

Heritage Statement

6-10 High Street, Hampton Wick, Richmond-upon-Thames



✠ Architectural History & Conservation

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1 Introduction

1.1 Professor Timothy Mowl of AHC Consultants has prepared this Heritage Statement for the owners of the property. Timothy Mowl is Emeritus Professor of Architectural History & Designed Landscapes at the University of Bristol. He is also a Professorial Research Fellow in the Humanities Research Institute at Buckingham University. Professor Mowl is a former English Heritage Inspector of Historic Buildings, Architectural Consultant for the Bath Preservation Trust and has served as President of Cheltenham Civic Society.

1.2 The purpose of the Statement is to present a historical analysis and description of the buildings in their setting. This will inform any proposed repair and restoration of the complex. The Statement has taken into account the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), but also the Local Development Framework (LDF) of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames, its 'Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance', and, more specifically, the Hampton Wick Conservation Area Study.



2 Historical Context & Cartographic Record

2.1 The following chronology has been constructed from documentary evidence in the Local Studies Library at Richmond Old Town Hall. Due to their vernacular nature, the houses and their shops are, understandably, ill-documented, though there are several early photographic views of Hampton Wick High Street held at the Library, in which they appear, prior to the coming of the trams in 1903 and 1906. These are the preliminary images in this Statement. Ray Elmitt has published these views in his *A Hampton Wick Timeline: from Domesday to the Current Day* (2010). As already mentioned, the RCHME covers Hampton Wick, though cursorily as regards the buildings in question, and there is the Hampton Wick Conservation Area Study, which is prefaced by a general history and development of the settlement. There is also the cartographic record, beginning in 1741-5 with John Rocque's Map of Middlesex, and continuing through successive editions of the Ordnance Survey to the present day. It is clear from these sources, as well as from an architectural analysis of the buildings, that the range dates from the later seventeenth century and was altered in the early nineteenth century with later, twentieth-century extensions to the rear.

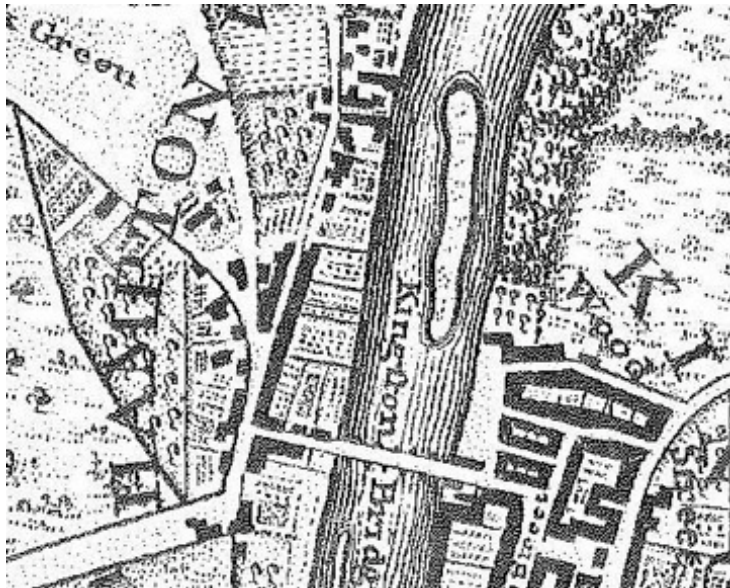


Plate 2 - Detail of John Rocque's 1741-5 Map of Middlesex

2.2 It is not the purpose of this present Statement to reprise existing historical knowledge of the settlement. Its aim is to ascertain when the range of houses and shops appeared and when they might have been altered. Rocque's 1741-5 Map of Middlesex shows them as part of a block of building on the east side of the High Street (*Plate 2*). At this date the only crossing over the Thames was via the medieval, timber Old Bridge, which would be superseded in 1828 by Edward Lapidge's stone bridge, which survives today, though widened. Old Bridge Street is a reminder of this original river crossing. In 1741 the back premises of the range were laid out as gardens and did not contain any buildings.

