
REDEVELOPMENT AT
ARLINGTON WORKS
TWICKENHAM
TW1 2BB

Design and Access Statement
August 2018

Sharpe Refinery Service Ltd

Job Number: 4786

The logo for Brookes Architects features the company name in a white serif font. A thin white diagonal line is positioned above the 'A' in 'Architects', extending from the top left of the letter to the top right of the 's'.

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1.0 Introduction

Redevelopment of Arlington Works to provide offices and 24 new build flats

INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been produced in support of a planning application for redevelopment of the Sharpe Refinery Facility/Sharpe Refinery Service Ltd. at Arlington Works, St. Margarets, Twickenham. It proposes demolition of the workshop sheds and decommissioning of the waste oil recycling facility tank farm to create a new mixed use scheme comprising approximately 610m² B1 commercial space within the existing refurbished and extended Buildings of Townscape Merit (BTM), together with 24 new build flats with associated car parking, landscaped amenity spaces, refuse/recycling and bicycle stores.

This statement summarises the reasoning and design principles that have led to the proposed arrangement. It describes the site and its immediate and wider context, identifies the opportunities and constraints for redevelopment and demonstrates how the design addresses those factors to provide an appropriate, sustainable and site specific response.

2.0 Context Appraisal

CONTEXT APPRAISAL

To be read in conjunction with Appendix A – Site Location Plan, Appendix B – Existing Survey Site Plan and Elevations and Appendix C – Photographs of the Surrounding Area

The application site is located at the end of an access driveway off Arlington Road. It lies parallel to the main railway line between St Margarets and Richmond stations. The entrance to the driveway also provides access to part of the adjacent Twickenham Studios (film and television production).

Arlington Road is a residential street located within a predominantly residential area east of the local centre of St Margarets and the railway station. It is in the wider area of East Twickenham which covers the whole of the St Margarets area and extends up to the eastern side of the River Thames as it bends around from Isleworth past Richmond to Twickenham to the west. It is accessed from St Margarets Road via Rosslyn Road to the south and becomes Arlington Close to the north of the site. As such, it is located in the heart of this residential area.

The site lies to the north eastern side of the wider extent of Twickenham Studios which, other than the frontage shops within the St Margarets local centre, are the only noticeable non-residential buildings in the area.

St Margarets Road runs approximately north/south intersecting the A316 which runs parallel to the railway line, before turning east to become Richmond Road and cross the River Thames at Richmond Bridge approximately half a mile to the east of the site.

Historically, this area north of St Margarets Road and bounded by the river was the site of Twickenham Park dating back to its enclosure in 1227 from the surrounding heathland. This was originally created as hunting grounds for which a long and chequered history is known, passing through many ownerships and uses before gradually being divided up and developed as grand mansion houses from 1600.

In 1820, a substantial house (which became known as Twickenham Park House) was built on the site where Park House Gardens lies today. The estate of this house includes the whole of the area around the application site, bounded to the south by St Margarets Road.

The subdivision and redevelopment for houses (of an increasingly diminished scale but still consisting of large villas) continued through Victorian times. The railway connecting London and Windsor was established in the mid-19th Century, cutting across the area of Twickenham Park through St Margarets village centre.

The area to the south and east of the application site has been developed with the construction of large Victorian villas with the roads being laid out as they are seen today. The application site was first developed to provide stables and grooms' accommodation, providing off-site facilities for the residential villas in the area. Parts of the context (such as the east side of Arlington Road) saw a renewed phase of building in the inter-war period, following the demolition of Twickenham Park House in 1924.

There is a variety of architectural styles in the area, mainly falling into two categories; large Victorian townhouses and villas and early 20th Century/interwar period houses and apartment blocks, with some later 20th Century infill developments.

The southern end of Arlington Road is flanked on the corners by two large Victorian buildings; a 3-4 storey Victorian townhouse/apartment building on the left and a three storey villa to the right. Heading north towards the site, the left hand side of Arlington Road is characterised by larger 3-5 storey Victorian and early 20th Century period purpose built apartment buildings with later 20th Century blocks immediately adjacent to the driveway entrance to the site. The east side of Arlington Road is characterised by two storey, early 20th Century/interwar period housing, most with later roof/loft conversions which form the western boundary of the wider early 20th Century housing estate to the east. This is bordered by large Victorian detached villas to Rosslyn Road to the south and to Riverdale Road to the east, many of which appear to have been converted into flats.

Across the railway and running parallel to it, there are mainly larger Victorian 2½-3 storey detached and semi-detached houses backing onto the railway with early 20th Century/interwar period housing (mainly two storey detached and semi-detached) leading away from the railway northwards towards the A316. Interspersed throughout are a small number of later post-war mid-20th Century houses and more contemporary houses on infill/replacement sites.

