The park, which opened in 1903, was laid out very much as it is today, although the bandstand is no longer there.

Sands End

For centuries, Sands End remained one of the most **rural corners of Fulham**. Running alongside the River south of the Kings Road, between the creek dividing Fulham from Chelsea and the old Peterborough Estate on the west side of Wandsworth Bridge, it was liable to flooding, open and dissected by creeks.

Probably named either from the sandy banks of the outlet of the creek, or after its earliest recorded owner, **John de Saundeford**, in the reign of Edward 1, there is no documentary evidence of settlement until the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Even by the end of the seventeenth century residents were few as the land was marshy and suitable only for grazing.

But by 1900, the waterside fields had been replaced by “a region of poverty and squalor”. During the 1890’s the land had been gradually developed, so that by the time of the publication of the 1916 ordnance survey, it was a fully developed industrial area. Extensive residential areas to the north of Sands End were also completed.

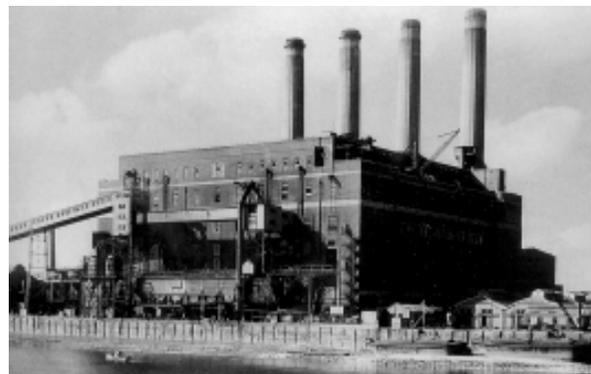
Early in the 18th Century there were plans to construct a two mile canal across the west side of Sands End, to connect the Lord of the Manor of Kensington’s estate to the river, but the idea was eventually abandoned and the land was sold to the West London Railway Company as a route for a new line. This was later extended across the river to connect at Clapham.

In the meantime, development on the opposite side of the Thames in Wandsworth had provided the impetus for similar changes in the Sands End area. Originally, riverside development was concentrated to the east of London, but new towpaths and improved navigation in the late eighteenth century made development as far west as Fulham practicable. The industrial area grew around Townmead and Carnwath Roads which ran parallel to the Thames and had numerous points of access to the River.

Delivery of raw materials by river, particularly coal, became possible, stimulating the development of storage facilities and industries such as Fulham Power Station and a gas works. In 1824 the **Imperial Gas Light and Coke Company** bought the Sandford Manor Estate and built a major gas works next to the river. Although no longer producing gas, there remain historic industrial buildings, including the oldest surviving gas holder in the world, and a dock still partly in water.

Fulham Borough Council built their first **power station** at Sands End in 1901, demolishing it in 1936 and replacing it with an immense structure with three hundred foot high chimneys.

Fifty years ago, the area was still a thriving industrial centre with an enormous gas works and power station, an oil depot and numerous other factories and works. But by the 1970’s it had become an industrial wasteland – the power station unused, the gasometers deflated or demolished and the factories empty.



Fulham Power Station in the 1930s

In the 1980’s the Sands End Conservation Area was established and demolition and clearance of the area began. It was at that time that the power station was demolished and the site redeveloped for housing and a large health club and indoor tennis centre (The Harbour Club). Since then a variety of redevelopment schemes, ranging from a supermarket and sports centre, to riverside flats have brought about the gradual regeneration of Sands End.

Hurlingham

The Putney Rail Bridge defines the western (upstream) boundary for the Hurlingham Conservation Area and its historical development is dominated by Hurlingham House, which was built from 1760, as a villa fronting the Thames. This stretch of riverbank downstream from Fulham Palace was previously part of the demesne estate and was used for nursery garden and osier cultivation.

The **Hurlingham Club** was founded by Frank Heathcote, who became the tenant of Hurlingham House in 1867, to pursue the then popular sport of pigeon shooting. The original house was built in 1760. Polo was introduced from India, where it was popular with the colonial administrators. This expensive sport soon gained an elitist status and was supported by the Royal Family. The Club acquired new land along the river to accommodate new sports activities including; croquet, archery, tennis and golf. It was also a venue for air ballooning and early motor rallies

In 1928 Hurlingham was seriously affected by the great Thames flood and during the last World War, the number 1 polo ground was dug up for allotments. Serious bomb damage was inflicted on the east and west ends of the Club House. The polo playing fields were acquired by London County Council following the war to create **Hurlingham Park**, a sports arena and recreation ground, together with new public housing.

By 1916 the area surrounding the walled Hurlingham Club had been developed with residential terraces. The section of riverside between the railway bridge and the western boundary of the club, was developed at the same time as the extension of the District Railway to Fulham. This was earlier the site of **Ranelagh House and Gardens**, of which nothing remains, except street names. Ranelagh House was used as a country club until demolished in 1892. The



Mid-stream moorings off Wandsworth Park

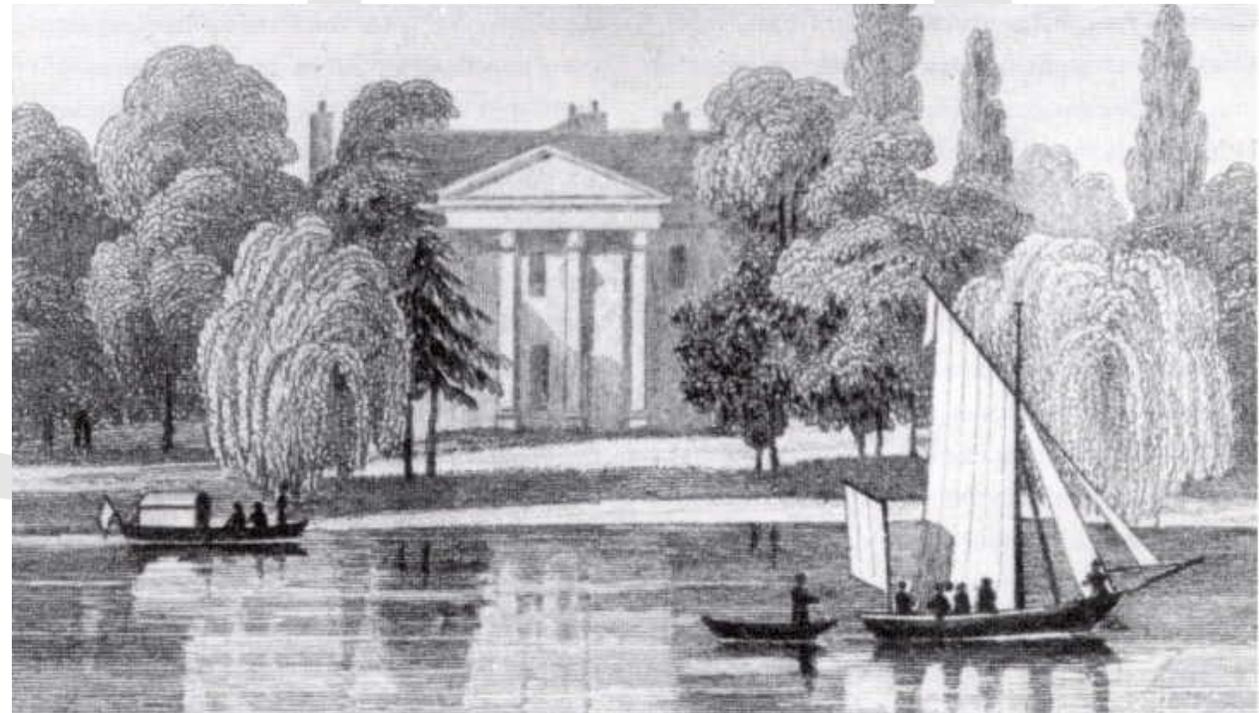
Ranelagh Club then moved to Barn Elms across the river in Barnes (see Character Reach No.4).

Broom House

Broom House stood on the western corner of Broomhouse Lane. It was described by Feret as “perhaps the most elegant mansion to be found in Fulham”. Built facing the river in nine acres, it was generally occupied in the nineteenth century by members of the British Raj. The house survived until 1911, when it and its grounds were absorbed by the Hurlingham Club.



Mid-stream moorings off Ranelagh Gardens



Hurlingham House circa 1840

Character Appraisal

The sweep of the river from the Hurlingham Club downstream to Battersea Reach is an area in transition. There is a marked contrast between the tree lined frontages of Wandsworth Park and the grounds of the Hurlingham Club and the derelict sites, industrial properties, retail warehouses and recently constructed luxury riverside apartments downstream.



The Old Candle Factory, Battersea

Wandle Delta to Regent's Wharf

The south bank of the River between the Wandle Delta and Regent's Wharf is a focus for new development with the recent approval and construction of projects such as Riverside West, Gargoyle Wharf and Prospect Quay. Other sections of waterfront, for example around Wandsworth Bridge, have experienced considerable pressure for redevelopment.

Helicopter movements associated with the **London Heliport** (now occupied by Metro Business Aviation) generates a stream of helicopters, which add to the noise of traffic with the traffic on the busy York Road.

Development in this character reach exhibits a tendency towards an increasing density and height of buildings and mixed use schemes and the provision of some river related facilities under the terms of recent planning consents.

The Belvedere Tower at **Chelsea Harbour** and the new **Montevetro** Building, designed by Richard Rogers, face each other on opposite sides at the start of the next character reach. These two landmarks are clearly visible downstream from Wandsworth Bridge.

