

Falcon Road to the Poyntz Road Triangle

This chapter covers a sidelong triangle of some sixty acres (Ill. 7.1). Its western base is defined by Falcon Road, its north and south sides by railways, which converge at a point east of Latchmere Road. As there are no through roads, the district's back streets and spaces have the character of a hinterland. The north-western section is taken up with small Victorian houses in streets with exotically colonial names, part of the developer Alfred Heaver's 'Falcon Park' conception. Two public housing estates on a human scale dominate the centre and south, giving way eastwards to post-war open space; all these replaced low-key streets of artisan housing. Further east, two successive railway arcs link the converging lines and pose a double barrier between this central area and Latchmere Road. Tucked between the arcs nestles the featureless Falcon Park (not to be confused with Heaver's development), again on the site of Victorian housing. Then come Latchmere Road and, beyond it, the self-contained Poyntz Road triangle, an oasis of 1870s houses.

Roads

The oldest major street in this district is Falcon Road, until 1882 Falcon Lane, linking the base of Battersea High Street with the turnpike road from London to Wandsworth. The name probably derives from the Falcon Inn at the south end, recorded in 1733 but in likelihood much earlier (page #). The first parish maps of c.1760 show the lane in two parts with a twist in the middle, since ironed out but corresponding to the bend between Falcon Grove and Este Road. Below this bend it was crossed by the Heathwall sewer, so its southern

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course was wider to allow for the Hydeburn or Falcon brook, which flowed northwards along its west side, joining the sewer at this point. The line of the Heathwall is represented today by the stub of Lavender Terrace, not far north of the deep railway bridge which cuts off the southern end of Falcon Road completely (see Ills 7.1, 2).

At the top of Falcon Lane where it met the High Street lay the junction with the lower road from Vauxhall to Wandsworth, latterly Battersea Park Road and York Road. Just to the east, Sheepcote or Sheepcut Lane joined the lower road at a point tallying with the present junction between Battersea Park Road and Cabul Road, as the western end of Sheepcote Lane was renamed in 1882. This local route ran eastwards along the southern edge of Latchmoor Common, linking up with tracks around Longhedge Farm. Its line is perpetuated today in Cabul Road, the present Sheepcote Lane and Rowditch Lane. Continuity between the first two was severed by railways in the early 1860s, but they remain linked by the secluded, partly sett-paved Latchmere Passage, which twists under three bridges and across the head of Falcon Park to connect Cabul and Latchmere Roads.

Latchmere Road is the third defining thoroughfare for the area, though only its central stretch passes through this chapter's territory. It is not an old right of way; eighteenth-century maps show no indication of even a track at this point. But a clear straight route denominated Pig Hill Lane appears on the tithe map of 1838, crossing the future London & South Western Railway line and (apart from a slight deviation over Latchmoor Common) aligned with Battersea Bridge Road. The first Ordnance Survey (c.1869) shows that while it had yet to attract development above the LSWR line, its northernmost end had become known as Latchmere Lane; the whole was then sometimes thought of as part of Battersea Bridge Road. By the time it was widened and raised to the dignity of Latchmere Road in 1875, building was well forward on the present Poyntz Road triangle and further north. But the construction of

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the West London Extension Railway in 1862–3 cut the road off permanently from the land to its west.

Falcon Lane to 1844

The first detailed Battersea maps show few buildings in this area. In the late eighteenth century the land south of Sheepcote Lane was still in strip cultivation. The largest of these subdivided fields or closes were called Upper and Lower Wilditch; along the top of Falcon Lane were two smaller ones, Weatherby's Shot and Newell Close. Further south, east of the bend in Falcon Lane and north of the Heathwall sewer lay some enclosed meadows in Spencer ownership. These were tenanted by members of the Mousley gardening dynasty in the 1760s. Probably in 1782 they were leased to Harbin Elderton, a City figure variously described as a haberdasher and hosier, a rich Russia merchant and an exchange broker. Following Elderton's bankruptcy in 1788 they were assigned to William Tomlinson.¹

