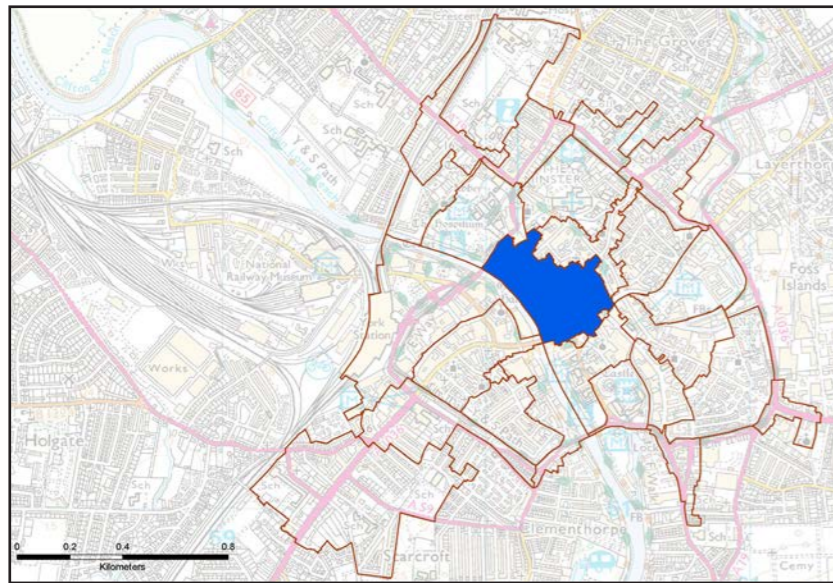


Character area II: Central shopping area



The location of the character area within the historic core.

Description

This area has been the commercial heart of the city for over 1000 years. Although the street pattern was established by the Scandinavian settlers, the wide streets and formal spaces are a result of 18th and 19th century civic improvements. Perhaps more than any other area, the central shopping area has responded to the pressure for change with a huge variety of building designs. Red brick Victorian department stores are juxtaposed with contemporary glass and steel buildings.

The core of this area is designated as part of the footstreet network, allowing pedestrians to roam freely for most of the day. The pleasure of this experience is abruptly halted by major traffic routes skirting the edges, heavily used by buses and cars.

Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal

Archaeological background

Roman

Evidence for Roman activity is well known throughout the area. The South-West wall of the Roman fortress (MYO2015) ran between Coney Street and Davygate with the Porta Praetoria (South-West gate) located at St. Helen's Square. The access passage is recorded as being 1.7-3.5m wide (EYO2614-2615). The fortress wall including interval towers have been observed in a number of locations including, Feasgate (EYO4993), St. Helen's Square (EYO2054), and Lendal (EYO4869). Also in the Davygate/St. Helen's Square area a 0.3m thick deposit containing Roman structures was recorded c. 2m below ground level (EYO3423). The Via Praetoria was of the fortress's main streets and followed the present line of Stonegate, exiting at the Porta Praetoria and crossing the Ouse by bridge near the Guildhall.

The South-West angle tower of the fortress is located on Feasegate. Remains of a substantial bath house (MYO1901) survive in the cellars of the Roman Bath Public House and probably represent the main legionary bath complex. Part of the bath block was also noted during a watching brief in 1972 (EYO3917) to the rear of the Talbot Hotel with walls surviving to a height of 2.5m. Remains of several stone barrack buildings have been identified in the Davygate area.

Evidence for extramural road systems, occupation and industrial/commercial activity has been located at a number of sites between the fortress and the River Ouse, and to the South-East. Excavations to the rear of 7-15 Spurriergate (EYO427) uncovered evidence of building material and pottery at depths of 1.3m as well as evidence of a substantial road. Several interventions have encountered walls and ditches in the High Ousegate and Parliament Street area. An altar was also located at 11-13 Parliament Street as well as the walls and columns of a potential public building facade (EYO4931). The River Ouse bank was probably located between 10.0m-30.0m closer to present Coney Street.

Anglian-Anglo-Scandinavian

Evidence from a number of sites in the city strongly suggests that the legionary fortress walls and their gates were standing for much of this period although probably in a ruinous state. The principle evidence for Anglo-Scandinavian settlement and commercial and industrial activity comes from the area of land bounded by the Ouse, Foss and South-East wall of the fortress. Many of York's surviving streets and alleys are almost certainly Anglo-Scandinavian in origin, if not earlier. Some, such as Coney Street/Spurriergate, Ousegate and Jubbergate (Market Street) appear to reflect earlier Roman extramural road systems.

Although not evidenced, it is highly likely that Ousegate crossed the Ouse via a new bridge, replacing the earlier Roman crossing by the medieval Guildhall. The churches of All Saints, Pavement and St Michael, Spurriergate are both pre-Conquest foundations. Anglo-Scandinavian deposits, including wattle fencing (property boundaries), evidence of craft working (leather working etc.), and parts of buildings clearly demonstrate that the various street frontages such as Feasgate, Ousegate and Coppergate were intensively occupied. This has been significantly evidenced through the extensive excavations at the Coppergate Centre between 1976 and 1981 (EYO4901 and see Area 13, The Castle).

These investigations clearly demonstrated both the excellent preservation of Anglo-Scandinavian archaeology and the intensive nature of this occupation. Observations of sewer replacement trenches on Parliament Street (EYO3802) uncovered evidence relating to antler, wood, leather, iron and non-ferrous metals working and significant deposits of Anglo-Scandinavian date that may represent deliberate dumping to raise the level of a natural hollow.

Further evidence of Anglo-Scandinavian activity was recorded at 4-7 Parliament Street including wattle fencing (EYO403). To the rear of 7-15 Spurriergate an excavation in 2000 (EYO427) revealed Anglo-Scandinavian occupation deposits including evidence of leather working and a timber structure all sealed by medieval pits at depths of 1.3m). Further evidence of craft working was revealed during the archaeological work at the BHS store on Feasegate (EYO146).

On Coney Street evidence of bone and antler working were recovered during separate interventions (EYO9 & 2064) and evidence of metal working was located beneath the Roman corner tower in the same area in the 1950s and bone, antler and metal working on 25-27 High Ousegate in the early 1900s. The name Blake Street is derived from Old Norse possibly meaning the street where bleaching takes place. Lendal may derive from Old English for Old Kings Street (Aldeconyngstrete) it appears to be called Lendill Street by 1639 possibly referring to the Old Norse for landing place. Coney Street is derived from a mixture of Old Norse and Old English for Kings Street (Cunegestræte). During the 12th and 13th century Coney Street included Lendal and Spurriergate and was the main route from the old fortress area (and Earlesburgh the palace of Northumbrian Earls in the Marygate area) towards Ouse Bridge. Coppergate and Feasegate are other examples of surviving street names in this area derived from Old Norse (Pallister 1978).

