

1.9 In line with the guidance given by both the Government and English Heritage, therefore, this conservation area profile will aim to define the character of the conservation area on the basis of an analysis of all or some of the following criteria:-

- the origins and development of the street patterns, the lie of the land;
- archaeological significance and potential of the area, including any scheduled monuments;
- the architectural and historic quality, character and coherence of the buildings, both listed and unlisted, and the contribution which they make to the special interest of the area;
- the character and hierarchy of spaces, and townscape quality;
- prevalent and traditional building materials for buildings, walls and surfaces;
- the contribution made to the character of the area by greens or green spaces, trees, hedges and other natural or cultivated elements;
- the prevailing (or former) uses within the area and their historic patronage, and the influence of these on the plan form and building types;
- the relationship of the built environment to landscape/townscape including definition of significant landmarks, vistas and panoramas, where appropriate;
- the extent of any loss, intrusion, or damage that has occurred since designation;
- the existence of any opportunity sites;
- unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the conservation area according to English Heritage's criteria.

2 DESIGNATION

2.1 The Putney Bridge Conservation Area was designated on the 13th of March 1991. The main aim in designating the conservation area was to protect the riverside itself and its setting, as well as the setting of the listed Putney Bridge.

3 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

3.1 The Putney Bridge Conservation Area is bounded by Putney Bridge and Fulham High Street to the west and Station Approach to the north. The railway bridge forms the boundary to the east and the southern boundary extends to the Borough boundary running down the middle of the River Thames. The conservation area boundary can be seen on the plan on page 15.

3.2 Putney Bridge Conservation Area is adjoined to the west by Bishops Park Conservation Area and to the east by Hurlingham Conservation Area.

4 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AREA

4.1 Before the construction of the old Fulham Bridge over the River Thames, the only communication between Fulham and Putney was by ferry. This ferry has been known to exist here and it is believed that a regular ferry existed here at the time of the Norman Conquest. The first direct allusion to a ferry occurred in 1210 when the harness of King John's horses was transported across the river at Fulham for one penny. By 1639 there were ferry services operating at several places along the River Thames, for example, at Fulham, Richmond, Hampton Court and Shepperton, for ferrying Charles I and his household across the River. The approach to the ferry at Fulham was over the site of the Swan Drawdock to the west of the old Fulham Bridge.

4.2 There were no bridges across the river hames between London Bridge and Kingston until the construction of the old Fulham Bridge in 1729 ¹.

4.3 The old Fulham Bridge was closed down and demolished in 1886. The new Putney Bridge (Grade II) which connects Fulham with Putney, was erected 1882-86 to the west of the old bridge.

It was constructed on the same alignment across the river as formerly occupied by the aqueduct of the Chelsea Waterworks Company.

It was designed by Sir Joseph W Bazalgette, the engineer, and Edward Bazalgette, assistant engineer, and Joseph Bazalgette superintended its erection. The contractor for the works was Waddell and Sons, who also undertook the demolition of the old Fulham Bridge ².

4.4 As a result of the erection of the new bridge, a new rising approach, Putney Bridge Approach, was formed from the High Street at its junction with Church Street (Church Gate) and it extended through the Vicarage garden close to the parish church (All Saints) ³. Today the Putney Bridge Approach is the main traffic route and the High Street has become a drab back lane with the slab and podium offices of the 1960's and 1970's (that is, Bridge House North and Bridge House South) to the west.

4.5 In the 18th century the area by the river extending over to the railway bridge was under cultivation, with some settlement on the east side of Bridge Street (the High Street) at the old Fulham Bridge ⁴.

4.6 By the mid 19th century there was an isolated grand house, Willow Bank (1816-17) situated east of the river inlet and on the river front surrounded by open land. By 1865 Willow Bank was surrounded by ornamental gardens ⁵. By the early 1890's, Willow Bank had been demolished and its former grounds (the area between the river inlet and the railway bridge) had become vacant land. By 1913 Swan Wharf was just about vacant and Willow Bank had been planted with shrubs ⁶.

4.7 In 1836 the second University Boat Race was rowed from Westminster to Putney, and races took place in five of the next nine years. In 1845 the race was moved to the stretch of the river between Putney and Mortlake where it continues as an annual event today.

5 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

5.1 Putney Bridge Conservation Area is one of the smaller conservation areas within the Borough. It has a visually prominent location on the riverside close to both Putney Bridge and the London Underground District Railway Bridge.

5.2 The riverside location of the conservation area provides important panoramas both outward from the conservation area and inward towards the conservation area. It is of strategic importance in defining the character of the River Thames, forms part of the river walk and is within the riverside Area of Special Character. The Putney Bridge Conservation Area includes those sections of the river which are used as the warm-up stretch for the University Boat Race, and the wind down stretch for the Head of the River races. The river is an important recreational and educational facility used all the year round by many people including youth groups.

5.3 The Thames Strategy provides a strategic outlook with regard to the River Thames and riverside development. In highlighting the importance of riverside development and its effect on its local context and in long range views it seeks to preserve and enhance the character of the river corridor.

5.4 The Putney Bridge Conservation Area is identified as an Archaeological Priority Area. There have been discoveries of archaeological remains from the Saxon, Medieval and the early industrial period.

5.5 There are mixed land uses within the conservation area including residential, retail, the Territorial Army Centre and the transport interchange of Putney Bridge Underground Station and the bus terminus.