There are a number of parks/recreational grounds in the area, all within a mile (approx. 15 minutes walking distance) of the site; Moormead and Bandy Recreation Ground to the west of St Margarets, Marble Hill Park (and Playspace) to the south and Cambridge Gardens and playpark to Clevedon Road to the east, set on the bank of the Thames immediately to the south side of Richmond Bridge. Across the bridge lies Richmond Green to the east of the site.

3.0 Site Description and Analysis



Aerial photograph showing application site and the wider curtilage

SITE DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

To be read with Appendix B – Existing Survey Site Plan and Elevations and Appendix D – Photographs of the Site

The application site is owned and occupied by Sharpe Refinery Service Ltd. It lies to the north eastern side of Twickenham Studios which covers the area adjacent to the railway line from St Margarets Road to the junction between Arlington Road and Arlington Close. Twickenham Studios provides accommodation for production and post production studio services.

The site is irregular in shape with the railway line to the north west. At its widest point, it is approximately 77.5m long and 40m wide, narrowing to approximately 20m wide at the southern boundary with Twickenham Studios. It is approximately 3,030m² (0.303Ha) in area, including the access driveway, and is entirely covered with either the buildings' footprints or hardstanding. It comprises two late Victorian terraced buildings that face inwards towards each other, separated by a cobbled mews/stableyard and turning their backs to the railway and the site to the south and east. These buildings provided stables, coach houses and tack/feed store rooms with ancillary residential rooms to the first floor as accommodation for the grooms and their families. It would appear that they were built immediately following the construction of the railway circa 1850 speculatively to be tenanted out to serve the stabling needs of the early Victorian villas being developed in the area. They are located to the south west corner of the site and have been awarded the status of Buildings of Townscape Merit (BTM) due to their age and the survival of much of their original fabric. Projecting brick bonding to each flank end of the terraces initially suggested that these may originally have been longer. However, historic studies show that these were built speculatively, in parallel with Victorian villas, and that the unfinished flank ends were left as it was intended that these buildings would be extended as the demand for more stables increased as more villas were developed and occupied in the local area. These extensions were never built as a result of the diminishing use of horses for private transport, with the establishment of the railway and the growth of the use of private motor cars. The buildings therefore comprise an unfinished development of stables that were intended to be extended but never were.

The existing terraces are constructed of yellow stock brick (now heavily soiled with decades of environmental dirt) with large black stained/painted timber coach house/stable doors at ground level and painted timber sliding sash windows at first floor level. As a result of their BTM status, these and the remaining section of their cobbled yard are felt to be worthy of retention and will be considered for refurbishment and possible extension.

A linear, single storey corrugated steel-clad workshop building, believed to have been constructed in the 1950s and currently in a very poor state of repair, extends north eastwards from the rear of the eastern (BTM) terrace. Although still occupied by tenants, this building is in an advanced state of dilapidation.

The site also currently accommodates a telecommunications mast and a series of oil storage tanks and associated machinery within a bunded enclosure. The site is generally flat and level.

The northern boundary of the site abuts the rear garage parking court of the adjacent post war (circa 1950s-1960s block of flats (Howmic Court) which is defined by an existing brick wall. This is approximately 2m high (currently secured with barbed wire on top) within the main site and becomes a low level wall with open metal wired fencing with screen planting along the access driveway road.

The southern and eastern boundaries are primarily defined by the flank wall of the Twickenham Studios buildings and extend across the currently open car parking areas, subdivided from the application site by close boarded timber fencing.

