

2.0 BASELINE INFORMATION



View from the Terraces to Marble Hill House

2.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Marble Hill House

Marble Hill House is a Grade I listed Neo-Palladian villa built between 1724-1729, designed by architect Roger Morris. It is open to the public for guided tours on Saturday and Sunday from March to November. The Ice House and Grotto still remain in-situ and evidence of the structure of the original landscape design by Charles Bridgeman and Alexander Pope exists in part. A Black Walnut, *Juglans nigra*, on the path connecting the House to the Thames is a significant specimen of its species and a remnant of the landscape works carried out in the mid to late 18th century.

Sports & Recreation

Marble Hill Park provides an important outdoor open space for both formal and informal recreation. Bookings for football, rugby and cricket pitches, artificial tennis courts and practice cricket nets are managed by the Park Ranger Team, based on site. Changing room facilities are also available for use, which are located in the north-east corner of the park. Currently the changing rooms can only accommodate single sex teams as there is no division of male and female facilities. The park is also used for informal recreation such as jogging and cycling and by many dog-walkers. The area between Marble Hill House and the River Thames is popular for relaxation and picnics with views across to the south bank and enclosure provided by the avenues of trees either side.

Play

The Marble Hill Playcentre provides play for 0-5 years at their One O'clock Club and 5-15 years in their Adventure Playground, both are paid entry. The play area and buildings, located along the north-east boundary of the park, are leased from English Heritage. A separate 'dog-free' fenced area is located to the west of the House and is popular with parents of young children, as an area where they can run around safely.

The Coach House Café and public toilets

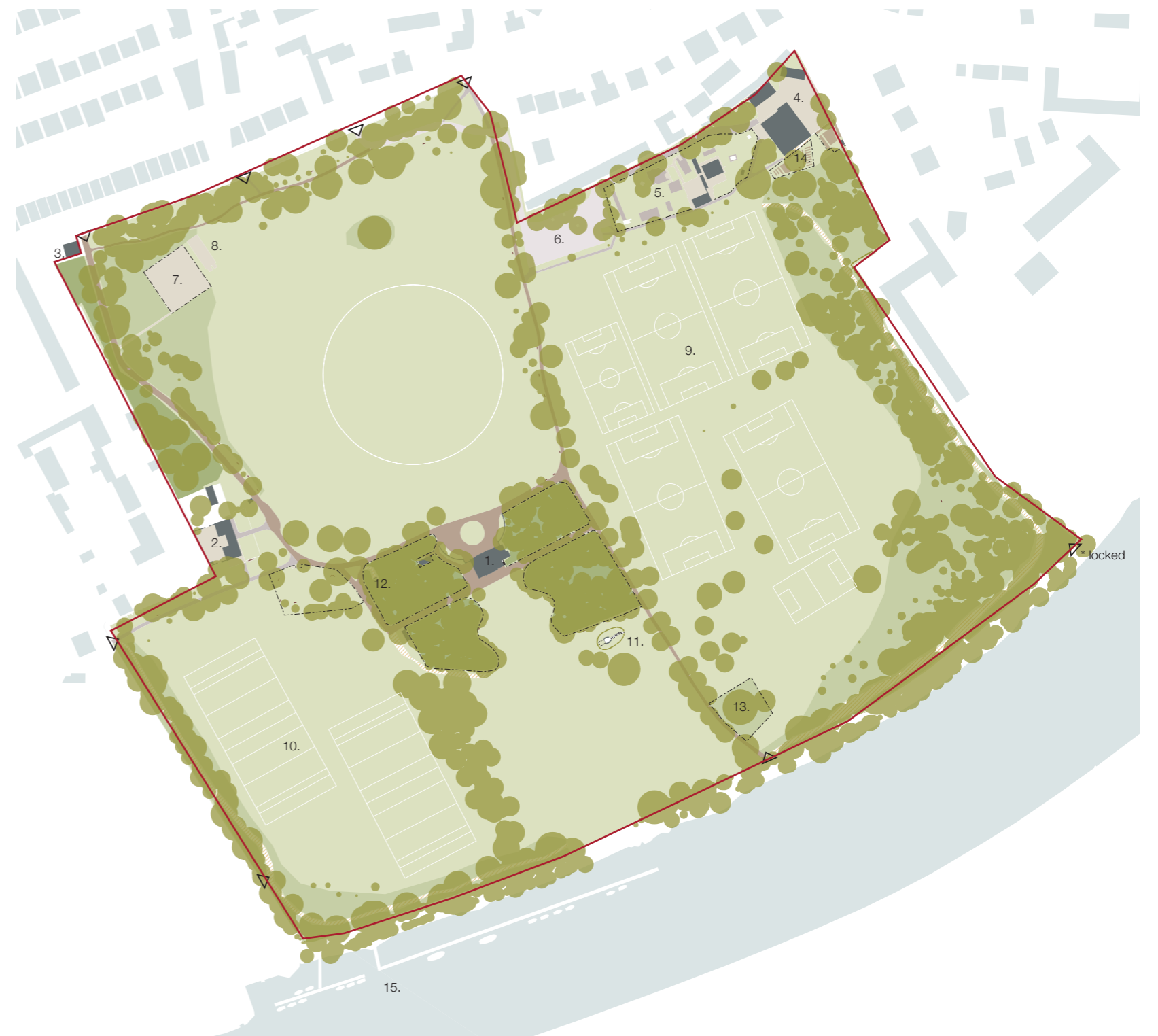
The Grade II listed Stable Block is home to the Coach House Café and public toilets. The cafe currently occupies the ground floor of the southern wing of the Stable Block and provides a small indoor and outdoor seating area. Male, female and accessible toilet facilities, located in the ground floor of the northern wing are open to the public for the duration of park opening hours.

