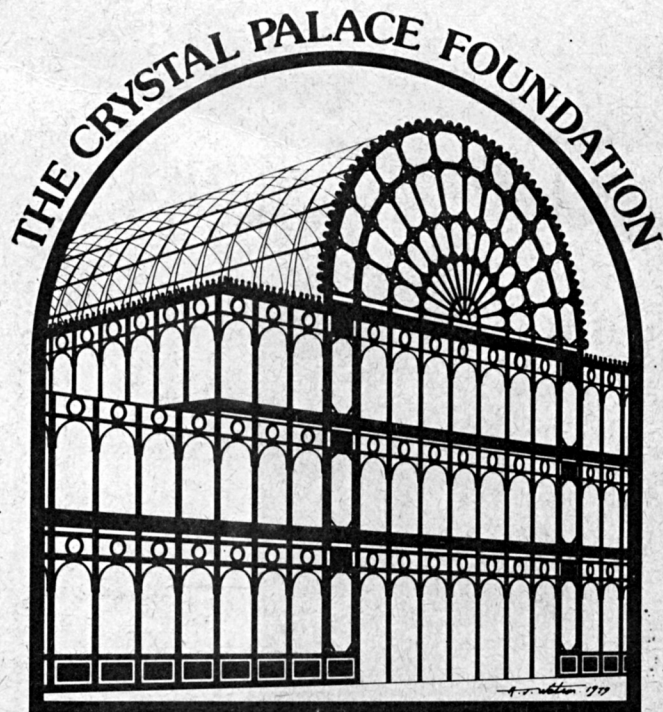


# The Crystal Palace Museum



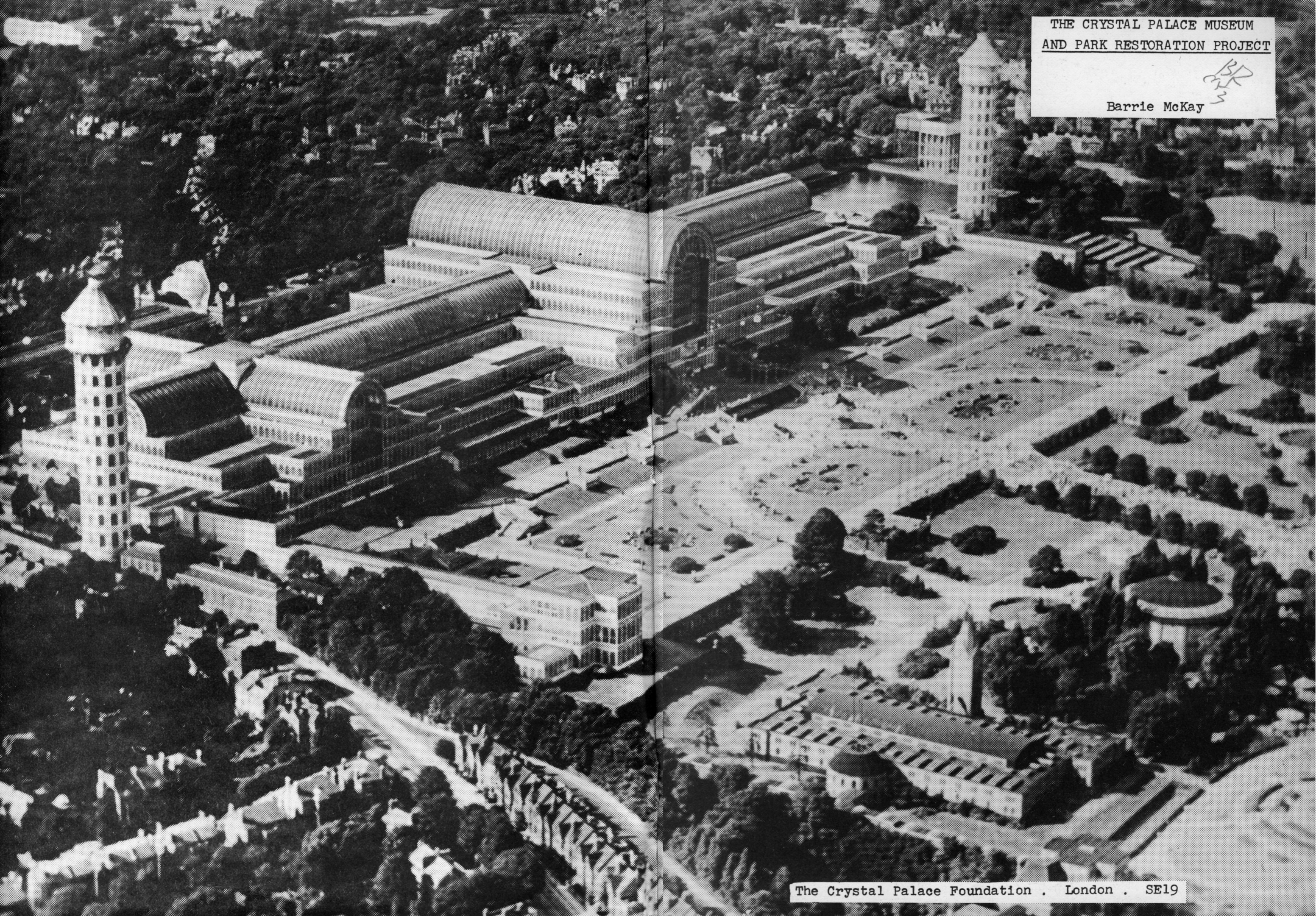
## and Park Restoration Project



THE CRYSTAL PALACE MUSEUM  
AND PARK RESTORATION PROJECT

*BM*  
*JK*  
*3*

Barrie McKay



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Second (revised) Edition 1982

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THE CRYSTAL PALACE FOUNDATION

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INTRODUCING THE CRYSTAL PALACE FOUNDATION

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

In May 1979 an Exhibition on the History of the Crystal Palace was held at the 'Lagan' Building in the National Recreational Centre. Though the grounds of the Crystal Palace have been an attractive and popular park for many years, 50 acres covering the site of the Palace and its adjacent terraces have been closed to the public since 1936.

In 1981 the Crystal Palace Foundation presented the Greater London Council with a detailed proposal offering a practical scheme for the reuse of this historic site.

Since the publication of the proposals the G.L.C. have formerly accepted in principal the Foundations recommendations and thanks to close cooperation the scheme is taking shape and detailed costings are now being prepared by the G.L.C.

The project has received considerable coverage on television and radio as well as in the National and local press.

This second edition of the report which was first published in July 1981 fully illustrates and describes the scheme as proposed by the Crystal Palace Foundation.

Barrie McKay, Chairman,  
Crystal Palace Foundation.

1. INTRODUCING THE CRYSTAL PALACE FOUNDATION

1.1 In May 1979 an Exhibition on the history of The Crystal Palace was held at the 'Anmac' Building in the National Recreational Centre.

1.2 The exhibition was a success and in response to the deep and widespread public interest, not only in the memory of the Palace itself, but also in the magnificent site on which it stood, the organisers of the exhibition founded the Crystal Palace Foundation.

1.3 As well as organising public events, giving talks on the Crystal Palace to schools, and other organisations, the aims of the Crystal Palace Foundation include:-

A. Encouraging: (1) Restoration and conservation of the terraces.

(11) Preservation of all remaining items of historical interest on the site.

(111) The Sympathetic improvement of the site.

