

SOUTH EAST CHARACTER AREA

IPSWICH URBAN CHARACTERISATION STUDY



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All Hallows Church Vicarage, Reynolds Road



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INTRODUCTION

The South East Urban Character Area was largely undeveloped farmland until the early twentieth century. Following the end of the First World War, much of this area was developed for housing, and reflects early-mid twentieth century public house building aspirations. Many of the residential estates in this Urban Character Area have been laid out taking a planned, garden suburb approach.

This planned suburb approach includes the provision of various parks and green spaces, which is complimentary of the character of urban Ipswich.

This area covers the south east of Ipswich towards the A14 at the borough boundary to the south. The South East Urban Character Area also includes a portion of land allocated to industrial/commercial activity to the south east of the area, formerly associated with Crane Engineering.

This Urban Character Area has been divided into 5 sub areas:

- Racecourse
- Upper Nacton Road
- Gainsborough and Greenwich
- Ravenswood
- Ransomes Way

Reynolds Road

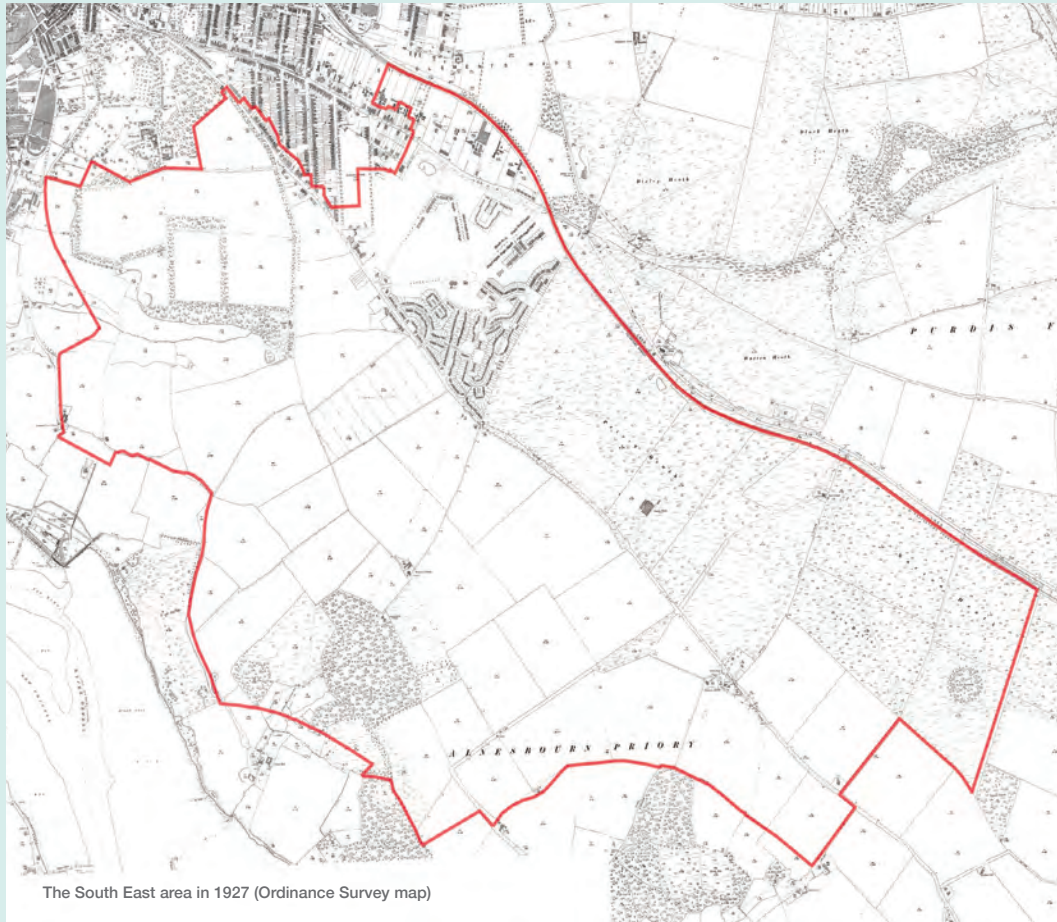


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The Castle Hill, Whitehouse and Whitton Character urban characterisation area and sub-areas.



