

12 Ottershaw urban area characterisation

12.1 Introduction

- (i) The urban area of Ottershaw is located in Foxhills ward. It covers an area to the south of Murray Road off Brox Road and Slade Road, and a smaller area west of The Otter roundabout leading off Chobham Road. Guildford Road, Chobham Road and Murray Road all meet at the roundabout and form the main traffic distributor routes network for the urban area.
- (ii) Although primarily a residential area of mixed character, Ottershaw has its own identity and sense of place which is partly derived from the clearly identifiable 'heart' of the urban area, focussed on The Otter and adjoining local shopping parade and community facilities, as well as being surrounded by open green belt countryside.

12.2 Local Character Areas

- (i) Ottershaw has three distinct urban character areas as follows, set in an undulating landscape with mature trees lining and visually dominating many of the buildings, roads and lanes:
 - o Housing area of mixed type to the west of Guildford Road and adjoining Chobham Road.
 - o Housing area of mixed type to the east of Guildford Road and south of Murray Road - extending south along Brox Road, Slade Road and Bousley Rise.
 - o The 'core' area - including The Otter public house, shopping parade and local community facilities in the north end of the Brox Road area.
- (ii) Much of the identified character derives from the period in which the areas of housing were constructed, but other features such as built form, street pattern and layout, densities and trees all contribute.

12.3 Historic development

- (i) Ottershaw was originally a small rural hamlet with properties widely spaced along the main roads. It experienced some late C19/early C20 housing development in very small pockets, mainly on Murray Road and Brox Road, including the church and local hall. The facade of the former early C19 workhouse on Murray Road is now listed and converted to housing. Very little changed during the inter-war period but it did include the rebuilding of The Otter public house c1927, a local landmark. Following the second world-war large areas were developed for housing and included the local shopping parade on Brox Road. This was followed by further housing development in the latter part of the C20 and earlier this century, some in the form of ribbon development along the Chobham and Brox Roads.



The Otter public house at the Guildford Road roundabout – a visually important local landmark

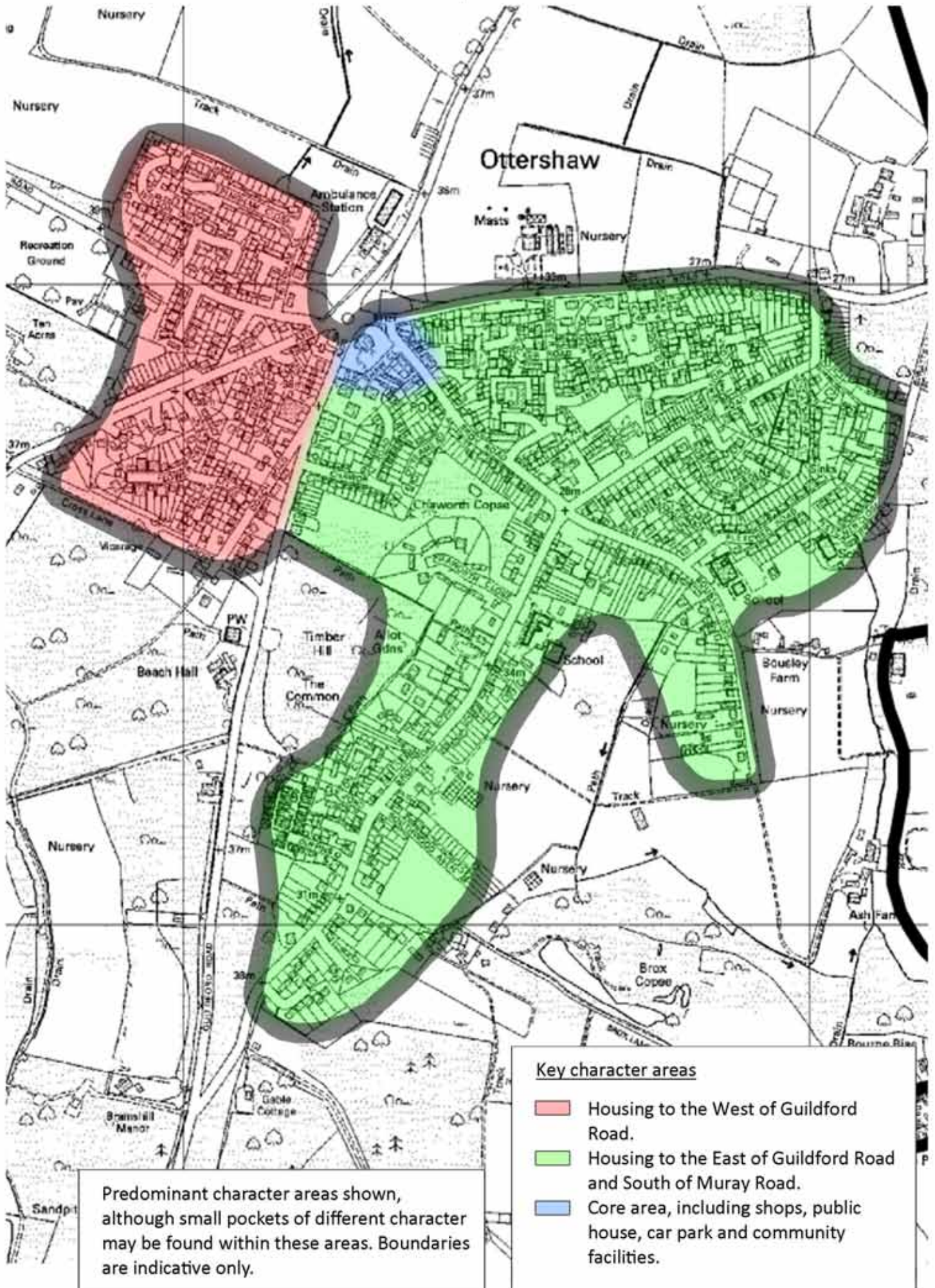
- (ii) Urban area housing is identified by historic character types on the accompanying map (refer to common features in the Appraisal Parameters). These are:
- (iii) [Housing Character Type 1](#)
Housing from this period was developed in small pockets on Foxhills Road, Guildford Road, Murray Road and Brox Road, displaying typical characteristics including narrow and deep plots, red stock brick, slated roofs and sash windows.



