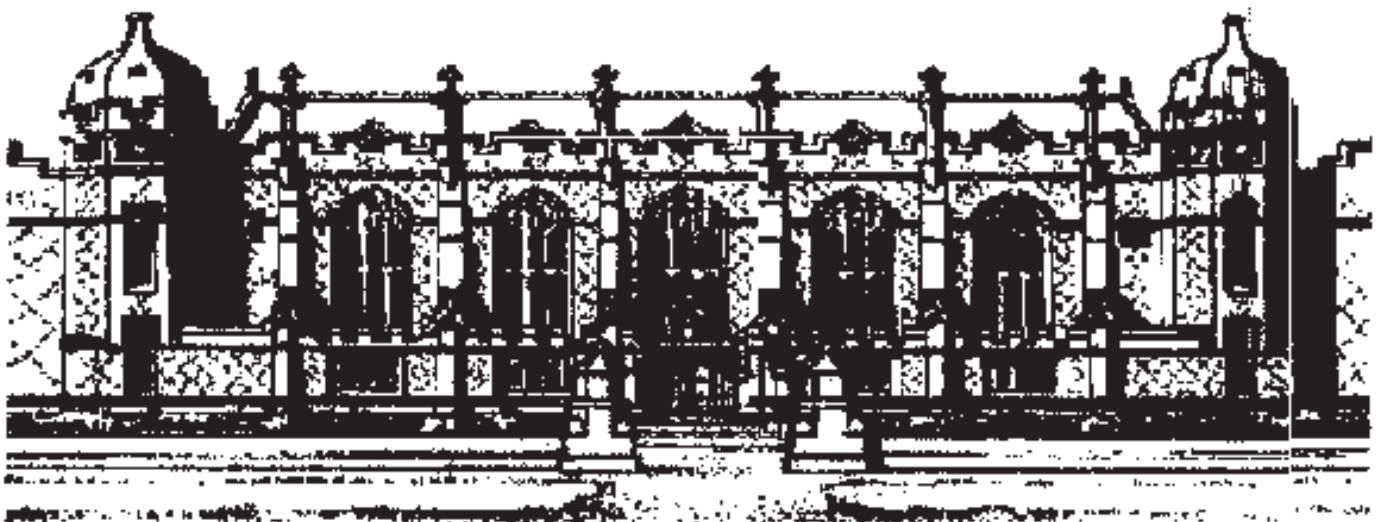




# North Leamington School Binswood Hall Development Brief



October 2000

# North Leamington School B i n s w o o d   H a l l Development Brief

## INTRODUCTION

This site was first used for educational purposes in 1847 following the formation in 1844 of a company to establish a college which outgrew its original premises and on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1847, Dr. Jephson laid the foundation stone of the present building. It was subsequently occupied from 1903 to 1916 by the Society of the Sacred Heart, a French Catholic Convent School and from 1916 to 1922 by Dover College and then once more in 1922 Leamington College, the original foundation. Distinguished pupils included Lytton Strachey, B. J. Enfield (poet), Sir Frank Whittle (inventor of the jet engine), and Eddie Savage (international rugby player). Leamington College subsequently became part of the co-educational system and now forms the sixth form centre for North Leamington School.

The original building was designed by E. G. Squirehill, architect of Leamington, with an addition of a chapel to the rear of the Great Hall in 1867, and a gymnasium in 1893. The large teaching block to the rear of the Great Hall is also probably late nineteenth century.

The chapel contains stained glass in the apse by Holland of 1858.



## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The earliest part of the building consists of the Great Hall, which is parallel to Binswood Avenue, in Tudor revival style, with diaper patterned brickwork and stone dressings and tracery to the windows. At right angles to the rear of the Great Hall is the chapel built in similar style, with an apsidal end. The Great Hall and chapel were built on sloping ground and there is therefore a significant basement underneath the Great Hall and accommodation under the chapel which presents itself as ground floor accommodation to the rear of the building and the far left and right of the Great Hall there are blocks of two storey accommodation. The Great Hall, which is essentially a single space, 30 metres by 10 metres has a six bay roof of richly carved beams on corbels and a dado with linfold panels and a continuous cornice. There are cambered arch openings to a small "cloister" to either side of the main entrance, which originally formed part of the entrance vestibule to the main Hall, with head stops to each of the arches, representing Whitcliffe, Harvey, Newton and Chaucer. The whole is a very fine space which appears to remain relatively unaltered since its construction.

