

THE DESTRUCTION OF OLD WOKING

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For many years Woking Urban District Council had sought to 'improve' the junction of Old Woking High Street and Broadmead Road – a junction often referred to locally as 'Send Corner'. Over the years they had bought properties on the High Street and on either side of Broadmead Road including Harts Butcher's shop on the eastern side of the junction and Levett's shop on the west - so that Broadmead Road could be widened to allow the new motor buses to navigate the corner. Granted the road was very narrow at that point, but if traction engines pulling threshing machines had managed to negotiate the bend back in the 19th century, then surely the 20th century charabancs and buses could have made it too?

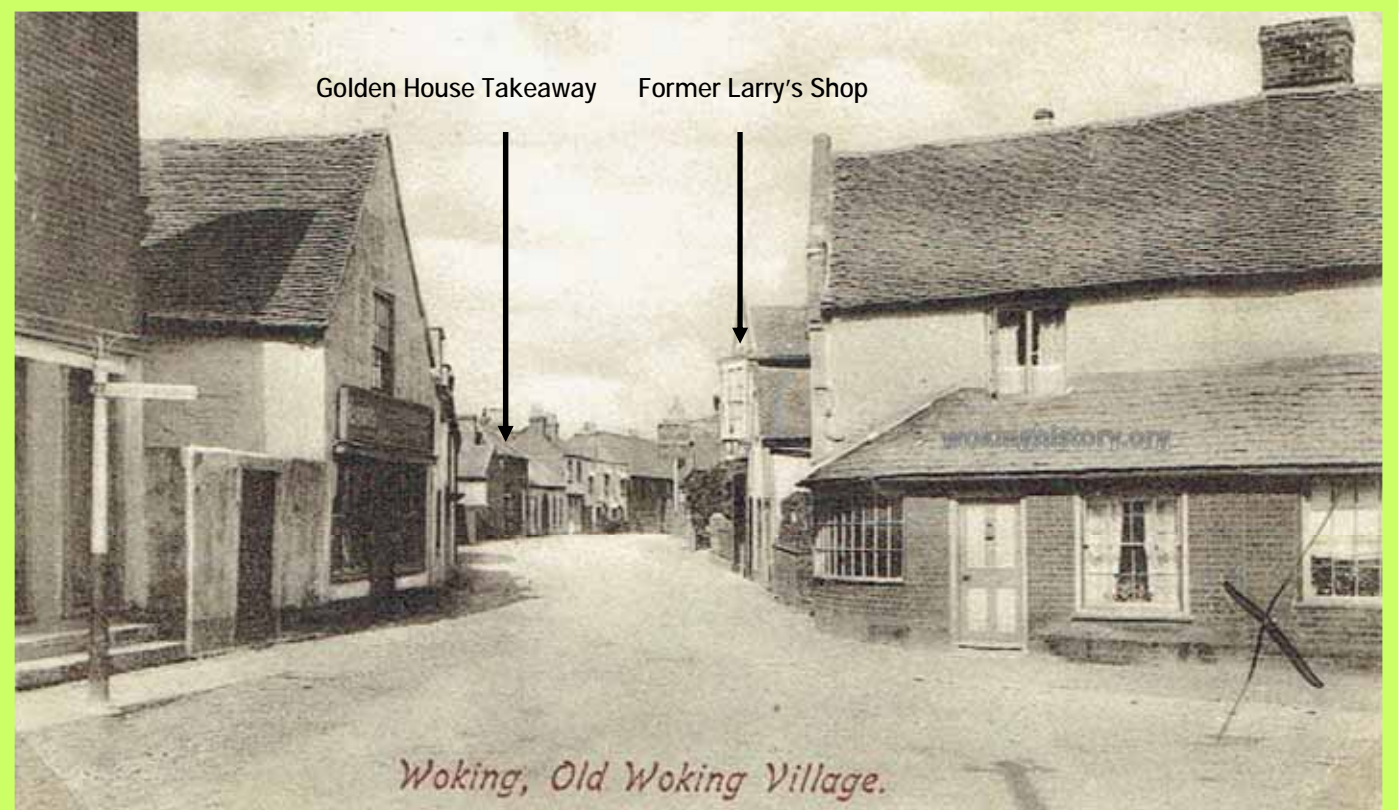
The main problem of course was not one of size, but speed. A tight corner at under 10mph is nothing compared to one at three or four times that speed and in the early days of motoring many minor accidents occurred at Send Corner. Indeed it has been recorded that one unlucky visitor from the United States managed to crash his car through the window of Mr Hart's shop, where a head of a massive buffalo that hung on the wall fell off, pinning the gentleman in his seat. The man suffered concussion, but when he came to he was

