

St John's Hill Area

This chapter covers an area of high ground bisected by St John's Hill, and delimited by railways to the north and east and Battersea's parish boundary with Wandsworth to the west and south (Ill. 16.1). A small community emerged here west of the junction with Plough Road from the 1720s onwards, spawning a fringe of independent villas between about 1765 and 1840. All this was on freehold land of the St Johns (hence the names of St John's Hill and St John's Place) and then the Spencers as lords of the manor. After the Spencer sales of 1835–6 it was divided between a variety of private owners.

This pre-Victorian development has now almost entirely vanished. The current housing dates mostly from between 1850 and 1885, and was given impetus when Clapham Junction Station opened in 1863. St John's Hill itself is lined in the main with small independent shops. Southwards, the better streets like Elsynge and Spencer Roads boast high-priced houses of attractive individuality, though there is less-favoured development around Strathblaine Road. North of the main road the building character varies. St John's Hill Grove, the earliest street, features quiet semi-detached houses and terraces, while the neighbouring L-shaped Harbut Road maintains the same modesty. The larger-scaled housing further east has mostly been converted into flats. Westwards, the area around the St John's Therapy Centre, a modern health centre on the site of the union workhouse, comprises a mix of former hospital buildings recast in the 1990s as apartments, modern brick housing and commercial space.

The area before 1845

The Plough (demolished)

The nucleus of the early settlement hereabouts was the Plough, an inn which existed in various forms for over three centuries at what is now the west corner of St John's Hill and Strath Terrace. According to Simmonds the inn was built in 1701, though this may have been a rebuilding of a slightly earlier establishment.¹ The Plough probably then stood on its own, commanding a strategic site at the top of the ascent up the main road from the Falcon Brook. At its back lay an open view across Wandsworth Common, while northwards from this point ran the lane leading to York Place, later known as Plough Lane (now Road). Early views of the Plough show a traditional vernacular building, later heightened with an extra storey and mansard roof to give a semblance of Georgian order (Ill. 16.2). The pub was rebuilt in 1875-6 for Young and Bainbridge of the Ram Brewery, Wandsworth to designs by G. A. Young, architect. Extensions of the 1890s included first an upper-floor concert room, designed by James D'Oyley, and then in 1896 a supper room or annexe.² This building was destroyed by an air-raid in 1940, and replaced by Young's Brewery in 1958 with a new Plough, a modest two-storey brick building enlivened by a decorative tile picture designed by Leslie Pearson at its front entrance (removed 1998). This in turn was demolished to allow the entire corner site to be redeveloped by Loncor Homes in 2010-11 as The Lismore, a block designed by Harper Downie, architects, containing apartments and a new Plough bar for Youngs on the ground floor.³

ST JOHN'S PLACE

West and north of the Plough there grew up a concentration of houses once exceeded in size only by the nucleus of Battersea around the High Street and by Nine Elms. This settlement, known loosely as St John's Place, is unlikely to

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have been the core of the ancient sub-manor of Roydon or Rydon, as has been conjectured.⁴ York Place Lane, the old name for Plough Lane or Road, is first recorded in 1720, and a flurry of leases from about that time, some conditional on a house being built, suggests that the hamlet took shape around then. Rocque's map of 1746 shows a smattering of houses on either side of St John's Hill, all within range of the Plough. The name St John's Place appears against what is now Plough Terrace. Another inscription, 'Dunghill Square', referring to the north end of the triangle between Plough Terrace and Plough Road, hints that the early houses here were lowly and agricultural. By 1764 the open space at this junction had acquired the more genteel name of St John's Square. Even so, it was little more than an elliptical patch between the roads, encroached upon over the years.⁵

The advent of affluent Londoners to this cottage community of farmers and gardeners began around 1756 when Thomas Blakesley, citizen and haberdasher, leased a plot just west of the triangle with a frontage of 140ft to the main road and a flank along the west side of present-day Plough Terrace. In 1764 he secured a new lease from Earl Spencer, now lord of the manor, while his son, John Blakesley, also a City haberdasher, took a second large plot opposite on the south side of St John's Hill. Both sites became occupied by two good-sized houses, St John's Hill House and Spencer Lodge (below). Around 1786 further houses were added north of the main road. The St John's Place triangle then consisted of about twenty independent buildings, rising to about thirty-five by the 1830s (see Ill. 0.2).⁶ Eight terraced houses in two rows stood at the western end of the St John's Hill frontage with a small pub, the Surrey Hounds, and three villa pairs further east, the best two in the centre (Suffolk Lodge and The Acacias) with long gardens. Following the Spencer sales in 1835–6 the triangle's freehold passed to Charles Wix, a City merchant who had moved to the area around 1816. He leased most of the ground here to George William Cockerell, the occupant of St John's Lodge (see below). Another house with a good garden, St John's Cottage (or Villa), was built on

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the tip of the triangle after 1850; along with other buildings at the triangle's north end it gave way to what is now High View School in the 1880s (vol. 49).⁷ The St John's Hill frontage mostly survived into the last century, but many houses were ruined by a wartime Doodlebug.

South of St John's Hill a smaller scatter of houses west of the Plough is shown on Rocque's map. An agreement was made in 1786 with William Burford to build or improve houses along this frontage. They were leased in 1788, the easternmost to Jacob Hagen, a copperas merchant from Bermondsey, the others to Burford. By 1838 some rearrangement had taken place: Hagen's house had passed in 1825 to Thomas Martin, a mercer and tailor with other local property interests, but at some point the garden was sold off to the next house west, leaving a pinched, irregular plot. Burford's houses became a pair, one owned by William Hutchins, the other by William Hemming. This last was called Ivy Lodge and stood at the corner of a lane leading southwards to Wandsworth Common (now Vardens Road). Along the west side of this lane three separate buildings are shown on Rocque's map. That distribution is confirmed by Corris's map of 1787, but the evolution of these plots is obscure. The corner plot with St John's Hill, later Harvard House, appears in 1764 to have been in the possession of the Carter family. It seems to have been extended later, and it was here that Charles Wix came around 1816, remaining till c.1833 when he decamped to the north side of the road. South of Harvard House was a sizeable piece of land acquired by Thomas Vardon (d.1809), a wholesale City ironmonger and supplier of anchors to the Navy, as the site for a new house – this was Spencer Lodge, another of the larger houses fringing St John's Place.⁸ The later history of some of these properties, all now demolished, follows in summarized form; the particular history of St John's Lodge, also demolished, and 54 & 56 St John's Hill – the only houses of St John's Place to survive – merit separate discussion (below).

