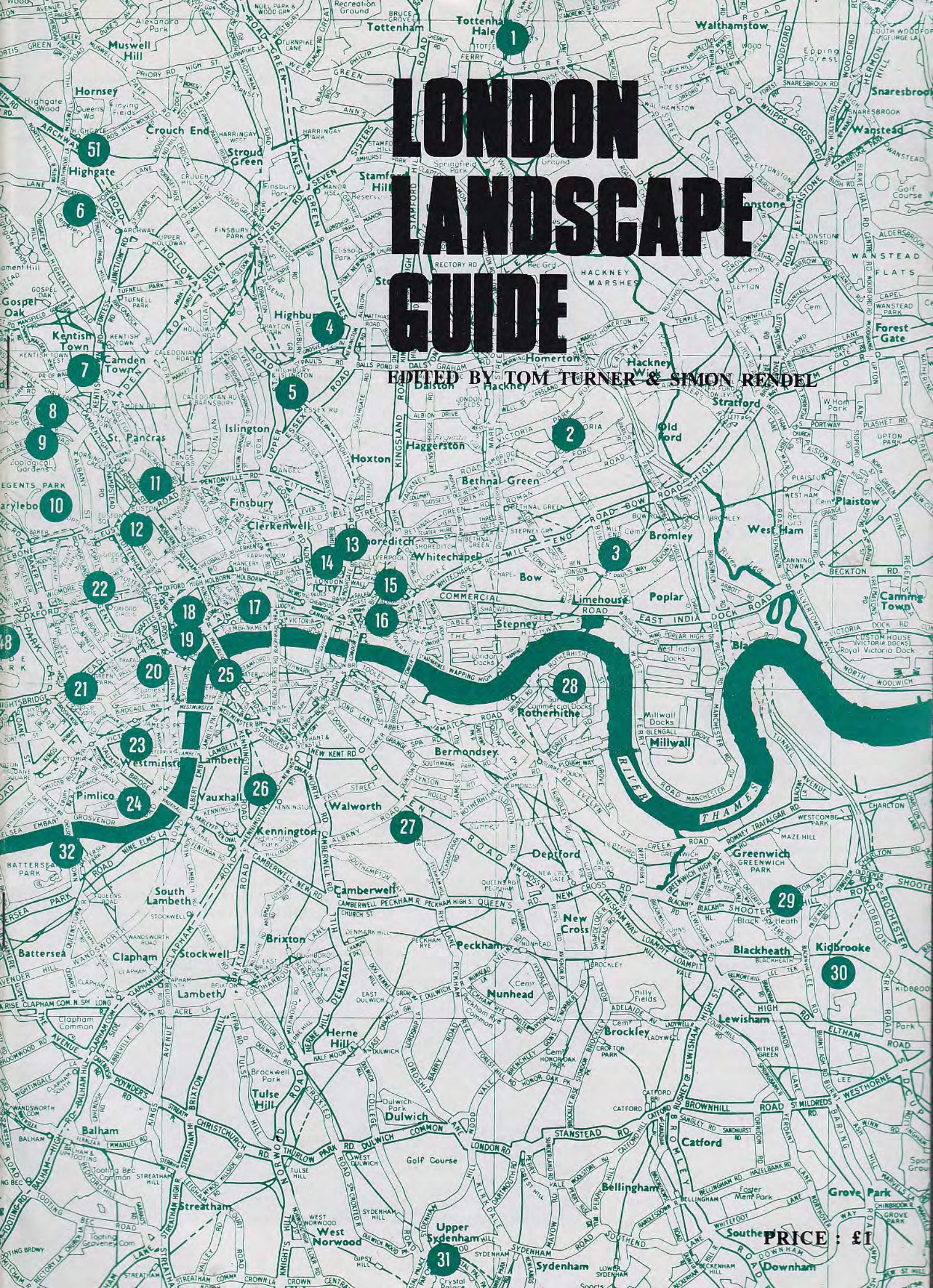




LONDON LANDSCAPE GUIDE

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LONDON LANDSCAPE GUIDE

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This is a guide to sites of landscape design interest in the London Area. It is the first section of a landscape visitors guide for the United Kingdom which is being prepared by the Landscape Institute. The editors have aimed for a balance between historic and modern designs and for a range of types of project. Suggestions for inclusion in future editions will be welcomed.

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Map references are given at the end of each entry in the text. They show the location of all the sites in the guide except Bushey Park, Canal Way Parks, Hampton Court, Hounslow Civic Centre, London Squares, Thamesmead and Trent Park.

The cover map reference numbers, which also appear in bold type at the end of each entry, are as follows :

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Lee Valley Regional Park | 27. Burgess Park |
| 2. Victoria Park, E 3 | 28. Surrey Docks, SE16 |
| 3. Mile End Park | 29. Greenwich Park / Blackheath, SE10 |
| 4. Aberdeen Park, Islington | 30. Span Estates, Blackheath |
| 5. New River Walk / Marquess Road, N1 | 31. Crystal Palace, SE19 |
| 6. Highgate Cemetery | 32. Battersea Park |
| 7. Hawley Road Playground | 33. Winstanley Road |
| 8. 38 - 50 Fitzroy Road, NW1 | 34. Wimbledon Common |
| 9. The Zoological Gardens | 35. Richmond Park |
| 10. Regent's Park | 36. Ham House |
| 11. Polygon Road Playground | 37. Kew Gardens - Royal Botanic Gardens |
| 12. Euston Square, NW1 | 38. Syon Park |
| 13. Bunhill Fields | 39. Osterley Park |
| 14. The Barbican | 40. Chiswick House Gardens |
| 15. Cutler Street Offices | 41. Guinness Hills |
| 16. St. Dunstan's in the East and Wren Tower | 42. Harrow Reservoir |
| 17. Inns of Court | 43. Hampstead Garden Suburb |
| 18. Covent Gardens, WC2 | 44. The Hill, Hampstead |
| 19. Coutts Bank, The Strand | 45. Kensal Green Cemetery |
| 20. St. James's Park | 46. Holland Park and the Commonwealth Institute |
| 21. Green Park, SW1 | 47. Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens |
| 22. Portland Place / Regent Street / Waterloo Place | 48. Park Lane, W1 |
| 23. Westminster Cathedral | 49. The Water Gardens |
| 24. Lillington Gardens | 50. Kenwood |
| 25. The South Bank, SE1 | 51. Parkland Walk |
| 26. Cotton Gardens | |

Aberdeen Park, Islington

A jewel of infill housing perfectly detailed. The main feature is a grassed square in which several large trees have been retained. The proportions of the polygonal space and the blend with the older housing have been expertly handled by the architects and landscape architects Darbourne & Darke. Note also the highly intricate playfort which is essential to the massing of the scheme. *Islington N5 Seaforth Crescent off Aberdeen Park.* 4

The Barbican

A vast and ambitious development in the City of London. There are many exciting features including massed fountains, a cascade, roof gardens, trees growing on columns, great pools and a sitting area which is set below water level. However, many of the spaces are bleak and draughty. The development comprises tower blocks, a school, a major arts centre, part of London's Roman Wall and the restored St. Giles Church. Extensive pedestrian decks cover the parking areas and access roads. The scheme was designed by Chamberlain Powell and Bon in the 1950's and is now almost complete. *Access from London Wall, EC2.* 14

Battersea Park

One of London's great nineteenth century public parks. It was laid out between 1846 and 1864 to designs by James Pennethorne and John Gibson. The site, which was originally flat and swampy, was built up using material excavated from the Royal Victoria Dock and supplied free of charge by Thomas Cubitt. Battersea retains many typically Victorian park features including a serpentine carriage drive, a formal avenue, an irregular lake, flower gardens and shrubberies. The profit which was made on the terraced houses in Albert Bridge



The Barbican from the Arts Centre.

