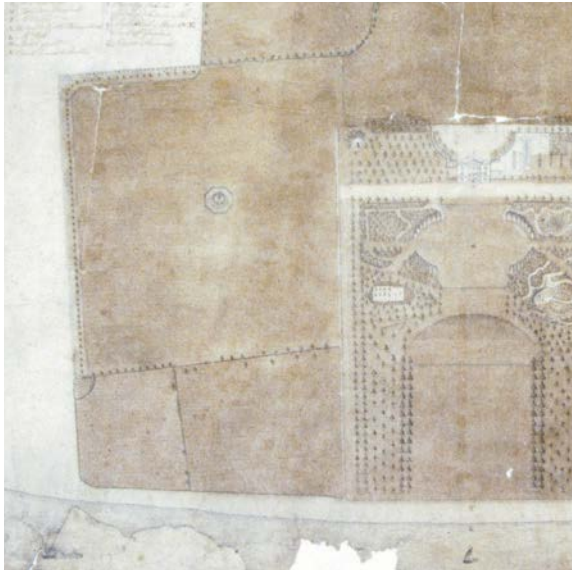


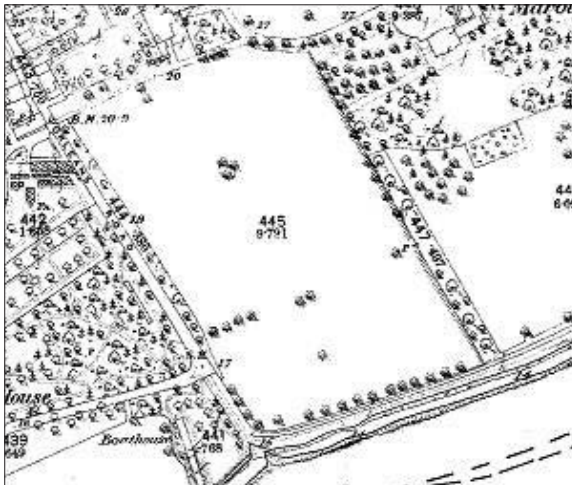
### 4.3 West Meadow (Lawn)



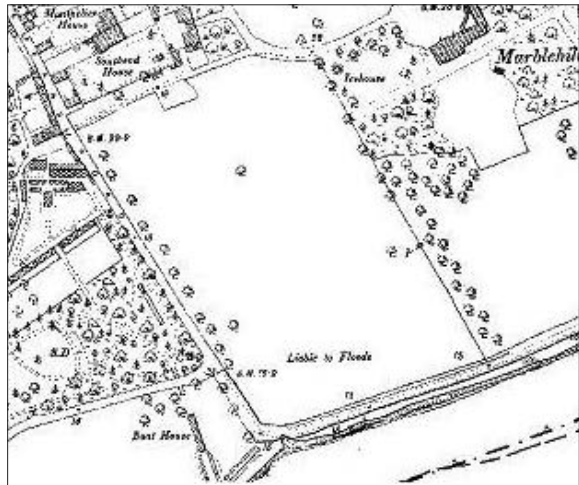
Survey plan of c.1752 (cropped)



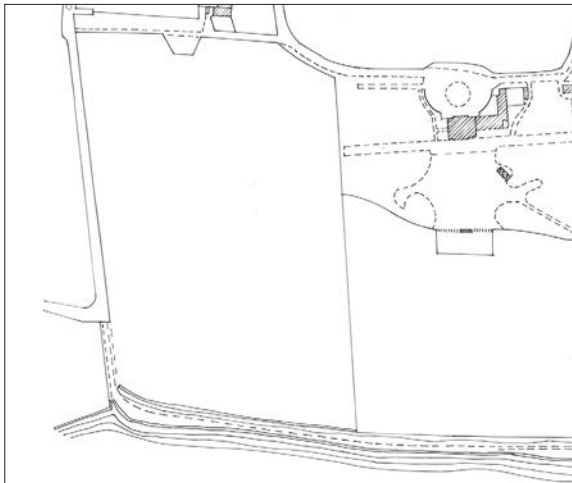
Map of Twickenham drawn by CA Sauthier in 1786 (cropped)



1st edition Ordnance Survey map, 1881 (cropped)



2nd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1896 (cropped)



Legal and Parliamentary Department, Deeds of Marble Hill 1901 (cropped)



3rd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1915 (cropped)

### 4.3.1 Historic development

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century this area was made up of two sections, the western shot of Marble Hill (a corn field) and, to the south, part of the meadows of Dole Mead. These were divided by a hedge and standard trees along this line were still visible in 1903 although none survive today. On the survey plan of 1752 a round structure is shown in the middle of Marble Hill shot and the field is labelled Marble Hold. Dr Jacques suggests it was used as a paddock. Around the western edge of the area there is a line of tree planting and possibly a hedge or shrubs planted along the boundary. This had become a looser line of mature trees by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and there is also a clump of trees on the site of the central round feature and scattered trees along the former field boundary to the south and along the river edge. This pattern continues in place until the 20<sup>th</sup> century with a gradual loss of tree stock. After the park comes into public ownership in 1903 the western boundary planting was thickened up with some new trees and the clump and line of trees within the open grassland were lost. The main use of the area during its time as a public park has been for rugby with two pitches in place during the winter months. There is a dog free zone in the north of the area bounded by a wooden fence.

### 4.3.2 Current condition

The current character of the West Meadow is of a large open grassy space, with the vast majority of the area close mown, which makes the area monotonous and lacking in visual interest or structure. In the south west corner and north west corner there are areas of longer grass which help soften the edges of the park. During the winter months the rugby pitches dominate the space with their goals and markings.

The area is enclosed by tree planting which forms a rural backdrop to the grassland. To the west an informal path runs through a narrow band of woodland with longer grass and this is a pleasant walk during the spring when the cow parsley is flowering. Trees overhang the area with some limbs reaching almost to the ground which reinforces the rural feel. The boundary is a metal fence along which runs a hedge which is in poor condition.

On the eastern edge of this area there is a Chinese style seating shelter which is in a very poor condition. The design of this feature enhances the feel that this area is purely a municipal park.

To the north east the dog free area is highly visible in the open grassland due to the wooden fencing.

### 4.3.3 Significance

- **Historic:** The historic outer boundaries of the three fields are maintained enabling the historic riverside setting to be retained.
- **Environmental:** The shelter belt planting provides limited habitat and corridors for wildlife.
- **Public:** This area is well used as it contains the dog free area which is used by families. It also contains the rugby pitches which are used regularly during the season.

#### 4.3.4 Issues and vulnerabilities

- Lack of distinctive character.
- Monotonous appearance of the grass sward due to close cutting of the majority of the area.
- Dog free area visually intrusive on open parkland.
- Poor condition of the Chinese style seating shelter detracts from the historic character of the area.

#### 4.3.5 Future research

- Further examination of the historic use of this area after it was added to the estate particularly the use of the round structure seen on historic maps.

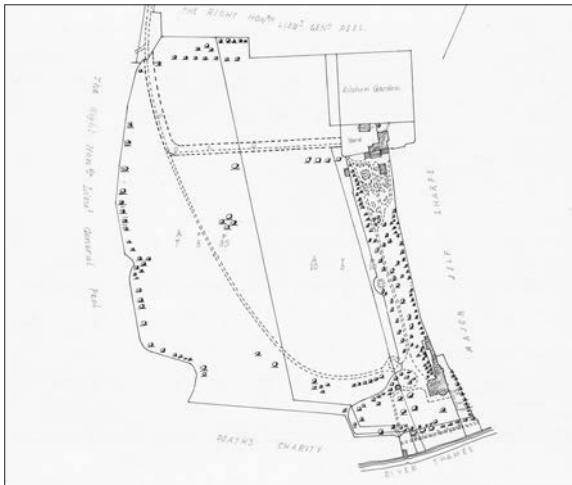
## 4.4 East Meadow



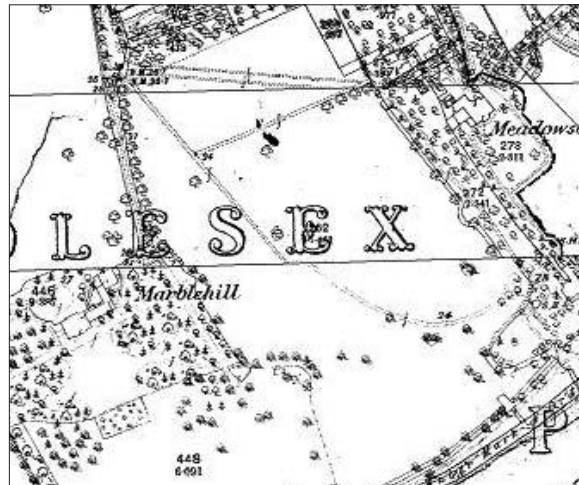
Survey plan of c.1752 (cropped)



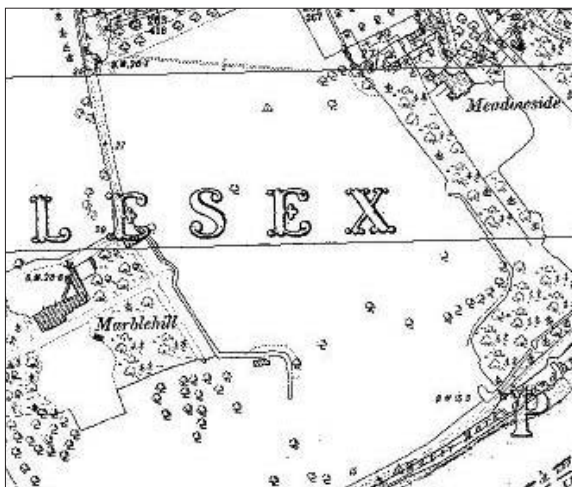
Map of Twickenham drawn by CA Saultier in 1786 (cropped)



