

THE MISCONCEIVED MONSTROSITY OF PARES CLOSE

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Continuing our look at early 1960's housing developments in the area we come to Horsell where (as in the late 19th century) the close proximity of Woking Station put pressure on land, especially close to the town centre, to be built upon in higher and higher densities.

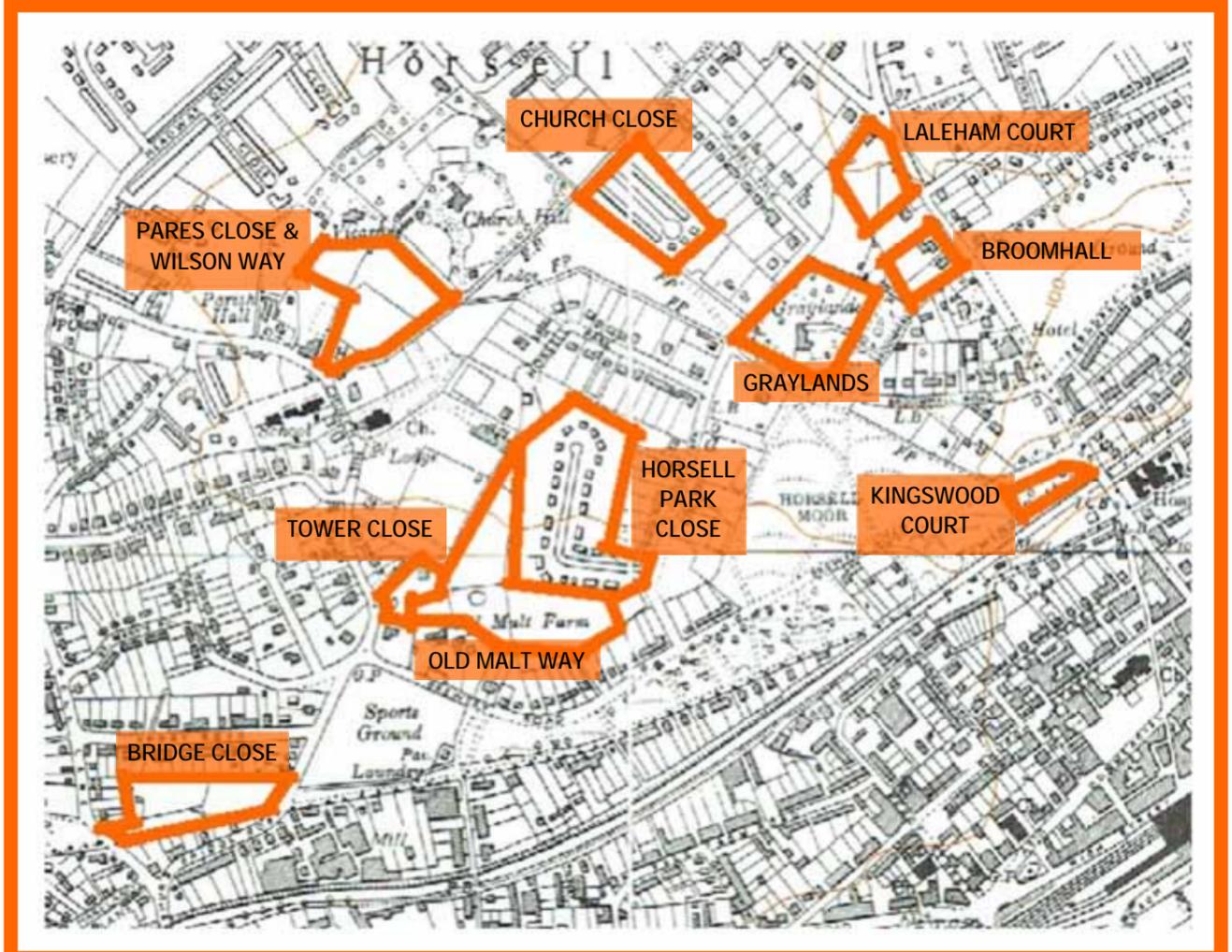
In 1954 the 'Horsell Park Estate' (Horsell Park Close) was built off Brewery Road, whilst the 'Hopfield Estate' (later named Church Close in September 1954) was developed by one of Woking's major house builders of the time – A & J Simmons Ltd. Another local company, West Surrey Building Estates Ltd, developed Summerhayes Close off Kettlewell Hill in the mid to late 1950's, with Old Malt Way and Tower Close (off Church Hill) also developed about that time.

