

Battersea Bridge Road to York Road

The area nominally covered by this chapter is a large one, taking in some of Battersea's most historic sites including those of the manor house (Bolingbroke House) and York House, the fifteenth-century mansion of the Archbishops of York – both long demolished. Bolingbroke House itself and the core of the historic village in and around the High Street are dealt with separately in Chapter 1 (Ill. 2.1). The remaining, greater part of the area was largely undeveloped until the nineteenth century. It now mainly comprises a mixture of Victorian housing and 1960s council estates, together with some of the most ambitious Thames-side residential developments of recent years.

The poet Richard Church spent his childhood in the teeming streets here in the early 1900s, when the 'range and variety of talent and background were remarkable'. He recalled 'Irish, Scottish, Cockney, provincial stocks; some poor, rough and brutal, others comfortable, scrupulous in religious and social observance. Sometimes this disparity existed between adjoining households'.¹ There were slums but also occasional havens of middle-class prosperity, particularly on the north side of Westbridge Road, where semi-detached villas and generous gardens prevailed. Today similar contrasts persist in the mix of post-war council housing and glamorous riverside flats that have replaced so much earlier fabric.

Proximity to Battersea's first and for a long time only river crossing influenced early developments. By the 1740s two straight roads – the northern end of the present Battersea Bridge Road and Ferry Lane (now Westbridge Road) – linked Battersea village and its embryonic road system with the ferry to Chelsea. Their making may have been linked to proposals by the St John family, then lords of Battersea manor, for a bridge on the ferry site. When

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Battersea Bridge was constructed here in 1771–2 under a new lord of the manor, the 2nd Earl Spencer, its proprietors planned to extend the existing short approach southwards all the way to the Wandsworth Road (the main east–west turnpike road, now Lavender Hill), but got only as far as Surrey Lane, which connected with the other main route between Nine Elms and Wandsworth (now Battersea Park Road–York Road). However, the proprietors also acquired a one-acre field strip immediately to the south in Little Hill Shot for a possible future continuation of this ‘Bridge Road’.²

That came in the mid 1840s, by which time house-building was under way in and around the existing part of the road and the Crown was buying up land to the east for Battersea Park. The widening and straightening out of Church (now Battersea Church) Road, improving access to the bridge from the village, also dates from this time. Private enterprise made the running in the form of local owners keen to turn their land into valuable road frontages. A Mr Stedman bought the Little Hill Shot strip from the bridge proprietors in 1845 and presumably made up the roadway shortly afterwards.³ The final stretch of Battersea Bridge Road, connecting with Battersea Park Road, was added around 1855, driven through land in Upper Rowditch field by the Battersea Park Commissioners. Unlike previous portions, this was not a straight continuation, but was angled westwards in order to join the main road close to its junction with Latchmere Lane, so allowing traffic an easy route south to the turnpike.

This chapter divides the district west of Battersea Bridge Road into five sub-areas (Ill. 2.1), treating them in a roughly north-east to south-west sequence, ending with the modern riverside developments of Lombard and York Roads.

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Battersea Church Road to the river

Morgan's Walk area

This was once part of a field of manorial land known as the Twelve Acres, which lay east of the old manor house and stretched south as far as Westbridge Road.⁴ Though industry had been spreading steadily along the riverside since the seventeenth century, the presence of the parish church and manor house kept it at bay here until the early 1780s. By then the bridge had been built, the manor house largely demolished, and the Twelve Acres leased by Earl Spencer to Thomas Rhodes and David Meredith. Thereafter this section of riverfront became industrialized, chemical factories being especially prevalent, and pockets of workers' housing began to appear along the north side of Church Road. Besides Rhodes and Meredith, those involved in the development of this area included James Chabot, refiner and jeweller, one of their sub-lessees, and Timothy Cobb (d.1839), a banker from Banbury who acquired the bulk of the estate by his marriage to Rhodes's daughter Ann.

By the mid 1820s Chabot and his son Charles had built 30-odd small cottages beside the narrow zigzag road that then connected Church Road with the bridge, in rows known as The Folly, Ford's Folly and Cottage Place (Ill. 2.2). After Cobb's death his family auctioned off his lands in 1841-3. House-building intensified under new owners, who included Charles Chabot, the Rev. John Partes Haswell (a Methodist minister, who built a chapel in Westbridge Road) and Joseph Watson, a Chelsea gentleman, who acquired the biggest acreage. Watson's builder, John Collett, also of Chelsea, was the most active in the area at this time. This phase saw a broad, straight continuation made at the eastern end of Church Road around 1842, improving access to the bridge. Development now spilled over into the hitherto vacant fields to its south. North of the new road, the 1840s boom brought more small

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houses in Europa Place and Europa Cottages (c.1844), as well as a long, narrow street of larger tenements called Little Europa Place (c.1848–58), all built by Collett, who also ran the Europa beerhouse in Church Road.⁵ But the road improvement severed this little district of courts and alleys from the terraces and semis emerging to its south, abandoning it to the surrounding riverside industries and sowing the seeds of its decline into a slum.

Any gaps were filled with more housing in the 1860s. By then overcrowding was becoming common, and poverty and cramped conditions later earned the area the slum epithet 'Little Hell'.⁶ The Metropolitan Board of Works bought up land here for rebuilding Battersea Bridge in 1886–90, demolishing houses on the west side of Battersea Bridge Road to allow for a widened approach. Part of the surplus was used by the London County Council for a river fire station and a block of working-class dwellings, **Battersea Bridge Buildings**, both erected c.1900–1. Comprising 65 flats in five storeys, the dwellings (demolished in 1971) were in the LCC Architect's Department's familiar Boundary Street style, of red brick and roughcast with gables, tall chimneys and a red-tiled roof (see Ill. 0.13). The council also erected a short-lived pair of cottage flats to their rear, in Cottage Place (demolished 1916). An early resident of Battersea Bridge Buildings was the sculptor Eric Gill, who had two successive flats here at the time of his marriage in 1904. He moved to Hammersmith the next year, following the birth of his daughter. Several of the flats, including Gill's first, came with 'associated' WCs.⁷

Municipal slum clearance on a larger scale was unnecessary; the Morgan Crucible Company saw to that. Established in 1856 in a riverside yard at the western edge of the Twelve Acres, the firm grew rapidly, gobbling up adjoining wharves and streets to east and west: houses in Church Road went in the 1870s, in Cottage Place and Little Europa Place in the 1910s–20s, and by 1937 all the housing north of Battersea Church Road had been swept away

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and the Morgan factory extended to occupy almost the entire riverfront from Battersea Flourmills to Battersea Bridge.⁸

When Morgan Crucible closed in the 1970s, re-use of the abandoned site became something of a *cause célèbre*. Local pressure groups and the Labour-controlled Wandsworth Council wanted it for public housing and light industry (see Ill. 0.18), and so rebuffed a joint proposal by Morgans and the developers Wates Ltd for luxury private housing and offices (by Chapman Taylor Partners). Stalemate ensued until the political watershed years of 1977–8, which saw the Tories sweep to power in the GLC and Wandsworth Council. Both bodies then threw their weight behind the Morgan/Wates scheme. The plans were finally approved in 1978 after a public inquiry and the factory was cleared the following year.⁹

Known as **Morgan's Walk**, the nine-acre estate was built by Wates in 1983–4, to revised plans by Austin Vernon Associates. The first big private housing development in Battersea on a prominent, formerly industrial riverside site, it was seen as a harbinger of the area's gentrification. Its river views, proximity to the heliport and good bus links to Sloane Square attracted a professional and business community then being priced out of Fulham and Chelsea, and property values rose sharply.¹⁰

What now seems most remarkable about Morgan's Walk is the modest scale and architectural conservatism of its buildings – both emphasized by Richard Rogers Partnership's towering Montevetro apartments alongside (see Ill. 2.7). Its 200-odd suburban-looking brick-faced flats, maisonettes and houses, with tiled roofs are arranged on an informal layout of new streets (Peveley Drive, Thorney Crescent, Whistlers Avenue). As part of the planning agreement an intended private riverside walk was made public, and the site of the disused fire station at Battersea Bridge incorporated into the scheme and landscaped as a public open space.¹¹

Montevetro

No modern building in Battersea polarized opinion more during its planning and construction than did Richard Rogers Partnership's Montevetro apartments in 1994–2000. The debate focused not so much on the building's architectural qualities, which were widely admired, but its unprecedented scale for such a sensitive location, on a prominent river bend next to Battersea's Georgian parish church. It flouted all existing height and density restrictions and planning guidelines, and so to an extent paved the way for the clumsier, less imaginative developments that have appeared further upriver and elsewhere on the Thames in the years since. There was also disquiet over the role of the Environment Secretary, John Gummer, a champion of 'controversial and challenging' riverside architecture, who took the final decision out of Wandsworth Council's hands by calling in the plans.¹²

The two-acre site had been occupied previously by the Rank Hovis MacDougall flourmills (or Battersea Flourmills), one of the last of the area's operational riparian industries, which closed in 1992. The company won planning approval later that year to convert and extend the mills to accommodate 170 luxury flats, principally to attract potential buyers. British Land plc acquired the site in May 1994, appointing the Richard Rogers Partnership as architects. By October that year the key elements of the Montevetro design were in place.¹³

From the outset the relationship with St Mary's Church was seen as paramount. The Rogers team (project director Marco Goldschmied) briefly considered a conversion, but soon realized that a better-aligned new building would both liberate the church, which was partly obscured by the flourmills, and offer residents enhanced river views.¹⁴ Firstly the architects gave up a

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large chunk of the available ground by reserving the south-westernmost corner for a landscaped public park around the church. Setting the apartments on a strict north–south alignment diagonally across the site not only made room for the park, but enabled all 103 flats to enjoy almost uninterrupted daylight, the sun striking the bedrooms ranged along the east side in the morning, the living rooms on the west flank in the evening.¹⁵

Visually the composition was a striking one: a long row of five interlinked blocks, running away at an angle from the riverfront, the northernmost by the river being a 20-storey tower, the other four stepping down under a raking roofline to a less intimidating four storeys at the south end, nearest the church (Ills 0.20; 2.3, 4). The space beneath the sloping roofs was reserved for fully-glazed duplex penthouses. Also audacious was the use of a curtain-wall system of high performance double-glazing to clad the entire west front, overlooking the river, using Belgian glass and Swiss aluminium frames, pre-assembled in the UK. Glass's ubiquity suggested the project's change of name in the summer of 1997 from the rather pedestrian Battersea Thames Rise to the more memorable Italian one (literally 'glass mountain').¹⁶ A contrasting, more solid rear elevation came from the use of prefabricated terracotta cladding panels, punctured by four tall, glazed lift-towers that defined the five blocks, giving direct access to the apartments, without the need for internal corridors. Living-room and kitchen balconies occupied similar positions on the west front, breaking up the otherwise sheer wall of glass. An ancillary leisure building with car parking beneath was provided on Battersea Church Road.

