THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
IMPLICATIONS OF
DEVELOPMENT
IPSWICH

The Archaeological Implications of Development

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Summary

Ipswich is a town of major historical importance which has already lost some 25% of the medieval area to recent development, without any proper provision for the examination of the archaeological potential for the town.

Lacking the focal point of a great cathedral or castle, the importance of its wealth of medieval and later buildings has largely been overlooked, resulting in the irrevocable loss of much of its character and heritage.

This Report surveys the situation as we know it today and assesses the problems posed by further development and the potential still remaining, particularly in areas where development is indicated. The archaeological/historical potential is reviewed and recommendations proposed to rectify a situation which is already serious.

PREFACE

This survey arose from discussions held by the newly-formed Scole Committee (the professional co-ordinating body for East Anglian archaeology) at which an order of priorities in East Anglian archaeological problems was being drawn up. The significance of Ipswich as an Anglo-Saxon foundation and as one of the major medieval ports concerned with Continental trade is indisputable. The Report is more than a statement of the present state of the history of Ipswich; it is an expression of the deep concern felt not only by the Scole Committee but by many other local and national bodies, that virtually nothing has been done to recover this history by systematic means.

CONTRIBUTORS


Cover design by Ken Cuthbert
SECTION 1. Background

1.1 Geology (fig. 1)

The Borough overlies a series of clays, sands and gravels which range in age from Eocene to Recent. They are more or less horizontally bedded above the chalk, which is the bed rock of the area with its surface only just below the level of the lower part of the valley. The junctions between the rocks which occupy the earliest area of settlement may not be quite as shown on the one-inch geology map, since they have long been built over and obscured.

1.2 Topography (fig. 2)

Ipswich is situated in the valley of the Gipping-Orwell, near the head of the estuary, where the alignment of the valley changes from approximately west-east to north-south. Although the highest point in the Borough is no more than about 176 feet above sea level, there are some quite steep slopes defining the valley sides. The town did not begin to spread beyond these slopes till the middle of the last century, which was also when the lowest-lying marsh areas were first built over. For 1,200 years settlement was confined to the area of a gently undulating gravel terrace, between about 15 and 50 feet above sea level. Minor streams flowing across here had their sources in reliable springs situated where the valley side cuts across the water table above the London clay. Immediately below the level of this terrace flows the bridgeable River Gipping, widening suddenly to a navigable estuary, the Orwell.

1.3 Communications

The original site is the meeting of routes by navigation from the North Sea, about 12 miles away, and by land across the valley. There is some evidence of a possible Roman route from the coast, which skirted the early town to the north, but it is only in very recent years that any such east-west route has become significant. For many centuries the route from London towards Norwich and Great Yarmouth has been the dominant land route through the town.

1.4 The Urban Centre

The area of the medieval town now forms the central business district of Ipswich and an industrial section of the port. The pattern of streets here is very much as it was when the thirteenth century ditches were created to enclose the town. The bridgehead settlement of Stoke, on the south side of the river, was one of five hamlets outside the line of these ramparts, which were incorporated in the medieval town. The west gate was the access to both the London and Norwich roads, the former skirting the marshes which confined the town on its south-west side, to go over the River Gipping at Handford Bridge, another early crossing point. The present boundary of the Borough nearly coincides with the liberties of Ipswich as defined in King John’s charter, and urban growth has now virtually covered all this area.

1.5 The Borough Status

Ipswich is now a County Borough covering 9,925 acres with a population, in 1971, of 122,814. After nearly eight centuries it is losing its self-governing status, to become one of the Districts in the new County of Suffolk.

SECTION 2. Conventional History

2.1 The Place-name

The earliest spelling is Gipeswic, which means “the collection of dwellings”, or “street”, or “town” (wic) “at the corner of the mouth” (gip, a word related to O.E. gipian, “to yawn”, and perhaps to an Old Swedish word with a similar meaning, according to Smith, Place-Name Elements, Vol. I, page 202, and Ekwall, Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names, 4th edition).

2.2 Early English period

This name suggests the very picture that archaeology has built up, of a seventh- and eighth-century settlement, related particularly to the line of Carr Street, Tavern Street, the Cornhill and Westgate Street. This line crossed the aboriginal brook of Brook Street at right-angles, and provided the town centre with its major cross-roads from the start. An important industrial pottery, just south of Carr Street, was linked southwards to the quayside, “the corner of the mouth, or estuary”. Links between the pottery and the Sutton Hoo dynasty have lately been established: also the probable connection of that dynasty with a chapel of St. Mildred which was incorporated in the Moot Hall on the Cornhill during the Middle Ages. This strongly suggests that, where the Town Hall now stands, the Wuffingas, the East Anglian ruling family, had established one of their halls early in the eighth century.

This direct connection between the East Anglian kings and the origins of the town may be further reflected in the place-name, if Ekwall was right in stressing the Old Swedish origin of the name. For the Wuffingas themselves came from East Sweden, (see S. E. West, P.S.I.A. XXIX, Part III, 1964; and Norman Scarfe, The Suffolk Landscape).

2.3 Anglo-Danish, Viking and Norman periods

The curved, helmet-shaped defensive ditch and later rampart that enclosed the town all through the medieval period gave the central area its surviving distinctive compact pattern of rectangular streets within a steeply-curved line of streets following the old outer ditch. This street pattern, that still controls the shopping and motoring habits of thousands of people, presumably dates from the Anglo-Danish
period, c. 991–1010, of recorded Viking raids. The broad, shallow (5ft.) ditch created then was converted into a rampart during the lawless, turbulent reign of John (1199–1216). From the Anglo-Danish period at least one individually-defended house-site, with surrounding ditch, has been located and excavated. Meanwhile “Domesday Book” recorded a grim state of affairs in Ipswich, as in Norwich. Between 1066 and 1086 Ipswich had been devastated, and in 1086 three-fifths of the town still lay waste, while another fifth was still badly depressed.

“In the borough there were in the time of King Edward 538 burgesses rendering custom to the king... but now there are 110 burgesses who render custom, and 100 poor burgesses who can render to the king’s gold only a penny a head... and 328 burgages (mansiones) within the borough lie waste.”

