

APPENDIX 9: BIGBURY ON SEA VILLAGE STUDY

Bigbury on Sea Village Study for Bigbury Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Introduction and Historical Context

Bigbury on Sea is a relatively recent development on what had been farming land in the nineteenth century. There were few buildings then other than Folly Farm, Warren Cottage and the fishing canneries. In 1908, the enterprising Bigbury Bay Land Company bought the area from the Cleveland estate and their planned holiday village was quickly constructed. By the Great War small hotels and holiday bungalows with rooms to let were already in place, and in addition day trippers came from Plymouth by steamers. The advent of motorised transport subsequently placed Bigbury on Sea firmly on the tourist map, and the Pilchard Inn and Barden's Tea Rooms provided food and drink. The golf course amenity (which lies between Bigbury on Sea and the village of Bigbury) was developed in the early 1930s, as was the Art Deco Burgh Island Hotel, which remains the iconic view of the South Hams.

Although some of the original 1910s chalet style buildings remain, the village has continued to evolve. In the 1960s and 1970s the desire to live, or dare it be said, to retire by the sea encouraged many bungalows to be built both here and overlooking Challaborough Bay. For holidaymakers who wished to enjoy this special Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty there were still plenty of amenities - Folly Farm, the Henley Hotel and even a Youth Hostel provided varied accommodation, the Bay View Cafe and Tom Crocker Inn provided sustenance, and the Post Office / Shop had provisions - only the farm, the two hotels and the Pilchard Inn remain. The desire for second home ownership and for homes to let has resulted in further building developments of various architectural styles from the 1990s onwards. However, the buildings have all been within the confines of the village boundary. At present the existing amenities are tourism orientated businesses, located around the main car park and beach; these provide locals with some opportunities for employment, as does servicing the letting accommodation, but most of the associated workers come from outside the area.

Layout of village

You know you have reached Bigbury on Sea, not only by the boulder announcing a welcome, but also by the splendid view you have over the village from the top of Folly Hill, funnelled by the green and agricultural rolling slopes down to Burgh Island and its Art Deco hotel, surrounded by sea and beaches. The B3392 is the only road in and out of Bigbury on Sea. The village effectively falls into two parts, with linear development (outside of the village development boundary) following the hill and coastal cliffs down into the main grid based area within the boundary, enclosed by the beaches and fields.

At the top of Folly Hill stands Mount Folly Farm, with the barn conversions of Avon Court lining the route on the left, and on the right fields used in summer as the farm's camping site and car park.

Following the hill downwards, on the left is a run of detached houses and bungalows of the 30s to the 2010s set back off the road in large plots. Avon Quillet, a block of flats, and the Henley Hotel both border the road as it narrows and curves slightly, before a left turn off Folly Hill into the cul-de-sac called Clematon Hill. Here again on the left continues a short line of individually styled, almost all detached, houses and bungalows of various ages, more closely spaced with smaller grounds. All the aforementioned properties are on the cliff edge with uninterrupted views over Bantham and coast beyond. On the right hand side of Folly Hill are fields used for grazing and crops, ending in a field virtually opposite the Clematon Hill access, used for grazing in winter and as parking for tourists in summer.

At this point the village development boundary starts as shown on the map at the end of this study. Folly Hill continues to run down toward the sea. On the right are six bungalows built in the 60s, set back off the road with large front and rear gardens, and fields behind. They have low-pitched tiled roofs, rendering, stone and timber cladding finishes to the variously renovated and extended properties, but each considerably staggered in their plots to allow each bungalow views of

- BELOW (LEFT TO RIGHT): VIEW OF BURGH ISLAND; OVERSPILL CAR PARK OF MOUNT FOLLY FARM; STAGGERED PROPERTIES ON THE WEST SIDE OF FOLLY HILL; BURGH ISLAND HOTEL, PILCHARD INN AND THE HUERS' HUT; WESTERN END OF MARINE DRIVE; BADGERS' WALK; USE OF SLOPES TO MAXIMISE VIEWS; MODERNISED 1930s BUNGALOW, COLONIAL STYLE; 2 BUNGALOWS ON MARINE DRIVE SET IN LARGE PLOTS; KORNIOFF RESIDENTIAL HOME, NOW CLOSED AND VACANT.



the sea and Burgh Island. A large detached house sits on the corner of a cul de sac, off which are accessed 2 further bungalows stepped up on the slope to allow for sea views, and at the end of which lies a footpath leading to other parts of the village. On the opposite side of the road is the tract of green warren land called Clematon Hill, owned by the National Trust, and over which the public can meander to enjoy wonderful views over the coast and village.