2.3 The next map to show the buildings, or at least a block of building in that position on the east side of the High Street, is the 1769 Turnpike Map (*Plate 3*).



Plate 3 - 1769 Turnpike Map

2.4 By the time of the 1826-7 Enclosure Awards Map (*Plate 4*) the range of shops and houses, now more clearly defined in their footprints, had ancillary buildings built within their back yards. However, due to the generalised cartographic rendering of buildings on the earlier maps, this does not necessarily mean that the range was originally uniform in its rear elevations.

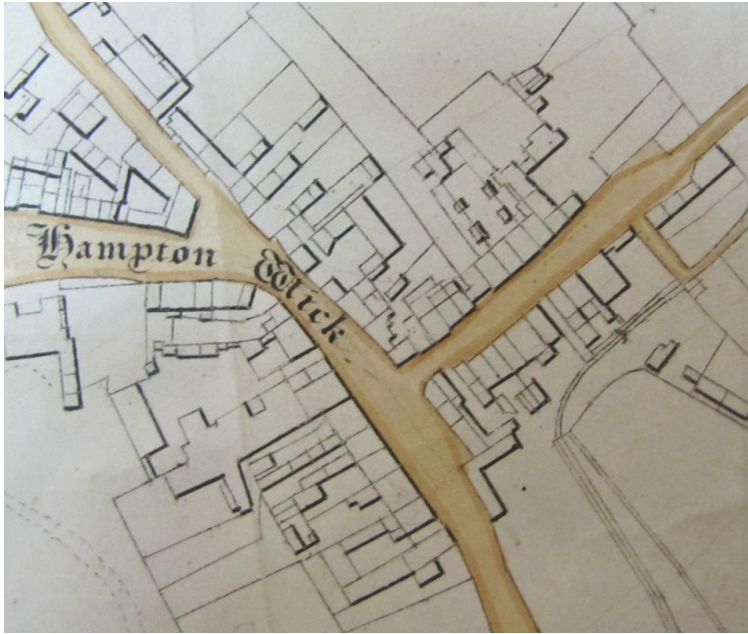


Plate 4 - 1826-7 Enclosure Awards Map

2.5 The Ordnance Survey first edition of 1863 (*Plate 5*) is much more detailed and shows the individual houses and their subsidiary buildings set around yards in the plots behind. The most important building in this area is a large detached villa on Old Bridge Street marked 'Moira House'.



Plate 5 - 1863 Ordnance Survey Map

2.6 Nothing had changed by the publication of the 1880 O S sheet, neither were there changes recorded on the 1886 map, apart from the appearance of a bath to the north-east of the back premises along the High Street (*Plate 6*).