A consolidation of ownership took place when most of the area's meadows and strip fields were acquired in the Spencer sale of 1835 by Thomas Carter, market gardener (d.1843), already the tenant of many of them.² Carter's farm buildings lay just north of the present Falcon Grove. An exception was the top third of Falcon Lane's east side. Here from 1809 a portion of Weatherby's Shot belonged to the Fownes family, London glovers in a large way of trade. John Fownes (1752–1827), apprenticed in Worcester, had started his firm in the City in 1777, quickly expanding to the West End, with a shop in Coventry Street and nearby workshops. By 1790 he had moved his family to Hanwell and soon started a major glove-making enterprise there. These workshops accompanied him when, leaving the West End retailing to his oldest son, Fownes transferred to Falcon Lane. Here Poplar House was built for the founder and his large family, with a line of sheds to its north,

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later extended. The Fowneses seem gradually to have acquired extra property northwards up to Sheepcote Lane and beyond. By 1841 the younger sons, Henry and Thomas, were managing the Battersea operation, and Poplar House had probably been recast by John Davis Paine, architect.³ In 1861 Henry Fownes (1791–1862) claimed to be employing 100 men and 300 women, many living locally, no doubt as outworkers. A fourth brother not till then resident in Battersea, Edward Fownes (1799–1883), presided in 1875 over the transfer of manufacturing first to Lombard Road and then in 1884 back to the glove-making centre of Worcester, where the family had maintained its connections. The Poplar House property was then developed by Alfred Heaver, as detailed below. The Fowneses also from 1846 owned land in the Bramlands fields opposite their house on the west side of Falcon Road, which Heaver also took on.⁴

Developments under T. D. Carter and W. W. Pocock

The first signal for building in this area was given on the Carter holdings, when in 1844 Thomas Daniel Carter advertised part of his late father's lands for sale with a note that the ground contained brick earth. The successful applicant was William Willmer Pocock, architect, prominent Wesleyan, and son of another canny developer-architect, W. F. Pocock of Knightsbridge. This marked the start of a prolonged and lucrative involvement on the younger Pocock's part. A memoir he wrote for his children's benefit casts self-congratulatory light on his procedures here and claims that he cleared £30–40,000 from this, his largest speculation.

Pocock was just then embarking on his first independent speculative venture, Ovington Square, Brompton. As the Building Act was to be applied to the outer London parishes from 1845, he relates, a building boom was on. Bricks were expensive, so it was the brick earth that attracted Pocock to

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Battersea. His father having furnished the purchase price, the Falcon Brickyard opened in their joint names. It was not at first particularly successful or profitable ('the bricks did not turn out very bright'). After Pocock senior's death in 1849 his son extended the operation and supplied hollow bricks for, inter alia, Henry Roberts' Prince Consort Cottages at Windsor, but the clay proved too poor for special purposes. Latterly however, as building gathered pace locally, the brickyard brought Pocock £500 per year 'with only about an hour or two's attention once a week'. Once the brick earth had been extracted and the ground made good, it could be turned over for building.⁵

Having secured the freehold of the brickmaking land in the centre, Pocock went on in 1852 to negotiate from T. D. Carter two 'takes' next to the border roads on the promise of building leases. By then, some middle-class building was already in train. The erection in 1847-9 of the strategically sited Christ Church next to Sheepcote Lane, on a plot owned by the Fowneses and exchanged by them for a piece of glebe next to their own establishment, doubtless boosted confidence. Carter himself started the process by abandoning his farm, building himself a short-lived villa called The Elms roughly where Kerrison Road now runs, and developing plots further south along Falcon Lane. The surviving semi-detached pairs at 77-79, 81-83 & 85-87 Falcon Road, each different in character, belong to this phase, of around 1850 (Ill. 7.3).⁶ So does the detached, much-mutilated No. 75, originally Grove End House. From about 1870 this was the home and office of Henry John Hansom, member of the Catholic dynasty of Hansom architects, district surveyor, and promoter of the Sacred Heart Church near by. Hansom lived here with his son and colleague Richard until 1886, when bankruptcy forced him out. The house is now the Battersea Mosque.⁷

Pocock's new streets on leasehold ground into the hinterland were Falcon Grove, the first street driven eastwards out of Falcon Lane, and Grove

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Road, later Shillington Street, southwards out of Sheepcote Lane (see Ill. 7.2). The name Grove Road was also at first applied to what became Este Road (briefly Este Grove), the second street leading out of Falcon Lane, here on Pocock freehold land, so the idea must have been to link the two ends. Eight pairs of houses were built in Falcon Grove around 1852–3 and four at the northern end of Grove Road next to Sheepcote Lane. But by the late 1850s Battersea was losing its eligibility. In the next stage, forward by 1861, smaller artisan terraces sprang up along the rest of Falcon Grove, on both sides of Este Road, and along Lavender Terrace, a third Pocock street out of Falcon Lane (Ill. 7.5).⁸ None of these houses behind the main road frontage remains.

