

AREA D - GOUGH WAY STREET APPRAISAL

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THE GOUGH WAY ESTATE

The estate consists of about 150 detached houses and a small block of flats (Larchfield), built between the mid-1960s and 2018.

It has a secluded and almost-rural feel, partly because there is only one vehicle access to the estate (from Barton Road). The plots are reasonably generous, with fair-sized front gardens planted with grass, bushes and trees. Many of the original low boundary fences have disappeared, many replaced with a variety of hedges. There is a main spine road, feeding several short side roads, all of which have grass verges and are lined with trees (originally planted with money subscribed by residents). Additionally, there are two larger grass areas on the spine road, with trees, and there is a valued large grassed children's play area edged by trees and bushes.

The houses on the western edge of the estate have views over open country, but this has been under frequent threat from development, so far resisted by South Cambs planners, government inspectors, and the courts.



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There are six roads linking into the main Gough Way spine road - Stukeley Close, Pearce Close, Spens Avenue, Penarth Place, Wootton Way and Dane Drive.

Two lanes provide additional exits from the estate for pedestrians and cyclists, one to Barton Road and the other to Cranmer Road. The Bin Brook flows alongside each, and crosses between them in a culvert whose size has twice proved inadequate: it flooded a dozen houses in 1978 and again in 2001. A relief channel was dug along the western edge of the estate after the first flood but proved completely inadequate the second time. Residents then spent 6 years discussing with the Environment Agency the provision of an upstream balancing pond. After the Agency had spent some £200k on a study, it was judged by its National Review Group not to represent good value for money, and eventually the Agency provided flood barriers to the most vulnerable houses. There is an annual meeting between residents, the City Council and the Agency, to ensure that the Brook and its surrounding vegetation are well maintained.

The curves on the main spine road add character to the estate and help to slow most of the vehicle traffic. Many of the residents are no longer young and so rely on their cars. This is partly because some of the houses are nearly 1km from the nearest bus stop on Barton Road, and there is only one bus per hour, with none after 7pm or on Sundays. Cars parked by commuters from outside the City have begun to become a problem, so there has been general support for the proposed residents parking scheme.



The houses are in a variety of post-war styles. Nearly all are 2-storey, though three of them, and the flats, have three. All the houses have garages, though few now are used for cars, for which many residents have partially paved over their front gardens, almost all non-porously. There are almost no loft extensions or solar panels. Many of the houses have extensions, a few of which are quite major. Two are particularly excessive in extent, together with one extremely large house built in 2018 in what the largest back garden was previously.



Most, though not all, of the houses appear to be well maintained. Some 85% of the houses are owner occupied. Four houses are used to accommodate students. They change the nature of the community and two are particularly poorly maintained.

The estate has an active resident's association and a neighbourhood watch presence.

GOUGH WAY - SPECIFIC CHARACTER

FEATURE	CONTRIBUTION TO CHARACTER
Main Uses Roads and Linkage spaces	A residential estate. Some 85% of the houses are owner occupied. There is a main spine road, feeding several short side roads. The curves on the main spine road add character to the estate and help to slow most of the vehicle traffic. Two lanes provide additional exits from the estate for pedestrians and cyclists, one to Barton Road and the other to Cranmer Road.
Plot Shapes and sizes Open spaces and spaces between buildings	The plots are reasonably generous, with fair-sized front gardens There are two grass areas on the spine road, with trees, and there is a valued large grassed children's play area edged by trees and bushes. An agreement dated 21 September 1961 between Corpus Christi College, the original landowner, and the City Council provided that "an area of half-an-acre in an agreed position shall be reserved for a Children's Playground and such area shall be conveyed to the City Council free of cost the Council thereafter undertaking the maintenance of the Playground" This area, together with the two green islands, should be designated Local Green Spaces within the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework.
Age of Buildings/Type of buildings	Mostly mid-1960s to mid-1970s, with additions going up to 2018. About 130 detached houses, one bungalow, and a block of 12 flats (Larchfield).
Building Heights	All but 4 of the detached houses are 2-storey. 4 houses and the flats are 3-storey. Many of the houses have extensions, a few of which are quite major. There are very few loft extensions or solar panels.
Building Lines	Mostly staggered
Architectural detailing	The houses have many different styles, good examples of their times. All the houses, and the flats, have pitched roofs.
Gardens	All the houses have fair-sized front and back gardens, with many bushes and trees. But many front gardens are partially paved, almost all non-porously.
Boundary treatments	Many of the original low boundary fences have disappeared, many replaced with a variety of hedges.
Parking	All the houses have garages, either single or double, though few are now used for cars.
Street Scenes	The roads all of which have grass verges and are lined with trees (originally planted with money subscribed by residents)

PRESSURES ON THE CHARACTER AREA

Two extensions are particularly excessive in extent, together with one extremely large house built in 2018 in what was, previously, the largest back garden.

Few residents park in the street, but cars parked by commuters from outside the City have begun to become a problem, so there has been general support for the proposed residents parking scheme.

The houses on the western and northern edges of the estate have views over open country, but this has been under frequent threat from development, so far resisted by South Cambs planners, government inspectors, and the courts. Four houses are used to accommodate students. They change the nature of the community and two are particularly poorly maintained.

POSITIVE FEATURES

The estate lies just inside the western city boundary with green belt to the west and north and playing fields to the east. It has a secluded and almost rural feel, partly because there is only one vehicle access to the estate (from Barton Road)

The green spaces, the trees and bushes in the front gardens, and the trees lining the roads, all add to the rural character.



The estate has an active resident's association and a neighbourhood watch presence.

NEGATIVE FEATURES

The Bin Brook flows alongside each of the two pedestrian/cycle exit lanes, and crosses between them in a culvert whose size has twice proved inadequate: it flooded a dozen houses in 1978 and again in 2001. A relief channel was dug along the western edge of the estate after the first flood but proved completely inadequate the second time. Residents then spent 6 years discussing with the Environment Agency the provision of an upstream balancing pond. After the Agency had spent some 200k on a study, it was judged by its National Review Group not to represent good value for money, and eventually the Agency provided individual flood guards to the most vulnerable houses. There is an annual meeting between residents, the City Council and the Agency, to ensure that the Brook and its surrounding vegetation that are well maintained. No works of any kind should be allowed that increase the risk of flooding.

Many residents are no longer young and so rely on their cars. This is partly because some of the houses are nearly 1km from the nearest bus stop on Barton Road, and there is only one bus per hour, with none after 7pm or on Sundays. Such a large estate needs a Barton Road bus stop at its entrance and more frequent buses into town. Public transport should be improved, to discourage the use by residents of cars.

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