

A Window on West Wickham

High Street Mansions

In 1808 Edward Brayley, in the book "The Beauties of England and Wales" wrote about the neighbourhood as "*thickly shrouded with the villas of the nobility and the gentry. a district extremely desirable for occasional residence*".

The first world war changed the order of things. Large houses and their lands were beginning to be sold and in their place neat rows of houses and shops appeared.

It was in the 1920s that the sale and division amongst property developers began to expand West Wickham.



Sherwood Way

At the beginning of the 1930s the Beckenham Times reported that "the old inhabitants view with amazement the transformation scenes enacted from day to day".



Coney Hall is built

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Development was rapid. By the end of 1929 it was estimated that over 1000 houses had been built and a further 2000 by 1934: as many as 20 houses being built a week. The village people were swamped by the newcomers who formed a residents' association in 1929.

Many trees were lost as roads were constructed and the West Wickham Residents Association encouraged the planting of road side trees which were offered at a discounted price.

In 1934 amalgamation with Beckenham meant Wickham's boundary was altered with the loss of some land but the inclusion of part of Hayes.

By 1939 at the outbreak of WW2 the rural pleasantness of the area had largely gone and except for some post war infills, little new development has taken place since.

A fire station opened in July 1939 in Glebe Way, closing in 1968 to become a caravan centre. This is now a second hand furniture emporium.

In 1966 the swimming baths, now called the Leisure Centre, replaced historic cottages at Wickham Green.



West Wickham Fire Station



*The Dolls House
corner of Station Road/
Red Lodge Road now occupied by
The Leisure Centre*



Building of the Leisure Centre