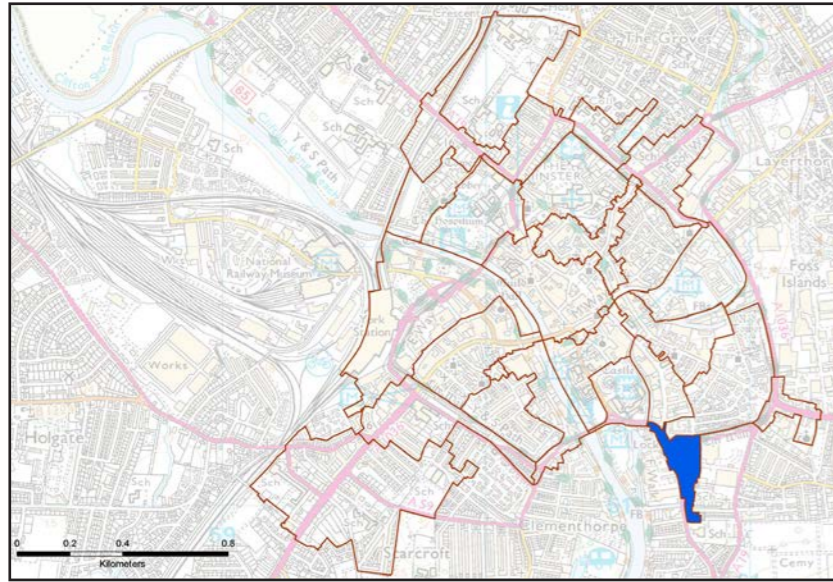


## Character area 18: Fishergate



### Description

The Fishergate area was continuously occupied throughout the Middle Ages but the present buildings date from the late 18th century onwards. The historic character of the area is fragmented by modern development and its ambience is compromised by high volumes of fast moving cars – it essentially operates as a traffic island. Despite these issues, the area should be incorporated within the Conservation Area as it forms an important entry point to the city and provides a setting for the city walls.

*Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal*

## Archaeological background

### Roman

Archaeological evidence for Roman settlement is sparse. A few ditches and other similar features suggest a landscape that is largely agricultural. Fawcett Street and George Street are presumed to reflect an earlier Roman road of which there is no direct evidence although the location of cremation and inhumation cemeteries implies the presence of a road. A Roman cemetery has been located to the north in the Castle Yard area, as well as extensive evidence for activity throughout the Piccadilly area. A 1st-2nd century cemetery is known to exist at the southern tip of this area between Melbourne and Winterscale Street (MYO2021). This may have extended further west to the Mecca bingo site.

Roman burials and a boundary ditch (possibly a cemetery boundary) were identified from an excavation on the site of the medieval All Saints Church (EYO4332). Evidence for Roman activity was also encountered behind Festival Flats in 2010 including an infilled agricultural terrace cut by a Roman ditch. The Roman deposits here were truncated by Anglian, Anglo-Scandinavian and medieval clearance and rubbish pits (EYO4327). A Roman ditch (MYO2286) is recorded on the HER on Fawcett Street near the junction with Kent Street. Excavations nearby in advance of the construction of the Barbican Centre during the late 1980s, revealed a small number of Roman cremation burials as well as boundary ditches (EYO3982-94). The archaeology in this area was heavily disturbed by the 19th century cattle market.

### Anglian - Anglo-Scandinavian

At 46 – 54 Fishergate (EYO2424, EYO2450-51 & EYO2465-66 – Redfearn National Glass Factory), two distinct phases of activity were identified, a late 7th to 8th century settlement and a less intensive period of settlement in the 9th century. Evidence was in the form of property boundaries, pits, latrines and postholes as well as evidence of craft activity in 0.2m thickness of deposits. The possible Roman road from medieval Fishergate Bar may well have been in use at this time, reflected by modern Fawcett Street which was formerly Fishergate or Fiscergate (Old Norse – street of the fishermen). Excavations of the site of All Saint's Church revealed evidence of an earlier timber church

and associated burials almost certainly of Anglo-Scandinavian date and a boundary ditch was identified further south running parallel with Fawcett Street. Modern Fishergate dates to the 19th century.

### Medieval

The City Walls (MYO1734) date to the 14th century although there is strong archaeological evidence to suggest an earlier earthen rampart and ditch possibly originating in the Anglo-Scandinavian period if not earlier in the Anglian. A postern gate probably existed in this area as early as 12th century leading to medieval Fishergate (Fiscergate). The present postern was erected in the mid 14th century but was rebuilt in the mid 15th century.

Fishergate was settled by at least the 12th century. The Augustinian priory of St Andrew's founded c.1200 (MYO3633) was situated to the west of Fishergate and All Saints Church (MYO2283 & 3482 and Character Area 66) was located south of the present day Paragon Street. All Saint's Church (MYO2283) was rebuilt in stone as a simple three celled apsidal ended building in the late 11th century. Medieval skeletons were recorded on the site of All Saints cemetery (EYO4332) in 2008, skeletons were also excavated on Kent Street frontage in 1991 (EYO18) and in 2000 (EYO496). A single crouched burial of a female in the apse has been tentatively identified as the historically attested anchoress, Lady Isobel German who is known to have resided at the church between 1428 and 1448. A medieval drain and infill 0.25m thick was located during excavations at 46-54 Fishergate (EYO2467) and 11th to 12th century rubbish pits were found to the rear of Festival Flats (EYO4481).

### Post-medieval - Early modern

By the 17th century, any development which had existed in Fishergate was gone and the area appears to have reverted back to agricultural use. Excavations at All Saint's Church uncovered four mass graves containing more than 100 skeletons that dated after demolition of the church in the 16th century. These almost certainly date to the English Civil War siege of York. In the late 18th and early 19th century, some large houses were built along Fishergate demonstrating that it was becoming a desirable place to live (Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal).

However, from 1827, the northern end contained a cattle market between Fawcett Street, Paragon Street and Barbican with animal pens at the base of the city wall ramparts stretching from Fishergate to Walmgate Bar.

Excavations at 4 Fishergate (EYO799) revealed dumps and surfaces to 1.25m below ground level all dating to the late 18th century and later. The earliest deposits displayed good organic preservation, suggesting that significant, earlier waterlogged deposits are likely to be present on the site at greater depths. 18th-19th and early-mid 20th century development within this area will have had a negative impact on any surviving archaeological deposits depending on the depths of disturbance.

Fishergate dates to the 18th/19th century and Kent Street, Melbourne Street date to the late 19th century with Heslington Road probably dating to the creation of the cattle market.

