

DESIGN ASSESSMENT AND POLICY GUIDELINES

CHISWICK STAITHE

For CHISWICK STAITHE LTD



2 APRIL 2002

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
PART 1 CHARACTERASSESSMENT	3
1.1 THE ARCHITECT	3
1.2 SITE LAYOUT	4
1.3 BUILDING FORM	8
1.4 MATERIALS	12
1.5 DETAIL	12
1.6 COLOUR	15
1.7 LANDSCAPING	15
PART 2 POLICY GUIDELINES	18
2.1 RECOMMENDATIONS	19
2.2 PERMITTED ALTERATIONS	22
2.3 SPECIFIC CONSENT REQUIRED	23
2.4 PROHIBITED ALTERATIONS	26

ACANTHUS LW ARCHITECTS

Architects, Historic Building Consultants, Landscape Architects

Voysey House
Barley Mow Passage
Chiswick W 4 4PN

020 8994 2288
fax 020 8747 9001

www.alwarchitects.co.uk
design@alwarchitects.co.uk

INTRODUCTION

This report has been commissioned by Chiswick Staithe Ltd., the management company for the Chiswick Staithe estate, to establish the present status and value of the architectural design of the Staithe, and to develop guidelines by which its value can be preserved and enhanced.

This report has been prepared by Ian Brocklebank and David Wrightson.

We would like to acknowledge the valuable help of Paul Way who has arranged for access to original architect's drawings, and provided useful background information.

"It is apparent that the Staithe as a whole is something more than simply a bland, speculative housing development like any other, and that it has distinct qualities and virtues all of its own. These contribute significantly to its character; to its amenity value to the residents, and, cumulatively, to the value of the individual properties."

PART 1 CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

1.1 THE ARCHITECT

Chiswick Staithe was designed in 1962-3 by Edward Armitage, a local architect who lived in Chiswick all his life, in his capacity as a partner with Green Lloyd & Son, who had offices in St James's Street, SW1. His obituary by Theo Crosby is a useful and sympathetic character sketch from an eminent architect who knew and respected him. By revealing much about the values which informed its design, this offers in very few words a surprising amount of information relevant to an understanding of the form, character and value of the Staithe itself:

Edward John Armitage died on 20 November 1992, aged 72 years.

Max Fry and Jane Drew's office in 1948 was a hopeful, laughing place, a nest of eaglets: Trevor Dannatt, Christopher Knight, Stephen Gardiner, Cate Adams, Ursula Bowyer and many others, including Edward Armitage. He was the quintessential Major of Engineers, smoked a pipe and was distinctly grown up. Under that mask, and many a subsequent other, he remained cheerful, earnest and innocent all his good and useful life.

His father had been an Arts and Craftsman, risen to affluence under Sir Herbert Baker and left Edward the proprietor of a grand house in Strand on the Green. He bred in turn strong, useful sons and a daughter. He made a good life for those around him.

As an architect nurtured in the Modern Movement, he found the received doctrine always unsatisfying and he built, in Chiswick Staithe and on Chiswick Mall, some of the best, most comforting of Georgian revival houses. They were built with love – quirky, original, but providing for a real community decades before this became a respectable ambition.

He worked with me from time to time, building Ulster Terrace in Regents Park and the Globe on Bankside. He did the research on the timber construction and was a benevolent consultant presence throughout its 20-year saga.

We loved him and will all miss him.

Theo Crosby, RIBA Journal, March 1993.

1.2 SITE LAYOUT

The overall site layout at Chiswick Staithe is clearly in a direct line of descent from the suburb of Radburn in New Jersey. Radburn was a successful pioneering design which aimed to separate people from cars, and to encourage the development of a community on the site. It achieved this by laying out houses in a strongly corrugated wavy line around a central communal garden, with the corrugations allowing the penetration of arms of the garden from the inside and cul-de-sac access roads from the outside.