To the east and west ends of the Great Hall are two storey ranges consisting generally of one room on the ground floor and one on the first floor served at the western end by an original staircase and at the eastern end by a modern staircase. These rooms contain certain Tudor/Gothic features.

The interior of the chapel remains largely intact, although now used as a library, this has been fairly sympathetically converted and still retains a small gallery and carved screen at the entrance to the space. As well as the stained glass windows by Holland in the apse there are other stained glass windows to the side walls. A corridor runs along the north wall of the Great Hall and separates this from the chapel.

The main entrance to the school is to the eastern end of the Great Hall through a small Tudor-style brick building which abuts a pair of early 19th Century /Regency dwellings which are now incorporated into the school. It would appear that these houses, **which predate the school, were used as the headmasters and caretakers house** (These paired dwellings are the only survivals of a proposed crescent on the site now occupied by the school which was never completed.)

At right angles to the rear of Nos. 27 and 29 is a large 3/4 storey late Victorian classroom block which links with the entrance hall which is sandwiched between Nos. 27 and 29 and the original Binswood Hall building. The building has been modified on the eastern elevation in the 1950/60's.



To the eastern rear boundary of the site is a large 1960's classroom building which links to the rear of the Binswood Hall Building which it shares a staircase with of that date.

Also on the eastern boundary to the 1960's classroom block is a gymnasium circa 1893, which is brick built with terracotta detailing. At the east of this building is a swimming pool, formerly part of the Binswood Hall School but now leased to Arnold Lodge School.

To the north of the gymnasium against the eastern boundary is Dormer House, probably of mid-19th Century origin, built as either a headmaster's or caretakers house, now used as the art complex. The building is a typical mid-19th Century brick building with sash windows and a shallow pitched slate roof. Similar in appearance and detailing to the former brewery buildings of The Maltings on the opposite side of the road.

In terms of external spaces around the buildings there is a significant forecourt area which is partly grass, in front of Binswood Hall, with typical front garden areas in front of Nos. 23 and 25, 27 and 29. Binswood Avenue. There are several mature trees within these frontage areas which would need to be retained. In terms of the rear external spaces these are defined largely by the buildings on the site and fall into two areas consisting of a large courtyard space bounded by Binswood Hall, the late 19th Century teaching block and the 1960's teaching block with an open end to the north. There is a smaller space bounded by Nos. 27 and 29 Binswood Avenue and the Victorian teaching block and the boundary garden wall of Nos. 23 and 25 Binswood Avenue. At the northern boundary of the site with Lillington Road is a high brick wall of mid-nineteenth origin. In the two spaces described are several trees which would need to be protected. A separate tree survey would be necessary.



## OPTIONS FOR USE OF THE SITE

The site as existing contains a number of significant constraints in terms of any future use, should the educational use cease on this site. These include the grade II listed buildings Nos. 27 and 29 Binswood Avenue and Binswood Hall and its attached buildings, which are grade II\* listed. The whole site is within the Leamington Spa conservation area. All the buildings would be classed within the curtilage of the listed buildings.

The constraints of the listed status would also have physical constraints in terms of conversion of the interior of certain aspects of the buildings, particularly into smaller cellular spaces. Binswood Hall and the attached chapel, are two large interior spaces, which contribute significantly to the quality of this building. Binswood Hall as a Grade II\* listed building is considered nationally to be a building of high quality, the interior and exterior of which it would be necessary to protect in any future proposals.

It would also be necessary to seek the guidance of English Heritage, through the District Council as part of any proposals for this site.

