



**Thomas's College, Queen's Road,
Richmond-upon-Thames TW10 6JP**

Townscape/landscape Visual Impact Assessment

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The subject site comprises a tarmac driveway/pathway and a tennis court. It is within a larger site at Thomas's College, Queen's Road, Richmond-upon-Thames, TW10 6JP, which comprises an 1840s neo-Gothic building (formerly "Richmond College"), seven other buildings dating from the 19th and 20th centuries, and landscaped gardens including a tennis court and two entrances addressing Queen's Road. The former Richmond College site is Grade II listed [Appendix 1]. It is mostly located within character area 5 of the Richmond Hill Conservation Area ("RHCA"), and it is partially located within the St Matthias Conservation Area ("SMCA").
- 1.2. The proposed scheme involves the provision of a new 9.5 metre high sports canopy, in the current location of the tennis court. It would have a steel frame, with walls comprising a perforated PVC fabric, and a barrel-vaulted roof covered with a tensile PVC fabric.
- 1.3. This Townscape/landscape Visual Impact Assessment ("TVIA") should be read in conjunction with the Heritage Statement (also authored by Heritage Information Ltd. and dated November 2024). This TVIA has been produced to assess the visual impact of the proposed new sports canopy on the following:
 - Landscaped grounds and the setting of the former Richmond College (Grade II listed);
 - Setting of the Red House (locally listed and within the curtilage of Richmond College);
 - Settings of the Upper and Lower Cottages and Oak Tree Lodge (locally listed and within the curtilage of Richmond College);
 - Character and appearance of the RHCA;
 - Setting of the SMCA.
- 1.4. This assessment complies with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2023) and the online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in respect of Heritage issues. It also considers the National Design Guide (2019) [Appendix 2] and the *Buildings in Context Toolkit* (2001) [Appendix 3].
- 1.5. The setting of a heritage asset is defined as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Elements of a setting may make a positive, neutral or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral (NPPF glossary).
- 1.6. Historic England's **Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3** (December 2017) [Appendix 1] observes that the contribution of setting to the significance of a heritage asset is often expressed by reference to views, a purely visual impression of an asset or place which can be static or dynamic, long, short or of lateral spread, and include a variety of views of, from, across, or including that asset (paragraph 10). The document states that the protection and enhancement of setting is intimately linked to townscape and urban design considerations. Setting often relates to townscape attributes such as enclosure, definition of streets and spaces and spatial qualities as well as lighting, trees, and verges, or the treatments of boundaries or street surfaces. The document also recommends that where complex issues involving views come into play in the assessment of setting – whether for the purposes of providing a baseline for plan-making or for development management – a formal views analysis may be merited.

1.7. Authorship

- **Dorian A T A Crone** BA BArch DipTP RIBA MRTPI IHBC – Heritage and Design Consultant. Dorian has been a Chartered Architect and Chartered Town Planner for over 30 years. He has also been a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation for over 25 years. Dorian is a committee member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (“IHBC”), and until recently he was also a committee member of The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (“SPAB”), the International Committee on Monuments and Sites (“ICOMOS”) and ICOMOS UK. He is currently a trustee of both the Dance Scholarship Trust and the Drake Trust. In addition, he is himself an SPAB scholar. Dorian is the Vice Chairman of the City Heritage Society (having previously been the Chairman), and a panel member of the City Conservation Area Advisory Committee.

Dorian has worked for over 30 years as Historic Buildings and Areas Inspector with English Heritage/Historic England, responsible for providing advice to all the London Boroughs and both the City Councils. Dorian has also worked as a consultant and expert witness for over 20 years advising a wide variety of clients on heritage and design matters involving development work, alterations, extensions and new build projects associated with listed buildings and conservation areas in design and heritage sensitive locations. He is a Design Review Panel member of Design: South-West, Design-South East, and the London Boroughs of Lewisham, Wandsworth, Richmond-upon-Thames and Croydon. He was also formerly a Design Review Panel member of the Design Council and the London Borough of Islington. He is also a panel member of the City of London Heritage Award. In the past, Dorian has been a panel member of the Betjeman Design Award, as well as being involved with a number of other public sector and commercial design awards including the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition Architectural Awards and the Philip Webb Award.

