

Mitcham site to close by next year

THE SCALING down of the European defence industry as a result of the end of the cold war means the end of the road for operations at the New Road, Mitcham site, which has played such a prominent role in the history of Philips in the UK.

Towards the end of this year the image intensifier activities of the Electrical Optical Devices Group will be integrated with those of Brive in France. This will lead to important cost benefits in a highly price-sensitive market.

Fragmented

The other product areas in the EOD Group – fibre components and power supply units for image intensifiers – will continue as a stand-alone business unit. As well as supplying Brive the unit will work to increase sales to other third-party image intensifier manufacturers and to expand its already profitable business for single channel electron multipliers and scientific micro channel plates.

The fragmented locations on the old site are not suitable for the new business, so it is planned that operations will be transferred to a new local site, retaining Philips' link with Mitcham.

The changes will result in the loss of 60 jobs in manufacturing, technical and auxiliary areas and a similar number in the site ser-



END OF AN ERA: Mitcham played an important role in the growth of the British radio and television industry.

vices departments. Some enforced redundancies will be unavoidable and Philips will offer professional help in finding jobs outside the company for those who need it.

Activity at New Road has been gradually reduced since the mid-seventies as the result of product obsolescence, changing markets and integration plans. The imminent sale of the Geiger Muller tube activity, and the recent move of the Advanced Projects Group to Philips Research Laboratories at Redhill have been a continuation of this process.

By the middle of this year the majority of the Philips Corporate

departments operating from Mitcham will be relocated to City House, Croydon. Operations at New Road will be finally wound up during 1993.

Gordon Bussey, historical adviser to Philips Electronics UK and co-author of 'The Set-makers', BREMA's official history of the industry, said: "Mitcham has played a very important role in the growth and development of the British radio and TV industry.

First models

"It was established in 1927 as an overspill from the Balham factory and assembled the first Philips radios sold in the UK,

including one of the first mains models, the 2514.

"A huge number of Britain's radios were produced at Mitcham. In 1932 it began manufacturing valves, and played a vital role in valve production as part of the war effort.

"Its involvement in TV production actually began before the war; and after the war it became a leading development and production unit in this field under the direction of S S Eriks. In 1949 it pioneered the production of TV tubes using pressed glass techniques," he added.

Philips Mitcham can be justly proud of its contribution to the radio and television industry.