Road and Prince of Wales Drive helped to pay for the park which they overlook. In 1951 the Festival of Britain Pleasure Gardens (designed by James Gardener) were laid out in Battersea Park and the fountains survive. *Battersea SW3.* 32

Bunhill Fields

A dissenters burial ground which was established in 1685 and taken over by the City of London as a public open space in 1867. It contains monuments to Bunyan, Defoe and Samuel Wesley. The cemetery was damaged during the war and reconstructed in 1960 to a design by Sir Peter Shepherd. It is a relaxed and well mannered place with quite walks and sitting spaces, good paving and choice planting. *City Road EC1* 13

Bushey Park

The 445 ha. Bushey Park is less well known than the other Royal Parks. It adjoins Hampton Court and owes its present grandeur to William III's gardeners, George London and Henry

Wise. A wide and majestic avenue of triple rows of horse chestnut trees runs through the park. It encloses a large round pool designed by Christopher Wren with a statue of Diana by Francesco Fan. Fallow deer graze under the trees in the park.

Burgess Park

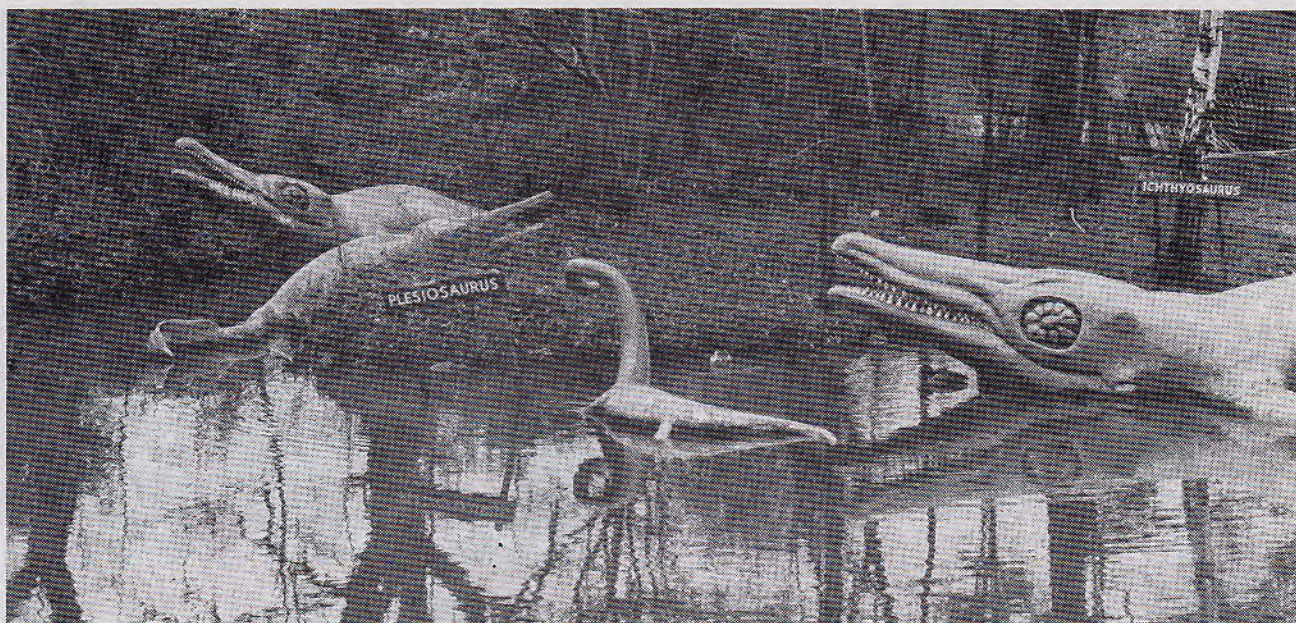
Land was zoned for a new park on this site in 1943 and the site is gradually being cleared of housing and industry. By 1982 27 of the 56 hectares had been developed. The most interesting features to see are the new entrance from the Old Kent Road and the lake which was opened in 1982. Much remains to be done if a really good modern park is to be created. *Access from Albany Road/ Old Kent Road.* 27

Canal Way Parks

London's canals are being developed as a recreational amenity. In time they will form a pedestrian link from Limehouse basin in East London to Wormwood Scrubs in West London. Access is already open to many sections of the route and landscape works are underway. The most attractive sections to visit lie alongside Mile End Park, Victoria Park, Kings Cross, Camden Lock, Regents Park, Little Venice and Kensal Green Cemetery. Highbridge Wharf is a recent GLC scheme by *Caledonian Road in London N1.* It is heavily planted and has a colourful narrow boat garden.



The pond and Chestnut Avenue in Bushey Park.



Paxton's monsters at Crystal Palace.

Chiswick House Gardens

Historically of great interest as one of the best surviving early examples of the English Landscape School. The house and garden were created in the eighteenth century by Lord Burlington and others. William Kent's design for the garden was modelled on a painter's interpretation of the Roman Campagna. It complements the Palladian Villa in a romantic way and was superimposed on an earlier garden in the formal style. The garden is now a public park and retains most of its original layout. It is being extensively restored. *Access from Paxton Road/Great West Road.* 40

Cotton Gardens

An estate of tower blocks and rectilinear terraced housing which is enlivened by good planting and roly-poly hillocks. The scale of the mounds provides a satisfying foreground for the tower blocks and also blends in with the height of the terraced housing. The courtyards are crisply detailed and the planting is effective. Landscape architects London Borough of Lambeth. *Off Kennington Lane / Reedworth Street. SE11.* 26

Coutts Bank, The Strand

On the north side of the The Strand (opposite Charing Cross Station) a glass wall has been built into a facade designed by John Nash. It looks onto a fine indoor garden court (by Frederick Gibberd and Partners) which was designed to give the feeling of a traditional London square – but with an ideal climate, cream coloured marble paving, sub-tropical plants and a revolving tree on a turntable. *The Strand WC2.* 19

Covent Garden, WC2

The old flower market has been imaginatively restored and the area pedestrianised by the GLC to create a new shopping centre (of boutiques and bistros) which has become one of London's major tourist attractions. 18

