

Binfield House, Binfield, Berkshire

Statement of Significance



January 2012

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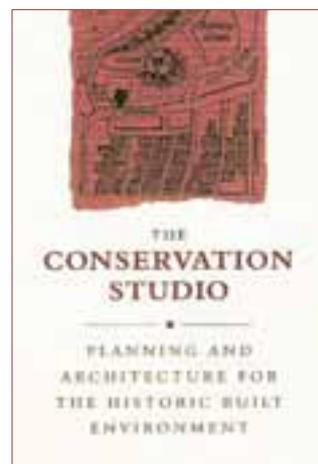
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Executive Summary

Binfield House is a grade II listed building located on the western edge of the village of Binfield in Berkshire. The first section of the house dates to the 1770s, but it has been altered at least three times, firstly in the mid 19th century, then secondly in the late 19th century, when substantial additions were made. Finally, the house was nearly doubled in

size in c1928 when the famous architect Nugent Cachemaille-Day was brought in by Lord Knox. Purchased by the then Bracknell Forest District Council in 1974, the house was converted into sheltered apartments in the 1980s but the late 19th century walled garden remains as a Council depot.



Binfield House – front elevation



Detail of cornice and double doors in Entrance Hall

As required by PPS5, this report seeks to identify the special significance of the building and its site by considering its historical development and the value of the surviving features. The principal element is clearly the house itself, which is interesting as an example of the use 18th century Gothic details although the interior is mostly of c1928 or later. Of the 19th century, the most important surviving feature is the walled garden and its attendant (though in places derelict) outbuildings which once provided food for the house. The service wing at the back of Binfield House probably dates to the same period, roughly between 1890 and 1900, but is

fairly plain and it has been altered as a result of the 1980 conversion to flats. Of special note however are the ornate neo-Georgian interiors provided by Cachemaille-Day which have survived in the principal rooms, most notably the fireplaces, cornicing and doors. The fine staircase, with its elegant turn, is another very important feature of this period. It should be noted that due to the present use of the house as sheltered flats, it has not been possible to carry-out a detailed internal survey of the house other than the principal communal rooms, so it is possible that other historic features remain which have not been identified.

Outside, the gardens which were tended by the Knox's have also been altered although several specimen trees remain, possibly dating to the late 19th century. The 19th century stables were demolished in the early 1980s so there are no other historic buildings apart from Binfield House and the adjoining walled

garden and its outbuildings. Binfield House now sits in a large mainly grassed garden, created in the late 19th century after the old road was diverted away from the house. Small remnants of brick paving indicate where the Knox's once had a rose garden.



The site of the Knox's former Rose Garden

Binfield House was just one of several important residences of the late 18th century in the area, and was relatively modest in size when it was first built. Today, it is one of the largest and most important historic listed buildings in the area. Chapter 6 of this report (*Further*

issues for future consideration) contains a number of issues and makes some recommendations for the future management of Binfield House and the site in general which could be implemented as funding permits.

1 - The purpose of this report

Binfield House is a grade II listed building located between Wick's Green and Terrace Road North on the western edge of Binfield village in Berkshire. The house, and part of the grounds, are owned by Bracknell Forest Homes and have been converted (in 1980) into sheltered housing. The rest of the grounds, including a late 19th century walled garden which is used as a Council plant nursery, are owned by Bracknell Forest Council.

The purpose of this report is to provide a Statement of Significance for the house and its grounds which could be used to guide any future changes to the site or its setting. This document therefore includes a description of the historical development of the site and its various inhabitants, an assessment of the building in its wider context, and an analysis of how the house developed over time. A summary of the most significant features of the house and its garden is also included. Finally, the document identifies further issues for future consideration which will be the responsibility of either Bracknell Forest Homes or the Council.



Detail of Cachemaille-Day's staircase of c1928

This document has been written by The Conservation Studio on behalf of Bracknell Forest Council. The research was carried out in December 2011 and included visits to Bracknell Library, Binfield Library, the Berkshire Record Office in Reading, and the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (RCHME) in Swindon. A site visit to Binfield House was carried out on 9 December 2011 and included an internal inspection of four of the principal ground floor rooms within Binfield House.

2 - The historical development of Binfield House

Binfield House was built in 1776 and for nearly 150 years was rented out to a number of tenants including the well know historian Catharina Macaulay Graham. In the mid 19th century it was used for at least 35 years as a small school. In 1928 it was purchased by Lady Knox who with her husband Major General Knox rebuilt and greatly extended the house under the guidance of the architect Nugent Cachemaille-Day. Binfield House was sold in 1974 to the then Bracknell District Council. It was transferred to Bracknell Forest Homes in 2008. With some adjoining bungalows, the site is now used as sheltered housing for the elderly although some of the gardens remain in the ownership of the Council and the area around, and including, the walled garden, is used as a Council depot.



*Entrance to Binfield House
from Terrace Road North*

Early maps show the much larger Binfield Park as Binfield House, so the name of Binfield House may have been different in the late 18th and into the middle part of the 19th century, although the map of 1883 certainly confirms the use of the name by then. Previously, the house may have been called 'Wyhtwicks' after its builder.



Wick's Green is a quiet country lane

The historical development of Binfield

Binfield is located in east Berkshire in an area which once formed part of Windsor Great Forest, a royal hunting forest. The suffix *-feld* or *-field* in several place names is evidence of Saxon clearings and Binfield (formerly *Benetfield*) is one of these. A church was established by the

early 12th century and Binfield developed as part of the Manor of Cookham. In the 16th century, Reading was the tenth richest town in the country and the Abbots of Reading Abbey established a country seat at Elm Grove. Although the house has since been rebuilt, the street name Monk's Alley (which runs westwards from Binfield House) survives from that association. White Gate, opposite, is a significant hall house dating from the 15th century. Other early houses in the area include Binfield Place, Wick's Green Cottages, and The Terrace in Terrace Road North.

The area provided a refuge for several families following the expulsion of Catholics from London in the late 17th century, after which they were not allowed to live within ten miles of London. Amongst these were the family of the poet Alexander Pope (1688-1744), who is said to have sung in the choir at All Saints' Church in the early 1700s. Pope's house is to the south of Binfield. In the 18th century, a further number of substantial country houses were built in the Binfield area, including Binfield Park, Binfield Lodge, Binfield Manor (both rebuilds), Pope's Manor and Binfield House, the smallest of the five.