## Visible character

Visible landmark medieval city walls and postern

Buildings date from late 18th century onwards generally between 2 and 3 storeys in height

Possible medieval burgage plots remaining on west side of Fishergate

Historic character of the area is fragmented by modern development

Important entry point to city

## Sub surface character

### Ove Arup Development & Archaeology Study Research Zone: 14

**Deposit Depth (where known):** Ove Arup Archaeology and Development Study suggest archaeological deposits of an unknown quality exist in this area at an average depth of c.1.5m.

**Period Survival:** Roman to post-medieval occupation and agricultural deposits exist as well as inhumations (Roman and medieval) and cremations (Roman). Anglo-Scandinavian deposits exist on the west side of modern Fishergate where large scale excavations have occurred. All periods appear to survive in Fishergate where undisturbed by post-medieval development.

**Interventions (recorded on HER April 2013):** There are approximately 14 interventions recorded on the City of York Historic Environment Record (HER). Few of the interventions are recorded in any detail. See Appendix 1 for HER summary.

## Significance

**Overview:** Medieval Fishergate runs parallel to the River Foss along a ridge of higher ground above the flood plan and generally falls within the low-lying, south-east extramural area identified by the Ove Arup Archaeology and Development Study. The highest ground exists at the southern tip of this character area. Ove Arup suggests an average depth of archaeological deposits primarily relating to the Anglian and medieval period at 1.5m below ground level. There is no archaeological evidence recorded for prehistoric activity within the area. Discoveries made during excavations at the former Redfearn National Glass Factory attest to presence of a significant Anglo-Scandinavian settlement close to the Ouse and Foss rivers. As with Hungate and Coppergate, there is strong evidence of planned land division.

Roman cemeteries exist in and close to the area strongly indicative of the present of a principal road running south from the Piccadilly area but settlement evidence is limited suggesting a predominately agricultural landscape.

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

The City Walls running from Fishergate Postern to Red Tower (MYO1734) form the northern boundary of this area. These are Grade I listed and a designated Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 30).

There are ten Grade II listed buildings dating to the 18th-19th centuries, six of which are located between Fishergate and Fawcett Street. Tower House and No. 3 Fawcett Street have also been identified as Buildings of Merit in the 2011 Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal.

**Streetscape components:** Paving is a mixture of riven English Pennine Sandstone and pre-cast concrete flags (Marshall's Saxon paving principally). Natural stone is only found on part of Fawcett Street. Pre-cast concrete flags are predominantly used on Fishergate and Kent Street. Carriageways and footpaths on Paragon Street, part of Fawcett and Kent Street are asphalt.

Modern street lighting units and late 20th century bus stops and traffic signage are in use.



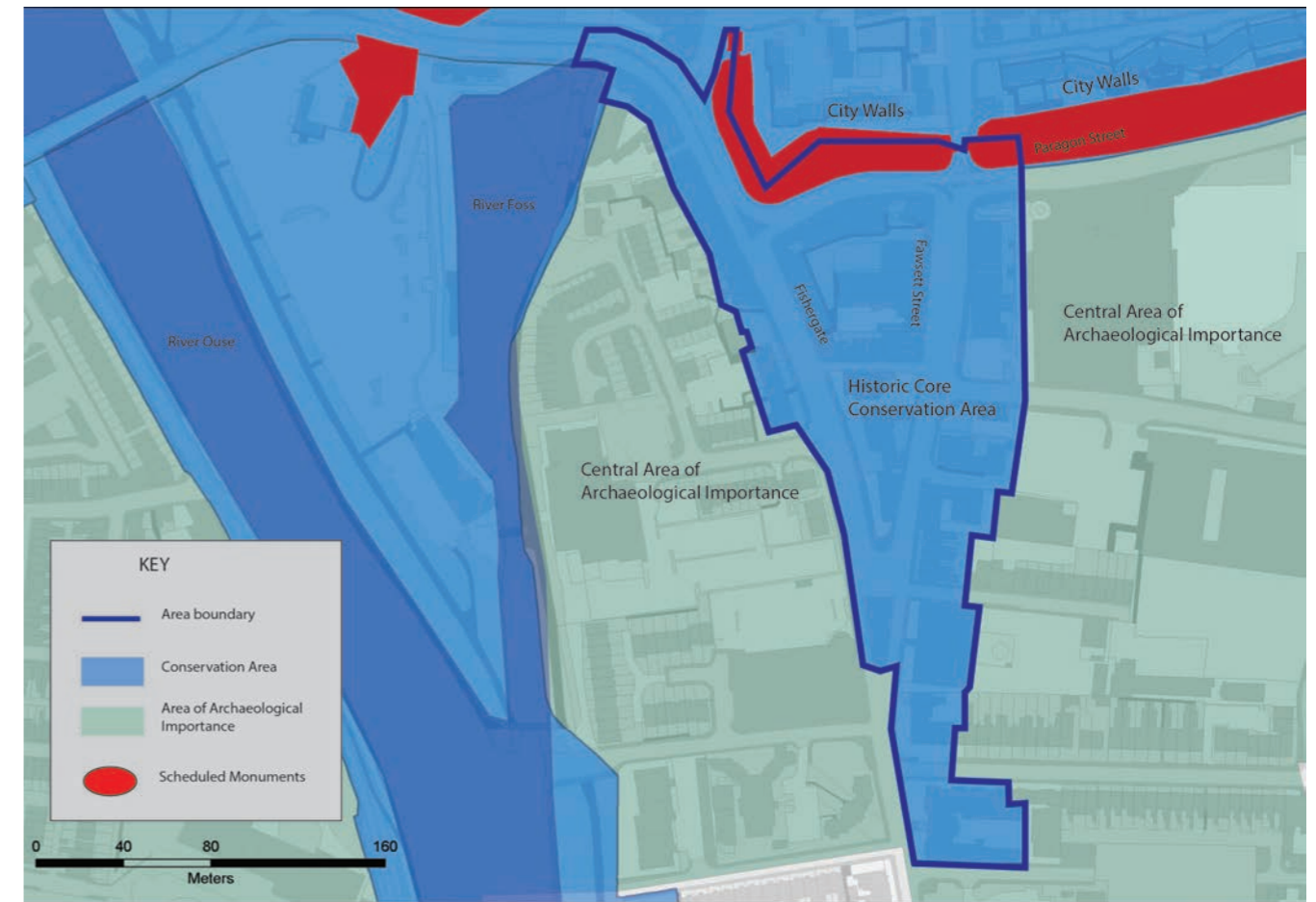
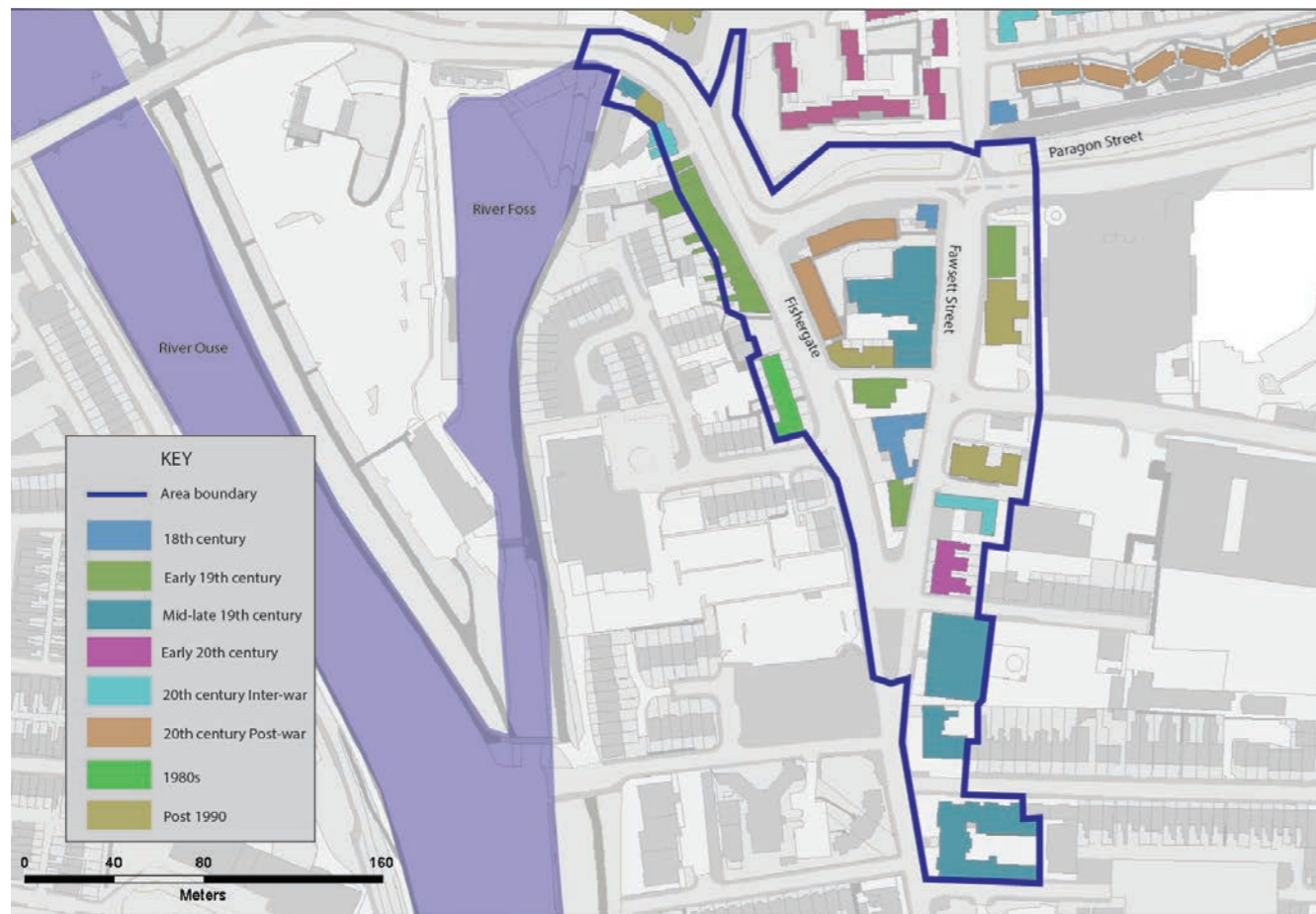
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Figure ground map with built environment shown as white on black.