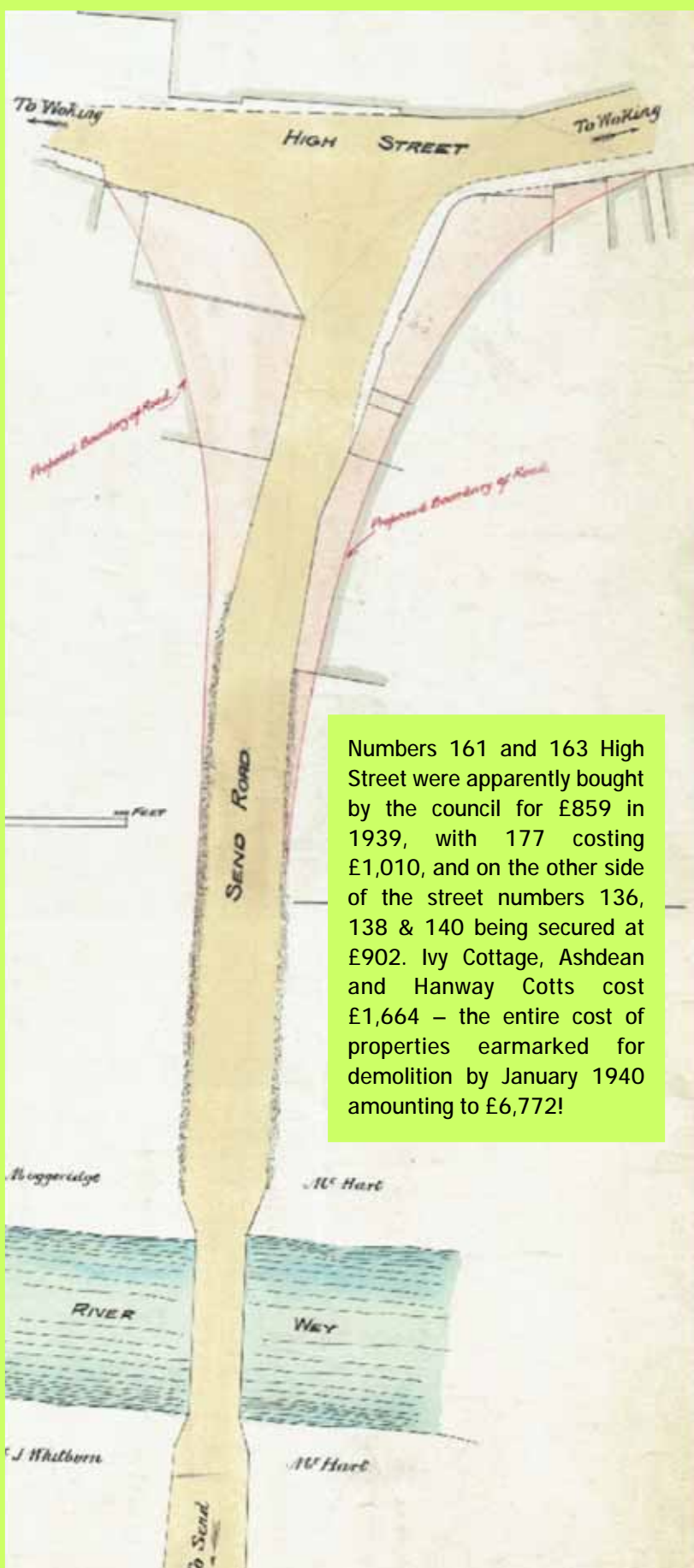
naturally confused and apparently wondered whether he was in heaven or hell (a question some locals have been asking themselves about Old Woking for years)!

Before the council demolished the property in 1947 there had been talk of the National Trust acquiring the cottages on the right (once part of Hart's butcher's shop), but to no avail.

