

CHANTRY,
STOKE PARK AND
MAIDENHALL
CHARACTER AREA

IPSWICH URBAN CHARACTERISATION STUDY



IPSWICH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
History	2
Transport and Access	5
Open Space	6
Biodiversity and Archaeology	7
Landform and Views	8
Urban Analysis	9
Character Sub Area Description – Belstead Road	10
Character Sub Area Description – Stoke Park & Maidenhall	12
Character Sub Area Description – Chantry	14
Summary	17

INTRODUCTION

The character area comprises one of Ipswich's most popular residential suburbs, occupying the sweep of upland between the Orwell and the Belstead Brook. It divides into three character sub areas:

- Chantry
- Stoke Park and Maidenhall
- Belstead Road

In the 20th century, the area of former park and farmland was developed into low density estates, designed around the garden settings of Stoke Park and The Chantry. Many mature parkland trees have been protected and the slopes offer extensive views over Ipswich, the estuary and Suffolk countryside.

The general character of the area reflects the design aspirations of public housebuilding in the middle decades of the 20th century; large, solidly built semi detached and terraced housing with generous gardens, arranged around distributor roads and culs de sac with broad grass verges.

The topography, railway line and river tend to isolate the suburb from its urban surroundings, but this is compensated for by efficient road connections, a good bus service and a location which enables the railway station and town centre to be reached on bike and foot.

Chantry Green



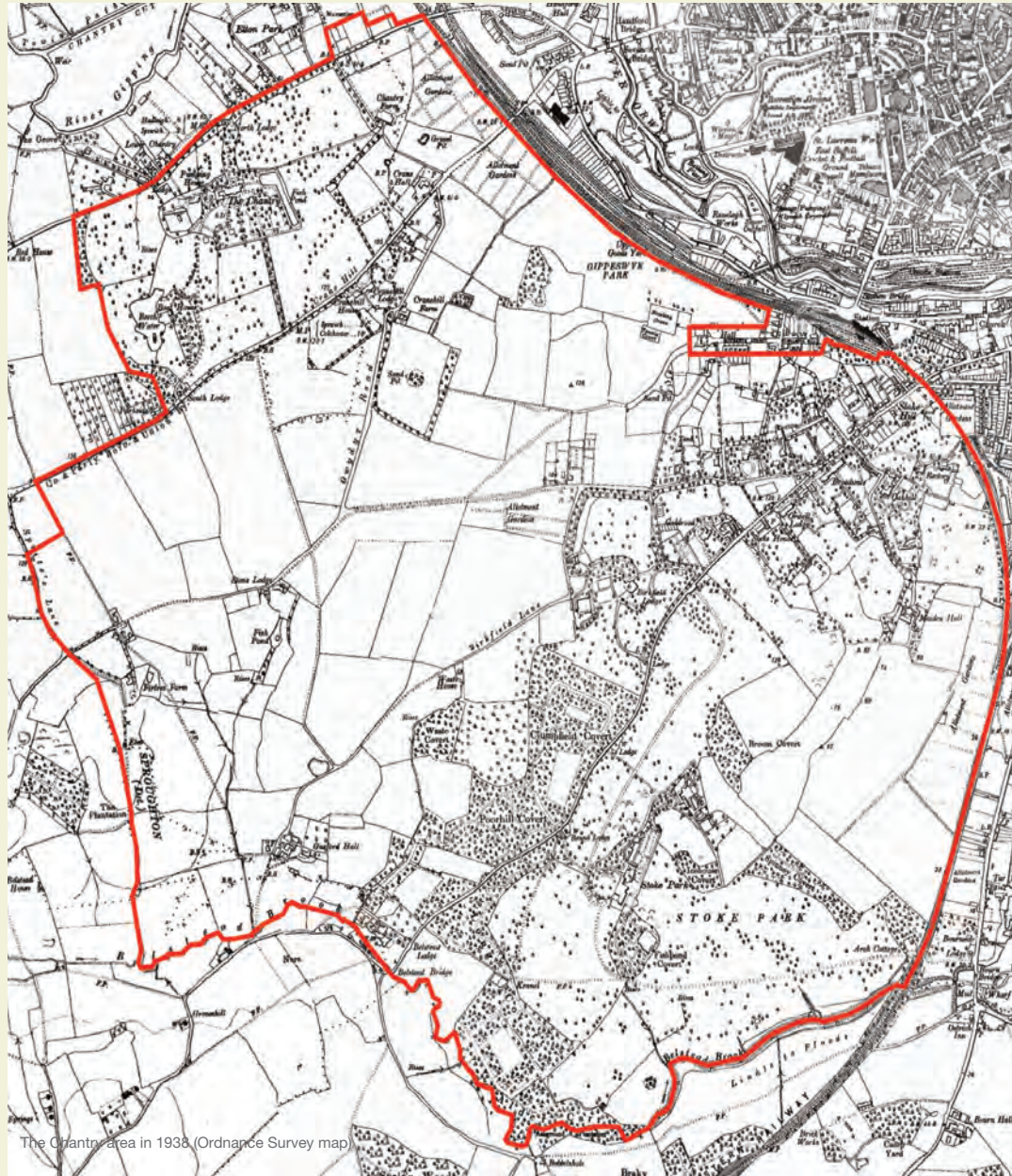
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The Chantry, Stoke Park and Maidenhall urban characterisation area and sub-areas.