- **Melisa Thomas** BA PGDL LPC MSc IHBC – Heritage Consultant. After graduating from her BA Hons. degree in English and History, Melisa initially pursued a career in the law while also working as a specialist guide, researcher and lecturer at Strawberry Hill House, Richmond-upon-Thames. In 2017 she changed career, completing a Master's degree in the Conservation of the Historic Environment (for which she was awarded Distinction). Her heritage consultancy work to date has included a wide range of different projects involving heritage planning, design and townscape matters, including Appeal work. Her specialist subjects include Georgian and Victorian house architecture, London history, and urban townscapes. Due to her background in the law, Melisa keenly follows developments in the regulation of the historic environment through legislation, policies and case law. She gained an accreditation with the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) in 2023.
- **Dr Daniel Cummins** MA (Oxon) MSc PhD IHBC – Historic Environment Consultant. Daniel is an historian with a BA and Master's in History from Oxford University and a doctorate from the University of Reading, where he specialised in ecclesiastical buildings and estates and had his work published in leading academic history journals.

Daniel has a Master's in the Conservation of the Historic Environment and provides independent professional heritage advice and guidance to leading architectural practices and planning consultancies, as well as for private clients. He undertakes detailed historical research, significance statements, character appraisals, impact assessments and expert witness statements for new development projects, as well as for alterations and extensions which affect the fabric and settings of Listed Buildings and Locally Listed Buildings, the character and appearance of Conservation Areas, the outstanding universal value of World Heritage Sites, and all other types of heritage assets.

2.0. METHODOLOGY AND CRITERIA

2.1. Site visits were carried out on 17th August 2023, 1st February 2024 and 13th September 2024, during which four key viewpoints were selected within the public realm from which the townscape character of the subject site may best be appreciated and understood [Figure 1]. These specific points have been chosen where the proposals might impact on the surrounding landscape/townscape, on the settings of nearby statutorily and locally listed buildings, and on the character and appearance of the RHCA. Consideration has been given to the historical development of the area, its physical fabric (i.e. building types and materials), and key views to any notable historic buildings or other landmark structures.

- **Viewpoint 1:** From the pathway/driveway to the east of the listed building, looking northward
- **Viewpoint 2:** From the pathway/driveway to the north of the subject site, looking southward
- **Viewpoint 3:** From the area to the south of the Red House, looking north-westward
- **Viewpoint 4:** From the lawn within the grounds of Thomas's College, looking north-westward



Figure 1: Aerial view of subject site (Google Earth, 2024). Location of proposed sports canopy is indicated by a yellow star. Viewpoints are labelled 1 to 4.

- 2.2. **LI & IEMA's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment:** This Townscape Visual Impact Assessment ("TVIA") takes into account the good practice guidance outlined in *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Landscape Institute ("LI") and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), 3rd Edition, 2013: ("GLVIA3"). This guidance pertains to urban townscape as much as landscape. The guidance does not provide a detailed universal methodology, but it recognises that much of the assessment must rely on professional judgment.
- 2.3. **Historic England's Setting of Heritage Assets:** This TVIA responds to Historic England's *Setting of Heritage Assets* [Appendix 1], which observes that the contribution of setting to the significance of a heritage asset is often expressed by reference to views, a purely visual impression of an asset or place which can be static or dynamic, long, short or of lateral spread, and include a variety of views of, from, across, or including that asset (paragraph 10). The document also recommends that where complex issues involving views come into play in the assessment of setting – whether for the purposes of providing a baseline for plan-making or for development management – a formal views analysis may be merited.
- 2.4. The analysis carries out a review of the proposals in the spirit of Paragraph 138 of the NPPF using the accepted and established criteria of most Design Review Panels and in particular used by the Design Council. (Dorian Crone is a Design Review Panel Member of Design: South-West, Design-South East, and the London Boroughs of Lewisham, Wandsworth, Richmond-upon-Thames and Croydon. He was also formerly a Design Review Panel member of the Design Council and the London Borough of Islington.)
- 2.5. In accordance with **Steps 1 and 2** of the Historic England criteria [Appendix 1], the TVIA will firstly establish a baseline for each view against which to judge the impact of proposals upon the local townscape. The townscape in each view is described in terms of its constituent elements and character, including development patterns and scale (including use of materials, massing, density and enclosure), any heritage assets, green and open spaces, transport routes and uses; the way in which the townscape is experienced and by whom also forms part of the assessment. The extent to which proposals have an impact on the existing townscape character is often related to the sensitivity of the townscape to change. Criteria for assessing townscape sensitivity have been based on a variety of factors and attributes which are generally agreed to influence the existing character and value of the townscape:

| Sensitivity | Criteria |
|-------------|---|
| Very High | Strong townscape structure and a distinctive intact character exhibiting unity, richness and harmony, and a strong sense of place. Internationally or nationally recognised townscape, e.g. a World Heritage Site or Grade I listed building, extremely susceptible to minor levels of change. |
| High | Strong townscape structure, distinctive features and a strong sense of place with some detracting features. Nationally or regionally recognised townscape or high quality and distinctive character, e.g. a Grade II* listed building or a conservation area containing a high proportion of listed buildings, susceptible to change. |
| Medium | Recognisable (perhaps locally recognised) townscape structure with some distinctive characteristics e.g. a Grade II listed building, a group of locally listed buildings or a conservation area, and in a reasonable condition. May be capable of low levels of change without affecting key characteristics. |
| Low | Undesignated townscape of local value with few distinctive characteristics. May contain elements in a poor state of repair. Capable of moderate levels of change/enhancement. |
| Negligible | Weak or disjointed townscape structure, capable of high levels of change/enhancement. |