Crystal Palace, SE19

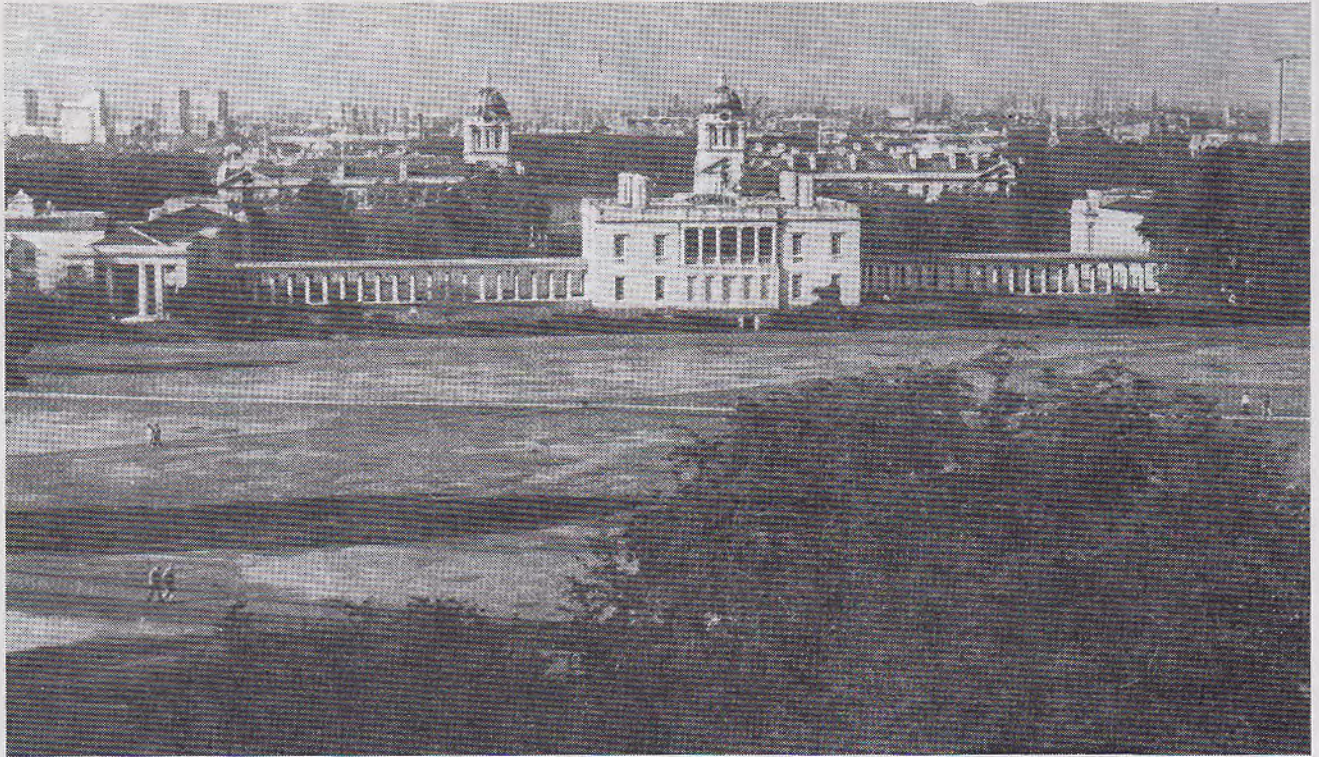
Paxton's Crystal Palace was moved to Sydenham in 1852 and set in a large Italianate park designed by Paxton. Most of the park has gone but one fine terrace survives, as do Paxton's extraordinary prehistoric monsters round the lake in the southern corner of the park. The central area of the site has been laid out as the National Sports Centre in a most unimaginative way. 31

Cutler Street Offices

The East India Company's City premises have been converted (1982) into what the developers describe as 'London's largest landscaped office development'. The open spaces (0.8 h.a.) were designed



Covent Garden, Fowlers Market Hall and setts relaid in 1980.



Greenwich Park seen from the Royal Observatory.

by Russell Page and contain several interesting water features including a golfball fountain and a Moorish channel garden. The pink Portuguese granite setts are well handled and attractive. They blend with the warm yellow stock bricks on the old arched warehouses but not with the icy red polished granite which has been used for the new buildings. Most of the external spaces are oppressed by the height of the surrounding offices. *Cutler Street off Hounsditch El.* 15

Euston Square, NW1

The space in front of the new Euston Station has been made into a sunny and pleasant sitting area with good brick detailing by Michael Brown. 12

38-50 Fitzroy Rd NW1

Conversion of a disused piano factory into housing and a community centre. Two small landscaped spaces well related to the intimate feel of the buildings which are tucked in via passages in the Fitzroy Road terrace. Much successful use of timber and the well-trying brick paving by the landscape architect Michael Brown.

Green Park, SW1

The smallest of London's Royal Parks. It is a stately place with a fine central avenue and informal groups of trees amongst which the valley of the former Tyburn river can just be detected. The avenue centres on Sir Aston Webb's 1901 *rond-point* in front of Buckingham Palace. 21

Greenwich Park, and Blackheath, SE10

Le Nôtre is reputed to have drawn the plans for Greenwich though he did not visit the site. The remains of his formal avenues can be seen but his design has been overlain by subsequent planting in the English landscape style.

The park is on a hill which rises behind Wren's Royal Palace. The hill is crowned by the former Royal observatory and there are wide views over the Thames and London. Between the palace and the river (King William Walk) a setting for the tea-clipper 'Cutty Sark' has been designed by GLC parks department. South of the park, on high ground, is Blackheath, an almost treeless expanse



Green Park and the front of Buckingham Palace.

of grass with a fringe of Georgian and Victorian buildings. It was formerly a 'wild' heath, like Wimbledon Common, but has been reclaimed for playing fields.

29

Guinness Hills

The only significant landscape feature on Western Avenue was created by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe who had the idea of using 20,000 tons of subsoil excavated from a tunnel to form two beautifully shaped hills which enhance the view of Park Royal Brewery (designed by G G Scott). The money saved by not having to take the subsoil 8 km to a tip was donated by the contractor to pay for one issue of the Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects. *On the north side of the Western Avenue opposite Park Royal Station.*

41



Guinness Hills by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe

Ham House

The gardens of Ham House were restored by the National Trust to their original 17th century layout to mark European Architectural Heritage Year (1975) using documentation existing from the period. There are now formal parterres and a 'wilderness' – which is not very wild. Plants which would have

been available at the time have been carefully selected, and have faithfully recreated the atmosphere of the period. *Sandy Lane, Petersham, Richmond-upon-Thames.*

36

Hampstead Garden Suburb

One of London's finest housing schemes, described by Lewis Mumford as 'a masterpiece and an artistic triumph'. Parker and Unwin designed the scheme in 1905. It makes excellent use of the topography and the central square (designed by Lutyens in 1908) on the hilltop is by far the best twentieth century London Square. *Access from Central Square, NW 11.*