B. Establishing a Crystal Palace Museum to permanently record the 85 year history of the Crystal Palace.

C. Promoting education and research.

D. Publishing work concerned with the Crystal Palace.

E. Organising exhibitions and other events reflecting the importance of the Crystal Palace in our history.

1.4 The Crystal Palace Foundation is a voluntary organisation with a professional outlook.

Its large membership is a mixture of people with special skills:- historians, archaeologists, engineers, scientists, surveyors, exhibition designers, community workers, members of Parliament, civil servants, local government officers etc., together with many energetic volunteers ranging from school children to senior citizens to whom the Palace was an important part of their lives.

1.5 The Crystal Palace Foundation publishes its own quarterly magazine 'Crystal Palace Matters'. This 36 page magazine is given **free to members** of the C.P.F and is sold through the Foundations own shop and other retailers and museums. Complimentary copies are issued to several libraries including the British Museum Library.

1.6 Membership of the C.P.F is £2.00 per annum for adults: £1.00 for additional family members or Pensioners and children.

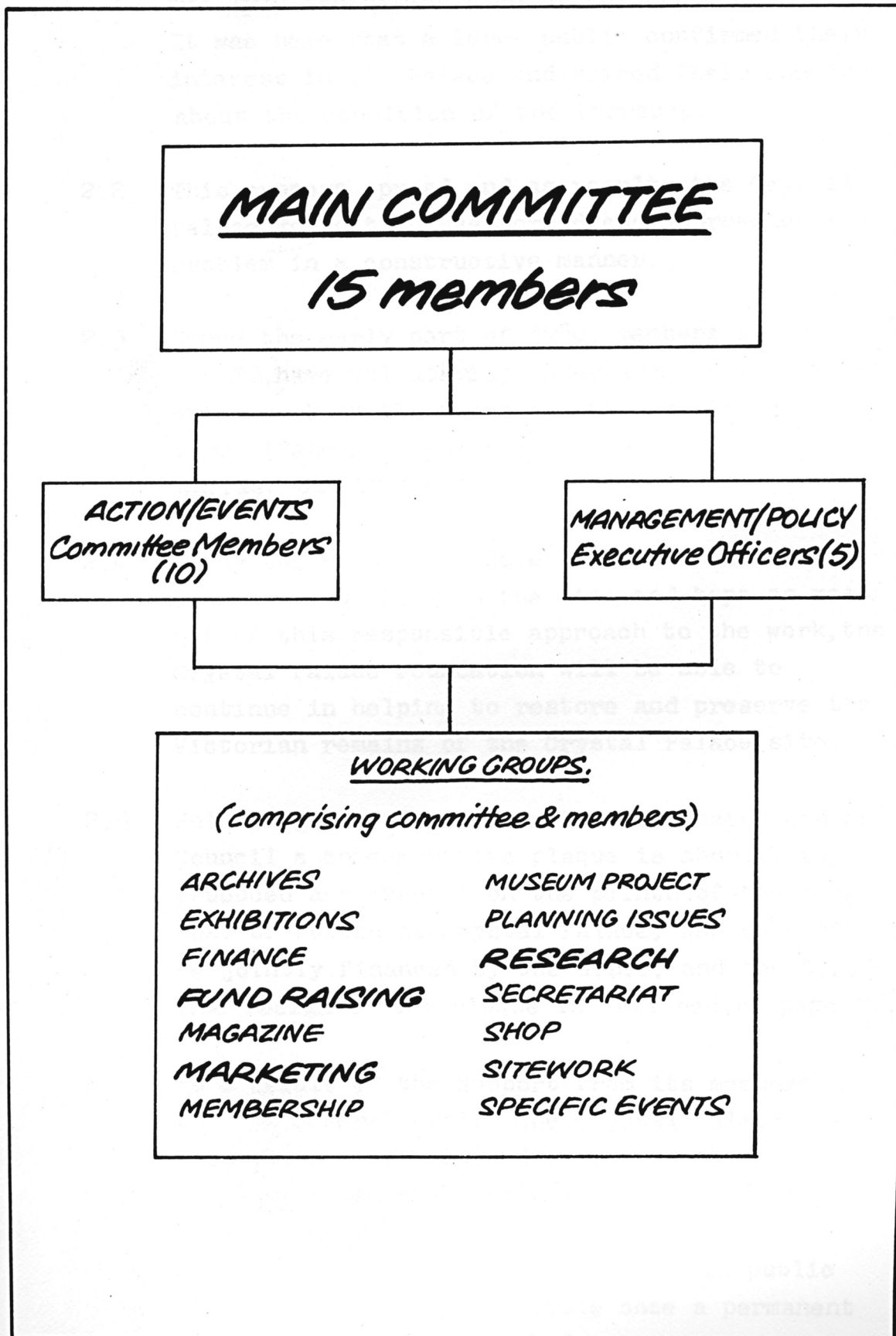
1.7 The Crystal Palace Foundation currently have members in 10 countries paying the overseas subscription of £3.00.

1.8 Page 11 illustrates the committee structure of the Crystal Palace Foundation.

1.9 The Constitution of the C.P.F. is currently under review to meet **new terms of** the Foundations aims which is to include the obtaining of charitable status and the setting up of the Crystal Palace Museum Trust.



# C.P.F. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

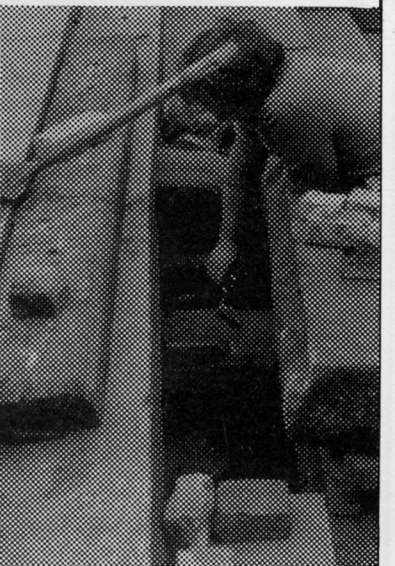
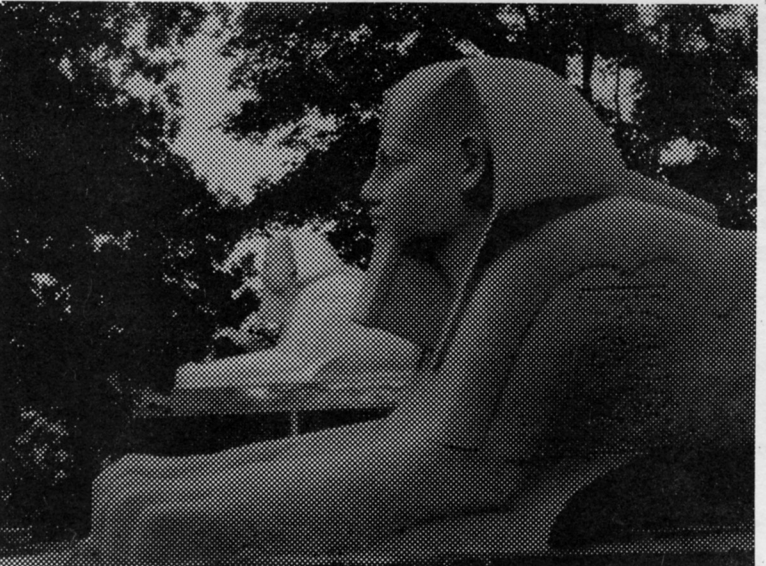
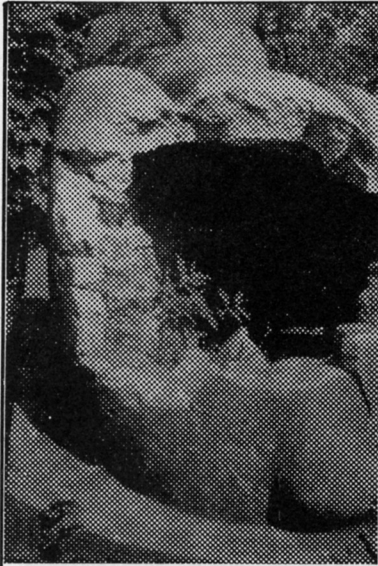