Such an aggressive design was objected to principally by those from across the river whose views it would dominate, notably the councils of Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington & Chelsea, and especially the Chelsea Society. But elsewhere it was warmly received: both the Royal Fine Art Commission and English Heritage were supportive, as was the vicar of St

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Mary's, John Clarke, who welcomed it as 'imaginative'.¹⁷ Wandsworth Council also made encouraging noises, though its planning committee rejected the first application in February 1995, albeit by a single vote. Councillors quickly overturned this decision at a full meeting the following month, and so expressed themselves 'mystified' by John Gummer's insistence that the final judgement should be his, after a public inquiry in June.¹⁸

The Environment Secretary's department was at the time putting the finishing touches to a new strategy for riverside development in the capital, and saw Montevetro as a potential landmark case. Gummer had also invited Richard Rogers to join his Thames Advisory Group. It was the high quality of the design that seems to have swung the decision in its favour. Fortunately, Gummer made his approval conditional on the faithful execution of the Rogers team's plans, for as soon as permission was granted the site changed hands again, British Land selling up to developers Taylor Woodrow for £19 million. Revised plans were accepted by the council in November 1997 and work began shortly afterwards. Nevertheless, the Rogers team lost control of the final construction phase, which was handled by another firm; and it has been suggested that this may have contributed to problems complained of by early residents.¹⁹

Montevetro was also notable for its method of construction, which owed much to the Rogers practice's expertise with fast-track commercial projects. The use of prefabricated components like the glass curtain-walling, which could be attached quickly to the in-situ concrete frame, greatly expedited the process. The terracotta panels on the rear façade – of the same French 'Bardeau' system introduced by Renzo Piano in his Cité Internationale hotel in Lyons – were delivered already clipped to their Swiss-made aluminium frames and lifted by crane into position for fixing. Similarly the bathrooms, which occupy a central service spine between the sleeping and living spaces, were prefabricated pods made in Denmark by E. J. Badekabiner,

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veterans of bathroom pod production for European hotels, then shipped across the North Sea and taken by road from Dover to Battersea and craned into place.²⁰

This attention to detail and the streamlined modernism continued inside (Ill. 2.5). Stripped-down interiors and wide, ceiling-height windows and door openings made roomy apartments appear even bigger. Rather than traditional tiling, the bathroom pods were finished in floor-to-ceiling sheets of glass, in a selection of marine colours. When completed in 2000, apartments ranged in price from £250,000 for a one-bedroom flat to £4.5 million for the biggest penthouse, placing them in the exclusive reach of the well-off – a bias that did little to endear the building to its detractors. One pair of wealthy new residents contrasted the ‘young, free-and-easy Californian lifestyle’ offered by the building to their previous home ‘in stuffy old Belgravia’.²¹

Battersea Church Road to Westbridge Road

East of Bolingbroke Walk

The wedge of ground formed by Battersea Church Road, Battersea Bridge Road, Westbridge Road and Bolingbroke Walk retains a significant number of houses from this district’s first major period of building activity in the 1840s. Among them are some of Battersea’s best of the period: the ‘villas’ with long gardens ranged along the north side of Westbridge Road – a surprising middle-class island amid so much meaner housing, strong enough to withstand later waves of redevelopment.

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The land here was part of the Twelve Acre field sold at auction by the Cobb family in 1841–3. Before the decade was out most of the road frontages, including the new eastern arm of Church Road, had been filled with houses by new owners, many of them small builders, no doubt keen to make the most of favourable times.

On the south side of Church Road, the first row of small two-storey cottages (later 1–9 Battersea Church Road) was erected in 1842 by John Sugden, a Bermondsey builder, for the Rev. J. P. Haswell, along with three stuccoed houses and shops adjoining at 46–50 Battersea Bridge Road; all are now demolished. Sugden also built the corner block opposite on the north side of the new road (also demolished). Most of the surviving houses on **Battersea Church Road** date from the mid-to-late 1840s. Thomas and Robert Jones, builders of Pimlico, were responsible for Nos 11–29, of c.1844. Their miserly two-storey elevations were typical of the housing going up in the vicinity, but unusually the rear halves were taller, with a small top-floor window lighting an upper rear room behind. Most have since had dormer roofs added in front, though the original arrangement can still be seen at Nos 21 and 25. Alongside, Nos 31–35 are of a similar vintage; and further west at Nos 51–57 are remnants of a row of six (Nos 47–57) erected c.1848 by George Ayles and George Tyrrell, two Chelsea builders. The terrace at Nos 61–71 (formerly 'Pinn's Terrace') is later, being the work of John Pinn, a local carpenter formerly of Lambeth. A few years later Pinn also built the last row on the north side (Nos 22–50, now demolished), but went bankrupt soon after.²²

Around the corner in **Battersea Bridge Road**, Richard Gibb, a Cavendish Square coffee-house keeper, bought land at the Cobbs' sales and around 1843 built a row of six houses and shops called Caledonia Cottages (now 58–68 Battersea Bridge Road), borrowing money from the Cobb family bank to do so. Within a year these had been joined by a trio of taller houses

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and shops adjoining to the north, a speculation by John Collett called Europa Place (now Nos 52–56). The frontage southwards was also developed around 1843 by Richard Colven, a Brixton builder, with three houses and shops (Nos 70, 72 & 76) and a corner pub at No. 74, originally called the Prodigal's Return (later extended into No. 76). Colven also built the two adjacent houses at the east end of Westbridge Road (see below). The present pub (the Draft House) is a rebuilding of 1929–30 to designs by G. G. MacFarlane, architect to the Stag Brewery in Pimlico.²³

Aside from the trio of houses at 10–14 Westbridge Road – another example of mid 1860s infill – the houses on the north side of **Westbridge Road** were all built within a year or two of each other in 1844–6.²⁴ Many were surprisingly fine for the area, if not large, arranged mostly in semi-detached pairs, or occasionally in rows of three or four, and gardens were generous and well laid out (Ill. 2.2). One pair (later Nos 6 & 8, now demolished) stood either side of a Methodist chapel set further back from the road, built at the same time the Rev. J. P. Haswell (see vol. 49).

Richard Colven's houses at Nos 2 & 4 stand out for their striking flint façades and medieval-style decorations, which include statuettes set in half-domed tabernacles or niches, door porches with grouped colonnettes and pointed arches, cusped window tracery, plentiful head-stops and other sculpted decorations (Ill. 2.6). They failed to take at first, standing empty whilst the rest of the street filled up quickly, until c.1851; but Colven, who died in 1846, had belief or pride in them, asking in his will that they be retained while his other properties were sold off to support his kin.²⁵

With several builder-developers at work in Westbridge Road in the mid 1840s there was considerable stylistic variety. The peculiar Gothicism of Colven's pair is echoed in a more eclectic trio at Nos 32–36 (originally Albert Villas), with neo-Tudor mouldings, head-stops and jaggy bargeboards; these

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were a speculation by John Chancellor, a job master living in Hyde House, one of the bigger, older properties near by on Hyde Lane.²⁶ Elsewhere a weakish neoclassicism predominates, as in the paired semis at Nos 24 & 26 and 28 & 30 (Myrtle and Elm Villas), or a chunkier Italianate, as at Nos 38 & 40 (Oriental Villas). The short terrace built by William Woods at Nos 46–52 (Woodbine Cottages) has a simpler early Victorian look.

Westbridge Road was characterized in the early 1890s as having ‘a respectable class of house’, despite its situation amid ‘a poor neighbourhood of little streets’. Certainly the annuitants and professionals who lived here, and the resident domestics who served them, were rarely found elsewhere in the surrounding area. Even so, few were of note, though the English Aesthetic artist John Eyre (1850–1927) was living at 26 Westbridge Road in the early 1900s.²⁷

The west side of Bolingbroke Road (now Walk) was laid out in 1844 and filled rapidly with small houses, now all demolished; the east side and land behind remained mostly vacant until it was taken for Bolingbroke Road (now Westbridge) School in the 1870s.

West of Bolingbroke Walk

This ground was a market garden when it was sold with Timothy Cobb’s estate in the early 1840s. Here Frances (later Condray) Street, with 59 two-storey terraced houses, was laid out in 1851–3 for John Allen, a Lambeth musical-instrument maker, and his lessee William Hayman, a lace manufacturer from St Marylebone; John Pinn was again one of several builders involved. Two shorter streets of small houses – Hart (later Scholey) Street and Somerset (later Handley) Street – were shoehorned between it and Church Lane at the same time. Gradually the district became even more

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densely built up. West of Church (now Sunbury) Lane, a handful of houses known as Althorpe Grove was added off Westbridge Road in 1856, to be joined by a cul-de-sac called Freeland Street around 1867–8. Though these were never among the worst streets in north Battersea, they suffered overcrowding and poverty, particularly in the blind alleys.²⁸ After the Second World War all these sites were acquired and demolished by the LCC for new housing (below), the only remnant being an isolated former pub of c.1867, The Stag, at 96 Westbridge Road.