The development of Binfield House

In 1762 an area of land which was then known as Binfield Field was owned by Francis Wightwick, who lived near to Binfield at Beenham Manor in Waltham

St Lawrence. The estate included land which is now Terrace Road North, Forest Road, and Wicks Green. Binfield House, as represented today by the three bays at the west end of the building, was built in 1776, probably by Francis Wightwick. It is not known if he ever lived in the house but by 1780 the house was rented out and the income was used to support four fellows and three scholars at Pembroke College, Oxford. Wightwick's will (he died in 1783) contained a contingent reversion which meant that on the death of his successor, his nephew (another Francis Wightwick), the freehold of Binfield House including 17 acres of land would revert to the College.



The original three bay section on the left dates to the 1770s

Information about early tenants in Binfield House has been recorded. In 1780 it appears that a Mr Tyler was in residence but he left in 1787 after his wife died in childbirth. The house was then rented to William Graham who, in 1788, married Catharina Macaulay. They lived at the house between 1788 until she died in 1791, after which her

husband retired to live at Edmund Hall, Oxford. Mrs Graham adopted the name Macaulay Graham after her second marriage and she was a famous historian. Her maiden name had been Sawbridge and she was born in 1732, marrying a Dr Macaulay in 1760. She wrote, amongst other books, an eight volume History of England for which she

received considerable fame, though some people, notably Dr Samuel Johnston, belittled her. George Washington, however, was a great admirer of her work, and in 1788 she went to America to visit him. There is a memorial to her in All Saints' Church, erected by her husband.



Catherina Macauley

In 1791 a Sir Henry Tempest was in occupation, rapidly succeeded by Richard Hawthorn, widower, who died in 1793. The next tenant was the Reverend M Elderidge, who disappeared rather mysteriously in 1793, deeply in debt. A Mr Ashfordby was briefly in residence, then in 1799 Mr Hall, Cannon of Christchurch, took over the tenancy although by 1800 he had been replaced by a Mr Mackinnon. Further tenants followed until 1843, when, at the death of Francis Wightwick's nephew, the property passed into the ownership of Pembroke College, as allowed under his uncle's will. The College continued letting it to a succession of tenants and a letter dated 1941 from the Bursar of Pembroke College to Sir Alfred Knox provides a list of these tenants between 1843 and 1928/9, when it was sold to Lady Knox. These were:

- 1843 *John T Collins (who ran Binfield House as a small school)*
- 1860 *Mrs Beechey*
- 1878 *Captain later General Stewart (who fell in the Sudan)*
- 1882 *Stuart Foster*
- 1907 *W H Tyler*
- 1910-28 *Hubert Thomas Bailey*

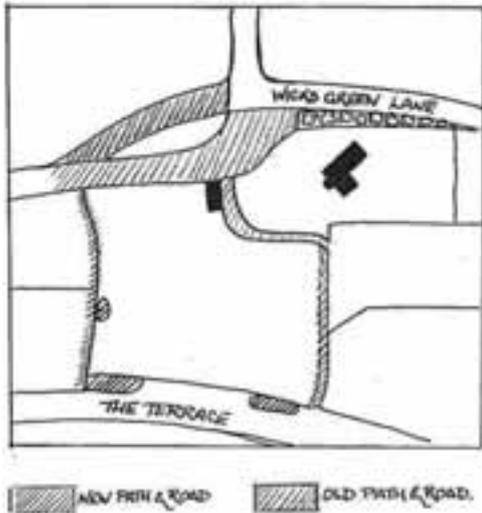
In 1843 John Taylor Collins rented the house and used it as his Academy for Young Gentlemen. The 1871 census for Binfield House confirms that it was still a school and was being run by William and

Louisa Beechey who had living with them two children, one assistant master, two servants, and 25 boys aged between 6 and 14. Most of the children came from London, but some were local.

In his 'Recollections of Binfield', published in 1921, K E Caswell notes:

'The house now called Binfield House was Mr Collins' school, and hardly half the size it is now. The road also passed close to it, and left little garden, and the footpath to the village skirted the playground in which the actual school-house stood. It was an excellent school, as some of our leading tradesmen can testify'.

In 1882 the Vestry Book for Binfield records that the Master and Fellows of Pembroke College applied (successfully) for permission to reroute part of Wicks Green further away from Binfield House and to close the footpath through the part of the garden to Binfield House between The Terrace (now Terrace Road North) and Wicks Green. At the same time, a public footpath which once went along the drive and on to Monk's Alley was legally replaced by a parallel path across a field further to the south, which is now Knox Green. This work is not shown on the 1883 map but is shown on the map of 1899, along with substantial additions to the house.



Copy of extract from the Vestry Book 1882

In 1928 the College sold Binfield House to Lady Knox who lived there with her husband, Sir Alfred Knox. The house and grounds were extensively remodelled under the direction of Nugent Cachemaille-Day, a leading architect of the time. Alfred William Fortescue Knox was born in 1870 and was brought up in County Down in Northern Ireland, although he was educated at St Columba's College, Dublin. He had a brilliant military career, starting at Sandhurst before joining the Irish Rifles in the Indian Army in 1898. Between 1899 and 1900 he was A.D.C to Lord Curzon, and later worked at the Staff College in Camberley and on the General Staff in the War Office. He served in campaigns on the North West Frontier and during World War I between 1914 and 1917 he was based with the Russian forces. He was Chief of the British Military Mission to Siberia between 1918 and 1920, when he finally retired from the army, having received many medals

(and a knighthood) for his military service. He was the Member of Parliament for Wycombe in Buckinghamshire from 1924 to 1945. Lady Knox died in 1959 and Sir Alfred died in 1964.



The entrance gates from Wick's Green (the old main entrance) bear the initials 'AK' for Alfred Knox

During World War II a pill box was built at the western end of the ha-ha which lies to the north of the house, both structures now somewhat subsumed by large clumps of rhododendrons. Two sticks of bombs fell in Binfield, the first in 1940 within the garden of Binfield House (and beyond) and the second, also in 1940, somewhat further from the house. Fortunately, no one was killed in these attacks.