In the 1860s Pocock projected two short streets southwards out of Este Road, called Newman and Pearson Streets after their main developers, Edward Newman and John Pearson. A third one parallel was added further east after 1870; this was at first to be called Lawn Road after the house to which Pocock had then just moved in Wandsworth, but soon became Guildford Street and then Lubeck Street. To link their southern ends, the longer Duffield Street was laid out behind, beginning from about 1867. Of these roads only Pearson Street survives, rechristened Batten Street in 1937. Here Christ Church Schools were built in 1866, in advance of the houses around it. (The present school on the site is a rebuilding of 1907–8.)⁹

Further east, progress was checked by the incursion of the West London Extension Railway (WLER), considered below. Pocock claimed not to have lost from the ensuing delays and complexities. The WLER paid him £4,600 for 3½ acres of land in 1860, leaving him still with some twelve acres for brickworks, and 4½ acres on which to build. Operations picked up again after 1875, and peaked in 1878–82, when under new agreements the blocks between Este Road and Duffield Street were completed and Shillington Street proceeded, as the northern sector of Grove Road now became in honour of Pocock's tea-dealing son-in-law, Digby F. Shillington. Pocock represents this

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phase as smooth and successful. He advanced bricks and money at 5%, and 'as one transaction closed, they were usually glad to enter upon another'. The main developers were Edward Newman and Edward Carter, possibly a relation of the Carters through whom Pocock had acquired the land. On Carter's death in 1880, his agreement was taken up by his brother James.¹⁰

From all this building effort on Pocock's land from the 1850s to the early 1880s, totalling some three hundred houses, absolutely nothing remains. To judge from the few remaining photographs they are hardly to be regretted. The minor roads have all gone, and Shillington Street survives only as a stub now annexed to Este Road beside the former Shillington Street Board School of 1882-3. The only Victorian fabric to survive are two short groups at 1-7 and 2-4 Falcon Grove, both apparently added in the late 1880s as infill on the back gardens behind 67-73 and 75 Falcon Road. The former group is said to have been due to a local builder, Daniel Pitt. Its centre at No. 5 is pepped up by the former Falcon Grove Hall, with amiably naïve Gothic detailing (Ill. 7.4). The hall was used over the years by religious denominations, the National Union of Railwaymen and auctioneers, before becoming a house in about 1988-9.¹¹

The West London Extension Railway and its consequences

The West London Extension Railway (WLER), though the Cinderella of the local lines, had enduring influence on land use in the eastern portion of the present area. The first Act authorizing an extension of the West London Railway over the Thames and through the parish went back to 1847, but was not taken up. The scheme resurfaced late in 1858, and with support from the LSWR acquired a new Act in August 1859. Land purchases and construction then took the best part of four years, until the opening in March 1863.¹²

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Crucial for the WLER was to connect efficiently with other railway lines at the new Clapham Junction. Therefore while the line's main course ran straight from its Thames bridge towards the Battersea Tangle, two separate arcs branched off after Battersea Park Road to join the north and south sides of the main lines from Waterloo and Victoria east of Clapham Junction. These arcs, mostly elevated on embankments, took up much land, chopped up what remained into awkward fragments, and cut off east-west communications across the eastern half of the territory covered by this chapter.

Not until 1869 did the WLER release its surplus land for development. In so doing the company relied much on the builder-surveyor George Todd junior and his family, already active in Battersea. There was no standard procedure, but in the case of the future Poyntz Road triangle in the apex between the lines, and perhaps also in the Latchmere Grove area next west, Todd or someone in his circle made a layout for housing development; the properties were then offered for sale by treaty or auction. At Stainforth Road, the Todds bought the land themselves, awaited a favourable moment and then sold it, again with a street layout. Details of these transactions are given below.