Events

The main event held in the park is the House Festival in July, a one day music festival run by member's club Soho House. The House Festival occupies the entire field between the House and the Thames and has secondary facilities located in both the west and east meadows. Vehicular traffic is managed via the west entrance off Richmond Road.

- Key:
- ▶ Entrances
 - Grass
 - Paths
 - Track
 - Meadow / long grass
 - Understorey
 - Tree
 - Site Boundary

1. Marble Hill House
2. Coach House Cafe
3. Lodge
4. Works yard
5. Play area
6. Car park
7. Tennis courts
8. Cricket nets
9. Football pitches
10. Rugby pitches
11. Grotto
12. Ice House
13. Black Walnut tree
14. Allotments
15. Hammerton's Ferry



Existing landscape plan

2.2 POLICY FRAMEWORK

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

The national policies of relevance to this report are set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and within the Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (2010), which remains relevant despite the replacement of Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (2010) by the NPPF (2012).

The NPPF requires applicants for development proposals to provide a description of the significance of the heritage asset affected by proposed development. A heritage asset is defined within Annex 2 of the NPPF as:

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Significance (for heritage policy) is defined within Annex 2 of the Framework as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Paragraph 128 of the NPPF indicates that, in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to:

Describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF indicates that, in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

In respect of designated heritage assets, paragraph 132 states that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation; The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be".

Paragraphs 133 and 134 then set out the criteria for weighing 'substantial harm' or 'less than substantial harm' against the benefits of proposed developments:

Paragraph 133. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- *the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;*
- *and*
- *no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- *conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- *the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

Paragraph 134. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL POLICIES

Regional and local policy relating to heritage assets are contained within the Mayor of London's London Plan and the Royal Greenwich Local Plan. The Local Plan comprises the Core Strategy and Development Management Plan (DMP) and these are currently under review. The new policies relating to heritage assets do not differ in principle from the existing policies and therefore this statement assesses the new proposal at Marble Hill against the existing guidance.

CORE STRATEGY

The Core Strategy was adopted on 21 April 2009 and is a policy document which determines the future development of the borough over the next 15 years. The Strategy outlines the:

- Vision
- Spatial strategy
- 20 core planning policies on topics such as climate change, housing, employment and retailing

Marble Hill is one of the main features of the local development framework. The policies within the Core Strategy that are of relevance to this development are:

CP7 Maintaining and Improving the Local Environment

7.A Existing buildings and areas in the Borough of recognised high quality and historic interest will be protected from inappropriate development and enhanced sensitively (...)