In December 1972 Binfield House was listed grade II when it was still in the ownership of Lord Knox's estate. The house and grounds were put up for sale in 1974 and were sold jointly by auctioneers Messrs. Nicholas and Harrods Estate Office to Bracknell District Council. The eleven-bedroomed



Entrance to the Walled Garden

house came with over ten acres of land, including two detached bungalows on either side of the back lane leading to Terrace Road North. The main entrance at this time was still into Wick's Green, the lane to Terrace Road North which passed by a group of service buildings

(including 19th century stables and garaging), being used as a service entrance. The house was transferred to Bracknell Forest Homes in 2008, but the Council retained some land, including the walled garden, which is used as the Council's plant nursery



Binfield House in 1974

The conversion of Binfield House in 1980 was carried out to the designs of the architects Edgington, Spink and Hine, who demolished the freestanding service buildings (including the 19th century stables) shown on the auctioneer's site

plan of 1974, and replaced them with a single storey block of additional accommodation. There are now six two person flats, ten single person flatlets, a warden's flat, a common room, a guest suite and a laundry room.



Binfield House – site plan as shown on 1974 auction particulars

3 - The wider setting to Binfield House

Binfield House was built as a modest gentleman's residence in the late 18th century in a rural area which had already become well known as a favoured location for prestigious country seats. The most significant of these in Binfield was Billingbear Park, one of the great Elizabethan houses in Berkshire, which lay only half a mile from Binfield. The building was demolished in the 1920s and replaced by a more modest structure. Another important house was Binfield Lodge, probably 17th century in origin but rebuilt in 1754 for William Pitt the Elder by his younger brother John Pitt. A large wing was added in 1895-7 for Cecil Rhodes's brother, one of Lutyen's first commissions. Close by, Binfield Manor was owned by the Pitt family in 1738 but was rebuilt in 1754, possibly by William Pitt the Elder. Shown on historic maps as standing in large grounds to the north of the village, Binfield Park is a large red brick house of 1775 with additions of 1889. For part of the 19th century maps confirm that it was known as Binfield House, which suggests that what is now Binfield House had another name.

In the 17th century, Binfield was little more than a small hamlet with scattered buildings in a rural setting which until



Aerial view of Binfield House in 1997

the early 19th century was all part of Windsor Great Forest. All Saint's Church is listed grade II* and parts date to the 14th and 15th centuries. The growth of the area came after the end of the 17th century with the development of the prestigious houses detailed above, although the village also expanded from the 19th century onwards as the railways brought easier connections to London or Reading.

Today, Binfield House sits on the edge of an important 'green' gap of countryside between Binfield village and Wokingham. There are open fields to the west and north, with mainly 1960s or 1970s residential development to the immediate east and south. Binfield village centre, with its parade of shops, library, and primary school, is within walking distance.

4 - The architectural development of Binfield House

Francis Wightwick's first building, dating to c1776, appears to have been built for letting rather than for his own occupation, and its construction was probably encouraged by the close proximity of a number of prestigious country houses inhabited by wealthy aristocrats. Between c1860 and c1880, the three bay house was extended by a further two bays and a service wing, with glass houses, a second service block, and the walled garden being added towards the end of the 19th century. In 1928 the whole house was extensively remodelled by the architect Nugent Cachemaille-Day, and the gardens extended into adjoining land. The conversion of Binfield House to sheltered housing in the 1980s resulted in historic service buildings being demolished and replaced by a single storey row of bungalows.



Mid to late 19th century service wing

Phase 1: 1776 to mid-19th century

The original house was just three bays wide, one room deep, two storeys high, with a central entrance. The staircase may have been at the back of the entrance hall. The building was constructed in red brick in Flemish bond with a battlemented parapet and a peg tiled roof with axial end stacks. The windows were sashes with ogee-shaped heads. A Gothic porch to the front entrance, shown in the photograph of c1900, may date to this period although it could also be 19th century. The red brick was probably made locally in the Binfield brickworks, and because this source was available well into the 20th century, the colour, size and texture of the bricks are fairly consistent throughout the much-altered building.

The overall style was Strawberry Hill Gothic, as popularised by Horace Walpole at his house next to the River Thames in Twickenham, which was built from 1750 onwards. It is interesting to note that Alexander Pope (1688-1744), whose family moved to Binfield in 1700, was a friend of Robert Walpole, Horace Walpole's father, and had himself lived in Twickenham.

The Tithe Map of 1839 shows (admittedly at very small scale) a single building, with two smaller detached buildings to the south and east, next to an L-shaped driveway coming off Wick's

Green. These may have been used as stables. Wick's Green at this stage bent slightly and lay very close to the front of Binfield House.