Ipswich, like Norwich, was closely associated with the East Anglian earl, Ralph Guader, and they jointly paid the penalty for his disloyalty to the Conqueror in the planned rebellion of 1075. The boundaries of the liberties of the Old English borough were approximately 4 miles by 5 miles, running from Westerfield and Whitton (inclusive) in the north, down the Nacton, Wherstead and Belstead boundaries (exclusive) in the south. They included the extensive farmlands of Stoke to the south of the river. Both Stoke Bridge and Handford Bridge are named as bridges in a perambulation of 970.

“Domesday Book” made specific reference to a number of churches, despite the general devastation.

(a) Alnulf the priest has a church, Holy Trinity, with 26 “acres”. (This presumably stood on the site of the later priory of Austin canons, where Christchurch Mansion now stands.)

(b) Cullinge, a burgess, had a church, St. Mary, with 26 “acres”. (This may have been St. Mary Tower.) The average glebe holding of the Suffolk churches in “Domesday Book” was about 4 1/2 “acres”.

(c) Tumbi had a church of St. Mary (? St. Mary Elms) with 2 “acres”. St. Mary Elms’ south door is still held together by twelfth century ironwork.

(d) Lestan, a priest, had St. Augustine’s, with 11 “acres”. This stood in Stoke, at the junction of Vernon Street and Whip Street.

(e) Ulwin, a priest, had St. Michael’s, with 8 “acres”. This is thought to have stood near present church of St. Nicholas.

(f) In Thurleston (then, as now, just over the borough boundary, in Claydon Hundred), Godric had St. Botolph’s with 1 “acre”.

(g) Turchill and Edric have held the church of St. Lawrence for a half-year last St. John’s Day.

(h) Godric had St. Stephen’s, with 1 “acre”.

(i) Ascer had a church of St. Peter, with 1 “acre”. This may well be the same St. Peter’s recorded in another entry as having been endowed a short time before the Conquest with no less than 6 carucates (the equivalent of 720 “acres”), by Aelfric, Wi sag’s son. From his desperate attempt to endow his church at Clare with nearly 3,000 “acres”, we guess he was trying to avoid confiscation of his lands in the event of the Normans conquering. (He failed in Ipswich, as in Clare, Melford and elsewhere.) But we note that a mill was among the possessions of St. Peter’s. This was possibly the tide-mill whose successors stood on Stoke Bridge until the nineteenth century.

(j) Aluric holds the church of St. Julian, with 20 “acres”.

We may assume that this list of ten “Domesday” churches is not a complete tally. For we know that St. Mary’s at Stoke had been given to Ely in the tenth century. There is no reason to suppose that it was not standing in 1086.

2.4 The twelfth century

The East Anglian earldom was suppressed for sixty-five years after the 1075 rebellion. The sheriff, Roger Bigod, got a share of the earl’s forfeited land and “Domesday Book” shows him in charge of most of the borough “in the king’s hand”. It was for this sheriff’s son Hugh that the earldom was mistakenly re-created by Stephen in 1146 and Hugh was besieged here by that king: it was Hugh’s son, Roger, who was instrumental with King John in getting Ipswich its first charter of liberties in the spring of 1200. For Ipswich, as for most ancient towns, the twelfth century was one of great activity and growth. The year 1075 was forgotten, and the town went on to expand beyond is tenth-century ramparts. St. Clement’s parish, dateable to c. 1200 or a little earlier, marks a significant development along the quayside east from St. Peter’s. St. Mary Quay developed in between them perhaps a little later, and St. Helen’s (to the north of St. Clement’s) was perhaps a new industrial suburb of this time. Equally important, two priories of Austin canons were established: Holy Trinity c. 1133, in the present Christchurch Park, in what had probably been the parish church of the Trinity, and SS. Peter and Paul, founded beside St. Peter’s church by the quay before the end of the century. These canons provided many of the parish clergy and were influential in the gild merchant. Alone among English towns, Ipswich possesses a detailed account of its reception of its ancient charter. The townsfolk were empowered to choose their own officers and associate in a gild merchant, and were confirmed in their peculiar customs. To implement the charter they met on various occasions in the summer of 1200 in the churchyard (and once in the church) of St. Mary Tower. The town seal, exhibited to the people there on 12th October, shows, significantly, a ship on its obverse, a church with spire on its reverse. The church may be intended to represent either St. Mildred’s, where the gildhall, moot hall and town hall have successively stood, or St. Mary Tower, the chief municipal parish-church.
2.5 The Medieval town

The form of its constitution endured from the thirteenth- to the nineteenth-centuries, and so did the shape and size of the town. Though it did not expand, it was remarkably enriched by carved, half-timbered buildings from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, often further elaborated in the seventeenth.

But since the disappearance from the corner of Tower Street in 1817 of the Old Coffee Tavern, with the most interesting Jacobean exterior in the town, in the interests of widening Tavern Street for the already increasing traffic, there has been such a clearance of these splendid building-works of Tudor and Stuart craftsmen that the only group of major importance left is that in Fore Street, backing onto the quay. Unforgivably, the old “Fox and Geese” with its famous corner-post at the junction of Foundation and Brook Streets was replaced as lately as 1960 by a mean brick shed-like commercial building; and in 1954 a finely carved Tudor gateway was silently removed from No. 10 Key Street. Meanwhile, the Victorian expansion of both traffic and population continues.

Within the cincture of the old town, the first important event after the acquisition of the charter was the coming of the Friars: Grey (Franciscans) before 1236 (a few fragments remain, impaled in a multi-storey “comprehensive” development); Black (Dominicans) in 1263 (a few fragments remain in a wall just off Foundation Street); White (Carmelites) c. 1278, south of the Butter Market, extending from Queen Street to St. Stephen’s Lane. The Black Friars were most important here, and their buildings on the east side of Foundation Street were used after the Dissolution for a very remarkable Tudor charity foundation. The medieval hospital of St. Leonard stood on the parish boundary of St. Peter’s; the leper chapel of St. James and St. Mary Magdalen and the chapel of St. John at Caldwell on the East side of the town; the chapel of St. Petronilla stood in Chapel Field beside the Buckleham Road; the chapel of St. Edmund Pointeney seems to have been founded at the south-west corner of Rosemary Lane in the time of Edward I; All Saints chapel may have been connected with a hospital near Handford Bridge; St. George’s church, going back before 1066, later stood on extra-parochial land in St. George’s Street.

