

Between the Commons 2

Victorian suburban housing is one of the defining elements of Battersea's character and nowhere is it found in a greater concentration than in the 280 acres covered by this chapter (Ill. 18.1). From Bolingbroke Grove on the edge of Wandsworth Common, row after row of terraced houses, with a few detached and semi-detached neighbours, advance downhill to Northcote Road and then climb again towards Clapham Common where they are joined by reinforcements from the early years of the twentieth century. Occasionally a church or board school, or shopfronts break the ranks, sometimes small pockets of post-war rebuilding; but nonetheless this vast area is overwhelmingly residential, and overwhelmingly Victorian-Edwardian.

This dramatic and intensive growth began in the 1850s and 60s, the regular terraces supplanting an older, gentler landscape of gentlemen's estates and villas that had prospered here for a hundred years (described in the previous chapter). Within barely sixty years all but a handful of the estates had been redeveloped, until by the 1920s the district was almost entirely built over.

None of this post-1850s reconstruction was the work of indigenous landowners. Rather, the early stages were dominated by two Victorian freehold land companies, later phases by individual builder-developers and speculators, buying up the old villas as their residents died or left. Further sales brought greater subdivision to an already fragmented pattern of landownership, and so development was often bitty and disjointed.

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What emerged was a large new dormitory of middle-class housing – the biggest in Battersea – but within its apparent homogeneity was much diversity in fabric and social character. The only discernible pattern was for bigger detached and semi-detached houses to be built early on, to the south and west, particularly along Bolingbroke Grove and in and around Nightingale Lane, which for a time held on to the area’s upper middle-class elite. Successful merchants and stockbrokers took to these houses that were still only a carriage or coach-ride from their place of work. Civil servants, bank clerks, legal clerks – clerks of every kind – brought their families and domestic servants to the more modest streets of housing laid out further into the hinterland in the 1880s and 90s. And as the century closed, the grids of tighter-packed terraces that sprang up towards Clapham Common added more tradespeople and others of the lower middle-classes to the mix.

As elsewhere in South London, decline set in either side of the Second World War, when the population contained a large proportion of poor but decent working-class tenants. Take for example Fred and Nellie Taylor, a plumber and factory girl living at 138 Bennerley Road, who during the war were offered the freehold to their house by their landlord for £220, a price well beyond their means.¹ Being far removed from Battersea’s industrial zone, the area survived the war and its aftermath fairly intact, and by the 1970s the manageable size and affordability of its houses was tempting young married middle-class couples away from their flats in other parts of south-west London. Since then the trickle has become a flood and the area has undergone comprehensive gentrification. Its resident population today is visibly white, youthful and affluent, and consumption is conspicuous in the many cafés, bars and restaurants.

This chapter considers the Victorian and later speculative housing in topographical sections; the few estates of post-war public housing are grouped together and dealt with separately at the end.²

Around Northcote Road

Chatham Road

Chatham Road was where Victorian development between the commons began in the mid 1850s. It was in many respects an anomaly, an isolated venture by a land company before the railways had fully exerted their grip on Battersea and pulled lower middle-class London this far south-west. Its houses were small in size and low in cost.

The opportunity arose in 1852 with the death of Elizabeth Hoper, owner of the middle of the Five Houses of Bolingbroke Grove (page ##), and its sale by her relatives the following year. The new owner was the National Freehold Land Society (NFLS), the most active of such societies south of the Thames, whose purpose was to buy land for resale in small freeholds which would guarantee purchasers the right to vote. By the late 1850s its land-dealings were in the hands of a specially formed subsidiary, the British Land Company, with the NFLS supplying loans. As the laws changed and the franchise widened, so the two organizations reverted to straightforward property investment and finance.³

It is likely that the road was laid out by the NFLS before 1855 as neither its name nor route was approved by the post-1855 authorities. Building began in 1857 and continued at a slow but steady pace throughout the late 1850s and 60s, with some thirty-seven houses completed by 1861, most of them on the north side, rising to about seventy by 1871.⁴

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To a large degree Chatham Road followed the freehold land movement's preferred model. Many early inhabitants bought small individual plots and built single houses (or engaged tradesmen to do so for them). As a result, owner-occupation was unusually high for this period and class of housing. But speculation was not lacking, some developers acquiring several plots and erecting houses for sale or to let. Charles Dungate, a Clapham grocer, for example, built several houses on the north side of Chatham Road and around the corner in a narrow side-street called Sydney Court or Place (later widened to become part of Northcote Road); and similarly Charles Stonell, a coal contractor, in 1866-7 built Stonell's Place: five houses on the south side, now 116-124 Chatham Road, and a further ten round the corner in a narrow cul-de-sac, now 6-15 Stonell's Road (Ill. 18.2, 3).⁵

Miss Hoper's villa survived for a time beside the emerging new street, latterly in the occupation and ownership of James Lord, barrister. By 1864 Lord, with the help of the auctioneer and surveyor George Todd, had demolished it and engaged a builder to erect new houses. In 1866 Lord bought another 3½ acres at this west end of the estate from the NFLS, for which Todd prepared plans of new streets and began letting plots, but all Lord's builders went bankrupt, leaving house-carcasses unfinished, and by 1871 Lord himself had gone into liquidation (see also page ##). Some of his houses were completed by others, but much of his land was acquired by the Rev. J. Erskine Clarke for St Michael's Church and Schools (1880-1), replacing a temporary iron structure of 1872 (vol. 49).⁶ Clarke said that Lord had mistakenly embarked on speculative building 'before the district was ripe for it', whilst Todd thought his habit of charging large ground rents and high interest rates for advances had contributed to his builders' bankruptcies. Both were probably correct, though Lord undoubtedly also suffered from the dramatic decline in the building cycle at the time. A terrace of plain red-brick houses at 157-173 Northcote Road, date from this period of Lord's involvement.⁷

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There was very little that was metropolitan about Chatham Road in its early days. Rather it was a proto-suburban hamlet of mostly two-storey, simple brick cottages on narrow plots, set amid empty fields. It was also a working community, with shops, bakeries, smithies, laundries, beer-houses, carpenters' and builders' yards. Several houses had side-passages or cartways under their first-floor rooms leading to rear yards and outhouses; two of the latter type survive at Nos 84 & 86, of c.1863–4. Others followed another characteristic freehold land movement model in being set well back from the road towards the rear of the plots, behind long gardens. Early residents suggest a bucolic existence, with carpenters, agricultural labourers, gardeners, even cow-keepers – precisely the type of semi-rural working people among whom the NFLS hoped to spread the franchise.⁸

More houses came in the 1870s–80s, including two new streets as intended and possibly partly begun by Lord and Todd in the 1860s: Swaby Road (later incorporated as part of Northcote Road), running south to the estate boundary; and Darley Road (since obliterated), another east–west route linking Swaby Road with Bolingbroke Grove. Henry B. Mitchell, surveyor to the British Land Company, supervised the laying out of roads and sewers, and several builders then went to work on the housing. Lord returned to build more houses in Chatham Road and Bolingbroke Grove (e.g. Nos 50–55) in the 1870s, and was also involved in the later stages of Darley Road's development in the 1880s.⁹

By that time the area had its own factory (built c.1864 at the corner of what became Webb's Road by George Stiff as the printing works for his magazine, *The London Reader*); an Anglican church (St Michael's); an independent chapel (built by the Rev. Spurgeon); several small shops; and half-a-dozen public houses and beer-shops. The Bolingbroke Arms at 17 Chatham Road (later 2 Cobham Close, demolished) was the first, built in 1855

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by John Stapleton, a Bedfordshire carpenter, and later extended by him into three adjoining cottages. Today the only old pub left is the Eagle Tavern at 104–106 Chatham Road, rebuilt in 1890 by Holloway Brothers to designs by Karlake & Mortimer.¹⁰

Residents by then were firmly rooted in the capital's low-grade service sector, with labourers, laundresses and charwomen to the fore. Charles Booth's investigators found Chatham Road to be the only 'poor' road in an 'otherwise well-to-do district'. Many houses were already in a bad condition and readily dispensable. Several were demolished in the 1890s when Sydney Place was widened to become part of Northcote Road, which was being extended south through the adjoining estate; others on the north-west side of the road came down for a new LCC fire station, erected in 1906.¹¹

Although there was bomb damage in Chatham Road it was not this but general decline that made it the focus of the only substantial tranche of post-war slum clearance between the commons. Cottages on its north-east side and virtually all of Chatham and Darley Roads west of Northcote Road were swept away for new housing developments; these are discussed on page ##.

Auckland and Buckmaster Roads

After Chatham Road, the next area of house-building was on Battersea Rise, on land formerly belonging to the Bolingbroke Grove House estate, broken up and sold at auction in 1858.¹² Battersea Vestry acquired 8¼ acres at the corner with Bolingbroke Grove for a parochial burial ground, which came into use in 1860 as St Mary's Cemetery (vol. 49). By 1863 land to its east had been purchased by Christopher William Todd for development with three short rows of shops and houses on Battersea Rise, and three residential streets to their south: Middleton (now Buckmaster) and Auckland Roads, both running

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north-south, and Pelling Road running east-west at their base, along the cemetery boundary. Todd later abandoned this last road, leaving only a 20ft-wide passage in its place as a link between the two other streets, which were extended.¹³

Work began in 1865, and then only on the main-road houses and shops (Hopefield Terrace and Villas): of these, nine survive at 133-143 & 145-149 Battersea Rise. It was not until *c.*1867, after the change of plan, that houses began to go up in the new streets. Middleton Road was completed *c.*1871, Auckland Road by *c.*1873. Most prominent of several builders at work was John Lane of Peckham, who also built The Invitation, Auckland Road's old-fashioned brick and stucco pub, of *c.*1868-70.¹⁴

These were simple, cheaply built terraces, of two storeys in Middleton Road, with double-height canted bays, generally without basements. The addition of basements and attics gave some Auckland Road houses four stories, but otherwise they were similar. Auckland Road's west side has the greatest visual impact, with regular two-bay frontages and a roofline punctuated by a long row of gabled attic storeys (Ill. 18.5). Middleton Road was renamed in 1937 after J. C. Buckmaster, the prominent local resident who campaigned tirelessly for the preservation of Wandsworth Common, and ironically was highly critical of Todd's development at Chivalry Road (below).

Of early residents, about half could afford a live-in domestic servant. Thomas Crapper, the sanitary engineer, and his wife Maria were the first occupants of 1 Middleton (Buckmaster) Road *c.*1867-74. His family owned most of the houses on the east side and were responsible for the construction in 1873-4 of the superior-looking Italianate villas at Nos 8-10 (St Mark's Villas), with bowed ground-floor windows. John Cazenove, the political

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economist and elder brother of the stockbroker and philanthropist Philip Cazenove, lived at 13 Middleton Road, where he died in 1879.¹⁵

For the Auckland Road Estate, see page ##.