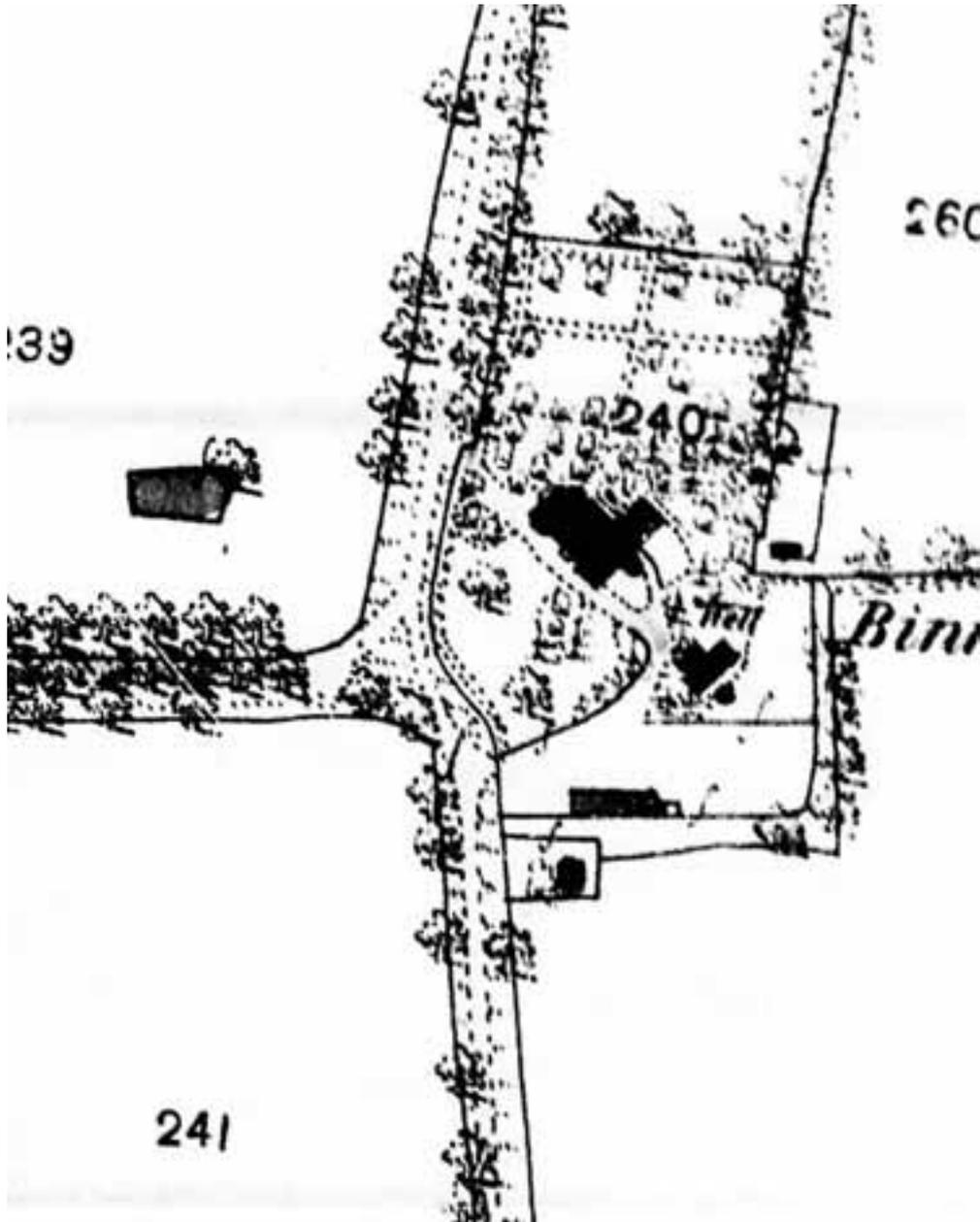


1838 Tithe Map

Phase 2: Mid-19th century to 1883

At some stage, stylistically between the 1860s and the 1880s, a large service wing was added to the back of the house and at the same time it was extended to the east by a further two bays, making five bays in all. The side extension was set back about 1.5 metres, clearly

demonstrating the later addition to the original house. This work may coincide with the addition of canted bay windows to the front of the house. The changes are clearly shown by the footprint of the 1883 map, and the service wing remains, although somewhat altered.



1883 1st Edition OS Map

In 1882 Pembroke College obtained permission to reroute Wick's Green away from the house and to divert a local footpath which went through the site from east to west. This revision is not shown on the 1883 1st Edition Map, which still has the lane running close to the house with a formal garden behind it to the north. A well and a stable building

lie to the south-east, with a further building, possibly a garden store, on the boundary to the far south of the house. An earlier map of 1883 shows the same footprint. The walled garden is not shown on either map, and is also not shown on the 1882 plan which accompanied the proposal for the rerouting of Wick's Green.



Part of the former Greenhouses within the Walled Garden

Phase 3: 1883 to 1899

Between 1883 and 1899 a great number of changes appear to have been made to the buildings and the grounds in this very short timescale, as confirmed by the historic maps of these dates and a photograph in Binfield Library which is dated c1900. The lane has been diverted to provide a much larger garden in front of the house, with a curving access road leading to it from Wick's Green. The boundary to the north meanders along a pathway and the formal gardens shown on the 1883 map have been completely abandoned. All of the former outbuildings appear to have been demolished and Binfield House has been greatly extended by the addition of a substantial conservatory/glasshouse and a large Arts and Crafts two storey block which probably contained servants'

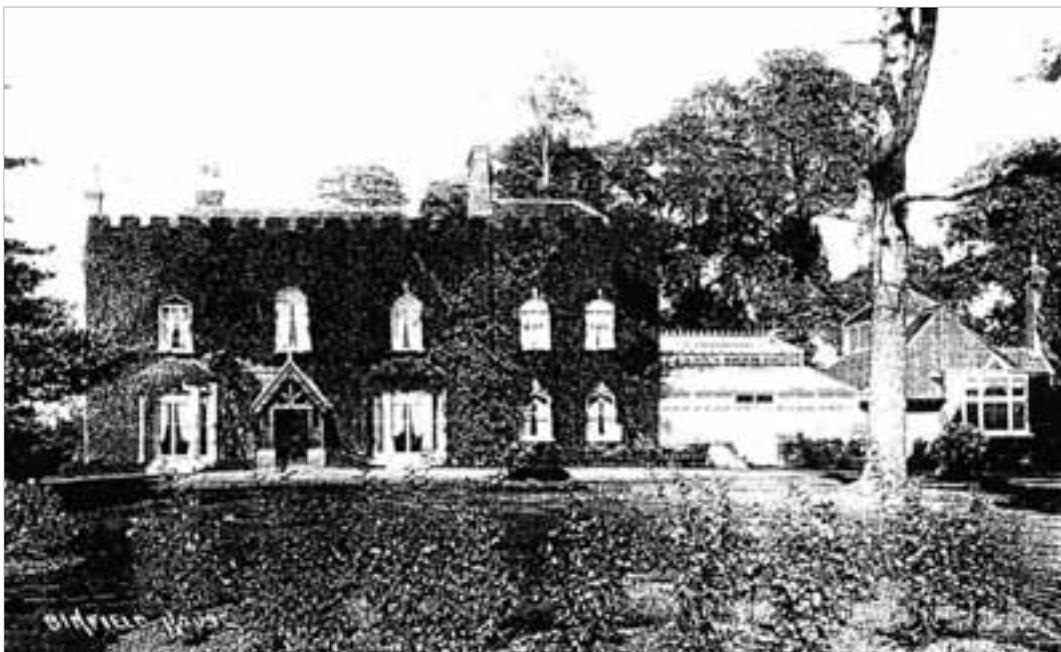
accommodation. A small extension has also been added to the existing service wing and the former side entrance removed and replaced by the conservatory. A large stable block lies to the east with much smaller buildings, probably greenhouses or gardeners' bothies, close by. The walled garden is clearly shown with its attendant outbuildings – greenhouses, store rooms (for apples and other garden produce) and a large circular pond in the middle. The footpath from the village to Wick's Green is now shown across the field to the south of Binfield House. Overall, the house now has a more substantial and attractive setting, with all of the attendant service facilities which would have been expected in a gentleman's residence of the period.



