

Schools and Colleges

In 1870 the School Board for London came into being under the Elementary Education Act. Just before the Act passed, the Society of Arts published 'an inquiry into the existing state of education in Battersea', the last of four such it sponsored in districts of London. Its author, T. Paynter Allen, painted a picture of a 'pre-eminently poor parish' under population pressure. Allegedly thousands of houses were in construction or untenanted, yet sixteen inhabitants were 'no uncommon number to a house'. 'In every quarter of the parish it is the complaint of parents that there is no school, not already overcrowded, to which their children can be sent'.

Twenty-four voluntary schools offered 4,160 places, yet Allen computed the school-age population of Battersea as roughly 12,600. 'Where were the remaining 8,000?' Apart from a supposed 600 'in the streets', his answer was that they were at dame schools or 'private adventure' establishments. 'No one need have any trouble setting up a school in any street in Battersea ... The projector requires neither capital, experience, professional ability, nor special aptitude of any sort; the simple expedient of placing a card in a window on Saturday ... will ordinarily raise the nucleus of the future school by Monday'.¹

In pre-industrial Battersea, schools in private houses had been the norm. The earliest known operated between about 1666 and 1672 in Battersea's vicarage, while the vicar was living with the St John family or elsewhere. It was run first by Charles Parkhurst and then by Thomas Horrockes, a clergyman ejected for dissent who retained local protection, since according to Edmund Calamy 'he boarded and taught young gentlemen, among whom were two of the sons of Sir Walter St John'.² Later, Thomas Powell, described in his will as a schoolmaster of Battersea, died in

Draft

1750 with debts of over £400 owing to him for board and tuition of a large number of boys and a few girls, some of good standing. Powell's establishment had a schoolroom and a dining room for the boys. The suggestion that this was Sir Walter St John's own school in Battersea High Street, the oldest in the parish with a continuous history, is questionable.³

There are further passing references to private boarding schools in the parish during the Georgian era, most of them in the central 'village' area. Around the 1770s the Rev. John Gardnor, as yet still the parish curate and doubtless seeking to supplement his income, issued a detailed prospectus for an academy for a maximum of thirty boys (boarders only) in his house. Mathematics, geography, music, drawing and fencing were all offered; decorum was punctiliously observed at mealtimes, Gardnor told prospective parents, while 'the French Tongue is constantly spoken in the Family' – fees, £30 per year, or 40 guineas for 'Parlour Boarders'.⁴ After Gardnor took over as vicar in 1778, the academy was being run in partnership with the glass enameller and drawing master William Beilby. It was perhaps a variant of this same private school, near or even in part of the workhouse, that passed into the hands of the next curate, Richard Morgan.⁵ Girls' schools included a young ladies' boarding school opened near Battersea Bridge in 1790, 'each of whom will be allowed a separate bed', promised the proprietress;⁶ and the 'Battersea House Boarding School' to which Jeremy Bentham paid fees for a niece in 1821.⁷ Their number dwindled after schools became purpose-built, but they persisted in outmoded villas with long gardens and the like. Under Erskine Clarke, for instance, the vicarage was again appropriated as the Vicarage School for Girls, later transferred to the Shrubbery near Clapham Common.

Sir Walter St John's School was founded in 1700 if not earlier. For the first century of its existence it was small and humble compared to its private competitors, but during that time it had no purpose-built rivals. Had Allen conducted his survey in 1850, he would have found just three such schools in the parish. Sir Walter St John's was operating from its original premises, but under the name of Battersea

Draft

Village School, and linked now with Battersea Training College, the pioneering college for teachers established at Old Battersea House near by. That apart, there were just two tiny schools: one of 1826 in Battersea New Town, Nine Elms, and another of 1840 linked to the Battersea Chapel, York Road. All other instruction took place privately. The voluntary schools mentioned by Allen were nearly all of the 1850s and '60s, and church- or chapel-affiliated. Most were still small, though the largest, Christ Church Schools, catered for 600.

The continuous programme of school-building embarked upon in Battersea after 1870 can be set against that backdrop. The School Board for London spent the next three decades battling to overcome the shortfall exposed by Allen and keep pace with the population. It did so effectively enough to put voluntary school-building agencies in the shade. Though six of the twenty board schools then built have been demolished and only eight are still in educational use, enough remain to stamp the Battersea skyline. Indeed the famous vignette from the Sherlock Holmes story *The Naval Treaty*, where Holmes extols the board schools as 'beacons of the future', takes place on a train clattering through Battersea. Between Queenstown Road and Clapham Junction, Holmes and Watson could have glimpsed a shoal of such schools rearing up from the sea of artisan housing: Basnett Road, Gideon Road, Holden Street, Latchmere, Lavender Hill and Shillington Street, to use their old names, while west of the junction the festively gabled Plough Road presided over the division of lines. Though the first two have gone, the school-crowned panorama southwards from the railway east of Clapham Junction can still be savoured. It is one of London's least-blemished Victorian vistas.

The impact of the board schools was immediate. Charges were imposed until the 1880s and many schools started in temporary hired premises or huts before permanent buildings could be put up, yet they were soon fully subscribed. Nonconformists now stopped building their own schools; indeed Southlands College off Battersea High Street was founded to supply Wesleyan women teachers for this new breed of schools. Anglicans were warier of non-denominational

Draft

instruction, but in Battersea they too largely ceased competing with the better-equipped board schools. Among Anglican voluntary schools, only the tiny St Peter's (1875) and St Michael's (1887–8) post-date the 1870 Act. The creation of St Michael's School is curious, as Canon Erskine Clarke had in 1877 given up classes held there in an iron room once the Belleville Road Board School opened, 'with all the space and appliances which the support of the rates afford'.⁸ That year Battersea's largest and smallest Anglican schools, Christ Church Schools and an outpost of St George's School at Nine Elms, were both ceded to the School Board after just eleven and seven years of respective existence.⁹ Christ Church eventually reverted to Anglican management, but it could never compete with the neighbouring Shillington Street Board School and was eventually 'downsized'. And in 1880 Sir Walter St John's felt that because of the board schools it need no longer offer elementary places, allowing it to cater for older boys.

Battersea's first three board schools (Battersea Park, Bolingbroke Road and Winstanley Road) accommodated between 575 and 720 children. All were rapidly extended to take in more. Their successors were bigger. Sleaford Street of 1873–4 and Holden Street (Shaftesbury Park) of 1875–7 both housed more than a thousand children. In later 'three-decker' board schools a complement of over 1,500, divided equally between infants, girls and boys, was standard. From the 1880s these large schools mostly followed a symmetrical plan, their centres occupied by superimposed halls. They were normally built in stages, as money became available, as at Honeywell Road, Lavender Hill and Wix's Lane; sometimes the composition was never completed, as at Shillington Street. Peculiarities of site permitted alternatives. At Plough Road (High View) an asymmetrical design with a single bulbous-topped tower prevailed.

The first London board schools had no proper halls, though Bolingbroke Road had a 'centre room'. Central halls connected to a cluster of surrounding classrooms came in during the 1870s. They did not dominate at first, as can be seen from Latchmere School of 1882–3, said to represent the final thinking of E. R.

Draft

Robson, first architect to the School Board, before his assistant T. J. Bailey took over. Perhaps because Bailey lived locally, Battersea schools (Latchmere, Lavender Hill and Plough Road) were unusually well illustrated in the building press, the last two from drawings exhibited at the Royal Academy.

From the 1880s the Board differentiated its schools and aligned them to local needs. Surrey Lane of 1884–5 became one of a select few ‘higher grade schools’, where an extra standard or class was added at the top end, and also boasted the novelty of a workshop, while Ponton Road, in rough Nine Elms, became an ‘industrial school’. In the 1890s cookery and laundry rooms and manual centres proliferated, usually in low-rise annexes. At Lavender Hill School a separate block for pupil-teachers ran to a laboratory, drawing school and gymnasium, exciting the cheese-paring suspicion of government. Such pushing beyond the bounds of ‘elementary education’ contributed to the Board’s demise at the end of 1903.

Meanwhile Battersea had also acquired some large private foundations. The influx began in the 1850s when the open acreage of Wandsworth Common, prey to enclosures, enticed educational bodies looking for suburban seclusion. First came the St James’s Industrial Schools near the Balham boundary of the parish and the Royal Masonic Institution’s Girls’ School further north, both opened in 1852 and now demolished. The colossal Royal Victoria Patriotic Asylum for girls, across the Wandsworth boundary, arrived in 1858.

Two new charitable schools followed in the 1870s. The Patriotic School for Boys, next to its larger neighbour but just inside Battersea, proved short-lived and was soon converted to Emanuel School; while Battersea Grammar School on St John’s Hill emerged from reorganizing the charity directing Sir Walter St John’s School. Both Emanuel and Battersea Grammar arose from endowed-school reform, which went in parallel with the setting-up of the school boards. But their ways parted. Battersea Grammar School was a local foundation, supposed to spearhead secondary education for Battersea children, with a renewed Sir Walter St John’s

Draft

School acting as a feeder. Emanuel School was a boarding school created from amalgamating certain Westminster charities. It took over the Patriotic Boys' premises in 1883. As a result Emanuel enjoyed more space, and could expand when the boarding element dwindled and the school sought out the local middle classes after 1900. As a day school created in an old villa, Battersea Grammar had no such advantages and soon sold to the railways most of what open space it had. While it stagnated, Sir Walter St John's recovered ground, becoming from the 1890s the thriving practical secondary school that Battersea needed.

By then Battersea, like the rest of London, was inching towards a system whereby bright boys (not yet girls) could climb the 'ladder' from the board schools to local secondary schools and maybe beyond. An example is Albert Mansbridge, a carpenter's son and future founder of the Workers' Educational Association. Mansbridge attended Bolingbroke Road and Surrey Lane schools before winning a scholarship in 1885 to Sir Walter St John's and hence onward to Battersea Grammar School. His means allowed him no further, so in 1890 he left at fourteen to work as a City clerk, while pursuing his studies via a university extension course at Munt's Hall, Clapham Junction.¹⁰

Later Mansbridge took a course at the Battersea Polytechnic. Raised on Battersea Park Road in 1892-4, this was a key piece in the jigsaw of industrial Battersea's training and welfare, and the only one of three polytechnics planned for South London to acquire a wholly new building. Battersea Polytechnic symbolized the parish's stride to educational maturity since Allen's report. But it was not at first co-ordinated with Battersea's school system, fostering feeder schools of its own that had later to be integrated into wider local secondary provision. There was also friction between its vocational slant and the polytechnic movement's early ideal of bringing culture and recreation to working men and women. As the institution grew, those facilities lost out. It is a measure of Edwardian Battersea's thrust that its polytechnic was among the first to embrace a wholly academic and vocational

Draft

orientation. The movement which led Battersea Polytechnic to become the University of Surrey in 1966 was palpable by 1900.

By the time the LCC took over the board schools in 1904, Battersea was built up. The Council's main task in respect of elementary schools was improving what had already been built. A Board of Education circular of 1909 limiting class sizes to 60 led to the reconstruction of Mantua Street (Falconbrook) School in 1913 and Belleville Road School in 1921–2.¹¹ The LCC thought some new schools in Battersea still desirable and in 1911 hoped to create four. None was built. At Meteor Street near Clapham Common, the Council bought a site and won an enquiry against opposition, but the project collapsed after the hiatus of the First World War.¹²

A more telling case was Linda Street off York Road. There as part of the shake-up of school design following T. J. Bailey's retirement, the LCC put a new school for 1,264 children out to competition in 1913. Arnold Mitchell (once an assistant of Bailey's) won with a single-storey design which followed the best recent practice and earned praise in the building press (Ill. 4.1). But when the Board of Education saw the design, its architectural adviser objected: 'it appears that, as is likely to be the case in London, the site is not of sufficient size to make the building of one storey only'. The LCC's own architects privately agreed. This project too foundered, and Linda Street did not get its new school until Joseph Tritton School of 1952–3.¹³ The only educational building the LCC actually erected in north Battersea before the First World War was a handsome set of divisional offices at 92 St John's Hill (H. L. Holloway, builder, 1908–9); even that had been projected under the School Board.¹⁴

Further south the LCC did better. It was early in the field with the Clapham County Secondary School for Girls, Broomwood Road (1908–9). Strategically sited for middle-class appeal, it was one of very few such schools erected by the Council before the First World War. Provision for boys was harder to resolve, because of existing local voluntary schools. As their prime source of funding, the LCC and its

Draft

successor after 1965, the Inner London Education Authority, strove to shape their policies, teaching and indeed location. Demographic change and educational politics both played their part in this long-running battle. Battersea Grammar School moved away to Streatham in the 1930s, losing its identity forty years later, while Emanuel resisted and went independent in 1976. Through amalgamations, Sir Walter St John's School forewent its name in 1977 and its ancient site in 1988. But its buildings remain in school use as one of Wandsworth's post-Thatcher crop of independent schools, Thomas's, Battersea (the same group has also taken over the Broomwood Road school as Thomas's, Clapham).

Battersea's purpose-built secondary schools from the 1930s onwards are a disappointment. Between the wars the LCC managed to raise only the Battersea Central School, Culvert Road (1938–9), replacing converted premises in Surrey Lane. This was enlarged in 1965–9 to create Battersea Park Comprehensive School. The other 'provided' secondary school of the post-war period, Marianne Thornton School, Clapham Common West Side (1958–60), was amalgamated with Clapham County School in the 1970s and obliterated twenty years later. In the voluntary sector the Salesian College, a Catholic secondary school started in converted premises, was rebuilt in 1964–6 but has now closed.

Apart from Joseph Tritton School, Battersea's new provided primary schools of the post-war years (Chesterton, Ethelburga, John Burns, John Milton and Sir James Barrie Schools) replaced outdated or damaged board schools. Like many post-war schools, they lacked robustness and flexibility. All except Sir James Barrie and the charming Chesterton have been demolished. Failures in fabric were not the only reason. After the Inner London Education Authority was abolished in 1990, its services in Battersea passed to Conservative-controlled Wandsworth Council. Against a backdrop of falling population Wandsworth took a briskly reductive attitude towards providing school places, with an eye on realizing the value of sites. A paper of 1992 scrutinizing school accommodation in the borough concluded that the Battersea district (not quite the same as the old parish) had the biggest gap

Draft

between provided primary capacity (8,608) and pupils on the roll (5,378), or a surplus of 28.8%.¹⁵

A round of closures followed, often bitterly contested, as at Latchmere (1993–4) and Ethelburga (1999–2000). The advent of ‘parental choice’ and the partial recovery of Battersea’s population complicated these debates. At Ethelburga School, first earmarked for closure in 1992 and put under ‘special measures’ in 1998, the governors argued unavailingly that local demand for primary places was increasing, and that in North Battersea most local children left primary schools ‘at a variety of ages (or never attend them in the first place) because the secondary provision has been of such a low standard for many years’.¹⁶ Not all schools slated for closure were discontinued. Falconbrook survived after radical reconstruction, while empty space at Wix was filled by a feeder school for the Lycée Français in South Kensington.

School and college provision in Battersea offers a different face at the time of writing than it did twenty years ago. Since Westminster College left the old polytechnic building in 2000 there is no longer a higher educational college in the area. Meanwhile, fostered by Wandsworth’s policies, independent nursery, primary and preparatory schools are now frequently to be met with, some in school buildings inherited from municipal and voluntary providers, others in houses or church crypts. None of these establishments can bear much resemblance to the ‘private adventure’ schools described by Paynter Allen in 1870.

