

North of Clapham Junction

The district north of Clapham Junction is almost entirely devoid of older buildings. Roughly square in shape and seventy-three acres in size, it is bounded eastwards by Falcon Road, northwards by York Road and westwards by Plough Road, while the London to Richmond railway tracks together with Clapham Junction Station form a firm southern barrier (Ill. 8/1). Large-scale public housing covers much of this ground today, among which a section of the Winstanley Estate between Grant, Plough and Winstanley Roads is notable for its architecture. These post-war estates all but obliterated a road pattern set by the original development of this area between about 1845 and 1880, along with street after street of artisan housing. The demise of this housing can be put down to several factors: the early division of tenure between many different freeholders and leaseholders, impeding good maintenance; low-lying, ill-drained ground, leading to chronic problems with damp; sheer hard wear by an impoverished working-class population; and an animus against small Victorian houses by those who ran the post-war Battersea Council, many of whom had endured upbringings in inadequate homes of this kind.

Early history

The first Battersea maps show enclosed fields in this area by the 1760s, except for Bramlands, strip-fields set end on to Falcon Lane. Three larger fields to the west facing Plough Lane were cultivated as market gardens, but much of the centre consisted of marshy meadow, as the Falcon brook trickled across it on its final course to the Thames beyond York Place Bridge and Creek. The tithe map shows the brook, doubling as an open sewer, split into two with

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offshoots and meanders (see Ill. 0.2). It was not wholly straightened and suppressed till 1866, as part of the Metropolitan Board of Works' low-level drainage campaigns.¹

Apart from the odd cottage or farm building along Plough Lane, the only smatter of houses was close to the Prince's Head. This hostelry stood across from the parish pound, at the south-west corner of the junction between Falcon Lane, York Road, Battersea High Street and the 'lower road' to Vauxhall and Nine Elms (now Battersea Park Road). Before its Victorian rebuilding, it was a plain, square pub with outhouses, cottages and gardens. It can be traced back to 1716, when it appears to have been new-built, the name Prince's Head being confirmed from 1765; at both dates the lessees were members of the Tidswell family, clothiers of London and Wakefield.² York Road, running westwards from here towards Wandsworth, carried only light traffic until it was linked up with the improved Battersea Park Road. Until 1869 it was formally part of Lower Wandsworth Road, though the name York Road is also found; the stretch near the Prince's Head is marked as Adam Lane on a parish map of the 1760s. West of the pub, a group of cottages known as Prince's Place also appears on this and later maps.

The sale of this whole area in lots by the Spencers in 1835–6, followed by encroachment of the London & South-Western Railway across the south end of this territory in 1836–8, had no immediate impact on land use. Nor did the branch line to Richmond, laid out a decade afterwards. Clapham Junction, soon to emerge where the two lines parted, was not yet anticipated when building began around 1850. So the earliest plans for development just reflected what was going on near by, notably on the Carter property east of Falcon Lane. But once opened in 1863, the station soon dominated thinking. When Canon Erskine Clarke embarked on St Peter's, Plough Road, in 1874, he gave the district's 'proximity to the great railway centre "Clapham Junction"' as the direct reason for its recent building boom.³

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The first major initiative came from John Cornelius Park, who had started out as a dealer in building materials in Walworth and dabbled in other South London land speculations. Probably on the strength of money realized from some nine acres on the future site of Battersea Park, in 1850 he bought the low-lying meadows round the brook from Joseph Tritton the banker. Park projected the lengthy Lavender Road across the middle (see Ill. 8.2), running from the lower stretch of Falcon Lane towards York Road, before which it forked into two parts, Lavender Road and Creek Road (later Street). The Falcon Lane end acquired a good-sized pub, the Lord Auckland, in honour of Battersea's recent vicar Robert Eden, who had just inherited that title. At the opposite end came a smaller beerhouse, the Black Swan, by the corner of York and Lavender Roads. The plan for this pub was signed by the South London architect-surveyor W. G. Colman, possibly Park's professional adviser. The west end of this development, close to riverside industries, filled up with small houses. The middle stretch of Lavender Road enjoyed more generous dwellings known as Lavender Villas, some semi-detached, more in terraces, but all with good gardens, while Falcon Lane acquired a straggle of buildings. Park sold freeholds after building whenever possible. Progress was rapid around 1850–4, then slowed. About half the plots had been built up when in 1862 he mortgaged the property to the solicitor Henry Chester, whose firm was also involved in later developments in this area.⁴ Park died in comfortable circumstances at Teddington in 1887. He hit the headlines only after his death, when it transpired he had encouraged a young woman to marry his son. She forged documents settling money on herself, whether or not the marriage took place, but was detected and convicted.⁵

