

### ABIGAIL WILLS

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The name Druids Heath to those unfamiliar with the area conjures up images of mystical buildings or structures in a wild countryside setting. What we have is low cost housing on a run down estate surrounded by open green common land. There is no integration of the two and, apart from a few gardens, the outside of the estate is very neglected. It forms an area of cul-de-sacs, frontages facing open common land, dead end walkways and shared access to the rear of houses. Would it look better, more pleasing to the eye and feel safer if the housing was of more traditional materials in a more familiar layout ?

The area is very brutal, bleak and barren. It raises the question of whether the architecture influences the behaviour of the inhabitants .

The area around Manningford Road was built in the 1960s based on the Radburn Design Principle. The Radburn Design Principle is seen as flawed, with high crime rates and social isolation blamed on the layout. The Druids Heath Estate, which Manningford Road is part of, is the most deprived area in Birmingham and within the 50 most deprived areas nationwide. See [www.academyofurbanism.org.uk/urban-idiocy-brilliant-ideas-that-ruined-our-cities](http://www.academyofurbanism.org.uk/urban-idiocy-brilliant-ideas-that-ruined-our-cities).

The most interesting architecture to me is the tower blocks. Many are now empty and are waiting demolition. I had to force myself from just photographing them.

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