

Buildings for Health and Welfare

This chapter is principally concerned with Battersea's buildings and institutions for health and welfare. As elsewhere, the origins of the parish's hospitals were partly bound up with the provisions of the Poor Law. Ever since the Reformation, responsibility for the destitute had fallen to the parish authorities, but the need for anything more than almsgiving was not felt until well into the seventeenth century when a parish almshouse was set up. As the population grew, periods of economic depression, however short, brought too many cases of hardship to be relieved by charity or out-pensions from the poor rates. A parish workhouse became a necessity, later succeeded by a union workhouse and then a workhouse infirmary. Alongside these two major hospitals were founded in the parish, and their history is given after the poor-law buildings. Following on from these are some notes on smaller establishments: dispensaries and settlements. The chapter concludes with two quite different kinds of institution, the National Penitentiary proposed in the 1780s and 1790s, whose presence would have transformed the face of Battersea, had it ever been built; and Battersea Dogs' and Cats' Home.

Almshouses

Two sets of parochial almshouses existed in the pre-Victorian village, one at the bottom of the High Street near the parish pound or fold, the other in King Street, now part of Westbridge Road. There are references from 1675 to the almshouses near the pound, which were rented from Sir Walter St John, but ultimately belonged to the Archbishop of York's estate. These appear on the parish map of

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c.1760 as a short row, built inconveniently forward of the road's edge. In 1769 the northern two were demolished and the materials used to repair the others.¹ They had all been razed by the time of Corris's map (1787), and replaced by the buildings in King Street, with a watch-house adjoining. An undated (probably 1770s) survey of the Archbishop's estate refers to a tenement formerly called the Almshouse, which had been converted into a cottage, a part-brick, part-timber building, comprising a low room and buttery, and two little chambers over part.²

The King Street almshouses were rented by the parish from Lord Spencer until 1835, after which they were demolished.³ By that time pensions were seen as a better way of supporting the aged poor; 70 parish out-pensioners were being maintained by 1839.⁴

A few small bequests for the maintenance of the poor were administered by the parish, alongside which some private benefactors provided more substantial aid. There were at least two other sets of almshouses, one established by Amelia Tritton near her home in Plough Lane, long since demolished, the other by Ann Maria Lightfoot in the form Dovedale Cottages, which are still standing on Battersea Bridge Road.

Dovedale Cottages

Originally called Dovedale Place, these almshouses were built in 1841 by Ann Maria Lightfoot of Balham Hill (and her daughter Mary), presumably using money left by her late husband, Dr Samuel Lightfoot (d.1835).⁵ The name apparently commemorates Mrs Lightfoot's family connections with the Peak District of Derbyshire. She intended the buildings to be an asylum for women 'in reduced circumstances professing godliness', more specifically inmates were to belong either to the Evangelical side of the Church of England or a denomination

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of Orthodox Dissenters. This was also underlined by the trustees she appointed to run the charity – the Rev. John Noah Davidson, Samuel Morton Peto and Jasper Shallcross of Banstead.⁶

At the time the almshouses were built, facing what was then the Lower Wandsworth Road, their setting was still semi-rural, for there were as yet few other houses close by. The land was bought from Jonathon Alder in May 1841 and building nearly complete by August, but the identity of architect and builder alike is unknown. Originally there were twelve two-roomed apartments flanking a small chapel in a central block, with larger, detached four-roomed cottages at the very ends of the long plot, and gardens in-between. These buildings survive in good condition. The long, low, two-storey central range is carried up to a gable in the middle, within which a roundel, depicting a dove bearing an olive branch, sits above an oriel window marking the chapel. Built of white brick, the almshouses have Tudor-style mullioned windows, set in heavy surrounds of cement painted to resemble stone. Plat bands and quoins of the same material help tie the decorative elements together. A row of severe bungalows, added in 1971–3 between the central block and the western cottage, was replaced by more sympathetic two-storey houses around 1995, when the end cottages were extended and all the accommodation was reconfigured and improved.⁷

Workhouses, 1731–1839

The parochial accounts before the mid eighteenth century abound with measures to hold down poor relief, notably getting ‘big-bellied women’ out of Battersea before their offspring could become a burden on the parish. But by 1731, eight years after Knatchbull’s Act inaugurated widespread provision of workhouses, the need for a workhouse was pressing. That summer a request was made to

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Wandsworth for Battersea paupers to be accommodated in the workhouse there. Meanwhile, estimates were sought from carpenters and bricklayers for building a workhouse at the almshouses near the pound. On Wandsworth's brusque refusal, the Vestry prepared to build. Thirty guineas were offered for the intended quarter-acre site, and the estimates copied to show 'some Substantial Builders'.⁸ How the scheme fell through is unrecorded, but probably it was too expensive. A workhouse was in operation by 2 April 1733, when its first account book starts, but it was an old, rented house. From the abrupt way the accounts begin, utilizing blank space left by the inventory at the front of the book, it was probably opened well before that date.⁹

Although the 'old workhouse' was sketched in 1815, its location is unknown, as are its origins. The date shown on the front, 1686, is probably a misreading or else recorded some change made that year. The elevation matches the layout indicated by the inventory, at least as regards the upper floors. There were three garrets, with nine beds in all; below were two chambers, containing one and two beds, and a store-room between. There were an infirmary (two beds); a 'Long Room', unfurnished; a hall with tables and forms, the only room with a fireplace in use; a parlour (one bed), Master's room (one bed), and a well-equipped wash-house.¹⁰

In 1754 a yard, house, stable and barn adjoining the workhouse were leased as 'a proper place to put the Poor in that had any Infectious Distemper, or lousey'.¹¹ Thus enlarged, the workhouse continued to function, but by 1791 a bigger one was needed. In February a scheme was devised for building on arable land belonging to Earl Spencer on the north side of 'the Bridge Road' – the eastern arm of present-day Westbridge Road, then an isolated, out-of-town spot. It was hoped to finance it by selling brick-earth at Latchmere, for which a special lease was to be sought from the Archbishop of York.¹² Later in the year Spencer

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offered a long lease at low rental and £50 towards building. The workhouses at Kensington and Barking were visited, and the parish surveyor James Cartwell drew up plans and an elevation based on these models, but when the cost became apparent the Vestry lost its nerve.¹³ It then balked at Cartwell's estimate of £700–800 for repairing and enlarging the existing workhouse, and at the terms demanded for a new lease by the landlord, also workhouse Master, Robert Goodfellow. A Mr Duff came to the rescue, offering the lease of his house in Battersea Square. This became the new workhouse, initially with Goodfellow as Master.¹⁴ There were 63 inmates in late 1792, including 23 children; by the end of the century and thereafter there were usually well over 80; in 1836 it was said that it had once held 120, with great inconvenience.¹⁵

In 1817 the freehold of the property, which included a separately let grocer's shop, was purchased from the then owner, the distiller Joseph Benwell, for £1,400.¹⁶ In 1839, following the opening of the purpose-built Union workhouse at St John's Hill, the premises were sold for redevelopment, being purchased by the shop's long-standing tenant, James Cross. The workhouse was awaiting demolition in 1844.¹⁷

Hospitals

There is no longer a functioning hospital within the parish bounds of Battersea. Previously there have been four general hospitals, none of much architectural pretension. Two were Poor Law institutions, two voluntary hospitals. Of the Poor Law institutions, some buildings remain of the former union workhouse on St John's Hill, later St John's Hospital, while the entire site of St James's Hospital has been redeveloped with housing. Similarly, while the former Bolingbroke Hospital was

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converted into a school in 2012, Battersea General was demolished in the 1970s. Additionally there was some provision for maternity cases. St John's House Maternity Home, run by an Anglican nursing sisterhood, moved from Chelsea to a house in Albert Bridge Road in 1883, while the Battersea Maternity Home, which opened in two large houses in Bolingbroke Grove in 1921, was established by Battersea Borough Council.¹⁸

St John's and St James's Hospitals were large complexes with many phases to their construction. The older, St John's went back to the 1830s, while St James's originated in a school for pauper children from the parish of St James, Westminster, built in 1851. Building development on both these sites continued well into the era of the National Health Service, following a pattern of expansion typical of urban poor-law institutions.