2.7. Using the baseline, the impact of the proposals on the views will be assessed by considering how the townscape may be changed or affected by reason of the latter's location or design. Aspects of townscape and design such as scale, height, mass, orientation, palette of materials and landscaping are particularly relevant. The assessment will illustrate how the proposals might affect the elements that make up the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the townscape and its distinctive character, and how observers may be affected by any changes in the content and character of the views. The potential impacts have been categorised as:

| Magnitude of Impact | Criteria |
|---------------------|--|
| Negligible | Impacts considered to cause no material change to the visual quality of the view. |
| Minimal | Impacts considered to make a limited impact on a townscape where there is some sensitivity to change. Where the proposed change would form a minor component of the wider scene that may affect slightly the character and quality of the townscape in the view or the setting of a heritage asset. |
| Moderate | Impacts considered to make an appreciable difference or change the quality of the townscape where there is some sensitivity to change. Where the proposed change would form a recognisable new element within the scene that would noticeably have an impact on the quality and character of the townscape in the view or the setting of a heritage asset. |
| Substantial | Impacts considered to cause a fundamental change in the appreciation of the townscape where there is a high sensitivity to change. Where the proposed change would affect the quality and character of a valued view, the character and quality of a highly sensitive townscape, or the setting of a highly significant heritage asset. |

Source: Based on GLVIA3 (2013).

2.8. Impacts are therefore assessed in terms of the sensitivity of the townscape affected and the magnitude of the impact or change, and whether the impact is considered to be positive, negative or neutral. If the proposals will enhance the character and quality of the townscape, then the impact will be deemed **positive**; however, if they fail to sustain the quality of the townscape in the view by the removal of characterising elements or add new intrusive or discordant features then the impact will be deemed **negative**. If the proposals preserve the quality of the townscape in the view, or where positive and negative impacts are finely balanced then the impact will be deemed **neutral**.

3.0. TOWNSCAPE AND LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

3.1. Townscape Context

- 3.1.1. The subject site comprises a tarmac driveway/pathway and a tennis court within the grounds of Thomas's College, which is located on the west side of Queen's Road in Richmond Hill. Richmond Hill generally overlooks the River Thames to the west. The area is generally characterised by its large 19th century institutional buildings, its 19th century terraced houses, and by nearby parks and gardens [Figure 2 & Figure 4].
- 3.1.2. The visual impact which the subject site has on the surrounding townscape is limited to the driveway within the south entrance, surfaced in tarmac [Figure 6]. Otherwise, the subject site is located at a short distance away from the townscape and enclosed within the grounds of Thomas's College behind its boundary walls [Figure 3 & Figure 5]. The impact which the subject site has on the surrounding townscape therefore is at most, negligible and neutral.



Figure 2: North-eastward view along Queen's Road, within RHCA. Richmond Gate Hotel (Grade II) is on the left.



Figure 3: Northward view along Queen's Road within RHCA, with glimpses of no. 3 (locally listed), and Upper and Lower Cottages (locally listed and curtilage listed).



Figure 4: South-westward view along Queen's Road within RHCA, towards Richmond Hill. The Royal Star and Garter Home (Grade II) can be seen straight ahead, and Ancaster Court (unlisted) is on the left.



Figure 5: North-eastern view along Queen's Road within SMCA, with Phase 1, Queen's Road Estate (Grade II) on the right.



Figure 6: Westward view towards southern entrance to Thomas's College within RHCA. Lower Cottage (locally listed and curtilage listed) is on the left, and the principal college building (Grade II) is in the distance. Driveway is within subject site.

3.2. Heritage assets

3.2.1. The subject site is located within the Richmond Hill Conservation Area (“RHCA”), just south of the boundary of the St Matthias Conservation Area (“SMCA”) [Figure 7]. It is within the settings of the former Richmond College (Grade II listed), and locally listed buildings which are also within the curtilage of the former Richmond College: The Red House, the Upper and Lower Cottages, and Oak Tree Lodge.