## 2. WHAT HAS THE C.P.F. DONE SO FAR?

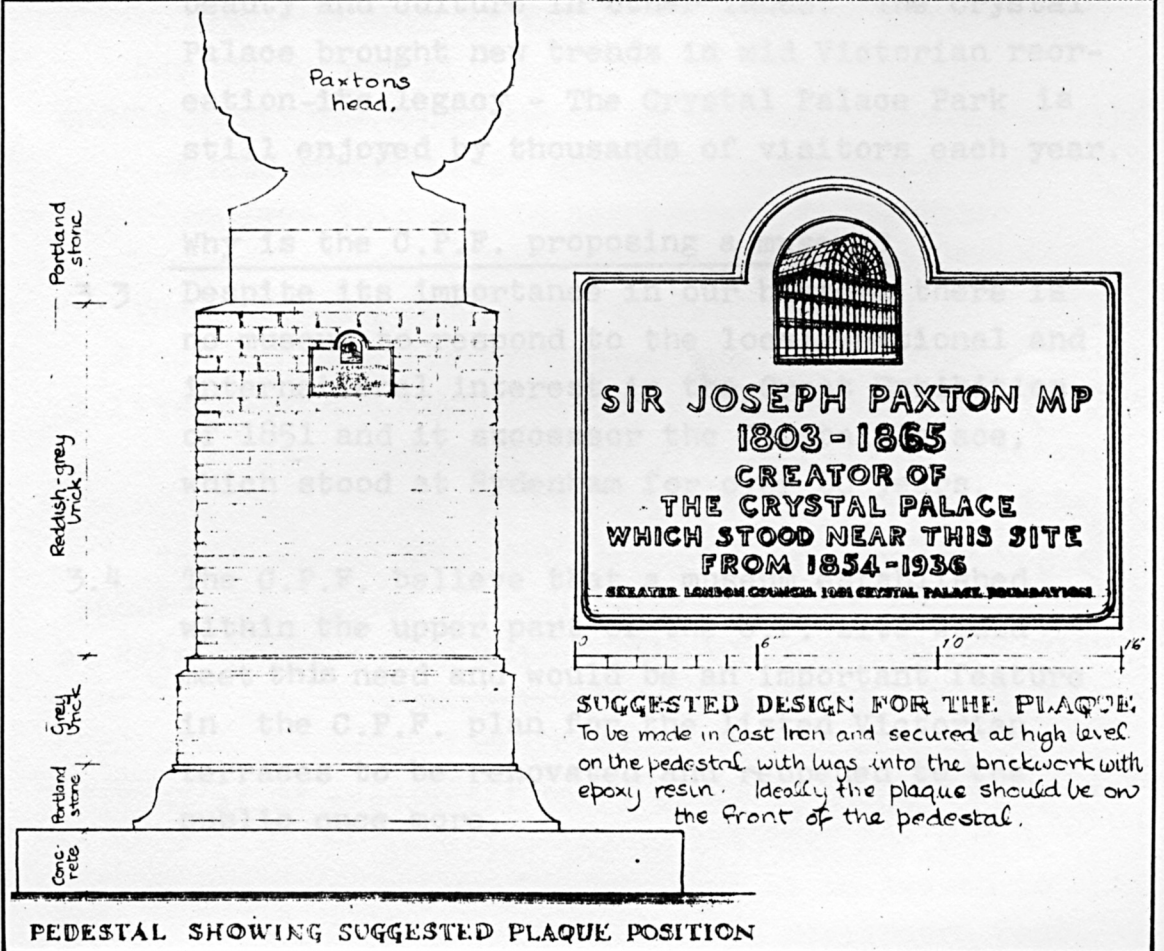
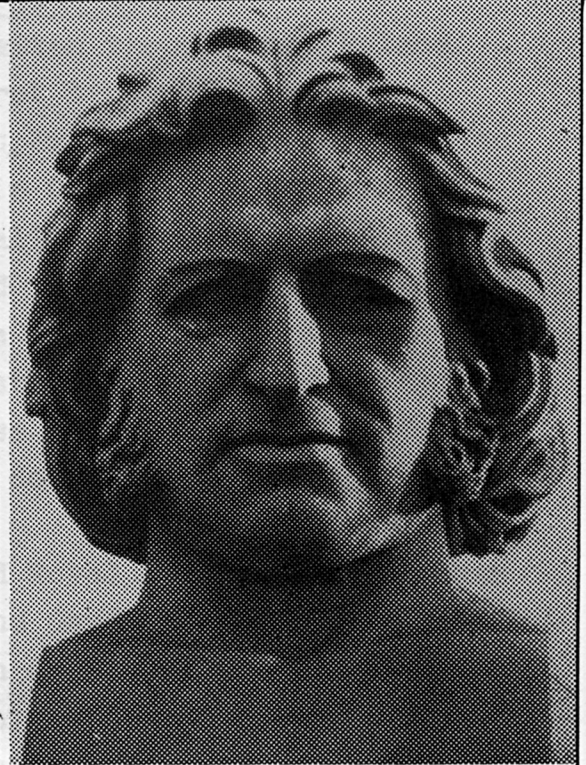
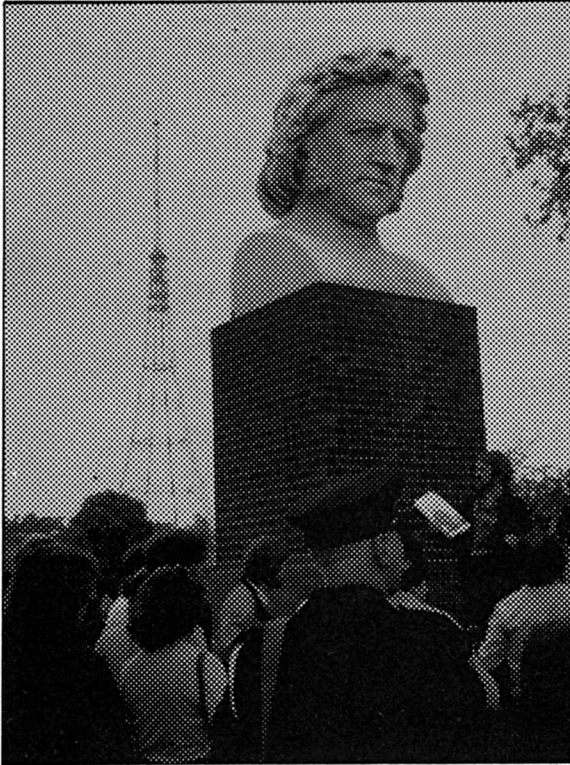
- 2.1 The 1979 exhibition came at an opportune time. It was here that a large public confirmed their interest in the Palace and voiced their concern about the condition of the terraces.
- 2.2 This concern spread and as result, the Crystal Palace Foundation was formed and approached the problem in a constructive manner.
- 2.3 Since the early part of 1980, members of the C.P.F. have voluntarily undertaken site restoration work on the terraces, and granite stairways. (Page 15 shows some of the work already carried out by the C.P.F.)
- 2.4 Today the Foundation have their own insurance cover when working on the site and hope as result of this responsible approach to the work, the Crystal Palace Foundation will be able to continue in helping to restore and preserve the Victorian remains of the Crystal Palace site.
- 2.5 Following consultations with the Greater London Council a commemorative plaque is shortly to be produced and erected on the plinth of the large bust of Paxton at Crystal Palace, and this will be jointly financed by the G.L.C. and the C.P.F. (The design of the plaque is outlined on page 17.)
- 2.6 As a result of the support from its members and the general public the Crystal Palace Foundation have acquired a considerable amount of archive material connected with the Crystal Palace. The Foundation is cataloguing this material for research purposes and for public display, to be made available once a permanent museum has been established.