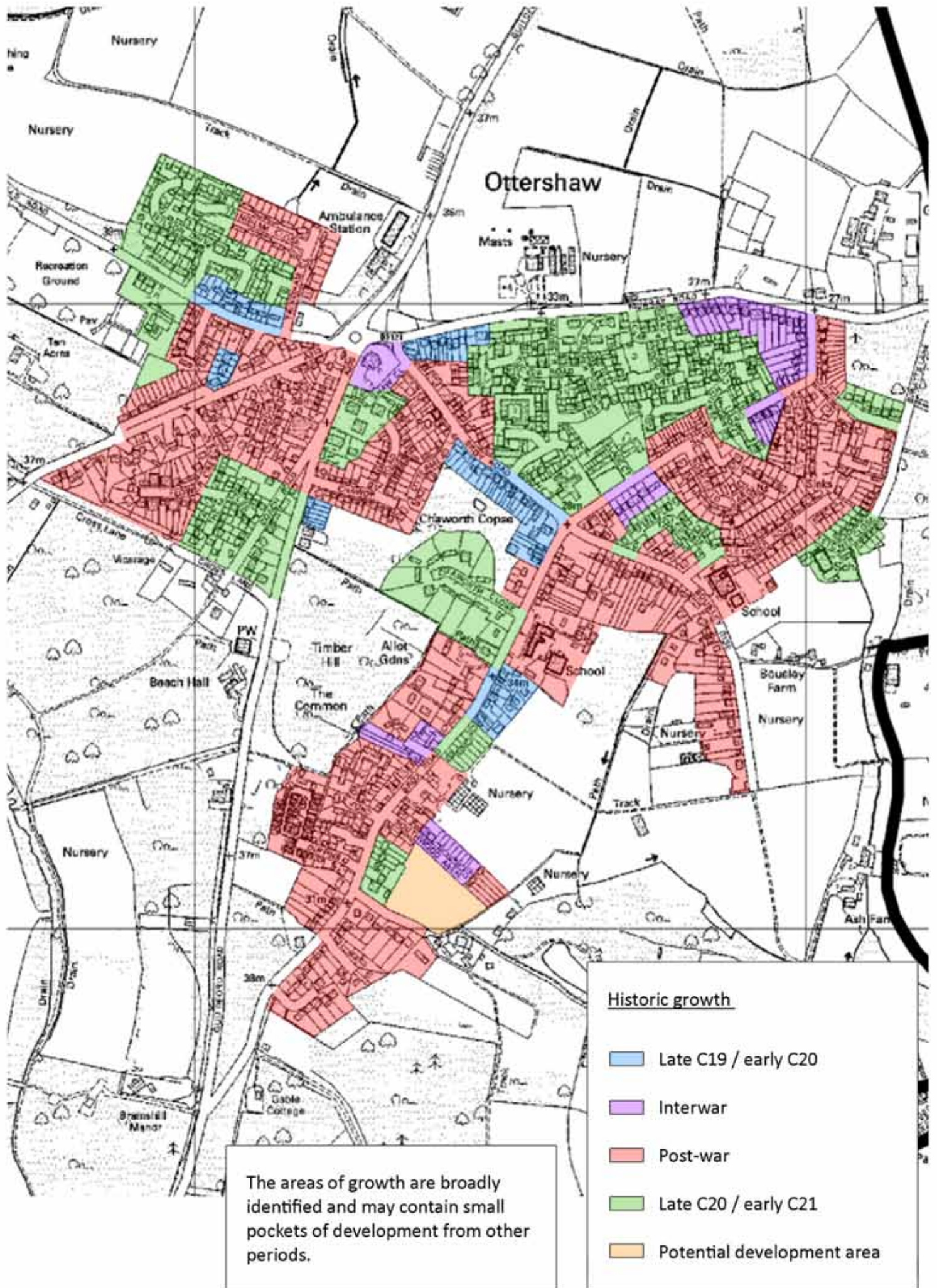
Early C20 houses on Brox Road form one of the small pockets of development from this period