Medieval

The Coppergate excavations and associated documentary research has demonstrated substantial continuity from earlier Anglo-Scandinavian property divisions well into the 12th and 13th centuries with significant survival of medieval burgrave plot boundaries into the present. Archaeological evidence is abundant and well preserved in most cases. By at least the early 14th century Coney Street was York's principal street due to its proximity to the River Ouse. The Anglo-Scandinavian bridge across the Ouse was rebuilt several times. York's centre of governance, the Guildhall (MYO1616 - present structure 14-49-59) is sited between Coney Street and the river. St Sampson's Square was the main market place, known as Thursday Market, where butchers sold their meat and dairy produce. Pavement was also used for a market selling grain, wool and herbs.

Several medieval churches, All Saint's (MYO1004), St. Martin-le-Grande (MYO1630), St. Helen's (MYO958) and St. Sampson's Church (MYO1730) survive. One, St Peter the Little was demolished in the 16th century. York's medieval synagogue is located between Coney Street and the river to the rear of 19 Coney Street. Many Jews lived on or around the Jubbergate area which was formerly known as Jewbretgate.

The largest religious establishment, an Augustian Friary (MYO2393) lay between the Ouse and Lendal, the exact positions of the friary buildings are unknown although the extent of the precinct is.

Excavations on Davygate (EYO69) produced medieval pottery, features and deposits at depths of 1.7m. A watching brief at 3-5 Davygate (EYO509) in 1997 observed well preserved medieval archaeology with later deposits destroyed by modern development. Observations at 13-17 New Street (EYO152) noted 12th-13th century domestic waste at levels greater than 1.1m. In the Newgate area medieval burials relating to St. Sampson's Church and a row of medieval houses were located. The houses were situated at 1m below ground level. Medieval pottery was found at 3-7 Coney Street (EYO82) alongside post-medieval brick and tile dumps.

Post-medieval – Early modern

The city underwent major changes following a devastating fire in 1694 which led to the majority of buildings being replaced in brick. In the 18th and 19th centuries road widening and improvement schemes took place, for example, creating St. Helen's Square partly from the medieval churchyard of St. Helen's. Parliament Street, created as a new market place in 1835-40, resulted in the demolition of around 50 buildings.

Various new high status and public buildings were constructed including: The Mansion House (1725-33); Judge's Lodgings (1715); and Lendal Chapel (1815). The medieval Guildhall was also extended to include a council chamber and ancillary offices (1808-1809, and 1889-1891). New Street was also created in the late 18th century. The present Newgate Market was created in 1964 after the demolition of a number of buildings and back yards. Parliament Street and St Sampson's Square function now as the city's main festival and event space.

Visible character

Commercial heart of the city for over 1000 years with a high number of listed buildings

Medieval churches and other landmark buildings such as the Guildhall

Largely pedestrian area

Key views of Minster

Anglo-Scandinavian and Medieval streets and back lanes preserved as well as 18th and 19th century widening and improvements works

Plots and surviving water lanes reveal the long-standing river trade once conducted from the warehouses on the riverbank to the rear of Coney Street

Burgage plot boundary survival is high throughout the area.

Sub surface character

Ove Arup Development & Archaeology Study Research Zones: 1, 2, 3 and 9

Deposit Depth (where known): The historic course of the river and various developments of the shopping area has resulted in a variation in depths of archaeological deposits.

Ove Arup Archaeology and Development Study suggest Roman deposits of a high quality exist in this area at depths of c.5.0m. Made up ground is known to be generally around 2.5m but can be up to 9.0m thick in the Coney Street area due to successive dumping through the centuries. Roman structures and deposits are known on Davygate at c.2m below ground level (EYO3423).

1.3-1.7m of modern deposits were identified on Davygate overlying medieval archaeology (EYO69). Investigations on Coney Street (EYO82) suggested up to 4.0m of archaeological deposits on the frontage and up to 7.0m closer to the river area.

Anglo-Scandinavian deposits are generally well-preserved and deeply stratified in places, especially in area of Ousegate and Coppergate.

Period Survival: Substantial Roman deposits relating to the fortress and civilian area exist in a number of locations. Evidence for Anglian activity is sparse but Anglo-Scandinavian deposits are very rich where they occur, comprising, property boundaries, buildings, workshops and craft and industrial activity. This is particularly noticeable on Parliament Street, parts of Coney Street, High Ousegate, Feasegate and Coppergate. Medieval deposits are common as in other parts of the city. Post-medieval and later evidence was scarce in some areas e.g Davygate where modern development had removed archaeological material of those periods.

Interventions (recorded on HER April 2013): There are approximately 100 archaeological interventions, including several historic in date, recorded on the City of York Historic Environment Record (HER). It is unclear exactly how many separate interventions are recorded as many entries do not have a location or are vague in description. Few of the interventions are recorded in any detail and a brief examination of some grey literature suggests several interventions are yet to be recorded in the HER. See Appendix I for a brief summary.

Significance

Overview: This area covers the South-East bank of the River Ouse and includes part of the legionary Roman fortress of Eboracum and its associated civilian settlement. The highest land is situated in the area of Church Street, from where it gradually slopes down towards the river. The Ouse is clearly an important factor in understanding this part of York and a glance at the topography map gives an insight into the relationship between the higher ground and those areas that must have been prone to periodic flooding. In this area the river played an important role in the commercial growth of York.

Anaerobic archaeological material from the Roman period through to the medieval is common. Anglo-Scandinavian and medieval deposits are particularly well preserved in the lower lying areas. The surviving Anglo-Scandinavian street pattern, in part reflecting earlier Roman roads together with a high survival of medieval burgage plot boundaries into the present add significant value to sub-surface archaeological evidence.

The Ove Arup Archaeology and Development Study suggests deposits of high quality dating back to the Roman period exist at an average depth of c.5.0m with natural ground at anywhere between 2.5 and 9.0m below ground level. Subsequent investigations and observations demonstrate that substantial stratified deposits survive at varying depths between 1.0m to as much as 8.0m and 9.0m below ground level.

Designations: The site falls within the Central Area of Archaeological Importance and the Historic Core Conservation Area.

The Shopping Area contains few architecturally or historically significant buildings of the highest rankings but a large amount of Grade II listed buildings. There are 4 Grade I (Guildhall, Mansion House, All Saints and St. Michael's Church), 14 Grade II* (including St. Helen's Church) and 151 Grade II listed buildings. Several Buildings of Merit (as defined in the Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal (HCCAA) have also been identified including 19 Coney Street (Next), an Art Deco department store and 6 - 14 Davygate, an example of a 20th century department store in a Georgian style (HCCAA).

There is one Scheduled Ancient Monument, the South-West angle tower of the fortress (537) which survives entirely below ground.

