

VIEW 5 – To Ham House (seasonal view)

Reason for selection

This is one of the most important sightlines that opens up from the river front of the park, providing a visual interconnection with another historic stately home of exceptional significance located only a short distance away.

Description

Ham House stands on the south bank of the Thames slightly upstream from Marble Hill. Like its counterpart on the opposite side, it is set back from the towpath and screened from it by two lines of trees. Since the two houses are staggered, Ham House can be seen only from the section of the river terrace in front of the West Meadow and then only obliquely. The view opens up in the winter when the trees shed their foliage. The distance to Ham House and the fact that the sun is behind it for most of the day reduces the amount of detail that can be made out but its considerable bulk with tall chimneys forms an imposing backdrop to views of the river.

History

Being a Jacobean building, Ham House predates Marble Hill. When first built it was surrounded by open country. Although later development encroached on its surroundings, the house and outbuildings were surrounded by extensive grounds which ensured that its immediate setting was protected. Although part of the estate was sold off in 1949, the same year the house was donated by the Tollemache family to the National Trust who ensured its preservation. The view has therefore changed little apart from relatively insubstantial additions in the foreground such as landing stages and jetties for pleasure craft.

Significance: High



VIEW 6 – Both ways along the river (from a boat)

Reason for selection

The River Thames has always been an important transport route – initially as a means of communication with central London, then from the nineteenth century onwards for day-trippers travelling on pleasure craft. Marble Hill is one of a number of landmarks visible on this stretch of the river.

Description

This is a kinetic view which reveals itself gradually whether one is travelling upstream or downstream as the boat draws level with the Pleasure Ground and sightlines along it to the south front of the mansion. Travellers heading upstream see first Marble Hill on the starboard side, then a short distance later Ham House on the port side and then ahead Eel Pie Island in Twickenham. Travellers heading downstream see these same features in reverse sequence and on opposite sides. The sharp bend in the river means that looking almost directly ahead they see Petersham Meadows and, above them, Richmond Hill and the Royal Star and Garter Home.

History

The main features which appear in this view have been described above. As originally built, Marble Hill and the other mansions along the banks of the Thames, such as neighbouring Orleans Park, formed the principal architectural accents and were intended to impress travellers on the river. But with increasing appreciation of the surrounding landscape as a beauty spot from the late nineteenth century onwards other views from river craft began to vie with them in importance.

Significance: Moderate

No photograph available

VIEW 7 – Both ways along the river terrace

Reason for selection

The river terrace is an important thoroughfare from which the House and ground can be viewed by members of the public without entering the site. Views also open up looking along the towpath upstream or downstream.

Description

This is a kinetic view which changes as one walks along the towpath in either direction. Looking directly ahead along the towpath, elements of the Marble Hill site are visible only at the edge of one's field of vision. In the foreground the towpath itself and the verges are visible; in the distance the wider setting of the house (from some points the reciprocal of View 3) can be appreciated. This includes features such as Petersham Meadows and Petersham Ait.

History

Early views of the house show the pleasure ground extending all the down to the river bank. On the 1786 Saulthier map of Twickenham a narrow strip running along it can be identified. On the first edition Ordnance Survey map the towpath can be clearly identified and trees had started to grow up along it. In place, especially where it passes in front of the East Meadow, the foliage is now dense in the summer months. As described above in the entries for Views 3 and 5 the surroundings of Marble Hill have been well protected from twentieth century development and therefore the views along the towpath have not changed substantially, although from it in the distance prominent landmarks such as the Royal Star and Garter Home on Richmond Hill of 1919-24.

Significance: Moderate



VIEW 8 – From Thames to house

Reason for selection

This is the reciprocal of View 9 and very similar to View 4, with the exception that the river is not visible in the foreground and the south front of the Mansion is seen at slightly closer range.

Description

The south front of the house is seen across the Pleasure Ground framed by groves of trees. Those that line the upper terrace immediately in front of the house reflect the original formal planning more closely, those that line the wider terrace that stretches down to the Thames are thinner and less regular. Since there is no path or roadway running across the Pleasure Ground access may not be very easy in poor weather and the view is most frequently appreciated by people using the towpath, which has a hard surface.

History

As described above (see entry for View 4), the Pleasure Ground was an important component in the Bridgeman's original plan for the garden. It was also important as a formal approach to the house for visitors arriving by boat. While the original layout can still be traced and, to a degree, appreciated, it has been much eroded.

Significance: High



VIEW 9 – From house to Thames

Reason for selection

This is the reciprocal of View 8: if the House was conceived in relation to the Thames and intended to be seen in conjunction with it, views looking out of it across the Pleasure Grounds to the river and beyond were no less important. The single aspect of the Great Room takes advantage of this view as seen from the first floor, underscoring its importance.

Description

In the foreground is the lawn of the Pleasure Ground, with low, curving banks marking the location of the terraces stepping downward towards the river into which it was formerly divided. It is framed on both sides by groves of mature trees. Trees growing along the towpath restrict longer-range views in the summer months, but control over development in Petersham on the opposite bank of the Thames, which has remained low rise, and the presence of Richmond Park beyond mean that the skyline is unencumbered.

History

See above

Significance: High



Reason for selection

This is one of the most important views in the northern half of the site since it presents the second largest historic building on the site after the Mansion in its wider setting.

Description

This view is obtained from the Beaufort Road entrance to the Mansion and opens up soon after one enters the site if one looks southwest across the Great Lawn. Although Montpelier Row is located almost immediately behind the Stable Block yard, it cannot be seen since the trees along the western boundary of the site, including the Sweet Walk, form a visually impermeable backdrop, even in the winter months.

History

The Stable Block was built by Lieutenant General Jonathan Peel (1799-1879), probably soon after his purchase of Marble Hill in 1825. At some date between the death of Henrietta Howard in 1767 and the Saulthier plan of Twickenham made in 1786, the fields to the north of the mansion stretching all the way to the Richmond Road were added to the estate. Peel created a second drive to the Mansion that branched off Richmond Road at the White Lodge (see above). A point along this drive would have been a logical location for a Stable Block, although when it is approached by this route along the Sweet Walk is reveals itself only at the last moment. However, the spacious ground in front of the site provided an incentive for a broad, spreading front to exploit the position, as well as views from the original drive in which it could be seen at a distance. The view has little changed in the intervening years.

Significance: High