On only one of these areas, the land now covered by Falcon Park, had development begun before the WLER intervened. Here around 1848 John and Henry John Hunt, small-time father-and-son speculators prolific in Battersea, took under Thomas D. Carter a strip of fair width in Upper Wilditch, end on to Sheepcote Lane and not far west of Pig Hill Lane (later Latchmere Road). Two buildings 'near the new church' [Christ Church] reported in 1848-9 as belonging to H. Hunt of College Street, Chelsea, may represent the start of the Hunts' new street, christened Latchmere Grove. Ten free-standing pairs of semi-detached villas and long gardens were completed along its east side around 1850, but they can scarcely have been eligible, as the sizeable Latchmere Grain Distillery was built opposite at the same time, with a pub,

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the Latchmere Arms, adjoining at its north end. After the WLER's compulsory purchase of the freehold in 1861, the two arcs of the railway encompassed the street like pincers. The Battersea historian Henry Simmonds associated Latchmere Grove with noisome piggeries: in the 34 houses occupied here in 1871, seven heads of household were connected to pig-keeping or dealing.¹³

Henry Hunt, however, hung on, no doubt with compensation. It appears that the WLER arranged a fresh layout plan for Latchmere Grove when its surplus land was sold by auction in April 1869, and that Hunt bought most of the separate lots by bid or negotiation. The street was completed in 1879–84, with infilling along the east side, smaller houses on the west, and two brief arms squashed into the south end of what was now a deep cul-de-sac. This south end was developed under a separate freeholder, James Bennett, who had previously laid out Wayford Street (see below), and presumably secured the land in the WLER sale.¹⁴

Between Pocock's Shillington Street and Hunt's Latchmere Grove lay a strip of land released in 1871 by the WLER into the ownership of the Todd family, in trust for George Todd senior's wife. This, the so-called Croft estate, was sold with a ready made layout in 1878 to Alpheus Cleophas Morton, who proceeded to develop it forthwith as Stainforth Road, relying on the efficient local builder Edward Newman.¹⁵ Morton, a Clapham resident, claimed to be an architect and surveyor; he has left no record in the former capacity, but his over forty years as a member of the City Corporation hints at property skills. Pocock dismissed the bandy-legged Morton as 'a talkative member of the local [Wandsworth District] Board' without financial substance. They clashed over Morton's efforts to achieve an exit from Stainforth Road into the Pocock property, for which the latter extorted £400. In Pocock's version of events, 'Poor Morton had ruined his estate, but I don't suppose he had a feather to fly with, and if he thinks he has got the better of me, he is welcome'. But it was

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Morton who climbed the higher, getting into Parliament as a radical MP and earning a knighthood when he retired.¹⁶

The Poyntz Road triangle

One compact, self-contained area of small 1870s houses survives from these post-WLER developments: the so-called Poyntz Road triangle, wedged between the tapering railway tracks east of Latchmere Road. Behind its main-road frontage at 57–107 Latchmere Road run three interconnecting streets, Knowsley, Poyntz and Shellwood Roads.

In preparation for this land's disposal the railway company had a plan of streets and building lots made, probably by George Todd, who in 1869 applied to lay out roads. The Harefield Estate, the name given to the development, hints that Evan Hare, a speculating lawyer living in Putney, was already involved. The next year Hare bought the freehold of many of the lots and Todd concocted a revised plan, with roads provisionally named Colbert, Tetton and Mowbray Streets. Sanction was granted in May 1870, after which the present street-names soon came into effect.¹⁷

The build-up of the triangle took most of the 1870s. The WLER or Hare sold off chunks of land to speculators, and builders then filled them up. Thus Samuel Trow of Battersea Square, boot manufacturer, purchased the whole north side of Knowsley Road direct from the WLER. The Latchmere Road frontage, at first called Shellwood Terrace, was largely built by Daniel Tuhey, but the freeholds here were split between separate purchasers from Hare, including William Bellingham at the north end and Charles William Welch at the south. Another freeholder, James Scovell Adams, employed the partners Henry King and James Spelman in Shellwood Road. Other builders to the fore were William Bax & Peter Matthew Ward; Samuel Ludford; and R. & S.

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Lyon.¹⁸ Apart from some shops along Latchmere Road, the only non-domestic building was St Aldwin's Mission Chapel of 1880, later St Stephen's Hall, on the east side of Poyntz Road (since demolished).