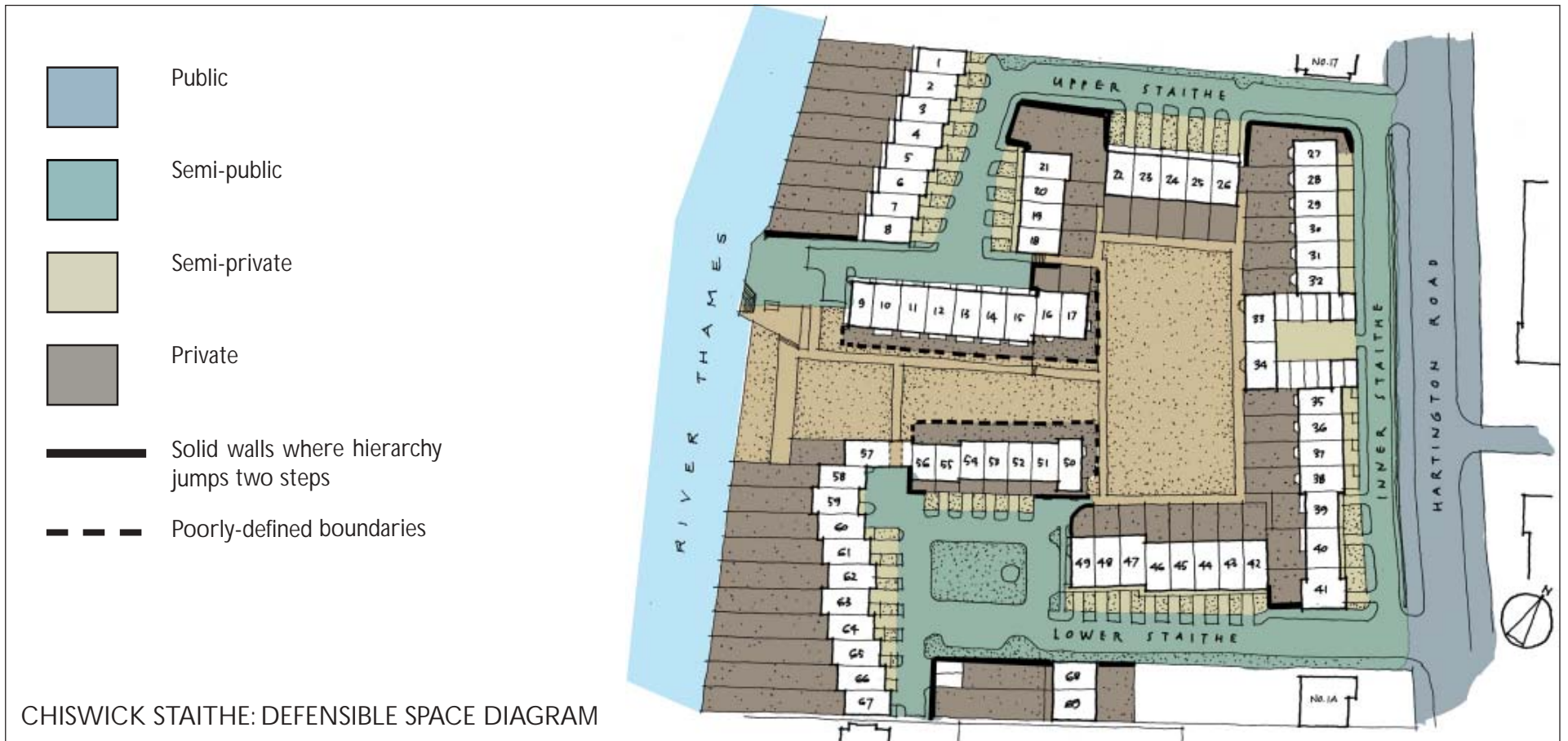
Although actually constructed as early as 1927, Radburn was widely discussed and became influential in the years of post-war reconstruction after 1945, giving rise to a generic technique christened, unsurprisingly, "Radburn Planning". The Staithe is directly modelled on a single corrugation of this type, with its central communal garden spine leading up from the Thames sandwiched between north and south access roads off Hartington Road. The near-continuous winding line of houses forms a solid boundary between these two main character areas, whilst giving the majority of dwellings a face onto each.

This separation also reflects an important dividing line between two levels of "defensible space", reflecting a second, entirely compatible, influence prevalent at around the same time. The defensible space technique studies the perception of spaces in a spectrum from intensely private to entirely public, and, correctly used, accords with strong notions of cultural propriety and feelings of psychological comfort. In this analysis, the winding line of the houses also marks the division between the semi-public access roadways on three sides of the site, and the semi-private communal garden at the centre.

Left and below left: *From semi-private to private.*

Right and below right: *From public to semi-public; Hartington Road and the Inner Staithe*





CHISWICK STAITHE: DEFENSIBLE SPACE DIAGRAM

Left: From semi-public to semi-private; wall to private garden on left



Right: Retained wall between semi-public and private. With reused doorway.



Left: From semi-public to semi-private under beam and up steps. Projecting lamp lights route and denotes that it is not private.



Right: From semi-private to semi-public below archway.



Other features marking boundaries between significant levels of the spectrum are the low wall and planting between the semi-public front access road and the fully public Hartington Road, and the distinctive white picket fences between the semi-private communal garden and the private gardens which surround it. The simple existence of the front access road is an important indicator of intention, as perhaps four extra units could have been fitted on the Staithe overall if houses 27 – 41 had been designed to open directly off Hartington Road, although at the expense of a much less pleasant environment. Consistent with this method of analysis, direct boundaries between private gardens and the semi-public access roads (a jump of two steps in the hierarchy), are made wherever they occur with full-height brick garden walls.

Two particular deviations from this general scheme are worthy of comment:

- The main line of houses is broken between numbers 8 and 9 to allow the northern access road (semi-public) to lead directly to the quayside area, with its hand-crane and the large sculptural set of steps down to the river level itself. This area is strongly reminiscent of similar, half-hidden riverside penetrations which tend to occur along both banks of the Thames for its full course through London. It is separated from the semi-private communal gardens by a carefully-modified existing wall with a seat at its end, a re-used quatrefoil window surround and a distinctive garden gate. Unfortunately, the original perception of this space by the riverside has been slightly compromised by the subsequent construction of the low wall needed to provide flood protection, but its function remains intact.