As the buildings are listed or within the curtilage of listed buildings and also within the conservation area, the original use for which the buildings were built would be the preferred use. **In accordance with the advice given in PPG 15 relating to the use of listed buildings, these buildings should first be marketed for their original use and alternative uses only considered if educational use is no longer viable.**

**The Council would wish to be satisfied that the building is not reasonably capable of being used by another educational establishment before considering any other use.**

**In terms of alternative uses, the school lies within a residential area, and the following uses would be in accordance with policies in the Warwick District Local Plan.**

- **Housing.** A residential use for the site would, in principal, be acceptable. However, the capacity of the present buildings to include such use is severely constrained by the large spaces occupied by Binswood Hall and the chapel. The integrity of these spaces must be preserved, and the subdivision of these spaces within the listed buildings would not be acceptable.
- **Office Use.** Although the site lies outside an area which would normally be identified for office use ( policy DW EMP5 ), it is considered that the integrity of the original listed buildings may be better protected by an office scheme, and therefore the Council would consider a sympathetic redevelopment of the building for this use.
- **Community Use.** This may be an appropriate use for either all or part of the building.

**It should be noted that there may be detailed design, access or parking issues which may, in practice, create problems for any of the above uses.**



## CONSIDERATION OF INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS WITHIN THE SITE

### *Binswood Hall and the Former Chapel and Associated Basement Areas*

The difficulties of alternative uses for these spaces has already been highlighted in the previous section on constraints. With a Grade II\* Listed Building it would be unacceptable to consider subdivision in any significant way of the main hall or the chapel. In the event of this remaining in educational use, then the retention of both large spaces would be less problematic. In the event of the remainder of this site becoming residential, it would be difficult to integrate either of these spaces within a residential unit and the only possible option for these spaces are to be used communally. Any form of conversion in the basement areas underneath would be single aspect. If the rest of the site was being used residentially it may be more appropriate for an alternative use to be considered for Binswood Hall, the chapel and the associated basement areas.

### *Nos 27 and 29 Binswood Avenue*

These are essentially semi-detached villas and should be returned back to residential use in the event of them ceasing to be used for educational purposes. Whilst some internal alterations have been made in the two villas being linked internally, it would not be too difficult to return them to two single dwellings which would be the most appropriate use. Most of the other houses of similar size on the north side of Binswood Avenue are single dwellings rather than flats and this should be the primary alternative use for them. Consideration could be given even in the event of the site remaining in educational for these two particular buildings to be returned to residential separately to the rest of the site.

**There is a shared access into no 25 Binswood Avenue and it may be necessary to create a new vehicular access to these properties, whilst maintaining an independent access to no 25 Binswood Avenue.**



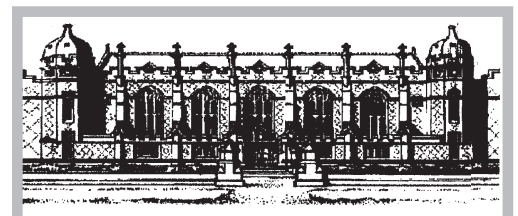
## ***Entrance Building And Late 19th Century Teaching Block***

The entrance building is sandwiched between Nos. 27 and 29 Binswood Avenue and Binswood Hall itself. This could constitute an entrance to Binswood Hall should that go into separate alternative usage or in the event of Nos. 27 and 29 being used residentially, it may be more appropriate for this to form part of a residential conversion thus removing the access to Binswood Hall back to the middle of the building where there is an original entrance door and would more successfully separate an alternative use from a residential conversion. Alternatively, this building provides a primary access to the 19th Century teaching block to the rear and in the event of these being converted it may be necessary to retain this primary access route through from Binswood Avenue.

The teaching block is a very significant and dominant building to the rear part of the site, although not particularly evident on Binswood Avenue. It probably consists of two or even three building periods, circa late nineteenth or even early twentieth century. The range immediately at right angles to Binswood Hall and 27 & 29 Binswood Avenue has a brick facade with a regular pattern of 19th Century windows with a small toilet block turret at the attachment to the Binswood Avenue Buildings. The eastern elevation of this section however, has been significantly modified in the 1950's/1960's and would require some consideration in terms of a more attractive form of fenestration if the building were converted. This building does form part of the listed building as it is attached to both Nos. 27 & 29 and also to the Grade II\* Listed building of Binswood Hall. There is a presumption against the demolition of listed buildings and given that the building does contribute to the conservation area there would be a strong presumption in favour of retaining this block as part of any proposals. The range has a number of attractive features, in particular, the northern block which has a turret feature and projecting windows and balcony. Retention of the toilet block should be considered subject to the use of this block.