Independent schools

Sir Walter St John’s School, Battersea High Street (now Thomas’s, Battersea)

Draft

Sir Walter St John's School occupied premises on the west side of Battersea High Street from at least 1700 until 1986. It was succeeded by a private preparatory school, Thomas's, which took over the buildings in 1990. These are a miscellany, but the long street front is marked by the pungent Gothic brickwork of William Butterfield, who rebuilt the school in 1858–9. Later extensions largely respected his lead.

The official foundation date, 1700, derives from the deed of that year whereby Sir Walter St John, then lord of the manor, endowed a school in Battersea 'for the Education of Twenty Free Scholars' with the income from 31 acres of land in Peckham, and provided a house and garden to 'forever hereafter be used as a Schoole house for teaching of Scholars therein'.¹⁷ Sir Walter, then nearing the end of his life, resided mainly in Battersea and was already a parish benefactor. The school's historian, Frank Smallwood, was able to show that there had been a schoolmaster in the parish since the late 1660s, while in an affidavit a cooper christened in Battersea in 1670 affirmed that he 'went to Schole there under ... Sir Walter St Johns Chaplain who was one of the Ministers of and Scholemaster at Battersea aforesaid'.¹⁸ So the deed of 1700 probably regularized existing arrangements. The earliest depiction of the schoolhouse, seven windows wide with equal storeys, a platt band, transom lights and an inscribed cartouche over the door, suggests a date closer to 1675 than 1700 (III. 4.2).¹⁹

By his will, proved in 1708, Sir Walter stipulated for the school's trustees to apprentice one or more of its children; there was a similar provision in the will of his wife Johanna, who predeceased him. The first schoolmaster under the deed of 1700 was Sir Walter's chaplain. It became customary for the post to be filled by the vicar of Battersea or a deputy, though the lord of the manor made the formal appointment. In the church near by, Sir Walter had set aside gallery space for the boys.²⁰

Draft

During the eighteenth century the school stagnated. After the St John name lost its aura, it was known loosely as the Battersea Free or Charity or Village School. Trustees found little to do and were seldom replaced, while between 1787 and 1802 the total of pupils had risen by just three over the foundation norm, to 23 boys.²¹ The curate and schoolmaster at this time, Richard Morgan, though deemed tolerably conscientious, did not live in the schoolhouse, 'nor has there, I really believe, ever been an Instance of such residence', claimed his vicar, John Gardnor.²² Morgan probably devoted much more attention to the separate private academy he ran in his own name (see above).

When Joseph Allen replaced Gardnor in 1808 he found that every room in the schoolhouse apart from the schoolroom itself had been let. From about 1814 he set about bringing the enterprise into line with the National School system for educating the poor on Anglican principles. Sixty boys and sixty girls were now added to the foundation boys, and the schoolroom was refurbished.²³ Under Allen's successor, Robert Eden, this reformed school became quite a celebrated educational model. The diarist Charles Greville visited Eden and his boys twice in 1838 and again in 1842. He recorded an ecstatic impression of their 'readiness and correctness ... I doubt whether many of the children of the rich ... could pass such an examination as these young paupers who are instructed at the cost of about one guinea a year'. On his second visit Greville witnessed an anatomy lecture in the schoolroom, attended by 'many of the gentry of Battersea, males and female, the tradespeople, workmen, the boys of the school, and a rough, ragged set of urchins, labourers on the railroad - in all about 300 people'.²⁴

By the time of Greville's last visit Eden had contrived important changes. Though the girls had already been separated out, the old schoolhouse must still have been too small. In 1839 the Vestry agreed to use compensation money it had received for land taken by the London & Southampton Railway for an extension north of the old schoolhouse, built in 1840 by Pipers of Bishopsgate to Sampson Kempthorne's design.²⁵ The school now became the 'practising school' for the

Draft

teacher training college established that year next door at what is now Old Battersea House (page xxx). A report of 1846 on the efforts of Eden and his curate suggests that 'Battersea Village School' was then partly being used as a feeder for the college in order to swell the number of competent assistant schoolmasters.²⁶

Under Eden's successor, J. S. Jenkinson, a feeling arose that the Sir Walter St John trustees had neglected their duties by ceding the school to the church authorities. Some 'Battersea gentlemen' now voiced complaints about its direction; a public meeting followed. Behind the wrangling lay an incipient demand for better middle-class education in Battersea. In 1853 a fresh scheme of management was obtained in Chancery, four new trustees were appointed, and Jenkinson resigned as the school's nominal master.²⁷ These events paved the way for Sir Walter St John's School to reassert its independence, rebuild and expand.

The first step was to sell half the foundation property in Peckham, completed by 1855 with the surveyor-architect Charles Lee's assistance. The trustees then secured the freehold of the school site from the 4th Earl Spencer, and resolved to rebuild 'with all convenient expedition'. The premises were described by a school inspector as 'so ill-shaped and ill-arranged as to render organization and supervision extremely difficult. They are moreover too small for the numbers now admitted'. These were 20 free scholars on the foundation and 196 paying day scholars, mostly of the artisan and labouring classes, aged 8 to 13.²⁸

It had been hoped to build on the southern portion of the Old Battersea House property, but its lessee, John Shaw Lefevre, declined to sell. So the trustees, again using Lee, secured in August 1857 from Charles Chabot dilapidated houses and a garden south of the school.²⁹ But when Lee applied to design the new school, he was told that another architect had already been instructed. This was William Butterfield, then building a chapel next door for the Rev. Samuel Clark, principal of the training college and chairman of the reformed Sir Walter St John trustees. Clark was assisted in taking 'the active part in the proposed buildings' by two other

Draft

trustees in particular, both City merchants: Philip Cazenove, a benefactor to local Anglican causes; and the treasurer, James Bogle Smith, whose arms and initials feature on a cinquefoil in stained glass, preserved near the school entrance.³⁰

Butterfield's design consisted of a school for 350 boys at the south end and a master's house to its north – a long street composition held together by a projecting centre, perhaps inspired by Pugin's convent at Handsworth, Birmingham. The elevations were in Butterfield's wiry style of diapered brick Gothic, specially bracing at the back (Ills 4.3, 4.4). The master's house replaced the old school, though the 1840 extension to its north survived. There were two schoolrooms, one classroom and a 'hat room' on each floor, corresponding to an upper and a lower school, with access to the upper storey from an open flight of steps. Entry was via an archway at the extreme south end; it is surmounted by a fine roundel with crested shield upon a diapered ground inscribed with a quatrefoil, beneath which runs the St John motto, 'Rather Deathe Than False of Faythe' (Ill. 4.5). Lavatories occupied a separate block in the ample playground. Of the interior only the upper schoolroom survives, with a spare, steeply pitched open roof running from front to back.

There was some anxiety about cost. Butterfield resisted reductions in either house ('a good house being in every one's opinion one of the best forms of endowment') or school – which, he said, had taken up 'a great deal of attention'.³¹ In July 1858 the lowest tenderer, George Trollope & Son, won the contract against Butterfield's favourite builder Joseph Norris, then completing the chapel at the training college. The school reopened in June 1859. Soon a flurry occurred over flooding in the cellars. Butterfield took the line it was none of his business ('the Drainage of Battersea was very bad'); the blame fell instead on the builder and the clerk of works.³²

A decade later, commissioners enquired into the foundation under the Endowed Schools Act of 1869. With the School Board for London preparing to supply Battersea's burgeoning population with elementary schools, they were

Draft

persuaded that the parish most urgently needed higher schools. By a scheme of 1873 the foundation was redirected towards creating an upper school, the future Battersea Grammar School on St John's Hill (see below). The elementary school and a middle school were to stay in Battersea High Street.³³ The scheme was disliked locally on the grounds, relayed by Canon Erskine Clarke to the 5th Earl Spencer, 'that it withdraws the benefit of the school from the artizan, clerk and small shopkeeper class ... and applies the bulk of the endowment to provide a school at a rate of payment ... which the parishioners of Battersea cannot afford'.³⁴

Under the headmastership of William Taylor (1873–1907) the school fought itself free from the restrictions of this arrangement. In 1880 it was resolved to shut the elementary school, a level of education now well supplied locally. There were then 212 boys in the middle school, and despite overcrowding Taylor was keen to expand into science teaching. The connection with the training college, though chequered, provided a cheap supply of assistant masters.³⁵

Once ampler subsidies for education became available, improvements were possible. Pitching for funds in 1894, Sir Walter St John's could claim to be the only secondary school in the district providing 'a thoroughly practical and commercial education'.³⁶ In 1898 a single-storey science room was built at the bottom of the playground to designs by A. H. Ryan-Tenison, the foundation's architect for some thirty years. The middle school became officially a grammar school in 1902 and the science block soon received an extra storey.³⁷

The Butterfield building was now out of date. In 1911 the LCC agreed to grant-aid extensions provided that Battersea Grammar School, now judged ill-sited, would eventually close. Ryan-Tenison's scheme for accommodating 318 boys – many more than were on the roll – was built in 1913–15 by W. H. Lorden & Son.³⁸ Though respectful of Butterfield's style, the new buildings compromised his integrity and balance. Northwards, on the site of the master's house, two storeys with Tudor fenestration housed an open-timbered assembly hall over a dining hall

Draft

cum gymnasium. Behind, a classroom block stretched backwards, including a headmaster's room equipped with strategic bay window for policing pupils' movements through the entrance arch. Ryan-Tenison also made minor changes to the remnants of Butterfield's building. Internal replanning provided a broad new staircase with tiled dado and wooden balustrade; a war memorial window was installed here in 1921.

In inter-war phases of expansion, the school's street front was elongated at both ends. Slum property in Crescent Place to the south having long been earmarked, Ryan-Tenison in 1919 produced a scheme for a library, laboratories and classrooms eventually built by John Willmott & Sons in 1925–6.³⁹ It is a plain Tudor-style brick building, with a projecting centre at the front, also originally at the back. At the north end, Kempthorne's school extension of 1840 still stood. Extra land further north was acquired with the LCC's help, and here in 1937–9 the junior school was rehoused in a further large brick block in stripped Tudor idiom, designed by a young architect-alumnus of the school, T. J. Denny, then an assistant to Vincent Harris; for the purposes of the job, probably his first, Denny teamed up with his old architectural master, C. W. Baker. Early drawings for this Baker & Denny scheme going back to 1935 suggest bolder, late-Lutyens-like detailing, toned down in execution.⁴⁰ The southern end projects forward, while at the northern end is an arch with a delicate iron grille. The interiors and rear elevation are functional.

The school was evacuated to Godalming during the Second World War. The buildings suffered in September 1940, when a delayed-action bomb lodged itself unerringly beside the headmaster's study. It exploded after four days, destroying much of the south-west wing of 1913–15.⁴¹ After the war it was decided to demolish what remained of that block, curtail the back of Butterfield's schoolroom wing with a new end, and build a new three-storey wing behind the 1925–6 extension. Baker & Denny produced a scheme in 1946 for restoring Butterfieldian tracery. In the end the architects for both this stump and the new wing, carried out in 1951–2, were Farquharson & McMorran. The wing, plain but tasteful, has a hipped roof, and

Draft

carries round to meet the earlier buildings by means of a single-storey corridor behind the entrance arch. In 1960–1 a lower western block was added to even plainer designs in concrete and brick (since painted) supplied by the LCC's Architect's Department. Its siting supplied the school for the first time with a quadrangle, while its accommodation allowed the old science block in the playground to be demolished.⁴² In 1968 the east window in Butterfield's upper schoolroom was glazed with colourful abstracted panels by Lawrence Lee alluding to the brotherhood of man.⁴³

Since 1903 the trustees had increasingly lost control of the school, as more of its funding came from the LCC. In 1944 it became a voluntary controlled grammar school. In line with the Inner London Education Authority's policy to end secondary selection, after a failed merger with Lavender Hill as a mixed-sex comprehensive, Sir Walter St John's was amalgamated in 1977 with William Blake School as a voluntary boys' comprehensive. Because of falling secondary rolls, in 1988 that school was in turn merged into Battersea Park School (page xxx), and the historic site relinquished. Sir Walter St John's foundation was subsequently recast as an educational charity.⁴⁴

Since taking over the school buildings in 1990, Thomas's has made one addition. This is a brick-faced block filling the corner between the wings of 1951–2 and 1960–1, completed to the designs of MEBP & P Partners, architects, in 2001.⁴⁵

Battersea Grammar School, St John's Hill (demolished)

Battersea Grammar School was created to supply the fast-changing Victorian parish with a dedicated source of secondary education. But it proved precarious, surviving in Battersea only from 1875 to 1936, when it moved to Streatham. The name disappeared in 1977.

Draft

As described above, the Charity Commission acting under the Endowed Schools Act agreed a scheme in 1873 for reforming Sir Walter St John's Charity. The foundation's school of that name in Battersea High Street was to become a lower and middle school, serving a new upper school for some 250 boys on a separate site. Despite opposition from Battersea's vicar, Erskine Clarke, who drafted a petition for the House of Lords, the scheme enjoyed enough support to be ratified.⁴⁶

Meanwhile the foundation's treasurer, John Costeker, had found a promising site for the new school. This was St John's Lodge, a villa near Clapham Junction at the corner of St John's Hill and Plough Road (then Lane), with a garden of over three acres stretching back to the London & South Western Railway's Richmond line. Costeker bought the property at auction in 1873 under his own name, intending to sell it on to the charity. It had recently passed through the hands of the failed speculator James Lord, and so was encumbered with Chancery proceedings until 1875.⁴⁷ By then Costeker and the new governing body were being advised by the architect E. C. Robins, who thought St John's Lodge a good bargain which with alterations might accommodate 236 boys. Works were accordingly carried out by the builders Newman & Mann. Robins subsequently pressed for a large hall of his design to be added, but had to make do with further alterations.⁴⁸

The school opened under the Rev. E. A. Richardson's headship in April 1875. Known as Sir Walter St John's Grammar School, it was poorly attended at first, with just 48 pupils in 1881 and accumulating debts. A fresh headmaster, William Bindley, turned things around. The name changed to Battersea Grammar School. By 1891 there were 160 pupils, largely from the prosperous quarters of the parish. Extra classrooms including a science room were added to designs by J. S. Quilter and George Wheelhouse in 1892–3, projecting towards St John's Hill on the Plough Lane side (III. 4.7).⁴⁹ They formed a solid brick block in English Renaissance style, with high hipped roof and turret, stone quoins and dressings. Further classrooms over a covered playground followed at the back in 1905–6. This time the designer was A.

Draft

H. Ryan-Tenison, architect to the Sir Walter St John's Charity, and the builder William Hammond.⁵⁰

The school's better fortunes were partly due to the sale of cumulative portions of the garden to the LSWR, as sidings west of Clapham Junction ate up more land (III. 4.8). Negotiations began in 1882, when the governors instructed Frederick Beeston, Earl Spencer's land agent. Beeston advised selling the whole property, but was opposed by the Charity Commission and the governors. So at first only the far end of the garden was sold, in 1887. Erskine Clarke, by now chairman of the governors, exulted to Spencer that the sum received (£5,900) was more than had originally been paid for the whole property (£4,844). The LSWR returned to the charge in 1897 with a bid for the whole site. Once again the governors refused, preferring to sacrifice the playground behind the school in return for £12,000.⁵¹

The advocates of a total sale proved right in the long run. By 1909 the accounts were again in deficit, the roll was falling and the governors considered transferring control of this and perhaps also Sir Walter St John's School to the London County Council, which took the view that Battersea Grammar School was poorly sited and equipped and ought to be closed. It had in mind building a large secondary school in Cedars Road, Clapham, to which the grammar school's pupils and name might be transferred. After 'considerable reluctance', the governors assented so long as the sale of its assets could be used towards improving Sir Walter St John's School. Then a reprieve occurred; the LCC failed to build at Cedars Road, and with a drop in fees at St John's Hill, numbers rose again.⁵²

The school could hardly prosper in the long term at St John's Hill, where extension was impossible. Yet numbers continued to rise, reaching 450 boys in the year after headmaster Bindley's retirement in 1918. Not until the 1930s was it decided to decamp to Abbotswood Road, Streatham. The school finally took possession of purpose-built premises there in 1936. The name Battersea Grammar School was retained until 1977, but then lost in an amalgamation. The Streatham

Draft

premises are now occupied by a department of the Streatham and Clapham High School.⁵³ On the St John's Hill site, the buildings were demolished to make way for a Granada cinema (page xxx).