Streetscape components: The area has undergone a major resurfacing in the 1980s as part of the York footstreets implementation. Coney Street, Spurriergate, High Ousegate, Feasgate, Davygate and Market Street are paved with a mixture of pre-cast concrete flags (Marshall's Saxon paving), pre-cast brick paviours and reconstituted Portland stone setts (Blanche de Berge). The latter has survived relatively well and is in good condition but the brick paviours are generally poor. St Helen's Square has been surfaced in a mixture of riven English Pennine Sandstone flags, and sandstone setts which is a fitting setting for the Mansion House and the city's principle civic space. Blake Street footways are a mix of pre-cast and riven English Pennine Sandstone flags. Lendal is predominately asphalt carriageway and pre-cast concrete flags (Marshall's Saxon paving).

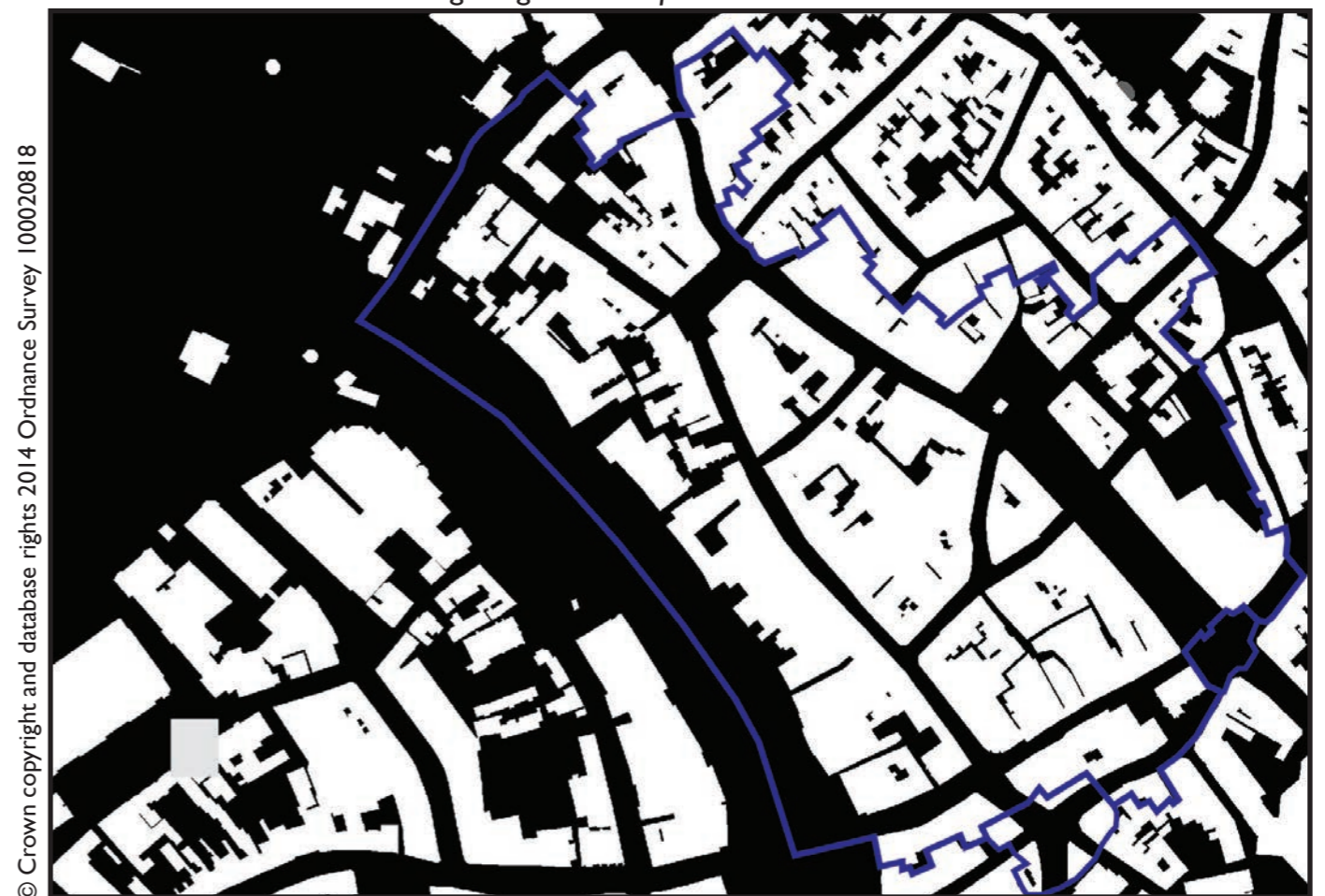
Parliament Street comprises a very mixed pallet of materials laid during the 1980s. The carriageway is surfaced with pre-cast brick paviours and sandstone setts on speed tables and the main open area is a mix of pre-cast concrete flags (Marshall's Saxon paving), pre-cast brick paviours and riven English Pennine Sandstone flags. Recent surfacing on the site of former toilets at the Pavement end has used poor quality stained riven flags. The overall effect is confusing.

Footways are surfaced with pre-cast concrete flags (Marshall's Saxon paving). St Sampson's Square uses riven English Pennine Sandstone flags in the centre and the footways. Carriageways utilise pre-cast brick paviours. Church Street is surfaced in asphalt (carriageway) and pre-cast concrete flags (Marshall's Saxon paving).

Museum Street is part of the main pedestrian gateway from the station to the Minster. This street includes large modern street lighting units, Broxap and Edinburgh style waste bins, black bollards, orientation boards, late 20th century phone boxes and bus stops. Outside the library, 21st century bespoke seating has been installed. Sheffield hoop cycle racks are located in Parliament Street, Blake Street, Davygate and St Sampson's Square.

St. Helen's Square incorporates black late 20th century seating which surrounds small black planters. Broxap bins are in use in this square as well as heritage replica lighting units and black, ornate, cast iron sign hangers on the side of buildings. Some existing street lights are original 19th century features.

Figure ground map with built environment shown as white on black.