The parkland trees and open spaces are the most characteristic historic features, along with the Grade II listed Chantry and estate buildings.

The site of the mansion at Stoke Park has been redeveloped, but many of the fine Victorian and early 20th century villas along nearby Belstead Road survive along with their mature garden settings. Further areas of open space and mature tree planting have been retained within the grounds of educational institutions.

Downside Close



The Chantry area in 1938 (Ordnance Survey map)

History

This area remained the most undeveloped part of Ipswich's rural hinterland until well into the 20th century. The ancient settlement of Stoke only started to expand across the lower slopes of Stoke Hill during the Victorian period, and the rapid growth of residential neighbourhoods seen elsewhere in Ipswich was checked by the boundaries of the large estates at Stoke Park and The Chantry.

Early photographs give a good idea of the area's character. The image below is of the Belstead Brook around a century ago, in a completely rural setting. Analysis of the tithe map for St Mary at Stoke parish shows that in 1840 approximately 60% of the land was used for arable farming, another 25% for pasture and the remainder for housing, gardens and parkland.

The relatively undisturbed landscape has preserved some of the earliest evidence of activity in the Ipswich area. In the 1960s, during excavation works for housing, a hoard of solid gold torcs - Iron Age necklace ornaments, dating from around 75BC - were discovered near the source of a spring above Belstead Brook.



Iron Age Torcs, found near Ellenbrook Drive.



Belstead Brook c.1900

HISTORY

The grounds of Broadwater House during the First World War when the house was being used as a convalescent home.



Following the Reformation the former abbey lands were divided into private estates. The owners continued to farm the land, for example Andrew Sulyard who built Gyppeswyk Hall in the early 16th century (originally called New Place). Edmund Daundy, an Ipswich merchant, purchased the land which would become, in the 18th century, The Chantry.

These projects were able to take advantage of the availability of land, the open views and the springs – ideal for parkland with ornamental water features.

Peter Burrell, the 4th Baron Gwydyr, inherited Stoke Park in 1848. He invested large sums in both the house and the remodelling of the extensive parklands. Although the house has been lost, much of the mature tree planting on the south east side of the character area has been preserved.

On the extensive areas of land between the estates, mixed agricultural use continued throughout the 18th and 19th century. A number of windmills were constructed, creating landmarks on the Ipswich skyline which can be seen in prints and paintings from the period.



Stoke Park. The mansion in the photograph was built in the 1830s by Lord Belstead on the site of an earlier house and demolished in the mid 1920s.



Windmills were landmarks on the Ipswich skyline; 17 were visible in the 1830s of which 6 were in the Stoke area. The engraving, dated 1843, shows two of the mills on Stoke Hill. The appearance of residential development wasn't welcomed by everyone. On Stoke Hill the miller complained that nearby housing was robbing the wind from his sails!

In the 20th century, bequests transferred these estates into public ownership. Ambitious house building programmes, both before and after the second world war, took advantage of the topography and mature parklands, creating some of Ipswich's most attractive residential settings.



Grading of farmland in preparation for the construction of phase 1 of the Chantry housing estate (early 1950s)

Construction of public housing began in the 1930s with the estates off London and Hadleigh roads. After the war, larger estates were laid out in the Chantry and Maidenhall areas.

The publicly funded and designed estates were laid out following modern standards of public space provision, local services and transport connections. Generous open spaces were created, reflecting pre-war ideas about garden city design. Roads were run around the contours of the land and as many parkland trees preserved as possible. Housing areas were served by purpose designed district and local centres.