Those to the north of the High Street (by the direction sign) were demolished before the Second World War.

The only buildings in this photograph to survive the destruction of Old Woking is what is now the Golden House Takeaway and what was once 'Larry's sweet shop. The railings in front of the White Hart (next to Larry's) can just be seen together with its sign, but since the pub closed that is no longer either.





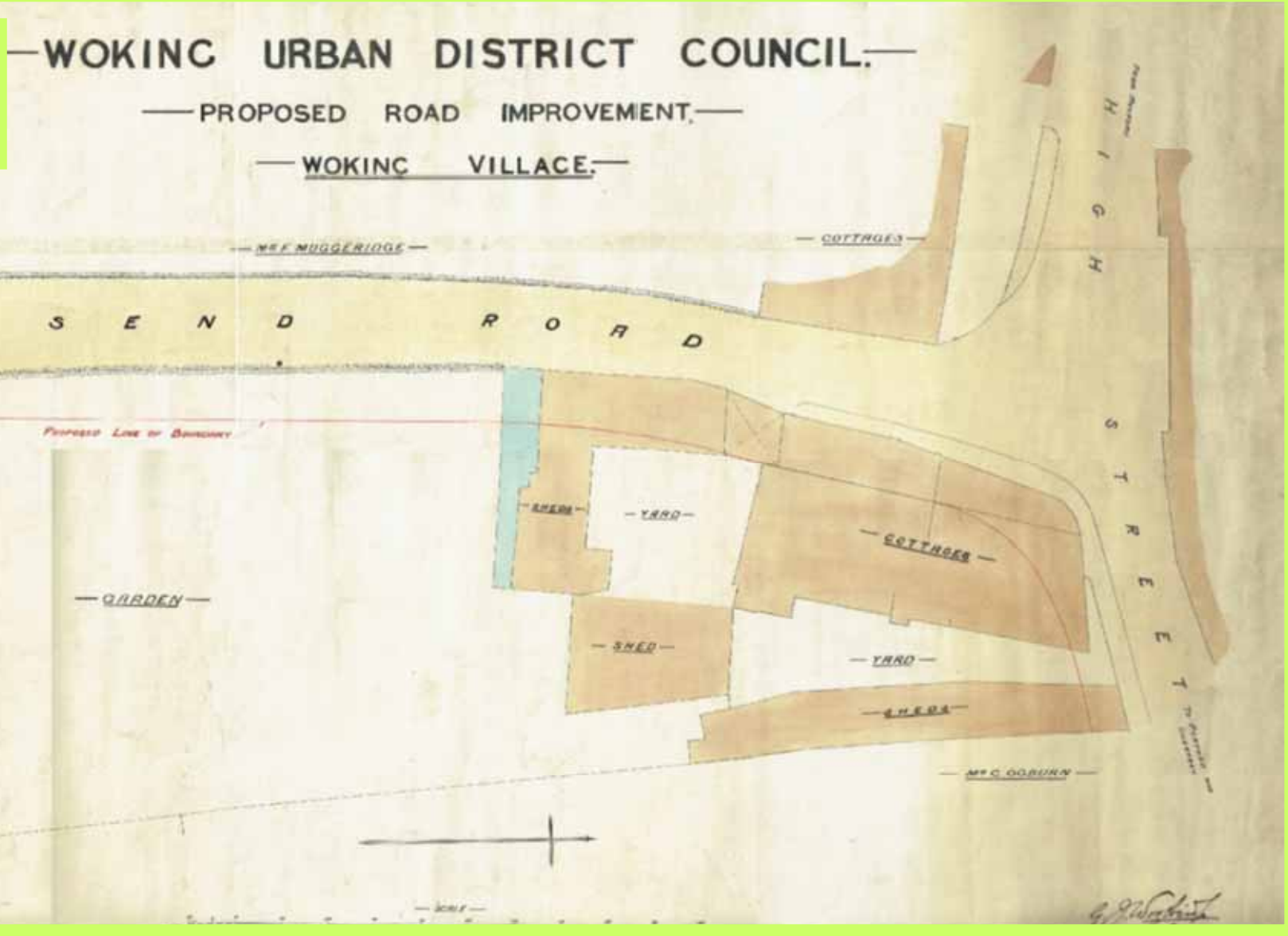
Numbers 161 and 163 High Street were apparently bought by the council for £859 in 1939, with 177 costing £1,010, and on the other side of the street numbers 136, 138 & 140 being secured at £902. Ivy Cottage, Ashdean and Hanway Cotts cost £1,664 – the entire cost of properties earmarked for demolition by January 1940 amounting to £6,772!

