



Binley Woods Parish Plan

Village Design Statement



Version 1.0 - August 2013

Foreword

by Paul Salisbury



Dear Resident,

It gives me great pleasure to present the first Village Design Statement to the residents of Binley Woods.

Binley Woods is not an 'olde worlde' village. However, we do have a number of characteristics that you told us, through the Parish Plan survey questionnaires last year, are important to you and your families. This document seeks to identify those characteristics and to ensure they are preserved and enhanced for future generations, through influencing both planning applications submitted by residents and planning decisions made by the Borough Council.

My fellow parish councillors and I would like to thank the members of the Parish Plan Steering Group and our band of enthusiastic Parish Plan Volunteers for all their hard work which has led to the publication of this document. We would especially like to thank Doug Hodgkinson; without his professional experience, knowledge and dedication to the task in hand this Village Design Statement would not have made it off the drawing board. Our thanks also go to Sarah Fisher and Ross Middleton from the Planning Department at Rugby Borough Council for their invaluable guidance and support.

The Parish Council has been fully involved through the development of the Village Design Statement and we wholeheartedly support and endorse the development control policies and associated design advice given in Chapters 7 and 8. We will seek to ensure these policies and advice are adhered to when reviewing future planning applications relating to Binley Woods.

I hope you find this Village Design Statement clear and helpful, and I commend it to all residents.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Salisbury', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

*Paul Salisbury,
Chairman, Binley Woods Parish Council*

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	2
1.1 The Purpose and Status of this Village Design Statement (VDS)	2
1.2 The Principal Audiences for which this VDS has been Prepared	2
1.3 The Local Context.....	2
1.4 The Structure of this Village Design Statement.....	3
1.5 Local Housing Need and the Village Design Statement	3
2. Letter of Endorsement from Rugby Borough Council.....	4
3. A Short History of the Development of Binley Woods	5
3.1 The Current Parish of Binley Woods – Its Setting in the Warwickshire Countryside	5
3.2 Before 1923 – Pre-history of the Village	6
3.3 1923 to 1939 – The Years of ‘Shack and Track’	7
3.4 1940 to 1961 – Filling in the gaps in the early Development Areas	8
3.5 1961 to 1973 – The contemporary Binley Woods rapidly takes shape	9
3.6 1973 to 2013 – Consolidation and Maturity?.....	10
4. The Result: A Very Twentieth-century Warwickshire Village.....	11
4.1 A Visitor’s First Impressions of Binley Woods	11
4.2 The Influence of the Surrounding Landscape on the Setting of the Village.....	12
4.3 Lower and Then Higher Density Village Development	13
4.4 Earlier, Lower-Density Development	14
4.5 Later, Higher-Density Development.....	15
4.6 Why Did Development Fall Off So Abruptly in the Mid-1970s?	16
4.7 The A46 Coventry Eastern Bypass.....	17
4.8 The Contrast between Development Patterns in the 1930s and Today.....	18
4.9 Significant VDS Policy ‘Anchors’ Emerging in Chapters 3 and 4	19
5. Rugby Borough Council: Statutory Planning Context	20
5.1 LDF Core Strategy: Strategic Overview.....	20
5.2 LDF Core Strategy: A Summary of Binley Woods VDS-related Policies.....	21
5.3 Minerals Extraction	23
5.4 National and Borough-wide policies; their interaction with this VDS	23
6. 2012 Binley Woods Parish Plan Questionnaire Survey Results	24
6.1 Opinions on the Future Scale of the Developed Area of Binley Woods	24
6.2 Preferred Choices on More Detailed Development Control Issues	25
7. Development Control Policies	26
7.1 Introduction	26
7.2 Overall Objectives	26
7.3 Retaining the Green Belt.....	27
7.4 New and Replacement Housing	28
7.5 Access to New Residential Developments	29
7.6 House Extensions	30
7.7 Commercial & Industrial Development	31
7.8 Environmental Enhancement Corridor.....	32
8. Design Advice	33
8.1 Rebuilding to Produce Larger Detached Houses	33
8.2 House Extensions at Road Junctions Within the Village.....	34
8.3 Conversion of Bungalows to Dormer Bungalows	35
8.4 Choosing Appropriate Materials	35
8.5 Driveway / Parking Area Extensions and Dropped Kerbs	36
8.6 Tree Preservation and Housing Development: Tension between them.....	38
8.7 Other Village Design Issues	39

1. Introduction

1.1 The Purpose and Status of this Village Design Statement (VDS)

This VDS is a detailed, Binley Woods-specific supplement to the statutory Planning Documents of Rugby Borough Council. Its purpose is to provide an enhanced level of policy detail for use by the Borough Council in the determination of Planning Applications. Its status for the purposes of Rugby Borough Council (RBC) is confirmed in their letter dated 22/08/2013, reproduced in Chapter 2.

The Binley Woods VDS relates only to the Parish of Binley Woods. It has no influence on development outside of the Parish boundaries, for example across the A46 into Coventry or over the eastern parish boundary into Brandon where the speedway stadium and former Oakdale nurseries are situated.

This VDS was also submitted for comment to Warwickshire County Council in its capacities as Minerals Planning Authority and Highway Authority.

1.2 The Principal Audiences for which this VDS has been Prepared

This VDS has been prepared specifically for the following three sets of audiences:

- a) **Residents and other property owners in Binley Woods:** either those contemplating their own developments of a nature and scale requiring them to make a Planning Application, or those needing a sound information base in order to react persuasively to such applications.
- b) **Outside interests and their professional advisors:** needing to brief themselves on likely Planning requirements when preparing Planning Applications for land or property within Binley Woods Parish.
- c) **RBC Planning Department:** who will use this VDS as a supplement to the statutory Planning Documents when determining Planning Applications.

1.3 The Local Context

While this VDS is a stand-alone document, its preparation has been part of the wider Binley Woods Parish Plan exercise. The Parish Plan is an exercise in consultation and policy formulation sponsored by the Parish Council and prepared by a Steering Group of Parish Councillors and local residents. It is designed to set priorities for action – as either development or as conservation - in the next few years. This action will be undertaken either directly by the Parish Council, by other Councils or by private suppliers of utilities and other public services.

As part of that much wider Parish Plan exercise, the following documents (plus much supporting data) have been prepared and published by or on behalf of the Parish Council:

- a) **Housing Needs Survey Report:** published via the Internet in May 2012 with a summary issued to every household.
- b) **Parish Plan Survey Questionnaire:** issued to every household in Binley Woods in September / October 2012.
- c) **Interim Report on the Parish Plan:** summarising the results of the survey and suggesting actions to address residents' concerns. Issued to every household and published via the Internet in March 2013.
- d) **Full Survey Results:** published via the Internet in March 2013.
- e) **The Binley Woods Parish Plan:** containing the agreed actions to improve the village. Issued to every household in Binley Woods, and published via the Internet in September 2013.

Documents published via the Internet can be found at <http://binleywoodsparish.wordpress.com>.

1.4 The Structure of this Village Design Statement

Chapter 3 sets out the history of the village from the point of view of those concerned with the promotion of development.

Chapter 4 turns to the village today; how it may appear to the visitor; how much its physical setting gains from the woodlands surrounding it; and how much the setting of individual properties benefits from the tree cover surviving within the village. It goes on to distinguish two distinctive development phases of the village around which VDS policies are later developed.

Chapters 5 looks at the statutory planning framework operated by Rugby Borough Council as Local Planning Authority as this applies to the developed area of Binley Woods village and the wider Binley Woods parish.

Chapter 6 sets out the opinions of the 40% of all local households in the village when questioned in 2012 about:

- preferred future scale (or absence thereof) of development
- detailed Development Control issues

Chapter 7 is the core of this Village Design Statement, setting out detailed Development Control Policies and recommending associated good practice in the context of the particular characteristics of Binley Woods.

Chapter 8 presents advice for those designing new / replacement dwellings or modifying existing properties in the village.

1.5 Local Housing Need and the Village Design Statement

This Village Design Statement contains no policy proposals to locate development, specifically local needs affordable housing, beyond the Settlement Boundary.

If in the future the Parish Council concludes that a recent, up-to-date Housing Needs Survey for Binley Woods has demonstrated a clear need for such development and that it can only be accommodated beyond the existing Settlement Boundary, then this Village Design Statement will need to be amended by the Parish Council in terms acceptable to the Borough Council. This in turn would provide the detailed policy basis upon which the Borough Council could then consider approval under its Rural Exceptions Sites policy (Core Strategy Policy CS21, or future Local Plan successor).

2. Letter of Endorsement from Rugby Borough Council



clean, green, safe

Mr K Short
29 Heather Road,
Binley Woods,
Coventry,
Warwickshire,
CV3 2DE.

Please ask for: Ross Middleton
Direct Line: (01788) 533631
Fax: (01788) 533866
E-mail Address: ross.middleton@rugby.gov.uk
DX: DX 11681 Rugby
Our ref: BW/VDS/RM
Your ref:
Date: 22nd August 2013

Dear Mr. Short,

RE: Binley Woods Village Design Statement.

Thank you for providing a copy of the Binley Woods Village Design Statement.

I am happy to confirm that the document, as submitted to Rugby Borough Council (RBC) on 22/08/2013, meets RBC requirements and will be used as a material consideration by Officers in the determination of planning applications from the date of its adoption onwards.

It is recognised that documents such as this bring benefits such as deepening community involvement and increasing a sense of belonging and of community ownership of parish level planning documentation.

Rugby Borough Council will seek to ensure that all developments contribute towards the community aspirations as set out within the Binley Woods Village Design Statement. In promoting this approach, it must be emphasised that RBC is responsible for making decisions on planning applications taking into account a wide range of material considerations, of which the village design statement is one. Therefore it is important to stress that where other policy provisions of Borough Council adopted planning policies would not be met, it is unlikely that the provisions of a village design statement would override.

Thank you for the final copy of the document, I will make the necessary arrangements, once formally adopted, for the Binley Woods Village Design Statement to be placed on the Borough Council's website and made available to all.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards.



Ross Middleton
Planning Officer
Development Strategy
Rugby Borough Council

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3. A Short History of the Development of Binley Woods

3.1 The Current Parish of Binley Woods – Its Setting in the Warwickshire Countryside

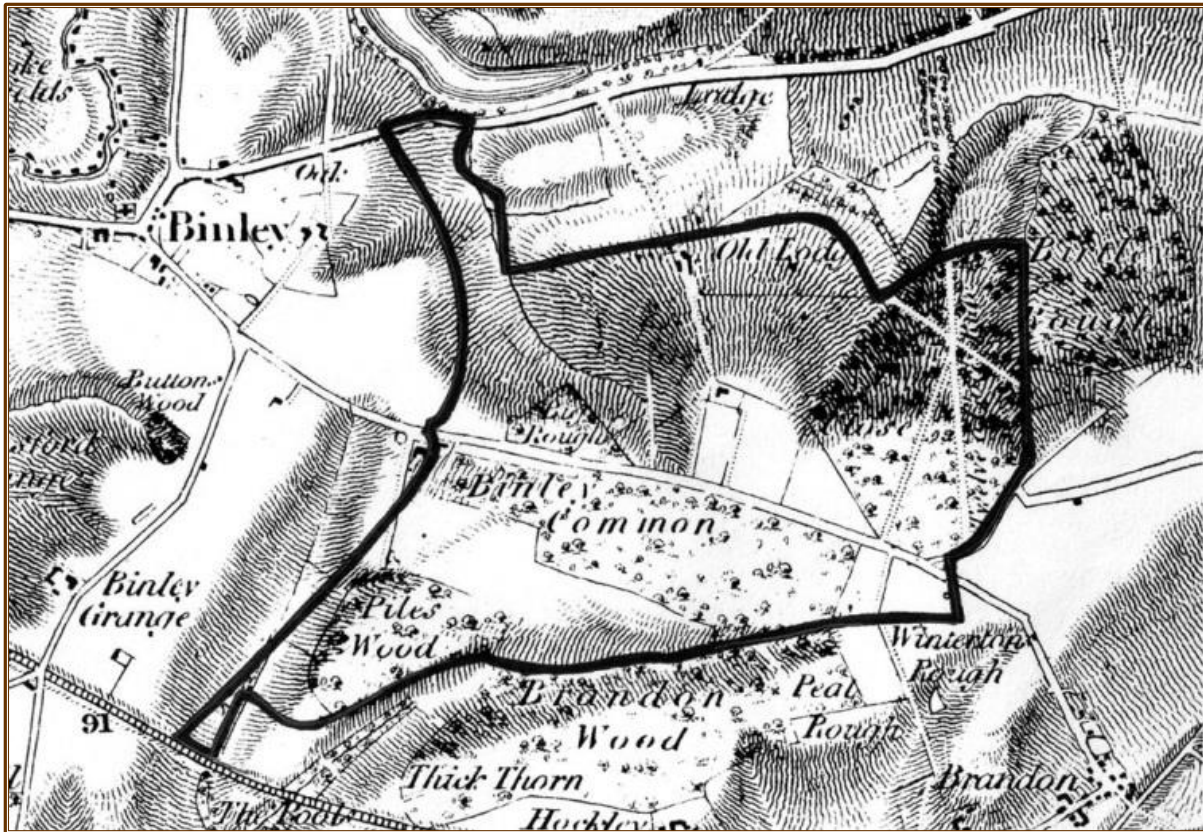


Figure 1: 19th Century OS Map with the future (post-1994) Parish of Binley Woods added

The parish and village of Binley Woods lie four miles almost due east of the centre of the City of Coventry and seven miles almost due west of the town of Rugby. The land forming the current civil parish lay for over three centuries at the southern extremity of the Coombe Abbey estate belonging to the Earls of Craven. It was bordered to the south by the Brandon Hall estate of the Beech family. The boundary of the parish since the 1994 alteration of the Coventry-Rugby boundary is superimposed on the Ordnance survey first edition extract reproduced as Figure 1, above.