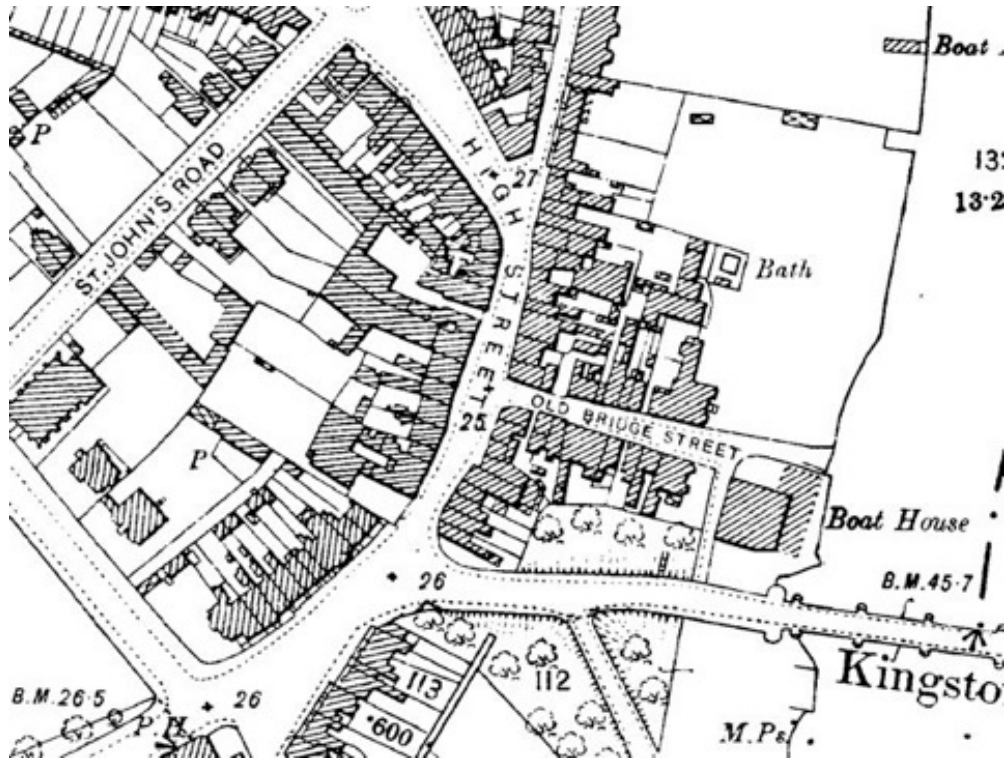


Plate 6 - 1886 Ordnance Survey Map

2.7 Subsequent O S maps of 1915 and 1934 reveal no change to the site, but by 1956 the sheet records the house numbers, a new access lane to the rear premises, accessed from Old Bridge Street, and two ancillary buildings on this lane marked as in ruins (*Plate 7*). A bakery is marked to the rear of number 16, while the land between the backyards and the river has been filled with a sawmill and a timber yard. Moira House survives as number 13 Old Bridge Street. By 1969, Moira House had been demolished and its site given over to the timber yard (*Plate 8*).