7.B All new development should recognise distinctive local character and contribute to creating places of a high architectural and urban design quality that are well used and valued. Proposals will have to illustrate that they:

- (i) are based on an analysis and understanding of the Borough's development patterns, features and views, public transport accessibility and maintaining appropriate levels of amenity;
- (ii) connect positively with their surroundings to create safe and inclusive places through the use of good design principles including layout, form, scale, materials, natural surveillance and orientation, and sustainable construction.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Plan was adopted on 1 November 2011, builds on the Core Strategy and includes more detailed policies for managing development. The policies within the Plan relevant to this development are:

Policy DM OS 4 Historic Parks, Gardens and Landscapes

Parks and gardens as well as landscapes of special historic interest included in the Register compiled by English Heritage (...) will be protected and enhanced. Proposals which have an adverse effect on the settings, views, and vistas to and from historic parks and gardens, will not be permitted.

Policy DM HD 1 Conservation Areas - designation, protection and enhancement

The Council will continue to protect areas of special significance by designating Conservation Areas and extensions to existing Conservation Areas using the criteria as set out in PPS 5 and as advised by English Heritage.

The Council will prepare a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for each Conservation area, these will be used as a basis when determining proposals within or where it would affect the setting of, Conservation Areas together with other policy guidance.

Buildings or parts of buildings, street furniture, trees and other features which make a positive contribution to the character, appearance or significance of the area should be retained. New development (or redevelopment) or other proposals should conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area, and views and vistas.

Policy DM HD 2 Conservation of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments

The Council will require the preservation of Listed Buildings of special architectural or historic interest and Ancient Monuments and seek to ensure that they are kept in a good state of repair by the following means:

1. *consent would only be granted for the demolition of Grade II Listed Buildings in exceptional circumstances and for Grade II* and Grade I Listed Buildings in wholly*

exceptional circumstances following a thorough assessment of their significance;

2. retention of the original use for which the listed building was built is preferred. Other uses will only be considered where the change of use can be justified, and where it can be proven that the original use cannot be sustained;
3. alterations and extensions including partial demolitions should be based on an accurate understanding of the significance of the asset including the structure, and respect the architectural character, historic fabric and detailing of the original building. With alterations, the Council will normally insist on the retention of the original structure, features, material and plan form or features that contribute to the significance of the asset. With repairs, the Council will expect retention and repair, rather than replacement of the structure, features, and materials of the building which contribute to its architectural and historic interest; and will require the use of appropriate traditional materials and techniques;
4. using its legal powers to take steps to secure the repair of Listed Buildings, where appropriate;
5. protecting the setting of Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings where proposals could have an impact;
6. taking a practical approach towards the alteration of Listed Buildings to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and subsequent amendments, provided that the building's special interest is not harmed, using English Heritage advice as a basis.

Policy DM HD 4 Archaeological Sites

The Council will seek to protect, enhance and promote its archaeological heritage (both above and below ground), and will encourage its interpretation and presentation to the public. It will take the necessary measures required to safeguard the archaeological remains found, and refuse planning permission where proposals would adversely affect archaeological remains or their setting.

Policy DM HD 7 Views and Vistas

The Council will seek to protect the quality of views indicated on the Proposals Map. It will also seek opportunities to create attractive new views and vistas and, where appropriate, improve any that have been obscured.

TWICKENHAM RIVERSIDE CONSERVATION AREA POLICIES

Twickenham Riverside Conservation Area was designated on 14th January 1969 and extended in 1982 and 1991. Richmond Borough Council's Conservation Area Statement includes the following information relevant to Marble Hill.

History and Development

"The village is of medieval origin focused on the Parish Church of St. Mary which dates from the 14th century. The pattern of Georgian and early Victorian development illustrates that growth took place based on this core. There was also some 18th century villa development along the river. With the advent of the railway in 1863 the focus shifted towards the current centre of Twickenham. York Street was built in 1890 and became the main route to Richmond, bypassing the original centre."

Character

"The area was originally designated in recognition of the historic and architectural value of the original village core and river frontage. It was extended to include the 18th century splendour of Marble Hill Park and the setting of important surrounding buildings, particularly Montpelier Row (...). 17th and 18th century development along the Thames is characteristic of the period's grand formal approach to landscape and buildings. The Palladian Marble Hill House, set in extensive grounds running down to the river, is a nationally important example of such development. Together with York House, Orleans House and Montpelier Row it contributes to an exceptionally fine area of integrated architectural and landscape design. These buildings also have a strategic role in visually linking up with other houses in the area such as Ham House and Strawberry Hill and viewpoints such as Richmond Hill. (...) Trees play an important role in framing views and providing the setting to the buildings."