Chivalry Road area

Although not strictly located between the commons, this area is included here as it forms part of the same story. C. W. Todd was again the chief developer, acquiring the land at auction sales in 1863 and 1867 from the London Brighton & South Coast Railway Company, whose New Wandsworth railway station and coal depot stood at the north end of Wandsworth Common. Within a month or two the builder Robert Hewitt had agreed to take land facing Battersea Rise and had begun excavations.¹⁶

But local inhabitants, led by J. C. Buckmaster, balked at the idea of common land being let for building. Meetings were held, Buckmaster on one occasion addressing a crowd estimated at 4–5,000. Handbills and posters decried the ‘filching’ and reselling of the common ‘at enormous profit’, proclaiming ‘Cursed is he who removeth his neighbour’s Landmark’, before urging local men to tear down Todd’s fences. In the end violence was avoided, though Buckmaster himself was summoned to court in 1869 for damaging Todd’s property; the case was dismissed. Hewitt seems to have worked on regardless, finishing his plain three-storey houses and shops, now 153–167 Battersea Rise, around 1868–9.¹⁷

The protests may have delayed Todd’s development. Most of the houses on Chivalry Road and the west side of Bolingbroke Grove date from the 1870s, 1880s or later, the row at 1–4 Chivalry Road being the first built, in 1872–4. The biggest builders were Robert Dootson of Middleton Road, who

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erected the fourteen two-storey houses with attics and basements at 5–18 Chivalry Road (Dootson's Terrace, 1877–8); and Stephen Martin of Hackney, with the nineteen smaller terraced cottages at 107–116 Bolingbroke Grove and 20–28 Chivalry Road (1882–4).¹⁸

Coal merchants and railway workers naturally found this a convenient spot to live. Late nineteenth-century residents also included foremen, bricklayers, shop assistants and junior clerks; servants were rare but not unknown, and boarders popular. A few bigger and better houses went up at the bottom end of Chivalry Road, facing the common, and round the corner in Bolingbroke Grove, where Nos 103–106, of the late 1870s and 80s, enjoyed long gardens reaching back to Chivalry Road.¹⁹

In 1901–2 two blocks of red-brick flats were built at 116 & 117 Bolingbroke Grove by Boynton, Pegram & Buckmaster, valuers and estate agents of Waltham Green. Quaintly eclectic and naively proportioned, these stunted versions of West End mansion flats were the work of the locally based architect Herbert Bignold (Ill. 18.7). There were four apartments per block, each with three rooms, kitchen, scullery, bathroom and WC.²⁰

A synagogue, later the South West London Synagogue, was founded in 1915 at 104 Bolingbroke Grove, and greatly extended in 1927 when a purpose-built synagogue was erected on the vacant plot to its rear, facing Chivalry Road (designed by Charles Living junior of Stratford). The house then became a small hall. The synagogue closed in 1997 and has since been converted to flats. Several new buildings have been erected in the area in recent years, but the biggest change has been the development by Fairview Homes in the 1980s of the Arundel Close estate on the site of the defunct railway goods station, on the west side of Chivalry Road.²¹

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Northcote Road and vicinity

The area south of Battersea Rise centred on Northcote Road lies at the core of modern, upwardly mobile, child-rearing south Battersea. This is 'Nappy Valley', where the plentiful boutiques, restaurants and cafés cater as much for the booming infant population as for their affluent parents. Once part of an estate attached to Bolingbroke Grove House, on the site of the former Bolingbroke Hospital, it comprises about thirty-five acres bordering Wandsworth Common and is almost a suburb in itself. It was developed in phases, mostly in the 1870s–90s, under one of the freehold land societies with nigh on 600 houses, as well as shops, churches and schools.

It was the Conservative Land Society (CLS) which in 1868 acquired the undeveloped remnant of the Bolingbroke Grove House estate from Henry Wheeler, its last private owner.²² The CLS had been active in north Battersea since the 1850s, buying estates to increase Tory support among the working-classes by selling small freehold plots for house-building that gave owners the right to vote. However, by the time the society offered the first 113 plots for sale on its Bolingbroke Park estate, as it became known, this political incentive had receded. Thenceforth the CLS and its subsidiary the United Land Company were fundamentally speculative land agents and developers, and it was in that spirit that they went about their business here.²³

The street layout for the first phase was the work of the society's Glaswegian surveyor James Wylson.²⁴ He devised a simple rectilinear grid of mostly east-west streets (Abyssinia, Cairns, Shelgate, Mallinson, Bennerley and Salcott Roads), many of them running uphill either side of a central north-south spine road (Northcote Road) built over the Falcon brook. (This put Northcote Road in a similar line to the two side-streets, Sydney Place and Swaby Road, then being built on the Chatham Road estate to the south, which enabled them to be joined together later as a single main road.) Mallinson,

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Bennerley and Salcott were the longest, running all the way from Wandsworth Common to the estate's eastern boundary at Mud or Pope's Lane, now Webb's Road.²⁵ (These three roads, as well as Shelgate Road and the later Wakehurst Road, were to be extended beyond Webbs Road as part of the development of the adjoining West Side estate in the 1880s.)

Construction began in 1868 and continued piecemeal throughout the 1870s and into the 1880s. Most of the houses west of Northcote Road went up *c.*1869–75, any gaps being filled during the late 1870s – though a few plots, such as 2–4 Shelgate Road, remained undeveloped till the 1890s. A second batch of freeholds came on sale in 1872, a third in 1875, this last group relating to houses east of Northcote Road, which by and large were built in the later 1870s and early 80s.²⁶ By then the population here was making good use of the rail link at Clapham Junction (opened 1863), as well as two new churches – St Mark's, Battersea Rise, and St Michael's, Chatham Road.

With the exception of the Northcote Hotel (*c.*1870) and a few shops, much of the earlier fabric built in Northcote Road in the late 1860s and 70s was, as in the side-streets, residential (e.g. the runs on the west side at Nos 32–40 and 70–86). But as building picked up here and on neighbouring estates, so this road, with its central position in the declivity of the Falcon brook, evolved into the district's main shopping street. Many houses were converted to shops in the late 1870s and 1880s, and new commercial terraces erected (e.g. Nos 23–31 and 87–99).²⁷ Most shops were small, catering for local domestic needs, especially food and clothing. Costermongers' stalls also appeared and eventually blossomed into a full-blown street market (see vol. 49). The arrival of banks in the late 1920s added to the high street character: the Midland at No. 10, and the Westminster at Nos 35 & 37, the latter with a classical stone façade.²⁸

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There is much variety to be found among the first houses built in these streets between 1869 and the mid-1870s. Wylson died in January 1870, when only a few had been begun, and neither he nor his successor, John Ashdown, exercised much control in terms of house size or elevational uniformity. Some of the first houses were tall and urban-looking, usually in an old-fashioned late-Georgian style (Ill. 18.6); others were smaller, in two-storey terraces. Most were built in short runs, few builders taking on more than a handful of houses at a time, and on the whole decoration was limited. Alfred Heaver's first Battersea houses, built in 1869–70 at 2–12 Bennerley Road, in partnership with Edward Coates, were of this type, and it is instructive to compare them with those he built seven years later at Nos 58–72, by which time he was acting also as a developer (Ill. 18.7). For by then a distinctive 'villa' style had evolved under Ashdown's surveyorship that was to become the hallmark of the estate and of much of Heaver's later work from the mid 1870s. This consisted of terraced or semi-detached houses tricked out in a livery of gault brick with banding and arches in a contrasting stock (or sometimes red) brick, interleaved with generous string-course ornaments – studs, nailheads and rosettes. Liberal over-painting has since exaggerated this gingerbread-house effect. (Heaver himself lived for a time at No. 72, which he dubbed 'The Homeland', the biggest and most finely detailed house in the row.)

The Bolingbroke Grove frontage, overlooking the common, attracted bigger, more valuable properties, generally similar in style, though there were some individualistic exceptions, of which the double-fronted, detached houses at Nos 92 & 93 stand out. The latter was erected in 1874 as Holly Lodge, extended in 1883 and 1894, and again in 1901 when it became the vicarage to St Michael's Church. Its more heavily decorated neighbour dates from 1882–3. Both were built for Harry Nelson Bowman Spink, a chemist based in Westminster, who lived at No. 9?²⁹

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Land at the southern end of the estate had remained vacant. In September 1875 Ashdown drew up plans for a continuation of Northcote Road and two further east–west streets leading off it (Wakehurst and Belleville Roads).³⁰ Just over an acre facing Webbs Road was taken by the London School Board as the site for a school, and work then began on houses in the adjoining parts of the new streets, between Northcote Road and Webbs Road. These were semi-detached villas, on more generous plots than usual, of about 20–24ft frontage.

The final phase of house-building – the laying out of the western ends of Belleville and Wakehurst Roads – took place in 1878–80 under Heaver, who cut his teeth as a developer here, buying all four acres from the CLS and leasing plots to investors or builders. Plans were provided by the architect William Clinch Poole (a resident of one of his ‘own’ houses in Belleville Road, the present No. 62), who following John Ashdown’s death in August 1878 became surveyor to the CLS and United Land Company, and thereafter was a regular associate of Heaver’s.³¹ The new roads just missed Bolingbroke Grove House, which was bought by the Rev. Erskine Clarke before it could be demolished and converted to a pay hospital and dispensary (later the Bolingbroke Hospital, see vol. 49). Unlike the roomier plots east of Northcote Road, overlooking Belleville Road School, the two-storey houses here were smaller, and built as long terraces, though designed with recesses (where the servants’ doors were located) to give the impression of semi-detached pairs. All were clothed in the by-now ubiquitous bay-windowed white-brick villa style. Similar though larger houses marked the ends of terraces, facing Bolingbroke Grove (e.g. Nos 80–81) and Northcote Road (Nos 108–118, originally Orlando Villas). In these later streets the presence of clerks and their families was more solid, as was the employment of resident servants.³²

Kelmscott and Bramfield Roads

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In 1889 Henry Nicholas Corsellis, the Wandsworth solicitor and developer, bought Grove House, the last of the Five Houses in private use. Confronted with a rectangular plot sandwiched between the gridded streets of the Conservative Land Society's estate and the Liberals' Chatham Road development, Corsellis's surveyor and builder William Stanbury followed suit, laying out two more east-west streets, with return frontages to Webb's Road and Bolingbroke Grove, both of which were widened at this point. At the same time Stanbury took the opportunity to extend Northcote Road further south.³³

Around 300 houses went up in 1890-5. Other than some flats at the east end of Kelmscott Road (Nos 104-110 and 113), built in 1894-5 by J. B. R. Meyring of Earlsfield, nearly all were in standard two-storey red-brick terraces, with double canted bays, and rather plain. Those built by the Stanbury family (e.g. 1-23 Bramfield Road and 2-24 & 19-33 Kelmscott Road), were lifted above the norm by foliage decoration to the window surrounds and iron cresting above the doors. William Stanbury himself lived for a time at 2 Kelmscott Road, a rare double-fronted house at the end of the terrace. Similar features reappeared in the two pairs they contributed (at Nos 72-75) to the rows of big, gabled three-storey houses built in 1890 facing the common, at 64-79 Bolingbroke Grove. (Those at Nos 76-79 were built by James George & Son of Clapham.)³⁴

With retailing now firmly established on Northcote Road, the frontages there were lined with parades of shops and flats, their tall, canted corner bays crowned by little gables offering a contrast to the shop conversions further north. The shorter parades at either end share the same simple stock-and-red-brick livery; the longer central stretches, at Nos 133-145 and 128-140, have a regular rhythm of tripartite first-floor windows crowned by stone-framed pediments, infilled with brick panels (Ill. 18.9). All date from 1896 and were

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the work of the same builder, E. J. Golds. A similar process had already taken place on the Webb's Road frontage, where in 1893–5 Meyring had erected plainer ranges of two- and three-storey shops with rooms above, at Nos 26–56.³⁵

Broomwood Road area

Broomwood (originally Broomfield) House, celebrated as William Wilberforce's residence at the height of his anti-slavery campaign, occupied a central position between the commons, standing amid 'charming wooded meadows and shrubberies'.³⁶ It was approached by a carriage-drive from Clapham Common that was eventually widened to become the eastern end of Broomwood Road and part of Kyrle Road. House-building on this large and important estate began in 1880 but was neither rapid nor immediately successful, occupying several developers for more than two decades. Yet it was a turning point. It heralded the spread eastwards towards Clapham Common in the late 1880s and 90s of yet more streets of housing on the sites of old villas. For the sake of completeness those other estates are also covered here (Ill. 18.10). Often more densely packed and homogeneous than hitherto, the later streets were increasingly the work of larger-scale builders, and brought to an end the golden era of detached mansions for wealthy residents strung out along the common's west side.