As with the Binswood Hall buildings the preferable use would be the retention in educational use, however, in the event of alternative uses being sought this could link with a use for Binswood Hall itself or there is considerable potential for conversion into residential units. A number of attractive features such as the windows could easily be incorporated into residential use as a potential for either conversion vertically into tall town houses or horizontally into flats. Internally the rooms are fairly plain and therefore there is significant scope for internal alterations to achieve the required residential standards.

Because of the dominant nature of this range, the use will have a significant effect upon other possible uses for the surrounding external spaces **and could also affect privacy of neighbouring properties which would need to be respected.**



### ***1960's Teaching Block (Eastern Range)***

This is the least attractive building on the site and does not contribute well to this part of the conservation area. This part of the site would benefit for redevelopment and demolition of the range would be of benefit particularly in the event of the site not being used for educational purposes.

In the event of the site being used for residential purposes there would be scope for some redevelopment of this area, however, it would be necessary to bear in mind that this range is at the boundary of the site and adjacent to Nos. 31 and 33 Binswood Avenue which are currently in separate educational use (Arnold Lodge School). Consideration would be needed to be given to the possible reversion of these buildings back to residential use and any development along the boundary would therefore need to respect their amenity. There is however, potential in this area for redevelopment of the 1960 block into residential use, or possibly also as a separate use associated with the Binswood Hall buildings.

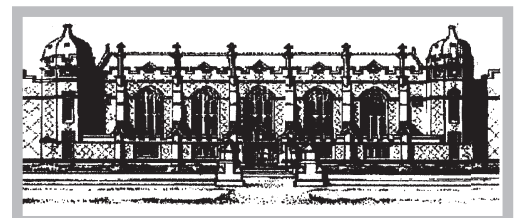
### ***Gymnasium Building***

This is a late nineteenth building with some good terracotta detailing which by nature of its attachment does form part of the listed building. It is also mentioned in the listing as an addition to the original building and does have certain architectural qualities relating to the use of terracotta. Historically, it must be an early building of its type and consideration should be given to its retention. It presents certain problems relating to the single space (as with Binswood Hall and the chapel). However, there may be some potential of a sub-division of this building and residential use may be possible. Possibly, in the form of studio flats whereby certain open gallery areas could be retained and thus the tall windows maintained - together with a sense of space internally.

### ***College Cottage -***

#### ***Mid-19th Century House in North East Corner***

This building is a good example of a 19th Century house at the boundary of the site and although not separately listed is within the curtilage of the listed buildings and does contribute to the quality of the conservation area. The cottage should therefore be retained and would easily convert into a single residential use or into flats or could be divided vertically into two residential dwellings.



## **THE SPACES AROUND THE BUILDINGS**

### **Area A**

The frontage areas onto Binswood Avenue; these are largely forecourts to Binswood Hall and front gardens to Nos. 27 & 29 Binswood Avenue with significant trees. The retention of these spaces as open frontages would be vital to the maintenance of the setting and appearance of both listed buildings and offer no prospect for development. There is currently some car parking within the forecourt of Binswood Hall. Further parking would need to be restricted to maintain the setting of the front of the building. The original railings from the front of the building are missing as also the front of Nos. 27 & 29 and any future use of the site should include within the proposals the reinstatement of appropriate cast iron railings and where appropriate, gates.

### ***The Rear Space***

There are significant rear external spaces, however, these do tend to be dominated by the existing buildings.

### **Area B**

The space to the west of the 19th Century teaching block and the rear of Nos. 27 & 29 Binswood Avenue. This is essentially the rear gardens to Nos. 27 & 29 Binswood Avenue and in the event of these being returned to residential use would need to be part of the amenity space for these buildings. This now also constitutes a significant part of the setting for the 19th Century teaching block and would form part of the setting and amenity area for that development. There would therefore, seem to be **no** scope for development in this area.

**Planting may need to be strengthened in this area to maintain the privacy of the adjacent residential properties.**

### **Area C**

The main central open area falls into three main spaces.