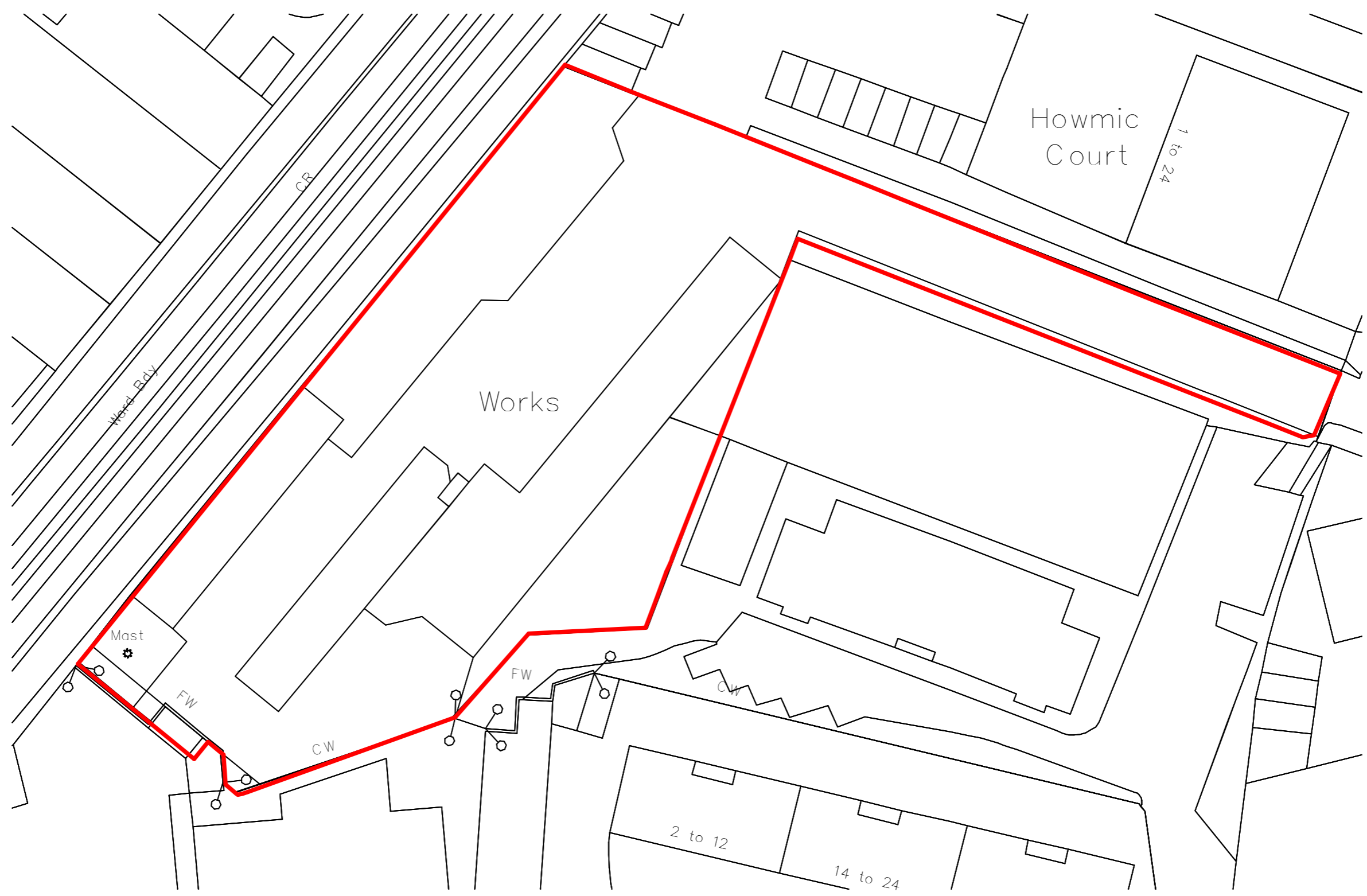
The railway line bounds the western edge of the site with the nearest line set approximately 7.5m from the boundary. The line runs on an elevated embankment approximately 1.6m above the current ground level of the site.

The site has a public transport accessibility level (PTAL) of 3, which is defined by the London Plan as 'moderate'. The nearest bus stops are located on St Margarets Road. St Margarets train station is approximately an eight minute walk from the site, providing direct links to Richmond and central London.

The site is not within any identified specific flood risk area. It is categorised as being within the lowest Flood Zone 1, however, parts of the surrounding area fall within Flood Zone 2. The area to the north of the railway is assumed to be at a lower level as this is characterised as Flood Zone 3 but is isolated from the site by the railway embankment.

As previously noted, the site primarily comprises an oil recycling facility with some secondary independent trades operating from sections of the existing terrace building and the workshop block. As a result of its current use as an oil recycling centre, a Phase I Desk Study, Site Reconnaissance and Phase II Site Investigation Report have been prepared by Leap Environmental Ltd to assess the contamination risk associated with the site which could affect its redevelopment. The report identifies that the site is covered in a mantle of made ground 0.55-1.10m deep found to be contaminated. It recommends that this be removed and/or covered with clean cover soils where new garden

areas are proposed in any redevelopment of the site and that further intrusive testing be undertaken following demolition of the tank farm, together with further groundwater contamination monitoring. However, the investigations confirm that there is no preclusion against residential or commercial (mixed use) redevelopment on the grounds of contamination.



Site Location Plan

4.0 Planning History

PLANNING HISTORY

To be read with Appendix E - Pre-application Scheme

There is no relevant planning history for the application site as previous applications on record only relate to proposed alterations to antennas, masts and other communication equipment situated within the north western corner of the site.

There was a proposal to redevelop the site for business use in August 1989 but, due to the age of the record, the decision is unknown.