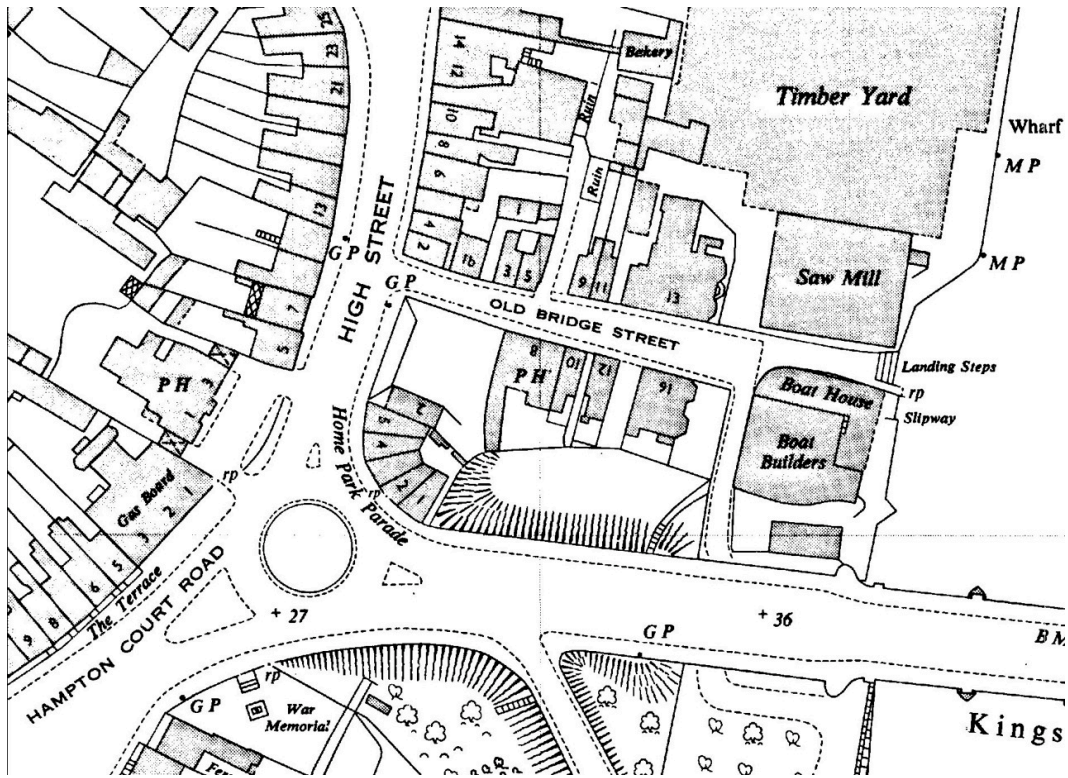


Plate 7 - 1956 Ordnance Survey Map

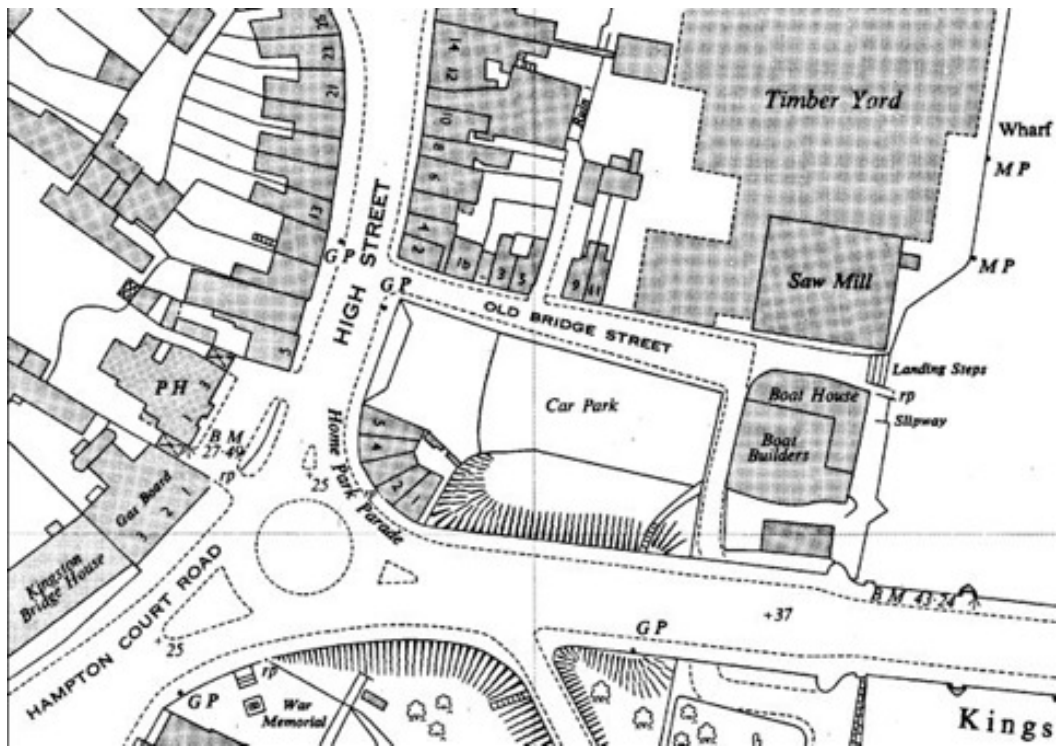


Plate 8 - 1969 Ordnance Survey Map

3 Historical Assessment of the Buildings



Plate 9 - Numbers 6 - 8 High Street, Hampton Wick

3.1 Numbers 6-8 High Street (*Plate 9*), Hampton Wick were listed Grade II with Group Value on the English Heritage register in June 1983 (EH Building ID: 205447); number 10 (*Plate 10*) is not listed, but is deemed by Borough Council to be 'Grade II Statutory Listed' because it contributes to the group value of the range and is physically attached to the listed structures, which were originally two properties but now comprise one building. The list description is short and vague, particularly as regards dating, and appears to derive essentially from the Middlesex volume of the *Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England*. Indeed, it is confined to the exterior only, which on the west façades facing the High Street would suggest that the buildings were late Regency or early Victorian in date. The dating chronology given in the list description is, unhelpfully, 'C17 to C18'. It is only when the rear of the properties is viewed that the seventeenth-century character of numbers 6 and 8 emerges. This easterly

aspect (*Plate 11*) reveals two gable ends of an earlier building that was re-fronted and altered internally in the early- to mid-nineteenth century.