From left to right:
Bonny Crescent
Elmhurst Drive
Open space at Ransome Road



The South East area in 1927 (Ordnance Survey map)

This survey area is characterised generally by lighter heathland soils, and was built-up prior to any requirements for archaeological investigation. Occasional, sparse finds from all periods are recorded but it may have been more generally open land.

Finds and features from the Bronze Age including burial mounds and cremations alongside field systems have been excavated, as have occupation remains of Roman, Saxon and medieval date. Ransome's Industrial Estate, has also received investigation, but remains are sparser, perhaps due to its topographic position, or due to extensive World War II gilder trap earth works designed to protect the airfield, and bomb damage (NAC 081). These are likely to have destroyed many archaeological remains that once existed.

There were few buildings in the area until the early twentieth century, as the South East was largely undeveloped farmland and estates. Very few building pre-dating the 20th century still exist in this character area, Felixstowe Villas, and Halfway House appear to be the only remaining relics of earlier development.

In the thirteenth century, Alnesbourne Priory was established to the south of the character area. Much of the land in the south west of the character area was under the ownership of the priory. By 1514, the priory was reported to be ruinous, although one wall of the former priory is thought to be preserved in the Grade II listed Alnesbourne Priory Country Club, located just outside the borough boundary.

Pond Hall, a large 16th century farmstead to the west of the character area, found in the Gipping Valley area, also occupied significant portions of land, including Pond Hall Carr. The carr remains, and is located between Gainsborough Lane and Braziers Wood, although is carved from the setting of Pond Hall Farmhouse by the A14.

A racecourse was established to the north of the character area in 1710, occupying the space between what is now Nacton and Felixstowe Road. The original course was a circuit of around 2 miles, and was awarded the Royal Plate in 1727. The racecourse went through waves of popularity, and held its last race in 1911.

Greenwich Farm 1890s Photo courtesy of David Kindred



Building on the Racecourse commenced around 1920, and is the earliest widespread 20th century housing in the character area, with much of the Racecourse housing estate being built in the 1920s. The former Racecourse Public House on Nacton Road (since demolished and now Tesco Express) was reportedly located on the finish line of the former racecourse.

Land in the south west of this character area was the site of Ipswich Airport, which opened in 1930 as a municipal airport, led by Ipswich Corporation. The airport put on air shows, as well as allowed flying of domestic routes. In 1939, the aerodrome was requisitioned by the RAF following the outbreak of the Second World War. Civil aviation recommenced following the end of WWII, and in the later 20th century, the airfield was used as a flying school as well as municipal airport. The airport was de-licenced in 1996, and developed for housing, now the Ravenswood Estate. The 1930s airport terminal was converted to residential use and is a Grade II listed building.

Conscription during the First World War highlighted the poor health of the nation, and post war planning resulted in the clearance of many urban slums, and prompted widespread house building on the edge of towns during the 1920s and 1930s. Much of the housing in this character area was built in the peak building years before the Second World War. Across Ipswich, 4,921 new houses were built on the outskirts of the town between 1921 and 1930, many of which were located in this South East Character Area.



A Victorian scene of a day at the races at Ipswich Racecourse – photo courtesy of David Kindred

Ipswich Airport with the former Crane Engineering site to the right, 1972 – photo courtesy of David Kindred



Unfortunately Ipswich fell victim to several air raids throughout the Second World War as enemy planes targeted the docks and airbase. The location of the early 20th century housing between these two strategic targets meant that the population in this area were frequently victims of bomb damage. Several air raids in 1940 resulted in damage to houses and loss of life at Landseer Road, Clapgate Lane and Nacton Road. The last air raid Ipswich faced was on 8th January 1941, where a lone plane dropped a string of ten 50 kilo bombs over the South East of Ipswich, landing on houses in Romney Road and Fletcher Road in the Gainsborough Estate, resulting in 2 fatalities and several casualties.