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St John's Hill House. The evolution of the site taken by Thomas Blakesley in 1756, represented now by the west side of Plough Terrace and the adjoining main-road frontage at 92 St John's Hill, is unusually well documented for a Battersea house of its date. Let out well before Blakesley died in 1777, it was sold by his widow in 1797 to Thomas Dyke of Aldersgate Street, later noted as 'the eminent auctioneer'.⁹

Dyke was a keen improver. After moving in he urged the Spencers' agent, John Harrison, to stop by and see the premises: 'I hope you will be thoroughly satisfied all is doing as you could wish for the Estate'. A plan of 1805, when Dyke secured a new lease, shows a modest-sized house set back from the main road, with a small yard and stable to its east and a lawn and long garden behind. His next move was to secure two old houses beyond this garden and replace them with a coach-house, stables and service rooms, and also to take over the six acres next to the west then tenanted by a market gardener, John Glenny. His last land was 'bishophold' property, held by the Spencers from the Archbishop of York. After careful scrutiny Harrison decided it was his duty to promote Dyke's plan, he told Earl Spencer – presumably because the ground would be more valuable after improvement than as market garden. But he thought it might be difficult to secure a lease of the six acres. All the same Dyke went ahead, and in 1810 was inviting Harrison over again to view a completed green and pond: 'I flatter myself you will think it well done'. Another new lease issued to Dyke in 1812 included the property to the north, but not the acreage to the west, which perhaps reverted to garden ground after he left. That may have been in 1821, when Dyke was succeeded by Thomas Crook of Rotherhithe. Dyke died in 1823 at Brighton.¹⁰

Charles Wix moved to this house from Harvard House across the road in 1832–3. In the Spencer sales that followed, Wix also purchased the freehold of the six acres westwards as well as the St John's Place triangle. He lived here

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till he died in 1845 and his widow Elizabeth continued on until her death in 1861. The house (known in the Wixes' time as West Hill House or St John's Hill House) and the six acres were then sold for development to Thomas Mackley (see below). Shorn of its garden, the house itself survived the development process because his family lived here, but was sold in 1870 after Mackley's death. It then became a school run by Charles Winter, an independent minister previously at Edith Grove Chapel, Chelsea. It was pulled down shortly after 1900.¹¹

Spencer Lodge, which stood on the west side of Vardens Road, was probably the house that John Blakesley agreed to build in 1764 in exchange for a lease from Earl Spencer. By 1787 the house and land across the lane (formerly part of Wandsworth Common) were in the possession of Thomas Vardon, who also owned a field of over fifteen acres west of the house, known as Spanish Close. After Vardon's death, Spencer Lodge changed hands several times in the early 1800s. By the time of the Spencer sales in 1836 it was in the hands of Henry Wilkins, who negotiated a new lease enabling him to build speculative villas on Spanish Close, perhaps in response to the advent of the London & Southampton Railway, then being constructed close by. But nothing came of this, and the house then became tied up in Chancery until the early 1850s. In 1853 Spanish Close was sold for development to the National Freehold Land Society (see *Marcilly Road to Vardens Road* below). The house and its immediate grounds went to the same body the following year, and had gone by 1863, when 26 & 28 Vardens Road were built on its site.¹²

Henry Tritton's house. This was a house of c.1808, built facing Plough Lane to the north of St John's Hill House, best known as the residence from 1832 of the banker Henry Tritton. The Trittons, originally brewers, were a wealthy Baptist family with various connections in Battersea, Clapham and Wandsworth. Henry was the second son of John Henry Tritton and Mary

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Barclay, whose marriage brought together two of the great banking families of the day.¹³ The house had extensive gardens and meadows adjoining, and in 1843 Henry's brother Joseph built a second villa, Olney Lodge, on land to the north (page ##). Not long afterwards the two houses were separated by the Richmond Branch of the London & South Western Railway (LSWR), constructed in 1846–8. A photograph of c.1860 shows Tritton's house, largely obscured by walls and a two-storey wing projecting towards the street (Ill. 16.3). Its main section was three storeys high, to which various extensions were made with no regularity – 'a large old-fashioned ... straggling house' as J. Herbert Tritton recalled. The whole was unified as well as could be by painted render or stucco. Henry Tritton died in 1838, but his widow, Amelia (née Benwell), lived on there until her death in 1855. She set up a school for orphaned daughters of the professional classes and also built almshouses opposite the house, on the east side of Plough Lane.¹⁴ Their daughter, also Amelia, married the Rev. Israel May Soule of the Battersea Chapel in 1841, and the couple subsequently moved into the parental home where they raised a large family. The estate was sold around 1880, Israel May Soule having died, already a widower, in 1873.¹⁵

Holly Lodge was a moderately sized villa of c.1845 built on a plot east of the present 54 & 56 St John's Hill (below); its first occupant was John Okines, a fundholder and landed proprietor. A rear extension was added in 1891 by the builders Perry & Co., contractors to the LSWR, so perhaps the house had by then been acquired by the railway company.¹⁶ The expanding railway junction eventually engulfed the house, which had been demolished by 1911.

St John's Lodge (demolished)

This house of about 1839, one of Battersea's last large villas, was unusual in having been projected after the railway arrived. It stood just north-east of the

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corner of St John's Hill and Plough Road. After some thirty years as a house it was taken over by Battersea Grammar School, whose history is given in volume 49. It was demolished around 1936 for the Granada Cinema.

The site, of just over three acres, was garden ground until 1838 when George William Cockerell, a Southwark auctioneer, bought the freehold in the Spencer sales, along with a paddock to the south and a lease of part of the St John's Place triangle to the west.¹⁷ St John's Lodge was under construction in 1839, and perhaps always intended for Cockerell's own occupation; at any rate, he himself moved in with his family. The cost was met by heavy mortgages secured on Cockerell's property here and in Southwark. The house, of brick with stucco or stone dressings in a restrained Greco-Italian style, had a two-storey centre block divided by a strong cornice. While the front was only three windows wide, with a central porch in antis, the back boasted five windows per storey looking out upon a long garden with a fountain (Ill 16.4). To the sides were lower wings, irregular by 1870. The Richmond branch of the LSWR lopped off the northernmost tip of the garden in 1846–8. Six cottages, known as Swiss Grove, were also built at this end of the property; these were later sold to the railway and had gone by 1870.¹⁸

Cockerell died in 1855 before paying off the mortgage. His widow moved to Wandsworth, but their oldest son, the Rev. George William Cockerell, stayed on at St John's Lodge. The family's finances were gravely embarrassed in the early 1860s by a wastrel youngest son, James Charles Cockerell, who persuaded his mother to pay his debts through further mortgages. Following his bankruptcy in 1865, his mother and brother were sued by a solicitor, John Murray, for their compounded debts. Murray appears eventually to have won a judgement, and then sold his rights to Alfred Jones, a City solicitor, who became the Cockerells' chief creditor for debts of over £7,300. The original mortgage debt was mostly met by selling some pieces of property.¹⁹

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The Cockerells meanwhile had vacated St John's Lodge. In 1861 the house was tenanted by the Patriotic Fund Commissioners, suggesting that it may briefly have been the first home of their boys' school, soon afterwards at East Hill, Wandsworth, and later in the premises now occupied by Emanuel School (vol. 49). The tenancy was short-lived, for in 1862 a 21-year lease was issued to Herbert James Triggs, a boot manufacturer living at St John's Place. Triggs assigned the lease to James Lord, who had moved into the house by early 1864.²⁰

James Lord (1814–1906) was among the more colourful figures in Battersea's Victorian development. He was a barrister by profession, among whose many publications was a textbook on conveyancing. But he came from a clergy family, and kept his convictions in trim as long-term chairman of the Protestant Association, spokesman for anti-Catholic causes and author of a lengthy doggerel poem called *Sister Theresa, née Ryan, The Abducted Nun* (1865). Lord arrived in Battersea in 1858, when he bought the freehold of one of the Five Houses on Bolingbroke Grove and installed his family. Two of his children were to make some name: his daughter Emily, later Emily Ward, as founder of the Norland nurses, his son Walter Frewen Lord as a historical author.²¹