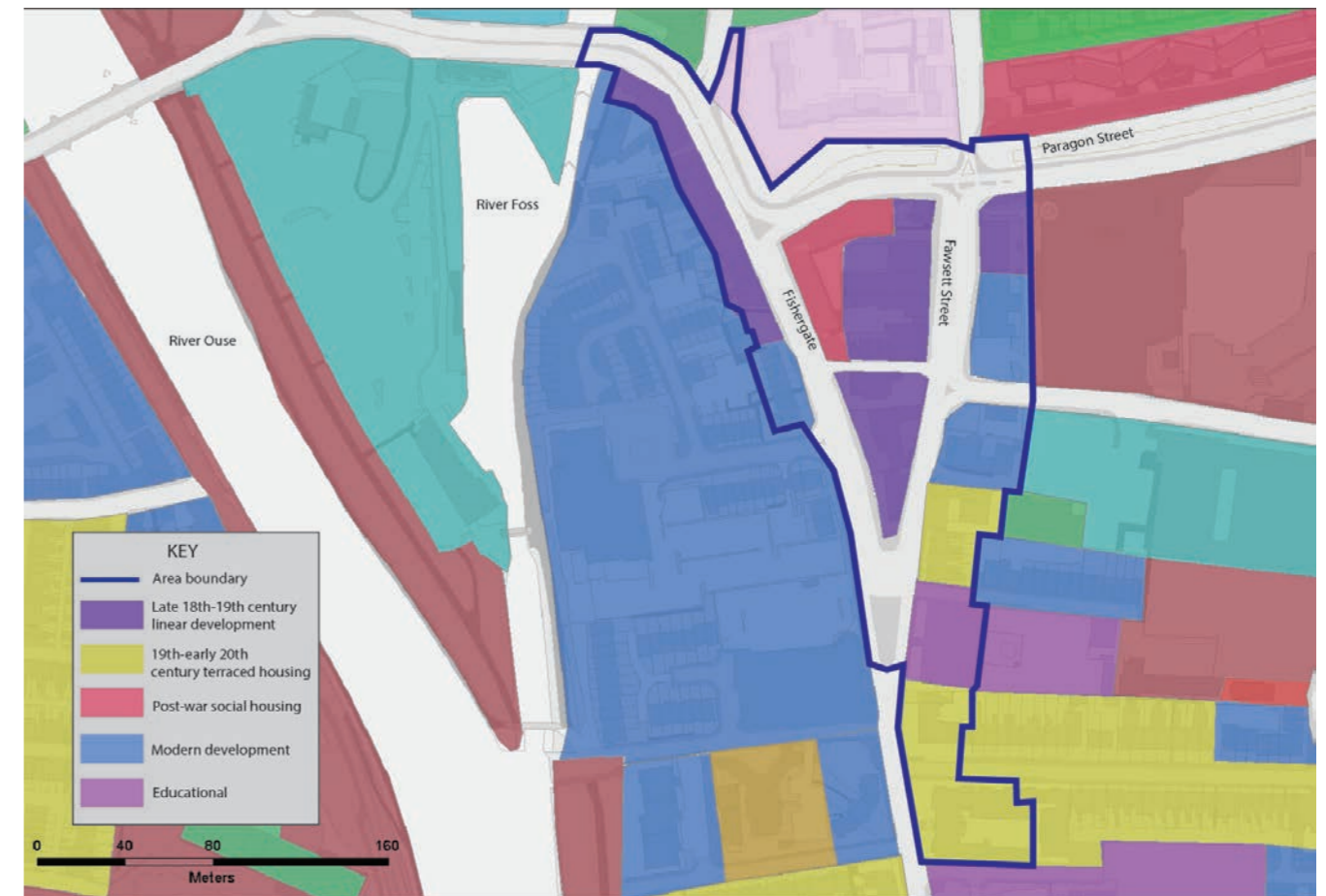
Above: Plan showing the heights of the buildings within this character area.