43

Hampton Court

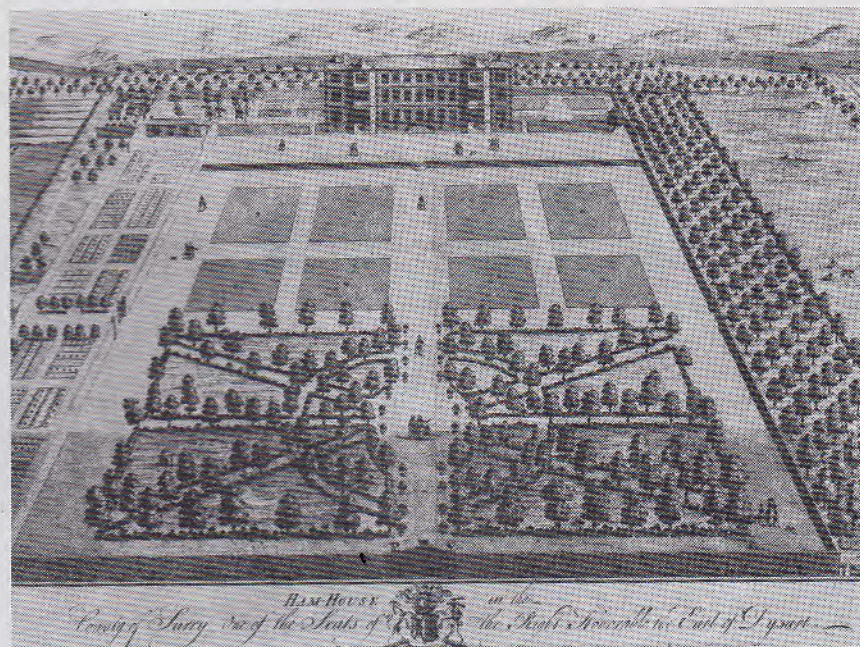
The great red brick Tudor palace where Henry VIII lived was enlarged and remodelled for William III by Christopher Wren, 1690. William of Orange had the gardens laid out in the French manner with three avenues radiating from the terraces in the form of a *patte d'oie* and they still stand in their original splendour. On the south side of the palace there are several small enclosures laid out as an Elizabethan knot garden, a Baroque garden and others. The maze retains its popularity but suffers from overuse. *Kingston-upon-Thames.*

Harrow Reservoir

An object lesson in how to conceal a 1¼ ha. underground reservoir. It has been set into the hillside and the excavated soil used to create gentle mounds



The Central Square in Hampstead Garden Suburb



View of Ham House c. 1730, "wilderness" in the foreground.

on the other side of the road. Grass covers the water storage area and trees and shrubs have been planted around it. The reservoir is a fine example of the philosophy that the landscape architect (in this case Sir Frederick Gibberd) succeeds best when nobody knows he has been at work. *Harrow Park, Harrow-on-the-Hill.*

42

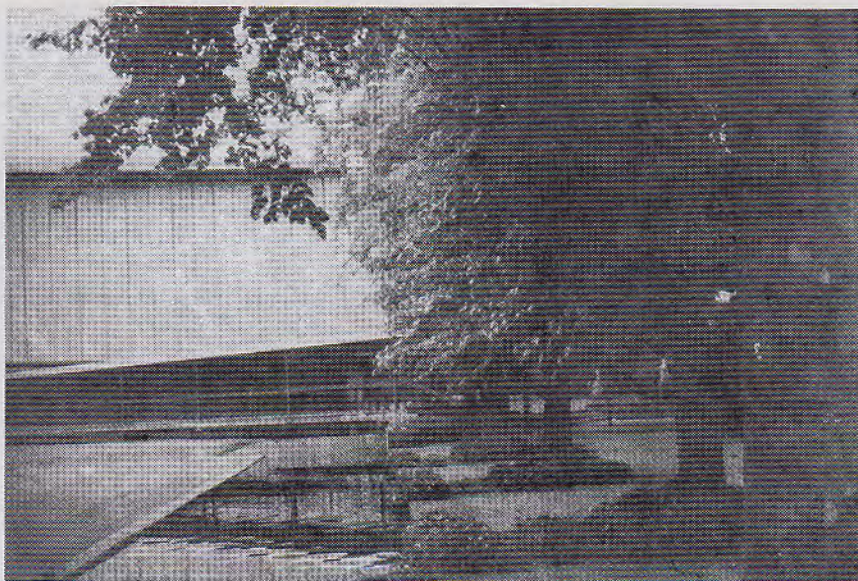
Hawley Road Playground

A large playground in a tough area. The design uses battered brick retaining walls to keep planted and grass areas well above walking and playing levels. Planting is abundant with many trees and species roses tumbling about in the summer. Landscape Architect Michael Lancaster. *Hawley Rd. London NW 1.*

7

Highgate Cemetery

Probably the best known of all the older cemeteries in the country because of its remarkable monuments, its air of romantic decay, and the presence of Karl Marx's tomb. In fact there are two cemeteries, one on either side of Swain's Lane. The eastern section contains Marx's tomb. David Ramsay was responsible for the circuitous layout of the western section which rises up the wooded hill to vaults and a terrace. There are spectacular sunken catacombs, known as the Lebanon Circle, and an Egyptian Avenue lined with vaults. At present entrance to the western section is on appointed days only. *Swain's Lane, N6.*



The Entrance to the Commonwealth Institute.

The Hill, Hampstead

A rare example of the period 1910-1925, with a unique atmosphere of mellowed classicism. The Pergola Walk, linking the formal gardens of the main house and the more gentle lawns of the lower garden, is the main feature. The dramatic contrast between the towering trees of West Heath and exotic plants climbing the graceful Pergola offers a unique experience. The fill for the Walk was obtained from the Northern Line excavations. Designed by Thomas Mawson for Lord Leverhulme and now managed by the GLC. *Off North End Road, Hampstead, approach via West Heath, NW11.*