The voluntary hospitals have greater historic interest. The Bolingbroke, established in 1880, has some claim to be the earliest general hospital for paying patients. It started out in a late-Georgian villa overlooking Wandsworth Common, but was eventually replaced by a purpose-built hospital. Lastly, there was the National Anti-Vivisection Hospital, known locally simply as the Anti-Viv, which changed its name and founding principles in the 1930s to become Battersea General. This too started out in a converted house, overlooking Battersea Park, later expanding into the neighbouring houses and acquiring a purpose-built out-patients' department.

All four hospitals were transferred to the NHS in 1948. Battersea General closed first, in 1972, then St John's and St James's in 1988 and lastly the Bolingbroke in 2005.

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St John's Hospital and St John's Centre

St John's Hospital evolved from the workhouse built here in 1838 to serve Wandsworth and Clapham Union. A large infirmary was later built to the rear, and after a new workhouse was erected for the Union in Garratt Lane, Wandsworth, in 1886, St John's was entirely devoted to the care of infirm paupers. After transferring to the NHS it continued in use as a general hospital until the 1980s. The original buildings have long since been demolished but some later additions have survived, converted into flats, while a new therapy centre and housing for the elderly and mentally infirm have been built at the front of the site (Ills 2.2, 2.3).

Following the Poor Law Act of 1834, Battersea became part of the Wandsworth and Clapham Union, which also included Streatham, Tooting and Putney. A Board of Guardians with representatives from each parish was elected early in 1836. Each parish already had a workhouse, and initially these carried on much as before. Wandsworth's and Streatham's were in the best condition, and offered the potential to serve the whole union if one were devoted to the aged, infirm and children, and the other to the able-bodied poor. After lengthy discussion, the Guardians decided that it would be better to have just one Union workhouse, and that the Streatham building should be enlarged to hold upwards of 600 inmates.

George Ledwell Taylor, previously designer of the Royal Naval Hospital at Chatham and of Wandsworth's vicarage, was chosen as architect to the Union. In May 1836 he drew up plans to extend Streatham workhouse, but the scheme ran into the sands when the lord of the manor refused to grant the additional land required for its enlargement. However, the Union was fortunately placed in that one of the Poor Law Commissioners was John Shaw Lefevre, who knew the district and its influential residents well. His ties with the Spencer family, and broad knowledge of their landholdings in Wandsworth and Battersea, led him to suggest that a site on

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Wandsworth Common would be ideally suited for the erection of a new workhouse. Lefevre informed the Guardians that the 3rd Lord Spencer would undoubtedly agree to such a site if there were no objections from local proprietors. He admitted that this might prove a considerable hurdle, but that 'the difficulty might in some degree be met by taking in a space large enough for planting and by giving the proposed building (as in some cases in Wilts and Suffolk) an ornamental character'.¹⁹

A pretty workhouse notwithstanding, there was sufficient opposition to send the Guardians looking for a site elsewhere. By December they had turned their attention to a piece of ground on St John's Hill at the edge of Battersea parish, owned by a market gardener, John Carter, who agreed to sell four acres for £1,600. Taylor's first sketch plans were drawn up in June 1837. His initial estimate of around £19,000 alarmed the Guardians, who sent Taylor back to revise the plans, reducing the number of inmates from 600 to 450, and the cost to £14,000.²⁰

The owners of the adjoining properties were horrified at the prospect of the 'contiguity of this unpopular establishment' and revived attempts to procure a site on Wandsworth Common. James Norris of Spencer Lodge, Charles Wix – who owned the land to the east and could see the value of his purchase sinking – and Mr Fauntleroy, owner of the mansion to the west, all took their complaints to Lefevre, who worked hard on their behalf.²¹ But as time dragged by without any real progress the Guardians ran out of patience. The Poor Law Commissioners approved Taylor's plans in March 1838. With the budget now set at £10,000, the plans had been revised yet again, and in April the tender of Robert & George Webb was accepted. Building work continued through to November, with numerous minor modifications to the plans along the way.²²

Of stock brick with no frivolous ornament, the workhouse was an austere building. Taylor's design roughly followed one of the model plans devised by

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Sampson Kempthorne and published by the Poor Law Commission. It comprised in essence a series of buildings arranged in a square, with cross ranges and walls subdividing the inner area into four courtyards which allowed the different classes of inmate to be segregated.

Around Christmas 1838, the inmates of the several parish workhouses moved to the new building. A month later it was still in an 'unsettled' state and the demeanour of the paupers 'incorrect'. It was felt that decent order would not be introduced until the inmates were supplied with the workhouse dress. A hand mill for grinding corn provided the work element of the house. As the principle of the New Poor Law was to deter the idle poor from seeking relief, there were lengthy guidelines as to how the able-bodied should be put to work. The efficacy of the system depended on its being 'repulsive...to the Idle and Dissolute', but for the Wandsworth and Clapham Union there was a positive desire not to be seen as 'hard and cruel taskmasters' or to turn a 'benevolent institution...into one of stern repulsion to those in want of work and [who] cannot obtain it elsewhere'.²³

The new workhouse only occupied about a third of the long site acquired by the Guardians. Eventually this was all but completely built over. The first of many additions was a separate infirmary built in 1849 to designs by J. Bowes, for which the building contractors were Benjamin Nicholson & Son.²⁴ Following swiftly on from the Metropolitan Poor Act of 1867 a much larger infirmary was built. The Act marked the first step in reorganizing health care for paupers in London, and started the process of caring for sick and healthy paupers on separate sites. Francis Brereton was appointed surveyor in December 1867 to design the infirmary together with new casual wards, laundry boiler house and kitchen.²⁵ The infirmary was built in 1868-70 and incorporated the 1849 building as one of four ward wings in an H-plan range (Ills 2.3, 2.5). Myers & Son were awarded the building contract on their tender of £38,867. The new ward blocks were of four storeys, designed on the pavilion plan.

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At the outer ends, twin sanitary towers with economical Italianate detailing had cast-iron balconies between them, in imitation of the contemporary St Thomas's Hospital in Lambeth.²⁶ Most of this building phase survives, only some of the ancillary buildings having been demolished: the kitchens, boiler house and casual wards.

In the 1880s the Guardians decided to build a new workhouse and devote the St John's Hill site to infirmary cases only. Designed by Thomas Aldwinckle, it opened in 1886 off Garratt Lane. A competition was held for a new infirmary at St John's Hill on the site of the original workhouse building, but in the face of the high cost of the Garratt Lane workhouse, in addition to that of the Dispensary and Relief Station built by the Union at the same time, it was decided that the former workhouse should simply be converted to provide additional sick wards. Aldwinckle was given the job, and the contractor was W. William Johnston.²⁷ Sanitary towers containing WCs were added to the old ranges to update these facilities. The north and east ranges were demolished, together with some of the outbuildings, including the original entrance lodge. A new lodge and a house for the Medical Superintendent were built fronting St John's Hill.