Folly Hill changes name at this point to Marine Drive, marking the start of the grid pattern that forms the layout of the rest of Bigbury on Sea. (see map).

To the left of Marine Drive, and outside of the development boundary, lie the main car parking for tourists, the Burgh Island Causeway apartments, the Warren, and the slipways to access the beaches. The beaches are a huge draw throughout the year for visitors and locals alike. They are some of the first sandy beaches east of Plymouth, loved by families, dog walkers, and water sports participants, although there are dangerous rip tides to be aware of due to lying at the mouth of the River Avon. At low tide you can walk across to the privately owned Burgh Island, with its Grade 2 listed hotel and 13th century Pilchard Inn, and take the footpaths open to the public on the west side of the island up to remains of the Huers' Hut, with magnificent views over the coast. At high tide the crossing is made on the famous Sea Tractor. Although the beaches fall within the AONB, surprisingly the island does not.

The car park area (rented by SHDC) hosts an outdoor cafe, ice cream kiosk, surf school, beach shop, coastguard station, public toilets and recycling banks. Problems with regard to coach parking space need to be addressed, to avoid dangerous loading and parking issues on Marine Drive and at the bottom of Parker Road. The Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire raised a 33% response to the consideration for secure bicycle parking on the main car park. There is concern at the degradation of the Warren due to its use as an overspill car park, and interest in keeping this as a Local Green Space, as well as an historic and recreational asset for the village. At the end of the Warren, Marine Drive follows the curve of the cliffs, with housing on both sides of the road, before petering out into the footpath that leads down the cliff edge into neighbouring Challaborough.

There is a green edge to the remaining sides of the Bigbury on Sea development boundary, formed by properties backing onto agricultural fields. A footpath leads off from the top of Parker Road across the fields,

and a short stretch of tree-lined footpath, known locally as Badgers' Walk, links the east end of Cleveland Drive to the east end of Ringmore Drive and down into the Folly Hill cul de sac mentioned earlier. The Tree Warden has stated that the trees should remain, but be pruned back occasionally to keep the footpath accessible.

Existing Property Types and Designs

Returning to the grid layout of Bigbury on Sea, the original plots on land formed by the various intersections were generous, accommodating large houses, bungalows and hotels, well separated from each other. This also created an impression of green space throughout the village viewed from the beach and Clematon Hill, which is in grave danger of being lost. Properties were constructed using the slopes leading away from the coastline into agricultural fields to maximise views for all properties. It has to be said that the vast majority of smaller properties were built on tight budgets as holiday homes for Plymothians, with poor quality of materials and design. Over the years there has been a cyclical pattern of ownership – from mostly holiday homes, to people retiring and living permanently in the village, and now as people die, over 50% of properties have become again second homes / holiday lets. On the positive side these create more employment opportunities for supporting services / businesses with money coming into the wider area's economy. On the negative side village shops and businesses within the parish have closed, unable to cope with seasonality and price competition (eg from supermarket deliveries), and there is added traffic and road deterioration as well.

The now closed and vacant Korniloff Residential Home was originally built as a hotel set in large grounds with tennis courts to the side. Most of the land to the side was sold some time ago for the construction of a bungalow.

During the last 30 years, gardens have been sold to provide infill development. Whilst the build quality has improved in line with regulations, property prices have increased steeply, and single bungalows are now more often replaced by two 2 storey properties, particularly so since the turn of the century.

In the late 20th century a walk round the village revealed a range of characterful, differing, even quirky building styles. These original and older properties are now being replaced by a more uniform style of 'New England coastal' development – two storey, upside down layout properties with a larger footprint and scale than previously on site, large areas of plain glazing, slate/zinc roofing, timber cladding, glass and



• TOP (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT): A MUCH EXTENDED ORIGINAL BUNGALOW; ORIGINAL CHALET FROM 1910; LARGE 1930s HOUSE; 1980s /90s BUNGALOW INCORPORATING BRICK WORK AND LEADED WINDOWS, UNUSUAL MATERIALS FOR THE AREA;
 • BOTTOM (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) 2 EXAMPLES OF NEW HOUSING THAT HAS REPLACED SINGLE BUNGALOWS ON LARGE PLOTS. THE DWELLING SHOWN ON THE FAR LEFT HAS ADDED TO A RUN OF DEVELOPMENTS DOWN THE HILL ON WARREN ROAD. EACH IN TURN, HAS BLOCKED VIEWS FROM PROPERTIES BEHIND. CLIFF HOUSE, ONE OF THE OLDEST DWELLINGS IN THE VILLAGE. PHOTO FAR RIGHT SHOWS CONTRASTS BETWEEN OLD AND NEWER PROPERTIES AT WESTERN END OF RINGMORE DRIVE



stainless steel balconies and terraces, reduced green gardens and garaging, more impermeable hard standing for open parking, hard landscaping and extra decked areas. The impermeable treatment of large areas of garden is now leading to drainage problems.