The process began in 1877 with the death of Sir Charles Forbes of Broomwood House. Within three years his executors had sold his estate, then known as Broomwood Park, along with part of the Dent's House estate and an adjoining house, The Elms, on Bolingbroke Grove, which Forbes had also acquired, to John Cobeldick, a Cornish land agent and builder living in Stockwell.³⁷

This was a big transaction for the time, Cobeldick paying £43,000 for around 41 acres. Layout plans had already been prepared by the architects Hammack & Lambert of Bishopsgate (Henry Hammack was one of Cobeldick's mortgagees). By 1881 builders were at work at the west ends of Broomwood and Honeywell Roads, and also in Wroughton Road, a north-south road linking up with Thurleigh Road on the Old Park estate. Small frontages to Bolingbroke Grove and Webb's Road were also included. Other new streets – Kyrle, Hillier, Devereux, Gayville and Montholme Roads – were laid out preparatory to building.³⁸

The earliest houses – e.g. those of c.1881–3 in Broomwood Road built by W. H. Steer at Nos 1–57 and Samuel Rashleigh at Nos 2–46, and in Wroughton Road at Nos 1–11 – illustrate well Cobeldick's original vision. These were good-sized two-storey houses on plots of over 20ft frontage, faced in white and stock brick (or very occasionally in red), with double-height canted bays, many of them arranged in semi-detached pairs and obviously aimed at a solid middle-class market (Ill. 18.11). Bigger still were the early houses of Honeywell Road, where among the semis were some large detached, double-fronted residences of a more advanced architectural design, with corbelled eaves, Gothic-style bargeboards, and carved heads to the door-surround pilasters. To begin with the families of clerks, government officials and civil servants predominated here, about half of them keeping a resident servant or two.³⁹

In all about 130 houses had risen by 1883, but only another forty or so materialized over the next three years, Cobeldick's plans having run into the sand. In 1886 he sold most of his undeveloped land for £45,000 to Thomas Ingram, Henry Bragg and James John Brown, three men well-versed in speculative development locally.⁴⁰

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Ingram and Bragg brought in new capital and building had resumed by 1887, most of the work concentrating at first in plugging the gaps in Broomwood, Honeywell and Wroughton Roads. The housing constructed there to around 1889 followed the existing patterns – being mostly terraces (as at 74–98 Broomwood Road and 2–28 Wroughton Road), or a mix of semi-detached and double-fronted (as at 77–95 Broomwood Road) – and much of it may have been partly built before Cobeldick sold up, as many leases were backdated to 1880.⁴¹ The architect William Newton Dunn, a frequent collaborator with Ingram and Bragg, took over the surveyorship of the estate, though his influence was probably minimal at first.

With these roads finally filling up, the new owners and their builders turned their attention to those parts of the estate left unattended by Cobeldick. Between 1889 and 1892 part of Kyrle Road and most of Hillier Road were lined with terraces, John Smith being the prominent builder. Devereux and Montholme Roads came next, in 1891–2, with Smith again much in evidence, followed finally in 1893–4 by Gayville Road. Elevationally there was little variety, the pale brick houses there resembling those already built. Only Devereux Road stands out, the unusually wide double-fronted houses on its west side, with frontages of 29–32ft, being generously decorated around their doors and windows, many with large moulded terracotta panels. Gayville Road, the last to be built, was faced entirely in red brick. By the close of 1894 the tally of houses had risen beyond 500, the only undeveloped plot left being the site of Broomwood House and its garden, which survived until 1904 (below).

In 1889 Cobeldick offloaded another five acres of vacant ground to Ingram, now apparently acting alone, for £7,520. This was at the eastern end of the estate, and here more houses went up in 1892–4 on the south side of Kyrle Road (Nos 2–20) and in a new north–south street called Ballingdon

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Road. All were built by Abel Playle of Clapham, and brought to an end this prolonged first phase of development in the Broomwood Road area.⁴²

There was little pause for breath before more housing followed. By 1888 Broadlands, a villa facing Clapham Common with grounds bordering the carriage-drive to Broomwood House, had come into the hands of H. N. Corsellis.⁴³ As early as March 1888 the Stanbury family had prepared for him a scheme for rows of houses along the north side of the drive, which was to be widened, but no real progress was made until revised plans were accepted by the LCC in 1895. In 1896–8 the Stanburys erected thirty-six terraced houses (Nos 152–222, originally Broadlands Terrace) in an eastern addition to Broomwood Road, which thus became the first of the area's new streets to extend fully from common to common. Most were similar to those built a few years earlier in Bramfield and Kelmscott Roads (above). But the row at the far east end (Nos 196–222, of 1896–7) was designed in an unusually exuberant Gothic Revival style (Ill. 18.12). This was probably the work of the builder William Stanbury's son, William Henry Stanbury, architect and surveyor, who at the time had just been made an Associate of the RIBA. He was then serving as a surveyor on the civil staff of the Royal Engineers, designing buildings at home and abroad for the War Department, and eventually rose to become an Inspector of Works and Lieutenant-Colonel. There are some vague similarities to his only known major work, the garrison church of St George in Tanglin, Singapore (1911).⁴⁴

Broadlands being the first of the old West Side villas to come down, the Stanburys exploited its fine outlook with a range of larger, three-storey houses near the corner with Broomwood Road, facing the common (now 61–67 consec. Clapham Common West Side, 1895–6). Three acres of ground north of Broomwood Road, formerly a meadow attached to Broadlands, appears to have been part of Corsellis's purchase but was left undeveloped until he returned to the area later in the 1890s to buy up more land.⁴⁵

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By advancing Broomwood Road eastwards to Clapham Common, Corsellis cleaved open the fields and gardens to either side for further development. Those to the south went first. In 1896 Thomas Ingram returned to augment his earlier work, buying the four villas and sixteen acres of grounds facing the common south of Broomwood Road – The Grange, Leveson Lodge, Broxash and a fourth unnamed house, formerly the residence of a Captain Percy Brown (old 31 West Side). W. N. Dunn once more served as planner, extending Kyrle Road to the common, accompanied by two more long east-west roads to its south (Broxash and Manchuria), and a short north-south stub (Amner Road) that took a 90-degree turn westwards to join up with Ingram's Broomwood Park estate at Ballingdon and Wroughton Roads. (This return leg was later renamed as the western arm of Roseneath Road.) Also, the vacant south-eastern stretch of Broomwood Road was completed with the construction in 1898–1900 of more terraces (Nos 155–223); and, under some pressure from the LCC, Ingram and Dunn extended the improved roadway at Clapham Common West Side a little further south than originally intended, to their estate's southern boundary, erecting further ranges of three-storey houses (Nos 46–60). The biggest builders were John Smith and Henry Bragg & Son.⁴⁶

The reduced scale of the housing built in this phase in 1897–1904 suggests that change had come between the commons, both architecturally and demographically. Though well-built, there was little to inspire in the long, monotonous red-brick terraces of Kyrle (c.1897–1901), Broxash (c.1900–2) and Manchuria (c.1902–4) Roads. Ingram and Dunn seem now to have been bent on maximizing the income from ground-rents, the housing density here – at twenty-four per acre – being by far the highest in the area at the time.⁴⁷ It was only in some of the shorter rows of bigger houses overlooking the common – such as 54–60 Clapham Common West Side, designed and built by the Stanburys – that any variety of style crept in. Charles Booth's

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investigators in 1899 found the houses at this end of Broomwood Road 'not so good as the old', judging the new district's inhabitants to range from the moderately poor to the fairly comfortable. Tradesmen and shopkeepers came here in greater numbers, heads of household of the early 1900s including joiners and carpenters, grocers and tailors, even a dairyman and fruit salesman.⁴⁸

Ingram died in 1901, before completing the estate, and later leases were issued by his wife Matilda and son Thomas. Another son, William, trained as an architect and surveyor, and may have been responsible for the ground plans and possibly elevations to some of the houses.⁴⁹

Building on the estate was essentially finished by 1904, though the eastern arm of Roseneath Road, beyond Amner Road, was not built up with housing until the eve of war in 1913–14. Though the houses of the north side (Nos 3–41) were designed by different architects (Chapple & Utting) to those on the south (Nos 52–88, by J. J. Freeland), all share similar features, such as shaped door panels, good-quality stained-glass and pretty Art Nouveau wooden porches (Ill. 18.13).⁵⁰

Meanwhile, by 1898 Corsellis had reappeared, with the Stanburys again in tow, when he acquired Beechwood, the former residence of Sir George Pollock. In development terms this was a small plot, of about 1½ acres, allowing room for no more than half-a-dozen three-storey houses facing the common (75–76 & 77–80 Clapham Common West Side) framing the entrance to a short stub of a side street, where twenty-one terraced houses were built in 1900–1 by William Henry George, another of Corsellis's favourite builders, as Culmstock Road (now Nos 1–19 and 2–22). At the same time Corsellis laid out a second, longer road (Winsham Grove) on the three-acre field to the south, where George in 1898–1900 erected a further sixty or so houses, as well as more at 68–70 & 71–74 Clapham Common West Side. Two

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more occupied the east side of a short link road (1 & 3 Adderley Grove). Most were red-brick terraces which, though monotonous in such large numbers, were of George's usual good quality, redeemed by foliage decoration to the door and window surrounds, and stained-glass door panels.⁵¹

Finally, in 1904, Broomwood House was demolished and a lease of its ground agreed with John Smith for thirty of his trademark red-brick houses — nine on the south side of Broomwood Road (Nos 97-111), and eleven each at 61-81 Hillier Road and 62-82 Wroughton Road. By and large his work was completed during 1905. These had a standard Victorian plan of two rooms per floor, with a two-storey back addition containing a kitchen, scullery and WC on the ground floor, a third bedroom, bathroom and second WC above. No. 111 Broomwood Road was the only exception, having a slightly wider frontage than the rest, a larger than usual kitchen and a tiled scullery, having been built by Smith 'specially' for its owner, Miss Florence G. E. Higgins, professor of music at Trinity College. It was whilst Smith was building these houses that the LCC decided to honour Wilberforce with a commemorative plaque in the flank wall of No. 111 (Ill. 18.14).⁵²

Nightingale Lane to Bolingbroke Grove

Thurleigh Road–Nightingale Lane area

Until the late 1860s the area north of Nightingale Lane today bounded by Thurleigh Avenue and Rusham Road was an estate of fields attached to the mansion known as Old Park. In contrast to the closely packed streets of terraced houses that grew up to its north, this area's Victorian development

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was characterized by substantial houses in generous grounds – a direct result of the estate owners' strict leasing and selling policy, which prescribed only detached or semi-detached houses and stables.⁵³ Despite later infill and rebuilding, the area is still distinguished from its close neighbours by some unusually large properties.