Somerset Estate. The Somerset Estate, started by the LCC in 1962 and finished under the GLC, now occupies a large hunk of the ground between Westbridge Road and Battersea Church Road (Ill. 2.7). Architecturally, its two point blocks (Selworthy and Sparkford Houses) and seven lower blocks (Chelwood, Clevedon, Crewkerne, Draycott, Exford, Misterton and Shepton Courts) constitute one of Battersea's more vigorous public housing developments.

The LCC had been accumulating pockets of slum property for redevelopment in this district since 1952. The largest such acquisition, made in 1957, was around Handley Street, by which name the subsequent project was first known. By 1961 the LCC had almost eight acres in hand, and embarked on a scheme for 296 dwellings in two 21-storey blocks and six four-storey 'cluster blocks' of maisonettes, supplemented by two lower groups for old people.²⁹ The design presented by the Architect's Department was based on housing types with Brutalist-style elevations then being built on similar terrain at the Canada Estate, Bermondsey, to a pattern worked out by Colin Lucas and Philip Bottomley. They were also being adopted at the same time for the Westbury Estate, just beyond the Battersea border north of Wandsworth Road. The maisonette blocks present strongly modelled, syncopated elevations in which cantilevered concrete floor slabs and downstand beams play their part, set off by bands of grey brickwork (Ill. 2.8).

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The open staircases are particularly trenchant. The estate's original colour palette has been much modified, all the concrete being now overlaid in cream paint, and much of the brickwork in black. The two point blocks are grouped together in the north-west portion of the estate, nearer the river. The right-hand side of each elevation is canted out in bays of three and four storeys at a time to obviate monotony. The ground storeys were originally left open. Space was at first reserved in the centre of the estate for a children's home; this was then shifted to a position next to Bolingbroke Walk, but the building erected around 1965 has since been demolished and replaced with private flats. At the extreme north-west position next to Battersea Church Road is Dimson Lodge, a low-rise building with an oversailing roof. Named after the GLC councillor Gladys Dimson, it was originally a tenants' hall but since 2007 has been a clubroom for the elderly.³⁰

The Somerset Estate has survived in better condition than its Bermondsey counterpart, which encountered problems of vandalism from the beginning.

Westbridge Road to Surrey Lane

The funnel-like shape of the district now given over to Wandsworth Council's Surrey Lane Estate had been determined before 1772 by Battersea's emerging road system. Within the confines of a triangle of roads connecting village, bridge and common fields, a handful of detached houses sprang up in the later 1700s and early 1800s, mostly connected with the market gardens then predominant in this area – among them the Russell family's Enham Nursery, in the 'Shoulder of Mutton Field' between Westbridge Road and Hyde Lane, known in the 1820s and 30s for its rare geraniums. Otherwise there was little in the way of development.³¹

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South of Hyde Lane, most of the land facing Battersea Bridge Road almost as far as Surrey Lane was owned in the early 1840s by William Hurst Ashpittel of Clapton Square, for whom the local builder William Everett erected a pair of villas at either end of his field's long frontage. But concerted development only began after 1848, when this ground and the Enham Nursery were acquired by the brothers Charles William and William Henry Spicer, then both of Upper Brook Street. (William Henry was better known as Henry T. Spicer, the barrister turned dramatist, poet, writer on spiritualism and friend of Dickens, who died in 1891.) In association with the solicitors W. T. Mackrell and J. C. Lethbridge, the Spicers went on to develop these nine acres or so from the late 1840s into the late 1860s with terraces of houses and some shops facing the main roads – i.e. in Westbridge Road (south side), Hyde Lane (or Road) and Battersea Bridge Road – and in three new residential side-streets, Harley, Spicer and Randall Streets. A separately owned corner of land at the junction of Battersea Bridge Road and Surrey Lane – once part of Little Hill Shot – had already been built up around 1847 on both fronts by Charles Chabot.³² Two notable buildings of this period were: the Lammas Hall, Battersea's first public hall, opened in 1858 in a converted beer-house at the junction of Westbridge Road with Surrey Lane; and Battersea Police Station, a predecessor of the present station, which opened in 1861 in a building at the north corner of Battersea Bridge Road and Hyde Lane (vol. 49).

Steadily the remaining gaps began to fill with housing in the 1860s and 70s, presenting range after range of standard brick terraces. A wedge of land on the south side of Surrey Lane, at its west end, is also included here as it falls within the Surrey Lane Estate's purlieus. Here in 1868 a licensed victualler named George Bishopp built and ran a corner pub, the Clarence Inn or Tavern, and then proceeded to develop an estate of about 110 mostly two-storey terraced houses around it, in Parkham and Granfield Streets, all laid

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out for him by the architect James Edmeston. A short south-western arm was added to Granfield Street in 1882 under later owners, providing a direct link with the High Street.³³

By the 1890s these streets were poor but respectable, though there were pockets of ugliness, especially at the south end of Spicer Street, where a row of tiny cottages (Miles Cottages) lined a dead-end alley; and on the south-west side of Surrey Lane, between Parkham and Granfield Streets, where common lodging-houses held sway, mostly for the use of prostitutes. When Hyde House and its gardens – the last developable chunk of open ground – came on the market in the late 1890s there was no doubt as to the type of accommodation best suited to the area. The result was Winstead Street, a solid mass of 58 two-storey cottage flats in red brick, designed by F. & W. Stocker, a firm of City surveyors, and built c.1897–9.³⁴

Of all this nineteenth-century housing not a brick survives.

Surrey Lane Estate

A tract of over nineteen acres, bounded mainly by Battersea Bridge Road, Westbridge Road and Surrey Lane, contains the third largest and perhaps the dullest of northern Battersea's housing estates. Its fan-shaped site narrows from a frontage of almost 400 yards on Battersea Bridge Road to a neck at the west end, where the estate meets Westbridge Road. This flat landscape is covered by four-storey maisonette blocks faced in red brick interspersed with four point blocks of 21 storeys and one slab of 14 storeys (Ills 2.7, 9). They were built for Wandsworth Borough Council to the designs of Richard Seifert & Partners in 1970–3 and originally numbered some 828 dwellings. The scheme entailed the obliteration of several roads, while the old course of Surrey Lane between Parkham Street and Westbridge Road disappeared.

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Only two existing buildings survived, both near the north end of the site: Battersea Police Station facing Battersea Bridge Road, and Westbridge House, Westbridge Road, a Battersea Council block of flats dating from 1950–1.³⁵

Planning for the estate came forward in 1967–8, when Seiferts (who were already employed on a housing scheme for Wandsworth in Tooting) were appointed architects, with J. C. Bianco & Associates as engineers. The first housing layout was much as built, except that the idea of linking the whole estate by a deck at second-floor level and providing multi-storey car parking was abandoned on cost grounds, leaving a series of abbreviated balcony routes around the lower blocks. A systems approach to construction was investigated, but doubtless dropped following the Ronan Point disaster of May 1968. In a period of inflation, the project's costs started to worry Wandsworth's Housing Committee, leading to the curtailment and postponement of the 'amenity area' next to Battersea Bridge Road. Here a health centre, social centre, library, estate office and shopping precinct had been planned, and there had been hope of relocating the Lammas Hall (demolished by the scheme). But only nine shops were built at Villiers Court, 152–168 Battersea Bridge Road. Cost-saving measures were also directed to the structure of the tower blocks. These were built using 'Lytag' structural lightweight concrete, cutting out the need for plastering, while the cladding panels were precast and bush-hammered on site. The maisonette blocks were constructed with reinforced framing and calculated brick crosswalls.³⁶

Most of the estate was built in the first stage of construction, carried out in phases by Holland & Hannen and Cubitts in 1970–2. That left only the tip between Westbridge Road and Battersea Bridge Road to complete. Here Musgrave Court was added by Wandsworth's Building Works Department in 1971–3. The blocks were named after prominent English bishops: hence Blomfield, Bowstead, Burnet, Fraser, Gardiner, Jacobson, Mansel, Musgrave, Sancroft, Villiers, Wigram and Wolsey Courts, and Compton, Cranmer,

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Gardiner and Whitgift Houses; the exception was Macey House, called after Father Charles Macey, the founder of neighbouring Salesian College.³⁷

Judi Bratt, writing for the *Architects' Journal*, was critical of the estate's planning, lamenting its few social facilities and noting that large families and the elderly were scheduled as tenants in the towers, although these groups were known to be ill-suited to high-rise living. Little of the landscape was set apart for the towers, she remarked, whereas the maisonettes enjoyed landscaped courts 'whose character is such as to induce territorial attitudes and resentment of intrusion by tower block dwellers'.³⁸ Some extra facilities were added along Randall Close, the only road internal to the estate to bear a name: a day centre and small hall, and a children's home. But a sense of bleakness still attends the towers, whose box-on-end profiles loom up over car-strewn voids or vacant avenues.

South of Surrey Lane

This section considers the large block of land bounded by Surrey Lane, Battersea Bridge Road and Battersea Park Road, though it crosses over the last-mentioned at one point in order to take in a triangle of associated streets between Latchmere Road and the railway lines further west (Ill. 2.10). Through the district's centre runs Shuttleworth Road (formerly Castle Lane), once an important east-west connection but since the redevelopments and traffic re-routings of the 1960s and 70s now little more than a backwater. The quiet residential streets that run north and south to either side of it contain the largest concentration of mid Victorian housing in the area covered by this chapter. Other houses in and around Surrey and Bridge Lanes belong to an earlier generation of development, of the 1840s-60s, reflecting those streets'

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older history. The area also includes a string of good nineteenth-century commercial ranges along Battersea Park Road.

Surrey Lane, Bridge Lane and Battersea Bridge Road

The oldest corner of building fabric here is in and around the little triangle formed by these three roads. It was the extension of Battersea Bridge Road south of Surrey Lane in the 1840s and 50s that encouraged the growth of the built-up area of Battersea into the fields here, towards what is now Battersea Park Road.