The location of Binley Woods was, until the age of the motor car, a remote rural location comprising a few Estate farms and the old-established major woodland known as Binley Common, together with a number of other smaller woodlands. The area covered by the parish was predominantly a relatively elevated east-west ridge, a thick clay overlay to the surrounding valleys rich in sand and gravel deposits. The heavy, poorly-drained clay soil appears to be an at least partial explanation of how so much woodland in and around the parish survived into the twentieth century and beyond.

In 1923 the Binley Common woodland area, comprising almost all the land forming the present developed area of Binley Woods village, was the subject of an auction sale following the break-up of the historic Coombe Abbey estate in the previous year.

3.2 Before 1923 – Pre-history of the Village

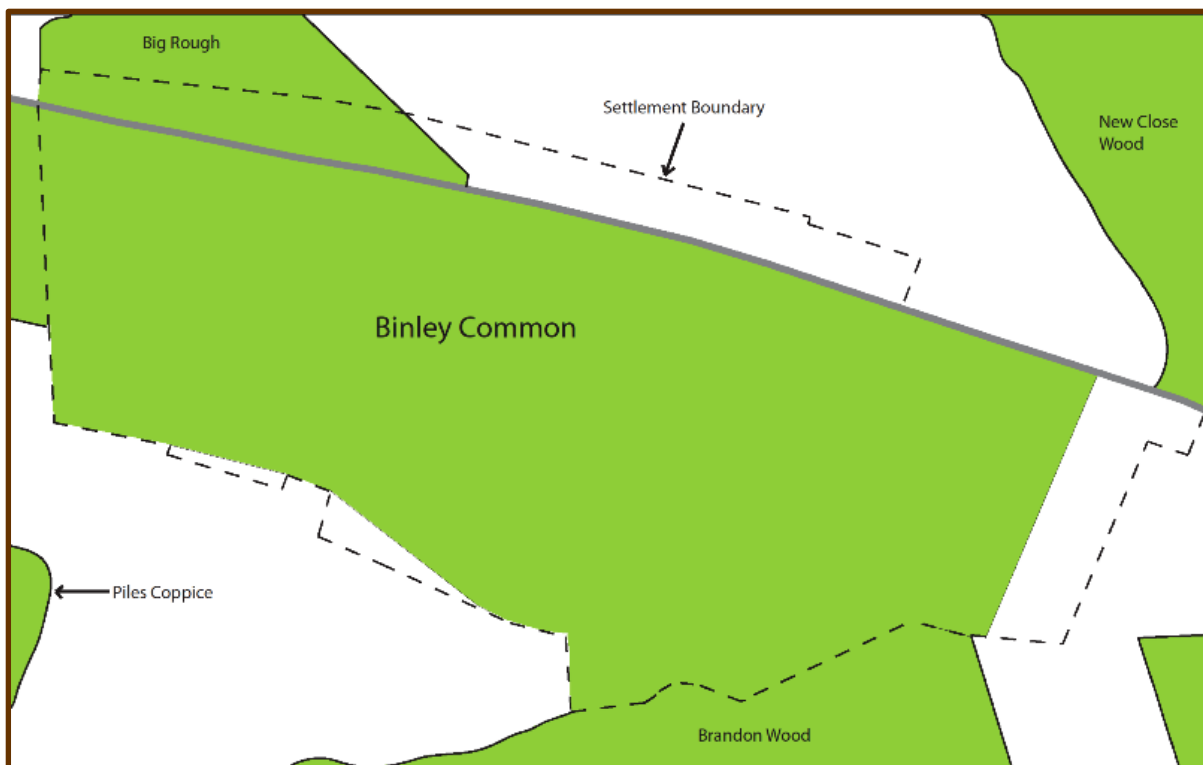


Figure 2: Binley Woods - Pattern of Woodland in the 1900s and 1910s

At the break-up of the Coombe Abbey Estate in the Sale of 1923 there were no houses whatever in the present 'Settlement Boundary'. In the wider parish there were just a handful of estate farm houses and associated agricultural labourers' dwellings.

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship of the Binley Common woodland area, located in the centre of Figure 1, to the Settlement Boundary set out in successive modern Development Plans.

That, now virtually vanished, Binley Common woodland had formed the long-established wooded southern fringe of the Coombe Abbey Estate at least since the seventeenth century. The only substantial part of that wooded fringe to survive today is to be seen fronting on to Rugby Road opposite to the entrance to the Broad Street Rugby Football Club ground.

Up to 1932, for Local Government purposes, the Binley Common woodland and surrounding farmland formed the eastern part of the civil parish of Binley. Binley Parish formed a part of the now long-vanished Foleshill Rural District.

In 1932, boundary changes to the very rapidly expanding City of Coventry led to the abolition of Foleshill Rural District and the transfer of most of the land within the Rural District and Binley Parish into the City – areas such as modern Binley Colliery village and the ancient settlement of Binley (on Brinklow Road). The rural residue of the old Binley Civil Parish was transferred into Rugby Rural District, in which it remained until the present Borough of Rugby was formed in 1974. In 1994 a minor boundary change realigned the Parish / Borough / County / City boundary with the western edge of the then recently completed A46 Coventry Eastern Bypass, taking areas like the new Morrisons superstore, much of the partially-complete housing estate and about half of B&Q out of Binley Woods.

3.3 1923 to 1939 – The Years of ‘Shack and Track’



Figure 3: Binley Woods - Housing development in 1920s & 1930s

By 1924 the new owners were treating Binley Common separately from the adjoining working farms because it was so poorly-drained and therefore of little agricultural value. The mature tree cover had been logged up, leaving only young trees, some of which survive today into their maturity adding much valued quality to the twenty-first century village environment. Figure 3 illustrates the way development of the village then got under way, operating from a complete ‘blank sheet’.

Binley Common was divided up and offered for sale in one-acre plots, at £50 an acre on the main road, at lower prices further south. The sale plots were laid out between a rectilinear pattern of tracks. These tracks came to form the structure of the quite unusual village road pattern as we know it today.

Initially, this small, compact semi-urban development was restricted to parts of the main road (Rugby Road, formerly known as Brandon Road) and, to a lesser extent, to parts of Woodlands Road. This produced a steady ten-year development, effectively brought to a halt after 1932 by new Planning legislation. Further south there developed a scatter of individual bungalows; most of them were quite small, very simple and often sited in one corner of a one-acre plot (see the left hand map in Figure 14, page 18). By around 1940 there appear to have been no more than 200 houses in the village, plus the Roseycombe pub. With no shops nearby, this led to some residents opening a shop in their front room.

Tarmacked roads were limited to just the main road. To the south, the tracks we know today as adopted roads were often badly rutted, regularly flooded, sometimes impassable and even knee-deep in mud.

3.4 1940 to 1961 – Filling in the gaps in the early Development Areas

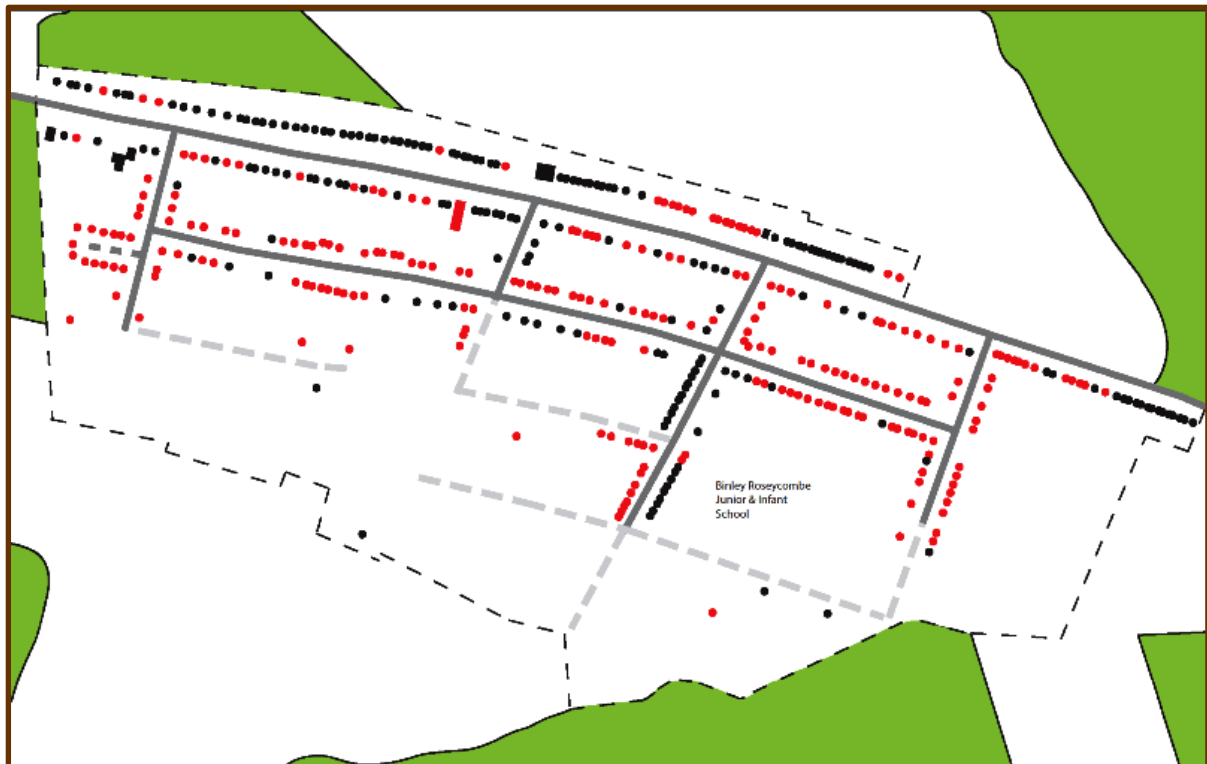


Figure 4: Binley Woods - Housing development in 1940s & 1950s

During World War II, as Coventry people were bombed out of their homes or chose to escape from the bombing, they came to this area looking for lodgings or accommodation. Many bought or rented a part of the one-acre plots and built their own wooden shack or put an old tramcar, bus or caravan on the site. There were a great many of these sites mainly along Heather and Monks Roads. After the war and during the 1950s, when they wanted to erect a replacement brick built home, they ran into planning restrictions. This led to speculative buying up of plots by various builders.

After 1945, the pre-war patterns of development intensified but still without the benefit of proper roads and public utilities. Many individual properties and small groups of properties were built along Rugby Road and Heather Road as owners of acre plots progressively in-filled remaining frontages - see the red notations in Figure 4. Only one new road was developed: Karen Grove, off Oakdale Road, in 1953. By 1960, the number of residential properties in the village had risen to about 400.

At the close of the 1950s the momentum of development was beginning to accelerate and the village was beginning to acquire its public facilities. After much local fundraising, the new Village Hall was opened in 1956, replacing the old air raid shelter used since 1949. The Roseycombe Junior and Infants School was opened off Woodlands Road in 1955. The Recreation Ground in Craven Avenue was opened at Easter 1963, while plans were laid for the Library, later opened in 1967. Progress was also being made on paving the existing village roads, with frontage owners commonly having to contribute up to £200 a property. Sections of Woodlands Road were made up in 1956. Sections of Heather, Oakdale and Ferndale Roads followed in 1957/8. Much of Monks road and Craven Avenue were only made up in the 1960s and 1970s. Gas, water, sewage and electricity were extended into the village during the same period.

In 1961 the village, by Referendum, finally chose for itself the name 'Binley Woods.'

3.5 1961 to 1973 – The contemporary Binley Woods rapidly takes shape

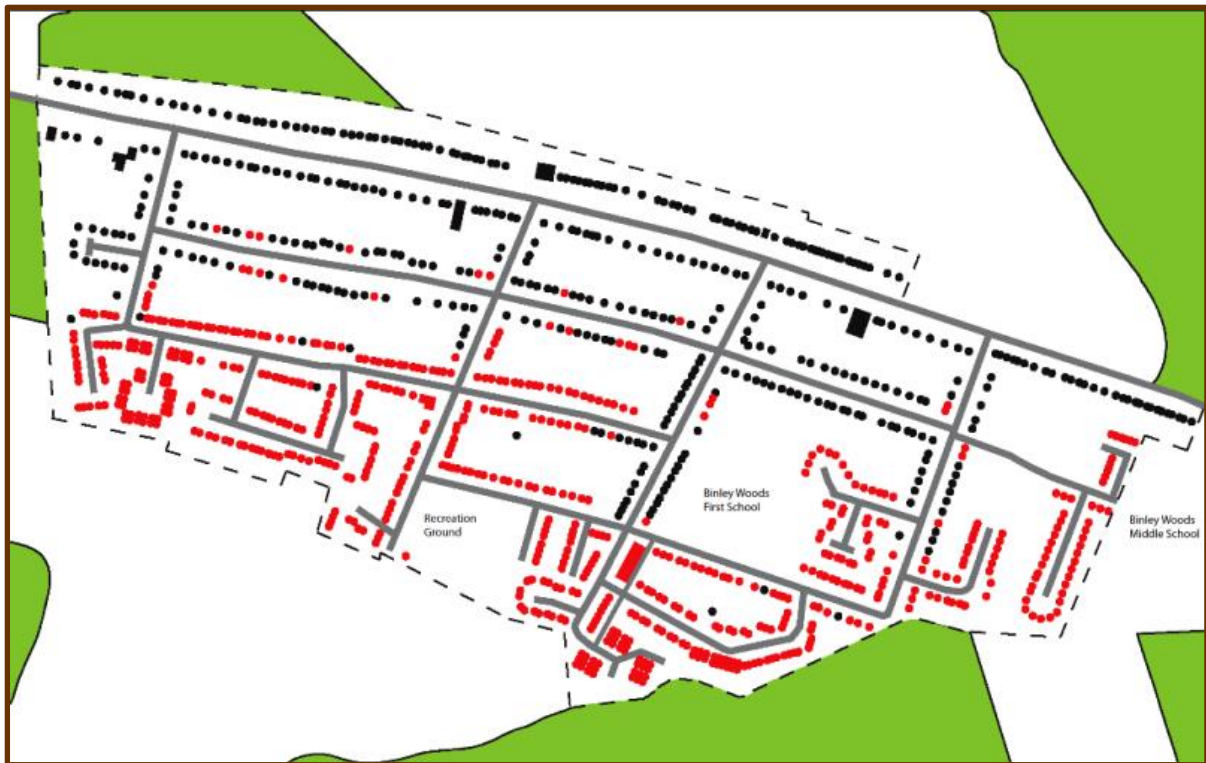


Figure 5: Binley Woods - Housing development in 1960s & 1970s

In the 1960s and 1970s the by now familiar pattern of infill frontage development continued, if on a steadily reducing scale. What was different about development activity now was the arrival of numerous local-area builders who continued to buy up undeveloped plots or plots of land containing caravan homes, consolidated them into larger areas and, from the outset, laid on for their customers all their public utility connections. They developed numerous larger housing groups and small estates on effectively all the remaining open land within the 'Settlement Boundary', land to the south of Monks Road and of Craven Avenue, and to the east of Ferndale Road, in association with the decision to build a second School. Figure 5 illustrates the geography and the sheer scale of development experienced by Binley Woods in the 1960s.