- (iv) [Housing Character Type 2](#)
Modest developments are located on Slade Road, Murray Road, Brox Road and Southwood, and because of their small numbers have little impact on local character.

Ottershaw Urban Area - key character areas



Ottershaw Urban Area - historic growth



(v) Housing Character Type 3

The post-war building boom included much of the recognised Ottershaw urban area. Large amounts of housing were built in the area of Chobham Road, Coach Road and Brox Road (which included the shopping parade), and extended to the south along Brox Road and to the east in the Bousley Rise and south of Slade Road area. These have street patterns and house types typical of those being developed nationwide at this time, many being medium density cul-de-sac forms, with large numbers of bungalows.



Post-war cul de sac bungalow development – Simons Close



Post-war council estate housing on Tringham Close, illustrating issues arising from restricted on-site parking opportunities

(vi) Housing Character Type 4

In the latter part of the C20/early C21 further housing development has taken place, with the most significant areas located to the north of Foxhills Road and substantial developments on and to the south of Murray Road, including Vernon Close and Clarendon Gate. These are generally characterised by cul-de-sac layouts and roads patterns lacking identity and often difficult to navigate in and out of.



Wilson Drive – typical late C20 cul de sac layout and form

An exception is the distinctive Chaworth Close low density development. This emulates the Arts and Craft architectural style on a gently sloping site with a curving cul-de-sac of detached houses set amongst mature trees.



Chaworth Close – distinctive low density late C20 housing in the 'Surrey Style', referencing late C19 Arts and Crafts architecture

On Murray Road the Murray House development of the former workhouse facade addresses the road in a quasi-mews style, incorporating the small workhouse chapel, also converted to residential use with a distinctive appearance and landmark status.



Murray House – new housing incorporating conversion of listed facade to former early C19 workhouse, adding to local distinctiveness

12.4 Landscape setting, trees, views and landmarks

- (i) The gently undulating topography of the urban area affords mainly short distance views of townscape. The presence of large numbers of impressive mature trees preserved in the area often soften and hide views of houses, creating a semi-rural appearance and character in some parts.

