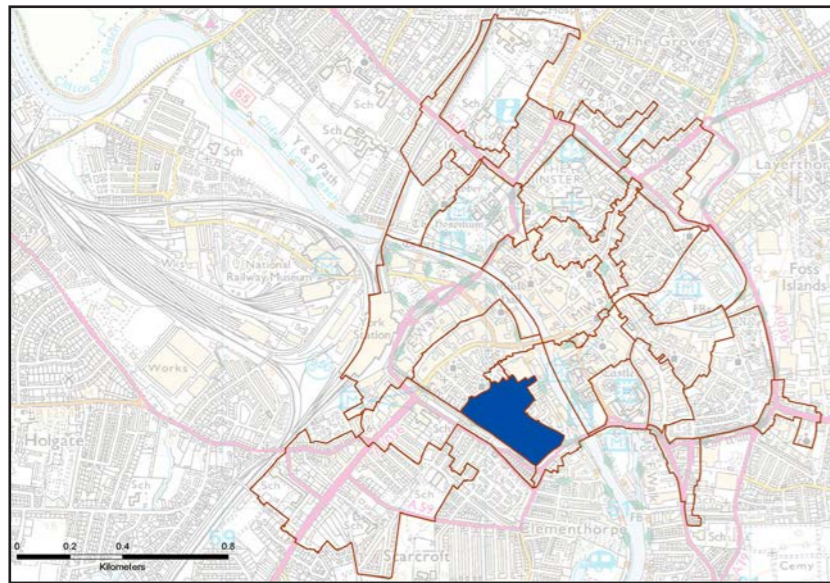


Character area 20: Bishophill



The location of the character area within the historic core.

Archaeological background

Roman

During the Roman period, Bishophill was part of the civilian Colonia of Roman York. Where the topography rises up from the River Ouse to the ridge of Bishophill Senior, natural terraces were further enhanced to make the best use of available land. There is strong evidence that either high status public buildings or private villas occupied these terraces.

A Roman building (MYO2289) containing a plunge bath was observed during the excavation of a sewer trench along Fetter Lane in 1852 (EYO2706) just outside the character area (see Character Area 19). An evaluation also on Fetter Lane in 1998 (EYO156) revealed evidence of a well constructed mortar floor, overlain by levelling deposits and a less well constructed floor of later date, all Roman in date to a depth of 1.75 metres. These layers were sealed under sandstone flags suggesting roof collapse of a well constructed building of 2nd century date. A 4th century wall standing to a height of four courses was also recovered and evidence for an earlier stone building along with an associated infant burial.

Further archaeological evidence from this period was identified during a watching brief on Prospect Terrace (EYO3526) which revealed a cobbled surface and wall, and on Kyme Street where a pit or posthole was recorded (EYO2344). The latter was recorded as 0.4m thick although the deposit had been disturbed by the Roylat factory building which had occupied the site.

On the site of Bishophill Senior a Roman plaster surface 0.3m thick was revealed c. 1.48m below ground level (EYO3708) as well as clay and cobble wall foundations (EYO3916) slightly further north c.3 m below ground level. During an excavation at 37 Bishophill Senior in 1973 floors and remains of an apsidal stone building were recorded. Many of these deposits which ranged in thickness between 0.2m to 0.6m thick were disturbed and heavily robbed (EYO2038-44). Roman dumps and levelling deposits were recorded during the same excavation facing Lambert Court up to 3.0m in thickness (EYO2033).

Excavations at the Friend's Burial Ground (EYO2251-52) immediately to the east of Bishophill in 1973 produced finds indicating continuous occupation from the 2nd to 19th century.

Structures encountered may have been the defences of the Roman Colonia. In addition to this, pits and metallised surfaces were identified.

Anglo-Scandinavian

There is very little evidence for Anglian settlement or activity south of the Ouse although several cremation cemeteries, in particular The Mount, as well as numerous casual finds suggests that activity must have been present.

Skeldergate and Albion Wharf to the east of this character area contain waterlogged Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian deposits (EYO429, 4848, 4850, 2910-22, 2021-23). The excavation at 37 Bishophill Senior in 1973 revealed three sherds of Anglian pottery (EYO2047) and an Anglo-Scandinavian pit recorded as 0.5m thick (EYO2048). Evidence for craft working including non-ferrous metals was located at the same excavation. The church of St Mary's, Bishophill Senior and St. Mary's, Bishophill Junior (MYO1868) may have been founded by the 8th century. Investigations beneath Baille Hill have produced some evidence of occupation.

Medieval

Ballie Hill is the remains of an 11th century motte, part of a substantial motte and bailey castle built at approximately the same time as York Castle off Tower Street (Character Area 13, The Castle). The only other city with two castles is London. The earlier, Anglo-Scandinavian earthwork defences were retained and strengthened. The masonry city wall was probably completed by the late 13th century in the Micklegate area and a simple postern gate is known to have existed in the 12th century called Lounelith at the present Victoria Bar (blocked at some point in the later medieval period).

The Baille castle became the responsibility and property of the Archbishop and its only significant role since the 12th century was during the 1644 Siege of York when it was used by Royalist defenders as a gun emplacement. The castle was fully integrated into the circuit of city defences in the mid 15th century.

Description

After the Romans departed, Bishophill was a sparsely populated pastoral area until the 19th century when it was densely built up to house York's population growth.

Today, the charming network of terraced streets strongly reflect the character of a Victorian suburb; the regimented and repetitive nature of the architecture makes the area distinct from others in the city walls. Enclosed by the wall, this area is a tranquil haven with a very strong sense of identity.

Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal

Bishophill appears to have had several names in the 12th to 13th centuries such as Bychehyl, Bicchehill and Biscophill (Pallister 1978:5).