2.6 The Tudor town

It was from the pulpit of St. George’s that the Reformer Bilney was plucked. The chapel of Our Lady of Grace with its miraculous figure of the Virgin, burnt at Smithfield, stood just across the way in Lady Lane. Edmund Daundy’s almshouses were founded as such in Lady Lane in 1515. His kinsman, the most famous native of Ipswich, Thomas Wolsey, founded his college beside St. Peter’s church in 1528. It fell with him in 1530, and only a gateway remains, displaying restored royal arms: it was intended to be a foundation of royal magnitude and European use. St. Leonard’s hospital still survived in 1606, and St. Edmund Pointeney’s in 1599. But the chief post-Reformation hospital was Christ’s, on the Foundation Street site of the Black Friars. In 1557 the corporation levied a compulsory poor rate—one of the first towns to do so. In 1568 they bought the Black Friars building and site. Here were established the grammar school, the town library, the Bridewell, and Christ’s Hospital School.

2.7 The seventeenth century

The town was staunchly Puritan, and saw no fighting during the Civil War. But there are records of the strengthening of the earthen ramparts “just in case”. Ipswich had the smack of the Dutch towns of the period with their hospitals for the old and the sick. When Evelyn visited Ipswich in 1677 he noted that “there is not any beggar asks for alms in the whole place, a thing very extraordinary, so ordered by the prudence of the magistrates”. Evelyn, too, saw a Flemish affinity: how Christchurch Mansion “stands in a park near the town, like that at Brussels”. John Ogilby’s map of Ipswich, 1674, shows in great detail the town as it was in those days. Evelyn observed that “the trade of Ipswich is for the most part Newcastle coals, with which they supply London; but it was formerly a clothing town”. In general, Ipswich’s age-old business has been the export of corn and other local produce, the import of coal and other luxury goods. The old sites of the various markets in the town are easily made out. The Cornhill and Butter Market preserve their names. The Shambles and meat market stood at the junction of the Cornhill and Tavern Street, which contained the poultry and vintry. At the east end of the Butter Market was the fish market, at the west end the timber market. Dial Lane was formerly Cook’s Row.

2.8 The eighteenth century (fig. 4)

In 1717 A Treatise of Feruginous Waters, especially the Ipswich Spaw was published in London. Ipswich in the Georgian age looked wonderfully attractive. This is abundantly clear from Pennington’s beautiful map of the town in 1778, and from what we know of Gainsborough’s early life here, and from the 2nd edition of Kirby’s Suffolk Traveller (1764) where the point is made that “one favourable circumstance is almost peculiar to this place, that most of the better houses, even in the heart of the town, have convenient gardens adjoining to them, which make them more airy and healthy as well as more pleasant and delightful”.

2.9 The nineteenth century

It is the nineteenth century map of Ipswich that is most telling, with its picture of modern growth, at first orderly and admirable, as revealed in Edward White’s map in 1849, then indiscriminate until order began to be re-imposed in the 1920’s, a decade earlier than in most towns. The Ipswich population trebled in the first half of the century and then doubled again in the second.
SECTION 3. Statutory Protection (fig. 6)

3.1 Between 1947, when historic buildings began to be listed under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act of that year, and 1971, when the revision of Ipswich's List of Historic Buildings was carried out, some 40 statutorily protected buildings were demolished in the town. Other buildings, unlisted but of undoubted value historically and architecturally, were also destroyed.

3.2 The designation of Conservation Areas was instituted by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 in an attempt to conserve the character of areas rather than the structure of individual buildings. At the moment Ipswich has no designated conservation areas, although they are to be included in the Town Centre Map which should be available in late 1973.

3.3 The Town and Country Planning Act 1968 further rationalised the machinery of Building Preservation Orders by requiring Listed Building Consent from the Minister before a listed building can be altered or demolished. The concept of "Group Value" was again enhanced by the provision for the listing of a group of buildings which individually may be of limited merit but together represent a visual or other asset to an urban area. In Ipswich the value of these groups was recognised in the first list by the provision of 23 group listings.

3.4 Ipswich contained in the first list the high number of some 160 entries excluding churches. Five were Grade I and 76 Grade II. In the new list, despite the fact that 42 entries have disappeared, some by demolition, the total number has risen to an impressive 252 entries, excluding churches.

3.5 In Ipswich the particular problem is two-fold. Firstly, even the new list has obvious faults. Aldertons, with a fine interior, is not mentioned; neither is the fine house at the end of St. Stephen's Lane. Secondly, the re-fronting that went on in the eighteenth century must have hidden whole areas of good early building. Felawes House, Foundation Street, now demolished, proved to have a stone ground floor which deserved more archaeological attention than it received. The fault of the list is that it was only done, in the majority of cases, from the exterior—and so normally misses the internal structure.

3.6 What is needed is provision for expert examination and recording of buildings, preferably without the threat of demolition. This needs to be done for both listed and unlisted buildings.

SECTION 4. Archaeological Provision

4.1 Over the past fifty years many observations have been made and a considerable quantity of material has been collected, both by interested local people and by the staff of the Ipswich Museum.

   The problem of urban archaeology is on a national scale, and one with which archaeologists and historians together have, only relatively recently, begun to cope. They have been encouraged by State aid and in some cases by the co-operation and participation of enlightened local authorities and developers.