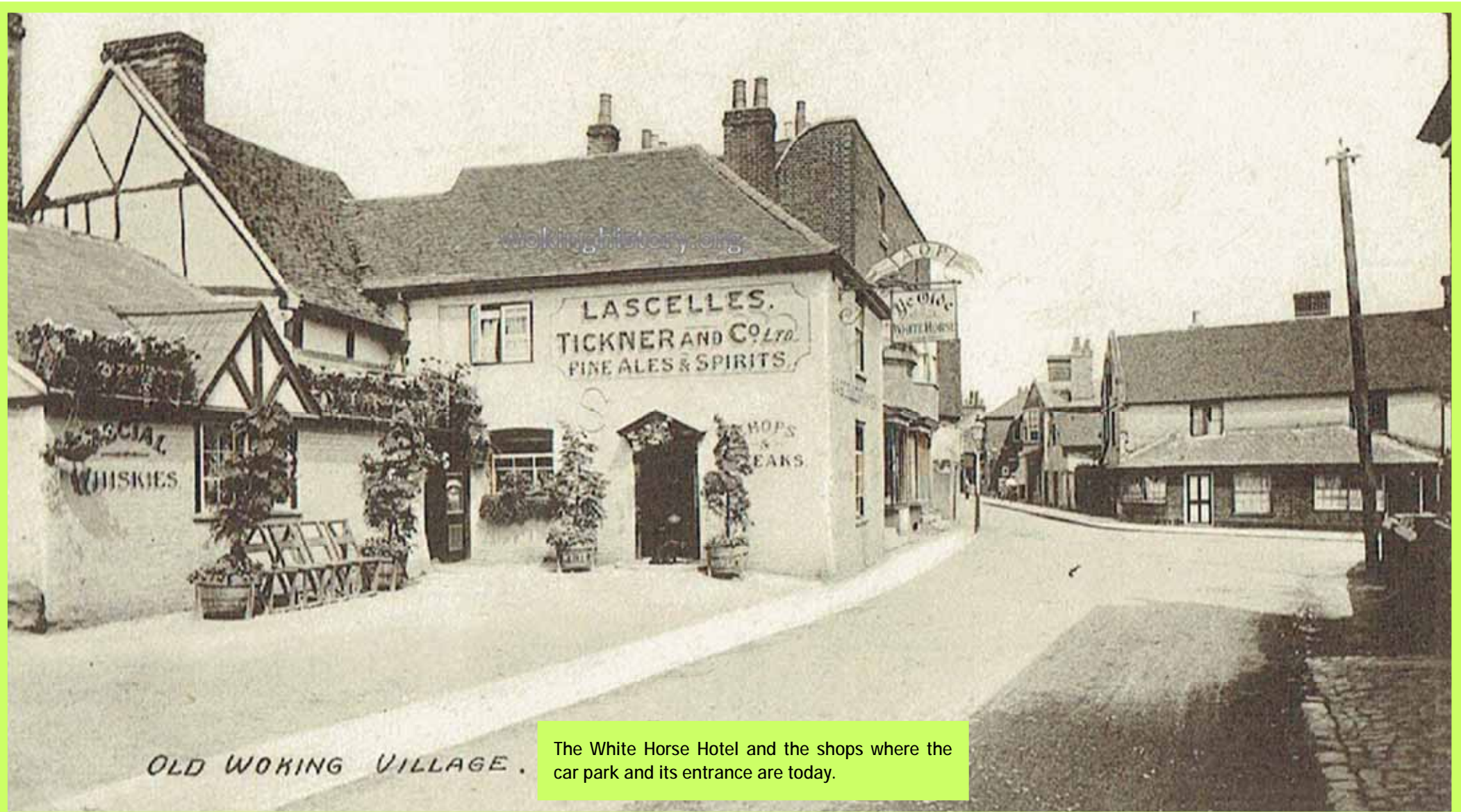


The former Larry's sweetshop managed to survive, but the workshops and cottages next to it were not so lucky.



