

# *Teddington Lock & High Street Study*

*Conservation Areas nos. 27 & 37*



LONDON BOROUGH OF  
RICHMOND UPON THAMES

Planning Transport & Client Services Department

Approved by Planning & Transport Committee October 1995

# Character of the Area

## High Street - main shopping area

There is a considerable variety of architecture in this traditional shopping street with mostly Victorian, or earlier, buildings on the north side and Edwardian on the south which date from the 1903 road widening for the tram. The differences in form, and changes in roof level and building frontages, contribute significantly to the visual interest. This variety is partly the result of the development of different uses in the High Street; for example on the north side, single storey late 19th century shops were built in the gardens of 18th/early 19th century houses. These contrast with the remnants of 16th and 17th century low two storey buildings such as 93 & 95 High Street and, on the south side, the long tall blocks of Edwardian shops with flats above in red and yellow stock brick. A number of buildings are worthy of special note: Elmfield House, Lloyds Bank and 79-85 High Street are listed for their architectural or historic interest. Teddington is fortunate in having many good Victorian and Edwardian shop-fronts whose survival in the High Street may be mainly due to the location of chain stores in Broad Street. Their retention and restoration is essential to maintaining the special quality of the street. Many retain some, if not all, of their original features; because of this, shop-fronts which are worthy of retention and/or restoration are the subject of separate guidance available from the Council.

At a right-angle to the High Street, Watts Lane forms a compact group of two storey 19th century cottages possibly built in connection with the adjacent works buildings. Watts Lane is indicated on the Ordnance Survey map of 1863 as an established route from the High Street to the then agricultural land beyond.

There are many interesting views of the architectural interest in the conservation area whether one is travelling by car or on foot. For example, the rising ground to the road bridge over the railway gives views along the length of the High Street as it curves gently away. Further along the street, the view gradually unfolds to take in the landmark of St Alban's. At the west end, the railway bridge signals a termination to the High Street with Elmfield House and its well-planted garden making a positive contribution at this end. There are also glimpses, especially on the north side, of interesting enclosed spaces through narrow openings such as Wades Lane.

High Street



## Issues

The nature of the High Street's commercial heart has changed in recent years with the loss of such businesses as the hardware shop, fishmonger and cobbler. These have been replaced with shops selling upmarket clothes, toys and specialised goods. While retail use continues these changes have meant that most everyday food shopping has to take place outside the immediate area. Other economic factors have created dead frontages, such as the closure of the old post office and the building of the telephone exchange, now also closed down. Similarly, dead areas have been created by poor forecourt treatments of, for example, public houses. The High Street has to cope not only with these pressures but also with those caused by demands for servicing and parking, the need to keep traffic moving, and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

The challenge is to preserve and enhance the unique character of the High Street as an attractive shopping and residential area in the face of such pressures. Below are listed some of the immediate and sometimes site specific concerns which have to be addressed if this challenge is to be met.

### Threats to commercial character:

- shop-fronts and signs which are out of keeping with the character of the area (subject of separate guidance)
- large advertising boards on sides of buildings and A-boards obstructing the footway
- relocation of the post office has left a dead frontage at its earlier purpose built site
- sites which would benefit from improvement or redevelopment (e.g. telephone exchange, see map overleaf)

### Threats to setting of buildings:

- a large number of poles, carrying signs and lighting, cluttering the footways
- unattractive boundary and surface treatments at Cedar Road Car Park which have created an unattractive space in a prominent position
- opportunity for improvements to the surfacing and boundary treatments of private forecourts e.g. Midland Bank, public houses (see map overleaf)
- worn out/vandalised seats and under-used area between junction of High Street and Station Road
- lack of provision for cyclists outside present post office
- unsympathetic surfacing to narrow entrances on the north side of the High Street
- forecourt parking in Watts Lane which destroys the character of the front gardens through the removal of boundary walls and soft landscaping and so detracts from the setting of the cottages

### Traffic/pedestrian conflict:

- width of junctions e.g. Elmfield Avenue/High Street/Station Road
- parking on bus stops and loading areas
- unattractive traffic signs and markings
- lack of provision for cyclists
- noise and air pollution caused by traffic