4.2 The Ipswich Museum

   The Ipswich Museum was opened by Dr. Stanley, the Bishop of Norwich, on 15th December, 1847. The first Secretary and prime instigator of the project was George Ransome, a Quaker, and grandson of the founder of the well-known Ipswich firm. He stated in his report that he believed the Museum to be the first institution in Britain with the primary object of promoting the instruction and rational amusement of the working classes, and accordingly admission was free on Wednesdays and Fridays. He was careful to avoid antagonising the two existing societies, the Ipswich Literary Institution, founded 1818, which rented the upper storey of the Town Hall, and the Mechanics Institution, founded 1828, in Tavern Street; both handed over their collections within a month of the opening ceremony. The Museum was housed in a specially constructed building, which was rented for £74 10s. per annum, in a new road which was called Museum Street. It was soon found that the admission charges and subscriptions would not cover the running costs, and in May 1852 the Museum was taken over by the Corporation and awarded a rate of 3d. in the pound. When the original building proved too small a new one was erected in 1880 on the present site in High Street, to house Museum, Library and Schools of Art and Science.

   During the nineteenth century the emphasis was on Natural History, and many distinguished scientists were connected with the Museum. The first President was William Kirby, for 68 years Rector of Barham and a notable entomologist, who had tried unsuccessfully to found a Museum in Ipswich in 1791. He was succeeded (1850–61) by Professor John Henslow, Rector of Hitcham, Professor of Botany at Cambridge, and one of the original members of the Senate of London University. He took an active interest in the Museum and turned it from a heterogeneous collection of curios into a systematic display with interesting and informative labels. He also gave public lectures at the Museum as did other famous men, notably G. B. Airy, the Astronomer Royal, one of the original Vice-Presidents, and Charles Darwin.
Of the early Curators, Dr. W. B. Clarke (1848–60) and Dr. J. E. Taylor (1872–93) were both natural scientists. In this century, however, Sir Ray Lankester (1900–1929) and J. Reid Moir (1929–44) held the office of President of Ipswich Museum, both keenly interested in the palaeolithic period and active members of the Prehistoric Society of East Anglia, which developed into the present national Prehistoric Society. In 1924 during the curatorship of Guy Maynard (1920–52) the Library was moved to Northgate Street, freeing another gallery, and the archaeological collections, which had been dispersed between the geology room, the entrance hall and Christchurch Mansion, were now displayed together. Guy Maynard and Norman Smedley (1952–65) also built up and catalogued a large reserve collection for the use of scholars and students.

The Corporation, through the Museum, makes an annual grant of £50 to the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology for excavations.

4.3 There is no town archaeological society or group at the moment. The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology, formed in 1848, is the main published source of information on archaeological and historical topics in Suffolk, publishing its Proceedings annually. From its limited funds small grants towards excavation costs are occasionally made.

The Prehistoric Society of East Anglia was founded in 1908 and was responsible, through its Proceedings for the publication of much of the work of such gifted local archaeologists as J. Reid Moir and Miss N. F. Layard, much of it of immediate interest to the Ipswich region. In 1935 the Society broadened its horizons and became simply The Prehistoric Society, concerned with prehistory on a world-wide scale.

The Ipswich Historical Society came into being in 1948 and organises lectures on local subjects. The Society is at the moment undertaking work on the documentary evidence of the town’s past.

The Ipswich Society was formed in 1960 with the aim of stimulating public consciousness in the history and character of Ipswich as a matter of civic pride with a constructive interest in its development and enhancement. The Society has an archaeological interest where development, preservation or improvements to the town are taking place.

The Ipswich and District Historical Transport Society concerns itself with the road, rail and river aspects of the town and the recording of the town’s industrial archaeology.

SECTION 5. The Archaeological Dimension

5.1 Archaeology and history combine to attest the early importance of Ipswich as a commercial and trading centre. However, the gaps are large; historians, lacking the archaeological data have been unable to evaluate the development of the town through the first six hundred years of its history, although Norman Scarfe, in his recent book on the making of The Suffolk Landscape, has done much to redress the balance. From the evidence that we have, it is clear that the foundation of Ipswich took place during the first half of the seventh century as a response to the developing trade with the Continent, particularly the Rhineland, and represents, in its very foundation, a fundamental development of Anglo-Saxon economy and society. What we can still see in the rapidly changing landscape of the town is the largely Anglo-Saxon town plan with surviving medieval and post-medieval houses of the wealthier kind. We can, so far, only glimpse the importance of the town in the Saxon and Early Middle Ages; the key to the early history of the town undoubtedly lies underground; the key to the character of the town as much as to its fabric.

5.2 Ipswich thinks of itself, quite rightly, as an historic town; everyone has heard of its most famous son, Wolsey. But by Wolsey’s time Ipswich had long since developed its character, a character coloured by the absence of any outstanding feature on which to focus its civic pride. Lacking the respectable antiquity of Roman Colchester and its monumental Norman Keep, the Castle/Cathedral complex of Norwich or the sanctity of Bury St. Edmunds, Ipswich has, in some respects, lost its identity. Without the more obvious elements of civic pride, Ipswich has long been overshadowed by its fine neighbours, and its real historical and economic significance as one of the earliest and largest towns in Saxon England has been overlooked.

5.3 (fig. 3)

Geographically, Ipswich, at the head of the Orwell estuary, lies in an area known to have been densely inhabited from the earliest times. Throughout the immediate area surrounding the town many important sites illustrate the nature and extent of settlement from the earliest prehistoric times down to the royal burial at Sutton Hoo in the early seventh century. Although comparatively well-known, the immediate area around Ipswich can still produce dramatic discoveries, like the six Iron Age gold torcs; but just as important are the continual discoveries of an individually more minor kind, so important for a balanced view of the history of man in the area.

The town of Ipswich owes its existence on the bend (Gip) of the river to the short crossing from the Rhine and to the great development of trade in the seventh century. Ipswich as a new foundation was doubtless encouraged by royal Wuffinga interest with the intriguing possibility, as Scarfe has pointed out, of a palace site here.
5.4 More generally the Council for British Archaeology has given the lead on the problems of urban archaeology, particularly with regard to the "rape of Worcester" and more recently with their publication *The Erosion of History* (archaeology and planning in towns). In physical terms the excavations in Winchester have given a new dimension to urban archaeology and added immeasurably to the study of historical settlements. Among other towns that have followed this lead is Norwich, with the appointment of an urban archaeologist. These developments have demonstrated in social, not just academic terms, the archaeological dimension in the history of British towns, of which the public are becoming increasingly aware.