Considered individually there is nothing wrong with the more modern contemporary design of the newer properties but much depends on the context of its location. Sometimes the contrast between older and newer properties is striking, even incongruous.

It also has to be acknowledged that some properties have been 'land banked' and allowed to fall into very poor state of repair, to the detriment of neighbouring properties and the image of the village overall. Means need to be identified of encouraging owners of such properties to at least maintain, if not make better use of, their plots.

A property on Ringmore Drive, shown bottom right, has been left untouched for well over ten years; a timber style building, which apparently won awards when first built. It occupies a large plot between Marine Drive and Ringmore Drive.

Some of the properties along the cliffs on both sides of the village have suffered from serious coastal erosion requiring in some cases the shoring up of properties or reinforcement of the cliff faces with stone bastions walls which can look unsightly. New development including extensions to the footprint of existing properties on sites likely to suffer from future coastal erosion should be avoided if this would cause any potential danger to future occupants or result in visually harmful mitigation measures.

Proposals for Future Development and Design Policy

Many plots are now being redeveloped in a way which seeks to maximise the value of the site with little consideration being given to the amenity of the existing residents.

An example of this which occurred during the preparation of this study was when developers applied to demolish Warren Cottage and the Bay View Café and to redevelop the site to provide four modern new houses. Warren Cottage is the oldest house in the village. It is understood to have been built in the 1820s. The café, which occupied a timber framed extension on the side of Warren Cottage and had been in operation until immediately prior to the sale of the property had been used as a café since the early 1920s.

This scheme would have resulted in the loss of a much loved community and tourist facility on a visually and historically important site within the village. Community opposition was overwhelming and the application was refused planning permission on loss of a local heritage asset and a community and employment facility. The problem has now been resolved following the purchase of these premises by the owners of The Burgh Island Hotel who are now using Warren Cottage as staff accommodation and have advised the community that they would like to replace the café with a larger café/restaurant building on the same site.

The Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire elicited responses where 49% of respondents thought new builds should be in keeping with existing buildings and sympathetic to the surrounding environment, and 37% considered that views and privacy should be respected. 34% wanted ridge heights maintained and 11% did not like to see two to four properties replacing one.

These responses reflect strong opinions that some restraints are required to 'rein in' the seemingly constant competition to redevelop, turning Bigbury on Sea into a continuous building site. Bigbury on Sea is an expensive place in which to buy property. The main reason for the high cost of property is to be able to live in a beautiful coastal location and to be able to enjoy the amazing views of the beach, sea and coastline which are currently available from almost every property.

Communal and individual views are of paramount importance to this community. Almost every property has been purchased specifically, and often solely, because of its scenic outlook. Therefore focussed protection of these land and sea views is of unrivalled importance to the residents.

The need for a policy which, amongst other things, seeks to protect

- BELOW (LEFT TO RIGHT): STRIKING CONTRASTS BETWEEN OLD AND NEWER PROPERTIES AT EASTERN END OF RINGMORE DRIVE; 2007 BUNGALOW CONSIDERED TO BE A GOOD EXAMPLE OF MAXIMISING SITE POTENTIAL WITHOUT SPOILING VIEWS FOR OTHERS BEHIND, MODERN BUT NOT OUT OF PLACE; PROPERTY DEVELOPED FROM A SMALL BUNGALOW, PART OF WHICH REMAINS AS THE MIDDLE SECTION, INTO WHAT IS NOW A DOMINATING MASS ON ITS RINGMORE DRIVE PLOT; DERELICT PROPERTY ON RINGMORE DRIVE



existing views is particularly relevant to new development in Bigbury in Sea where the original development has been specifically designed to allow for excellent views of the beach and sea. In designing the layout of this planned development advantages were taken of the slope on which the existing dwellings sit. The development was designed in a grid form layout with careful attention being given to the location, height and spacing between properties to ensure that at each level the occupiers of all properties would have the advantage of good views of the beach, sea and coastline. The local community consider that the ethos behind this existing planned development should be protected and any new development should fully respect this important concept.