A degree of **siltation** has been observed at the mouth of the Wandle River by the Environment Agency and Wandsworth Borough Council, since the construction of the half tide weir in 1990. The



Chelsea Harbour

gravels at Wandle Mouth, and the associated Bell Lane Creek provide an extremely important nursery ground and refuge area for young smelt and other fish fry. However, since the installation of the weir, the river bed gravels have been predominantly covered by silts.



View towards Battersea Bridge from Prospect Quay

This stretch of the river is one of the major **missing sections of the Thames Path National Trail**. The new pedestrian and cycle bridge linking the east and west banks of the Wandle needs to be linked into a new riverside path around the Point Pleasant development site and Feathers Wharf.

The Thames Path National Trail and the new Riverside Quarter will be linked to Wandsworth Town Centre by the **Wandle Promenade**, an SRB funded pedestrian and cycle route along the banks of the River Wandle. This will form the backbone of a network of routes aimed at improving connections with the Thames.

A series of interlinked public spaces are proposed in the **Wandle Riverbank Improvement Plan** (WS Atkins 1998) to act as focuses of activity and the settings for new development. These include: Feathers Wharf, Point Pleasant and Causeway Island

A range of ecological enhancements are proposed in the 'Riverbank Improvement Plan. These include cutting back the existing wharf edges in places to provide a vegetated riparian fringe, adding timber fendering to sheet piled section of river walls and modifications to the sequence of weirs. The **Causeway Triangle** and **The Spit**, which are both Local Nature Reserves, require new management regimes to enhance habitat diversity.

The future of the local authority owned **Feathers Wharf** at the mouth of the Wandle is strategically important. It is currently used for the temporary storage of containers. It has the potential to provide a high quality promenade/public square, together

with ecological terraces, enjoying excellent views across to the Hurlingham Club. There is scope to include some development on the site, which should fund a major new public space, riverbank improvements and the removal of contamination.

The opportunity exists to **re-excavate McMurrays Canal** to maximise the waterfront setting. The canal, which acted as a terminus for the Surrey Iron Railway, was infilled during the construction of Armoury Way in 1936.

Causeway Island is a central hub. The regeneration of Causeway Island will require the relocation of the Onyx depot which currently occupies the island and the adjoining railway arches. Ground investigations will need to be carried out to establish the measurements required for remediation of ground contamination.

The opportunity exists to re-excavate the **former**

Parish Wharves extension to Bell Lane Creek to form the setting for mixed use development. This would require the relocation of the council owned depot.

The existing **Waste Transfer Station** is also a dominant visual element when viewed from the River. The site has important camp sheds for barges, handling facilities and is a safeguarded wharf.

Sands End

There are few reminders of the former industrial activity at the many wharves along this reach. On the north bank boundary walls, gatehouses, and a few nineteenth century buildings, for example Fulham Wharf Warehouse, are all that now remain.

Most of the industrial and retail development from the twentieth century is single-storey workshops and two-storey warehouses sited along Carnwath



Wandsworth Bridge

Road and Townmead Road. These generally uninspiring developments have not responded to the riverside location, for example **Hurlingham Retail Park**.

Wandsworth Bridge is a key feature providing views along the Thames in both directions. The present bridge was completed in 1939 and was jointly designed by London County Council's engineering and architects departments. The distinctive blue panelling on the side of the bridge is visible throughout much of the riverside. Wandsworth Bridge Road is a busy road and creates bottlenecks on both sides of the River.

The local authority has been successful in achieving a **river walk** along sections of the embankment that have been redeveloped in recent years. This allows access to, and views of, a reach

of the river that was previously hidden behind industrial buildings and storage depots. The detailing of the walk differs between redevelopment schemes. The section between Broomhouse Drawdock and Wandsworth Bridge is in particular need of a coordinated programme of enhancement.

The **Wandsworth Bridge roundabout and underpass** is dominated by a large advertising sculpture. The roundabout should remain as an island of open space.

The **Sainsbury's Supermarket** just downstream of Wandsworth Bridge and Fulham Wharf is a single storey typical early 1990's development with false porticoes and banded brickwork. Its large car park adjoins the River. It is understood that options are currently being considered for the Supermarket to be extended or redeveloped in the future.

The eight-storey residential apartments at **Regent on the River** to the east of William Morris Way stand on the site of the former Fulham Power Station. This bulky development dominates the residential streets behind.

Imperial Wharf is currently being transformed from part of a former gas works into a mix of private, affordable and student riverside accommodation. The development is unusual in providing a local park next to the River in an area deficient in public open space.

The north bank of the River includes three safeguarded wharves - RMC Fulham, Swedish Wharf and Hurlingham Wharf, to be retained within future development for the transportation of freight by water.



View of Regent on the River from Wandsworth Bridge with Chelsea Harbour in the distance

Key Issues and Opportunities

Wandle Delta

- The poor visual and physical connections between Wandle Delta and the surrounding area and public transport facilities.
- The creation of a new riverside “Quarter” in the Delta area, is one of the three main objectives of the Wandsworth Challenge Partnership’s Round Three SRB programme.
- Vegetation is limited, often inappropriate, and in need of reinforcement. A programme of works to create enhancements to the riverbanks including planting is underway.
- The Wandle Delta offers considerable potential for recreation, sport, amenity and the establishment of wetland habitats.
- The area is deficient in green space and there is a need for improved linkages to the wider area and Wandsworth Park. New development could create open space.
- This stretch of the River is one of the major missing sections of the Thames Path National Trail. The new pedestrian and cycle bridge linking the east and west banks of the Wandle needs to be linked into a new riverside path around the Point Pleasant development site and Feathers Wharf.
- The area has a rich industrial heritage which recent development has not reflected.
- A high degree of siltation has been observed by the Environment Agency and Wandsworth Borough Council since the construction of the

half tide weir in 1990 at the mouth of the Wandle River.

- The Western Riverside Transfer Station is London’s largest riverside waste transfer station and should be safeguarded.
- Pier Wharf is considered by the PLA to have capacity to be brought back into port use and should be considered as part of a comprehensive strategy for River freight movement.
- The development of Riverside West and the former Shell Oil Site display a lack of variety both in terms of design and mix. The contextual relationship between these developments and their surrounding area is weak.
- The future use and development of Feathers Wharf is a key issue, which must be considered in the context of an overall masterplan for the Wandle Delta area. When the site becomes available for development, it will be required to provide public space as well as a continuous riverside walk.
- Development of the former Shell Oil Site will improve provision for moorings in this stretch of the River. The potential for additional moorings and a pier should be considered.
- The Wandle Delta should be considered as part of a potential development and regeneration hub focused on Wandsworth Town Centre.
- The provision of a Watersports centre in the vicinity of the Wandle Delta would not be commercially viable. However provision should

be made for access to the water for users such as canoeists.

- Causeway Island is the central hub of the new Riverside Quarter and a recent feasibility has highlighted the suitability of the area for residential moorings.
- The opportunity exists to re-excavate the former Parish Wharves extension to Bell Lane Creek to form the setting for mixed use development. This would require the relocation of the council owned depot.

Eight projects were identified in the Wandle Delta Riverbank Improvement Study (WS Atkins 1998) on land or sections of river within public ownership or not dependant on future redevelopment.

A East-West Link:

The east-west link and the setting of the new footbridge

B Wandsworth High Street Bridge:

The refurbishment of the open space adjoining Wandsworth Bridge in the High Street

C Causeway Triangle

The ecological enhancement of the green triangle and local nature reserve on the eastern side of the Causeway

D Wandle Promenade (Armoury Way to Causeway Triangle)

Environmental improvements to the public domain along the causeway and in channel river bed improvements

E Causeway Island:

A major new public square for Causeway Island

F The Spit:

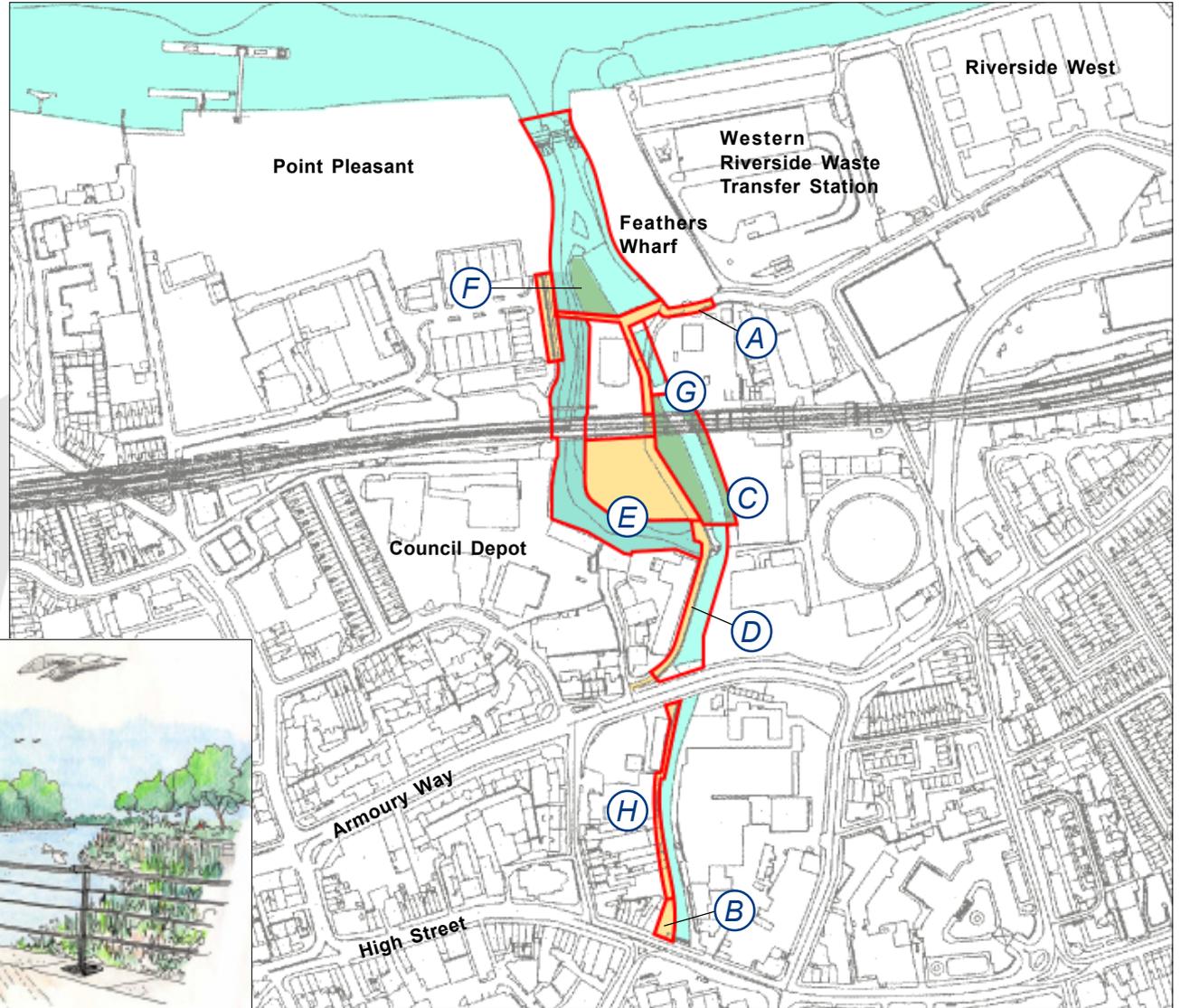
The potential impoundment of Bell Lane Creek and ecological enhancement of the Spit.

G Causeway Bridge (Lower Mill) Weir:

The modification of the stepped weir to the south of the Causeway Bridge

H Wandle Promenade (Armoury Way to High Street)

The provision of a foot/cycle path (The Wandle Promenade) along the western bank of the river between Armoury Way and the High Street.



Potential improvements to East - West Link at Lower Mill Bridge

Priority Riverbank Improvement Projects

Sands End

- The need for a comprehensive “vision” for the area. Recent developments have been designed and planned in isolation.
- The need for improved visual and physical linkages between the river and surrounding area.
- The area is deficient in green space. The new riverside park to be provided as part of the Imperial Wharf development will address this deficiency but should be planned as part of a network of green and public spaces.
- The potential for integrated public transport provision. The proposed provision of a station is critical to improved accessibility to the river and the promotion of river services.
- Swedish Wharf and RMC Wharves are safeguarded for port uses. Development in the area should not prejudice the use of the Wharves and their future role. A comprehensive strategy for river freight movement should be considered.
- Battersea Railway Bridge provides an opportunity for the provision of a cross-river pedestrian linkage which would improve accessibility within the area.
- Vegetation is limited and in need of reinforcement.
- There is a requirement for the preparation of integrated development guidelines for the area with particular attention to be paid to the lack of integration between development sites and the need for improved linkages.

- The riverside walk is in general need of upgrading.
- Sands End should be considered as part of a potential development and regeneration hub focused on Wandsworth Bridge.

Wandsworth Bridge to Regent Wharf

- There are poor visual and physical connections between the River and surrounding area.
- A lack of variety in recent/proposed development in terms of design and mix. The need to review development mix in order to achieve a sustainable form of development.
- The area is deficient in green space and vegetation is limited and in need of reinforcement.
- Retaining the Wandsworth roundabout as open space.
- The area has a rich heritage which has not been reflected in recent development.
- Recent development has not realised the potential of the riverside location in terms of use of the River. Limited provision has been made for moorings and access to the foreshore. There are currently no proposals for provision of a pier in this stretch of the River.
- There will be continued pressures for development of remaining industrial sites on the River. Development of these sites should not be considered in isolation but as part of a comprehensive plan for the area. Redevelopment should include employment uses.

- There is a need for cross-river co-operation in addressing the potential for new pedestrian crossing at Battersea Railway Bridge.
- The riverside walk should be completed and further consideration given to the creation/ improvement of linkages with the surrounding area.

Hurlingham

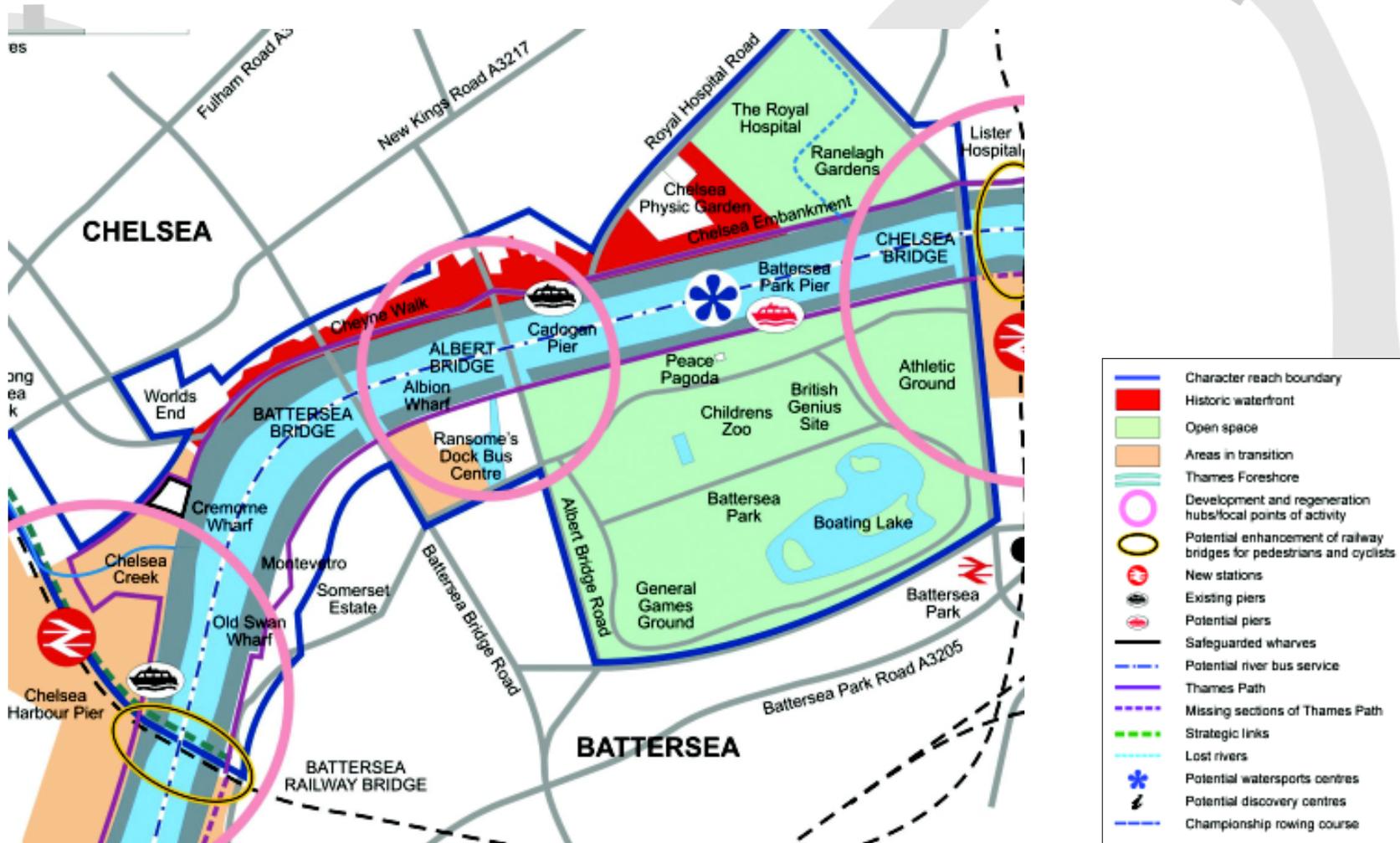
- The importance of the mature trees along the river frontage of the Hurlingham Club in views along the River, and from Wandsworth, and the long term replacement of plane trees with indigenous species
- The break in the continuity of the Thames Path caused by the diversion around the grounds of the Hurlingham Club.
- The nature conservation interest of the southern part of the Club grounds.
- The proposal to demolish the existing 1930's former polo grandstand within Hurlingham Park, and replace it with a modern sports pavilion.
- The opportunity to remove the variety of municipal buildings within Hurlingham Park as part of a comprehensive regeneration programme, focusing on maximising the potential of the park for sport.

Wandsworth Park

- On its anniversary in 2003 some minor improvements are planned in keeping with the park's original Victorian layout.
- The need to plan for the long term replacement of the mature Plane trees along the riverside promenade, to ensure a continuing stock of mature trees for future generations.
- The rejuvenation of the park with new street furniture, lighting, signage, riverside railings and public art.
- The introduction of a café, and an events area to maximise the potential of the riverfront location.
- The opportunity exists to create localised retired defences and steps down to the foreshore. This would, however, require the removal of mature trees.
- Further archaeological investigation of the foreshore; finds of metal work and pottery from the late Bronze Age may indicate a settlement now being eroded there.