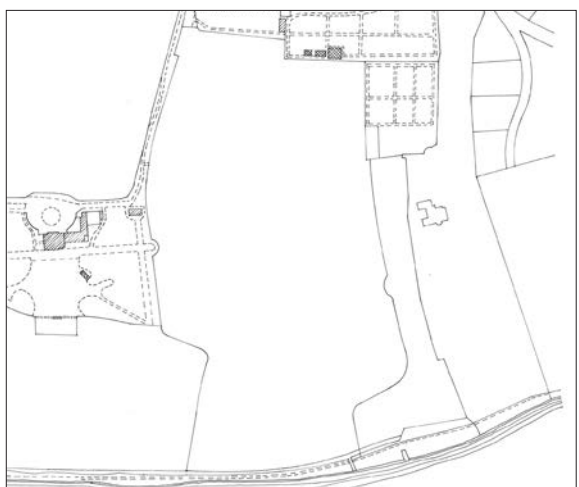
Deed Plan, 1873



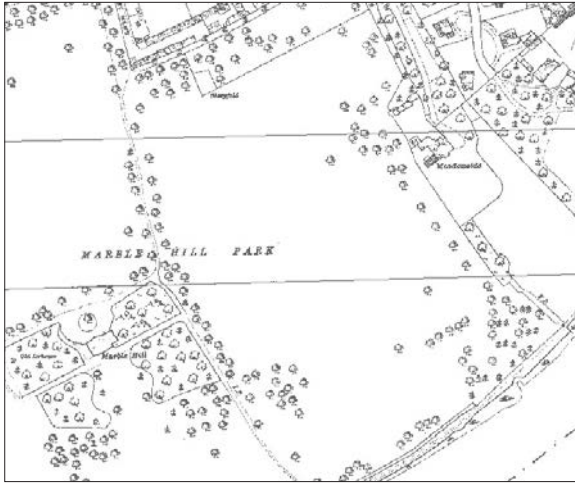
1st edition Ordnance Survey map, 1881 (cropped)



2nd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1896 (cropped)



Legal and Parliamentary Department, Deeds of Marble Hill 1901 (cropped)



3rd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1915 (cropped)



Modern day aerial photography, captured 2015

### 4.4.1 Historic development

The East Meadow has a more complex history than the West Lawn with various buildings and landscape features being created and then largely lost again. By the early 18<sup>th</sup> century the area was used for growing fruit and vegetables and was divided into three areas: Park Close, a meadow next to the Thames, Park Close Furlong to the north of the meadow and Long Sandborough Shot at the far north. The only section of this area to form a piece of the original early 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape was the northern section of Long Sandborough Shot (Long Sandborough shot will be discussed in Section 4.5).

At the far south east of the current park there was a house already in place when Henrietta Howard made her initial land acquisition in the 1720s. By the 1752 survey this had expanded to two substantial houses set in an enclosed formal garden. The land was acquired by the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Buckinghamshire shortly afterwards and united with the rest of Marble Hill.

Changes to the estate probably under the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Buckinghamshire included creation of a new route across the open ground allowing separate access to what became known as Marble Hill Cottage. This route is still faintly visible on a recent aerial photograph of the site (Figure 14). The garden of this property was also extended northwards up the eastern boundary of the park and a walled kitchen garden and stables built just to the south of the ones for Marble Hill House.

The garden of Little Marble Hill was well wooded by the 1869 OS map with a complex of stable and garden buildings plus the walled kitchen garden still in place. However all these buildings had gone by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see Figure 10c, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition OS) and the garden walls have been lost leaving just scattered trees indicated on the OS map of 1915 (Figure 12c).

The boundary between Long Sandborough Shot and Park Close Furlong was taken away to the west by the 1780s but remained in place to the east and is still visible, lined by mature trees, in the 1881 OS map (Figure 9c). The trees had gone by 1934 and the current line of trees between the two sets of football pitches is considerably to the south of this old field boundary indicating that the change in level here was probably created or modified from the existing landform in association with the conversion of the park for sports use in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

To the south west of the area is the site of the sinuous shrubbery created by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Buckinghamshire in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Dr Jacques, in a field survey of 1995, notes the presence of earthworks along the line of this shrubbery and along the line of the boundary of the meadow at the south of the area. There is a group of trees in this general area but only the black walnut, slightly to the south, is likely to be a survival of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century planting. Lord Islay had a large nursery of recently introduced trees and shrubs at his nearby seat at Whitton and the walnut tree is supposedly from his planting.

A second grotto which has been backfilled may be located in this section of the area. Pope's subterranean grotto provided camera obscura effects of the river and it is argued that the smaller grotto at Marble Hill may have had similar devices.<sup>18</sup>

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18 Batey M, and Lambert D. 1990. *The English Garden Tour: A View into the Past*, London: John Murray (Publishers) Ltd p.151

#### 4.4.2 Current condition

The East Meadow is a large, fairly featureless expanse of close mown grass framed by trees with its use for football visually dominant during the winter months. The football pitches are also used for parking during the summer concerts and this use leads to wear on the grass leaving bare patches and also compacts the soil of the pitches.

The eastern margin of the area, the former gardens of Little Marble Hill, is now a secluded wooded area with an informal path winding gently through long grass and leading on to the southern margin again through long grass shaded by trees along the boundary with the riverside path. The south east corner is also left as long grass which softens this area of the park.

The large old black walnut tree is a significant feature to the south west. The tree is contained within a fenced enclosure in which the grass is allowed to grow long. The fencing is advisable for safety reasons but, in combination with the patch of long grass set amid the shortly mown parkland, is visually highly prominent.

#### 4.4.3 Significance

- **Historic:** The black walnut is a significant survival of the late eighteenth century planting. The south east corner of this area also contains significant archaeology relating to Little Marble Hill House. The location of the second grotto is thought to be in the western side of this area and therefore this area has significant potential to provide more evidence for the historic scheme.
- **Environmental:** As a veteran tree the black walnut has significant habitat value particularly for invertebrates. The areas of long grass and tree belts also have wildlife value as meadow grassland habitats and wildlife corridors.
- **Public:** This area of the parkland is frequently used in the football season for matches and generally throughout the year for informal football.

#### 4.4.4 Issues and vulnerabilities

- Lack of distinctive character.
- Visual prominence of football pitches.
- Visual intrusion of the car park and playgrounds.
- Fenced enclosure of the black walnut is visually intrusive.

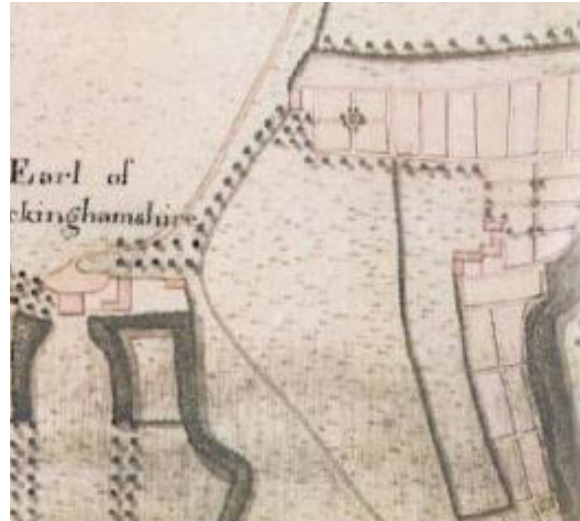
#### 4.4.5 Future research

- Detailed research and archaeological investigation into the form and extent of Little Marble Hill House and associated structures including the Kitchen Garden and stables.

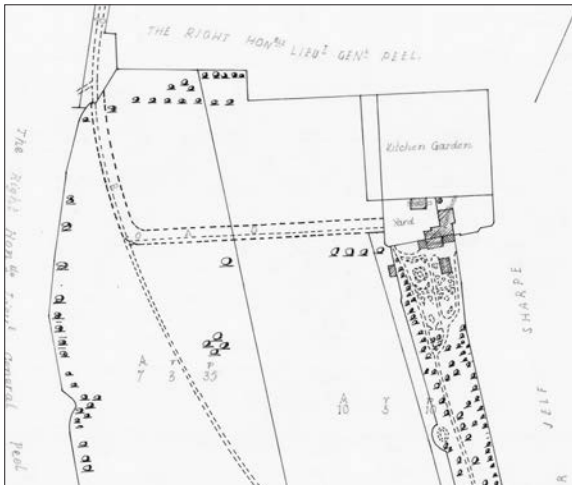
## 4.5 Car Park, Playgrounds and Works Area



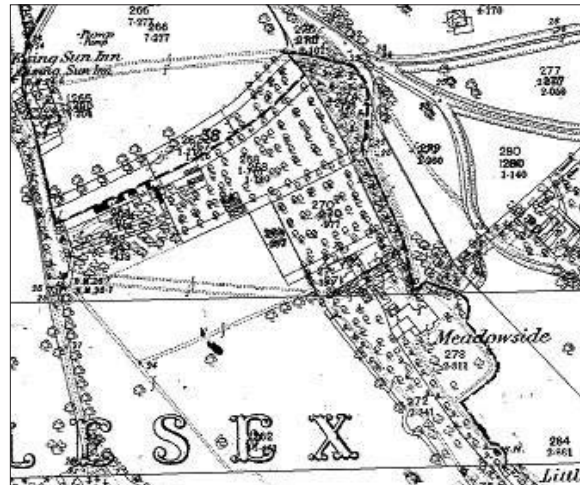
Survey plan of c.1752 (cropped)



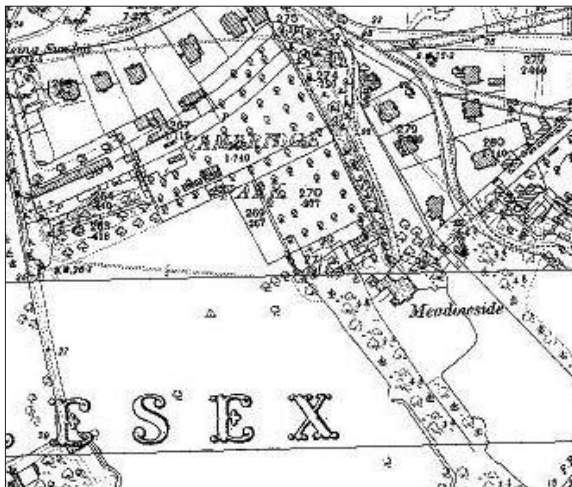
Map of Twickenham drawn by CA Sauthier in 1786 (cropped)



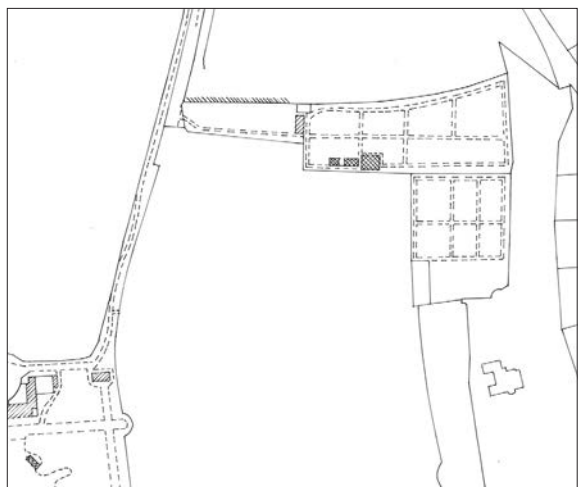
Deed Plan, 1873



1st edition Ordnance Survey map, 1881 (cropped)