Royal Masonic Institution for Girls, Boutflower Road (demolished)

Between 1852 and 1934 this school occupied the site of the present Clapham Junction Estate between St John's Hill and Boutflower Road. Like other sizeable schools of its day, it came to South London for its suburban amenities and quiet but moved away once these had vanished. Only its two lodges survive.

The school owes its existence to Bartholomew Ruspini, a surgeon-dentist from Bergamo who had done well in London selling dental and medical equipment.⁵⁴ A fervent mason, Ruspini in 1788 founded the Royal Cumberland Freemasons' School, or Royal Freemasons' School for Girls, at first in Somers Town but then in Westminster Bridge Road, St George's Fields.⁵⁵ With the lease due to run out, the trustees sought a better site in about 1850–1. The school's solicitor and 'Bro. [P. C.] Hardwick, G. Superintendent of Works' led the search.⁵⁶ Hardwick was working for the 4th Earl Spencer at the time, so maybe he it was who found the chosen site of two and a half acres at the north end of Wandsworth Common, just east of the London & South Western Railway as it curved southwards. Its seclusion was real. Neither the West End of London and Crystal Palace Railway (which soon joined the LSWR line close to the school) nor Clapham Junction was then anticipated. The site itself was freehold, but Earl Spencer donated a strip of common land over which a southern approach drive from Battersea Rise was laid.⁵⁷

Hardwick prepared alternative designs, from which a 'mediaeval' option was chosen and built by Thomas & William Piper (Ill. 4.9). The school was masonically consecrated in August 1852, the 65 children arriving in December. The

Draft

original building was a block of Tudor, H-shaped plan with shallow projecting wings, prettified by diapered brickwork and lead patterning in the windows. Prudholme stone from Northumberland was the unusual choice for the dressings.⁵⁸ The spectacular feature was a baronial water tower over the entrance, foreshadowing Rohde Hawkins' similar creation for the Royal Victoria Patriotic Asylum further south.

The school flourished and grew at Battersea. A journalist in 1866 found the 'Freemasons' Girls' School' a haven of comfort, 'spotless cleanliness' and judiciously trained staff, not forgetting the 'healthy cleanly dormitories, the light and airy glass-covered exercise-hall, where the young people drill and dance'. There were then 103 girls aged between eight and sixteen, all freemasons' daughters.⁵⁹ Accretions appeared at the back in about 1862 (S. G. Wilson, architect; Patrick & Son, builders), while works of 1866 (S. W. Wilson, architect; Myers & Son, builders) perhaps included the prolongation of the two front wings. In 1872 Wilson junior inserted an infirmary following a scarlet fever epidemic.⁶⁰ An extra hall with classrooms over was added north-east of the main building in 1876 (T. Massa, architect; Charles Fish, builder). By then the school's preferred name was the Royal Masonic Institution for Girls.⁶¹

Massa's work was outflanked by a larger eastward addition, erected in 1889–90 by B. E. Nightingale, builder, to commemorate the school's centenary, and opened on 12 March 1891 by the Prince of Wales. There were two portions, the Alexandra Wing angled away from the main axis parallel with Comyn Road, for which Henry A. Hunt was joined as architect by Ralph Clutton; and the Alexandra Centenary Hall in front, designed by F. G. Knight (with input from Hunt), in the rich early Tudor idiom of Henry VIII's hall at Hampton Court. Its main front included a statue of Ruspini high up beneath the gable (Ill. 4.10). Inside came a hammer-beamed roof with plaster infill and armorial stained glass by Edward Frampton in the ample windows. Perforated internal buttresses allowed for passage-aisles with narrow galleries above (Ill. 4.11).⁶² From 1890 onwards Frampton added some

Draft

charming stained-glass panels on English literary subjects, probably in the alcoves under the galleries.

Hunt, a member of the school's House Committee for twenty years, was probably responsible also for the school's boundary railings, gates and picturesque lodge of 1886-7 beside the railway – safeguards reflecting that the district had become built up. Northwards, a junior school was created in 1880 at Lyncombe House facing St John's Hill just east of the railway, sold to the trustees by William Evill. A further purchase taking in the two houses eastwards led to enlargements and changes by Hunt in 1888. With Higgs & Hill as builders, he went on in 1903-4 to replace the houses with a purpose-built junior block in a workaday Tudor facing St John's Hill.⁶³

As the years wore on, and after the railway had encroached further on to the property in the 1890s for track-widening (Ill. 4.8), Clapham Junction seemed an ever less suitable vicinity for a large girls' school. The juniors departed first, emigrating to Weybridge in 1919. The main school at first took advantage of these extra premises, but soon sought a new home itself. Some 280 acres acquired at Rickmansworth allowed a new school to open there in 1934. The Ruspini statue, much worn, was transferred thither, along with all the stained glass from the Centenary Hall, cleverly reset in a scheme by Louis Ginnett. The Battersea property was sold to the Peabody Trust and cleared for housing that autumn.⁶⁴

Emanuel School, Battersea Rise

Emanuel School is Battersea's largest private secondary school. Wedged between two arms of the railway south of Clapham Junction, its site amounts to over twelve secluded acres, once part of Wandsworth Common. Additions cluster round the core of the school, a large Gothic pile of 1871-2 by H. Saxon Snell. This however was built not for Emanuel but as the short-lived Royal Victoria Patriotic School for Boys.

Draft

The lifespan of the Royal Commission of the Patriotic Fund Boys' School (its official name) was brief. The fund had been created in a surge of sympathy for the dead of the Crimean War, with the aim of maintaining their orphaned children. It was resolved to create a school and asylum for 300 girls, and another for 100 boys. The girls came first. With the money amply donated, the Commissioners bought from the 4th Earl Spencer 52 acres at Wandsworth Common between the LSWR's main line and the WELCPR. This land's southern portion was farmed, while at its centre arose the Royal Victoria Patriotic Asylum, conceived as a 'national monument' and built in 1858-9 to ebullient Gothic designs by M. Rohde Hawkins, architect to the Committee of Council on Education. The Patriotic Asylum itself was in Wandsworth parish and is therefore not treated here, but the northern end of the grounds and long drive from the railway bridge on Battersea Rise lay in Battersea. At the top of this drive a plain lodge, now the entrance lodge for Emanuel School, was erected, probably in 1862-3.⁶⁵

In 1862 a temporary school for 146 boys started in a house on East Hill, Wandsworth. By 1870 the sum set aside to accommodate them permanently had accumulated, and eligibility had been extended to orphans of wars since the Crimea. So another large, though less grand, building was planned on the Battersea portion of the grounds. The Commissioners sought designs from five architects: Arthur Blomfield, Henry Dawson, John Giles, Henry Saxon Snell and John Tasker. Snell was chosen as architect, J. T. Chappell as builder after competitive tenders, and the Patriotic School went up expeditiously, opening in October 1872 without ceremony.⁶⁶

Snell's design set out a square, barrack-like plan with a central courtyard cut into by a dining hall, over which a chapel, reached by divided stairs, was added as an afterthought (Ill. 4.12). On the ground floor, the west (entrance) and north fronts were mainly taken up by small rooms, of which the committee room (now the headmaster's study) survives best. Facing south came a large schoolroom and large

Draft

playroom, originally intended by Snell to have a wing of their own; beyond them a half-open playshed projected. On the east side were a single-storey swimming bath and 'lavatory', both of similar size to the southern rooms. The upper floors were mainly dormitories, since the Patriotic School took boarders only. The superintendent occupied the north-west corner. To the south-east lay a separate infirmary on two floors.⁶⁷

The style of the main building is Gothic in Sir Gilbert Scott's manner, of red brick with some coloured patterning and sparing Portland stone dressings. The pointed windows are grouped on the ground storey and separated on the first floor, above which gabled dormers break into the roof. The pièce de résistance is the Ypres-Cloth-Hall-type tower surmounting the entrance with its prominent porch (Ill. 4.13). It was originally topped off with a salient two-stage crown, removed in 1931.

Briefly all went well at both schools: 'The girls did all the washing for the boys while the boys' school did all the baking for the girls'.⁶⁸ But in 1874 an epidemic at the Patriotic Asylum killed several girls and a young doctor in the public eye, Francis Anstie. Bad sanitation was suspected. Saxon Snell insisted that there was nothing wrong with his building; he blamed the disaster on poor handling of sewage, which had been spread on the girls' kitchen garden and adjacent meadow.⁶⁹ But further deaths occurred in both schools, adding to the taint of mismanagement. This, plus a bad inspector's report, led to a fall in numbers at the boys' school from 309 in 1875 to 193 in 1879. Next year the Patriotic Fund was declared insolvent. Critics claimed that the schools had been draining capital away and the farm had long been losing money. The remedy was to let the farm and close the boys' school after less than nine years.⁷⁰

Under the Patriotic Fund Act of 1881 the boys' site was advertised for sale. The successful offer came from the United Westminster Schools, which outbid a rival by paying £32,682, some £10,000 more than first offered. That body had been

Draft

created by the Endowed Schools Act of 1873 to restructure educational charities in Westminster, notably Lady Anne Dacre's Emanuel Hospital, founded in 1594. Under these provisions a boarding school named Emanuel School was to be opened within twenty miles of London, in parallel with two day schools, later combined as the Westminster City School.⁷¹

In 1878 the governors bought 36 acres near Swanley, Kent. The plans prepared proved too expensive, and the governors were about to embark on a revised scheme when the Wandsworth Common site was drawn to their attention. Important in clinching the deal was the architect-surveyor Henry A. Hunt, deputy chairman to the United Westminster governors.⁷²

Emanuel School opened in the Patriotic School building in January 1883 with just 80 pupils, mostly boarders, though the numbers soon rose to over 200.⁷³ In preparation, the eastern end of the north front was rebuilt and raised from one to three storeys; Henry Dawson, one of the unsuccessful competitors in 1870, designed these works, which followed Saxon Snell's tone, with J. McLachlan & Sons as builders.⁷⁴ Otherwise the site changed little until 1895–6, when a new classroom wing with a large top-lit examination and recreation hall behind supplanted Saxon Snell's playshed. Built in a busy late French Gothic style, this was the work of an obscure architect, James Emes (Ill. 4.14). The extension's main purpose was to boost science teaching. In 1898 C. W. Kimmins of the LCC's Technical Education Board reported that Emanuel had 'excellent laboratories and science lecture room ... admirably equipped with all the modern appliances', yet he found them little used and the science teaching 'not yet satisfactory ... The school always gives me the impression of being much understaffed in the science department'.⁷⁵

Emanuel started out a boarding school. The high point of 185 boarders was reached in 1889, then fell, mainly (says the school's latest historian) because of 'the steady urbanization of the area. It made boarding pointless'.⁷⁶ Some thought was given to transferring the school to the countryside and handing over the premises to

Draft

the LCC. Instead the governors took the other option and closed down the boarding side in 1909, converting dormitories to classrooms. The change coincided with a shift towards a middle-class ethos, which helped raise the complement to 562 boys in 1912.⁷⁷ But the school had recurrent financial problems, and relied on subsidies from the LCC. After persistent criticism of the accommodation and teaching, the LCC opened its purse. The main fruit of this was a new assembly hall (the first Hampden Hall) and gymnasium, built in parallel with the south front and opened in November 1937; their architect was G. F. Turner.⁷⁸

Under the London School Plan of 1947, the LCC offered to rebuild Emanuel as a four-form entry school for 650 boys, but the offer was declined by the United Westminster governors. There were therefore no further new buildings until the end of post-war controls in 1957.⁷⁹ That January the Hampden Hall was burnt down, and promptly rebuilt to a higher specification from designs by the successor to Turner's practice, Laurence King. Various other supplementary buildings followed. The Exeter Block, Dacre Block (1970) and swimming pool were designed by Laurence King; the Year 7 Block (1987) and Hakim Sixth Form Centre (1993) by Tristram York; the Sports Hall (2003) and Craddock Common Room (2004) by Best Harding & Roels.⁸⁰

After 1965 attempts were made by the Inner London Education Authority to end selection and merge the school with others. The first would have seen Emanuel combine with Spencer Park Comprehensive School, recently built on part of the Patriotic Asylum site adjacent. The second, of 1972, sought to make the school co-educational by merging it with two girls' grammar schools.⁸¹ Having warded off these threats, Emanuel went independent in 1976. The most dramatic incident in its recent history occurred on 12 December 1988, when the Clapham Junction rail crash took place next to the site, and boys and masters were among the first rescuers on the scene.⁸²

Draft

Of the many changes to the main building, the most radical has been the replacement of the ground-floor dining hall in the centre by the school library, entailing reconfiguration of the surrounding courtyard spaces. The chapel at first-floor level above has not been affected. It is a rectangular vessel of five bays, with an open-timber roof and an east window with a cinquefoil rose over three lancets (Ill. 4.15). It has lost its original simple reredos and the stencilling formerly on its walls, but contains fittings of interest. The pews, stalls and screen are plain-pine Victorian work, but in 1894 the pulpit, altar table, lectern, model of the Dacre tomb (now removed), sacred tables and two paintings were brought here from the doomed Emanuel Hospital Chapel in Westminster. Notable are the painted figures of Moses and Aaron in classical frames, now on the west wall (Ill. 4.16). Almost certainly part of the reredos ensemble from St Benet Fink, they had been moved following that City church's demolition to Emanuel Hospital in 1846. The figures have been attributed to the Wren-period painter Robert Streeter the elder, the frames to the early eighteenth century. The tables now on the staircase and above the door may also have belonged to this composition, rearranged for the Westminster chapel and much renewed. The pulpit contains little if any seventeenth-century work; the sturdy wooden eagle lectern appears to have a Victorian top on a partly older base; and the eccentric hollow-legged altar table is likely to be the one commissioned for the Emanuel Chapel in 1846. The thin wooden altar rails, seemingly Georgian and also from the old chapel, were not installed till 1916.⁸³ The stained glass is also of interest. The eastern rose was filled in about 1887 by an unknown firm, but in 1894–5 the lancets below were carried out by B. A. Lillie to designs by the painter-decorator F. Hamilton Jackson.⁸⁴ In 1954–5 these were joined by clear heraldic glass of a lighter style in the side windows, to a scheme designed by C. W. Scott-Giles in collaboration with Moira Forsyth, and made by Lowndes & Drury.⁸⁵

For St James's Schools, see page xxx.

Draft

Church Schools

Anglican schools

Battersea's earliest surviving purpose-built school building is the former **St Mary's School** in Vicarage Crescent, formerly Green Lane.