Problems and Pressures

- Development pressure which may harm the balance of the river and landscape-dominated setting in many parts of the area, and the obstruction or spoiling of views, skylines and landmarks
- Loss of traditional architectural features and materials due to unsympathetic alterations
- Loss of front boundary treatments and front gardens for car parking
- Lack of coordination and poor quality of street furniture and flooring

Opportunity for Enhancement

- Improvement and protection of the river and landscape setting
- Preservation, enhancement and reinstatement of architectural quality and unity

2.3 DESIGNATIONS & LISTINGS

Marble Hill Park is included in Historic England's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, designated Grade II*. The park lies within the Twickenham Riverside Conservation area of London Borough of Richmond. The park is also designated Metropolitan Open Land and Public Open Space.

There are several listed buildings within the park, most notably Grade I listed Marble Hill House. The Stable Block, Ice House and White Lodge are all Grade II listed. The setting of these features can be greatly improved through subtle and sensitively integrated interventions in the landscape of the park.

Immediately along the western boundary is Montpelier Row, comprising several listed dwellings, notably two Grade II* listed early 18th century terraces and Grade II* listed South End House whose grounds share a boundary to the rear of the Stable Block. The Grade II listed 'Woodside' is a detached dwelling which shares a boundary along the western edge of the park.

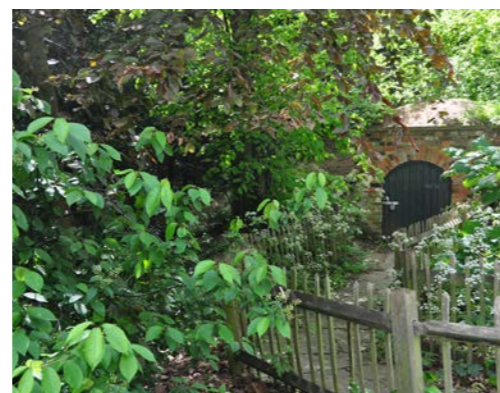
Three areas within the park are identified within the Local Development Framework, Proposals Map (July 2013) as locations for additional tree planting. This includes the flanks of the former Pleasure Grounds and the car park and adventure playground site.

To note: The Woodland Quarters the Pleasure Ground Avenues and the area encompassing the car park and the Adventure Playground and the One O'clock Club are identified as areas for new tree planting in the local plan.

Please refer to section 5 for the Heritage Impact Assessment of landscape proposals