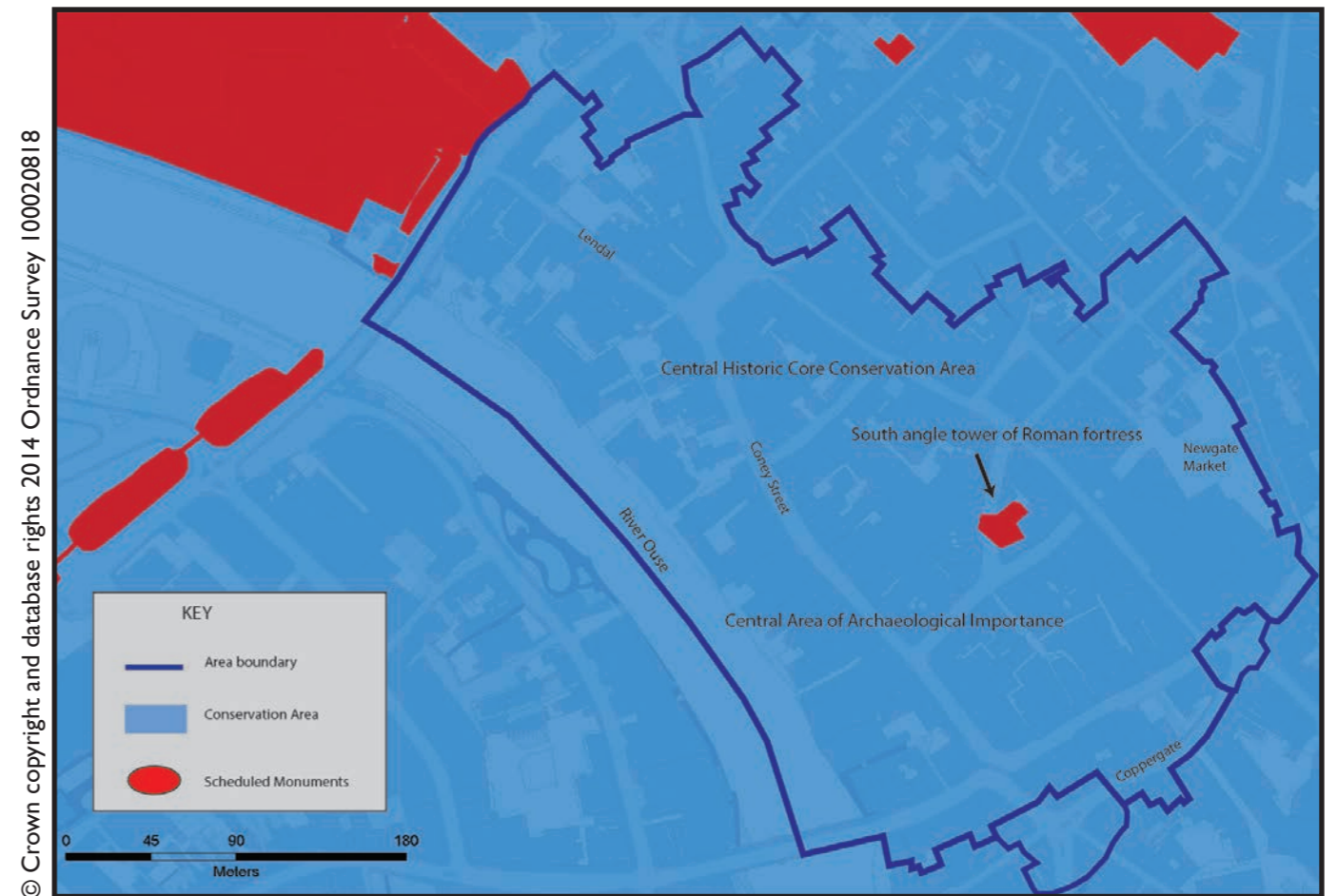
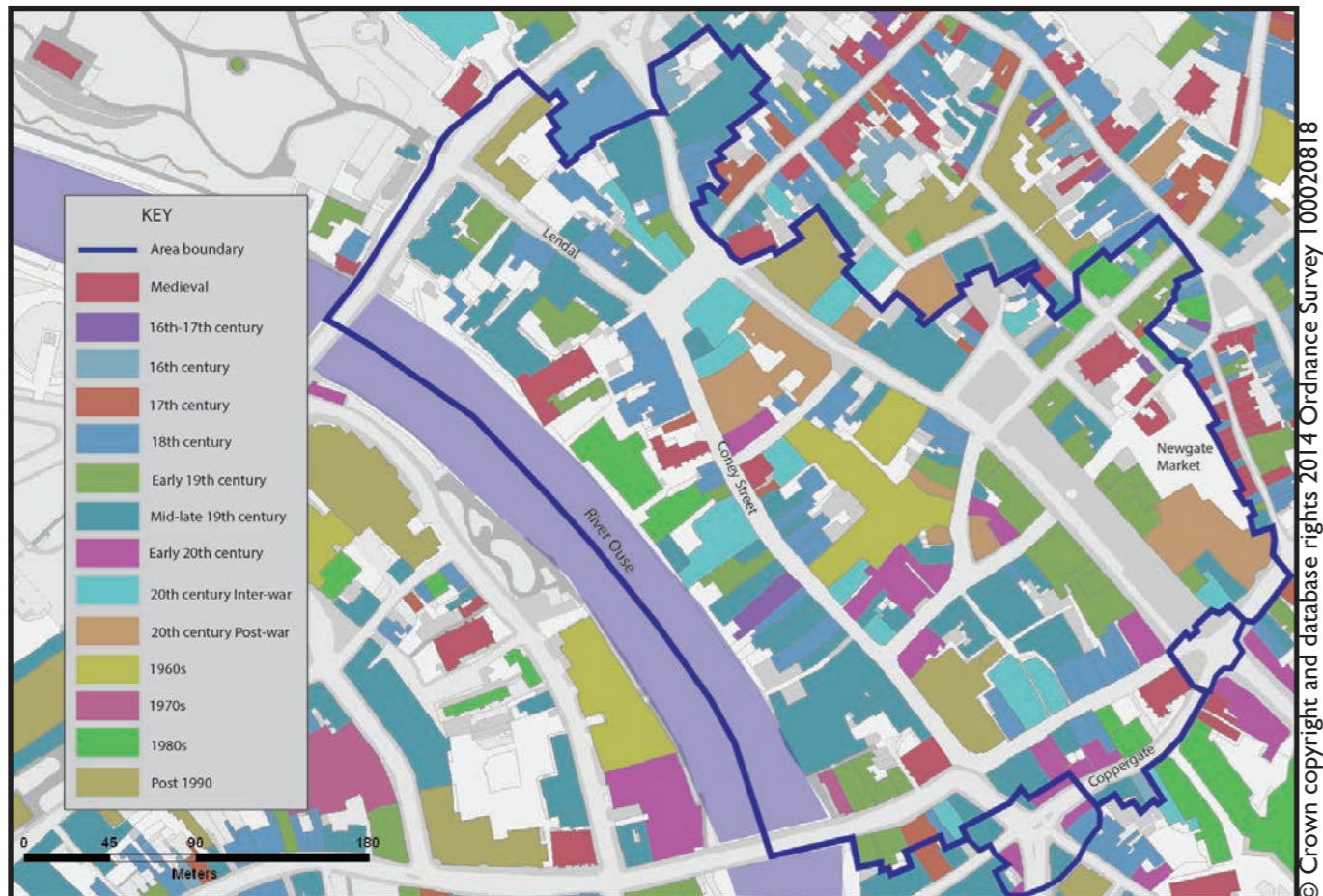


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Above: Plan showing the heights of the buildings within this character area.