When Sir Walter St John's School became a National School after 1814 (page xxx), girls were admitted as well as boys. They were later taught elsewhere, probably in an infants' school which existed on the north side of Green Lane close to the Sir Walter St John's site by 1828. These premises were decent enough for the Vestry to meet there regularly in the 1840s.⁸⁶ Opposite, on the south side of the same street, dedicated girls' and infants' schools were supplied in 1849–50. They were paid for by Elizabeth Champion of Battersea Rise, while the land was granted by the 4th Earl Spencer and his lessee, John Shaw Lefevre. A design was supplied by the architect M. Rohde Hawkins in April 1849 (Ills 4.17, 18),⁸⁷ and the schools opened exactly a year later. The plaque on the front was erected in 1855 to record the Vestry's gratitude to the donors.⁸⁸

Originally the building consisted just of semi-detached plain brick houses in front for the two teachers, and single-storey girls' and infants' schools behind, all in one block. Deep-eaved hipped roofs alone betrayed the early Victorian date. The schools were entered from lobbies set back on either side. Each had a single schoolroom and a small classroom. In 1875 an extra storey containing a large schoolroom for the girls and two new ground-floor classrooms were added at Philip Cazenove's expense; the builder was Thomas Gregory and the architect William White. This allowed boys to join and brought the complement of pupils to 600.⁸⁹ Some alterations took place in 1907–8 at the LCC's instance.⁹⁰ After the school closed because of falling numbers in 1985, the premises were converted to housing, becoming Windsor Court, Vicarage Crescent.

Draft

St George's School, at the junction of Thessaly and Corunna Roads, is the second oldest of Battersea's parochial schools in point of foundation. The present buildings date from 1969.

Before St George's Church had been erected, an infant school, probably purpose-built and later at least also used for girls, had been provided on the west side of Thessaly (then New) Road in 1826 to meet the wants of Battersea New Town.⁹¹ This was supplanted in 1856–7 by fresh schools further south just beyond the LSWR line, at the corner of New Road and St George's (later Wadhurst) Road. The scheme goes back to at least 1854, when the Battersea Vestry agreed to devote a windfall of £400 towards a boys' school in the St George's district, regarded as in a 'deplorable state of ignorance'. It was 'to be based upon sound Protestant principles, and to be under the supervision of the incumbent'.⁹² The freeholder, J. J. S. Lucas, gave the site and a government grant was secured. Subvention probably also came from Eliza Maria Graham of Clapham Common, a benefactress of St George's parish. All this allowed a handsome group of schools for 200 boys, 150 girls and 150 infants to be built, with teachers' houses for each, 'fronting the open fields in a very fine situation'.⁹³

Their designer was Joseph Peacock, known as one of the 'rogue' architects of the Gothic Revival. St George's Schools demonstrated all his picturesque intensity. The L-shaped composition was broken into three (Ills 4.19, 20). Along the side road lay the boys' school, marked by over-buttressed chimneybreasts with castellated stacks, and a bellcote. Beyond the boys' teacher's house came the girls' school over the infants at the corner, adding height and dignity. Facing Thessaly Road were their teachers' quarters, again superimposed, with an outside staircase to the upper house and access through from both to the schools via a bayed turret. The materials were white brick with stone dressings, and the builders William Beevers and John Harmer.⁹⁴

Draft

In 1867 Peacock added an extra infants' classroom at the back.⁹⁵ Much of the playground and some of the back buildings were lopped off after 1895 for widening the LSWR line. The compensation money was devoted to building extra classrooms in 1900, probably to designs by W. C. F. Gillam of Brighton, replacing all three teachers' houses and upsetting Peacock's balance.⁹⁶ By then the neighbourhood was deteriorating. Rebuilding to serve the new Patmore Estate was mooted in 1952, but the school continued on its reduced site till 1970, when Wadhurst Road was closed and replanning of the area allowed extra land to be taken in down to Corunna Road. It was then demolished and the present single-storey school built in 1968–9 to designs by Richard Sheppard, Robson & Partners.⁹⁷

The present **Christ Church School** in Este Road was built in 1907–8, replacing an earlier school on the site of 1866. In that year too this parochial district created a separate infants' school further east in Orkney Street, also demolished.

The original schools in Este Road, built for 600 children in equal numbers of boys, girls and infants, served the district east of Falcon Road, where modest houses were accumulating. The initiative began with Christ Church's vicar, Samuel Bardsley, in about 1864. With help principally from William Evill junior, a half-acre site was bought and single-storey schools were raised forming three sides of a quadrangle. Boys at the front faced Pearson (now Batten) Street, girls along the flank faced Grove (now Este) Road, while infants occupied the back. Two teachers' houses completed the composition, which was fenestrated with lancets and faced in red bricks with Bath stone dressings (Ill. 4.21). E. C. Robins was the architect and Lathey Brothers were the builders.⁹⁸

This was the school that the young John Burns attended in the late 1860s. But in 1877 the managers felt unable to carry it on. It was transferred at a peppercorn rent to the School Board for London, which rechristened it Falcon Grove School and ran it as a stop-gap measure until Shillington Street Board School was ready near by in 1883. The premises then reverted to the vicar of Christ Church, who

Draft

reopened it as a superior small 'national' school charging higher fees. This was maintained, but attendances failed to match the accommodation.⁹⁹ Once the LCC started to subsidise religious schools, improvements were stipulated. The whole school was therefore rebuilt on a tighter plan in 1907–8 by A. H. Ryan-Tenison as architect and W. Hammond as builder, with just six classrooms arranged on either side of a 'marching corridor'.¹⁰⁰ The neat, symmetrical building, of stock bricks with red dressings, remains in school use (Ill. 4.22). Towards Batten Street, the front has gables at the ends flanking lower, flat-roofed classrooms with an inscribed central brick panel; at the back, similar gables are deftly paired in the middle. Extensions at the south-east end partly occupy the site of the teachers' houses from the 1866 school.

The Orkney Street infant school, likewise projected by Samuel Bardsley, lay south of Battersea Park Road, on a corner site just off the present Dagnall Street. Known as Christ Church or Battersea Park Infants School, and informally as the 'Bell School', it was a single-cell building with one attached classroom, built in 1866–7 by Lathey Brothers to cheap Gothic designs by William Bennett Hays, architect of Christ Church's vicarage.¹⁰¹ It doubled as a mission church and became the first place of worship when St Saviour's parish developed as an offshoot from Christ Church (page xxx).¹⁰² By 1879 it had ceased use as a weekday school and become a hall and Sunday school for St Saviour's; around this time it was described as 'the great centre of the social life of the parish'.¹⁰³ The building survived until the 1950s.

St John's Schools. Boys and infants' schools were built in Usk Road just south of St John's Church in 1866, to plain Gothic designs by G. H. Page, with George Bass as builder, and extended southwards shortly afterwards, probably to bring in girls.¹⁰⁴ An application of 1871 to transfer management to the School Board for London was declined, so the school soldiered on under Anglican control. Though scheduled for closure and demolition in favour of housing development under the LCC's post-war plans, it hung on until the early 1960s.¹⁰⁵ It was largely superseded by the Joseph Tritton School in nearby Wynter Street (page xxx).

For **St Mark's Infant School**, at first St Mary's Infant School, Battersea Rise, (1866–7), see page xxx; for **St Michael's Schools** (1887–8), page xxx; and for **St Peter's School**, Plough Road (1874 &c.), page xxx.

Roman Catholic Schools

For the former **St Joseph's Boys School** and **St Mary's (Notre Dame) Roman Catholic Schools** on the site of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the former Convent of Notre Dame, Battersea Park Road, see pages xxx. **St Mary's Catholic School, Lockington Road**, is the latter's successor. A low-rise lightweight primary school of conventional appearance, it was built to designs by Tomei & Mackley, architects, in 1971–2, and extended soon afterwards.¹⁰⁶

Sacred Heart School started in premises at the angle of Trott Street now occupied by **L'École de Battersea**, just east of the Sacred Heart Church. The earlier of two schools connected with the church, it is first heard of in March 1878, when H. J. Hansom, the architect who did much to promote the original church (page xxx), was instructed by Bishop Danell of Southwark to draw out a plan for a cheap school building. A portion was built by C. H. Head of Peckham and opened later that year. The rest followed in 1879–80, built this time by Richard Dickens. The completed school rose to two storeys, with the girls' department in front and the boys behind. The main entry was in Trott Street, but there was access also from Orbell Street.¹⁰⁷

After the Salesian Order took over the parish, additions to the boys' school were proposed by F. A. Walters in 1889 but possibly not built. Later, after a serious fire burnt out the girls' and infants' schools, Walters restored and replanned them in 1907, effecting some enlargement on the flank facing the church.¹⁰⁸ All that is now visible of the school from Trott Street is a somewhat coarse and altered brick front, with a broad gable over a round arch at the upper level.

Draft

After the Sacred Heart School migrated in 1990 (see below), the premises became first a Montessori school and then in 2005 L'Ecole de Battersea, a branch of the Chelsea-based L'Ecole des Petits. Additions and renovation were carried out by David Rosemont Associates, architects, with the London Planning Practice.¹⁰⁹

The present Sacred Heart School lies half a mile south between Este and Cabul Roads, beside the old Shillington Street School. The site, cleared after war damage and then occupied by prefabs, had been allocated for the school by the Inner London Education Authority in 1973, as the Trott Street premises were 'cramped and poorly planned'.¹¹⁰ Government cuts led to repeated postponements of the project, which only materialized in 1988–90. The low-rise brick building, planned around two internal atria (since filled in), was designed by Hans Haenlein Associates, architects.¹¹¹

Salesian College, a Catholic secondary school for boys, operated between 1895 and 2011 north and east of the Sacred Heart Church. In its latter years it was housed mainly in buildings of 1964–78 off Parkham Street. The site awaits redevelopment at the time of writing.

The Salesians' coming to Battersea in 1887 is described in the account of the Sacred Heart Church (page xxx). From the first they wished to found a senior boys' school to complement the existing Sacred Heart School beside the church. That proved possible when the Order in 1895 acquired Surrey Lodge, a brick villa of the 1830s fronting Surrey Lane. It had a generous garden stretching behind the houses of Orbel Street, where the Salesian priests were living. By dint of capacious, plain wings added westwards in 1897 and eastwards in 1901, the house was made large enough for both priests and boys, while a Tudor-style chapel was created in old stables at the angle between Surrey Lane and Parkham Street.¹¹²

Draft

By the time of the First World War there were some 250 boys (Alfred Hitchcock, briefly a pupil in 1908, remembered being given copious laxatives).¹¹³ Technical workshops had been erected in the garden to teach trade skills like printing, tailoring, woodwork, mechanics and shoe-repairing.¹¹⁴ The chapel was also enlarged in 1911–12 to create an aisle with a Lady Chapel as well as a nave (Ill. 4.49). Though quaintly amateurish on the outside, its interior was richly decorated, having a screen and full rood with paintings of the apostles, an alabaster reredos, and heraldic devices on the boarding of the open-roofed ceilings.¹¹⁵ Fr George Fayers, who filled the Sacred Heart Church with his paintings, probably had much to do with this adornment. Later the screen was moved into the side aisle and has since been removed altogether, the chapel interior having been much simplified, though the reredos remains. Outside in the garden, the charming ‘ambulacrum’, a covered walkway running along the back wall of the houses in Orbel Street, may also date from about 1911 (Ill. 4.48).

A new school proposed behind the houses in Parkham Street to plans by James O’Hanlon Hughes in 1938 was not built. In 1950 two temporary classroom blocks were constructed in the Orlit system to designs by D. Plaskett Marshall.¹¹⁶ These survive, though intended only as expedients until the new school envisaged under the London School Plan could be obtained. That became possible when the LCC authorized the closure of most of Granfield Street at the west end of the site, and the demolition of Parkham Street’s south side, which was thrown into the Salesian College’s space. Plans for the first stage were made in 1963 by Greenhalgh & Williams of Bolton, architects favoured by the Salesians at the time, as Bolton was their English headquarters.¹¹⁷ Their orthodox secondary school design, concrete-faced on a steel frame and set back from Parkham Street, was built in 1964–6, allowing the old technical block to be demolished.¹¹⁸ A crafts block followed on in 1977–8.¹¹⁹

The school became grant-maintained in 1993.¹²⁰ Plans of around 2009 for building an entirely new school on the site, to be formed by merging Salesian

Draft

College with John Paul II School, Wandsworth, with a new Salesian Community House to the west, did not go forward. The school shut in 2011 and was amalgamated with Saint John Bosco College, Wimbledon.¹²¹

Nonconformist schools

The earliest purpose-built schools erected by nonconformists in Battersea were the **Grove House School** or **Battersea Grove Boys School** in York Road, and its counterpart, the **British Girls School** in Plough Lane, both connected to the Battersea Chapel, York Road.

The boys' school went back to 1799, when under the Rev. Joseph Hughes's leadership a committee of Baptist subscribers set up a charity school, in the first instance to teach 20 poor boys reading, writing and arithmetic. The name Grove House came from the school's domicile until about 1824. When Israel Soule became minister of Battersea Chapel in 1840, it was decided to erect 'a new and more commodious building'. The 3rd Earl Spencer and Thomas Cubitt jointly sold a small site on the south side of York Road opposite Lombard Road, where a schoolroom was built by George & J. W. Bridger of Aldgate. In 1858-9, to the plans of a 'respectable architect', the builders D. Nicholson & Sons of Wandsworth added a larger schoolroom with a tapering rooflight on extra ground westwards, leaving the school wedged between the flanking Verona and Benfield Streets.¹²² The style of the whole was a bleak brick Romanesque. In 1878-9 the roll was 142. The popularity of the board schools led to closure in 1887, when the building became a Sunday school and vaccination centre.¹²³

The girls' school stood further south, on the west side of Plough Lane (later Road). Built at Joseph Tritton's expense in 1845 and donated by him to the Battersea Chapel in 1858, it continued a school that had previously met in converted premises further south in Plough Lane, and perhaps before that off Battersea High Street. It

Draft

consisted of a simple schoolroom with porch. Nicholson & Sons, probably the original builders, soon added an extra room, and in 1869 another was tucked in on the flank facing Benham Street, to designs by J. R. Gover, the architect responsible around that date for the surrounding housing.¹²⁴ Like the boys' school it became a Sunday school only, probably in the 1880s. It was demolished in 1905 and replaced by the Plough Road Institute (page xxx).¹²⁵

In 1909 the managers of the Battersea Chapel decided to replace the boys' school with a new Sunday school and institute for the 641 scholars and 43 teachers which they claimed to employ. The two-storey scheme, with halls over teaching rooms, was carried out by William Hammond (a former Grove schoolboy) in 1911–12 to designs by George Baines & Son, who won the job by competition. The elevations were in Baines's disciplined style, with two tones of brickwork and chequered gables. The entrances were from the side streets. Latterly known as the York Road Baptist Sunday Schools, the building succumbed following the transfer of chapel and schools to Wye Street in 1973 (page xxx).¹²⁶

State Schools

Board schools

As in other parts of London so in Battersea, when the School Board for London started work in the early 1870s, it made do with temporary premises until new buildings could be ready. Its first two schools in the parish (which was assigned to the Board's Lambeth Division) were at Knox Road north of Clapham Junction, and Landseer Street near Battersea Park, opened in September and December 1872 respectively. Both were small affairs for boys only, with 117 and 149 pupils.¹²⁷ Knox

Draft

Road closed when Winstanley Road School opened; Landseer Street was supposed to be replaced by Battersea Park School, but survived until 1883.¹²⁸

When these short-life schools opened, permanent ones had been widely commissioned via the competition system first favoured by the School Board. Battersea acquired two such, originally called Battersea Park and Bolingbroke Road. Both survive, though the former has been converted. The following account of the board schools begins with these two and then proceeds in chronological order. Where later schools have been rebuilt on the same site, they are included here.