Lord's transfer to St John's Lodge coincided with his first venture into development, whereby the surveyor and estate agent George Todd laid out his Bolingbroke Grove property for building. He teamed up again with Todd in 1868, buying a second estate north of York Road where they planned further modest streets (pages ##, ##). He was riding high enough to present himself as Conservative candidate for East Surrey at the election of that year, but was roundly beaten. Nevertheless, Lord and Todd now laid plans for a third Battersea development off Latchmere Road, where the Shaftesbury Park estate afterwards rose. Meanwhile, at St John's Lodge the builder most

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employed at Bolingbroke Grove, John King, improved the house and garden around the time Lord moved in.²²

By 1870 Lord's local profile was high as one of the champions fighting to preserve Wandsworth Common. A crisis now overtook his affairs. Misconduct of some kind took place in connection with his building transactions, and a solicitor absconded to America. Lord himself was not held to blame, but with debts of at least £42,000, he had to seek liquidation by arrangement in the summer of 1871. Plans for the Shaftesbury Park site collapsed amid a dispute between Lord and Todd.²³

St John's Lodge was let for six months to the 8th Marquess of Tweeddale. Lord was there at the time of the census in 1871 but vacated in June, never to return. Although his lease had been short, he remained keen to get the house back. Meanwhile Alfred Jones, the Cockerells' chief creditor, had died. His executors tried to eject Lord's assignees for non-payment of rent, then in July 1873 put all the Cockerells' interests at St John's Hill up for auction. Having been discharged from the liquidation arrangements, Lord entered in a bid for the whole. He was successful for the leasehold properties of St John's Place, but his private offer for St John's Lodge itself was declined. It went instead to John Costeker, acting for the Sir Walter St John trustees who wanted the site for their new grammar school. Lord took the matter to court, arguing that his lease had been unfairly set aside. This tied up the house in Chancery, from which it could not be extricated till 1875, when Costeker and the school trustees were confirmed in possession.²⁴

Lord's later career is obscure. He and his trustees were still involved with the Bolingbroke Grove development in the later 1870s, but he never recovered his prosperity or public profile, and had to relinquish his St John's Place leases, once again heavily mortgaged, in 1882. Latterly he lived in a flat in Brixton, seemingly alone.²⁵

54 & 56 St John's Hill

The sole survivor today of the St John's Place development and its outliers is a lone pair of semi-detached houses, now 54 & 56 St John's Hill (Ill. 16.5). They stand in isolation, set back from the road between the former Granada Cinema and the sidings of Clapham Junction Station. Formerly named Chesterfield and Westwood houses, the two plots were leased in 1828 to Edward Parsons, builder, and Charles Andrews, plumber, both of Wandsworth. Building may not have been completed until 1832–3 when Andrews sublet his house to John Adam, a fruit broker. Two years later the houses were described as capital newly erected residences, with stabling and gardens.²⁶ Though the forecourt is used today as a turning point for buses, they still have a faded elegance, presenting straightforward brick and stucco façades, of three storeys over a basement, with the windows to the ground floor set in blind arches. By the 1970s they had been united as the Clapham Junction station-master's house; today they are in use as railway offices.

The area since 1845

NORTH OF ST JOHN'S HILL

The attraction of this area to wealthy residents was somewhat blighted by the erection of the union workhouse (later St John's Hospital) beside the parish boundary here in 1838 and the arrival of the Richmond branch railway shortly afterwards in the 1840s, along a route some few hundred yards north of St John's Hill. The creation of Clapham Junction in 1863 then further affected the district.

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The various streets north of St John's Hill are treated here as far as is practicable in topographical order, running from west to east.

Chronologically, St John's Hill Grove was the first development, started in 1848.

Nantes Close and Rochelle Close area

The old Battersea parish and borough ended just west of the present St John's Centre, on the site of the former St John's Hospital. This boundary has no practical meaning today, as all three sides of that site are enveloped by a loose-knit housing scheme carried out by Wandsworth Council in 1976–85. The only older buildings to survive are the rear blocks of the hospital, now converted to flats.

East and north of the hospital site, the main former feature of the topography was Usk (at first Union) Road, now represented by the line of Rochelle Close. This thoroughfare was the only road connecting York Road and St John's Hill west of Plough Road. Though planned by the time of the Spencer sales in the mid 1830s, before the workhouse had been built, it was not laid out until the 1850s, after the Richmond branch railway had been completed, and then on a line further west than first contemplated.

After the Spencer sales, the land here was acquired by the market gardener John Carter. It was on smaller freeholds distributed among his sons and daughters that most of the humble terraced housing along and off Usk Road sprang up from about the time of Carter's death in 1853 and onwards into the 1860s. These small groups had subsidiary addresses before the 1870 name-change from Union to Usk Road. Two dense culs-de-sac were also

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sandwiched between the top of the workhouse site and the railway: these were Didcot (at first Western and then Weston) Street and St Peter's Place.²⁷

Condemnation of these two slum-like dead-ends in the early 1930s heralded the area's rebuilding. As the Didcot Street site lay close to the London County Council's recent East Hill Estate over the Wandsworth boundary, the LCC took it on as an annexe. An L-shaped block of five-storey flats (Peterhead House) duly replaced the culs-de-sac in 1936, in an austerer style than its East Hill neighbours with outward-facing access balconies; a second (Whitehaven House) was added on the east side of Usk Road opposite in 1939, replacing further small houses and an industrial site.²⁸

After the war the southern end of Usk Road was scheduled for clearance and replacement, but progress under the LCC was parlously slow. In 1971 its successor, the Greater London Council, passed over the East Hill Estate to Wandsworth. The Labour-controlled council resolved to demolish the whole of this now-degraded estate south of the railway, including Peterhead and Whitehaven Houses, substitute low-rise brick housing, and extend the scheme to take in Usk Road. This 17-acre venture started on the main East Hill site west of the hospital in 1976 but had yet to reach Usk Road when the Conservatives took power in Wandsworth two years later and consigned the scheme to the open market. So the houses and flats of Rochelle Close and Nantes Close, not finished till 1985, were built when this policy was in place.²⁹

Rochelle Close, perpetuating the line of Usk Road, features three-storey blocks in yellow bricks with pitched roofs incorporating garages on the ground floor (Ill.16.6). Nantes Close carries on from Harbut Road westwards into the Wandsworth end of the development, with similar three-storey houses against the railway. Among smaller and lower groups of sheltered housing interspersed with these the most conspicuous is Hill Lodge (1983), a

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quadrangular old people's home at 148 St John's Hill, which stops off the line of Rochelle Close: to its west is a new road called Haydon Way.