# Objectives for the Conservation Area

The analysis in this study of Teddington's special character, and the issues identified within it, form the basis for setting objectives for the conservation areas. These objectives are focussed on the preservation and enhancement of four key areas:

- buildings
- surfacing and highway conditions
- street furniture
- open spaces, including trees

Everyone involved in the study area, whether it be the Council, developers, commercial users or residents, needs to contribute to achieving the proposals set out in this study. The Council will strictly apply UDP policies and the detailed proposals listed overleaf to preserve and enhance the special interest of the area. When, and if, money is available, the Council will implement proposals on its own land.

## Residential property

The High Street and Teddington Lock areas contain a large amount of housing, mainly in the form of flats, either above shops or as a result of sub-division of large houses. The Council is able to control new development through its powers under the planning acts and is always willing to give advice to those who want to undertake new work. There is a range of guidance leaflets available on development requiring planning permission and if you are in any doubt about the need to obtain permission for intended works you should contact the Planning and Building Control Division at the Civic Centre.

As illustrated on the map, many of the buildings in the study area are either Buildings of Townscape Merit or on the statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. Where there is a particularly good group of houses which would suffer if work were to be carried out which does not necessarily require planning permission (e.g. changing windows, demolition of front boundary walls) then the Council can make an Article 4 Direction. This means that certain permitted development rights, as specified in the Direction, are then removed and owners would have to apply for planning permission to carry out these works. Such a Direction has been made for 7-17(odd) Twickenham Road, 1-9(odd) Kingston Road and 4-10 (even) Broom Road.

### What residents can do:

Under present legislation, house owners are entitled to carry out certain minor works to their houses as 'permitted development', which means that permission does not have to be obtained from the Council. Flats do not enjoy these rights. There is, therefore, a great responsibility on owners to consider the quality of the street and the area, not just their own needs, when carrying out work. There is plenty of opportunity to preserve or enhance the character of conservation areas by paying attention to the small details of houses which can make a huge impact on the wider scene. For example, the study area contains several groups of cottages and houses which have retained their original windows only to be spoilt by the odd one or two that have installed aluminium or uPVC versions. Similarly, painting a house which is part of a brick terrace spoils the appearance of the whole terrace. Front garden car parking has been identified as an issue, particularly in Watt's Lane, and this needs to be addressed sensitively if the 'public' part of the private landscape is to look attractive. What constitutes development can be a complex matter and residents should consult the Council if in any doubt whether or not intended work requires consent. In any case, the Council's officers are always happy to give advice and guidance.

### Shop-fronts:

The quality of Teddington's shop-fronts has been identified as a major factor in its special character. Therefore businesses need to maintain their frontages and forecourts to a high standard. In recognition of this, advice on shop-fronts is the subject of a separate leaflet. Grants are currently available from the Council towards the repair and/or reinstatement of well designed shop-fronts.

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# Introduction

This study has been prepared by the Planning and Building Control Division of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, in consultation with other departments of the Council. Its purpose is to take forward relevant policies in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) by formulating and publishing proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the area's character. This will provide a framework for action by the Council, residents, commercial users, developers and statutory bodies. The identification of the area's special character and problems provides the basis for specific proposals, including the improvement of less attractive areas.

## Location and History

Teddington provides evidence of human activity from pre-historic times and its name is derived from the Anglo-Saxon meaning 'Tudas Farm'. The original settlement was on the river terrace, elevated from the flood plain of the Thames. Situated not far from Bushy Park and Hampton Court Palace, it was the property of Westminster Abbey before becoming part of Henry VIII's hunting estate in the 16th century, after which time it returned to being an independent manor. Long dependent on agriculture as its economic base, its rural setting and riverside location attracted wealthy residents; during the 17th and 18th centuries Teddington saw the development of many large houses standing in their own grounds such as The Grove, Teddington Place, Elmfield House and Udney House. The area became an attractive rural retreat to such people as John Walter, the founder of *The Times*; Charles Duncombe, who became Lord Mayor of London and Orlando Bridgeman, Keeper of the Seal, who is buried in St Mary's Church. The explosion of Teddington as a commuter area came in 1863 with the arrival of the railway which cut through the village pond. The development and redevelopment of many High Street frontages dates from this period although traces of the older village are evident in the survival of 18th century villas behind 19th century shop-fronts along the north side of the High Street. Commuter pressures led to the demolition of many of the large houses and their gardens disappeared under speculative housing; the widening of the High Street in 1903 to accommodate the tram also led to extensive redevelopment of the street's south side. The main commercial centre serving everyday needs has now shifted to Broad Street while the High Street has evolved more specialised shops.