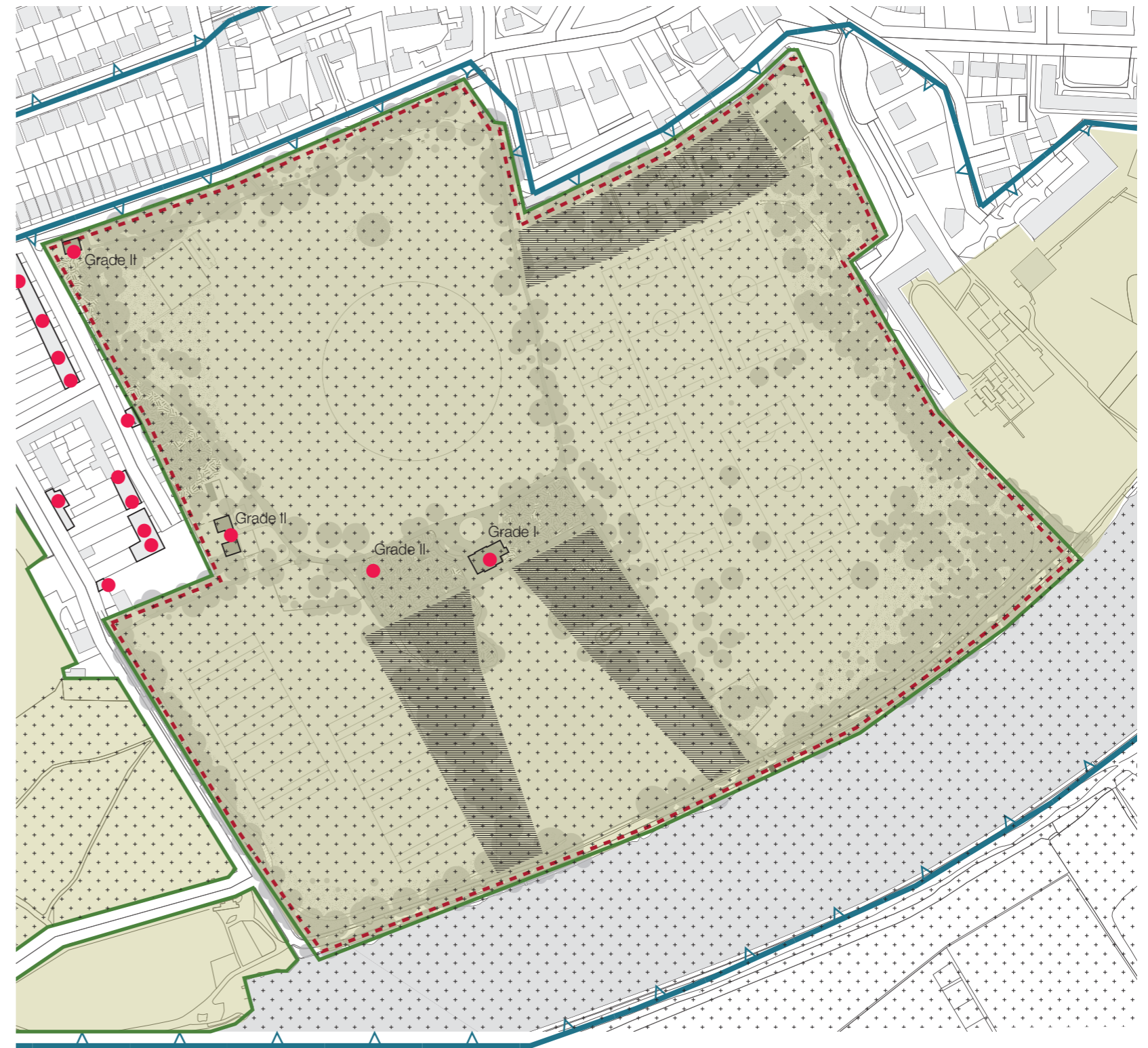


Marble Hill House - Grade I listed



The Ice House - Grade II listed

- Key:
- Metropolitan Open Land
 - Conservation Area
 - Public Open Space
 - Historic Parks & Gardens
 - Proposed area for tree planting
 - Site of nature importance
 - Listed Building



Designations and listings plan



2.4 CHARACTER AREAS

The character areas at Marble Hill Park have been identified through analysis of the existing park layout and uses, in conjunction with historic research and review of nomenclature used on the 1752 Survey Plan. Seven areas of different character exist within the park. The principal area, The Pleasure Grounds, is further subdivided to describe more specific features. The character areas enable the articulation of feasibility proposals and help to focus on areas where the greatest intervention is required to maximise the benefit for park users and to preserve features of heritage significance.

Much of the original landscape design by Charles Bridgeman and Alexander Pope in the 1720's is still evident, although eroded. Interrogation of the 1752 Survey Plan of Marble Hill has helped to further understand the landscape and fill the gaps in areas that are now missing. Subsequent research by Magnus Alexander et al of Historic England and Mark Laird for English Heritage have provided further clarity in these areas. Please refer to subsequent sections of the report for further information.

Note that areas have been variously referred to by other names which may appear within the various reports cross referenced in this document. As our understanding of the history of the park is refined so will the names used to describe each area.

Notably the Woodland Quarters which are variously referred to as Woodland Compartments or by the constituent parts of each quarter such as Thickets, Groves (NW Quarter), Orchard (NE Quarter), Wilderness, Ninepin Alley (SW Quarter) and Flower Garden, Grotto (SE quarter).

