

## Enforcement Appeal: Petersham Nurseries Summary Statement of Heritage Significance

### Heritage Context

- 1.1 Petersham Nurseries is neither listed nor locally listed but it does lie within the Petersham Conservation Area designated in January 1969.
- 1.2 The Nurseries are located at the rear of Petersham House, entirely enclosed behind high brick walls. Access is via a narrow opening off Petersham Road that also provides access to St Peter's Church and Churchyard as well as pedestrian access to Petersham Meadows beyond.



Figure 1: Ordnance Survey Map 1893

- 1.3 Historic Maps show the presence of substantial glasshouses on the site of the nurseries as far back as 1893, with orchards and further glasshouses to the north. At that time Petersham House was also the Vicarage.
- 1.4 The Nurseries have been commercially operating for at least 65 years and it is recognised that the associated activities that relate to this use - including the café/restaurant, retail, visitors, vehicular deliveries & collections - form part of its established nature and character.
- 1.5 There are a number of statutory listed buildings in the vicinity of the Nurseries. Those that I believe have the potential for either a visual or associational relationship with the Nurseries include:
  - Parish Church of St Peter – Grade II\*

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- Petersham House (including gates & railings) – Grade II\*
- 141 Petersham Road – Grade II
- 143a Petersham Road (and Ice House) – Grade II
- Rutland Lodge (including gate & piers) – Grade II\*
- Petersham War Memorial & various monuments in the churchyard of St Peter’s Church-Grade II

1.6 Along River Lane, The Old Stables and Rosebank are identified on the Council’s Local List. These buildings are also identified on the Council’s Conservation Area Map as being ‘Buildings of Townscape Merit’ - as well as Rutland Cottage (there is no visual or associational link between the Old Stables, Rutland Cottage and the Nurseries).

1.7 The following map extract, prepared by the Council, identifies listed buildings (dark green), buildings of townscape merit (pale green).



Figure 2: Map Extract from the Council’s Conservation Area Map 6 (location of Nurseries marked in red)

## Heritage Significance

### Assessing heritage significance and setting

- 1.8 The legislation governing listed buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act').
- 1.9 Section 66(1) of the Act says that 'in considering whether to grant planning permission or development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State, shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or exercise of any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.

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- 1.10 Listed buildings are ‘designated heritage assets’, as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Locally listed buildings or structures identified as being ‘Buildings of Townscape Merit’ can be considered as ‘non-designated heritage assets’.
- 1.11 ‘Significance’ is defined in the NPPF as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic’. The Historic England “Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2’ puts it slightly differently – as ‘the sum of its architectural, historical, artistic or archaeological interest’.
- 1.12 ‘Conservation Principles, Policies, and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment’ (English Heritage, April 2008) describes a number of ‘heritage values’ that may be present in a ‘significant place’. These are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value.
- 1.13 The setting of a heritage asset is defined in the NPPF as:  
  
‘The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral’.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.14 Within the context of this appeal the relevant heritage assets to be considered are the character and appearance of the Petersham Conservation Area and the setting of the nearby listed & locally listed buildings.

## Petersham Conservation Area

- 1.15 The character and appearance of the conservation area is articulated by the Council in their Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Plan. As well as providing a short history of the area, the following extracts give an overview of its character. It notes that *‘the well-defined form of the traditional village core [is] still apparent. There is a clear distinction in character between the historic centre of the village and later suburban development...Petersham also has its own very individual character.’* It goes on to say *‘Petersham clings to the main Petersham Road connecting Richmond and Kingston, forming the spine of this village. A number of smaller residential roads lead off Petersham Road including Sudbrook Lane, Sandpits Lane, Cedar Hights and River Lane, which winds gently down to the riverside connecting the village to the Thames. Away from the busy traffic of Petersham Road there is a greater sense of tranquillity’.*
- 1.16 *The view from Richmond Hill gives the impression of Petersham as a distinct almost rural village. Throughout the year the riverscape and tree’d landscape dominate the view of the conservation area from higher ground. The buildings forms tend to appear subservient in this landscape. However, within these views the distinctive settlement form and roofscape of Petersham can be appreciated. Key landmarks, which define this view, include*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/annex-2-glossary>

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*Petersham Lodge, the tower of St Peters Church, Petersham House, the campanile of All Saint's Church and Ham House.*