Park had been anticipated by the Scottish-born market gardener Francis Lithgow, owner since the Spencer sale in 1836 of Grove House, facing York Road, and a field behind. From about 1845 Lithgow began desultorily to build up his main-road frontage (with Grove Place, St John's Place and

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Victoria Cottages), followed by some cramped streets behind: Grove Lane, Francis (later Lithgow) Street, Edward (later Wye) Street, and Tibet Street. He had not got far when he sold up in 1853.⁶ The eventual purchaser was the Conservative Land Society (CLS), one of several similar bodies set up at this period ostensibly to create small freeholders who would then qualify as voters under the franchise rules of the day. The Radical Liberals had pioneered the device, but the Conservatives soon caught up. By 1857, when it proceeded with the Lithgow land, the five-year-old Society had already acquired and parcelled up many estates, especially in the London suburbs, and was evolving into a straightforward development company. The property was small by its standards, having 81 lots, but it drew the Society into two further local ventures: its Plough Lane and Clapham Junction Estates (pages ##, ##).

Under the high-class names of the soldier and rake Viscount Ranelagh, the Society's chairman, and of Robert Bourke, later Lord Connemara, a modicum of lots were promptly sold facing the newly formed Verona Street, which removed Grove House. The purchasers were under no obligation to build and often sold on, while other lots were not disposed of till later. By the end of the 1860s Edward (Wye) Street had been completed in orderly fashion; Francis and Tibet Street were well forward, but Mantua Street was still a blank. The original purchasers ranged from a clergyman to a farmer, with members of the drink trade well represented. Keith Bailey calculates that 44 of the 81 lots were bought with a view to enfranchisement, 14 with building in mind.⁷

After the Lithgow property the CLS took on another market garden field nearby, this time fronting Plough Lane, owned by the Drew family until 1846 and then by the reputable nurserymen Joseph Knight and Thomas Perry. After some speculative exchanges it was bought by the Society in 1864, the year after Clapham Junction opened. The figures leading for the CLS in this

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and subsequent transactions here were Lt.-Col. A. W. H. Meyrick and Newnham Winstanley: hence the names Meyrick and Winstanley Roads, supplemented by Currie, Knox, Newcomen and Palk (later Darien) Roads, probably all honouring directors of the Society. Perhaps under the influence of James Wylson, the Society's able surveyor, a better layout was made here, with a grid at diagonals to Plough Lane, good street widths and some 45-degree corner plots (see Ills 8.2, 4). Houses of at least £250 value were to be built on the 203 lots thus created. The old farmhouse was excluded, becoming the site of St Peter's Church and Vicarage (vol. 49).

The apportionment took place in two stages, beginning in 1864 with the north-west sector next to Plough Lane. Here the estate's entrance was announced by the Collingwood Arms and a large shop called Winstanley House, both on angled plots where Meyrick and Winstanley Roads converged at Plough Lane. The second sale disposed of lots south-east of Newcomen Road. Again much speculation took place; plots were often purchased by individuals and passed on before building commenced. Progress on the ground was patchy during the downturn of the late 1860s, to judge from maps, and building continued well into the next decade.⁸

The largest single field in the area, of almost eighteen acres, lay next south of Drew's. Like the others, it had been bought in 1836 by a market gardener, in this case William Howey. Its demise was certain once Clapham Junction Station opened beside it in 1863. Howey had long retired to Barnstaple, and seems to have had little personal engagement with the development, which may have been organized by the solicitors Chesters, agents also for J. C. Park. An eastern strip of the field was sold to Park, who used it to consolidate the southern end of his holdings. For the rest of the land a plan was procured with roads and 357 lot divisions; the freeholds were then sold at auction as the 'Clapham Junction Estate' – the first but not the last time that name was used. The estate agent and surveyor involved was George