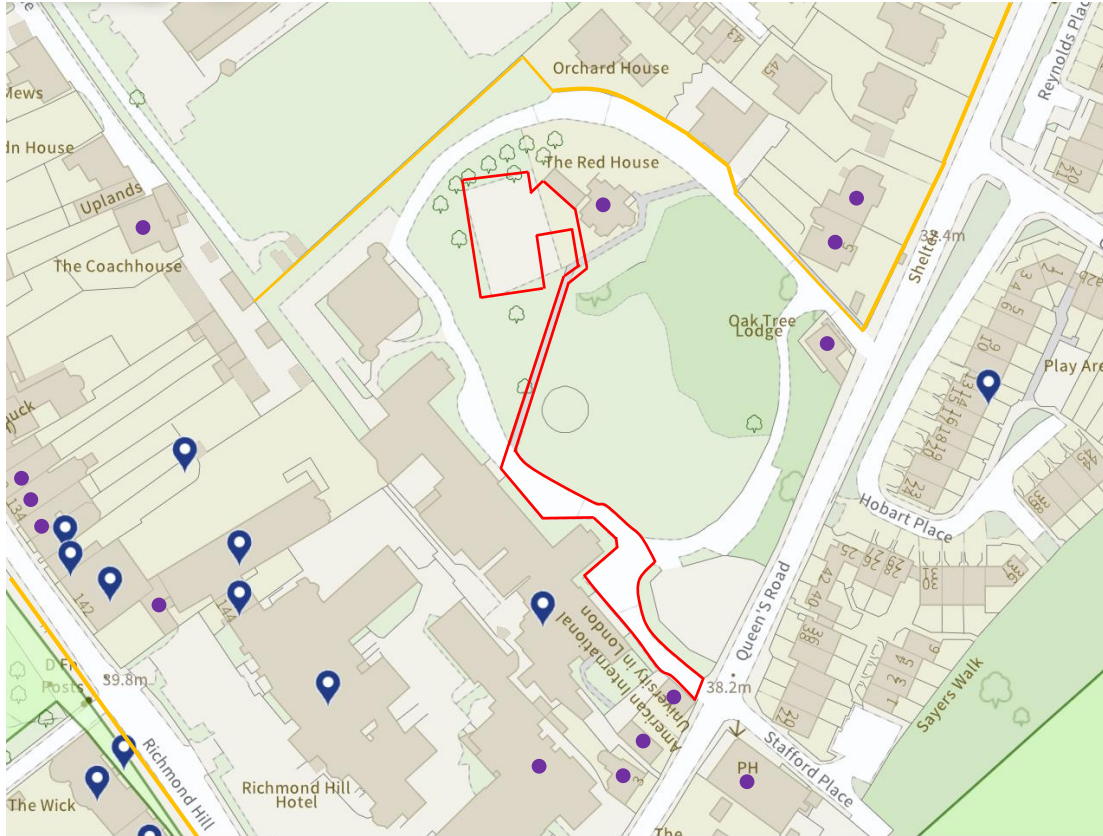


Figure 7: The location of the subject site (outlined in red); boundary between the Richmond Hill CA to the south and the St Matthias CA to the north (outlined in yellow); nearby statutorily listed buildings (marked with “dropped pins”); nearby Buildings of Townscape Merit (marked with purple dots); and nearby registered parks and gardens (outlined in green).

3.2.2. The contribution which the subject site (comprising a driveway/pathway and the tennis court) makes on the character and appearance of the RHCA is considered to be minimal and neutral. Its contribution to the settings of other heritage assets is as follows:

- Former Richmond College (Grade II listed) and Red House (locally listed and within the curtilage of the former Richmond College): Moderate and neutral contribution;
- Upper Cottage, Lower Cottage and Oak Tree Lodge: Minimal and neutral contribution;
- Statutorily and locally listed buildings outside of Thomas's College: No contribution.

3.2.3. The neutral contribution which the subject site makes to the character and appearance of the RHCA and the settings of the heritage assets within the site of Thomas's College, is due to its relatively open nature – although the tarmac surfacing of the driveway/pathway is somewhat unsightly. From most viewpoints, the tennis court is largely hidden behind trees and planting.