1899 2nd Edition OS Map

A rather poor quality photograph of c1900 shows the building with the recently-erected conservatory/

glasshouse on the east side of the house with the two storey service wing, in Arts and Crafts style, on the right.



Photograph of Binfield House in c1900

Phase 4: 1899 to 1928

It can fairly safely be assumed that there were few changes to the site during this time. There were only 3 tenants over this period, particularly Hubert Thomas

Bailey who was in residence for a long time between 1910 until 1928. World War I also intervened between 1914 and 1918.



1912 3rd Edition OS Map

Phase 5: 1928 to 1974

In 1928 Pembroke College sold Binfield House to Lady Knox. The future sale of the house was advertised in *Country Life* and photographs show the battlemented parapets, ogee windows, and the lack of any staircase extension. Lady Knox and her husband Major General Knox rebuilt and greatly extended the house under

the guidance of the architect Nugent Cachemaille-Day.

Cachemaille-Day (1896-1976) was born in South Woodford, Essex, and trained at the Architectural Association. He became chief assistant to H S Goodhart-Rendel and he also worked with Louis de

Soissons at Welwyn Garden City before going into partnership in 1928 with Felix Lander. One of their first jobs together was the development of the Hanger Lane estate in the late 1920s, and after they were joined by Herbert Arthur Welch in 1930, the practice was also involved with the last phase of Hampstead Garden Suburb. After 1936, Cachemaille-Day worked on his own, concentrating on designing churches including St Michael and All Angels in Manchester, described by Pevsner as ‘a milestone in the history of modern architecture’. After World War II, he became architect and surveyor to the Hackney Archdeaconry and restored several bombed-out churches. In his later years he worked with J E Jackson and in 1959 he moved to Brighton, where he died.



Cachemaille-Day copied the Gothic window details of the original late 18th century house



Cachemaille-Day's Entrance Hall

At Binfield House, Cachemaille-Day made a number of changes to provide a larger, more integrated house of ten bays (rather than the previous five). Whilst he respected the Gothic style of the front elevation, and where necessary, reinstated or copied the ogee-style windows, he provided an interior with neo-Georgian details including heavily moulded cornices and highly decorative fireplaces. Other changes included:

Binfield House:

- The demolition of the conservatory and Arts and Crafts stables and their replacement on a similar footprint with a two storey brick structure with ogee windows to largely match the original house;
- The removal of the Gothic main entrance porch, and the creation of a new entrance in the original dining room on the immediate right (the old entrance hall was subsumed within what is now the communal lounge for the residents); the creation of large and prestigious entrance hall with neo-Georgian decoration;
- Provision of a new staircase with metal balustrade at the back of the house in a new staircase enclosure built from header brickwork;
- Removal of the battlemented balustrade and the original chimney stacks and their replacement with a much taller plain brick parapet and plain, almost square, brick chimney stacks;

- The provision of new neo-Georgian interiors to the principal rooms with heavily moulded cornicing, 18th century-style fireplaces, and mahogany moulded double doors into the main rooms – a painted ceiling in the 18th century style may lie beneath the modern plasterboard which has been tacked over it in the communal lounge;
- Painted decoration above the fireplaces in the Drawing Room and Morning Room (removed in 1974).



The Reception Hall in 1974



The Drawing Room in 1974

Binfield House grounds:

It appears that during the period 1912 to 1974, but most likely during the occupation of the Knox's from 1928 to 1964, there were a number of changes to the grounds:

- The addition of a section of field into the northern section of the garden, beyond the wavy line of the boundary shown on the 1912 map (the line of the ha-ha), part of which was used for a swimming pool which has now gone – since 1974 this piece of land has been sold separately by Bracknell Forest Council but the slightly curved boundary follows the line of the 1912 boundary;
- The addition of an area of land between the southern part of the

garden and the walled garden – the map of 1974 shows a line and circle in this area, reflected in changes of level which can still be seen today. This must be the 'Rose Garden' described in the 1974 particulars, and the brick paths, sections of which have recently been exposed, are probably part of this garden. The circular feature was a pond and the particulars add that nearby were a number of flower borders and a small orchard, bounded by an avenue of pollarded limes, which can clearly be seen in the 1974 photograph below;

- The addition of a metal gate to the Wick's Green entrance with the monogram 'AK' (for Alfred Knox) which still survives.



Binfield House in 1974, showing the previous main entrance from Wick's Green

Council staff have uncovered a number of glazed earthenware bottles which were buried in the Walled Garden. Research has identified that they came from Germany and apparently contained tonic water (the company is still operating). They may date to the 1930s when the Knox's were in occupation. Some of the bottles have been preserved.



Glazed earthenware bottles found in the Walled Garden

Phase 6: 1974 to present day

In 1974 the then Bracknell District Council bought Binfield House and the northern part of the garden beyond the ha-ha, the walled garden, and the two lodges (Binfield House Lodge and Pelham Lodge – both bungalows and probably dating to the 1950s), facing Terrace Road North. A surgery was subsequently built next to Pelham Lodge (probably in the 1970s) and a further detached house added. Binfield House and part of its garden was sold to Bracknell Forest Homes in 2008.

The work to convert Binfield House in 1980 was carried out by Edgington, Spink and Hine, architects. Whilst the exterior of the house appears to have remained virtually unchanged, the interior was substantially remodelled to provide self contained flats and other accommodation. Access has not been possible apart from to the communal lounge, staircase, and the ground floor flat which uses the principal room (the former Dining Room) next to the main entrance as its living room. This room

contains neo-Georgian decoration which matches that in the communal lounge and no doubt was installed by Cachemaille-Day. The sales particulars mention paintings over the fireplace in the Drawing Room and in the Morning Room which were removed by the vendors before completion.



Fireplace in the ground floor flat in Binfield House (the former Dining Room)

The conversion scheme also removed the various outbuildings mentioned in the 1974 particulars, namely the garage block/stables (with 4 loose boxes), which probably dated to the mid 19th century,

and various sheds. A large summer house to the north of Binfield House was also demolished to make way for the row of bungalows which can now be seen behind the house. The driveway from Wick's Green has been grassed over and the former back entrance from Terrace Road North made into the main entrance.