That the area near to the river was largely undeveloped until the 19th century may be attributable to the fact that the river was tidal beyond this point until the present weir was constructed in 1812 and the first lock built. Consequently, any flooding would be less controlled. This then marked the highest point of the tidal Thames and became a focus for leisure activity with the suspension bridge being built in 1888. Until this time Ferry Road, as its name suggests, led to an early crossing point by boat to Ham. The Porter and Bryce Building was used as the Royal Boathouse in the late 19th century, illustrating Teddington's status on the Thames. Boat building became an established industry here and is now an essential part of the area's character. The Ham side of the bank has remained rural in nature being inaccessible except by foot.

The High Street and riverside areas are divided physically by the main Twickenham to Kingston road which replaced the original route along Twickenham Road. This has meant that the centre of Teddington has to some extent been by-passed by heavy traffic travelling between the two centres. This is not to say, however, that the High Street is not subject to traffic pressures from Hampton Hill and beyond, as well as local shopping traffic. Today Teddington's tightly defined old shopping street remains distinct from the surrounding centres of Twickenham, Hampton Wick and Hampton Hill mainly because of the residential areas which separate them.

There are many important trees throughout the area, whether standing as individuals or in groups. The riverside, in particular, has a good range of trees on the islands and banks on both public land and in private gardens. Udney Park Gardens and St Mary's Churchyard similarly have several groups of trees which add to the character of this end of Teddington. Street trees, whether actually on the street or in front gardens, have also made a major contribution. There has been new tree planting in the study area, particularly in the High Street, which reinforces this.