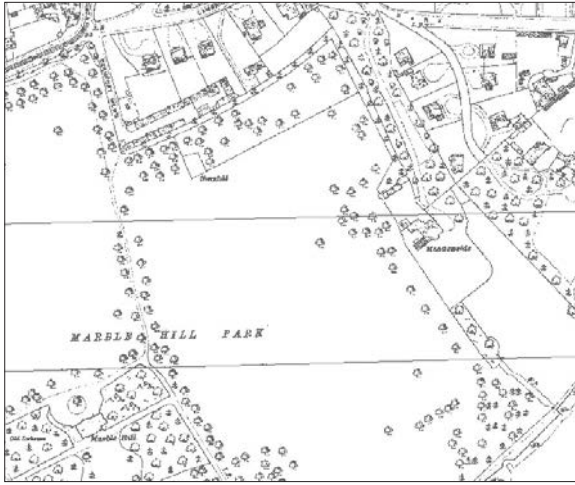


2nd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1896 (cropped)



Legal and Parliamentary Department, Deeds of Marble Hill 1901 (cropped)





3rd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1915 (cropped)

### 4.5.1 Historic development

The only section of the East Meadow to form a piece of the original early 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape was the northern section of Long Sandborough Shot which was initially the site of a stable, an orchard and fruit and vegetable garden and later a fowl yard and farm buildings (while still retaining the walled vegetable garden). On the 1752 plan the poultry yard is indicated behind the stable block. In 1758 Horace Walpole refers to the 'Gothic farm at lady Suffolk's' and that he had called one of the new buildings 'the Priory of St Hubert's'. This building had a spire designed by his friend, Richard Bentley. The basic layout of the walled garden and the fowl yard/orchard remained intact until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (see Figure 9d, 1881 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS). An enclosure (walled or fenced) was still in place in the 1930s and the 1915 map notes a sheepfold in one corner (either in use or historic?). This section of Long Sandborough Shot maintains its slightly detached history from the main body of the park in that today it forms the site of the car park, the One O'Clock Club and playground, and the park depot, sports changing rooms and community Kitchen Garden.

The land along the north was purchased in either 1743 or 1751 and was the site of the old Kitchen Gardens. The original stables were demolished around 1827. Both can be seen on the Saulthier plan of 1786-7. The Kitchen Gardens stayed in this area until the park came into public ownership, in 1902. The Beaufort Works were later sited here.

The land along the east formed Little Marble Hill estate and was purchased in 1751 by the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Buckinghamshire. At this time there were two small residences near the river. Shortly after 1751, one of the houses was demolished and the other was enlarged and altered several times to become little Marble Hill House. It was also known as 'Twickenham Meadows', 'Marble Hill Cottage' and 'Spencer Grove'. Little Marble Hill had about two acres of gardens attached to the house and these were rented out between 1751 and 1824, except for a period of twelve years when Henrietta Hotham, Henrietta Howard's great niece, chose to live there in preference to the main house. In 1824 Marble Hill was purchased by Timothy Brent. He kept the 'Little Marble Hill' estate and the East Meadow and sold the rest of the estate to Jonathan Peel. The estate remained divided until 1876, when Peel re-united both estates, by which time Little Marble Hill house had been demolished.

### 4.5.2 Current condition

To the far north of the East Meadow is the car park, playgrounds and park depot.

Views to the parked cars and colourful equipment and murals within the playgrounds are highly visible in this area and diminish the rural ambience of the park.

A community Kitchen Garden is located in the east of this area and contains two plots surrounded by a wooden fence and managed by volunteers.

### 4.5.3 Significance

- **Historic:** This area was historically the productive part of the park and contained the kitchen garden and stables. This significance continues today through the location of park amenities, works area and kitchen garden in this area.

- **Public:** This area houses a significant amount of important visitor facilities including the car park and play area. For visitors arriving at Marble Hill House by car this area is the setting for their first glimpses and impression of the site. The kitchen garden is also significant as it facilitates local community involvement in the site.

#### 4.5.4 Issues and vulnerabilities

This area creates a visual intrusion on the wider parkland especially in the East Meadow.

The continued use of the community kitchen garden area at the end of the Heritage Lottery Funded project.

The car park is unable to accommodate the number of spaces needed for large events and concerts.

#### 4.5.5 Further research

The extent and layout of the Kitchen Garden, Stables and auxiliary buildings.

More research into the form and design of the 'Gothic farm at lady Suffolk's' and 'the Priory of St Hubert's' described by Horace Walpole in 1758.

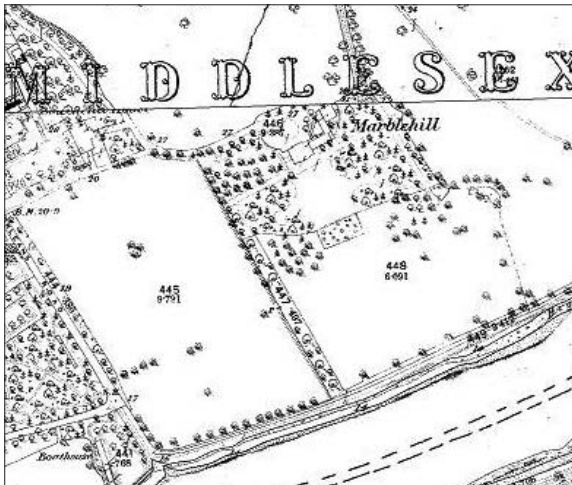
## 4.6 River Terrace



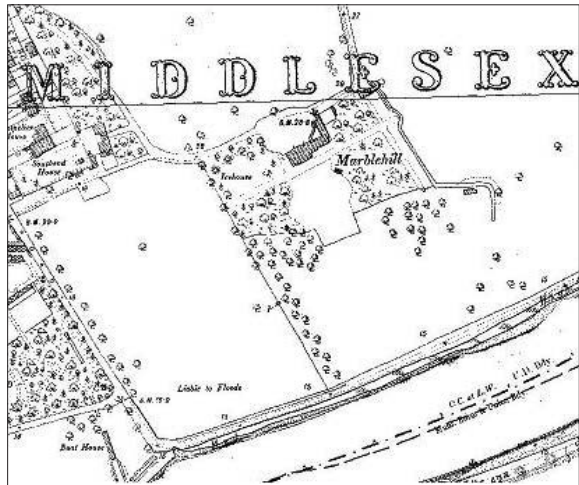
Survey plan of c.1752 (cropped)



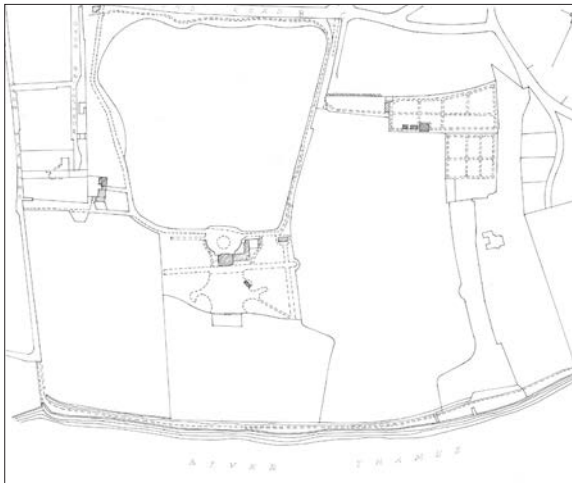
Map of Twickenham drawn by CA Saultier in 1786 (cropped)



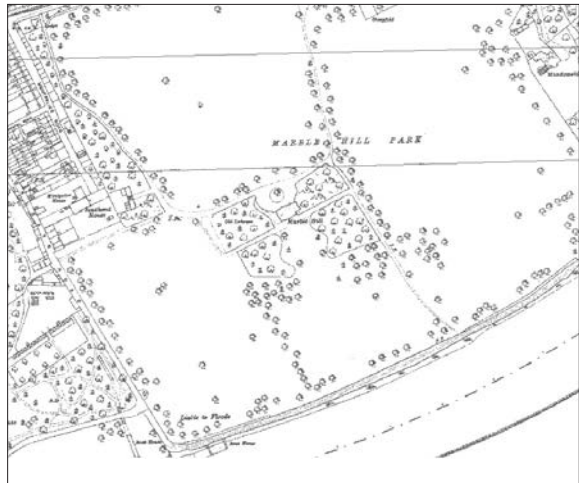
1st edition Ordnance Survey map, 1881 (cropped)



2nd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1896 (cropped)



Legal and Parliamentary Department, Deeds of Marble Hill 1901 (cropped)



3rd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1915 (cropped)

### 4.6.1 Historic development

In 1724 when the first 25.5 acres were purchased, the land along the river was in several different forms of ownership. An old right of way crossed what was later to become the Pleasure Ground, roughly halfway between the house and the river along the old field boundary between Dolemead and Marble Hill Shot. Henrietta Howard wanted to move the path, which was twelve foot wide, out of her garden. To do this she needed to purchase all the land along the river front between Secretary Lane, now Orleans Road, and Five Foot Lane.

A raised terrace walk was created along her stretch of riverside land almost immediately. It was almost thirty years later however before it was completed; despite many attempts, Henrietta Howard was not able to obtain a long lease of the Death Charity Lands which bordered the river on either side of her land, until 1752.

Between 1750 and 1770 the Thames became tidal as far as Marble Hill. A small channel of water ran alongside the terrace walk on the Marble Hill side. The terrace was heavily reinforced several times during the present century to create the flood barrier.

### 4.6.2 Current condition

The river terrace provides access to Marble Hill from the Thames walkway. The views from the river to the house have recently been cleared of scrub and are now kept open to allow the house to be seen from the footpath. The trees on the north side of the footpath, away from the river are contained within small brick retaining walls, some of which have partly fallen down due to root expansion. Some of the trees have also failed leaving empty areas surrounded by retaining walls.

The lighting along the warren footpath was replaced in 2009 to be less intrusive and sensitive to bats as part of the HLF London's Arcadia project.

### 4.6.3 Significance

- **Historic:** Marble Hill is a significant site in the arcadia landscape which is linked by the Thames. The view between Marble Hill House and the Thames is historically significant and was an important aspect of the original design intent.
- **Environmental:** The rough grassland and tree line along the riverside boundary are part of the foraging corridor for bats along the Thames.
- **Public:** This area allows visitors to access the river and join the riverside walk. It also allows non-visitors using the riverside path a glimpse of the house and its setting.

### 4.6.4 Issues and vulnerabilities

- The continuing need to prevent scrub encroachment from blocking historic views.



# Management Plan





# 5.0 Landscape Management Approach

The overarching management approach for Marble Hill Park is to balance and integrate the various values of the site, so that it is conserved and enhanced as a popular and vibrant public park well used by the local community, as an important historic landscape, and as a green space with biodiversity interest.

Marble Hill has the potential to be an exceptionally significant historic property. In order to achieve this, the park landscape will be enhanced through considered repair and restoration of the historic landscape. This will reconnect Marble Hill House with its landscape and increase understanding and enjoyment of the park for all.

