

# Battersea Matters

the newsletter of the Battersea Society WINTER 2018/2019



## New church and social housing for Plough Road

Jenny Sheridan explores a new community asset

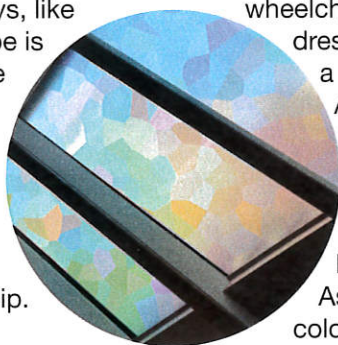


far left: the frontage on Plough Road. left: a carved stone plaque in the entrance. inset: multi-coloured abstract fish scales printed on glass windows. photos: Suzanne Perkins

**'P'**eople who live on housing estates have a right to a beautiful church'. Vicar Patrick Malone is proud of the brand new St Peter's church on Plough Road, on the edge of the Winstanley Estate. It is built, as he says, like a nest of tables – the shape is determined by the kite-like footprint of the site. The kites engraved on the glass doors, each with a cross in the centre, reference this as well as what he describes as the playful sense of the worship.

Inside the copper-clad building is a large airy community hall with a hatch through to a catering-standard kitchen. There are also meeting rooms and prayer spaces. Upstairs is the church, a tall roughly triangular space lit by multi-coloured windows designed by artist Ptolemy Mann. Patrick explains, 'The pattern is taken from the scales of a

Caribbean parrot fish. St Peter was a fisherman and our community is very diverse, so it seems appropriate. The abstract pattern is digitally printed onto the glass'. The lift up to the church is large enough to take several wheelchairs or a bride, her dress and bridesmaids, or a coffin and pall-bearers. A viewing gallery for families with small children overlooks the worship space.



### Multi-coloured

As well as the multi-coloured windows (seen to advantage from the outside after dark), artworks include a stone pillar carved with a modern version of Bible verses and a bronze statue of the Prodigal Son.

It is unusual for a new church to be built nowadays. When Patrick Malone arrived in 2006, 'It was dereliction. The old church – which

was uninsured – had burnt down on Guy Fawkes Night in 1970. There were some uninhabited terraced houses, a temporary church building and a listed Victorian church hall, all in a terrible state. We had to go to the Secretary of State for permission to demolish the church hall.'

The site belonged to the parish and to Southwark diocese. In order to build the new church they leased the

land to a developer. Sixty nine flats were built, one third of which - 23 in total - are affordable, either through social renting or shared ownership. They include a new vicarage.

One year into the contract, the building contractors went bankrupt. 'Nothing happened on the site for a year,' says Patrick, 'But the developers were very good and continued the job with their own contractor.'

Architect Howard Allen of Portal Architecture comments, 'This is a significant brownfield regeneration project for Battersea. It's about perseverance and determination over many years by many local stakeholders.'

The first service was held in November 2018 and the church will be consecrated in June this year, after which they will be licensed to carry out weddings and funerals. In future the community hall and meeting rooms will be available for hire.



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**[batterseasociety.org.uk](http://batterseasociety.org.uk)**

**for regular updates on Battersea Society news, events and planning matters**