Of the three thoroughfares, **Surrey Lane** has the longest pedigree, having been well established by the mid eighteenth century.³⁹ The earliest building here was a house on a corner plot opposite the future route of Battersea Bridge Road, erected in the 1830s by Daniel Board, a West Country carpenter and builder. By c.1844, with the road extension under consideration, Board had converted the house to an inn, the Rising Sun, which he ran for a while himself, later adding another house alongside (on the site of 3–7 Surrey Lane). The Rising Sun was rebuilt in 1887 in a hard red brick by the public house architect Harry Isaac Newton; the ground floor especially bears his handiwork in the well-proportioned windows and glazing bars, and the fine-quality plaster and iron decorations. It is now the Prince of Wales, 186 Battersea Bridge Road.⁴⁰ The present 3–7 Surrey Lane is a rebuilding of 1894. A stock-brick villa at No. 9, with tall, Soaneian blind arches and a shallow roof, dates from the early-to-mid 1840s, when it was probably built by Robert Peter Spencer, who ran a market garden here. And at the corner with Bridge Lane, Nos 11 & 13 is a pair of stuccoed two-storey and basement houses of 1863–4 (formerly Anglesey House and Villa); their most likely builder is James Ascomb, a Yorkshire-born carpenter who lived locally.⁴¹

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Further west, the Surrey Lane frontage between Bridge Lane and Octavia Street once contained half-a-dozen or so good-sized detached and paired houses with long gardens known as Ezra Place (later 13–23 Surrey Lane, demolished), built around 1840 on land belonging to David Ker of Surrey Lodge (page ##). These were replaced in 1897–9 by the present buildings at 17–35 Surrey Lane and 23–25 Bridge Lane – standard two-storey terraces designed by the architect and surveyor Herbert H. Hill of Rosenau Crescent as a speculation for John Waterhouse, a local gas fitter.⁴²

Bridge Lane originated as a sinuous footpath between the fields, linking Surrey Lane and the future Battersea Park Road. By the 1830s it had become a roadway – known variously as Love Lane, Little Surrey Lane, or Surrey Lane South – and would have been a useful north–south link in the years before Battersea Bridge Road was extended. Most of the two and three-storey houses along its east side are semi-detached pairs of the 1850s–60s. The biggest, Nos 3–6 (Cambridge Villas), were built first around 1855, with their gable-ends facing the street and side entrances. They have good-quality white-brick fronts with red dressings, and Regency-style margin glazing bars. The more traditional early Victorian houses to either side, at Nos 1 & 2 (Oxford Villas) and 7 & 8 (Clarence Cottages), are of c.1863 and c.1860 respectively. Nos 9 & 10 were added later, in 1884.⁴³ The plainer row at Nos 11–17 was a first tentative stab at development in 1869 on the outer limits of Edward Pain’s Surrey Lane estate (see below).

On the west side, now incorporated into the The Lanterns – the converted Surrey Lane School – is Laburnum House, a white-brick double-fronted villa built by Joseph Fincher in 1879 as part of the later phase of work on Pain’s estate; it was subsequently taken over by the London School Board as a school for domestic economy. Fincher also erected the row of semis alongside at 103–113 Shuttleworth Road, in 1876–7.⁴⁴

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South of Surrey Lane, the new stretch of **Battersea Bridge Road** began to fill up with runs of small stock-brick houses in the mid 1860s. The survivals display the varied repertoire that the London suburban builder could bring to the simplest two-storey terraces (Ill. 2.11). The longest run, at Nos 192–202 (originally Anglesey Terrace), was built c.1865–7 by George Godbolt of King’s Road, Chelsea, possibly in partnership with James Ascomb. A shared hipped roof gives a little dignity to the trio at Nos 208–212 (Tonbridge Villas), also of 1864, by John Gamman, a Battersea Square builder; the simpler, squatter, boxy pair without basements alongside at Nos 204 & 206 (East Cottages) was the work of Daniel Board, again of c.1864–5. Another small pair at the northern end, at Nos 188 & 190 (Clyde Cottages), was added later, around 1875. In 1866–7 a congregational church was erected at the corner with Bridge Lane, on a triangular plot belonging to the Battersea Park Commissioners that had been cut off from the rest of their lands by the extension of Battersea Bridge Road. It was demolished and replaced in 2002–3 by flats at 214 Battersea Bridge Road (Carden & Godfrey, architects, for Michael Shanly Homes).⁴⁵

Further south, towards Battersea Park Road, the early 1860s group of the Duke of Cambridge pub and houses to either side at 230–234 Battersea Bridge Road (Cambridge Terrace) and 1–4 Banbury Street, erected in empty fields, was a harbinger of the later Colestown estate (below). They seem to have been the creation of F. E. Knowles, a St Marylebone developer active in Battersea Park Road and elsewhere locally, and presumably were all that emerged of a much larger planned new street. The builder, of the houses at least, was John White, in 1864.⁴⁶

Surrey Lane and Colestown estates

In development terms most of the streets south of Surrey Lane belonged to two main landholdings, both begun hesitantly in the late 1860s and not built

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up fully until the 1870s and 80s. Firstly, the Surrey Lane estate (not to be confused with the modern public housing complex of the same name, above), on the north side of Shuttleworth Road, laid out for Edward Pain and his family mostly with semi-detached 'villas' – a rare form at this date in north Battersea. And secondly, Colestown, south of Shuttleworth Road, developed with more characteristic closely packed terraces under Jesse Nickinson (Ill. 2.10).

A solicitor from a Somerset family, Pain was no stranger to speculation in Battersea. He had made around £30,000 selling land in Battersea Fields to the government for Battersea Park, which he had bought cheaply at the Spencer auction sales.⁴⁷ He also built houses here and there, though without much commercial success, for example in Mendip Road and Orkney Street, begun in the 1840s and 1860s respectively (pages ##, ##).

Pain had acquired most of his Surrey Lane estate as field strips at the Spencer sales, and by 1844 had built himself a substantial family residence on Surrey Lane. Known as Tower Lodge, it stood in generous grounds to the south-east of Surrey Lodge, roughly on the site today occupied by Octavia and Ursula Streets. By the late 1860s Pain had fled to the sylvan surroundings of Frimley, Surrey.⁴⁸ A row of modest three-storey houses of c.1869, built at the south end of what was then Love Lane (now 11–17 Bridge Lane, see above), may have been the first salvo of an intended campaign of concerted development by Pain on his estate, but the building slump of the late 1860s and early 70s would have forestalled any such scheme. So it was not until 1876–7, with building once more on the rise, that Pain's son Arthur C. Pain, a surveyor and civil engineer, drew up plans for five new residential streets on the estate, much as built, comprising (from east to west) Octavia, Ursula, Edna, Henning and Orbel Streets; and for widening the relevant parts of Surrey Lane and Castle Lane (now Shuttleworth Road). Soon after, preparations were also under way for extensive building work on the

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adjoining Colestown estate to the south, prompting the construction of a joint drainage scheme, with a shared main sewer in Castle Lane.⁴⁹

The men behind Colestown were Jesse Nickinson, a Lincolnshire-born solicitor, and two Rochester merchants, John and Edward Coles. The Coles brothers were part of a loose consortium of leading Rochester residents who were developing property in Battersea in the 1860s with, among others, James Griffiths, the local estate agent and auctioneer. These included: John Foord (Mayor of Rochester, 1859), John Lewis Levy, a corn merchant (also a Mayor of Rochester), and the Prall family of solicitors. Nickinson's involvement came through his partnership with one of the Pralls in his Chancery Lane law firm, Nickinson, Prall & Nickinson.⁵⁰

Edward Coles seems to have taken the lead with Nickinson in Colestown, a 21-acre estate that reached south beyond Battersea Park Road to the West London Extension Railway line (Ill. 2.10). It probably came to their notice in 1862 when Nickinson's firm acted as solicitors for Captain Francis Woodgate, who had acquired about seven acres of this land from Lord Spencer.⁵¹ As with Pain's Surrey Lane estate, planning here began in the late 1860s, but in this instance gathered a fair head of steam before recession bit, with several buildings going up c.1867–74, mostly in the south-eastern corner, across Battersea Park Road, in Atherton and Frere Streets, and in Christchurch Street – the original name for what since 1887 has been Abercrombie Street. Building then slowed considerably, almost to a halt, with only Abercrombie Street seeing much more in the way of activity in 1875–8. Most of these houses were small, two-storey cottages, and in multi-occupation from the start.⁵² John Coles died early in 1878, and his brother Edward, by then in his mid 70s, may have been reluctant to persevere with a venture that had spawned fewer than 140 lowish-grade houses in a decade. For in June that year he sold the remaining undeveloped portions to Nickinson, who lost no time revising the

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plans. Workmen were back on the ground early in 1879, by which time building was already under way again on Pain's land.⁵³

Thus both estates rode the crest of Battersea's next and biggest building wave, of c.1879–82. On the Pains' estate, Octavia and Ursula Streets were begun in 1878–9, obliterating the former family home, with Edna Street and the terraced houses and shops of Shuttleworth Road following from 1880. The vast majority of houses in these streets were the work of the Pimlico building firm of William Henry Iles & Thomas Wood, closely following an estate layout and house-plans commissioned by the Pains. Nearly all the houses were stock-brick, two-storey semis of about 23ft frontage, but otherwise not very large, generally with a single bay window and two main rooms per floor. Only in parts of Orbel Street, and particularly in Henning Street, did building work drag on into 1883–4.⁵⁴ A wider variety of builders went to work there, not all of whom adhered so closely to the estate plan. A taste for a Queen Anne Revival stock- and red-brick livery emerges, or occasionally for red brick, alongside Aesthetic-style detailing, some of the houses having pretty floral motifs around the doors and decorative painted tablets (Ills 2.12–14). Both streets also boast a handful of larger, detached houses at their southern ends, with steeply pitched gable roofs; these may have been the work of Charles F. Fenton (son of the Chelmsford architect James Fenton), who is known to have designed a 'villa' in Orbel Street.⁵⁵ And so in places the atmosphere resembles that of the more middle-class streets of south Battersea, the Pains perhaps hoping that Battersea Park could exert a steadying influence this far west.