44

Holland Park and the Commonwealth Institute

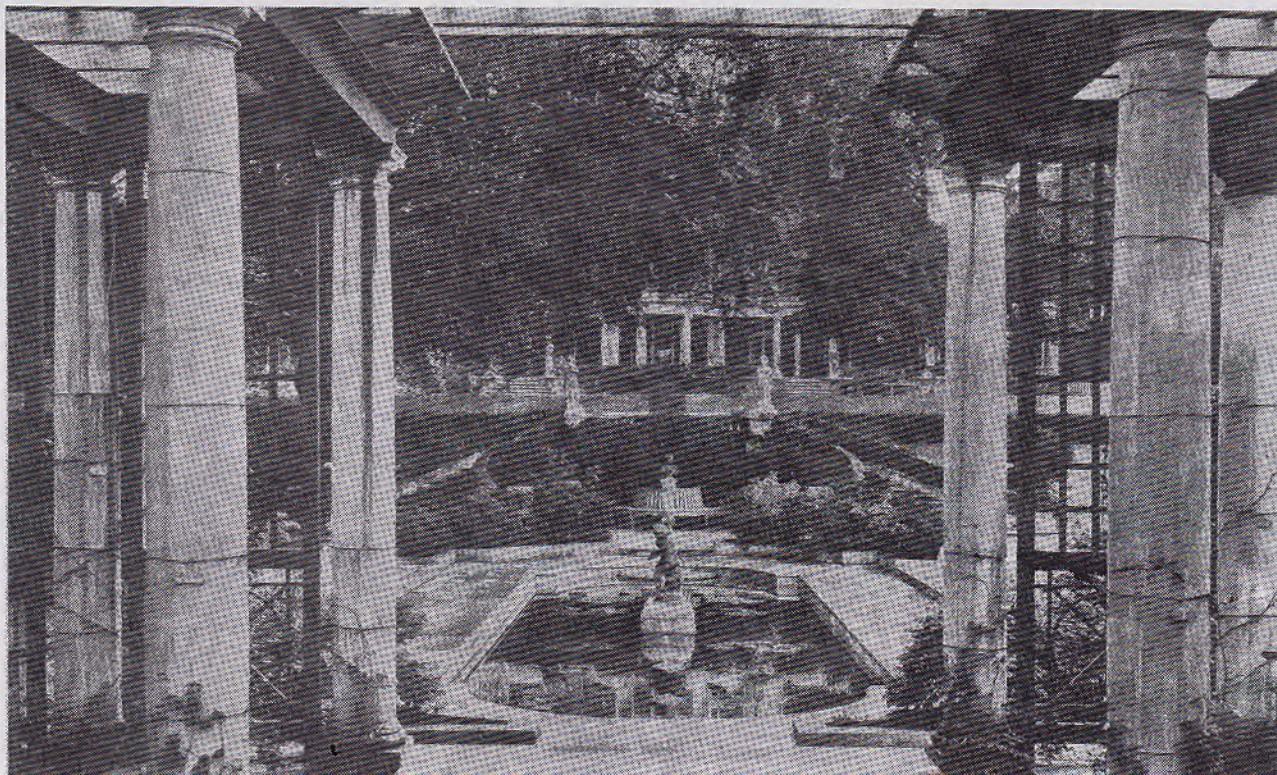
The formal gardens and a large area of woodland came into public ownership after the house had been bombed during the Second World War. The park is now open to the public. Its spatial qualities are analysed by Dame Sylvia Crowe in her book *Garden Design*.

Adjoining the park, on Kensington High Street, is the Commonwealth Institute with its grounds designed by Dame Sylvia. Flagpoles, an avenue of lime trees, a fine water feature and good paving provide an impressive setting for an international building. *Kensington High Street, W8.*

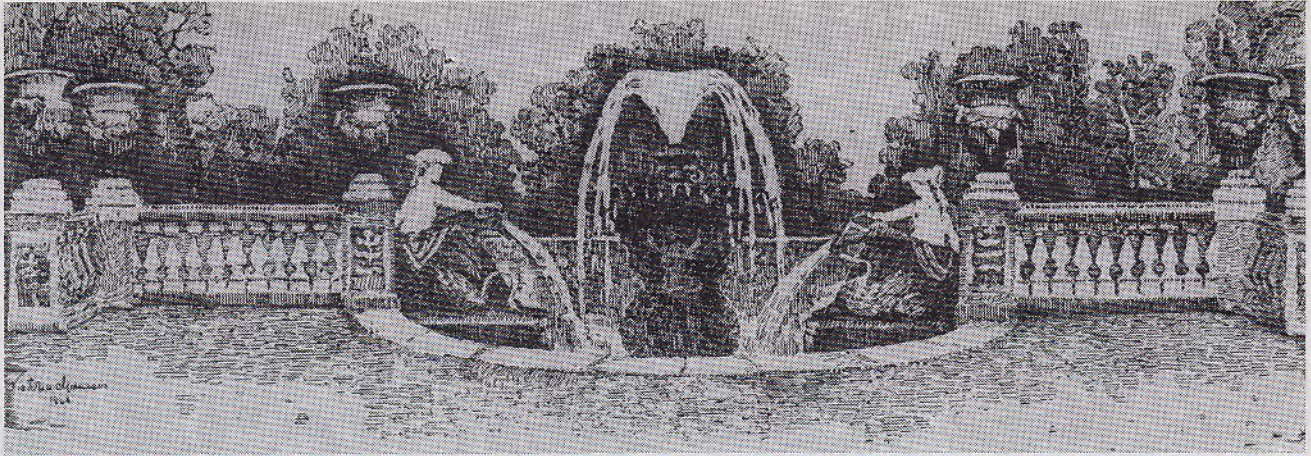
46

Hounslow Civic Centre

A fine modern landscape design with Japanese and Scandinavian affinities. The landscape designer, Preben Jacobsen, has employed a fascinating range of plants and has used smooth stones and ground cover plants with great effect. His originality can also be seen in the geometry of the hard landscape. *Lampton Road, Hounslow, Middlesex.*



Pergola, pond and terraces at The Hill, Hampstead photograph c. 1925



*Fountains at the Head of the Serpentine designed by John Thomas 1861.
An Engraving by Lady Victoria Manners.*

Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens

These two parks comprise over 240 hectares and were once part of a royal hunting forest. The River Westbourne which flowed through the parks was dammed to form a lake. The east and west halves of the lake, known as the Serpentine and the Long Water are divided by a bridge designed by George Rennie in 1826. It has a magnificent prospect.

Hyde Park has been open to the public since 1635 and demonstrates the value of a really large boldly planted park in a city. It is enlivened by two fine modern restaurants, one at each end of the Serpentine.

Kensington Gardens belonged to Kensington Palace. They were laid out for Queen Caroline by Henry Wise and Charles Bridgeman and contain a *rond point*, formal avenues, a sunken Dutch garden and an orangery. *Access from Park Lane and Kensington Road.* 47

Inns of Court

The headquarters of Britain's legal profession lie around a series of squares and courtyards between Theobalds Road and the Embankment. The smaller spaces have a medieval calm which is rare in London (eg Staple Inn and Fountain Court) while the larger spaces (eg Lincoln's Inn and The Temple) are elegant and urbane. *Access from High Holborn and The Strand.* 17

Kensal Green Cemetery

All Souls Cemetery was laid out in 1831. H. E. Kendall won a competition for the layout and buildings in a romantic gothic style but the Company preferred the Greek revival style and the design was done by William Chadwick, a sometime colleague of Soane. The cemetery is now leafy and magnificent in its decay. Ageing avenues of chestnut, lime and poplar, handsome buildings, obelisks, and urns contribute to the atmosphere. Only the

area around the tombs of two of George III's children is properly maintained. *Between Harrow Road and the Grand Union Canal near Kensal Green Station.*

