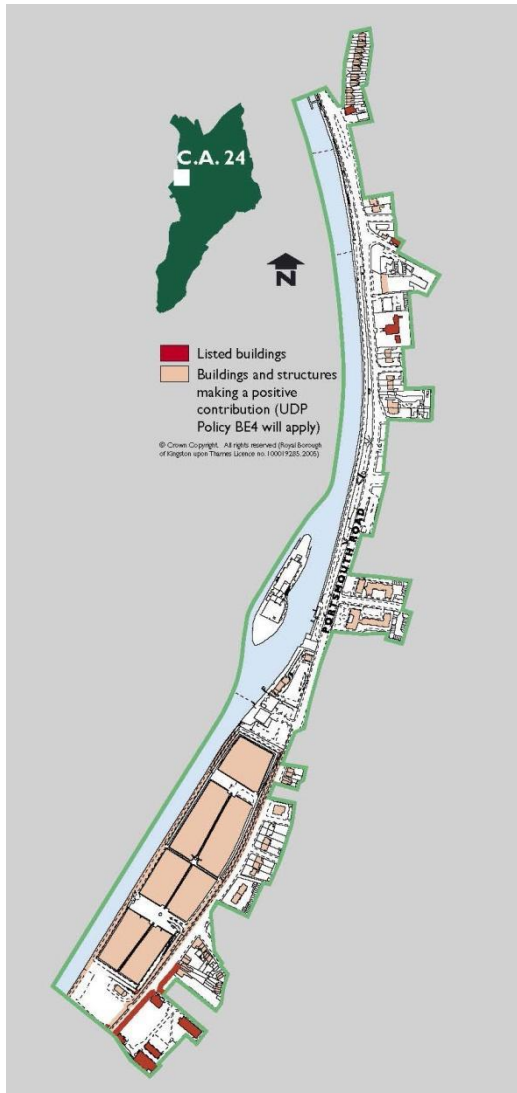


## Riverside South (Kingston) Conservation Area



The Riverside South Conservation Area (designated in February 2003) covers a linear area consisting of 240 properties situated along the east bank of the River Thames. It is within a Strategic Area of Special Character and is visible from Hampton Court Palace Gardens, Kingston Bridge and the barge path on the opposite bank.

The residential strip along Portsmouth Road, the Queens Promenade (the river walk with associated riverside uses), and the former Seething Wells with Water Works are three recognizable character areas where the prevailing and historic uses have variously influenced the plan form and the building types of the area.



Map and view of the Riverside conservation area. © Royal Borough of Kingston

The interest of the Riverside South Conservation Area (CA) is associated with the ancient riverside estates and later Victorian benefactors. The domestic scale, rhythm and townscape quality of mainly pre-war or earlier buildings alongside or near the river frontage also adds to the architectural interest. Also of importance is the quality of the 19th century public works that established Queens Promenade as a place of recreation, together with the industrial/public health buildings and structures at Seething Wells Water Works.

Brick is the dominant building material of the CA with red clay tile or slate roofing, stucco, white render and stone on the east side, complemented by the Arcadian planting along the west side of Portsmouth Road. More recently however, the landscape has suffered from poor maintenance and footways have become downgraded to tarmac on both sides of the road as is the surface of Queens Promenade.

From its history as a key regional movement route between London and the Coast, Portsmouth Road has evolved into a busy commuter route from Surrey to Kingston Town Centre dominated by cars and separating the mainly residential development from the Thames. The dominance of cars and highway infrastructure interrupted the views to the river and the setting of the Grade II\* listed Church of St Raphael, which can be clearly seen from Hampton Court Palace and Kingston Bridge.



Seething Wells Campus. © Kingston University

The residential areas adjacent to Portsmouth Road retain fine examples of Victorian suburban development. Only a few of these houses remain, however, the Queens Promenade retains its Victorian character and is a popular recreational venue for walkers, joggers, riverside activities and to enjoy the views to Hampton Court Palace Grounds and the barge path opposite.

The Seething Wells Water works and the filter beds occupy a total of 26.5 hectares bisected by Portsmouth Road. The vacant land within the Seething Wells site was sensitively redeveloped from 2004 onwards into the Kingston University Halls of Residence, a low rise, soft yellow brick accommodation complex which blends well with the bricks of the waterworks. The development is set back from the road and the original walls and railings form the boundary to the site retaining the visual continuity of the site.

Further sensitive enhancement to the CA will be delivered by a new mixed use educational and residential development, the GEMs Academy, which will be built at 45-51 High Street. The sensitive new architecture will mediate between the small scale historic architecture of the Old Town Conservation Area and the historic promenade of the Riverside South Conservation Area and will provide necessary teaching and residential facilities thus adding to the vitality of the area.



Seething Wells campus- halls of residence. © Kingston University





Visualisation of approved development at 45-51 High Street. © Architecture Initiative

The recent Go Cycle scheme provides infrastructure, public realm and landscape improvements along Portsmouth Road. The scheme has transformed parts of the Queens Promenade with landscaping, new planted terraces, seating and natural stone paving, improved road crossings and access to a revitalised riverfront in the spirit of the Victorian Prom. The Promenade provides a local park for adjoining residential areas.



Queens Promenade transformed by the Go Cycle scheme. © Royal Borough of Kingston

Returning the design of the public space to cater for slower models of travel has allowed the appreciation of the Thames and its landscape to become the heart of the area again. The Portsmouth Road scheme received a commended in the New London Architecture Awards in July 2017 for the Transport and Infrastructure category for making a better public space through the cycle route and better connections to the river. The Riverside South CA shows how sensitive development and infrastructure to support growth can be successfully integrated into historic environment, thereby laying the way for future growth in the CA and adjoining areas. The sensitive approach pursued by the Council has allowed growth while preserving and enhancing the CA's unique character.

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