- 1.17 Of particular relevance to the part of the Conservation Area within which the Nurseries are located, the Appraisal states:
- 1.18 *Petersham is dominated and fed by the busy Petersham Road, with the distinctive dog leg of the road sending traffic sharply south at the junction with River Lane. The experience of this village is enlivened by constantly changing views, which reveal themselves in stages as we follow the winding route of Petersham Road.*
- 1.19 *The historic parish Church of St Peter is set away from Petersham Road within its more secluded churchyard, yet occupies an important position within the village. Glimpsed views of the tower and cupola of the church can be gained from this road. Key buildings, listed Grade II or II\* and Buildings of Townscape Merit, including numerous grand 17th and 18th century mansions. The character of this area is dominated by large detached mansions of two to three stories boldly addressing the road and set in individual large well planted grounds with mature trees and generous spaces between buildings. These mansions dominate the street scene and other buildings such as the former stable blocks to Petersham House and more modest cottages or houses within the village adopt a more subordinate role and scale. There is a varied building line to the road, however the large buildings tend to be set back further from the road behind front gardens or driveways. Houses are set behind distinctive continuous high brick walls and elegant cast iron railings and gates. Mansions, and trees in their gardens, remain perceptible over and through these boundaries from the street. However, these boundaries do enclose the narrow Petersham Road and so create a tunnel like environment, wearing the pedestrian feels at the mercy of busy traffic...*
- 1.20 *...Away from Petersham Road the scale and character of buildings tends to be more modest. The historic properties of river lane occupy smaller plots and are only one or two stories in height, with of course the exception of the landmark 18th century mansion Petersham lodge, marking the northern gateway to the village. Limited respite can be found from the busy traffic of Petersham Road down River Lane, Church Lane, and alleyways and footpaths. These routes provide important connections between the village, the Riverside and surrounding open spaces. River Lane is an important link between the village and the river.*
- 1.21 There is no specific reference to Petersham Nurseries in the Petersham Conservation Area Statement and in reality its presence is visually completely hidden behind high brick walls on all sides; however, there is reference to River Lane that leads to the riverbank, described as a quiet retreat from Petersham Road, and the surviving historic alleyways, which further contribute to the distinctive village character of this area, one of which leads to the entrance of Petersham Nurseries. The active presence of nurseries on the site is historic and its continued historic use as nurseries today can be regarded as a positive

one within the context of the conservation area. It adds vitality and activity to the area along with the local public houses and schools.

## Listed & Locally Listed Buildings

- 1.22 The listed buildings in the vicinity of the nurseries clearly have special architectural and historical interest and thus significance. Of most relevance to this appeal is the setting of the following assets and how setting contributes to that significance.

### St Peter's Church – Grade II\* (War Memorial and other churchyard monuments – Grade II)

- 1.23 St Peter's Church is a small, mainly brick church dating to 1505, with only the chancel remaining from this date. The nave was rebuilt and enlarged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and in 1810 so that the greater length of the church is at right angles to the tower with its octagonal bell cupola and lead ogee dome<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.24 With regards the church's setting, as the historic parish church the building has, both historically and today, a 'community' role beyond that of, say, a private residence. This makes its visible presence from longer as well as close views a particularly important elements of its significance. The longer views are most apparent across Petersham Meadows and from Richmond Hill where it is one of the identified landmarks in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal.
- 1.25 Whilst close by, Petersham Nurseries does not contribute to the setting of the church – set some distance away, behind a series of high brick walls.

### Petersham House – Grade II\*

- 1.26 Petersham House dates to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and in the classical style. The main part of the house is three storeys, five bays wide with two storey wings. It is built in brown brick with red dressings. It has an early 19<sup>th</sup> century central circular porch. Set back from the main road it sits behind early 19<sup>th</sup> century Greek Revival cast-iron gates and railings<sup>3</sup>. Historically the house was also the Vicarage to St Peter's Church. The house has a large garden to the north with many mature trees, enclosed by a high brick wall.
- 1.27 The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the house is primarily an appreciation of its fine architectural presence and quality and the sense of its status manifested by the scale of its grounds to the south. This is mostly appreciated from Petersham Road where its relationship with the village – forming part of the group of fine 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century houses that line the road is also apparent and along the lane leading to Petersham Meadows where the mature open garden to the rear is apparent behind the high brick wall. Through the house's role as the former Vicarage there is a historical relationship, which is also visual from the church yard, with the Church where

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<sup>2</sup> Historic England LEN: 1065334

<sup>3</sup> Historic England LEN: 1065336

the interrelationship between the two is identifiable. (the church and the house cannot be seen in the same context from Petersham Road).

- 1.28 Petersham Nurseries does not make a meaningful contribution to the setting of Petersham House other than in nestling behind its high brick walls, ensuring that any longer views towards the rear of Petersham House are unimpeded.

## 141, 143 & Ice House, Petersham Road - Grade II

- 1.29 These three listed buildings all historically had a subsidiary relationship with Petersham House: 141 was an outbuilding; 143 formerly stables and the Ice House providing storage of ice.
- 1.30 Nos. 141 and 143 sit at the corners of the front garden to Petersham House, directly behind the pavement on Petersham Road.
- 1.31 Whilst clearly each having their own architectural and historical interest, the contribution that setting makes to their significance primarily relates to their relationship with Petersham House, through their historical association, and more widely to the character of the centre of Petersham Village where they are prominent contributors to the character of the village along the main road.
- 1.32 Petersham Nurseries do not contribute to the setting of these buildings.