CHARACTER REACH NO 7: CHELSEA AND BATTERSEA

River Chart Name: Battersea Reach - Chelsea Reach



Key Characteristics

This reach is framed by Battersea Railway Bridge, upstream and crossed by three bridges – Battersea Bridge, Albert Bridge and Chelsea Bridge. It is one of the most varied reaches. The Belvedere Tower, adjacent to Chelsea Creek, a central feature of the Chelsea Harbour development is a dominant feature on the skyline, along with Lots Road Power Station and Montevetro, the new high rise housing block that dwarfs the adjacent St. Mary's Church. The Buddhist Peace Pagoda is a focal point of Battersea Park, providing both a cultural and recreational facility in this densely built up area.

On the north bank, is the tree-lined Chelsea Embankment that severed many buildings, once fronting the Thames and is now dominated by traffic. Cheyne Walk housed many famous residents in its past and the permanently moored houseboats also add to the character of this area. The Chelsea Physic Garden is a well-hidden jewel, and the grounds of the Royal Hospital and Ranelagh Gardens appear quiet and deserted, except during the week of the Chelsea Flower Show each May.



Aerial View of Character Reach No.7

Key features of Character Reach No.7 may be summarised as follows:

- The Belvedere Tower at Chelsea Harbour is a 1980s example of a landmark residential building;
- Chelsea Harbour illustrates issues of practical public accessibility in large residential developments;
- Chelsea Creek is a major opportunity site for riverside restoration, new uses and improved links;
- St. Mary's Church, Battersea is an historic building diminished by a backdrop of high rise flats;
- Montevetro is a 1990s example of a landmark residential building setting a bulky precedent;
- Lots Road Power Station/Grosvenor Dock are sites planned for adaptation with new mixed uses;
- Battersea Bridge is a focal and viewing point with opportunities for better riverside links at ends;
- Albert Bridge is an outstanding example of an historic suspension bridge framing all river views;
- Cheyne Walk comprises terraces of historic buildings representing important architectural styles;

- The informality of moored houseboats have come to define river living in an urban context;
- The presence of a working boatyard;
- All Saints Church, Chelsea is an important historic reminder of the village origins of Chelsea;
- Chelsea Embankment retains the quality of the Victorian co-ordination of the improved riverside;

- Battersea Park is a major recreational resource with plans for improved river links and restoration;
- Chelsea Physic Garden is an opportunity site for improved visitor appreciation;
- Chelsea Royal Hospital is an historic set piece of architecture and landscape isolated by traffic



St Mary's Church and Montevetro

Historical Background

Chelsea Riverside

Old documents disagree about the origins of the name Chelsea, although it is thought that it might mean **chalk wharf** or **shelf of sand**. Spellings include Chelcheya, Chelched and Chelchythe.

A Synod was held in Chelsea by Offa, King of the Mercians, in AD 787. It is also mentioned in the Domesday Book. The first church was probably built in AD 799, although there is no written record of it until 1157.

In the succeeding centuries, Chelsea is occasionally mentioned in connection with its important inhabitants. Sir Reginald Bray was Lord of the Manor in 1485.

The known history of Chelsea begins in the 16th century when the Lawrence family were Lords of the Manor with the establishment of a number of large houses by the aristocracy. The village of Chelsea, for it was a separate village at that time, was close enough to Westminster to be accessible to the Royal Court at St James. Sir Thomas More and Henry VIII both had houses there as did many of the aristocracy. It became known as a “**village of palaces**”. Sir Thomas More, is commemorated in Chelsea Old Church.

Even before this time however, Chelsea Old Church was already in existence. The Church has been altered many times during its history and was extensively rebuilt after the Second World War. The earliest parts of the Church, however, date from the late 13th century.

The most important of the great houses was Beaufort House, which was built on the site of Sir Thomas More’s mansion. Other notable houses in the area included King Henry VIII’s manor house. The Earl of Shrewsbury’s mansion, the Old Manor House, Danvers House and Gorges House. All of these have long since been demolished and only Lindsay House, the Royal Hospital and Chelsea Old Church remain from this period.

Documentary evidence suggests that there has been a church on the site of **Chelsea Old Church** since 1157, but it was not known as All Saints until 1290. The north chapel, built about 1325 belonged to the lord of the manor. Sir Thomas More rebuilt the south chapel in 1528 for his own private worship. His first wife’s tomb and monuments both to More and to his second wife are in the sanctuary.

In April 1941 the church was struck by a bomb, but the determination of the congregation to rebuild



A view of Chelsea and Chelsea Old Church c.1738

was immediate. Although much of the church, including the tower, had been destroyed by the bomb, the original medieval parts of the church, namely the chancel and the More and Lawrence chapels, remained, damaged but intact.

The apothecaries company founded the **Chelsea Physic Garden**, which is the second oldest in the country, in 1676. Since 1683 when some of the first cedar trees in the country were planted there, plants and seeds have regularly been exchanged with botanic gardens throughout the world.

The garden is also home to a number of “firsts” including the earliest rock garden in the country, built from Tower of London stone and basaltic lava brought from Iceland, as well as the first greenhouse and stove in England built in 1681.

Today, in addition to the herb garden of modern and historical medicinal and culinary plants, the Chelsea Physic Garden boasts many exotic shrubs and trees from all over the world, including an olive tree, at 10 metres the highest in Britain.

The major influence on the development of Chelsea during the 18th and 19th century, was **Sir Hans Sloane**, the famous physician and naturalist, who had been secretary and was to become president, of the Royal Society. Not only did he come to own the majority of Chelsea’s river frontage, but he also instigated much of the redevelopment. He is thought to have owned most of the land west of the present site of Crosby Hall and east of Oakley Street. Noted particularly for his study of medicine and exotic plants, he took a considerable interest in the Physic Garden.

By the late 17th century the section of the river frontage between Oakley Street and Chelsea Old Church, was occupied by Winchester House to the east, Shrewsbury House and the old Manor House.

During the early 18th century, development began on the site of Shrewsbury House. Winchester House was demolished in 1828 and Oakley Street was laid out on the site. House building began in Oakley Street during the 1860's and there is development on the river front which also dates from this period.



A view of Chelsea from the Thames, 1744, by Maurer

The section of **Cheyne Walk** between Cheyne Row and Lawrence Street was developed with terrace buildings by the early 19th century and 50, the "Kings Head and Eight Bells" Public House, dates from this period. The remainder of the site was redeveloped in the late 19th century however, and a residential mansion block, Carlyle Mansions was erected.

Cheyne Walk contains many beautiful **Queen Anne Houses** and takes its name from the Cheyne family who were lords of the manor in Chelsea from 1660 to 1712. Running between Royal Hospital

Road and Cremorne Road, it has been home to many famous people.

Chelsea is also renowned for gathering **intellectuals and artists**. Writers such as Swift, Addison, Carlyle and Leigh Hunt all lived there, as did artists including Whistler and Rosetti.

George Eliot lived at No4; Rosetti, Swinburne and Meredith shared No 16; Henry James lived and died in Carlyle Mansions; Mrs Gaskell was born at No 93; Whistler lived at both 96 and 101; Sir Marc Brunel and his son Isambard lived at No 98; Hilaire Belloc lived at No 104; Philip Wilson Steer lived at No 109; and JMW Turner lived at No 119.

Another interesting feature of Cheyne Walk is its sculpture, including works by P Lindsay Clark, David Wynne, Francis Derwent, Epstein, Gilbert Ledward and Charles Pibworth.

The Chelsea Hospital was inspired by the Hotel des Invalides in Paris, The Paymaster General, Sir Stephen Fox, first suggested the idea of a home for



Parrott's 1841 lithograph of Cheyne Walk

veteran soldiers to Charles 11 in 1681. The next year **Christopher Wren** was appointed architect and in 1689 Chelsea Hospital admitted its first 476 pensioners. The building was finished in 1692.



The building comprises a fine red brick composition centred on the Central Saloon, flanked by the Hall and Chapel of the north block and an infirmary residential west wing (rebuilt after destruction by a landmine in 1941). Alterations were made by **Robert Adam** in 1765 – 82 and stables added by Sir John Soane in 1814. A statue of Charles II by Grinling Gibbons was erected in 1692 at the centre of the South Court and a memorial granite obelisk in the grounds was erected in 1849. The landscaped grounds originally ran to the river edge until the construction of the embankment road and have been used each May since 1913 for the **Chelsea Flower Show**, continuing a recreational tradition established with the former Ranelagh Gardens once on an adjacent site.

Chelsea Embankment runs alongside the River and was built, by the **Metropolitan Board of**

Works, on land recovered from the foreshore. Costing £269,591 between 1871 and 1874, it is just over a mile long and extends from Battersea Bridge to Chelsea Bridge.

Opened by the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh in May 1874 and designed by **Sir Joseph Bazalgette** (who also designed Battersea Bridge), it is not simply an attractive riverside road, it also covers the main sewer for the area.

The **Metropolitan Board of Works Estate** was built on what was previously the foreshore and land purchase was therefore kept to a minimum. Between the east end of Cheyne Walk and the grounds of the Royal Hospital however, the Metropolitan Board of Works had bought a considerable area of land. The reason for this was to enable them to build roads linking with the Embankment; in the process, however, the completion of the Embankment also left the Board with a large area of land which was now ripe for development.