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Todd. Both Todd and Park ensured that the road system connected with the CLS's holding to the north. On Park's land, Meyrick Road was projected south-eastwards to meet Falcon Road, while on the Howey property Winstanley Road was carried on down almost to the station, intersected by three new roads parallel with Palk Road and the railway; these were Grant, Livingstone and Speke Roads, commemorating African explorers.⁹

The roads on Howey's land had been named and begun by the time of the first auction, around the autumn of 1864. This appears to have involved only a few lots facing Plough Lane. In June 1865 Todd arranged a larger, more publicized auction. Perhaps because of the railway, the advertisements welcomed factories and shops as well as houses.¹⁰ The purchaser of most of the plots was Job Caudwell, a publisher and 'almost fanatical teetotaller, non-smoker and vegetarian', who soon afterwards built a concrete house for himself at Spencer Park, and was father of Paul Caudwell, long-term solicitor to Battersea Council. Caudwell issued leases to builders in Grant, Livingstone and Speke Roads in 1865-8.¹¹

Then or later, other takers purchased the eastern end of Howey's land facing Winstanley Road: the large Winstanley Arms, for instance, was naturally not Caudwell's. There was also some ground south of Grant Road, obliterated when Clapham Junction expanded northwards in 1904-7. Benjamin Hatfield started a small commercial development here at the end of a cul-de-sac, at first Hatfield Crescent but eventually Lothair Street. Further east on Park's land, the short Station (from 1887 Andoe) Road offered back access to Clapham Junction, with the Railway Guard pub and the Station Works of the road's builder-developer, Thomas Gregory, at the bottom.¹²

Other Victorian developments in this area, all obliterated, can be briefly described. North of J. C. Park's land, a narrow field with a 350ft frontage to Falcon Lane was leased in 1851 by the market gardener T. D.

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Carter to a Chelsea builder, William Winks, and a brewer, Frederick White. They appear to have built only the Queen Victoria pub (later 82 Falcon Road) and four houses to the south (Victoria Terrace). Then from 1866 a new freeholder, Thomas Capps of Nightingale Lane, set out Ingrave Street from the north side of the pub as far as the bottom of Wye Street, before selling on in 1876.¹³

Ingrave Street tied in with another small venture, on land owned by Thomas Cubitt's trustees. Along with some industrial riverside sites further west, Cubitt had purchased a four-acre field south-west of the Lithgow land from the 3rd Earl Spencer in 1841. Apart from the Baptists' Grove House School, erected that year, it remained intact until 1867. The trustees then invited building along the York Road frontage and in two modest streets behind, Barmore and Benfield Streets, which connected with a western prolongation of Ingrave Street. After a hiatus the development was completed in 1878-9, mainly under an agreement with the local builders Leonard and Noah Bottoms. The one sizeable building here was the Queen's Head pub of 1868 at the corner of York Road and Barmore Street.¹⁴

North of the Carter-Capps freehold in Falcon Road lay the old strip field called Bramlands. This was bought by Henry Fownes of the local glove-making dynasty in 1846 and sold on by his brother Edward to Alfred Heaver in 1879, becoming part of the latter's Falcon Park estate, discussed in Chapter 7. Under his surveyor W. C. Poole's original plan for this area, Mantua Street was continued eastwards, north of which two new streets, Heaver and Musjid Roads, debouched into Falcon Road. At their west end they were connected by Natal Road, later part of Kambala Road. This last road was added after Heaver in 1882 obtained building rights over two extra acres northwards on a narrow market-garden field south of the Prince's Head with a house, Falcon House, at the front. Following the Spencer sales, this field had been leased in the 1850s by an absentee owner to an absentee lessee, William Watling, a

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provision dealer of Pimlico, who promised to build but did little except install a woman in Falcon House and let the back lands for a piggery and cowsheds. But a trustee for Watling's grandson, John Stephens, probably a relative, managed to acquire the freehold in 1880 before he died. So the leases for the Kambala Road houses were mostly from his widow Emily Louise Stephens, acting as a trustee for William Charles Watling, via Heaver, to the various builders and lessees.¹⁵ Between Kambala and Musjid Roads, an Arding & Hobbs warehouse and some workshops for Munt Brothers broke up the domestic tenor.