A watching brief on Newton Terrace (EYO180) concluded that the site was part of the old castle bailey and that the space had been open from the medieval period until the construction of the present street frontage of the late 19th century. The area in general appears to have been sparsely populated until the 19th century. Some medieval activity and occupation must have occurred in this area due to the recording of a thin 0.25m deposit containing medieval pits, dumps and a hearth on Kyme Street (EYO 2341). These remains had also been disturbed by the subsequent construction of the Roylat factory building. Medieval postholes, wall and mortar surface was recorded in a 0.48m thick deposit at Trinity Lane Car Park in 1981 (EYO3057). St. Mary's Church stood on the east side of Bishophill Senior close to the populated Skeldergate area. Medieval occupation has been evidenced at Fetter Lane (EYO156).

A watching brief at Priory Street/Bishophill Junior in 2000 (EYO437) revealed a stone wall that follows the course of the parish boundary that separated Holy Trinity Priory from that of St Mary Bishophill Junior. The wall may have formed part of the south-eastern boundary wall of the Holy Trinity Priory which stood immediately to the north of this character area (Character Area 21, Micklegate).

Post-medieval – Early modern

Post-medieval archaeological evidence is sparse, due in part to disturbance caused during construction of 19th century terraced housing. Wall foundations were exposed during a watching brief at 3-5 Victor Street (EYO3430) along with brick and rubble dumps 1.38m thick at St Mary's Bishophill Senior (EYO3707) and a 0.2m thick brick floor in 1984 (EYO3794).

The Bishophill area seems to have remained relatively undeveloped until the mid to late 19th century when residential development began. By the 17th century several large houses were extant in this area such as Buckingham House and the Fairfax Mansion (both demolished in the 19th century). A House of Correction was built on the site of the medieval castle bailey adjacent Baile Hill in 1802-7 and demolished in 1878.

Visible character

Quiet Victorian suburb within the City Walls

Confined by City Walls on two sides

Green space is generally confined to the rampart areas

Sub surface character

Ove Arup Development & Archaeology Study Research Zone: 11

Deposit Depth (where known): Ove Arup Archaeology and Development Study suggest average quality archaeological deposits of all periods at average depths of c.2.0m in this area

Across the Bishophill area the general model is between 2.0m and 4.0m of historic strata covered by a shallow overburden although some anomalies exist.

Roman archaeology has been located at varying depths such as 1.75m below ground level on Fetter Lane, c.3.0m below ground level and 1.48m below ground level at St Mary's Bishophill Senior

Deposit thicknesses vary between: Roman c.0.2m to 3.0m; medieval c.0.25m to 0.5m; Anglo-Scandinavian c.0.5m; and, post-medieval c.0.2m to 1.38m

Period Survival: Significant Roman deposits including structures have been found within the area, which formed part of the civilian Colonia.

Limited Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian deposits relating to craft working but no structural evidence apart from St Mary's Bishophill Senior and suggestions of occupation beneath Baile Hill.

Medieval deposits are less common in this area than other places partly due to the negative impact of the 19th century residential development and partly due to the lack of contemporary activity.

Interventions (recorded on HER April 2013): There are approximately 28 archaeological interventions recorded on the City of York Historic Environment Record (HER). Few of the interventions are recorded in any detail. See Appendix 1 for summary.

Significance

Overview: Bishophill falls within the former Roman Colonia/ West Walled City area as identified by Ove Arup in the Archaeology and Development Study. The Colonia contains average quality deposits at an average depth c.2m below ground level, relating to all periods.

Evidence for Roman occupation is abundant in the wider area but less so for the specific area. The same is true of the Anglo-Scandinavian period although specific evidence for structures is lacking. Bishophill appears to have been sparsely populated until construction of residential terraces in the 19th century.

With the limited information available it is known that substantial stratified, anerobic and dry deposits can survive within the area at an average depth of 2.0m below ground level. Post-medieval archaeology is likely to be limited due to the impact of later housing and lack of intensive activity during the medieval and post-medieval periods.

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

Bishophill contains few architecturally or historically significant buildings due to the late development of the area. The City Walls (Barker Tower to Baile Hill) are Grade I listed and Scheduled Ancient Monuments. There are 3 Grade II listed buildings; The Golden Ball PH (1880s), the Old Rectory (late 17th century) and the former Victoria Bar Primitive Methodist Church (1880).