Above: *Unique gate closes opening between semi-public and semi-private.*

- The mediation between the narrow part of the communal garden and the private external spaces to houses in the terraces either side (Nos. 9-17 and 50-56) is perhaps less successful than it might have been, or as Edward Armitage may have preferred. The lack of clear separation here is possibly a result of commercial pressure to increase the number of houses with private riverside gardens to the maximum, as these would generate a premium return, resulting in those in between becoming slightly squeezed. The communal lawn between these terraces remains very pleasant, but the additional planting and pots introduced by the individual householders suggests that their defensible space feels inadequate, especially where the path runs close by.

This diagrammatic form was carefully not applied too rigidly, and adjustments were made in particular to allow the retention of most of the previously-existing mature trees on the site.

Below: *Semi-public roadway slips through to riverside.*



Below: *Sculptural riverside treatment with carefully considered detail. Crane is not just functional. Bollard almost impractically delicate. Quatrefoil and seat terminate wall in balanced composition.*



Above and above right: *Poorly defined transitions between semi-private and private.*

1.3 BUILDING FORM

Chiswick Staithe has been described (not least by Theo Crosby) as being a good example of the Georgian revival of the 1950s and early 1960s. This is true, but it is worth noting explicitly that this Georgian precedent is invoked almost entirely in the overall form and construction of the buildings, and hardly at all in their details.

Conceptually, these are Georgian terraced brick houses, of a type familiar throughout most of London. It is not always remembered, however, that the majority of houses of this period and type were speculatively built, and are quite plain in both form and detail, characteristics which are perpetuated in the Staithe. Several influential commentators during the 1930s, particularly those from a European background, found in abstract form in older British buildings many of the desirable qualities which they ascribed to Modern architecture, much to the surprise of many natives. Edward Armitage, studying architecture in the late 1930s and 1940s, could hardly fail to have been aware of Steen Eiler Rasmussen's book "London: The Unique City", first published in 1934. This affectionate, perceptive and amusing book found great value in the domestic tradition of plain, simple architecture, devoid of unnecessary external show, at a time when such buildings were not generally appreciated at all. They still often were not in 1963.



Above: *Mount Vernon, Hampstead. Rasmussen, 1930.*



Above left and right: *Terrace facing the Upper Staithe; two views. The similarity between the lamp-posts is unlikely to be coincidental.*

Theo Crosby's description of Edward Armitage as an architect trained in the Modern movement, but not completely at home in it, gives a likely indication of how this should be read. Armitage's sympathies appear to have lain only with that strain of Modernism which saw itself as a natural development from earlier forms and types, rather than as a revolutionary, confrontational break with the past. This "Other Tradition", as it has been called by Colin St John Wilson, with its Scandinavian rather than mainland European sympathies, was not as dramatically exciting, nor as critically dominant, as the harder strain, but it has in many ways lasted far better, chiefly due to its humanity and lack of assertive dogma.

Internally within the majority of houses on the Staithe, the Georgian precedent is also directly apparent in the deliberate placing of living rooms on the first floor, corresponding with the placing of the main reception rooms in town houses during the eighteenth century. Similarly, the ground floors are given over to secondary reception and service spaces (although garages are clearly a modern adaptation of the scheme), whilst the upper floors contain bedrooms.



Above: *Parkway, Camden Town. Rasmussen 1930.*

Right: *Houses on Lower Staithe.*



Above: *Keats Grove, Hampstead. Rasmussen 1931.*

Above right: *A door and windows as simple holes in the wall. (Replacement doors and windows only partially successful in this case.)*



The actual construction method is also essentially based on the Georgian precedent, with timber-framed floors and internal partitions within a loadbearing brick envelope, capped with pitched roofs. One departure from precedent in this instance is the substitution of projecting eaves and gutters for brick parapets, but this need not be assumed to detract from the general scheme, and offers in any case considerable maintenance advantages.

Unlike the majority of Georgian terraced houses, however, which had a carefully-considered formal front elevation and usually a very functional back, the terraced houses in the Staithe are forced to have two fronts as a result of the double-sided Radburn planning, although these have different places in the spatial hierarchy. Georgian formal elevations had windows simply punched in as rectangular holes, and, significantly, these were often shown simply as featureless dark openings in the design drawings. The restrained beauty was held to lie in the abstract geometry and mathematical proportions of the elevations, to which the details were entirely subservient. Unfortunately, in this instance, Armitage's work at the Staithe has achieved only mixed success.

The elevations to the communal garden are generally successful in their own terms, and those which take their inspiration most closely from their Georgian predecessors are the finest on the Staithe. These are symmetrical compositions with two equal windows on each of the first and second floors, with the *piano*

Above: *Gray's Inn before war-time. Rasmussen, 1930.*



Right: *Terraces facing the communal garden. Rhythm and proportion.*

Below: *Bedford Place from Bloomsbury Square. Rasmussen, 1931.*



Right: *Terrace facing the Inner Staithe. Some rhythm, but not very much proportion.*

nobile marked by taller windows down to floor level. These particular elevations form an important part of the overall character of the Staithe, as a harmonious composition around three sides of the central garden. In contrast, the semi-public elevations of the same houses are asymmetrical, presenting windows as required by the internal spaces, with the effect that any sense of their relative proportion is rather diminished.