Nickinson, however, was under no such illusions, presiding over the construction between 1879 and 1881 of more long terraces of two and three-storey stock-brick houses of much narrower frontage (at around 17ft 6in) in Banbury, Colestown, Stanmer, Balfern, Inworth, Bullen, Goulden and Horace Streets, and Home Road, as well as in the streets already begun south of

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Battersea Park Road (Ill 2.15).⁵⁶ He recouped some of his costs quickly, selling off large chunks freehold in 1880 before building work was completed. One block, of around 90 houses between Stanmer Street and Battersea Bridge Road, was bought by Battersea parish using proceeds from the sale of glebe lands in Penge, largely through the labours of Canon Erskine Clarke. He seems to have encouraged his fellow clergy to follow suit, as by c.1914 nearly all of Colestown and parts of the Pains' estate were in ecclesiastical ownership.⁵⁷

Long frontages to Battersea Park Road offered architects and builders on both estates the scope to produce three-storey parades of shops with dwellings above, of a type common to main roads in and around London at this time; and it is in this stretch, west of Latchmere Road, that the Victorian width and character has been best preserved. Although leases of blocks on the south side, in Colestown, were backdated to 1872–3, nearly all of the buildings were erected in 1879–80. They were done up in a variety of simple styles, as at Nos 242–268 (various builders), 284–296 (Thomas Hines, builder), and 298–310 (William Mulliner). Hines was also responsible for at least some of the softer, Italianate-domestic group in stock and red brick at Nos 270–282, with its overhanging roof and eaves brackets. On the south side a recently cleaned stock- and red-brick warehouse-style block stands out at Nos 557–561 (Merritt & Street, builders), and there is a nicely decorated half-timbered and roughcast corner shop at 2 Abercrombie Street. Shops were aimed at the local community, with bakers, butchers, greengrocers, drapers, dairies, stationers, a pawnbrokers and a sixpenny bazaar.⁵⁸

In 1882, before all the houses were finished, the *South London Press*, in a burst of enthusiasm, reported the Pains' estate to be perhaps the 'pleasantest, healthiest and even cheapest' district of Battersea, its houses 'the very ideal of an English homestead', its architecture 'in every way suggestive of comfort and convenience'. In truth, though minor clerks and the occasional resident

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servant could be found north of Shuttleworth Road, the estate was not as middle-class as the Pains would have hoped. And though labourers, laundresses and building tradesmen were more frequently to be found south of the divide, in Colestown, it was the small shopkeepers, travellers, cab drivers and general tradesmen – plumbers, blacksmiths, gas fitters and the like – who formed the ballast in both estates. Booth's poverty maps did not differentiate between them, painting the whole as one 'mixed' area.⁵⁹

The streets and houses of the Surrey Lane estate have survived well and in good condition, and today constitute Wandsworth Council's Three Sisters Conservation Area. (The title was suggested by Edna, Octavia and Ursula Streets, which were in fact named after Edward Pain's two wives and his mother respectively.) The only major rebuilding since the war has been the ultra-modern six-bedroom detached house of 2003–4 at 66 & 68 Orbel Street, by Loates-Taylor Shannon Architects (see Ill. 0.22). But bomb damage and persistent poor housing conditions south of Shuttleworth Road made Colestown the subject of a post-war redevelopment scheme, described below.⁶⁰

Goulden House and McCarthy Court. These 1970s blocks, 300 yards separate, represent fragmentary bookends of what was meant to have been a public housing estate engulfing the whole of Colestown and more, all the way from Battersea Bridge Road to Winders Road, and reaching across Battersea Park Road as far as Abercrombie Street (see Ill. 2.10).

The first of two stages for this greedy development, over 23 acres in size, came before Wandsworth Council in 1966. Powers of compulsory purchase were duly applied for, but the Abercrombie Street element was removed from the scheme late in 1967 because of the intended widening of Battersea Park Road for the GLC's proposed London 'motorway box'. While

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the Council awaited the outcome of the public enquiry, held in January 1968, the Borough Architect produced an outline design suggesting a procession of six-storey blocks around landscaped courts, to be built in the Jespersen 12M system then being tried out on the Doddington Estate. The scheme was called the Home Road site, after the street at the west end of the area where building was to begin.⁶¹

In December 1968 the Council (by then in Conservative hands) was electrified to learn that, following its inspector's report, the Ministry of Housing had disallowed compulsory purchase powers for the whole area east of Bullen Street on the grounds that the houses there were structurally sound and could be renovated. That took out over ten of the fifteen acres applied for under Home Road Stage I. After taking stock, Wandsworth acquiesced in the decision but decided to buy up by negotiation one and a half acres where housing conditions were said to be specially bad at the easternmost end of the area, bounded by Shuttleworth Road, Bridge Lane, and Banbury and Stanmer Streets. This became the site of McCarthy Court.⁶²

Home Road Stage I, confined now to the quadrilateral between Home Road, Winders Road, Shuttleworth Road and Bullen Street, went ahead in two phases between 1971 and about 1975. Goulden House, as the completed scheme was called, consisted of some 270 flats and maisonettes (Ill. 2.16). Designs were provided by Wandsworth's Director of Development, while the building work fell to Headway Construction.⁶³ The six storeys and courtyard layout give a fair impression of what the larger development might have looked like. But after the embarrassments of the Doddington Estate, crosswall brick construction with exposed concrete floorplates was substituted for the controversial Jespersen system. Some variation is given to a blocky and unremitting outline by means of balconies and the stepping of sections backwards and forwards. The style comes close to that of the Lillington

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Gardens development in Westminster, but the larger courtyards, one open and one closed, give a different overall effect.

The constricted site of McCarthy Court, built in 1973–4, did not permit a courtyard design. It was entrusted to private architects, William Ryder & Associates, who provided 78 dwellings in the guise of a pair of parallel stepped terraces using the fashionable A-frame section, with the space beneath devoted to garages. One of the terraces, flanking Stanmer Street, is of four storeys, while the other looking over Bridge Lane is only of two. Between the blocks runs a garden entered from Banbury Street, giving access to most of the dwellings.⁶⁴

Simpson Street and Winders Road

Simpson Street and Winders Road were laid out on what remained of the grounds belonging to the so-called Manor House (see page ###), after the house was demolished in the early 1860s for the West London Extension Railway. The house itself stood roughly on the site of the new Battersea Station in the High Street, opened in 1863. The railway lines divided a slender rectangular plot of land on the north side (plus a small detached portion fronting the High Street, for which see page ###) from a broader wedge to the south, linked by a passage through the embankment. This land had been acquired by the tent manufacturer Benjamin Edgington, resident in Lavender Hill. Plans for developing Edgington's Manor House Estate were drawn up in 1866 by George Todd, the Battersea surveyor and estate agent, perhaps in expectation of the new station's appeal to commuters. Todd proposed three new streets: the present Simpson Street and Winders Road, and north of the railway a third, called Henry Street, since largely demolished. George Reeve, a Camberwell builder, took several leases, building some houses himself, but also subletting plots to others.⁶⁵ By October 1868 the controlling interest in this

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little estate seems to have passed to the solicitor Henry Simpson and his clerk Reuben Winder, of the firm Simpson & Palmer of the Borough (later Simpson, Palmer & Winder), for it was then that the three eponymous street-names were introduced. Winder himself lived for a time in one of his own three-storey houses at 7 Winders Road (now demolished).⁶⁶

Though most of the terraces here date from 1867–9 – for example the three-storey stock-brick rows at 4–28 and 35–48 Simpson Street, and the tiny row of two-storey houses beside the railway tracks at 20–26 Winders Road (formerly part of Henry Street) – the early 1870s recession left gaps, especially at the southern end, at the junctions with Battersea Park Road. Here Battersea Fire Brigade station was erected on the north side of Simpson Street in 1873–4, and houses adjoining to its east on Simpson Street and west at 328–336 Battersea Park Road in 1878. The opposite corner (338–342 Battersea Park Road) was developed by Henry Simpson with houses and shops in 1875–6.⁶⁷ All these later structures have been demolished.

Socially this little district was always mixed, though long leases were rare, short tenancies, low rents and multi-occupation being accepted as inevitable. These were most prevalent in the two-storey houses of Henry Street, north of the railway, some of which were very small. Winders Road, though also with small houses, was perhaps a touch better off, with a few skilled craftsmen. The 1891 Census records the sculptor Paul Montford, then aged 22, living at 8 Winders Road with his mother and father Horace, also a sculptor; the family had added a small shed at the rear in 1883 as a studio.⁶⁸ Winders Road was improved in 1901 when all the houses on this west side (Nos 1–8) were demolished and replaced by a row of cottage flats, designed for the estate owners by the architects N. S. Joseph & Smithem; the firm had already worked for Reuben Winder and his partner William White Palmer in the early 1890s at Old Park Avenue, off Nightingale Lane (page ##). Now numbered **3–43 Winders Road**, these red-brick faced three-storey dwellings

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had a separate flat on each floor, typically with a bay windowed living room, two bedrooms, kitchen and scullery, but no bathroom (Ills 2.17, 18). Characteristic paired doors led to the upper flats, an external stair down to the lower one.⁶⁹

Just north of the railway a 20ft-wide footway called Patrick Passage was made in 1904 on the site of two houses in Henry Street and Home Road by the brewers Mann, Crossman & Paulin Ltd. Previously no direct communication existed between these two streets or their respective estates, and the passage was allowed by the LCC as a means of giving better access from Colestown to Battersea station – though the existence of a beer-shop owned by the brewery in Henry Street nearby was presumably the prime motive.⁷⁰

Henry Street was demolished after the war for public housing; parts of McKiernan Court (Battersea High Street Estate) and Goulden House occupy its site (pages ##, ##).