A nurses' home was added in the north-east corner of the site in 1898–9 to designs by Mark J. Lansdell and Edmund J. Harrison²⁸ Of four storeys, in stock brick with red-brick occasional stripes, it has ornamental shaped gables at each corner. Lansdell and Harrison later designed two tall blocks containing receiving wards and staff accommodation put up in 1902–4 on the western boundary of the site.²⁹

In 1930 poor-law unions were abolished and in London the entire network of workhouses, with their infirmaries, asylums and schools, was taken over by the London County Council. The change in management made little difference to the basic function of these institutions, but it was then that the name St John's Hospital

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was adopted. In 1948 it became part of the NHS, and cared predominantly for geriatrics, probably reflecting the status of the majority of patients for many years previously. It closed in 1988.

Plans were approved in the early 1990s for the redevelopment of the site. The remainder of the original workhouse was demolished, but the later buildings were retained and converted into flats, with studio workshops and a few offices.³⁰ Part of the site was retained by the local health authority. Here, two new buildings went up: a therapy centre fronting St John's Hill, and behind it Hazel Court, an octagonal, single-storey day centre for the elderly and mentally infirm.³¹

The therapy centre did not last long. It was replaced by a much more ambitious building, erected in 2005–7 to designs by Buschow Henley, architects, as part of a Department of Health strategy to provide health centres combining general-practice surgeries with out-patient clinics usually located in a general hospital. The St John's Centre, one of the first of this new breed in England, houses a mental health unit, a gym and physiotherapy suite for stroke and road accident victims, podiatry, speech and language and aromatherapy services alongside two general practices. As it is considerably larger than the previous generation of health centres, St John's has a monumental presence on the street, in no way diminished by the choice of cladding. This consists of rich, reddish-brown panels of pre-lacquered, timber-veneered board, not previously employed on such a scale in Britain.³² The use of 'natural' wood enhances the building's prominence and sets up a curious contrast with its angular and geometric front, where the irregular fenestration and high proportion of wall to window were made possible by placing the bigger clinic spaces here. The rear elevation has a greater number of windows, lighting the smaller rooms for offices and consultants.

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Bolingbroke Hospital

The Bolingbroke opened in 1880 as a hospital for paying patients. The house which it originally occupied remained in use until the 1930s, having gradually been replaced by a purpose-built hospital that grew up around it. Passing to the NHS in 1948, it continued to flourish until the 1970s when doubts arose about its future. With hard-fought local support it remained in operation until 2005.

Like many voluntary hospitals, the Bolingbroke grew out of a dispensary – in this instance the Battersea Dispensary, which had been founded in 1844 and re-organized as a Provident Dispensary in 1876. The idea of setting up a ‘Provident’ hospital, where patients contributed to the cost of their care, came from William Hatcher, Secretary of the dispensary and a sub-manager at Price’s Candle Factory. Canon J. Erskine Clarke, vicar of St Mary’s, spotted the potential of Bolingbroke House, then part of an estate being developed by the Conservative Land Society, and in 1876 he began negotiations for its purchase.³³

This fairly plain if substantial three-storey dwelling was one of five houses which, until the 1850s and ’60s, faced Wandsworth Common across Bolingbroke Grove. Originally built in the late 1770s, its five-bay front was rendered, featuring a plat band between ground and first floors, a simple porch, and floor-length ground-floor windows defined by shallow flat canopies on slender console brackets, perhaps a later alteration, as might also have been the non-matching wings set back to either side of the main house. A shallow hipped roof was largely hidden behind a cornice and minimal parapet. Erskine Clarke bought the house for £4,500 and leased it to the managers of the hospital, with an option to purchase at cost price. After what was probably a rather rudimentary conversion, it opened in 1880 with around 30 beds.³⁴

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The original intention was that it should be self-funding, but that was never a reality and money-raising events were a continual necessity. A change to the hospital's aims was forced upon it by Battersea's rising working-class population and the growth of industries and railways, which gave rise to large numbers of accident cases. With the nearest charity hospitals several miles away there was irresistible pressure on the Bolingbroke. From the outset casualties were admitted free, and the number of paying patients could not come close to subsidising their treatment. The first dedicated accident ward opened in 1893.

In 1897 the Bolingbroke became incorporated as a free accident hospital, continuing the pay-beds alongside.³⁵ After this, with help from the Prince of Wales's Hospital (later King's) Fund, plans were made for expansion. Young & Hall, among the leading hospital architects, drew up a scheme for the complete rebuilding of the hospital, including the demolition of the house. The first phase was completed in 1901 with the opening of the Victoria Wing, a new out-patients' department (Turtle and Appleton, builders). This one-storey, red-brick block fronted Wakehurst Road at the north-eastern corner of the site. It contained a waiting hall extending almost the length of the building, with consulting and examining rooms off it, an X-ray room and a dispensary with a separate exit at the end. The main entrance at the eastern end enjoyed a hall supposedly large enough for prams to be left there.³⁶

Work began on the second phase of rebuilding when Princess Louise laid a memorial stone in 1906. The builders were Johnson & Co.³⁷ A towering ward block rose up behind the out-patients' wing, of three main storeys with the standard Nightingale-style wards, here on a small scale with 14 beds. On the east side, a sanitary tower was separated from the ward by a cross-ventilated lobby. Somewhat unusually for a hospital, the ward block was flat-roofed to form an airing ground for patients and nurses. This wing was later named after Erskine Clarke. At the west

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end of the out-patients' department came an operating theatre with a distinctive big north window carried over the roof to provide top-lighting.³⁸

The work left the hospital heavily in debt, not cleared until 1920. Afterwards Sir James and Lady Carmichael became closely involved with the hospital's development; Sir James was the head of a well-established building firm in Tooting and gave material assistance, while in 1926 his wife donated the nearby houses at 80 and 81 Bolingbroke Grove for use as nurses' homes.

Money bequeathed by another 'philanthropically minded builder', William Shepherd, funded the construction of a new wing named after him facing Wandsworth Common in 1925-7. Young & Hall's original scheme for the western of the three ward wings originally planned for the site was revised and updated. Their imposing stair-tower is still the chief feature of the complex, in crisp red brick, with a white-rendered band at its top pierced by three windows on each face, capped by a tiled pyramidal roof with swept eaves. The ward wing to the south, destined for private patients, was of advanced design. Its ground floor housed an 18-bed ward whose long walls were almost entirely glazed and the beds placed parallel to them instead of head-on, anticipating the open balcony or veranda wards of the late 1920s and '30s. On the first and second floors were single rooms and a four-bed ward, lit by full-height bay windows opening on to the balcony overlooking Wandsworth Common.³⁹ Originally open, the triple-decker balcony is a striking feature of the west elevation. It was later glazed in, and the front otherwise mutilated.

North of the stair tower, a compact wing contained a new board room and offices on the ground floor, with a children's ward above. Two further storeys were added later. The children's ward was paid for by the Carmichaels, while the nursing staff raised the money to decorate the ward with tile panels depicting nursery rhymes - 'Dickery Dickery Dock' incorporated a working clock. Picture tiles of

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animals were supplied by the Poole firm, Carter & Co., while the main nursery rhyme panels in the style of Mabel Lucy Atwell were by W. B. Simpson & Sons.⁴⁰ Among other improvements was a new operating theatre, followed in 1928–9 by the erection of a small chapel adjoining.⁴¹

With the completion of the Shepherd wing, the old house was hemmed in on three sides by tall hospital buildings, its main front facing the rear of this latest addition. By 1930 the Governors had in mind the final phase of rebuilding, replacing the house and constructing a large new administration block fronting Wakehurst Road, with a Hall of Remembrance to honour the war dead. The heavy cost of building the block, estimated at £70,000, could not be raised until 1936. The following year the old house came down.