All of these, however, were fairly conventional developments of small closes of houses, but in May 1957 a much different type of development was proposed when W Deakin & Co (whose name, as promised before in this column, was continually cropping up in local developments at this time) submitted a planning application to build fifty flats in three connected four-storey blocks 'near the junction of Chobham Road and Brewery Road' (on the site later to be called Kingswood Court).

Mr Deakin obviously worked on the principal of 'if at first you don't succeed...', as when that scheme was turned down by the Council, he came back with an alternative plan for forty flats, and when in June 1957 that too was dismissed, he submitted another scheme for thirty flats (plus ten garages) -which the council were finally happy to pass in October that year.

This was not the only application of its type, as Mr D E Hollick put in plans for a dozen maisonettes in two block near the junction of Broomhall Lane and Chobham Road, and A H Moorshead did likewise for twelve flats in a three-storey block at Broomhall, but neither of these plans were approved.

A more conventional plan by E Childs & Sons Ltd to demolish Broomhall and its outbuildings and erect four new dwellings on the garden was



Like Laleham Court (below), the height of the flats at Kingswood Court was also reduced to three floors in W Deakin's final plan to gain approval.



also initially refused, as was a plan to build six houses and garages on part of the garden of a house called Laleham, near the junction of Chobham Road and Horsell Rise. I wonder if any objectors to that scheme later kicked themselves when within a few years the Sir Lindsey Parkinson Group sought permission to build the much larger Laleham Court development of fifty-six flats and maisonettes in four, four-storey blocks (later reduced to three-storeys and just forty-two dwellings in order to gain planning permission).



The 'misconceived monstrosities' of Pares Close

But private developers were not the only ones building homes in Horsell in the early 1960's, as Woking Council built old people's flats at the new Bridge Close between Arthurs Bridge Road and Well Lane, as well as pensioner's bungalows in Wilson Way.

The latter road was named after Geoffrey Fellowes Wilson (who died of Polio aged twelve), a great-nephew of a former Vicar of Horsell, Canon Norman Pares - who himself is commemorated in the slightly more controversial development of council

maisonettes just around the corner.

At the time of their construction, one former councillor called Pares Close 'misconceived monstrosities' and their elevated position in the heart of the village, with their close proximity to St Mary's Church, only added to the controversy.

The Old People's bungalows of Wilson Way.



Wilson Way, Horsell.



If only every 1960's building looked like this pair built by Mr T D Lock in the grounds of Esgairs (below)



There was outrage too about this time at suggestions that the garden of Esgairs, a late 15th century listed building in Horsell High Street, should be built upon - although I would like to suggest that if the council went to as much trouble in designing Pares Close as the builder of 71-73 High Street obviously did, then there would have been few complaints.

Indeed apart from a few locals who are well aware of the site's history, it is sometimes hard to convince people that the medieval-looking 'gatehouse' development is really a 1960's building at all. The present planning department at Woking Council certainly seem unaware, as in their 'Woking Design Supplementary Planning Document', published in 2015 (page 20) they use a picture of the houses to illustrate 'Pre-Victorian' housing – an illustration, if ever I saw one, of the lack of local knowledge that our planners now possess.

The Woking Design Supplementary Planning Document, published by Woking Council in 2015, shows how little the planners know about the borough (let alone planning)!



Pre-Victorian



Late Victorian / Edwardian



Arcadian



Inter-war / Immediate Post-war



Post-war



Modern

The 1935 Map of Horsell clearly shows the grounds of Esgairs (plot 629) before the 'Pre-Victorian' 71-73 High Street were built.