Marble Hill Park will also continue as a series of tranquil open grassy spaces enclosed by trees, a place for quiet recreation but also for playing sport, enjoying concerts and events and with active involvement of people of all ages and backgrounds in the park through volunteering, educational activities and consultation.

The biodiversity value of the park will be increased through carefully considered and monitored changes to management regimes encouraging a greater diversity of flora and fauna.

The impact of climate change on each character area will be considered and monitored, to help determine future maintenance strategies to mitigate any detrimental changes to historic planting. As well as monitoring the effects of climate change, Marble Hill will aim to mitigate their carbon foot print by the creation of better composting facilities and continuing to be peat free.

Sport will continue to be an important part of the life of the park and the facilities will be managed with the aim of providing high quality sports facilities in a parkland setting which are sustainable in the future.

# 6.0 Management Aims and Objectives

The Management Aims are to conserve, present, enhance the significance and provide effective day-to-day management and maintenance of Marble Hill estate.

## 6.1 Objectives

6.1.1 Conserve, interpret and, where appropriate to the modern day use of the park, restore elements of the early 18<sup>th</sup>-century historic layout by Charles Bridgeman and the significant later 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>- century additions:

- The Pleasure Ground
- The Sweet Walk

6.1.2 Maintain the park as a safe, well used and highly valued local park balancing the needs of users of the park with the conservation of the historic landscape.

6.1.3 To protect and, where appropriate, strengthen the key views and vistas to, from, and within the park, by mitigating the negative impacts of intrusive elements on the views within and outside the park.

6.1.4 Through monitoring and regular maintenance enhance the built landscape to a high standard of physical repair and visual quality appropriate to the historic character of the park:

- Built structures, particularly designated buildings but also undesignated assets of significance
- Entrances to the park
- The road and path network
- Park furniture and signage

6.1.5 Through ongoing research to understand the archaeological remains on the site which will be conserved and protected in situ. The potential for disturbance of archaeological remains will be considered in any future subsurface works.

6.1.6 Provide the best possible solution to the provision, design and location of modern facilities ensuring minimal visual and physical intrusion and site damage to the landscape and built fabric as well as setting and context of the site:

- Visitor services
- Sport facilities
- Administrative areas

- 6.1.7 Enhance the landscape character and biodiversity of the site by:
- Increasing the areas of long grass where appropriate to the nature of the area and its use by visitors
  - Introducing a tree planting programme to ensure visual and ecological diversity
  - Engaging with ongoing local and London-wide biodiversity initiatives
- 6.1.8 Champion the highest standards of environmentally sustainable management:
- Commission wildlife surveys to support legal obligations and biodiversity statutory duty
  - Promote nature conservation measures in the management of all aspects of the landscape
- 6.1.9 Minimise, as much as possible, biosecurity threats and risk from plant pests, diseases and invasive plant species.
- 6.1.10 Ensure that the impact of periodic flooding on the landscape of Marble Hill Park is monitored and an appropriate level of action taken to alleviate damage to the park fabric.
- 6.1.11 Strengthen the links between Marble Hill House and Marble Hill Park through interpretation, educational activities, events, and physical enhancements to the landscape which forms the setting of the house.
- 6.1.12 Continue to provide and maintain a range of recreational opportunities in the park in particular for sport use and informal recreational ensuring that these facilities are managed efficiently, are of good quality and have minimal visual impact on the landscape.
- 6.1.13 Encourage the active involvement of the public in the historic landscape and the ecology of the park through education, volunteering and events.
- 6.1.14 Manage Marble Hill Park in an open and transparent manner, for and on behalf of its users and visitors and, where appropriate, ensure consultation about major proposals or changes in management with stakeholders including:
- Marble Hill Society
  - Marble Hill Playcentres
  - Sport clubs and users
  - Community users
- 6.1.15 Ensure that all stakeholders are working towards the objectives identified in this plan by engaging relevant groups in the continued development of the landscape.

- 6.1.16 Define the capital works and plan budgets required to restore the essential structure and layout of the landscape.
- 6.1.17 Ensure that full records are kept of landscape management and maintenance practices and changes to the landscape including climate change impacts as part of the Conservation Management Plan.
- 6.1.18 Review and roll forward the Conservation Management Plan every 5 years. A midterm review to be carried out in year 3.

# 7.0 Management by Character Area

## 7.1 Pleasure Ground

### 7.1.1 Design vision

- The vision is to restore the pleasure ground as far as possible to the layout created by Henrietta Howard between 1724 and 1767. This is the most appropriate historical period as it corresponds with the building of the villa and should create a highly attractive area within the park.

### 7.1.2 Proposals

#### 7.1.2.1 Detailed Proposals

- Restore the stepped avenues of horse chestnut trees, which flanked the house creating an arc, to be replanted in the positions indicated by the archaeology undertaken in 2006 and historic plans.
- The sharp lines and structure of the terraces should be reinstated.
- Restore the evergreen palisade cut into an arcade on the oval lawn in front of the villa on the 1752 plan.
- Restore the area behind the stepped avenues to the layout on the 1752 plan which would have sinuous plantations of trees and flowering shrubs, leading up to and around the two grottoes. The trees would be a mix of lime, sweet and horse chestnut, oak, evergreen oak, walnut, and cherry. The understorey of shrubs would be of attractive, scented shrubs available in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, such as Viburnum, lilac, Cistus, Genista and roses.
- Restore the formal planting along the walls to both sides of the north front of Marble Hill House according to the historic pattern to enhance presentation of the house.
- Restore the historic form of the turning circle and the southern terrace and resurface with a more informal but still solid permeable surface (for instance resin bound gravel or tar spray and chip) to enhance the setting of Marble Hill House.
- Restore the nine pin alley in the western compartment of the middle terrace and the flower garden, to complete the Bridgeman landscape of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- Restore the Orchard to the west of the house to its early 18<sup>th</sup>-century pattern including enhancing the setting of the Ice House. This could result in a low key play area relating to an orchard theme.
- Bring the site of the service wing (within the woodland quarter to the east of the house) into active use, potentially as a site for new facilities for visitors to Marble Hill House and park.

- Remove selected trees close to Marble Hill House that are outside the historic pattern and intrusive in views to the building in particular the cedar to the north-west and the two weeping birches to the south.

#### 7.1.2.2 Benefits

- **Historic:** Conserves the integrity of important key elements of the core historic landscape and assists the understanding and appreciation of the unified design of the whole landscape as an important historic parkland and setting for Marble Hill House. Restores and frames important designed views between the house and river.
- **Environmental:** Improvement of existing habitats and development of a more varied and diverse woodland habitat with better ground flora which will in turn increase invertebrate, bird and mammal populations.
- **Public:** Provides opportunities for people to enjoy a landscape in complete contrast to other areas. Improves and encourages public access, engagement and enhances the sensory experience.

## 7.2 Great Lawn and Sweet Walk

### 7.2.1 Design vision

- The aim is to restore the Sweet Walk to its 18<sup>th</sup>-century character of trees, flowering and sweet smelling shrubs and ground cover, which will be enjoyed from a meandering walk running through it. The plantation would be thickened up to screen the traffic and would form an attractive and effective boundary along the north of the park.
- Conserve the open, informal grassy space of the Great Lawn including its use for cricket.

### 7.2.2 Proposals

#### 7.2.2.1 Detailed proposals

- The footpaths should be resurfaced with a more informal but still solid and permeable surface (for instance resin bound gravel or tar spray and chip) to enhance the setting of Marble Hill House.
- Move the hard tennis courts and the cricket nets to another, less visually intrusive location such as the Car Park, Playgrounds and Works Area.
- Convert the artificial cricket square into a grass cricket square to fit better in the parkland setting.
- Reconsider the landscape setting of the Stable Block which could also enhance the use of the building by for instance providing additional seating areas for the café.
- Enhance the woodland of the Sweet Walk to restore historic character and increase biodiversity interest – for instance by controlling tree regeneration and introducing glades with scented shrub and groundcover planting on the margins of the woodland.
- New tree planting along the northern boundary should consider the historic decorative character of the Sweet Walk and use a variety of species including smaller scale and scented trees.

#### 7.2.2.2 Benefits

- **Historic:** Moving intrusive features such as the cricket net and tennis courts would enhance the setting of the villa, and the distinctive character and quality of the principal approach. Assists understanding and appreciation of unified design of building and landscape. Enhancing the sweet walk would re-introduce the late 18<sup>th</sup>- century phase of development on the site and allow this era of the site's history to be explored and interpreted.
- **Environmental:** Improvement of existing habitats and development of a more varied and diverse woodland habitat with better ground flora which will in turn increase invertebrate, bird and mammal populations.

- **Public:** Provides a sense of welcome, encouraging public access and reinforcing visitors' understanding and appreciation of the historic character of this area. Improved catering facilities and seating areas around the stable block will enhance the enjoyment of the park and its amenity value. Opportunity to engage public groups in a variety of projects which have a positive impact on wellbeing and community cohesion.



## 7.3 West Meadow (Lawn)

### 7.3.1 Design vision

- Conserve the West Meadow as an open grassy area enclosed by tree belts and enhance it through diversifying the mowing regime and tree planting to increase visual and biodiversity interest.

### 7.3.2 Proposals

#### 7.3.2.1 Detailed proposals

- Introduce more long grass to soften the margins of the area to reinstate a more rural ambiance.
- Remove the dog free area or change the boundary treatment of the dog free area to one that is less visible in the open grassland.
- Remove the Chinese style seating shelter due to poor condition and lack of historic significance.

#### 7.3.2.2 Benefits

- **Historic:** Reducing the visual impact of the dog free area would improve the historic integrity of the West Meadow.
- **Environmental:** Introducing new tree planting would increase existing habitats and develop a more varied and diverse woodland habitat which would in turn increase invertebrate, bird and mammal populations.
- **Public:** Rugby pitches will be retained. The dog free area will be less intrusive which will improve the overall atmosphere of this area for visitors. Opportunity to engage community groups in a variety of projects including planting the wild flower meadow.

## 7.4 East Meadow

### 7.4.1 Design vision

- Conserve the East Meadow as an open grassed space surrounded by tree belts and enhance it through diversifying the mowing regime and tree planting to increase visual and biodiversity interest and screen views to intrusive features.

### 7.4.2 Proposals

#### 7.4.2.1 Detailed proposals

- Introduce more long grass to soften the margins of the area, to create new 'glade' areas and to reinstate a more rural ambiance.
- The natural amphitheatre in the centre could be used in the summer for large events such as the concerts. The foundations on the stage could be built into the ground where the garden wall of Little Marble Hill used to run.
- Opportunity for tree planting at the margins of the open grassland to give more structure and character to the area and to partially screen the car park, One O'Clock Club and buildings on the park margins.
- The planting along the north and east edges would be thickened up and a new path from the car park to the river constructed following a more attractive winding route along the historic boundary.