Battersea Park School, now 110 Battersea Park Road and entirely distinct from the later Battersea Park Secondary School opposite, was the first board school commissioned in the parish. Negotiations for the site, part of the Crown lands attached to Battersea Park, were in train from October 1871. They were conducted for the School Board by E. R. Robson, acting as its surveyor in the period before he began designing the schools himself. The plot of land on offer amounted to an acre and a half, but the Board whittled this down to three-quarters of an acre for reasons of cost. The site was to be enclosed eastwards as well as westwards, since there was as yet no thought of Forfar Road, later the school's eastern boundary.¹²⁹

In May 1872 an architectural competition took place involving W. G. Coldwell, R. W. Edis, G. G. Stanham, W. M. Teulon & Cronk, and J. Toner. Edis produced a Gothic design which the *Building News* would have been 'glad to see adopted' and later illustrated, but Coldwell won. W. Shepherd built his three-storey design in 1873–4.¹³⁰ The numbers of children had been set at 720, but the accommodation was raised to almost 900. At the opening Sir Charles Reed, the School Board chairman, predicted that the school would be full within a week, although boys and girls then paid 3d per week and infants 2d.¹³¹ An immediate western extension followed in 1875.¹³²

Draft

Coldwell's original school can be identified with the central section bearing the legend 'Battersea Park School' (Ill. 4.24), plus the portion next westwards. They are in the austere style (pinkish stocks and red dressings) typical of the first London board schools, some Gothic touches being counterbalanced by sash windows. The design has an unresolved quality, perhaps due to simplification of gables following war damage. The 1875 afterthought is the westernmost portion, while to the east is a large extension by T. J. Bailey, the School Board's architect, of 1893–4, added after the school had been found 'very inconvenient and unworkable'.¹³³ The former schoolkeeper's house in front is of 1888.¹³⁴ Rechristened Chesterton School in the post-war period, the school moved to new premises on the other side of Battersea Park Road in 1965 (page xxx).¹³⁵ The buildings were used for a time as an annexe to Battersea College of Technology and for other educational purposes, then converted to housing.

Bolingbroke Road School, of 1873–4 with many later additions, is now **Westbridge School**, Bolingbroke Walk. Here John W. Walton was appointed architect in July 1872, after a limited competition; John Spink was the builder.¹³⁶ The school, planned for 575 children, opened in two stages at the turn of 1873–4. After disappointing early attendance figures ascribed to 'absence of publicity to the fact of the opening', the full complement was soon reached.¹³⁷ The original two-storey building (the southern end of the present school) had classrooms clustered round a 'centre room'.¹³⁸ Though altered, the front is in a pleasant, simple stock-brick Gothic with windows grouped in triplets. The robust gate piers and cast-iron gates, thrice repeated, are lively survivals from this phase. At the rear a rather domestic half-hipped extension protrudes.

Additions were made in 1875, 1880 and 1894.¹³⁹ Perhaps of 1894 is the northward extension of the main front, while the single-storey infant accommodation, Gothic in style, is likely to be earlier. An internal reconstruction took place in 1908–9.¹⁴⁰ There were then over 1,000 pupils, described as largely in 'straitened home circumstances'.¹⁴¹ By 1931 Bolingbroke Road had the reputation of 'a rather difficult school ... The chief obstacle to good work now is a certain

Draft

listlessness and apathy which, it is often said, are characteristics of riverside children'.¹⁴² The school's name changed to plain Bolingbroke in 1937, when Bolingbroke Road became Bolingbroke Walk. It was diagnosed as having serious weaknesses in 1997 and reorganized by Wandsworth Council as a 'fresh start school' called Westbridge in 2000.¹⁴³

Winstanley Road School, the third of the School Board's early Battersea schools, has been demolished. Built in 1873–4 to serve the rising district north of Clapham Junction, it belonged to the select early group of schools designed by the Board's first regular architect, E. R. Robson, and illustrated in his *School Architecture* of 1874.

A corner site of a mere quarter-acre at the obtuse angle of Winstanley and Livingstone Roads, was bought from Job Caudwell in 1872. Robson's design went to tender late that year, the school being built by G. Stephenson of Chelsea.¹⁴⁴ On opening day in January 1874, 'the place was besieged with parents accompanying children whom they sought to enter on the school register', so that 580 out of the 700 places were instantly taken up.¹⁴⁵

Robson made his resourceful best of the constrained, rhomboid site. In front came the single-storey infant school, consisting of a schoolroom with two 'babies' rooms off, one having a polygonal end. The infants were not in the main block, Robson explained, because they needed wider, squarer rooms than the 'graded schools'. They shared their outside playground with the girls, but also enjoyed a covered play space under half of the three-storey block behind. There the planning was spare; both the boys on the first floor and the girls above were divided into senior and junior schools, set out in simple rows to maximize north light on desks (Ill. 4.25b).¹⁴⁶ The elevations, in two tones of brick, were lively. An angular access tower staircase took up the centre of the larger block, open-topped for a bell and flanked by two high chimneybreasts, like sentinels. All the front-facing parapets of

Draft

the school were crenellated, giving a tang of Flanders or North Germany. Winstanley Road was the most flagrantly ‘castellated’ of Robson’s early school designs. The *Building News* objected: ‘we decidedly think parapets are one of those peculiarities of the pseudo-Classic best avoided’.¹⁴⁷ It may also have been the first to deploy the School Board relief panel of ‘Knowledge Strangling Ignorance’ commissioned from the artist Spencer Stanhope, placed on the chimneybreast right of the staircase tower.¹⁴⁸

The accommodation immediately proved inadequate. The first of at least two northward site extensions appeared in 1875. A thorough remodelling of 1901–2 involved altering Robson’s south-facing front and shifting the relief panel (Ill. 4.26).¹⁴⁹ Despite these improvements, the LCC opted for a complete rebuilding in 1937. A standard three-storey LCC design with rooftop playground was ready for building in 1939, when the school was demolished. In the run-up to war the contract was cancelled, never to be revived in post-war plans for the area.¹⁵⁰

Sleaford Street (later John Milton) School (demolished), was built by W. Higgs in 1873–4 to Robson’s designs. Initially known as Lower Wandsworth Road Schools, it occupied back land between Aegis Grove and Sleaford Street in a poor area of Nine Elms. More land was gradually acquired, with extensions in 1882 and remodelling with halls in 1904–5. To relieve the district, Charlotte Despard among others pressed for housewifery and manual centres at this school in 1906 to supplement the existing laundry.¹⁵¹

Renamed John Milton School in the 1950s, the school was rebuilt by W. J. Simms, Sons, & Cooke in 1972–4 on an extended site at the top of Sleaford Street, using the MACE industrialized building system then favoured by the GLC Architect’s Department for primary schools in London. There were problems with vandalism and arson during its construction.¹⁵² Despite healthy attendances, the school was shut by Wandsworth Council in 2004; flats now occupy the site.

Draft

Gideon Road (later Elsley) School (demolished). The boys' and girls' departments of this school, housing 440 pupils from the environs of Shaftesbury Park, took shape at the corner of Acanthus and Gideon Roads to E. R. Robson's designs in 1875–6, following an asymmetrical plan because of the site (Ill. 4.27). Despite reorganization and enlargement southwards in 1906 bringing the accommodation to 1,102, the premises were described soon afterwards as 'awkward, inconvenient and behind the times'. The school was discontinued in 1927 but not demolished till after the Second World War. The site is currently vacant.¹⁵³

Further west, a separate infants' block was added on the north side of Gideon Road, probably in 1880. It was a demure single-storey building, sunk below road level because of the slope and supplemented in 1906 by an extra eastern bay and a hall behind with ventilation turret. Latterly it became a special school called Gideon School, entered from Elsley Road. Transferred to Tooting under that name in 1990, it reverted to the old site under the new name of Elsley School in 1995, but did not last long. The building was demolished in 2010.¹⁵⁴

Shaftesbury Park (formerly Holden Street) School is the main primary school on the Shaftesbury Park estate, facing Holden Street and backing on to Ashbury Road. First built in 1875–7 by Wall Brothers, to Robson's three-storey designs, it originally accommodated 1,104 children.¹⁵⁵ As often with early board schools, the want of central halls was soon felt, so in 1898 T. J. Bailey devised radical improvements. Though the Government's Education Department objected on cost grounds, W. Johnson & Co. were eventually able to proceed with these in 1901.¹⁵⁶ In November 1904 fire caused damage at one end.¹⁵⁷ As the school appears today, the end wings are probably of 1875–7, the whole centre and southward projection of 1901. But parapets and gables have been simplified, and a staircase turret has disappeared from the west end of the Holden Street front. Next to this, the schoolkeeper's house at No. 35A is of 1888.¹⁵⁸

Draft

Falconbrook (formerly Mantua Street) School, in the district between Clapham Junction and York Road, began as a three-storey board school of 1875-6 for 1,104 children built to Robson's designs, probably by Kirk & Randall. It lay further south on the site than the present school, facing the short street which furnished its original name; Kambala Road to its east had not then yet been laid out. The schoolkeeper's house at the south-east corner may date from the original period.¹⁵⁹ Enlargements took place in 1885, 1891 and 1893.¹⁶⁰ The single-storey buildings facing Wye Street are perhaps of 1893.

Poor inspectors' reports from 1905 onwards led to proposals for reconfiguring the school. The LCC's first idea was to make do with the site as it stood, but that would have reduced the playground space. So the Council acquired more property on the east side of Wye Street, demolished the buildings of 1875-6, and in 1913 erected a large new block stretching from Wye Street to Kambala Road; the builder was T. D. Leng.¹⁶¹ The result, rising to four and in some places five storeys, represents LCC school architecture at its austerest (Ill. 4.28a). The change of name from Mantua Street to Falconbrook occurred in 1951. After Wandsworth Council inherited the school in 1990, it found the main building 'wholly unsuited to any form of primary education for the twenty-first century' and considered replacement, but made do with a major internal reconstruction.¹⁶²

Tennyson Street School, flanking the street of that name but facing Thackeray Road and Bewick Street, was the main school of the Park Town estate. Though converted into housing as 'Victorian Heights', its three separate blocks still exert a powerful local presence. The site was chosen after the School Board had considered another at the Queenstown Road and Broughton Street corner in 1874.¹⁶³ The original three-storey school of 1875-7, for 820 children or more, faced the new Bewick Street, as a date plaque attests; at that time it stood by itself.

The school was designed by E. R. Robson, built in two stages (first by J. Cooper, then by J. Tyerman) and briefly called Tennyson Road until the street

Draft

changed its ending in 1877. Despite some enlargement in 1879, it was deemed constrained and out of date by the 1890s, when the School Board bought extra ground to the east. This allowed reconstruction of the original block in 1900 so as to tuck in halls, followed by two new buildings in 1901: a junior mixed department on three main floors, and beyond that nearer Silverthorne Road, a two-storey special school.¹⁶⁴ The expanded school has the wayward bluffness of many of T. J. Bailey's designs, mixing gables and bays unpredictably. After a spell in secondary use the school closed in 1968, when the main building was converted for the Inner London Education Authority's television centre. As the Battersea Studios, the centre survived the ILEA, continuing here till 1999.¹⁶⁵ The change to housing took place in 2001–2, to plans by Paul Brookes Architects.¹⁶⁶

Belleville Road School was the first board school built in southern Battersea, to serve the growing population between the commons. The original portion, facing Webb's Road, was built for 828 children in 1876–7 by Thompson of Camberwell to Robson's design. It is in his plainest, three-storey Queen Anne manner, though the gables were probably simplified after 1945.¹⁶⁷ In 1909 a report adverted to noise problems from 'the rattle of vehicles, from street cries, and from barrel organs, a state of things which it does not appear to be anybody's business to remedy'.¹⁶⁸ The LCC prepared for a major enlargement in 1912, buying property in Wakehurst and Belleville Roads. The scheme was delayed until 1921–2, when J. Smith & Sons built designs by the LCC Architect's Department. The westward-protruding halls and the flanking wing along Wakehurst Road belong to this period.¹⁶⁹

Newton Prep School, Battersea Park Road, occupies the premises of the old municipal **Raywood Street School** and so is included in this section. The main block, set back from the road, dates from a total reconstruction by the LCC of 1926. It replaced a board school of 1881–2, which stood end-on to Battersea Park Road with its playground backing on to Raywood Street, a cul de sac. In 1910 there was talk of enlarging the playground and building a 'housewifery centre' towards Lockington

Draft

Road. The premises were judged poor and categorized among London's 'noisy schools' on account of trams and trains. The children included a large 'migratory element', with many girls employed part-time.¹⁷⁰ Memories of the school in these years feature in Edward Ezard's *Battersea Boy*. An anecdote recounts how the headmaster took advantage of the railway's proximity to hail the advent by train of the French president (probably Poincaré) on a state visit. 'Mr Kirby had us all out in the playground awhile before practising the concerted shout *Vive le President!* Of course we didn't do French at that school. When the train flashed past we really gave it the works, hoping that our distinguished visitor might hear'.¹⁷¹

After the First World War the LCC brought forward a rebuilding scheme, carried out mainly by C. P. Roberts & Company in 1925–6.¹⁷² The new school, for 1,124 children, was planned on old three-decker lines, set back from and parallel with Battersea Park Road. Just a few details like the Roman-tile window heads betray its date. An inspection of 1936 commended the lively teaching of the drawing master: 'the boys in this drab neighbourhood need as much colour as they can get'.¹⁷³ Falling rolls led to reorganizations. From 1947 much of Raywood Street was being used as an annexe to Battersea Secondary School, Culvert Road (page xxx),¹⁷⁴ while in its final municipal incarnation it formed part of Clapham College. In 1991 the buildings were taken over by Newton Prep, a school founded by Farouk Walji. Over the next two decades its intake grew from 70 to almost 600 pupils. Large extensions have been made at the back, designed by various architects including the Seymour Harris Partnership and, in 2011–12, Barrie Taylor Associates of Warminster.¹⁷⁵

Prominent in the streetscape east of Falcon Road, the former **Shillington Street School** has been converted into flats. It dates from 1882–3, when the first portion – no doubt the high south wing rising to four storeys within a gable topped by a louver (III. 4.22), perhaps with part of the centre – was built to E. R. Robson's designs by William Oldrey. It supplanted the School Board's temporary Falcon Grove School and housed almost 1,200 children.¹⁷⁶ Local demand must have been strong, as temporary classrooms were added in 1886 on a separate site facing Cabul

Draft

Road, later annexed to the main site.¹⁷⁷ An enlargement of 1887 is represented by the northern end of the main block, beyond which lies a schoolkeeper's house. The omission of an answering north wing makes the composition lopsided. A cookery, laundry and manual centre were to be added in 1895, and accommodation for blind children in 1898; these are the lower buildings at the north end of the site. An inspection in 1911 reported that the girls were mostly children of the unskilled labour classes, though 'a small proportion are comparatively well-to-do'.¹⁷⁸ By 1980 only one floor was in use, as a special school. The whole was converted into housing in the 1990s.¹⁷⁹ The street after which the school took its name was abolished as a result of post-war planning, so that the flats now face on to a cul de sac and are numbered 181–187 Este Road, while the northern outbuildings are known as Takhar Mews.