There are two subsidiary courtyards either side of the chapel; these essentially form light wells to the 19th Century teaching block and the rear of Binswood Hall and the chapel and the 1960's teaching block. There is possibly little scope for development in these areas as they would need to be maintained as external amenity spaces.

The eastern side of the eastern courtyard would most possibly be redeveloped in the event of the 1960's teaching block being demolished.



There is a larger, more significant, external space to the north bounded by the gymnasium and College Cottage. The boundary of this space is the high brick wall to Lillington Avenue. As the character of Lillington Avenue is largely defined by boundary walls to the school, Arnold Lodge and the other residential properties in Binswood Avenue it would be most appropriate to retain this characteristic and not to have frontage development onto the road. There is however, scope for development in this area which would most appropriately be some form of inward looking development forming a fourth side to the courtyard space already existing. This is possibly the primary area for any new development on the site, either as residential, or possibly, an alternative associated with the need to retain the listed buildings.

The design of any development on this site would need to address the fact that it is not frontage development and would be set behind the boundary wall. The scale of the development would also be critical as the 19<sup>th</sup> Century teaching block is particularly dominant and would dwarf any proposals unless they are sensitively designed.

It is likely that any form of development in this location would need some vehicular access off Lillington Avenue and there is no direct vehicular access from Binswood Avenue to the rear of the site. This is a matter which would need to be discussed with the Engineering Department of the Council. However, at the very least, any proposed vehicular access off Lillington Avenue will need to comply with visibility standards with an x distance of 4.5 metres and y distances of 90 metres, with no obstructions to visibility above 0.6 metres in height. The width of any access will be dependant on the proposed use of the site but will be a minimum of 5 metres.

In order to comply with the above requirements it will be necessary to remove at least one street tree located in the verge of Lillington Avenue and further require some of the existing high brick boundary wall and trees to the property to be removed and the wall rebuilt to the rear of the new visibility splays.



## SUMMARY

There are significant constraints on this site, namely the listed buildings in particular Binswood Hall which is a Grade II\* listed building; the site is also within the conservation area and there are significant trees **on the site**. The ideal use for this site is to retain it in educational use although **in the event of the site not securing a future educational use there is potential for alternative uses as discussed in the report..**

Any application for redevelopment would need to be referred to The Secretary of State as there is a Grade II\* building involved and any demolitions would also need to be referred to The Secretary of State. As English Heritage are advisers to The Secretary of State on these matters, any design and use issues should be discussed with them at an early stage.

**It should also be noted that any development exceeding 1000 m<sup>2</sup> within the Conservation Area would need to be referred to English Heritage.**

**In view of it's sensitive location and character and it's location within the Conservation Area, the Council wishes to see a comprehensive approach to the development of the site. Accordingly, it will only accept a full planning application for the whole site, including full details of all landscaping. Outline applications, or applications for only part of the site will not be acceptable.**

**It should be noted that this brief focusses on design considerations which may be required either by this Council or the County Council when this site is developed ( for example towards footpath/cycleways, public transport improvements, etc) these will be considered when detailed proposals are put forward.**