The administration block followed Young & Hall's original scheme in order to tie in with the eastern section built thirty years earlier. Its four storeys and attics over a basement dwarf the neighbouring houses. Like the rest of the hospital, it is of red brick with stone dressings, constructed on a steel frame with concrete floors. In addition to the War Memorial hall it contained the usual offices, south-facing, six-bed wards on the first floor, accommodation for nursing staff above these and the main kitchen on top.⁴²

The hospital was twice damaged in the war. Despite some initial resistance, in 1948 it was transferred to the NHS and continued to function as a general hospital. The future of the Bolingbroke still seemed bright when a department of nurse education opened in 1966, followed by a coronary care unit. But in 1974 the casualty department closed and in 1980 the hospital became a geriatric unit.⁴³ A costly refurbishment was completed in 2004, but soon afterwards it was discovered that the building had 'serious fire-safety problems'. Due to the design of the building 'bottlenecks' would slow the evacuation of upper-floor wards, and the hospital was

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closed to in-patients in March 2005.⁴⁴ In 2009 the building was listed grade II. It was acquired by ARK, an educational charity, with a view to turning it into a new academy school, to be opened after conversion in September 2012. The former children's ward was to become the school library with the picture tiles preserved in situ.⁴⁵

Anti-Vivisection Hospital (demolished)

The National Anti-Vivisection Hospital, sited opposite the south-west entrance to Battersea Park, opened to out-patients in June 1902 and in-patients in January 1903. Like the Bolingbroke Hospital, it occupied a converted house of large proportions. But unlike the Bolingbroke it continued in these premises, expanding into the adjacent smaller houses, and the only purpose-built accommodation on the site was an out-patients' block added in 1915 (Ills 2.12, 2.13). The hospital's history is closely linked with that of the anti-vivisection movement, but it was forced to abandon its principles and become a mainstream general hospital in the 1930s in order to qualify for subsidies from the King's Fund. It passed to the NHS in 1948 and continued in use until the early 1970s.

The house that the hospital acquired at the turn of the century had been built at the corner of Albert Bridge Road and Prince of Wales Drive in 1864–5 by George Todd, under lease from the Battersea Park Commissioners.⁴⁶ A large Italianate residence named Strathdon, it was put up before dreams had faded of the area around Battersea Park becoming as fashionable as Regent's Park. For decades the house remained empty, known locally as Todd's Folly. In 1894 its then leaseholder, Louisa Inderwick, bought the freehold for a mere £690, after protracted negotiations with the Commissioners to waive their usual restrictive covenant about using the premises as a school, hospital or place of worship, tacitly acknowledging that no individual would be likely to take it as a private family house.⁴⁷ The eventual

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purchasers were the trustees for the establishment of a national anti-vivisection hospital, who paid £7,000 for it in 1900.⁴⁸

Henrietta Jane Munroe had first proposed such a hospital in 1896. She was the secretary of the Victoria Street Society, from 1897 the National Anti-Vivisection Society. Due to Mrs Munroe's subsequent ill-health, her founding role was taken over by trustees. These were leading figures in the anti-vivisection movement: Lord Hatherton, Lord Coleridge, the Rev. A. Jackson, Ernest Bell and, on the medical side, Abiathar Wall. Their aims were to found a general hospital where no experiments on living animals would be carried out, to be staffed by those who were pledged against vivisection. More controversially, they refused to use any medicines which had been developed by testing on animals.⁴⁹

Seemingly the only other hospital in the country operating on anti-vivisection principles was the Hospital of St Francis, also in London, in the New Kent Road, established by Dr Josiah Oldfield in 1897. In 1902 the influential journal *The Hospital* fulminated against the 'impudent assumption of the title "hospital" by this wretched, grubby little house', shortly after which it closed.⁵⁰ Battersea's Anti-Vivisection Hospital laid claim to being an altogether more serious institution but nevertheless ran counter to the establishment, and many influential figures in the medical world showed little but contempt for it. In particular its refusal to use medicines developed through animal testing led to the conclusion that the hospital could not have the welfare of its patients as its priority, and thus financial support was denied from the two principal grant-giving bodies, the King Edward and the Metropolitan Hospital Sunday Funds.

Given the hospital's anti-establishment mantle, it is unsurprising that it found its home in Battersea where the Progressive-led Council lent staunch support. The presence of Battersea Dogs' Home, too, is telling, as the home was also against

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vivisection and had a strict policy of keeping its animals out of the clutches of vivisectors. The location of the hospital and the Dogs' Home, together with the sympathies of Battersea Council, also lay behind the selection of Battersea as the site for the Brown Dog Memorial, the controversial anti-vivisection monument erected at the Latchmere Recreation Ground in 1906 (page xxx).

The publicity and controversy surrounding the memorial may have helped swell the hospital's funds from private donations, as by 1912 its debts were cleared and plans were in hand for expanding the accommodation for out-patients and doubling the number of beds for in-patients. When it first opened, the hospital, generally called the 'Anti-Viv', had eleven beds for adults and four for children.⁵¹ By 1910 it had begun to admit paying patients, a necessary method of supplementing income, and in 1911 opened a children's ward. Next year the leasehold interest was acquired of 43 and 45 Albert Bridge Road, a semi-detached pair immediately north of the hospital. Here a cancer research department run by Dr Robert Bell began admitting patients at the end of 1913. At that time the hospital purchased the freehold of the houses and also of 29 and 31 Prince of Wales Drive, west of the main building, for offices and staff accommodation.⁵²

A large vacant plot at the back of the hospital had been acquired in 1911. Aware of the inadequacies of the existing out-patients' department occupying the former stable and coach house, the Board of Management decided to erect a new purpose-built department on the site. Initial plans were drawn up towards the end of 1912 by the hospital's honorary Surveyor and Engineer, J. Wright Kirk, but after some argument the Board approached Edwin T. Hall, of the hospital architects Young & Hall, who had previously designed the Tyler Wing at the London Homeopathic Hospital, including accommodation for out-patients.⁵³ Hall drew up plans for a single-storey block that could be raised to two storeys, and the building contract was awarded to Foster and Dicksee in 1914. The Board encountered

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problems over the contract with the Battersea Trades and Labour Council, and further difficulties raising a loan. Although completed in 1915, the new department did not open until 1923, as there were insufficient funds for equipment or for creating access from Rosenau Road.⁵⁴

By 1928 the hospital had once more cleared most of its debts and decided to embark on fund-raising for a large extension scheme. But the subsequent purchase to that end of 47 and 49 Albert Bridge Road plunged it so deeply into debt that by 1935 it was on the verge of bankruptcy. With about half the wards closed, the then chairman, Ernest Hall, determined to drop the hospital's anti-vivisection ideals. He was reported in the *Morning Post* as blaming the hospital's 'meaningless' title for denying it official funding. Sir Cooper Perry, writing to the King's Fund, observed wryly that 'if there was anything of the old Brown Dog Spirit in the Anti-vivisectionists, Acteon in the person of Lord Ernest would be torn in pieces by his own hounds'.⁵⁵ In the meantime Hall was taking the necessary legal steps to alter the trusts under which the hospital was established, dropping 'anti-vivisection' from its title and its practice. Sanction of the High Court and the Charity Commissioners was given in the summer of 1935.⁵⁶

In 1948 the Battersea General Hospital, as it had become, was taken over by the NHS. It closed in 1972, but the buildings were retained and used as an annexe to the Camberwell Reception Centre. In 1978 plans were approved for a resettlement unit on the site, and the buildings demolished. The scheme was dropped, as was another for a psychiatric day hospital and sheltered housing. The local health authority finally disposed of the site in 1987 and a purpose-built residential care home for Servite Houses opened here in 1991.⁵⁷

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St James's Hospital (demolished)

This large general hospital near the southern boundary of the parish was built in 1908–10 as a workhouse infirmary to serve Wandsworth Union. It was preceded by an industrial school, erected in 1850 for the pauper children of the parish of St James, Westminster – hence its name and that of St James's Road on its western side.