The rebuilding of the Prince's Head in 1881 can stand for the completion of the quadrilateral's first development. It was promoted by two local speculators, George Sansom and Joseph Ewington, who earned a long lease from the freeholder, W. H. Hattersley, in return for undertaking a three-storey pub with a large billiard room and meeting rooms, flanked by three shops along the York Road frontage. Its architect, H. I. Newton, soon afterwards author also of the surviving Falcon at the other end of Falcon Road, thought enough of it to get it illustrated in *The Builder* (Ill. 8.3). The sums at stake in transactions surrounding this prominent pub were high, and as was usual drew in large brewers. In 1889 Sansom and Ewington issued a 50-year sublease for £36,000, while after they had parted with their interest to the Cannon Brewery a new head lease in 1897 cost £45,500.¹⁶

The area's physical character is graphically conveyed by aerial photographs of the 1920s (Ill. 8.4), and also in a memoir by James Guttridge, who was brought up during that decade in Benfield Street off York Road, 'a short, slightly crescented street of about 60 houses' with some high 'stinkpoles' (sewer vents) as its only ornament. Each house contained at least two but mostly three families, remembered Guttridge, 'so there was a right assortment to create a lively neighbourhood'. He supplies a minute description of how the houses were inhabited; for instance, there were coal

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chutes in the pavement but they were never used, and front doors were generally unlocked or had a key on a string.¹⁷

The single famous resident was the young John Burns, who in 1871 was living at 80 Grant Road along with his railwayman father, then working at Clapham Junction, his mother, two brothers and five nieces and nephews. A remark from Burns in old age hints that his family may also have lived in Speke and Winstanley Roads; if so, their mobility would not have been untypical.¹⁸ In 1898 the population of St Peter's parish, which took in two-thirds of the area, was described as one of small tradesmen, some artisans, railway servants and carriage cleaners, along with 'a large proportion of the shiftless class of poor who seem to have no regular employment, and are constantly out of work'. A register of callers at St Peter's confirms the pressure of social needs. Commonest are requests for letters of recommendation to hospitals, but other problems obtrude, like the shoeblack from a corner near the station who asked for the vicar's help in getting his licence renewed after he was told he caused obstruction and reacted abusively.¹⁹

The same vicar reported to Booth's investigators that prostitution was common in his parish.²⁰ Its facilities were not generous. Apart from the church on Plough Road and two big board schools, there was a small Baptist chapel in Meyrick Road, the Battersea Chapel's Sunday school in York Road (grandly rebuilt in 1911-12), and Speke Hall, which started out as a private bath. Its promoter, John Dickeson, complained in 1883 that nearby brothels in Speke Road were damaging his trade (see also page ##). The hall was subsequently converted for general hire and played host to a lively Pentecostalist congregation, described as ministering to 'a district than which it would be difficult to find many places poorer or in more need of some evangelising agency'.²¹ For all these buildings see volume 49.

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Remaining buildings of pre-1945 vintage in the area are as follows:

The Peacock (formerly the Meyrick Arms), **146 Falcon Road**. Leased probably around 1851 by J. C. Park. Described in its previous incarnation by a visitor in 2008 as 'Foul, dingy, to all intents and purposes on its last legs'.²²

63–73 Musjid Road with **66–74 and 61–69 Heaver Road**, of c.1880, are survivors from the western arm of Alfred Heaver's Falcon Park estate.²³ They are typical of the two-storey houses which once dominated the area.

105 Meyrick Road, at the corner with Darien Road, is the former Duke of Wellington pub of c.1870. For Darien House of 1934, to its south-west, see below.

St Peter's School and **21–31 Plough Road**. For the school and for 21 Plough Road, the former vicarage of St Peter's, see volume 49. Nos 23–27, a short row of shops, was built on Conservative Land Society freehold, probably in 1877. Nos 29–31 at the angle with Newcomen Road was the former St Peter's Club House, built around the same time.²⁴ The whole site was derelict at the time of writing (2012).

Winstanley and Livingstone (now Falcons) Estates

The Winstanley Estate is the second largest of Battersea's public housing projects. Like the even bigger Battersea Park Road development, its long-drawn-out construction between 1956 and 1972 meant that it was far from a single planned entity. But the portion built in 1963–6 in the triangle between Plough, Grant and Winstanley Roads to designs by George, Trew & Dunn, has a coherence of design lacking in any other post-war housing built in Battersea.