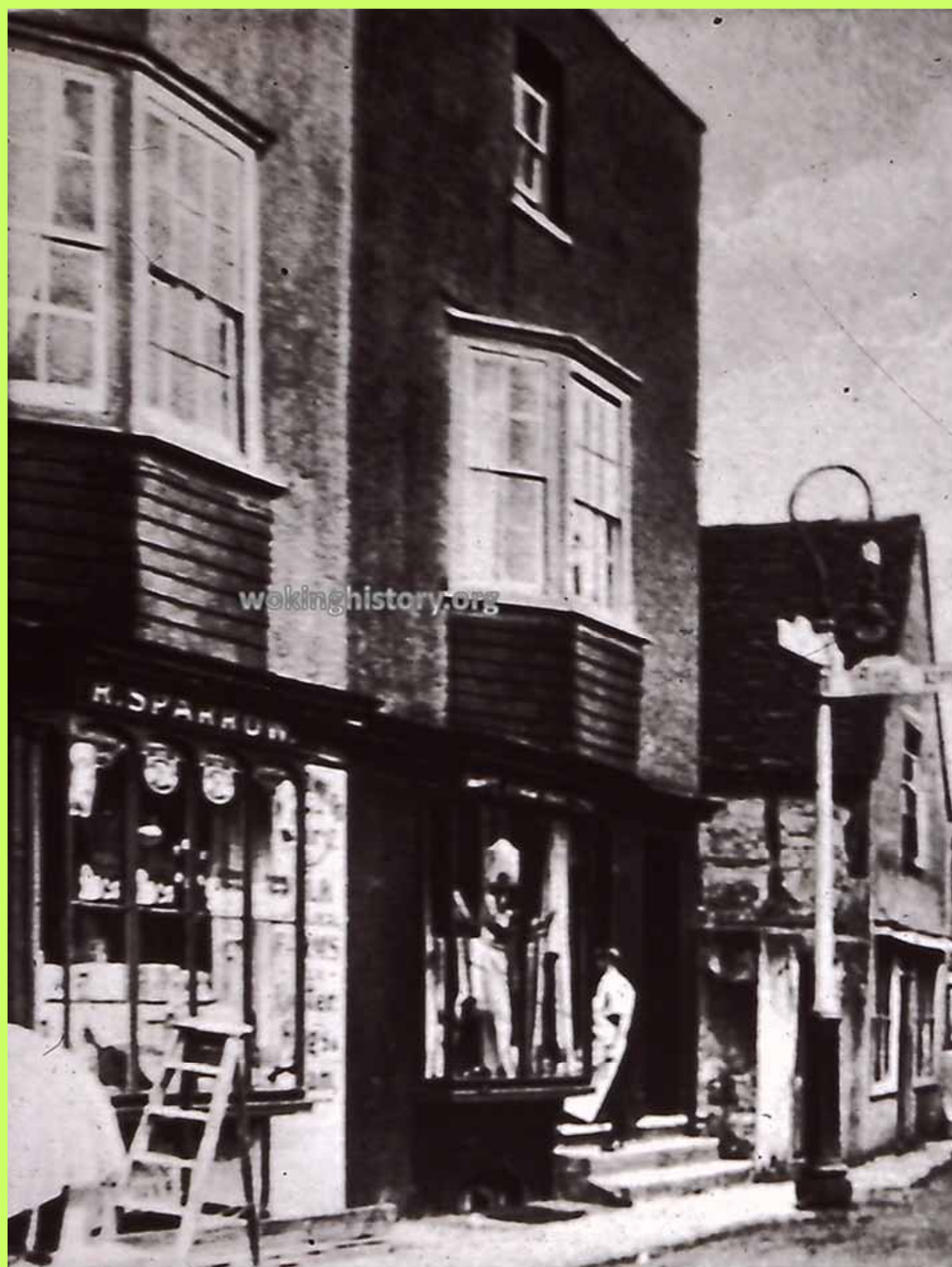
Above the plans of 1910 to widen 'Send Corner' with more plans in 1914 showing Ivy Cottages (Harts former butcher's shop) and yards.