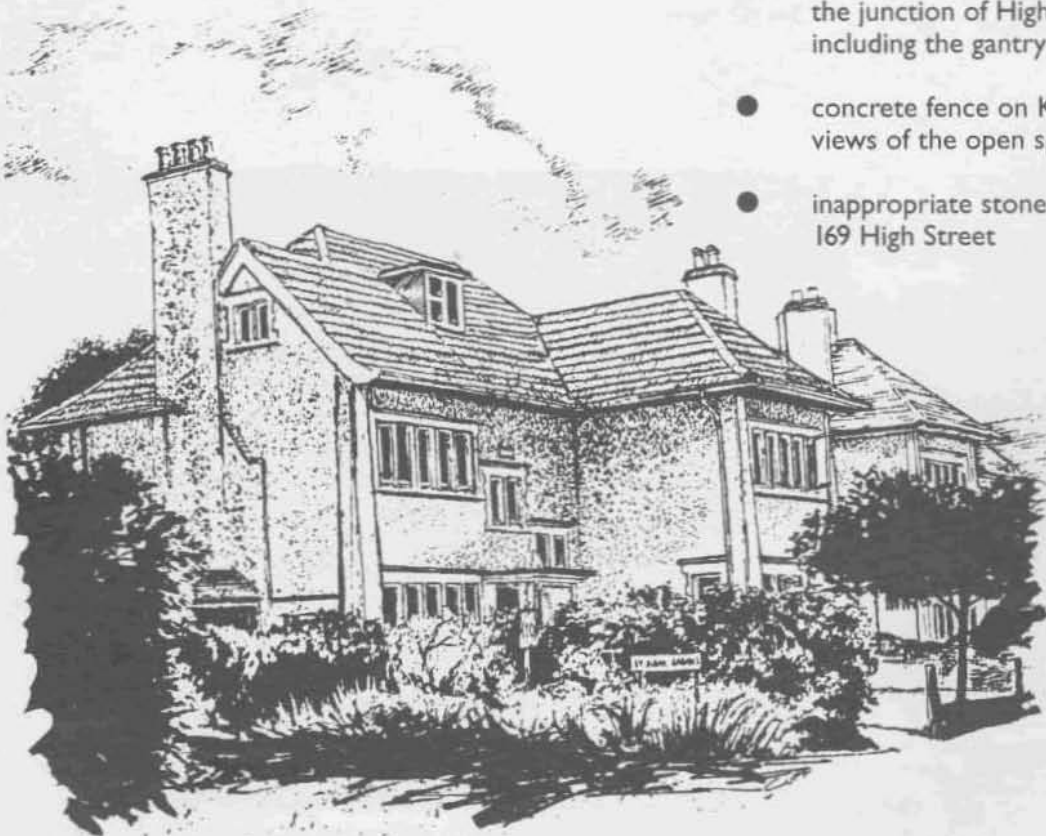
## Policies and Protection

The protection of the area through the Council's planning policies in the UDP is shown on the map overleaf and referred to in the text of the study, specifically in the list of proposals. Also taken into account is central government guidance and the Thames Landscape Strategy which aims to identify the character of the river landscape between Hampton and Kew and implement proposals to preserve and enhance it. The Study has also been prepared with consideration to proposals of the London Bus Priority Network which provides funds for various environmental improvements. The Council will strictly apply all UDP policies relevant to the study area.

# High Street - east end

Towards its eastern end the character of the High Street begins to change, with more houses and green open spaces, and a view of the river. In the process of restoration and now in community use, the flamboyant St Alban's, left half finished in 1886, stands in dynamic contrast to the smaller 16th century St Mary's Church set in its tiny and crowded graveyard, home to a variety of wild flowers and trees. The new housing development respects the scale of both churches and emphasises the kink in the road which marks the end of the High Street. There are two groups of distinctive houses in the Voysey style in Twickenham Road and Kingston Road. The listed Peg Woffington's Cottages form a compact group and provide a termination to the view to the west, effectively screening the High Street from the river. Next to St Alban's is Udney Park Gardens, formerly the grounds of the now demolished Teddington Place; this valuable open space, used informally and for activities such as the Teddington Village Fair; is also important as one of the few green spaces on Kingston Road, and partly alleviates the effect of the road junction. The wide open space occupied by the Lensbury Club sports fields is hidden from view by an unattractive concrete fence.

Twickenham Road



## Issues

While different in character to the main High Street, this area suffers similar problems associated with traffic, especially as Manor Road/Kingston Road is the main route between Twickenham and Kingston. Consequently, the most should be made of opportunities to reduce the impact of this traffic and to allow the enjoyment of the buildings and the green, leafy spaces that form their settings. The following specific problem areas have been identified with this in mind.

