

The Chiswick Curve Public Inquiry

Friends of Gunnersbury Park & Museum

Images

4.2.3 Views

View 1 (View 9 in 2008 CMP)

From the Terrace outside Gunnersbury Park House, looking across the Park and Gardens

Date View Originated: 1650

This view looks over the earthwork terrace associated with the earlier and present house and gardens, over open lawns towards the Orangery and the site of the Horseshoe Pond. Viewshed analysis of the potential views from the terrace reveals an expansive view across the Thames Valley, taking in Kew, Richmond and Chiswick. This was a critically important view from the mid-17th century onwards, and it is therefore striking that none of the available historic illustrations depicting the grounds at Gunnersbury are taken from this location.

Historical Significance

- A key viewpoint from the terrace outside the mid-17th century mansion, overlooking the formal garden shown on Rocque's map. Virtually nothing from this period survives within the view.
- In the 18th century this point provided a view over the Horseshoe Pond and the rest of the formal gardens. The view probably also afforded views out into the parkland, beyond the garden walls (dense planting is not shown in the garden on the 1777 map suggesting a more open prospect). The earthwork of the Horseshoe Pond is still visible from this location, though it is partially obscured by the rockery.
- During the 19th century this point allowed views across the Rothschilds gardens, up to the boundary with the Small Mansion which was disguised with tree planting.
- 19th century Ordnance Survey maps show the area to the south as being planted with trees, which may have restricted more expansive views from the terrace.

Overall, the view is of **High Historical and Aesthetic Value**.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING A

Condition

As a 17th or 18th century view, the present view is in poor condition with few visible features from either period and with a restricted view due to 19th century and municipal planting. The rockery within the earthwork of the Horseshoe Pond is an intrusive feature in this respect, obscuring the one surviving element from this period.

As a 19th and early 20th century view associated with the Rothschild mansion, however, the view is in fair condition, although the extent of municipal planting means that its original character has to some extent been compromised. The density of such planting also ensures that the view is probably more restricted than it was in the 19th century.



The increasingly restricted nature, over time, of the views out from the mansion and into the wider landscape constitutes one of the intrinsic aspects of Gunnersbury's historic character and is a reflection of the increasingly industrialised and urbanised character of the locality in the course of the 19th century.

CONDITION RATING 4 RECOVERABLE VIEW.



Site Boundary

Historic Tree Phasing

Phases

- pre 1835
- 1835-1869
- 1869-1925
- 1925-

View 1

View 2 (Views 8 and 10 in 2008 CMP)

From the Terrace Outside the Small Mansion looking over the Gardens and Parkland

Date View Originated: 1650

This viewpoint outside the Small Mansion overlooks the earthwork terrace and area of the early formal garden. Viewshed analysis of the potential views from this point are virtually identical to View 1, with an expansive view across the Thames Valley. This was also a critically important view from the mid-17th century onwards, but it is not depicted in any of the available historic illustrations showing the grounds at Gunnersbury.

Historical Significance:

- A key viewpoint from the terrace outside the mid-17th century mansion, overlooking the formal garden shown on Rocque's map. Virtually nothing from this period survives within the view.
- In the 18th century this point provided a view over the Horseshoe Pond and the rest of the formal gardens. The view probably also afforded views out into the parkland, beyond the garden walls. The earthwork of the Horseshoe Pond on this side of the gardens has been entirely filled in and is covered with relatively recent municipal planting.
- During the 19th century this point allowed views across the gardens of the Small Mansion, with the boundary with the Rothschilds' garden disguised with tree planting.
- 19th century Ordnance Survey maps show the area to the south as being planted with shrubby-style planting, rather than trees, which suggests that the views down towards the Gothic ruins and the Japanese Garden were more open in the 19th century.

