



A4685 Charters, Reading

Character Study

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Introduction

This document aims to investigate the local character around the Charters Garage (Tilehurst, Reading) in order to demonstrate the deliverability of a housing development at the existing site, addressed as Oxford Rd, Tilehurst, Reading RG31 6TQ.

Site

The site is situated in close proximity to Tilehurst Railway Station, and adjacent to the river Thames with a lush green corridor separating the two. The surrounding properties are predominantly residential, and are set to 2.5 storeys max. It is well connected, being situated on an A road (Oxford Road), leading directly to Reading town centre, next to the Tilehurst Railway Station and a few minutes' walk away from the local bus stops. Currently there are 3 buildings on the site, which were previously used for car dealerships and a service garage. Constructed from painted brick and gable roofs with some flat roof extensions that are glazed in various areas and finished in asbestos sheet cladding with advertising.

The proposal is to develop *housing* that is sympathetic to the history, locally found materials and the character of the site. The site is an 'Allow Development Site' within the current Reading local plan.



Fig. 1 The Roebuck Hotel, Oxford Road

Locality

The site is located on the A329, Oxford Road, surrounded by predominantly residential properties. It is in close proximity to Reading town centre, where all local amenities can be found. The site is serviced with pedestrian access to both the station and bus services within short walkable distances.



Site context

History & Heritage

The site is rich in history, having been used for a major pottery industry during the early 20th century. The site lies on the top of a hill consisting of a clay subsoil with some gravel and chalk commonly found in the area too. Therefore, much of this clay was dug from the enormous claypits on Norcot Hill, and taken to the kilns at Tilehurst Potteries Limited, found at the foot of Kentwood Hill. This was one of the major employers of local men in Tilehurst. Throughout the 20s up until World War Two, the kilns were formally established and successful in producing tiles and brick manufacture.

By the time the Second World War had begun, the industry had progressed and there were many more modern methods for tile and brick manufacturing and therefore the Kew Kiln at Kentwood Hill fell in disuse. The clay continued to be in use however, at a different location in Grovelands by overhead buckets that ran over Norcot Hill. In 1967 the claypits were closed and were replaced by a school, doctors' surgery and houses.

The proposal is to develop housing that is sympathetic to the history of the area and inkeeping with the materiality found in the area to redefine the character of the site.



Fig. 2 Kentwood Hill



Fig. 3 School Road



Site context

Existing Site photos



Existing building used for car dealership. Brickwork painted over. Flat roof annex to the original building



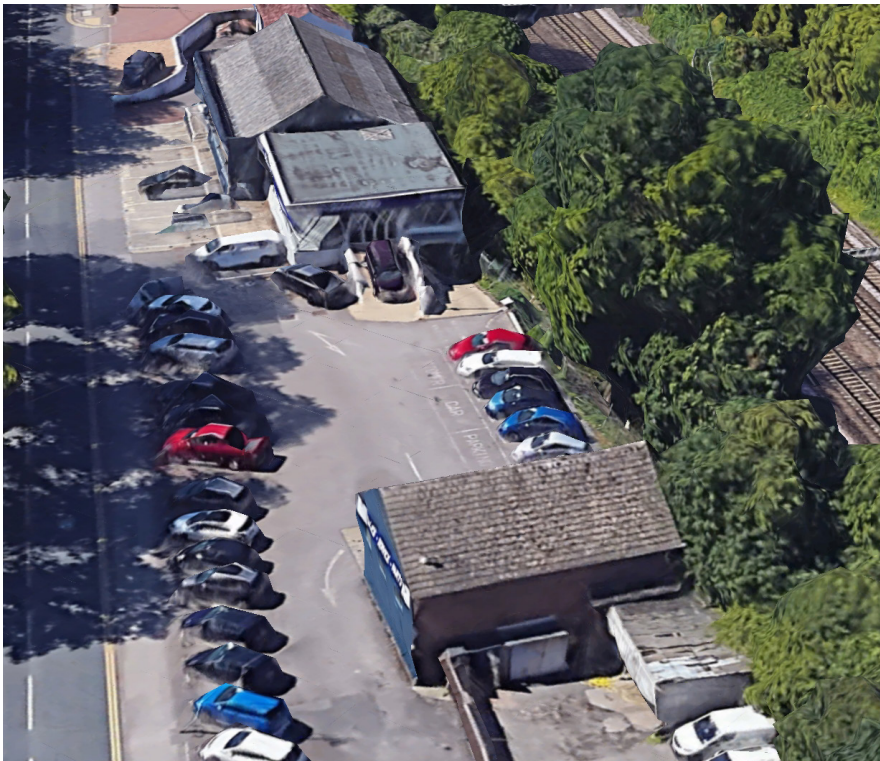
Open space for car servicing purposes



Blockwork separation between the site and Oxford road



Advertising to front of the building. Stepped access into the building.



Hardscaping all around the site and landscaping kept to the rear. Image adopted from googlemaps.



Aerial view of the site indicating the proximity of the site boundaries. Image adopted from googlemaps.

Site context

Key:

-  Trainline
-  A-Road
-  Riverbank
-  Security Fence
-  Chainlink Fence
-  Closeboard Fence
-  Bus Stop
-  Trainline
-  Site
-  Residential Area
-  Green Corridor
-  River Thames

Access, transport & local amenities

The site is located a short 2 minute drive away from Tilehurst train station and a few bus stops which provide easy access to Central Reading, Upper Basildon and Theale.