York Road to Lombard Road

The disparate area discussed here falls into two parts. First is the riverside strip along both roads, formerly industrial and now mostly residential. This includes the historically important sites of York House and, along Lombard Road, several demolished houses including Sherwood Lodge, the once-celebrated home of the royal mistress Maria Fitzherbert (Ill. 2.19). The second part comprises the triangle between the roads, south of the railway. This district was laid out for housing in the late-1860s building boom, but was still not fully built up twenty years later. It has been redeveloped almost entirely

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since the Second World War with public housing, and commercial and light-industrial units now giving way to private housing.

York House

The mansion of the Archbishops of York that gave York Road its name stood on the riverside south of Battersea (or York Place) Creek on the site long associated with Price's Candles. This was once part of the manor of Bridges Court. Bridges or Bruges is first mentioned in a charter of 1218, when ground there was probably already in use for stockpiling Reigate stone for buildings in London.⁷¹ Lawrence Booth, Bishop of Durham, acquired Bridges Court in 1460, but it was later seized from him by Edward IV. Having effectively bought it back in 1471, Booth began building a new manor house, obtaining a licence to crenellate in 1474 during his brief tenure of the Chancellorship of England. He left the estate to the archdiocese when he died in 1480, and the house was completed over the next few years by his successor Archbishop Rotherham. Remains of the moated rectangular building, including one of the octagonal corner towers, have been excavated.

Thomas Wolsey, Archbishop of York from 1514, set up a brickworks and materials depot here in connection with his building works at Hampton Court and York Place in Westminster, while at least part of what he called 'my pore house in Batirsej' was occupied by his servant John Oxynherde, whose wife was a kinswoman of his.⁷² The house was stripped of valuables in 1554 when Archbishop Holgate was deprived of office by Queen Mary; in Elizabeth's reign it became a prison for recusants. When leased to Isabel Peele in 1631 it was on condition of extensive repairs and improvements. By the time York House came into Parliamentary hands during the Civil War the property comprised some six walled acres and included various outbuildings, gardens, an orchard and fishponds. It was returned to the archbishopric at the

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Restoration, and in the 1670s became the home of the merchant and East India Company administrator Sir Edward Winter, on his return from Fort St George at Madras. He died at York House in 1686. At some point the middle of the house was pulled down to make two separate houses, described in 1743 as ‘of Queen Elizabeth’s time, old and crazy’.⁷³

During the eighteenth century the site, generally referred to as York Place, was developed for a succession of industrial uses, described in volume 49. In 1788 it was leased to the distillers Joseph Benwell and Henry Waymouth. When Sir Richard Phillips visited York House early in the nineteenth century, he found it ‘in a modern style’, and surviving views show nothing identifiable as medieval or Tudor work (Ill. 2.20). Benwell described to him a ‘superb’ room that he had demolished – domed, with a richly ornamented ceiling and ‘curiously painted’ panels with silvered framing.⁷⁴ The house was demolished following Price’s acquisition of the site in the 1850s.

York Road (north side)

The eastern part of York Road, between Battersea High Street and the creek, is called Adam Lane on the parish map of c.1760. This shows a scatter of buildings along the north side, including Battersea Chapel. Later on, terraced houses were erected at the Lombard Road corner, probably in connection with industrial development at York Place. In York Road, immediately west of York Place, a row of 39 small brick cottages called Ford’s Buildings was built c.1824–5 by John Ford, for workers at the woollen factory he had set up on the land behind (Ill. 2.21). Ford’s factory was unsuccessful, and the houses were occupied in the 1850s and 60s by employees at the silk works that succeeded it.⁷⁵

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No other buildings stood west of this on the main road until 1848, when William Evill and John Kemp Welch built their Orlando Jones starch factory on the adjacent riverside plot, to which, like Ford, they added workers' housing beside York Road.⁷⁶ Also of two storeys, these cottages were wider and taller than Ford's, each having six rooms, and were arranged in two groups: fifteen flanking the approach to the works (Starch Factory Road), and two rows on York Road guarding the entrance (York Terrace, later 192–206 York Road). The approach road and its houses were later known as York Road Buildings, but after Archibald Dawnay & Co. established its engineering works here in 1902 became Steelworks Road.

By the time these cottages appeared, development was also under way to their west, on a plot near the Wandsworth boundary purchased at the 1836 Spencer sale by the solicitor Edward Pain. This was Pain's first foray into house-speculation in Battersea. The first houses on his new street, Mendip Road, went up c.1842–8, but progress was slow, many plots lying vacant during the 1850s recession, and it took till the mid 1860s for the land on its west side and in York Road to be fully built up, with around forty-five houses. Most were very small, of about 12ft frontage, aimed at workers in the nearby Battersea and Wandsworth factories (see Ill. 0.5). One side street, Canterbury (later Eldred) Place, had two-storey houses only 11ft 6in wide.⁷⁷ The land east of Mendip Road, bought at the Spencer sale by Thomas Cubitt, was taken in 1856 by Daniel Watney and his sons, owners of a brewery just over the Wandsworth boundary. Here they built houses, shops and a pub (The Unity) in the 1860s in two rows at 220–226 and 228–242 York Road, framing the entrance to an intended new street. This last component lay dormant until 1883 when James Churchyard, a Brixton builder, erected sixty-seven houses in the street (Sewell, later Chatfield, Road) and on the east side of Mendip Road.⁷⁸

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This was a deprived district. The Booth survey found Ford's Buildings 'rather poorer' than the rest, and they were demolished shortly after 1900 for road widening and general improvement. Their replacement, Durham Buildings, a pair of long, glowering blocks of LCC working-class flats, was erected in two phases in 1902–4 by F. & H. F. Higgs. Each red-brick and roughcast block contained fifty-two apartments, of two or three narrow, thin-walled rooms. Built hard up against the malodorous Garton's sugar works and Price's candle factory, the flats understandably proved unpopular with council tenants. They were demolished in 1971.⁷⁹

Today, all that remains of this older fabric are the small rows of run-down 1860s shops and houses at Nos 220–226 and 228–248. Otherwise York Road's north-west front has been transformed by Battersea's post-industrial resurgence. Commerce and services cling close to the road, in the form of mundane storage sheds, garages, DIY stores and a budget hotel. But on the riverfront residential developers have been able to flex their muscles (see below).

Gwynne Road area

West of the High Street, most of the land in the angle between the railway tracks and York and Lombard Roads was built up from the late 1860s as two adjoining estates of small houses, both laid out to plans by George Todd. Though limited in extent their development was protracted and far from straightforward. The larger of the two – eight acres on the east side of Lombard Road with a few detached houses in wooded grounds and some early ribbon development along York Road, beside Battersea Chapel – was acquired in 1868, apparently at Todd's suggestion, by one of his erstwhile business partners, the barrister James Lord. Todd devised a rectilinear grid of streets, namely Harroway, Holman, Totteridge, Urswicke and Yelverton

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Roads, as well as new frontages to York and Lombard Roads, retaining two of the existing dwellings (Walnut Tree Cottage and another house near by) among the planned new terraces. (A sixth street, Buckton Road, materialized only as a short stub.) Between this Lombard estate, as it was known, and the railway embankment to its north lay a narrower strip of ground acquired in 1864 by James E. A. Gwynne, an Irish civil engineer then living in St Marylebone. Here Todd made for Gwynne a single straight road (Gwynne Road) connecting Lombard Road and the High Street, with openings on its south side into four of the streets on Lord's estate. Its route also lined up neatly in continuation of Simpson Street, on the other side of the High Street, which Todd had laid out only a few years earlier (above).⁸⁰

On the Lombard estate construction began almost immediately in 1868, and about half of the planned 240 houses were finished and occupied by 1871 when work stuttered to a halt, Lord having been forced into liquidation (see page ##). He had mortgaged heavily with the Birkbeck Building Society, under whom Todd's layout was modified for fewer houses, the remainder of which were erected in the later 1870s and 80s. Work on Gwynne's estate, though planned at the same time as Lord's, did not begin until about 1871 and took a decade to finish.⁸¹

The drawn-out process led to a mix of fabric, with, in several streets, stock-brick parapeted rows of the 1860s standing side-by-side with red-brick splayed-bay terraces of the 1880s (Ill. 2.22). Some of the early houses had been designed for the builders by Todd, at 5 per cent commission.⁸² Occupied by the floor on short lets, they seem to have been poorly constructed, quickly falling into disrepair. Lombard Dwellings, a rare example in Battersea of privately owned working-class tenements, were built under lease from the Birkbeck in 1886–7 by William Beale. They comprised three tall blocks of two-roomed flats at the bottom end of Lombard Road (Nos 53–57), and behind them a range of two-storey dwellings (No. 59) built over stables grouped

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around a yard, with a first-floor stone balcony or gallery for access (Ill. 2.23). However, rents, tenants and turnover of occupants was no different here than in the flatted houses.⁸³

The area was never as solidly residential as Todd had planned. Commerce or industry took to the sites of the older villas (demolished by the mid 1890s) and other plots originally intended for housing; and by 1901 much of the Lombard Road frontage had been lost to a new municipal electricity generating station (see vol. 49). Only on the north side of Gwynne Road, at its eastern end, near Battersea Station, were a few more eligible double-fronted houses provided (Nos 2–20). Auction sales stressed the station's presence, but in reality neither estate was likely to attract the City commuters that Todd may have hoped for, standing cheek by jowl with industry and railways at a time when both were tightening their grip.⁸⁴

By the early 1900s the area was poor, its inhabitants 'very rough'. Most houses harboured two or three families, many sub-letting rooms to lodgers to help make ends meet.⁸⁵ Such hardship encouraged the arrival here in the 1890s of the Caius College Mission, established in Holman Road in a purpose-built tall, Gothic, red-brick structure that symbolically reached high above the low rooftops; an associated boxing club proved popular.