3.3. Summary of Landscape Context

- 3.3.1. The subject site comprises a tarmac driveway/pathway and a tennis court within the grounds of Thomas's College, which is otherwise characterised by its lawns, its mature trees (many of which were planted by Squire Williams in the early 19th century, including species sourced from around the world), and the buildings [Figure 8, Figure 9, Figure 10, Figure 11, Figure 13, Figure 15 & Figure 17]. The lawn is located to the east of the front elevation of the decorative neo-Gothic/Tudor principal college building (comprising Bath stone), thereby maximising views of the building. The trees have been strategically placed around the edges of the lawn. The other buildings within the grounds are visually subservient to the principal college building – including the locally listed Arts and Crafts style Red House (comprising red brickwork with clay-tiled pitched roofs and casement windows), the locally listed Upper Cottage, Lower Cottage and Oak Tree Lodge (all comprising London Stock brickwork with hipped slated roofs and sash windows), the unlisted Orchard House and the unlisted Longley House. Although the unlisted Sir Cyril Taylor Library has four storeys, it is subservient to the principal college building in its lower height, its pared back detailing, and its use of London Stock brickwork.
- 3.3.2. Although it is not a registered park and garden, the grounds of Thomas's College has some landscape interest due to its surviving early 19th century layout, with specimen trees.
- 3.3.3. From most viewpoints, the tennis court within the subject site is largely hidden behind trees and planting. The footprint of the driveway/pathway is an essential part of the landscaping scheme, allowing for access and movement within the grounds – but the tarmac surfacing is somewhat unsightly. Overall, it is considered that the subject site makes a moderate and neutral visual impact on the landscape of the grounds of Thomas's College.



Figure 8: Southward view, with existing tennis court on the left, and the Sir Cyril Taylor building on the right, with a glimpse of the college building in the background on the right. The subject site includes the tennis court (which is hidden behind the trees and planting on the left) and the driveway/pathway.



Figure 9: Southward view across landscaped gardens, with a glimpse of the principal Richmond College building (Grade II) on the right, and Sir Cyril Taylor Library. The subject site includes the tennis court (which is hidden behind the trees and planting on the left) and the driveway/pathway. (Same as Figure 13.)



Figure 10: Southward view towards principal college building (Grade II), across landscaped gardens. (This view is from further east of the Red House.)

4.0. TOWNSCAPE VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1. Baseline Viewpoint 1 – View from pathway/driveway, looking northward



Figure 11: Baseline View 1, looking north-eastward.

- 4.1.1. View 1 is seen from the driveway in front (i.e. to the east) of the principal college building, looking north-eastward towards the location of the tennis court. The purpose of View 1 is to show the visual impact which the subject site (i.e. the driveway/pathway and the tennis court) has on the landscaped grounds of Thomas's College, and on the settings of the Grade II listed former Richmond College and the locally listed Red House (which is also within the curtilage of the listed building) – as well as the character and appearance of the RHCA.
- 4.1.2. View 1 is dominated by the neo-Gothic/Tudor architecture of the principal college building in the middle ground on the left, and the verdancy of the trees and planting on the right. More specifically, this view includes a glimpse of the four-storey north wing of the building comprising Bath stone, with distinctive architectural features such as turrets, Gothic arches, and casement windows. Part of the tarmac-surfaced driveway can be seen in the foreground, and some planting can be glimpsed in the background. The tennis court within the subject site and the Red House are not visible, as they are hidden behind trees.
- 4.1.3. It is considered that View 1 has **medium sensitivity**, being located within the Richmond Hill Conservation Area, and includes part of the Grade II listed building. In addition, it includes some of the specimen trees likely planted by Squire Williams in the early 19th century – which make a positive contribution to the landscape quality of the grounds of Thomas's College. Although this View does not encapsulate the general character and appearance of the whole of the RHCA, it does capture an element of the verdant

setting of the Grade II listed former Richmond College building. As such, there is moderate capacity for change and enhancement.

- 4.1.4. The subject site is considered to make a **minimal and neutral contribution** to the landscape setting in View 1, as well as to the settings of the Grade II listed former Richmond College and the locally listed Red House. The subject site is considered to make a negligible and neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the RHCA, being such a minor element of View 1.

4.2. Proposed View 1 – View from pathway/driveway, looking northward



Figure 12: Proposed View 1, looking north-eastward.

- 4.2.1. View 1 with the proposals can be seen in Figure 12. The proposed sports canopy is hidden behind the mature trees, and its height appears much lower from this distance and this angle.
- 4.2.2. The proposed sports canopy thus sits comfortably within the landscape in View 1, causing no material change to its visual quality. Accordingly, **the magnitude of impact of the proposals on View 1 is considered to be negligible and neutral to negative.**

4.3. Baseline Viewpoint 2 – View from pathway/driveway, looking southward



Figure 13: Baseline View 2, looking northward.