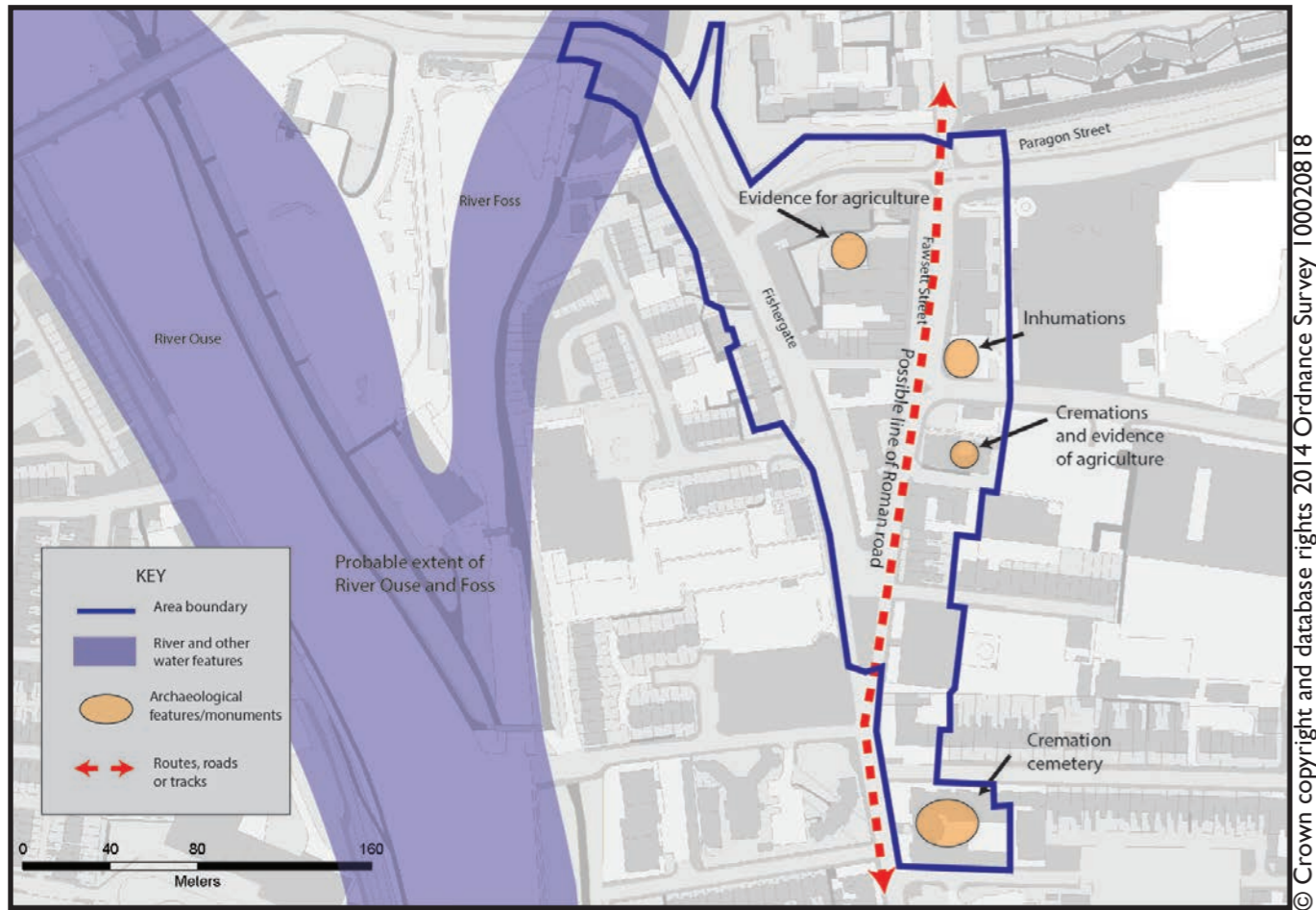
Below: Plan showing the construction dates of the buildings within the area.



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

Below: Plan showing the Broad Type characterisation of the area.