St John's Hill Grove

St John's Hill Grove was laid out from 1848 on market garden land owned after the Spencer sales by William Carter junior. The details of its acquisition for development have not come to light, but it seems that the land was sold in at least two parcels. The northern three-quarters was acquired by Thomas Cole Mackley (d.1869), an ironmonger of Shoreditch, who became a considerable developer with interests dotted all over London, and was to go on to develop the larger area next eastwards (see below). The south end next to St John's Hill was sold separately, probably to Charles William Spicer, a developer later active along Battersea Bridge Road. A straight street such as now exists was no doubt projected through from the frontage. It was originally called West Hill Grove, often shortened to The Grove. The present name trickled into use in the 1860s, becoming official from 1884. It was originally a cul-de-sac, the terraces at the north end being added later as part of the Harbut Road development.

Fourteen houses were in progress in 1848-9 under three different builders: four by J. H. Heigham of Blackheath Hill, four by W. & J. Brittain of Wandsworth Road, six by John J. Clark of Stepney.³⁰ Some early dispute between the developers must be assumed, since Mackley was at first obliged to get access to his end of the property via a dogleg which ran north from the main road and then west behind the present 120-124 St John's Hill. To remedy this situation, he sold a small portion of the land next to St John's Hill to William Smith, a Wandsworth timber dealer, who undertook to procure better access to the property but failed to do so. Instead, Smith used his ownership of this key piece of land in a strange attempt at extortion. He set

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up effigies of 'notorious people' (including Marie and Frederick Manning, publicly executed for the 'Bermondsey Horror' murder in 1849), pots and kettles, large bells, flags and 'a great many other extraordinary matters', putting off any would-be tenants. Mackley's efforts to regain the land only succeeded in 1852 when he won a court case against Smith, who was sentenced to six months in prison. The dogleg persisted into the 1860s, and is shown on Stanford's map of London and its suburbs published in 1862, but had gone by the time of the first Ordnance Survey map of c.1868.³¹

The original houses on Mackley's portion consisted of eleven semi-detached pairs, now Nos 25–47 on the west and Nos 26–44 on the east (Ill. 16.7). These were perhaps the six-roomed 'detached cottages' advertised for rent in May 1849 as 'three minutes' walk from the Clapham-common Railway Station', though not all were occupied till 1852.³² They look old-fashioned, all on two main storeys with hipped and slated roofs and side entrances, but variously fronted in brick and stucco. Of the two terraces at the south end of his take, both framed at their ends by bracketted gables, Nos 11–23 on the west side were added in 1862 by the builder William Parratt; the similar Nos 12–24 opposite seem to date from a little later, while Nos 8 & 10 next southwards may be of 1864.³³

The history of the street's south end is less clear. The one known deed attesting Spicer's ownership is a lease of 1 West Hill Grove in 1851 by his mortgagees to Robert Wetten, of Westminster, architect. This is probably the present 1 St John's Hill Grove, on the west side, and suggests that all four semi-detached pairs at Nos 1–7, with tightly capped bays and overhanging eaves, are Wetten's work, along with the similar No. 9, adjoining. On the St John's Hill frontage, Nos 118–124 (formerly Elm Terrace) and 126–134, flanking the mouth of the Grove, also belong to this development of c.1851. No. 126 was a public house, the Napier Arms (now the Artisan & Vine), and

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was the first building completed in this short stretch. As a result, Nos 1–7 (in the Grove) behind were for a time known as Napier Grove.³⁴

As for the north end of St John's Hill Grove, the short terraces at Nos 46–58 and 49–59 were added by James George and Frederick Turtle in 1882–3 for George Butt to connect the street with his Harbut Road development. There is an outburst of exuberant decoration at No. 46 where the ground-floor window head sports deep-cut foliage with a central squirrel, while the doorway has a portrait-head keystone showing a startled, clean-shaven man (Ills 16.8, 9). Also owing to Turtle are Nos 2–6, formerly Elm Villas, three infill houses of 1883 at the south end on the east side.³⁵

Brussels, Cologne, Louvaine and Oberstein Roads

These roads were laid out in the 1860s on the six acres west of St John's Hill House for Thomas Cole Mackley, who had bought the house and estate in 1861.³⁶ He lived here throughout the process of development until his death in 1869.

The modest scale of the houses in St John's Hill Grove contrasts with the grander housing Mackley built here, perhaps premised on the opening of Clapham Junction, and reflecting some of the character of the National Freehold Land Society's estate on the south side of St John's Hill (see below). Why Belgian and German city names were chosen for the streets is obscure. The development consists of terraces in mostly shortish runs, and of semi-detached pairs with high basements. The language is the orthodox late-Italianate idiom of larger London houses of the time, brick-faced with stucco dressings and cornices. The houses built from the later 1860s have less predictable details, as often. If there was any controlling mind to the layout, it may have been the local architect George Hunt Page, whose name appears on

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a plan of 1866 showing the frontage line of houses in Brussels and Oberstein Roads.³⁷ But there is no evidence that he provided designs for the houses.

The exception to the development's domestic tenor was St Paul's Church at the east corner of St John's Hill and Brussels Road, beside the Mackleys' house. It was erected first in temporary form in 1865, then as a permanent church designed by Henry Coe in 1868. In addition a small mews was constructed at the back of the Mackleys' garden, just behind Oberstein Road, with access from Plough Terrace. This site is now Plough Mews, a small housing development of 2004.³⁸

Work began in 1862–4 with the block bounded by Oberstein, Louvaine and Brussels Roads and 94–108 St John's Hill (at first Halbrake Terrace). Here the Lambeth builders Joseph Fincher and William Martyn were the main undertakers. At 12 Oberstein Road, on the corner of Louvaine Road (since heavily rebuilt), the pre-Raphaelite artist Arthur Hughes was the first occupant in 1863–5, and was visited by Rossetti and Burne-Jones.³⁹

William Parratt, who had built terraced houses in St John's Hill Grove in 1862, built most of the north side of Oberstein Road, where three pairs of semi-detached houses at the east end (Nos 23–28) were leased to him from Christmas 1863, and the whole run had been completed by 1869 (Ill. 16.10). These houses have pretty ceramic friezes and pert central dormer windows, but their brickwork has too often been overpainted. Parratt was also responsible around 1862–5 for most or all of the west side of Louvaine Road, which displays the strung-out window detailing typical of the decade, and for Louvaine Terrace, now 110–116 St John's Hill. Here there were shops including a post office on the corner at No. 110. Edmund Perfect, a Kensington-based builder, probably undertook the two terraces at 7–15 Brussels Road (east side) and 30–37 Oberstein Road (south side), where the date range is c.1865–9.⁴⁰

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The last of Mackley's streets was Cologne Road, parallel with Oberstein Road. Here the development was all terraced, hinting at a dilution of ambition (Ill. 16.11). It started in 1863 with Nos 45–55 on the south side, west of Louvaine Road, built by Parratt. The street's major builder was William Harris, at his peak around 1869, but heavily indebted to Amelia Mackley for advances no doubt made to him by her husband. Harris seems to have built most of the south side east of Louvaine Road, and the similar Nos 32–50 on the north side; he was living at No. 40 in 1881.⁴¹

With the development largely complete by the time of Thomas Mackley's death, most of his interests were sold by his family in 1870. It remained only to finish Cologne Road. A dozen of the newer houses were unoccupied here at the time of the 1871 census, with four more in construction at the east end of the north side; William Alloway and Charles A. Kelly were among the builders. Steel brothers added another pair in 1874–5, and shortly afterwards built at least three more for G. F. Mackley, to designs by the architect William Bradbear. Cologne Road's last fifteen houses, at the east end, on the south side, were put up in 1882–3 by George Picton of Kennington in a matching style, on land which had by then passed to George Butt.⁴²

Though these streets did well for the first twenty-five years of their existence, they gradually succumbed to multi-occupation and had become severely run down by the 1970s. An account of the subsequent Louvaine Housing Action Area is given below. Modern houses here include 1–6 Pembroke Mews between Cologne Road and St John's Hill Grove (c.1996), and an end-of-terrace infill on a bomb-damaged site at 29 Oberstein Road (c.2007–8).⁴³

Harbut Road area

Harbut (originally Harbutt) Road was promoted by George Robert Butt, a furrier, of Red Lion Works, Barbican. This L-shaped street covers a piece of land which Butt bought along with a rectangular plot north of the railway from Israel May Soule's sons, heirs of the Trittons, in about 1879–80.⁴⁴ The east–west parcel just south of the railway lines had been the gardens to the Trittons' house on Plough Lane, while the north–south arm connecting with St John's Hill had been meadow land long held by the Carter family from the Trittons.

