



# Conservation Area Proposals Statement Cheyne Conservation Area



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

# Introduction

## FOREWORD

With a street layout largely dictated by mediaeval boundaries and the ancient village lanes of Old Church Street and Paradise Row, Chelsea was not built-up until the end of the 17th century.

Today the special quality of this part of Chelsea derives from the diversity brought about by changes to original houses. In recognition of this quality The Cheyne Conservation Area was designated in 1969 under the then recently introduced Civic Amenities Act 1967.

This conservation policy publication sets out the factors which led to the designation of the area as a Conservation Area, and the statutory provisions and Council policies by which it is hoped they may be conserved.

The character of this area could all too quickly be destroyed by careless alterations, both large and small, and also by lack of repair and maintenance to the buildings. Possibilities for improvements, extensions and alterations have been defined for guidance to householders wishing to improve their properties. It is hoped that there will be a better appreciation of the historical and architectural heritage which it is sought to conserve and enhance.

I hope this publication will be interesting to all living and working in the area and will be useful to architects, solicitors, estate agents, surveyors and all those thinking of acquiring or altering properties.

Conservation Area policy statements have now been produced for many of the designated areas within the Royal Borough and a list of these can be found at the back of this book.

The Council and its officers are indebted to residents and local groups for their support and involvement in the preparation of this publication and particularly to the Vicar of Chelsea Old Church, the Rev'd C.E. Leighton Thomson for his assistance with the historical introductory chapter.



Councillor J. Wheeler, M.A., B.Sc.  
Chairman, Town Planning Committee.

## STATUTORY BACKGROUND

Under Section 277 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, local authorities are obliged to determine which parts of their areas are of special architectural or historic interest and to designate them as conservation areas. They are further obliged (under Section 277B) to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas, to present such proposals for consideration at a public meeting, and to have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by the persons attending the meeting.

In accordance with the first requirement above, the Cheyne Conservation Area was designated in June 1969. This document fulfills the second requirement whilst the public meeting held on 2nd June 1983 fulfills the third.

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*Produced for*

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND  
CHELSEA Town Planning Committee

*by*

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## THE PURPOSE OF THE POLICY STATEMENT

The objective of the Council is to preserve the conservation area as an area of architectural and historic interest. This does not mean that no change should take place, for conservation is as much concerned with ensuring that changes are compatible with their surroundings as with retaining the exact appearance of the building.

The purpose of the policy statement is twofold:

1. To provide an indication of the Council's likely response to planning applications for development such as house conversions and additional storeys. In situations where development can be allowed, the Policy Statement also provides guidance on the appearance and other details. In this way the document is intended to be a useful guide for residents in the area, and people intending to carry out developments, as well as the Council's planning department.
2. To indicate where physical improvements can be made, for example in the maintenance of buildings, and state where the Council will carry out improvements, such as providing street trees.

## PROCEDURE

This draft Policy Statement has been produced by the Council's consultants, Miller + McCoy, in liaison with representatives of several of the local residents' associations including the Chelsea Society, Paultons Square Residents Association, Margareta Terrace Residents Association, and Adair House Tenants Association.

Following the Public Meeting, a period of over one month was set aside for receiving written or verbal comments on the draft. Comments made either at the Public Meeting or during the following month were considered and, where appropriate, alterations to the draft were approved by the Town Planning Committee of the Council. Following the Committee's adoption of the report as Council policy this edition has been made available at a price of £2.50.

## Acknowledgements

This policy statement was produced under the direction of the Borough Planning Officer, Alan Sanders, ARICS. It was prepared by Miller and McCoy under the supervision of Denis McCoy, ARIBA., MRIAL, FRTPI., Dip.Arch (Oxford). Report author was Robert Fraser, BA.

Historical illustrations were photographed and printed by the Borough Photographer John Rogers from original maps and illustrations held in Kensington Central Library.

## NOTES ON FORMAT

It is important to read this conservation area proposals statement in conjunction with the Council's statutory District Plan, for although some of that Plan's policies are quoted their justification and full context can only be understood by reference to the District Plan. Equally the Council's efforts to maintain and enhance the status of the Borough as an attractive place in which to live and work and thus to conserve the character of this and other largely residential conservation areas are only fully explained by reading the set of policies in the Plan as a whole.

Policies quoted directly from the statutory District Plan for the Borough, adopted in June 1982, are identified by the use of italic type and the Council coat of arms.

Paragraphs identified by the Houses of Parliament symbol summarise national legislation.