The walled garden has been used as a Council nursery since 1974. Poly-tunnels have been erected inside the walled garden and whilst most of the old greenhouses have fallen into disrepair some features remain. These would have been used to raise tender plants and from the archaeological evidence it is

clear that the garden must once have been extremely productive. Brick lean-to structures against the brick walls on the north side are in poor condition (these include an apple store) although the brick bothy on the west side has been repaired and upgraded to provide Council workers with a mess room and toilet facilities. The former pond (which was filled by rainwater) in the middle of the walled garden has been made into a covered underground cistern. The brick walls to the walled garden have been repaired and repointed in places but further repairs are needed, using the correct lime mortar. Some of the lean-to structures (mainly on the north side of the wall) are almost derelict.



A section of the Walled Garden



One of the repaired brick entrances into the Walled Garden



The former bothy has been repaired and is used by Council staff

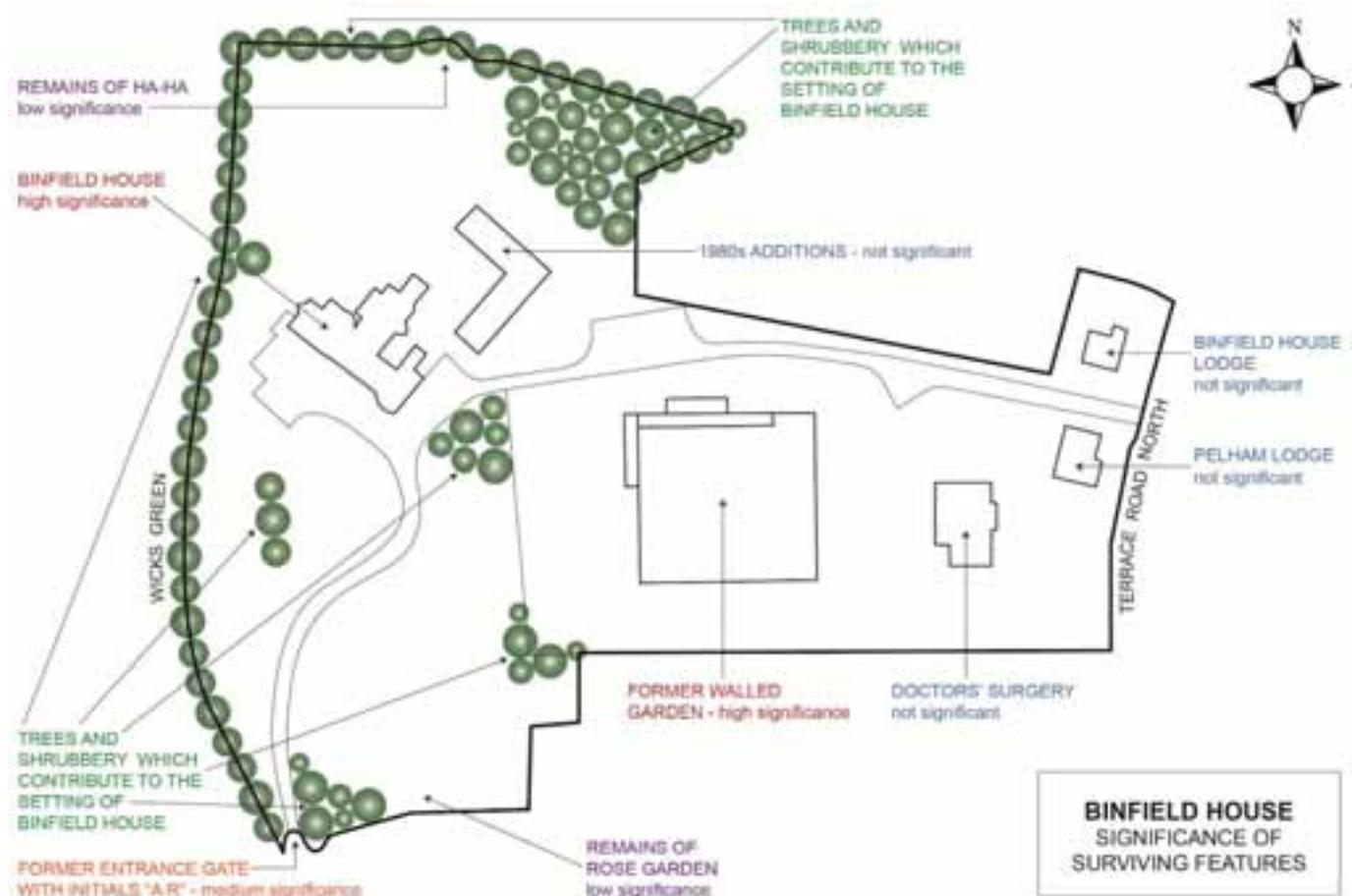


Brick structures on the north side of the walled garden are in poor condition

5 Statement of Significance for Binfield House and its grounds

The features which make Binfield House and its grounds of special significance are:

- Binfield House is listed grade II as a building of special architectural or historic interest
- It was built in c1776 as a modestly-sized gentleman's residence in the Strawberry Hill Gothic style, similar to Horace Walpole's house in Twickenham, which dates to 1750 onwards
- The ogee-shaped sash windows which face the south and the main part of the garden are of special note



- Binfield House was lived in between 1788 and 1791 by the renowned author, Catharina Macaulay Graham, who wrote an eight volume *History of England* for which she received considerable fame
- In the late 19th century the house was extended with a large conservatory/glasshouse and an Arts and Crafts service wing, and new stables and a walled garden, with glasshouses and outbuildings, were provided
- The house was extensively altered and extended with neo-Georgian details by the renowned architect Nugent Cachemaille-Day in 1928
- The house was lived in between 1928 and 1964 by Sir Alfred Knox, who received many medals and a knighthood during his long career in the Army and later as a Member for Parliament
- Today, Binfield House retains a number of rooms with complete neo-Georgian details and a fine neo-Greek stone and wrought iron staircase, all dating to 1928
- Within the grounds is the well-preserved late 19th century walled garden which retains features relating to its use for growing exotic plants and other produce for Binfield House
- Whilst the larger garden associated with the Knox's occupation has been somewhat diminished, enough remains to provide an appropriate setting to the house including a number of specimen trees, some of which probably date to the late 19th century
- The gate to Wick's Green with the initials 'AK' for Alfred Knox