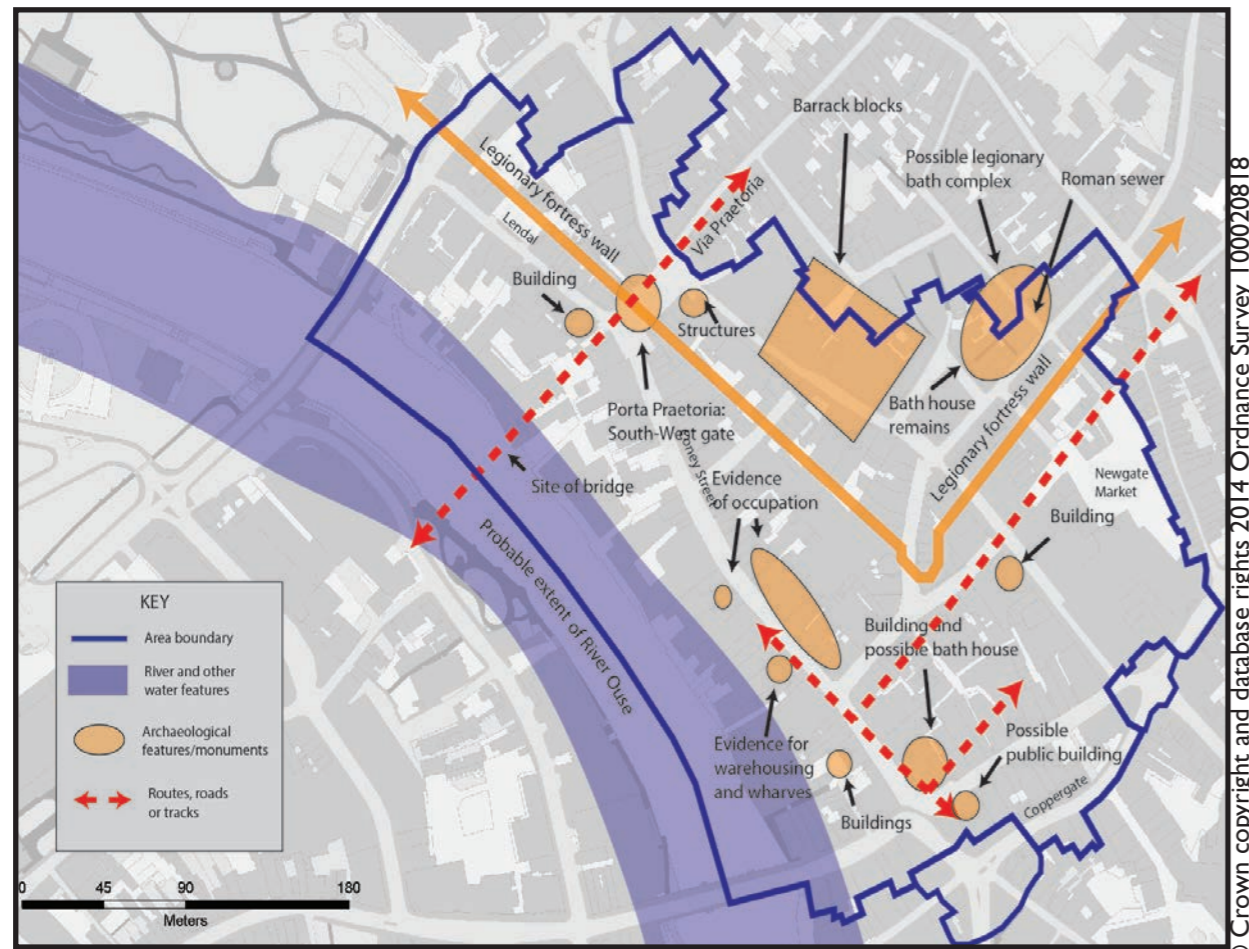
Below: Plan showing the construction dates of the buildings within the area.



Above: Plan showing designated heritage assets within this character area.

Below: Plan showing the Broad Type characterisation of the area. White roadways indicate roads or lanes visible on the 1852 Ordnance Survey Plan.