Proposals, which are derived from District Plan policies, are specific to this conservation area. They are highlighted in the margin by a symbol and the number(s) of any relevant paragraphs of the Plan are shown in a footnote. These proposals are, broadly speaking, of three kinds (though some will fall into more than one category):

- (a) possible physical action (eg street works) **by the Council:**
- (b) possible physical action (eg improvements to house exteriors) **by others:** and
- (c) detailed development control guidelines.

Proposals of all kinds are listed as an appendix, together with the agency upon whom implementation depends.

The River Thames is identified as an 'Area of Special Character' in the Greater London Development Plan. The Council of the Royal Borough has designated it, with the adjacent roads and gardens, and the bridges, as a conservation area. The Town Planning Committee has decided to deal in the Thames Conservation Area Proposals Statement with all those properties facing the River, even though most of them are in the Royal Hospital or Cheyne Conservation Area. The extent of that study is indicated by the shaded area on the base map of this report: and this study has accordingly avoided reference to the River.

Along its northern boundary the conservation area abutts and includes an area already covered by the King's Road Character Study which was adopted by the Council of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in February 1983. Consequently the Council's policies are also found in that study to which reference on matters concerning the King's Road should be made.

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## CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARIES

Cheyne Conservation Area, initially designated in June 1969, is centered on the medieval village of Chelsea whose history is briefly described in chapter . It is bounded on the north by the King's Road and to its south by the Thames which was its highway when Cheyne was a rural retreat from London. The Moravian Burial Ground, which is also designated, is counted part of Cheyne conservation area for administrative convenience, although detached from it.

The exact boundary at the first of April 1981 can be seen on Map 1. Some adjustments to the northern boundary were recommended in the King's Road Character Study and adopted, and these are summarised below as a part of the review of the boundaries which paragraph 4.3.11 of Chapter 4 of the District Plan commits the Council to undertaking as part of each conservation area proposals statement.

The properties hatched on the key plans are those recently designated or being considered, as the text adjoining them describes.

Paragraph 4.3.10 of Chapter 4 of the District Plan says: 'Since a large part of the Borough has already been designated as being within conservation areas, to designate further areas of less architectural or historic value may devalue the perceived quality of those areas already designated, and place additional pressure on the area remaining outside them'. This has to be borne in mind.

On the other hand DoE Circular 23/77 makes clear that 'the familiar and cherished local scene' can merit designation, so changes to boundaries have to be considered in the light of both these considerations.

It should be noted that areas designated since the first of April 1981 are subject to slightly different 'permitted development' rules (see page 26/27), which is why they are identified as such on the map.

The Moravian Burial Ground is an enclave of rather special character. A brick tower block called Moravian Corner bounds it on the north, and Council housing on the south and west. The mansion blocks of Beaufort Street abut it on the east. None of these adjoining developments merits conservation area designation and so no change to the boundary of this detached portion of Cheyne Conservation Area is proposed.

Page 19 will deal with the Burial Ground's history,

### Southern Boundary

Along its entire southern edge Cheyne shares a common boundary with Thames Conservation Area, and so no additional designations are possible.

In its south-west corner the narrow strip of the conservation area which extends to the Worlds End Estate included all the old properties except 120, 121 and 122 Cheyne Walk, and 1a Blantyre Street remaining between Cheyne Walk and a pleasant inter-war housing estate of no particular architectural or historic interest. The three undesignated houses facing the river are of a somewhat florid Victorian character and retain almost all of their stucco ornament and their elaborate railings. They have now been designated, with the old building at the rear fronting Blantyre Street (122a Cheyne Walk or 1a Blantyre Street) so as to include the whole block of older buildings adjoining the Worlds End Estate. Their bulk seen from Battersea Bridge or the river relates sympathetically to the block linking the towers of new housing.