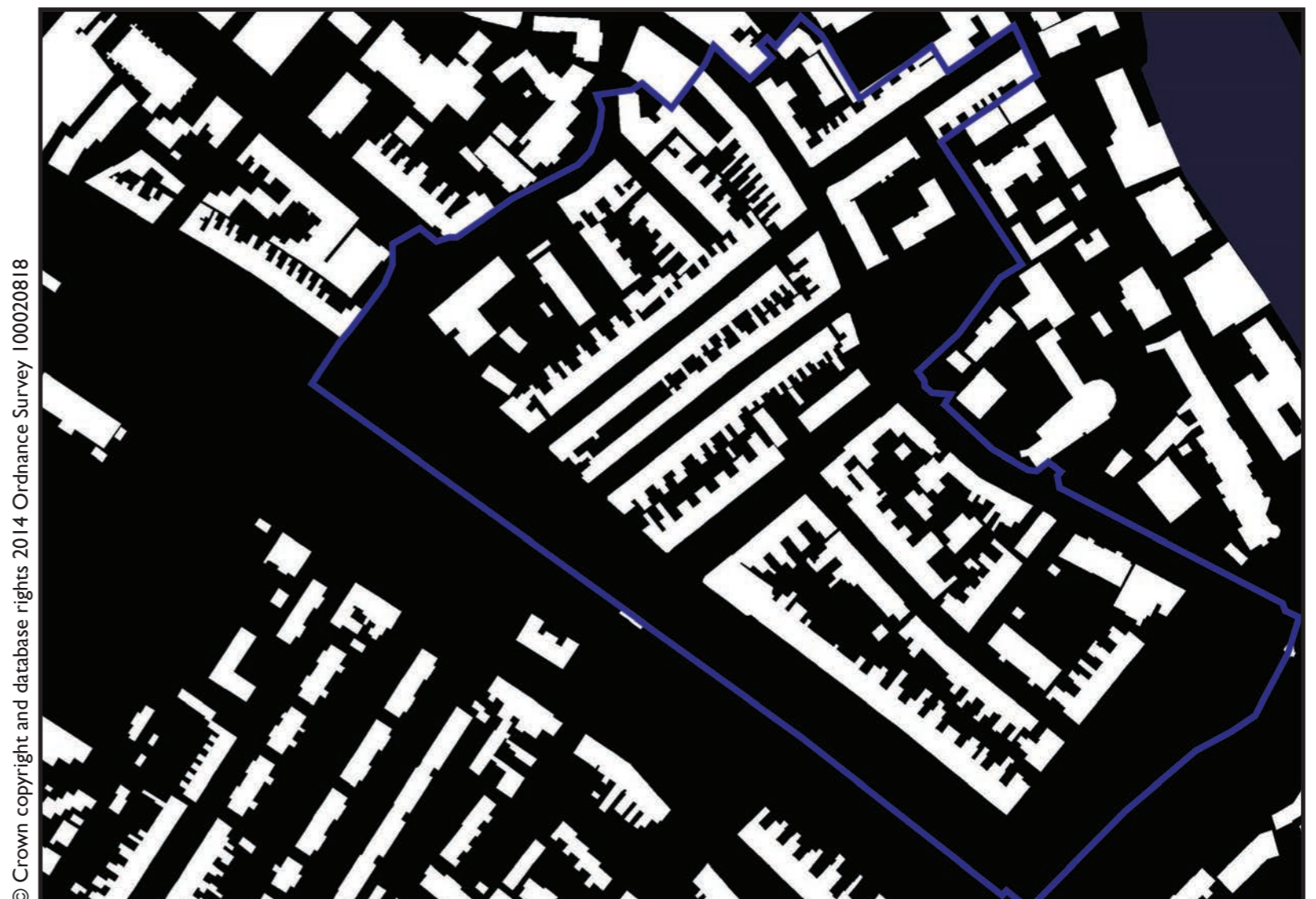
The Historic Core Character Area Appraisal suggests that the terraced streets as a whole have strong local value and should be considered Buildings of Merit.

Streetscape components: Footway paving is mixed. Some streets such as Hampton Street, Kyme Street and Baile Hill Terrace retain much of their original English Pennine Sandstone flags. The back lanes also retain much of their original stable pavements.

Paving on other streets is predominantly a mixture of pre-cast concrete flags (in some cases original 1950s) and asphalt. Pre-cast concrete flags are used on Newton Terrace, part of Hampden Street and all of Victor Street. Natural stone flags were removed from Bishop Hill in the 1970s and 1980s for use in the city centre. Carriageways are asphalt as well as part of the footpaths on Lower Priory Street and Bishophill Senior.