Plate 10 - Number 10 High Street, Hampton Wick



Plate 11 - East elevation of Numbers 6-8 showing seventeenth-century gables

3.2 Numbers 6-8 High Street is of two storeys and an attic with a rendered west front and a gabled, clay tile roof in which are set three gabled dormers. The ground floor window openings are now boarded up but comprise modern shop fronts, while the first floor has an odd 6-light window with two top opening panes and a mid-twentieth century window with Crittall-type frame. There is a further opening to the right-hand, which has been blocked. The dormers are boarded too; their gable heads have simple weatherboarding. An archival photograph shows most of these hidden features; the dormers have simple two-light casements (*Plate 12*).



Plate 12 – 6-8 High Street before remodelling and boarding up

3.3 On the east elevation of numbers 6-8 there are two rectangular openings in the attic storey, both boarded up, and a canted bay window (*Plate 13*) to number 8 at first floor level. It is likely that this feature, which is nineteenth-century in date and part of the re-ordering of the houses in that period, originally extended to the ground to light both floors.



Plate 13 - Canted bay window to Number 8 High Street

There are similar features on another listed property in the village at Navigator House on the same side of the High Street (described as Number 60 on the list), but further north at its junction with Seymour Road (*Plate 14*). This interpretation of the original form of the canted bay was made at the draft stage of this report. It has since been proven to be correct by the discovery of a 1953 photograph of the rear façade, which shows a two-storey bay (*Plate 15*).



Plate 14 - Navigator House, 60 High Street, Hampton Wick



Plate 15 - Rear façade of Number 8 High Street in 1953

3.4 Number 10 High Street is not listed, but provides group value with its adjacent listed neighbours in the streetscape. It is of two storeys with a rendered west front and shallow-pitched slate roof. The modern shop front and entrance doorway to the ground floor are boarded up; these are flanked by timber gates. The fenestration on the upper floor is of 12-pane sashes set in recessed openings with decorative blind boxes; the central recessed window is blind. These upper floor features are all indicative of an early-nineteenth-century date, as too is the brickwork to the rear around a cambered-headed, boarded up window opening, just visible where the back wall abuts the corrugated-clad later extension. Another archival photograph shows the original ground-floor openings, now altered, on the front façade (*Plate 16*).



Plate 16 -10 High Street before remodelling and boarding up

3.5 There is nothing of architectural interest surviving inside Number 10 High Street, nor in the ground floor interiors of Number 8, these having been sacrificed for the creation of the bakery. However, in the ground floor back room of Number 8, there are the first internal signs that these two buildings are of seventeenth-century origin. These are areas of walling constructed with wooden laths and lime mortar covered with an outer skin of lime plaster bonded with animal hair. This walling construction is deployed throughout the two houses and is a rare and important survival of the historic fabric. It is particularly evident in the attic rooms where only certain walls have been rendered over in the nineteenth century period. The roof is also seventeenth-century in date, though many of its rafters and purlins have been replaced; generally, however, the main tie-beams survive. All these seventeenth-century features can be seen in *Plate 17*.



Plate 17 - Seventeenth-century roof and wall construction

3.6 Some of the rooms in Numbers 6-8 have been upgraded in the nineteenth century. These include the front room to Number 8 on the first floor, which has simple panelling set over the seventeenth-century walling (*Plate 18*), and the central chimney, which on the first floor has been extended into the room, and on the second floor above has been given a new fire grate. At least one wall in the attic has been plastered over at this period and a door inserted. Other joinery, such as skirtings and window reveals, is also nineteenth-century in date.



Plate 18 - Nineteenth-century panelling laid over original walling

3.7 This just leaves the staircase surviving in Number 8. This is not part of the original build, though at both upper levels it will have been inserted into the existing well when the properties were re-ordered. The extremely narrow and vertiginous run of stairs, from the ground floor to the first floor in Number 8, is a deathtrap. The handrail and stick balusters on the first landing relating to this run of stairs are plainly nineteenth-century in date. The more substantial flights further up have a simple baluster newel post and plain treads (*Plate 19*).