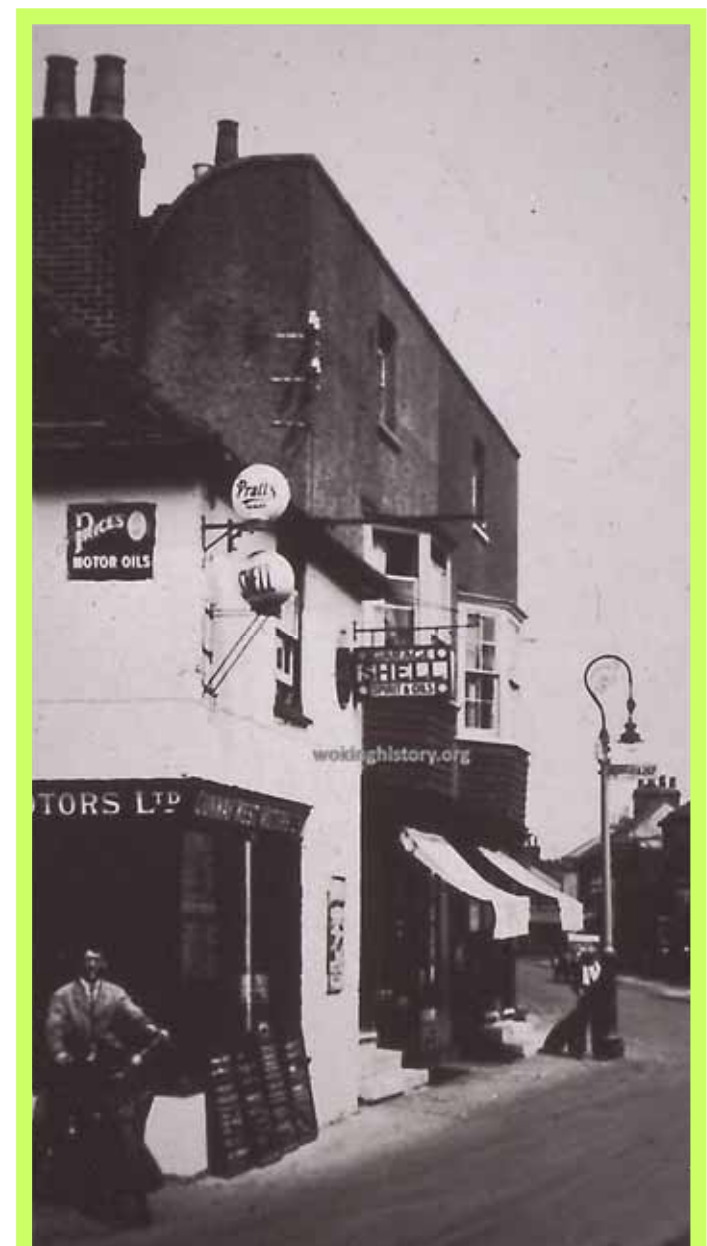


OLD WOKING VILLAGE.

The White Horse Hotel and the shops where the car park and its entrance are today.



Some of the first properties to go were the shops on the northern side of the High Street, leaving that part of Old Woking looking like a bomb site even before Hitler had a chance to get to work on the area. Indeed it was just before the outbreak of war in 1939 that the council purchased the former White Horse Hotel – the final piece of the jigsaw on that side of the junction. It had once been a coaching inn dating back to at least the 17th century, and was owned by Old Woking's Brewery across the road (where the Old Brew House and Riverside Gardens are today).





Since the early 20th century the old inn had been used by a succession of motor engineers – first Messrs Conway West Motors and then Mr A.C.T Fleming from whom the council bought the property for £2,337.

But that was not the end of the story, with the outbreak of the war the council had better things to do than demolish perfectly good buildings, so it appears that the local fire brigade used the property until January 1946, when the council leased a small part of the site at the back to Mr G.S Leigh, formerly of the Corner Garage at St Johns.