Throughout the area, a variety of attached and free standing early to late 20th century street lighting units, historic and modern street signage and ironwork and late 20th century traffic signage are in use. Cast iron drain covers can be found running across the concrete paving slabs in the terraced streets. Black cast iron bollards restrict parking and traffic access in some areas such as Victor Street and Cromwell Road.

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





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

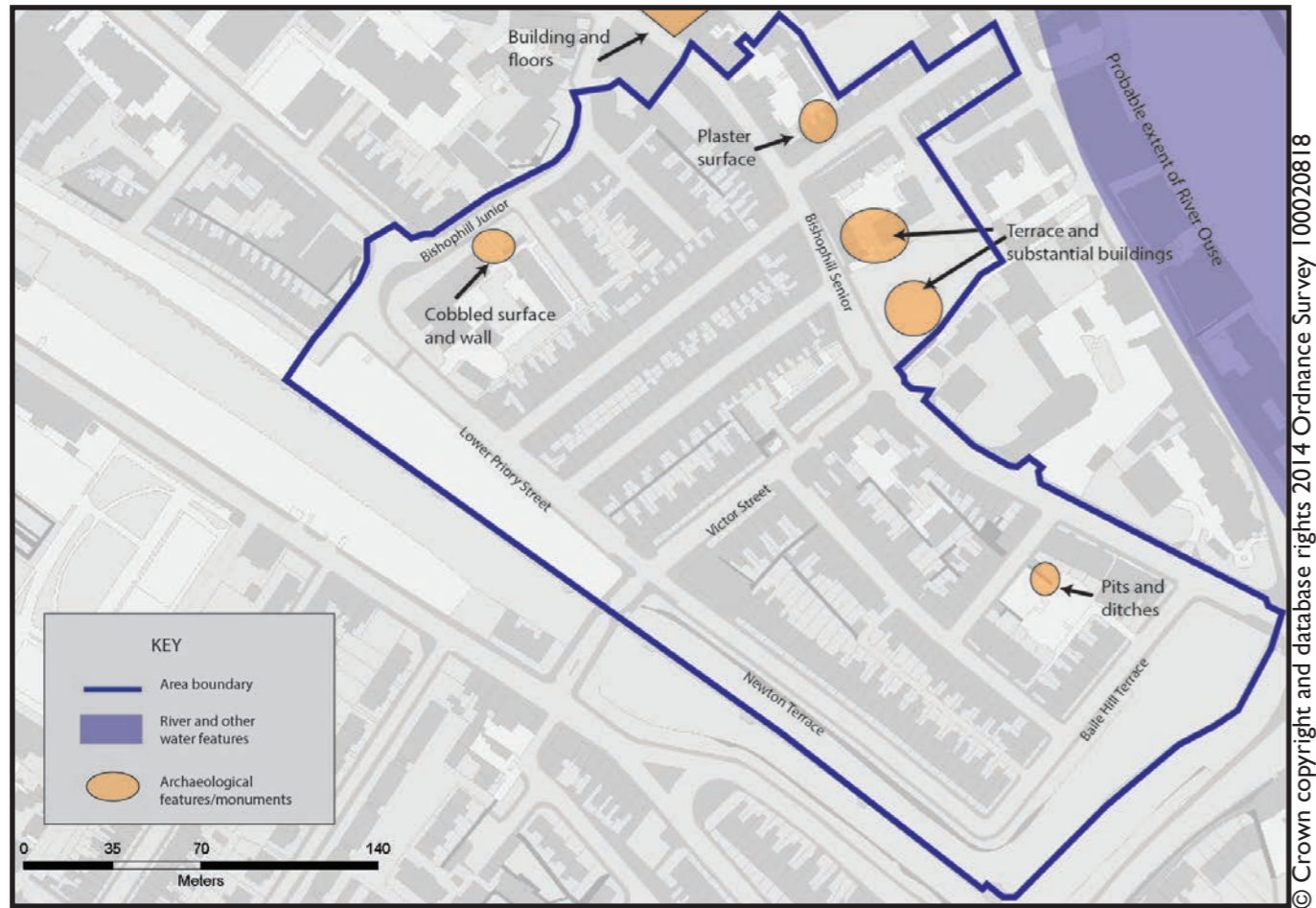
Below: Plan showing the construction dates of the buildings within the area.