### Western Boundary

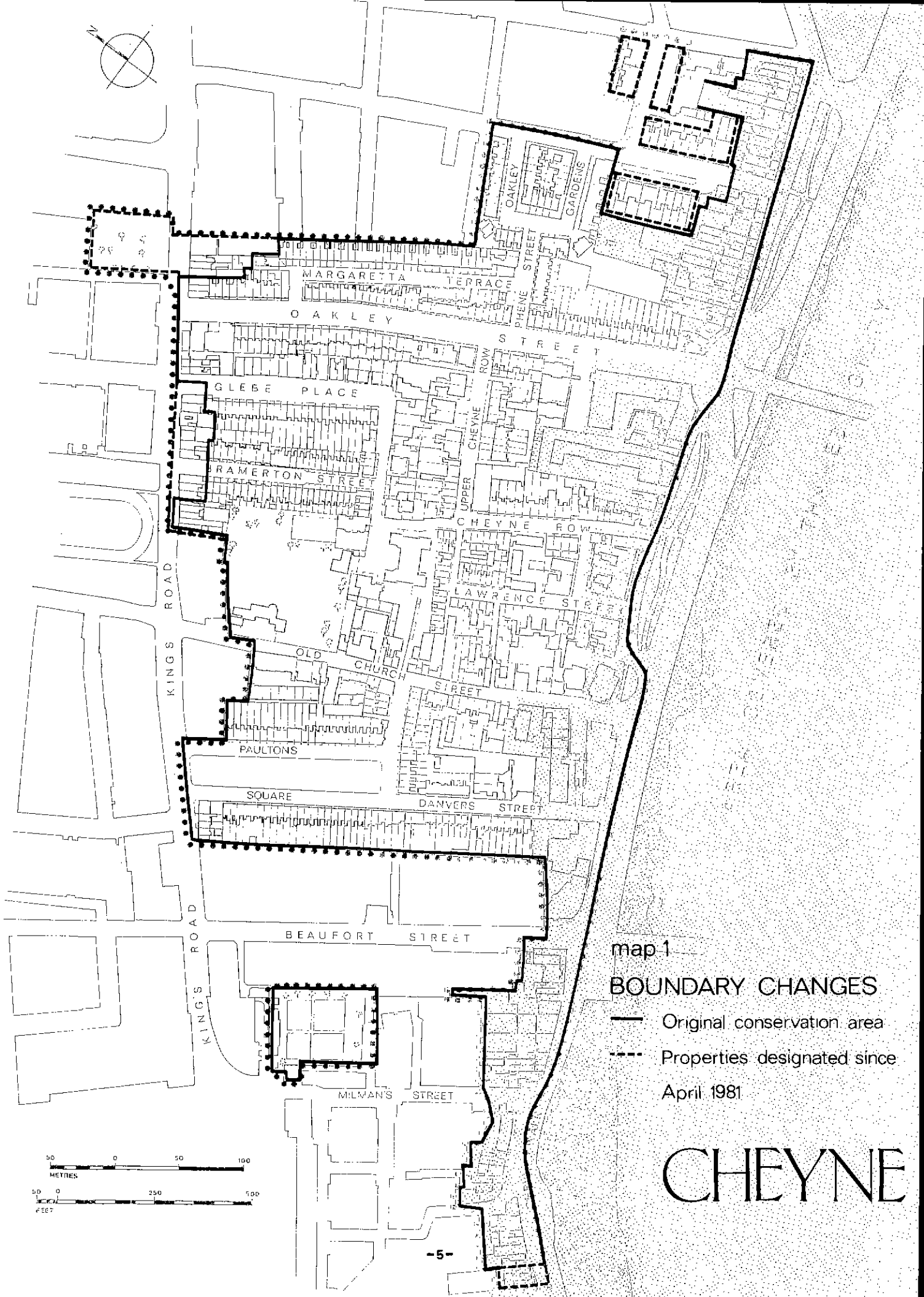
Beaufort Street is parallel to the main western boundary of the conservation area, and is dominantly comprised of solid blocks of flats characteristic of several parts of the Royal Borough. They are not so particular as to merit designation. Thus the convenient boundary along the rears of the Paultons Square and Danvers Street properties remains unaltered.

The Paultons Square style houses fronting the King's Road are within the conservation area.

### Northern Boundary

On the King's Road edge of the conservation area there were two undesignated pockets in April 1981. The first, from Paultons Square to Old Church Street, includes a block on the corner of the Square which is larger than its neighbours and of no special character; and then the remnants of a once fine terrace compromised by the neighbouring cinema and the indifferent (undesignated) terrace facing it across the King's Road. Though the cinema's upper elevation is a remarkable example of Art Deco (Egyptian/Modern influence) it would certainly not be an appropriate addition to the conservation area, any more than the motor repair garage and other minor undesignated buildings in Old Church Street would be.

East of Old Church Street numbers 259-277 (odd) King's Road are good brick architecture of appropriate scale, with rich cornice and string course details, and black and red brick voussoirs enlivening the stock brick facades. However, they do not complement the surroundings in such a particular way as to cause a presumption against any other block doing so equally satisfactorily, which is why it has not been designated. 247-255 (odd) King's Road, which incorporate some remains of early buildings within the single-storey shopping frontage facing Carlyle Square is already designated. 257, being similar to 255, was designated in 1981.



map 1

## BOUNDARY CHANGES

- Original conservation area
- - - Properties designated since April 1981

# CHEYNE

The corner blocks at Bramerton Street and west of Glebe Place are similar to those in the two streets, and two of the intervening buildings are listed, so the whole group has been designated as an addition to the area (see map 2). 205-217 (odd) are already designated.