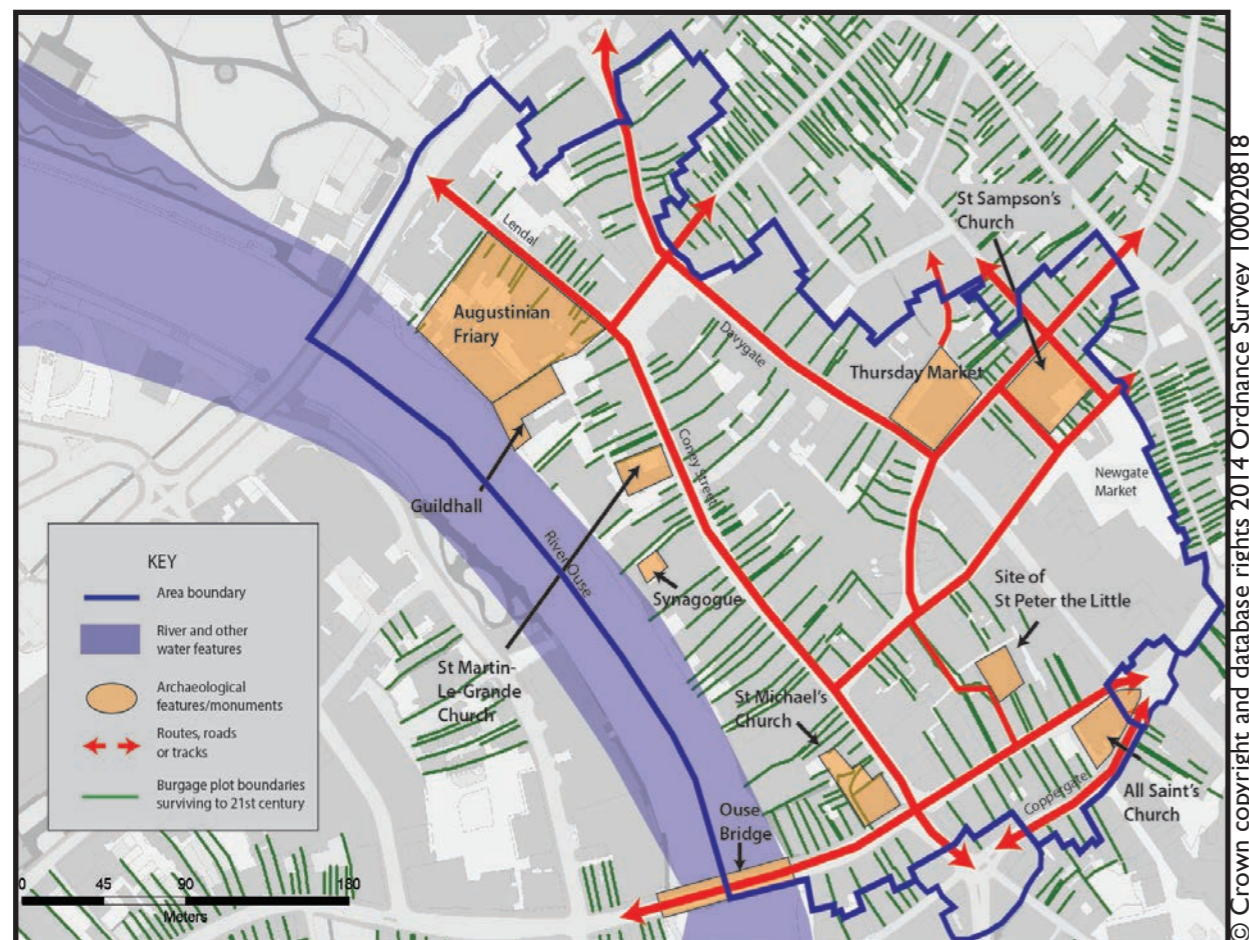




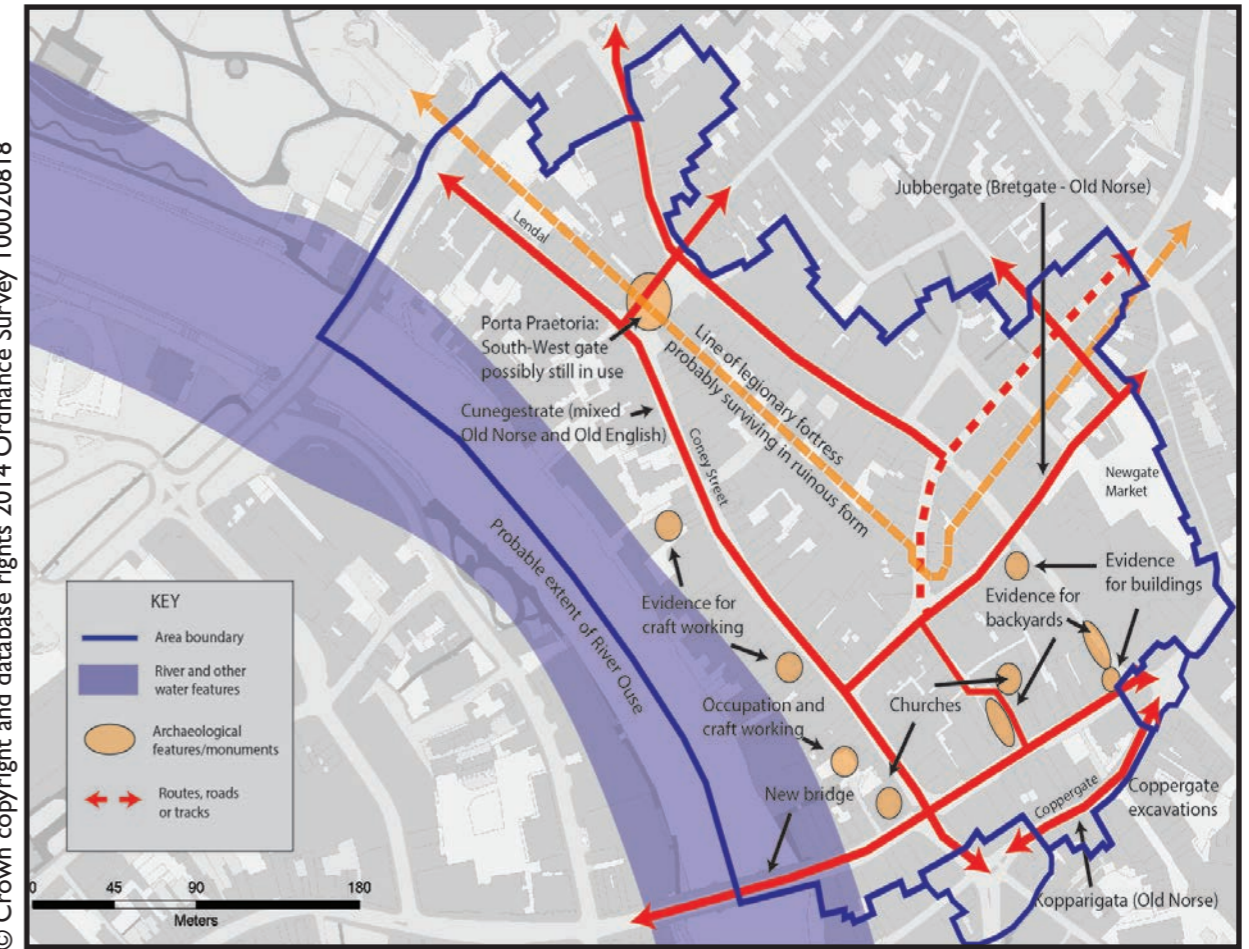
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Above: The Roman landscape.

Below: The medieval landscape.