These streets perpetuate the type of pinched mid-Victorian workers' houses built in short runs, common all over northern Battersea before the rebuildings of the 1960s but now quite rare (Ill. 7.6). Before modernization, all were on two storeys without basements, and fronted in plain stocks. Just a few have single-storey bay windows. Added attic storeys and painted fronts have latterly infringed the streets' lowly but decent sobriety.

The Poyntz Road triangle's survival owes much to the energy of its residents, who heard in 1973 that Wandsworth Council contemplated rebuilding the district. They undertook a survey, consultation and report which concluded that rehabilitating the triangle instead of demolition enjoyed the 'unreserved support' of most residents. The campaign's upshot was successful; the Council's plans were abandoned forthwith, minor improvements were made such as planting at the angle of Knowsley and Shellwood Roads, while increasing owner-occupation helped secure the triangle's future. The Residents' Association's report of April 1974 offers an unusually full analysis of physical and social conditions at that time (Ill. 7.7). Small private landlords still then owned a majority of houses; multiple occupation was almost as common as it had been when the streets were first built; many houses were in poor condition and some bricked up because their future was uncertain. The survey extended to ascertaining the number of resident adults who had been born in Battersea and, as well, of those who had been born in the triangle itself. A remarkable 26 households out of 156 included adults in this last category, pointing to the district's social coherence. In part, that still obtains.¹⁹

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Associated with this area is an unprepossessing string of shallow houses on the west side of Latchmere Road, numbered between 32 and 54. They appear to have been built in 1884–5 by the builder James Swann of Swann & Barlow, in tandem with houses in Latchmere Grove, now demolished.²⁰

Smaller Holdings

Two minor developments in this area, now largely demolished, were not affected by the WLER. West of Shillington Street was Wayford Street, created on ground bought from T. D. Carter by James Griffin and James Bennett in 1865. Bennett, a local linen-draper, seems to have been the leading figure. A few houses at the top and facing Sheepcote Lane were built by John Wilkinson and James Mill Gowman around 1866–7. There was then a hiatus. Bennett sold the undeveloped part of the east side to a City merchant, James Porter, in 1876; building there followed in about 1877–80 under Abraham and W. H. Isaacs, builders, with H. J. Hansom possibly operating as their architect.²¹

In the south-west corner of the triangle lay a separate small freehold awkwardly squeezed between Lavender Terrace and the LSWR line, with a short frontage facing Falcon Road. It belonged in the 1870s to Georgina Jane Campbell, heir to George Delavand who had owned a villa and grounds cut in two by the railway. This northern fragment of the Delavand property was developed for her mainly in 1879–80 by the local builder Thomas Gregory and an associate, James George, with houses on both sides of Falcon Terrace, the south side of Lavender Terrace, and a frontage to Falcon Road known as Falcon Market.²² Only the shops at Nos 117–127 Falcon Road survive, retaining some quirky window-heads at first-floor level (Ill. 7.9).

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Even the most unprepossessing of sites here was at one time intended for housing. In 1872 an aborted scheme was drawn up for Richard John Bell of Bridlington, Yorks., to build 50-odd tiny dwellings on a sliver of land owned by him between the railway tracks just south of the Poyntz Road triangle, to be known as Hygeiopolis or Hygeia Road. The unexecuted house designs were the work of the architect, engineer and concrete pioneer Philip Brannon, in his own patent 'monolithic and stone felt' method of construction, with gardens atop the asphalted roofs.²³

Alfred Heaver and the Falcon Park Estate

The north-west corner of the territory covered by this chapter was efficiently built up with small houses under the developer Alfred Heaver, mostly between 1879 and 1881. The streets in question are Afghan, Cabul, Candahar, Kerrison, Khyber, Nepaul and Patience Roads, and Rowena (at first Zulu) Crescent (Ills 7.1, 2). Together with others west of Falcon Road, now demolished, called Heaver, Kambala, Musjid, Natal and Tugela Roads, they formed the so-called Falcon Park estate.

