

Lost buildings of Wheathampstead high street

Compiled and edited by Mike Smith using research material gathered by members of the 'History of our High Street' project in 2013.



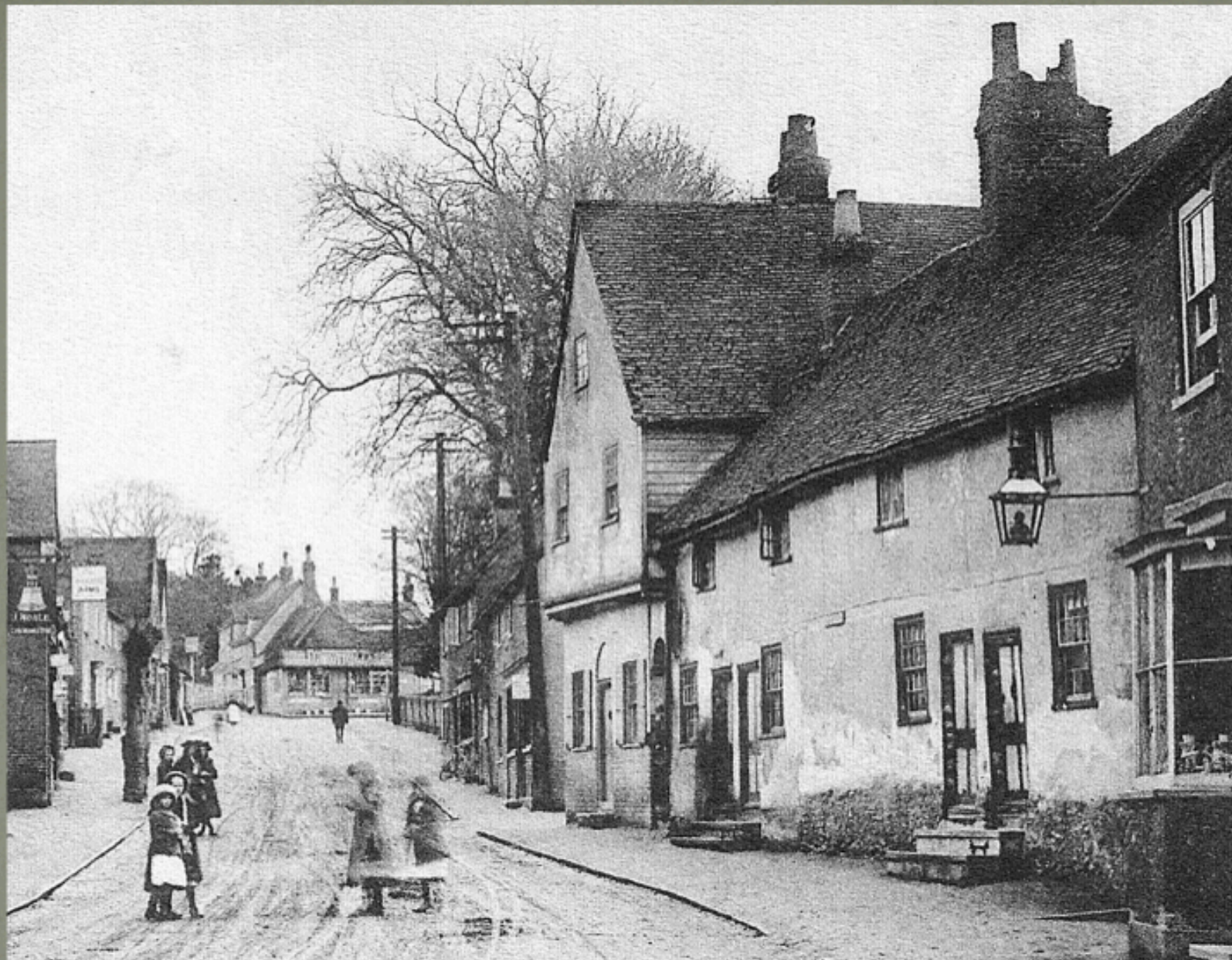
FG Wootton the ironmongers was located on the corner of Church Street, next to The Swan. It burnt down in 1910 when the oil store in the shop caught fire.