5.5 Having demonstrated the potential of "buried" history, archaeologists and historians in an increasing number of towns and cities are combining with both developers and local authorities to discharge their responsibilities to the cultural heritage of the nation. All these factors have helped to arouse informed interest in the potential of Ipswich with the understanding of its history below ground as well as what remains above.

**SECTION 6. The Archaeology of Ipswich**

6.1 In spite of the considerable quantities of Saxon and medieval pottery recovered since the early twentieth century, it remains true that the only organised excavations carried out in advance of development were those done, under the auspices of the then Ministry of Works, at Cox Lane in 1958. These covered an important series of rubbish pits and a small defensive property ditch covering the period of the seventh to the eleventh centuries, and at Shine Hall Yard, where a section was taken across the surviving portion of the Town Rampart in 1959. The Museum excavated the sites of two late Saxon kilns in 1961. Since then no systematic excavation has been carried out.

6.2 In the nineteenth century several archaeological discoveries were noted but most of the objects, which are now lost, were inadequately described and sometimes probably wrongly identified: the Roman pottery recorded in the Victoria County History as being found in Carr Street was almost certainly a product of the prolific Late Saxon kilns since discovered in that area, and the Roman "guttus" said by Hamlet Watling to have been found during the construction of "the Bank" is, in fact, a medieval jug. A Roman mosaic pavement and an amphora were, however, rescued from Castle Hill, Whitton, in 1854 and removed to the Museum.

6.3 In the early part of this century Ipswich was fortunate in possessing two active amateur archaeologists in Reid Moir and Nina Layard. The former was concerned primarily with the Palaeolithic material which was uncovered in the clay and gravel pits in the suburbs of the town, but one of these, the Dales Road Brick Field, had been used as a cemetery by the occupants of the Castle Hill Villa, a fact which led him to take an interest in this site and to conduct a small excavation there before it was partially built over.

Miss Layard was concerned with all periods and rescued an important group of Middle Saxon Ipswich Ware wasters and much medieval pottery from building sites within the town, but her greatest contribution was the excavation in 1906 of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Hadleigh Road. Inevitably excavation techniques were deficient by modern standards and some of their conclusions are disputed, but they published most of their discoveries and gave their collections though not, unfortunately, their notebooks, to the Museum.

6.4 Reid Moir's 1930 excavation of Castle Hill was followed in 1948 by a smaller one, financed by the Museum. The small-scale excavations noted in 6.1 followed between 1958–61 and are all published in the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*.

6.5 Apart from these pitiably small-scale operations the Museum has had to confine itself to rescuing as much as possible of the material uncovered during commercial operations. This has, however, become increasingly unprofitable. None of the pits within the borough boundaries is now being worked and the use of large-scale earth-moving equipment makes even the recovery of pottery virtually impossible. In 1972 the Queen's Hotel in Queen Street was demolished and the ground below it removed to a depth of 14 feet; only one fifteenth century jug fragment was recovered. Some idea of the amount of material almost certainly destroyed on this site can be obtained from the neighbouring sites of Martins Bank, the Alliance Assurance and the Eastern Counties Building Society which, in 1956, 1957 and 1962 respectively, all produced large amounts of pottery ranging from the eighth to the eighteenth century.

6.6 As large modern buildings remove all archaeological layers in this wholesale manner there is no chance of recovering material or information unless the site is scientifically excavated before redevelopment. Fig. 7 shows those areas of Ipswich which are already lost to archaeology together with those areas which lie open and are available for excavation.
SECTION 7. Archaeological Assessment (fig. 3)

7.1 The preceding sections set out the basic facts concerning the archaeology of Ipswich. The outstanding impression is that there is clearly a great deal of important material already to hand but that it lacks the cohesion of real understanding, because too much has come from sporadic, chance discoveries, too little from controlled excavations, leaving many questions concerning the nature of the sites unanswered. The following section brings together these facts into an outline of the story of settlement in the Ipswich area which begins before the last Ice Age down to the present day.

7.2 Prehistory

The Museum contains many hundreds of Palaeolithic flints from Ipswich, mostly stray finds from the gravel terraces, notably in the Bramford Road and Hadleigh Road pits, which are especially rich in flakes of Levallois type. Maidenhall Estate and Stoke Hill have produced flints of this period associated with animal bones which provide valuable evidence of the climatic conditions in East Anglia at that time. The most important Palaeolithic site in Ipswich, however, and in fact one of the most important in the country, was discovered by Reid Moir in the brickfields on the Foxhall Road. This is a lakeside settlement which has produced Acheulean hand-axes; further investigation in this area is highly desirable.

A few hundred yards from the Borough boundary, in a gravel pit adjoining the Sproughton Sugar Factory, are most interesting flint working areas of the Late Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods and there are indications that similar sites existed in several parts of Ipswich, for instance Ivy Street and the Orwell estuary. The Mesolithic site at Pipers Vale is of exceptional interest as it was sealed by alluvial deposits containing datable plant and animal remains. No study has yet been made of these deposits.

Stray flints of the Neolithic, as of earlier periods, are comparatively common in Ipswich; a large concentration on the Chantry Estate may well indicate the presence of a settlement. In addition, two undoubted dwelling sites have been discovered: hut floors in a sand pit in nearby Kesteven Road and a timber shelter in the Dales Road Brick Field. The presence of Beaker burials here shows that occupation continued until the introduction of metal working into the country.

A Late Bronze Age cemetery occupied the junction of the Playford and Woodbridge Roads and may well extend into the borough, whose boundary lies 100 yards to the west. Hoards of bronze objects were buried by itinerant smiths on Bishops Hill and in Berners Street.

Ipswich has produced the most spectacular hoard of Iron Age date to be found in Britain: the six gold torcs or necklets each weighing about 2 lb. uncovered during the construction of the Belstead Hills Estate. Unfortunately, nothing is known of the surrounding area so that it is impossible to say whether a deserted spot was chosen or whether they were buried near the workshop of the goldsmith or the house of his client. It is known, however, that there was some form of Iron Age occupation on the Chantry Estate just under a mile away, and isolated finds of pre-Roman Iron Age date have come from the Valley Road and the Dales Road Brick Field.