The former **Latchmere School**, Burns Road, built in 1882–3 but now a group of flats known as Southside Quarter, was published as 'the last school built under the direction of Mr E. R. Robson' before he gave up as architect to the School Board for London and became advisory architect to the Government's Education Department.¹⁸⁰ So it may perhaps be taken as Robson's final word on board school layout, at a time when funding was improving. Built by William Oldrey,¹⁸¹ it was planned with rigid symmetry, following the customary stacking of infants at ground level, girls on the first floor, and boys at the top. The classes of the older children were confined to 60, though in the large infants' rooms this rose to 80. On each floor the rooms clustered around a central hall, as yet restricted to 30 feet square but extensible into adjacent classrooms (Ill. 4.33). The elevations, in two tones of brickwork, were suaver than in Robson's early schools, but not as plain as they now appear (Ill. 4.32), since the shaped gables were simplified after the war for maintenance purposes, and the turrets atop the staircases on the north side removed. A separate low-rise junior mixed department was added east of the main block in 1890–2; an early building of this type, it has rendered gables. At this time also a secondary entrance was contrived from Battersea Park Road.¹⁸²

Draft

Despite objections from local parents and teachers, Wandsworth Council closed the school on grounds of over-capacity in 1994.¹⁸³ After conservationists pointed out the school's value to the context of the adjacent Latchmere Estate, the Council agreed to a scheme of conversion into housing, carried out by Sapcote Real Lofts¹⁸⁴ Extra housing units have covered much of the playground space, obscuring the view from Burns Road.

Basnett Road School (demolished). This imposing, three-decker school for 975 children was sandwiched in 1883–4 between Wickersley and Wycliffe Roads, between the Shaftesbury Park and Park Town estates, and called after Basnett Road (formerly Grove) to the south. It was oversubscribed in 1899 with 1,121 on the roll, rising to 1,212 in 1907. A single-storey northern extension was added in 1901 next to St Bartholomew's Church. Though scheduled for replacement in 1947, it survived until the 1970s under the new name of **John Burns School**, for whose later history see page xxx. The schoolkeeper's house survives at 66A Dunston Road.¹⁸⁵

Surrey Lane (later **William Blake**) **School**, on the west side of Surrey Lane South (now Bridge Lane), has been converted into housing. The main four-storey block was originally built for 1,592 children in 1884–5 (E. R. Robson, architect, C. Wall, builder). Solid and compact, it dominates the west side of Bridge Lane; to its north is a schoolkeeper's house. The school enjoyed the novelty of a workshop where the staff would 'teach the boys the use of various simple tools, how to execute trivial repairs, and in other ways to make them on leaving school handy and intelligent lads'.¹⁸⁶ It soon became one of the higher-grade schools instituted in the 1880s. A chemical laboratory, drawing room and manual centre were added in 1896, followed by a centre for deaf children in 1898.¹⁸⁷ Surrey Lane was the first school attended by the poet and critic Richard Church, whose memoirs paint a picture of unhappy years in the boys' department (1901–5).¹⁸⁸

In the early 1920s the LCC turned the upper floors into Battersea Central Schools, with separate departments for boys and girls (III. 4.35). Inspections of 1925

Draft

noted that an 'industrial bias' led to many of the boys gaining scholarships at trade schools, while the girls' school found places hard to fill because it lacked the 'commercial bias' of rival schools in south-west London; those girls who stayed the course typically went into dressmaking.¹⁸⁹ Following the transfer to the purpose-built Battersea Central Schools, Culvert Road, in 1939, the building remained chiefly in secondary use, acquiring the name William Blake School. This school survived a threat of closure only to be amalgamated in 1977 with Sir Walter St John's, the Bridge Lane site becoming the school's lower section.¹⁹⁰ By 1990 that amalgamated school had been merged into Battersea Park School, leaving the complex ripe for conversion.¹⁹¹ The front block became housing (William Blake House) while the minor buildings at the rear were turned into offices. The overall scheme is called The Lanterns.

Ponton Road School (demolished) was built in 1884-5 (E. R. Robson, architect; Atherton & Latta, builders) on the east side of Ponton Road against the back of the Nine Elms Brewery, to replace a short-lived school housed in a mission room close by (page xxx). Attendances in this tough industrial area were poor and in 1899 the school was said to be 'rapidly declining owing to redistribution of population'. From 1900 the infants' school was maintained but the upper floors became an industrial school (III. 4.36) and 'feeding centre' until the LCC in 1912-13 converted them into a remand home or 'place of detention', against local opposition. The buildings survived till after the Second World War.¹⁹²

High View (previously **Plough Road**) **School** was built in 1889-90 and extended in 1895. Part of the site had been purchased by the School Board in 1883, when temporary buildings were put up. The permanent school, for 1,175 children, followed on, the builder being Charles Cox of Hackney.¹⁹³ Sited (as its name implies) on an eminence overlooking the western approaches to Clapham Junction, High View is the most powerful of the Battersea board schools. Its asymmetrical plan gives the elevations variety as well as force, the westward aspect from Plough Terrace and Oberstein Road looking quite different from the hulking façade towards

Draft

Plough Road. Stepped gables, slightly clipped by later maintenance regimes, and a bulbous top to the north-east staircase tower do much for the composition's vivacity (III. 4.37). T. J. Bailey must have been pleased with the design, for it was shown at the Royal Academy in 1891.¹⁹⁴ A schoolkeeper's house facing Plough Terrace belongs to the ensemble.

The former **Lavender Hill School**, largely of 1891–2 and now converted into housing coyly named *The Village*, rears up on the south side of Amies Street where Latchmere Road climbs steeply. Conceived as far back as 1884¹⁹⁵ and designed by T. J. Bailey in 1888, it was one of the School Board for London's frankest ventures yet in the direction of secondary education. North of the conventional elementary school came a separate centre for 216 pupil-teachers on three main floors, equipped with a laboratory, drawing school and two gyms. E. R. Robson, who had by then transferred his loyalties and become consulting architect to the Government's Education Department, was wary: 'The P.T. Centre appears to be a complete technical school. What is the accommodation which has been sanctioned for the purpose? And on what scale should such buildings be allowed? No precedent, I think?'¹⁹⁶ The project was delayed until 1891–2, when the builders were S. Belham & Company. A wing may at first have been left off the elementary school and added in 1894–5, when the complement of places rose to almost 1,600. At this point also a cookery school with schoolkeeper's accommodation above was added south-west of the main block, as originally planned, and a lower-scale laundry and manual centre south of the pupil-teachers' block.¹⁹⁷

The school proper, illustrated at the Royal Academy in 1888 from a perspective by Arnold Mitchell, previously an assistant under Bailey (III. 4.38), belongs to the bold, symmetrical three-decker type favoured at this time, but has lost its shaped gables and parapet details in post-war simplification. The pupil-teacher centre, higher up the hill, has likewise been simplified. Under the LCC this became a secondary school feeding the Battersea Polytechnic,¹⁹⁸ but by the 1930s it was a men's institute. By then rolls in Lavender Hill School itself were falling. It was

Draft

divided into separate schools for girls and boys after the Second World War. The boys moved out in 1957, when the girls' school took over the whole site until 1981, after which it became a branch of Wandsworth College.¹⁹⁹ Strenuous attempts in the early 1990s to list the complex or include it in a conservation area failed.²⁰⁰ The buildings were well converted into units of fashionable 'shell' housing by the firm of Sapcote Real Lofts in 1994–6.²⁰¹

Honeywell Road School stands end-on to the road from which it takes its name, commanding a fine westward-facing site. One of Battersea's best-preserved schools, it is typical of the robust, three-decker designs produced by the School Board for London's architects under T. J. Bailey. A temporary school contained in three parallel iron huts for boys, girls and infants was erected here in 1889. Its successor, though designed as one, followed on in phases between 1891 and 1901, when capacity reached 1,634 children.²⁰² A date plaque within a handsome rubbed-brick frame indicates the original portion next to the road. The long fronts are symmetrical and follow a type used in other mature Bailey schools, among them Lavender Hill. Shaped gables proliferate, while the superimposed halls in the centre are defined by buttresses, a higher roofline and crowning ventilating turret. A raw schoolkeeper's house survives at 58 Honeywell Road.

Ethelburga Street School (demolished) began as a three-decker board school of 1895–6, built for almost 1,200 children in Worfield Street off Ethelburga Street, close to Albert Bridge Road. Practical training was emphasized early on, so the school included classes in drawing, cookery and laundry. An inspector's report of 1911 noted that the headmaster of the boys' school often found jobs for his leavers. In 1931 the boys were described as mostly from 'good working-class homes'. The school was irreparably damaged by bombing and so demolished.²⁰³

A new **Ethelburga School** for juniors and infants was built to single-storey designs by the GLC Architect's Department in 1967–9 at the south-west corner of Ethelburga Street and Rosenau Road.²⁰⁴ After allegations of educational 'weakness' it

Draft

closed in 2000, despite prolonged protests to Wandsworth Council from governors and parents. The site was then sold for housing.²⁰⁵

Wix Primary (formerly **Wix's Lane**) **School**, on the eastern edge of Battersea close to Clapham Common, was built in 1902–3 during the School Board for London's final years. It manifests the penultimate stage of the T. J. Bailey triple-decker board school, in which the elevations are festooned with terracotta dressings and cornices, and the classroom windows affect 'Wrenaissance' proportions. The plans of the 1,000-pupil school were criticized for extravagance when submitted for central approval; E. R. Robson demanded on the Board of Education's behalf that his former assistant Bailey narrow the halls, widen the classrooms and reduce the ornament. With a thousand pounds lopped off the estimates, the school proceeded, the contractors being J. & M. Patrick,²⁰⁶ but the south end had to be omitted. It was added only in 1921, completing the symmetrical front in a bare style.²⁰⁷

The location of Wix's Lane meant that many pupils could expect to go on to secondary school at their parents' expense. The children were noted in 1905 as superior in class to those at Surrey Lane and perhaps even Honeywell Road Schools. By 1933 older families were moving out to new housing estates and giving way to a poorer type, but most children were said still to have 'social advantages much above the average for London elementary schools'.²⁰⁸ One wartime pupil was Michael de Larrabeiti, whose melodramatic memoirs recall a sadistic headteacher, and running battles amid blitzed buildings between lads from Wix's Lane and Tennyson Street School, whither the former's children trooped for their daily school dinners.²⁰⁹ Since 1993 the building's top floor has housed 'L'Ecole de Wix', a feeder for French-speaking South Londoners to the Lycée Français in South Kensington. It was inserted to make up for the primary school's surplus of space over its school roll.²¹⁰

Primary schools after 1945

Draft

Sir James Barrie School, sandwiched between the Patmore and Carey Gardens Estates and facing Stewarts and Condell Roads, is perhaps Battersea's largest primary school. It was built in 1951–3 to replace Bradmede (formerly New Road) School, a board school in the Clapham portion of Thessaly Road, destroyed in the Second World War and temporarily rehoused in huts. The Bradmede name was retained until completion. Sir James Barrie was one of eighteen primary schools designed by the LCC Architect's Department during the post-war shortages using the system of light steel framing with concrete panels marketed by Hills of West Bromwich, and best known in the form used by Hertfordshire County Council. The builders were Gee, Walker & Slater.²¹¹ The school fronts Stewarts Road discreetly. The main grouping of halls, shallow-pitched with full-height glazing, is set back from Condell Road, while a two-storey wing runs northwards. The original Hills concrete cladding has been replaced in two tones, except on the schoolkeeper's house.

Joseph Tritton School (demolished) was built in Wynter Street off York Road to designs by Sir John Burnet, Tait & Partners in 1952–4. This LCC school represented the final resolution to the drawn-out saga of the Linda Street school project, going back to 1912 (page xxx). In about 1937 the LCC reserved T. S. Tait to design a senior elementary school for an enlarged site serving the intended Wilberforce (then Hibbert Street) housing development by the same firm of architects (vol. 50). Both projects were postponed because of war.²¹² Afterwards the firm retained the jobs. The Wilberforce Estate preceded the primary school (as it now became), which was erected in 1952–4 by Whyatt (Builders) Ltd.²¹³ Laid out across the line of Linda Street, it was named after the banker and local landowner Joseph Tritton. It was of the finger-plan type, tightly planned on three storeys and constructed on a steel frame with brick façades. Cantilevered upper storeys dignified the entrance.²¹⁴ An inspection of 1957 found that most of the children came from flats adjacent. They were 'clean and well clothed' but had often watched television till late in the evening and lacked sleep: 'volatile, eager ... often restless and inattentive, but friendly and responsive - reflecting, in fact, their

environment'.²¹⁵ The school was closed by Wandsworth Council in 1999 and demolished.

Chesterton School, Dagnall Street, built by Thomas & Edge to the designs of the LCC Architect's Department (Schools Division) in 1963–4 and originally for 560 children, replaced the old Battersea Park Board School as part of the post-war redevelopment south of Battersea Park Road. Most of the children attending the old school were already living on that side of the main road, so the southward shift was logical. In the demure single-storey courtyard design, made in 1960, a central block for assembly halls and administration was linked to classrooms by semi-open walkways. Each of the classrooms was a separate square cell faced with sand-lime bricks and covered by miniature hyperbolic paraboloid timber roofs, then in fashion (III. 4.43). The assembly hall was a larger version of the same concept, but concrete-framed with a wider span. The schoolkeeper's house followed after the school itself. Much infilling has occurred since the 1960s, and in 2008 the classroom roofs were replaced by simpler pyramidal coverings, though the original assembly hall roof remains.²¹⁶

John Burns Primary School between Wycliffe and Wickersley Roads east of Shaftesbury Park, was built in 1966–7 as **Wycliffe Special School**, replacing a previous special school of that name on the same site. That school, opened in 1905 and later enlarged, was for mentally defective boys and run in connection with Basnett Road (later John Burns) School on the other side of St Bartholomew's (now St Nektarios's) Church.²¹⁷

In the early 1960s the LCC decided to replace the old buildings with a day school for some 180–200 educationally subnormal children. The work was carried out under the Inner London Education Authority to plans by the GLC Architect's Department (Schools Division), as successors to the LCC.²¹⁸ The flat-roofed building has two storeys, with brick infill and exposed concrete floor slabs. The plan divided

Draft

primary and secondary children into separate wings, with a hall and kitchen in the centre.

In 1993 Wycliffe Special School was given up. It was replaced by the John Burns School, which after its former home was pulled down (page xxx) had occupied buildings near by on the east side of Wycliffe Road. These were built in about 1973–4 by the Inner London Education Authority using the MACE system for primary schools then officially favoured by the GLC Architect's Department. Like many MACE buildings, this one proved technically unsatisfactory, its roofs requiring major repairs; it was demolished in about 1995 after the school had moved across to the Wycliffe site.²¹⁹

Paddock Primary School, a maintained school for young children with learning difficulties on a site between Forthbridge Road and Meteor Street, occupies a low-key building erected to designs by the GLC Architect's Department for the Inner London Education Authority in about 1972–3, and first opened as Susan Isaacs School for children with special needs. The site's educational history is bound up with that of **Springwell House School**.

In 1913 the LCC bought Springwell House, 80 Clapham Common North Side (vol. 50). Its deep garden behind shaved the west side of Meteor Street, then stretched back at an angle to a point in Forthbridge Road close to the junction with Marmion Road. Known as the Meteor Street site, it was intended for an elementary school. But Battersea Council opposed the location, and war intervened.²²⁰ The LCC hoped to add in No. 81, west of Springwell House, whose garden bordered the east side of Forthbridge Road, along with two houses in Forthbridge Road and a terrace in Meteor Street. Most of these properties were finally secured in 1924–5, but the elementary school project died.²²¹

Meanwhile Springwell House had been opened in 1919 as a school for tuberculous children under the aegis of Mrs L. S. Bennett, building on an informal

Draft

'day sanatorium' she had started in Battersea Park during the war.²²² In the 1920s it was the largest of five such schools run by the LCC, with 150 pupils. Timber shelters were set up in the large garden behind (Ill. 4.43b); gardening was part of the curriculum, and following open-air policies then in vogue, during the whole of 1922 the school was held indoors on only three occasions.²²³ After the Second World War, Springwell House School catered for 'physically defective' or maladjusted children, continuing until 1972, after which the house became a residential centre for groups from special schools.²²⁴

The long-delayed plans to build on the garden came to fruition under a scheme approved by the ILEA in 1967. Those houses in Forthbridge Road and Meteor Street still not in public ownership were acquired and demolished, and the special school was built in about 1972–3. During a period of steeply rising building costs, the estimates for the modest brick building, planned round a central hall, almost doubled.²²⁵ It has undergone changes of name and use. Susan Isaacs School was closed in 1993, to be replaced on the premises by The Vines Community Special School. This in its turn became a branch of Paddock School in 2007.