Plate 19 – Staircase with baluster newel post

There must always have been a further staircase serving Number 6, which would have been wrapped around the back of the central stack. There appears to be a stairwell space with a surviving stringer attached to the wall on the first floor in this area, suggesting that it originally extended to the top of the house (*Plate 20*). This would seem to be the only way of accessing the attic space when this was a single property and not connected to the adjacent house. When lateral connection was required at attic level a breach was made in the party wall between the two houses.



Plate 20 – Stairwell to attic floor

4 The Proposals

4.1 Proposals for the repair of 6-10 High Street and for their conversion into residential dwellings (Nissen Richards Studio for Countrywide Design Group) would seem uncontroversial if the change of use is accepted by the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames. However, it has been established here that Numbers 6-8 are seventeenth-century in origin and, as such, they will require sensitive treatment.

4.2 The proposed scheme has been drawn up in line with guidance given in the NPPF, with particular reference to listed buildings and their conservation and alteration. It has also been informed by the Borough's 'Planning Information for Historic Buildings – Maintenance & Repair' (Planning Information Leaflet 4), where the philosophy of repair versus restoration in any historic building is stated as a priority, and that any 'restoration' should be 'considered as a last resort' (page 1). The Borough also has a leaflet on shop fronts (Supplementary Planning Document – Shopfronts, 2010), which will give guidance on the repair and re-ordering of the shop fronts to Numbers 8 and 10 if their re-instatement forms part of the conversion. Wherever possible, natural materials such as lime mortar ('at, say 1:2:9 Cement/Lime/Sand to allow a degree of flexibility in the overall bonding'; page 2) and timber fenestration – 'precise copies of existing windows' (page 5) – where there are lost or unsightly elements, should be deployed in the conversion. It is essential that all historic fabric should be retained wherever possible, that interventions are minimal and that the conversion into residential dwellings respects the specific character of the heritage assets.

4.2 The conversion of Number 10 High Street would not appear to be controversial. It is listed by virtue of its group value with Numbers 6-8, but has no specific architectural quality in its own right, which would render it listable, being a fairly standard product of the early nineteenth century. Its status is that

of a building of local interest rather than one of national stature. Nevertheless, it requires sensitive upgrading if it is to act as a foil to its more important neighbours. This would be provided externally by an overhaul of the existing fenestration and openings at ground floor in line with the Borough Council's planning guidance. Nothing of significance survives inside to warrant special attention in its conversion to a single dwelling unit, and the demolition of the huge shed at the rear would be a positive enhancement, opening up a view of the seventeenth-century rear elevation from the service lane. As too would be the demolition of the extension behind Number 8. The proposed new extension to the rear façade at ground floor level of Number 6 (three options are provided for the conservation officer's comments) would not result in any loss of historic fabric, as the walls are currently breached, and would provide further benefits to the property.

4.3 Proposals for Numbers 6-8 have been prepared with care and close attention to the important historic interiors. Initial plans to form residential dwellings, particularly in Number 6, would have compromised the central stack which, although restructured and built out into the rooms on two floors in the nineteenth century, is, nevertheless, an original feature. The revised plans avoid any such breaching of this stack by wrapping the new staircase around the back of it and, thereby, avoiding any loss of historic fabric (drawings A1372-PL-202 & A1372-PL-203). Similarly, the reduction of Number 6 to a two-bedroom house means that there would be no breaching of the original seventeenth-century partition wall between Units 1 and 2 at attic floor level. In addition to the new staircase in the original well space for Unit 1 in Number 6, the drawings propose a new reconstructed staircase for Number 8. In view of the present decayed state of the plain, nineteenth-century stair, this would seem uncontroversial and appropriate, particularly if details of newels and balusters were to be reproduced in the new joinery. As with Number 10, original fenestration should be respected where possible and new joinery provided to match the existing. There would be

an opportunity on the rear façade of Number 8 to extend the bay window to the ground floor, as at Navigator House.

4.4 The scheme would pay respect to the seventeenth-century interior and would endeavour to preserve all other surviving elements, as well as offering a positive enhancement of the historic assets.