2.7 The Foundation have organised and will continue to arrange regular public events including guided walkabouts, exhibitions, slide and film shows of the Crystal Palace history to community groups and schools in the London Boroughs.

# SITWORK



# PAXTON PLAQUE



### 3 THE CRYSTAL PALACE MUSEUM

#### The Crystal Palace 1851 - 1936

3.1 Designed by Joseph Paxton the Crystal Palace housed the World's first truly International Exhibition. The Great Exhibition of 1851 was an important part of this Country's history. Its concept brought all nations together in peace and harmony and launched a new era in Britains achievements in technology and manufactured design and construction. The building was made of iron and glass and achieved high acclaim in its revolutionary design and construction.

3.2 With its transfer and Royal opening at Sydenham in 1854 the Palace and Gardens became the centre of art and recreation expanding the minds of the average Englishman in the arts and sciences and beauty and culture in other lands. The Crystal Palace brought new trends in mid Victorian recreation-its legacy - The Crystal Palace Park is still enjoyed by thousands of visitors each year.

#### Why is the C.P.F. proposing a museum?

3.3 Despite its importance in our history there is no museum to respond to the local, national and international interest in the Great Exhibition of 1851 and its successor the Crystal Palace, which stood at Sydenham for over 80 years.

3.4 The C.P.F. believe that a museum established within the upper part of the C.P. site would meet this need and would be an important feature in the C.P.F. plan for the listed Victorian terraces to be renovated and reopened to the public once more.

3.5 Apart from providing visitors and tourists to the area with the Palace's wide and interesting history, a museum located within the surrounds of the C.P. site would not only be appropriate it would also enhance the attractions offered in this, Londons Premier Park.

Where could the museum be located?

3.6 A survey carried out by the C.P.F established that the G.L.C.'s Anerley Office Building next to the base of Brunel's south water tower on Anerley Hill is of ideal stature and location for such a museum.

3.7 The building was constructed in 1872 to house the worlds first school of Practical Engineering. Its founder principal W.J.Wilson was cousin of Sir Charles Fox whose company Fox & Henderson built the Crystal Palace at Hyde Park and subsequently at Sydenham. It was Wilson who first suggested to George Grove, Secretary of the Crystal Palace Company, the need for such a school.

In its long history the school produced many hundreds of engineers from all over the world. The famous aeronautic engineer Sir Geoffrey De Havilland attended the school.

3.8 The building, which is featured on the front cover is a suitable size and design which lends itself for easy conversion into a museum with no structural alteration necessary.

3.9 Drawings on pages 25-27 illustrate it is felt, the suitability of the building.

What are the aims of the C.P.F. for the museum?

- 3.10 The aim of the C.P.F. is to finance and fully operate the museum. Once established it is envisaged that its activity would extend and develop in providing seminars and educational courses for students, schools and other organisations. Subjects would include Conservation of historical landscapes, historical surveys of Victorian life and courses in the development of iron and glass architecture.
- 3.11 Since its formation in 1979 the C.P.F. has gained the support of other organisations such as the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Brunel Society etc., and have brought together leading authors, specialists and historians on the Crystal Palace as well as successfully acquiring sufficient archive material in preparation for a Crystal Palace museum.
- 3.12 Whilst the building on Anerley Hill is temporarily housing the G.L.C.'s workstudy engineers the C.P.F. believe this should not prevent the Greater London Council from considering the C.P.F. proposals.
- 3.13 These proposals are:-
- (1) The C.P.F. will undertake to finance, set up and operate the museum and be completely responsible for its upkeep.
  - (11) The C.P.F. will equip the museum with the necessary furnishings, displays and exhibits.
  - (111) The C.P.F. propose that the G.L.C. allow the building to be leased to the Foundation at a peppercorn rent.



The C.P.F. will of course undertake the upkeep, running costs and maintenance of the building.

(IV) The C.P.F. proposes that with G.L.C. approval the base of the South Water Tower be incorporated as part of the museum project. It would be renovated and preserved by the C.P.F. with the plan to make it available for viewing by the public and visitors to the museum.

(V) Once the proposed museum has been established the C.P.F. would also undertake to restore and preserve the vaulted subway on the upper site with view to incorporating the care of this historic place as an extension to the museum responsibility.

3.14 Page 29 shows the last few precious remains of the statuary that once adorned the terraces and gardens of the Crystal Palace. These are at present under cover in a 'storage' area on the upper part of the site. It is the hope of the C.P.F. that these statues can be donated by the G.L.C. as part of the museum display.

#### Car Parking.

3.15 The C.P.F. realise the necessity for car parking facilities and are aware of the problems of access to the upper part of the site by vehicles.

3.16 To overcome this, the C.P.F. recommend that the immediate area at the rear of the proposed museum could become a designated car park space to accommodate up to 40 vehicles. It is also suggested that a