- (ii) The key visual and physical landmarks in the area which help visitors to navigate the area are:
 - The Otter public house on the Guildford Road roundabout, a distinctive building dating from the 1920's with typical features of public houses constructed in that period including a symmetrical design, large pitched and hipped clay tile roofs and Flemish bond red brickwork.
 - 2 Chobham Road – an C18 listed building now used as an estate agents and prominently located at the junction with Foxhills Road.
 - Brook Hall, at the junction of Murray Road and Brox Road. Although of small scale proportions this public hall has a strong visual presence and adds to the sense of local identity.
 - The former chapel on Murray Road, now converted to residential use as part of a housing scheme, but still features prominently in view from the road.



2 Chobham Road, an C18 listed local landmark



Former chapel on Murray Road, now converted to residential use, remains as a local landmark

12.5 Uses and activities

- (i) As previously described the urban area mainly comprises housing, together with a thriving local shopping parade on Brox Road and other local facilities including schools and community uses.



Local shops on Brox Road create activity



The visually distinctive Ottershaw Social Club on Brox Road contributes to community life

12.6 Streets and buildings

- (i) The road hierarchy within the area is largely historic, based on the earlier network of country lanes. The key hierarchy is described in the introduction, and spreading from this are the secondary roads and lanes serving the various residential areas. The urban area has a 'T' form with a compact 'core' centred on the Guildford Road roundabout and linear or ribbon forms of development leading from it. As previously described, the presence of many large mature and visually imposing trees lining the roads is an important contributor to the local character.



Coach Row retains its original rural character as a tree lined lane



Brox Road shopping parade – the public car park is to the north side of Murray Road making pedestrian access from it to the shops more difficult.

12.7 Local details

- (i) Generally the existing varied housing styles and types must be recognised as existing context, and reflected in the form of any new development, albeit in a contemporary interpretation. For example, those areas of late-Victorian housing typically show use of red brick and natural slate and clay tile roofing. Their detail is in the decorative bargeboards, attractive bay windows and porches and other such features, which enhance local character. Interwar and post war housing generally reflects suburban character of the period with large hipped and pitched roofs topped by chimney stacks above rendered, pebble-dash or brick walls, with bay windows and porch architectural features. Front gardens are bounded by low walling and hedges.



Mock 'Tudor' style of housing on Brox Road does not reflect existing context

12.8 Public realm, Traffic and Parking

- (i) The only area of public realm identified is centred on Brook Hall and the adjoining Brox Road shopping parade, which is thriving and well maintained. The public car park serving this core is located on the opposite side (north) of Murray Road, which results in high levels of pedestrian movement across this road.

- (ii) As elsewhere there are high levels of fast moving traffic impacting on local character on the main distributor routes of Murray Road, Chobham Road and Guildford Road. The roundabout is extremely busy and the roads linking to it are difficult to cross as a pedestrian.
- (iii) No parking need issues are identified, but walking from the well-used public car park near the roundabout on the north side of Murray Road to the shops and other community facilities on Brox Road shops can be hazardous in traffic terms.

12.9 Negatives – pressures, issues and threats to local character

- (i) No specific threat to local character has been identified other than the traffic congestion previously described, added to by the close proximity of St Peter's Hospital. This causes difficulty for pedestrians navigating the main roads leading to and from the roundabout.
- (ii) Because the area is very constrained physically there are few opportunities for change. Consequently any changes that do occur will have a more intense and disruptive impact on character.

12.10 Positives – opportunities, enhancement and improvements to local character

Chapter 5 identifies those opportunities common to all the urban areas. Only one specific opportunity to reinforce and improve the Ottershaw urban area character is identified:

Local Issue

Difficult pedestrian movement

This is of particular concern for pedestrians crossing Murray Road from the public car park to the shops on Brox Road, and crossing Guildford Road and Chobham Road in the vicinity of the roundabout.

Recommendation

Prepare a pedestrian access improvement scheme

A scheme could be prepared for the vicinity of the roundabout and shops to enhance the pedestrian environment, including improving the pedestrian link from the car park on Murray Road to the shops and other community facilities on Brox Road. This would be in liaison with the Surrey County Council highway authority.



Pedestrians have to cross the busy Murray Road in order to access the local shops from the car park



Heavy traffic volumes at the roundabout hinder pedestrian accessibility