For Ethelburga and John Milton Schools, see pages xxx and xxx.

Secondary maintained schools

Clapham County Secondary School for Girls was the original name of the school in Broomwood Road currently occupied by **Thomas's, Clapham**. This arresting building of 1908–9, conspicuous on the skyline between the commons, was among the earliest secondary schools built by the LCC. Its designer was T. J. Bailey, as architect to the LCC's Education Department.

On taking over from the School Board for London in 1904, the LCC was faced with providing the secondary schools which the Board had no powers to

Draft

create. As at Paddington and Woolwich, secondary schools in Battersea had grown up around the polytechnic. The LCC decided to turn these into directly funded schools with purpose-built premises. As girls' secondary education was thin in Battersea, they took priority. The two-acre site on the north side of Broomwood Road, chosen in 1906, had been briefly occupied by temporary school accommodation. Bailey's designs, for what was one of four new-style LCC secondary schools, were ready by July 1907. The school was erected by Holliday & Greenwood, opening in Autumn 1909 with some 390 girls. Most came from the Battersea Polytechnic girls' school, hitherto on Clapham Common North Side, as did the first headmistress, but some were transferred from the Battersea Pupil Teachers' Centre at Lavender Hill School, defunct under the new regime.²²⁶

The building conformed closely to LCC secondary schools designed around this time in Chelsea and Hammersmith. Despite superficial similarities to the board schools, the arrangement was quite different, housing only a third of the pupils expected in an elementary school of its size. The four-square plan (Ill. 4.44b) was dominated at ground level by a large dining room at the back, doubling as a gymnasium and with open steel girders in the ceiling (Ill. 4.46); around it were ranged staff rooms and kitchens. Above came a double-height assembly hall with galleries round three sides, ringed by classrooms, while at the top level were laboratories, rooms for art and music and the school museum. The ample grounds were part turfed and part tarmacked, with a strip reserved for nature study.

Elevationally the school, of brick with Portland stone dressings, follows Bailey's forthright 'Free Renaissance' idiom, with projections upwards and outwards (Ills 4.44, 45). Particularly wild and bold are the twin staircase turrets, drawn well forward and culminating in lead-capped roofs and cupolas. Entrances are slotted in below these at an angle, one marked 'visitors', the other 'pupils'. The tone is summed up in a poem by Pamela Hansford Johnson, an alumna:

Not a great period for architecture,
LCC nineteen-nine, red brick: but still

Draft

The Arabian turrets dominate the hill,
From upper windows still young voices trail
Out on the air
“And did those Feet in ancient time” ... I know,
I once sang there.²²⁷

The schoolkeeper's house at the south-east corner of the site sports quite another style, with roughcast elevations, brick corner piers, modillion cornice and hipped roof.

The front and flanks of the school look much as they did in 1909. Internally the planning has naturally changed, the first major addition being a library in 1930.²²⁸ After years of stability, the Inner London Education Authority proposed in 1970 that Clapham County should be amalgamated with Marianne Thornton School (see below) as a large comprehensive school. Despite the governors' opposition this plan was implemented in 1976 under the new name of Walsingham School. At first both sites were used, but the idea was that in due course the school should operate only from Broomwood Road, with extra new buildings.²²⁹

After Wandsworth took over educational powers from ILEA in 1990, Walsingham School attempted to opt out from council control. Despite a high-court action, that was refused and the school shut down.²³⁰ In 1993 the premises were taken over as a private day school educating children from the age of two to thirteen by the Thomas's network of schools, already present in Battersea on the Sir Walter St John's site.²³¹ Additions and alterations since include an extension of the main block on one side at the back in 2001–2 to the designs of Richard Grey Associates and the MEB Partnership, and low buildings behind the playground by Claridge Architects, consisting of an art block (2005–6) and a reception block (2007–8).²³²

Marianne Thornton School, an LCC secondary school of 1958–60 for some 700 girls, has been demolished. Built on the west side of Clapham Common, bounded by Manchuria Road on the north and Thurleigh Road on the south, it replaced some villas with long gardens which had escaped Edwardian

Draft

development. It was mooted in 1956 as new premises for Elmfield School for Girls, Balham, with the intention that it would evolve into a 'county college' or comprehensive. The design was made in 1957 by the LCC Architect's Department (Schools Division), with H. L. Smith and Warren Chalk as job architects. The layout sought to create 'a collegiate atmosphere' by means of semi-enclosed courts. A four-storey teaching block of cross-wall construction with storey-height glazing faced eastwards over the common, while a lower-lying steel-framed hall and other facilities lay behind. The school, erected by Thomas & Edge of Woolwich, was formally opened in July 1961. It was named after Marianne Thornton of Battersea Rise and Clapham, who was interested in girls' education; her great-nephew E. M. Forster had then lately published a 'domestic biography' about her. The school was amalgamated with Clapham County School in 1976 under the new name of Walsingham School (see above). After the combined school shut in 1991, the Marianne Thornton site was redeveloped for housing under a plan announced in 1996. The houses of Walsingham Place occupy the site.²³³

Battersea Park School, between Dagnall Street and Battersea Park Road, is the area's largest comprehensive school. Its main buildings are of 1965–9, designed by Shephard & Epstein, architects. They are linked to an earlier block facing Culvert Road to the west and known as Culvert House. This was built in 1938–9 to house Battersea Central Schools.

The LCC long thought of building a school on the east side of Culvert Road and bought a site in 1913.²³⁴ Nothing happened until 1935, when it was agreed to construct premises here for Battersea Central Schools, then temporarily in Surrey Lane (page xxx). A four-storey brick building in standard LCC style, housing some 400 boys and 400 girls with extra places for crafts and domestic economy, was built in 1938–9 by Cropley Brothers Ltd.²³⁵ It may not have opened till 1946, when it became known as Battersea Secondary School. It was touted by the LCC as 'one of five to be conducted forthwith as experimental secondary schools', with the promise of enlargement into a 'comprehensive high school'.²³⁶

Draft

Extra space to the east in the Battersea Park Road redevelopment area became available in 1963, when plans were laid for extending the school into an eight-form-entry mixed comprehensive on a house system. Bridgwater, Shephard & Epstein, who were then also designing the University of Lancaster, were chosen as architects; their scheme went out to tender in 1965, the winner being Marshall-Andrews & Co. Links from the Culvert Road building ran through to a cruciform, four-storey block on the north side containing house rooms and technical teaching rooms. Facing Dagnall Road was a larger block with an entrance foyer leading into an octagonal assembly hall with tiered seating and pitched roof, and gymnasias and a swimming bath to the east. Both buildings were concrete-framed with brick walling. The official opening, by Lord James of Rusholme, took place in March 1969.²³⁷

In 1992 following question-marks over the school's future it was converted into a council-run City Technology Centre.²³⁸ It reverted to the name of Battersea Park School when it became a foundation school in January 2009.

Colleges

St John's (previously Battersea Training) College (demolished)

The history and architecture of Old Battersea House, formerly Terrace House, is given in volume 50. Between 1840 and 1923 it was headquarters to an institution which can be reckoned as England's first teacher-training college, originally known as Battersea Training College or Normal School and from about 1879 as St John's (Training) College. This account covers the story of the college and its various extensions, all demolished.

Draft

The college owed its origins to the Whig reformer James Kay, later Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth. As an assistant poor law commissioner during the 1830s Kay had become a strenuous advocate of improving education for the poor. On his transfer to the Metropolitan Poor Law district in 1839 he began to reorganize the Norwood School of Industry into a model school. He also became secretary to the Committee of Council on Education, newly created by Melbourne's Whig administration to formulate a national policy for education and disburse grants. Kay and his ally Carleton Tufnell spent that summer looking at continental schools, notably the Ecoles Normales of France and Switzerland, which trained pupils as teachers. On their return they found that Parliament had declined to establish a normal school. Kay therefore determined to found a training school at his own risk.²³⁹

To that end Kay contacted John Shaw Lefevre, a fellow poor law commissioner who moved in the same Whig circles.²⁴⁰ Since 1827 Terrace House and its grounds of some five acres had been let by the 2nd Earl Spencer to Shaw Lefevre, who was advising the Spencers on property matters, not least in Battersea. Recently, having found the situation unhealthy and inconvenient, he had moved his family to Bayswater, while retaining the lease.²⁴¹ Terrace House could therefore be put at Kay's disposal.

The main local enthusiast for the venture, however, was not Shaw Lefevre but Robert Eden, whose success in raising the nearby village school to high standards had already drawn it to the attention of reformers and notables (page xxx). Kay wrote:

We were led to select premises at Battersea chiefly on account of the very frank and cordial welcome with which the suggestion of our plans was received by the Hon. and Rev. Robert Eden, the vicar of Battersea. Mr. Eden offered the use of his village schools in aid of the training school, as the sphere in which the pupils might obtain a practical acquaintance with the art of instruction.²⁴²

Draft

The enterprise, first known as the Normal School for Schoolmasters at Battersea, then as Battersea Normal College or Battersea Training School, opened its doors at Terrace House in February 1840. Kay and his family took one side of the ground floor, the rest of the house being occupied by classrooms and dormitories. The foundation, says Kay's biographer, was 'on the Swiss model. Its primary purpose was to prepare teachers for workhouse and district schools, for schools of industry, for schools which would reconcile the children of the poor to a life of honest toil, while tasting the delight of mental activity and religious communion'.²⁴³ The earliest pupils were eight boys of thirteen and over, transferred from the Norwood School of Industry, to be trained for three years and then spend two more as pupil-teachers in the Battersea village school. They wore a 'plain, dark dress of rifle green, and a working dress of fustian cord'.²⁴⁴ A few older students were also admitted, some to be trained to teach in the 'schools of gentlemen'. By the end of 1840 there were 24 pupils, their costs at first paid largely by sponsorship. Kay brought in Walter Macleod, his headmaster at Norwood, with the title of first Normal Master as well as master of the village school, while music flourished under the tutelage of the gifted John Hullah.²⁴⁵ Visits from supporters and celebrities included at least one by Prince Albert, in June 1841.²⁴⁶

These first arrangements proved unsustainable, Kay suffering 'considerable pecuniary loss'.²⁴⁷ Following his marriage to Janet Shuttleworth in February 1842, he gave up living at Terrace House and sought to reduce his responsibilities. That November the Committee of Council on Education made its first grant to the college. More money followed on condition that the buildings be improved and a new lease granted. The college was taken over in December 1843 by the National Society on the Church of England's behalf. Kay-Shuttleworth, as he now was, had always opposed an education system dominated by the established church. He therefore severed his connection, though Tufnell remained involved.²⁴⁸

Battersea under the National Society's control became the largest of a series of Anglican teacher-training colleges: St Mark's College, Chelsea, founded in 1841,

Draft

came next and remained closest. The name was not at first altered. In 1845 there were 71 pupils, all now aged twenty and over, so the tenor of the establishment naturally changed.²⁴⁹ Additions were slow in coming, in part because the college was on a sublease, though Shaw Lefevre offered extensions of tenure. Under the first Anglican principal, Thomas Jackson, in about 1845 a lecture theatre was built east of Terrace House, and a small dining room to its north.²⁵⁰ The college acquired a committee system which soon involved local churchmen including Philip Cazenove and Henry S. Thornton as well as Battersea's vicar, J. S. Jenkinson. Under the architect Henry Clutton various minor works were undertaken in 1850–1, including a new classroom with dormitories over between the house and the lecture theatre. Clutton was also asked to prepare plans for a building 'set apart for Divine Worship' – the word chapel was perhaps avoided to avoid the imputation that this was a final arrangement.²⁵¹ The addition of a small museum and laboratory behind the lecture theatre may belong to about 1853, when works were contemplated.²⁵²

The next principal was Samuel Clark (1851–62). His main memorial was the permanent chapel, erected to Gothic designs by William Butterfield in 1857–8 and paid for by subscription. It was sited east of the house and built in brick with stone dressings by Butterfield's favourite contractor, Joseph Norris. *The Ecclesiologist* found 'much masculine power in the design ... there is an entire absence of foppery'.²⁵³ Rose windows lit the chapel from three sides, while over the altar excellent glass by Clayton & Bell in memory of Clark's wife filled a three-light window. The bench seating was laid out in the parochial manner (Ill. 4.52). A cusped timber arch and a change in the roof profile marked the division between nave and chancel. In the Edwardian years A. H. Ryan-Tenison added a screen, executed by Nathaniel Hitch.²⁵⁴ The west gallery with organ may also have been an addition.

Under Evan Daniel, longest-serving of the principals (1866–94), the name St John's Training College was adopted. A block of classrooms and dormitories arrived north of the chapel to designs by E. C. Robins in 1878.²⁵⁵ But not until H. Wesley Dennis succeeded Daniel did the college grow substantially. This succeeded a

Draft

critical period when with their sublease about to expire the college contemplated moving away. Following negotiations with Battersea Vestry, a strip of ground was ceded in 1895 for a road along the river frontage to link Lombard Road with Vicarage Crescent. At the same time the National Society bought the freehold with help from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and a building fund was drummed up.²⁵⁶

A loose half-quadrangle now emerged round the chapel (Ills 4.50, 51). First came the transformation in 1896–7 of the former lecture theatre and classroom into the Daniel Memorial Library and lecture theatre. The architects were A. H. Ryan-Tenison and Edward Thornton, who gave the new front a Renaissance cast, with brick pilasters and render.²⁵⁷ Beyond came a junior lecture theatre, a gymnasium (1903) and, at right-angles behind the chapel, the senior lecture theatre and classrooms (1899–1900). North of the house a new dining hall was built in about 1905, once again to designs by Ryan-Tenison, probably the author of all these buildings.²⁵⁸ The generous grounds were divided into the principal's garden closest to the river, a tennis court in the centre and space for sports at the back. The college was approached via a drive from the riverside. On the far side of the grounds next to Green Lane (now Vicarage Crescent) lay minor buildings including a students' common room (1896).²⁵⁹

In 1923 the National Society decided to merge St John's with St Mark's College, Chelsea. The Battersea site continued to be used for dormitory purposes until new accommodation was ready at Chelsea. Its life was briefly prolonged, as the old house and some other portions were temporarily taken by Warrington Training College, also being rebuilt.²⁶⁰ That use once over, the SPCK put the site up for sale. It was snapped up for housing by Battersea Borough Council in 1930. All the college buildings were cleared apart from Old Battersea House. The subsequent history of the site is given in volume 50.²⁶¹

Draft

Southlands College (mostly demolished)

This Wesleyan teacher-training college for women was an offshoot of Westminster College, Horseferry Road, started by the Wesleyan Education Committee in 1850 for training men and women. As the 1870 Education Act increased demand for teachers, it was decided to provide a new college specifically for women. In 1871, through the mediation of the Methodist architect-surveyor W. W. Pocock, the committee acquired Southlands, a stuccoed villa of the 1830s in attractively planted grounds off Battersea High Street, entered from Castle Lane (now Shuttleworth Road). It had previously been a private academy for army and Civil Service entrants. (The earlier history of the house and its site are given in volume 50).²⁶²

In 1871 the stables north-east of the house were converted into Southlands Practising School. Inspectors invariably praised this school which, the principal claimed in 1893, parents preferred to local board schools. At its peak, in 1907, there were as many as 285 girls and 265 infants.²⁶³ Southlands College itself opened in February 1872, with an initial cohort of 105 students, 21 of them from Westminster College. Most were products of the pupil-teacher system and of Methodist elementary schools.²⁶⁴ The villa now acquired an obtrusive three-storey west wing, finished in brick; an existing low east wing, containing a conservatory, was retained. In 1873 a house for the principal was built at the north-west corner of the site. This was designed by Pocock, who presumably was also responsible for the earlier building work.²⁶⁵ Other additions and alterations were made to the school and college during the 1870s and '80s, including the raising of the east wing by a storey (Ill. 4.54).²⁶⁶

In 1904–5 an extension by the architects Bell, Withers & Meredith (George Parker, builder) took the main building almost to Battersea High Street. This wing, in plain red brickwork, had some suave, almost Art Nouveau touches. Internally it included a library and a hall with semi-circular plaster vault and lunettes. The main

Draft

buildings were also altered; light-green tiling cheered up the corridors, while the old conservatory became the students' dining hall, with an added bay.²⁶⁷

By 1924 talk had begun of moving away because of the deteriorating neighbourhood and in 1927 the property was sold to Battersea Borough Council for a health centre and library (page xxx). The school closed down, while Southlands College moved to a larger house on Wimbledon Parkside.²⁶⁸ The college is now part of Roehampton University, where a stained-glass fragment from the Edwardian hall is retained. The Battersea buildings were mostly demolished following war damage but the 1904-5 wing remains, mutilated and converted into housing.