Residential development has continued to the present day, in recent decades mostly private sector construction.



Robin Drive, Chantry (late 1950s)



Chantry Green 2015

Hawthorn Drive District Centre (late 1950s)



Ellen Brook Green Local Centre 2015





Much of the built environment and infrastructure has been masterplanned from scratch, reflecting the priorities of the postwar decades (a demand for family housing and the social and retail facilities required to service that need). The low density layout is served by a neighbourhood road network which is well connected to the surrounding primary routes, both for cars and bus services. The road design, which encourages higher vehicle speeds, is less attractive for pedestrians and cyclists though a number of parks and green spaces provide attractive routes for both. Compare, for instance, Birkfield Drive (development set back from the roadside, few junctions, higher speeds) with Belstead Road (shorter sightlines, development and mature trees closer to the road edge, lower speeds).



Kestrel Road - typical residential street with generous verges, though most streets lack the tree planting.



Birkfield Drive. The road is set within a broad landscaped strip originally intended for a dual carriageway - it even has an underpass.



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Biodiversity

The south west area of Ipswich benefits from good open space provision including large parks on three of its boundaries: Chantry Park in the north-west, Gippeswyck Park in the north-east and Bourne Park in the south-east. The southern boundary is marked by Belstead Brook Park.

County Wildlife Sites within the area are:

- Ashground Covert and Bobbits Lane Meadows (Stoke Park), with diverse habitats consisting of herb rich and rough grass meadows, fen, semi-natural woodland, seasonal wet woodland, scrub, hedgerow, reedbed, stream and ponds.
- Bourne Park Reedbed (Stoke Park), which contains habitat including reedbed with open areas of shallow water and seasonal mud, and tall rough grassland.
- Stoke Park Wood (Stoke Park), which is mixed woodland, scrub and historic grassland.
- Chantry Park (in Chantry), the designated part of which contains wet and dry broadleaf woodland, scrub, species-rich rough grassland, and a lake.

Just to the south of the character area, the rest of Belstead Brook Park includes significant wildlife sites including Spring Wood, Millennium Wood, Bobbits Lane Meadows and Kiln Meadow. This area and the Belstead Brook itself are renowned for wildlife and species include: otter, brown trout, water vole, dormouse, badger, slow worm, common lizard, grass snake, and common toad.

Belstead Road and Birkfield Drive tree belts/verges are amongst the most significant corridors for wildlife and help

define the well wooded and rich varied landscape of this area. Areas of recent meadow creation and tree planting along Birkfield Drive have greatly enhanced the biodiversity of the corridor.

Gardens play an important role in providing wildlife habitat and links into the ecological network. Any future reduction in the size or number of gardens could result in a net loss of biodiversity and reduced effectiveness of the ecological network.