All of this development took place in little more than 10 years and was mostly in place as early as the opening of the new Middle School in 1973 and the parallel conversion of the Junior and Infants School into a First School. This was part of a Rugby-wide re-organisation of Schools designed to cope with recent (and projected) major population increases all over the Borough.

In retrospect, by twenty-first century standards, the Rural District Council was not particularly active in exercising its powers (as opposed to duties) in regard to overseeing and adopting completed new sewage systems. In fairness to them, this was a far-from-uncommon experience in many neighbouring Local Authorities. Ultimately, this situation resulted in recently-implemented national legislation requiring Water Companies to take on the maintenance of un-adopted sewers, finally securing the promise of consistent future maintenance, at the expense of the whole community. The recent expensive experiences of residents in Saxon Close illustrated the urgent need for such arrangements.

3.6 1973 to 2013 – Consolidation and Maturity?

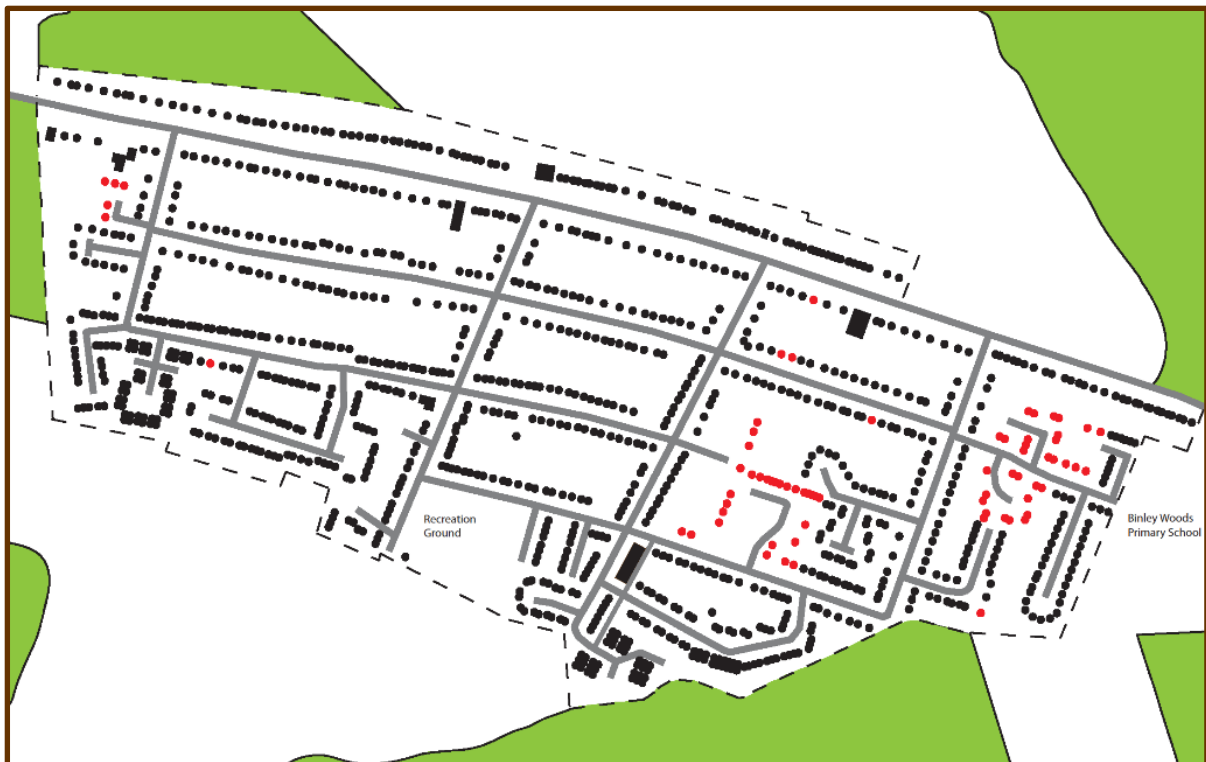


Figure 6: Binley Woods - Housing development 1980, 1990s & 2000s

From around 1973 the pace of development fell away and remained at a low level compared with earlier years. Figure 6 illustrates this limited development, again shown in red.

A few small housing estates were completed as ad hoc opportunities arose:

- In the 1980s Rugby Borough Council released surplus land which the recent Coombe Drive access to the (then) Middle School had opened up some years earlier
- In the 1990s redevelopment of the former First School site provided a permanent Village Green and two new residential cul-de-sacs accessed off Woodlands Road and Craven Avenue
- More recently the development of Oakdale Court, off Oakdale Road finally occurred, after a difficult gestation and at the second attempt in about 20 years

Houses in the recently-built estates were subject to many minor house extensions and adaptations, but the bulk of building activity was concentrated in the incremental adaptation of the older housing stock:

- Individual house plot developments continued on the last residues of the 1923 Sale plots
- Widespread redevelopment of most remaining tiny Cabin-type properties occurred, often resulting in very much larger properties taking advantage of their large, wide plots
- Many of the more substantial bungalows and houses were also extended, both upwards and outwards into substantial two-storey houses, again facilitated by generous plot sizes
- On a smaller scale, dormer rooms were commonly inserted into bungalows as families grew and as their demand for space grew with their relative prosperity

4. The Result: A Very Twentieth-century Warwickshire Village

4.1 A Visitor's First Impressions of Binley Woods



Figure 7: The western (top) and eastern (bottom) entrances to the village of Binley Woods

The majority of people approach Binley Woods from the A46 Coventry Eastern Bypass junction with the A428 (Brandon Road in Coventry and Rugby Road in Binley Woods). This tree-clad entrance to the village is bounded on the south by the undeveloped residue of the old Binley Common woodland, and on the north side by the well landscaped boundary of the Broad Street Rugby Club. These at once set the tone for visitors' first impressions: a tree-clad openness that never quite goes away even in the most densely-developed parts of the village. Other visitors, coming in from the opposite direction, from Brandon and Wolston, are met with another attractive village entrance framed on the north by New Close Wood and mature hedgerow trees and on the south by School playing fields.

The mainly pre-1960 developments in the northern parts of the village then at once begin to form in the visitor's eye the distinctive character of Binley Woods, based around

- the wide, tree-fringed grass verges of Rugby Road (A428)
- the long front gardens that add a second band of greenery behind
- long back gardens on Rugby and Heather Roads adding a third band of the tree cover

As visitors move southward through the village, into Monks Road and especially into Craven Avenue they witness the transition from mainly individually designed and developed properties to the many rapidly developed small estates built, for the most part, within the original gridiron pattern of tracks laid out for the sale of the former Coombe Abbey Estate. Increasingly, in the distance beyond the village, the visitor then clearly sees the imposing mass of the community-owned woodland, Brandon Wood, which visually shields this ridge top village from the valley of the river Avon to the south.

4.2 The Influence of the Surrounding Landscape on the Setting of the Village

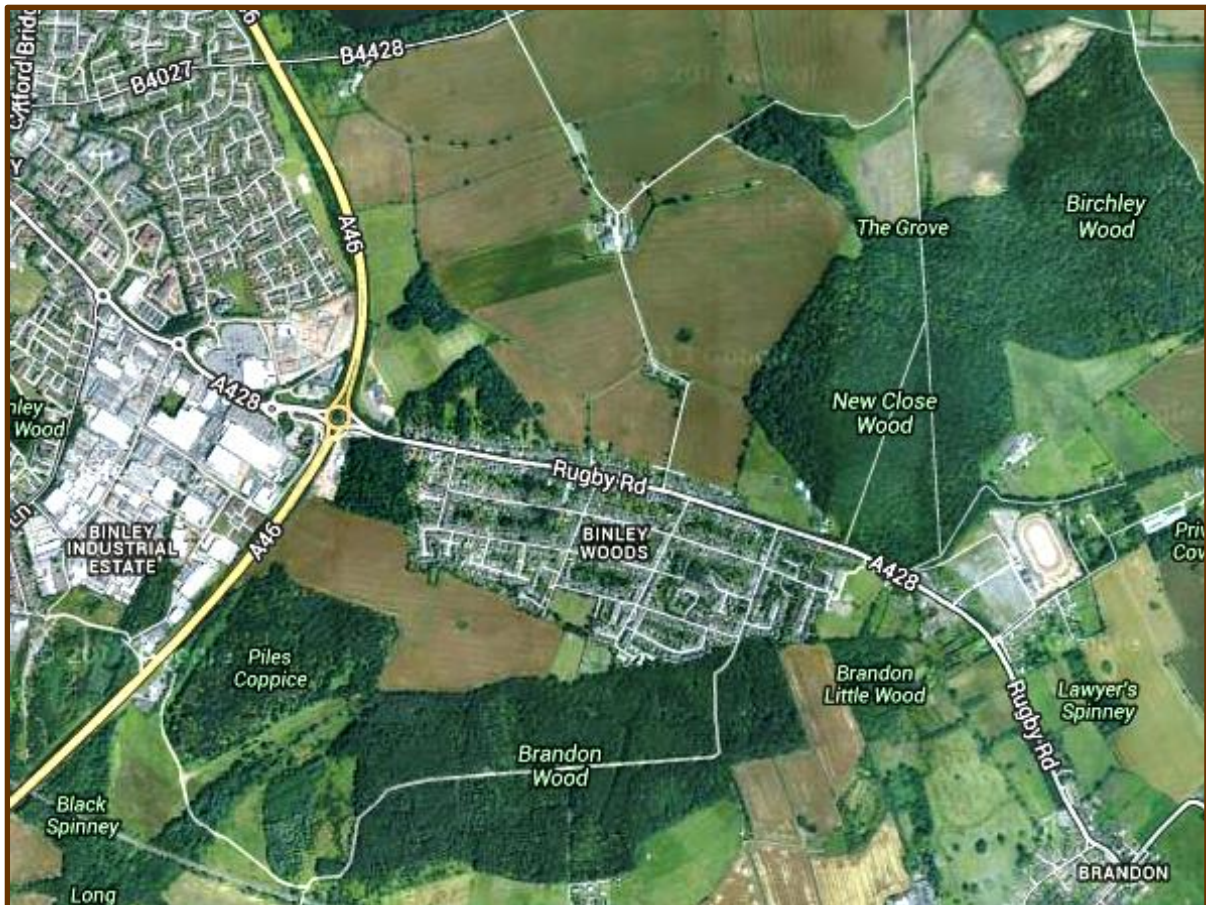


Figure 8: Binley Woods from the air (© Google Maps 2013)

Binley Woods sits very close to the A46 Coventry Eastern By-Pass, which now forms the boundary between the village and the City of Coventry. However, a glance at the modern aerial photograph, Figure 8, above, illustrates how visually enclosed and how set apart from Coventry and neighbouring parishes the village of Binley Woods has managed to remain.

This enclosure is a by-product of the type of countryside surrounding it:

- **To the west** the A46 Eastern By-Pass and its landscaped, noise-reducing mounds, plus Piles Coppice and the residue of the Binley Common woodland. These shelter the village to the point where it is a surprise to the visitor to walk down the Recreation Ground towards Brandon Wood and suddenly see on the skyline the three distant Spires of Coventry City Centre.
- **To the south** the enclosing feature of Brandon Wood dominates, plus mostly unseen arable land to the rear of back gardens of houses facing into the village.
- **To the east** the area is quieter but more open, with nearby Brandon Little Wood and the adjoining landscaped grounds of Brandon Hall providing a further wooded backdrop.
- **To the north** are important woodland remnants of the old Coombe Abbey Estate - New Close Wood, Big and Little Roughs and the adjoining long tree-filled gardens on Rugby Road backing on to very large but mostly unseen arable fields.