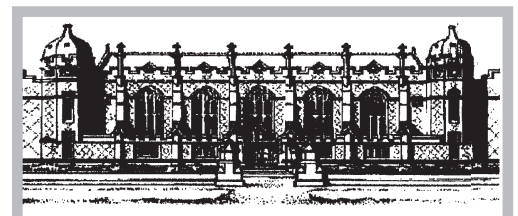
## Drawings Attached

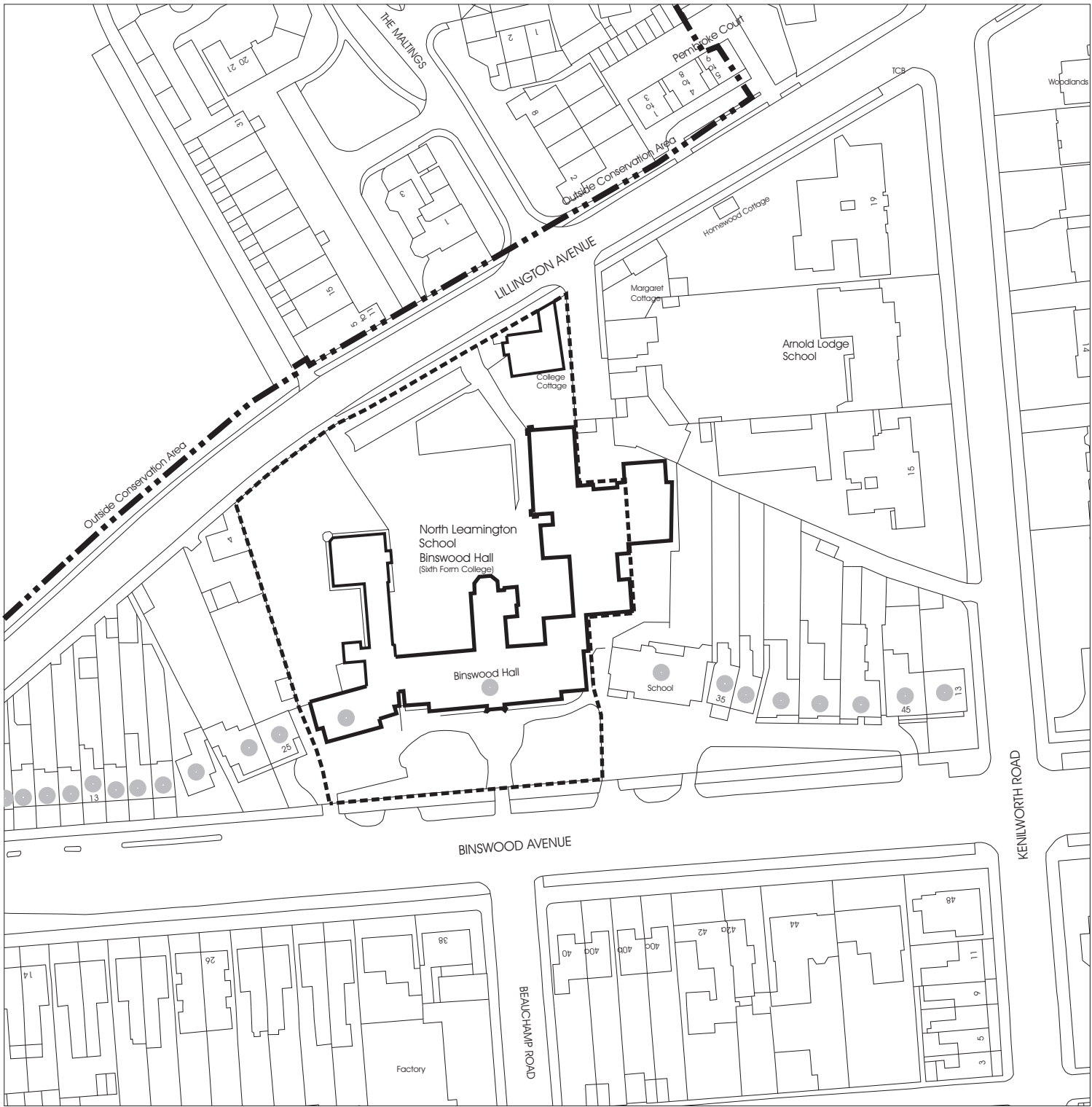
### Plan 1





Location plan

### Plan 2

Site Layout Plan






- Key:
-  Site boundary ( Site Area 0.90497 ha - 2.2361808 ac ).
  -  School buildings
  -  Conservation Area Boundary
  -  Listed buildings

Note : Boundaries shown on this drawing are indicative only and may not correspond with legal ownership boundaries.