#### 7.4.2.2 Benefits

- **Historic:** Reducing the visual impact of the car park and playground would improve the historic integrity of the East Meadow. New interpretation will enhance the understanding of the historic character and use of this area as Henrietta Howard's estate farm including a 'folly' stable and kitchen garden
- **Environmental:** Increasing the tree planting will increase existing habitats and the development of a more varied and diverse woodland habitat which will in turn increase invertebrate, bird and mammal populations.
- **Public:** Football pitches will be retained and more attractive footpath routes created. Opportunity to engage community groups in a variety of projects including planting the wild flower meadow.

## 7.5 Car Park, Playgrounds and Works Area

### 7.5.1 Design vision

- The aim is to contain all the functional areas and visitor facilities in this area which was historically separated from the park.

### 7.5.2 Proposals

#### 7.5.2.1 Detailed proposals

- The hard tennis courts and the cricket nets could be moved to this area.
- Introduce interpretation in order to provide the public with an understanding of the historic use of this area.

#### 7.5.2.2 Benefits

- **Historic:** Confining functional areas and visitor facilities to one area will prevent the significance of the core historic areas being compromised.
- **Public:** This area will be a hub for visitor facilities (along with the stable block) and will allow visitors easy access to important facilities.

## 7.6 River Terrace

### 7.6.1 Design vision

- The aim is to manage the terrace in a way which is sympathetic to the historic nature of Marble Hill. Particularly important to this vision is retaining the iconic view between the house and the river.

### 7.6.2 Proposals

#### 7.6.2.1 Detailed proposals

- Continue to actively manage scrub encroachment in the historic vista.
- Any empty retaining wall areas should be removed or replanted to prevent the area looking neglected.
- Introduce interpretation in order to provide the public with an understanding of the historic use of this area.

#### 7.6.2.2 Benefits

- **Historic:** The important historic vista will be retained and improved through scrub removal. Viewing Marble Hill from the Thames allows the historic connection of the 'arcadia villas' to be visually prominent. New interpretation will explain the rationale for the location of Henrietta Howard's villa in Twickenham as a newly fashionable area in the 18th century.
- **Environmental:** The riverside frontage is a key ecological feature of the park, which is likely to provide an important foraging corridor for bats. It is important that the almost continuous tree line and associated rough grassland along the park boundary and adjacent riverside are conserved. The river embankment itself is botanically quite interesting with ash and willow trees, scrub and a variety of waterside plant species.
- **Public:** The iconic views up to Marble Hill from the river will be accessible to all visitors who use the footpath as well as promoting the site to non-visitors. New interpretation will enhance the understanding of the historic context and status of Marble Hill House.

# 8.0 General Management Issues

## 8.1 Grassland

### 8.1.1 Brief description

A large majority of the grassland in Marble Hill Park is amenity grassland which is closely mown throughout the year. This management regime has a number of impacts chiefly that it makes the grassland visually monotonous and the grass sward is liable to damage from wear along popular routes or for instance from the summer concerts.

These events bring heavy wear to particular areas for a short period of time – with the movement of people and of service vehicles (although efforts are made to use a temporary track). The grassland of the football pitches is also compacted by parking for the concerts and events which has a cumulative impact on the quality of the grass sward and the soil and in particular the playing quality of the sports pitches. The grass is also worn at pinch points and popular routes such as the entrance to the dog-free area.

In recent years efforts have been made to diversify the mowing regime in the park through the introduction of infrequently mown areas to the boundaries of the East and West Meadows, the Black Walnut enclosure and the Sweet Walk area in line with the 2006 Land Use Consultants proposals. This has visually softened the appearance of the park boundaries, but there is potential to extend this treatment to enhance the landscape character of the site and the ecological value of the grassland.

The visual quality of the existing less-managed improved grassland areas is affected by the generally high fertility of the soil which limits the development of fine meadow grasses and, combined with some areas of heavy shading under the boundary trees, encourages nutrient loving ruderal vegetation such as cow parsley, nettles and creeping thistle to grow. Although these areas are still of greater ecological interest than short grass, the sometimes 'weedy' appearance of the ruderal vegetation may not be perceived appropriate by park visitors. However timely communication or workshops explaining the reasons behind this appearance and any changes in maintenance would mitigate the negative effects on public perceptions.

The mowing timing and frequency could be adapted to help discourage the ruderal growth in the more open areas and potentially increase species diversity but grass development will continue to be limited where heavily shaded by trees. Sensitive crown lifting of some boundary trees could improve light penetration accompanied by shallow cultivation and sowing of shade tolerant grass seed or native spring bulbs to improve the visual quality of these areas. The high fertility of the Park (particularly with silt from river flooding and run off from the fertilised sports pitches) will continue to encourage the competitive 'coarser' species.

A considerable area of the park is required for sports use: cricket in summer in the northern section and football and rugby in the east and west sections respectively. This sports use is highly valued by the local community and brings people into the park. Any extension of areas of long grass would need to be carefully planned to ensure that adequate space is left for

sports and also for everyday use of the park (for instance by providing closely mown paths along popular routes).

### 8.1.2 Issues and vulnerabilities

- Visual monotony of the close mown amenity grassland.
- Wear to grassland in areas of heavy use (for instance at entrances) and from concerts and events.
- The visual quality of the existing less-managed improved grassland areas is affected by the generally high fertility of the soil and, close to the Thames, by flooding with silty water creating a “weedy” appearance.

### 8.1.3 Management guidelines

- Introduce a more varied mowing regime in phases, monitoring the success of the areas in terms of visual and ecological enhancement and of the functioning of the park.
- Use information from monitoring to fine tune and develop the mowing regimes for instance to place mown paths along popular routes or to enhance biodiversity by plug planting or soil scraping.
- Ensure that the users of the park are kept aware of the reasons for changes in mowing regimes, consulting them where appropriate and seeking to involve them for instance in enhancement projects such as plug planting wild flowers and in monitoring long term changes to flora and fauna.
- Ensure that damage to grassland in areas of heavy wear (for instance entrances and around benches) is repaired and measures introduced to mitigate the problems (such as moving benches, using turf reinforcement mesh or rubber crumb).
- Monitor long term damage from the concerts and other events to the sports pitches and grassland and take steps to ensure that the promoters pay the full cost of repair.
- Monitor the routine cutting of the amenity grassland to ensure that this is kept at the required length for sports use.

## 8.2 Trees and woodland

### 8.2.1 Brief description

#### 8.2.1.1 Trees

Trees are a very important part of the park landscape structure and contribute greatly to its ecological value. Mature standard trees form shelterbelts along the park boundaries; younger trees form more formal plantings along dividing pathways and woodland blocks and scattered trees still roughly define the historic layout of the southern pleasure ground. This section considers the tree population in general while issues specific to woodlands are considered below.

The trees provide important habitat for birds and invertebrate species and have wider environmental benefits in terms of providing wildlife corridors, absorbing carbon dioxide, mitigating the effects of pollution, noise etc. The trees also contribute to making the park an inviting place for visitors.

Specific areas in Marble Hill Park have been indicated in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Local Plan (Adopted July 2013) as proposed areas for tree planting in the borough (Policy DM DC 4).

In 2005, to support the production of the Land Use Consultants Management Plan a detailed report on trees was produced by arboriculturalist Brian Crane, this has been reproduced for reference in Appendix 4.

#### 8.2.1.2 Woodland

Woodland at Marble Hill Park is in two main types: the historic plantations of the Sweet Walk at the north west of the park and the Quarters immediately surrounding and to the south of Marble Hill House; and the looser plantations set in grassland around the perimeter of the park.

Although the woodlands of the Sweet Walk and the Quarters occupy roughly their historic position their original character has been largely lost. These areas have developed a dense understorey of ornamental and native shrub species. The ground flora is sparse due to the heavy shading and would benefit from increased light to encourage growth and species diversity. These dense woodland areas are also discrete from the surrounding park and inaccessible to the public, with vegetation growing up to the surrounding wooden fences.

There are extensive belts of less dense woodland at the margins of the park which is set in long grass. The shading from these trees limits the species biodiversity of the grassland. Crown lifting of some boundary trees could improve light penetration although the visual effect of the limbs reaching almost to the ground in some places is in keeping with the rural ambiance of these areas so that tree works would require careful consideration and management.

#### 8.2.1.3 Hedgerows

There is a section of 'leggy' hawthorn hedge along the eastern Park boundary with Orleans Road. This has minimal wildlife value and visually is not very attractive in its current condition. The hedge would benefit from new planting to gap up the existing section. In addition, there

is potential for new hedge planting for instance to partially screen the adventure playground or to screen views of moving vehicles on the Richmond Road along the northern boundary of the park. New hedges of native species would enhance the wildlife as well as the historic character of the park recalling its origins as a rural farmed landscape.

## 8.2.2 Issues and vulnerabilities

### 8.2.2.1 Trees

- Likely loss of the majority of mature and semi-mature horse chestnuts within the next 0-20 years due to age or disease.
- Potential loss of significant individual trees such as the black walnut in the next 40 years.
- Loss of mature trees of large growing species (sycamore, ash, London plane, lime) within the next 10-40 years.
- Increasing dominance of the tree population by a few fast growing and prolific species – sycamore and ash in particular – with significant impacts on both visual character and biodiversity interest.

### 8.2.2.2 Woodland

- Loss of historic character of the Sweet Walk and the Quarters.
- Dense shrub understorey limits biodiversity value of the woodlands.
- Lack of access to enclosed woodland areas.
- The Sweet Walk woodland needs to retain its screening function along Montpelier Row.
- Trees in woodland margins limit biodiversity of the grassland beneath due to shading.

### 8.2.2.3 Hedgerows

- Poor condition of existing hedge to south west boundary.

## 8.2.3 Management guidelines

- Update the tree survey to include all of the trees within Marble Hill Park, their species, location and condition along with any health and safety concerns.
- Maintain a varied tree population (in species and ages) through a planting programme to ensure visual and ecological diversity and the health of the overall tree stock.
- Ensure that new planting maintains or strengthens the historic character of the park in choice of species and position and takes account of local condition such as the periodic flooding at the south of the park.
- Use effective and sensitive methods for new planting such as triangular coupes for replanting in the boundary tree belts.



- Identify, protect and conserve mature historic trees (most notably the black walnut) by careful maintenance for instance by avoiding mowing under these.
- Where restoration of historic features such as avenues are proposed archaeological and historical investigation will be required before planting is undertaken to ensure appropriate species and positions.
- Maintain the current extent of the gap in the southern boundary tree belt to conserve the newly opened view between Marble Hill House and the Thames.
- Control regeneration of sycamore and ash trees, particularly within woodland blocks, to avoid future dominance of these species within the park.
- Consider the impact on tree health when introducing objects which require intervention below the soil e.g. interpretation panels and benches.