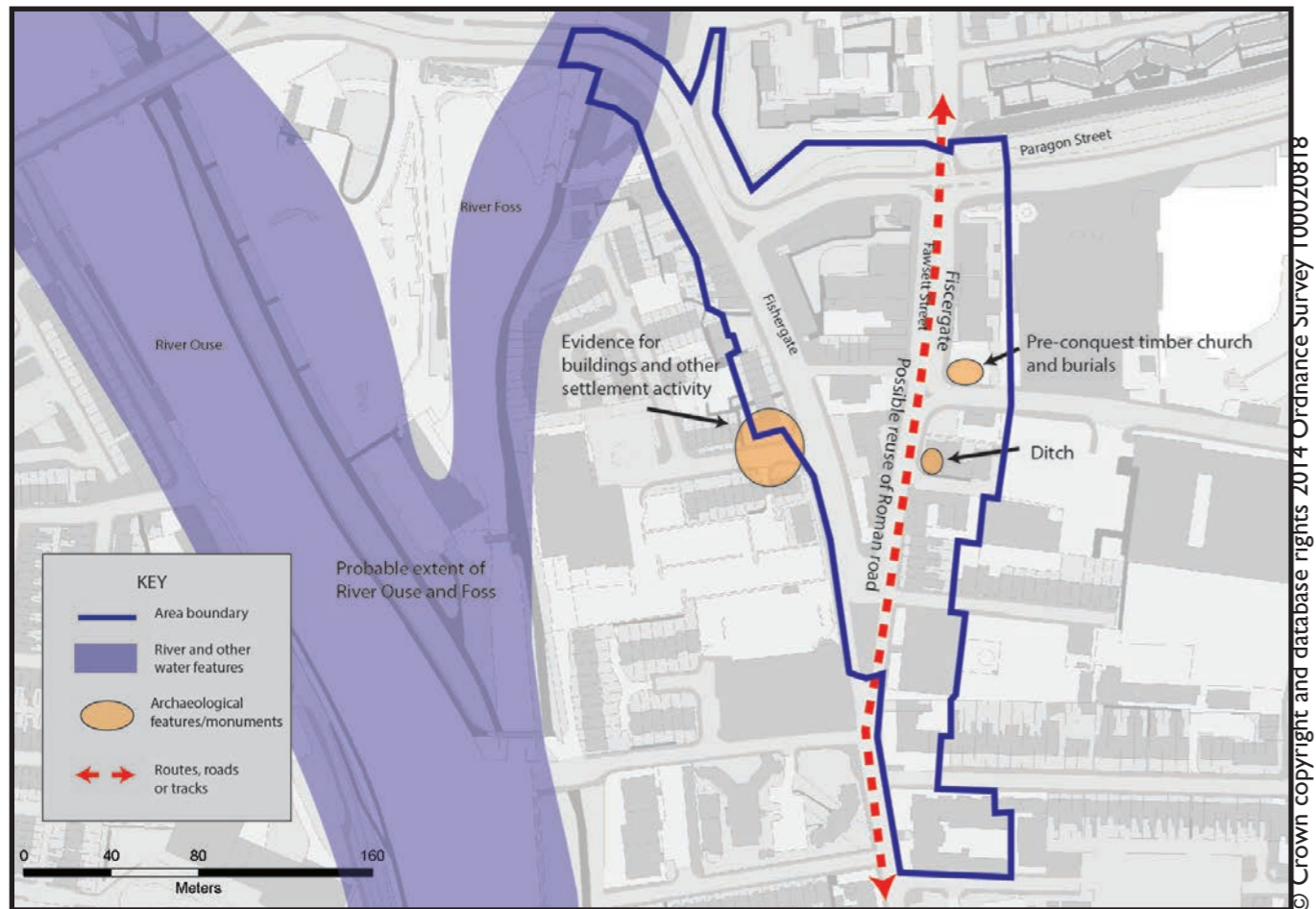




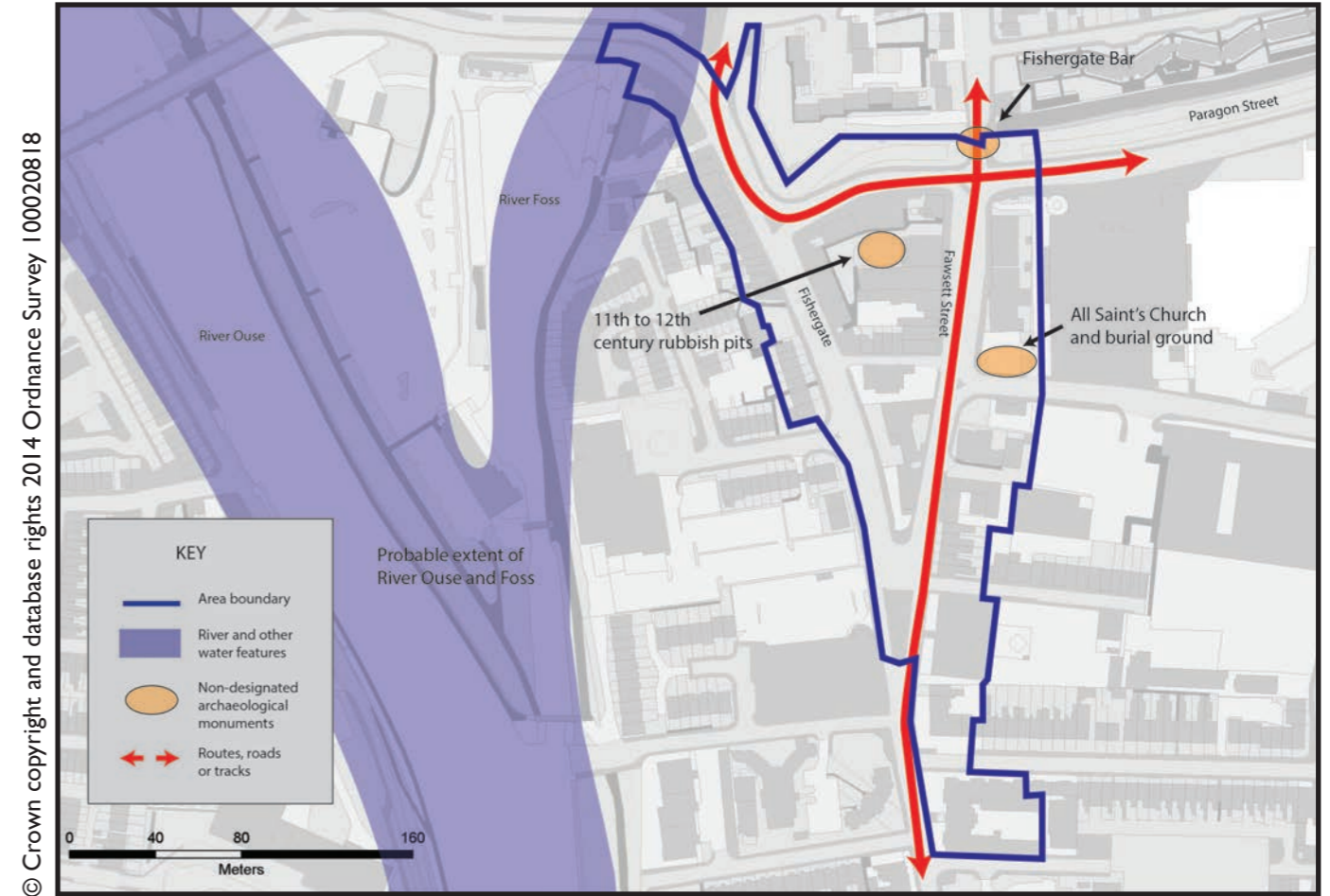
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Above: The Roman landscape.

Below: The Anglo-Scandinavian landscape.