The land here was formerly part of Wandsworth Common. Its selection as a suitable site for a pauper school was due to Charles Lee, long active as a surveyor-architect in Battersea, but also a member of St James's Westminster Vestry and of the joint committee of vestrymen and Governors and Directors of the Poor of St James's appointed to carry through the erection of the school. Lee convinced the committee to drop plans to build at Hanwell, and took it upon himself to find a more eligible plot of land. In October 1849 he revealed that the 4th Earl Spencer would grant, in fee, from 15 to 20 acres at the south end of Wandsworth Common at £30 per acre subject to the approval of the copyholders.⁵⁸ Lee, who was 'well acquainted' with the copyholders, was confident that none would resist: few, if any of the tenants still turned out their livestock to graze on the common; at least a third of the copyholds had been enfranchised, and the common rights of all tenants were now vested in the lord of the manor.⁵⁹

Lee drew up plans for the school and the land was purchased in 1850. The school was to house 250 children at a cost not exceeding £4,200, and was modelled on a similar institution Lee had designed at Anerley, described by *The Builder* as 'strictly industrial'. St James's was three storeys high, the central five bays slightly advanced and given a plain pediment, the wings to either side regularly fenestrated, with white-painted window surrounds and quoins. The builder was B. W. Pearce.⁶⁰

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Changes in poor-law administration in 1868 combined the parish of St James with neighbouring districts to form the Westminster Union. Much to the chagrin of the Governors and Directors of St James's both their workhouse and the Battersea school passed to the new Union. After much discussion and a flurry of legal consultations, St James's sold the school to the Union in 1870, but with just seven acres of the original twenty, the intention being to develop the remainder of the land. In about 1874–6 Westminster Union added a detached infirmary block on the south side of the school.⁶¹

By the early years of the twentieth century Wandsworth and Clapham Union was in urgent need of additional hospital accommodation, the infirmary on St John's Hill being seriously overcrowded. In 1903 the Guardians began negotiations with Westminster Union about acquiring the St James's Road schools.⁶²

In 1904 the freehold of the land and buildings was bought for £21,000. The initial intention to decant sick children from the workhouse into the schools was dropped in order to tackle the equally urgent problem of overcrowding amongst the able-bodied poor in the face of a potential rise in applications for relief over the winter. Accordingly the schools became a branch workhouse, with accommodation for 225 inmates, the first occupants moving there early in 1905, while overcrowding at the St John's Hill infirmary was slightly eased by using the detached children's infirmary block for 50 sick pauper children.⁶³

Building a new adult infirmary at St James' Road now became the priority. In 1907 the Guardians appointed Alfred Saxon Snell to judge plans and on his advice James S. Gibson was selected as the architect. William Johnson & Co. of Wandsworth Common won the building contract on a tender of £66,550 in 1908.⁶⁴ Opened in December 1910 by John Burns, then President of the Local Government Board, the infirmary was erected on the gardens to the east of the old school with a

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separate entrance from Ouseley Road. Here there were a weighbridge and a lodge containing the porter's office and waiting rooms, with an ambulance station adjacent. Two houses next to the entrance in Ouseley Road had been purchased early in 1906. These were allocated to the Medical Superintendent and Assistant Medical Officer, and are still standing (Nos 42A and 44). The infirmary itself followed the pavilion plan, with six three-storey ward blocks providing accommodation for 600 patients. At the centre was an administration block containing the usual offices, board room, staff accommodation, stores and a dining room for the nurses. In the north-west corner was a four-storey home for 75 nurses, set end-on to St James's Road.⁶⁵

Major extensions were made after St James's was taken over by the LCC in 1930. The old school was finally demolished in 1931 and new wards, an out-patients' department, detached boiler-house and laundry were erected. In 1935 X-ray and physiotherapy departments were added. All the works were carried out to designs by the LCC Architect's Department.⁶⁶

During the Second World War there was some bomb damage, reducing the hospital's bed complement by 288. In 1948 the infirmary became part of the NHS, continuing in use as a general hospital with 610 beds. A survey by its new management committee concluded that a new out-patients' department, casualty, restaurant, kitchen and operating theatres were needed. Alan H. Devereux and Elidir L. W. Davies were appointed architects. The new three-storey out-patients' department was built first, opening in 1953. It sat between the nurses' home and the boiler house. Inspired by visits to recent hospital buildings in Europe, particularly Switzerland, the architects used varied materials and incorporated sculpture, mosaic and painting to move away from the grim institutional buildings typical of Boards of Guardians, of which St James's was a notable example. Devereux and Davies succeeded in producing a smart out-patients' department with a hint of a Swiss

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clinic. Michael O'Connell designed a dividing curtain to hang in the ground-floor waiting room. Two pieces were commissioned from Douglas Wain-Hobson, a young sculptor who had exhibited at the 1951 Battersea Park Open Air exhibition. He created a life-size nude in bronze named *Recovery* but soon rechristened the 'Leafless Man of Balham'; it was placed facing patients as they entered the building and shocked local residents who petitioned unsuccessfully for its removal. Overnight the statue was clad in a hospital gown with white apron loincloth, and some weeks later it was found partially covered with surgical plaster and bandages following a students' dance.⁶⁷ The hospital's commitment to contemporary art was not shaken, and in 1960 a series of abstract murals for the children's ward were procured from students of the Royal College of Art.⁶⁸

In 1964 a new central block was completed, with Devereux as sole architect. This four-storey building contained a suite of four octagonal operating theatres, the supply department, and, on the ground floor, a restaurant and dining rooms.⁶⁹

St James' Hospital closed in 1988, services – and Wain-Hobson's sculpture – transferring to St George's Hospital, Tooting. The entire site was cleared in 1992 to make way for housing and a community centre, completed in 1995.⁷⁰

Other buildings and institutions

Dispensaries

On behalf of the deserving poor, in 1844 Battersea's parishioners petitioned the Vestry to set up a dispensary.⁷¹ Although the vestrymen did not accept that such a provision was their responsibility, a dispensary was established that year in

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Battersea High Street. It was reorganized in 1876 to become a 'provident dispensary', encouraging the industrious working classes to subscribe a small sum to entitle them to free medical consultations and medicines. From this came the germ of inspiration to found the Bolingbroke Hospital, which included the Wandsworth Common branch dispensary when it first opened. A further branch opened in 1891 at Cedars Terrace, Queenstown Road.⁷²

Wandsworth and Clapham Union's Board of Guardians built a Dispensary and Relief Station in 1886, designed by Thomas Aldwinckle, with W. G. Wyatt & Co. as builders.⁷³ This surprisingly grand Flemish-style building could be entered either from Abercrombie Street, where it was tucked into an awkward corner, or from gates in Latchmere Road between a pair of lodge-houses accommodating the medical and relieving officers. The high-roofed and high-flèched central hall, with open-timber roof, offered a strikingly benevolent image of the reformed Poor Law, more reminiscent of a *béguinage* than a workhouse (Ills 2.17A, 17B). In 1924 Battersea Council made plans to add a maternity and child welfare centre and a tuberculosis dispensary on the adjacent site to the south in Latchmere Road. This attractive scheme, probably drawn up for the Borough Surveyor by his assistant Henry Hyams, ran into administrative difficulties and did not proceed, leaving the vacant site to be filled with council flats (now Stevenson House).⁷⁴ The main dispensary itself has been demolished but the lodges facing Latchmere Road survive.