Both front and back elevations to the houses along the river speak a rather different language, being almost entirely Modern town houses of the early 1960s. Here, again, however, Armitage's lack of dogma, and concern for the overall human feel of the design, have importantly allowed the houses to have a range of small individual differences in fenestration and plan, helping the whole to have a lightness of touch which would not normally be the case with such an insistently repeated single basic house type.

Below: *View from across river. Rear elevations of tall, narrow townhouses.*





Above and right: *Front elevations to riverside houses from Upper and Lower Staithe.*



Above: *Elevation to communal garden*

Above right: *Enclosed balcony overlooking the river.*



Edward Armitage also made a point of introducing variety into the general house type present on the Staithe, and several houses justify particular comment.

Houses 16, 17 and 50 do not follow the general Georgian terraced house type of the bulk of the Staithe, and are presented more as something between eighteenth-century cottages and nineteenth-century artisans' houses, although again as essentially abstracted forms. This has the effect of softening the ends of their adjoining terraces and easing the transition of scale between the narrow and wide sections of the communal gardens. Numbers 16 & 17 have ground floor living rooms only, which puts particular pressure on their defensible space as they are based on a type which would normally have a front garden. Houses 33 and 34 are interestingly quirky mews cottages with the same problem in part, fortunately offset by the presence of first floor terraces over their neighbours' garages, and remote bedrooms forming the pavilions either side of the entrance to the garage court.

Left and right: *Cottages break potential monotony of terraces to communal gardens.*



1.4 MATERIALS

Chiswick Staithe was built only eight years after the end of the post-war rationing of building materials. This was a time when, although the range of available materials was necessarily restricted, those few types which could be obtained were plentiful and of good quality, often still derived from pre-war craft-based production methods.

Facing bricks and roof pantiles throughout the Staithe are unostentatious but are entirely handmade. The bricks are laid well in a relatively soft mortar which is probably based on a local Thames valley sand.

Joinery components were specially designed and made in a simplified traditional manner, to a high standard of workmanship in appropriately-selected materials. Painted components were generally of softwood, but weathering sills, beads, and other critical pieces were of good-quality hardwood, as were unpainted thresholds etc.

Rainwater goods are plain black-painted cast iron, of good quality and without applied decoration.

Left: *Unadorned handmade bricks with relatively soft mortar offset with delicate foliage planting. Dappled shade.*



Right: *Canted bay evokes Victorian detail, but with unprecedented slimness.*



1.5 DETAIL

The detailing of the buildings on Chiswick Staithe, though quite sparse, demonstrates an interesting but quite particular range of influences, and contributes significantly to the overall character.

Consistent with the Arts-and-Crafts influence of Edward Armitage's father, the distinctive decorative details of the architecture are almost all embellishments of necessary components of the construction, or are re-used items from the buildings that previously occupied the site. This is doubly reinforced, as this particular tenet of the Arts-and-Crafts movement was directly and explicitly imported into the Modern Movement, and is likely to have been difficult for Armitage to disregard. The only item of pure decoration on the Staithe, without associated function, is the swag panel applied to the first floor end wall of the garage court, and this does not appear on the original construction drawings.



Above left, above right, left and right: *Romantic Classical* keynote detailing. Arch holds lantern and denotes boundary between semi-public and semi-private. Hip irons turn plain metal brackets into curliques. Finials are copper ball valve floats. Front door is not as shown on construction drawings, but fits well and is appropriate to unmediated entrance off semi-public area.



Although the intellectual approach to detailing is Arts-and-Crafts/Modern, the actual style definitely is not. The most overt, noticeable details, and those which contribute most to giving the Staithe its slightly quirky, human face, are derived from a kind of whimsical Romantic Classicism reminiscent of the work of Clough Williams-Ellis or Oliver Messel, but fortunately without these particular gentlemen's sometimes overbearing theatricality. These details, such as the prominent curling hip-irons; the copper ball-cock finials, and the lamp standards and brackets, are in this case all the more effective for their sparsity. They appear only where they make a contribution to the communal presentation of the Staithe, and are not generally present on individual houses.

Front doors have been designed in a generally uniform language, but with variations to suit their locations in the semi-public/semi-private hierarchy. Only house No. 57 opens directly onto a semi-public space and is therefore fitted with a solid panelled door (above). Other doors are partially glazed with vertical bars or square glazed panels, the proportion of glass to timber suiting the degree of privacy offered by their respective locations. Doors which face the street are fully barred, whilst those off car ports have fully glazed upper portions.

The tall windows on the *piani nobili* of several of the terraces are thoughtfully detailed as sash windows with the lower sashes incorporating vertical bars for safety and visual articulation. These are a very distinctive abstraction of the small iron balconies prevalent on similar Georgian houses, and contribute immensely to the success of the elevations on which they are found.

Above: *Piano nobile* window, showing abstracted railing in lower sash.

