

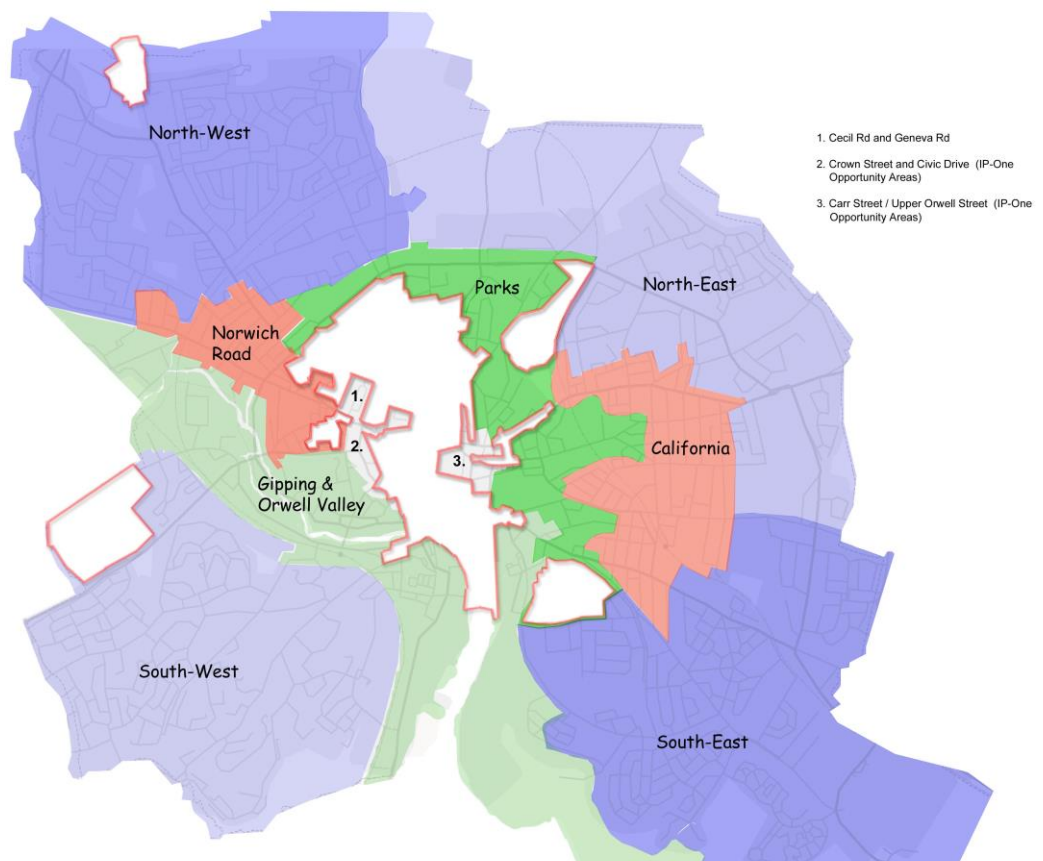
IPSWICH URBAN CHARACTERISATION STUDY

Introduction

The Council is committed to high quality change which safeguards the best of the town's urban character and neighbourhoods and secures positive improvements. In order to ensure that planning policies and decisions enhance the environmental characteristics of the Borough, an Urban Characterisation Study has been undertaken to define the environmental characteristics of the area as a whole. This study is being prepared as a supplementary planning document (SPD) which means that it is a material consideration in the planning process. The document will be subject to formal public consultation before its adoption by the Council.

The map shows the extent of the study. It comprises eight Urban Character Areas, divided between inner and outer urban zones. The study for the inner urban areas will be adopted in due course. It is expected that the outer urban areas will be completed and adopted by 2016.

Position the mouse over the map to select an Urban Character Area or Conservation Area.



The Study area does not include the Borough's 14 Conservation Areas, which have separate *Conservation Area Appraisals*. It also does not include a small number of town centre sites which are designated as part of the Opportunities Areas within the *IP-One Area Action Plan*. Geneva Road and Cecil Road are uncategorised within the Study, but are established residential areas where redevelopment issues are considered unlikely to arise.