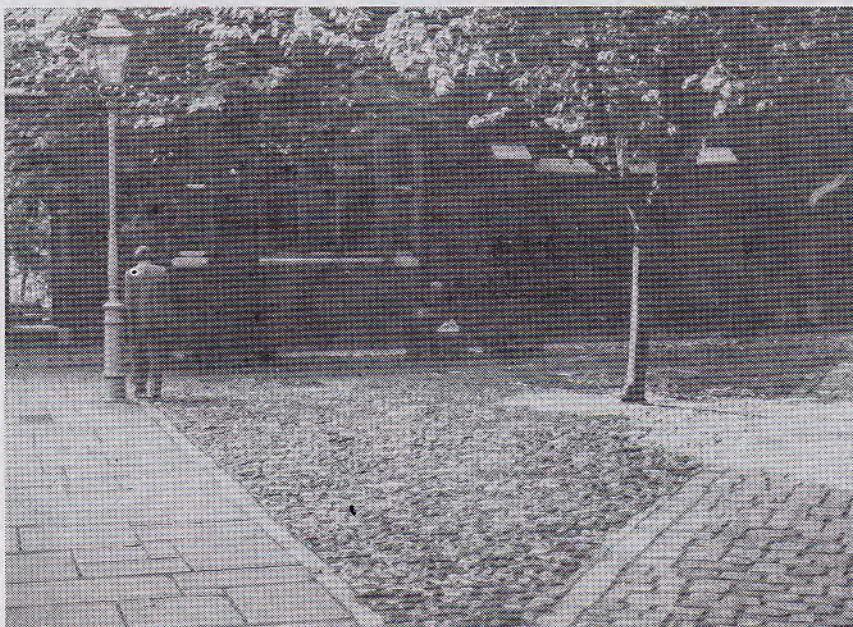
45

Kenwood

The house was remodelled by Robert Adam and provided with a suitable landscape setting consisting of a grassed slope down to a lake and contrived bridge. More recently, in its capacity as a GLC park, a concert bowl and various fences have entered the scene. The remainder of the grounds consist of woodland and a vast rhododendron collection. Hampstead Heath, beyond the lake, is interesting for its views over London and the unobtrusive management of a large semi-wild area subjected to heavy wear and tear by visitors from all over North London. *Hampstead Lane, N6.* 50

Kew Gardens – Royal Botanic Gardens

The original gardens were created for Augusta, Princess of Wales around her home, Kew Palace. She was much helped by Sir William Chambers who was influenced by oriental gardening and designed the chinese pagoda in the grounds and other buildings. The estate was acquired by the nation in 1841 and enlarged to become a place for the scientific study of horticulture. It now contains the largest collection of plants in the world with tropical and sub-tropical plants being kept in appropriate conditions in magnificent Victorian glasshouses. The variety of plants is overwhelming but Kew has a magic far above the ordinary run of Victorian plant collections, perhaps because of its size and the underlying but unobtrusive formality of its structure. The Queen's Garden has recently been laid out as a faithful copy of a 17th century garden with parterres, sunken garden and pleached alleys. *Kew Rd. Richmond.* 37



Staple Inn



Lincoln's Inn Fields : a Seventeenth Century London square.

Lee Valley Regional Park

Abercrombie's 1944 Greater London Plan proposed a regional park in the Lee Valley and in 1968 an Authority was formed to make a 37 km long park. It reaches from Hackney in the East End of London to Ware in Hertfordshire. Progress has been slow but it is worth visiting Broxbourne Lido, Waltham Abbey Gardens, The Eastway Cycle Track and Springfield Marina. Abercrombie wrote that 'here is a magnificent opportunity for landscape treatment and tree planting' but few landscape architects have worked on the Park. One notable exception is the Markfield Action Playground designed by Mary Mitchell. A disused sewage works was transformed into an adventure playground by making the site a free tip until sufficient subsoil accumulated to create grassed hills, mounds and ridges. The filter beds provide spaces for roller skating, archery etc. *Access from Crowland Road, N15.*

1



Trafalgar Square : laid out in the Nineteenth Century.

London Squares

The first London Squares (eg Covent Garden, Lincoln's Inn Fields and Soho Square) were laid out in the seventeenth century and, following their Italian Predecessors, were mostly paved. During the eighteenth century new squares were laid out (eg Portman Square, Hanover Square, Cavendish Square and Manchester Square) and planted with forest trees and shrubs. During the nineteenth century more planting took place and more squares were laid out (eg Belgrave Square, Eaton Square, Russell Square and Trafalgar Square). The great period of square building came to an end after 1850.

In the twentieth century London's squares, with their fine buildings, iron railings, plane trees and rich planting, have been seen as an ideal of civilised urban living. The following are of particular interest: Russell Square and Cadogan Square were originally designed by Humphrey Repton;

Lincoln's Inn Fields is the oldest survivor; Trafalgar Square was designed in the Italian Style by Charles Barry and subsequently embellished with lions by Landseer and fountains by Lutyens; St. James's Square, occupied by six dukes and seven earls in 1721, is still beautifully maintained; Cavendish Square was re-designed by Michael Brown after an underground carpark was built in 1971; and Fitzroy Square has been re-designed by John Brooks.

Lillington Gardens

This estate was one of the first attempts in London to break away from the idea of blocks of high rise flats whilst continuing to build at high density. The design of the central spaces, though conceived on several levels, is strong and simple; the brick of the buildings is carried into the paving and retaining walls, the ground is subtly contoured and the use of trees and shrubs is bold. Access balconies are enlivened with shrub planting, though not everything has survived as planted. Architects and Landscape Architects, Darbourne & Darke for the City of Westminster (1968-70). *Vauxhall Bridge Rd. SW1.*

24

Mile End Park

Work is in hand to form a 36 ha. park beside the Grand Union Canal. It will nearly link Victoria Park to Limehouse Basin and the River Thames. About 75% of the land has been acquired but only 10% is in permanent layout. Another 50% is in temporary layout and is visually depressing. *Access from Grove Road / Burdett Road, E4.*

3

New River Walk / Marquess Road, N1

A linear park running for over half a mile through Canonbury following the course of the New River brought to London by Sir Hugh Middleton in 1613. It is only a few metres wide but is full of character – an ideal landscape corridor. The walk has been reconstructed and replanted along the frontage to the Marquess Road estate. Bird life and leafy corners abound and paths are highly contrived but it has that indefinable Japanese quality which steers clear of the twee.

Marquess Road estate is high density housing in medium-rise form. Detailing and spacial composition are well handled though complex. Cul-de-sacs, basement garaging and mature trees are somehow woven into the tight spaces.

Nearby on the opposite side of St. Paul's Road is St. Paul's Shrubby: a superbly articulated space with graceful mounding set off by the backs of Georgian terraces. Children's play areas at either end from an integral part of the composition. Architects and landscape architects for all three schemes were Darbourne and Darke. **5**

Osterley Park

Osterley is typical of the eighteenth century fashion for improving a country estate with extensive lawns and views through large and stately trees. There are three lakes and a Temple of Pan (1720). Sadly the park is cut in two by the M4. The mansion, designed by Robert Adam, and the grounds are owned by the National Trust. *Osterley Lane, Southall.* **39**



The Temple of Pan Osterley Park

Park Lane, W1

The Park Lane boundary to Hyde Park has been radically altered to provide extra traffic lanes and massive roundabouts at Marble Arch and Hyde Park Corner. Mounding has been carried out on a limited scale to protect the Park from the traffic but is is regrettable that the excavations from the underground car park were not used to implement Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe's proposal for 'an earth companion for the Serpentine'. A mound, in the form of a giant serpent, would have created 'a sunny, sheltered, green amphitheatre for those who now sit exposed to wind and noise'. **48**

Polygon Road Playground

Designed for a tough area this playground has survived well. It is remarkable for being created without any harsh materials – the boundaries are banks of shrubs and trees, which were very quickly established. The adventure playground is surrounded by a screen of railway sleepers. Landscape architect Preben Jakobsen. *Polygon Rd. London NW1.* **11**

Parkland Walk

A charming rural walk has been created along the line of a disused railway. It was designed by Maurice Pickering Associates and runs for 3.2 km from *Finsbury Park to Highgate Station.* **51**



New River Walk : a Seventeenth Century aqueduct with Victorian planting refurbished by Darbourne and Darke in the 1970's.