In February 1866 the Old Park estate was purchased by J. J. Welch and H. P. Hughes, a City warehouse manager and wool-broker respectively, who within a month had mortgaged it to the auctioneers Debenham, Tewson & Farmer, and commissioned a simple street layout from the architects Wimble & Taylor. This comprised four new roads – Thurleigh, Sudbrooke, Westerdale (now Ramsden) and Winchelsea (now Rusham) – and a widened Nightingale Lane. That April, Welch and Hughes tried but failed to sell at auction the only real plum – the old house and its grounds – and so in 1868 agreed instead to its purchase by Edward Tewson, one of their mortgagees. Thereafter the mansion remained in separate ownership and was let to tenants for the remaining twenty-five years of its life.⁵⁴

Welch and Hughes then began auctioning off freehold plots for house-building. This began in two phases in 1867 and 1869 with the sale of ground fronting Nightingale Lane – a main route where large mansions were already in existence on the opposite (Balham) side, where more were going up: such as Ferndale, of 1865–6, home of the sanitary-ware manufacturer George Jennings; and Helensburgh, built around 1864 by William Higgs for the Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon, replacing an earlier house of the same name. Spurgeon had been drawn by the area's 'secludedness', but this was fast disappearing as builders continued to make inroads; adverts for the Old Park estate sales stressed the 'great demand' now for high-class housing 'in this favourite neighbourhood'.⁵⁵

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The first houses built on the Battersea side *c.*1868–72 were big detached or semi-detached villas, in the pale brick and stucco neo-Italianate style that had populated so much of London's environs in recent years. Nos 42–44, 46–48 and 50, built and developed by Higgs, and No. 74, designed by Rowland Plumbe for a wealthy jeweller (covered separately below), are the best survivors from this first phase (Ill. 18.15). Also of note was Dudley House at No. 56, the first of several speculative houses built in the area for John King Farlow, a City solicitor (also discussed below). One other large house of the period, now long gone, was Beecholme, set well back from the road (on the site of the present Holmside Road), built around 1870 for the banker and economist William Newmarch.⁵⁶

Further development was steady but slow, confidence having been knocked by the recession of the late 1860s. More good-sized Italianate semis went up in the mid-to-late 1870s, at Nos 78–84 and 90–96. Active in the area at this time was the Kingsland builder Stephen Hayworth, who in 1875–7 erected two more large detached houses on Nightingale Lane (Nos 86 & 88, now demolished), and several big semis round the corner in Rusham Road, at Nos 11–19, 23 & 25 (demolished), and 22 & 24. All were built for J. K. Farlow.⁵⁷ These houses were popular with merchants, for whom large families and two or three domestic servants were the norm.⁵⁸ All were probably the work of the architect Robert Pledge Notley, to whom Farlow was related, or his younger brother Frederick Charles Notley; the latter designed another pair of similar houses in Rusham Road for Farlow in 1878 (Nos 12 & 14). Their father John H. Notley, a builder, also erected several of Farlow's houses.⁵⁹ Roomy gardens allowed for later additions, such as billiard rooms, which were a popular late-Victorian embellishment in the area, and indicative of its social composition.

Building continued throughout the 1880s and 90s. James Holloway erected a fine white-brick double-fronted cottage in 1881 on the east side of Rusham Road (Ivy Dene, No. 16), designed by the architect Edward Witts for

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James H. Bartlett, a lamp and lustre maker. A few years later some 1,000ft of frontage on the north side of Thurleigh Road was taken by Charles Edward Smith, a Pimlico land agent, who in 1885–7 embarked upon a series of large detached houses in spacious plots (of which Nos 87, 89 and 117 survive), as well as semi-detached houses on narrower plots (Nos 95–103).⁶⁰ Generally these were of good-quality red brick, if rather plain except for hood-moulded lancet doorway arches. His biggest house, The Priory, was demolished in the 1930s for 105–115 Thurleigh Road (below).

Other houses of this period include the pair of red brick and stone semis at 68 & 70 Nightingale Lane, built in 1885 by William Smith, each with a first-floor billiard room; and Parkhurst, at 25 Sudbrooke Road, an attractive design of 1888–9 in red-brick and tile by the architect Frederick Wheeler for William Henry Cressy Hammond, a lithographer. Also in the area in the 1890s were the Stanbury family, who in 1896 erected one of their characteristically stylish rows of tall houses at 67–77 Thurleigh Road.⁶¹ But the major development in the area at this time was the creation of Old Park Avenue.

Old Park Avenue. Increasingly hemmed in by new building, Old Park House and its grounds finally fell in the early 1890s, to be replaced by a new side-street of good-class houses linking Nightingale Lane with Ramsden Road. In this case the developers were the solicitor-partners William White Palmer and Reuben Winder. They bought the house in December 1889 from Edward H. Thompson, a Clapham land agent who had been submitting plans for a new road here since March 1888.⁶²

About thirty tall and generously accommodated three-storey houses were jammed into a relatively narrow curving road (Ill. 18.16). A few were detached, but most were terraced, though planned to look from the street like

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semi-detached villas. This layout, and the liberal use of red brick and hung tiles, gave Old Park Avenue a whiff of Bedford Park, which blossomed into a more full-blown Queen Anne Revival in the five freer stock-brick houses built at its southern end, facing Nightingale Lane (Nos 32–40, Ill. 18.17). Detailed layout designs were provided by the architects N. S. Joseph & Smithem (later involved with Winder at Winders Road), and the good-quality elevations here are probably their handiwork.⁶³

The builders of Old Park Avenue were Robert Francis Saker of Kennington, who began first, building Nos 1–7 and 2–12 at its south end in 1889–93; and David Kettle, of Vardens Road, Battersea, who between c.1894 and 1900 put up Nos 14–36 and 9–23 (17 & 19 have since been demolished). Early residents followed the usual pattern, with the families of stockbrokers, bank managers, civil servants and engineers to the fore, all with one or two domestic servants. A Blue Plaque at 40 Nightingale Lane commemorates the humourist and cartoonist H. M. Bateman, who moved here from Clapham with his parents in 1910, at the age of 23. The area provided rich pickings for his satirical exposés of middle-class suburban manners.⁶⁴

Later developments, from the 1890s. While Old Park Avenue was going up there were still large gaps on the estate. The swathe of land between Sudbrooke and Thurleigh Roads, for instance, though it had houses at its west end, facing Rusham Road, was still mostly open ground, turned over to allotments.⁶⁵ But from about 1900 local house-builders gradually filled the gaps, and in so doing brought a variety of neo-Tudor architecture to the area more usually associated with the capital's outer suburbs. Some of the Metroland-style semis of the late 1920s and 30s still look a little out of place; but the better-quality houses of twenty years earlier sit well with their Victorian neighbours, and with the generous gardens and planting lend the district much of its agreeable character.

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Firstly, houses were built on virgin sites, such as the allotments, which began to fill up from the early 1900s. Then 'garden-building' took off, particularly on the south side of Sudbrooke Road, which hitherto had been taken up mostly by grounds belonging to the detached mansions of Nightingale Lane. Later, as the out-of-fashion Victorian properties came on the market, second-generation development also became a factor.

Houses from the turn of the century include the well-proportioned red-brick and tile vicarage for St Luke's Church at 192 Ramsden Road, designed by John S. Quilter and built in 1901 by Lathey Brothers; and 57–61 Thurleigh Road, a nice trio in red brick and white stucco with cast-iron balconettes, designed by the local architect Henry Branch and built in 1902 by John Nicks, who was also responsible for the adjoining semis at Nos 63 & 65, as well as a rare block of flats at Nos 31–33 (Thurleigh Mansions), of 1899, where Nicks himself lived.⁶⁶

Thurleigh Road is also rich in some quirky late-Victorian and Edwardian houses designed by the Norfolk-born architect Herbert Bignold, who was based in Battersea in the 1890s and early 1900s. These range from rows of lively semis built in 1903–4 at 11–24 Sudbrooke Road and 40–66 Thurleigh Road, to the big, detached neo-Tudor houses at 86 and 123 Thurleigh Road, of 1897–8. Of red brick, with large half-timbered gables projecting on corbels, the latter recall the vernacular architecture of Bignold's native East Anglia (Ill. 18.18). Each also has its own date or name plaque. These and other characteristic features recur on a reduced scale at 76 Thurleigh Road, of 1902, which therefore must also be by Bignold, as probably is the adjoining pair of semis at 78 & 80, built at the same time and by the same builder. But Bignold's major work here is the large red-brick and stucco Art Nouveau house at No. 68 (originally Kenmara), built in 1901–2 for Sidney Joe Tavener, of the family who ran the Falcon Tavern at Clapham

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Junction (Ill. 18.19). The prominent corner tower is apparently a later addition, of 1906. Bignold also designed two smaller houses in a similar style in 1906 for plots on the north side of the road, at Nos 87A & 89A.⁶⁷

By 1911 Edwin Evans & Sons had bought up six acres on Sudbrooke Road, where in 1912 three pairs of large semis were erected at Nos 1–6, followed in 1915 by Sudbrooke Lodge (now 185 Ramsden Road), a large detached house, of red and brown brick in a neo-Georgian manner, designed by Edgar J. George.⁶⁸

After the First World War infill and redevelopment continued. Houses of the 1920s include semis at 7–10A Sudbrooke Road (1923), and 32 & 33 (1925), the latter pair designed by the Balham architect Albert G. Hastilow. On the south side of the road, Nos 29–30 and No. 27 were added in 1926 and 1929 respectively in the former back gardens of mansions in Nightingale Lane.⁶⁹

Perhaps the best example of second-generation development is the small group of houses at the south end of Rusham Road. Those on the west side, at 1–7 Rusham Road, were built in 1934–6 for Glassner & Glassner to designs by Cecil Codrington in an imaginative Arts & Crafts neo-Tudor style, with plentiful half-timbering (Ill. 18.20). Though they have the appearance of small, intimate dwellings, these were four-bedroom houses, with the fourth bedroom tucked away in a rear attic, facing the garden, and rear drawing-rooms with French doors. The similar pairs on the east side (Nos 2–10A) and the adjoining house at 88 Nightingale Lane were built slightly later, in 1936–7, by Fawcett & Co. Ltd of Spencer Park, Wandsworth, on the site of one of J. K. Farlow's big houses of the 1870s. Fawcett & Co. were also responsible for the similar-looking houses at 60–61 Sudbrooke Road, of 1937, and a year later converted Wheeler's house at 25 Sudbrooke Road to flats, at the same time building a small three-bedroom house adjoining in its grounds, at No. 25A, complete with a maid's room and integral garage.⁷⁰

Mention should also be made of the *moderne* semis of 1934–6 at 105–115 Thurleigh Road, with curving brick-and-render façades and Crittall windows; and also of the fine red-brick house at 59 Sudbrooke Road, designed by Ley, Colbeck & Partners on part of the rear garden of Dudley House, 56 Nightingale Lane. This combines an old-fashioned neo-Georgian style with modern Crittall type windows, and included a roomy lounge, dining room and entrance hall on the ground floor, as well as a built-in garage.⁷¹

Infill and redevelopment has continued in Sudbrooke Road since the war, more than on the other streets of the former Old Park estate, bringing a rare variety in date, size and style to its housing (see also page ##).