## 8.3 Ecology

### 8.3.1 Brief description

Marble Hill Park (along with Orleans House Gardens) is designated as a Site of Local Importance for nature conservation within the Borough of Richmond upon Thames. It is also situated in the Richmond Park Sites of Special Scientific Interest impact risk zone and as a Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat. Pipistrelle and Daubenton bats have also been recorded on the site.

#### 8.3.1.1 Habitats

The Park is dominated by regularly mown species-poor amenity grassland, however, the site does support small areas of broadleaved plantation woodland, and infrequently managed improved grassland, associated with the sites boundary, that are of greater ecological value. A number of mature standard trees provide additional ecological interest, providing important habitat for bird and invertebrate species. The current management of the grassland and woodlands is discussed above including ecological issues however there are some aspects of the biodiversity of the park which are not covered and these are outlined below.

#### 8.3.1.2 Riverside frontage

The boundary of the park extends to the bank of the river Thames. The riverside frontage is a key ecological feature of the park, which is likely to provide an important foraging corridor for bats. It is important that the almost continuous tree line and associated rough grassland along the park boundary and adjacent riverside are conserved. The river embankment itself is botanically quite interesting with ash and willow trees, scrub and a variety of waterside plant species. This area was subject to enhancement through the removal of scrub and introduction of more sensitive lighting along the footpath under the Arcadia project and the Thames Landscape Strategy.

#### 8.3.1.3 Dead wood

Dead wood can provide valuable habitat for invertebrates. There are a number of records (post 1990) for Stag Beetle and bats in the surrounding area, protected species which could potentially find a habitat in Marble Hill Park. Standing deadwood benefits hole nesting birds and bats whilst stag beetles and other invertebrates take advantage of fallen timber. Standing deadwood in a public park may be considered dangerous but in the woodland areas or areas to the periphery of main walking routes it may be possible to leave some standing timber. Arboricultural works could be undertaken to reduce side branches and reduce the height to a safe pillar. Fallen deadwood can be safely stacked into discrete log piles in the woodland and longer grass areas.

#### 8.3.1.4 Fauna species

Key species include bats, breeding birds and invertebrates. The river Thames is likely to provide an important foraging corridor for bats, and the close proximity of Marble Hill Park to the river is likely to contribute to its overall bat value. In addition, the park supports a number of mature standard trees that possess cracks, fissures, and spilt limbs etc., which have the

potential to support roosting bats. The wildlife at Marble Hill, in particular the bats, could form the basis of events or tours in order to engage with the public.

These trees, together with areas of woodland and scrub also represent a valuable habitat for breeding birds and terrestrial invertebrates. A number of bird species were recorded during the habitat survey (2006) including green finch, great spotted woodpecker, robin, wren, magpie, blackbird, wood pigeon, feral pigeon, blue tit, great tit, pied wagtail and parakeets.

### 8.3.2 Issues and vulnerabilities

- The park is dominated by a few habitats (in particular amenity grassland) thus restricting biodiversity value.

### 8.3.3 Management guidelines

- Take opportunities to diversify the grass mowing regimes and actively manage woodland to enhance biodiversity.
- Control invasive plant species such as sycamore using hand and mechanical methods instead of chemical methods wherever possible.
- Conserve the rough grassland and tree line along the riverside boundary as part of the foraging corridor for bats along the Thames.
- Take opportunities to leave standing dead wood where this will not present a safety hazard, and construct log piles of dead wood in little used areas such as woodland with long grass to provide habitat for invertebrates.
- Attach bat and bird boxes to suitable trees to encourage greater numbers and diversity of species.
- Consider introduction of ecological monitoring to collect standardised, repeatable information to allow managers to detect changes in the ecological condition of the park. This should include monitoring parkland bird populations, bats and diversified grasslands and would be an opportunity to involve volunteers in working in the park.

## 8.4 Climate change

### 8.4.1 Brief description

The consequences of climate change are already noticeable in many historic landscapes, from increased carbon dioxide levels to temperature changes and more frequent extreme and erratic weather. Developing policies to manage the implications of climate change will allow us to preserve historic landscapes for the future. These changes will affect not only historic planting but also visitor numbers and needs, perhaps resulting in more wear and tear to sites or alterations needed to visitor facilities and routes due to changes in the prevailing weather conditions.

The impact of climate change on each character area should be considered and monitored, to help determine future maintenance strategies to mitigate any detrimental changes to historic planting. As well as monitoring the effects of climate change, Marble Hill aims to mitigate their carbon foot print by the creation of better composting facilities and continuing to be peat free.

Although monitoring climate change is a long term project, recording site specific changes will help ensure that effective management practices can be put in place in the future.

### 8.4.2 Management guidelines

- Strive for the highest standards of environmentally sustainable management.
- Consider the potential for onsite green waste recycling.
- Monitor the changes and impact on the ecological character and biodiversity of the landscape.
- Develop a communication strategy to keep the park users informed about the changes and involved in activities to mitigate the impact of the changes on the ecology and biodiversity of the site.

## 8.5 Biosecurity

### 8.5.1 Brief description

Biosecurity is protection from biological harm; and in the case of gardens and landscapes this threat is most present from plant pests, diseases, and invasive alien plant species.

Biosecurity has become an ever increasing concern due to continued expanses in global trade, and the increased number of pest outbreaks in recent years.

For gardens and landscapes hazards include:

- Plant material introduced into the site with a significant pest or disease
- Transfer of significant pest or disease by other means (in or out of the site), including staff, volunteers, visitors, and contractors
- Spread of pests and diseases around the site, including along paths, drainage / water courses, irrigation and green waste
- Spread by natural agents including wind, wildlife etc.

The Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) has produced Parks and Gardens - Biosecurity Best Practice Protocols guidance to support garden practices and reduce biosecurity risks.

### 8.5.2 Management guidelines

- Minimise, as much as possible, the threats and risks from plant pests, diseases and invasive alien plant species.
- Regular monitoring of the site to prevent the spread of threats and risks from plant pests and diseases.

## 8.6 Hydrology

### 8.6.1 Brief description

Marble Hill Park is sited on the north bank of the Thames and flooding has been a long standing problem in the park. To accompany the 2006 LUC management plan a study on Flood Risk was commissioned from Peter Brett Associates. Hydrological modelling, a review of Floodscape proposals and investigations into drainage systems using an existing sewer were carried out to inform the conclusions which are summarised below.

Flooding occurs at the southern end of the park. The floods are due to the river overtopping the embankment along the southern boundary, becoming trapped and taking time to drain away leaving standing water in the park which affects the grassland, trees and the condition of the rugby pitches. As well as overtopping the embankment water enters the park through the embankment close to the park entrance at the south east and from overland flow originating from low ground to the west of the park.

#### **8.6.1.1 Effect of climate change**

Climate change scenarios were modelled for 2025, 2050 and 2100. The modelling showed that there will be a significant increase in flood events but that this will be tempered by an increase in the use of the Thames Barrier. The effect of the flood water coming from the west along Orleans Road could not be examined due to lack of topographical data so the picture is somewhat incomplete. Modelling showed that the flooding would extend a further 5 to 10 metres inland from its present extent and would be 300mm deeper by the year 2100.

#### **8.6.1.2 Removal of flood water**

It is suggested that the existing brick sewer could be brought into action to alleviate flooding in the park however this first requires investigation into the sewer and penstock which could not be undertaken as part of this study. The sewer could be used simply with drainage through grated covers, or in combination with land drainage or a pumped system.

#### **8.6.1.3 Options**

The problems caused by flooding in the park are in the condition of the grassland, some damage to trees (possibly worsening the disease issues with the horse chestnuts) and in the condition of the rugby pitches. The flooding also deposits fertile silt enriching the fertility of the park and encouraging ruderal (weedy) growth in the infrequently mown grassland margins.

The Peter Brett report suggests that there is unlikely to be a major change for the worse due to global warming with just a 5-10 metre increase in the flooding area inland in the next 100 years. Therefore although it would seem of benefit to investigate and carry out works to the existing sewer to allow quicker drainage of water this is not an urgent need and the installation of land drainage or a piped system would appear to be an excessive use of resources considering the nature of the problem.

Thorough monitoring of the number of flood incidents and their severity along with the impacts on the grassland and trees would give a clearer picture of the effects and allow a more informed decision to be made on the priority of carrying out works to the sewer.

### 8.6.2 Issues and vulnerabilities

- Impacts of flooding on grassland, trees and biodiversity.
- Impact of flooding on condition of the rugby pitches.
- Lack of information on the sewer and the cost of repairing it.
- Lack of detailed information on the frequency and severity of floods.

### 8.6.3 Management guidelines

- Monitor the flooding of the park, noting number, length and extent of flood incidents and the condition of the grassland and trees in the area in order to fully assess the impacts of flooding on the fabric of the park, reviewing this periodically (suggest every 3 years).
- Consider reinstating the sewer at the southern end of the park to provide a route for the flood water to drain more quickly from the site (timing dependant on results of monitoring).

## 8.7 Archaeology

### 8.7.1 Brief description

The Northampton Archaeology report produced in 2004 considered the archaeological remains in the pleasure grounds to the south of Marble Hill House. This found various features that accord with the layout shown in the 1752 survey plan along with others that they suggest date from later phases. The findings of the survey are reproduced as Appendix 3 and can be summarised as follows:

- The 1752 plan fits well with the current topography in particular the southern edge of the grassed upper terrace, the position of the nine pin alley and the two ditches or hahas to east and west of the pleasure grounds.
- The semi-circular platform to the east of the terrace immediately to the south of house is still present – this feature is visible on the 1896 OS map.
- Low earth mounds within the quarters probably relate to later dumping of waste material rather than the original path layout.
- The breaks of slope between the grassed terraces are subject to wear and erosion from mowing.
- In the treed areas to the south of the quarters shallow depressions are visible marking former tree positions but it is not clear which phase of planting these belong to.

This report forms a good basis from which to consider archaeology in terms of conservation however, in order to physically restore the historic layout, including specific features such as replanting avenues, further more detailed archaeological investigation will be essential before works can be undertaken.

Any future ground works would also benefit from watching briefs in sensitive areas such as the pleasure grounds.

The report also notes the lack of awareness in the public of the archaeological remains and improvements to interpretation would increase understanding of this.

### 8.7.2 Issues and vulnerabilities

- Presence of significant archaeological remains relating to the 1724 layout as well as later phases.
- Evidence unclear as yet and requiring further investigation if it were to form the basis of restoration proposals.
- Routine maintenance (grass mowing) causing gradual erosion of terraces.
- Watching briefs advisable for groundworks in sensitive areas.
- Lack of public awareness of archaeological remains.
- Lack of strategy for intervention in the ground from the events programme.