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

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

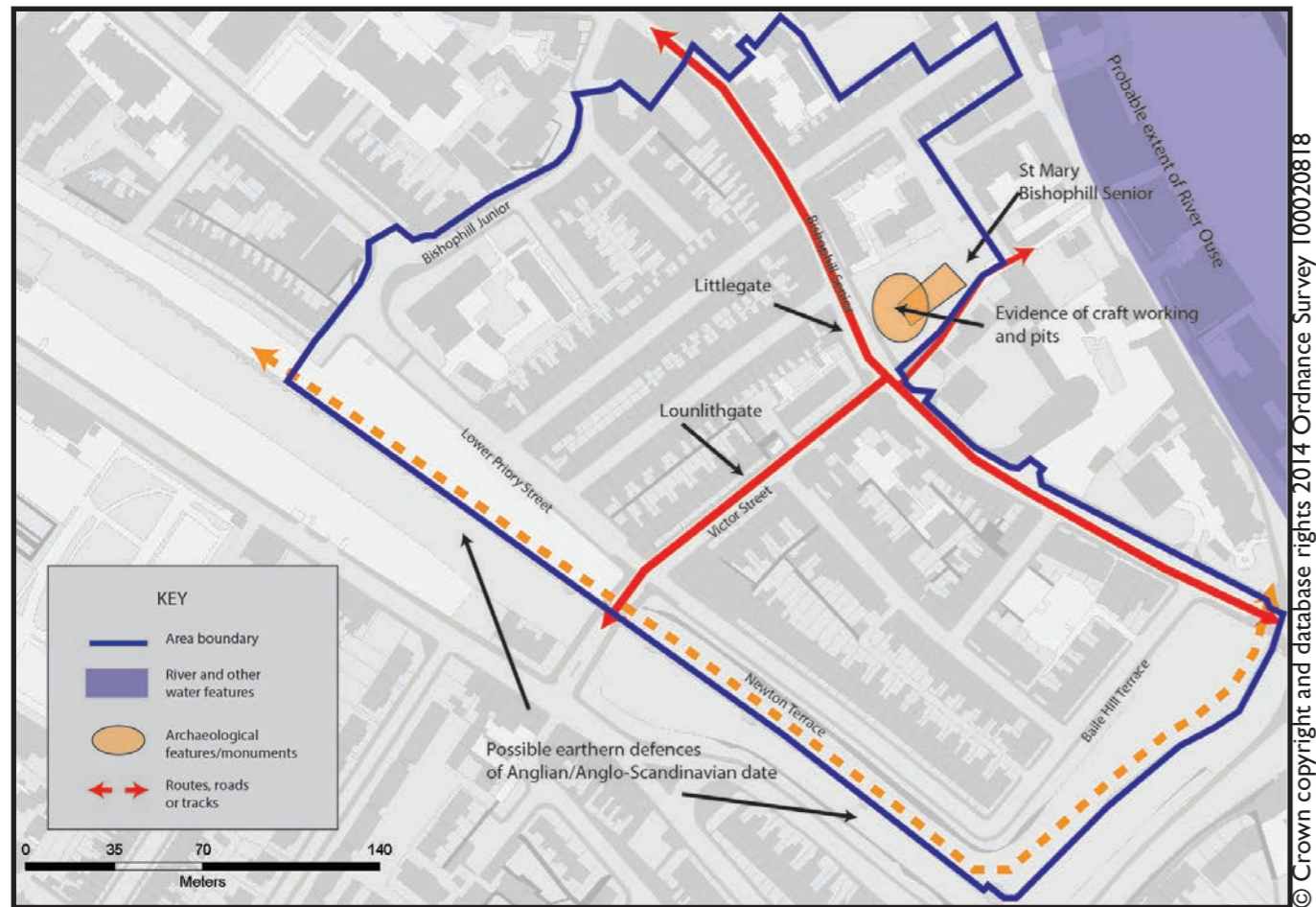




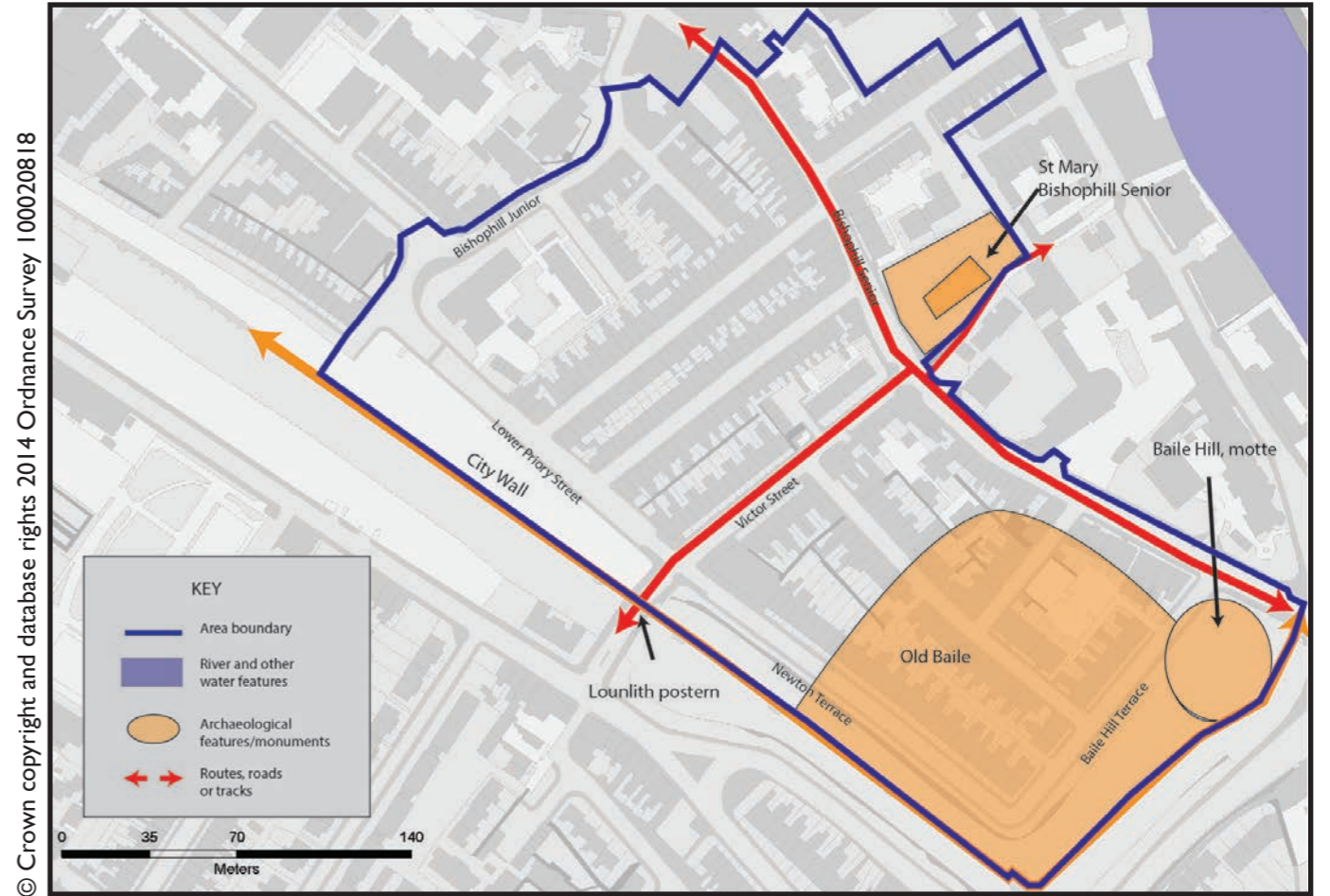
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Above: The Roman landscape.