The Purpose of the Ipswich Urban Characterisation Study

The Ipswich Urban Characterisation Study is an area-based study which identifies and highlights the distinctive characteristics of Ipswich Borough. The Urban Character Areas are considered to have shared and locally distinctive features which are worthy of recognition in the Development Management process.

This does not mean that development and change is not welcome within these areas. Rather, the Study draws attention to features which help define the sense of place in a particular location, and which should be reflected in the design of development proposals.

The Study is one of a suite of Conservation and Design documents intended to inform the planning process, assist planning applicants and be of general interest to the public :

- *Ipswich Urban Characterisation Study (SPD)*
- *Ipswich Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (SPG)*
- *Ipswich Consolidated List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest*
- *Ipswich Local List (Buildings of Townscape Interest) (SPD)*

Some or all of these documents may apply to an application. If in doubt, please contact the Council's *Conservation and Design Team*.

Methodology

The preparation of the Study has followed established urban characterisation practice. The character area boundaries do not correspond to administrative or political boundaries (although ancient boundary lines such as the river are included). Instead, the extent of the areas has been established through a process of desk and field research. Characteristics which appear to be shared within an area have been mapped:

- Social and economic history (for example medieval, 18th or 19th century, early 20th century)
- Architectural history (is there a dominant pattern of built form ?)
- Patterns of architectural survival and replacement (how much evidence is there of change ?)
- Underlying topography (for instance is the ground level or sloping, low lying or upland?)
- Natural features such as springs, the river and estuary.
- Tree cover (for instance areas of woodland, street tree planting or garden trees)
- Pattern of open spaces (the pattern of open space, for instance parkland, recreation grounds, private gardens ?)
- Street types and junctions (for instance major through roads, local service roads, culs de sac?)

Four urban character areas were established for the first section of the Study:

- California (19th century Freehold Land Society housing and private housing on level land, terraced housing, regular street grid, private front gardens, few trees or public open spaces).
- Gipping and Orwell Valley (early medieval historical associations, waterfront, commerce, road and railway corridors, 19th century industrial development, modern redevelopment, nature and wildlife areas)
- Norwich Road (early and later 19th century terraced housing in a variety of styles, major and minor road frontages)
- Parks (sloping landform with springs and woodland, mixed 19th century residential development, public open spaces, views across the town centre).

Each of these areas was then tested through a process of more detailed desk research, consultation with local heritage societies and site visits. Every street within each character area was visited and photographed. Although individual buildings were recorded, the emphasis has been on the shared characteristics of an area, for instance streetscape types and open space.

Finally, the researched material was compiled into a draft character area document, which was then submitted for comments to interested parties and the Council's independent Conservation and Design Panel.

In addition, the process has been subject to the normal SPD consultation process.

How to Use the Ipswich Urban Characterisation Study

Planning applicants should consult the Study for background information on their site. Each Characterisation Area is described in terms of:

- history and archaeology
- transport and access
- open space and biodiversity
- landform and views
- urban analysis
- detailed area and sub-area descriptions

The local distinctiveness of an area is typically a combination of factors. A residential area may be characterised by the historic period in which it was developed. Similar housing nearby may be distinguished by its location in a hilly area, which produces a different streetscape with more views and perhaps more mature tree cover. The Valley area stands out because of its long historical associations with the river and estuary and the continuing presence of commerce and industry.

Within these settings a huge range of development design responses is possible, from traditional to modern. The Council does not favour one architectural style over another; rather it wants to encourage design which acknowledges and responds to its setting. This is often best achieved through high quality modern design rather than historical pastiche. Similarly, the best response to a site may be to create contrast rather than complement.

The Study provides an easily accessible reference for site owners and agents considering a development design. Ideally, it should be consulted at an early stage in the process (although it can be referred to any point). It will be a reference document during the Council's Pre-Application Advice process. Where a Design and Access Statement is required, applicants will find the Study provides useful contextual information which can be used to justify a chosen design approach.

Links

- *Ipswich Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (SPG)*
- *Ipswich Consolidated List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest*
- *Ipswich Local List (Buildings of Townscape Interest) (SPD)*
- *Draft Site Allocations and Policies (Incorporating IP-One Area Action Plan) (DPD)*