4.3 Lower and Then Higher Density Village Development

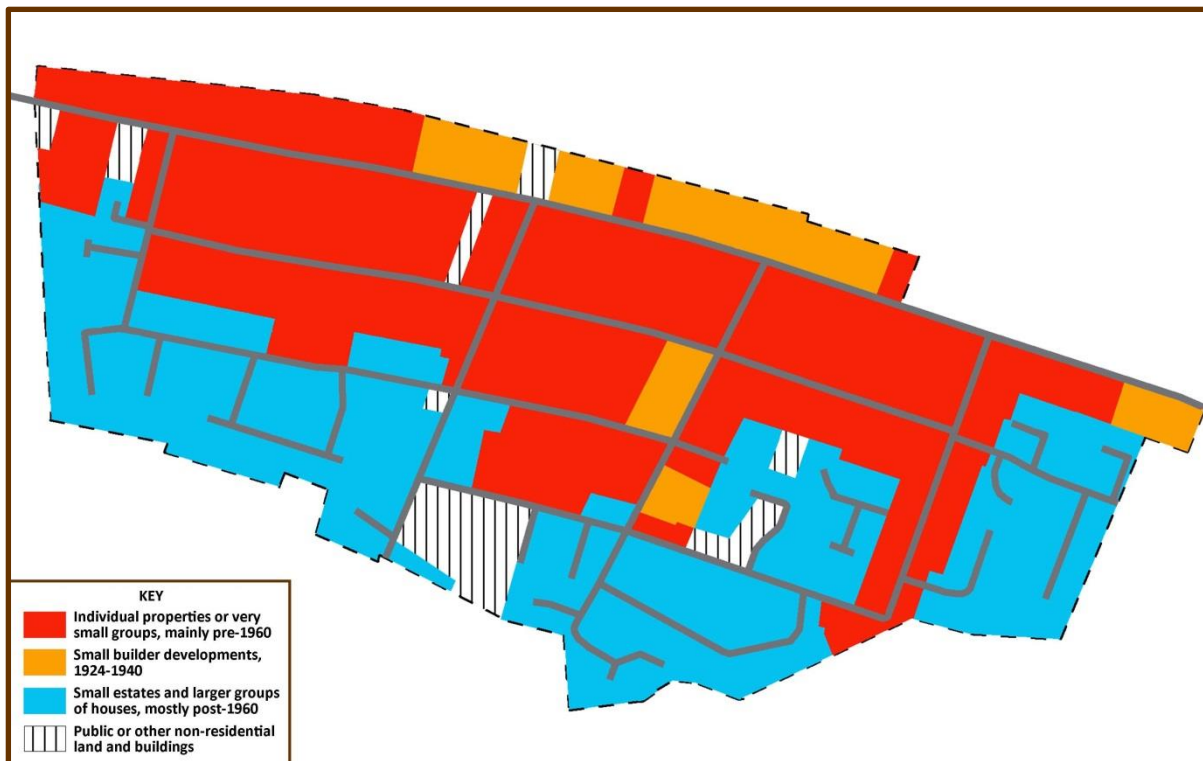


Figure 9: Binley Woods – lower and then higher density Village development

Chapter 3 spells out in some detail the manner of and the reasons behind the fairly unusual way in which Binley Woods came into being, and how its development proceeded prior to its present relatively stable state. This section, and the next two sections of Chapter 4, set out a broad analytical distinction between the different parts of the village; their differing physical forms and, principally, their differing development densities. In turn, this suggests differing levels of development intensity that may be acceptable to the broader community.

Figure 9 illustrates this analysis. Characteristically, the separation is not a clear cut line, but is a reflection of where earlier development had and had not penetrated to any great degree by the time developers began to take an interest in Binley Woods in the 1960s. As a result, it has been the good fortune of Binley Woods that, environmentally and socially, the village has always readily retained a clear sense of being a single community, rather than a conscious coming together of different periods and differing social groups. Nonetheless, the physical distinctions that characterise them still need highlighting since they might not otherwise be readily self-evident:

- **Shaded red:** Individual, often self-built properties dating from 1924 into the 1960s and beyond
- **Shaded orange:** small groups of houses, with each group built by a single developer mainly in the 10 years after 1924
- **Shaded blue:** small estate developments, mainly constructed after about 1960

Non-housing developments such as the Recreation Ground are shown in hatched vertical lines.

4.4 Earlier, Lower-Density Development



Figure 10: Individual houses on Rugby Road; small builder development on Woodlands Road

The brown-shaded, mostly pre-1960, development areas shown in Figure 9 are where single properties were developed initially to house the acre-plots' owners, and were commonly self-built. Subsequent adjoining building activity resulted from acre-plot owners selling off remaining frontage land on two separate roads, producing sometimes detached or sometimes semi-detached bungalows and houses. Many original pre-war and wartime properties were tiny and lightly constructed, usually purely of timber. Long since, most have been redeveloped or improved / expanded out of all recognition. This is illustrated further in the pair of maps in Figure 14 on page 18.

The orange areas shown in Figure 9 are the small groups of compactly and consistently laid out brick-built houses. The majority were semi-detached while a minority were laid out in terrace format. They are located on Rugby Road and to a lesser extent on Woodlands Road. They were constructed by local small builders, mainly in the 10 years from 1924.

Housing densities in these early developments were low, even very low, by post-World War II standards. This is largely due to the pattern, scale and shape of 1923 Sale plots, which has produced a quite unusual level of:

- **larger, longer, wider house plots** than readily available across the Coventry boundary
- **smaller, sometimes very small, properties**, predominantly bungalows, on long, narrow plots
- **sheer variety of house styles** with rarely more than two or three in a row to a single design
- **surviving tree cover** that then matured very attractively by the end of the twentieth century

4.5 Later, Higher-Density Development



Figure 11: Rowan Close housing cul-de-sac; Arden Court flats

The blue areas shown in Figure 9 are the principal builder-led developments in the village, predominantly completed in the 1960s. They are located around the western, southern and eastern edges of the built-up area.

As with the limited pre-war developer-led activity, frontages were compact and consistent in design. On top of that, densities were increased by between 100% and 200%, which was due to a number of factors:

- **Comprehensive design and layout of whole areas** introduced for the first time
- **Higher land prices** and a popular preference for smaller gardens
- **New-style estate layouts** geared to the motor car – whether or not successfully!

As a result, these newer areas of the village tend to be characterised by:

- Housing that is mainly semi-detached
- Some terraced housing, and a small number of two- and three-storey blocks of flats
- Far fewer detached bungalows and houses
- Far less surviving tree cover
- Much higher levels of on-street parking, because of shorter front gardens
- A still-considerable variety of house types due to the number of different developers involved

4.6 Why Did Development Fall Off So Abruptly in the Mid-1970s?

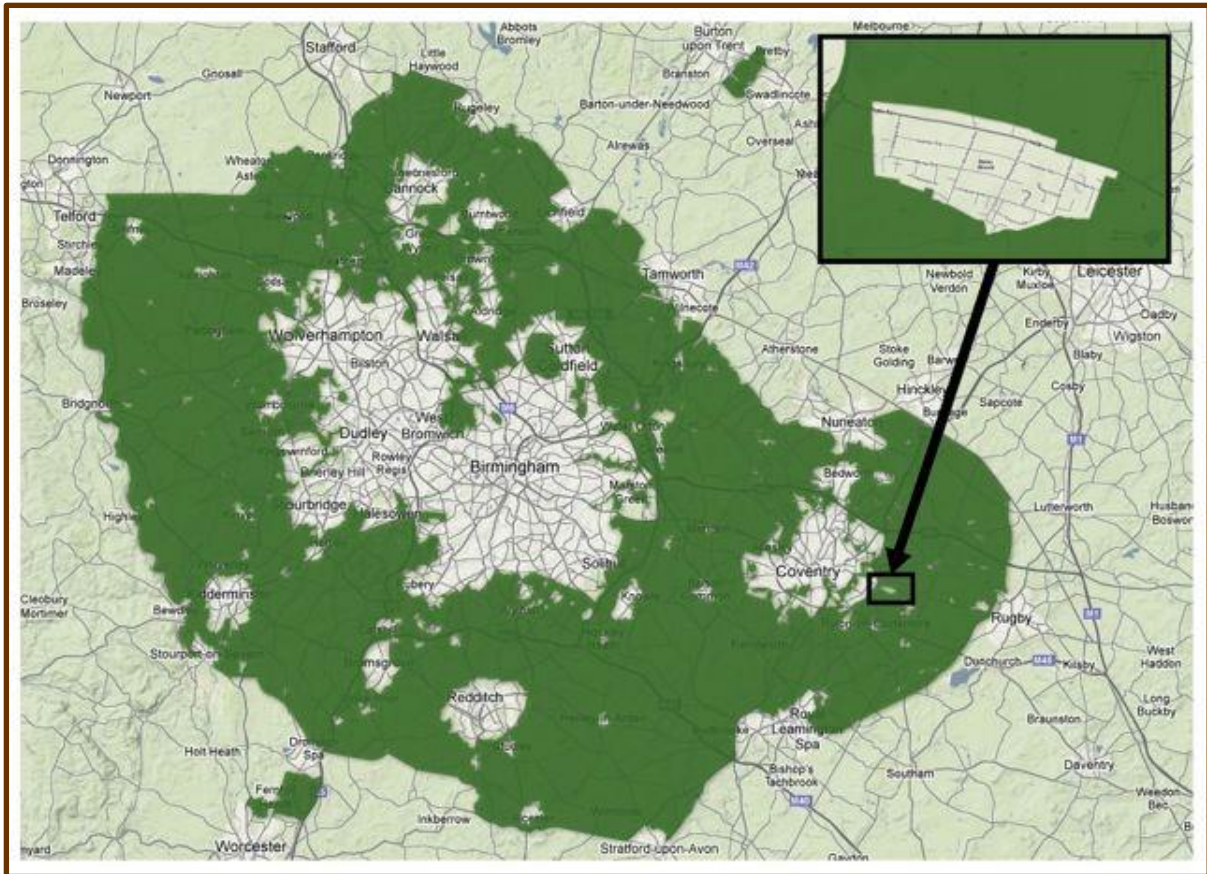


Figure 12: Binley Woods, its location within the West Midlands Green Belt

By the mid-1970s estate-type development in Binley Woods essentially terminated with the completion of Friars Close. Why? Previously, development land shortage would have provided a powerful reason for expanding the village’s development area. However, by the mid-1970s the designation of Green Belts around the major urban areas such as Coventry, long in gestation, had finally acquired approved boundary lines.

The main map within Figure 12 shows the designated West Midlands Green Belt tightly encompassing Coventry and running eastwards to the edge of the town of Rugby at the Cement Works. The result, illustrated in the Figure 12 inset, has been to draw the Green Belt boundary tightly around Binley Woods on all sides, following precisely the Settlement Boundary. Therefore, altering the size of the built up area of Binley Woods had become a question of altering the position of the freshly-established Green Belt boundary – quite deliberately this was not designed to be an easy option!

The fundamental Green Belt principle has always been that, once established, it should be particularly difficult to change in the absence of quite exceptional circumstances. Additionally, in locations close to the Green Belt inner boundary around Coventry (and Birmingham) proposed changes have always proved to be a particularly sensitive issue.

For the foreseeable future, therefore, expansion of Binley Woods village and its Settlement Boundary is likely to be allowed only in ‘very special circumstances’ as spelt out in the adopted Local Plan / Core Strategy.

4.7 The A46 Coventry Eastern Bypass

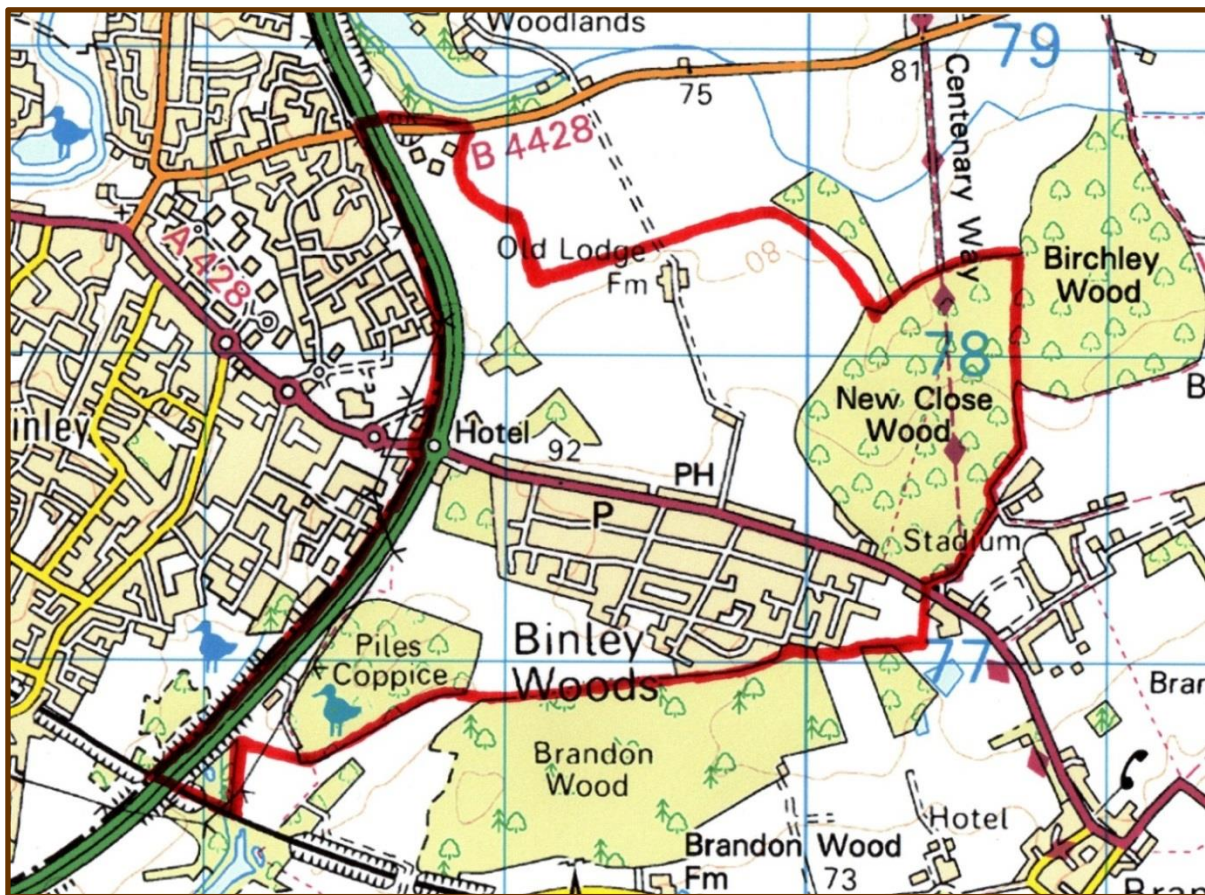


Figure 13: Contemporary OS map setting of Binley Woods parish, including the A46

Since 1994, the western boundary of the parish of Binley Woods has run along 1.5 miles of the western highway boundary of the A46 Coventry Eastern Bypass, from Brinklow Road (B4027/B4428) in the north to the mainline railway in the south.