On Chelsea Embankment, as well as in Tite Street, the Board leased building plots to a variety of builders, most of whom were retained by specific individual purchasers. The development of this estate, therefore, differed from earlier estates in the area in that only a small part of the land was developed speculatively. The Board was keen to ensure that the development of their estate was carried out to the very high standard. Above all they exercised considerable control over the choice of architect for each development. Richard Norman Shaw designed seven houses in the estate, EW

Godwin designed four, while GF Bodley/TN Garner, and Richard Phene Spiers designed one each. The development of the estate began shortly after the completion of the Embankment Road and most of Chelsea Embankment was complete by 1880. Dilke Street was laid out in 1875 and the buildings were completed in 1880's. Embankment Gardens was completed about a decade later.

On the western corner of the crescent Embankment Gardens stands Shelley House, built to the designs of Edmund Warren and now a nurses' residence. It was originally owned by the printer and connoisseur, Charles St John Hornby, who died in 1946.

Albert Bridge is a three span bridge constructed by RM Ordish on his straight link suspension system in 1871-3, which is a hybrid containing elements both of cantilever and suspension

bridges. It was built as a cantilever structure, each half supported by 16 straight wrought iron bars radiating from the top of the highly ornamental cast-iron towers. The side girders of the parapets were hung from vertical steel suspenders.

Thomas Dawson, Baron Dartrey, bought **Chelsea Farm** in West Chelsea near the Thames in the late 1770's. When he became Viscount Cremorne, the house became Cremorne House.

By the 1830s the house was owned by Charles Random de Berenger, who opened it as a sporting club called **Cremorne Stadium**. This venture failed and in the 1840's he reopened the 12 acres of grounds as pleasure gardens with a banqueting hall, a theatre, an American bowling-saloon, an orchestra, grottoes and "delightful lavender bowers" which could accommodate 1500 people.



Albert Bridge

By the 1870s **Cremorne Gardens** had acquired a bad reputation and were condemned as a nursery of every kind of vice. When an application to renew the license for the gardens was rejected in 1877 the gardens were closed and the land put up for sale. Today the site is covered by the Lots Road Power Station and the Worlds End Estate. The name of Cremorne Road remains as the only reminder of the history of the area.

People have been living on boats of different sorts in Battersea Reach since the the end of second world war.

The houseboats are a prominent feature in a river landscape which has been considered “romantic” at least since the days of Whistler. They are a feature in the river scene when viewed from Cheyne Walk, from Battersea Bridge and from the river itself.

By 1900 the river frontage was build up to more or less its present extent. New developments during the 20th century therefore necessitated the redevelopment of existing buildings.

The most interesting of the 20th century buildings in Crosby Hall, which was erected at the junction of Danvers Street and Cheyne Walk in 1910. To describe the building as 20th century is technically inaccurate however, since it was originally built by Sir John Crosby in Bishopsgate, in the City of London in 1466. The Hall remained there until 1908 when the site was bought by the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China. The bank intended building new offices on the site and eventually agreed to take down the hall carefully and at great expense and transferred the stones to the London

County Council for storage. The re-erection of the Hall on its present site was completed in 1910 under the supervision of the architect Walter Godfrey. The Hall is a particularly fine example of a medieval merchant’s house, its more distinctive features including a stone vaulted oriel and a timber roof.

Many properties were damaged during the war with the most extensive area of damage being the buildings between Danvers Street and Chelsea Old Church.

The restoration of the church began in 1953 under the supervision of the architect Walter Godfrey (who was also responsible for the resiting of Crosby Hall) and his son Emil Godfrey.

Major developments of the 1970’s included the Worlds End development, a housing estate owned by the Royal Borough.

Lots Road is named after the ‘lots’ of ground belonging to Chelsea Manor, where the parishioners had Lammas rights to graze their animals at certain times of the year.

Its main reputation, for many years, was as an area notorious for rough behaviour and fighting, but it was also the site of a medieval-style tournament in 1863 and in 1869 a balloon made several ascents from the lots, an event which gave the name to the Balloon Tavern at No 114.

In 1902, in the face of vociferous opposition, work started on **Lots Road Power Station**, near Chelsea Reach, which was built to provide power for the District Line. The size of the power station

and its two enormous chimneys outraged residents and Punch suggested a statue of Thomas Carlyle should be supported by the chimneys.

The capacity of **Lots Road Power Station** has been increased at various times and by 1990, together with London Transport’s other power station at Greenwich, produced two thirds of the power needed to run the tube network.

In less than a century this most industrialised area of Fulham turned full circle. One after another the works and factories closed, leaving a debris of deteriorating buildings, sheds and wharves until in the 1980s these unpromising acres were chosen for an expensive and highly ambitious development, **Chelsea Harbour**.

Twenty acres of former rail depot and coal yards were bought by P&O and Globe to produce what they described as a “unique world of houses, flats, offices, restaurants and shops”, and a luxury hotel built around a working yacht harbour. The marina occupies the original Chelsea Basin which was used for the transport of coal by River and later infilled and used as part of the goods yard. The basin was excavated as part of the development scheme. There is a vast underground car park, and the central Belvedere Tower is topped by a tidal ball which gauges the height of the tide. The architecture contains a mixture of classical and modernistic styles and motifs, much in the style of Docklands.

Battersea Reach

Originally known as Batrices Edge, or **Badric's Island**, the earliest evidence of settlement at Battersea can be found in stone, bronze and iron objects found in the river and the surrounding area. The Battersea Shield is in the British Museum.

Excavation has confirmed the existence of a **Saxon settlement**, while the earliest written record is a charter of AD 693, granting the area to the Abbess of Barking.

The old village of Battersea was centred on today's **Battersea Square. St Mary's**, to the north east of the square and built in 1777, stands on the site of an earlier church mentioned in 1067. Although the large manor house that stood next to the church was demolished, several other original village buildings remain. Old Battersea House, built in the style of Wren, dates back to about 1699, while the Vicarage and Devonshire House were built in the 18th century. The Raven public house in the square is a Charles II building and remains much as it was 300 years ago.



Battersea Bridge, looking towards Battersea c.1838

Once surrounded by water or marshland, the soil in the area is particularly fertile and market gardening was the chief local occupation until the late 19th century. The local asparagus, sold in '**Battersea bundles**', was famous. Other crops included carrots, melons and lavender.

From the late 17th century, however, although remaining primarily agricultural, Battersea began to develop a more industrial character. A variety of businesses were established including a pottery, copper works, a lime kiln, chemical works, docks, wharves and windmills.

But it was the opening of the **London and Southampton railway** and the terminus at Nine Elms in 1838 that changed the area completely. Between 1801 and 1901 the population grew from 3,000 to 169,000. Railway lines criss-crossed the area, large factories were built including Morgan Crucible Company, and Nine Elms Gas Works. 24,000 new homes were built to accommodate the huge influx of new workers.

The Chelsea Yacht and Boat Company Ltd was actively involved during the Second World War in the production of various types of craft and landing barges for the Normandy Landings. Boatyards have been located on this site in Cheyne Walk for centuries. Today, the Chelsea Yacht and Boat Company is one of the few remaining boat yards on the middle Thames and in addition to moorings, operates dry - docking facilities and workshops.

Battersea Park

Battersea Park was created during this time of great expansion in the 19th century. It is on the site

of part of the **common fields of Battersea**, which can be traced back to the 7th century.

Drained over the years and by the 19th century, one of the most fertile areas near London, the fields were then low marshes intersected by streams and ditches and separated from the river by a narrow raised causeway.

The area had developed a bad reputation. **The Red House Tavern** had an unsavoury clientele, while the fields themselves were used regularly for pigeon and sparrow shooting, Sunday fairs with horse and donkey racing, roundabouts, theatres, comic actors, dancers, conjurors and fortune tellers, gambling, drinking booths and hawkers and vendors. Gypsies camped there regularly. It was even the site of a duel between the Duke of Wellington and Lord Winchelsea. The constant flow of people arriving by boat was another problem.

In the end, in response to public pressure, the government decided to act on suggestions from **Thomas Cubitt** in 1843 to Queen Victoria's Commission for Improving the Metropolis and buy a large part of the area, partly as building land, partly for a new Royal Park. With a budget of £200,000 they bought 320 acres and converted 198 acres of it, laid out under the direction of Sir James Pennethorne into Battersea Park.

Battersea Park was opened in 1853. The lake and the sub tropical gardens were added in the 1860's. In 1885 the Albert Palace from the Dublin Exhibition of 1872 was put at the south end of the park for concerts and art exhibitions, although the idea was a failure and it was demolished in 1894.

Instead, by 1896, Battersea Park had become and remained a favourite for cyclists.

Listening to band concerts prior to the First World War was a popular way of spending Sundays and holiday weekends. The park was often used for political meetings and during the Second World War the bandstand was a platform for speeches.

The **Festival of Britain in 1951** was held to commemorate the 1851 Great Exhibition and to assist Britain out of wartime drudgery. Bedevilled

by strikes of electricians and carpenters, and the opposition of regular users of the park and occupants of the mansions nearby, the pleasure gardens opened in May 1951.

The Festival showboat was built and presented by the Chelsea Yacht and Boat Company Ltd which still operates from Old Ferry Wharf in Cheyne Walk. It was built on wooden piles over the Thames, had a series of tableau displays that included Jonah and the Whale, Atlantis and a display entitled Under the Icecap.

Today Battersea Park houses a children's zoo, a deer park, playing fields, a running track and tennis courts. The Old English Garden has been restored. The stone sculpture Three Standing Figures by Henry Moore and the bronze, Single Form, by Barbara Hepworth are also features of the park.

Battersea Park hosts a variety of events throughout the year, including an annual Easter Parade.