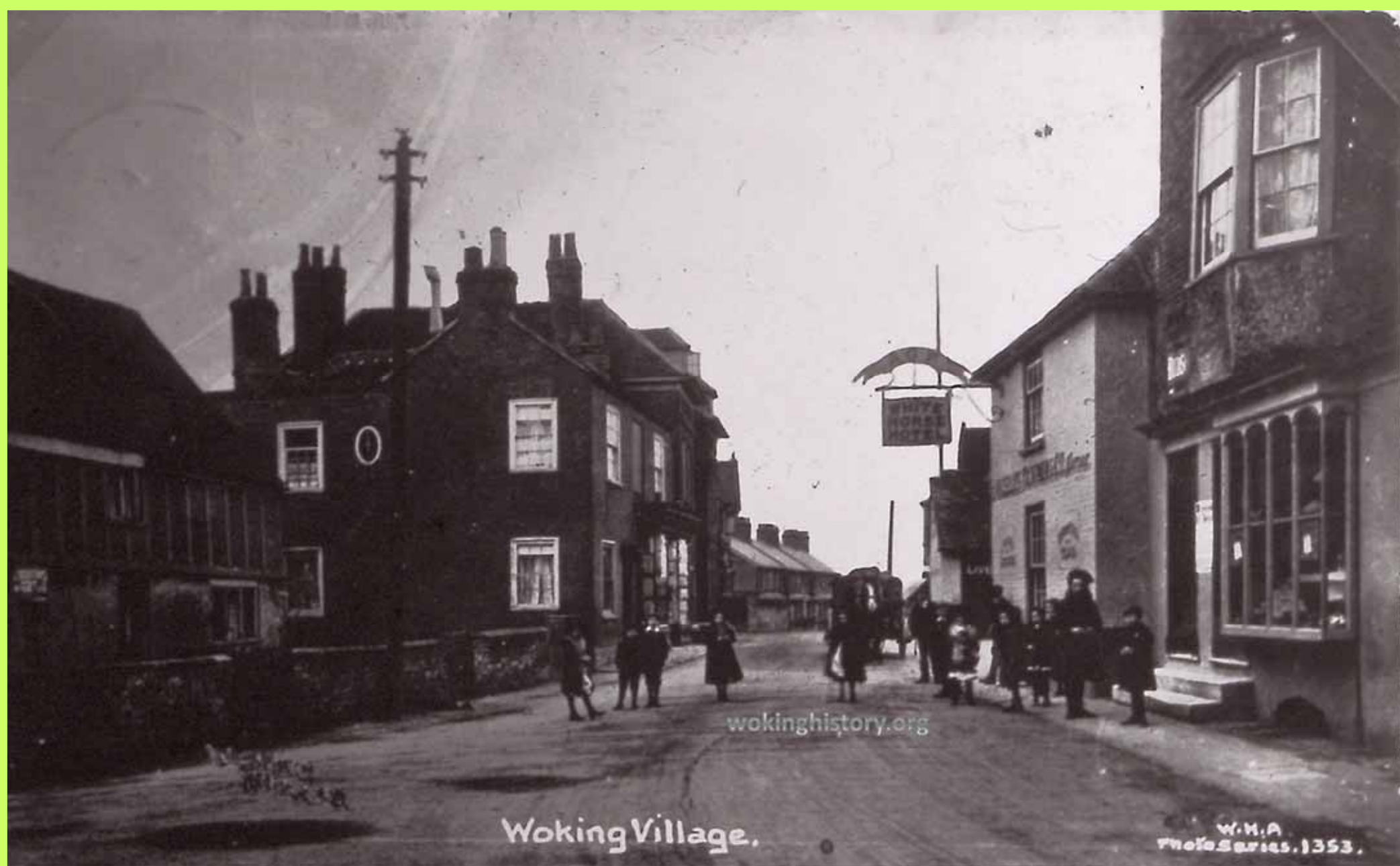
the small workshop at the back continued as Leigh's Garage for many years, until the houses of Manor Mews were constructed on the site. With the postponement of the building of the proposed Woking Southern By-Pass (along Rydens Way) the need for the link road from Broadmead Road through the site had gone and all Old Woking gained for its heart being effectively ripped out was a mini-roundabout, a car park and eventually Manor Mews.

The front part was eventually demolished, but



The White Horse Hotel was used as a succession of motor workshops until the final part (at the rear of the site) was demolished as Leigh's Garage and replaced by the houses of Manor Mews





Harts shop, which was demolished by the council in 1947, has been replaced by the little garden where the village sign is, whilst Levett's is just an empty site next to London



House, a former drapers shop which as the Post Office was the last of Old Woking's old village shops (unless you count the Golden House takeaway).