### 8.7.3 Management guidelines

- The Northampton Archaeology Survey of 2004 should be considered as a guide in relation to planning and decision making for new works in order to avoid inadvertent change to known surviving features in the limited area to which it applies (the Pleasure Grounds).
- As there are archaeological remains of known significance and further unknown potential, a watching brief will be prepared for any new works likely to affect subsurface remains.
- Further archaeological investigation would be required to form the basis of any significant repair or restoration of the historic landscape.
- Consider introducing measures to reduce damage to archaeological features from routine maintenance, specifically to the earthworks of the terraces from grass mowing.
- Interpret the archaeological remains for instance through a leaflet or signage to raise public awareness of their presence and historic interest.

## 8.8 Buildings

### 8.8.1 Brief description

Marble Hill Park is centred on Marble Hill House and the relationship between this building and the landscape is the key element of the park's historic character. Other buildings existed on various parts of the site in the past but have disappeared with the changes in use of the park (Little Marble Hill, the service wing of Marble Hill House, various stable and farm buildings, plus garden structures such as greenhouses). Surviving historic buildings in the park are:

- **Marble Hill House, (listed grade I)** is one of a series of villas built along the Thames in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was constructed between 1724 and 1729 for Henrietta Howard to the designs of Lord Herbert and Roger Morris and the pleasure grounds to the south leading down to the Thames were designed by Charles Bridgeman in 1724 to form a setting to the house. The building is currently open to the public at the weekends and for booked parties during the week.
- **The Stable Block (listed grade II)**, built by Jonathan Peel, this is a handsome early 19<sup>th</sup>-century building with a central clock tower and forms a landmark in the northern section of park. The building currently accommodates the park cafe and the toilets on the ground floor and staff flats above. To the rear of the building is a yard currently used for car parking. This is in poor condition and the original granite setts are still visible in some places through the more recent worn surfacing. The raised platforms in front of the building are probably a mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century addition which do not enhance the building or the landscape and restrict the room available for cafe seating.
- **The White Lodge, (listed grade II)** a small, early 19<sup>th</sup>-century single storey building built by Jonathan Peel and now used for staff accommodation.
- **The Ice House, (listed grade II)** part of the original garden layout of the 1720s, lies at the north west corner of the north west woodland Quarter. Work has been undertaken to conserve the structure and its historic use is explained by an interpretation panel. The icehouse itself is not accessible by the public.
- **The Grotto**, again part of the early 18<sup>th</sup>-century layout, has been conserved and made safe for the public by installing a metal barrier precluding entry to the cave like interior. However it is heavily shaded by overgrown shrubs creating an uninviting feature.
- **Beaufort Lodge**, a 20<sup>th</sup>-century single storey building used for staff accommodation. The garden is neatly kept although utilitarian in design.
- **The park depot and changing rooms** are simple modern buildings which are largely out of site in the north east corner of the park. The changing rooms are robust and spacious possibly offering scope for new uses. They are used by football teams and feedback from users was positive although the facility would benefit from minor updating and redecoration.
- The base for the **One O'Clock Club and the adventure playground** are again modern buildings. Marble Hill Play Centres manage the One O'clock club and adventure

playground under a lease agreement. The colourful mural on the building is a long established feature (changing each year) but is very obvious in the parkland to the south and west.

- The **disused changing rooms** to the north west of the Stable Block, are a wooden building which appears to be in sound condition and currently used for storage. It is in a secluded position within the Sweet Walk and offers potential either for new uses or a well screened site for minor new buildings if required for instance for expanding catering or toilet or interpretation facilities.
- The **sports booking hut**, a small wooden building which is in active use.
- The **disused toilet block** within the woodland block to the north west of the house is a small modern utilitarian building which reinforces the unkempt appearance of the woodland.

### 8.8.2 Issues and vulnerabilities

- The Stable Block raised front garden and the yard to the rear are underused and, in their present form and condition, detract from the historic character of this Grade II Listed building.
- The disused changing rooms close to the Stable Block have potential for more positive use.
- The changing rooms require minor refurbishment and enhancement to fit them as a contact point for the public to access the Park Rangers.
- The disused toilet block reinforces the unkempt appearance of the woodland compartments.

### 8.8.3 Management guidelines

- The existing buildings will be maintained and used in a manner in keeping with their historic character and, as far as possible, their original function. The setting of buildings will be designed and managed to create a historically and visually appropriate relationship with the park.
- Historic buildings and structures will be interpreted to increase understanding of their past use and their place within the landscape.
- Positive use of all buildings will be promoted including occupation by English Heritage staff of park lodges and other buildings that are not suitable for public use.
- Any new buildings should be sensitively designed and positioned to avoid negative impacts on the historic character of the park and the settings of the listed buildings.
- Continue to promote and manage the positive use of buildings by other organisations (such as the One O'Clock Club) which assist in fulfilling the social inclusion objectives of English Heritage and bringing a wide range of users into the park.

- Enhance the setting of the Stable Block by removing the raised beds at the front and repairing/restoring the paved yard to the rear.
- Bring the disused changing rooms to the north of the Stable Block into more active use or use this well concealed site for sensitively designed new facilities such as interpretation or education or enhancements to toilets or the cafe.
- Consider removal of the disused 20<sup>th</sup>-century toilet block to the west of the house as part of an overall enhancement to the woodland quarters.

## 8.9 Boundaries and entrances

### 8.9.1 Brief description

The location of the boundaries of the park has changed little since the estate was consolidated in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century however the entrances have changed with alterations in ownership and then with the conversion to public park in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Boundaries are a mix of wooden palisade fencing, railings and brick walls, with the majority dating from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The boundary with the Richmond Road is a 1.5 metre high wooden palisade fence. This refers to the history of the site in that wooden fences were used when Marble Hill was a private estate and the use of the material maintains a rural ambiance. However the view of moving traffic through the fencing detracts from the tranquillity of the park.

The boundary with Orleans Road is wooden with some metal railings plus a hedge which is in poor 'leggy' condition.

The boundary with the riverside path is of metal railings which is beneficial considering the flooding of this southern area. The condition of these railings requires monitoring due to potential damage from flooding and tree regeneration along the boundary line.

Internal boundaries are mainly wooden fencing for instance around the woodland blocks and the Sweet Walk. Although there is historic precedent for the use of wooden fencing, a few sections are in poor condition and it does present a very informal and even temporary appearance in the context of a public park. Stouter wooden fencing is used along the boundary of the adventure playground/One O'Clock Club and also around the dog free area. The latter is intrusive in views across the open grassland. Estate rail, with a dog proof mesh, could be considered an attractive and durable alternative.

There are now seven entrances to the park including two vehicular entrances off the Richmond Road, the one to the east for the public and to the west for service vehicles and staff. The entrances are gateways in the wooden fencing or (along the river boundary) metal railings.

### 8.9.2 Issues and vulnerabilities

- Wooden fencing allows views of moving traffic on the Richmond Road.
- Hedge along the Orleans Road boundary in poor condition.
- Wooden internal fencing in poor condition in a few places and looks temporary.
- Fencing to dog free area intrusive in views.

### 8.9.3 Management guidelines

- Maintain boundaries and entrances to a high visual and functional standard.
- Plant a new native hedge along the Richmond Road boundary to screen views to moving traffic from inside the park and to enhance biodiversity.
- Replant/refurbish the hedge along the Orleans Road boundary.

## 8.10 Road and path network

### 8.10.1 Brief description

The road and path network is still closely allied to the historic pattern of the park.

The main route from Beaufort Lodge entrance to Marble Hill House follows Worple Way, the original access way to the meadows and market gardens of the early 18<sup>th</sup>-century landscape. The drive along the north of Marble Hill House and the path (former terrace) to the south of the house derive from the 1724 layout although these have been greatly altered since. The drive along the north of the house has been extended to the west and the carriage circle, which was originally a semi-circle, has been converted to a full circle and then modified again to its current layout. The former terrace to the south has been narrowed and become slightly irregular in outline. The terrace was an important part of the garden layout of the 1720s and its current irregular shape and tarmac surface are very far from the historic wide, gravelled walk.

Similarly the carriage circle is municipal in character due to the tarmac surfacing and the small scale grass central circle.

Jonathan Peel's alterations in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century modified the winding path through the Sweet Walk into a carriage drive much on the same layout as today to the west. To the north more entrances (including the vehicular ones) were added in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and these changes have further modified the carriage drive route.

New paths created as part of the transformation into a public park in the 20<sup>th</sup> century include the path along from the car park to the Park Depot and the extension of Worple Way in the form of a tarmac footpath down to the riverside path.

The roads and the formal footpaths are all surfaced with grey/black tarmac. From the Richmond Road narrow gateways and poorly surfaced roads greet the visitor by car, the roadway lined by ranks of unpainted wooden pegs to prevent access to the general parkland. The roadway to the main visitor car park is rutted and pot-holed with unattractive speed ramps.

There are less formal pedestrian routes around the west, south and eastern boundaries which are paths worn by foot traffic and reinforced as needed using bark chippings. These paths are generally through long grassed areas and their informality reinforces the pleasant rural ambiance although the surfaces will not accommodate buggies during wet weather periods.

Within the park vehicle traffic is confined to the access road and car park minimising conflicts with pedestrian park users.

### 8.10.2 Issues and vulnerabilities

- Loss of historic character in key elements of the setting of the house (the carriage circle and the south terrace) due to the municipal style surfacing and modifications to the form of the routes.

### 8.10.3 Management guidelines

- Ensure regular repair of path and road surfaces to maintain a safe and well presented network of routes.
- Maintain the current level of hard surfacing in the park with a general presumption against further surfacing except where this would bring significant benefits for public access or safety.
- In areas of long grass maintain short cut grass paths in a pattern reflecting the requirements of park users (for instance alongside the main vehicular route to the car park when the relevant phase of long grass is implemented).
- Consider resurfacing selected historic routes (particularly those in the immediate setting of the Marble Hill House) with permeable materials reflecting their historic character (tar spray and chip or resin bonded gravel).
- Consider reshaping the carriage circle and the southern terrace to reinstate the historic pattern and improve the setting of Marble Hill House.
- Consider improvements to the trampled path running parallel with Orleans Road to make it easier to use (while retaining the path's rural character) for instance by surfacing with self-bound gravel.

## 8.11 Furniture and signage

### 8.11.1 Brief description

The furniture in the park is mixed in style and condition with a substantial proportion inappropriate to the historic character of the park and/or in poor condition.

There are three styles of benches:

- A modern style combining wood and metal (mainly at the north of the park).
- A more traditional all wooden bench (many of which are commemorative; these are clustered around Marble Hill House and the dog free area).
- A special historic style bench (sited along the south front of the house).