### Streetscape:

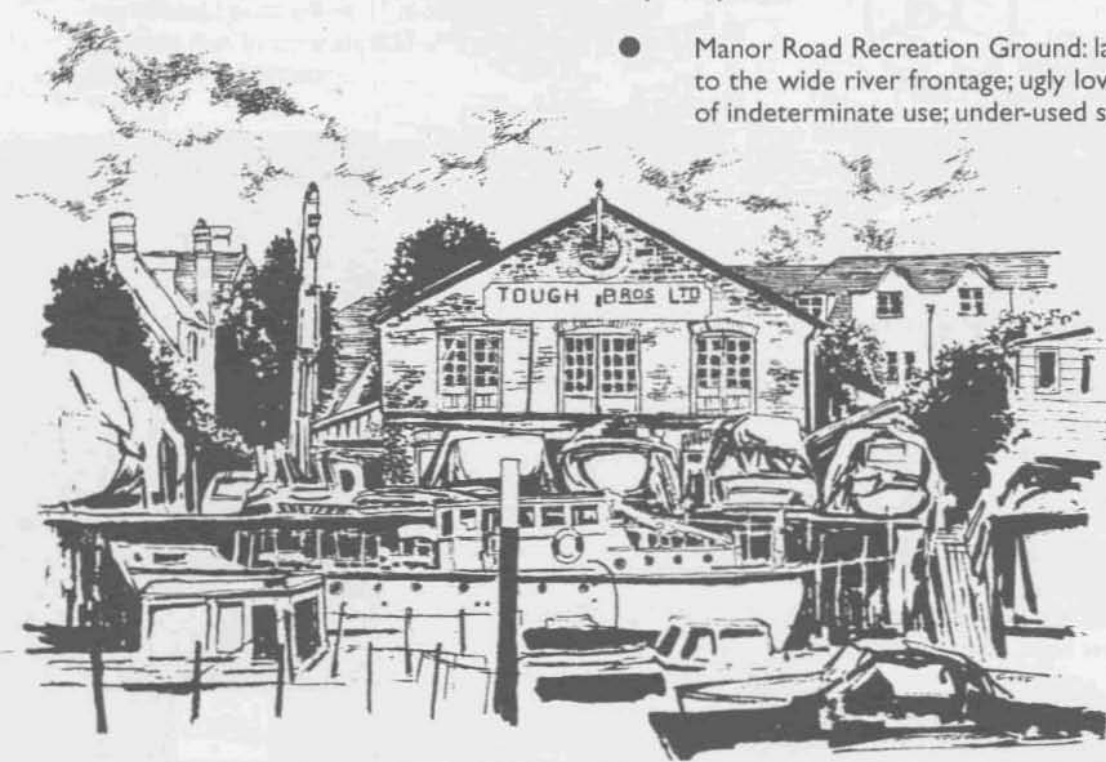
- poor condition of fence and hedge to St Mary's churchyard
- narrow stretch of pavement at bus stop causing pedestrian congestion
- unattractive junction of High Street/ Twickenham Road/Ferry Road caused by excessive roadway width, badly sited cabinets and street furniture
- unattractive chain link fence between Udney Park Gardens and St Alban's
- unsympathetic array of poles and cabinets at the junction of High Street/Kingston Road including the gantry traffic lights
- concrete fence on Kingston Road blocks views of the open space of the Lensbury Club
- inappropriate stone cladding to 169 High Street

# The Riverside

Beyond Kingston Road, Ferry Road forms both route and gateway to the Thames focussing on the landmark of the colourful pedestrian suspension bridge which comes magnificently into view as one travels down the gentle slope towards the river. The road is lined by large Victorian houses set in their own gardens on the north side, giving way to smaller cottages, public houses and riverside uses by the water and on the south side. The river and Ham bank form a secluded, semi-rural environment framed by dense tree cover on the islands and the Ham bank itself. The Thames Path, which stretches 213 miles from the Cotswolds to the Thames Barrier, follows the Ham bank and attracts visitors to Teddington from both the Kingston and Richmond directions. They can enjoy the striking contrast between the noise and action of the weir and the peaceful neatness of the well tended lock area. Views from the banks and the suspension bridge extend along the sweep of the Thames in both directions. To the south, beyond the television studios, the feel is rural with Kingston on the horizon beyond the trees and the green open space of the meadows in Ham. In contrast, to the north, Tough's boatyard and its associated buildings provide vitality, activity and a reminder of the river's long tradition of boatbuilding.

Manor Road Recreation Ground is a rare area of green public open space on the west bank and allows the first glimpse of the river for some distance on the approach from Twickenham.

*Tough's Boatyard River Frontage*



## Issues

Removed from the bustle of the High Street and the need to accommodate through traffic, the challenge of the riverside lies in promoting public enjoyment of this natural resource while ensuring that the quality of that resource in no way suffers as a result. Below are listed specific opportunities for improvement:

### Threat to quality of built environment:

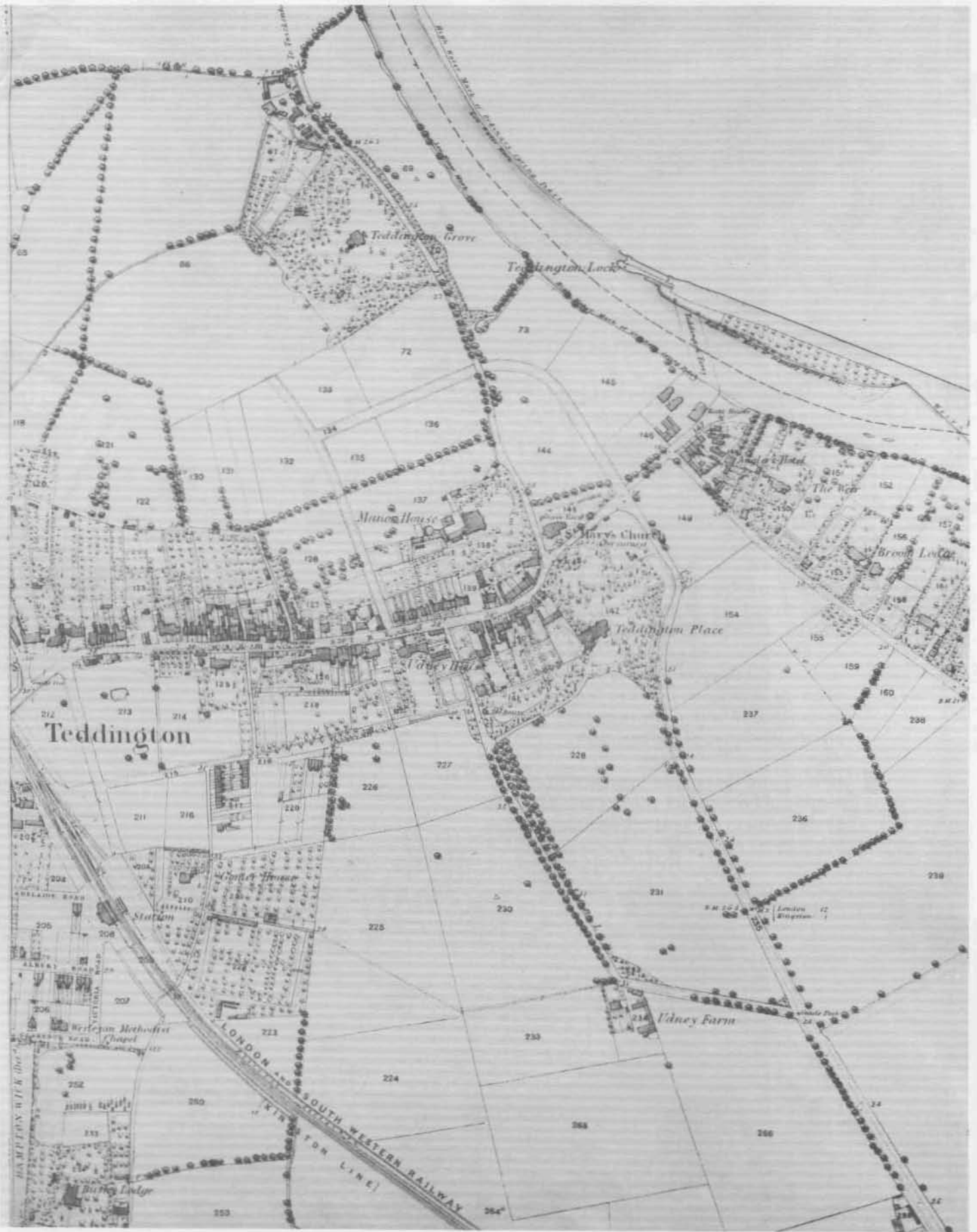
- eyesore created by closed toilet block
- insufficient screening of television studios by trees

### Traffic/pedestrian issues:

- Ferry Road (beyond Broom Road junction): impact of traffic and provision for vehicles (tarmac, kerbs, yellow lines) on an area primarily used by pedestrians and cyclists
- inappropriate siting of seating area on Ferry Road side of flood wall which blocks views to river
- poor state of seats and signs on Ham side of river and need for more seats, especially between the lock and footbridge
- inadequate signing to Teddington from the Ham bank and footbridge

### Open spaces:

- Manor Road Recreation Ground: lack of access to the wide river frontage; ugly low structure of indeterminate use; under-used space



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