The name Harbutt was probably a conflation of the family name with that of George's only son, Harry; it was also the name adopted for their house in Croydon to which they had moved by 1881. George Butt had already been investing locally, and was listed in 1876 as owner of two houses in Brussels Road and one in Oberstein Road, which he may have bought at the Mackley sale in 1870. After Harbut Road he presided over Cologne Road's completion (see above). Butt was forced into liquidation in 1882, and though discharged two years later, was finally bankrupted in 1888.⁴⁵

In 1880 an application to form roads was submitted by A. & F. Carter, local auctioneers and surveyors, on Butt's behalf.⁴⁶ On his land north of the railway, Maysoule Road was under way by October 1880 (page ##); there all the houses have been demolished. On the south side work started in 1881, continuing for several years. As an infill development, its layout had to fit the existing street pattern, and so included an extension of St John's Hill Grove northwards to meet the new road. In all 145 houses were erected in Harbut Road, involving over a dozen builders, seemingly none of whom had worked on Maysoule Road. Among them were the partners Turtle & Appleton of St John's Hill. Frederick R. Turtle was a carpenter-cum-builder of local stock, living around this time with his mother in Usk Road; he was responsible for

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sixteen houses on his own account, and another dozen with George Appleton. Appleton was the bigger player, employing some 68 men and 12 boys and living at Spencer House on St John's Hill. Others responsible for more than a dozen houses were James George (18), Henry Lewry (17), and William Henry Jones (14).⁴⁷

Butt's venture was one of several developments in the vicinity to adopt the name Clapham Junction Estate. The proximity of the junction and of the Richmond branch line probably dictated the building of houses plainer and smaller than those in Louvaine and Cologne Roads. The houses are of a standard terraced type of two main storeys, sometimes with basements and sometimes without, and with the variety of bays, window-types and recessed porches usual in the 1880s. The facings are stock brick, sometimes with red-brick banding.

Louvaine Housing Action Area

In 1974 Wandsworth Council's Labour administration eyed for possible redevelopment a swathe of Victorian housing on the north side of St John's Hill, stretching from Plough Road to St John's Hill Grove and taking in the whole of Brussels, Cologne, Louvaine and Oberstein Roads and the inner sides of Harbut Road. At a time of growing reaction against the blanket imposition of council housing, residents and owners reacted fiercely to this threat of compulsory purchase. A Louvaine Area Residents Association (LARA) sprang into being, and with some professional advice proposed instead that the district should be improved piecemeal under the terms of the recent 1974 Housing Act. Wandsworth Council's Housing Committee reluctantly accepted the principle in March 1975 and declared one of the country's first Housing Action Areas.⁴⁸

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As ownership of the housing was mixed, the mechanisms for administering such a scheme were obscure. Indeed, almost all the first houses improved belonged to the Council, which had owned 65 when the HAA was created, and bought 70 more soon afterwards. In 1976 the Council considered declaring a similar area for substandard housing south of St John's Hill, around Strathblaine Road, but in the event this never went beyond the status of a 'priority neighbourhood'.⁴⁹

In 1978 the Conservatives took over Wandsworth. The sale of council houses was now promoted and private investment otherwise stimulated. LARA's activists fought this policy with decreasing success. But the HAA status undoubtedly saved these streets from demolition. The energy generated also had an offshoot in the form of a full sociological study of the district undertaken from 1978 and published as *Living in South London*. Besides recording the struggle for housing improvement, it contains invaluable data on employment, family structure, living conditions, ethnicity and other matters for this area of Battersea at a time of social transition.⁵⁰

Plough Road

The land around Plough Road that had once belonged to the Trittons and then the Soules was sold in lots in the early 1880s, and most of the houses here were built shortly afterwards. Those on the east side were put up by three separate builder-developers in 1880-2. Nos 77-99 were built on the site of Mrs Tritton's almshouses by Thomas Hutchens, a young builder from Hampshire, then active in the area and employing some fifty men. This was the cheaper end of the road, close to the railway lines, and all the houses here were in multiple occupation from early on. Another seven (including Nos 107 and 137) were built by John Flitton, a bricklayer turned small-time builder. Richard Pymm, a Battersea Park Road carpenter, acquired a plot where James

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R. Ward, another Battersea-based builder, put up a short row of cottage flats (Nos 121–127).⁵¹

On the west side, the two short terraces either side of Harbut Road comprise small, two-storey, flat-fronted houses. Originally these all had ground-floor shops, though only a few remain. The pair at the south corner of Cologne Road were purely domestic and belong with the development of that road. Most of the residents here were transient and few were local in origin.⁵²

There has been some modern infill on the south corner of Harbut Road and the east side of Plough Road. Standing out from the run-of-the-mill houses is a former dairy at No. 119, dated on its gable 1902. It was designed by William Clinch Poole for the Dairy Supply Company Ltd.⁵³ Paired doors under a bold canopy provide access to the ground-floor premises, lit by a pair of large, round-arched windows, and living accommodation above.

SOUTH OF ST JOHN'S HILL

Marcilly Road to Vardens Road

Most of this territory belonged to Spanish Close, the seventeen or so acres of meadow which at the start of the nineteenth century belonged to Spencer Lodge. In 1853–4 first this land, and then Spencer Lodge itself, were bought for development by the National Freehold Land Society and promptly offered for sale in lots.⁵⁴ The society's nominal aim was to divide freehold land for the purposes of enfranchisement. At the same time the NFLS also bought property off Bolingbroke Grove, in which context its policy and operations are further described (see pages ##, ##).