Overall, the view is of **High Historical and Aesthetic Value**.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING A

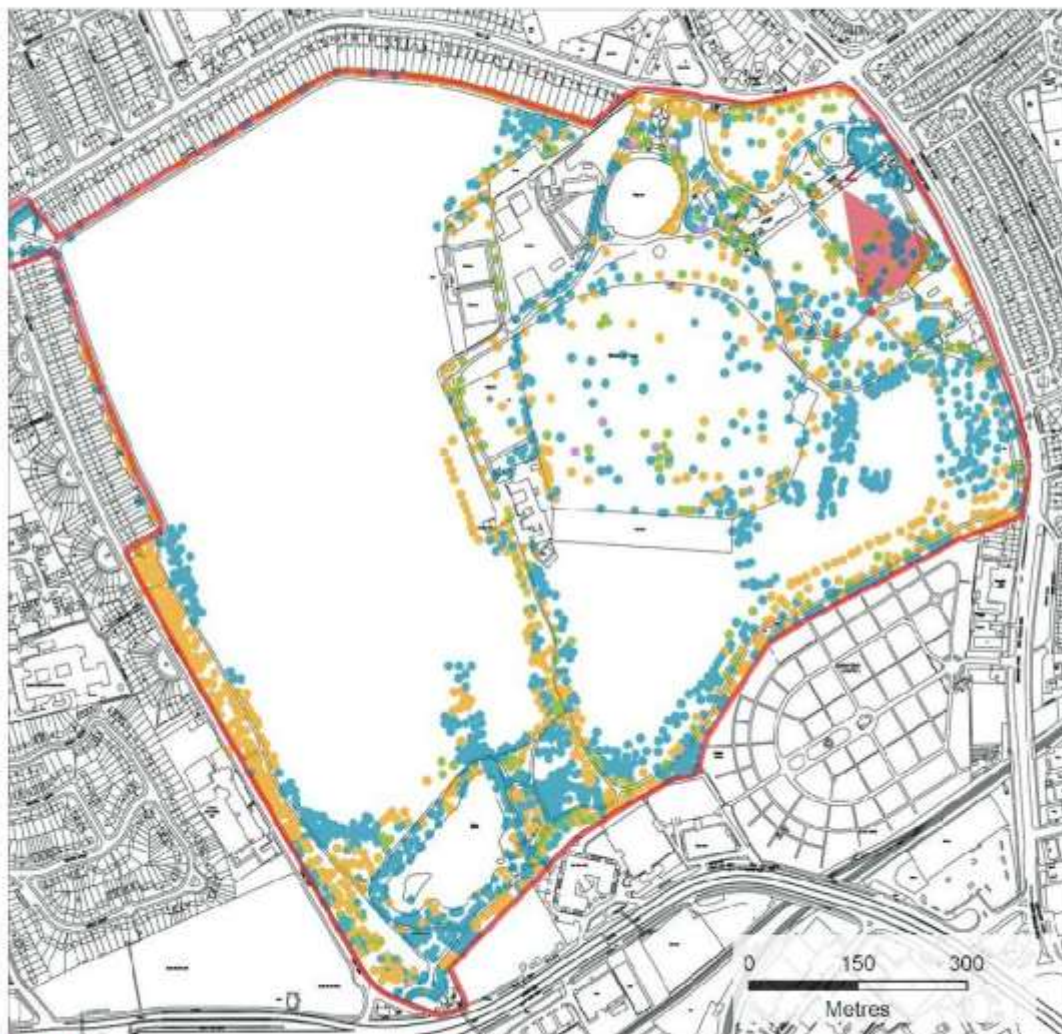
Condition:

As a 17th or 18th century view, the present view is in poor condition with no visible features from either period and with a restricted view due to 19th century and municipal planting. Recent planting on the site of the Horseshoe Pond obscures the probable 19th century view over the gardens of the Small Mansion. The view is much more densely treed than it was in the 19th century, with modern groups of copper beech as a particularly prominent feature. Therefore, as a 19th century view this is also in poor condition.



Once again however, it is important to note that the increasingly restricted nature over time of the views out into the wider landscape, constitutes one of the intrinsic aspects of Gunnersbury's historic character and is a reflection of the increasingly industrialised and urbanised character of the locality in the course of the 19th century.

CONDITION RATING 4 RECOVERABLE VIEW.



Historic Tree Phasing Phases

- pre 1835
- 1835-1889
- 1889-1925
- 1925-

Site Boundary

View 2

View 9 (View 5 in 2008 CMP)

From the Temple looking south across the Round Pond and Parkland

Date View Originated: c. 1740

This is the reverse view of View 8, and the other key 18th century set-piece view. The view takes in the open parkland to the south of the Temple.