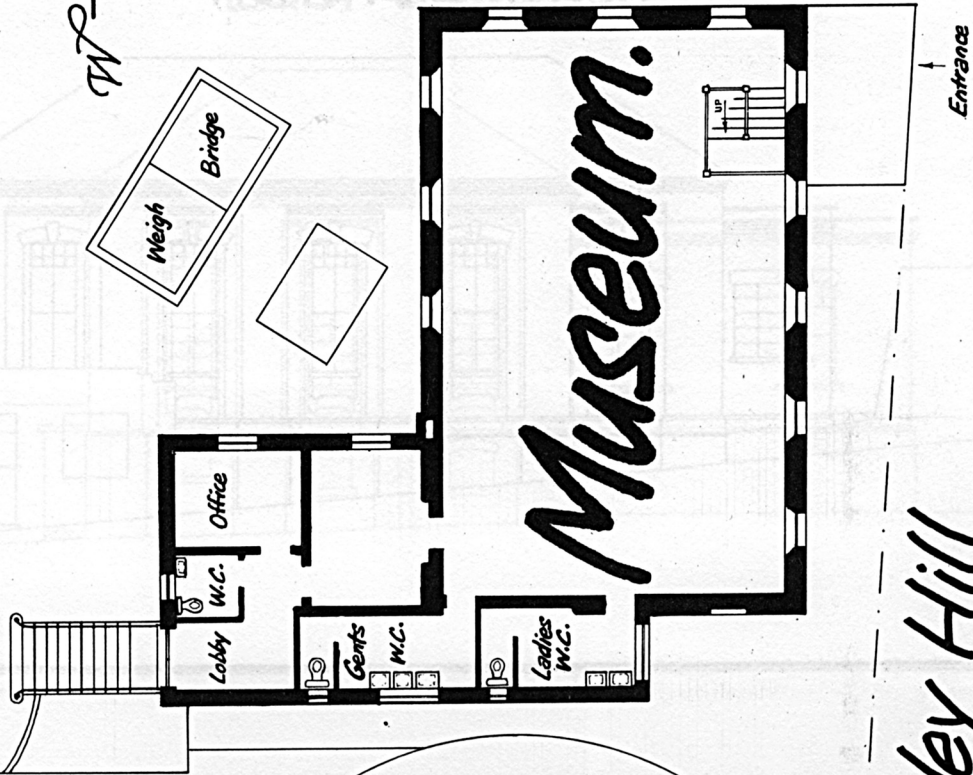
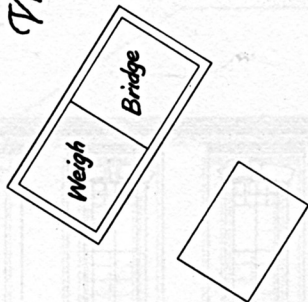
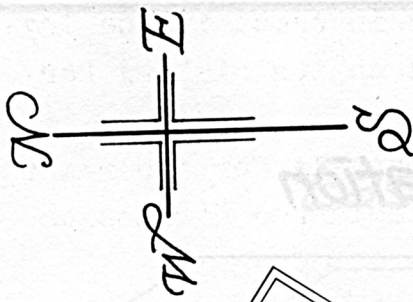
- further car park could be allocated for the museum and visitors to the upper site in the area of the former High Level railway station with pedestrian access via the Vaulted Subway.
- 3.17 Even the existing car park used for the National Recreation Centre could, in most instances, be utilised as an emergency overflow museum car park although it would be envisaged that if this was necessary it would only involve a small number of vehicles.
- 3.18 Crystal Palace is well serviced by public transport both rail and bus and considering the expected number of visitors to the museum from the park, car parking facilities should be contained at a reasonable level.
- 3.19 To improve access and road safety a traffic direction scheme could be introduced to guide vehicle flow in one direction and avoid vehicle right turn manoeuvres entering and leaving the proposed museum area.
- 3.20 It is the hope of the C.P.F. that the present official scheme to consider vehicular access improvement into the National Recreation Centre via Ledrington Road is not carried out in isolation but in consideration for the whole interest of the future use of the park.
- 3.21 The C.P.F. estimate between 150/250 visitors per day during its first months of opening eventually growing to 400 per day averaged over its summer opening period. The C.P.F. would restrict the numbers of visitors in the building at any one time to 50.

Conclusion.

3.22 The C.P.F. scheme for a museum it is felt will meet the increasing public interest in the Crystal Palace and provide a focus on its history for generations to come.

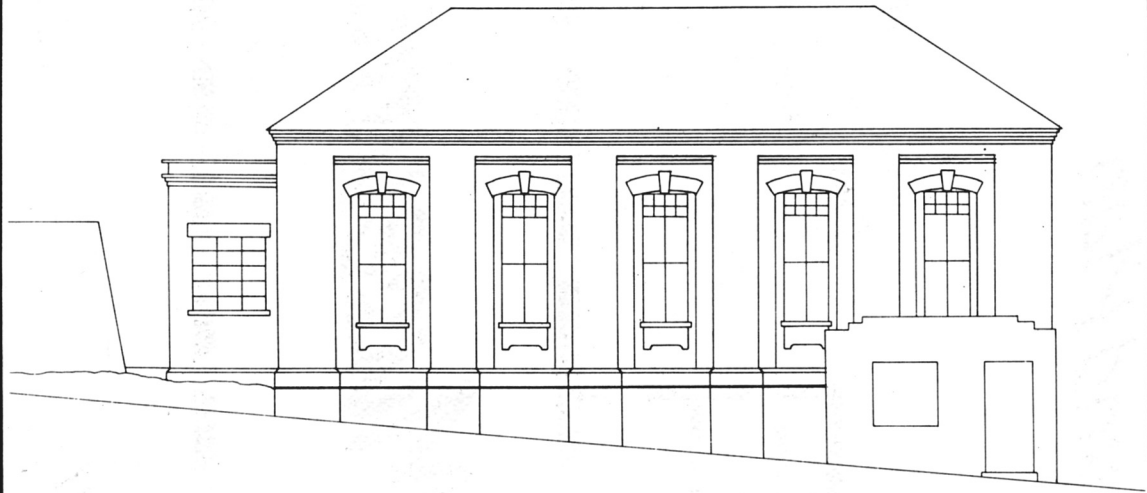
It is hoped that these proposals for a permanent museum, will provide the basis for discussion between the C.P.F. and the G.L.C.