Planned house building continued throughout the 20th century across the South East of Ipswich, whilst an industrial centre was set up to the south benefitting from good transport links to the A14 and A12.

Bomb damaged houses at Romney Road following an air raid on 08.01.1941 – Photo courtesy of David Kindred



OPEN SPACE



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The South East character area benefits from several defined parks and open spaces, one of the largest being Landseer Park, a former landfill site in the 1950s and 1960s, since filled and landscaped, with flatter recreation space to the east, and more 'natural' heathlands to the west towards the river valley.

Brazier's Wood is an ancient woodland (land that has been continuously wooded since 1600AD) located to the south of the Gainsborough area, an area of dense woodland, with worn paths navigating through the woodland. Users of the woodland are reminded only of the urban setting by the hum of traffic using the A14.

Brazier's Wood forms part of the 100 hectares of Orwell Country Park, which loops around the south of the Ravenswood Estate, emerging into more of a heathy landscape. 'The Tump' is located to the south of the Ravenswood estate, which provides a vantage point to view the heathlands and river valley.

Open recreational spaces are often incorporated into housing developments, such as Murray Road and St Augustine's Recreation Grounds at the Racecourse Estate, and various greens around the Ravenswood Estate. It is often in these smaller pockets of open space where public art, sculptures and memorials are displayed, such as the *Sir Douglas Bader Memorial* (Malcom Road), *Handstanding, 52° North, Formation, Flightpost, Green Wind, Propeller* (all Ravenswood).

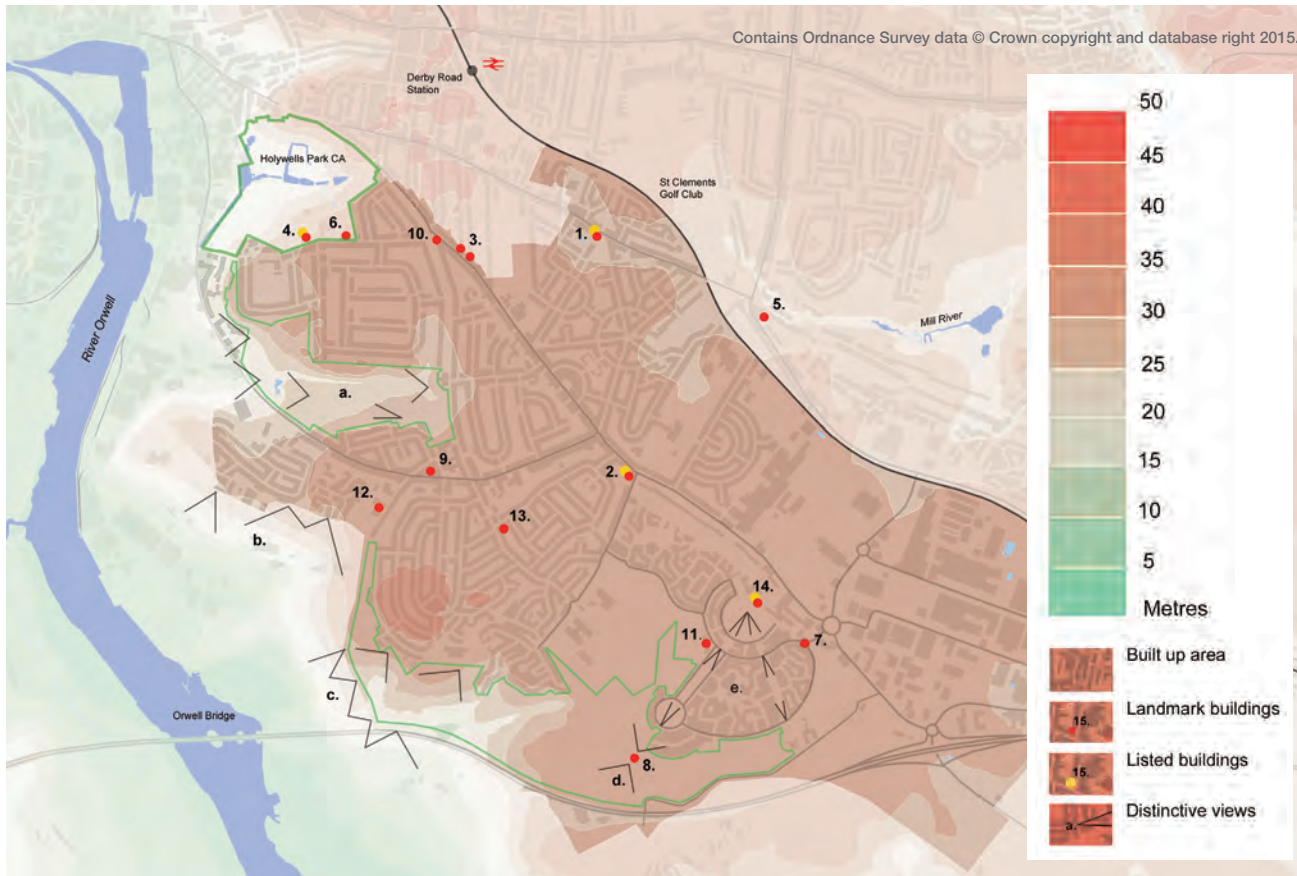
There are 9 schools in this survey area, most of which benefit from large playing fields which contribute to the extent of open space found in this character area.