Situated on the A329-Oxford Road, the site provides easy access to a number of local amenities, such as shops and restaurants on Kentwood Hill. This road also has direct access to Reading town center.

Policies

1. RBC Borough Boundary
2. EN12 Area of Identified Biodiversity Interest
3. EN15 Air Quality Management Area
4. Allocated Development Site



Local vernacular – Visual analysis



1.



2.



3.



4.

- 1. 999 Oxford Road**
Render, Gable roof, Timber detailing, Tiled roof
- 2. 1001 Oxford Road**
Render, Brick, Timber detailing, Tiled roof
- 3. 1011 Oxford Road**
Render, Brick, Timber detailing, Tiled roof
- 4. 1015 Oxford Road**
Render, Brick, Timber detailing, Tiled roof
- 5. 1017 Oxford Road**
Render, Brick, Tiled roof, Brick detailing
- 6. 1019 Oxford Road**
Render, Brick, Tiled roof, Brick detailing
- 7. 1023 Oxford Road**
Render in Grey, Brick, Tiled roof, Brick detailing, Hipped roof
- 8. 1031 Oxford Road**
Pebbledash, Brick, Brick detailing, Tiled roof, Hipped roof
- 9. 1036 Oxford Road**
Brick, Timber detailing, Tile hanging, Tiled roof, Hip and Gable roofing
- 10. 1043 Oxford Road**
Brick, Timber detailing, Tiled roof, Gable roof
- 11. Recent Development on Rawlins Rise**
Render, Brick in Sandstone/Yellow, Brick detailing, Tiled roof, Hip and Gable roof



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.



10.



11.

Predominant materials

Red multi brick
Clay roof tiles
Hanging tiles
Render
Timber detailing
Brick detailing
White frame windows and doors

Key architectural elements

2 or 2.5 storeys
Predominantly gable roofs as distinctive elevation features
Some hip roof structures
Projecting Bay windows
Gable roof dormers
Large hardscaping driveway

Proposal inspiration & precedents

The development shall aim to take inspiration from both the historical background on site, as well as the local vernacular. Given the past use of the sites surrounding areas of claypits and pottery kilns, the proposal intends to reflect the materials that relate to the history of Tilehurst.

The materiality that could be found on site suggests brickwork as a suitable material to pick for a primary structure, to successfully reflect the on-site character. Red multi brick complement the materiality of the surrounding residential properties.

Gable roofs and dormers are defining forms found in the residential properties across the road, using render, timber, and brick for detailing.

Buildings situated nearby the site and the form of the existing buildings on site can be used to inform the proposed structure. They suggest a gable roof and a 2/2.5 storey height.

A more contemporary read of the context, the mix of gable and flat roof buildings on site allow for a modern solution, which simple uses clean lines, sharp detailing, and modern glazing. The goal is to encapsulate this materiality, vernacular and aesthetic, to form a proposal which is sympathetic to its context and functions as comfortable, contemporary *residential* space, contributing positively to the context and bringing a new life to the site.



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

Character reflection

Concept

The main concept behind the new development is to provide a contemporary solution that aims to address the housing requirements in the Reading Borough, on a site marked as allocated for development in the Reading local plan.

Proposed design

The historical background and the amount of residential properties in close proximity suggest a proposal of such to be a suitable addition on site.

Due to the now closed car sale and garage function, the existing buildings are not suitable for refurbishment and conversion to suit residential purposes. BY proposing new structures on the site, the proposal creates for a scheme that is inkeeping with the area. The local character has to a large extent been considered in the design which would suit the site better than the existing car garage buildings use.

The approach of the scheme is detailed and elaborated within the Design and Access Statement to address the scheme on use and amount, layout, landscaping and the appearance and materiality.

References

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Images

Fig. 1 - Closed Pubs, The Roebuck, retrieved (05/01/24) https://www.closedpubs.co.uk/berkshire/tilehurst_roebuck.html

Fig 2 -Tilehurst-Berkshire (n.d.). Tilehurst, Berkshire, UK, retrieved (05/01/24) Tilehurst - Berkshire <https://www.flickr.com/photos/micsworld/4299930153/>

Fig. 3 - Tilehurst-Berkshire (n.d.). Tilehurst, Berkshire, UK, retrieved (05/01/24) Tilehurst - Berkshire <https://flickr.com/photos/micsworld/4300683242>

Fig. 4 - Google Maps. (n.d.). Charters, Reading, retrieved (05/01/24) https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@51.4728147,-1.0334324,3a,15.4y,89.46h,93.74t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1s_L49JMIgFtR0wXBakJkTHw!2e0!7i16384!8i8192?entry=ttu

Fig. 5 - Google Maps. (n.d.). Charters, Reading, retrieved (05/01/24) https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@51.4728147,-1.0334324,3a,15.4y,89.46h,93.74t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1s_L49JMIgFtR0wXBakJkTHw!2e0!7i16384!8i8192?entry=ttu

Fig. 6 -Google Maps. (n.d.). Charters, Reading, retrieved (05/01/24) https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@51.4728147,-1.0334324,3a,15.4y,89.46h,93.74t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1s_L49JMIgFtR0wXBakJkTHw!2e0!7i16384!8i8192?entry=ttu

Fig.7 - Google Maps. (n.d.). Charters, Reading, retrieved (05/01/24) https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@51.4728147,-1.0334324,3a,15.4y,89.46h,93.74t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1s_L49JMIgFtR0wXBakJkTHw!2e0!7i16384!8i8192?entry=ttu