7.3 Roman

During the Roman occupation, Colchester, already an important port during the later part of the Iron Age, was the chief town of the district. The area of the later Saxon and medieval Ipswich seems to have been virtually uninhabited and produced only a few stray items such as the bronze flask from the site of Wolsey's college, purchased by the British Museum in 1857. There was, however, a villa, now covered by the Castle Hill Estate, with its cemetery on the nearby Dales Road Brick Fields. The villa has produced the only mosaic pavements so far discovered in Suffolk and was evidently a building of some importance. The excavations conducted in 1930 and 1948 retrieved many interesting objects from the surrounding rubbish pits but were on too small a scale to determine the function of the building, its history or even its plan.

A scatter of coins has been reported from the neighbouring Whitton and White House Estates extending for ½ mile north and east of Castle Hill. It would be interesting to know if this represents a settlement dependent on the villa. A further concentration of coins and pottery lies to the north of the Felixstowe Road at the top of Bishops Hill. This may indicate a settlement possibly bordering the road which must have linked Bayham Mill, the Roman Comberonium to the port and later fort at Felixstowe. The cemetery found in 1899 on the Tuddenham Road probably also flanked this road. Unfortunately its exact position is unknown and only a small fragment of a lead coffin has survived. The occupation on the Chantry Estate continued into the fourth century.

7.4 Anglo-Saxon

The wealth and importance of the Early Saxon Kingdom of East Anglia is shown by the unique treasure from the Royal burial mound at Sutton Hoo. The cemetery at the junction of the London and Hadleigh Roads indicates that one of the principal settlements of the Kingdom was situated in the vicinity. As the whole area has now been built over, the site of this settlement has probably been destroyed unnoticed.

The foundation of Ipswich as a town dates from the seventh century in Middle Saxon times. It is one of the oldest towns in the country surpassed only by those of Roman origin. From the start Ipswich has owed its wealth and importance in large measure to its close trading links with the Netherlands. The manufacture of mass-produced, wheel-thrown pottery ceased in Britain with the collapse of Roman rule, but it continued on the Continent and was re-introduced to this country through the development of the
port of Ipswich. The Carr Street area seems to have been the “potters’ quarter” from the early seventh to the twelfth century; first the clumsy “Ipswich ware” made on a slow wheel, then the high quality “Thetford ware”. In 1958 an excavation was conducted on a series of rubbish pits on the site of the Cox Lane car park. These contained products of the kilns and pottery imported from the Netherlands. This excavation also revealed a ditch, evidently defensive since the bottom was strewn with iron caltrops designed to maim horses; it was of tenth century date and presumably protected some important building. Ipswich at this time was very vulnerable to attack by the Danes and was raided in 993 and 1010. The skeleton of a man was found in 1961 near the kilns; he had been thrown down a well on top of some burning timbers after receiving at least three sword cuts. He may well have been killed in one of these Danish raids. The same fate may have overtaken the man who, shortly after 979, buried the coin hoard found in the Butter Market in 1063. This consisted of about 500 silver pennies, many struck in Ipswich; the town was of sufficient importance to have been the site of a royal mint from 973 to 1216, when the striking of coinage became more centralised.

Apart from these tantalising glimpses nothing is known of Saxon Ipswich. Yet sherds of “Ipswich” and “Thetford” ware have been found scattered over the whole area enclosed by the later medieval walls. This indicates that the extent of the town may have been as great in Saxon as in Medieval times; in fact it was little larger until the mid-nineteenth century.

### 7.5 Medieval

Ipswich remained a flourishing port throughout the Middle Ages but no use has been made of archaeology to gain knowledge of its industry, housing or waterfront. The only tangible evidence of trade consists of chance finds of pottery imported from France and the Netherlands; this increased in volume in the fifteenth century and continued into the seventeenth century.

Nothing is now visible of the medieval fortifications. The West Gate was demolished in 1781 and the North Gate in 1794. A fragment of the West Gate was uncovered in 1967; it was well-constructed of finely dressed stone imported from Caen in Normandy. Unfortunately it was considered necessary to destroy this also. Stretches of rampart were visible at the beginning of this century north of Old Foundry Road and Tower Ramparts (called St. Margaret’s Ditches and Tower Ditches on Pennington’s map of 1778). The last surviving fragment in Shire Hall Yard, Lower Orwell Street, was sectioned in 1958 before it too was levelled. This section showed that the fortifications consisted of a rampart and ditch. A foundation trench had been cut to receive a stone wall but this had not been built. The line of the defences can be seen clearly on the map since they were encircled by the roads Orwell Street, St. Margaret’s, Crown Street, Lady Lane and Tanners Lane. The course of Tanners Lane is followed now by the Civic Drive but regrettably Lady Lane has been obliterated by the new Civic Centre.

Apart from a lion head stone spout found during the construction of a supermarket, the name of Lady Lane was all that remained of the Chapel of our Lady of Grace which was famous for a miracle-working statue of the Virgin. Ipswich had seven religious houses. Blackfriars is represented by seven arches flanking a narrow passage wedged between a car park and a storage yard. Greyfriars exists only as three reconstructed arches cowering under the tower block which bears its name. Part of the precinct wall of the Holy Trinity Priory forms the northern boundary of St. Margaret’s Churchyard. The other religious houses have been totally destroyed.

### SECTION 8. Archaeological Problems and Potential

8.1 The accumulated data for all phases of settlement in the Ipswich area is considerable but much fundamental work is required, particularly in regard to the foundation of the town and the period preceding the Early Middle Ages. Not only can the study of local artifacts, such as the development of regional pottery styles, be considerably advanced by the excavation of well stratified deposits, important as that is, but basic knowledge of the way of life of the ordinary townsfolk is lacking, both from the archaeological and the historical records. The development of a town as a new concept of living represented as much of a challenge then as change and development does today. The archaeological studies envisaged would “people” a whole phase of the town’s history.

8.2 The problems posed by the Ipswich region cover all aspects of human history, some of which can be tackled by accurate, regular observation and recording, others by controlled excavation.

Problems:

(i) The geological history of the Gipping Valley is of immense importance, particularly in regard to the number of Palaeolithic sites of different ages that are known to be located here. Detailed examination is needed of certain critical sites.