A **Buddhist Peace Pagoda** was the first major monument in Central London to be entirely dedicated to peace. It was a gift to the capital from the late Most Venerable Nichidatsu Fujii, and the Buddhist Order, Nipponzan Myohoji, and was formally presented to the people of London on 14 May 1985. It was located overlooking the river.

Battersea Bridge

Until 1771 the only way to cross the river between Battersea and Chelsea was by ferry. The first bridge, built of wood and designed by Henry Holland, was also the first to be built between Westminster and Putney.

Although it transformed Chelsea from a village into a small town, Battersea remained virtually unchanged. It was also a hazard for river traffic. It was dangerous going under the bridge or "shooting the arches". Many boats crashed into the piers and were wrecked.

The original wooden bridge, replaced in the late 1880's by the present cast iron bridge with five arches, designed by **Sir Joseph Bazalgette**, was immortalised in the misty nocturnes and etchings by Whistler.



Battersea Park 1928



Battersea Bridge

Battersea (or West London) Extension Railway Bridge also crosses the river between Chelsea and Battersea and was built in 1861 by William Baker of the London and North Western Railway to link the West London Railway to Clapham Junction. It is a five span wrought iron bridge very much like Southwark Bridge.

Character Appraisal

This Character Reach represents an outstanding model of historic townscape and landscape, retaining important examples of traditional river land uses, forms, functions and layout sensitivity incorporating 19th and 20th century improvements.

The 17th century Chelsea Hospital and grounds and the 19th century Battersea Park opposite are each outstanding examples of their period and help create a green gateway to the urban Westminster boundary framed by the handsome suspension structure of Chelsea Bridge and beyond the Victoria Rail Bridge.

Chelsea Riverside

The overall impression of the Chelsea riverside is one of diversity, attractive house frontages screened by a nearly continuous line of trees and interspersed with dominant landmarks such as the Royal Hospital, the Physic Garden and Chelsea Old Church and the Worlds End development. Throughout most of the frontage between Ranelagh Gardens and Worlds End, the embankment road provides a physical barrier between the buildings and the river.

There are many impressive views into and out of the riverside. Views across to the south bank can be seen from the entire river frontage, except at the west end where there are high buildings between Lots Road and the river. The best views are of Battersea Park on the eastern half of the frontage.

The best views towards the riverside are obtained from the bridges and the south bank of the river. The features which form the most distinctive parts of the landscape and provide focal points for views, are: major landmarks, building groups, parks,



Worlds End

wooded areas and areas of open space and the houseboats and other marine craft.

The overall view of the embankment from the south is towards the continuous embankment wall with a general back drop of trees and buildings and interspersed with more prominent landmark buildings.

From the Worlds End development eastwards there is a continuous line of trees along the embankment. This provides a contrast to the hard angular outlines of the buildings and results in more variety in the appearance of the river front. Where the belt of trees is thickest - in Embankment Gardens, Chelsea Physic Garden and Royal Hospital Gardens - the appearance of the trees is particularly attractive.

The dominant landmarks along the riverside are the very large buildings: the Royal Hospital, (surrounded by extensive grounds), the Worlds End development and the Lots Road Power Station. Smaller buildings and developments, such as Chelsea Old Church, Crosby Hall and Cremorne



The Royal Hospital

Gardens, as well as building groups such as Lindsay House, 12-26 Cheyne Walk and Embankment Gardens, also form distinctive landmarks.

The bridges are important features of the landscape as well as performing the function of visual frames to sections of the river. Albert Bridge, in particular, is of a very distinctive design.

The Royal Hospital is one of the oldest surviving buildings along this reach (1689), but it is now severed from the river by the heavy traffic along the embankment. The grounds of the Chelsea Hospital are used by the Royal Horticultural Society for the Chelsea Flower Show, which takes place in May every year, the area takes on a different character and becomes more lively and busy.

Along the north bank there is the formal avenue planting of London plane trees along the Chelsea Embankment, small fragments of the Chelsea Embankment Gardens, and the Chelsea Royal Hospital Grounds. These provide a great variety of vegetation and species, with ornamental planting being more dominant in this reach than native species. Many of the trees are now approaching maturity, and little new tree planting has been undertaken.

The **Chelsea Embankment** has historic lighting columns mounted on the embankment wall, and the benches provided at regular intervals are mounted on stone plinths, allowing a view of the Thames, over the solid flood defence wall, even when seated. The dressed stone flood defences are an important visual feature.

Traffic is the dominant issue on the Embankment. The main problems are the sheer volume of traffic travelling along the embankment. Apart from congestion of the road, this also results in parking problems, noise, fumes and vibration. This is unpleasant both for people living in houses fronting the embankment and pedestrians using the adjoining pavements.

The recent introduction of a segregated cyclepath along the Embankment has not respected to the character of the area.

Solutions to traffic congestion on the embankment can really only be made by considering the traffic problem for London as a whole.

It was proposed in the 1980's that one possible method would be to sink the road in a tunnel under its present course. This has already been done elsewhere, notably along the banks of the Seine in Paris.



Chelsea Embankment

To the west of the hospital site, fine houses and mainly 19th century mansion block flats create a continuous rich townscape edge to the riverside.

The buildings facing the riverside between Embankment Gardens and Royal Hospital Road have a coherence and similarity of age and building style. All are late Victorian and Edwardian buildings, built between 1870 and 1913. They are in the distinctive ornamental style of the period - being tall red brick buildings, or yellow brick with red brick dressings. They have decorated gables, steeply pitched roofs with dormer windows of various attractive designs; and mouldings such as cornices and freizes, picked out in Portland stone or red brick. They also have a series of ornate chimneys contributing to the vertical rhythm of the architecture. The houses are generally between four to five stories high with basement and attic floors.

Albert Bridge

The Chelsea reach of the river flanked to the south by Battersea Park is framed by two suspension bridges. The more decorative of the two is Albert Bridge, a spiky and vaguely Gothic structure designed by Rowland Ordish. By day, the pink, white and pale green colour scheme emphasises its delicacy, whilst by night it is lit by thousands of white light bulbs which give it a magical quality. The lighting also enhances the shape of the bridge.

Albert Bridge to the west, like Chelsea Bridge to the east help define this section of river and the park edges with outstanding landmarks acting as visual frames and gateways to the river channel.

Battersea Park

Battersea Park, one of the earliest public parks, takes up the entire south bank of this reach. This is the largest park within the study area. There is a riverside promenade, lined with mature trees, along the entire length of the park. There is a need for replacement planting to ensure a long-term framework of vegetation. The recreational facilities in the park continue to be well utilised, but there are areas of the park that are no longer being used to their full potential. Battersea Park is a very self-contained unit within the landscape and there is potential for creating links between it and the wider landscape.

In February 1999, a multi-disciplinary team led by Halcrow, was appointed by the London Borough of Wandsworth to undertake a four year project to restore Battersea Park. The Heritage Lottery Fund and the London Borough of Wandsworth are providing funding for the project.



Battersea Park

The views from Battersea Park, to the Royal Hospital are of significant importance and should be protected.

Chelsea Harbour and Creek

The Belvedere Tower of Chelsea Harbour is an important landmark defining the start of this character reach. Chelsea Harbour is already an important focus of activity, but its full potential has not been realised. This is partly due to the lack of a coherent network of pedestrian and cycle routes linking it to other visitor attractions and public transport. Redevelopment of the Lots Road Power Station should provide for improved linkages. The two chimneys of the power station are an important landmark.

Chelsea Creek connects by means of a sluice under the railway embankment to the Imperial Gas Works dock, which is partly still filled with water. The remains of this historic dock and industrial



Chelsea Harbour

buildings of heritage value should be conserved in any future redevelopment of the British Gas site. The potential for creating a pedestrian link along the former course of the Chelsea or Counter Creek to Brompton Cemetery should be explored.

Battersea Reach

St Mary's Church has been dwarfed by the new **Montevetro Building** designed by Richard Rogers. The new residential apartments step up from the church and reach 17 storeys on the corner of the bend in the River. This dramatic new building was built on the site of former flour mills. The tower blocks within the Somerset Estate already compromise the setting of the church. The impact of the Montevetro building varies according to the viewpoint; from sections of the Chelsea Embankment it appears as a single tower but when viewed travelling downstream on the River from Wandsworth its full stepped profile is clearly visible. The extensive glazing reflects the prevalent weather conditions.

Key Issues and Opportunities

Cheyne Walk and Chelsea Embankment

- The historic townscape of Cheyne Walk should be protected.
- There is a need for improved interpretation of the history of the area eg. Chelsea Physic Garden. Consideration could be given to improved signage and provision of interpretation boards.
- The working boatyard and residential moorings provide an essential River service and incidentally add to the character of the river and should be protected.
- Many existing trees are reaching maturity and consideration should be given to a programme of replacement. There is potential to enhance existing vegetation.
- Increased use of Cheyne Pier and Cadogan Pier should be considered. There is potential to extend the existing river services as part of the overall strategy.
- The bridges are key landmarks and views should be protected.
- Links to the wider landscape and Battersea Park/Chelsea Royal Hospital should be promoted and encouraged to compensate for the apparent shortage of green space along this stretch of the river.

- There is a need to integrate public spaces adjacent to Battersea Bridge with the surrounding area and to encourage increased public use.

Battersea Park

- Battersea Park provides the potential for increased utilisation of facilities and links into the wider landscape. Consideration should be given to improved linkages and enhancement of river walk.
- The area provides the potential for greater public use/enjoyment of the river, e.g. festivals.
- A new pier has been proposed for a site near to Battersea Park close to the Battersea Power Station, this will be accompanied by improved pedestrian access along the riverside between the Power Station and the Park.
- Connections with the surrounding area and public transport facilities should be improved, including the proposed leisure complex at Battersea Power Station. A new pedestrian link under Chelsea Bridge was approved in December 2000.
- Battersea Park does not at present make the most of its prime riverside location. Redevelopment plans promote its connection with the River.