Below: The Anglo-Scandinavian landscape



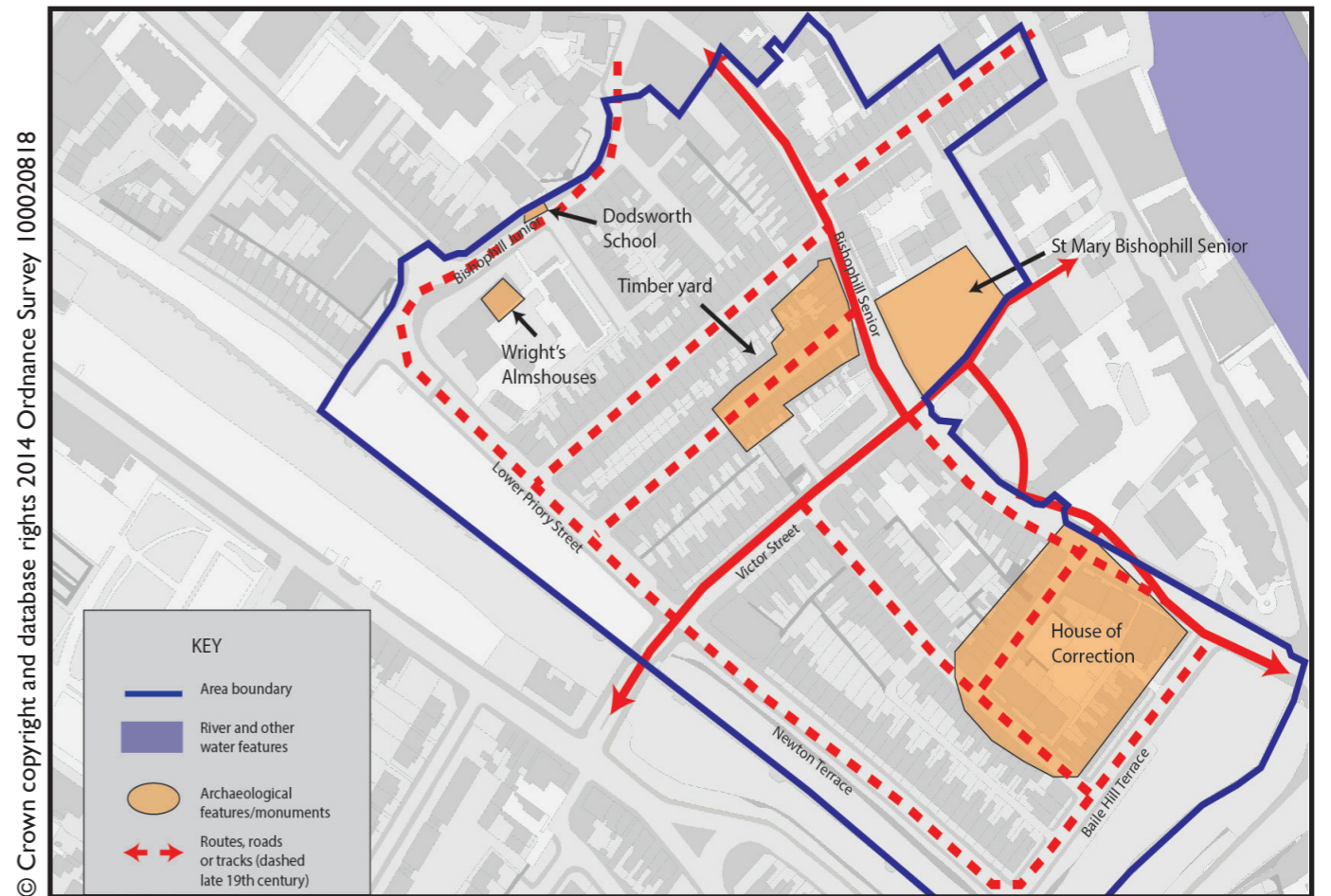
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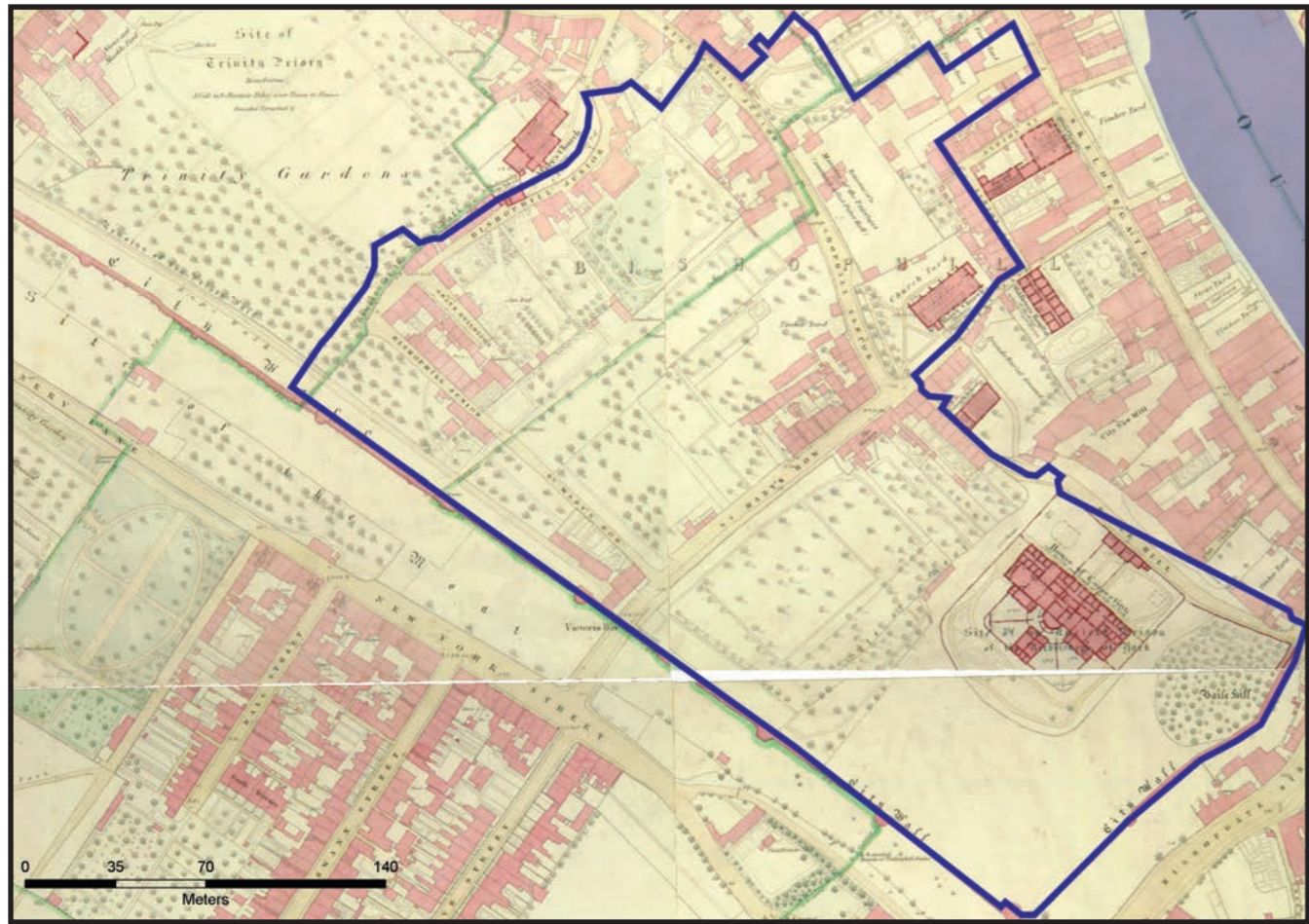
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Above: The medieval landscape.

Below: The post-medieval landscape.