The Battersea Dispensary for the Prevention of Consumption opened in 1911 in converted premises at 179 Battersea Bridge Road. Its establishment had been proposed two years earlier at a meeting of the Battersea Voluntary Health Society. Further encouragement came from the renowned physician, Dr R. W. Philip, founder of the pioneering anti-tuberculosis Royal Victoria Dispensary in Edinburgh, who lectured at Battersea Town Hall on the aims and objects of tuberculosis

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dispensaries. The Battersea Dispensary was open to any resident of the borough free of charge, but was principally aimed at uninsured persons unable to pay for a doctor. This was a swift response to the introduction of National Insurance in 1911, which provided free treatment of tuberculosis by the local authority to those insured. In its first year 661 patients applied for treatment: only 179 of them were found actually to have the disease, with another 69 suspected cases. After examination and diagnosis they were given treatment, and might be referred to a sanatorium. Home visits were made, particularly to assess the risk to other family members. Where patients were able to remain in their homes, assistance was given to encourage sleeping out of doors, including the provision of open-air shelters.⁷⁵ The dispensary was taken over in 1921 by Battersea Borough Council.

Katherine Low Settlement

The Katherine Low Settlement has been at 108 Battersea High Street since its inception in 1924, initially in the house formerly called The Cedars, and since the Second World War in the former Cedars Institute adjoining as well.

The Cedars Institute grew out of a club for factory girls started in the early 1880s by Canon Erskine Clarke. The Cedars, an eighteenth-century house largely rebuilt thirty years earlier, had recently been a home for 'working gentlewomen'. Clarke acquired it with various activities in mind, but only the club endured. It initially occupied a parish room in the garden, probably converted from an old outbuilding. This was also used as a boys' and girls' ragged school by Isabella Gilmore and her deaconesses, based on Clapham Common North Side.⁷⁶

In 1904 Clarke commissioned a design for a new building on the site of the old room from his architect, J. S. Quilter.⁷⁷ Next year he transferred the site to

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trustees on condition of their putting up the building. He was assisted by a group of well-off ladies who made a public appeal for money, writing from the Belgrave Square home of Lady Beatrice Pretyman.⁷⁸ The most active of the club's supporters were Nesta Lloyd and her brother-in-law H. G. Ferguson Davie. Together with a bank manager, Reginald Skipwith, they were the trustees.

Quilter's building (for much of its existence numbered 106A) was erected in 1906.⁷⁹ It is solidly and plainly built in red brick, with a street-corner facing of green glazed brick. It contained separate club rooms for boys and girls, and a chapel on the attic floor with a simple scissors-truss roof. The Cedars itself had been used meanwhile as a clergy house. In 1912 it was bought by the trustees and Nesta Lloyd took up residence, fitting up a 'beautiful' chapel there (no trace of which remains) in memory of her sister Gwendolen Davie, a worker at the girls' club who had died in 1902.⁸⁰

Ill-health forced Nesta Lloyd to give up her work at the Cedars Institute, and in 1922 she and Skipwith (Davie having been killed in 1915 at the Dardanelles) transferred the property to trustees for a new boys' club run by members of Christ's College, Cambridge. This club had its origins in the Christ's College Working Boys' Home in Camberwell Road, set up in 1904 in connection with the university's Cambridge House settlement but closed in 1915 because of the war.⁸¹ In 1921 the project was revived on new lines, leading to the opening of the Christ's College Boys' Club at the former Cedars Institute the following year, under H. S. Tyler of Christ's. The old house was at first unoccupied, but in 1924, through the agency of Nesta Lloyd, was let at a nominal rent for a girls' club. This was run by a newly formed Anglican settlement in memory of Katherine Mackay Low, a leading light in the United Girls' School Settlement Mission at Camberwell, who had died the year before. The girls' club was opened in May

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1924 by the future Queen, H.R.H. the Duchess of York. Meanwhile, money was raised for an extension to the boys' club, a two-storey wing built in 1924–5.

In the inter-war years the settlement ran a medley of clubs for boys, girls and mothers, and during the war became first an evacuation centre and then a rest centre. In June 1944 the artist David Bomberg was teaching there part-time.⁸² That month a flying bomb hit Gwynne Road, leaving the house uninhabitable.

Subsequently the two enterprises were amalgamated as the Christ's College and Katherine Low Settlement. The premises were involved in wide-ranging post-war plans for a North Battersea Community Centre to have occupied the much-bombed three acres between Green Lane and the railway. Discussions were held with Paul Mauger, 'a very competent architect', as to the design of a school and hall, and the LCC was asked to buy the site as an adjunct to the borough council's St John's Estate.⁸³ But despite all-round good will the project foundered.

This left the boys' club saddled with obsolescent buildings and dwindling finances. Tyler, its mainstay, was dead, and some college members regarded the settlement concept as anachronistic. A crisis came in 1953 when the buildings urgently needed major expenditure. An appeal to the college governing body fell on deaf ears: 'demands of this kind might go on indefinitely without any real result'.⁸⁴ Meanwhile, friction grew with the Katherine Low ladies, whose contribution to the running of the joint settlement far exceeded that of the club. The upshot was a somewhat acrimonious dissolution, and the transfer of the property to new trustees nominated by the Katherine Low Settlement, which has remained in occupation ever since, organizing youth and other community initiatives.

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In 1958 the southern part of the site, where a detached club-room had been destroyed by the flying bomb, was fitted up as a playground by the Variety Club of Great Britain. In 2002 a crèche was built there, and improvements made to the other buildings, by Eger Architects, under the Government's Sure Start programme. The crèche has laminated-timber beams and columns, with a curved roof and glazed front; the rear wall, alongside the railway, is inset with coloured glass blocks.⁸⁵

Caius College Mission, Holman Road (demolished)

An Anglican mission and club supported by Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, began operations in Battersea village in 1887. A mission chapel with a club beneath was built in stages in Holman Road between 1892 and 1908, and for a time contributed to Battersea's parochial system. Eventually the club predominated and the religious element declined.

Establishing settlements or missions in poor parts of London, maintained by Oxbridge colleges and the public schools, came into fashion after the founding of Toynbee Hall in 1884. Bishop Thorold of Rochester was supportive, and induced Cambridge colleges to set up missions in South London. In Battersea the initiative appears to have come from Francis W. Pawson, one of Erskine Clarke's many curates, a Caian and a soccer blue.⁸⁶ Though most of St Mary's parish had by then been subdivided and assigned to district churches, slum-ridden Battersea village still stood in need of alleviation.

The original proposition was agreed in the summer of 1887, and a committee established at Caius. Clarke put the old vicarage at the mission's disposal, formally rechristened Caius House. Here young graduates were invited

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to live and partake in educational and charitable work under Pawson's superintendence. Evening lectures and debates, directed towards the 'respectable artisan', took place in the meeting room behind. The mission also took on 20-22 Battersea Square near by, renaming it Gonville House. It offered cheap and wholesome food for the destitute, while upstairs were reading rooms and a workmen's club.⁸⁷

These arrangements ran into trouble. Few graduates volunteered to live at Caius House, while Gonville House turned out to be beyond the mission's resources and closed. Pawson having left, the enterprise was recast with a more specifically religious intent and a warden independent of St Mary's. Clarke promised to hand over the cure of some streets west of Battersea High Street once the Caians had built a mission and club room.⁸⁸

Under a part-time warden, the Rev. W. B. L. Hopkins, the revised 'Caius Hall' took shape in 1891. A freehold was purchased at the corner of Holman and Harroway Roads, and the architects W. & C. A. Bassett Smith provided plans. These adumbrated a Gothic church with seven-bay nave over a Sunday school, and a small back extension with billiard and club rooms. Only a fraction could be immediately afforded. The lower half of the western end proceeded in 1892. A second phase added more at ground level with an upper storey, which became the permanent church. In a final phase of 1907 the clubroom was tacked on to the north side, again by the Bassett Smiths, with William Hammond as builder. The last three bays of the nave were never built, leaving an unfinished end towards Harroway Road.⁸⁹

Raising the church above a high ground storey imparted some dignity to the mission, otherwise plain externally. The church's brick-faced interior was tall, with a high arch properly dividing nave and chancel. There were stalls and