5.6 The conservation area can be split into two sub-areas for the purposes of the character assessment in order to distinguish areas of similar

character and similar periods of historic development. These are shown on the plan of the conservation area on page 15.

The sub-areas are:

- A Ranelagh Gardens
- B The Riverfront and River

A Ranelagh Gardens

5.7 The core of the conservation area is concentrated around Ranelagh Gardens. This is where the historic buildings within the conservation area are to be found. The scale of the development respects the historic character of the area and the plan form is as it was at the turn of the century.

5.8 On the corner of Fulham High Street and Station Approach is Fulham House. The dignified front of this property was revealed only after its restoration in 1987-89 by Stroud Mallis & Partners for the Territorial Army. Listed Grade II it is a detached house built in the first half of the eighteenth century, with probably earlier cellars. In 1987-89 there was an extension to the rear which is built of brick with good detailing and gives a strong building line to Station Approach.



Fulham House - listed Grade II

5.9 Fulham House is built of amber brick with a slate mansard roof. It is three-storeys high and five bays wide to Fulham High Street with the centre three bays set forward and the central bay further advanced. It has a central round headed entrance with a prominent stone keystone. The windows, mainly sashed with glazing bars, are

square headed with gauged arches. Those to the centre have brick architraves. There are brick string courses above the first floor and below the parapet.

5.10 The private open space in front of the listed building is defined by formal railings, two metres in height, which provide an appropriate setting for the listed building as well as defining the corner of Fulham High Street and Station Approach. There is an impressive and well detailed stone entrance gateway to the front of the property which is an important feature in the streetscene.

5.11 Directly to the south along Fulham High Street is the Eight Bells Public House which is first documented in 1629⁷ and is a Building of Merit (BOM). Today it has a modest early 19th century front with attractive and interesting signs and other insignias. Built of stock brick it has redbrick flat cambered arches, sash windows with 16 lights and original fascia details. The neighbouring Ranelagh Garden Mansions, three storeys in height, relate well to it in terms of scale.

5.12 Ranelagh Gardens Mansions are two three storey Victorian mansion blocks that run the full length either side of Ranelagh Gardens and are of value to the townscape as a group. Built primarily of red brick they have large areas of rendering to the second floor facade and parapet. Good window arch details and timber casement windows with glazing bars add to their architectural interest.

5.13 Ranelagh Gardens is predominantly residential with some retail at ground floor. The majority of the retail units are located at the eastern corner of Ranelagh Gardens and Station Approach with one (Ben's Bagels) on the south east side of Ranelagh Gardens, and the Bookshop at the corner of Ranelagh Gardens and Fulham High Street. They have attractive shop fronts which retain most of their original features and many units retain the complete original shopfront.

5.14 The eastern corner of Station Approach is formed by a London Underground Electricity Sub Station which completes the 'central island' of sub-area A and provides a strong edge to the street continuing the sense of enclosure.



Putney Bridge London Underground Station and Ranelagh Garden Mansions

5.15 The eastern boundary is defined by the district railway line and Putney Bridge Station. The facade to the Putney Bridge Station entrance is a feature building of architectural significance and is especially important in the townscape closing views west down Ranelagh Gardens and south down Station Approach. It is part of the originally constructed station, opened on the 1st March 1880, designed by the Metropolitan District Railways Architect's Department under the design supervision of Sir John Wolfe-Barry. The canopy by Watson Williams, erected in 1992, is modern in design and materials and acts as a foil to the Victorian station. The Station, built of gault brick, is well detailed providing a quality architectural feature to the eastern boundary of the conservation area.

5.16 Trees have been planted outside the station on the opposite side of the road and are a welcome addition which will in time help to minimise the visual impact of the buses at this transport interchange. The retail units on the corner provide a focus and this can be seen as the main node of activity within the conservation area.

5.17 Also of note is the single span brick bridge to the south of the station carrying the District Line over Ranelagh Gardens, with simple and

well proportioned detailing. A World War II pill box is situated on the southern side of the bridge span across Ranelagh Gardens, the only one in the Borough. There is an old red Post Box at the front elevation inscribed 'GR'.

5.18 Beneath the arches of Putney Bridge Station to the north is Putney Bridge Taxis Limited. The area is used for the maintenance of London taxis and access is gained via Station Approach. Directly to the west is a footpath leading from Station Approach to New Kings Road, this is screened from the taxi works by a timber boarded fence.

Important Views

5.19 Views of the feature buildings are important providing interest and incident, as are internal views of the group of Ranelagh Gardens Mansions. Views remain enclosed within Ranelagh Gardens providing an intimate townscape with a strong human scale. Fulham House is a particularly dominant feature when entering the conservation area along Fulham High Street.

B The Riverfront and River

5.20 The riverfront sub-area is characterised by the river Thames and foreshore, with the two recent residential developments on the river side, framed by the road and rail bridges spanning the river.

5.21 Putney Bridge was built in 1884 by Joseph Bazalgette from grey granite and is listed Grade II. It consists of five segmental arches of channelled masonry with plain buttresses above cut-waters. The bridge has a bold course and plain solid parapet with three-light standards which centre above each arch. On the eastern side there are the former public conveniences, now converted to a sandwich bar, and a flight of steps provide a pedestrian link from the bridge to the riverside.

5.22 Putney Railway Bridge spans the river at the eastern boundary of the conservation area and was designed by William Jacomb and erected in