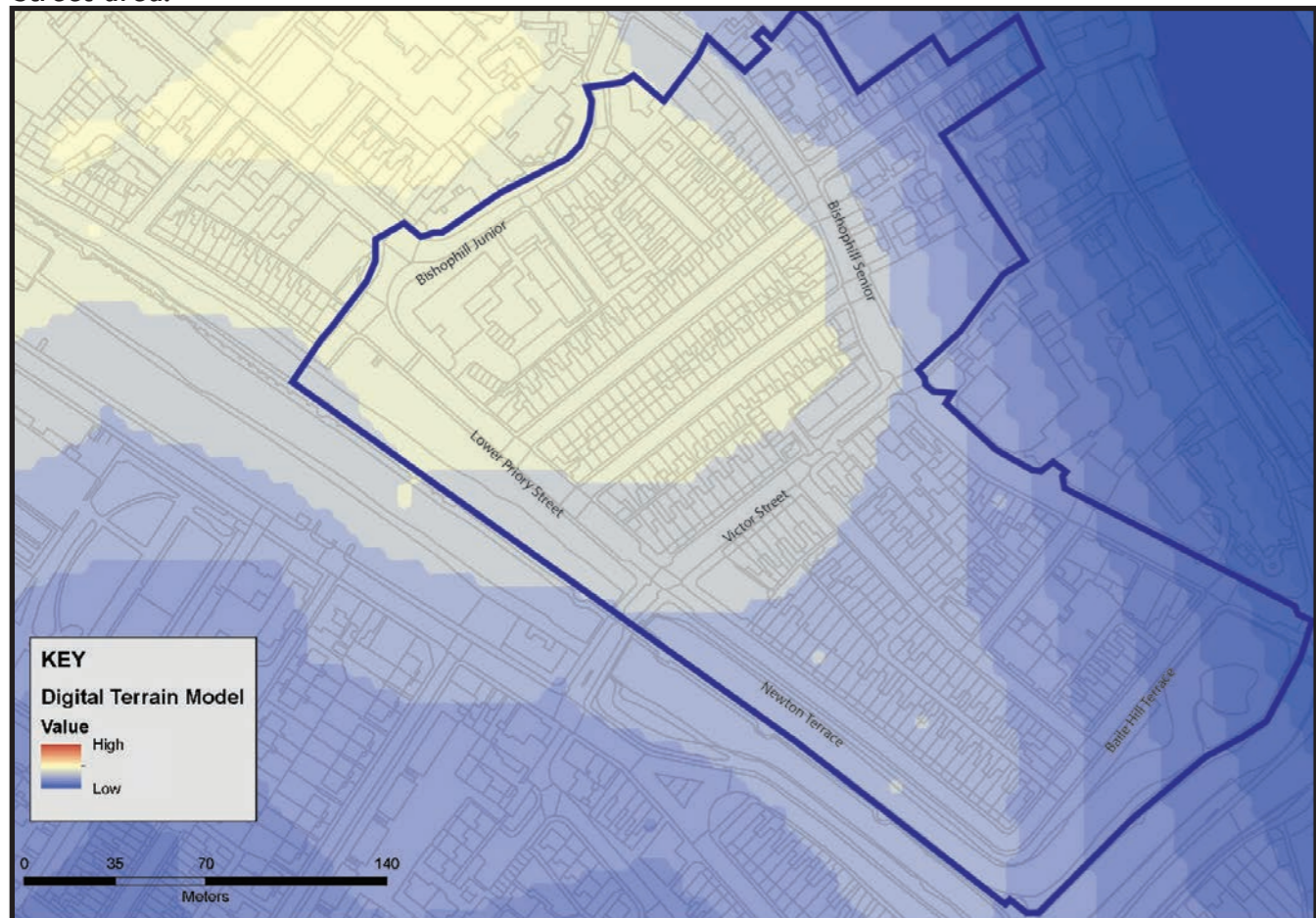
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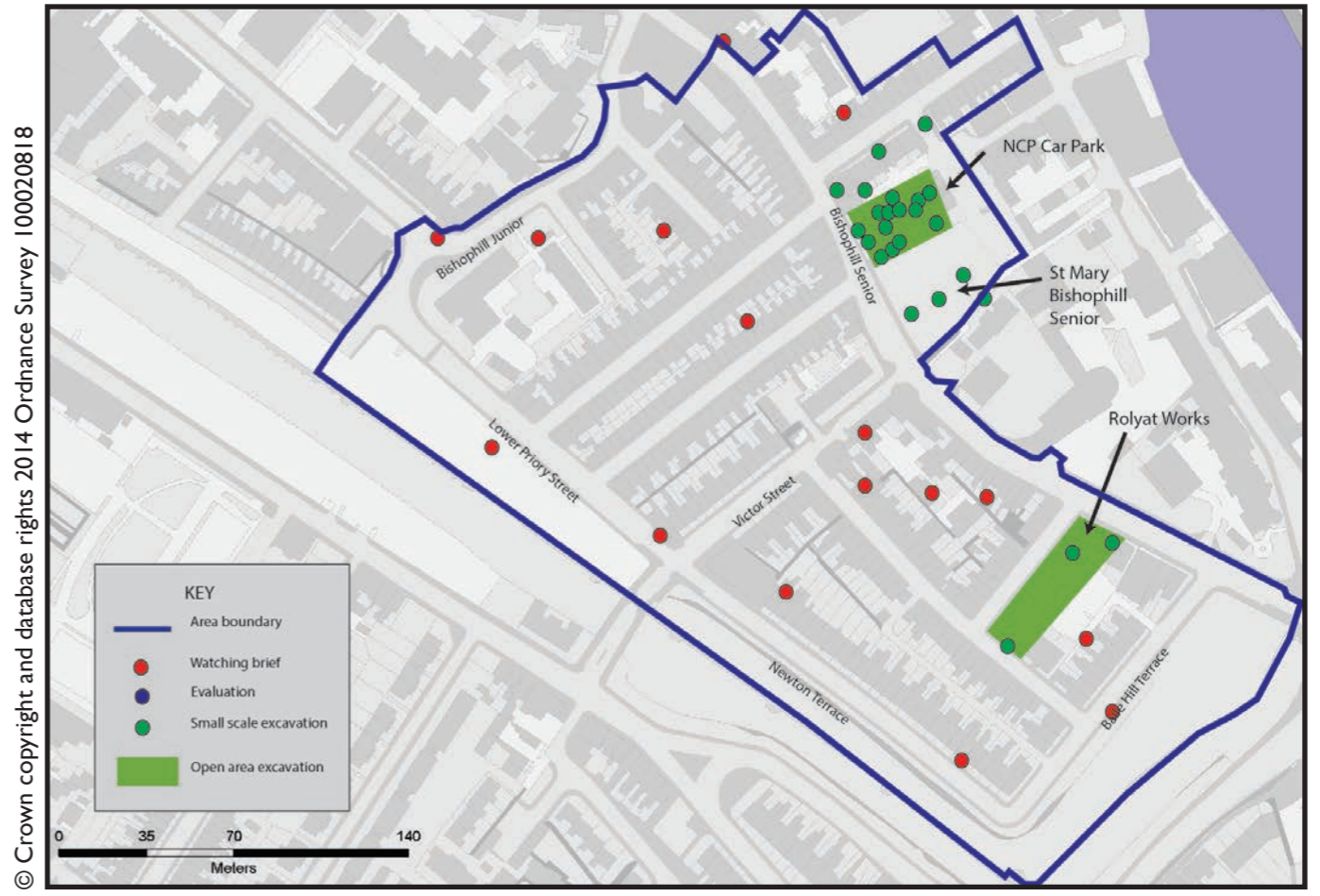
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Above: The 1852 landscape.