Ground Plan

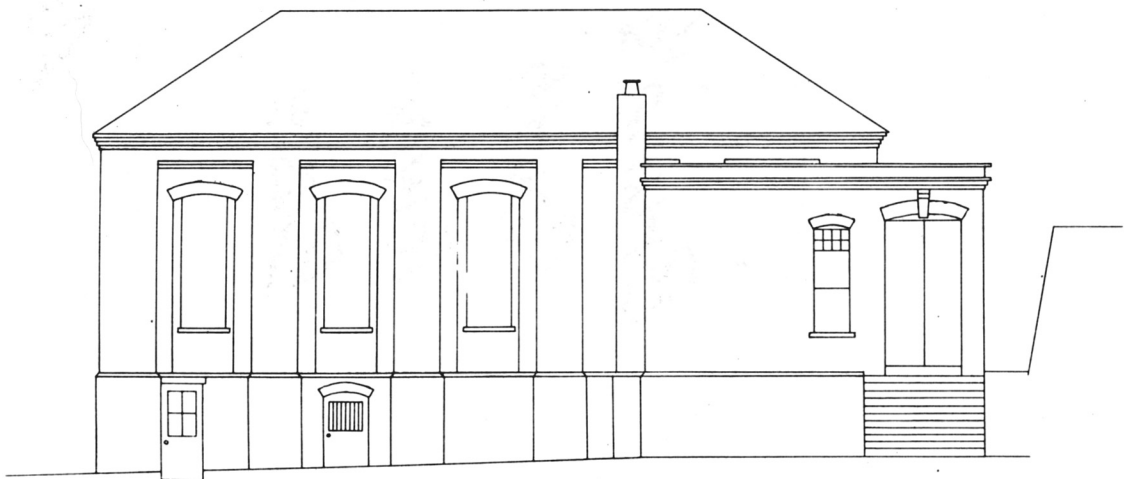


Anerley Hill

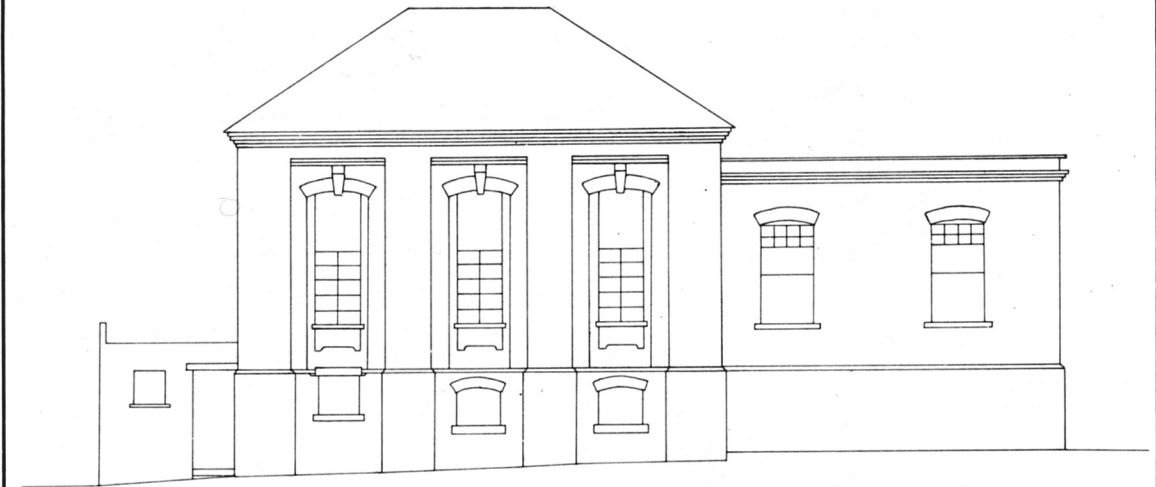
*Front Elevation*



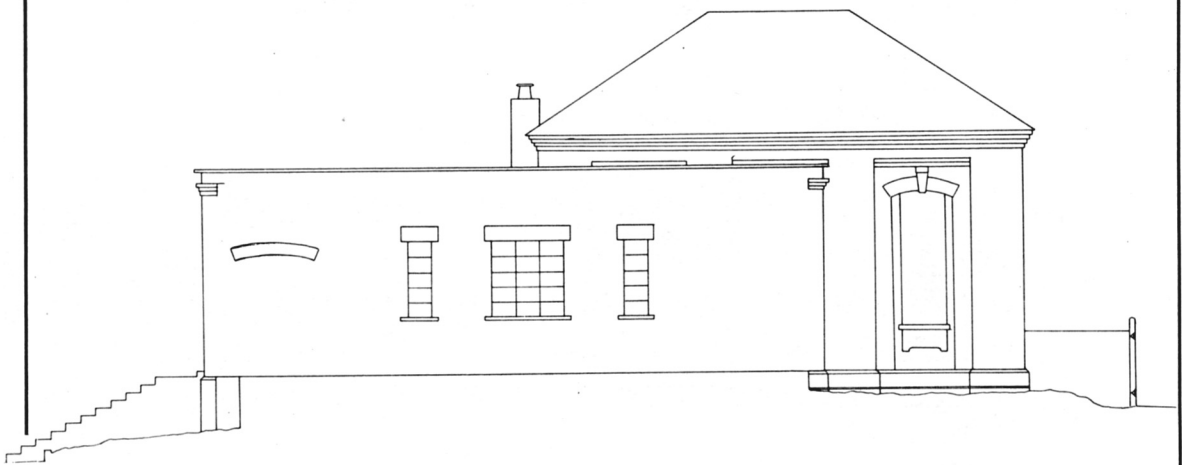
*Rear Elevation*



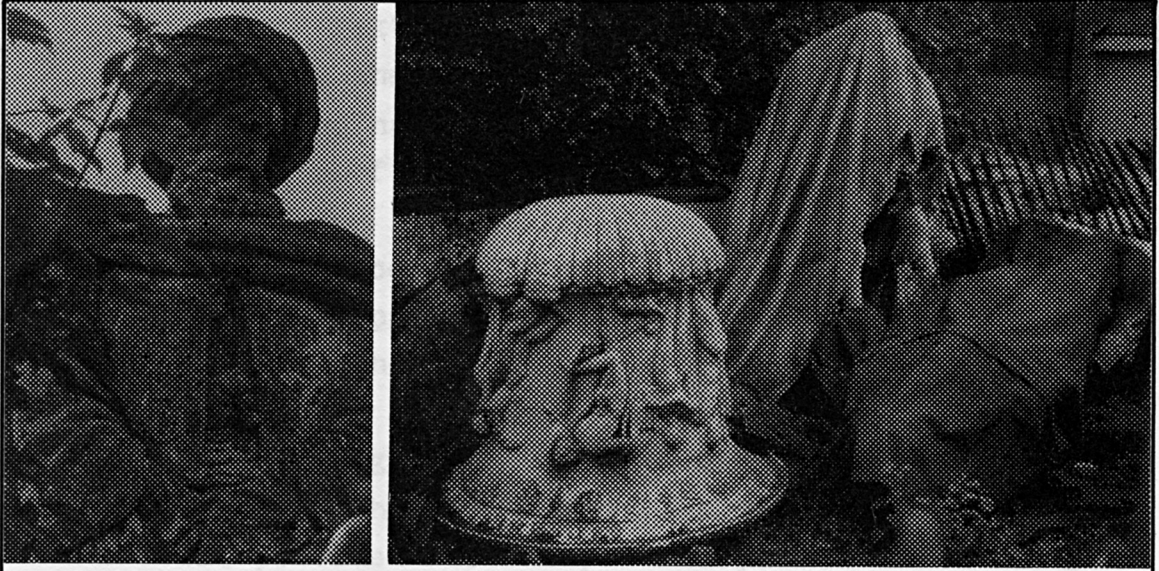
*East Elevation*



*West Elevation*



# STATUARY & TERRACES



- 4.1 In 1852 Paxton aided by architects and engineers modified the Palace for its new site at Sydenham by extending the building and giving it an arched roof. Paxton also landscaped the grounds to feature Italian and English Gardening. He laid terraces, flower temples, pleasure walks with replicas of the worlds choicest statues adorning the site.

He even organised a system of fountains that rivalled those at Versailles. Futher interest was provided for the public by a series of large life size models of prehistoric animals.

- 4.2 Opened by Queen Victoria on 10th June 1854 the Crystal Palace and its magnificent gardens and fountains soon became the most fashionable place in England its fame spread throughout the Empire. In its 82 year history at Sydenham the Palace was many things to many people. It was the recognised centre for music, sport, aeronautics, animal shows, firework displays, exhibitions and entertainments.

- 4.3 92 million people visited the Palace before it was tragically destroyed by fire in 1936. That was 44 years ago. Today the Terraces and part of the upper site of the Crystal Palace are closed to the public. The historical remains of the terraces, the balustrading and steps have deteriorated to a point where any further neglect will result in their total loss.



What are the C.P.F. proposals for the site?

- 4.4 The Crystal Palace Foundation have completed a study and survey of the now derelict and unused Crystal Palace Site and offer their proposals to the Greater London Council on how the site could be renovated and be reopened as an extension to the Crystal Palace Park creating a flavour of its former glories whilst allowing the park to cater for present day needs.

How can this plan be achieved?

- 4.5 The C.P.F. plan would be to clear the Italian Gardens and for the old pathways to be put back. The site of the fountain basins would be outlined in asphalt to give an indication of their shape.
- 4.6 The balustrading, stairways and other features would be renovated as much as possible or replaced if missing.
- 4.7 The top site would be extended out to recreate the same area as the former main floor of the Palace, by infilling with earth and retained by a concrete buttress following the line of the Palace. This will allow a wide area of use for the top site and provide a superb platform overlooking the Italian Gardens, and giving extensive views to the south.
- 4.8 The outline of the Palace on the top site would be delineated by pathways and small trees to give visitors an indication of the vast size of the building.
- 4.9 The foregoing is shown in plan form on page 35. Page 37 shows a model produced by the C.P.F. which incorporates the detailed features of the plan.

4.10 This model is available to the G.L.C. to assist their appraisal of these proposals for the site. Eventually this model will be on display to the public at future exhibitions and events organised by the Crystal Palace Foundation.

What are the C.P.F. proposals for  
the Victorian Vaulted Subway?