(ii) The nature and extent of the later Prehistoric periods, particularly in relation to those elsewhere in Suffolk.

(iii) The nature and extent of the Roman occupation at Whitton and the communications between this and the major road junction at Coddenham to the west and the coastal settlement and port at Walton/ Felixstowe.

(iv) The archaeological evidence shows an Anglo-Saxon settlement pattern around Ipswich, but nothing before the seventh century on the actual site of the town. The distribution of Middle Saxon pottery shows the enormous size the town achieved in some 200 years of growth. Apart from the apparently industrial nature of the Carr Street area nothing is known of the character of the town down to the Medieval layout.
(v) The area of St. Peter's church is of special significance because of the evidence for this having been a Minster church.

(vi) None of the five monastic sites has been examined, or the area of "The Mount", a possible contender for the site of the Ipswich castle.

(vii) Wolsey's College is unknown apart from the gateway, although this is clearly a site of major importance.

(viii) From the time of the foundation of the town, Ipswich was evidently in continuous contact with the Continent, and a detailed study of the trade is crucial to the history of the town.

(ix) The extra-mural developments in the Middle Ages also require study. Late Saxon material from St. Matthew’s Street may well indicate a very early date for this area, but the site has now been lost to redevelopment.

8.3 The Port

Ipswich was founded on trade in the seventh century and maintained its position as a major port well on into the Middle Ages. The Anglo-Saxon and early medieval town had its quays between the ford or bridge leading to the settlement of Stoke, and the point where the “Wash”—the stream which served as a moat on the eastern side of the town—entered the river. Early in the thirteenth century the parish of St. Clement grew up and the quays soon extended further eastward, to the point where the river turned sharply to the south. Somewhere here was Ding Quay, one of the earliest recorded shipyard sites in the country, where a galley was built for the king in 1295.

The port flourished on the medieval wool trade with the Low Countries and on the importing of timber, iron and leather goods from the Hanseatic towns. In Tudor times, finished cloth was exported in return for goods from almost every nation in Europe, whilst at the same time Ipswich became one of the leading shipbuilding centres in England, rivalling even London itself. Names like Tooley and Smart, and a few buildings of the period, remind us of the prosperity of those times.

In the seventeenth century, wars and other factors brought about a decline in the town's fortunes although, like any other place to which navigable water extended, Ipswich exported the produce of its hinterland, shipyards and received shipments of general cargo from the larger ports, particularly London. There was a steadily increasing trade in coal from the North-East.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the town had begun to expand with new industries. The Gipping had been made navigable up to Stowmarket, the channel of the Orwell was deepened and straightened, and the Dock—at the time the largest in the country—was constructed between 1838 and 1842. Engineering became an important industry in Ipswich, but it did not extend to the local shipyards, which survived hardly as long as the wooden sailing vessels remained an economic proposition. The construction of the Dock swept away every vestige of the earlier quays and riverside buildings, and more recent development has replaced most of the buildings which first stood round it.

8.4 In general, the examination of street frontages, where they still exist in their original form, before and during redevelopment, is essential. It is only in this way that the structure and significance of standing buildings can be recorded, that their predecessors can be found and examined, and that the development of the street plan can gradually be pieced together. Examination of earlier pre-medieval levels is, of course, desirable, but that can be carried out elsewhere.

The essential factor is that the street frontages demonstrate the development of the medieval town: fig. 5 shows the enormous losses that have already occurred, but there still remains significant stretches which require adequate examination.

The Cox Lane car park area, for example, was clearly densely built up in pre-Conquest times, yet the Pennington map shows it as a largely open space; here we have a unique opportunity to examine the layout of part of the Saxo-Norman town, probably including streets and houses as well as the pottery industry already noted.

8.5 The value of recording sections across roads must also be stressed. These can provide not only structural and dating evidence of successive road surfaces, but can also enable the ebb and flow of street frontages on either side to be studied.

8.6 The present channel of the River Orwell has been progressively deepened so often that it is extremely unlikely that any ancient remains will ever again be recovered from it. Some of the spoil dredged up in straightening the fairway was formerly dumped in old loops of channel to be abandoned, e.g. in “Back Again Reach” off Pond Hall, so that all trace of what was once “John’s Ness” has been destroyed and any river-bed jetsam must have been effectively buried. However, this turning-over of material can still result in some small objects being recovered. “The Knoll”, between Cliff Quay and the new quay in Wherstead Road, has yielded early clay tobacco pipes, although whether this bank is a virgin mudflat or an old spoil heap is uncertain. The ancient channel, which has been sitting up since it was by-passed in 1822, still survives off Nova Scotia.

Whilst the river bed has been deepened, new quays have constantly been built out in front of older ones. Isaac Lord's malting now seems to be the only pre-Dock building surviving round it, and it is set noticeably further back from the water’s edge than all the others. The Dock Commission’s new “roll-on, roll-off” quay has been built out in front of the 1840 dock wall; behind it a group of buildings at the corner
of Coprolite Street still delineates John Barnard’s eighteenth century shipyard and a yard between them indicates the exact width of the shipyard basin—an area of deep fill shunned by the Victorian builders.

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the mudflats extended under the gasworks, and the old “Fountain Inn”, on the site of the Holywells Road roundabout, stood at the high tide water’s edge. Objects of maritime interest may yet be recovered, or discovered, some distance from the present waterfront.

8.7 The Churches

The religious sites of central Ipswich were particularly important in the early development of the town. The recent report of the Bishop’s Committee suggested that the future of several churches in the Borough will have to be considered, and other uses eventually found for some of the medieval ones. The position needs to be watched, as these are obviously very important features from an archaeological viewpoint.

SECTION 9. The Future

9.1 Three factors affect the archaeological policies for the town:

(a) The Structure Plan.
(b) The Land Use Transportation Study.
(c) The Town Centre Map.

Of these, the Land Use Transportation Study, which will make recommendations for overall policy including the primary road network for the whole town, should be published at the end of July. Detailed road requirements are not therefore available at the present time (May 1973). The survey of analysis work for the Structure Plan is now completed and plans will follow; and the Town Centre Map, which will include the proposed conservation areas and will be of major importance, is expected to be available in draft form late in 1973 or early 1974.