The development was largely built on the property of the Fownes family. In March 1879 Heaver agreed with the aged Edward Fownes, acting with his son-in-law William Rigden, to develop his freeholds on both sides of Falcon Road. Heaver's surveyor, William C. Poole, promptly produced plans for the main three sections of the estate on Fownes land (Falcon Park Nos 1, 3 & 4 east of Falcon Road, and No. 2 to its west); infrastructural work must have started that summer. The layout for a small southern addition to the eastern sector including Kerrison Road and Nepaul Road (at first Square) had been finalized by May 1880. This was on land which Heaver bought freehold, perhaps from the Carters. The other afterthought to the scheme was Kambala

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Road west of Falcon Road, added in 1881–3 to the north of No. 2 section on land belonging to the Stephens family.²⁴

These street names mostly commemorate British feats of arms in the Second Afghan War of 1878–80 and the Zulu War of 1879. An engagement at Ali Masjid or Musjid was the first of significance in the Afghan campaign, whose later phases saw the Khyber Pass controlled, Kabul occupied, and final victory in September 1880 at Kandahar, when Falcon Park was in full spate. The Tugela River was an important boundary in the Zulu War; the Battle of Kambula or Kamballa saw a restoration of British supremacy after the disaster at Isandlwana, and resulted in Zululand being annexed to Natal. Nepaul Road is another obvious imperial reference, though its exact topicality is unclear. Other names have varied origins. Patience Road honours Alfred Heaver's wife; Kerrison Road is a puzzle. Musjid Road was at first to be Ashdown Road, perhaps after John Ashdown, an earlier lessee hereabouts, while Nepaul Square was originally mooted as Hiscox Square after a local vestryman and builder, Joseph Hiscox. In the reverse direction, the name Zulu Crescent may have proved strong meat for nervous locals, for it was toned down to Rowena Crescent in 1883.

Development proceeded with impressive speed, east of Falcon Road almost entirely in the years 1879–81. Heaver brushed aside a proposal for a vestry hall at the corner of Battersea Park Road and Falcon Road, so that the estate consisted almost entirely of two-storey houses, with matching shops along the Falcon Road frontage (Nos 1–63). The only variation occurs along the north side of Cabul Road east of Candahar Road, much of which post-dates Heaver's development. At No. 21, facing down Wayford Street, stands the former Milton Congregational Hall of 1885. The modest terrace to its east (Nos 31–39) is of 1896, probably designed by Richard D. Hansom for the builder E. J. Payne. Then at the Rowena Crescent corner comes No. 41, faced

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in green faience and formerly the London, Chatham & Dover Railway Tavern.²⁵

For his houses Heaver used a variety of small builders, none dominant. In Rowena Crescent, for instance, some six operated simultaneously, while Heaver himself built seven houses directly. The biggest single take seems to have been the block between Afghan and Khyber Roads, taken up by John Jenkins of Walworth. Between Cabul and Patience Roads, William Rowe of Clapham also undertook a block of 28 houses, along with the frontage to Falcon Road (Ill. 7.10). The southward extension, consisting of Nepal Road, Kerrison Road and the south end of Candahar Road (originally conceived as the eastern arm of 'Nepaul Square') was no different. Among builders here were Henry Mundy, prolific in Tugela Road near by, and Thomas Gregory.²⁶

These houses are entirely characteristic of the Battersea of their time, first occupied by one, two or even three artisan families, built to standard plans, and with the usual minimal front gardens and pocket-sized yards squeezed round back extensions. But they are less dour than the typical Battersea artisan houses of the previous decade, say on the Poyntz Road triangle, even if their decorative features were larded on to improve their rentability. Most houses have double-height bay windows, usually finished off with caps, and there is the customary alternation between arch-headed window-types, accompanied by red-brick voussoirs and runs of nail-head ornament, and straight-headed types, where individuality is achieved by chamfering the soffits with assorted moulding profiles (Ills 7.10, 11). Keystones and capitals earn the most ornamental attention. The best street from that standpoint is Kerrison Road, where male and female heads of standard type but varied headgear alternate as keystones over the porches along the south side. Kerrison Road also contributes to the estate's one architectural incident, where the same south side collides with the end of Candahar Road, forcing three squashed houses backwards into the angle.

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The southern portion of the area covered by this chapter was badly hit by wartime damage. A V1 landed in Duffield Street south-east of Christ Church School, while much of Falcon and Lavender Terraces, Fownes Street (as Newman Street had become in 1937) and the top of Shillington and Stainforth Streets were irreparably damaged. The upshot was much emergency clearance, the erection of prefabs, and a sense that only comprehensive redevelopment could set a scruffy, wilderness area to rights.