The A14 acts as the boundary to much of the of the character area, which acts as a visual barrier to the open fields, and heathlands of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the south. The survey area does include some undeveloped fields to the south of the A14, which read as the open landscape towards the river valley.

New development should look to provide biodiversity improvements where possible and appropriate. This could include the provision of green roofs, green walls, bat and bird boxes, tree planting and enhancements to existing green corridors.



From Top:
Landseer Park 1964 prior to remediation - photo courtesy of David Kindred
Landseer Park 2018
Braziers Wood
View from The Tump, Ravenswood



The river estuary location provides this character area with regular rise and fall in topography, which, in the open spaces to the west of the area, gives long ranging views across the valley and over the historic core of Ipswich. Further into the character area, views are largely residential, with pockets of greenery and parks which are characteristic of this leafy suburb.

The Ravenswood Estate has been designed to maximise long ranging views through the residential development through the use of 'runways' which allow views to the surrounding open space.

Views

- a Landseer Park – estuary and townscape views
- b Sandyhill Lane – estuary and townscape views
- c Orwell Country Park – estuary and Orwell Bridge views
- d Ravenswood Park – countryside views from 'The Tump' (elevated viewpoint)
- e Ravenswood – street and avenue views

Landmark Buildings

- 1 'The Follies' (Formerly The Crown and The Havens), Felixstowe Road (Locally listed)
- 2 The Golden Hind, Nacton Road (Grade II listed)
- 3 285 & 287 Nacton Road
- 4 Margaret Catchpole PH (Grade

II* listed)

- 5 St Augustine's Church, Bucklesham Road
- 6 King George V Memorial Homes, Cliff Lane
- 7 Public Art – 'Formation' (2003) by Rick Kirby
- 8 Public Art – 'Green Wind' (2006) by Diane MacLean
- 9 All Hallows Church and Hall, Landseer Road
- 10 Shelter, Nacton Road/Clappgate Lane Junction
- 11 Ravenswood Community Primary School
- 12 Piper's Vale Community Primary School
- 13 Gainsborough Community Library
- 14 Airport Terminal Building (Grade II listed)



Pictures clockwise from top left:
The Follies, Felixstowe Road
Shelter, Nacton Road
Piper's Vale Community Primary School
287 Nacton Road

The earliest planned housing development in this character area can be found at the Racecourse estate, which is an area of early 20th century public housing, with a distinctive spoke and wheel layout which lead to pockets of open space and local centres. Housing across this area generally feature red brick and rendered dwellings, a number of which are detached single storey, but most are pairs of semi-detached houses or short terraces. Styles vary, and use mansard roofs, gables, quoining and chimneys which provides visual interest and variation.