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encaustic tiles in the chancel, and an old-fashioned oak pulpit and stone font in the nave, seated with chairs. The outstanding embellishment was a Burne-Jones stained glass inserted into the central lancet of the chancel in 1914. It commemorated four local boys who drowned on a Caius Mission outing to Rottingdean. Lady Burne-Jones, who lived at Rottingdean, gave her late husband's design in their memory. At the top of the window was the figure of St Martin dividing his cloak, in the lower half a smaller-scale scene of Christ calling two of his disciples.⁹⁰

The settlement continued for some years at the vicarage (Caius House), and it was there that the doctor and Antarctic explorer Edward Wilson lived as a 'missioner' in 1896–8. He would have helped at Caius Hall, the Sunday school beneath the church, and at premises rented for men's, boys' and girls' clubs in Harroway Road, before the 1907 extension to the main building. A boxing club founded in 1912 became a distinguishing mark of the mission. Decline was slow, but by the millennium services had long been discontinued in the church and the club sorely needed new facilities. Demolition in favour of flats incorporating club rooms took place in 2008, in consequence of which the Burne-Jones window was taken to Caius College. At the time of writing, the Caius House Youth Club was temporarily in Petworth Street, pending the construction of new premises in Holman Road.⁹¹

National Penitentiary

The largest abortive scheme of development in Battersea's history was the 'National Penitentiary', projected in 1781–2 and again in 1792–4 on a site covering nearly 80 acres (some 3% of the parish), bounded in modern terms by Plough Road, St John's

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Hill and Falcon Road and so including the present Clapham Junction. As this project has been recently studied by Keith Bailey, it is only covered briefly here.⁹²

The idea of a national gaol surfaced during a seminal period for British penal reform, prompted by the prison researches of John Howard and the curtailing of transportation for felons to the North American colonies after the War of Independence broke out in 1776. Until Australia became their destination after 1787, convicted offenders had to be kept at home, and extra space (including hulks on the Thames) found for their incarceration. The Penitentiary Act, passed in 1779, provided for the building of two penitentiaries, one for men and the other for women, in which the reformed Howardian principles of ‘solitary Imprisonment, accompanied by well regulated labour, and religious Instruction’ would prevail.⁹³ Three supervisors, one of them Howard, were appointed to carry this through in 1780; Clerkenwell was the site first favoured, but nothing came of it. A fresh committee of Sir Gilbert Eliot, Sir Thomas Bunbury and Thomas Bowdler then took up the cudgels. After considering Wandsworth Fields for the men’s prison, they opted instead for land close by at ‘Battersea Rise’, large enough to accommodate prisons for both sexes and plentiful space for agricultural and industrial activity – an important part of the concept. The new site had probably been chosen by late June 1781.⁹⁴

The area in question was in the ownership of the first Earl Spencer, partly as his freehold but mostly on a long lease under the Archbishop of York. No immediate local opposition seems noted to this gargantuan scheme, perhaps because the land, some of it marshy, was thought of in low-value, agricultural terms. An open architectural competition for both prisons took place in 1781–2. So rare an opportunity met an eager response. Of the 63 efforts submitted, only John Soane’s adventurous designs seem to have been preserved.⁹⁵ Bailey calculates the combined area of Soane’s two prisons as 19 acres, or perhaps one quarter of the land. The winners were William Blackburn for the men’s prison and Thomas Hardwick for the

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women's. Blackburn's success set him off on a short but influential career as a designer of prisons, in association with Howard. But the potential cost, estimated at over £200,000, deterred the Treasury. By 1784 new powers had made it easier for local justices to build more prisons, while a fresh Transportation Act promised to renew the exporting of felons. Lord Spencer having refused the first offer made to him, a price of £6,600 had been assessed for the Battersea land by a jury but it was never bought.⁹⁶

The moribund project was revived under less auspicious circumstances in 1792–4 because of Jeremy Bentham's unremitting lobbying. Bentham now promoted his panopticon – an enhanced version of the Howard–Blackburn style of prison – as the key to humane social reform. It was meant to replace the hulks off Woolwich, and to obviate the drawbacks of the renewed transportation policy. Bentham had elaborate models of buildings and machinery made for display at his house, which Pitt's Home Secretary, Henry Dundas, visited in September 1792. In principle Dundas and Pitt then approved the notion of a national panopticon prison under Bentham's personal management.⁹⁷ A fresh Penitentiary Bill was needed to buy the Battersea site and erect the prison. This Bentham largely drafted and pressed upon Parliament in 1794. But by then war with France had begun, and the Government had again grown cool.

By now local interests in Battersea and Clapham were also aroused. The 2nd Earl Spencer, soon to join the Government as one of the 'Portland Whigs', had inherited the land. In a robust memorandum his man of business, John Harrison, noted that 'if this receptacle for Felons Thieves and Cut-throats is there to be established it will soon be seen what effect it will have on the value of property as it will unquestionably drive away all the respectable residents, and the value of property there will sink in a degree not calculable'.⁹⁸ Influential residents including Charles Baldwin, Joseph Benwell and Samuel Thornton gathered at the Plough, Clapham, in May 1794 and passed a resolution, likewise emphasizing the disastrous

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effect the prison would have on the many villas lately built in the neighbourhood.⁹⁹ The Bill passed, but with the amendment that the panopticon prison was to be built at Battersea Rise 'or any other as convenient and proper Spot of ground'.¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile Bentham, having acquainted himself intimately with the Battersea site, harried Spencer, Archbishop Markham of York, and the Harrisons with lengthy blandishments and reassurances.¹⁰¹ He contended that a 1,000-inmate prison would actually be 'an accession to the Neighbourhood ... So far from flying from the spot, Builders will flock to it, were it only for the benefit of the protection afforded by the Guard.' The site, he argued, had nothing on it but 'Two or three Cottages of no value, and a Public House [the Falcon] that would make a fortune by the choice'.¹⁰²

These pretensions received short shrift, yet Bentham was civilly treated. The emollient Spencer even instructed Thomas Harrison in 1796 to offer him up to 125 acres in the marshy district eastwards of Battersea Bridge, including some timber docks. Bentham, by then angling for a site at Charlton, turned up his nose at these 'repositories of putrescent mud', but soon found himself 'thrown back upon your Lordship's Marsh, spite of my utmost efforts to emerge from it'.¹⁰³ Now thoroughly fed up with the brash philosopher, the earl responded: 'I always had and still continue to have very strong objections against your pursuing your plans at Battersea ... I am determined to keep my Estate unless compelled by law to give it up'.¹⁰⁴ So terminated a proposal which, had it been implemented, would have shaped Battersea's history profoundly.

Battersea Dogs' and Cats' Home

Since 1871 Battersea Dogs' Home has occupied the same site, wedged between the railway lines behind Battersea Park Road, close by Battersea's two great

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landmarks, the power station and the park. It moved here from Hollingsworth Street, Holloway, where it had been founded in 1860 by Mary Tealby, a middle-class woman who had separated from her husband. She was helped by her brother, the Rev. Edward Bates, with whom she lived, and after her death in 1865 he continued to be closely involved with the institution. From the start, the home provided a temporary refuge for lost or abandoned dogs, aiming to re-unite them with their owners or find new homes for them.

There have been several phases of building on the site, with little now remaining of the earliest. The most significant of the older buildings is the one modest survivor of additions carried out in 1907 by Clough Williams-Ellis: Whittington Lodge. This bijou cattery with playful Arts and Crafts detailing gives a foretaste of the architect's characteristic style. The lodge is now dwarfed by multi-storey kennels, the inevitable solution to an increasing demand for accommodation to ever higher welfare standards on a constricted site.