- Key:
- 1.0 Pleasure Grounds
 - 1.1 Carriage Circle, Southern Terrace and House Representation
 - 1.2 Terraces
 - 1.3 Stepped Avenues
 - 1.4 The Woodland Quarters
 - 1.5 Palisade and Oval Lawn
 - 2.0 Great Lawn and Sweet Walk
 - 2.1 Great Lawn
 - 2.2 Sweet Walk including Stables Block
 - 3.0 West Meadow
 - 4.0 East Meadow
 - 4.1 Woodland Walk
 - 5.0 Car Park, Playground and works areas
 - 6.0 River Terrace
 - 7.0 Marble Hill House



Character areas



1.1 Carriage Circle, Southern Terrace & House Representation

This area concerns the land immediately surrounding Marble Hill House; the carriage turning circle to the north and the paved terrace to the south. The north elevation of the House is flanked by two curved white walls.

The carriage turning circle is asphalt surfaced with a lawn circle in the centre. At the foot of the two flanking walls is a graveled strip, each containing 4 freestanding white timber planters with clipped Bay trees. This is the main entrance to the House and the entry point for guided tours. Legibility and orientation is not clear for visitors wishing to enter the House, who may walk away unaware of tour timetables.

1.2 Terraces

The 1752 Survey Plan shows a series of terraced lawns stepping south of Marble Hill House down to the Thames. These terraces can still be seen today, although their form has been eroded over the years. The Terraces are enclosed on three sides by the House and two avenues of trees either side. The southern view is open towards the Thames, which is partially obscured by encroaching scrub and tree planting. Due to the elevation of the Thames Path and flood embankment it is not always possible to view the water. The terraced lawns are a popular place for picnics, relaxation and as an open space for informal games. The Terraces host the annual House festival in July (see 2.1 Events).

1.3 Stepped Avenues

Running north-south either side of the Terraces are avenues of trees running down to the Thames, comprising a mix of species including Lime and Horse Chestnut. The 1752 Survey Plan shows clear double avenues of trees and groves flanking the lowest terrace, today a lot of the definition has been lost. The Avenues provide division between the Pleasure Grounds and the East and West Meadows. Within the eastern avenue is a black walnut tree, *Juglans nigra*, which is a significant specimen of its type in the UK and a remnant of the landscape works carried out in the mid to late 18th century by Henrietta Howard's nephew, the 2nd Earl of Buckinghamshire. The black walnut is enclosed by timber post and wire fencing for protection.

1.4 The Woodland Quarters

The Woodland Quarters are densely canopied with a large number of self-seeded species such as Sycamore, Holly and Yew. The groundcover is sparse due to lack of sunlight and poor in biodiversity. These areas are not open to the public and enclosed by timber post and rail fencing creating a municipal appearance. A couple of features still remain, such as the Grade II listed Ice House and Grotto. Visually the Woodland Quarters appear as solid blocks and permit limited views in and out of the Pleasure Grounds. According to the 1752 Survey Plan, the Woodland Quarters would have had four very distinct characters. The north-west quarter, containing the Ice House was formally planted with a grove of trees and a thicket to the north, likewise the north-east quarter which housed the, now demolished, servant's wing was planted with an orchard and was the location of the Green House. The south-west quarter contained a ninepin bowling alley and paths through a wilderness of trees and shrub planting. In the south-east quarter was a flower garden and winding paths through tree and shrub planting leading to two grottoes, of which one remains today albeit lacking its original woodland setting.

1.5 Planted Palisade and Oval Lawn

This area occupies one of the middle terraces sitting below the House and has a distinct character. Surviving of the 1752 Survey Plan is the oval shaped lawn although the palisade enclosing no longer exists. The lower Woodland Quarters provide an enclosing sense to the space and a backdrop to several benches that edge the lawn. The lawn is flat and a popular place for relaxation and picnics, enjoying views down to the Thames.

2.1 Great Lawn

This area provides the foreground and setting to the House upon entry from Richmond Road. It is mostly devoid of trees with the exception of a large Turkey Oak. The lawn is bounded by the East Meadow and Sweet Walk to the west. Benches are located intermittently around the perimeter of the lawn, offering view across the park. The lawn contains the cricket pitch, which is available for hire.