The opening of the by-pass in 1989 had a major, if subtle and pervasive, effect upon Binley Woods, but this happened after the level of house building in the village had already fallen away to the very low levels still present, approaching 25 years later. What had been a village community just outside Coventry on the old-established main road between Rugby and Coventry became, overnight, a potential commuter settlement located a few yards from a trunk road dual carriageway from which one-hour journey times could now bring village residents to most parts of the East and West Midlands and to nearby parts of the South-East.

The main observable impact has been to accelerate the acquisition by relatively prosperous incomers of many of the smaller detached houses and bungalows in the older-established parts of the village. These properties were then usually entirely redesigned and re-built or extended so that their floor areas expand two-, three-, four- and even five-fold, and almost always running to two storeys where the old property had been a bungalow. A few have been of exceptionally good design, but many more have simply repeated adjoining houses' designs, reducing the essential richness of design variety that characterises these parts of the village.

4.8 The Contrast between Development Patterns in the 1930s and Today

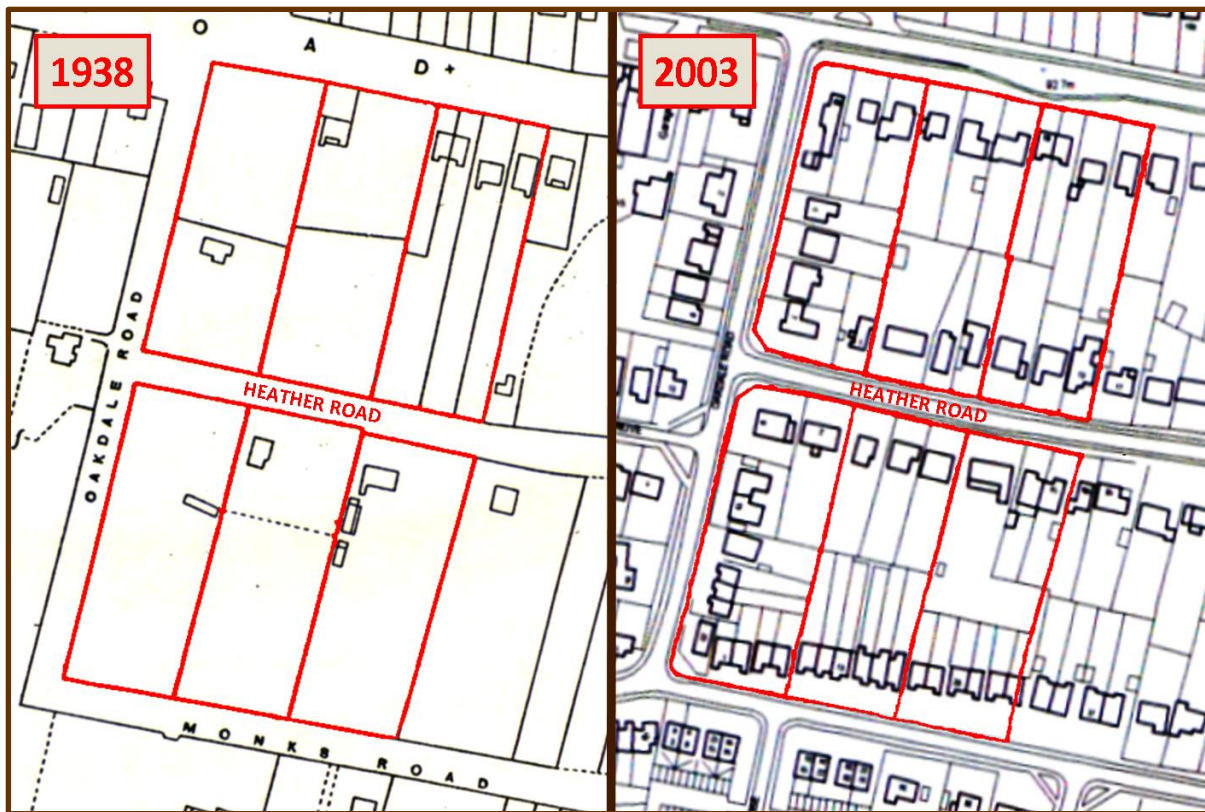


Figure 14: Development of six 1-acre lots either side of Heather Road, 1938 (left) and 2003 (right)

Figure 14 takes a moment to look at a particular group of 1923 Sale Plots in some detail.

The left-hand map shows the limited beginnings of development even 15 years after the Sale. Just the north-easternmost plot has been fully developed on its Rugby Road frontage, with long back gardens running all the way through to Heather Road. The next two plots appear to have been split lengthwise prior to 1938, but with just the original house so far built. The three plots between Heather Road and Monks Road are still undivided; two have a single house in one corner, the third probably just a shed for stock.

The 2003 map shows the by then well-established full development of all six plots. Development in Heather Road seen in plan form is typically slightly haphazard, while the development down Oakdale Road and especially along Monks Road opposite the Elm Close flats is very intense in terms of frontage width but the garden lengths are highly varied in response to incremental decisions on where to draw boundaries as each original plot is separately divided up.

4.9 Significant VDS Policy ‘Anchors’ Emerging in Chapters 3 and 4

The key points listed below have been drawn from the history of the development of Binley Woods and the current characteristics of the village as presented in Chapters 3 and 4. They have been used as the basis for the policies put forward in Chapter 7 and the design advice given in Chapter 8.

Village Design Statement Policy ‘Anchors’:

- (1) The recent, purely twentieth century origins of Binley Woods as a settlement
- (2) The unusual village road pattern resulting from the pattern one-acre plots
- (3) Early, slow-moving development (mainly pre-1960) in the northern part of the village
- (4) Later, much more rapid development of small housing estates to much higher densities
- (5) The impact of Green Belt designation – a complete stop to outward expansion
- (6) The impact of the A46 Coventry Eastern Bypass on the local market for larger properties
- (7) The enclosing tree cover of the Parish, plus Brandon Wood (across the Parish boundary)
- (8) Extensive tree cover within the village – its major importance to village setting.
- (9) The sheer variety of architectural styles generated over a period of only 50 years up to 1973

5. Rugby Borough Council: Statutory Planning Context

5.1 LDF Core Strategy: Strategic Overview

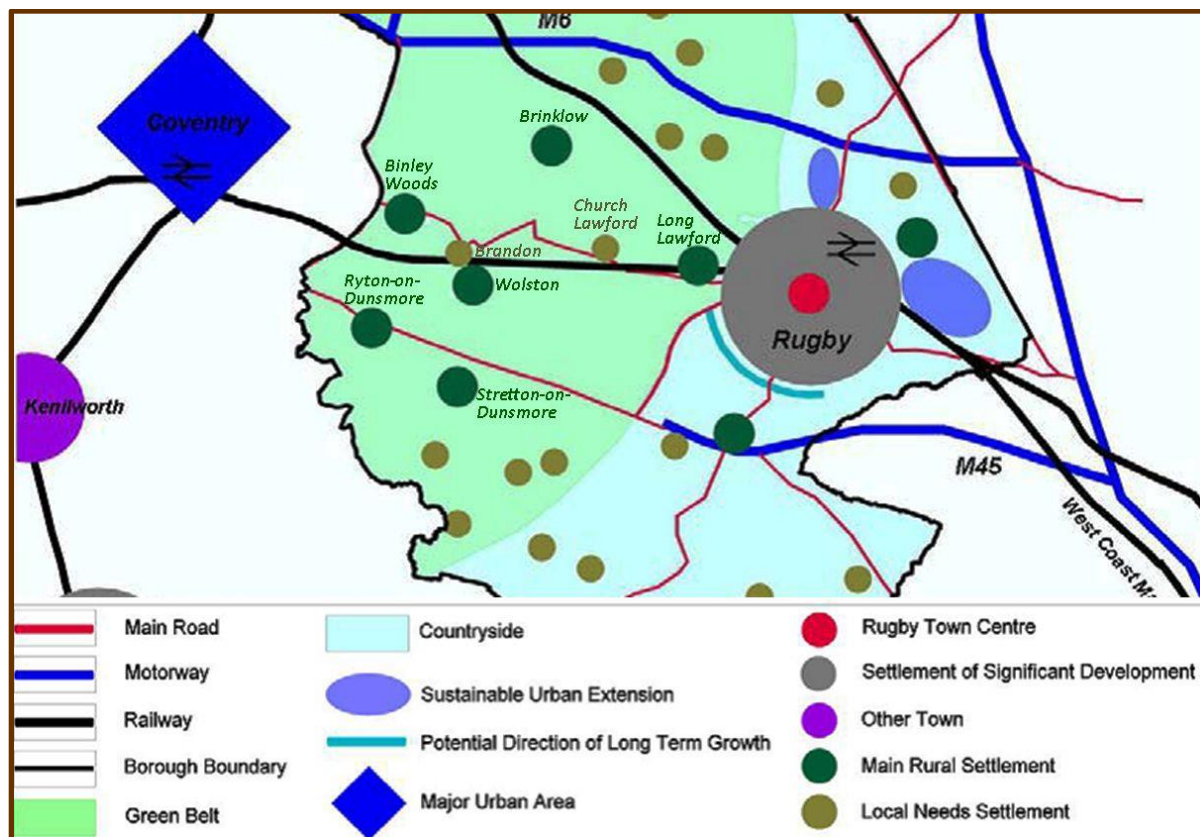


Figure 15: Rugby Borough Core Strategy – Key Diagram

In 2006 the Borough Council adopted the Rugby Borough Local Plan covering the whole Borough. The Local Plan was only in force in full until 2009. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 then required preparation of a Local Development Framework (LDF) for the Borough, although specific policies from the Local Plan were ‘saved’ and remain in force.

The LDF Core Strategy, adopted in 2012, sets out a spatial strategy for meeting the known and anticipated development targets over the 20 years 2006 to 2026. It includes urban extensions to the town of Rugby, a strategy governing the rural area and strategic approaches to guide future development. Also, it sets out a Development Strategy that concentrates the vast majority of development on the town of Rugby and then identifies a hierarchy of development locations in the Borough as a whole that are below that level. The first level down is Main Rural Settlements, of which Binley Woods is one. They are considered suitable for small scale infill development, in addition to being suitable for development that meets an identified local need.

The Borough Council is now required to prepare and adopt a new Rugby Borough Local Plan which will build on the existing Core Strategy, re-work those parts of the earlier Local Plan still in force, and ensure the resulting policies are made fully consistent with the recently-issued (March 2012) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF, in 50 pages or so, has replaced all previous Planning Policy Guidance and the net effect for larger communities in the Green Belt is likely to be quite limited. The Binley Woods VDS has been prepared with this in mind, and it is accepted that it might later need some revision if this assumption proves to be not wholly correct.

5.2 LDF Core Strategy: A Summary of Binley Woods VDS-related Policies

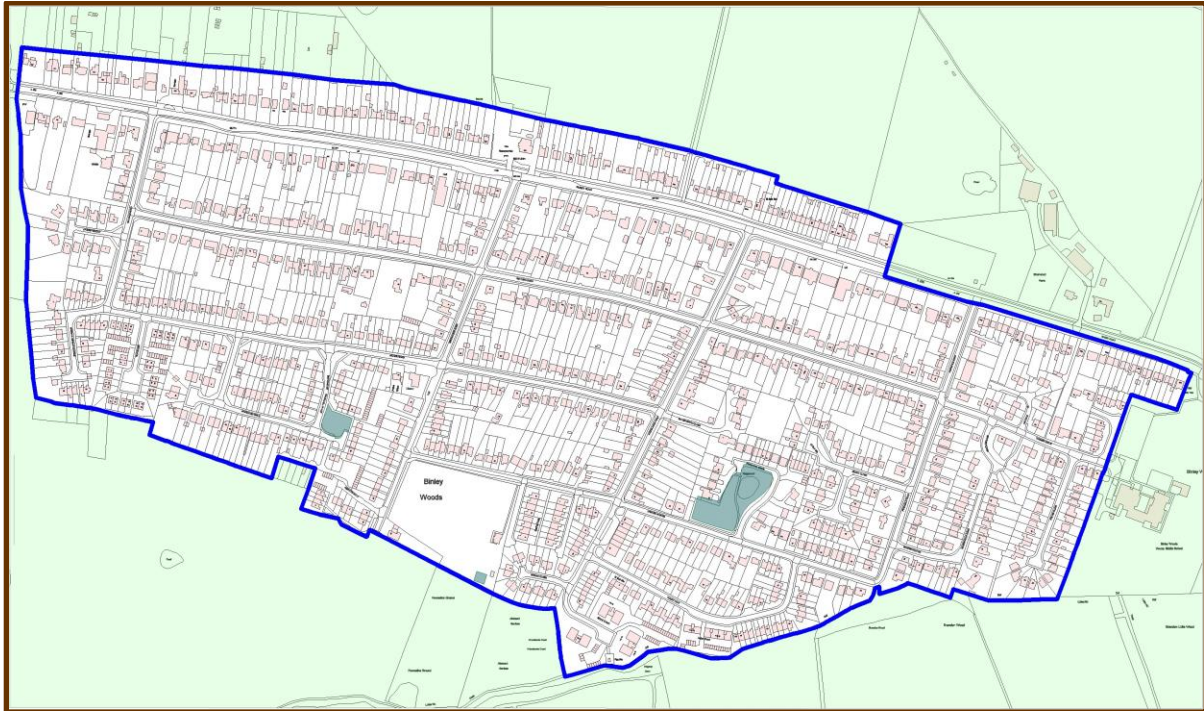


Figure 16: Local Development Framework - Core Strategy: Binley Woods Inset Map

Rugby Borough-wide Development Strategy (Policy CS1).

The RBC Core Strategy is summed up in its Policy CS1: Development Strategy. It states that:

“The location and scale of development must comply with the settlement hierarchy. It must be demonstrated that the most sustainable locations are considered ahead of those further down the hierarchy.”