The previous end of this boundary was the eastern corner block of Oakley Street. Next lies the remnants of a simple but elegant terrace numbers 199-203 (odd), which are given especial value by facing Dovehouse Green. Then comes the Six Bells Public House, so exuberant (apart from its unsympathetically handled ground floor) that it is surprising to note that it and the Chelsea Library were built within five years of each other. The pub garden, though noisy no doubt at times, represents an amenity of value to many overlooking dwellings. These four properties (195-203) and the old burial ground were included in the conservation area in April 1981 (the latter in recognition of its historic interest). Now called Dovehouse Green, it was laid out in its present form with the help of the Chelsea Society in 1977, the year of its Golden Jubilee and the Silver Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen.

The Library, previously the Chelsea Town Hall, is a listed building — it is not part of Cheyne visually and so is not within the conservation area. The blocks south of it are much too recent to be assessed, and south of that again the mellow residential developments are not considered so particularly part of Cheyne as to be designated. The unattractive block of flats east of the Six Bells was not included.

#### South Eastern Corner

The east side of Chelsea Manor Street, certainly as far south as, and including, Chesil Court on the corner of St. Loo Avenue, contains no building or areas of such character as to justify inclusion in the conservation area.

The ornate, red-brick blocks on both sides of Cheyne Gardens date from the 1860s or 70s, and apart from a couple of regrettable substitute front doors, still constitute an area of consistent character which some think worthy of conservation status. The trees and stone paved platform flanking Cheyne Gardens are significant townscape assets and enhance the frontage of the housing as well as the streetscene.

The eastern terrace has a number of attic storey re-buildings, being done to a uniform pattern, which in the interest of uniformity will one hopes be carried out on the whole terrace. As the southern house, which features the date 1877, is of a different (though completely sympathetic) design, changes to it would require individual consideration.

The first floor balcony balustrading on this block is of wrought iron, whereas on the western block it is of timber. That block, though without an attic storey,

has had some additional storeys constructed: again, the terrace suffers while such features are not on all its units.

Although both terraces retain uniform fenestration and decoration their design and detail is rather weak and minimal, and their public side is rather detached from the conservation area. In the case of some similar buildings on the west side of Oakley Street their envelopment by neighbours of much greater architectural quality puts quite a different light on their designation.

At the south end of Flood Street there are mansion blocks of considerable architectural character, for example Rossetti Gardens Mansions with their substantial pedimented entrances, tessellated porch floors, and burnished bronze door furniture. In St. Loo Avenue they face another mansion block which also has stone string courses, bays, gables, balconies with railings, and consistent fenestration patterns, creating a street with considerable appeal.

Although Cheyne Court is of equal quality in many ways, its offensively boring rear elevation to Christchurch Street seems to rule out its designation, which militates against designation of Rossetti Gardens Mansions (numbers 1-20) since boundaries on the centre line of streets ought to be avoided.

The conservation area boundary has been extended to include Cheyne Gardens, and St. Loo Court (numbers 1-20) together with the parts of Rossetti Gardens Mansions (numbers 21-40) opposite.

#### Conclusion

Although of a lesser quality and very different character to the rest of the area, some local residents favour extension of the boundary to include properties at the south eastern corner of the area. These are scheduled below as part 3 of Table A and public comment on their designation is invited at the public meeting or in writing.

#### TABLE A

1. Properties designated part of Cheyne Conservation Area since April 1981:

King's Road: 195-203 (odd): 219-245 (odd): 257  
Dovehouse Green

2. Additional properties designated following this Study:

Cheyne Walk: 120, 121, 122, 122a

Blantyre Street: 1a

Cheyne Gardens (all)

St. Loo Mansions (numbers 1-20)

Rossetti Gardens Mansions (numbers 21-40)



A former pub in Old Church Street

# History

This essay can only summarise aspects of the area's development, and although specific details about some buildings or terraces are included by way of example, for most groups specific information is sketchy or omitted altogether. More notes as to dates of buildings can be found in the townscape chapter on pages 29-45

Little has been included about buildings as present facing on to the River, as the Thames Conservation Area Proposals Statement covers their history.