The wood and metal benches are visually intrusive and generally in poor condition. The all wooden benches are generally sound in condition and more in keeping with the character of the park due to their more traditional shape. These are popular for commemoration and there is a demand for more commemorative benches in the park.

The special benches along the south front of the house enhance this area providing a different sort of experience. There may be potential to expand on this for instance in combination with tree planting to recapture something of the formal landscape.

At present seating is heavily concentrated in the centre and northern area of the park with very few benches around the perimeter to the south of the park. This is a sensible pattern in that many people enjoy sitting and watching the cricket or other activities in the more lively area at the north, or enjoy the ambiance of the pleasure ground to the south of the house or need to sit in the dog free area to keep an eye on their small children. However in some places the quantity of benches (for instance immediately to the north of the house) creates a cluttered appearance which affects the tranquillity of the park.

A high proportion of the benches are on paved bases, some of which are in poor condition and detract from the rural character of the park. In a few locations the wear to surrounding grass is extensive giving a very poor appearance locally. The paved bases allow the benches to be anchored and avoid the worst of the wear to the grass but there are ground reinforcement technologies available, such as rubber crumb or plastic mesh/honeycomb products which allow the grass to grow through whilst binding the surface and reducing the visual impact. It is important that any surface renewal allows disabled access.

There are several litter bins and dog bins in the park, these are of mixed styles and the litter bins are of varied condition with a few in very poor condition. They are again clustered in areas of heavy use with dog bins more evenly distributed for instance around the perimeter path taking into account the popularity of this route with dog walkers.

Entrances are poorly presented, with decaying infrastructure and information about the landscape and the park completely absent. The car park has unattractive signage, furniture and amateurish notices. At pedestrian entrances signage is basic, corporate but uninformative about the grounds, and while it indicates a range of the facilities available



there is no information on their location or opening times, apart from information about the house. There is no indication of the times of park opening, no orientation map, no idea about cultural or sporting offers.

Lighting in the park is currently restricted to the car park and its approach route and the path from the car park to the house. Two styles of light are used, with small scale historic style lamp posts along the approach road and around the car park and seven simple low level bollards along the path. This style and level of lighting is appropriate to the landscape of the park.

### 8.11.2 Issues and vulnerabilities

- Modern (metal and wood) benches and paved bases are visually intrusive in the park landscape and in poor condition.
- Grass very worn around some benches.
- Benches crowded around Marble Hill House giving a cluttered appearance.
- Demand from the public for more commemorative benches.
- Mixed style and poor condition of some bins, signage and lights.

### 8.11.3 Management guidelines

- Furniture will be of a consistent style and quality, appropriately sited and maintained to a high standard to ensure it meets user needs and does not detract from the parkland setting.
- Broken or vandalised furniture will be repaired with speed and there will be a programme of repair for worn grass surfaces around benches.
- Consider replacing the stock of modern metal and wooden benches with the more traditional all wood pattern (these could be memorial benches for which there is a strong public demand).
- Consider replacing the poor condition paved bases for benches set in grassland with either reinforced grass, or new bases of large paving stones.
- Adjust the placement of benches so that they are less visually intrusive.
- Consider refurbishment and partial replacement of bins to ensure that there is a consistent and high quality set of furniture throughout the park.
- Introduce a scheme of new consistent and visually attractive signage.
- Introduce historically sensitive and consistent lighting which is visually attractive.

## 8.12 Landscape character: Views



Fig 08 Key views to and from Marble Hill House

### 8.12.1 Brief description

Marble Hill is a level landscape with little variation in topography therefore the drama of the views comes from the design of the park (chiefly the placing of trees and woodland blocks), the location and form of the house and the presence of the river.

The park is largely enclosed by tree belts but the level topography allows views to surrounding buildings, notably along the Richmond Road and to the east. Views of elements within the park which are not sympathetic with the historic character of the site are also prominent due to the level landscape – these include views to the car park and adventure playground. The visual relationship with the Thames was been changed by the construction of the Warren footpath in the 19th century which blocks the view of the river from the park.

The view of the site from Richmond Hill is important to the landscape context of Marble Hill. The outcry that saved the park from development in 1902 was largely due the impact of the loss of the park to housing on the view from Richmond Hill and was a catalyst in the movement to conserve this important view.

#### 8.12.1.1 Views to the house

Marble Hill House sits on a slight rise at the centre of the park and is visible from most areas to north and south. To the east and west it is masked by the woodland blocks of the quarters. These blocks are uneven and in views from the south this lack of symmetry appears at odds

with the character of the house. In addition, the cedar to the northwest of the house is out of character and intrudes on views to the house.

The key views to the house are:

- From the Great Lawn, now the cricket pitch.
- From the entrance at the far north of the site on the Richmond Road.
- From the open ground of the Pleasure Ground to the south.
- From the river and tow path.

#### **8.12.1.2 Views from the house**

Views out of the house over the landscape are also important, in particular the view south across the grassland to the river but also the views to the north over the Great Lawn. The open parkland is part of the experience of visiting the house giving a tranquil backdrop to the rooms. However the current character of the landscape as a municipal park is in contrast to its original layout which in the pleasure grounds to the south was highly geometrical and formal set amid the rural landscape of meadows, paddocks, cornfields and fruit and vegetable gardens.

#### **8.12.1.3 Other views**

Other views of importance are:

- Across the Great Lawn to the Stable Block.
- Across the pleasure grounds to the south towards the river.
- The view over Marble Hill Park from Richmond Hill with the open green space and tree cover of the park forming an important part of this highly significant view.

### **8.12.2 Issues and vulnerabilities**

- The important entrance closest to Twickenham, by the White Lodge opens immediately onto the hard tennis court and the cricket nets and these obscure the view of the house from this key entrance.
- The unchecked growth of the woodland quarters around the house have obscured the design intent of Bridgeman and give an immediate setting to the house very far from the orderly and symmetrical design of the 1720s.
- Decorative trees including the cedar to the northwest of the house are out of historic character and intrusive in views to the house.
- Views to boundaries are uneven with moving traffic and the houses along the Richmond Road affecting the rural ambiance of the landscape along with views to Meadowside to the east and the flats along the Beaufort Road to the north east.

### 8.12.3 Management guidelines

- Conserve the open views to Marble Hill House from much of the park and from the River Thames and riverside path.
- Consider moving the hard tennis courts and the cricket practice nets to enhance views from the White Lodge entrance to Marble Hill House.
- Actively manage the trees in the woodland quarters with the aim of restoring the symmetry of the setting of the house in the views from south and north.
- Use hedge and tree planting to screen intrusive views to moving traffic and buildings inside and outside the park.
- Include interpretation to explain the importance of views from the river and Richmond Hill.

## 8.13 Sport

### 8.13.1 Brief description

Sport is an important part of the life of the park bringing people to the site to enjoy outdoor activities in this tranquil setting. Consultation with sports users in 2006 emphasised that the setting of the park and the views to Marble Hill House was part of the attraction of the site particularly for cricket teams but also to some extent for footballers, tennis players, runners and cyclists. Informal sport is popular particularly children learning to ride bikes and adults jogging.

The formal sports facilities are a long established and valued part of the scene at Marble Hill.

The range of facilities is summarised below:

- Four football pitches in the East Meadow
- The cricket wicket and outfield on the Great Lawn
- Two cricket practice nets on the Great Lawn
- Two hard tennis courts on the Great Lawn
- Two rugby pitches on the West Meadow

### 8.13.2 Issues and vulnerabilities

- The football teams tend to favour certain pitches causing extra wear and tear on these.
- Rugby pitches are affected by occasional flooding of the southern edge of the park.
- The tennis courts, the cricket practice nets and the cricket wicket are visually intrusive in the historic parkland.

### 8.13.3 Management guidelines

- Continue to provide a range of recreational opportunities in particular the sports usage and informal recreational value of the park.
- Ensure that sports facilities at the park are managed efficiently, are of good quality, reasonably priced and have minimal visual impact on the landscape.
- Use the Ranger Team to liaise with sports users and monitor the use of the sports facilities.
- Monitor the impacts of flooding on the condition of the rugby pitches as part of the overall consideration of flooding in the park.
- Consider introduction of regular meetings with representatives of all sports users (suggest twice a year initially) to improve communication and increase involvement (for instance in applying for grants from funding bodies to improve facilities).
- Consider measures to reduce the visual impact of the sports facilities in the parkland landscape in particular to move the hard tennis courts and the cricket practice nets to a less intrusive area.

## 8.14 Staffing

### 8.14.1 Staff

There are currently four rangers based at Marble Hill Park who are line managed by the site manager. The Ranger team are based in the park office and their day-to-day

duties include locking and unlocking the park gates liaising with the Landscape Manager to ensure the park is presentable at all times, assisting with small-scale park maintenance and repair works e.g. making safe damage caused by vandalism, supervising the cleaning contractor's activities to ensure the public toilets, changing rooms and park office are clean and tidy and monitoring the use of the car park. They are also responsible for managing the sports booking system, fees and access to the house.

### 8.14.2 Contracted services

All of the maintenance of the Park landscape is carried out under a Regional Grounds

Maintenance Contract. This covers a large range of work including grass cutting, tree works, maintaining sport facilities and litter picking.

Health and Safety tree inspections and works are completed by term contractors managed by the Regional Landscape Manager.

### 8.14.3 Issues and vulnerabilities

- Increased maintenance needs as a result of the restoration of historic landscape features.
- Coordination and management of potential volunteers recruited to assist with the maintenance of the historic landscape.

## 8.15 Events and hospitality

### 8.15.1 Brief description

Marble Hill Park currently hosts a varied and extensive events and concert programme. These are often on a large scale and held in the summer. These events often have a direct impact on the landscape as large areas of lawn are used surrounding Marble Hill House.

The Maintenance Contractors and Rangers team need time to prepare areas for events, which may consist of cutting the grass or altering the maintenance routine, and should be consulted from the outset to support the event operation and minimise possible damage.

Event plans and budgets must allow for the possibility of damage, and the cost of its repair. Consideration must be made for repairs to be completed as this may impinge on the operation of the next event.

Event plans should also consider the general impact on the appearance of the site in relation to event arenas or related temporary marquees/tents. Consideration as to the visual impact should be given before structures are located within the landscape

### 8.15.2 Issues and vulnerabilities

- Long term impacts on the fabric of the park from concerts and events (particularly parking) require monitoring to inform future arrangements.
- Impact on archaeology from intrusive events which require careful management to prevent destruction of archaeological evidence.
- There may be potential for sensitively expanding the range of small events both for income (to support the sustainable future of the site) and for community benefit.

### 8.15.3 Management guidelines

- Ensure the Maintenance Contractors and Rangers team have sufficient time to prepare for concerts and events.
- Ensure event plans and budgets consider the cost of damage to the site and the time needed for repairs.
- Consider the visual impact of temporary marquees etc. in relation to the historic setting of Marble Hill House.

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