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Records for this development are sparse. It was initially called the Clapham Station Estate, after the short-lived railway station near the foot of Vardens Road, while its location was referred to as New Wandsworth. The land was divided into 453 lots: five to be reserved for 'paddocks', the remainder intended to be laid out for building. Land values in London being higher than in the provinces, a small lot would still entitle its owner to the vote (in comparison a similar sized estate in Bradford had only 249 lots).⁵⁵ New roads were laid out: St Ann's (now Marcilly), Park (now Elsynges) and Spencer, and drains formed along them. It was originally intended that Park Road should continue eastwards into Vardens Road but this plan had been abandoned by 1862. Detached or semi-detached houses were prescribed for most of the estate, and values set from £400 for detached houses facing Wandsworth Common down to £150 for a terraced house on St Ann's Road. On St John's Hill the value was set at £200, with terraces and shops permitted.⁵⁶

It was not uncommon for such estates to be built up piecemeal over a considerable number of years. Development here took off slowly, starting mainly with the St John's Hill frontage. In 1854 a 'tavern plot' was under discussion, probably referring to the Fishmongers' Arms, built in that year on St John's Hill.⁵⁷ The pace accelerated after 1860, and a decade later the estate had been largely built over. The upshot along the main residential streets was an agreeable mixture of Italian and Gothic villas, individual and semi-detached. The random architectural pattern reflects the selling of plots singly or in small numbers, so that building was undertaken by many different developers. The most prolific architect was George Hunt Page, an early resident in Spencer Road, but not all his designs can be identified. Among builders, George Bass and various members of the Todd family were also busy. Early residents were mostly from the professional classes, but for some reason there was often a fast turnover in occupation.⁵⁸

Spencer Road. Here, large semi-detached houses with long back gardens predominate. The earliest plot sold, in 1853, was near the south end, on the east side. This probably equates to the sober No. 35, built for himself by the surveyor-architect G. H. Page, called Aylesford Villa after his birthplace, and occupied by 1856. Around the time Page's house was completed work picked up in earnest in the rest of the road. By 1857 five more had been built: No. 27 (Chesnut Villa) for Charles Gray, schoolmaster, Nos 23 & 25 (Nottingham and Marycote Villas) and Nos 14 & 16 (1 & 2 Hedingham Villas). Nos 18 & 20 had also been added by 1860. The first occupant of No. 20 was the chemist and industrialist Henry Bollmann Condry, whose factory stood on the Battersea riverfront at Church Road.⁵⁹

The modest pair at Nos 2 & 4 (Acuba Villa), first rated in 1860, were built for Edward Spooner, sometime clerk to the Board of Guardians, and Robert Creasy, a bootmaker. By far the biggest house in the road, and indeed on the estate, has not survived. This was Althorpe House, built in 1861-2 at the south end of the road on the corner of Wandsworth Common North Side. It was designed by G. H. Page for the Rev. J. S. Jenkinson, vicar of Battersea, as a new vicarage and probably built by J. & C. W. Todd. Jenkinson informed Earl Spencer that having failed to find a suitable house in a healthy situation he had built one on his own account. It was demolished in the early 1900s and Nos 24-38 built on its site around 1910 for John Smith of West Side, Clapham Common.⁶⁰

Clyde Villa (No. 8) was built for one of the Carter clan in 1862 but soon acquired by Thomas Buckham, surveyor to the Wandsworth District Board of Works. Gaps on the west side were filled with No. 22 in 1863 and Nos 10 & 12 in 1864, while No. 6, at the north corner of Elsynge Road, was added c.1866, a lively villa in Gothic taste, with brick diapering and patterning in the relieving arches over the windows (Ill. 16.12).⁶¹

On the east side, matching pairs of semi-detached houses at Nos 7–13 and 15–21 went up in 1862–5 (Ill. 16.13). The northern pair have broad fronts with attractive carved bargeboards to the gables, while those to the south have shaped gables that also feature on the side elevations. In the 1890s Edward Munt, the piano manufacturer, lived at No. 9, while No. 17 belonged to one of Charles Wix's sons (Frederick, b.1817) – a possible contender for a developer, as may be Alfred W. Pocock who was resident at No. 15 in 1881.⁶²

Elsynge Road is now an opulent street where houses sell for upwards of £2m, and large black cars encumber the forecourts. Until 1937 it was Park Road – sometimes filled out as Park Road, New Wandsworth, to distinguish it from its namesake near Battersea Park.

The earliest houses were Nos 6 & 8, at first named Richmond and Grove Villas. Dating to around 1856–7, they form a semi-detached pair, narrow fronted with recessed side entrance bays, of two storeys over a raised basement, and plainly built of stock brick with a little red brick around the windows. By 1860 the neighbouring pair at Nos 2 & 4 had been added (by the same builder judging by appearance), though No. 4 was given Gothic arched windows rather than square-headed tripartite sashes, and No. 2 has a Gothic arched window above the entrance (Ill. 16.14). Nos 1 & 3 opposite also appear to be part of the same development, thought built a little later, around 1864–5. The developers here may have been the Bohemian-born glass engravers and brothers Ferdinand and Paul Oppitz, who are recorded as owners in the 1870s.⁶³ Further details of their career are given under 24 Vardens Road (see below), where Paul Oppitz built himself a house; Ferdinand lived at 2 Park Road (Hope Villa). This group of houses may have been designed by the local architect William Bennett Hays, who was the first occupant of No. 1. At No. 8 lived Sylvan de Wilde, a young architect or engineer who made a name for

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himself by devising an apparatus to remove bullets from shot wounds, patented in 1867.⁶⁴

Building activity quickened after 1860. The 1861 Census recorded eleven occupied houses, a further three uninhabited, and three being built. Residents were reasonably well-to-do. In 1869 when the street numbering was formalized by the Metropolitan Board of Works there were only four gaps remaining (at Nos 14, 22, 54 and 45–51 odd). Among the few houses for which a builder can be ascribed is the tall pair at Nos 16 & 18, erected by Richard Down, joiner, of Princes Street, Westminster, for two separate clients who had bought adjacent plots in 1863, probably as small speculations. Down also built Nos 33 & 35, probably around the same time. Nos 37–43 were the work of Thomas Todd, in 1868, good-sized but spare in detail. The prolific local builder George Bass built four houses in this street and three in Spencer Road, but it is unclear which these are. Anomalies include No. 14 (Foxwood), likely to be the house erected for J. F. Newland by Turtle & Appleton in 1881; Nos 49 & 51, a pair slotted into one of the gaps by Augustus Nixon, builder, in 1880; and No. 23, converted from a pair into flats by the mid 1890s and much extended at the back. Residents in this street in 1873–4 included T. J. Lynes, an architect who carried out various works locally and later had an office or house in St John's Hill.⁶⁵

Wandsworth Common North Side. Here were the largest houses on the NFLS estate (Ills 16.15, 16). They included good villas, as this ground then overlooked the common, the Spencer Park development opposite (in Wandsworth parish) having yet to be conceived: hence the address, though the street was also at first referred to as Clapham Road.

When plans for Spencer Park were revealed in 1868, the North Side inhabitants and other neighbours memorialized the 5th Earl Spencer, but he

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was unable to influence events and could give them no reassurance, taking the line that 'the disappearance of trees and green fields in suburban districts, however much to be regretted, is an inevitable consequence of the spread of London'.⁶⁶ These large houses therefore now mostly face others across a traffic-bedevilled roadway, part of the South Circular system.

