

WATERSIDE



Tuck in: Berkeley's Taplow Riverside, left and above, will offer 139 private homes

properties and the former stables, which will be renovated into new homes that retain some period features. Two former paper mills also had to be demolished but are being rebuilt as wharf-style apartment blocks in a design that echoes their

Lodge, which will be completely rebuilt in period style, will sell for £7 million to £8 million.

Thirty of the available homes have been sold, with 10 already occupied. "We're seeing a mix of families and downsizers, as well as investors and young professionals who are moving out of London," says Saunders-Davies. "The attractions of the area are obvious: the Thames, the proximity to Oxford and the connections to London."

Roux at Skindles will open in the autumn of next year. Designed over two storeys, the dining room will be on the ground floor with what Roux calls a "club-style lounge" on the upper floor. Like the Waterside Inn, the day-to-day operations will be overseen by Roux's son, Alain, but instead of fine dining, Roux wants his new venture to be a more informal destination that reflects the relaxed waterside setting.

"It will be totally different to our other establishments. It has the best situation on the river, will overlook a beautiful bridge and have a lovely terrace," he says. "Everything must be the best. A place can have an idyllic location but still lack soul - it needs to have the right vibe. The restaurant won't just be for a special occasion but somewhere people will feel at ease."

'Skindles hotel had a wonderful position and was a place to be seen'

industrial heritage. Part of the site will also be given to brand new homes.

Currently on sale are two- and three-bedroom flats in Jubilee Mill, which overlooks the river, priced from £650,000. There are also three- to five-bedroom new-build houses in Jubilee Meadow, from £1.36 million.

The prime properties are the seven four-bedroom waterfront villas, which are priced from £2.12 million.

They are built over three storeys, have private moorings and are situated on the former Skindles site, next to Roux's new restaurant.

There is also an opportunity to buy one of the five detached

Victorian villas, which are in varying states of repair and will be renovated on a bespoke basis. Saunders-Davies predicts that Dunloe

river, near Maidenhead.

"We'd been aware of the site for some time and eventually bought it in 2014," says Andrew Saunders-Davies, chairman of Berkeley. "It's an amazing environment, between two rivers with acres of open space. Now we're bringing new homes, regenerating existing buildings, opening up places that have been closed to the public and constructing a new footbridge."

The project will offer 139 private residences on 42 acres that will also include riverside walks, 150 new moorings, commercial space and a 60-unit senior living facility, as well as a new footbridge to link the development to Maidenhead, two miles away. Also nearby is Taplow station, which has direct trains to London in 33 minutes.

The new Crossrail connection opens in 2019, putting the village 50 minutes from Canary Wharf.

Sadly, the original Skindles hotel was too derelict to be saved but the site includes several detached Victorian

Yes, chef: Michel Roux and his son Alain, right



Celebrity chef's taste of something different

Michel Roux tells *Laura Latham* about his first restaurant in a residential development, on the site of the former Skindles hotel

Celebrity chefs may be two a penny these days, but few have the status or cachet of legendary French master Michel Roux. At 76, he is still passionate about what he does and is working on a new venture that will, for the first time, associate his name with a residential developer.

His new restaurant, tentatively called Roux at Skindles, will be part of Taplow Riverside, an upmarket development by Berkeley near the village of Taplow, Buckinghamshire. Situated on the site of a once-famous hotel called Skindles, it's just a few miles from the Waterside Inn, the

fine dining establishment that Roux founded in the Berkshire foodie hotspot of Bray in 1967.

In the mid-1800s, Skindles was transformed from a 17th-century coaching inn to a fashionable riverside hotel, popular with weekending Victorians. However, its heyday was during the 20th century, when it became a popular destination for adulterous assignations. The hotel featured in the play *Journey's End* and the 1949 film *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, and attracted famous visitors including Princess Margaret, Sir Winston Churchill, the Rolling Stones and Roux himself. "I knew Skindles hotel and went there on a few

occasions for a drink," he says. "It had a wonderful position and was a place to be seen but I wasn't a regular."

The historic nature and picturesque location of the proposed restaurant persuaded Roux to take on the new venture. "It's the first time I've been involved in a residential project but this isn't just any development," he says. "I love this part of the world and Berkeley has a reputation for quality. It will be a superb development and wonderful for the community."

Over the past few decades, Skindles fell out of use and into disrepair, as did much of the surrounding estate, which is on a wooded peninsula sandwiched between the Thames and the Jubilee

Michel Roux's new cookbook *Cheese*, with more than 100 recipes, will be published by Quadrille on October 19, priced at £25.