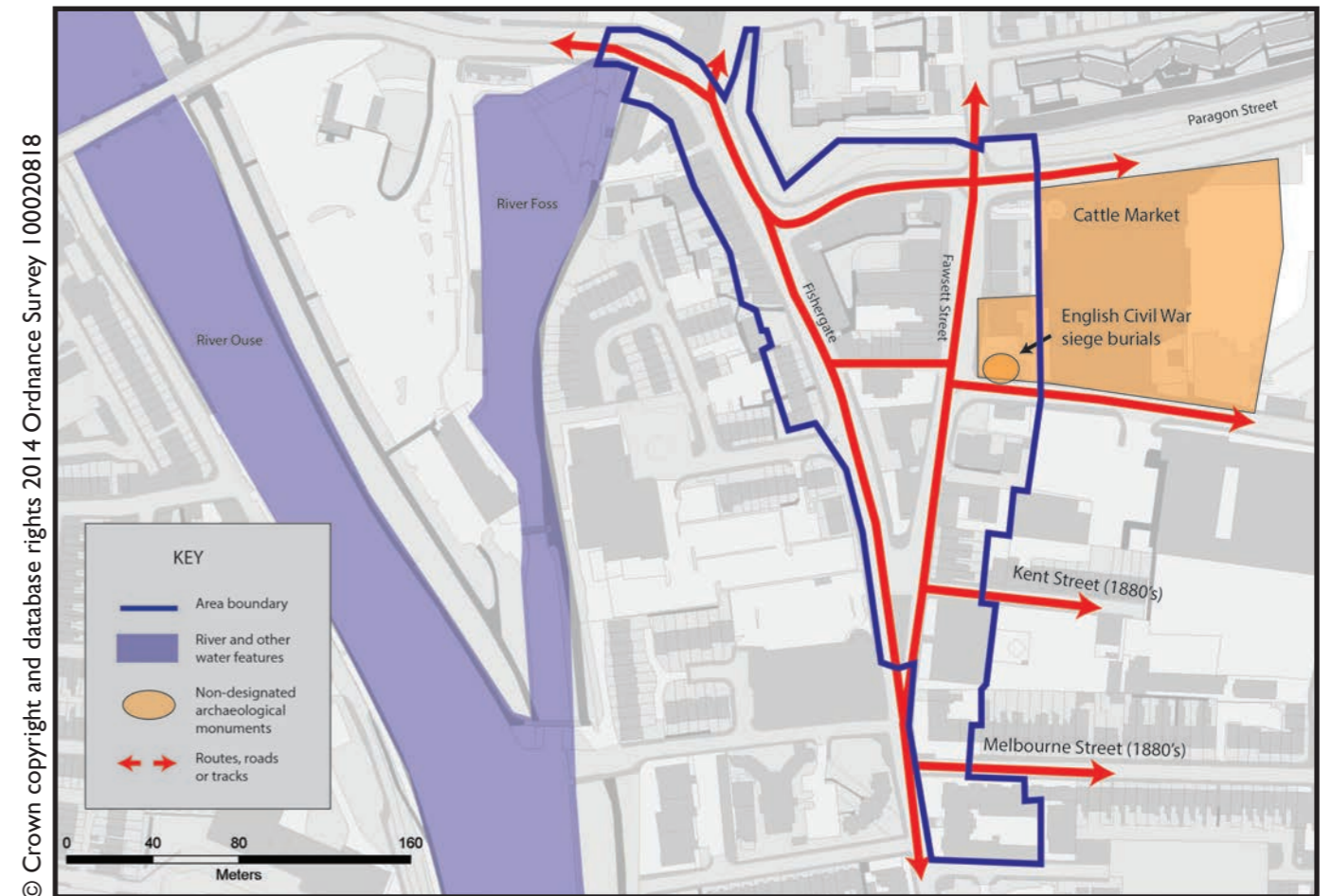
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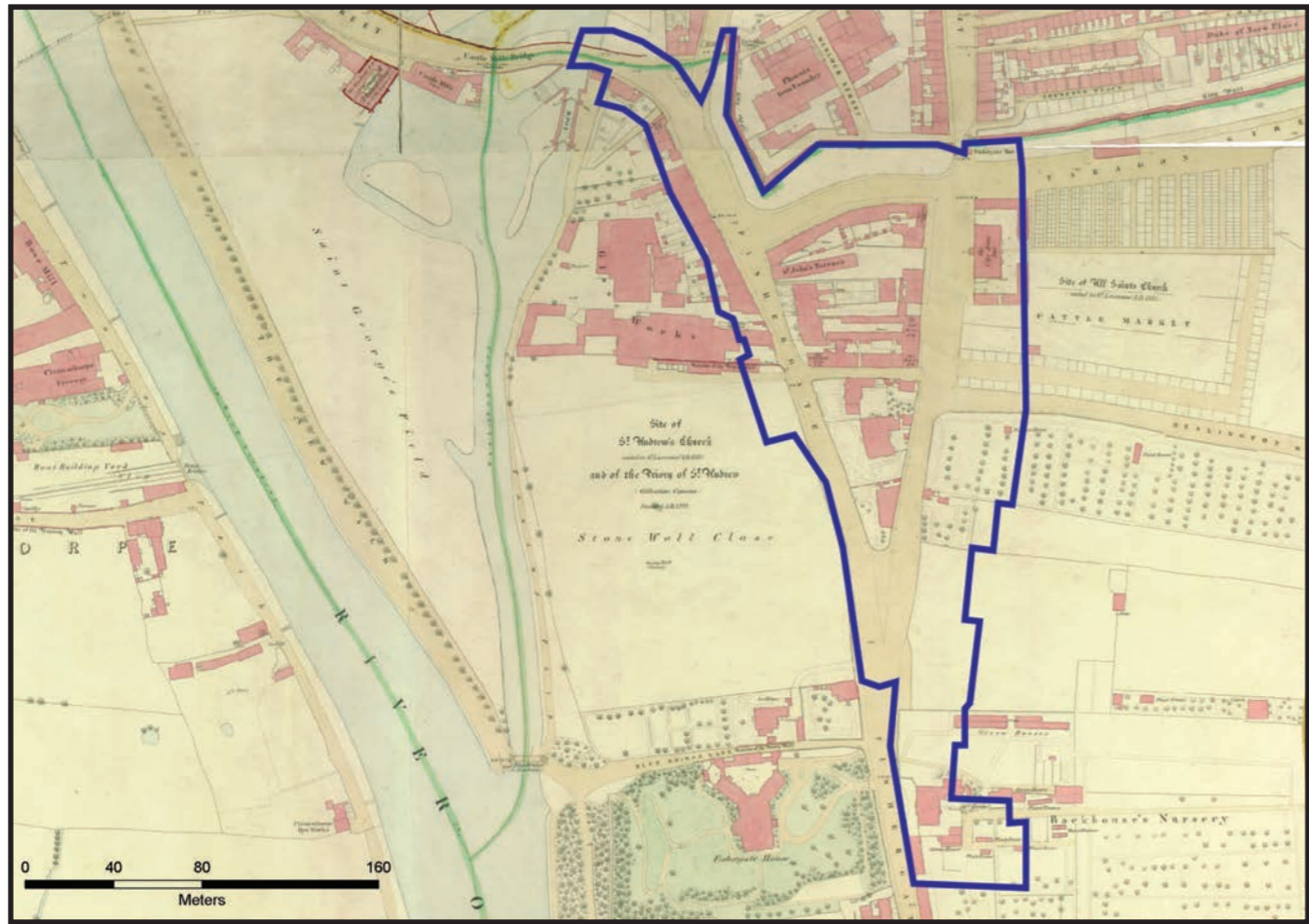
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Above: The medieval landscape.