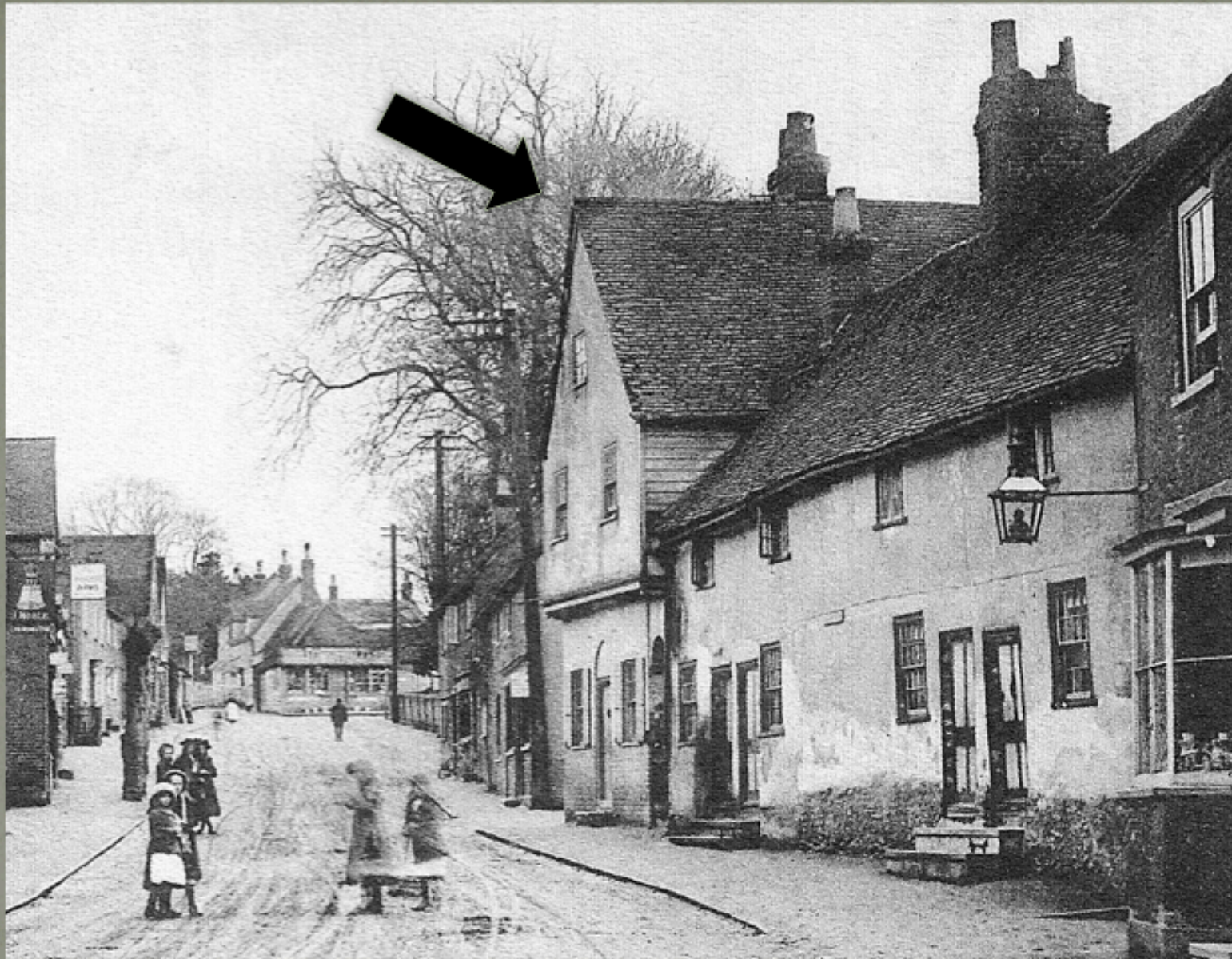
After the fire, Fred and Charlie Collins put up the current building in 1931 using architectural salvage from the 'winter garden' at Blackmore End House. The premises housed Collins Antiques until 2006 when it was turned into a bar/ restaurant.



Travelling down the High Street we come to Bank Side Chambers. This purpose built development included a branch of Barclay's Bank and three shops. It was built in 1936 on the site of what was known locally as 'Workhouse Yard'.



'Workhouse Yard' is popularly believed to have consisted of a row of four cottages and a large three storey building on the corner.



Recent research suggests that only the three-storey building was the village workhouse. It closed down in 1835. This photograph probably dates to the Edwardian period before 1910.



'Workhouse yard' was demolished one hundred years later in 1935 as part of a program of slum clearance. The buildings, that may have dated back to the seventeenth century, were described as "having fine woodwork with the original bark still visible".



An aerial photo taken in 1946 shows a range of very different lost buildings on or near the high street. In the background are the extensive workshops of Helmets Ltd, running parallel with the river. This is now the site of King Edward Place housing development.

Facing the High Street, in the middle of the picture, is a single storey white building. This was a 'surface' air raid shelter dating to WW2. It was probably dismantled soon after this photo was taken.

In the 1970s, when the bakery was built, a new service road was constructed to connect the Helmets site to the High Street. This involved the demolition of the large barn on the left of the photograph.



Past the Mill and along Station Road, two cottages stood in front of the Red Lion pub. They were demolished in the nineteen twenties. The Red Lion itself is believed to have been pulled down in the nineteen thirties. We do not have any pictures of the pub.



The site of the two cottages is now the frontage of three shops that includes the post office.

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