The main sources to which those interested readers who seek definitive historic detail should refer are the Survey of London Volumes and Faulkner's Historical and Topographical Description of Chelsea, which are listed with other references in the bibliography on page 75

The ancient village at this place on the bank of that major highway, the Thames, may have been the Cealhythe which was a Council Place of Saxon Kings, before the Normans came and centred all at Westminster. At least it is known that there was a Norman Church here, for it was granted, with all its pertinencies, to the Abbot and Monastery of Westminster in 1157. Records of the Rectors go back to 1289.

Cattle could be driven across a ford here, which may have brought trade to whatever sort of village existed during the centuries before it became a fashionable place for London aristocracy and gentry to buy themselves country homes accessible to the Court at St. James.

By the sixteenth century Royalty were frequent visitors to the mansions then lining the Thames.

The history of those great houses is really the history of the area over a couple of centuries, and the influence of their location and ownership on development can still be seen. They are shown on Map 2, P.16, and many of their boundaries are marked to this day by lengths of Tudor garden walls, and others can be implied by the lines of streets or boundaries between today's sites.

Although parts of some of the houses may have been in use concurrently their heydays did not coincide, and so Map 2, P.16 does not show the situation at one date but is consolidated information for many.

The short notes about each of them make up much of this chapter. One not dealt with in that way was a large house sited south of Petyt Place, where from 1581 to 1596 Richard Fletcher, Bishop of London, lived. Before him it was lived in by Thomas Hungerford, and after him it passed successively to the Earl of Salisbury, Sir Thomas Baker, and Sir Edward Powell, staying in his family until 1733. In 1679 it was subdivided and became known in due course as Lombard Terrace. One wing returned almost to the river, and had an arch punched through it to give access to Lombard Street, but the construction of the Embankment swept that part away. The rest was demolished for redevelopment in 1929-30.

The first real break with this pattern of riverside development came at the end of the seventeenth century with the Royal Hospital's projected but unrealised avenue to Kensington Palace, of which Royal Avenue is a reminder. Through the eighteenth century however most development was in the form of terraces of brick houses close to the church; concentric village development.



Cheyne Row was an instance of this, coming slightly before Sir Hans Sloane's 'ribbon development' along the riverside beyond the Manor House, which was carried out around 1717. 16-34 Cheyne Row were built on property leased from Lord Cheyne in 1708 by Elborow Glentworth and Thomas Hill. The ground was previously occupied by a bowling green of the Three Tuns public house (which shared the present site of 46-49 Cheyne Walk with another public house, The Feathers). 16-24 Cheyne Row backed onto the grounds of Shrewsbury house and have the Tudor garden wall as their boundary: numbers 26-34 backed onto the Glebe (the land attached to the Parish Church). There was an eleventh house in the terrace (owned at one stage by William de Morgan and housing his pottery from 1876-1882) called Orange House which in time made way for the Roman Catholic church (1894). This terrace is of the desirable Queen Anne style that became so fashionable at the turn of this century. Signs of their original state still remain: 16, 18 and 34 have kept their original roofs, although only 26 retains the cornice and 32 has a shell hood over the front door of the type that may have once graced all the houses in the terrace.

The Three Tuns and The Feathers were redeveloped in 1711 and now form 46-49 Cheyne Walk: unlike the bowling green the gardens were not developed until the late eighteenth century. Number 8 Cheyne Row being the oldest of these later developments had a gabled end toward the street originally: 8-14 are around fifty years later than the terrace to the north.

When Cheyne Row was built, its northern boundary was fixed by a new road 22 feet in width which ran east only as far as the end walls of the new houses — that is, up to the boundary of the Glebe. This became known as Little Cheyne Row (now Upper Cheyne Row). To the north of this road was a strip of land 40 feet deep bounded on the north and east by the Glebe. William Lord Cheyne had intended to built stables on this plot. The houses here were more modest sized building as befitted their greater distance from the River than Great Cheyne Row. They were built around 1710 to 1715. The Survey of London concludes that number 18 (than number 6) was erected soon after 1714 by William Holloway for the Duchess of Hamilton. Its garden extended northwards where studios in Glebe Place and their gardens now stand.

From a lease dated 1716 it is known that six acres of glebe land, north of the grounds of Shrewsbury House and south of the King's Road, and east of the Upper Cheyne Row properties were in the occupation of Francis Cook, after whom Cook's Ground was named. He seems to have started building before that lease gave him a tenure of three lives, for number 1 Upper Cheyne Row, the Cottage, which appears in the Rate Books from 1715, was probably built by him although there is a semi-circular vault below it, running the length of the building, which may be older. It appears larger than its present size upon earlier maps, and having been on the fringe of the village and within the glebe it presumably then had farm buildings attached.



Rear garden of the Six Bells one hundred years ago