Bomb damage caused havoc in Gwynne Road and although housing survived into the 1960s it was severely run-down and eventually condemned, to be replaced by Battersea Council's **York Road Stage II** estate. Today no pre-1945 fabric survives except for a former pub and two houses and shops of the late 1860s at 74–78 York Road, on the corner of Yelverton Road (part of James Lord's development). Until recently the whole north side of Gwynne Road was occupied by warehousing and industrial units. A number of these units, dating from the late 1970s, have been demolished for The Regent (2012),

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a long mostly six-storey block of flats built by Linden Homes, part of the Galliford Try Group.⁸⁶

Like Stage I south of York Road (page ###), the Stage II scheme was defined while Battersea Council was still in existence, in 1964. It covered a double block of terraces between six and seven acres in extent, bounded by Gwynne, Totteridge, Yelverton and York Roads; at its centre, Badric Road was to be obliterated.⁸⁷ Some compulsory powers of purchase were quickly obtained, but little progress was made until 1967, when William Ryder & Associates were appointed architects and produced sketches for 370 dwellings on the site. This figure was later reduced to 309 dwellings, disposed in one large quadrangular block (Badric Court) and one 21-storey tower to its north (Totteridge House). J. C. Bianco & Associates were again the engineers, but the experimental construction associated with Stage I was eschewed. John Laing Construction Ltd undertook the contract in 1969–71. Once these larger buildings were finished, an old people's home with an attached day centre and a children's home followed on east of Badric Court. The former was built from 1973 to designs by Ryders and is known as George Potter House, 130 Battersea High Street; the address of the children's home is 32 York Road.⁸⁸

Badric Court is unhappily sited with respect to York Road but has a well-landscaped internal courtyard. Built of concrete crosswall construction with infill panels of pink brick, its design has an energy lacking in the point block, Totteridge House (Ill. 2.24). Both make some play with abstract patterning in concrete on the ground storey.

Lombard Road

Lombard Road is heard of in the mid seventeenth-century parish records as Sayers or Nutte Lane, and appears as Lombard Street on Rocque's map of

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1738.⁸⁹ On the riverside along the narrow lane were the Sugar Houses, a well-known establishment set up in the mid seventeenth century but turned over to turpentine manufacture in the late eighteenth. The Sugar Houses site apart, Lombard Street was predominantly residential until the mid nineteenth century – when it became Lombard Road – with several villas in grounds along the riverside and another, Walnut Tree Lodge, on the landside. Walnut Tree Lodge was said to have been the home of ‘West, the artist’, presumably meaning Benjamin West. If so it was a temporary or second home, as West’s residence for 45 years until his death was in Newman Street, though he also had a house in Hammersmith for a time.⁹⁰ There were a few small houses too, a short terrace at the corner with York Road having been built before 1839. At the south end of Lombard Road, Sherwood Lodge was pulled down in the early 1850s. Two more of the older villas, Cave House north of Sherwood Lodge, and Battersea House just south of the railway, were demolished about 1870. Another, the Grove or Grove House, was latterly occupied by the Battersea developer George Todd.⁹¹

Battersea House was the successor to a house in existence by 1547, when it was in the occupation of Richard Holte. The property was owned from the 1660s until the 1790s by the wealthy Smith family who set up the adjacent Sugar Houses. In 1682 the anti-Catholic Earl of Argyll, having escaped from Edinburgh Castle where he was under sentence of death, stayed here incognito with the help of Mrs Smith, ‘a very pious and generous gentlewoman’, and at the Smiths’ house at Brentford, before fleeing to the Netherlands. Mrs Smith also helped finance Argyll’s invasion of Scotland in support of the Duke of Monmouth in 1685.⁹²

The old house was rebuilt or much altered to produce the imposing mansion shown in Illustration 2.26. Its aspect appears to have been Palladian towards the river but Hawksmoorian on the land side, perhaps suggesting more than one campaign of building at different dates. The ‘Hawksmoorian’

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drawing was made during the occupation of James Court, secretary to the Corporation of Trinity House, owner of the house after the death in 1814 of James Bell, who succeeded the Smiths there in 1793. Bell attended the nearby Baptist chapel in York Road, the minister there, Joseph Hughes, spending Sunday afternoons as his guest at Battersea House. For many years it was the home of David Ker MP, brother-in-law of Lord Castlereagh, who also maintained a residence in Charles Street, Mayfair. Sales particulars made after Ker's death in 1844 show the principal room to have been a drawing room of 22ft by 21ft, and mention sculptured marble chimneypieces and painted decorations on the staircase walls and ceiling. The house was subsequently occupied for many years by a QC, John Osborne.⁹³

Sherwood Lodge. Considered one of the finest riverside residences near London, Sherwood Lodge had a series of more or less noteworthy occupants in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The most well-known was George IV's mistress Maria Fitzherbert, whose favourite home it was said to be.⁹⁴ Extended and improved by successive owners, the villa was remarkable for a Neoclassical statue gallery, an early commission of Robert Smirke's, built in 1807–8.

The original small house, at the corner of a plot on the north side of York Creek, was leased by Earl Spencer to Thomas Ponton for 51 years in 1779. It was not then new, dating back at least to the 1730s, and had been occupied in recent years by John Walker, of the chemical manufacturers Kingscote & Walker at York House on the other side of the creek. The chief features of the grounds were a summer house near the river's edge and a long fish pond close to the house and screened by a hedge from the paddock which comprised the greater part of the site, then amounting to under 3¾ acres.⁹⁵

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By 1791, when the property was put up for sale, the grounds had been extended to about five acres. The six-bedroom house was described as compact and substantially built in a style 'of peculiar neatness', with plate-glass windows in mahogany sashes. The chief reception rooms were a dining room and a drawing room with a semi-circular bow and a chimneypiece of Sienna and white marble.⁹⁶

The house was bought by Henry Nantes, a City merchant from Bremen, who in 1793 married Marianne Voguell of Battersea, a German merchant's daughter. Nantes, some of whose business was in the sugar trade, was in partnership with the merchant banker and trader Richard Muilman Trench Chiswell (formerly Richard Muilman), son of a Dutch merchant and his English wife. In 1795 Chiswell employed Henry Holland to rebuild his Essex seat Debden Hall, but it was the South London surveyor and architect Thomas Swithin who seemingly acted for Nantes in the enlargement and improvement of his Battersea residence about the same time.⁹⁷ Nantes and Chiswell were then at the zenith of their prosperity, but overstretched. In 1797, just before their firm collapsed with debts of more than £450,000, Chiswell committed suicide. Nantes was bankrupted. 'Sherwood House' was sold, and he moved to a smaller riverside house (the Pavilion) at Nine Elms, with support from his merchant uncle Daniel Nantes.⁹⁸

As well as enlarging the house Nantes extended the grounds to the north, where he demolished two houses in the row called the 'Seven Houses'. (Recent residents there included James Condell and his son-in-law John Long, respectively box-keeper and musician at Covent Garden Theatre, in which Nantes was a shareholder; tangential links to Covent Garden recur in the story of Sherwood Lodge.) Nantes also embanked the foreshore, reclaiming a broad strip up to 27ft deep.⁹⁹

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The name Sherwood probably came from the Robin Hood legend, popularized at that time by Leonard Macnally's comic opera *Sherwood Forest*, and an operatic pantomime, *Merry Sherwood*, both staged at Covent Garden. The leafy retreat sold for 1,660 guineas: cheap at the price, thought the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 'considering Mr. Christie's fanciful description of it'. The auctioneer had drawn attention to the 'simply elegant elevation' reflected in the Thames, and the 40ft-long conservatory adjoining the dining-room, 'imparting to the dwelling all the genial warmth of the oriental or occidental climates, and diffusing at pleasure through the apartments the perfumes of the most odiferous plants'. Swithin and several building tradesmen, some from Battersea, were among Nantes' smaller creditors; they included the mason Richard Westmacott, who had probably supplied chimneypieces.¹⁰⁰

Christie's blurb characterized the house as 'on a most approved Plan, and finished in a distinguished stile of taste and elegance'. The main body contained, on the ground floor, a hall, off which were a library, breakfast room and small dressing room; and an eating room, leading into the conservatory with its central aviary, off which was a newly built and still unfinished drawing room. The conservatory range continued with a billiard room, pinery and fruiting house. The bowed music room on the first floor was probably the old drawing room. The grounds had been laid out with a lawn and plantations, walled kitchen garden and *ferme ornée*.¹⁰¹

Nantes was succeeded by Jens Wolff, City timber merchant and Danish consul, who demolished the remaining five of the Seven Houses to further extend the grounds.¹⁰² He commissioned the sculpture gallery for casts he had bought in Florence and Rome. Some 75ft by 25ft, top-lit by a central dome on massive fluted pillars, it was the largest space in the house. Lysons, who described it as 'in the most correct style of Doric Architecture', gives the height as 30ft, presumably referring to the dome. It was still being finished when Joseph Farington dined at Sherwood Lodge in March 1808. Both he and

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his friend (Sir) Thomas Lawrence, a close friend of the Wolffs, name Smirke – who had only been in practice a year or two – as its architect; Wolff, said Lawrence, ‘has done the next best thing to purchasing fine marbles, in building a handsome gallery for the reception of the best casts ... and tho the number is still short of being complete, there are some in his collection not I believe to be seen elsewhere in this country’.¹⁰³ As the room neared completion Smirke’s first major work, Covent Garden Theatre, with its sensational introduction of pure Greek Doric to London, was only months away: the old theatre burned down in September and was rebuilt in record time. Wolff’s gallery was grander than the gallery or ‘lower saloon’ Smirke provided at Covent Garden, with its eight Classical statues and relatively low, flat ceiling. The gallery is probably the vaulted hall which forms the background to Lawrence’s celebrated portrait of Mrs Wolff, begun in 1803 but not finished until 1815; on the far right is glimpsed the figure of Niobe, a cast of which (from the Uffizi Gallery) was among the works displayed, and which the Royal Academy tried to obtain when the house was sold in 1813.¹⁰⁴