By the 1930s the whole district covered by this chapter had been earmarked for housing reform. At first only pockets of slum housing could be tackled. A small area in Lithgow and Tibet Streets was cleared in 1935.²⁵ Battersea Council also declared a clearance area around the intersection of Livingstone and Winstanley Roads. Here one small constructive success was

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registered: Darien House, Darien Road, a four-storey walk-up block of flats with rear balcony access, built behind the Winstanley Road School by direct labour in 1934 to designs from Battersea's Borough Engineer. In 1938 the school itself was demolished for the sake of a new one – aborted by the war (see vol. 49).²⁶

Further progress had to await 1955, when Battersea Council's Housing Committee announced its intention of promoting a 'fresh development on the lines of the Battersea Park Road scheme', and appointed Pite, Son & Fairweather as its architects. The immediate upshot was the construction of Farrant, Jackson and Kiloh Houses, three pitch-roofed, three-storey blocks east and south of Darien House, on the Winstanley Road School site (which the LCC had released to Battersea Council) and along the south side of Meyrick Road. They were built in 1956–8 by Battersea's Works Department, presumably to Pite, Son & Fairweather's designs.²⁷

The next area tackled lay further west between Darien and Newcomen Roads, and involved obliterating the whole of Currie and Knox Roads. 'Meyrick Road' or 'Knox Road Stage I', the alternative names used, came before the Council late in 1955 but was delayed by the tardiness of clearance procedures until 1959–61. It consisted of three further low-rise, pitch-roofed buildings: the lengthy Arthur Newton House, stretching all along the south side of Lavender Road, named after a pillar of the Battersea Chapel and accountant to the Metropolitan Water Board; Baker House, returning along Darien Road and commemorating Mrs K. S. D. Baker; and Ganley Court, with a long frontage to Newcomen Road and a pleasant internal court (since divided into gardens), named in honour of Caroline Ganley, veteran Battersea councillor and post-war MP for South Battersea. Once again all three buildings were built by the Works Department, and doubtless designed by Pite, Son & Fairweather.²⁸

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These first campaigns had clung to an almost suburban density, since the whole area was designated at seventy persons per acre under the County of London Development Plan. In 1956 Battersea Council was already pressing the LCC to raise the figure to 'at least 100'. Only in November 1959 did the LCC relent.²⁹ So it is unclear what was shown in the model of the Winstanley Estate displayed in the Town Hall vestibule late in 1958. Certainly it would have shown the next clearance area scheduled, the large Winstanley Road-Plough Road-Grant Road triangle. Following the relaxation of the density rules, that took shape in the summer of 1960 with the appointment of architects for the next stages, George, Trew & Dunn, along with the engineer W. V. Zinn, and the sanctioning of their preliminary plan for the first portion (Speke Road No. 1). This took the form of a high-density mixed development of 547 dwellings in blocks of varying height, the tallest rising to 17 storeys.³⁰

George, Trew & Dunn were in fact the successor-practice to Pite, Son & Fairweather, but the name-change coincided with a change also in style to a robust modernism. Like its predecessor, the firm specialized in hospitals. It was not well known at the time of the appointment, but it prospered on hospital commissions in the 1960s and achieved some fame with the design of the Guards Chapel, Wellington Barracks (1961-3). The Winstanley Estate, for which the associate in charge was A. Artur, stands out as a housing rarity in its portfolio.

Before the big triangle could be cleared and redeveloped, George, Trew & Dunn first finished off the zone to its north along the west side of Darien Road (Knox Road Stage II). Here the looks and names of two T-shaped, four-storey blocks of maisonettes (1960-1) were harbingers of novelty. Battersea Council opted to call one of them Gagarin House 'in recognition of the rocket flight round the earth on the 12th April, 1961, by Major Y. A. Gagarin of the Soviet Union'. Evenhandedness prevailed when the other block was named after Alan Shepard, whose emulous American flight took place on the day of