Battersea Polytechnic (now Kingsway Square)

Battersea Polytechnic – the first London polytechnic to be purpose-built – was constructed to designs by E. W. Mountford in 1892-4. Much extended and changed over the years, the buildings were finally converted to housing in 2006-8 and have since been known as Kingsway Square.²⁶⁹

The Victorian notion of the polytechnic as a venue mixing technical instruction and recreation for working men and women goes back to Quintin Hogg's Regent Street Polytechnic, opened in 1882. The People's Palace in Mile End followed, slightly different in tone. Expanding the polytechnic movement became an objective of the Charity Commission, charged with disbursing funds under the City of London Parochial Charities Act. South London, then weak in facilities for training artisans, became one focus of effort. In 1888 the Commissioners met a deputation aiming to create three foundations south of the Thames, and promised endowment and some funding if matching money could be raised. The deputation included Canon Erskine Clarke, who 'urged the claims of Battersea'.²⁷⁰

Draft

An executive committee for the South London Polytechnic Institutes was duly formed, headed by Evan Spicer. New Cross, Elephant and Castle, and Battersea, were earmarked, all three with available sites and buildings in mind. The New Cross project, destined for the former Royal Naval School there, was sponsored by the Goldsmiths' Company, becoming Goldsmiths' College, while the committee took on former school and college premises near the Elephant to create the Borough Polytechnic.

That left Battersea, chosen because of its rapid industrial growth. Support came from the Battersea Tradesmen's Club and from the Battersea Vestry, newly liberated from the Wandsworth Board of Works. The response of employers was mixed. Octavius Morgan, local MP and director of the Morgan Crucible Company, acted as Spicer's right-hand man in the early stages, but there was no immediate reaction from the railways. The main donations towards the £60,000 appealed for came from William Guesdon, a Clapham businessman and evangelical (£20,000), and Sir Henry Tate (£10,000).

The first idea was to buy all or part of the Albert Palace facing Prince of Wales Drive, which having failed financially was for sale in 1888 (page xxx).²⁷¹ This attracted advocates of the polytechnic movement's recreational side, doubtless aware of the glass domes and winter gardens then planned for the People's Palace. That December the architect Rowland Plumbe, also employed at the Borough Polytechnic, reported that the palace buildings could be adapted for technical education 'at a comparatively low cost'. But a high-powered subcommittee including Hogg, Tate, Sir Lyon Playfair, Silvanus Thompson and Erskine Clarke investigated further and advised otherwise, with Clarke one of two dissentients out of nine.²⁷²

The promoters now opted for taking a portion of the Albert Palace's grounds, held under Crown lease and stretching south and west as far as Battersea Park Road and Forfar Road. Building on a one-acre site south of the palace in

Draft

combination with purchase of the Connaught Hall at its west end was the intention. That too fell through after Plumbe surveyed the hall and concluded that its 'most deplorable state' needed large sums to set right.²⁷³ By June 1889 the committee had decided to abandon the Albert Palace altogether, buy the larger two-acre site facing Battersea Park Road between Forfar and Macduff Roads and erect a wholly new building. Despite friction with potential bidders for the palace who threatened to turn it into a rival attraction ('The Polytechnics gave the people the pill, but it was their intention to sugar or gild the pill'), the scheme went ahead.²⁷⁴

Rowland Plumbe was the obvious contender for designing what was then called the 'Battersea Institute'. In December 1889 he produced a well-researched report followed by draft plans. He had decided against travelling to European cities to study comparable institutions, he said, because their better funding made them irrelevant. So Plumbe concentrated on previous London foundations, notably the Regent Street Polytechnic. He exceeded his brief by including a swimming bath in his plans, arguing that it would promote the institute's social aims.²⁷⁵

Despite Plumbe's strong suit, the committee opted for a limited competition under his management – a process he organized meticulously. It began with fact-finding at the Department of Science and Art.²⁷⁶ Plumbe sent a draft brief to William Garnett, then at the Durham College of Science and unsuccessfully touted as the head of Battersea Polytechnic. Following Garnett's rigorous criticisms, the final printed brief went out to architects. Three departments were planned: technical education, physical education and social recreation. Besides the many rooms for craft and technology, there were to be physics and chemistry laboratories, a photographic studio, an art school, four music rooms, three classrooms set apart for women and a school of cookery for women. On the recreational sides came a swimming bath, and separate gyms, refreshment rooms and reading rooms for men and women. A general library was not provided.²⁷⁷

Draft

Fifteen architects or firms submitted designs in September 1890: John Belcher; C. A. de Boinville; H. C. Boyes; H. H. Bridgman; Thomas Chatfeild Clarke; Henman & Harrison; George Hubbard; James MacLaren; E. W. Mountford; J. Osborne Smith; T. Roger Smith, Son, & Gale; W. H. Seth Smith; Sidney Smith; E. J. Tarver; and James Weir. Arthur Blomfield, T. E. Collcutt, R. W. Edis and Alfred Waterhouse were approached but did not participate. Belcher, Henman & Harrison, Mountford and three of the Smiths – Smith, Son, & Gale, Osborne Smith and Sidney Smith – were shortlisted and worked up their drawings for a final submission, decided in March 1891.²⁷⁸ The winner was Mountford. Despite his strong local showing – his Lavender Hill library had just been completed and he was shortly to build Battersea Town Hall – and a rumour that the decision went against Plumbe’s advice,²⁷⁹ charges of injustice are not recorded. The finalists’ drawings were shown at Goldsmiths’ Hall, and a few were published.²⁸⁰ Belcher’s design was the most outlandish, sporting the mannerist touches just then favoured in his office; one magazine described it as ‘rather curious and fanciful, especially the Chinese-shaped turrets’, while another found its drawing style ‘indescribably amateurish’.²⁸¹

Conscious that the polytechnic was the first wholly new building of its type, Mountford claimed to have ‘spared neither pains nor labour to produce a design worthy of the occasion’. The style he described as ‘Modern Renaissance of an English character, and, to some extent, collegiate in feeling’.²⁸² The elevations, mixing brick and (at this stage) terracotta with shaped gables, circular attic windows, high chimneys, roof lanterns and copious ornament, typified their author and date. While the long main front to Battersea Park Road was symmetrical (Ils 4.56b, 57), the sides were looser; a beefy hall flank-on towards the future Macduff Road offered a strong accent (Ill. 4.58). Mountford was doubtless selected for his clear planning, whereby the separate activities were grouped and linked by long lateral corridors, with a cross-corridor between front and back (Ill. 4.56). The larger volumes of men’s gymnasium, swimming bath and hall occupied the north-east sector; the small women’s gymnasium came semi-separately on the west flank.²⁸³

Draft

In July 1891 the Prince of Wales laid the foundation stone in the future entrance hall.²⁸⁴ Building hung fire until the spring of 1892, after lack of funds forced postponement of the hall, the women's gymnasium and a lodge. Although the Charity Commissioners thought this 'a wise discretion', their advisory architect, Ewan Christian, blithely pressed Portland stone on the committee instead of the cheaper Bath stone which by now Mountford had substituted for terracotta dressings; this was successfully resisted. Holloway Brothers were the builders chosen, on a tender price of £36,043 after reductions, including the replacement of wood blocks with granolithic flooring. It was the first major contract won by this local firm, and a step in their progress to metropolitan and wider reputation.²⁸⁵

The contract ran well and in parallel with Mountford's Battersea Town Hall, where facing materials of red Suffolk bricks and Bath stone were also used. The one major change during its course was the restoration in 1893 of the women's gymnasium on the west flank, built to a revised, larger-scale design.²⁸⁶ Amidst much bunting the Prince of Wales returned with the Princess in February 1894 to open the polytechnic (III. 4.61).²⁸⁷ The completed front differed from the competition design only in sporting double-storey bow windows at the two ends.²⁸⁸ Despite the economies, Mountford had been allowed ten statues in niches along the front, representing Architecture, Painting, Engraving, Sculpture, Music (III. 4.59), Poetry, Chemistry, Electricity, Mathematics and Engineering. These are by the architect's friend and collaborator, Paul Montford.²⁸⁹ The western flank was equipped with long sashes like those on the sides of Battersea Town Hall; forward of it stood the women's gym, lower but with a handsome straight gable and end window towards Battersea Park Road.

The main internal features of interest were the entrance hall and staircase. They are well preserved, though the floral-patterned floors have been covered or replaced. The entrance hall is a tight, double-height space rising to a deep coved frieze in which large plaster putti cavort, framed by shells and linked by swags. In the central rose further putti loll upside down precariously (III. 4.60). The hall is

Draft

overlooked by the first-floor corridor behind an open screen and balustrade. The main stair rises behind the long lateral front corridor, which is enlivened by a stone tympanum with the arts and sciences in relief.²⁹⁰

From its opening Battersea Polytechnic came within the remit of the London County Council, which provided a growing proportion of its funding. Under its first principal, Sidney Wells, and chairman, Edwin Tate, it developed a strong technical reputation. It was organized in six departments rather than the projected original three: mechanical engineering and building trades; electrical engineering and physics; chemistry; 'women's subjects'; art; and music.²⁹¹ When the next Prince of Wales visited in 1904, it was described as 'a great People's University', with classes and workshops in many subjects (Ills 4.62, 63).

The young artisan, seeking instruction in the scientific principles and practice of the trade, finds equal facilities with the teacher or engineer aspiring to obtain a university degree. The domestic servant or young housewife, desiring to make her own dress, can be seen with her more leisured sister studying for qualifications in music, commerce, or art.

The polytechnic had then just started classes for motor mechanics and drivers, while Selincourt & Co. of Pimlico were sending 105 'girl workers' not only for dressmaking and tailoring but for drill and gym classes. The railways too had come round sufficiently for the London & South Western Company to send apprentices from Nine Elms.²⁹² Boys' and girls' schools for aspirant students under fifteen were also started, but soon moved to separate premises (page xxx).

As early as 1895 a shift away from the early recreational aims was palpable, when the site of the postponed men's swimming pool at the back was commandeered for smiths', carpenters' and electricians' shops.²⁹³ But Mountford's hall was finally erected to slightly amended designs in 1898-9, again by Holloways, with workshops in the basement and rooms behind the platform for music classes.

Draft

Arthur Balfour opened the hall, after which Sir Henry Tate presented an organ by Beale & Thynne.²⁹⁴ Its elliptical ceiling and gallery at the back made it not unlike Mountford's large hall at Battersea Town Hall, but in photographs it looks somewhat bleak.

The freehold of the site having been purchased from the Crown in 1899, the polytechnic was freer to fill out the site with extensions, notably in the north-west corner.²⁹⁵ A prestigious addition was the library of 1909–10, tucked in west of the main front. This elegant small building was donated by Edwin Tate, Sir Henry's son. Its designer was F. Dare Clapham, who as Mountford's principal assistant inherited his practice when the latter died in 1908. It was opened by Archbishop Davidson of Canterbury with John Burns, a stalwart supporter of the Polytechnic and by then a cabinet minister, in attendance. Again of brick with Bath stone dressings, it shifts Mountford's idiom into a purer Renaissance style. The interior was fitted out with teak flooring, panelling and bookstacks of Austrian oak, and light fittings perhaps designed by Omar Ramsden (Ill. 4.64). Stained glass in the west window by Shrigley & Hunt featured the figure of Literature, while the side windows had mauve tints in the borders and opaque Prior glass in the clear lights. Once again the builders were Holloways; the carving outside and inside was by Seale of Walworth.²⁹⁶ In 1911–12 Clapham added a plainer block hidden from the street for the physiology and hygiene departments, built by Higgs & Hill and subsidised by the Drapers' Company.²⁹⁷

By then Battersea Polytechnic had gone further than its counterparts towards a wholly technical and academic orientation. One manifestation of this was a failed attempt in 1911 to affiliate to the University of London,²⁹⁸ another the replacement of the women's gymnasium in 1928–9 by a new west wing facing Forfar Road. A larger east wing towards Macduff Road was planned in 1949 but not built until 1953–4, by James Carmichael Ltd to designs by Campbell Jones & Sons. That involved demolishing Mountford's men's gymnasium, last remnant of the recreational facilities, and lopping off the top of his hall to shoehorn in a physics

Draft

department; Tate's organ was reconstructed to fit the reduced lower space. In the south-east corner the block barged beyond the previous building line.²⁹⁹

Like other such establishments, the polytechnic was rechristened a 'college of advanced technology' in 1956, becoming known as Battersea College of Technology. In 1962 it transferred to Ministry of Education control from the LCC, which had just completed a large men's hall of residence, Ralph West Hall in Albert Bridge Road. By then local links had loosened, and two-thirds of the students were said to come from outside London.³⁰⁰ The college had long outgrown its original buildings and taken on annexes round about. The search for an extra or alternative site had already begun. In 1962, under the principalship of Peter Leggett, it was decided to abandon Battersea for Guildford. Next year came the announcement that the colleges of advanced technology would become universities. That paved the way for the college to become the University of Surrey in 1966, a change made before the move, which occurred in 1968–9.³⁰¹ Some historic relics were taken to Guildford, including the Shrigley & Hunt west window from the library, later lost.³⁰²

The Battersea buildings were taken over by Westminster Technical College. After talk of demolition, a refurbishment took place in stages by GLC architects on behalf of the Inner London Education Authority in 1973–7.³⁰³ The college, latterly Westminster College, remained in possession until 2000. St James Homes, a subsidiary of the Berkeley Group, bought the complex in 2005 for development as housing and recast it as Kingsway Square in 2006–8, with the A & Q Partnership as architects. Most of the buildings were converted, but on land formerly occupied by annexes facing Lurline Gardens at the back a new block called Drapers Court was created. The entrance hall, main staircase and lateral corridor in the Mountford building retain their identity. The internal flank wall of the big hall, curtailed in 1953–4, was recreated to allow flats with large west-facing windows.³⁰⁴ The library has since been converted into a small art gallery.