Starting at the top, it then goes on to define that hierarchy in these terms:

- *Rugby Town Centre* - *the primary focus for services and facilities*
- *Rugby Urban Area* - *the primary focus for meeting strategic growth targets*
- *Main Rural Settlements* - *Binley Woods, Brinklow, Ryton, Wolston, etc. (See Figure15)*
 - *development permitted within existing village boundaries*
 - *local housing needs are prioritised over market housing*
- *Local Needs Settlements* - *small scale development to meet local housing needs permitted within existing village boundaries*
- *Green Belt*
 - *new development will be resisted*
 - *only where national policy on Green Belt allows wil development be permitted.*

Figure 16 reproduces the Core Strategy’s Settlement Boundary for Binley Woods. Its boundaries have been applied to the village-wide maps in the earlier parts of this Village Design Statement.

Main Rural Settlements (Supporting text to Policy CS1)

The Policy CS1 reference to local housing needs in regard to Binley Woods and other Main Rural Settlements is then elaborated carefully in its paragraph 2.6, an important component of the policy framework within which this VDS has of necessity been prepared:

- *Main Rural Settlements play a minimal role in helping to deliver the strategic growth targets for the Borough. However, these villages do play an important role locally and the development strategy is intended to support the sustainability and maintenance of existing services, such as schools, by enabling development which will support the local community*
- *Main Rural Settlements have a sufficient level of services, or access to services to allow for development within the existing settlement boundaries*
- *As this development is principally to support the local community any identified Local Housing Needs will be prioritised over market housing. It is expected that local housing need will be identified within a Housing Needs Survey*
- *Main Rural Settlements will have no threshold on the size of sites that come forward*
- *Due to the strategic importance of meeting local housing needs, in exceptional circumstances, affordable housing developments will be permitted through the application of Rural Exception Sites Policy, on the edge of Main Rural Settlements in the Countryside or Green Belt where it can be demonstrated that there are no suitable sites within existing boundaries*

Parish Plans (or Village Design Statements) (Policy CS2)

The Borough Council commits itself to take into account a Parish Plan (or Village Design Statement (VDS), as appropriate) in the planning system in these terms it will need to:

- *have been endorsed by Rugby Borough Council*
- *be in conformity with the Local Development Framework (i.e. the Core Strategy thereof)*
- *be regularly updated if necessary*

The use of Parish Plans / VDS will principally inform:

- *the determination of a planning application*
- *the requirement and scope of development contributions associated with a planning permission*
- *the assessment of schemes in the context of a need identified through the Parish Plan*

Local Housing Needs (Policy CS20)

In Main Rural Settlements permission for Local Housing Needs development will be granted by the Borough Council where it is proven to meet the identified needs of local people. There must be an established local connection for those local people that claim to be in housing need.

Local people will include:

- *A person or persons and their dependants residing permanently in the parish or adjoining parish, for at least 5 years or more in the previous 20 years*
- *A person or persons required to live close to another person who satisfies the above criteria and is in essential need of frequent attention and/or care due to age, ill health and/or infirmity*
- *A person or persons required to live close to their place of work in the parish or an adjoining parish*

Close attention is given to the sometime vexed and detailed question of tenure:

“In all cases where a local need has been clearly identified arrangements for the management and occupation of dwellings must be made to ensure that all dwellings provided will be, and will remain available for occupancy by eligible local people both initially and in perpetuity.

“In circumstances where the provision of this requirement is likely to threaten the financial viability of a development scheme, the Council will consider a reduced provision.”

Rural Exceptions Sites (Policy CS 21)

The Core Strategy recognises that just occasionally in Rugby’s Main Rural Settlements carefully prescribed exceptional circumstances can arise where there is a sufficient degree of justification for allowing housing development that cannot be accommodated within the Settlement Boundary, such as that shown for Binley Woods in Figure 16, in the following restrictively prescribed terms:

“The development of affordable housing that meets the needs of local people, as defined in policy CS20, will be permitted as a Rural Exception Site adjacent to defined rural settlement boundaries, where development is normally resisted, if all of the following criteria are met:

- *Developments do not have an adverse impact on the character and/or appearance of settlements, their setting or the surrounding countryside*
- *In all cases arrangements for the management and occupation of dwellings must be made to ensure that all dwellings provided will be, and will remain available for occupancy by eligible local people at an affordable cost and at a range of tenures, both initially and in perpetuity.*
- *It is clearly demonstrated that there is a local need for affordable housing which outweighs other policy considerations*
- *It is demonstrated no alternative suitable sites exist within the defined Settlement Boundary*
- *The development consists exclusively of affordable housing”*

Once again and in the same terms as Policy CS 20, close attention is given to the question of tenure.

5.3 Minerals Extraction

Warwickshire County Council Minerals Planning has confirmed that much of the wider parish of Binley Woods lies with a designated ‘Sand and Gravel Resource Area’. They also confirmed that, within the parish boundary, there are currently no ‘Permitted Minerals Sites’ where extraction could be considered nor any proposals to extract minerals.

5.4 National and Borough-wide policies; their interaction with this VDS

In the preparation of this Village Design Statement, the government’s National Planning Policy Framework plus the Borough Council’s Core Strategy have been read together and taken as a whole in the development of VDS Policies (Chapter 7).

VDS policies also give emphasis to the particular origins and characteristics of the built form of Binley Woods (Chapters 3 and 4) and the views of local residents as expressed in the 2012 Binley Woods Parish Plan Questionnaire Survey (Chapter 6).

The Letter of Endorsement (Chapter 2) indicates that this has been done to the Borough Council’s satisfaction and that the VDS will be taken into account by them in the determination of Planning Applications.

Applicants for Planning Permission are therefore urged to read all the relevant Government and Borough planning documents, together with this Village Design Statement, if only to avoid disappointment or abortive expenditure through not taking all relevant policy areas into account.

6. 2012 Binley Woods Parish Plan Questionnaire Survey Results

6.1 Opinions on the Future Scale of the Developed Area of Binley Woods

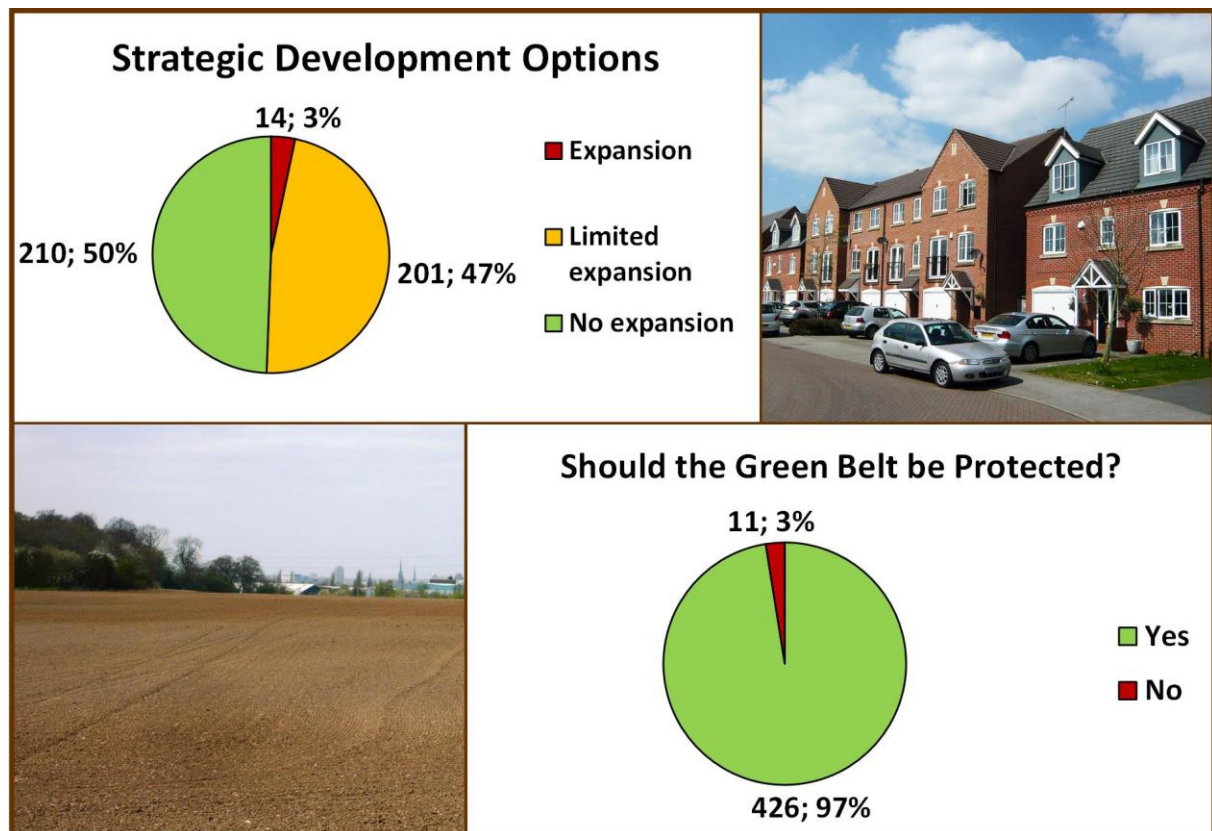


Figure 17: Survey results – Strategic development options

In the autumn of 2012, a village-wide residents' survey was conducted as part of the Binley Woods Parish Plan. 1140 survey forms were issued to all homes and businesses in the village and 459 completed forms were returned, giving a response rate of 40.26%.

Residents' were asked two questions concerning the future development of the village, and the results are shown in Figure 17 above.

Firstly, residents were asked to consider three strategic development options for the village:

- Expansion of the built-up area to accommodate a significant development of both housing for sale and for rent to anyone, with or without village connections. 3% of respondents favoured this option.
- Limited expansion of the built-up area to accommodate demand from within Binley Woods requested by residents in the 2012 Housing Needs Survey, provided such properties were only made available in perpetuity to local people. 47% of respondents favoured this option.
- No Expansion of the village's built up area. 50% of respondents favoured this option.

Secondly, residents were asked if the Green Belt surrounding the village should be protected. 97% of respondents, who expressed an opinion, stated that it should.

6.2 Preferred Choices on More Detailed Development Control Issues

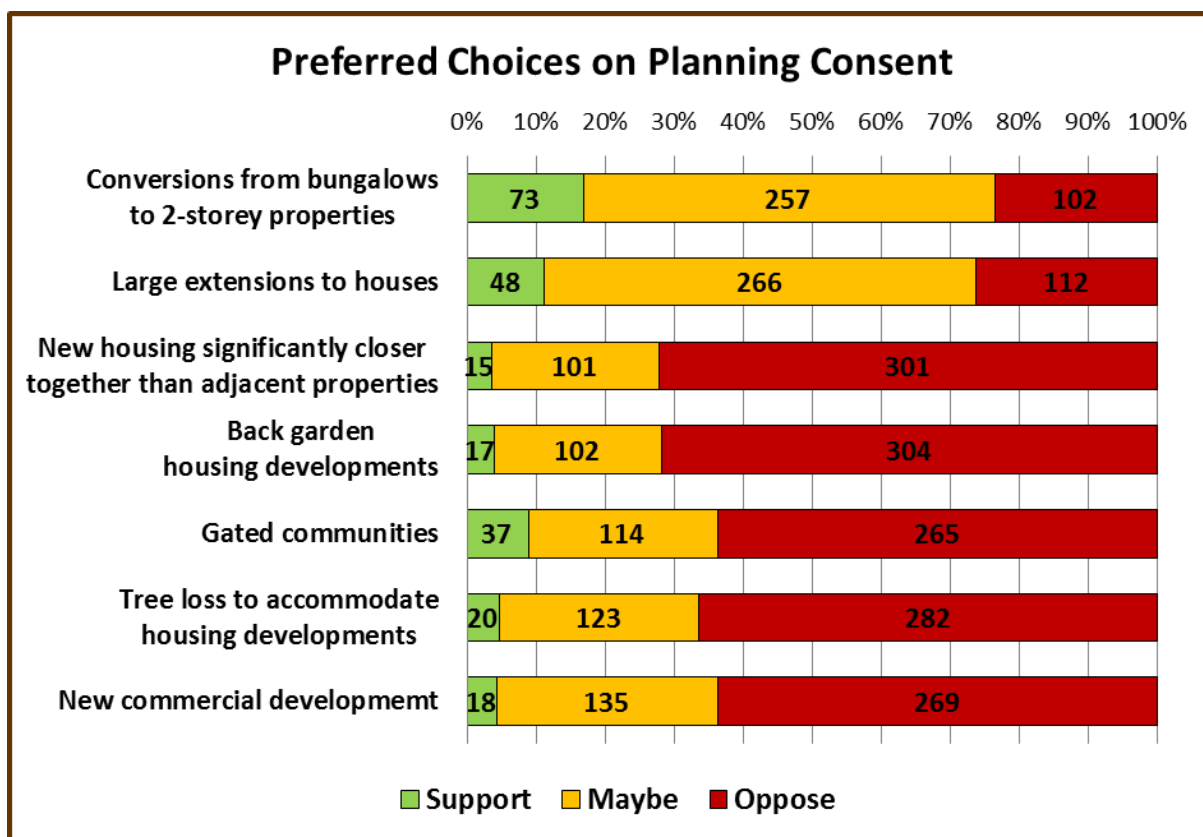


Figure 18: Survey results – Preferred choices on more development control issues

The Parish Plan survey also sought residents' views concerning a number of day-to-day planning issues. The results are shown in figure 18 above.

Two types of change were considered by a majority of respondents as 'maybe' supportable, depending upon the circumstances of the planning application:

- Conversions from bungalows to two-storey properties
- Large extensions to houses

A majority of respondents felt that each of the remaining types of change should be opposed:

- New housing significantly closer together than adjacent properties
- Back garden housing developments
- Gated communities
- Tree loss to accommodate housing developments
- New commercial development, either through change of use or new building

Note:

The views of the residents of Binley Woods have been used as local input to the Binley Woods Policies presented in Chapter 7, and are presented here for information only.

7. Development Control Policies

7.1 Introduction

The overall purpose of the policies that now follow is to influence the way in which the Borough-wide and rural area policies of Rugby Borough Council (the Local Planning Authority) are interpreted and applied to proposed development in Binley Woods Parish. As earlier chapters have sought to describe, Binley Woods village does not have the same history and therefore the same development patterns as in the Borough's many ancient villages.