Below: The post-medieval landscape.



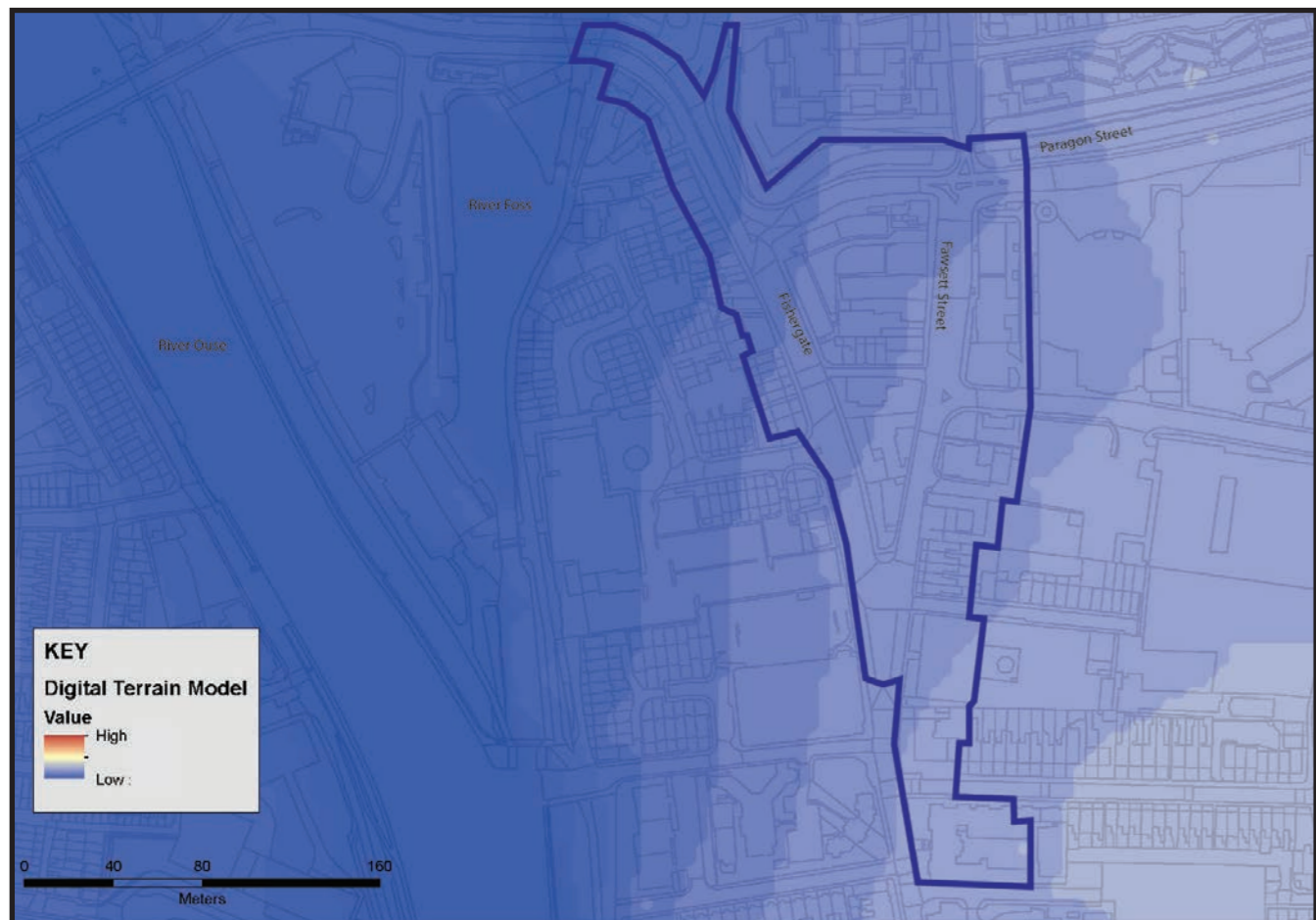
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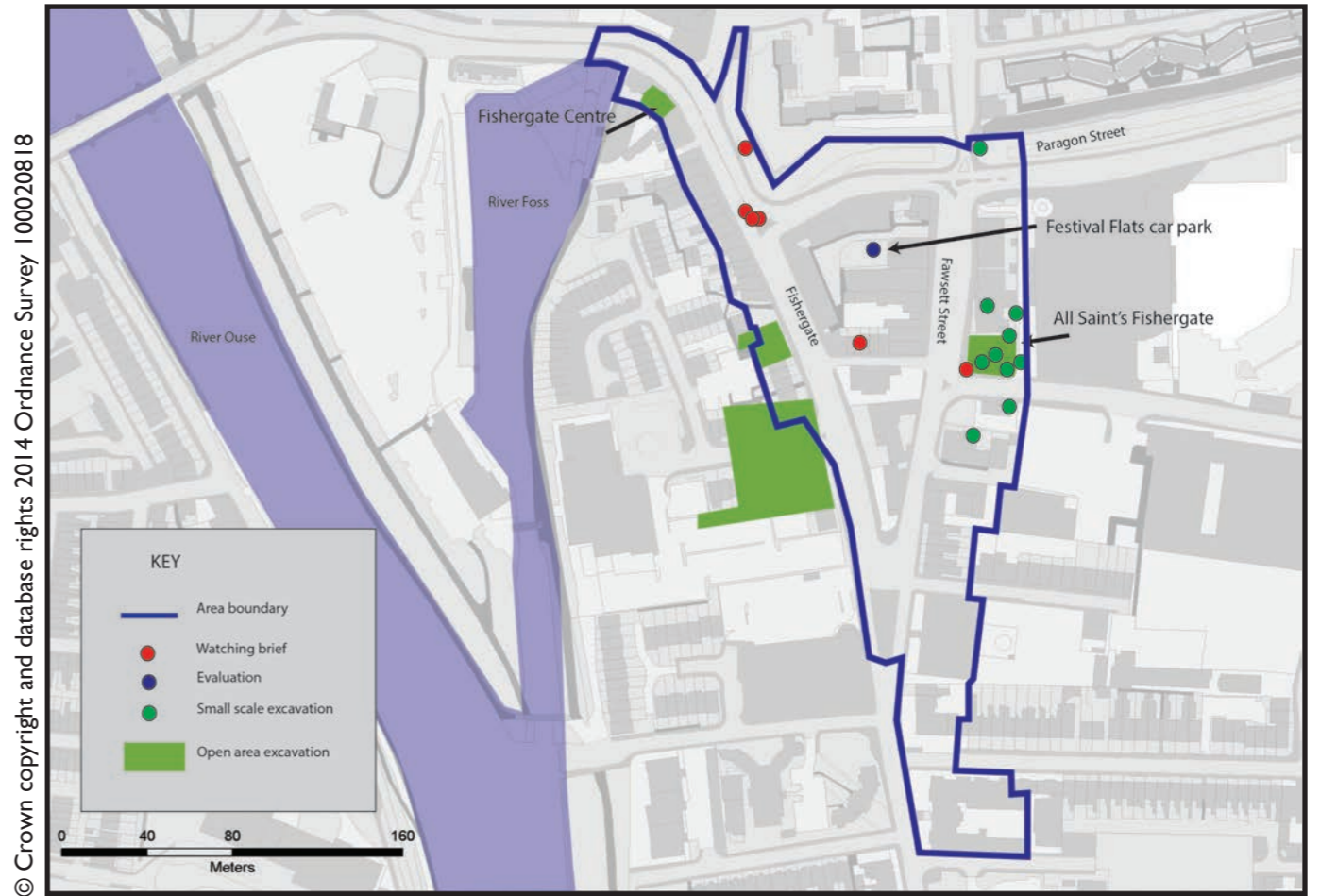
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Above: The 1852 landscape.