Left and right: *Deliberately plain house front softened by planting over concrete beam, all as originally intended. Invention in hardstanding layout with limited range of available materials, used softly.*



Left and right: *Private front door with full set of original ironmongery in BMA. Simple and restrained. The door is assumed to be original itself also. Colour and planting entirely appropriate.*



Other details, especially those on individual houses, demonstrate a self-effacing, but carefully considered use of available construction components of the time. House numbers were an elegant Roman serif face in bronze with off-white inserts, and the accompanying ironmongery in BMA is characterised by delicate proportions and a lack of applied decoration. There seems to have been a complete absence of brass, lacquered or otherwise.

Left: *Ledged and braced garage door with strap hinges; front door with square panes and BMA letterbox. Functional components used for restrained visual effect.*



Right: *Original house number and bell-push in BMA on painted brickwork.*



Although not significant for the overall appearance of the Staithe, it is worth recording that many of the houses had particular, individual variations internally. Two different styles of internal joinery mouldings were used; hardwood floors were in a variety of different timbers, and houses with chimneys did not always have the same fireplace arrangement as their neighbours. No.21 had a special range of internal cupboard details; No.52 had a distinctive and unique fireplace design, whilst around 50% of all houses had cast curved bath panels specially designed by Armitage.

1.6 COLOUR

As with construction materials, paint manufacturers in the early 1960s typically offered a relatively limited palette of standard colours to choose from, often simple, uncomplicated shades with a tendency towards pastels and sunny colours, still somewhat reminiscent of the Festival of Britain. This type of palette is clearly an important contributor to the ambience, the sense of place, and the evocation of period on estates such as the Staithe, and it is noticeable that those houses which maintain the colour and pattern idiom of the time on their front and garage doors sit particularly harmoniously within the whole composition.



Left and right: *Similar doors and garages. Colour is critical to effect, although green garage battens too narrow.*

Interestingly, original construction drawings indicate that doors in bay windows, and parts of the windows' main structure, were painted partially in colour to match the front and garage doors.

As with the ornate details colour was used quite sparingly on the Staithe, the majority of painted surfaces and joinery being in white, as now. It is worth noting, however, that the kind of brilliant white which is now so ubiquitous was not generally available in 1963, and the actual paint used would have presented a slightly less overt contrast with adjoining colours and materials.

1.7 LANDSCAPING

Soft landscaping on the Staithe is very representative of its period, with a wide mix of species and varieties in the planting. The majority have been chosen for their delicacy and lightness of appearance, and the resulting mixture of foliage colours and dappled summer sunlight is a strong contributor to the overall ambience of the site.

Right: *Communal garden. informally grouped trees giving light shade. Scale does not overpower surroundings.*



The larger trees on the Staithe were carefully preserved during its design and construction from the previous mature gardens on the site, and are clearly significant contributors to the overall character. Note that trees are covered both by conservation area legislation and a blanket tree preservation order in the Grove Park area, and local authority consent will be required for all works to them.

Hard landscaping is based on a very restricted palette of materials. With the exception of the asphalt roadways, footpaths and hardstandings were paved with relatively undistinguished pressed concrete paving slabs. These have, however, weathered well to show the colour and texture of their aggregate, and have in any case been laid generally uncut and without excessive geometrical rigour, the leftover spaces being filled with a mixture of smaller components such as stable paviors and rounded pebbles. Again, this approach is consistent with the original design intentions and overall character of the Staithe and it is recommended that it be continued. Materials which match quite closely are available from major suppliers. If breakage of large slabs through traffic loading becomes a consistent problem, they could perhaps be replaced with modern small element paving (300-450mm square) using the same philosophy of generally understated materials enhanced in a few suitable locations with richer details.

Left and right: *Small leaved foliage shrubbery with cast-iron lamp-post. Juxtaposition deliberately whimsical, but entirely of its time.*



Left: Communal lawns down to river with low freestanding trees and shrubs



Right Added decks over bank to river. Balustrading and handrails could be easily altered to accord with general atmosphere of Staithe.



PART 2 POLICY GUIDELINES

The preceding parts of this report set out some of the background to Chiswick Staithe, from the underlying values which informed it to the detailed implementation of the design. It is apparent that the Staithe as a whole is something more than simply a bland, speculative housing development like any other, and that it has distinct qualities and virtues all of its own. These contribute significantly to its character; to its amenity value to the residents, and, cumulatively, to the value of the individual properties. The purpose of the policy guidelines set out here is to provide a framework by which the Staithe can be managed to accommodate the pressures for change to which it will inevitably continue to be subjected, whilst ensuring that the valuable qualities and characteristics can be preserved as effectively as possible.

For convenience and clarity the guidelines have been set out in four basic categories:

1. Recommendations: An overview of actions which it is recommended that all householders on the Staithe should consider implementing.
2. Permitted alterations: Foreseeable alterations which Chiswick Staithe Ltd. consider to be entirely admissible.
3. Permission required: Alterations which fall between the two extremes of 2 and 4, and which must therefore be decided by Chiswick Staithe Ltd. on their individual merits. This must also, of necessity, include types of alterations which are so far unforeseen.
4. Prohibited alterations: Foreseeable alterations which Chiswick Staithe Ltd. consider to be entirely unsuitable.