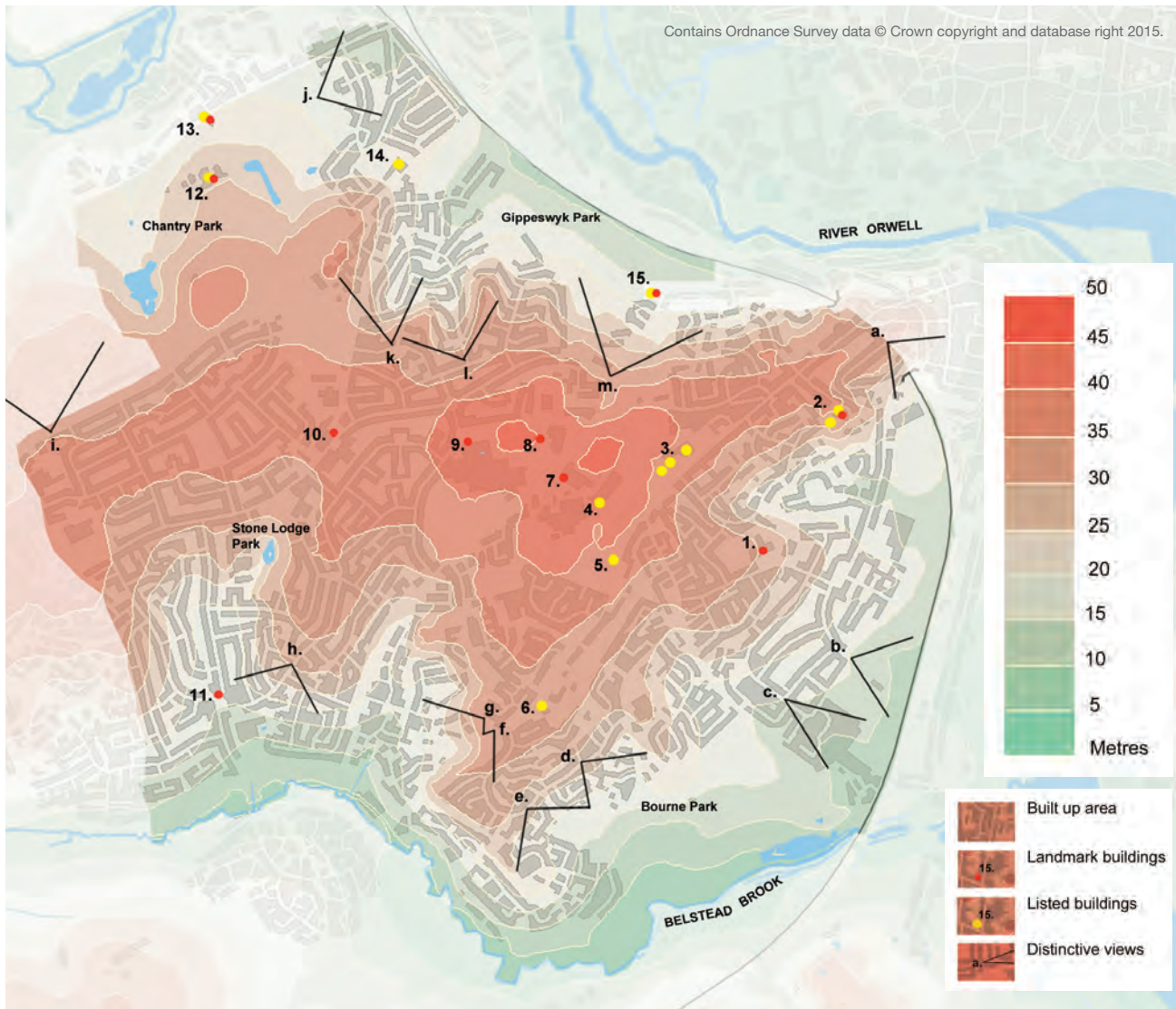
Opportunities for enhancing the biodiversity value of homes and gardens should be promoted, e.g. swift and bat features, native tree and shrub planting, ponds and other water features, fencing with gaps for hedgehogs and so on. Linear features that support the corridor functions will be most important, including hedgerows and ditches.



Clump Field



Stone Lodge Lane West water tower and reservoir



Landform and views

The elevated position creates good viewlines across Ipswich, the estuary and surrounding countryside, framed by mature tree planting. Modern housing development has helped protect some of the best views. The creation of new viewlines as well as the protection of existing views should be a development priority.

Views

- a Luther Road - view of Orwell estuary
- b Halifax Road - view of estuary and Orwell Bridge
- c Montgomery Road - view of estuary and Orwell Bridge
- d Fountains Road - view of wooded farmland south of Belstead Brook
- e Fountains Road - view of wooded farmland south of Belstead Brook
- f Girton Way - view of wooded farmland south of Belstead Brook
- g Girton Way - view of wooded farmland south of Belstead Brook
- h Sheldrake Drive - view of wooded farmland south of Belstead Brook
- i Scrivener Drive - view of open countryside near Sproughton
- j Hadleigh Road - townscape view of Ipswich
- k Lavenham Road - townscape view of Ipswich
- l Shamrock Avenue/ Cornflower Close - townscape view of west Ipswich
- m Pimpernel Road/Lavender Hill - townscape view of west Ipswich

Landmark Buildings

- 1 Halifax Primary School, Prince of Wales Drive
- 2 Oakhill & Rockery, Oak Hill Lane (Listed Grade II)
- 3 Goldrood House, Stables, Wall and Gatepiers, Belstead Road (Listed Grade II)
- 4 St Josephs College, Belstead Road (Listed Grade II)
- 5 St Josephs College Lodge, Belstead Road (Listed Grade II)
- 6 Round Lodge, Belstead Road (Listed Grade II)
- 7 St Josephs College, Birkfield Drive
- 8 Watertower, Stone Lodge West
- 9 Suffolk New Academy, Mallard Way
- 10 St Francis C of E Church & St Marys RC Church, Hawthorn Drive
- 11 Belstead Arms Public House, Bridgewater Road
- 12 The Chantry (Listed Grade II)
- 13 North Lodge & Entrance Gate Piers, The Chantry, Hadleigh Road (Grade II Listed)
- 14 Crane Hall, London Road (Grade II Listed)
- 15 Gippeswyk Hall (Grade II listed)