Chelsea Harbour and Creek

- Development of the remaining land at Chelsea Harbour should seek to improve public access to the river and should make provision for public open space. Development should include provision for enhancement of Chelsea Creek.
- Chelsea Harbour/Imperial Wharf has the potential to become a leisure hub, as part of the overall strategy.
- Consideration should be given to increased use of the existing pier/river services.
- A suitable use should be identified for the vacant yacht club building at Chelsea Harbour.
- Existing vegetation is limited, small scale, and should be reinforced. Species of more appropriate size should be utilised.
- New transport links next to the Lot's Road development may be provided through the Chelsea Harbour new rail proposals and station on the West London line, the Chelsea/Hackney Line could serve this area with links to south west Chelsea.
- Lots Road Power Station is an important landmark and could be retained in any redevelopment proposals. Redevelopment of the Lots Road Power Station should provide for improved public access to the river and

linkages to adjacent areas. A mixed use development planning application is at the time of writing being considered by the local boroughs, a comprehensive travel plan is also being prepared.

- The treatment of the river walk will be an important consideration in the redevelopment of Lots Road Power Station, the final phase of Chelsea Harbour and treatment of Chelsea Creek.
- Planning permission has been granted at Chelsea Wharf to extend the Thames Cycle Path from Cremorne Gardens to Cremorne Wharf. It is hoped that the missing link (at Cremorne Wharf) will be added by the time the Power Station development is completed.
- Key river ecology issues are thrown up by the decommissioning of Lots Road Power Station. The Council is keen to ensure that Chelsea Creek retains its tidal character and that the inter-tidal areas are protected as far as possible.
- The environmental value of Chelsea Creek should be protected and the potential for new wetland habitats investigated. These could form part of a green chain extending up to the Brompton Cemetery. Environmental enhancements form part of the development proposals being considered and include terracing the banks of Chelsea Creek and the timber cladding of river walls to encourage new habitats.

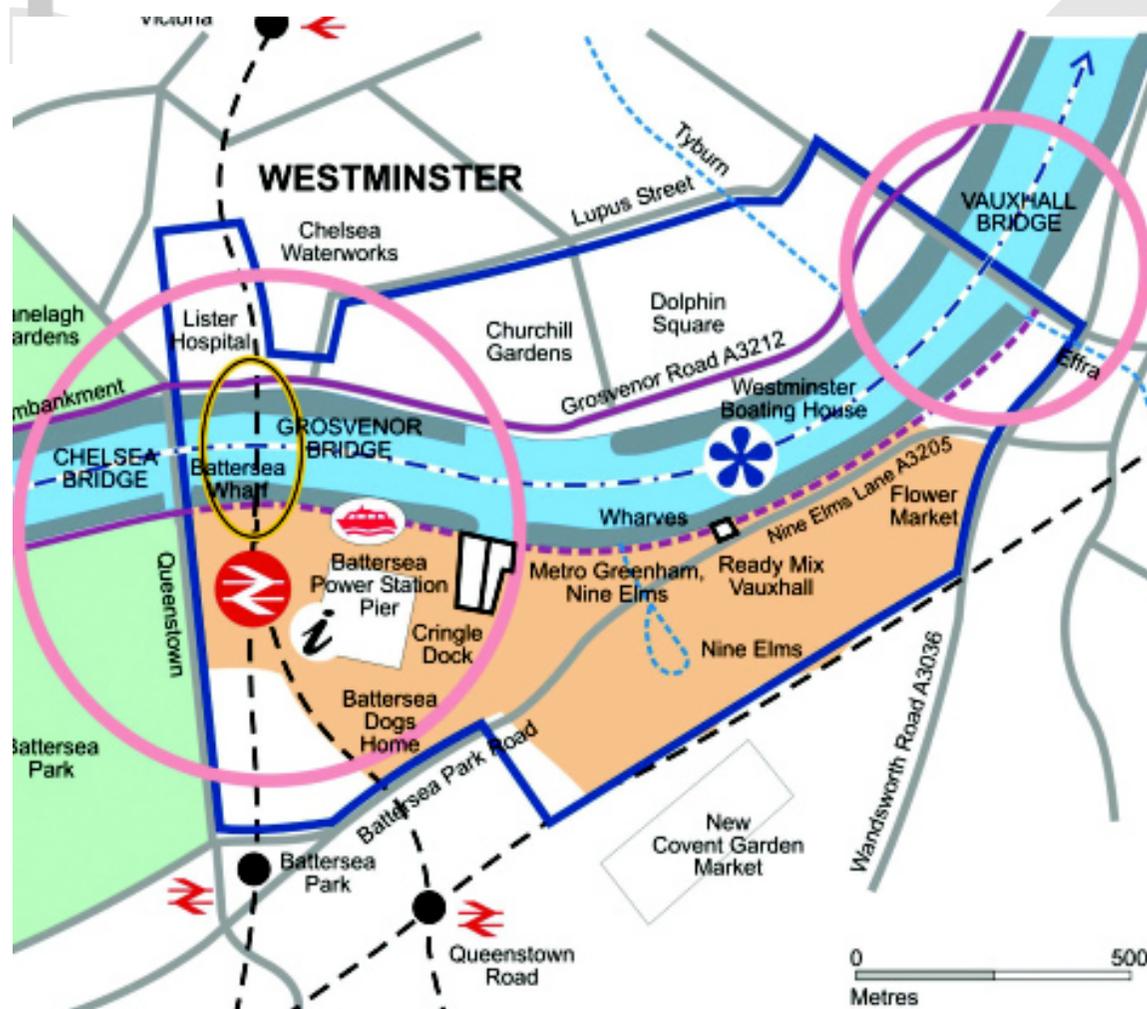
- It is likely that Cremorne Wharf will cease to be needed as a refuse transfer station at the end of 2003. The Council will need to consider whether the site is strategically important for freight, in their deliberations about what to do once it becomes surplus to requirements.

Battersea and Chelsea Bridges

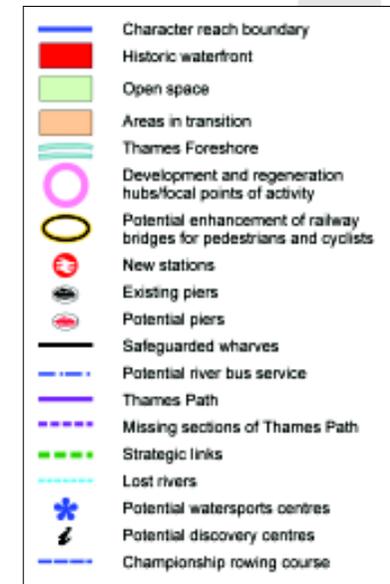
- Feasibility studies for the provision of pedestrian underpasses at Battersea and Chelsea road bridges are needed to improve pedestrian flow and accessibility to and along the Thames
- Pedestrian and cycle routes utilising Battersea Railway Bridge should be provided.

CHARACTER REACH NO 8: NINE ELMS

River Chart Name: Nine Elms Reach



Battersea Power Station



Key Characteristics

Although this character reach includes the area on the north bank between Chelsea Bridge and Vauxhall Bridge, it should be noted that this area is not included within the study area and is not therefore subject to the policy recommendations and proposals set out in this document. There is, however, a requirement for coordination between the Thames Strategy - Kew to Chelsea and the policies applied to the Thames in this area in the City of Westminster UDP. This area is included in the definition of the character reach because of its influence on the facing south bank of the River which forms part of the study area. Character reach No.8 also includes an area within the London Borough of Lambeth immediately to the west of Vauxhall Bridge.

The four tall chimneys of Battersea Power Station dominate this area, and the two disused cranes in front of the building are a reminder of its industrial heritage. The historic brick tower of the Western Pumping Station adjacent to Grosvenor Dock on the north bank is a prominent feature, as are the railway lines that merge to cross over Grosvenor Bridge. New Covent Garden Market is a hub of activity in undistinguished buildings and a generally uninspiring urban landscape.

Key characteristics of Character Reach No. 8 may be summarised as follows:

- Battersea Power Station is a landmark planned for regeneration with mixed commercial uses;

- Existing riverside uses from Battersea Park to Vauxhall interrupt the continuity of the riverside walk;
- The Churchill Gardens Estate residential blocks form a post war architectural landmark;
- The north bank of the River is generally residential in character. Grosvenor Road is affected by high volumes of traffic;
- Grosvenor Bridge provides a potential opportunity for improved shuttle rail and footbridge cross-river links;
- New Covent Garden Market and the Nine Elms river frontage is in need of improvement/ environmental enhancement;
- The development of land to the south of Vauxhall Bridge provides an opportunity for improved pedestrian links.



Aerial view of Character Reach No.8

Historical Background

Nine Elms

Until the mid 19th century, much of the Nine Elms area remained rural. Named in 1645 after a row of trees bordering the road, windmills lined the riverbank, surrounded by fields and osier beds. St George's Church, later in Nine Elms Lane and destroyed during the war, was named St George's in the Fields when it was built in 1829.

But over time Nine Elms became an industrial centre for brewing, lime kilns, potteries, woodyards and timber docks. By the end of the 19th century the fields were covered by industry, railways and Southwark and Vauxhall reservoirs, where the power station was later built. The **Nine Elms gas works** also occupied 17 acres.