Pre-application advice has been sought over the last year. This was requested in relation to a previous (similar) scheme proposal, that has been developed into the revised proposal forming this application. The pre-application response raised a number of policy related comments primarily in relation to the existing (partial) waste recycling use of the site and the principle of the proposed residential and B1 uses that are addressed in more detail within the supporting Planning Statement.

Generally, in terms of character, design and layout, the pre-application response noted that there was no issue with the principle of redevelopment, with the retention of the existing BTMs (two buildings). It noted that the *“existing jumble of industrial structures are not a very positive visual feature from the railway line”*. A number of comments were provided regarding the design aspects of the proposal. These are addressed in the following Detailed Design Response section of this Statement.

5.0 Opportunities and Constraints

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

To be read with the following Site Analysis Drawings

The waste oil recycling business is diminishing and is proving to be increasingly less viable, employing only a skeleton number of staff. It is also considered to be inappropriate to the residential context. Although established, it is an annoyance to local residents and is far from being compatible with the residential area. The nuisance caused is generally the disturbance from the impact of tanker vehicles accessing and egressing through the residential area and the unpleasant aroma created by the recycling process.

The workshops, although currently tenanted, are in a very poor state of repair. These are in an advanced state of dilapidation and do not provide any comfort/thermal efficiency, etc., providing a very poor level of accommodation.

Twickenham Studios' accommodation is a series of offices and various studio businesses that are commercial in nature but not of an industrial type. The rest of the area is residential.

Redevelopment of the site could make much better and efficient use of the site and a mixed use scheme would be more in keeping with the surrounding area. Only a relatively small part of the site is occupied by the waste oil recycling facility. This use is considered in more detailed in the supporting Planning Statement and other reports submitted as part of this application.

Redevelopment of the site will provide an opportunity to remediate the ground that may be heavily impacted with contamination resulting from the long term use of the tank farm area for the storage of oil. This will also reduce the risk of further contamination by removing this inappropriate use from the site.

The terraced buildings and cobbled mews between have been designated as BTM. In order to justify their retention, there is a need for conservation and refurbishment to ensure that these buildings provide a quality of accommodation that will secure their future viability and longevity. Currently these buildings are utilised as office/workshop space but, as with the other workshop buildings, they provide very poor accommodation. It is, therefore, suggested that retaining and refurbishing these to provide better commercial use could be viable and would suit the existing fabric, requiring minimal internal alterations other than repair, refurbishment and some improvement to the building's services and thermal performance. They are also located right on the boundary with the railway line so it would be better to avoid substantial reconstruction works that would arise from any proposed replacement. The retention of these buildings will ensure their protection as local (non-statutory) heritage assets. This will require sensitive refurbishment, maintaining as much existing building fabric as possible. Any redevelopment needs to be

considered and should reflect and respect these existing buildings. It is noted, however, that, given its location to the south west side of the site, this fragment of historic development remains landlocked and is a remnant building from the Victorian era, surviving out of context and being occupied differently, with some adaptation, from its original stable use.

The site is currently utilised as commercial B1 office and light industrial use. The change of use to mixed use (B1 commercial use and C3 residential) will provide an opportunity for the provision of employment within the local area to be retained and increased. Providing better and more comfortable accommodation will create the potential for a greater level of employment, being more attractive to a wider range of potential future tenants.

The context is mixed, as described above, between the residential area and the adjacent studio buildings. It is of a varied scale ranging from 2½ storey houses to 4-5 storey apartment buildings. As such, the scale of the existing buildings on the site is very low; lower than all other buildings in the context. The opportunity therefore exists to provide a better and more efficient redevelopment with additional accommodation up to four storeys in height without having an impact on the amenities of its neighbours or changing the general scale and character of scale in the area.

The site's location, remote from the adjacent residential area results in it being of very low visibility to its context. As such, it is somewhat unique in the local area with many being residents unaware of its arrangement and scale.

The main impact that the site has (particularly with its current use) is the movement of commercial vehicles to and from it. The site does not form part of a Conservation Area and both its location remote from adjacent apartments and houses and the variety of age and style of local buildings avoid the need for any particular reference or repetition of architectural style or form. The site is large enough to generate its own character, suggesting a degree of uniformity to any proposed redevelopment.

Whatever the use proposed, a greater level of floorspace can be accommodated on the site, optimising the potential re-use of this previously developed brownfield urban site.

Redevelopment will improve the ecological value of the existing site. Currently developed with a full site coverage of building or hardstanding, there is no permeability and no storage, collection or reuse of surface water. As such, the existing surface water run-off rate will be very high. The proposal will improve this situation with the implementation of a sustainable urban drainage system (SUDs) to mitigate and attenuate surface water run-off, helping to alleviate future risks of surface water flooding.