Bridgewater Road



Active, well defined street frontage



District Centre - 10 minute walking radius



Local Centre - 10 minute walking radius



Residential street pattern lacking in legibility and permeability. The varying landform creates middle and long distance viewlines which help mitigate the loss of visual variety.

- i) Long term development objectives should consider how both built form and public realm design can add landmarks and assist placemaking.
- ii) Traffic speeds on some access roads are too high; lower speed limits and control measures should be considered.



Features causing visual and physical separation:

- i) London Road. A significant visual and physical barrier between housing areas and Chantry Park. Opportunities to reduce vehicle speeds and improve pedestrian / cycle access across the route should be exploited.
- ii) Birkfield Drive. A linear space originally planned as a major traffic corridor into Ipswich (but never built). The underused open spaces and road dominated environment have become a physical and psychological barrier. Future plans should take into account ways to create landmarks and urban connections across the space, vary the line of the road (reducing speeds) and improve the design of junctions.

Birkfield Drive.
The traffic corridor creates a speeding hazard and uses up valuable space



CHARACTER SUB AREA - BELSTEAD ROAD

Belstead Road is an important link between Stoke to the north and the parkland landscape of Stoke Park to the south. Large 19th and early 20th century properties and mature trees and garden boundaries are distinctive features.



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The character sub-area is linear and focussed on the Belstead Road frontage. It extends between the railway tunnel at its north end and the junction with Girton Way. The road was developed in the 19th century and widened more recently to improve vehicle access and connect with the loop route along Stoke Park Drive.

Belstead Road passes through the middle of the former parkland once belonging to Stoke Park and enhanced in the 19th century by Baron Gwydyr. Many of the original trees have been retained and enhanced by planting in gardens. The mix of mature deciduous and ornamental species creates visual enclosure along most of the road's length, and individual specimens are local landmarks.

Belstead Road



Goldrood House (Grade II listed)



Balmoral Close

Townscape: Belstead Road. The street frontage is one of Ipswich's most attractive suburban settings, combining low density residential plots with the grounds of larger institutional buildings.



Clockwise from above: Belstead Road, near Holyrood Close, near junction with Oak Hill Lane, near Sandringham Close, near junction with Stone Lodge Lane

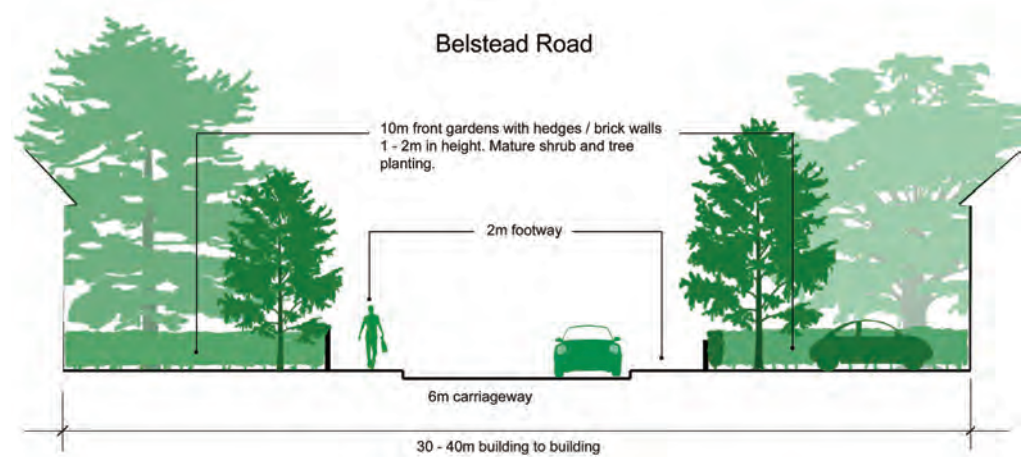
The species mix includes trees typical of the Plateau Farmlands landscape character type. Some may be surviving hedgerow trees from the earlier agricultural landscape, but most are the result of parkland planting.