- 4.3.1. View 2 is seen from the pathway to the north of the grounds of Thomas's College driveway, looking southward towards the front elevation of the principal college building. The purpose of View 2 is to show the visual impact which the subject site (i.e. the driveway/pathway and the tennis court) has on the landscaped grounds of Thomas's College, and on the setting of the Grade II listed former Richmond College – as well as the character and appearance of the RHCA.
- 4.3.2. The principal college building appears in the background of View 2, with part of the modern Sir Cyril Taylor Library in the foreground on the right. Although it is in the background the principal college building is a dominant feature of View 2, due to its distinctive architectural features – most notably the silhouettes of its turrets against the sky, the fine detailing of its elevations, and its height. The left-hand side of View 2 is verdant in appearance, with mature trees, planting, and part of the lawn.
- 4.3.3. Some of the tarmac-surfaced pathway/driveway within the subject site can be glimpsed on the right, adjacent to the buildings, whereas the tennis court is hidden behind trees and planting.
- 4.3.4. It is considered that View 2 has **medium sensitivity**, being located within the Richmond Hill Conservation Area, and includes part of the Grade II listed building. In addition, it includes some of the specimen trees likely planted by Squire Williams in the early 19th century – which make a positive contribution to the landscape quality of the grounds of Thomas's College. Although this View does not encapsulate the general character and appearance of the whole of the RHCA, it does capture an element of the verdant setting of the Grade II listed former Richmond College building. As such, there is moderate capacity for change and enhancement.

4.3.5. The subject site is considered to make a **negligible to minimal and neutral contribution** to the landscape setting in View 2, as well as to the settings of the Grade II listed former Richmond College and the locally listed Red House. This is due to its limited visibility. The subject site is considered to make a negligible and neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the RHCA, being such a minor element of View 2.

4.4. Proposed View 2 – View from pathway/driveway, looking southward



Figure 14: Proposed View 2, looking northward.

4.4.1. View 2 with the proposals can be seen in Figure 14. The base of the proposed sports canopy is hidden behind hedging. The parts of the sports canopy which are visible have a tent-like appearance, with its white PVC fabric stretched over a steel frame. The paired back form and visually light-weight materiality of the proposed sports canopy mitigates some its visual impact. As a result, it does not compete with the distinctive detailing and silhouette of the listed building. Instead, it acts as a foil against which the architectural interests of the listed building may be appreciated.

4.4.2. The proposed sports canopy is considered to form a recognisable yet minor component of the wider scene. Therefore, **the magnitude of impact of the proposals on View 2 is considered to be minimal to moderate and neutral to negative.**

4.5. Baseline Viewpoint 3 – View from south of Red House, looking north-westward



Figure 15: Baseline View 3, looking north-westward.

- 4.5.1. View 3 is seen from the lawn to the south of The Red House, looking north-westward towards the location of the tennis court. The purpose of View 3 is to show the visual impact which the subject site (i.e. the driveway/pathway and the tennis court) has on the landscaped grounds of Thomas's College, and on the settings of the Grade II listed former Richmond College and the locally listed Red House (which is also within the curtilage of the listed building) – as well as the character and appearance of the RHCA.
- 4.5.2. View 3 mostly comprises the verdant grounds of Thomas's College – with some lawn in the foreground, and mature trees and planting in the middle-ground and background. There are glimpses of the front elevation of the principal college building in the background on the left, with its Bath stone and its decorative detailing. The Red House can be seen in the middle-ground on the right, with its red brickwork, Arts and Crafts inspired tall chimney stack, and its clay-tiled pitched roof.
- 4.5.3. The tarmac-surfaced pathway/driveway within the subject site is located too far away in the distance to be seen in View 3, and the tennis court is hidden behind trees and planting.
- 4.5.4. It is considered that View 3 has **medium sensitivity**, being located within the Richmond Hill Conservation Area, and includes part of the Grade II listed building and the Red House. In addition, it includes some of the specimen trees likely planted by Squire Williams in the early 19th century – which make a positive contribution to the landscape quality of the grounds of Thomas's College. Although this View does not encapsulate the general character and appearance of the whole of the RHCA, it does capture the verdant setting of the Grade II listed former Richmond College building and the Red House. As such, there is moderate capacity for change and enhancement.

4.5.5. The subject site is considered to make a **negligible and neutral contribution** to the landscape setting in View 3, as well as to the settings of the Grade II listed former Richmond College and the locally listed Red House. This is due to the fact the subject site is barely visible (if at all). The subject site is considered to make a negligible and neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the RHCA, being such a minor element of View 3.

4.6. Proposed View 3 – View from south of Red House, looking north-westward



Figure 16: Proposed View 3, looking north-westward.