9.2 Development Areas available for Investigation (as numbered on fig. 7)

(i) Crown Street car park. This area, already cleared, lies immediately outside the medieval defences and should at least be closely watched during redevelopment. Planning permission has been granted and development can be expected to start in 1973.

(ii) Providence Street, east side. Development is likely in the near future. This is an area where little opportunity has so far arisen for archaeological observation, but it is important as a link between the pre-Conquest discoveries in the extra-mural settlement along St. Matthews Street and the known areas of late Saxon Ipswich.

(iii) Old Foundry Road. Areas of delapidated property where development can be expected. One already open area which crosses the line of the town rampart and ditch could be excavated to provide the only remaining opportunity to examine the northern boundary of the town.

(iv) The Cox Lane area. This large open area is in part used for car parking. The western portion behind Upper Brook Street has planning permission, which has now expired, and there is the possibility of development on the eastern half. The Cox Lane area provides one of the most promising sites for investigation on a large scale. From previous excavations it is known that this is an area of middle- and late-Saxon pottery making, but that there were also important properties in the same area. A large scale examination of this region of the town, spread over a number of seasons should undoubtedly be one of the main priorities in an archaeological programme. Here a significant portion of the Saxon town could be examined in detail: streets, whole properties, and boundaries, to provide an unequalled study of the early settlement.

(v) Wingfield Street–Foundation Street. An open car parking area. This is potentially an important area for investigation, particularly as there does not seem to have been any large buildings on the site.

(vi) School Street. A car parking area, the site of the Blackfriars monastery. No developments are planned as yet, but like all areas in this quarter of the town development is likely to follow the publication of the plans already referred to in 9.1. This is the only one of the five monastic sites in the town which is now available for investigation.

(vii) St. Peter’s, Turret Lane. A large part of this area will be capped, if not destroyed, by the road development on the north side of St. Peter’s Church to Key Street in 1973, but there will remain considerable areas to the north of that alignment which are at present open, but without planned development. With the recorded size of Wolsey’s College as about six acres, there can be no doubt that part of this open area includes some of the College buildings.

(viii) St. Clement’s. The road development for 1973 will destroy a considerable part of the area of the extra-mural settlement around the church. It is unlikely that anything more than a watching brief can be held here, but there is a strong case for excavation on available areas of this site, related as it is to the docks.

(ix) Arcade Street–Lion Street. An application for development has been made. Lying close to the site of St. Mildred’s Chapel, any development in this area is of major importance.
SECTION 10. Recommendations

10.1 Policy
That the Scale Committee, as the body responsible for the initiation of this Report, should set up an Ipswich Archaeological and Architectural Sub-Committee which would operate in close co-operation with national and local government bodies. This sub-committee should develop a campaign for recording and investigating, to the fullest possible extent, the evidence for the history of the Borough, both above and below ground.

Priority should be given to those areas immediately affected by development and to those open areas of the town centre where development, even if not immediate, is clearly inevitable. A programme of this kind can only be carried out by a combination of professional assistance, volunteer effort, public participation and the co-operation of the local authorities.

10.2 Aims
That the sub-committee should make provision for the following:

(i) The advance recording of all standing buildings threatened by alteration (internally or externally) or demolition whether or not they are listed, plus the additional recording, as resources allow, of all other buildings in the town, with a view, as a long-term objective, to the compilation of as complete an archive as possible.

(ii) The implementation of an “early warning” archaeological search on every site affected by development, bearing in mind that such a search could range from the briefest of checks to small-scale exploratory work or a full-scale rescue excavation. With proper planning and liaison with all concerned; the Planning Department, the developer and the contractors, there should be no need to cause delays to redevelopment.

(iii) A programme of observation on any work involving the movement of earth.

(iv) The preparation of a Topographical Index from documentary sources.

(v) A continuing public relations programme of information and education, starting with the proper promotion of this Report.

(vi) The prompt publication of the results of the work undertaken.

(vii) The participation of volunteers, under proper supervision.

(viii) Adequate finance to achieve a worthwhile level of work.

10.3 Immediate Action

(i) To make arrangements for the observation and recording of the routes of new roads, particularly in the region of Wolsey’s College, and where possible, to excavate.

(ii) Negotiate the appointment of an Urban Archaeologist at least on a three-year contract as a member of the proposed Suffolk Archaeological Unit, responsible to the Director of the Unit, and having access to the Unit’s facilities and assistance.

(iii) Negotiate for adequate premises for the storing and examination of material. This should not be less than 750 square feet for effective management of the material.

(iv) A Sub-Committee should be established to include members of the Scale Committee, the Department of the Environment, and representatives and individuals from Ipswich societies.
NOTES ON THE MAPS

1 and 2. The basic geology and topography of the Ipswich region is essential to the understanding of the growth of early settlement.

3. The main distribution of archaeological sites prior to the establishment of the Middle Saxon town. The slopes of the valley and the gravel terraces of the Gipping have been heavily settled since prehistoric times but the difficulties of crossing the marshy valley made Coddenham the focus of Roman Suffolk and was the reason for the building of Ipswich on a new site.

4. Pennington’s Map of Ipswich, 1778. The size and shape of the town is little altered since the Middle Ages.

5. Pennington’s Map with the principal subsequent changes to street frontages, new streets and river and dock realignments superimposed.

6. Listed Buildings. A comparison of Maps 4, 5 and 6 shows more clearly than words the great changes that have transformed Ipswich.

7. Archaeological Potential. This map not only demonstrates the dramatic loss of large sections of the town (25%) but also shows that there yet remains a significant number of sites, many of them still open ground, where archaeological work could more than retrieve the situation, and put Ipswich high in importance among our historic towns.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Recent: Alluvium
- Gravel & sand
- Boulder clay

Pleistocene:
- Sand & gravel
- Red crag

Eocene:
- London clay
- Reading sands & clays
1972 Statutory List, all grades
- Buildings on 1951 list including Grade 3, since demolished
- Group value only

LISTED BUILDINGS