The policies set out in this Chapter, therefore, are simultaneously anchored in two distinct places:

- The government's National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and beneath that the established pattern of national Planning Regulations, plus the resulting statutory Planning policy documents prepared and adopted by Rugby Borough Council (see Section 5.1).

(All significant Government-published Town and Country Planning policy documents may be downloaded from its highly-regarded Planning Portal at www.planningportal.gov.uk.)

- The surveyed opinion of Binley Woods' residents dealing with both the future scale of the village and detailed development control issues within it (see Chapter 6).

Applicants for Planning Permission are reminded to read together all the relevant Government and Borough Planning documentation, as well as the Policies presented in this chapter of the VDS.

7.2 Overall Objectives

This Village Design Statement is grounded in five Strategic Objectives:

- (1) **Green Belt retention**: in the whole of Binley Woods Parish outside the Village Envelope
- (2) **Green Belt enhancement**: in particular along the western boundary of the Parish, for the benefit of the amenities of the residents of Binley Woods and Coventry, plus users of the A46 Trunk Road
- (3) **Protection of woodland areas surrounding Binley Woods village**: to retain, conserve and enhance them for their natural beauty and their natural history interest
- (4) **Market housing**: to facilitate it within the established Village Envelope
- (5) **Local Housing Needs**: to facilitate it within the established Village Envelope, subject to the availability of space

7.3 Retaining the Green Belt

Policy BW 1: Green Belt

The existing Green Belt which surrounds the established Settlement Boundary will be protected and therefore new development within the Green Belt will be permitted only in very special circumstances, including those covered by Policy BW2.

Explanation (Policy BW 1)

Chapter 4, Section 4.6, and Figure 16 in Chapter 5 show the extent of the West Midlands Green Belt and the manner in which the boundary of the Green Belt surrounds the existing Settlement Boundary on all sides of Binley Woods village.

In the Binley Woods Parish Plan survey (see Chapter 6), 97% of respondents stated that the existing Green Belt should be protected from future development.

Policy BW 2: Local Housing Needs

If the outcome of an up-to-date Housing Needs Study is considered by the Parish Council to show that Binley Woods Village appears to be no longer capable of meeting Local Housing Needs within its established Settlement Boundary, the case for providing adjoining land within Binley Woods Parish will need to be considered under, currently, the Borough Council's Policies CS 20 and 21 in order to remedy that deficiency.

Explanation (Policy BW 2)

(1) Please see Chapter 5, Section 5.2, under the headings Local Housing Needs and Rural Exception Sites for description and explanation of these Rugby Borough Council Policies.

(2) As part of the Parish Plan initiative, a Housing Needs Survey was undertaken in Binley Woods in the spring of 2012¹. The survey identified a need for 13 affordable homes of a mixed tenure to meet the housing needs of those with a local connection to the village over the next five years:

- The immediate need (ie within the next two years) was three socially rented properties and four shared ownership properties
- The medium term need (ie within two to five years) was one affordable property, four retirement properties and one sheltered accommodation with support

Actions to address these housing needs are contained within the Binley Woods Parish Plan.

¹ The full results of the 2012 Binley Woods Housing Needs Survey are available on our website: <http://binleywoodsparish.wordpress.com>.

7.4 New and Replacement Housing

Policy BW 3: New and Replacement Housing – Those Fronting on to Public Highways

The details of proposals for new and redeveloped houses will be considered on their merits in the context of potential impact on the street scene and on the amenities of their neighbours by virtue of their positioning, scale and design. In the consideration of Planning Applications major emphasis will be placed on sustaining the continued:

- (1) **Harmonious variety of house types and styles:** New development should be in character with the surrounding area, but should neither be slavish copies of the style of adjoining houses nor sharply contrasting scales of buildings or surface treatment.
- (2) **Typically smaller size and limited height of most village properties:** The scale and height of existing development limits the potential for over-looking and visual intrusion that is highly valued.
- (3) **Current high levels of tree cover:** This is considered by residents to be a key characteristic in the setting and the attractiveness of the village.

In the event that a multi-dwelling redevelopment under this policy includes housing to the rear of demolished properties, then Policy BW 4 will also apply.

Policy BW 4: New Housing on Land to the Rear of Existing Properties

Proposals for additional housing to the rear of existing properties will need to sustain the character of the surrounding residential area. This will apply in particular to any multi-storey, multi-dwelling proposals because of their potential impact on the residential amenities of existing properties.

Explanation (Policies BW 3 and BW 4)

(1) The Parish Council's concern for the protection of neighbours' amenities in both policies relate first and foremost to the proposed positioning of upper storey windows, especially to any proposed introduction of dormers to the roof spaces of two-storey developments. As a consequence, plot coverage and building size may need to be restricted to less than those common in the urban area of the Borough in order to remain in character with the surrounding area.

(2) The right hand map in Figure 14, (see Chapter 4, page 18) illustrates the kind of area in which pressures to consider back land redevelopments could most readily arise under Policy BW 3 or BW 4.

7.5 Access to New Residential Developments

Policy BW 5: Proposed Gated Road Access Arrangements to Residential Developments

Public access to groups of new residential properties in the village shall be permanently maintained up to the edge of their individual curtilages rather than limited by the installation of communal gates beyond the end of the adopted public highway.

This policy does not apply to sheltered housing complexes or other similar arrangements designed for the use of frail and elderly persons.

Explanation (Policy BW 5)

- (1) This policy will be enforced by the inclusion of appropriate Planning Conditions attached to the Outline or Full Planning Permission.
- (2) The potential impact on the timely attendance of emergency vehicles at individual properties is considered to be significant.
- (3) Binley Woods has a very low level of crime and anti-social behaviour, and there appears to be no public safety justification at all for this degree of isolation from contact by the wider community.
- (4) 64% of residents who responded to the Parish Plan survey were against the introduction of additional gated communities (see Chapter 6).

7.6 House Extensions

Policy BW 6: House Extensions

Where proposed extensions are large enough to require Planning Permission under current regulations, favourable consideration will be given to the extension of existing houses and bungalows provided reasonable regard can be shown to have been paid to impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties.

Where proposed extensions are set forward of the existing property, proposals will be examined with particular care in the context of:

- (1) Any adverse impact on the street scene and the amenities of immediate neighbours.
- (2) Loss of on-site car parking capacity.
- (3) Retention of a significant residue of gardened area, in particular those areas in association with retained front boundary walls, fences and hedges.

Explanation (Policy BW 6)

(1) **The need for Planning Permission:** The margin beyond which Planning Permission is required for the extension of existing properties is set by detailed nationally-issued Planning Regulations. These limits are altered from time to time, as during the preparation of this VDS. As a result, householders should always check first with the Borough Council on the actual current limits to the scale of extensions over and above the original area of the house up to which Planning Permission is not required, although Building Regulations approvals are still required.

(2) **Street Scene:** Regard to impact on the street scene is required so as to avoid high profile redevelopments that stand out very sharply by reason of their breadth and height. Space should be retained at each side of the property consistent with moving of wheelie bins to and from the rear of the property. High-ridged 'two-and-a-half storey' extensions will usually be discouraged because of their potential intrusive impact on a mainly one- to two-storey street scene.

(3) **At the rear of properties:** Proposed large rear extensions should be predominantly one-storey in order to minimise the impact on the amenities of neighbours. Particular sensitivity to the amenities of neighbours is expected when designing in upper storey windows in the side elevation of rear extensions, dormer windows included.

(4) **Choices of materials:** These should match the existing dwelling and respect the mainly brick and tile setting of the village. At the same time, the variety of design detail in the neighbourhood should be sustained by avoidance of straightforward repetition of the details of adjoining properties.

(5) **Sustainable Drainage arrangements:** The inclusion of significant extensions of driveway/ parking areas on top of increases in the 'footprint' of houses risks worsening the standing water and waterlogging problems regularly experienced in Binley Woods on account of the village's flat, heavy clay soils. This subject is developed further in Chapter 8, Design Guidance.

(6) **Retention of existing trees:** the complicated matter of trying to retain trees undamaged and at the same time protect foundations from root damage is explored in Chapter 8, Design Guidance. Where the Local Planning Authority becomes concerned that significant trees or significant groups of smaller trees may be adversely affected by emerging development proposals, it reserves the right to exercise its Urgency powers to make Tree Preservation Orders to ensure a properly managed solution to any conflicts between the positioning of house extensions and the preservation of the tree cover that is so central to the abiding character of Binley Woods.

Residents are recommended to read the *Residential Extension Design Guide* available from Rugby Borough Council for further guidance on designing house extensions.

7.7 Commercial & Industrial Development

Policy BW 7: The Control of Commercial and Industrial Development

(1) The focus of purely retail development in the village should remain at Woodlands Road between Craven Avenue and Court Leet.

(2) Applications for other non-retail commercial or industrial development sufficient in scale to require Planning Permission will not normally be approved unless they can be shown to have traffic, noise and odour emissions compatible with their presence within a residential area.

Explanation (Policy BW 7)

(1) **Retail development:** With the increase in retail provision just across the Coventry boundary in 2013 it is important that retail provision within the body of the village be largely focused in one place in order to maximise the attraction of the retail offer to residents. For the avoidance of doubt:

- Policies BW 7 and BW 8 should be read together, precluding any additional retail development in the area covered by Policy BW 8
- Policy BW 7 is designed to preclude new or extended retail provision elsewhere in the village

(2) **Non-retail commercial development.** Minor commercial uses such as that of a spare bedroom as a small business office clearly subordinate to the principal use of a building as a dwelling house do not usually require Planning Permission. By contrast, a proposal to introduce a predominant or purely commercial or industrial use at a site within the village would require Planning Permission.

The Parish Council regards Binley Woods village as having developed as a primarily residential area. For that reason it opposes the introduction into the village of non-retail commercial and industrial uses requiring Planning Permission. This is because of the prospective impact on the amenities of this residential area.

(3) **Disused commercial / industrial premises within the village:** Where non-residential uses such as former petrol filling stations have gone out of use and are considered likely to remain so, their redevelopment for primarily residential purposes is likely to be supported by the Parish Council. This would be especially true if, for instance, the effect was to widen choice of accommodation types in a community where the proportion of elderly people is rising and nominal under-occupation of existing properties by one-person households is increasing accordingly.

7.8 Environmental Enhancement Corridor

Policy BW 8: A46 Environmental Enhancement Corridor

This Village Design Statement establishes an Environmental Enhancement Corridor within Binley Woods Parish between the Village Envelope and the A46 Coventry Eastern Bypass, and then north to Brinklow Road and south to the main line railway.

Within this Corridor the Borough and Parish Councils will promote enhancement of the environment by landscaping and tree planting through:

- Informal voluntary agreements with landowners and other interests, or
- Formal agreements made in association with the granting of Planning Permission

For the avoidance of doubt, no further expansion of non-Green Belt uses in the Environmental Enhancement Corridor will be allowed.

Explanation (Policy BW 8)

(1) The area to which this policy applies is shown in Figure 19.

(2) The vicinity of the A46/A428 junction, the main entrance to Binley Woods village, is effectively where development pressures on the eastern edge of the urban area of Coventry meet the Green Belt.

(3) The western edge of the parish is therefore the West Midlands Green Belt at its most exposed and sensitive, so it is essential that the established non-Green Belt commercial uses neither expand their area nor materially intensify the level of their activities.

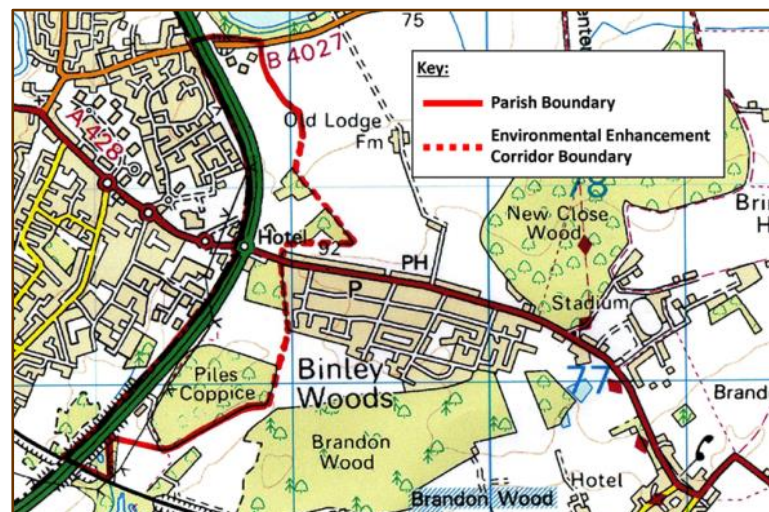


Figure 19: Environmental Enhancement Corridor Boundary

(4) It is the objective of Binley Woods Parish Council that the present boundary treatment and design of commercial uses south of the A428 should be comprehensively enhanced closer to the standard achieved at the Rugby Club through the A46 Trunk Road boundary landscaping.

(5) In locations where, in the twentieth century, the agricultural quality of some land in this corridor was permanently damaged, by sand and gravel workings or by 'borrow pits', the creation of additional woodland planting will be promoted. The objective is both to achieve enhancement of the local landscape and some further road noise-reduction for the benefit of nearby residents.

(6) Where there is existing woodland under a management regime, for example at Piles Coppice, this management will be actively supported. Where there is no management regime, for example for the residue of the Binley Common woodland opposite the entrance to Broad Street Rugby Football Ground, such management regimes will be encouraged and promoted.

8. Design Advice

8.1 Rebuilding to Produce Larger Detached Houses

From the point of view of the community as a whole, attractive, successful design of reconstruction or extension of houses is important everywhere in Binley Woods, but nowhere is this more important than along the main road through the village, Rugby Road, and at road junctions within the village.

In the past 30 years there has been a continuous process of reconstruction of older one- and two-storey properties on wider fronted plots to form much larger two-storey houses. Sometimes the scale of the rebuilt property has run into objections, the response to which has produced unimaginative 'sameness' when compared with neighbouring properties (see Example B, below).