- 4.6.1. View 3 with the proposals can be seen in Figure 16. The proposed sports canopy is hidden behind the mature trees, and its height appears much lower from this distance and this angle.
- 4.6.2. The proposed sports canopy thus sits comfortably within the landscape in View 3, causing no material change to its visual quality. Accordingly, **the magnitude of impact of the proposals on View 3 is considered to be negligible and neutral to negative.**

4.7. Baseline Viewpoint 4 – View from lawn, looking north-westward



Figure 17: Baseline View 4, looking north-westward.

- 4.7.1. View 4 is seen from the lawn to the south of the grounds of Thomas's College, looking north-westward towards the location of the tennis court. The purpose of View 4 is to show the visual impact which the subject site (i.e. the driveway/pathway and the tennis court) has on the landscaped grounds of Thomas's College, and on the settings of the Grade II listed former Richmond College and the locally listed buildings (which are also within the curtilage of the listed building), most notably the Red House – as well as the character and appearance of the RHCA.
- 4.7.2. View 4 mostly comprises the verdant grounds of Thomas's College – with an expanse of lawn in the foreground, and mature trees and planting in the background. The principal college building can be glimpsed from behind the trees on the left in the background, with its Bath stone and its decorative detailing. The Red House is hidden from view, behind trees and planting.
- 4.7.3. The tarmac-surfaced pathway/driveway within the subject site is located too far away in the distance to be seen in View 4, and the tennis court is hidden behind trees and planting.
- 4.7.4. It is considered that View 4 has **medium sensitivity**, being located within the Richmond Hill Conservation Area, and includes part of the Grade II listed building. In addition, it includes some of the specimen trees likely planted by Squire Williams in the early 19th century – which make a positive contribution to the landscape quality of the grounds of Thomas's College. Although this View does not encapsulate the general character and appearance of the whole of the RHCA, it does capture the verdant setting of the Grade II listed former Richmond College building and the Red House. As such, there is moderate capacity for change and enhancement.

4.7.5. The subject site is considered to make **no contribution** to the landscape setting in View 4, nor to the settings of the Grade II listed former Richmond College and the locally listed Red House. Similarly, it is considered to make no contribution to the character and appearance of the RHCA. This is due to the fact the subject site is not visible in this View.

4.8. Proposed View 4 – View from lawn, looking north-westward



Figure 18: Proposed View 4, looking north-westward.

- 4.8.1. View 4 with the proposals can be seen in Figure 18. The proposed sports canopy is hidden behind the mature trees, and its height appears much lower from this distance and this angle.
- 4.8.2. The proposed sports canopy thus sits comfortably within the landscape in View 4, causing no material change to its visual quality. Accordingly, **the magnitude of impact of the proposals on View 3 is considered to be negligible and neutral to negative.**

5.0. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. This Townscape/landscape Visual Impact Assessment, in accordance with the latest Historic England guidance on setting and townscape [Appendix 1], has undertaken the recommended four-step approach in establishing the visual impact of the proposal on the landscape, the setting of the Grade II listed former Richmond College and locally listed buildings (which are also within the curtilage of the listed building), and on the character and appearance of the Richmond Hill Conservation Area in the four Views. The heritage assets likely to be affected by the proposal have been identified (Step 1), the contribution of setting to the significance of these heritage assets has been assessed (Step 2), the impact of the proposals on the settings and significance of these heritage assets has been assessed (Step 3), and the design has sought to minimise harm and to maximise enhancement to the significance and settings of these heritage assets (Step 4).
- 5.2. This Townscape/landscape Visual Impact Assessment has also taken into account the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* issued by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, in 2013.
- 5.3. The design of the proposed scheme has been informed by a thorough understanding of the history and development of the subject site, and also of the existing landscape, setting of the Grade II listed former Richmond College and locally listed buildings (which are also within the curtilage of the listed building), and the character and appearance of the RHCA within the four assessed Views. It is considered that the proposals would have a minimal to negligible and neutral to negative visual impact on the landscape setting, on the settings of the Grade II listed former Richmond College and the locally listed Red House, in the four selected views. It would have a negligible and neutral to negative visual impact on the character and appearance of the Richmond Hill Conservation Area.

APPENDIX 1: HISTORIC ENGLAND'S PLANNING NOTE 3: "THE SETTING OF HERITAGE ASSETS", DEC 2017

This note gives assistance concerning the assessment of the setting of heritage assets. Historic England recommends the following broad approach to assessment, undertaken as a series of steps that apply proportionately to the complexity of the case, from straightforward to complex:

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected.

The setting of a heritage asset is 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced'. Where that experience is capable of being affected by a proposed development (in any way) then the proposed development can be said to affect the setting of that asset. The starting point of the analysis is to identify those heritage assets likely to be affected by the development proposal.

Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated.