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the previous decision. The Council felt that 'it would be particularly appropriate to have simple ceremonies performed by Major Gagarin and Commander Shepard on the respective sites and that it would be a striking and happy event if they could arrive in Battersea together'. Invitations went off in vain to the respective governments.³¹

Plans for the triangle changed a good deal before they could be finalized and built in 1963–6. The northern phase, between St Peter's Church and what is now Livingstone Walk, preceded the larger southern phase, from Livingstone Walk to Grant Road, but the two were conceived together. Following the Government's Parker Morris Report of 1961, internal space standards were improved and play areas received fresh attention, while in 1963 the construction process was rethought with industrialized building in mind. The overall layout remained constant. The bulk of the estate relied on the geometry of a series of four and five-storey maisonette blocks set at right-angles to form regular courts facing in alternate directions, while a second-floor circulation deck threaded through the blocks. Winstanley Road, the hypotenuse along the triangle's eastern flank, was otherwise treated, with a thin tower (Sporle Court), just two rooms deep and now of 22 storeys, at its north end, and three square, squat towers of 11 storeys (Clark Lawrence, Shaw and Sendall Courts) set below it in diagonal échelon. The first phase of construction consisted of these four towers alone, built from in-situ concrete by conventional methods. Clark Lawrence Court, opened in March 1965 by Bob Mellish, then Minister of Housing, was the first completed.³²

Just before work began on the towers, Battersea Council agreed in March 1963 with the builders, Wates Ltd, to construct the lower blocks using industrialized building techniques and a negotiated contract, to speed up the process. The system agreed upon had been devised by Wates through a subsidiary, Modular Concrete Ltd, with help from the engineers Ove Arup & Partners. It had not been used for low-rise building with complex internal

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plans before, so the architects had to redesign these phases to a 12ft module. A site factory beside St Peter's Church, staffed by a 20-man crew, opened in July 1964. Here and on the building site itself a novel type of portal crane, 'Little David', was used for 'casting, striking out, lifting and placing, and, in the initial stages, erection of the actual production line'. During construction the crane moved sequentially along the east-west circulation routes and in and out of each courtyard in turn. Floor slabs and external walls at ground level were of in-situ concrete, while most of the upper portions of the structure were cast in the factory. End walls were generally of brick, while the finishes of the ground-level concrete walls received abstract patterning by William Mitchell & Associates (Ill. 8.9). After construction, the landscapist, Michael Brown, planted out those courts that were not reserved for parking. Artur, the job architect, devised four pieces of 'play sculpture', while in the most formal court, Huitt Square, A. K. Bobrowski contributed a sculpture. The block on the south side of this space was at first used as a branch library, and still bears modest mosaics on its end walls, one depicting King Arthur, no doubt in humorous reference to the job architect. The care lavished on these spaces led the *Architectural Review* to judge the Winstanley as a 'conventional arrangement of point blocks and slabs transformed by sympathetic materials and landscaping'. Little trace of the original landscaping remains today.³³

The courts and squares appear generally to have taken their names from Battersea councillors, but the one new road, Thomas Baines Road, was called after an African explorer, replacing Speke Road which had commemorated another.³⁴ Sporle Court, immortalizing the chairman of the Battersea Housing Committee who had supplied much of the impetus for this phase of the Winstanley Estate, turned out the most controversial choice of name. After Sidney Sporle was convicted of corruption in 1971 there were moves to change it, remarkably unheeded. Sporle Court was also where the Winstanley idyll started to unravel. The architects had planned the whole of the tenth storey of this block as a playdeck—one of many provisions for

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children which caused Sporle to remark that when he first received the architects' report he was so excited that 'I read it over six times'.³⁵ Soon after the towers opened, sufficient problems with vents and doors had arisen to make Wandsworth's Housing Committee 'perturbed'. Further inadequacies emerged at Sporle Court over faulty lifts, condensation, and vandalism and nuisance on the unsupervised playdeck. After much dispute it closed and was converted into extra flats in 1972. Nor were the low-rise blocks trouble-free, as their lifts were exposed to rain at ground-floor level and often failed. And as frequently with housing estates of this date, the community centre planned for the west end of Thomas Baines Road remained unbuilt. A vociferous Winstanley Estate Tenants Association was therefore vexed when the estate won an RIBA medal for good design in 1967. A 'facelift' of 1982 finally remedied some of these faults.³⁶