Below: The general topography showing higher ground in the Bishophill Junior and Lower Priory Street area.



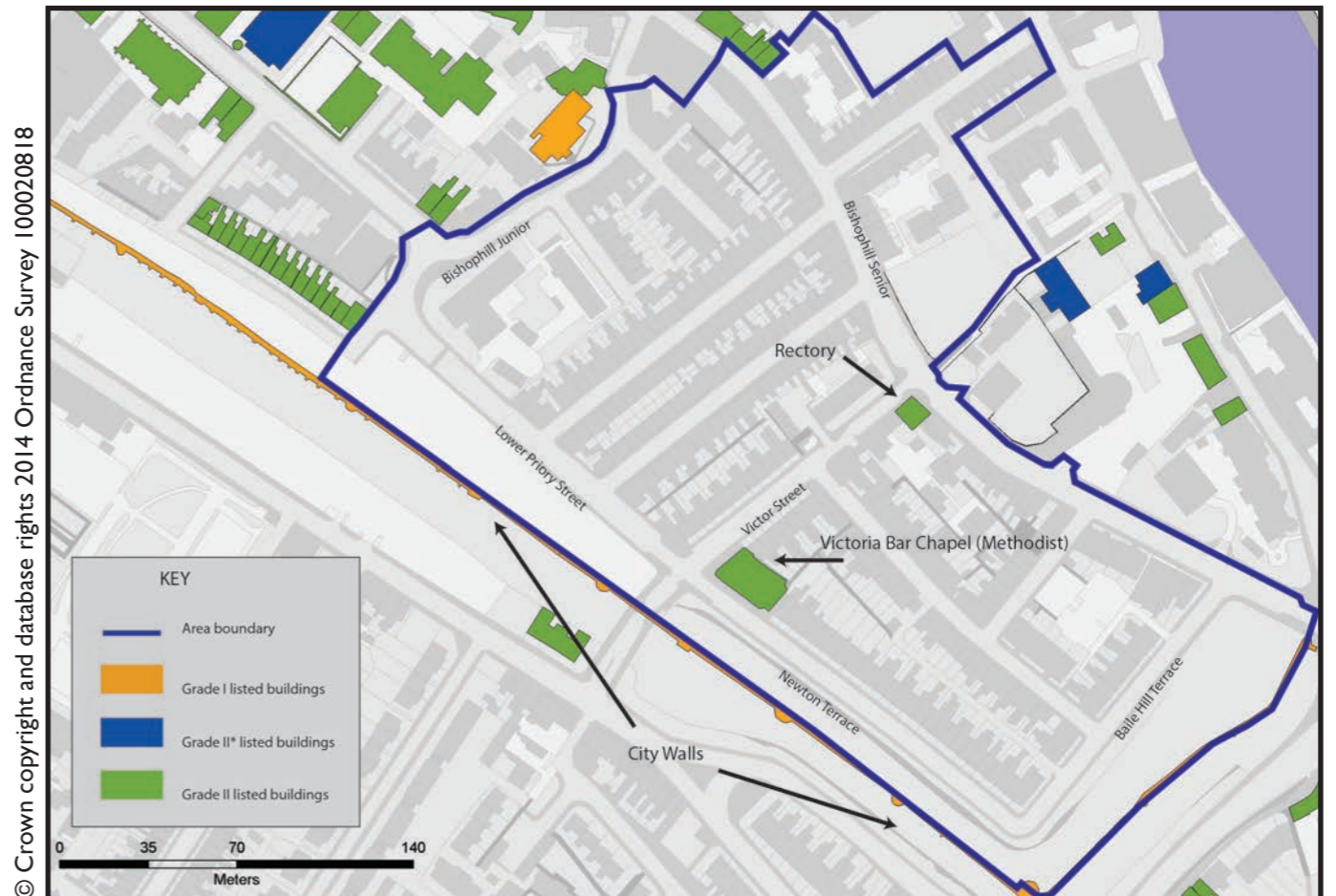
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Above: The location of archaeological interventions recorded on the City of York Historic Environment Record.

Below: Location of listed buildings.



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York City Council Historic Environment Record

York City Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal- 20: Bishophill

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