4.11 This rather unique piece of architecture was built in 1865 by Italian Cathedral Craftsmen for the London, Chatham and Dover Railway Co. to provide passenger access to the Palace from their 'High Level' rail terminus.

4.12 Although protected as a listed structure, this alone will not prevent its dereliction and vandalism unless further steps are taken to restore and preserve this special area of the Palace.

4.13 In its proposals for a C.P. museum the C.P.F. provides a solution for the preservation of the vaulted subway.

4.14 In this the C.P.F. would be prepared to undertake the restoration of this historic place and keep it maintained with the prospect of allowing access to the public as an extension of the C.P.F. museum project.

4.15 The C.P.F. has on previous occasions carried out site clearance in the vaulted subway. Page 39 shows the before and after of the 'clean up' operation by some of the members of the C.P.F.

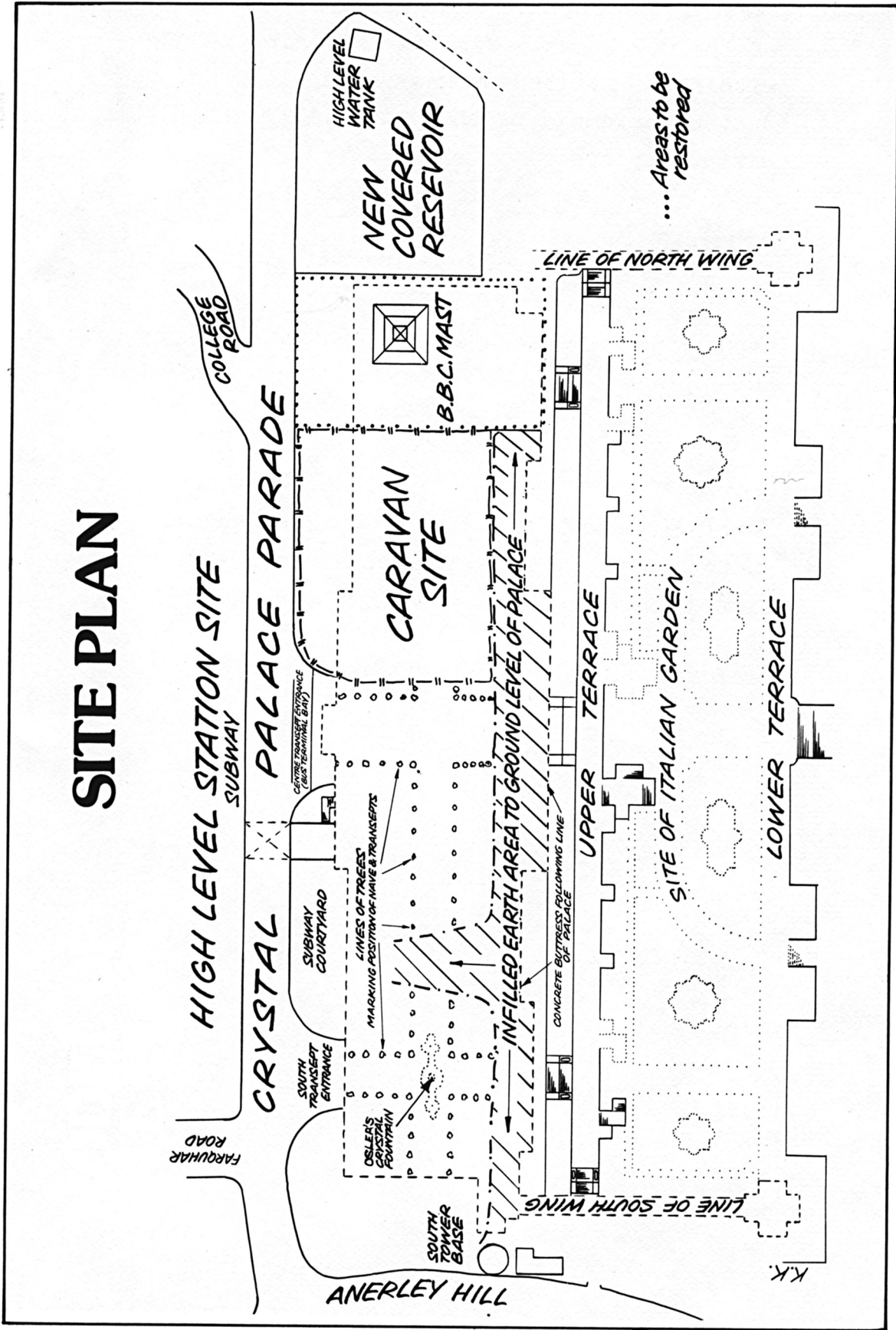
4.16 Page 41 portrays several representatives of the C.P.F. at a Victorian Evening staged within the vaulted subway during 1980 and is just one example of the potential uses of this historic place.

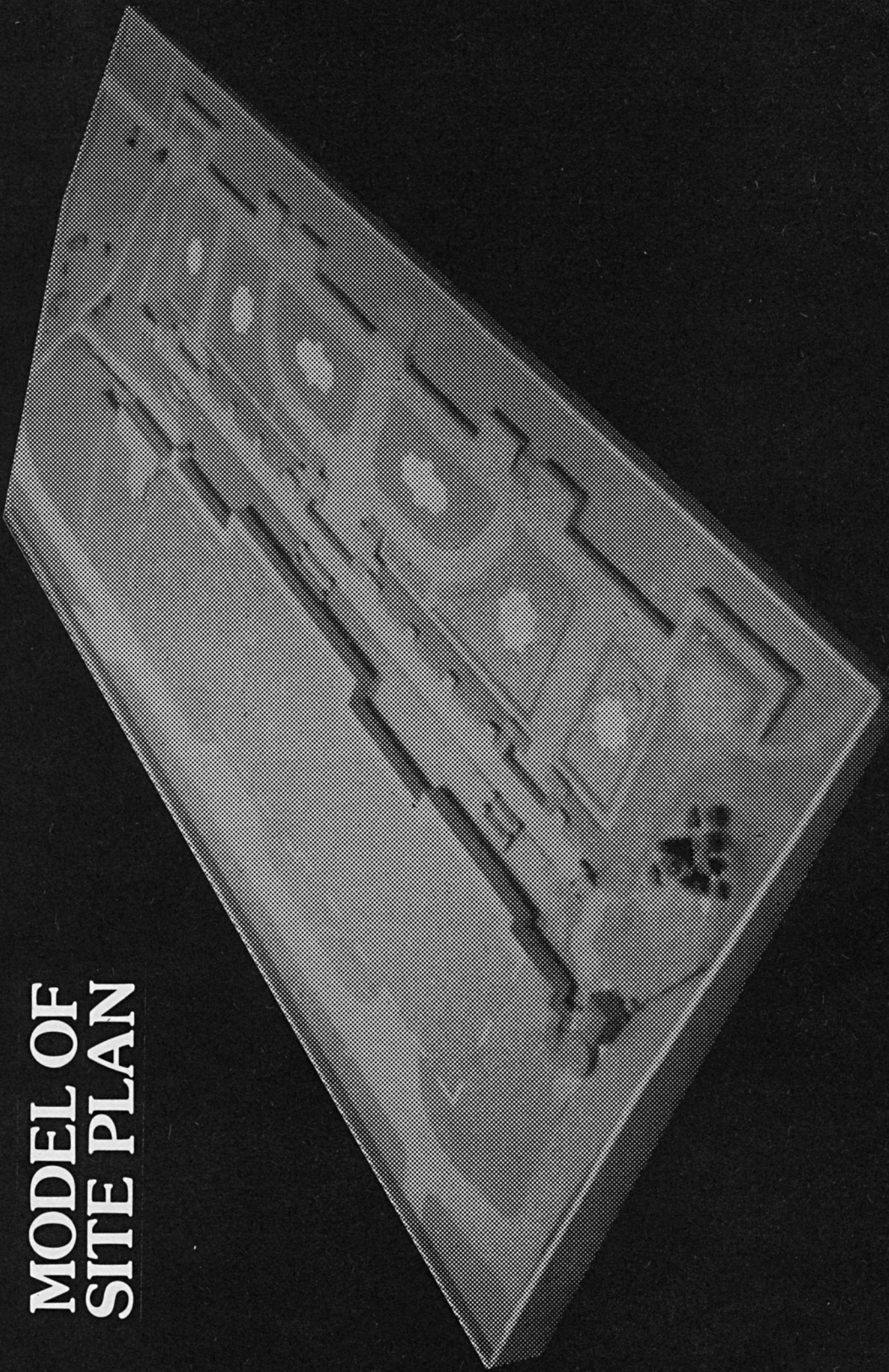
Conclusion.