This spoke and wheel layout gives the Racecourse Estate an interesting character, with a mix of long, straight tree-lined roads with wide, grassed footpaths, and more subtle, curved roads linking up the estate and slowly revealing the changes in housing style.

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Racecourse Estate 1930 - photo credit Britain from Above (EPW032868)



Many views from within the estate terminate at the central roundabout at the Queen's Way service centre. The central roundabout would benefit from a piece of public art or sculpture, to give some of the long ranging views through the estate more of a landmark quality.

Later 20th century public housing can be found along Felix Road and Beatty Road, to the south of the Racecourse estate, which backs onto the Lindbergh Community Site, with includes health, education and social facilities for residents. Lindbergh Road leads into Campbell and Hilton Road, and continues the spoke and wheel layout found across the earlier Racecourse estate, with pairs of semi-detached dwellings with a prominent central gables flowing through the curved road layout.

More recently, the Malcom Road development, to the southeast of the Racecourse estate won the 2015 Bricks Award for Social Housing Development of the Year. The development of 108 houses was the first substantial housing project led by Ipswich Borough Council for over 40 years. A sculpture is dedicated to RAF serviceman Sir Douglas Bader can be found in the central green off Malcom Road.

To the north of Lindbergh Close off Cobham Road is a small business park with several buildings dating from the 1930s, mainly comprising office accommodation, but also includes the Ipswich Transport Museum, a former trolley bus depot now used to display a large collection of Ipswich's transport and engineering heritage

Pictures from top to bottom:
Ransome Way
Franklin Road
Bantoft Terrace
Malcom Road



CHARACTER SUB AREA - UPPER NACTON ROAD

Dwellings along Nacton Road are generally more varied in design and feature the greatest amount of architectural embellishment, due to the piecemeal development of the northern section of this stretch of road in the late 19th century.

Clappgate Lane acts as a thread through this sub area, which features pairs of semi-detached dwellings dating from the early 1930s either side of a wide carriageway with a green tree belt dividing the houses on the east and west. This gives a particularly spacious character to the area, with wide frontages which continue north up into Nacton Road.

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A small number of dwellings in this sub area are detached single storey houses of modest proportions, but mimic the use of render, masonry, gables and bay windows to positively contribute to the character of the area.



The pairs of dwellings along Clappgate Lane feature two storey bay windows of varying designs but benefit from similar features which provide the area with an attractive, coherent character. The bay windows generally terminate with a gable, often utilising mock timber panelling, render, peg tiles and brick. The 2 storey bay window design is repeated throughout this sub area along Cliff Lane, across the Rivers Estate, and along St David's Road and King Edward Road adjacent to Murray Park.

Dwellings in this sub area are generally set back from the carriageway and have a linear layout, with ridges running parallel with the road, and are presented in a grid layout. These dwellings benefit from generous front gardens and spacing between the pairs of dwellings, which provides this area with a spacious, suburban character.

There are pockets of more modern development off Cliff Lane and Draymans Way which are more of a cul-de-sac layout, but still pick up the overriding architectural features of projecting gables and use of brick and render.

This sub area benefits from Landseer Park as a backdrop to much of the housing to the west which contributes to the out-of-town character of the area.

Pictures from top to bottom:
Nacton Road
King Edward Road
Clappgate Lane
Elmhurst Drive

This sub area is largely public housing dating from the late 1930s, and incorporates Landseer Park and Braziers Wood.