Portland Place / Regent St. / Waterloo Place

John Nash's scheme for linking St. James's Park to Regent's Park was carried out between 1813 and 1820. Most of the original buildings have been replaced but the concept of a 'picturesque' processional route survives. Sir John Summerson sees the scheme as an application of Humphrey Repton's landscape theory to urban design. Waterloo steps provide a grand descent to St. James's Park. 22

Regent's Park

A Royal Park encircled by white Regency terraces which are seen across the lake, over the lawns and through the trees. It was laid out (1812-1830) to increase the developer's profit on the terraces, and is the culmination of the scheme which runs from St. James's park via Regent Street and Portland Place (see also Regent Street entry). Nash's architecture and Repton's landscape concept have joined town and country in a way which has had a profound influence on twentieth century planning. *Outer Circle, London NW1.* 10

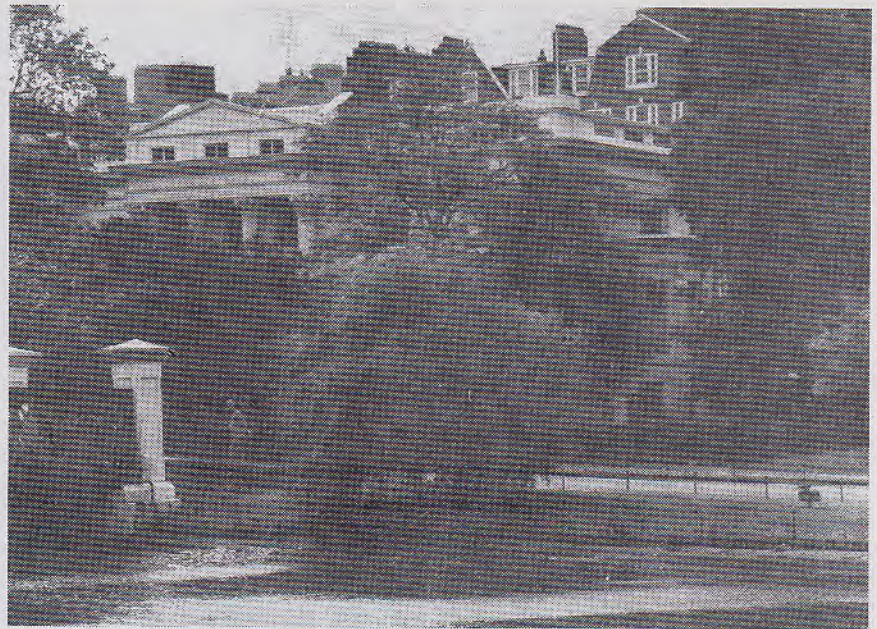
Richmond Park

An ancient royal hunting park and one of London's most splendid open spaces. Man has done little more than make roads through the parkland. Deer roam free under the old oak trees and may often be seen grazing in the distance. A very popular outing for Londoners on account of its size (over 800 ha.) and accessibility by car; a fine example of simple landscape management providing efficient semi-natural parkland and recreation.

At the NE corner of the Royal Park, the skyline is broken by Roehampton housing – well grouped tall point blocks in a classical landscape of mature trees. This famous public housing development was planned at a time of much lower car ownership. *Off Roehampton Lane.* 35

St. Dunstan's in the East and Wren tower

The bombed ruins of a medieval church and Wren tower made into a charming scene by imaginative planting of wall shrubs and climbers and an effective fountain. An outstanding example of a small City space, which makes the maximum use of scarce resources. Designed by City Architects and Parks Depts 1971, Landscape Heritage award 1976. *Idol Lane (off Eastcheap), London EC3.* 16



Regents Park : with Clarence Terrace beyond.



St. Dunstan's in the East, a bombed city church made into a paradise garden.



Corner Green : a Span estate in Blackheath.

St. James's Park

A Royal Park and one of the most romantic urban landscapes in Europe. The area was originally a swamp, subject to flooding from the Tyburn stream which still flows through the lake. Its 40 hectares were first made into a park with a rigidly formal design in 1660. Charles II had a long canal excavated from the watery land and introduced the geese, pelicans and waterfowl which are still there today. The park was completely re-designed by John Nash (1828) in the English landscape style which he had learned through his association with the Reptons. The subtlety of the contouring is notable and the view from the new bridge (1956) across the lake to the Horse Guards and Whitehall is justly famous. *The Mall / Birdcage Walk SW1.* **20**

Span Estates, Blackheath

A group of housing estates east of Blackheath developed by Span in the 60's. Each estate takes its place unobtrusively in the local street pattern with much attention to tree preservation and internal planting details. The sensitivity to the scale of spaces formed by the buildings, and the relationship between paths and planted areas is evident. The style runs through but each estate has its

own character and imagination never flags. Landscape architect Eric Lyons and Partners.

See The Keep, Corner Green, Southrow, Spangate, Hallgate, The Priory, The Lane, The Hall, Dale Close and The Plantation. *London SE3.* **30**

Syon Park

These magnificent grounds were landscaped by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown between 1767 and 1773. He swept away the Tudor terraces and formal gardens, setting the castle-like house in a green

park. He created a large lake in the mid-distance and introduced cedars and other exotic trees. For this he charged the Duke of Northumberland £1,956.

Changes in life-style in the 20th century have obliged the present duke to turn it into a commercial venture with a horticultural emphasis. The grounds have been adapted to cater for large numbers of visitors – the lakeside has been planted with a colourful collection of waterside plants and many 'designed' garden features have been introduced. *Park Rd, Isleworth, nr Brentford.* **38**



St. James's Park from the new bridge.



The Queens Walk, South Bank, from under Hungerford Bridge looking west.

The South Bank SE1

The co-ordinated development of the South Bank between Westminster Bridge and Southwark Cathedral is a 20th century phenomenon, much of the open space belonging to the 1960's and 1970's (and still incomplete). None of the open space is outstanding, and some is notorious for its inhospitable environment. The Queen's Walk, a pedestrian route, is beginning to take shape and will link the various developments. It is embellished with traditional dolphin lamp-posts and has fine views to the Victoria Embankment with its lawns and trees. Starting from the Westminster Bridge end, the landscape is dominated by County Hall, the first and, some would say, still the only wholly successful building in terms of its relationship to the river. Just upstream, as part of the re-development of St. Thomas's Hospital, is a notable roof garden dominated by a striking fountain sculpture by Naum Gabo. The garden is successful both when viewed from above and as a series of well-planted spaces for lunch-time relaxation. (Landscape Architects: York, Rosenberg, Marshall)

Beyond County Hall are the Jubilee Gardens. A good central space around a stage peters out into modicrity at its fringes. (Landscape Architects: Casson & Condor, for the GLC). The trees in front of the Jubilee Gardens were planted by the GLC in 1966 in very large and well prepared tree pits. In 1978 they were thinned from 10m spacing to 16m and have grown remarkably well.