6 Further issues for future consideration

The survey work required for this Statement of Significance has revealed a number of issues which could be addressed, subject to funding and/or staff time:

Binfield House:

- Information about the history of the house and an archive of historic plans, photographs and other background material should be gathered together for future reference
- Copies of the Cachemaille-Day Binfield House drawings, three of which are currently located in the RIBA Drawings Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, should be obtained, along with a set of drawings of the Edgington, Spink and Hine conversion work in 1980
- A full, dated photographic record of the external and internal features of Binfield House should be carried out with the co-operation of the existing occupiers of the flats – it is assumed that there are no internal Gothic features from the original house but this should be confirmed

- The ceiling in the communal lounge should be investigated to see if a painting lies underneath, and this should be recorded



The parkland setting to Binfield House



Long view of Binfield House

The Grounds:

- The brick wall which forms the walled garden (which is considered to be a curtilage listed building) has been partially repaired, but further repairs (mainly repointing using the correct lime mortar), would be welcome
- The brick lean-to structures on the north side of the walled garden are almost derelict and should be restored
- The specimen and other important trees in Binfield House gardens should be recorded and a Tree Management Plan provided, to be agreed between the Housing Association and the Council, who share ownership of the grounds

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 List description for Binfield House (grade II)

APPENDIX 2 Summary of the historical development of Binfield House

APPENDIX 3 Current land ownership map

APPENDIX 1: List description for Binfield House (grade II)

Large house, now home for the elderly. Late C18, altered and extended C19 with Gothic features, altered late 20.

MATERIALS: Red brick in Flemish bond; hipped tiled roofs of different heights.

PLAN: Rectangular plan with extensions at rear.

EXTRIOR: 2 storeys and attics. Several chimneys, some with clay pots. Sash windows with glazing bars, those on south-west front with Gothic glazing bars. Entrance (south-west) front: Windows have gauged brick arches, those on first floor are ogee headed, with keystones.

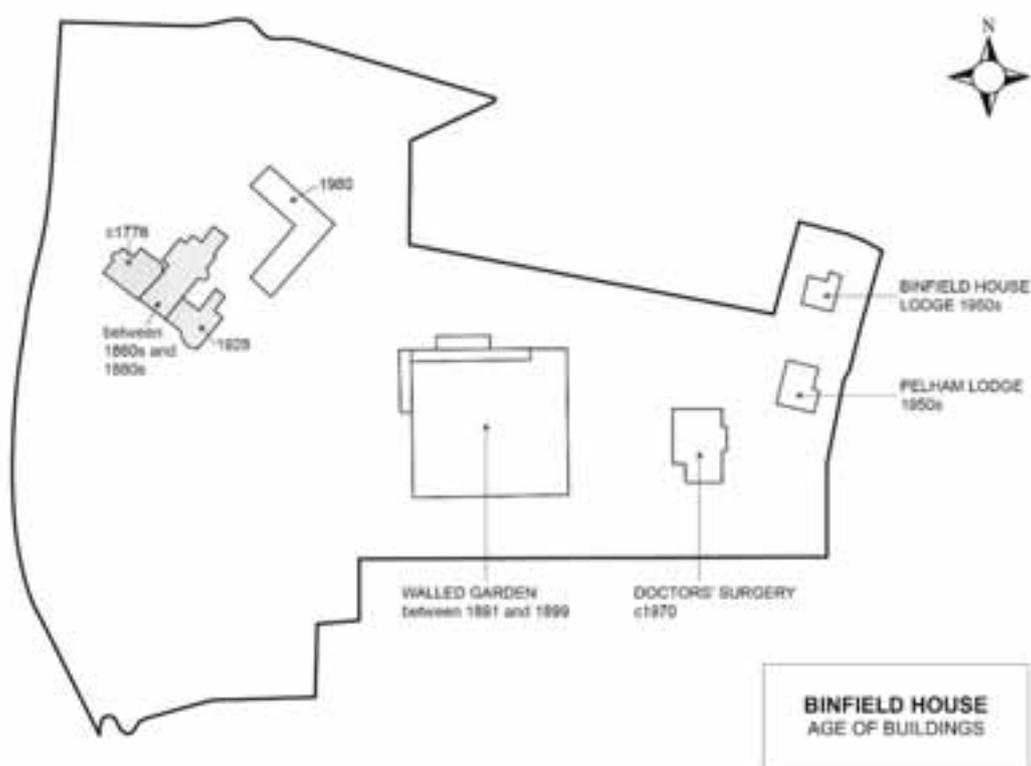
4 SECTIONS: First, left of 3-bays, projecting. Third bay has Venetian type window on first floor, with ogee arched centre and round arched sides. Below this, entrance door of 6 fielded panels in panelled reveal, corniced head and patterned, rectangular overlight. Prostyle porch has compound columns and dentil cornice, with panelled soffit. Second section, taller 2-bays, with doubled ogee attic widow. Third section, recessed of 3-bays, has pair of glazed doors under square hood mould replacing window in middle bay. Right hand section is large, half-octagonal canted bay with pair of glazed doors under square hood mould replacing window in middle bay.

INTERIOR: Entrance hall, dentilled ceiling cornice enriched with Acanthus leaf ornament. Dining room: Adam chimneypiece with swags, egg and floral enrichment in surround to marble inset, elaborate cornice enriched with floral decoration and paterae, console brackets with floral and dart ornament under. Elaborate doorcase, moulded architrave with bead and reel anthemion leaf ornament. Ionic pilasters from hall lobby into dining room. Moulded skirting and dado rail with floral decoration. Geometrical staircase with stone treads and closed string. Wreathed handrail with wrought-iron balusters of lyre pattern. Semi-circular dentilled cornice in ceiling above stairs.