Nine Elms station opened in 1838 as the London terminus of the **London and South Western Railway Co.** Then in 1848 Waterloo was opened and Nine Elms was left as a goods yard, although notables like Queen Victoria and Garibaldi still used the station occasionally. Rail lines crossing Nine Elms Lane to riverside wharfs had also to cross over tramlines and a man with a flag had to lead wagons across the road. The station was demolished in 1968. The flower section of the New Covent Garden Market is where the station used to be.

The goods yards and works covered many acres. Together with the gasworks, established in 1833 and the waterworks, they created many new jobs and brought thousands of workers to the area. To

accommodate them the expansion of **Battersea New Town**, begun in 1790, became a flood as new homes were built throughout the area.

After the war, however, Nine Elms became neglected. The railway yards and many factories closed down. Then in 1974 the **New Covent Garden Market** opened, moving from its traditional home in the centre of London, followed, after further years of dereliction, by new factories, making Nine Elms again the industrial heart of Battersea.

Battersea Power Station

Battersea Power Station was designed by **Sir Giles Gilbert Scott**, architect of Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, Bankside Power Station, Waterloo Bridge and the red telephone box, for the London Power Company. Station A opened in 1933 after years of opposition and protest.



Battersea Power Station decommissioned

Questions were raised in parliament about pollution which might harm the paintings in the nearby Tate Gallery and the parks and “noble buildings of London”.

In 1925 the government had recommended that electricity should be generated by a single unified system, under public ownership and from fewer, larger power stations. It was another 30 years before electricity supply was nationalised, but Battersea was the first super station, producing 400,000 kilowatts and supplying a large part of London with electricity.

Battersea is really two power stations, the original building was long, with a 300ft high fluted chimney at each end. After World War 11 it was doubled in size, with the, now familiar, two chimneys at each end. The **largest brick building in Europe**, it has a steel girder frame and exterior brick cladding. With a total capacity of 509 megawatts it was then the third largest power station in the UK, producing a fifth of all London's electricity. Station B began operation in 1948, though the building was not completed until 1953. The vapour issuing from the four chimneys was white, having been separated from sulphur and other impurities by smoke-washing apparatus.

Station A ceased production in 1975 and Station B in 1983. The building was listed Grade II in 1983. Since then a variety of plans for the preservation and/or redevelopment of the power station have been put forward and abandoned. In recent years it has been used as a stadium for pop concerts.

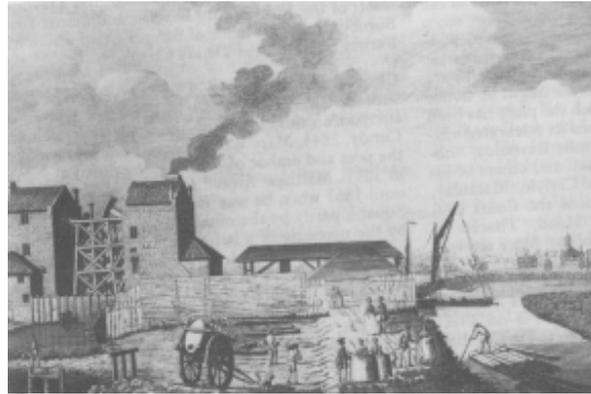
Now, after 20 years of uncertainty, Battersea power station looks set for redevelopment. Detailed planning permission and listed building consent were granted in September 2000 for mixed use development of the 14ha area around the power station. The owner of the site, Taiwanese-owned property developer Parkview International, plans to convert the power station itself into a 5,000 sq m interactive sports “infotainment venue”, plus a theatre, shops, cinemas, bars, restaurants and a 16 screen multiplex cinema. The surrounding area will house hotels, residential accommodation a theatre and a new rail terminus. Planning consent was granted in September 2000.

Planning permission has been granted for a mixed use development on the adjacent Chelsea Bridge Wharf comprising 680 residential units, a 200 bedroom hotel and office, retail and restaurant/leisure development.

Chelsea Waterworks

Chelsea Waterworks Company was incorporated in 1723 ‘for the better supplying the City and Liberties of Westminster and parts adjacent with water’. There were 2,000 shares of £20 each and the tide-mill works were established near the Thames on a site now covered by the Churchill Gardens Estate.

The low-lying canals were filled at high tide and the water retained until low tide by sluice gates. Later these were opened to run a water-mill that in turn ran the pumps. By 1726 the waterworks supplied reservoirs in Hyde Park and Green Park and preparations were being made to lay pipes ‘through all Westminster including Grosvenor



Chelsea Waterworks in 1725

Square, Hanover Square and all places adjacent’. A horse mill pumped the water to the higher ground near Grosvenor Square.

Over the following years the company expanded to provide water in other parts of London. By 1835 the company was supplying two million gallons daily to 13,000 houses, from Chelsea Waterworks. From 1856 the waterworks were supplied by three new reservoirs at Putney Heath and in 1876 the water came from five miles upstream near Walton.

In 1746 the company introduced the first iron main in London. Two atmospheric engines were installed in 1741-2, although they were supported by the tide-mill until at least 1775. Then in 1829 Chelsea Waterworks Company became the first to introduce slow sand filtration to purify the water they took from the river.

Planning Consent was granted in July 1999/March 2000 for the redevelopment of the Western Pumping Station and Grosvenor Dock to comprise a total of 478 residential units, a childrens resource

centre and play area, a retail unit and two cafes/restaurants, 10 houseboat moorings, riverside gardens and dockside walks. The existing dock is designated as being of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation and the developers are working with the Environment Agency to enhance the existing vegetation and to diversify existing habitats. The development ranges from four to nine storeys in height away from the river. The development is to incorporate public art to create a special identity unique to the development and historic features are to be retained.

Churchill Gardens

Churchill Gardens is an award-winning post-war development of flats and maisonettes for 6,500 people designed by A.J.P Powell and J.H. Moya (1950-62) for Westminster City Council. The rooms were heated from waste hot water pumped under the river from Battersea Power Station. A covered shopping centre, a restaurant, four public houses and an underground car park were included in the 30-acre site.

Character Appraisal

Battersea Power Station, with its four large, fluted chimneys is an extremely dominant feature on the skyline of the southern bank, visible from a great distance. This coal-powered station closed in 1983, and plans for converting it in to a leisure complex failed, with work ceasing in 1989 when the developers ran out of money.

Parkview's plans for it, which were submitted to Wandsworth Borough Council for full planning permission in April 2000, include mixed use, retail/leisure. The two large cranes in front of the power station, which used to unload coal from barges, as they arrived at the power station, form a strong sculptural feature, and should be retained, whatever the future use of the power station, as a reminder of the working river. Current plans (submitted December 2000) show their retention.

Two bridges cross this reach. Grosvenor Railway Bridge and Chelsea Bridge are very close to each other (180 metres), much closer than any of the other bridges between Kew and Chelsea. Chelsea Bridge is a suspension bridge, designed in 1934 by Rendel, Palmer and Tritton.

The tower of the former Chelsea Waterworks is an important landmark. Looking downstream the view is increasingly of high rise office blocks and apartments, including the new St. George Wharf apartments. The Millennium Wheel also comes fully into view.

The embankment along Grosvenor Road on the Westminster side of the River is dominated by

heavy traffic, and the quality of the public realm is not as high as elsewhere along the Chelsea and Victoria Embankments.

The mix of industrial activities along the Nine Elms bank of the River creates a very mixed impression. **Cringle Dock** is clearly visible from the opposite side of the river and contrasts with the new **St George's Wharf** apartments. This development attracts attention by the peculiar hinged wings on the penthouse apartments. It also has the same distinctive blue glass as the Vauxhall Cross MI6 building on the other side of Vauxhall Bridge.

The Thames Path National Trail is partly completed along the Nine Elms bank of the river. At present users are forced to detour onto the main road network. The character of this new section of path is a key issue, for example, should it be tree-lined to reflect the embankment on the opposite side of the River?

The **Westminster Boating Base** provides a welcome water-based recreation resource close to central London.



MI6 Building, Vauxhall



St George's Wharf, Vauxhall

Key Issues and Opportunities

Key Issues

- Battersea Power Station dereliction dominates existing area.
- The development of Battersea Power Station will change the character of this area and provide a major leisure/regeneration hub.
- Lack of public access to Battersea Power Stations site and adjacent areas.
- The area on south bank between the rail crossing and Chelsea Bridge is under-utilised and in need of improved public access.
- Access to the area will be a key consideration and an integrated approach is required to public transport provision and pedestrian/cycle linkages.

Development Proposals and Pressures

- The safeguarded wharves must be considered as part of an overall strategy and should not be prejudiced by other developments in the area.
- Other development pressures are likely to arise in the area as a result of increased development activity in this stretch of the river. Development of existing industrial sites should be sustainable and include a significant element of employment uses.

- The heritage of this area should be reflected in new development proposals, e.g. interpretation facilities, retention of industrial artefacts.
- Need for improved pedestrian access to River and public safety around site.
- Need for high quality Battersea Power Station site development and river frontage.
- Potential traffic congestion and access issues for circulating vehicles and pedestrian visitors to Battersea Power Station.

Future Opportunities

- Opportunity to improve pedestrian access to Battersea Power Station site from north bank riverside as part of new rail link bridge works.
- Opportunity for significantly improved architectural setting to south bank of riverside, better lighting of landmark buildings and structures.
- The potential for a new pedestrian crossing should be fully explored.
- Links to Battersea Park and the wider landscape should be explored and promoted.