1.1 Carriage Circle, Southern Terrace & House Representation



1.2 Terraces



1.3 Stepped Avenues



1.4 The Woodland Quarters



1.5 Palisade and Oval Lawn



2.1 Great Lawn

2.2 Sweet Walk & Stable Block

This area bounds the north and west edges of the Great Lawn. The area along the north boundary has moderate tree cover but remains open in feeling and has an understorey of improved grassland. A narrow asphalt path connects the pedestrian entrances on Richmond Road until it reaches the wider vehicular road. Along the western boundary tree cover is more dense and understorey predominant in self-seeded holly and yew make it dark and overshadowed. This is the primary vehicular route for deliveries to the café and House. The Grade II listed Stable Block houses the café and public toilets. The café is located in the south wing of the Stables and has a small paved terrace facing south with views to the Thames.

3.0 West Meadow

This area is predominantly short cut grass with margins around the south and west managed as meadow. There are two entrances along the western boundary from Orleans Road. This is part of the lower lying areas of the park and suffers from intermittent flooding. Two rugby pitches are marked out for hire in this area which can become unusable following flooding. Towards the Stable Block is a fenced dog-free area containing benches and is used by parents with young children.

4.0 East Meadow & Woodland Walk

This area is also predominantly short cut grass with meadow margins and trees to the perimeter, however, due to its more elevated position, it has an open character. It is bounded to the north by the car park, playground and works areas. The area is marked out with four senior sized pitches, one junior and one five-a-side pitch.

4.1 Woodland Walk

Bounding the south and east edges of the East Meadow is an area of mature woodland trees with meadow understorey and informal paths. A relaxed mowing regime to the edge of the sports pitches has encouraged a more biodiverse ground flora.

5.0 Car Park, Playground & Works Areas

This area is municipal in appearance, comprising the car park and works yard occupied by the Park Rangers Team. The car park provides the entry point for visitors arriving by car. The playground is managed by the Marble Hill Playcentre and contains colourful timber play structures. The works area comprises a concrete paved yard used by the incumbent landscape contractor, with storage buildings, the park ranger offices and the sport changing block. This area is not open to the public, with the exception of managed entry into the changing facility.

6.0 River Terrace

The stretch of Thames Path running south of Marble Hill Park is owned by English Heritage and maintained by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. This route, also known as the Warren Path, is a pedestrian path with permissive cycling. Tree cover and understorey is quite dense along both sides of the path with breaks along the boundary at the Pleasure Grounds, offering a view to Marble Hill House. The park has an access gate from the lime avenue path, east of the House, onto the Warren Path.

7.0 Marble Hill House

Grade I listed Marble Hill House is an 18th century Neo-Palladian Villa, sitting centrally to the grounds of the Park. This area is described further within section 7.



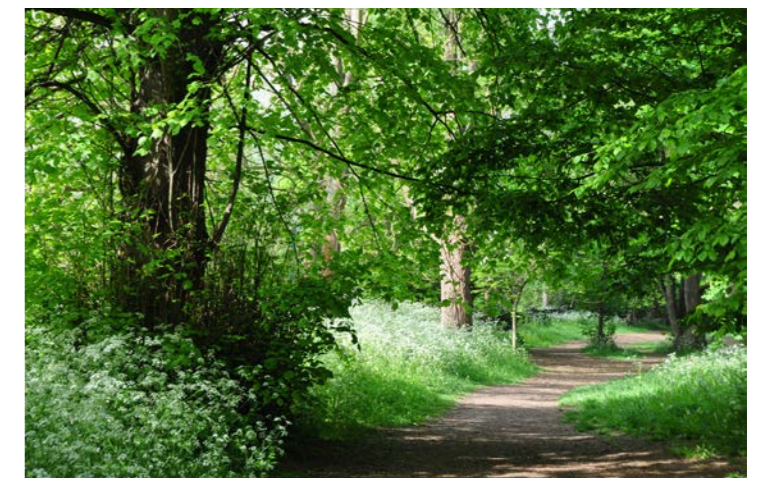
2.2 Sweet Walk & Stables



3.0 West Meadow



4.0 East Meadow



4.1 Woodland Walk



5.0 Car Park, Playground & Works Areas



6.0 River Terrace



7.0 Marble Hill House

Below is the view from Richmond Hill, the only landscape view in England to be protected by an Act of Parliament, the Richmond, Ham and Petersham Open Spaces Act 1902. Marble Hill sits to the centre of the view, identifiable by a row of Lombardy Poplars within the western avenue running from the House to the Thames.





Marble Hill Park