The scale of tree planting dominates views along Belstead Road, creating a distinctive tunnel effect in places and closing viewlines with individual specimens.

There is a variety of edge types along the length of the road. In places, tree plantations have been retained within mown grass swards, creating linear parkland strips. Although attractive, the strips are edged with blank rear garden perimeters with no overlooking frontage.

The grounds of St Joseph's College have a hedgerow boundary which retains a sense of the area's original rural character. In places, however, the hedge blocks views of local landmarks, in particular Goldrood House.

Along most of its length, Belstead Road is fronted by large detached houses set within mature front gardens. Although set back from the road, the scale and architectural quality of the individual houses make a strong impression on the streetscape, and frontages are attractively framed by mature tree planting. Gardens are usually enclosed by trimmed hedges, close boarded timber fences or brick walls (in red or white brick, sometimes with decorative details).



New development should complement both the street facing frontages and the green street edge. Creation of extensive areas of hardstanding for carparking, particularly with no enclosure, should be resisted.

Left: Lodge to St Joseph's College (Grade II listed)

Below: Stables to Goldrood House (Grade II listed)





The characteristic housing types along Belstead Road are either detached or semi detached properties, with good street frontage, originally constructed either side of the road and surrounded by the parkland of Stoke Park. The earliest buildings are picturesque single storey entrance lodges to the larger estates, now converted into houses; alongside these are a mix of 19th and 20th century house types, mostly two storey with attics.

The building designs are good examples of fashionable residential types, ranging from Suffolk white brick villas in a late classical style to more asymmetric designs using a mix of building materials. The Arts and Crafts influence is visible in some of the early 20th century houses.

There is an emphasis on individualistic designs and an avoidance of repetitive or bland detailing; modern development should aim to reflect this quality of design.

More recent housing design has been quite successful in preserving the parkland tree planting, but in many places has poor or non existent street frontage.

High quality detailing is a feature of older properties. The massing and form of residential designs is enhanced through the use of window bays, porches, dormers and other details, which express the internal organisation of the layout and create a hierarchy of form.



This is further reinforced by decorative details and finishes, including carved masonry, moulded terracotta panels and brickwork, decorative bargeboards and eaves.

Modern design should reflect the variety of architectural form and function (within the typical two storey scale) through massing and detail.



Brick is the most characteristic building material along Belstead Road. The earliest buildings (first half of 19th century) tend to use Suffolk white brick or painted lime base render. Red brick appears in the later 19th century, sometimes mixed in decorative patterns with other clay types, eg white or blue. Moulded and carved brickwork and decorative details are also used.

Brickwork is often used in front garden boundaries, either as full height walling or dwarf walls capped by clipped hedging or vertical timber boarding. Some walls make use of simple pierced patterns. The design of garden boundaries is an important part of the local character and should be reflected in development proposals.

CHARACTER SUB AREA - STOKE PARK & MAIDENHALL

Stoke Park and Maidenhall are residential suburbs occupying the south east and south west facing slopes of Stoke Hill, on former 19th century parkland. Mature tree planting and views across the estuary and Suffolk countryside are distinctive features.



The area is a modern part of Ipswich which manages to retain visible links with the town's history and its rural setting. The distinctive topography is an important part of this; the former agricultural land slopes steeply in places towards the Belstead Brook on its southern boundary and the Orwell estuary to the east. Springs emerge around the crown of the plateau, where gravel overlies clay, and flow downwards through valleys formed in the hill slope.

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New development should continue to do this and (through imaginative building and landscape design) add to the diversity of the built environment in the area.

Modern development has been designed around the alternating valleys and ridges, creating residential enclaves with a distinctive combination of visual enclosure and outlook across the surrounding landscape; Pembroke Drive for instance and Cambridge Drive/St Catherines Court. This is enhanced by the significant amount of mature tree planting, which frames views and emphasises the sense of enclosure.

New development should continue the principle of landscape - responsive design, and improve the architectural diversity of the area. Long term objectives should also include the reestablishment, where possible, of the culverted springs as a visible feature, perhaps as part of a sustainable urban drainage scheme.



Top: Downside Close (architect Birkin Haward)
 Above: Clumpfield (architect Barefoot and Giles)
 Left: Pembroke Close

Townscape: Both public and private sector housing layouts have been successful in protecting existing trees and responding to the topography and landscape views.



Oakhill – the copper roofed belvedere of this 19th century house is a local landmark.