56 Nightingale Lane and the Coach House. Originally known as Dudley House, 56 Nightingale Lane is a good-sized three-storey and basement villa of 1869–70, of pale gault brick with stock and red brick dressings, designed for the developer John King Farlow, probably by Robert Pledge Notley, a relation (Ill. 18.21). The name was popular with the Notley family. Robert's father, the builder J. H. Notley, lived and worked in what appears to have been one of his own speculations called Dudley Place and Villas on the Clapham Road, Stockwell, so it seems likely that he also built Dudley House. Its first owner, Henry Clifford Green, a wine merchant, added to it immediately, commissioning Notley to design detached stables and coach-house wings in a similar style for vacant land next to the house, with a covered yard between them.⁷² Though long converted to other uses, the stable block retains several of its original fittings: tongue-and-groove panelled and honeycomb-tiled walls, patterned cast-iron columns and a tiled floor with cast-iron drainage channels.

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Around 1886 the house was purchased by James O'Connor, a well-off Irish commission agent and horse-trainer with a business in Blackfriars (later at Piccadilly) as well as a racing stables, The Commons, near Cashel in County Tipperary. O'Connor renamed Dudley House as Mount Cashel and lived there with his wife and an orphaned nephew, James Ryan, also from the Cashel district of Tipperary, where the O'Connor and Ryan families were closely linked. Ryan followed his uncle into the bookmaking business and by 1891 had taken his surname, becoming James Ryan O'Connor.⁷³

James O'Connor died at Nightingale Lane in 1897, leaving a personal fortune of over £120,000 in addition to his London and Irish properties, which were inherited by James Ryan O'Connor, who by then had married and moved to Putney. He took control of his uncle's betting and stables empire, and with his new-found wealth in 1898 commissioned a marble altar for the recently built chapel at Rockwell College in Cashel in memory of his parents.⁷⁴ He also moved into Mount Cashel at Nightingale Lane and immediately set about improvements there. Between 1898 and 1900 several additions were made to the house, including extensions to the side and rear, the latter originally including a private dynamo house to furnish electric light. But it is the top-lit billiard room he added above the stable-block, formerly linked to the dining room in the main house, that stands out; the high quality and exceptional lavishness of its interior has recently earned it listed building status. The identities of J. R. O'Connor's architect and decorators are not known, though it is evident that the billiard room was built in 1898-9 by the well-known contractor (Sir) James Carmichael (d.1934), then based near by in Trinity Road.⁷⁵

The stable block's modified exterior was embellished with soft red-brick dressings and a terracotta frieze incorporating swag motifs above the billiard room's south-facing windows (Ill. 18.21). But these give little indication of the opulent Baroque decor within. Ionic pilasters support a

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cornice, above which sits a high coved ceiling rising to a central lantern light, set with stained glass depicting, among other things, saddles, horses' heads, and putti playing billiards. All is a riot of heavy rococo fibrous plasterwork, including, in the ceiling, painted relief roundels of what appears to be O'Connor himself in various sporting guises (Ills 18.22a-f). An arched inglenook at the north end contains a fireplace (with a replacement surround). This was more than just a private billiard room, and presumably was intended by O'Connor for entertaining and impressing his wealthy clientele. Some of the spaces between the pilasters are filled with large, well-executed wall-paintings of hunting, equestrian and coaching scenes, most of them again featuring O'Connor and his family, in settings reminiscent of the flat landscape around the village of Rosegreen, outside Cashel, where he kept a holiday home, near to The Commons stables. This was also the new name he gave to his improved house (sometimes Roes-green) in 1899. The paintings may have been added at a later date: one has a carriage with young girls, possibly O'Connor's daughters, but if so must have been painted nearer to the family's departure from Nightingale Lane in 1908.

In that year O'Connor sold up to John Scott, secretary to a railway contracting company, whose family remained at the house until the 1930s. Later in life O'Connor returned to Cashel, where he died in 1929 worth only around £300, after a lifetime of gambling.⁷⁶

The house later became a day nursery and remained so until 1982 when it was converted to flats, and four new dwellings were erected to its rear (Earlthorpe Mews). The coachman's house became a separate dwelling and the stable-block and billiard room were made into a private home, now known as the Coach House.⁷⁷

Broomwood Hall School for Girls, 74 Nightingale Lane. Broomwood Hall is one of several institutions to have made a home among the large private mansions of the 1860s that constituted the earliest phase of building development on Nightingale Lane. Still recognizable within its greatly extended frontage is the original house, a rare survival of the private domestic work of the architect Rowland Plumbe, better known today for his commercial and public buildings, and blocks of philanthropic housing.

Plumbe designed the house in 1869 for Joseph Lindner, a Viennese jeweller and goldsmith based in Berwick Street, Soho. Far from the first rank of his profession, Lindner could only have afforded such a commission through the inheritance of his wife Ann, a daughter of John Inderwick, the wealthy tobacco merchant, importer, and developer of (among other things) the Inderwick Estate in Kensington New Town. The chronology itself is suggestive: John Inderwick died in 1867 with an estate valued at nearly £100,000; Lindner married Ann the following year; in 1869 he applied for naturalization, a prerequisite to owning freehold property in England; and the house was built for him by J. J. Wilson c.1870–3. The construction costs alone were over £3,000.⁷⁸

The style employed by Plumbe was a pale, gault-brick Italian Gothic, with a prominent eye-catcher of a tower (Ills 18.23, 24), entirely in keeping with the big houses already going up on Nightingale Lane. There is much fine-quality High Victorian decoration, notably in the carved stone window and door arches, and also the polished granite columns and piers incorporated into the porch and window-surrounds. The style is also reminiscent of East Coast America, where Plumbe had been assistant to Frederick C. Withers, an English émigré architect in New York, before returning to England and private practice in 1860.⁷⁹

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Known from the first as Fairseat, the house was comfortable but not excessive, with four reception rooms, two of which opened on to a rear garden terrace, four family and guest bedrooms, and a top-lit billiard room and servants' rooms in an attic storey. Joseph and Ann Lindner were the sole occupants, generally with no more than two resident servants; and this impression of a quiet, withdrawn lifestyle is emphasized by the extraordinary sham medieval boundary walls that Lindner built around the house to thwart prying eyes, and which must have severely impaired the light to the house built next door (at No. 78) in 1879–80. Lindner died in 1889, and his widow stayed on at Fairseat until her death in 1902. The house then passed to her nephew, Edward Inderwick, who resided there from 1905 until 1918, when it was sold at auction.⁸⁰

Empty by about 1930, it has been in institutional use ever since. In 1932–6 it was home to the BBC's Research Department, then, from 1940, to the National Union of Printers, who made the first of many additions, erecting a two-storey and basement extension at the east end of the house.⁸¹ Subsequent alterations when in office use in the 1970s included an unsympathetic third storey (which destroyed the original roof line), a further eastern extension wing, and the removal of nearly all the internal walls – though none of this was considered destructive enough to prevent the building being listed in 1983. Conversion to a private girls' school came in 1987–8, and since then building work has been more sensitive, and confined mostly to the rear and basement. In 2008–10 a large theatre and assembly hall was constructed across the upper floor to designs by James Dinwiddie, of Dinwiddie MacLaren Architects. Its principal feature is a curved timber and stainless steel roof, largely hidden from street view behind the existing parapet.⁸² The school's success has seen it expand into other neighbouring former houses, at 68–70 and 50 Nightingale Lane, and St Luke's Vicarage on Ramsden Road.

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Houses by E. R. Robson in Bolingbroke Grove & Blenkarne Road

Today four large, detached Queen Anne Revival houses overlook Wandsworth Common at 23–26 Bolingbroke Grove, complemented by two more stock-and-red-brick mansions round the corner at 5 & 7 Blenkarne Road. All were part of a rare sortie into the planning of superior estate housing by the architect E. R. Robson at a time in the mid 1870s when he was busy in his role as architect to the School Board for London.

Robson's work here was formerly greater in extent (Ill. 18.25). He was responsible for two other large houses south of Blenkarne Road, both since demolished; and further down Bolingbroke Grove at No. 8 is a detached house set well back from the roadway which, despite standing so far apart, belongs to the same group. Built at the same time and in the same materials, it shows clear signs of Robson's handiwork.

Robson's involvement at what seems an inopportune time is explained by his relationship with the developer, Charles Edward Appleby.⁸³ Described variously as a coal-master or mining engineer, Appleby came from the Yorkshire family of coalmen and ironfounders who owned Renishaw Colliery in Derbyshire, where he himself worked for a time. His immediate family hailed from the same district of Sheffield as another big iron-and-coal dynasty, the Longdens, to whom they were connected by marriage. Robson, himself a Yorkshireman, became part of this extended family in 1861 when he married Mary Ann Longden (thereafter Marian or Marianne). The ties must have run deep: Marianne Robson's sister Amelia had the middle name Appleby, as did Robson's own son, the architect Philip A. Robson.

By 1872 Appleby had come south to London and set up in business as a civil engineer, apparently sharing Robson's office at 20 Great George Street, Westminster. In August 1875 he launched himself into speculative

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development with the purchase at nearly £18,000 of twenty-one acres of the former Dent estate, between the Falcon Brook and Wandsworth Common. The land was mostly empty fields, with a farm (Dent's Farm) in its south-west corner, and had good frontages to both Nightingale Lane and Bolingbroke Grove, the latter running for about a quarter of a mile alongside the common.⁸⁴

Shortly before the sale, Robson produced a basic street-plan with a single new road leading eastwards off Bolingbroke Grove then taking a curve in the form of a small crescent before heading south to join Nightingale Lane. There were no subsidiary roads. The MBW approved of this, but changed Robson's suggested name for the new road, Nightingale Grove, to Blenkarne Road. By November 1875 Robson had populated the plan with sixteen detached residences on Bolingbroke Grove, and thirty-six pairs of semi-detached houses along the other frontages, all on generous plots.⁸⁵

Before building got under way, Appleby sold a large plot on Bolingbroke Grove of 100ft frontage to Marjory Jane Peddie, a wealthy spinster and retired headmistress, for whom Robson designed the biggest of all his houses here (now No. 26). Appleby offset the £900 purchase price against his mortgage debts of £10,000, and Robson had a perspective view and a puff published in the *Building News*, which the two men must have hoped would excite interest. Miss Peddie's house was described as the 'first of a series of houses in the old English Style, somewhat incorrectly called "Queen Anne"'.⁸⁶

Christened Linden Lodge by Miss Peddie, the house was set back elegantly some 120ft from the roadway behind a carriage drive, and enjoyed over an acre and a half of garden and grounds (Ill. 18.26).⁸⁷ Inside, her accommodation included, on the ground floor, a library, dining-room and large L-shaped drawing-room with a bay window; upstairs were four

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bedrooms, a dressing-room and bathroom, with further rooms on a smaller second floor. Kitchen facilities and servants' quarters were provided by Robson in what was essentially a separate two-storey cottage attached to the west wall of the main three-storey house.