Below: The general topography showing the higher ground towards Fawcett Street.



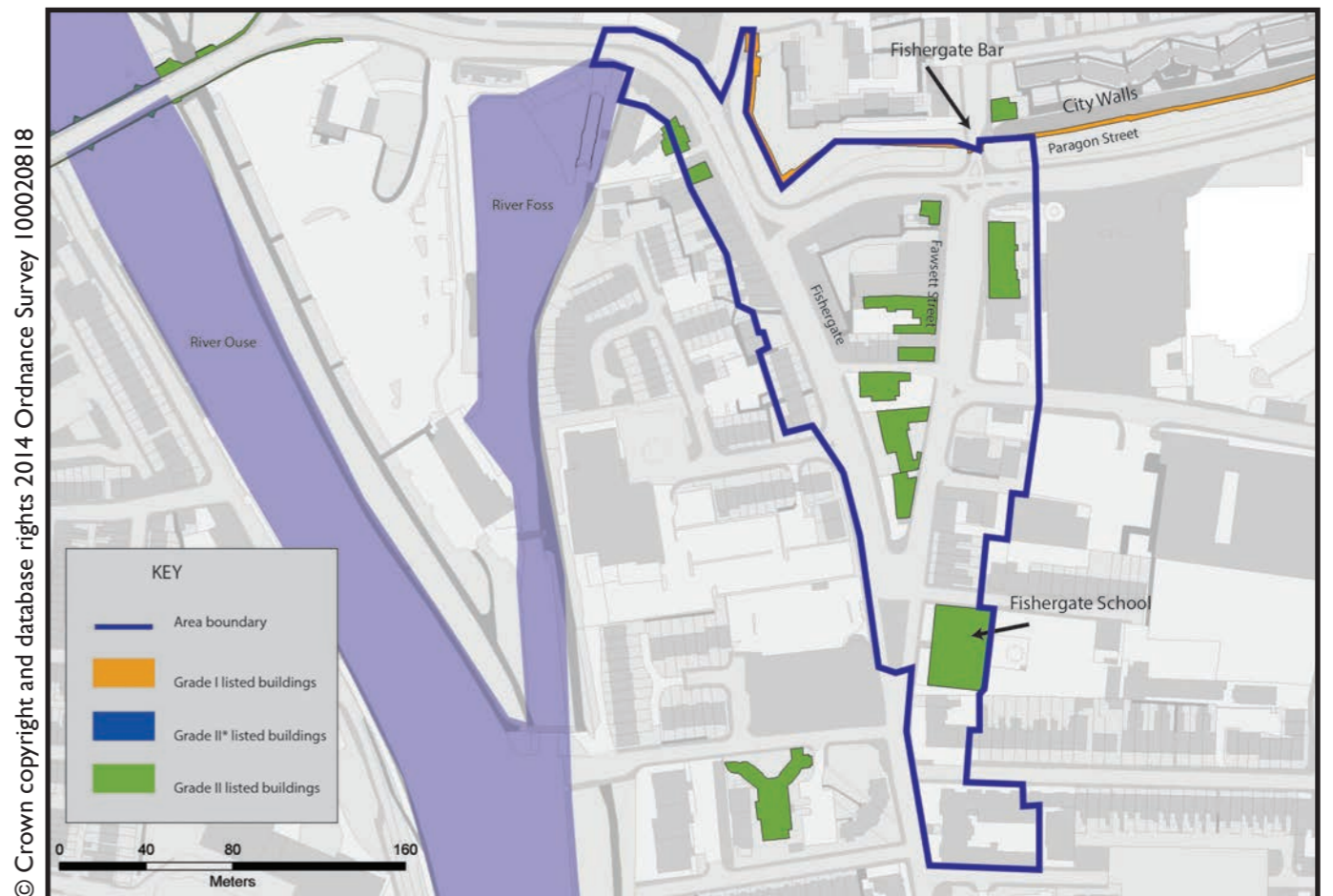
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Above: The location of archaeological interventions recorded on the City of York Historic Environment Record.

Below: Location of listed buildings.



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## Main Sources

Ottaway, P. 2011, Archaeology in the Environs of Roman York, CBA, York

Ove Arup, 1991, Archaeology and Development Study, York

York City Council Historic Environment Record (and grey literature report EYO18)

York City Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal- 18: Fishergate

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