The remainder of the estate is an anticlimax. Livingstone Road Stage IV, as the development phase was called, covered a smaller triangle bounded by Grant Road, Falcon Road, and what was then the north end of Speke Road. The proposal was presented to Wandsworth Council in March 1967 in tandem with York Road Stage I adjoining to the north-west, and built in 1968-72.³⁷ George, Trew & Dunn (or George Trew Dunn Beckles Willson Bowes, as they became) were retained as architects. Their design response here was much more mechanical, consisting of six low-rise blocks and two adjacent towers, connected by a deck covering car parking. South of the towers came an old people's home (Dawes House). The phase was completed by two small groups of brick shops on a staggered plan arranged round a new footpath, Bramlands Close, leading from Grant Road to Falcon Road, and the punchy twelve-sided Church of the Nazarene, designed by Green Lloyd Adams (vol. 49). These latter buildings confront the traveller emerging from the Grant Road entrance to Clapham Junction Station.³⁸

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This last phase of the Winstanley development was known as the Livingstone Estate until 1985, when Wandsworth Council sold most of its 338 homes to Regalian Properties. The price was only £4.65 million because problems with asbestos had been identified, requiring the evacuation and refurbishment of each block. The same architects, now known as the GTD Partnership, were retained. Once matters had been righted and the decks linking the blocks abolished along with the covered garages, the estate was gated, landscaped and rebranded as The Falcons, the blocks receiving fresh, aspirationally avian names. Despite scepticism as to whether flats in tall blocks would sell so far from the river – ‘People can do without views of Clapham Junction’, opined one estate agent – the privatization was successful.³⁹

York Road Stage I

Once the Winstanley Estate was advanced, Battersea Council turned to the area north of Meyrick Road up to York Road. Systematic planning started for these sites from about 1963. No distinct estate name seems to have been attached to them, but in the development phases the larger area south of the main road was generally known as York Road Stage I. A second instalment further north followed on as York Road Stage II, and is described on page ##.

Howes, Jackman & Partners, Battersea’s most frequent choice of private architects for council housing, were appointed to design Stage I in 1963–4. This took in a large boot-shaped area bounded by Meyrick Road, Ingrave Street, Wye Street, York Road, and the top of Plough Road. It included all of Barmore, Benfield, Creek, Lithgow, Tibet and Verona Streets, plus much of Ingrave Street, Lavender Road and Meyrick Road. A considerable depth of frontage towards York Road was reserved for the open

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space in which North Battersea was then deemed deficient – this eventually became York Gardens.⁴⁰

In 1965 the architects developed the *parti* of three eight-storey slab blocks (later raised to nine storeys) and three 16-storey towers. A parade of shops was scheduled west of Wye Street, along with much underground parking. J. C. Bianco & Associates had already been appointed engineers before Wandsworth Council took over the project that year.⁴¹

In the seamless handover of housing provision from the one local authority to the other, the focus at this date was on production methods, not design. So it was agreed that York Road Stage I would be built by Wandsworth's Building Works Department under a negotiated contract, as an experiment in rationalized building techniques. This involved a unique collaboration whereby Bovis Ltd helped the department (under W. J. Huitt) to create an on-site factory for casting cladding panels and other major concrete components for the three towers. Though not a complete building system, the techniques achieved their aim of raising productivity when construction took place in 1967–70. Wandsworth under the production-minded housing chairmanship of Sidney Sporle took much pride in this achievement, and Bob Mellish, Minister of Public Building & Works, was invited to top out the first tower on 27 April 1968.⁴²

Once the main housing elements (containing almost 600 dwellings) were complete, the central square followed in 1970–3 on the site of the casting yard west of the angle between Ingrave and Wye Streets. It consisted of a block of shops backing on to Lavender Road, a surgery, small library, and the rebuilt Battersea Chapel relocated from York Road (vol. 49). All but the chapel were designed by Howes, Jackman & Partners and built by the Building Works Department.⁴³