As elsewhere on the NFLS estate, a precise chronology of the development is difficult to establish.⁶⁷ The earliest house is also one of the most altered: **No. 20**, originally named Mecklenburgh House, built around 1856–7. Its first occupant was John Daniel Kachler, a tailor. Only a little later is **No. 8** (Bina Lodge), a handsome, symmetrical detached villa with paired eaves brackets and margin lights to the windows (Ill. 16.17). It was built around 1858 by the Kensington builder John Spicer, and first occupied by a retired army captain, Thomas Marshall.⁶⁸ Marshall was also involved with **No. 26** (Castle Cottage), or rather with its first occupant, Joanna Castle, a widow of independent means whom he had married in 1856. The house was described as lately erected in April 1865 when it was sold to Marshall. It is a modest stucco villa with bargeboards and castellated bays at front and back.⁶⁹

Most of the other houses here date from the 1860s. **No. 48** (Aucklands) was built around 1861 by and for George Todd senior, the Chelsea builder, who named it after his birthplace, Bishop Auckland. A cumbersome double-fronted house with wild eaves brackets, it was perhaps Todd's own design, or that of his surveyor son, George junior (Ill. 16.15). It now has a vivid rear extension with timber and tile cladding, built for the Rainbow School (Architype, architects, 2009–10). **Nos 50–54** together with the two pairs of semis behind them in Park (now Elsyngge) Road seem to be one speculation, as their leasehold interest was sold at auction in 1872 with 80 years to run. The villas on North Side were originally named, from east to west, Blendworth, Kent, Kingston, and The Elms. When they were built the parish boundary ran through the garden of No. 52, so the westernmost houses were in

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Wandsworth parish. **Nos 40–46** were likewise the work of a single developer, Nos 40 and 42 (Hohne and Norfolk Houses) were begun in 1860, perhaps to G. H. Page's designs.⁷⁰

Differing in style but not in date is **No. 4** (Devon Villa), designed by G. H. Page for G. H. Swonnell, maltster, and built in 1861, probably by George Bass.⁷¹ It is of red and yellow brick with bargeboards, and has a large coach-house to its east. It was converted to flats and a day nursery in 2005. **No. 22** (Rushmore Cottage), a plain double-fronted house, was built about 1862 for Edwin Ransome, hardware merchant, Quaker, and a key figure in the campaign to save Wandsworth Common. He died here in 1910.⁷²

Curving round the corner into Vardens Road is **The Round House** pub at No. 2 (until 1967 the Freemasons' Hotel). It was built in 1862–3, only a short step from New Wandsworth Station, which operated as a passenger stop from 1858–69. Following the Italianate styling of the neighbouring houses in Vardens Road, it has a sturdy character deriving from its long, continuously curving front, running between pilastered ends. The ground storey incorporates hefty Venetian windows and the whole is topped off by a balustraded parapet (Ill. 16.18). The original name came either from the Freemasons' Girls School to the north-east, or reflected the incidence of masons among local residents, e.g. in Spencer Road; the Earl Spencer Lodge, in which the Todds were prominent, was inaugurated here in 1873.⁷³

Further west, **Nos 14 & 16** (Durham Villa and Hatfield Lodge), built around 1864–5, form an unusual pair with projecting wings either side of a recessed centre with the entrances. They are in a simple Italianate style, with slightly crude carved-head keystones adorning the windows, and composite capitals to the porches. There is more robust decoration to the later pair at **Nos 30 & 32** with incised ornament and dog-toothed window heads. These two, along with Nos 34, 36 and 38 to their west, filled up the last big gap on

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the North Side frontage and were built around 1877–80, apart from **No. 34** with its hard red-brick bay and terracotta panels, which was added c.1881–2. Its neighbours at **Nos 36 & 38** are plainer, but have surprising Venetian Gothic or Moorish side porches.⁷⁴

As for later buildings, the large villa that formerly stood on the east corner of Spencer Road, at No. 6, was replaced by a small block of flats, **Henry Harrison Court**, designed by Sir Guy Dawber, Fox & Robinson, for Battersea Council in 1961–2; and the nursery ground long attached to No. 20, with a good-sized frontage to the road, was finally built over in the 1980s with **No. 18**, a self-effacing apartment block. More recently, a pastiche mews development was built in 2009 at **No. 2A** (Vestry Mews), mimicking the coach-house of No. 4 next door.⁷⁵

Marcilly Road. The frontages on both sides of this street (St Ann's Road until 1937) were in Wandsworth parish when the NFLS property was laid out, but the east side was an integral if minor part of the estate, and the boundary was adjusted in 1900 to bring the houses here into Battersea. Nos 9–19, a low stuccoed terrace with the livelier Nos 5–7 tacked on at the north end, were present by 1865; Nos 1 & 3 followed later.

Vardens Road, west side. The earlier history of this street, formerly a lane continuing Plough Terrace down to Wandsworth Common, is given under St John's Place. It took its name from Thomas Vardon, the main begetter of Spencer Lodge. During the 1860s the road was briefly and confusingly called Garden Road, but Vardon's name was restored by 1870, albeit in misspelt form. Harvard House at the St John's Hill corner was not part of the NFLS purchase. The rest of the west side was developed after the Society offered the site of Spencer Lodge and its immediate environs for building in 1854. It

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consists of villa-pairs built between 1856 and 1865. John Gloag, writer on architecture and furniture, who was born and brought up at No. 36, noted that these houses were mostly 'brick with painted stucco trim, modest classical moulded detail attics with dormer windows', and thought the early residents might have included 'a few almost but not quite "carriage folk", who ran to a gig or governess cart'.⁷⁶ The Gloag family home together with its pair at No. 34 were the first built in the road around 1856, and named Sandwell Villas. Unusually, the first-floor balconies are carried right across the façades. Coach-houses are set back at the sides, with sloped access and two storeys over. The two pairs to the south, originally 1–4 Antwerp Villas (Nos 38–44 even) date from 1859, while Heath Villas (Nos 46 & 48) followed a little later, being built around 1862–3. The first occupant of No. 46 from 1863 was Emma Moxon, widow of the poet and publisher, Edward Moxon, and adopted daughter of Charles and Mary Lamb.⁷⁷

Further up the road, Nos 26 & 28 (Eaton Villas) were built in 1862 as a striking pair with ragged brick edges round all the main mouldings and reveals, which impart a taut look. They were designed by the architect Charles R. Gribble, then of Putney, for Thomas Cleave, auctioneer, of Windsor.⁷⁸ Cleave's son, John, who became accountant to the British Museum in 1867, moved in to No. 28 in the 1870s. Next door, Nos 30 & 32 (Pelham Villas) are of 1863–4, whereas Nos 18 & 20 (Grenville Lodge and The Firs) date from 1864–5.

The house which stands out on this side of the road is **No. 24**, which still bears its original name, 'Paulinzell', on a pretty carved plaque over the door, also bearing the date 1865 (Ill. 16.19). It was built for Paul Oppitz, a highly skilled glass engraver best known for the Copeland Vase, now in the Victoria & Albert Museum. The Oppitz brothers Paul and Ferdinand had left their native Bohemia to settle in London in the 1840s. Ferdinand was already living in Elsynge Road (see above) when Paulinzell was built. The house has

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battlemented parapets and fretted bargeboards to the main gable; its north end (now No. 22) is a slightly later addition, separately occupied in 1871 by Arthur Moxon, who continued the Moxon publishing house with his mother Emma (of No. 46).⁷⁹

At the north end, the present Nos 2 & 4–8 (even) are a recent addition of c.2001–2 by Thirlstone Homes with a separate dwelling set behind. These, along with Harvard Mansions on St John's Hill, were not part of the NFLS development. This square corner plot had long been the site of Harvard House, knocked down in the early twentieth century. Behind the flats there had been a small Edwardian industrial site where aeroplanes had once been assembled (the Omnia Works).⁸⁰ The new houses comprise a rather stark short terrace of three fronting Vardens Road itself (Nos 4, 6 & 8) with a detached two-storey house tucked in to the rear that is square on plan, the rooms laid out around a central toplit atrium, designed by HM2. No. 2 gained considerable publicity after it had had been bought by Paul Newirck and Eric Lanlard, the master patissier and cake-maker to celebrities (he famously designed a croquebouche for Madonna and Guy Ritchie's wedding).