Title

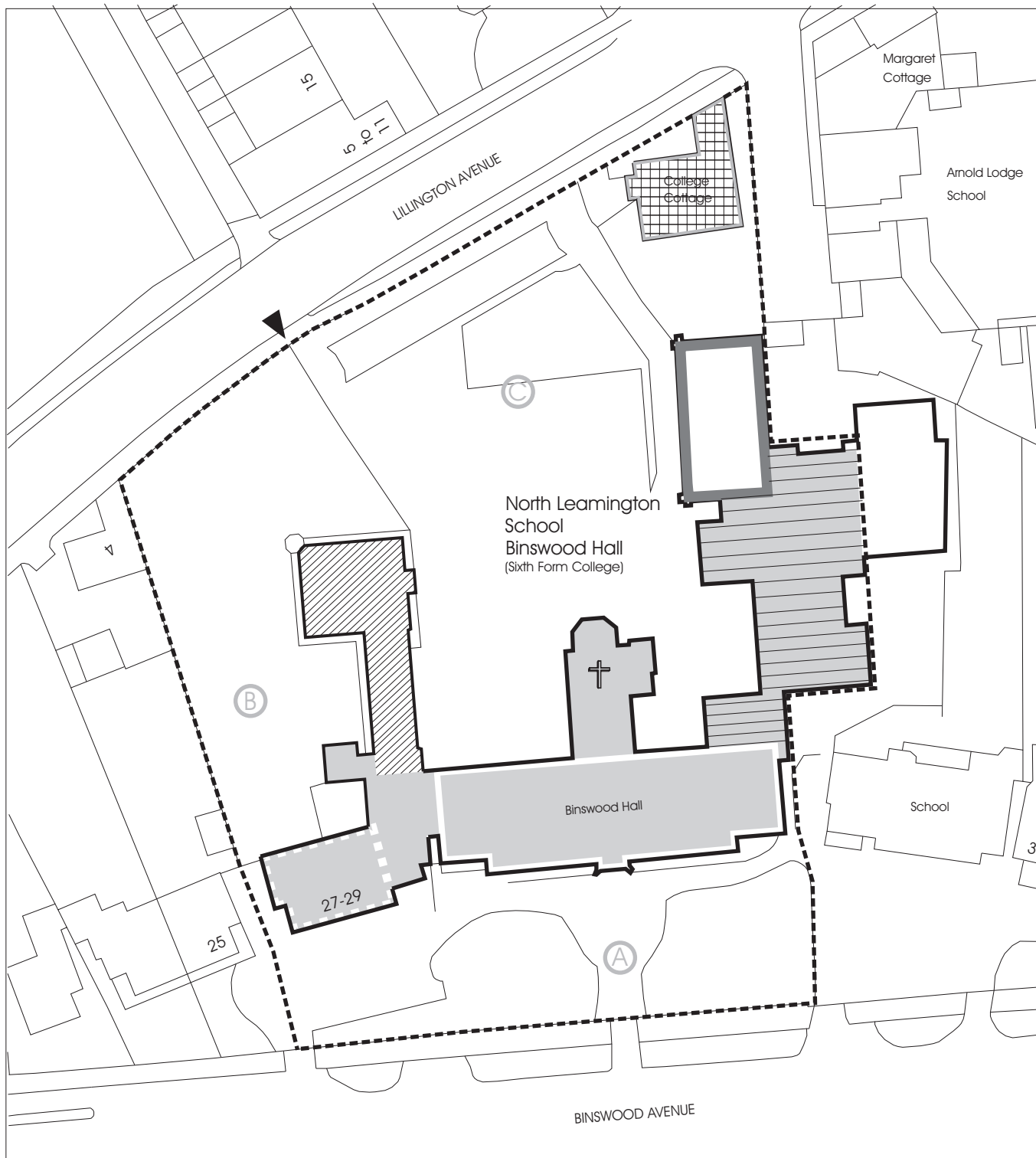
## North Leamington School Binswood Hall

### Location Plan











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Plan	Section File:	North: 
1	NRTHLM1.FCD	
Revisions:		



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Key:


-  Site boundary
-  College Cottage ( Art department )
-  Gym
-  1960's Teaching block
-  Chapel
-  C19 Teaching block ( 3 storey )
-  Binswood Hall
-  Numbers 27-29
-  Listed building
-  Existing pedestrian access

Note : Boundaries shown on this drawing are indicative only and may not correspond with legal ownership boundaries.

Title

## North Leamington School Binswood Hall

### Site Layout Plan

Scale: Not to Scale.	Date 07/04/00	Drawn: RFW/AM
Plan 2	Section File: NRTHLM1.FCD	North: 

Revisions:



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Oct'00