These guidelines form supplementary guidance for the administration of the Management Scheme which has been in place on the estate since 1974. Whilst this Scheme confers on Chiswick Staithe Ltd. a legal responsibility for its enforcement, it is assumed that the guidelines will be operated as far as possible through a mechanism of consent, rather than coercion, otherwise they will simply damage the very qualities which they are intended to protect. It should be stressed that the intention in all cases is to maintain an appropriate balance between the rights of individuals to use their property as they see fit, and the needs of the community as a whole.

The fact that these guidelines have been derived from a detailed study of the origins and fundamental qualities of the Staithe must clearly give them priority over any precedent which may be assumed from works which have previously been carried out, whether by consent or otherwise. In addition, a number of small changes on individual properties, any one of which is quite tolerable in itself, can in aggregate become extremely detrimental to the overall character of the estate, and it is only fair to restrict such items at the outset. On the other hand of course, it would not be fair to apply the guidelines retrospectively.

2.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1.1 Maintenance and Repairs

The continued regular maintenance and repair of property, both public and private, is probably the most effective course of action for continuity of both the amenity and financial value of houses on the estate, and preventative maintenance (as opposed to reactive) is by far the most cost-effective method of all. The need for substantial restoration works, or wholesale replacement of materials or major components, tends to suggest that proper maintenance has been neglected, and is invariably more expensive. It also allows retention of as much as possible of the original fabric of the buildings, in turn contributing significantly to the preservation of the overall character of the Staithe.

Evidence within the Staithe itself suggests that the regular regime of maintenance to the communal areas is appropriate and adequate, and should be maintained as it is.

Maintenance of individual houses is also generally good, although it is recommended that all householders ensure a programme of regular inspections, cleaning of windows, checking of flashings, clearing of gutters etc. Best practice in an institutional context generally requires that this be done twice a year, preferably in spring and autumn. Redecoration of all external joinery and ferrous metalwork on a traditional five-yearly cycle remains highly cost-effective, even with modern paints and timber treatments. The Management Scheme includes explicit obligations on owners to this effect, and Chiswick Staithe Ltd will enforce these whenever necessary.

The following detailed observations may also be noted:

1. The general use of brilliant white paint throughout the Staithe, although not strictly authentic, has the benefit of uniting the whole very effectively, simply because the same shade is produced by all manufacturers without any perceptible variation. It is recommended that this practice is continued.
2. Timber windows and doors can nearly always be repaired, and this will usually be substantially cheaper than replacement.
3. It is suggested that the original range of paint colours used on front doors, garage doors and other details be researched, possibly augmented by other colours of the period. These might be made available as a catalogue from which individual householders could choose whilst being sure that their choice would be harmonious with the whole.
4. Cast iron rainwater goods of the same pattern as those originally used are still manufactured.
5. The bricks and mortar originally used form a coherent composite material significant to the overall character. Unfortunately both are likely to be difficult, although not impossible, to match. It is recommended that sources of closely matching bricks, and the detailed mix of matching mortars, be recorded and made available to all householders who may need them.
6. Tiles may present similar difficulties, and should also be recorded.
7. Sources of matching hard landscaping materials should also be recorded for use when necessary.
8. The original pattern of the white picket fencing is shown on available con-

struction drawings. As the consistency of this design is an important part of the Staithe's character it should be maintained throughout as carefully as possible.

9. Unsurprisingly, many of the original door ironmongery components and house numbers have been replaced. Again, it is recommended that surviving original items be retained as far as possible, and that a representative sample be kept for information and future matching. No. 31, for instance, presents itself as a good candidate, although fortunately not unique. Many of the components are still available, at least to special order, and several companies exist who would be able to carry out repairs or to manufacture replacements of the others (although probably subject to a minimum order quantity).
10. If it does not already exist, a schedule of planting species and varieties in the communal areas should be taken to enable appropriate replacement when the time comes.
11. The manufacturers of the lamps in communal areas are still in business, and able to repair components as necessary.
12. Exposed concrete beams are likely to deteriorate over time and to eventually allow the reinforcing steel within to corrode, from which point damage will accelerate quite rapidly to eventual failure. This process can be substantially slowed if caught early enough, and it is therefore recommended that all the exposed concrete be inspected regularly for signs of cracking or rust staining.

2.1.2 Thermal Performance

Standards of thermal insulation in the 1960s were far lower than those considered normal now, partly because energy was extraordinarily cheap at the time, and partly because lower temperatures in houses were the norm. Upgrading now is generally desirable, and there is a recommended sequence of interventions which will give the most cost-effective results:

1. Sealing and draughtstripping of doors and windows (this is best carried out in conjunction with redecoration for the neatest results).
2. Insulation of roofs.
3. Insulation of external walls (especially timber-framed) and exposed floors.
4. Fitting of modern, efficient boilers (especially condensing boilers) and overhauling heating systems; fitting of radiator thermostats.
5. Installation of double glazing.

It is significant that only the last of these will have a direct effect on the external appearance of any of the houses (see below for what is considered acceptable), whilst also presenting the longest pay-back period. Much of the perceived benefit of double glazing actually results more from the reduction in draughts around opening lights than from the insulation value of the glazing itself. Note that an increase in insulation standards, especially combined with a reduction in ventilation, will considerably increase the danger of condensation occurring within buildings, and in vulnerable, hidden, points within the walls and roofs. Expert advice may well be required, although advice obtained for any one house on the Staithe will of course be relevant to many of the others.