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The Greenwich area is to the west of the sub area, south of Landseer Road. Dwellings in this area are generally pairs of semi-detached dwellings of simpler architectural character than those found in the Upper Nacton Road sub area, but again utilise brick and render. The dwellings on the north side of the roads in Greenwich feature prominent, pitched shared porches. This design carries across Landseer Road and onto the development around Hogarth Road to the south of Landseer Park.

Later 20th century cul-de-sac layout housing can be found off Sandyhill Road, on the site of the former Landseer School, which was demolished in the 1980s to make way for housing. The road names in this estate are named after teachers of the former school (Broom, Ireland, Davey).

To the east of the Greenwich estate is the largest single housing development in this character area, known as Gainsborough. Gainsborough has a more fluid layout compared with many of the other roads in this character area, and has a hybrid layout of both the grids and spoke and wheel plan as seen elsewhere in this character area. The layout of this estate therefore often provides spacious corner plots.

The design of houses in the western side of the Gainsborough estate are similar to those in the Racecourse, largely 2 storey dwellings, with a mix of short terraces and pairs of semi-detached houses, featuring occasional gables. There are pockets of housing within Gainsborough which feature prominent mansard roofs, some of which have retained their original clay Roman pantile roofs, although most now have concrete roof tiles. Rendered panels above the principally red brick walls are commonly painted in Gainsborough, which gives the estate a colourful character.

The dwellings in the east side of the Gainsborough estate repeat the housing styles found in the Greenwich area, with pairs of dwellings featuring the steeply pitched porches, and then evolves into later 20th century housing which sees the repeat of the two storey projecting bay windows as so commonly found in the Upper Nacton Road sub area. Later 20th century cul-de-sac housing can be found off Brazier's Wood Road, which features a change in gradient which allows for Braziers Wood to act as a backdrop to the development. The housing off Brazier's Wood Road introduces a wider palette of materials, including buff and brown bricks, as well as the more common red brick and render, and are generally larger pairs of semi-detached dwellings, or detached houses in generous gardens. These houses were designed with driveways and garages, and so on street parking is less prevalent in this area.



Pictures from top to bottom:
All Hallows Court
Landseer Road



Pictures clockwise from from top left:
Gainsborough Community Library, Fletcher Road, All Hallows Church, Braziers Wood, Boyton Road



The Golden Hind,
Nacton Road

This sub area benefits from several sites occupied by community facilities, including numerous schools and churches which act as local landmarks throughout the sub area. As the housing in this sub area features the regular repetition of similarly designed dwellings, the varied and unique character of many of these community facilities allow for the non-domestic buildings in this sub area to benefit from a more distinctive identity.

The Gainsborough Community Library is an interesting contemporary building on Clappgate Lane, just south of The Treehouse Nursery, which repurposed the 1930s Duke of Gloucester pub which closed in 2000. Piper's Vale Primary Academy off Raeburn Road is a contemporary school with projecting roof forms.

This sub area includes the Grade II listed All Hallows Church, erected in 1938-9 to the designs of Hector Munro Cautley, to serve the Anglican community of the new Gainsborough estate, which sits prominently on Landseer Road, contrasting with the more traditional design of housing opposite.

All Hallows Church is regarded as Cautley's finest work in Suffolk which is illustrative of the Modernist movement of the 1930s, and still retains its internal layout and character.

The Grade II listed Golden Hind Public House can also be found in this sub area at Nacton Road. The Golden Hind was erected in 1936, built by Tollemache Brewery as one of a series, using Jacobethan influences from the Tollemache family home, Helmingham Hall. At the time of building, the Tollemache and Cobbold Breweries were local rivals, with both brewers using the architecture of their public houses to project a corporate image, now collectively known as 'Tolly's Follies'.

To the south of this sub area is the ancient woodland of Braziers Wood, and the Orwell Country Park which screens the housing areas from the A14, and acts as a rural edge to the suburb. Between Gainsborough Lane and Morland Road is an area of allotments, which reinforces the rural edge of the town.