As completed, the gallery had twenty-six statues, including the Apollo Belvedere, Capitoline Antinous, Dying Gaul and Medici Venus. Some at least could be rotated on their pedestals. Pride of place was given to a colossal replica of the Farnese Hercules, which occupied a niche at the end. Henry Fuseli’s biographer John Knowles recounted how the painter was taken by Lawrence to see it one evening. The Hercules alone was illuminated, by lamps concealed behind its pedestal, leaving the rest of the gallery dark. Turned to face the wall, it presented ‘a vast mass of shadow, defined only by its grand outline and the strength of the light behind it’. Moved to tears, Fuseli at last spoke: ‘No man shall persuade me, that these emotions which I now feel are not immortal’.¹⁰⁵

Sherwood Lodge was not just the meeting place for the Wolffs’ artistic friends, but used for concerts and larger entertainments too, such as a ‘grand

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public breakfast' in the summer of 1811, attended by several hundred 'personages of distinction'.¹⁰⁶ The house is, however, poorly recorded. Two views are known. A drawing of the riverside front (Ill. 2.27), made in about 1810, shows nothing of the octagon library at the riverward end of the gallery range. It shows a veranda and balcony along the riverside front, and similar balcony to the first-floor drawing-room or music room. A much later view indicates alterations and additions at attic level, and gives an impression of the wooded setting (Ill. 2.28). Of the interior decor, a ceiling design, of a conventional Classical pattern, survives.¹⁰⁷

In 1812 Wolff was bankrupted in consequence of the Anglo-Danish 'gunboat war'. Having failed to sell at auction in May 1813, the house was acquired, with the statues, by the society accoucheur Sir William Knighton, physician-in-ordinary to the Prince Regent and recently made a baronet. Like Wolff, Knighton had artistic interests and was a friend of Lawrence.¹⁰⁸

Knighton was the ratepayer from 1814 until 1820, when he sold the house to Mrs Fitzherbert. Its character was more obviously suited to an extravagant grande dame than a physician, albeit one with a fashionable clientele. Lady Knighton does not refer to it in her *Memoirs* of her late husband, but there is ample evidence that they lived there, though not continuously. Mrs Fitzherbert was periodically in residence, and had been since 1812 or earlier, when it was still Wolff's. Replacing her suburban retreat at Parson's Green, Sherwood Lodge served as a second or third home for Mrs Fitzherbert, and she continued to use her Tilney Street town house and Brighton mansion.¹⁰⁹

The sale did not end Knighton's connection with the house and Mrs Fitzherbert (whom he was later to traduce as selfish, calculating and bad-tempered): society news reports show her entertaining there in June and August 1822, and him leaving town for Sherwood Lodge in July.¹¹⁰ He was

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evidently well acquainted with her long before he became the confidant of her by then estranged 'husband', the King. On his own account, he met George in 1811, but not again until 1818 (despite the baronetcy and nominal appointment as physician).¹¹¹

The predominant style of Sherwood Lodge was classical: the hall with columns and pilasters finished in imitation of porphyry; the eating-room with pillars in imitation of verd antique.¹¹² Wolff's furnishings had included pier tables to match. Four pillars in verd antique carried the cloud-painted ceiling of the upstairs drawing room. The 'tastefully Coloured' statue gallery formed the most important element in a suite of rooms opening one to another in a 'grand *coup d'oeil*'. The others were the library, top-lit by a dome, and an oblong saloon, adapted from Nantes's new drawing room and fitted up 'in the true Gothic Style' with 'ancient' painted-glass windows, and a chimneypiece of black marble by J. C. F. Rossi, who had worked on Covent Garden Theatre. Here Wolff had 'appropriate' furniture upholstered in scarlet; the library, where 'rarified' air was vented in through a fretwork chimneypiece, he had fitted out with furniture 'after the antique'.

Wolff may have extended Nantes' conservatory range. In 1820 it comprised a 108ft-long 'Conservatory and Orangery, in Compartments' (referring to 'succession' rooms, held at different temperatures for forcing plants). Paved with marble and gravel, it still contained an aviary. It also had a fish pond, presumably replacing the 'sheet of water' with fish and a duckery mentioned in 1797. The wing continued with a banqueting or 'tent' room with stained-glass sliding windows, and a billiard room, top-lit by a dome and decorated with marble sculptures and bas reliefs of 'exquisite' workmanship; these probably included Rysbrack's marble relief *The Choice of Hercules*, later acquired by the 8th Lord Beaumont for his Yorkshire house (since remodelled as Carlton Towers, where it decorates the Morning Room).¹¹³

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Mrs Fitzherbert carried out her own embellishments from 1820, which she could afford to do when, that year, George IV raised her annuity from £6,000 to £8,000. She insured the house that November for £3,000, renewing the policy three years later for £7,000, including £1,000 for the statues in the gallery and £1,000 for other contents.¹¹⁴ A few months later she put the house on the market, probably on account of the marriage of her protégé Minney Seymour, who had lived there with her. Mrs Fitzherbert's 'exceedingly correct judgment', said the *Morning Post*, 'is finely illustrated in the extraordinary good taste that pervades this admired Mansion and Grounds'. Lord Darnley was among those who expressed an interest, among 'lots of competitors'. Yet 'this Elysium' failed to sell. Back on the market in 1825, it was bought by Sir George Wombwell, Bart., for a reported £12,000.¹¹⁵

In 1827 the property was again for sale. Wombwell himself had 'much improved' it – raising the insurance of the house less the statues and other contents to £6,000.¹¹⁶ He made further unsuccessful attempts to sell. Details of Mrs Fitzherbert's changes are lacking, but they were probably cosmetic, for the block plan of the house drawn in 1825 can be matched closely to the description of the rooms given in 1820 (Ill. 2.29). Much of her spending may have been on the gardens, where she held summer parties. 'Mrs Fitzherbert's botanical garden at Battersea already attracts the notice of the scientific', noted the faithful *Morning Post* in 1821, later calling her 'one of the most scientific botanists in the kingdom'.¹¹⁷

By 1844 Sherwood Lodge was occupied by Sir Edward Hyde East, an elderly former MP and chief justice of Bengal. East's money largely derived from sugar, specifically from old family plantations in Jamaica. His move to Battersea has been attributed to reduced circumstances caused by falling sugar prices as opposition to slavery grew. Superficially this hardly accords with the character of the house, but already the district was not quite what it had been. He died at Sherwood Lodge in 1847, 'much beloved by the poor of

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Battersea'.¹¹⁸ Wombwell, who like Mrs Fitzherbert had oscillated between Sherwood Lodge and Brighton, died the year before at his Eaton Square residence. Lady Wombwell applied to obtain the freehold, perhaps as a preliminary to selling up. In 1850 house and grounds were badly damaged by flooding and soon afterwards her furniture was removed for sale. The house was demolished and the materials and fittings sold in 1853, the site thereafter becoming part of Price's candle works.¹¹⁹

Riverside development since c.1980

Redevelopment for housing of the riverside sites along Lombard and York Roads began in the early 1980s with Broadwell Land's seven-acre **Plantation Wharf** in York Road, a thicket of brick-faced, low-rise buildings and the similarly styled but multi-storey Trades Tower.¹²⁰ Intended as offices, the tower was still untenanted when the developers went into receivership in 1990, and in 1993 was converted to apartments by Try Homes.

In the late 1980s **Groveside Court** was built on the sites of several small wharves and the White Hart public house at the north end of Lombard Road, adjoining Vicarage Gardens. Designed by Lee Denham Architects for Groveside Homes, it provided 36 flats, The Chandler pub, now a restaurant, and houseboat moorings at Albion Quay in front.

Subsequent schemes, all south of the railway and outside the planning constraints of the old village area, have become increasingly large and showy (Ill. 2.30). Most combine a mix of uses, providing office space, hotels and the restaurants and leisure facilities now expected by the modern luxury flat dweller. **Oyster Wharf**, with bulky stepped-back towers of six to eight storeys, was built c.2002–4 by Barratt Homes to designs by PRC Fewster Architects. This is now dwarfed by the 18-storey **Falcon Wharf** adjoining, four

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curved towers with bright blue ceramic cladding, arranged back-to-back. It was designed by the architect James Burland of Burland TM for George Wimpey Ltd and built in 2006, against objections from Mohammed Al Fayed, the owner of the adjoining heliport. The upper floors incorporate an energy-saving, plastic-free 'eco hotel', Rafayel on the Left Bank.¹²¹ The Weston Group, which acquired the heliport from Al Fayed, was responsible for **Bridges Wharf** (Chantrey Ltd, architects, 2007–9), a trio of detached towers ranging from ten to fourteen storeys. Like Falcon Wharf, it makes extensive use of curved exterior walls and balconies. Included in the site is a new control room for the heliport.

More traditional in appearance are the stock-brick elevations of **Prices Court** (1999), four apartment blocks grouped around a courtyard, designed by Shephard Epstein Hunter for Fairview Homes on part of the former Price's Candles site. Behind these, towards York Road, a few of the factory buildings have been incorporated into another Wimpey residential redevelopment, **Candlemakers**. Immediately south of Plantation Wharf, Mendip Court and Sherwood Court are nine-storey blocks belonging to Berkeley Homes's **Riverside Plaza** development (Broadway Malyan, architects, c.1995–9). New residential developments continue further south-west at Wandsworth Bridge, just beyond the area covered here, with the five jagged towers of St George plc's Battersea Reach.

Most recently **Oyster Pier**, in front of Oyster Wharf, was built in 2011 to provide permanent moorings for converted Dutch barges, sold by the developers as shells. Also aimed at the luxury market, the development is tied in with the provision of secure parking and concierge services at the Rafayel hotel.¹²²