2.1.3 Fire Precautions

Fire safety standards applicable in 1963 do not always translate well into modern conditions, and the nature of the risk has in many ways changed in the intervening years as well. In particular, the copious use of synthetic fabrics and foams in modern furniture and decorations, to which fire resistance standards have only recently become mandatory, means that fires now generate large quantities of highly toxic smoke, which is often far more dangerous than the flames that produce it. Smoke in general is a particular problem in houses of three storeys or more, as it can block staircases and trap people on the upper floors without any means of escape. Houses which do not have a solid enclosure around the staircase for the full height of the building present an especially high risk.

It is for these reasons that Part B of the Building Regulations now requires a mains-operated fire detection and alarm system in dwellings, and cites the relevant British Standards (note that stand-alone battery-operated units are no longer considered appropriate). Although there is no legal obligation on householders to install such systems retrospectively, they cannot really be recommended highly enough.

2.1.4 Asbestos

Original construction drawings specify the use of asbestos on the Staithe, especially for boiler flues and for the lining of garage ceilings. In both these cases this will be asbestos cement, so the fibres are encapsulated and present no danger if undisturbed, but care must be taken if any work is to be carried out in these locations. It is recommended that all asbestos should be removed by specialists as a matter of course if in any way damaged, or whenever works are to be carried out in the vicinity.

It is not known how much asbestos remains on the estate, or if it is likely to be found elsewhere in the houses.

2.2 PERMITTED ALTERATIONS

The following alterations to individual houses are considered by Chiswick Staithe Ltd. to be entirely acceptable, and consent will automatically be deemed to have been given under the management scheme, subject to the conditions noted.

- Internal alterations to properties which do not affect the external appearance. (Owners should note, however, that the provisions of the national Building Regulations will still apply.) The conversion of a garage to alternative accommodation may be interpreted as the removal of a parking space under planning legislation.
- Replacement of windows and doors to the original patterns and in the original materials. It is worth noting in this connection that the timber sections of the original windows are relatively generous, and initial inspection indicates that it would be possible to add high quality draught-stripping and double glazing in the majority of cases without significantly affecting their appearance or operation at all. Such adaptations will also be deemed to have consent.
- Replacement of rainwater goods, external ironmongery, fencing, railings and similar to the original patterns and in the original materials.
- Alteration of paint colours on doors and garage doors within the approved palette (when agreed).
- Paving of gardens and hardstandings using the original palette of materials, or agreed substitutes.

It is recognised that in several cases it will no longer be possible to obtain an exactly matching material to that originally used. In such cases a suitable alternative should be agreed with Chiswick Staithe Ltd., who can then make the information available to other householders on the estate as required.

2.3 SPECIFIC CONSENT REQUIRED

In accordance with the Management Scheme, specific consent will be required from Chiswick Staithe Ltd. for alterations or extensions to the buildings on the estate. The "Permitted Alterations" (Section 2.2) set out above are deemed to satisfy the provisions of the Scheme and consent is therefore automatically granted, but all other proposals covered by the scheme will need specific consent as set out here.

Part One of this report offers initial background information against which the relative merits of particular applications should be assessed, although it should always be borne in mind that further factual information, or greater detail of the existing, may be forthcoming in the future, and should be taken into account as it comes to light.

The procedure by which application should be made to Chiswick Staithe Ltd. has been separately published, and may be subject to periodic revision. Since 1996 the process has been formally broken down into three main components: Notification, Consultation and Agreement, and it is recommended that this tripartite arrangement should be maintained. Applications will be greatly facilitated in the majority of cases if accompanied by the written approval of all affected neighbours.

The following particular discussions may also be of use:

2.3.1 General

In order to preserve the overall character of Chiswick Staithe the general relationship between overall simplicity of form and carefully-chosen detail needs to be maintained. If too much detail, or visual clutter, is allowed to accumulate (even if in keeping with the existing), the actual perception of it will be compromised. If in doubt, let simplicity take precedence, as it is the delicacy and infrequency of the punctuating detail which give it its strength and overall importance.

It is clear that Edward Armitage intended the planting to offer the necessary contrasting softness to the plainness of much of the architecture, especially through using species with open habit and delicate foliage, and the general level of maturity on the estate is now a very real asset. Again, preservation of the relative balance between hard and soft, plain and delicate, will maintain the fundamental essence of the design.

2.3.2 Replacement Windows and Doors

Sections 2.2 (above) and 2.4 (below) describe the window works which are considered to be entirely acceptable, and those which are strongly discouraged, but a wide range of possible options remain between the two, including replacement windows in UPVC and aluminium which closely follow the original pattern. Consent for such replacement windows can only be given on a case-by-case basis, as the standards offered by individual manufacturers and installers are so very variable, but it has to be noted that few, if any, will match the quality of the original timber components. In each case applications should be accompanied by detailed drawings and/or samples of the proposed window sections, materials and finishes so that properly informed decisions can be made.