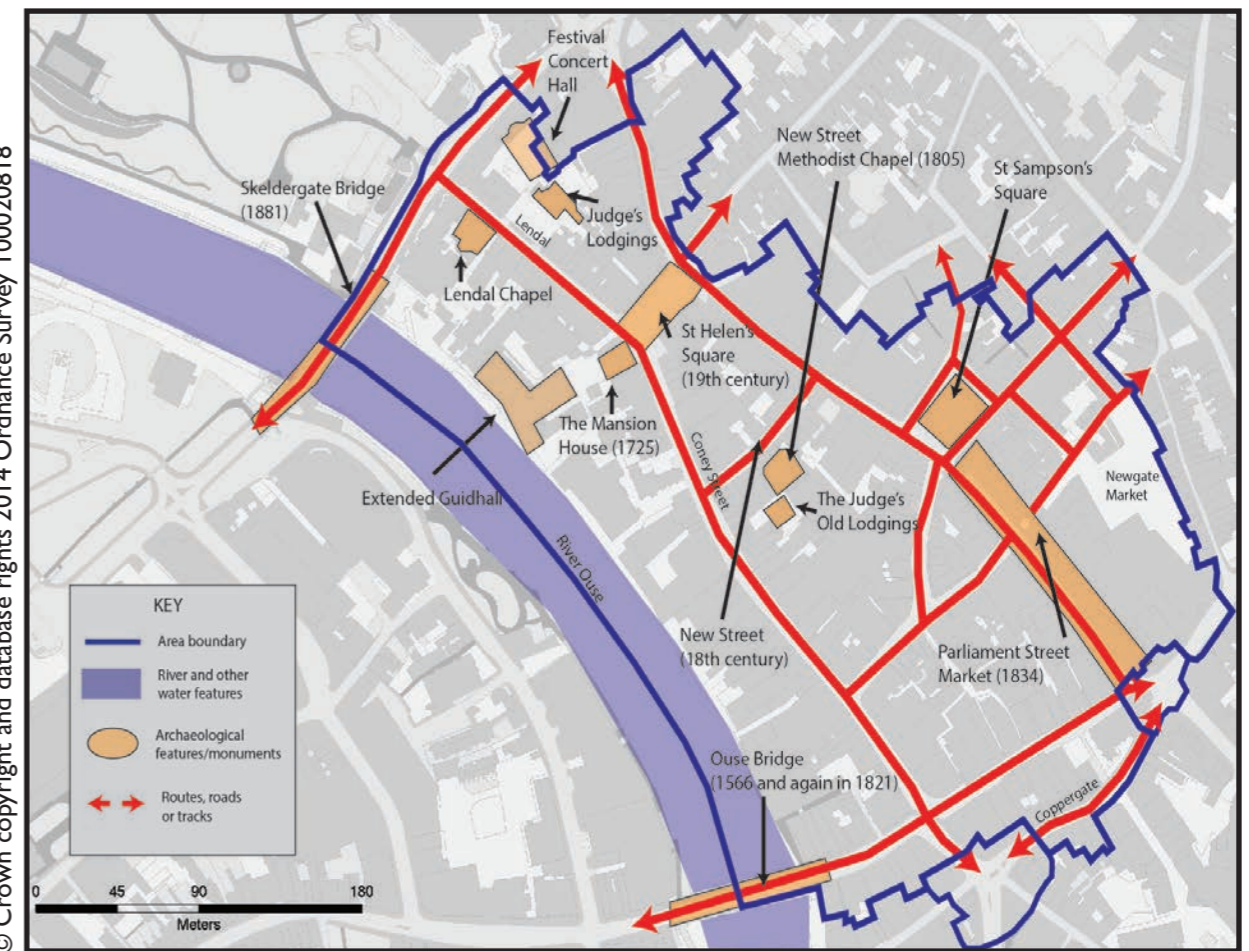
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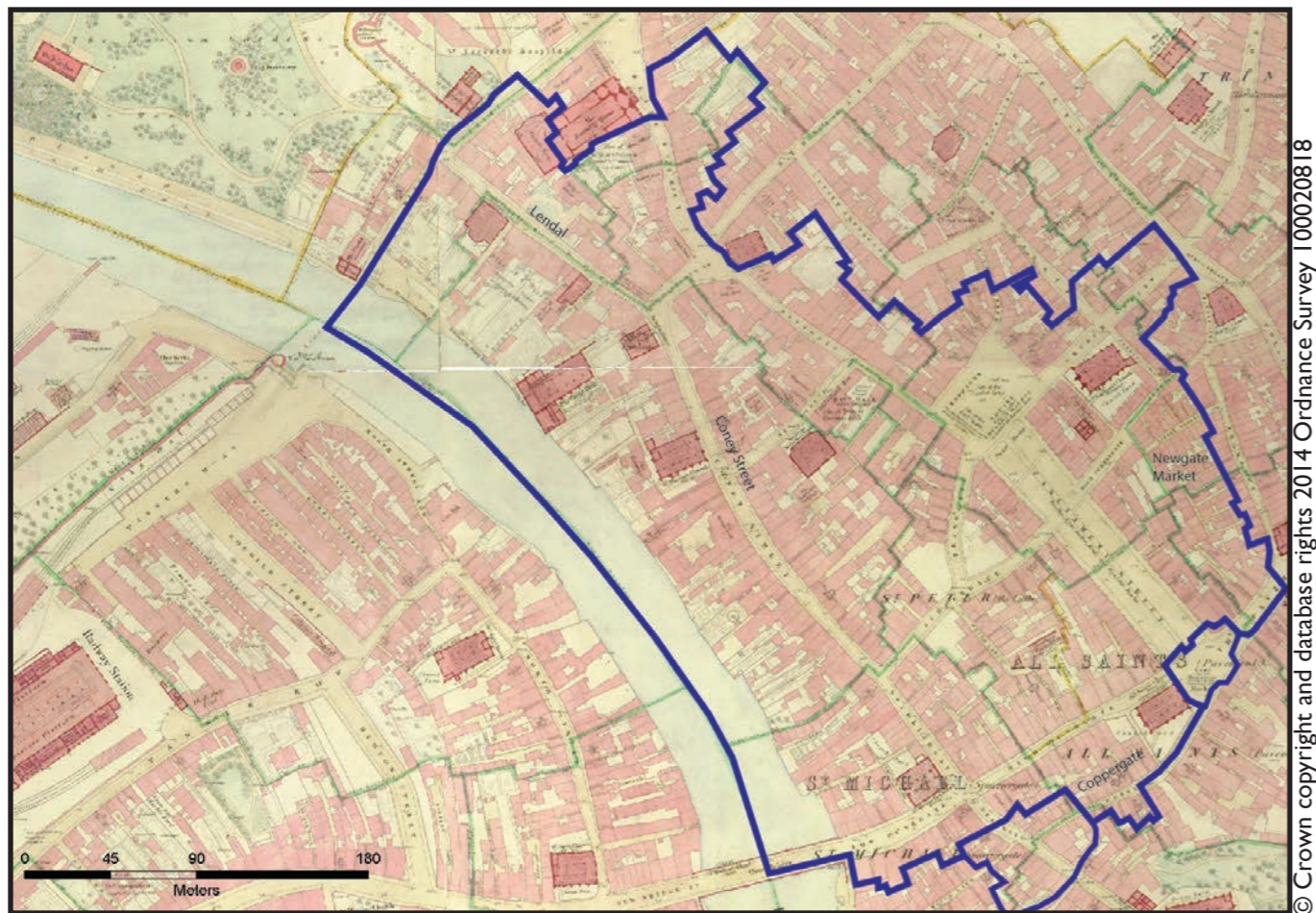
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Above: The Anglo-Scandinavian landscape.

Below: The post-medieval landscape.