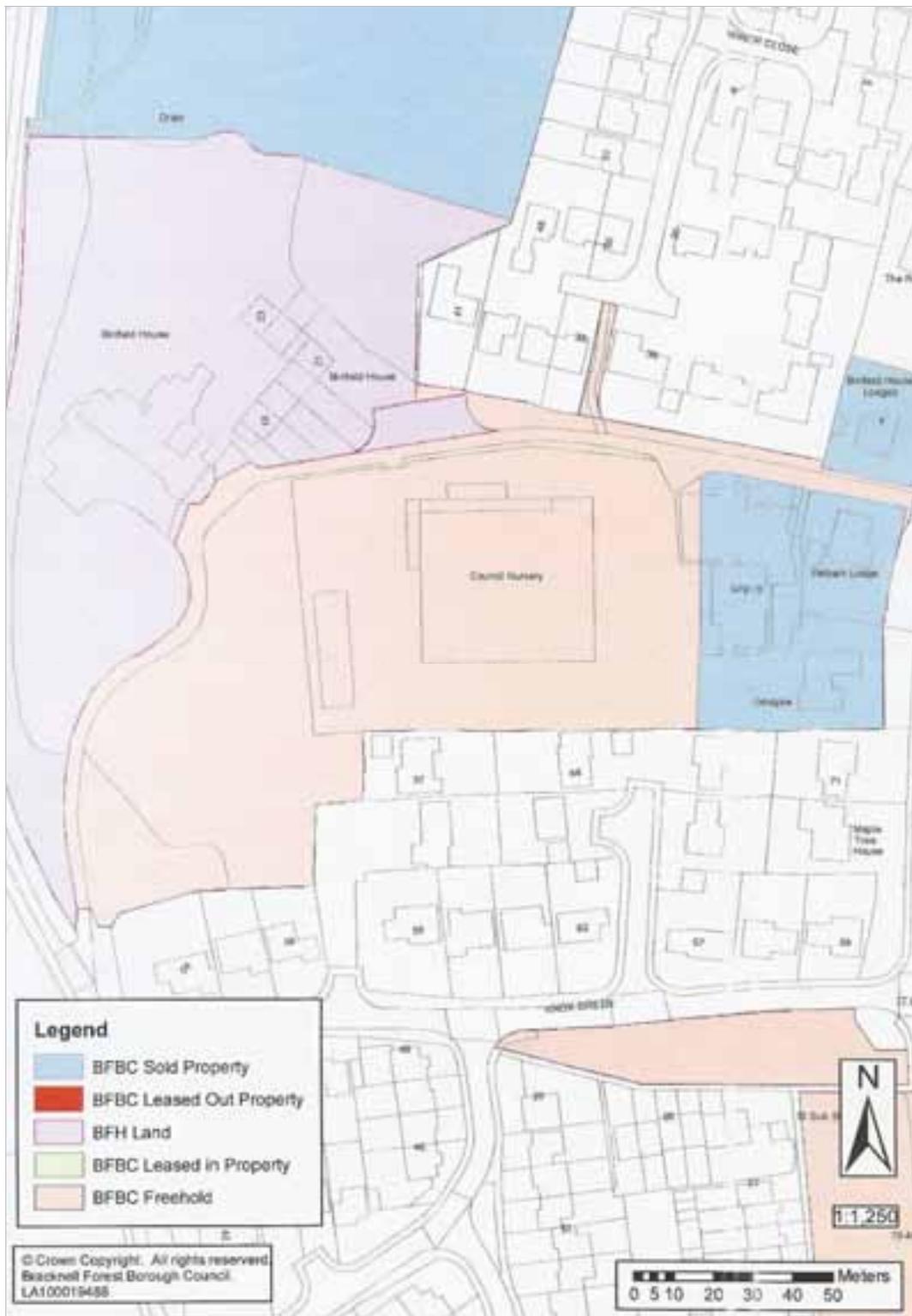
APPENDIX 2: Summary of the historical development of Binfield House

- In 1762 the land called Binfield Field was owned by Francis Wightwick, who lived at Beenham Manor in nearby Waltham St Lawrence.
- In c1776 he built a house called Binfield House but rented it out – the income was used to support four fellows and three scholars at Pembroke College, Oxford, for over 150 years.
- In 1783 Wightwick died and his will contained a contingent reversion which meant that on the death of his successor, his nephew (another Francis Wightwick), the freehold of Binfield House including 17 acres of land would revert to Pembroke College.
- One of the most famous tenants was the well know historian Catharina Macaulay Graham who lived there for three years between 1788 and 1791.
- In 1843 Francis Wightwick died and the property reverted to Pembroke College.
- In 1843 Binfield House was rented by John Collins who ran it as a school.
- In 1860 Mrs Beechey was the tenant and she also ran it as a school until at least 1871.
- In 1878 General Stewart was the tenant, and it may be that this was when the house was greatly extended, with two additional bays to the east and a large service wing being added.
- In 1882 Pembroke College applied (successfully) for permission to reroute part of Wicks Green further away from Binfield House and to close the footpath through the part of the garden to Binfield House between The Terrace (now Terrace Road North) and Wicks Green – this work appears to have been delayed for at least nine years.
- Between 1883 and 1899 a great number of changes to Binfield House are confirmed by changes to the historic maps and by a surviving photograph of c1900:
 - Wicks Lane has been diverted to provide a much larger garden in front of the house, with a curving access road leading to it from Wick’s Green;
 - The boundary to the north meanders along a pathway and the formal gardens shown on the 1891 map have been completely abandoned;
 - All of the former outbuildings appear to have been demolished;
 - Binfield House has been greatly extend by the addition of a substantial conservatory/glasshouse and a large Arts and Crafts two storey block which probably contained servants’ accommodation;
 - A small extension has also been added to the existing service wing and the former side entrance removed and replaced by the conservatory;

- A large stable block lies to the east with much smaller buildings, probably greenhouses or gardeners' bothies, close by;
 - The walled garden with its various outbuildings has been added;
 - The footpath from the village to Wick's Green has been moved to the south of Binfield House;
- In 1928 the College sold Binfield House to Lady Knox who lived there with her husband, Sir Alfred Knox – the house and grounds were extensively remodelled under the direction of the leading architect Nugent Cachemaille-Day.
 - During World War II a pill box was built at the western end of the ha-ha which lies to the north of the house, both structures now somewhat subsumed by large clumps of rhododendrons.
 - Binfield House was sold in 1974 to the then Bracknell District Council and in 1980 Binfield House was converted into sheltered housing and the stables to the rear demolished to make way for a single storey row of cottages.
 - The former walled garden was utilised as a Council depot, mainly as a nursery for plants.
 - Binfield House was sold to Bracknell Forest Homes in 2008.



APPENDIX 3: Current land ownership map



January 2012

Binfield House, Binfield, Berkshire