Vardens Road, east side. The old houses west of the Plough with their long gardens had become ripe for redevelopment by 1870, when William Compton Smith, owner of Ivy Lodge at the Vardens Road corner, granted a lease of the southernmost end of his garden to the builder William Harris. The upshot was the present 33–53 Vardens Road (of 1870–1), a terrace of eleven high houses with basements, identical to those Harris had been building in Cologne Road near by; he lived here for a time.⁸¹

Ivy Lodge itself and its immediate garden were developed by the builder David Kettle in 1881–2 as Braemar Terrace, 1–31 Vardens Road.⁸²

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These are lower, smaller houses than Harris's, reflecting the district's dwindling status.

Strathblaine and Sangora Roads. Having commenced development in Vardens Road, David Kettle quickly pressed on with the properties next eastwards, which since 1854 had been in the ownership of the Gillotts, a West End tailoring family. Leases for this development were issued in 1882–6 under William Henry Gillott. Working here in partnership with Henry Bragg, Kettle procured from the surveyor C. J. Bentley a layout which packed plots into a triangle jammed up against the railway by kinking the main street, Strathblaine Road, so that it could have two sides in the upper parts yet debouch into Vardens Road below Harris's houses. Sangora Road is a shorter cross-road into St John's Hill (Ill. 16.1).⁸³ Kettle built 25 of the houses himself but subcontracted the rest, notably to W. J. Goldsworthy and W. H. Richmond. Apart from 18–24 Strathblaine Road, built as flats, these are entirely standard houses without basements; the main feature of note is some pretty, naturalistic carving over the porches along Sangora Road's east side (Ill. 16.20). Following bomb damage, 10–12 Strathblaine Road were rebuilt for Battersea Council in 1958.⁸⁴

ST JOHN'S HILL

Like most main roads in London, the frontage of St John's Hill is broken up between different developments. After some remarks on its evolving commercial character, notes follow on individual sites.

Until the mid nineteenth century, buildings along the turnpike road between the Falcon and the parish boundary clustered around St John's Place and its outliers. They included a few small shops between Plough Road and

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Plough Terrace. After 1850 the frontage began to fill up fast. First off the mark was the St John's Hill Grove development, which included a pub and a few houses facing the main road. But the real change came with the NFLS estate, whose earliest buildings from 1853 onwards were largely on the main road. Almost the whole run from Spencer Road to Marcilly Road (Nos 143–229) had been completed by the mid 1860s. By no means all these houses had shops, but the Fishmongers Arms, well west at No. 225 with an ambitious stuccoed and pilastered front, must have abetted the commercializing tendency. A directory of 1867 lists 39 different trades for the whole length of the street from the Falcon to Marcilly Road. By then Clapham Junction had been several years open, and St John's Hill though far from completely built up had become the road of small shops and trades it remains today (Ill. 16.22).

Taking three later dates at random, gradual changes in the pattern of retailing may be noted. In 1884 the commonest directory entries were for pubs (though St John's Hill, with six, had less than most Battersea main roads), and surgeons, meaning presumably general medical practitioners. Next in frequency came drapers, confectioners and builders, and also schools (including the Royal Masonic Institution and Battersea Grammar School); then grocers, milliners, tobacconists and boot and shoemakers. Food shops (including confectioners) were common but not preponderant, amounting to 20 out of 128 commercial or institutional entries.

In 1939 the pubs, confectioners and tobacconists remained in strength. The drapers and builders were then few, the main-road surgeons or doctors fewer, and the schools had vanished. Tailors had increased in number. Seven hairdressers had also arrived (as against one in 1884) and five florists (none previously), while a handful of 'refreshment bars', 'milk bars' and 'cafés' had taken over from a solitary ham-and-beef warehouse. By 2011 several shops no longer served immediately local needs. They now include a business supplying frameless glass showers, another specializing in sash windows,

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and three design-furniture outlets. A private school has made an unobtrusive return in the old London County Council education office at No. 92. Ready-made clothes are available at just two boutiques, but there are still four tailors. Only three shops, all belonging to chains, sell a full range of groceries. The indulgence and care of the body are now in the ascendant. Five hair salons, three fitness centres, two dentists, a nail parlour, a tanning establishment, a chiropractor and a small health centre are ranged against 21 outlets for the consumption of food and drink. These comprise restaurants serving sundry cuisines, basic take-aways and exotically named bars or clubs. Two of these last have been created by the make-over of pubs, which in traditional guise are down to three, the Falcon and the Windsor Castle close to the station, and the small Beehive alone on the hill. The Plough has been reduced to a modern bar.⁸⁵

Selective list of buildings west of the railway

North side

Nos 76 & 78. Remnants of the St John's Place development, present by 1865.

No. 80 (with Langford Mews). Flats by Martyn Pattie, architects, 2007–8.⁸⁶

Nos 82–88 (Fineran Court), Battersea Council flats, erected 1949–51, following war damage.

No. 92, former LCC Education Offices, 1909, on site of St John's Hill House.

Nos 94–108 (formerly Halbrake Terrace), and 110–116 (Louvaine Terrace); both part of T. C. Mackley's development in and around Oberstein and Louvaine Roads, c.1862–5 (Ill. 16.21).

Nos 118–134. Part of Mackley's St John's Hill Grove development of 1849–51.

Nos 136–146. Part of the Harbut Road development, c.1880.

No. 148. Hill Lodge, old people's home of 1983.

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South side

Nos 61–79 (Stanley Terrace). Henry James of Buckhurst Hill, builder, 1874–5.⁸⁷

Nos 81–85 (Walden). Flats designed by Alan Camp Architects, c.2007.⁸⁸

Nos 89–91. The Lismore (west corner of Strath Terrace). Apartment block, O'Callaghan Properties, developers, 2010–11.

Nos 93–127. Part of the Strathblaine Road area development, c.1882–6.

No. 129 (Harvard Mansions). Flats with shops (The Parade), designed by Boehmer & Gibbs, architects, 1901, on the site of Harvard House.⁸⁹

Nos 131–229. Buildings on NFLS land, mostly of 1854–69:

Nos 131–141 (Prospect Terrace). Stucco-fronted, c.1854.⁹⁰ No.141, at the corner of Spencer Road, was once the offices of Turtle & Appleton.

No. 197. The Beehive. Here under this name by 1877.⁹¹

Nos 199–201. Lynes & Rivett, architects, 1869.⁹²

No. 225. The Alchemist club, formerly the Fishmongers' Arms.

No. 229. House with shop, Lathey Brothers, builders, 1864.⁹³