Historical Significance:

- Created in the early to mid-18th century as part of the landscaping of this area of the gardens. As noted [above](#), both William Kent and William Chambers have been proposed as the designer responsible for this view.
- In the 18th century the view was more expansive, overlooking the open parkland – both the Kretschmar map of 1847 and the late 18th century Payne watercolour suggest a more open aspect.
- During the later 19th century the parkland within the view was planted more densely, with a number of cedars reflecting those around the Temple itself. The planting is characteristic of a mid-to late Victorian area of ornamental parkland.
- During the 20th century the parkland in the view has been used as a pitch and putt golf course.
- Historic illustrations show the pond in the foreground of the view being used for fishing and boating, as noted [above](#).

The view is of **High Aesthetic and Historical Importance** given its association with important 18th century designers, and for illustrating the character of the garden during the 18th century. It is also important for illustrating the 19th century planting scheme.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING A

Condition:

The view is in medium condition. The 19th century planting within the parkland detracts from the original view designed in the 18th century, although to a significant extent the mixture of deciduous and coniferous planting, and some of the particular hardwood species employed, probably serves to replicate the spirit of the original design. Moreover, the density of planting – which is almost certainly greater than in the 18th century – serves together with the perimeter belt to the south to partially screen a number of tall office buildings and high-rise flats south of the Park from the present view which are more intrusive than the later planting scheme. Once again we can see how views out into the wider landscape became increasingly restricted over time as the locality became more urban and industrial in character. The pond itself, the principal foreground to this viewpoint, and View 8, suffers from a lack of use – the original 18th century design and experience of the view was intended to be enlivened by activity and the variety offered by boating on the lake. Once again, the municipal iron fencing around the pond, although perhaps a necessary feature of the Park's present role as a public open space, serves to compromise the view. The filtered views across the Park are believed to be recoverable in time although intervening fencing is a big issue.

CONDITION RATING 2/4

EXISTING HISTORIC VIEW.



View across the Round Pond from the Temple (E. Kretschmar c.1847)



Site Boundary

Historic Tree Phasing Phases

- pre 1835
- 1835-1889
- 1889-1925
- 1925-

View 9

View 11 (Not included in 2008 CMP)

The Playing Fields from the Lionel Road Entrance

Date View Originated: 1920s

The view is important in terms of the design and experience of the municipal parkland landscape created in the 1920s and 1930s.

Historical Significance:

- In the 17th and 18th centuries, this viewpoint lay outside the Park and would have included the open and enclosed fields suggested by contemporary historic maps.
- This area was incorporated into the Rothschilds park in the late 1860s when the Potomac Lake and Tower were also created. It does not appear to have been planted as ornamental parkland, and was used as a polo stud by Lionel Rothschild.
- In the 1920s this area of the Park was devoted to playing fields – the view incorporates the hedge around the bowling greens and Pavilion and municipal planting around the Model Farm.

The view is of **Medium Historical Significance** in terms of its history as a good municipal parkland landscape of the early 20th century, and has an important communal significance for its history of common use.