4.17 The proposals by the Crystal Palace Foundation for the terraces and upper site, allows the return of public access to this part of the park as well as providing conservation of its historic landscape.

4.18 The park restoration project, as a whole, is estimated to take up to 3 years to complete (if intensified 2 years), and if necessary supplemented by organised voluntary labour. The project taken in stages would allow the public access to the terraces within 9 months.

# SITE PLAN



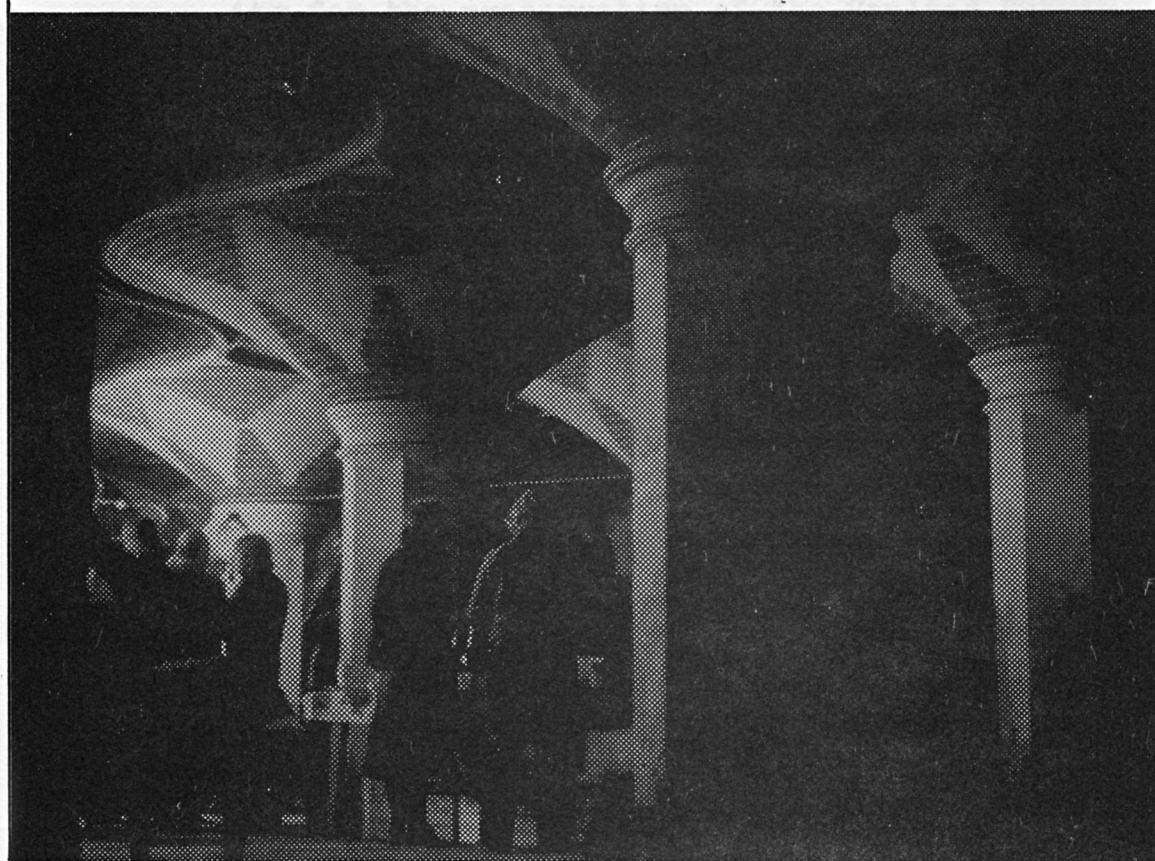


**MODEL OF  
SITE PLAN**

# SUBWAY CLEARANCE



# VICTORIAN EVENING WITHIN THE VAULTED SUBWAY



## 5 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 A Crystal Palace Museum on Anerley Hill would emerge as a valuable source of tourism for the area and provide a focus for local history.

5.2 The museum would offer an added attraction to the Crystal Palace Park. The revenue produced by admission charges and shop sales will help to offset the running costs.

### 5.3 Recommendations: Museum

(a) That the former Crystal Palace Engineering School, now used as temporary offices for G.L.C. staff, be leased at a peppercorn rent to the Crystal Palace Foundation as a Crystal Palace Museum. In return the C.P.F. would undertake the maintenance & running costs of this building.

(b) The C.P.F. would also undertake responsibility for the preservation of the Vaulted Subway with a view to this becoming an annexe to the Museum.

### 5.4 Recommendations: Park Restoration.

(c) That the C.P.F. continues its programme of restoration on the Palace terraces.

(d) That the G.L.C. consider the C.P.F. proposals for their undertaking:-

(I) To landscape the Italian Gardens to their original design.

(II) To continue to replace the balustrading, stairways & other features.



(III) To infill the basement area of the Palace, thus recreating, as far as possible the original ground plan of the building.

(IV) To outline the main features of the Palace (ie. the interior of the nave's & transept's) using small evergreen shrubs etc.

5.5 Past schemes for the Palace site whilst exciting in concept seemed to have been financially unrealistic. The C.P.F. plan is more modest in its aims, and it is hoped provides a realistic solution.

5.6 The C.P.F. proposals for the Park Restoration Project would enable the whole of this beautiful and popular park to be enjoyed by the public, whilst still offering flexibility for the activities to take place on the top site.

Barrie McKay, Chairman.  
CRYSTAL PALACE FOUNDATION

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Front Cover      The Former School of Engineering Building  
and Base of South Water Tower (Circa 1965)  
Reproduced by kind permission of  
Alan M. Owen.
- Inside Cover      Aerial view of Crystal Palace (Circa 1934),  
Reproduced by kind permission of the  
Patrick Beaver Collection.
- Page 11            The design for the Plaque commemorating  
Sir Josph Paxton.  
Reproduced by kind permission of the  
Greater London Council.
- Page's 25-27  
35/37              Plans, drawings and model by Ken Kiss.

All photo's by members of the C.P.F.

### SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

The C.P.F. wish to thank Mr. S. Griffiths, Parks  
Manager of the Crystal Palace Park and his team  
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given to the C.P.F. on sitework and events  
organised at the Crystal Palace.

THE CRYSTAL PALACE MUSEUM  
AND PARK RESTORATION PROJECT.

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