With this plot gone, Robson revised his street plan, moving the entrance to Blenkarne Road 100ft further south, and, perhaps encouraged by the sale of Miss Peddie's house, increased the size of the nearby plots to accommodate similarly large properties. Three were planned between Blenkarne Road and Miss Peddie's (now 23–25 Bolingbroke Grove), with frontages of about 65–70ft, and two more tucked behind them in Blenkarne Road itself (now Nos 5 & 7). A sixth and seventh stood south of Blenkarne Road: Haresfield, in a contrasting half-timbered 'Early English' style (see Ill. 18.27), and Elmhurst (both are now demolished).⁸⁸ Another site, south of Elmhurst, seems also to have been reserved for sale to a private owner, but was to remain vacant throughout the time that Appleby and Robson were connected with the estate. (It was later sold to Edmund John Spiers, who built a very large house here called Westwood Tower, 19 Bolingbroke Grove, in 1883–4, by which time Roy Road, now part of Thurleigh Road, had been planned to run along its southern flank.) At this stage only a single house, a double-fronted one called The Cottage (the present 8 Bolingbroke Grove), had been designed by Robson for the estate's southern reaches.⁸⁹

All of Robson's houses were built in 1876–8, mostly by Samuel J. Jerrard of Lewisham, a contractor with whom Robson had established a good relationship in his work for the School Board. Only 23 Bolingbroke Grove, the last of the houses to be constructed, was by another builder, Joseph Thompson of Camberwell Green. While the houses were going up, Appleby took the opportunity to borrow more money, extending his mortgage debts to £14,000.⁹⁰

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Such houses were well suited for the era's upper middle classes but perhaps Wandsworth Common was a step too far. For other than Miss Peddie's, none seems to have taken immediately. And when she died in 1879 her house was bought not by a private owner but by a school for the blind (later Linden Lodge School); it has been in educational use ever since. Its first neighbours in 1880 were the Misses Cazenove at Elmhurst, Archibald Stuart Wortley (presumably the painter of that name, d.1905) at Haresfield, who was keen to sell his lease; and Horace Mann in Blenkarne Road.⁹¹ With four of these six big properties still vacant in May 1881, Appleby cut his losses and tried to dispose of everything in two auction sales: one for the existing houses, a second for the remaining vacant land. But only one house took – 24 Bolingbroke Grove, for £2,000 – and so more sales were required.⁹²

Eventually, in June 1882, Appleby sold the remaining undeveloped thirteen acres or so for £19,710 to Thomas Ingram, Henry Bragg and Frederick Snelling. About half of the purchase money was used to pay off Appleby's mortgage debts. Ingram and Bragg went on to finish Blenkarne Road and develop the rest of the estate in the later 1880s with new streets of smaller houses (see *Gorst and Morella Roads*, below). Appleby stayed on in London as a civil engineer for a while, but also became the owner of the Tamar Firebrick & Clay Company, in Calstock, Cornwall, where he died in 1890, aged 55.⁹³

As for the later history of the Robson houses, by and large they eventually achieved their intended status as single family residences, and held on to it for a time. No. 8 Bolingbroke Grove (by then known as Rockfield) was bought in 1885 by the architect J. T. Wimperis, who divided his home life between this house and another in Sackville Street, Westminster. Residents of the bigger houses at 23–25 Bolingbroke Grove in the 1890s and early 1900s included Thomas Berry, a land agent, and Albert Puckle, a stockbroker's agent; those in Blenkarne Road were in the occupation of a drug merchant and a wealthy South Australian.⁹⁴

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Since then such extensive properties have lent themselves to institutional use or subdivision as flats. Westwood Tower at No. 19 and Elmhurst at No. 20 were used for a time in the 1910s as retreats for alcoholics. Both were purchased in 1920 by Battersea Borough Council and converted to a maternity home, the Battersea Maternity Home or Hospital. Having suffered blast damage during the war, they were demolished around 1948 and the flats of Lane Court built on their sites.⁹⁵

Today only 5 Blenkarne Road and 26 Bolingbroke Grove remain undivided, the latter as Northcote Lodge Preparatory School for Boys. Both still convey a sense of the high quality of housing that Appleby and Robson intended to bring to the area. Since 1966 the pair at 23 & 24 Bolingbroke Grove have been maintained as flats for Christian Scientists by the Bow Housing Society; Nos 8 and 25 are now also split into flats. Robson's influence is still felt also in Nightingale Park Crescent, for although he built no houses here, the feature of the crescent itself – the only real piece of what might be termed town planning in the area between the commons – was central to his first plans of July 1875.⁹⁶

The present 1 & 3 Blenkarne Road, two large detached houses of c.1925 in a colonial neo-Georgian idiom, were developed as a piece of infill on part of the long rear garden of 23 Bolingbroke Grove. The plans were provided by Robins & Hine, a firm of Westminster auctioneers.⁹⁷

Gorst and Morella Roads area

In the early 1880s more land with frontages overlooking Wandsworth Common, once part of the Dent family's holdings, was covered with housing.

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Firstly Dent's House and its five-acre garden, south of Broomwood Road, was acquired in 1881 by James Walker Everidge, a Kennington builder, who with the help of the architect Charles Bentley laid out on its site a single, U-shaped side-road, doubling back on itself to re-emerge further down Bolingbroke Grove. All was to have been called Dent's Road, but in 1883 the MBW insisted that the northern stretch and eastern curve be separately named Gorst Road (after the house's last resident, John Eldon Gorst). Construction took place in 1882–4, Everidge building several houses himself, including 1–10 Dent's Road and nine more facing the common at 27–35 Bolingbroke Grove. The biggest builders, however, were John Smith of Stockwell and James King of Plough Lane.⁹⁸

The characteristic house-type here was the good-sized two-storey semi-detached 'villa', usually with a third storey in a gable above the double canted bays (Ill. 18.29). Most had carved-leaf decoration to their door and window surrounds, ornamental Gothick bargeboards and other touches, though with enough variation to suggest that the builders, or their architects, had some freedom under Bentley's overall control. In addition, at the east end of Gorst Road are some standard two-storey terraced and semi-detached houses (Nos 29–59).

The Nightingale Park estate was the name given to the fourteen acres left vacant from C. E. Appleby's unfinished development in and around Bolingbroke Grove. It was acquired in 1882 by Thomas Ingram and Henry Bragg, on this occasion acting, at least initially, in partnership with another South London builder, Frederick Snelling. As in Dent's Road, designs were supplied by Bentley, and there are similarities between the estates.

Bentley modified the layout plan devised by E. R. Robson for Appleby, making room for smaller houses in greater numbers by reducing Blenkarne Road's southern arm to a stump, off-setting a new north–south link road

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(Estcourt Road, since 1912 known as Hendrick Avenue) further east, closer to the estate boundary, and introducing three new east-west roads connecting with Bolingbroke Grove – Granard, Morella and Roy Roads (see Ill. 18.25). The last was in line with Thurleigh Road (on the Old Park estate), but was originally planned to curve south into Hendrick Avenue, with houses cutting across the west end of Thurleigh Road. At the last minute the vicar of Battersea, J. Erskine Clarke, paid £100 for these house-plots, enabling Roy and Thurleigh Roads to run in continuation as one and so allow easier access to the new St Luke's Church from the western parts of its district. (The houses built as Roy Road are now 1-29 and 2-30 Thurleigh Road.) The derivation of the street-names, suggested by Henry Bragg, is unknown other than for Morella Road, which commemorates Marianne Richards, a descendant of an owner of one of the Five Houses, who in 1850 married a controversial Carlist general, Field-Marshal Don Ramón Cabrera, Count de Morella.⁹⁹

Construction began in 1882 in Granard Road, where all the houses were built by Thomas Robertson of Upper Tooting; these were mostly terraced on the north side but semi-detached on the south, where they resemble those built under Bentley in Gorst Road and Dent's Road. Those at the west end (Nos 2-20), of white brick faced with stocks or red brick faced with gaults, have fine features – iron cresting, urns, decorative bargeboards, and verandas of zinc supported on slender cast-iron columns. Similar houses started going up in Morella and Estcourt Roads by 1883, but eventually more builders brought greater variety. Most were big, three-storey houses with a smattering of Queen Anne Revival detailing. Robertson was also responsible in 1883-5 for the red-brick semis with stock brick dressings and decorative date swags on Nightingale Lane, of which Nos 118-130 survive today. And contemporary with these is the generously decorated terrace around the corner at 1-7 Bolingbroke Grove built by John Miller of Clapham, with hung tiles to the attic gables, panels of moulded brick, coloured glass, and little gables to the door porches (Ill. 18.30).¹⁰⁰

For once Ingram and Bragg may have overstretched, for in 1885 they sold off some land to their own builders. David Kettle acquired a strip on the north side of Roy Road, where in 1886–7 he built seven large detached houses (now 1–13 Thurleigh Road), in a stock-and-red brick Queen Anne style, with very fine quality red-brick porches. Early plans for these were provided by James Andrew, architect. Kettle also took the remaining frontage on Bolingbroke Grove, where he was already erecting some of the area's best houses, in two groups of detached and semi-detached villas at Nos 9–13 & 14–18 (Ill. 18.31).¹⁰¹

The double-fronted example at 9 Bolingbroke Grove (Elstree), with a large terracotta date-plaque to its return front, was designed for the solicitor Reuben Winder, who had lent money to Ingram and Bragg, and who was later involved with Kettle at Old Park Avenue (above). It was built first, in 1882–3, when, as Winder later recalled, no other houses were in 'close proximity'.¹⁰² Kettle hung fire till he could 'ascertain which class of property is most desirable' – i.e., detached or semi-detached houses. For this was all the choice he had. When Appleby sold the estate he inserted a covenant to prevent anything else being built on Bolingbroke Grove in the gap between his Robson-designed houses at Nos 8 and 23–26 (above). Hence the unusually large size and fine quality of Kettle's houses, of 1883–7; their spirited Domestic Revival idiom, with tall chimneys, stepped gables, and plentiful terracotta decoration, blends well with Robson's architecture of the preceding decade, and recalls the work of N. S. Joseph & Smithem, who were engaged by Winder at Old Park Avenue and Winders Road. Land adjoining, on the south side of Roy (now Thurleigh) Road, was bought by John Miller, who built the terrace of gabled houses at Nos 2–30 in 1885–7.¹⁰³

Other plots around Blenkarne Road went to James Robertson, who in 1885–6 built all the houses in the semi-circle of Nightingale Park Crescent

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(now Nos 9–31). The curve in the road gave the present No. 21, a semi-detached house near the centre, an unusually wide and deep garden. Nos 33–39 (Harefield Villas), erected in 1886 immediately south of the crescent in a similar style, were the work of Walter Harmer, a builder of Salcott Road. Company directors, wine merchants, clerks and lecturers featured among the early residents, nearly all having one or two domestic servants.¹⁰⁴

Around Clapham Common and Battersea Rise

Almeric and Lindore Roads

These two streets and the adjoining parts of Battersea Rise constitute the first foray into building development in the parish by Thomas Ingram, the most prolific of all Battersea's Victorian developers.