As a result of the County of London Development Plan (1951), the whole of the eastern area round the railway arcs was scheduled as open space, resulting in the total obliteration of Duffield Street, Latchmere Grove, Shillington Street and Stainforth Road and their gradual replacement by Falcon Park and the Shillington Street Open Space, divided by the western of the two arcs (see Ill. 7.1). This plan proved exasperatingly slow to realize, damaging the district. Falcon Park opened in 1966, Shillington Street Open Space not till the late 1970s. As late as 1973 the condemned Lubeck Street still hung on, nicknamed 'Agro Street' because of its local bovver boys.²⁷

Victorian housing further west nearer Falcon Road was also completely cleared, but here it was replaced by two estates of contrasting interest: the London County Council's Falcon Road Estate, of c.1959–61, a textbook miniature of the post-war principles of mixed development, and Wandsworth's Wayford Street Estate of 1974–7.

Falcon Road Estate

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The LCC's involvement with this six-acre site began in 1953–4, when the Council proposed to clear houses in the 'Falcon Road (East) Programmed Area'. The proposal was to stop off the awkwardly configured and badly damaged Lavender and Falcon Terraces, expunge the west end of Duffield Street, and create a low-density environment of 130 dwellings between Este Road and the railway, with a new Fownes Street as its central spine and Batten Street as its eastern edge, where Christ Church School acquired extra space. At the Falcon Road end, a proposal to rebuild the main road frontage with shops was not taken up.

Ministry approval for the clearances came through in 1957, giving the LCC Architect's Department's scheme the all-clear. Three six-storey point blocks (Eden, Ridley and Temple Houses) were planned corner-on to Este Road, islands in a sea of open space. Below Fownes Street came three four-storey maisonette blocks, again well separated (Ill. 7.13). The estate was skirted west and south by terraces raised up above road level on a platform-walkway. There is some ambiguity in the documentation about the dates of construction, but the name Falcon Estate was given in February 1959, and rents were fixed in November 1961.²⁸

The whole estate is constructed in a neat brick manner, conservative in style for the LCC Architect's Department, yet redolent in detail of its date. It passed to Wandsworth Council in 1971, and at some point was renamed the Falcon Road (sometimes Falcon Terrace) Estate.²⁹ It has suffered from insensitive window replacements.

Wayford Street Estate

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This estate consists mostly of three-storey blocks of flats, sandwiched into an awkward-shaped piece of urban fabric east of Falcon Road. It has several faces. It determines the present-day character of Falcon Grove, which has become a cul-de-sac; along the north side of Este Road it looks across to the openness of the very different Falcon Road Estate, while along Wayford Street its pleasant courts seem like a suburban oasis, sheltered by the back of the former Shillington Street school. The estate's northern edge, where it meets Cabul Road, is blank and clumsily managed.

Wayford Street developed out of a slum-clearance scheme for almost six acres put before Wandsworth Council in 1970. The Borough Architect produced an outline design for 215 dwellings, but it appears it was taken on to detail by the architects Diamond, Redfern & Partners in 1972. Their design, which reduced the total number of dwellings slightly, was built by H. Fairweather Ltd in 1974–7.³⁰ The basic unit is a T-shaped block of three-storey flats, sometimes doubled to create an H, sometimes distorted to suit the angular topography (see Ill. 7.10). Between the arms come open courts, while paths occasionally thread through the blocks. At the west end of Este Road, near the fire station, is a taller block which once contained shops, with a pathway to one side leading through to Falcon Grove. This street includes a group of houses on the north side, and a children's home opposite at No. 10. The elevations throughout are of brick with a not very attractive simulated slate covering the upper portions of the fronts. Roofs are flat, except on the houses and children's home of Falcon Grove.

Other

Apart from some rebuildings along Falcon Road, the one recent development worth mentioning is Zulu Mews, tucked in between the north side of Rowena Crescent and the railway tracks and reached from Cabul Road (see Ill. 7.10).

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This gated community consists of ten independent houses with monopitch roofs and a small block of flats at the end, built in 2009–10 to decent designs by Harper Downie, architects, for Ipsus Developments.³¹