The residential development of the Ravenswood Park estate on the site of the former airfield commenced in 1999. The Grade II listed former airport terminal has been converted to residential accommodation, and is located at the north of the development. The former terminal looks south west over a green, and along Downham Boulevard toward the *Green Wind* sculpture on 'The Tump'. Downham Boulevard is laid out along the line of a runway, illustrative of the former use of the site as an airfield.

The differing designs of architecture around Ravenswood gives the area an interest and quality quite different to some of the other sub areas, and provides the Ravenswood estate with some distinctive zones. The dwellings around the former terminal borrow Neo-Georgian influences forming an arc at Bonny Crescent. More contemporary designs featuring 2 and 3 storey dwellings with mono pitched roofs can be found around Downham Boulevard, whilst those at Dunwich Close feature rendered projecting box gables. The dwellings around Fen Bight Circle echo the language of the former terminal building, whilst some of the accommodation along Ravenswood Close reflects architectural language of malting buildings found along the waterfront.

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The development is laid out along streets which benefits from pockets of open spaces within the residential core of the estate, as well as the larger open spaces of the runways and crescent. The relatively modest front gardens are accommodated for by the generous expanses of open space within and nearby Ravenswood around these various parks.

The entrance to Ravenswood off Nacton Road includes a District Shopping Centre which provides shops and restaurant facilities which contribute to the independent character of the estate. The striking architecture of the Ravenswood Community Primary School off Downham Boulevard illustrates the aspirations of the estate and the residents who live there.

Ravenswood mimics the spoke and wheel layout of the Racecourse Estate, and helps define the character of the South East Urban Character Area. The additional benefit of the spoke and wheel layout allows for the Ravenswood estate to blend comfortably into the heathy landscape of Ravenswood Park. The curved design of the estate acts as a soft edge to the development, leading to the rural edge of the borough. There is further land allocated for residential development at Ravenswood, which provides opportunity to continue contributing to this distinctive estate in terms of layout and architecture, as well as public art, whilst also connecting with the open landscape and Country Park adjacent to the estate. Upon travelling south under the A12, the fields immediately open up and give the sense of departing urban Ipswich and lead into the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the south.

Pictures from top to bottom:
 Fen Bight Walk
 Cranberry Square
 Airport Terminal now in residential use
 Ipswich Airport 1972 – photo courtesy of David Kindred



Ravenswood benefits from several sculptures and public art commissions, which enhance the environment in which the estate is experienced, and responds to the high quality design and aspirations of the Ravenswood development.

Referencing the former airfield use of the site, most sculptures in Ravenswood have an aviation and flight theme, including *Flightpost* by Andrew Smith nearby Ravenswood Health Centre, *Formation*, a series of six female figures seemingly flying as a group marking the entrance to the Ravenswood development by Rick Kirby, and *Propeller*, a stone blade sculpture by Harry Gray. *52° North* depicts the mythical horse Pegasus with the names of towns and cities which share the same latitude (52° North) as Ipswich marked into the wings.

Green Wind by Diane Maclean is perhaps one of the most prominent sculptures around Ravenswood, sitting atop The Tump, an elevated mound which provides a vantage point over the estate. *Green Wind* features 12 'wings' which respond to the direction of the wind and change colour across the seasons.

Handstanding by Martin Heron is a sculpture of a child doing a handstand, constructed using steel in the shape of hands and celebrates the joining together of a new community.



Pictures clockwise from top left:
 'Green Wind' situated at The Tump
 Aviation imagery features heavily across Ravenswood
 '52° North' by Paul Richardson
 'Handstanding' in landscaped open space

This sub-area is an established industrial estate which occupies a significant amount of land to the south east of the character area. The nearby A14 makes this area well suited to industrial development with effective transport links.