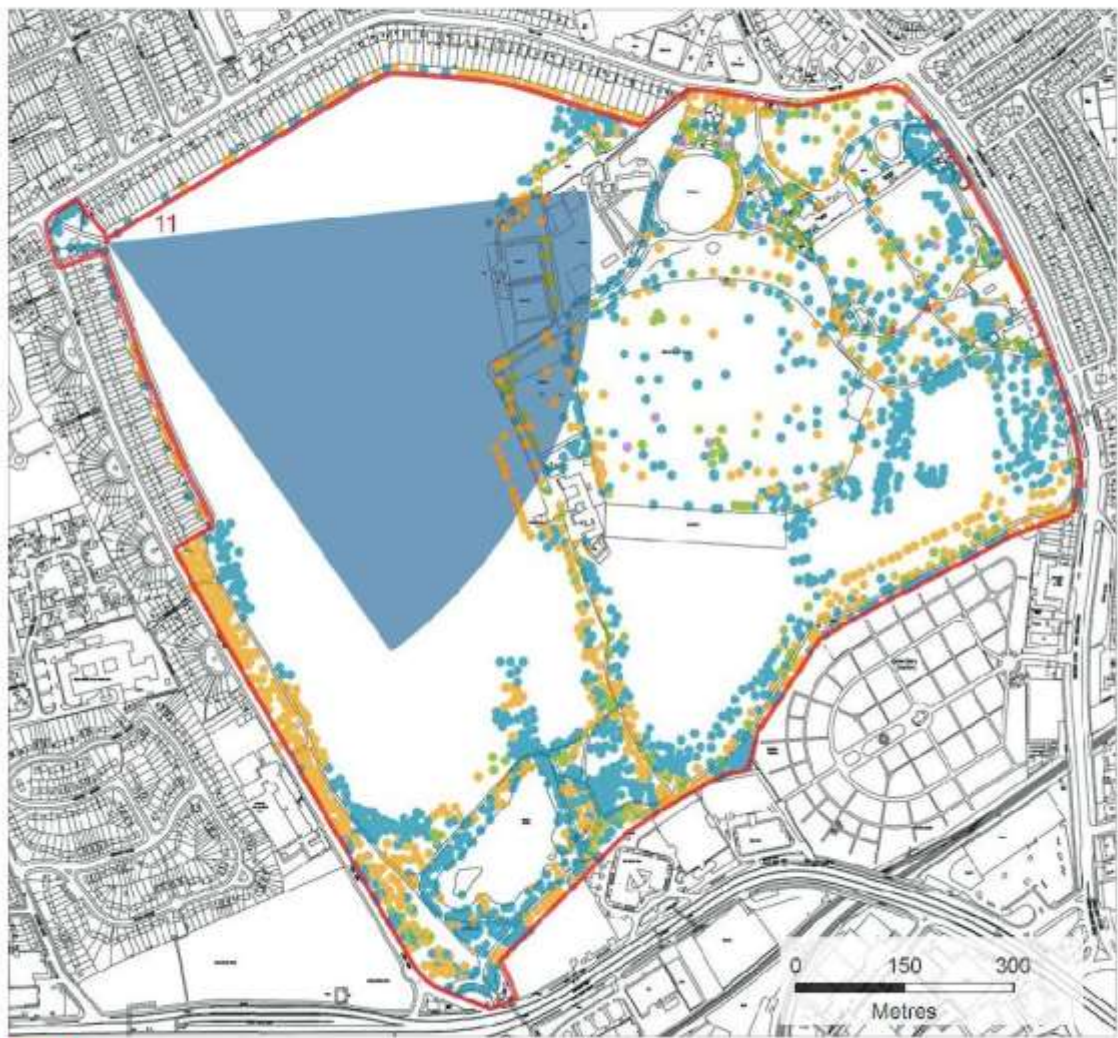
SIGNIFICANCE RATING B/C

Condition:

The view is in very good condition, with clear views across the playing fields towards the Model Farm and the southern edge of the Park. There are some intrusive high-rise buildings within the view, but the planting does screen out other development. Although the planting visible within the view mainly dates from the 20th century, the current view gives a fair impression of the appearance of this part of the Park in the late 19th century.

**CONDITION RATING I
RECOVERABLE.**





Site Boundary

- Historic Tree Phasing Phases**
- pre 1835
 - 1835-1889
 - 1889-1925
 - 1925-

View 11

4.2.4 Viewshed Analysis

This analysis of the views incorporates viewshed analysis, which is a useful tool for analysing the extent of views from any particular location. Viewshed analysis is a digital mapping technique which allows the ground surface from a particular viewpoint within the landscape to be mapped into two categories – 'visible' from the viewpoint, and 'not visible' from the viewpoint. The viewshed analysis presented here has been created using ArcGIS 10, with a viewpoint of 1.7m high above the ground surface – representing the height of a person standing outside the approximate location of the original mansion (and thus between the two present houses).

The data which creates the viewshed map is taken directly from a contour map, and so does not take into account upstanding features which may act as a barrier to the view, including buildings or tree planting. However, it does give a good general impression of the expansiveness of the view from the terrace which is now limited by recent development and the height of the planting in places.



Viewshed Analysis Map

0 150 300
Metres



NatWest Bank

The NatWest bank on Chiswick roundabout in 1995, soon after it closed. Originally a branch of the National Provincial Bank, it was erected at the southern end of the Great West Road in 1926, soon after the road was built. It was designed by F. C. R. Palmer, an architect famous for bank buildings. It later became the NatWest after a bank merger in 1970. There have been a number of unsuccessful proposals for redeveloping the site, which remains shrouded in hoardings.