The original premises in Holloway occupied stables and a yard behind houses in a densely populated district. There was no room for expansion and neighbours complained about the noise, the smell and the 'disgraceful sights' which ensued when the dogs were let loose in the yard. The decision to move had been taken by October 1869. A good-sized vacant plot was purchased from the London, Chatham & Dover Railway Company next to their recently opened Battersea Park Road Station (page xxx) and secluded from residential areas by railway lines. The land here was being used by the railwaymen for growing vegetables, and the home paid them compensation for the crops they had in the ground when the site changed hands in 1870.¹⁰⁵

Plans for the necessary buildings for animals and staff were made by Pain and Clark, surveyors, who had been the architects of the new headquarters

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building of the RSPCA in Jermyn Street built in 1869-70.¹⁰⁶ Thomas Joseph Tully of Dalston won the building contract.¹⁰⁷ By May 1871 the work was either completed or nearly so. At Holloway there had been room for at most about 100 dogs; twice that number could be accommodated at Battersea. Since the Metropolitan Police Act of 1864, all stray dogs taken up by the police were consigned to the home, and as it became more widely known, so the numbers of dogs brought to its doors increased. In 1884, for example, 14,772 dogs were received, but the following year over 25,000 were taken into the home, largely due to a police order for the seizure of all dogs found in the streets 'not under control'.¹⁰⁸

The original accommodation was insufficient for such numbers. The first addition, made as early as 1875, comprised a single-storey block of fourteen kennels for small dogs, arranged in a line with exercise pens behind.¹⁰⁹ Later two of the railway arches were acquired and enclosed to provide more kennel space. Inevitably many dogs had to be destroyed. The first 'lethal chamber' was constructed in 1883. This allowed the old method of dispatching animals by poisoning with prussic acid to be replaced by a method devised by Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson whereby the creatures were put to sleep by 'narcotic vapour'.¹¹⁰

In 1884 a range of offices with a committee room and a house for the secretary were built as well as a home for boarding cats. Cats had been taken in to the home since at least 1883 when the provision of a permanent building for them was first mooted.¹¹¹ A large crematorium was erected in 1886, prior to which carcasses had been sent to a suburban farm where they were used for fertilising the land. Local opposition forced the home into this more costly solution. The public were able to have their deceased pets destroyed in the crematorium for a fee. A second furnace was built in 1896 following a huge rise

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in the number of dogs received after a muzzling order issued by the LCC in response to a rabies scare.¹¹²

Expansion and a major overhaul of the buildings took place in 1906–7 when five more railway arches and a strip of ground beyond to the west of the tracks were leased. Three architects, Nicholson & Corlette, Percy Hodgkins, and Clough Williams-Ellis, were invited to submit plans to convert the arches into kennels and lay out the new ground as an exercising area. Williams-Ellis, for one, attended the meeting at which the plans were examined and ‘explained the drawings he had made’. He was appointed on the spot.¹¹³ Charles Elcock of Hartfield, Sussex, successfully tendered for the building contract on his optimistic estimate of £1,650. It was almost certainly Elcock with whom Williams-Ellis had spent a ‘summer month’ after leaving the Architectural Association, acting as his assistant.¹¹⁴ Building work was ‘pushed on vigorously’ and completed late in 1906. The arches are still in use but the exercise yard has long since been built over.

In addition to tackling the new site, Clough Williams-Ellis took in hand the modernization of the rest of the buildings (Ills 2.21, 22). Most of this work, which was carried out in 1907, consisted of improvements to the drainage, sanitation and ventilation of the kennels, but there was some reconstruction and one completely new building – Whittington Lodge.¹¹⁵ Later, Williams-Ellis recalled this ‘rather odd commission’ to impose order on the ‘existing huddle of odds and ends of buildings’

with such seamliness as I could contrive...I was permitted to do a little face-lifting of the office blocks’ street front and slightly to embellish the entrance and board room, whilst on some pretext or other I did get away with a little two-

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storied pavilion with a cupola and weather vane atop its steep pan-tiled roof, and an elegant outside timber stairway round it.¹¹⁶

Seemingly Whittington Lodge was in danger of being torn down as a fire-risk, until Williams-Ellis 'found someone who claimed that he could render it fireproof with a dope of his, when I think the authorities were as glad of this dubious excuse to let it remain as I was'.¹¹⁷

The redecoration of the boardroom carried out by Waring & Gillow, and a bas-relief commemorative tablet designed by Williams-Ellis's assistant, James B. Scott, have not survived.¹¹⁸

For decades the home remained little altered, although the method of destroying animals was updated in 1910 when new lethal chambers were constructed by B. Richardson, the son of their inventor. These were in effect gas-chambers into which chloroform was gradually admitted to put the animals to sleep before administering a lethal dose of carbon-monoxide gas. A gas-powered cremating furnace completed the process.¹¹⁹

During the Second World War the main entrance building fronting Battersea Park Road sustained general bomb damage, but it was not replaced until 1965. The new entrance block with offices and a flat for the secretary was designed by Ellis, Clarke & Gallannaugh,¹²⁰ but was demolished in 2009 to make way for a new cattery.

Most of the original buildings were replaced in the 1970s with undistinguished low-rise kennels, but these were short-lived.¹²¹ A multi-storey kennel block was built to designs by Devereux and Partners (project architect Tim Magee), named the Tealby Kennels and opened by the Queen in 1991. Of steel-frame construction with red-brick and aluminium cladding panels, it is of

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unashamedly utilitarian appearance. It contains 200 kennels, primarily to house dogs for re-homing. Requirements such as the need to hose down the kennels regularly dictated the use of non-deteriorating materials, including non-corrosive steel, and lining each floor with epoxy resin to prevent water penetration. The ground floor contains garages, holding kennels, incinerators and a mortuary. More kennels occupy the upper floors and there are exercise runs on the partially covered roof. The principal contractor was Neilcott Construction.¹²²

Plans to repeat the Tealby block on two other areas of the site were abandoned and in 1993 eight architects were invited to produce 'concepts' for further new buildings: dog kennels, a cattery for the increasing number of cats, and a new visitor and reception block. Martin Richmond Associates were appointed for the first phase comprising dog kennels and reception block, with Martin Richmond and Charles Knowles responsible for the designs.¹²³

Richmond and Knowles's block now dominates the site. It was named the Kent Building after Prince Michael of Kent, the home's president, who laid the foundation stone in June 1995. Of constructional yellow brick with reconstituted-stone dressings, it rises to four tall storeys, partially fronting Battersea Park Road and looming above the low-level railway lines on the eastern boundary of the site. It comprises three sections: 300 dog kennels in two, four-storey blocks with inset balcony runs; a visitors' block, with interview, meeting and clinic areas; and a top-lit 'ramp hall' between the two, creating an acoustic barrier, as well as a more dog-friendly means of ingress and egress. The visitors' block has a curved entrance front of grey-tinted glass curtain walling, facing Whittington Lodge. The Kent Building was built by R. Mansell Ltd and opened in 1996.¹²⁴

In 1995 the Home also acquired the 1½-acre site to the north, with eleven further railway arches under the line into Victoria Station. This provides access

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from Queenstown Road, staff parking and exercise runs and some temporary office accommodation.¹²⁵ The expansion followed on from an earlier agreement for a new lease of the seven arches converted to kennels in 1906 together with the land to the west.¹²⁶

Fronting Battersea Park Road, the new cattery was built in 2009–10, designed by Charles Knowles Design Architects (project architect, Charles Knowles, design team Knowles, Ross Sweetman and Andrew Scott). The principal building contractors were John Sisk & Sons. Of four storeys, the home features glass curtain walling, curved at one end, and, in addition to staff and public areas, provides 87 cat pens and four 'socialising rooms'.¹²⁷