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While the scheme was rising, the *Wandsworth Borough News* enthused about the 'almost overnight transformation from years of dinginess into a neighbourhood of strange architectural conceptions to which a modern population must rapidly and readily become accustomed'.⁴⁴ But for all its technical interest, York Road Stage I is uninspired. Neither the long slabs (Pennethorne House overlooking the square, and Holcroft and Scholey Houses set in parallel across a broad void south of Ingrave Street) nor the three towers (Chesterton, Inkster and Penge Houses) have character enough to offset their bulky monotony (Ill. 8.10). Pennethorne House is particularly unfortunate, as it overwhelms the little square on one side and offers a dour backdrop to York Gardens on the other. That space was laid out in 1971–2, with some architectural input from Howes, Jackman & Partners.⁴⁵

Kambala Estate

The low-rise, high-density Kambala Estate, covering a large square between York Road, Wye Street, Ingrave Street and Falcon Road, belongs to the latter days of council housing in Battersea. It was designed by in-house architects working for Wandsworth's Director of Development, and built by the council's Building Works Department in 1976–9.

The area, some fifteen acres in gross, was described in 1971 as 'the last remaining undeveloped land' in this part of Battersea. All the Victorian streets to its west and south having gone, it became the turn of Heaver, Kambala and Musjid Roads and Mantua Street to succumb. At first the Falcon Road frontage was to be kept, but it was soon decided to include this, entailing the demolition of the Prince's Head pub.⁴⁶

Wandsworth obtained compulsory powers in 1973, and the three-stage construction process started from 1976 under the Building Works

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Department – among its last important contracts (see Ill. 0.17).⁴⁷ The estate follows a pattern found acceptable for council housing in the 1970s. Its groups of low-rise brick houses and flats off tight culs-de-sac lack individuality but are given movement by juggling with frontage lines and breaking up the level of the pitched roofs. There is some variation along the fronts to the main roads, for instance with white-painted metal cladding towards York Road. The dwellings are mainly numbered in the access roads, called Coppock, Fawcett, Hicks, McDermott and Wolfencroft Closes. The estate includes three protective homes of different types: John Kirk House, Haven Lodge and Edwin Trayfoot Lodge. In terms of its architecture, the rebuilt vernacular-revival style Prince's Head facing Falcon Road, for which planning permission was given in 1979 to Wilson-Smith & Partners of Brixton, builders, is no match for its Victorian predecessor.⁴⁸

Developments since 1980

The creation of York Gardens and the Kambala Estate irrevocably changed the character of York Road. Hitherto there had been shops all along its south side, while the road itself took a sharp bend southwards west of Barmore Street, so awkwardly that when tramlines were introduced a signalman was placed here to regulate the traffic.⁴⁹ York Road was therefore widened once in the Edwardian period, but the rebuildings of the 1970s left the south side featureless, and offered the chance for a more radical widening and realignment all the way from Falcon Road to Plough Road. After much delay this took place in 1987–8, creating a desolate racetrack for traffic which usually then gets stuck in the next stretch of York Road westwards beyond Plough Road, or in the narrow portion of Battersea Park Road to the east.⁵⁰

The following recent buildings may be noted:⁵¹

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Fairchild Close. A housing development of 59 units between Wye Street and York Road on the former sites of Lithgow and Tibet Streets, built c.1992–4 for Fairclough Homes to designs by the Swinhoe Measures Partnership. The site was intended as playground space attached to York Gardens, but controversially sold by Wandsworth Council.

136 Falcon Road. Small block of flats on the former Queen Victoria pub site, designed by Michael Sierens Associates with A. C. Holdom for Sharpbridge Properties, 2002.

1–31 Winstanley Road. Housing and day nursery on the site of Winstanley Estate car park and play area, designed by Greenhill Jenner, architects, for Threshold Housing and Support, 2005–6.

Time House, 71 Plough Road. Prominent block of flats sandwiched between Grant Road and the railway on the former Pine Tavern site, designed by Munkenbeck & Marshall, architects, for Berkeley First Ltd, 2008–9, and sold and marketed by Thames Valley Housing Association. An earlier scheme for an 11-storey tower on this site was refused permission after a planning enquiry.

Griffon Studios, Winstanley Road. Two blocks of student accommodation built on the former children's home site at the Grant Road end of Winstanley Road for Berkeley First Ltd in association with Imperial College, 2010–12. The designs were adapted for students by Carey Jones, architects, from an earlier scheme for flats by Goddard Manton, architects.