Ransomes Europark occupies most of the sub area, to the south east of Ransomes Way. Development on this park is largely mid-20th century industrial warehousing in the core of the site, with later 20th century ancillary development surrounding the more industrial core, which tend to be more commercial in character, incorporating restaurants and hotels into the Europark.

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The commercial buildings in this area are largely utilitarian in character, often single volume space type warehousing.

More recent development off The Havens has generally continued the functional character of the area, and there is scope for more high quality designed landmark buildings, to raise the aesthetic interest of the area.

The area to the north of Ransomes Way is Futura Park, a more recent development on the site of the former Crane Engineering site. There are some fairly generic retail park units, although the more recent introductions to this site have been of a higher architectural quality than much of the development found at Ransomes (Audi, John Lewis/Waitrose, Land Rover). The more original designs of these sites have allowed for Futura Park to develop a more individual identity, which should be encouraged in the development of future phases of the park.

To the north west of Futura Park is The Drift, a further area of industrial warehousing development. These buildings are again utilitarian, often utilising saw tooth roofs. The Drift backs onto residential development at Campbell Road. The curved layout of Campbell Road provides The Drift with a buffer area to break between the industrial and residential sites.



Pictures from top to bottom:
Saw tooth warehouse roofs at Central Avenue
The Sandlings
Audi, James Bennett Avenue
Futura Park

SUMMARY



RACECOURSE

Some wide corner plots may lend themselves to new residential development, but care should be taken to retain the planned layout, and preserve the pleasant views though to rear and side domestic gardens and the open character of the area.

Where new development is proposed, it should reflect the active frontages and legible spoke and wheel layout, having regard to the established building line and linear ridge lines which generally run parallel with the estate roads. Open spaces should be retained, and more tree planting encouraged where opportunities arise.

Where new/replacement commercial



development is proposed off Cobham Road, this should aim to be of high quality design, respecting the scale of the largely residential setting surrounding this area.

UPPER NACTON ROAD

There is limited scope for new residential development in this sub area due to the grid layout of these estates and modest distance between dwellings.

Where new development is proposed, it should reflect the scale, layout and character of the existing area, which is dominated by two storey bays, generous gardens and use of brick and render. Additional planting and landscaping should be encouraged in new development proposals.

GAINSBOROUGH AND GREENWICH

New industrial development along Landseer Road should respond to the change in topography towards the river valley, and take opportunities to improve the existing industrial architectural precedent, and develop sites of more landmark quality with greater aesthetic interest.

Where new development is proposed, it should be sure not to reduce the open, spacious character of the area and respect the established building line of the estate.

New development should be of high quality, reflecting the more unique character of local facilities in the area which have landmark, distinctive quality. Where opportunities arise,

further tree planting should be encouraged.

Braziers Wood and the Orwell Country Park should be retained as a rural edge to the suburb.

RAVENSWOOD

Further phases of the development of the allocated land at Ravenswood is welcomed. New phases should reflect the modern, contemporary character of the estate, and continue the distinctive pockets of architectural style found in the south of the development area.

The layout should continue to reflect the former airfield character of the site whilst also respect the spoke and wheel layout already established. Development should provide areas of open

space with a strong landscaping scheme, including generous tree planting, integrating with the existing development. New development should incorporate continued opportunities for public art and sculpture.

Where new phases are proposed, they should be sure to respect the rural edge of the development which acts as a buffer between the suburban town and countryside.

RANSOMES WAY

New/replacement development should aim to be of high quality design, complementing the more individual character of the more recent development at Futura Park. Where possible, new buildings should aim to have architectural interest, explore

possibilities to create landmark sites, and avoid taking a too utilitarian approach. New development should have active frontages, and where sites occupy a corner plot, should ensure that all street facing elevations benefit from active frontages.

New development should retain existing landscaping belts, and be supported by additional landscaping and tree planting to soften the impact of new development and hardstanding.

Pictures from top to bottom:
52° North, Dunwich Close
Handstanding, Downham Boulevard
Sir Douglas Bader Memorial, Malcom Road