From County Hall to Hungerford Bridge, the landscape is dominated by the Shell complex with its muddled land-

scape spaces, and by the concrete walkways surrounding the Royal Festival Hall and Hayward Gallery. Apart from the riverside itself, only one space deserves mention, namely the Shell frontage to Waterloo Road roundabout, a simple, elegant solution to an awkward, sunken space. Beyond Waterloo Bridge, the Queen's Walk continues towards, but does not yet connect through to Blackfriars Bridge. Between Blackfriars and Southwark Bridges, new gardens at Bankside make a bright, well-organised riverside frontage but fail to match up to the scale of the river itself (Landscape Architects: Derek Lovejoy & Partners). *SE1.*

25

Surrey Docks, SE16

The Surrey Docks were excavated in the first half of the nineteenth century and closed in 1969. Most of the dock basins were filled in during the 1970's and the land is now being reclaimed. Visit the following :

Russia Dock Woodland : A delightful meandering valley has been created (1981) using the old dock wall to form one edge of a water course and a beach-like edge-treatment to form the other bank. The valley is enclosed by thickly planted steep mounds and crossed by bridges and decks. Designed by the John Stedman Design Group.

Lavender Dock Pond : Part of the old Lavender Dock has been excavated to provide a pond and ecological study area for schoolchildren. The scheme was designed by Land Use Consultants and will be managed by the Ecological Parks Trust.

Rotherhithe Knot Garden : A small brick-paved window on the Thames designed by T Meddings as an entry for the 1975 Art into Landscape Competition. It contains a number of giant rope knots which have been set with resin. *SE16.*

Thamesmead

The largest new development in the GLC area with an eventual population of 50,000. Thamesmead is built mainly on marshland vacated by Woolwich Arsenal after the war. The early parts of the development around Southmere (a popular sailing lake) were system built in precast concrete and the layout was very much the province of the architect. More recently, in the land to the North, a more flexible approach has been adopted. Existing trees have been incorporated into the layouts and the houses are brick built with pitched, tiled roofs. Three large parks are already in existence and the first stages of a 5 km riverside walk are appearing (1982). A canal system linking the lakes and moated islands left over from the Arsenal is a notable feature of the landscape and functions as a drain for surface water. Areas of particular interest are :- Southmere, Greenmead Park (both off Yarnon Way), Crossway Park, Birchmere and Harrow Manor Way. Landscape Architects GLC Dept. of Recreation & Arts. *Approached via Harrow Manor Way off Abbey Road, Belvedere.*

Trent Park

A country park 160 ha. in extent designed by Humphrey Repton, converted by the GLC from part of an existing estate and opened to the public in 1973. The house is now a separate educational establishment but was previously a country seat with grounds landscaped in the English manner. Features remaining include an impressive lime avenue, an obelisk and ornamental lakes. The estate, having originally formed part of the royal hunting forest of Enfield Chase, now lies at the inner edge of the Green Belt at the point of transition between town and country. A successful low-key adaptation for public access has been achieved with carparks sunk in the woodland. *Entrances off Cockfosters Rd, Bramley Rd, and the Ridgeway, London N14.*

Victoria Park E3

Laid out in 1842 to a design by James Pennethorne, Victoria Park is of considerable historical interest as the first Victorian park to be owned by the public and designed for recreational use. As C Poulson, an historian of the park observes 'Pennethorne's plan of the "finished" park, after the Board (of Works and Public Buildings) had done its worst, shows a plain green level surrounded by a wide tree-lined drive, with curving copses and serpentine flower beds, dotted with trees, alone and in clumps, with minor drives crossing it'. However, 'The park became at once the great attraction of the East End. The people loved it, and took it to their hearts'. Near the lake, which is the pleasantest area of the park, a connection has been made to the Grand Union Canal as part of the Canal Way Parks Project. E3.

2



The Lake in Victoria Park.

The Water Gardens

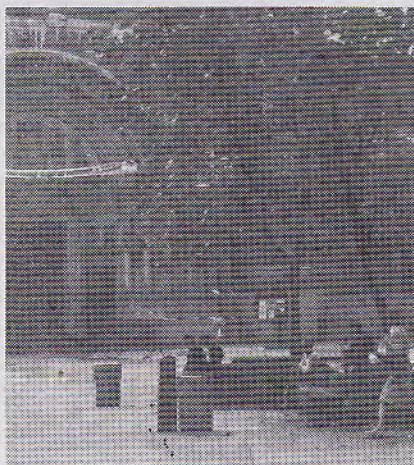
A formal water garden created for a development of luxury flats over a basement parking area. The design is based on several rectangular pools which have been successfully arranged with rocks, fountains and aquatic plants. The composition and its lush planting can be viewed from raised decks. Though small in scale it remains almost unique in London for quality of design in a confined area. Landscape designer Philip Hicks. *Corner Edgware Rd / Sussex Gardens, London W2.*

49

Westminster Cathedral

A new development of offices and shops has opened up the view to the Roman Catholic cathedral from Victoria St. It is paved with stone and brick to match the cathedral. This is a bold idea for the creation of space in the city centre and the glass of the offices contracts successfully with the cathedral and the paving. Architects : Elsom Pack & Roberts (1975). *Victoria St, London SW1.*

23



Westminster Cathedral –
The New Precinct

Wimbledon Common

460 hectares of birch and heather heath on the top of Wimbledon Hill, now surrounded by Greater London. A successful landscape plan has enabled the natural vegetation to be maintained at one fifth of the cost of a normal town park. Its execution was directed by Madeline Agar in the early 1920's with assistance from Brenda Colvin. Many conflicting land uses live happily together on the Common: golf, horse-riding, walking, football, children's play, cricket, model boating, outdoor swimming, courting and picking blackberries. *3km S of the Thames on the A3.*

34

Winstanley Road

An early high density scheme which was designed for a tough area and has survived despite poor maintenance. Hard paving dominates and has been carefully detailed with much use of brick. The spaces flow well between the blocks and tree planting softens the formality. One of the few clear successes amongst the redevelopment schemes of the 1960's. Landscape architect : Michael Brown. The landscape around the tower blocks which adjoins this scheme was refurbished (1982) by the London Borough of Wandsworth to create semi-private defensible spaces and some private gardens. *Between Winstanley Road and the railway, SW11.*

33

The Zoological Gardens

The London Zoo celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1976 by opening the New Lion House. This is a completely different concept for displaying animals — instead of the traditional box-like cages there are large amorphous enclosures within which the cage is hardly noticeable. The look of the natural habitat of the animal has been re-created, mainly through imaginative landscape design. Grassland, arid zones and watery landscapes are all there and many unusual plants have been included for effect. The public are 'managed' by the design of the enclosures themselves which provide a natural separation from the animals. Landscape Architect : Peter Shephard. Other buildings of landscape interest are the Aviary, the Penguin Pool, the Ape House, the Camel House and the Elephant House. *Prince Albert Rd, Regent's Park, London NW1.*

9

NOTES