There have been many examples of recent unsympathetic proposals for development in relation to new build housing or extensions to existing development at Bigbury on Sea. In some cases revisions have been made to the proposals following concerns raised by local residents and by the Parish Council and the resultant schemes have been acceptable. However, in many cases in the past developments have been allowed which have caused a loss of amenity to existing occupiers of properties by disrupting the design principles that lay behind the original concept of development which includes:

- Careful attention to levels to ensure the protection of general amenity and views;
- Adequate spacing of dwellings and space around each development;
- Provision of green verges along street frontages to create attractive settings to dwellings and to avoid on-street parking;
- Maintenance of building lines or to the existing staggering of properties to enable views; and
- Need for careful attention in the location of development to ensure no harm being given to the important views enjoyed by others.





• WARREN COTTAGE AND THE BAY VIEW CAFE

The general design principles for new housing development in Bigbury on Sea are set out below. These design criteria are not intended to prevent new development, nor the replacement of outdated buildings or the extension of existing dwellings. The criteria have been designed to ensure that new development recognises and embraces the original design ethos that has served the community well over many years.

It is also important to note that in the emerging Plymouth and West Devon Joint Local Plan Bigbury on Sea is not regarded as a 'sustainable village' suitable for a significant increase in housing. The village is also within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and in the South Devon Heritage Coast. As part of the Neighbourhood Plan it is proposed to retain the existing village settlement boundary for Bigbury on Sea. This is the same boundary which has been in place for many years and is currently part of the adopted South Hams Local Development Strategy. Any new development within the village should be kept within this village settlement boundary. In accordance with the above, new development, other than small extensions or replacement of existing development, will only be allowed within the village settlement boundary. As a general rule, redevelopment on existing plots will only be allowed if the proposed development does not increase the existing number of dwellings. Exceptions to this may be allowed if due to the size of the plot there is obvious scope to create more or different types of housing to meet a specific need.

Any new development within Bigbury on Sea should also meet the following criteria:

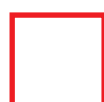
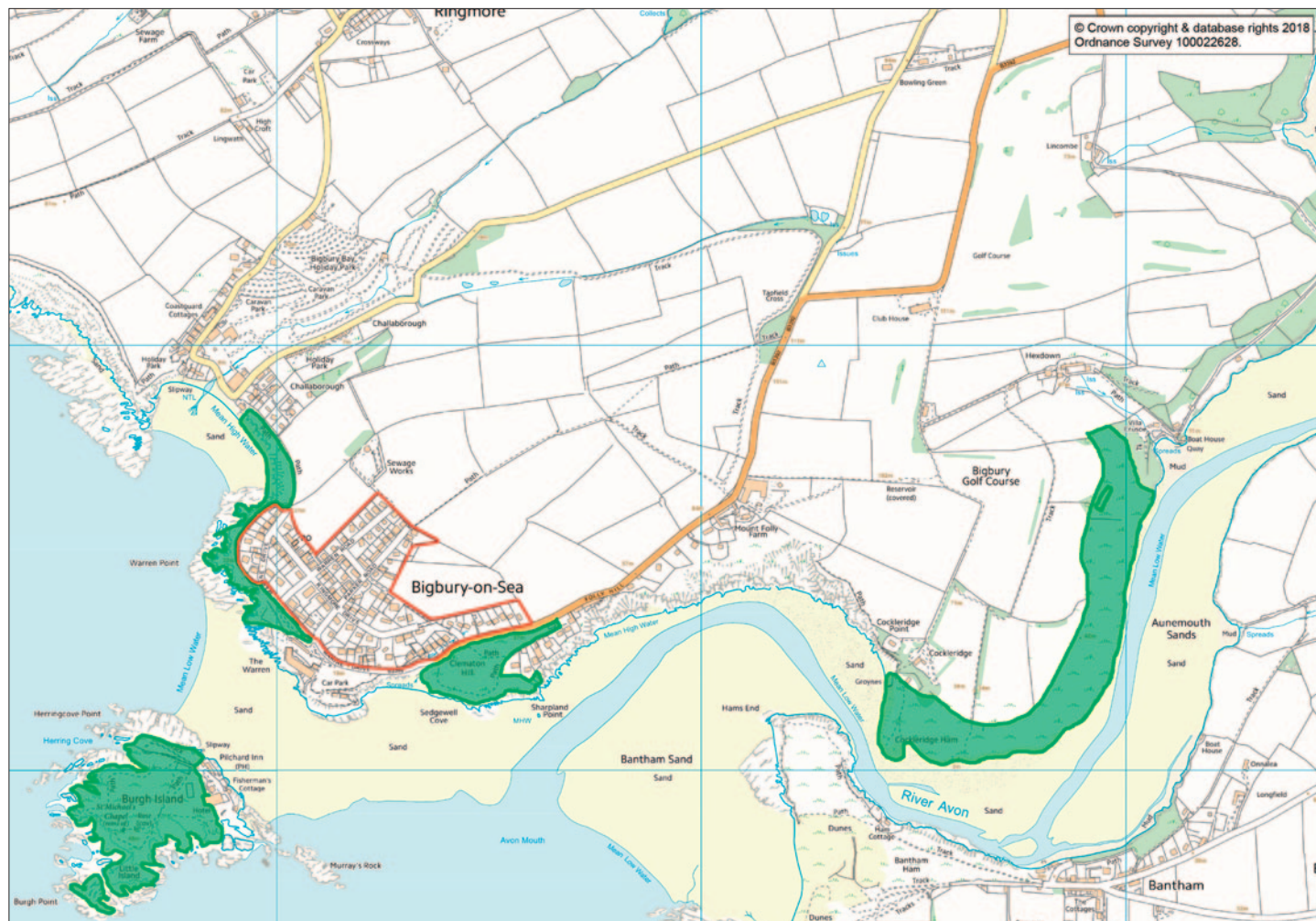
- Ensure the views and privacy of all neighbouring properties, including those across a road are respected and maintained, and only if these aspects would not be adversely affected by the proposals should approval be given. The provision of new access arrangements or provision of new or relocated car parking areas can in some cases also result in unneighbourly development if this results in undue noise or disturbance, loss of views due to the parking of cars, overlooking or loss of privacy.
- Reduce or retain the maximum height of roofs including those of extensions on new build or alterations and extensions to existing properties to that of the original, unless the increase in roof height is consistent with that of neighbouring properties and/or does not impede on the views of surrounding properties. Due consideration also needs to be given to changes of orientation and pitch to ensure that views from neighbouring properties are not harmed.
- Flat roofs are generally regarded as inappropriate, both aesthetically and due to the fact that they provide convenient and unwanted nesting opportunities for seagulls.
- Ensure each new dwelling has a reasonable sized garden appropriate to the size and type of property and having regard to the size of gardens in the vicinity.
- Retain front building lines if there is a consistent and obvious building