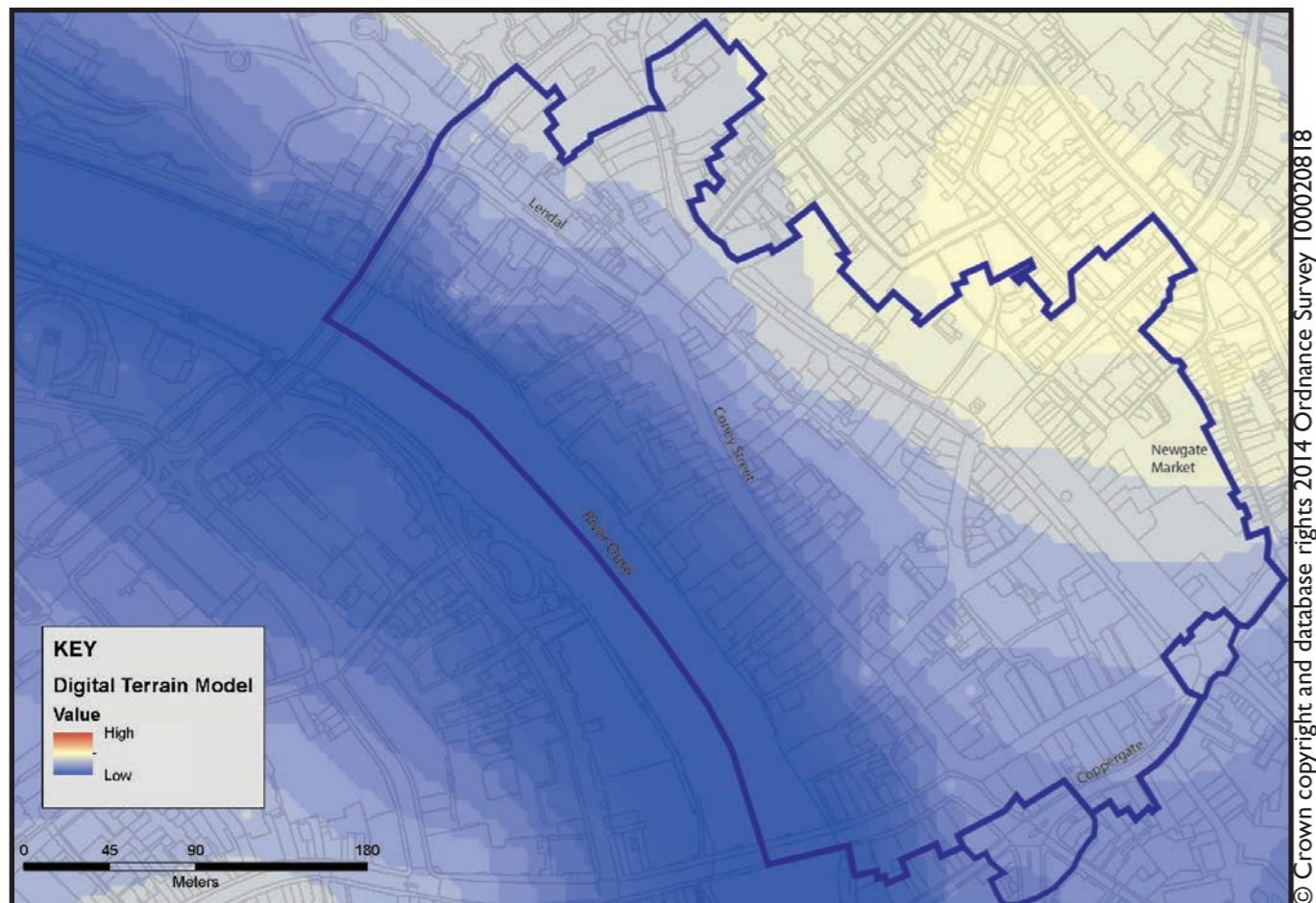
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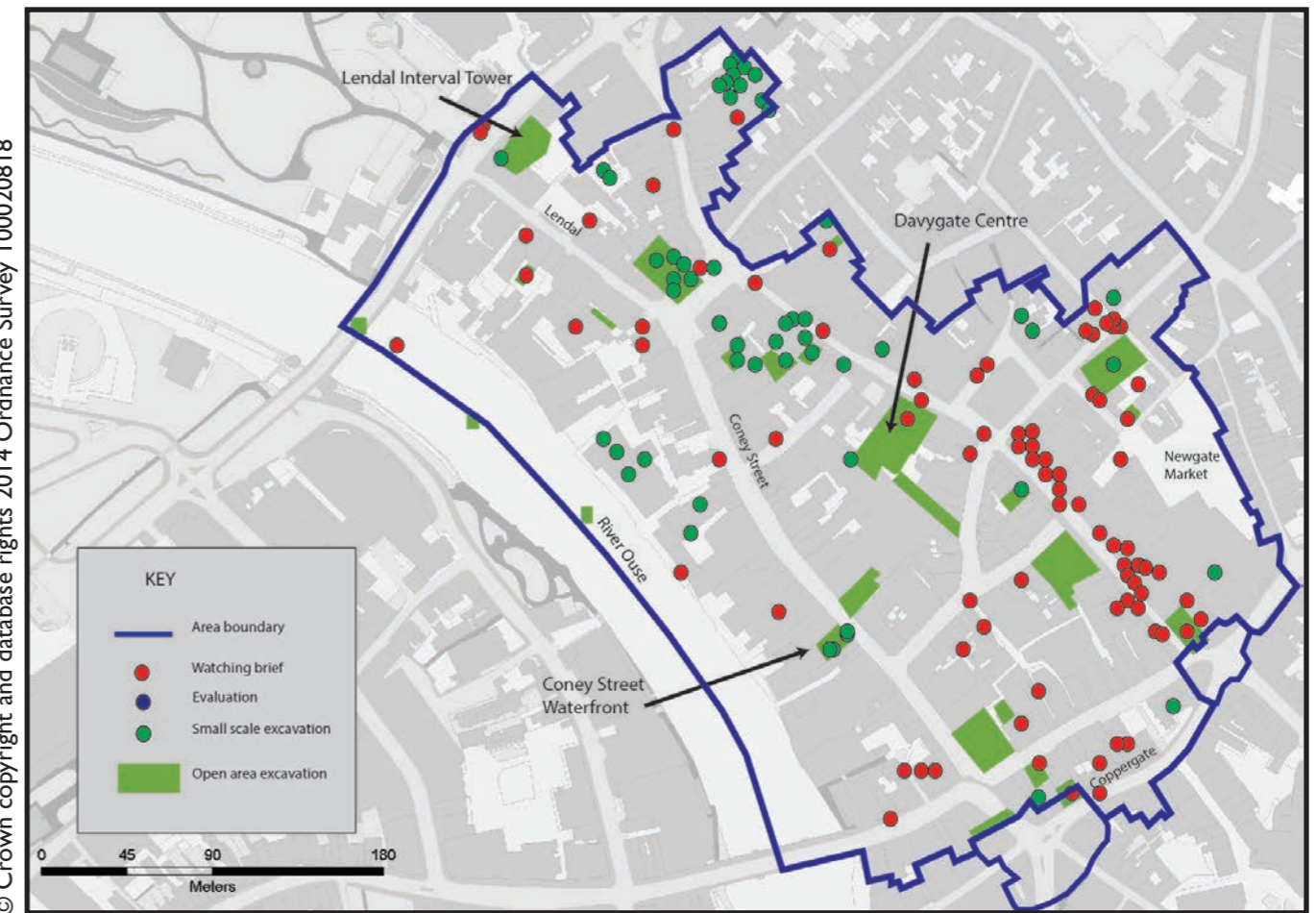
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Above: The 1852 landscape.

Below: The general topography showing the higher land in the Parliament Street area.



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Above: The location of archaeological interventions recorded on the City of York Historic Environment Record.

Below: Location of listed buildings. Note the Grade I listed buildings.



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York City Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal- 11: Central Shopping Area

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