Tree planting is a mix of native species and ornamental varieties, most surviving from the parkland and field boundaries of the former Stoke Park estate. Some individual specimens are large enough to form local landmarks. Bourne Park preserves a significant part of Baron Gwydyr's 19th century parkland layout, including individual trees and woodland set around open grassland.

The native species mix includes Oak, Horse Chestnut, Field Maple, Hawthorn, Broom and Hazel. In lower lying areas, Crack Willow and Alder are more common. Estate owners mix a variety of exotics including varieties of Cedar, Pine, Spruce, Maple and Cypress.



Cardiff Avenue
Clump Field



The character of the area is residential. There is a small group of pre-WWII houses around Belstead Avenue, but the majority of estate building took place in the postwar period. This was initially public housing, extending into the area south of Oak Hill Lane and successfully preserving much of the tree planting in the area.

More open agricultural land was redeveloped in the 1950s for the Maidenhall estate (Montgomery Road follows the line of a former field boundary). This has the characteristic low density layout of post war housing development including broad streets with grassy verges and a local centre laid out around a green.



Downside Close
Birkfield Drive



Subsequent housing development on the upper slopes towards Belstead Road and around Bourne Park is a mix of public and private sector schemes built from the 1960s onwards. This tends to be higher density than the earlier housing and includes some innovative individual schemes, for instance the attractively landscaped Oaklee public housing estate designed by Birkin Haward.

District and local centres in the area are well used: Ellenbrook Green in particular is a successful mix of businesses and open spaces. The retail store on Stoke Park Drive is popular but poorly scaled in relation to its surroundings, and much less well integrated into its urban setting.



Ellenbrook Green Local Centre

More generally, the area lacks distinctive landmark buildings or streetscape. Whilst new development should continue the tradition of protecting landscape views and mature trees, the possibility exists for a more imaginative approach to the scale and detailing of development design. New schemes should create active road frontages and improve the visual legibility of the route network.

CHARACTER SUB AREA - CHANTRY

Chantry is a residential suburb on high ground between the Orwell and Belstead Brook. Low density public and private housing, open space and views across central Ipswich are distinctive features. Chantry Park is a Grade II registered historic park and a conservation area.

The earliest buildings in the area are either alongside or close to London and Hadleigh Roads, both important routes into Ipswich. Crane Hall on London Road is a Grade II listed 16th century farmhouse (now converted to offices). The 18th century mansion at The Chantry is set within extensive parkland, with a formal avenue of trees leading to London Road and a listed gateway and lodge to Hadleigh Road.



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Beyond the parkland, most of the area was open agricultural land with scattered farmsteads reached down country tracks such as Sprites and Stonelodge Lanes. The level site assisted in the redevelopment of the site for housing, and the area retains an exposed and largely treeless character compared to Stoke Park or Maidenhall.

The first public housing was laid out between Hadleigh Road and London Road in the late 1920s, and continued after the war on a much larger scale to the south of Chantry Park. Ipswich's house building programme in the 1950s was one of the largest in Europe.



Townscape: Lavender Hill Local Centre



Townscape: Chantry Green

The mid 19th century North Lodge and gatepiers of Chantry Park are a local landmark on Hadleigh Road.



Chantry Park, south front





Clockwise from top Sprites Lane, Chantry Green, Pickwick Road, London Road allotments.

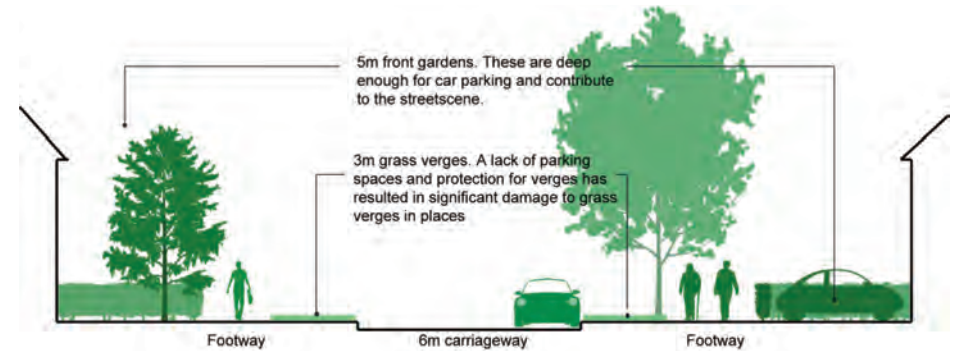
Public space was planned from the start as an integral part of the area's development. The grounds of The Chantry were preserved in public ownership. Gippeswyk Park, formerly owned by Gippeswyk Hall, is a less formal park laid out on lower ground alongside the railway line; the green edge is continued by allotments up to London Road. Smaller spaces such as Chantry Green are integrated into the housing layout.

