

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

RICHMOND TERRACE WALK

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Name:	RICHMOND TERRACE WALK
County:	Greater London Authority
District:	Richmond upon Thames (London Borough)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.452199 Longitude: -0.29927007 National Grid Reference: TQ 18272 73951 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1001552 Date first listed: 24-Aug-2001

Details

A public walk laid out c 1700, used as a promenade and viewpoint and much celebrated in literature and art from the C17 onwards.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the Middle Ages the whole area surrounding what became Richmond Terrace was common land in the royal manor. This part of Richmond Hill, which was known as Hill Common, was renowned for its commanding views over the Thames and as early as the mid C17 a seat had been placed overlooking the view. A late C17 poem by Durfey, set to music as an air by Purcell, referred to the site:

On the brow of Richmond Hill which Europe scarce can parallel,
Every Eye such Wonders fill, to view the Prospect round.
(Ode To Cynthia, T Durfey, late C17/early C18)

From the early C17, brickworks, known as the Tile Kilns, and a wharf, together with workers' houses, occupied parts of the riverside, and clay digging occurred along the lower slopes of Richmond Hill. The Terrace Walk was laid out c 1700 during a period of improvement of the area, with a double row of pleached trees overlooking the view at the top of the hill, and behind this, on the east side of the road, the construction of the substantial houses, 1 to 3 The Terrace. The scene is illustrated by both Tillemans and Knyff in the early C18. In Knyff's view of c 1720 the Terrace trees dominate the scene.

The Terrace Walk was the earliest place to excite writers to philosophise on beautiful prospects and to inspire the cult of landscape appreciation. Joseph Addison in his influential 'Pleasures of the Imagination' articles in *The Spectator* in 1712, was the first so to do. He dedicated the articles to his patron Henry Boyle, who lived at Douglas House at Petersham and knew the Richmond prospect very well. Addison himself sometimes took lodgings nearby and thus also knew the unconfined prospects of the Richmond scene well.

In the 1730s the Star and Garter Inn was built, and the great era of development at the top of the hill followed in the decade 1765-75, when the area became a very fashionable place for London society to visit. This popularity continued through the C19. The Tile Kilns below the Terrace were closed down in 1767, and part of the area adjacent to the north-west of the Terrace was developed as Montagu (later Buccleuch) House.

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In 1766 Richmond Vestry feared that with the closure of the Tile Kilns, Richmond Hill Common would be developed. They petitioned George III that 'if the said common was converted into a pasture for feeding sheep only (under Restriction that no Buildings should hereafter be erected thereon) it would become an Ornament to the Town' (Richmond Trustees' General Meeting Book, 1766-77, quoted in Cloake 1996). The prohibition of building was confirmed by an Act of Parliament in 1785, when the land, 9 acres (c 4ha) of grazed meadow on the slope from the Terrace down to the Petersham Road, was given to the Vestry as part of the royal bounty. It became Richmond Parish Charity land and was known as the Terrace Field. Meanwhile the Terrace Walk had been reconstructed in 1774 and extended towards Richmond Park.

Many foreign tourists described the Terrace viewing point. In 1782 Carl Moritz wrote:

The terrace at Richmond does assuredly afford one of the finest prospects in the world. Whatever is charming in nature, or pleasing in art, is to be seen here. Nothing I have ever seen is to be compared to it ... Here it was that Thomson and Pope gleaned from nature all those beautiful passages, with which their inimitable writings abound.

In 1814 the Emperor of Russia and his entourage of nine open carriages were received at the Star and Garter Inn, and having partaken of refreshment 'the whole party then walked on the Terrace and the adjoining spots and pronounced it "the Frascati of England" and "worthy of the best prospects of Claude Lorraine"' (The Times). In 1811 the French American, Louis Simond admired the scene of elegant nature, 'so select and chaste and unmixed with offensive objects' (Simond 1815). He found the viewpoint much frequented and as an ardent admirer of Gilpin and the Picturesque, criticised the 'walkers on the Terrace who admire most what their glasses alone enable them to discover; the colours flying on the top of Windsor Castle, or the roofs and chimneys of London' (ibid).

In 1902 an Act was passed for preserving the view from Richmond Hill, the first example of a landscape view being legally protected.

The site remains (2001) a public open space managed by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Richmond Terrace is situated on the east bank of the River Thames, c 750m upstream from Richmond Bridge. The c 4ha site is bounded largely by the Petersham Hotel and Nightingale Lane to the south, to the north-west by the public park Terrace Gardens (qv), and to the east by Richmond Hill road. Long views extend north-west and south-west along the River Thames, downstream in the direction of Syon and Kew, and upstream towards Marble Hill and Twickenham, many of these views being uninterrupted by urban development. The setting to the north, west, and east is composed of urban areas of Richmond and Twickenham, the two areas being divided by the River Thames. To the south remain the open spaces of Petersham and Ham Commons leading to Ham House (qv); to the south-west lies Marble Hill (qv), Orleans House gardens, and York House (qv); and to the south-east, beyond Petersham Common, lies Richmond Park (qv).

OTHER LAND The site is divided into two main sections: the largely level Terrace Walk itself, which runs along the highest ground by the Hill road and is entered at several points off the Hill, and the Terrace Field below, which slopes away to the west. The Walk extends for 220m south-east from its most northerly point by Terrace Gardens, alongside the western edge of Richmond Hill, overlooking Terrace Field to the south-west. Laid to gravel, the c 10m wide Walk is divided from Richmond Hill road above to the east by a stone retaining wall topped with iron railings. The central section on the west side of the Walk projects over the Field below. The Walk is lined by an avenue of mixed trees including horse chestnuts, limes, and American oaks, with a clipped privet hedge running along the top of the west edge above the Field. The Walk is broken to the south by the east end of Nightingale Lane. From here it continues south for a further 150m, terminating adjacent to the Star and Garter servicemen's home, close to the Richmond Gate entrance to Richmond Park. This southern length is flanked by mature London plane trees and bounded to the south-west by Petersham Common. The views west over the river are blocked along this section by the tree growth of the Common at this point. This section of the Walk was created in the 1770s, when the land was given by Queen Charlotte as Lady of the Manor.

Terrace Field, overlooked by the Walk, is laid to pasture and is crossed in the south-west corner by Nightingale Lane. The Field, which slopes down to the west, is crossed by several paths and overlooks flood meadows to the south-west bordering the Thames, with Marble Hill Park beyond.

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Maps John Rocque, *Map of Twenty Miles Around London*, surveyed 1741-5, published 1746 *Map of Richmond Manor, 1771 OS 6" to 1 mile*: 1st edition surveyed 1863-6, published 1869 2nd edition published 1897 1933 edition
Illustrations L Knyff, *A View from Richmond Terrace*, c 1720 (London Borough of Richmond upon Thames) Peter Tillemans, *View from Richmond House*, c 1730 (private collection) *London Magazine*, 'A Prospect of Richmond Hill' (March 1751)
Description written: August 2001 Amended: September 2001 Register Inspector: SR Edited: November 2002

Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.