## Rutland Lodge – Grade II\*

- 1.33 Dating from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, although listed in 1950, the house has been much rebuilt behind the front after a fire in 1967. The front elevation is faced with brown brick with red dressings and has 7 bays, the centre being set forward slightly. Two storeys in height, the front door has a large doorcase with fluted Roman Doric pilasters and a rusticated surround. The house is approached from the road through a fine wrought-iron gate with brick piers<sup>4</sup>. The building has been extended to the west with a plain brick two storey wing.
- 1.34 The house has now been divided into a series of individual dwellings and the gardens also developed with a further two modern properties on the newly formed Rutland Drive. Whilst an element of the original garden remains to the rear of the house the open character has now been much altered.
- 1.35 The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the listed building is primarily manifested in an appreciation of its grand front elevation and its relationship with the other grand mansions along and close to Petersham Road. Rutland Lodge is particularly prominent in longer views from the south and seen in the context of The Cottage (GII), The Manor House (GII) and Glen Cottage (GII) which all face into the apex of the junction with Petersham Road and River Lane.

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<sup>4</sup> Historic England LEN: 1065338

- 1.36 Although Petersham Nurseries shares its western boundary with the edge of the former gardens to Rutland Lodge, in reality it does not contribute to its setting – firstly there is now modern development in closest proximity within the gardens of Rutland Lodge and secondly the nurseries are entirely hidden behind the high brick wall enclosure of both places.

## Locally Listed Buildings

- 1.37 Rosebank is located just on the edge of Petersham Nurseries, at its north western boundary. The Ordnance Survey Map of 1893 shows it historically potentially forming part of the nursery demise, although now it is a separate dwelling.
- 1.38 The house, which would appear to have been much extended since it was represented on the 1893 map, is orientated to the east and sits behind a high brick wall to the north and a thick dense hedge to the south, alongside one of the historic alleyways that crisscross the village.
- 1.39 To the extent that the nurseries historically formed part of the setting of Rosebank, this has been largely severed visually and physically by the thick high hedge that encloses the house.

## The breach of planning conditions and their impact on heritage significance

- 1.40 The breach of planning conditions relates to increased, unauthorised opening hours of the café/restaurant at Petersham Nurseries.
- 1.41 Having undertaken our own assessment we have concluded that the site has historically been a nursery and at least for the time that the area has been designated a Conservation Area. The nurseries operate entirely hidden behind high brick boundary walls where activity has no impact on the setting of surrounding heritage assets.
- 1.42 Its operation forms part of the character of the area and extended opening hours for the café/restaurant will not detrimentally alter that character – particularly when the Nurseries are entitled to open for those hours anyway – continuing the process of deliveries of plants, supplies and equipment as well as retail activity. It was previously recognised and more recently confirmed with traffic data that the evening use of the Nurseries has had a very limited impact on traffic – with most visitors to the Nurseries travelling sustainably – and further confirms that there would be negligible to no impact.
- 1.43 Therefore, we believe that the current breach of condition does not cause harm to the significance of nearby listed and locally listed buildings or harm the significance, character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 1.44 This was also the view of the Council's own officers as set out within their enforcement report to the planning committee as set out below<sup>5</sup>:

*The amount of building on the Petersham Nurseries site has not altered significantly since the approval of the Certificate of Lawful Use in 1998. As the lawful use of the site is one of retail facilities and a café/restaurant, traffic generation and parking is an established feature at the site, not only in terms of customers and staff, but also with deliveries of plants, supplies and equipment. Furthermore, given the nature of the retail function of a garden centre often the products purchased at the site can be of bulky and/or awkward proportions, and therefore necessitate the use of a vehicle to transport them. It is considered that, up to now, the mixed use of the site has at least preserved the character and appearance of the conservation area, in so far as there has been no overall increase of area or built form on the garden centre site. The other impacts upon the conservation area are linked to the additional vehicular movements and car parking on site. In considering the previous application to retain the mixed use on a permanent basis, and the later one to extend the evening hours of the restaurant element, the Committee considered that the mitigation measures set out in the Green Travel Plan had been successful. The issue with the current proposal to extend the hours of use even further is whether any demonstrable harm would be created by additional vehicular movements and car parking in the area and if there would be any undue visual impact on the character and appearance of this part of the Petersham Conservation Area. As previously reported, in officers' opinion, this is less likely to be a sustainable objection, the visual impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area being difficult to identify.*

*The earlier application was not refused on grounds of impact to designated or non-designated heritage assets. As per those decisions, the current breach of condition is not considered to cause harm to the significance of nearby listed and locally listed buildings by virtue of the activity within their setting, or harm to the significance, character and appearance of the Conservation Area or Thames Policy Area.*

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<sup>5</sup> Enforcement Report Ref: 18/0025/EN/BCN



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