This assessment of the contribution to significance made by setting will provide the baseline for establishing the effects of a proposed development on significance. We recommend that this assessment should first address the key attributes of the heritage asset itself and then consider:

- the physical surroundings of the asset, including its relationship with other heritage assets
- the asset's intangible associations with its surroundings, and patterns of use
- the contribution made by noises, smells, etc to significance, and
- the way views allow the significance of the asset to be appreciated

Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it.

The wide range of circumstances in which setting may be affected and the range of heritage assets that may be involved precludes a single approach for assessing effects. Different approaches will be required for different circumstances. In general, however, the assessment should address the attributes of the proposed development in terms of its:

- location and siting
- form and appearance
- wider effects
- permanence

Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

Enhancement may be achieved by actions including:

- removing or re-modelling an intrusive building or feature
- replacement of a detrimental feature by a new and more harmonious one
- restoring or revealing a lost historic feature or view
- introducing a wholly new feature that adds to the public appreciation of the asset
- introducing new views (including glimpses or better framed views) that add to the public experience of the asset, or
- improving public access to, or interpretation of, the asset including its setting

Options for reducing the harm arising from development may include the repositioning of a development or its elements, changes to its design, the creation of effective long-term visual or acoustic screening, or management measures secured by planning conditions or legal agreements. For some developments affecting setting, the design of a development may not be capable of sufficient adjustment to avoid or significantly reduce the harm, for example where impacts are caused by fundamental issues such as the proximity, location, scale, prominence or noisiness of a development. In other cases, good design may reduce or remove the harm, or provide enhancement. Here the design quality may be an important consideration in determining the balance of harm and benefit.

Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

It is good practice to document each stage of the decision-making process in a non-technical and proportionate way, accessible to non-specialists. This should set out clearly how the setting of each heritage asset affected contributes to its significance or to the appreciation of its significance, as well as what the anticipated effect of the development will be, including of any mitigation proposals.

Assessment Step 2 Checklist

The starting point for this stage of the assessment is to consider the significance of the heritage asset itself and then establish the contribution made by its setting. The following is a (non-exhaustive) check-list of potential attributes of a setting that may help to elucidate its contribution to significance. It may be the case that only a limited selection of the attributes listed is likely to be particularly important in terms of any single asset.

The asset's physical surroundings

- Topography
- Aspect
- Other heritage assets (including buildings, structures, landscapes, areas or archaeological remains)
- Definition, scale and "grain" of surrounding streetscape, landscape and spaces
- Formal design (eg. hierarchy, layout)
- Orientation and aspect
- Historic materials and surfaces
- Green space, trees and vegetation
- Openness, enclosure and boundaries
- Functional relationships and communications
- History and degree of change over time

Experience of the asset

- Surrounding landscape or townscape character
- Views from, towards, through, across and including the asset
- Intentional intervisibility with other historic and natural features
- Visual dominance, prominence or role as focal point
- Noise, vibration and other nuisances
- Tranquillity, remoteness, "wildness"
- Busyness, bustle, movement and activity
- Scents and smells
- Diurnal changes
- Sense of enclosure, seclusion, intimacy or privacy
- Land use
- Accessibility, permeability and patterns of movement
- Degree of interpretation or promotion to the public
- Rarity of comparable survivals of setting
- Cultural associations
- Celebrated artistic representations
- Traditions

Assessment Step 3 Checklist

The following is a (non-exhaustive) check-list of the potential attributes of a development affecting setting that may help to elucidate its implications for the significance of the heritage asset. It may be that only a limited selection of these is likely to be particularly important in terms of any particular development.

Location and siting of development

- Proximity to asset
- Position in relation to relative topography and watercourses
- Position in relation to key views to, from and across
- Orientation
- Degree to which location will physically or visually isolate asset

Form and appearance of development

- Prominence, dominance, or conspicuousness
- Competition with or distraction from the asset
- Dimensions, scale and massing
- Proportions
- Visual permeability (i.e. extent to which it can be seen through), reflectivity
- Materials (texture, colour, reflectiveness, etc)
- Architectural and landscape style and/or design
- Introduction of movement or activity
- Diurnal or seasonal change

Wider effects of the development

- Change to built surroundings and spaces
- Change to skyline, silhouette
- Noise, odour, vibration, dust, etc.
- Lighting effects and "light spill"
- Change to general character (eg. urbanising or industrialising)
- Changes to public access use or amenity
- Changes to land use, land cover, tree cover
- Changes to communications/ accessibility/ permeability, including traffic, road junctions and car-parking, etc
- Changes to ownership arrangements (fragmentation/ permitted development/ etc)
- Economic viability

Permanence of the development

- Anticipated lifetime/ temporariness
- Recurrence
- Reversibility