

25: WANDSWORTH COMMON

(j) BOLINGBROKE GROVE

(For a more detailed account of the history of the area see **Wandsworth Common: Introduction.**)

History

Bolingbroke Grove was the former name of Chatham Road. Its name may have derived from Bolingbroke House which fronted the common. Several houses are shown in the former Bolingbroke Grove on Stanford's map of 1862, but by 1871 the name of Chatham Road appears instead of Bolingbroke Grove, and it is substantially built up with terraced housing. The name of Bolingbroke Grove reappears, being given to the lane running north to south along the edge of Wandsworth Common and known as 'The Five Houses', possibly after the number of houses facing the common at the time. A private road ran from Battersea Rise to Broomwood House, which was set among fields between the commons. A watercourse, Falcon Brook, ran along the line of what is today Northcote Road. Bolingbroke Farm had been established close by. By 1862 the Battersea Cemetery had been established at the corner of Battersea Rise and The Five Houses lane, and by 1871 parts of Battersea Rise had been built.

Over the twenty six years to 1897 the whole area to the east of Wandsworth Common was developed. Certainly the proximity of Clapham Junction stations would have provided a catalyst to development but it took time to start the process off. Once started, however, there was a spiralling effect with land being sold off and sub-divided for building. The population of Battersea almost trebled between 1871 and 1891, from 54,016 to 149,558. A number of builders were involved in this land conversion process. The Corsellis family, members of the legal profession, including Alexander, clerk to the Wandsworth District Board of Works, teamed up with John Stanbury (architect), producing plans for their estates on land between Wandsworth and Clapham Commons. The Conservative and National Freehold Land Societies were active in

Battersea. They sold freehold plots in Ravenslea Road and Wexford Road. Houses in Belleville Road and other roads in the area were developed by Alfred Heaver. The estate of Broomwood House was developed after 1880 forming Broomwood, Gayville, Montholme, Devereux and Hillier Roads.

A number of public buildings were developed at this time. The Church of St. Mark, Battersea Rise was built around 1873-76 by the notable ecclesiastical architect William White. St. Michael's Church was built in Chatham Road in 1881 again by William White. Northcote Road Baptist Church of 1887-89 by E.W. Mountford is in a Renaissance style and constructed of red brick.

Following the passing of the 1870 Education Act the provision of non-sectarian schools became the responsibility of the School Board for London. Their two main architects, E.R. Robson and T.J. Bailey, were involved in the construction of schools in the area. These were Belleville (Robson) 1877, Honeywell (Bailey) 1893 and Broomwood Road (Bailey) 1907. Linden Lodge (26 Bolingbroke Grove) was established as a school for the blind around 1876 and this is believed to have been another example of Robson's work.

Buildings & Townscape

Battersea Rise area - the character of this area is dominated by St. Mark's Church and the extant part of the Common which provides a 'village green' setting to this historic landmark building. St. Mary's Cemetery contains

interesting stone chapels and boundary walls, piers and railings reflecting the Gothic style.

The east side of Chivalry Road contains mainly two storey terraced properties with basements. They are generally constructed of yellow stock brick. No. 30 Chivalry Road is of particular interest, having moulded gault bricks stamped with the royal cipher.

Bolingbroke Grove contains a variety of mainly three storey detached and semi-detached buildings as well as short terraces, and some modern infill flatted development. The buildings are mainly mid to late Victorian with nos.23-26 being of some architectural interest. No.26 dates from 1876, and is a detached house of two main storeys with basement and garret. It is constructed of yellow stock brick with red dressings and tiled roof. A Dutch gable to the front gives the building an imposing appearance. Nos.23-25 are similar in stature and materials of construction with their gabled fronts dominant.

The sections of Bennerley, Salcott, Wakehurst and Belleville Roads, west of Northcote Road, comprise mainly two and three storey buildings, some with basements, predominantly gault and yellow brick with red dressings to windows. Some have parapets with eaves cornice, others decorative cornices and string courses. Some properties have retained ornate cast iron railings to the front. Broomwood and Honeywell Roads comprise two storey semi-detached properties constructed mainly of gault brick with yellow dressings and nailhead string courses.

Northcote Road is a mainly commercial street comprising two to four storey buildings with shopfronts to ground floor and residential accommodation above. Nos.108-118 are a unified group of three storey commercial properties. Alternating triangular and semi-circular pediments to first floor windows with moulded architraves add visual interest.

Gorst Road is characterised by mainly two storey buildings arranged in semi-detached pairs. They have two storey canted bays and are predominantly constructed of gault brick with yellow dressings. The bays and porches are rendered with Victorian Gothic decoration. Dents Road is similar in character, of two storeys plus a gabled attic storey. Some properties have square bays, others canted. They are constructed predominantly of gault brick, with some of red brick.

The north side of Thurleigh Road comprises a group of two storey detached houses of yellow stock brick construction. The gabled roof incorporates an attic storey. Their most distinctive features are the red brick Baroque doorcases with carved brick decoration. Brick walls and piers survive to the front. The south side of the street comprises two storey red brick buildings with gabled attic storey and projecting single storey canted bays. The properties at the western end have attractive glazed faience porch columns.

Morella Road comprises two storey properties with an attic storey incorporated in gabled roof. They are red brick at the eastern end and gault and yellow brick to the western end, mainly with canted bays. Some have Gothic towers to roof above front entrances with cast iron finial to slate roof.

Porches are recessed with stone arch and keystone. Granard Road is similar in character with gault brick buildings to western end and red brick to east. The distinctive feature is the projecting porch roofed in zinc with cast iron supporting columns. Some have decorative bargeboards to gables, and nailhead string courses.

Nos.5 and 7 Blenkarne Road represent a pair of substantial two storey detached buildings of yellow stock brick with red dressings. The two storey semi-circular bay windows add articulation to the fronts. No.5 has a projecting canopy to the bay.

Nightingale Lane and Wexford/Ravenslea/Mayford Roads comprise an area of substantial three storey, mainly semi-detached, properties of red brick construction. Nos.17-25 Ravenslea Road form a two storey terrace of red brick buildings of more modest design. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Days Saints represents an example of ecclesiastical architecture of the 1950's, and is a substantial building but rather austere in design.

This character statement is intended to give an overview of the development and current character of the conservation area; it is not intended to be prescriptive, nor to be a summary of planning constraints or an inventory of individual buildings or other features whether listed or otherwise.