The attraction of much of the village is its variety of styles and Example A, below, is intended to draw attention to imaginative design which has added interest to the experience of driving, walking or cycling through the village.

Example A – Bungalow rebuilt as a house

Formerly, this was a small and attractively-designed bungalow on a very large site (top photograph). The redevelopment (bottom photograph) retained essentially all the front, removed the roof, extended on the eastern side, at the rear and then upwards to form a second storey. In greater detail, a matching style to the former bungalow was developed and matching brickwork was incorporated, producing an attractive new contribution to the street scene.



Example B – Consistent similarity of house conversions

These properties are a combination of new-builds, major partial-rebuilds and extensions. Some of the rebuilds were originally proposed at a larger scale, but in order to make them smaller and non-controversial, were reduced in size to form near-replicas of their neighbours. In retrospect, this decision served to reduce the local variety of housing style and type.



8.2 House Extensions at Road Junctions Within the Village

Properties on road junctions can be very prominent, with or without extension, and so particular care needs to be exercised by both the applicant and the Planning Authority in determining the scale, shape and form of proposed extensions. In particular, this care needs to be exercised when emerging proposals contain major two-storey walls hard up against the public highway – whether or not there is a strip of highway verge between the property and the pedestrian part of the highway. The reasoning behind this approach is that a long flank wall on the edge of the property is very likely to create a hard, excessively ‘urban’ edge to a property in contrast to the front gardens adjoining, a few yards along the side road to the property.

Example C – Extension set back from side road

Here we see all the advantages that come with originally being set well back from the highway boundary of the return frontage on Woodlands Road. This example represents the kind of outcome preferred by the Parish Council. The house owners retain the ability to move from front to back gardens within their property. The significant width of public verge to the side of the property helps minimise the visual impact of the large house extension, which blends in extremely well with the existing property. Indeed, to the casual observer, it might appear that the property has not actually been extended and was originally built as it currently stands.

This example also reflects how house owners will sometimes go out of their way to enhance the setting of their property and, in the process, of their immediate neighbourhood also.



Example D – Smaller Extension adjoining side road

This property has received a smaller extension in a much smaller available side garden area. As a result there was enough space remaining once again to retain movement between front and back gardens using the space within the property.



Residents are also recommended to obtain a copy of the *Residential Extension Design Guide* from Rugby Borough Council when considering a house extension.

8.3 Conversion of Bungalows to Dormer Bungalows

When converting bungalows the challenge for the householder can often be how best to get enough light in without this resulting in very prominent dormer windows that seem to neighbours to threaten their privacy. Example E illustrates a creative attempt to meet both objectives.

Example E – Bungalow conversion

Before conversion (top photograph) this property was a typical Binley Woods bungalow, similar in design to many found in the village. The property has since been extended upwards to create additional bedroom capacity in the roof space with the addition of dormer windows to the front and rear. The resulting dwelling (bottom photo) is pleasing on the eye and the larger dormer windows do not overlook neighbouring properties.



8.4 Choosing Appropriate Materials

Whether building new properties, or extending existing properties, the detailed choice of building materials is key to making sure that the property blends in with its surroundings. When extending properties, it is particularly important to ensure that the choice of bricks and roof tiles is consistent with the existing property.

Example F – Matching bricks, tiles and window frames

This property has been extended to the side and the former garage has been converted into a room. Both parts have been constructed using brick, tile and window frames that match the remainder of the house.



Example G – Imaginative choices of cladding materials

On this bungalow, natural wood cladding has been used on the gable ends of both the main house and the porch, which adds distinctive character to the property.



8.5 Driveway / Parking Area Extensions and Dropped Kerbs

The increased paving over of front garden areas has become a national concern. Householders now need Planning Permission if they wish to extend their parking areas by more than five square metres using materials off which the rainwater runs (impermeable surfaces) instead of soaking through (permeable surfaces). Worsening local flooding problems are the prime motivation for this change in Planning Regulations. The environmental impact of impermeable driveway surfaces can, however, be reduced through the draining of surface water into a deep, purpose-built soak-away.

Where paving over is becoming very widespread the other major government concerns relate to the undesirable impact on the appearance of residential roads, and the loss of natural habitats. From a Village Design point of view there is a third crucial consideration, namely the increasing appearance of windswept, completely paved over front gardens.

This applies equally to small 'two car' gardens and to large front gardens where every vestige of vegetation has been obliterated and which are capable of taking perhaps six, seven, eight or even more vehicles. This Village Design Statement seeks by all means available to discourage the creation of bare, open front garden parking areas of a size more suited to the shops in Woodlands Road than to the needs of a single household.



Example H – Extensive parking in a large front garden

The surfaced area of this property's drive comes in two parts, both permeable: one part is block paved, while the other part has been constructed of gravel. Also, there has been substantial frontage planting greatly softening the visual impact of what is actually quite a considerable extent of parking for vehicles.



Example I – Extra parking in a small front garden

This semi-detached property has the footpath laid in impermeable material and the parking areas in permeable gravel. Significant planting areas have been retained. The overall visual appearance has then been greatly enhanced by additional wall-trained planting on both semi-detached properties.



Example J - Using an archway to soften impact

This property has a well planted frontage, with the planting continued over the wooden frame and existing tree cover carefully retained. Note: the wooden frame at the entrance to the property would require planning permission.



Example K – Using Planters to soften impact

Creative use has been made of profusely planted up raised beds. These soften the front driveway / parking area that would otherwise be very uniform in character. Also, note how the impact of the front garden wheelie bin storage has been successfully softened.

Reasons for minimising the extent of dropped kerb extensions

When extending properties, or just adding additional car parking to their front gardens, it is highly desirable to design the vehicular access so that the length of the pre-existing dropped kerb in front of the property is either retained intact or only minimally extended. The larger the front garden involved the less the need ought to be to extend the dropped kerb and the greater the capability to provide space for vehicles to turn around within the boundary of the property.

Minimising the length of dropped kerb extensions helps both the community and the individual household in several ways:

- Makes the property frontage more attractive
- Provides a safer environment for wheel chair, invalid scooter, pushchair and Zimmer frame users of the public footpath in front of the property – shorter lengths of steeper cross-fall will result
- Helps reduce the ‘prairie’ openness of whole groups of front gardens that:
 - are completely paved over between the house and the road in front of it
 - have lost all trace of front walls, gates and fences
 - are completely bereft of all former planting areas
- Limits the effective loss of on-street parking precluded by dropped kerbs

Example L – A minimised dropped kerb

This property has been extended and a large parking area has been added at the front of the property. However, vehicular access has been restricted to just a single ‘standard width’ gateway and the front garden is shared between the parking area and lawns / flower beds. Also, the car parking area has been masked through the building of a wall across the front of the property.



Example M – A minimised dropped kerb

This second example has a parking area large enough to accommodate three or more vehicles, but also retains an attractive front garden. As with the previous example, vehicular access has been restricted to a single gateway and the parking area has been masked behind a low front garden wall.



In-and-out drives

Warwickshire County Council in their *Roads Design Guide* discourages the construction of in-and-out driveways:

“No more than one access should be provided for any dwelling. Because every individual access constitutes a potential traffic hazard, pairs of ‘in-and-out’ accesses are not acceptable other than for special locations such as petrol filling stations where it is normally preferable to operate a one-way traffic flow through the site.”

8.6 Tree Preservation and Housing Development: Tension between them

The Problem:

(1) Thriving trees thrust out roots often as far as the canopy of branches and leaves above. As trees in a built-up area mature both branches and roots extend.

(2) Binley Woods is largely built up and the main development emphasis is on expanding existing houses and bungalows. The outward expansion of tree roots and of foundations can bring the two into conflict, and each can be damaged by the other. The same is true for the conflict between tree roots and the often much more rapid expansion of paved areas in front gardens and decking in back gardens.

(3) The instinctive reaction of some householders and many builders is to clear all trees anywhere near proposed building works on a precautionary basis. The reaction of the Parish and Borough Councils is to preserve as many trees as possible (for reasons rehearsed throughout previous Chapters) and to use the Planning Application process and the Borough's Tree Preservation Order powers to minimise tree loss.

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

TPOs are made when trees, individual specimens or groups, are considered to be important parts of the landscape and are judged to be at risk of being felled, lopped, or suffer root damage because of prospective development. They are also mechanisms for the subsequent management of trees in the interest of both tree health and public safety.

TPOs are normally made only on private land, though public land in course of disposal may be treated similarly. Ignoring the terms of a TPO can lead to fines being imposed by a Magistrates Court.

The way forward for developing owners and builders:

(1) Never pre-emptively clear-fell a site upon taking possession of it, as many prefer to do.

(2) At the first possible opportunity consult with the Borough's tree officer (Arboriculturalist) who can advise on the degree of clearance that would be necessary to accommodate draft building proposals. Some tree specimens will be judged particularly important, others less so.

(3) On this basis it is normally possible to reach an accommodation of views – not to do so is a drain on resources for both parties. However, where there is a determination to proceed with development involving loss of significant specimen or quantities of trees, Urgency Powers to make TPOs may occasionally be resorted to by the Borough Council.

So where in Binley Woods are there Tree Preservation Orders already?

The Parish Council had hoped to include a map showing all the TPOs in the village, but this proved to be impracticable, so the current list at April 2013 is appended. The descriptions are sometimes rather general, but they have been reproduced exactly as received.

Householders and builders are recommended to consult the Borough Council by telephone about the potential presence of TPOs on the site in which they have an interest or if there are any trees in the immediate vicinity. If the answer appears to be 'yes' in either case, they are recommended on a precautionary basis to inspect personally the TPO file(s) at the Town Hall. This can be particularly helpful in the event there are TPO trees in adjoining gardens which could influence the positioning of foundations. Always consult the relevant Council Officers to ascertain the likely mutually most satisfactory way forward.

8.7 Other Village Design Issues

(1) Porches. Most small porches do not require planning permission since they fall within the Permitted Development limits. Whether or not Planning Permission is required for what a householder has in mind, good quality design of a new porch can provide a focal point of a house frontage that can greatly enhance the attraction of a house to, for instance, a future prospective purchaser. Careful design and good choice of materials can be particularly helpful. Example N illustrates a front porch particularly carefully designed into its individual front garden setting.



(2) Hedgerows on residential boundaries. Hedges are a valuable form of boundary treatment both between properties and on street frontages. In regard to boundaries between front gardens and the public highway, please remember that new hedges need to be planted a little way within the boundary of the garden so that they can be trimmed as they mature to ensure they stay within the property boundary.



Many mature hedges within the village spill out over the adjoining highway grass verge, and even across the footpath beyond (see Example O). At junctions and on bends in the road this can cause a particular visibility problem as clear lines of site become dangerously reduced. The Highway Authority has the power to cut back to the boundary if there are concerns over traffic safety, at your expense, if you will not undertake the work. In addition, failure to keep hedges within the house plot boundary can mean that wheelchair and double-buggy users can be forced off the footpath onto the road and into the traffic in order to go forward.

(3) Gardening of the highway verge adjoining a front garden. This practice has become more common in recent years and is not at all encouraged by the Highway Authority. This is because, no matter how carefully planted up or for how long a period of time, the former grass verge will always in law be inalienably Highway land. The highway verge is likely to contain public utility services which may in principle need to be accessed for emergency repairs at any time, potentially ruining a beautifully gardened area (for example, the front semi-circular area planted with shrubs in Example H).

(4) Hedging-in and walling-in of highway verges to form extensions to front gardens. On Rugby Road and on other older-established roads in the village where there is greater depth of highway verge in front of properties, there has been a recent tendency to try to enlarge gardens by taking in sometimes many metres depth of wider verges into front garden. In law this is not possible without the land having first been declared surplus to Highway requirements, which very rarely occurs. The Highway Authority, therefore, will oppose and seek to reverse such attempts, and do so with the full support of the Parish Council.

(5) Shop fascias and sign boards. Policy BW 7 promotes the focus of purely retail development in the village on the group of shops on Woodlands Road between Craven Avenue and Court Leet. From a design point of view it wishes to promote as attractive a setting for the shops as possible. In particular, the Parish Council would welcome attempts to achieve a more consistent pattern of fascia treatment than at present and a reduction in the profusion of freestanding sign boards. It is prepared to promote the preparation of Design Guidelines for use when fascias are replaced, or as part of a more general Shop Fronts Improvement Scheme.

Appendix – Tree Preservation Orders in Binley Woods

Binley Woods has a number of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) in force. These orders cover a significant proportion of the mature trees and stretches of woodland both within the village Settlement Boundary and in the wider Binley Woods parish.

The list of TPOs as at April 2013 is:

- TR.4.10 - New Close Wood, The Grove and Birchly Wood
- TR.4.57 - The Bogs / The Pools
- TR.4.74 - Coombe Drive and Ashdale Close
- TR.4.82 - Land East of Coventry including Brandon Wood, Coombefields and Piles Coppice
- TR.4.112 - 33-35 Monks Road
- TR.4.116 - 14 Daneswood
- TR.4.117 - 309 Rugby Road
- TR.4.134 - 9 and 11 Monks Road
- TR.4.139 - 38 Heather Road
- TR.4.149 - 57 Monks Road
- TR.4.154 - 11/13 Heather Road
- TR.4.168 - 68 Rugby Road
- TR.4.176 - 35 Heather Road
- TR.4.182 - 164 Rugby Road
- TR.4.196 - Former First School, the Village Green and 92 Heather Road
- TR.4.201 - 40 and 42 Heather Road
- TR.4.224 - 3 Woodlands Road
- TR.4.235 - 13 Daneswood Road
- TR.4.240 - 104 and 106 Rugby Road
- TR.4.246 - Foxwood Drive
- TR4.269 - Land at Gossett Lane, Coventry Stadium
- TR4.300 - Rugby Road
- TR4.306 - 123 Rugby Road
- TR4.323 - Binley Woods (Various Locations)

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John Connolly paragliding over Binley Woods

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Figure 8 (page 12), Example A (page 33) and Example E (page 35):

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