The site was that of the former mansion of the Ashness family, set amid 3½ acres of pleasure grounds, acquired at auction in 1875 by Ingram with two partners – James John Brown, a timber merchant (Brixton-based, like Ingram), and George Powell, a City lawyer. Among several plans for two new roads leading off Battersea Rise to join with the Conservative Land Society's estate at Shelgate Road was one by W. H. Rawlings, a Lambeth architect, who may also have designed the generally uniform house-fronts.¹⁰⁵

These were big three-storey residences of about eleven rooms each, built in terraces, and faced in grey-white gault bricks, with some courses of red brick and canted bays of stone with incised decoration. Despite the apparent uniformity, several builders were at work in 1876–9: John Miller of

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Clapham built most of Almeric Road; Alexander Bryce, John Price, and David Kettle were all active in Lindore Road. Seventeen taller houses, made up to four storeys by the addition of basements, also went up in three ranges at 39–71 Battersea Rise (known originally as 1–17 Clapham Common Gardens), the builder on this occasion being James Duncanson, another Brixtonite.¹⁰⁶ A little more decoration went into these ‘high street’ rows, in the form of additional string-courses and door and window-heads in contrasting red brick.

Leathwaite Road and vicinity

While John Cobeldick’s builders were getting under way in Broomwood Road in the early 1880s (above), two other big estates further north were being snapped up and primed for housing. These were West Side (or Webb’s) estate and Chatto’s, adjoining properties at the junction of Clapham Common with Battersea Rise, each with its own villa, gardens and meadows, together amounting to some thirty-two acres. Construction here was overseen by Thomas Ingram and Henry Bragg, and was carried out expeditiously, most of the 720-odd houses reaching completion by 1886, allowing the pair to move south to Broomwood Road where Cobeldick had come unstuck.

West Side was acquired in 1881. W. N. Dunn, recently the provider of designs for the same partnership at Lavender Sweep, again took charge of planning. This being a long, narrow plot, Dunn simply extended the east–west streets of the neighbouring Conservative Land Society estate – Shelgate, Mallinson, Bennerley, Salcott and Wakehurst Roads – east of Webb’s Road to run for a final short stretch as far as Leathwaite Road, a new north–south road ranged along the estate’s eastern boundary. By 1884, with building going well, Dunn had decided to add two more short streets at either end of the estate – now Keildon and Berber Roads.¹⁰⁷

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In the side-streets, the two-storey terrace-house with canted bays again reigned supreme; nearly all date from the years c.1884–7. White and stock brick still predominated, though one of the more pleasing rows, built by Peter Duplock at 140–154 Bennerley Road, with decorated window piers and male and female heads, was faced in red brick. Parts of Webb's Road were made use of as shopping parades.¹⁰⁸

There were variants, notably some large three-storey houses in a Queen Anne Revival style at 53–65 Shelgate Road and, immediately behind, at 31–35 Keildon Road, erected in 1884–5 by Alfred Wing & Company. Side-entrances for servants suggest they hoped to draw a slightly better class of resident than the neighbouring houses, which they did, but only initially.¹⁰⁹

Leathwaite Road followed suit, with long two-storey terraces, but also some taller, three-storey Queen Anne-style rows at its north end, such as Nos 1–7, built in 1883 by John B. Gerrans of Lee in Kent (Ill. 18.32). These may have been the work of the south London architect Frederick Lea, who designed 94–100 Shelgate Road for Gerrans in 1885. Elsewhere, Dunn probably designed the long symmetrical parade built in 1886–7 as the public face of the estate on the 'high street' frontage at 1–37 Battersea Rise.¹¹⁰

With West Side filling up by the mid-1880s, Ingram and Bragg moved on to Chatto's estate. Unusually, this had been acquired for development in 1881 by Alfred Heaver, but then quickly dropped by him and sold on; perhaps like others he suffered from the glut in the suburban housing market. Plans had been prepared for Heaver by W. C. Poole; and essentially it was Poole's layout that re-appeared under the pen of Dunn, acting for Ingram and Bragg, bringing into being Burland, Chatto, Dulka and Grandison Roads, as well as extensions to Leathwaite and Wakehurst Roads.¹¹¹

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Between 1885 and 1888, another 270-odd houses were added in these streets to the 450 or so already going up on West Side, to which it was connected, most of them two-storey terraces in gault brick.¹¹² Only 1–19 Burland Road, with their bargeboarded gables, and 116–122 Grandison Road, tricked out with red-brick window arches and corbelled porches, broke the mould to any degree.

West of Clapham Common

The final burst of house-building between the commons began in 1905 with the development of the garden of Heathfield (now 21 Clapham Common West Side), a house of the early 1800s. In 1902 John Cobeldick bought Heathfield, where he was based for a time. Though he spared the house, he agreed with John Smith for the erection of forty-four houses in a new road called Sumburgh Road and continuations of Thurleigh Road (Nos 127–149 & 130–140) and Clapham Common West Side (Nos 14–20 & 22–24) on its garden. All were built in 1905–8.¹¹³ A mix of red-brick terraces and semis, these represent the acme of the suburban style Smith had been honing for twenty years between the commons, with double-height bays, terrazzo forecourts, stained-glass doors, and Smith's trademark terracotta panels of swag decoration beneath the first-floor windows.

Immediately to the north of these houses stands Walsingham Place and 25–32 Clapham Common West Side, a late 1990s estate by Rialto Homes on the site of Walsingham (formerly Marianne Thornton) School. In places its four-storey houses with integral garages mimic their Victorian neighbours with some unconvincing canted bays and moulded decorations.¹¹⁴

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Battersea Rise House estate. In 1907 the famous old house and its neighbours (Maisonette and Glenelg) were acquired by (Sir) Edwin Evans, of Evans & Sons, the Lavender Hill auctioneers, estate agents, surveyors and developers. In this instance Evans was not acting alone, but as the active member of a consortium of local businessmen, alongside H. N. Corsellis, his partner George Francis Berney, and Percival A. Watney, of the Wandsworth distillery.¹¹⁵

Evans's plan, approved in 1908, was to build around 475 houses in five new north-south roads – Alfriston, Muncaster, Canford, Bowood and Wisley – as well as in extensions to Wakehurst and Culmstock Roads and Clapham Common West Side. A handful more were planned for the estate's fringes, in Chatto, Broomwood and Grandison Roads. A plot at the corner of Alfriston and Culmstock Roads was reserved for a church, to have been designed by John S. Quilter & Son, but this never materialized; another small portion of the estate, at its south end, facing Broomwood Road, had already been reserved for the LCC's Clapham County Secondary School for Girls (1908-9).¹¹⁶

House-construction began in 1908 near the common, mostly north of Wakehurst Road, and progressed well, the whole corner block bounded by Wakehurst and Muncaster Roads, including the houses at 86-122 Clapham Common West Side, being erected in 1908-11, as were the north-west section of Alfriston and other parts of Canford and Culmstock Roads. W. H. George and Samuel Rashleigh were the biggest builders here. Muncaster Road and most of the rest of the estate south of Wakehurst Road followed in the next few years, leaving only about sixty or so plots unfilled when war brought work to a halt in 1915.¹¹⁷

Most of the pre-war houses were in typical two-storey Edwardian terraces, and largely designed in-house, perhaps by the young E. Dudley

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Evans, one of Edwin Evans's sons and partners, who by this date was increasingly involved with the firm's work. However, the somewhat finer houses at the north end of Muncaster Road (at Nos 1-27 & 2-30, of 1911-14), built by W. H. George, were the work of another emerging young architect, his son Edgar J. George (Ills 18.34, 35). He was responsible too for other livelier than usual rows built at this time by his father, as at 69-83 Muncaster Road, and 37-67 & 62-88 Alfriston Road, as well as the exceptional house at 90 Alfriston Road (Ills 18.36, 37).¹¹⁸ This house was, and still is, despite later alterations, unlike any other in Battersea. Its rakish sloping gable, deeply overhanging eaves, quasi-rustic window-shutters, pale-painted roughcast and thin, contrasting stringcourses of red tile – all express an interest in C. F. A. Voysey's oeuvre of the 1890s and early 1900s. The Cottage, as it was called, was designed as a family home for George and his new wife, Maggie Miriam George, the freehold possibly a wedding gift from his father. Several well-designed fittings illustrate E. J. George's eye for style and detail, which continued inside the house in the entrance hall, staircase and fireplace surrounds. Sadly, he had little time to enjoy his new home – he was killed in action on the Somme in September 1916. His widow lived on there, latterly remarried, till c.1930.¹¹⁹

Work on the estate resumed in the early 1920s, most of the gaps in Clapham Common West Side (at Nos 123-125, 128-134), Alfriston (69-87, 92-120), Muncaster (73-81), and Culmstock Roads (30-36), as well as the east side of Wisley Road, being completed in 1922-3. The last row to go up was 42-52 Culmstock Road, erected by Bessard Brown Ltd in 1929. Also, a gap left by the builders of Grandison Road nearly forty years earlier for a possible future extension of Burland Road was plugged with two new houses, numbered 103A and 105A.¹²⁰

Once again Evans & Sons supplied most of the designs, offering three or four types of four-bedroom semi, usually in a repetitive cut-price Arts &

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Crafts style, with roughcast upper stories, bowed windows and a little coloured glazing. Occasionally a more streamlined garden suburb look crept in, as at 73–81 Muncaster Road. One row, at 79–87 Alfriston Road, of 1922, was designed by John S. Quilter & Son; here the central pair of houses break forward in brick-fronted gables, in a distinctive cottage estate style. Nos 92–120, opposite, in the same style, are doubtless by the same architects.¹²¹

Other than a few pockets of bomb-damage replacement, the estate remains much as when first laid out.

Holmside Road area. A short coda to the story of redevelopment on the sites of older, larger houses is provided by Holmside Road and parts of the adjoining streets, developed with suburban semis in the 1920s and 30s.