The window survey and report prepared by Paul Way in 1992 (available from Chiswick Staithe Ltd.) gives good advice, and it is not intended to repeat this work here. Given the particular concern of the present report for the design quality on the Staithe, however, and the recommendations for improving ther-

mal performance above, his report is perhaps too even-handed between the competing materials, rather underplaying the overall benefits of timber. If the regular maintenance plan set out above is consistently implemented, timber windows and doors should last indefinitely, and recent research by English Heritage suggests they may actually be cheaper in the long run.

In addition, until such time as a suitable palette of colours has been formally agreed and approved, specific consent should be obtained for all changes to the colours of external doors and garage doors.

2.3.3 Roofs

The form and materials of roofs are of considerable importance to the overall ambience of the Staithe, and it is therefore felt that specific consent should be sought for all new roof penetrations, whether for service pipes, ventilation openings or rooflights, so that a consistent character can be maintained throughout. It is unlikely that consent will be given for additions which are visible from public or common areas.

2.3.4 Sunblinds and Awnings

External sunblinds and awnings can be visually very assertive, even though normally retractable, and it is therefore felt that specific consent should be sought.

2.3.5 Communal Areas

The rather poor separation in part of the communal garden between the semi-private lawns and the private areas of adjoining houses identified above, suggest that a small alteration to the original design of the landscaping here may well be beneficial. Houses 9-17 in particular are affected, but 50-56 may also deserve consideration. To preserve the overall ambience this would be best carried out consistently, and by agreement, rather than on an ad-hoc basis.

2.3.6 Extensions

As Chiswick Staithe has a clearly-defined formal layout and considered appearance, development beyond certain limits is likely to read as excessive pressure, and to be detrimental to the overall character of the estate, as terraced houses can never be infinitely expandable. There must inevitably come a time when one has to admit that it is better to simply move on, rather than to force a good building into a form or pattern of use for which it was never intended.

It is not, however, entirely impossible that suitable extensions can be designed for many of the houses on the Staithe, although any proposals will have to be considered entirely on their own individual merits, taking account of design, location and intentions. The following points may be of use in such assessments:

Houses on Chiswick Staithe which have enclosed and secluded private gardens can accommodate carefully designed single-storey extensions or conservatories without detriment to the overall appearance of the estate, although the interests of affected neighbours should always be taken into account. Care will still need to be taken in all these cases, however, as none of these locations are fully hidden, and most will still need to allow for appropriate planting as well as design.

The double-fronted nature of the majority of houses on the Staithe resulting from the Radburn layout severely restricts opportunities for the construction of unobtrusive extensions. The only way to overcome this is to design them as

deliberate, visible elements which can enhance the whole. Lightness and delicacy in design, and a clear sympathy both with Edward Armitage's work and with Georgian/Regency precedent, would be critical to success, and the co-ordinated alteration of complete terrace groups at the same time would help considerably, if it can be agreed.

It is recommended that extensions on the elevations facing the communal garden be particularly strongly discouraged, as this is an important space to all residents of the Staithe, and the existing elevations here, and the sense of place, are among the most successful elements of the whole estate.

2.4 PROHIBITED ALTERATIONS

The following alterations are considered by Chiswick Staithe Ltd. to be unacceptably damaging to the standards of appearance and amenity within the estate, and consent for these will therefore not be given.

- Demolition of any building or part of a building forming part of the original design.
- Subdivision of houses into flats or multiple occupancy.
- Alteration of the overall external form of any building which is part of the original design, including external plan form at each floor level, height, roof pitch and edge details, and external materials (bricks, mortar, roof tiles, concrete finishes, rainwater goods, eaves and verges, etc.).
- Alteration to the design, layout and pattern of windows and external doors wherever these are visible from common areas. This includes alterations to the pattern of window hanging and opening, as such changes have a significant effect on the overall appearance of the Staithe when windows are generally open.
- Alteration of external paint colours (other than to doors and garage doors).
- Alteration of picket fences or solid boundary walls, including increases in height, revisions to pattern, etc.
- Removal of, or modifications to, communal architectural details, including lamps, brackets and standards; ornamental hip irons; copper ball finials, and other fittings in communal areas. (Original construction drawings show ornamental hip irons also on No.21, and a ball finial on roof of the garage block to Nos.68 & 69, although it is not at present known if these details were actually installed.)
- Installation of television and radio aerials externally to buildings (including satellite dishes).
- Installation of building services, wiring or pipework on external elevations or roof slopes.
- Alterations to external paving of original pattern where this is visible from public, semi-public or semi-private areas of the estate.
- Addition of boundary fences or hedging in excess of 2m in height

2.4.1 Special Circumstances

It is recognised that owners of properties on the Staithe may on occasion find themselves facing unforeseen circumstances, such as long-term illness or disability, which require otherwise undesirable alterations to their houses to enable them to continue in residence. In such situations appeals may be made to Chiswick Staithe Ltd., who will as far as is practicable take a benign view. In the interests of the long-term amenity and character of the estate, however, preference will be given to alterations which are easily reversible, so that the building in question can be restored to its earlier form when the particular adaptation is no longer required.

Applications should be made in the same way as for the normal consent process, but should include information and supporting evidence, where appropriate, to explain why an exception should be made in that particular case.