line along the street.

- Avoid excessive amounts of glazing on all elevations to maintain privacy, avoid overlooking, reduce light pollution, and avoid undue glare.
- Materials for alterations or extensions to existing properties should match existing. For new dwellings slate would be the preferred material for roofs. Walls should generally be of painted render although some timber cladding or stone features might be appropriate. Where planning permission for raised decking or balconies is required due regard should be had to the size of the property and the garden and the decking or balconies should not result in the loss of amenity to neighbours by reason of overlooking, loss of views, noise or disturbance. N.B. Planning permission is required for decking, or raised platforms if the decking is more than 30cm above the ground, or the decking or platforms, together with other extensions, outbuildings etc. cover more than 50% of the garden area.
- Soft landscaping should be provided and maintained along the frontage to properties to avoid unauthorised and unwelcome parking by tourists.
- On sites adjoining cliff edges any new development of greater mass than existing, or extensions to existing properties, should be avoided unless it can be demonstrated that the property will be structurally sound, it will not result any harmful impact in relation to future coastal erosion or require unsightly mitigation measures.
- When planning approval is given, a financial contribution should be made to a ring-fenced fund to repair roads and verges in the village or parish, given the extra heavy traffic generated by any redevelopment.
- Retain use of Korniloff site as a residential home for the elderly or alternative residential accommodation, designed specifically for the elderly.
- Retain existing hotels and encourage new provision of hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation.
- Protect and maintain the following which are regarded as intrinsic to the character of Bigbury on Sea, particularly affecting its place as a tourist attraction within South Hams: Burgh Island Hotel, the Pilchard Inn, the Huer's Hut, the Sea Tractor, the tombolo between Burgh Island and the mainland.
- Find ways and means of reinstating a village store and post office. The latter is an amenity the village is officially entitled to have, given the distance to the now nearest post office at St Ann's Chapel.
- Protect and maintain views across the landscape of the village and coast, such as from Clematon Hill towards Bantham; from the top of Folly Hill down over the fields and village towards the beach and island; views from Marine Drive across the Warren; and views from the tops of Parker Road and Warren Road.



PLAN OF BIGBURY ON SEA AND CHALLABOROUGH



BIGBURY ON SEA VILLAGE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY



LOCAL GREEN SPACE