Firstly Courtlands, an 11-bedroom Victorian residence at the junction of Nightingale Lane and Ramsden Road, was acquired by Edwin Evans & Sons. In 1924–5 twelve houses were built there for Evans by H. & E. Wooding, comprising two pairs of semis each in Nightingale Lane (52–54A), Ramsden Road (177–183) and Sudbrooke Road (62–65). All were standard two-storey units, in stock and red brick and roughcast, with tiny garages, their outer-suburban look accentuated by oak boundary lych gates, a late addition to the design by Evans & Sons.¹²²

The redevelopment of Beecholme a few years later was a bigger enterprise. One of the largest Victorian mansions hereabouts, its extensive wooded grounds would have been coveted by early twentieth-century speculators, when precious little building land remained. Three other houses to its east, either side of present-day Thurleigh Avenue, were acquired at the same time, allowing the developers a little more elbow room.

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The developers in question were F. T. Wooding & Sons, a Streatham building firm. They acquired the Beecholme estate by 1926, when plans for 70-odd new houses were prepared for them by John S. Quilter & Son. Twelve were built in Nightingale Lane (Nos 8-30, of 1927-31), eighteen in Thurleigh Avenue (7-21 & 2-20, of c.1931), and sixteen in Thurleigh Road (88-118, of 1927-30), as well as a further twenty-eight in a new road. Intended to be known as Beecholme Road, its name was later changed to Holmside, and its houses were among the last to be built, in 1929-31. All were of two storeys, mostly semi-detached, and dressed in a similar humble suburban style to those by Evans & Son, but of slightly better quality.¹²³

Hightrees House. The only progressive design among inter-war developments on the west side of Clapham Common is this smart apartment block, at the corner with Nightingale Lane (Ills 18.38, 39). It was erected in 1938 for the Central London Property Trust Ltd, and was the last big private building project in the area, partly occupying the site of an old mansion of the same name. It was also a rare London commission for the architect Richard William Herbert Jones (d.1965), better known for his hotels and other Deco-style seaside commissions at Saltdean and Rottingdean for the Saltdean Estate, in particular the streamlined Saltdean Lido (1937-8).¹²⁴ In plan the block comprised a double 'E' shape, with the shorter arms turned to face Nightingale Lane, the longer ones at the rear, running alongside Clapham Common. The main decorative elements to the brick façades are the white-painted cement or concrete curved balconies that occupy the centre and ends of the blocks, and which taper as they rise towards the upper storeys.

Inside were 110 flats, arranged off central corridors. Some had only one bed-sitting room, with a separate bathroom and kitchen, others had four rooms and the same facilities; but the majority were three-room apartments. In keeping with the modernizing spirit of the age every sitting-room had an eye-

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catching central 'feature' of electric heater, radio and clock as a substitute for the more traditional fireplace surround. Communal basement facilities included a restaurant, bar and swimming pool, and storage units for deck-chairs were provided on the large open flat roof.

But so close to the outbreak of war, residents at first did not come in large numbers. As a result, the head lessees, a specially formed subsidiary (High Trees House Ltd), asked for and received a reduction in ground rent in 1941. After the war, when the block was fully occupied, the landlords took legal action to retrieve lost rent. The resultant court case, presided over by Judge (later Lord) Denning, proved to be a landmark in contract law, Denning arguing that the wartime agreement made the landlords' legal rights unenforceable, and in so doing introduced the modern legal principle of promissory estoppel.¹²⁵

Post-war public housing

Of the various public housing developments in the area, the larger Auckland Road and Chatham Road estates are noticed separately below. These paragraphs deal with medium-sized projects, chiefly along Bolingbroke Grove and in and close to Nightingale Lane. Smaller or individual instances of post-war replacement or infill have not been noted. Perhaps the first post-war housing built by Battersea Council was on a badly bombed site between Honeywell and Broomwood Roads, where the formally arranged **Honeywell Road Estate** arose in 1946–8. It consists of five blocks of flats, three facing Broomwood Road and two Honeywell Road. They are of three storeys with hipped roofs; balcony access is from the rear, where a bare open court is centred on an old-fashioned drying ground.¹²⁶

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Bolingbroke Grove attracted two developments of balcony-access flats in the immediate post-war years, both designed by in-house architects under Battersea's Borough Engineer, and both planned in L-shaped format with open gardens to their south and west next to road junctions. The three-storeyed **Lane Court** at Nos 19–20, built by the Council's Works Department, replaced two lightly damaged villas next to the corner of Thurleigh Road in 1948–9. Its original brick access balconies along the backs have been replaced by metal and glass ones.¹²⁷ More ambitious is **Stephen Sanders Court** overlooking Wakehurst Road, built in 1949–51 by Gorham Ltd (Ill. 18.40). Here, on a severely bombed site, the development rises to five storeys in one wing and four in the other. The architectural treatment is firmer; the individual concrete balconies towards the garden bear the imprint of the Festival Hall, while the access balconies at the back, visible along Salcott Road, have a horizontal severity. The development is named after a Battersea socialist and MP.¹²⁸

Nightingale Lane likewise has two early post-war blocks of flats, some distance apart. First-built was **Holmside Court** at No. 6 (1948–50), yet again an L-shaped, three-storeyed development, though here the two wings are separated, the access is from stairs, and the tight villa site entailed a narrower garden.¹²⁹ **Abbott House** followed in 1949–51, further west on a bomb site at the corner of Hendrick Avenue. It was started by H. T. Jones & Co., but taken over by Wates Ltd.¹³⁰ Once again its architecture, rising in parts to four storeys, is strong. The main road front has an almost monumental brick character, articulated by long staircase windows and framing devices enclosing deeply recessed balconies (Il. 18.41).

Later council housing in this area is rare. An exception is **Malins Court**, a four-storey maisonette building at 58 Nightingale Lane, backing on to a three-storey block at **38–43 Sudbrooke Road**. These were erected by Battersea's Works Department to designs supplied by the Borough Engineer

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in 1962–4.¹³¹ They have stylish external concrete stairs for access to the upper floors. Further east, the Council's attempt to demolish and build on the sites of 1–3 Thurleigh Avenue having failed, it had to be content with building on the back garden of No. 1 the four houses now numbered **120–128 Thurleigh Road** (c.1957–8), possibly designed by Sir Guy Dawber, Fox & Robinson.¹³² Also in Thurleigh Road and certainly these architects' work is **Elizabeth Cooper House**, built in about 1965–7 by Allan Fairhead Ltd for Battersea Old People's Housing Ltd, sponsored by Battersea (succeeded by Wandsworth) Council.¹³³ Its lower-rise neighbour at No. 93 is **Ivor Mayor Lodge**.

Chatham Road

Chatham Road is the only area between the commons to have a conspicuous presence of public housing, reflecting its different – and anterior – history to its wider environs (Ills 18.42, 43). Built between 1966 and 1973, it falls into two distinct linear entities, east and west of Northcote Road.

Chatham Road East goes back to 1964, when Battersea Council considered plans for redeveloping the north side of the road on either side of the Gardener's Arms, which was probably rebuilt at the same time. The architects chosen were Emberton, Tardrew & Partners, already working for Battersea at Southlands, while Joseph Capo-Bianco was named as structural consultant. That pairing was to become notorious as designers of the Doddington Estate, but no hint of trouble is recorded at Chatham Road. Building took place in 1966–7 after the change to Wandsworth Council, the contractors being Joseph Cartwright Ltd.¹³⁴

The development divides into two blocks east of the public house, Nos 121–133, arranged in an L with open ground in front, and the tougher-looking Chatham Court at Nos 83–117, to the pub's west and also L-shaped, but this

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time with the open space behind. The blocks take cognizance of the slope in the road and are built in load-bearing brick with brown facers. At the bottom is the Northcote Road Library, designed by Wandsworth's in-house architects (vol. 49).

The larger Chatham Road West scheme followed on from 1967, when Wandsworth Council proposed to buy up around seven acres all the way from Northcote Road to Bolingbroke Grove, including the whole of Darley Road and much of Chatham Road. The immediate environs of St Michael's Church were excluded, as was the nearby Bolingbroke pub. By the time the worked-up scheme reached the Housing Committee in 1969, Wandsworth's approach to public housing had changed. It was the Borough Architect who brought forward the low-key scheme. This consisted of 89 houses and 52 flats, mostly arranged round intimate U-shaped courts, with vehicle access, Radburn-fashion, from the rear. There was still some thought of using an industrialized system for the development, as elsewhere in Wandsworth (at Bedford Hill and Merton Road). That option did not prevail, and the design was duly built in load-bearing brickwork by E. Clarke & Sons in 1971-3.¹³⁵

The focus of the estate is a formal path along the old line of Chatham Road, renamed Halston Close (all new names were taken from places in Kent). This leads westwards up the slope from Northcote Road, with two narrow courts on its south side and a third to its north. Taller monopitch roofs and boxy wooden porches give pep to the pale-brick, two-storey houses. This scale works well along the pathway, but the back roads (Darley Road and Rainham Close) feel empty. Cobham Close, the westernmost portion of the development stretching up to Bolingbroke Grove, includes a wide-open space behind St Michael's that aggrandizes the look of this low-rise church. The Bolingbroke pub survived here till 2008, but has since been replaced.

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Auckland Road Estate

This close-packed council estate was shoehorned into a two-acre back area between Northcote Road and Battersea Rise in the years after 1976. It covered properties on the east side of Auckland Road and the north side of Cairns Road. Abyssinia Road behind them was wiped out by the scheme, but its line is partly retained in the new access road christened Abyssinia Close.

Wandsworth Council's Housing Committee suggested this area for compulsory purchase in 1973, claiming that the old houses were substandard, though by no means slums. The Director of Development hoped to build fifty-five replacement dwellings, a figure later raised to fifty-nine. Work was due to start in 1975 but postponed for a year.¹³⁶ The buildings, presumably designed in-house, are quiet, two- and three-storey affairs of brick with pitched roofs. The only touch of adventure is along Auckland Road, where the sloping ground is dug out and bridges reach across to the front doors of the upper units. A pathway through the estate leads to an open space, north of which is an old people's home in the same brick idiom, 14 Abyssinia Close.

Some Residents

Notable residents of the streets and houses discussed above, not already mentioned in the text, include:

Jabez Balfour (1843–1916), disgraced speculator, 100 Nightingale Lane, c.1908–1916

Jonathan Dimbleby (b.1944), journalist and broadcaster, Edith Villa, 3 Thurleigh Avenue, 1970s

Matthew Robinson Elden (1839–85), artist, friend of Whistler, 69 Mallinson Road, c.1879–85

Draft

Gus Elen (1862–1940), music hall artiste, Edith Villa, 3 Thurleigh Avenue, c.1934–40

Pamela Hansford Johnson, author and playwright, 53 Battersea Rise (formerly Clapham Common Gardens), 1912–34

James Hobbs, draper, co-founder of Arding & Hobbs, 1 Thurleigh Road, c.1891

Fred Knee, trade unionist, politician and housing reformer, 24 Sugden Road, **dates??**

Mark Rogers (junior), wood carver and sculptor (d.1933), 74 Grandson Road, c.1891–1933

George Albert Shearing (1919–2011), jazz pianist and bandleader, pupil at Linden Lodge school for blind children, 26 Bolingbroke Grove, **dates?**

Edward Thomas (1878–1917), poet and writer, 61 Shelgate Road, 1888–c.1900

Susanna York (1939–2011), actress, 21 Blenkarne Road, **dates?**