The areas of public housing are laid out around a purpose designed neighbourhood route network. The first estate, between London and Hadleigh Roads, is designed as a series of loops off an access road. The scale and character of the streets in this area is determined by gardens

fronting footpaths. Hedge planting and groups of trees in back gardens provide a sense of scale, and gardens are deep enough to allow for off street parking.

The later housing layouts are lower density with grass verges to footpaths as well as front gardens. These create a sense of space but the lack of tree planting and the damage to grass verges caused by vehicle parking has undermined the appearance of some areas.

More recent housing south of Hawthorn Drive is higher density, closer in appearance to the pre-war density pattern.



Clockwise from top Robin Drive Cross section, St Joseph's College architect Birkin Haward (locally listed), Sprites School.

The majority of housing in the Chantry area is 2 storey, a mix of detached, semi detached and terraces of up to 4 units.

The original design of the earliest housing (late 1920s, since modified) is quite experimental, with single aspect ground floor living spaces overlooking large front gardens. Later designs have more conventional double aspect layouts, an approach continued in private housing layouts from the 1960s onwards.

The area is bisected by London Road, an important route into Ipswich which carries a high volume of through traffic. Although this provides convenient access to the town centre and to

edge of town shopping facilities at Copdock, it is a significant barrier to pedestrian movement between the housing area and Chantry Park.

The railway line to the north is also a constraint and vehicle access to the main housing area is restricted to the London Road and Ancaster Road junctions.

The lack of landmark views, variety of streetscape or distinctive buildings in the Chantry Green area undermines its legibility; a problem that could be addressed through more imaginative landscape design as well as the encouragement of distinctive or contrasting architectural styles in new development.

SUMMARY

BELSTEAD RD

Some modern developments lack street facing frontage and have visually impermeable boundaries. This should be avoided in future development proposals.

Paving of front gardens for vehicle hardstanding - where front of site parking is unavoidable, a boundary treatment should be included which reflects the character of the surrounding area.

Road junction design encourages higher driving speeds and reduces visual quality in the immediate vicinity, for instance the junctions with Stone Lodge Lane, Stoke Park Drive and Girton Way.

STOKE PARK & MAIDENHALL

Greater contrast and diversity is needed in the built environment in order to create landmarks and improve placemaking.

New development should address road frontages and open spaces positively; avoid blank

perimeter walls, inactive frontages or unused space.

Parking problems which are causing damage to grass verges should be addressed, through protective planting or similar measures and provision of small parking lots carefully integrated into the public realm.

District and local centres require public realm investment (hard and soft landscaping) in order to improve their setting.

Consideration should be given to greater use of shared surfaces within district and local centres. Publicly owned vacant lots should be developed where possible.

Traffic volumes and speeds should be reduced where possible, for instance through the introduction of a 20mph speed limit and other traffic calming measures. Improve cycle lane and pedestrian access. Tarmac surfaces to concrete slab roads have deteriorated badly in

places and require repair.

Where possible, culverted streams should be uncovered and integrated into the pattern of open space.

CHANTRY

The lack of variety in streetscapes and housing unit designs should be addressed through eye-catching and innovative development design. The elevated position of the Chantry allows for the creation of both local and (where appropriate) borough-wide landmarks.

The lack of street tree planting should be addressed where possible, to protect road verges, add scale and variety to the streetscene and emphasise key routes and spaces.

New development should address road frontages and open spaces positively; avoid blank perimeter walls, inactive frontages or unused space.

District and local centres require public realm

investment (hard and soft landscaping). Consideration should be given to greater use of shared surfaces within district and local centres.

Traffic speeds and volumes should be reduced where possible, for instance through the introduction of a 20mph speed limit and other traffic calming measures. Improve cycle lane and pedestrian access.

Improve the design of Gippeswyk Park with new tree and shrub planting, and consider how its use can be diversified.

Parking problems which are causing damage to grass verges should be addressed through protective planting or similar measures and provision of small parking lots integrated into the public realm.

Tarmac surfaces to concrete slab roads have deteriorated badly in places and require repair.