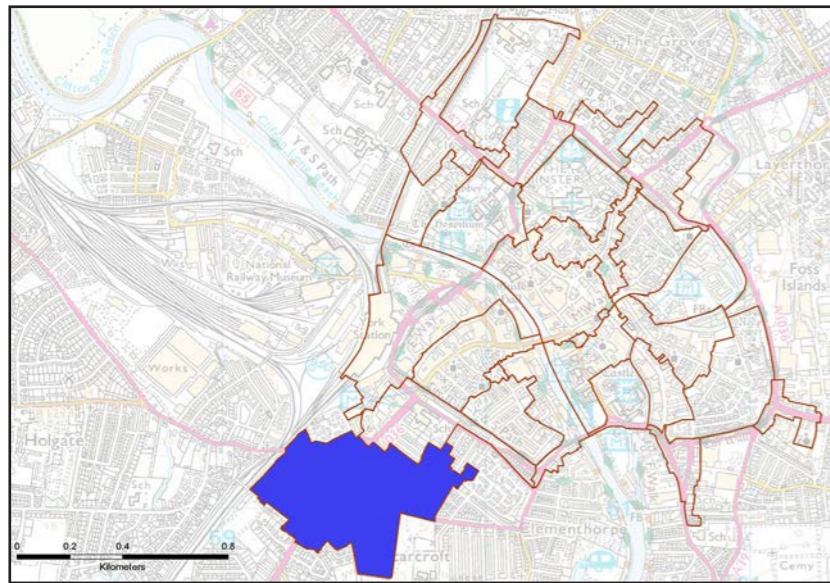


## Character area 24: The Mount



The location of the character area within the historic core.

## Archaeological background

### Prehistoric

Prehistoric finds have been found south at Dringhouses and to the north-west in the vicinity of the Railway Station. Dringhouses has produced Neolithic axes while probable Iron Age burials and a beltplate were located at the Station. Several prehistoric finds are reported from the area of The Mount in the 19th century (EYO801).

### Roman

Blossom Street/The Mount/Tadcaster Road has been the principal route into the city from London and the south since the Roman period and perhaps earlier. The Roman road from Tadcaster (Calcaria) to York (MYO2033) has been recorded in several places within this area. It runs parallel with Blossom Street to the rear of the buildings on the north-west side. A second road presumed to link York with Alborough (Isurium) runs to the rear of the Odeon building and off towards Holgate. Evidence of a cobbled surface, probably the Tadcaster Road was revealed during excavations off Driffield Terrace (not on the HER). During the Roman period the extramural areas around gateway roads were predominantly used for burying the dead. 18th and 19th century finds from The Mount and immediate vicinity include tombstones, altars and stone/brick burial chambers. Cremations are also known throughout the area such as at Mount Parade, located in 1823. Blossom Street, to the north also contains a large Roman funerary area (MYO2203 & MYO3680) as well as cemeteries to the south, such as Trentholme Drive, excavated in the 1950s.

20th century archaeological investigations on The Mount revealed evidence for a cemetery on the east side (no.89) (MYO2169). However, test pits on the same site in 1999 (EYO195) to 1.0m below ground level revealed evidence for occupation but no undisturbed human remains.

Several interventions at the Mount School over many years have revealed many funerary related deposits and features. A watching brief ahead of the building of the Science Block (1987.15) recorded 13 inhumations and 1 cremation at c.0.3m below ground level. Natural ground was recorded at c.0.5m below ground level.

It can be assumed that ground reduction has taken place in this area possibly associated with the construction of the school buildings and sports facilities. Some areas within the school grounds are archaeologically sterile due to 18th century quarrying and school development. Features including a ditch, evidence of levelling, road and stone coffin have also been found in the grounds of the Mount School. Roman deposits are generally located immediately beneath modern layers in the area as evidenced by a watching brief at Tregelles Primary School (EYO245).

Adjacent to the school, excavations at 1 to 3 and 6 Driffield Terrace from 2004 to 2005 produced a large numbers of burials, many of which had been decapitated (EYO351 & EYO718). Further inhumations and cremations were uncovered at 4 Driffield Terrace (EYO2682) in 2003. Natural levels were recorded at 3 Driffield Terrace (EYO351) between c.1.5m and 1.8m in the deepest areas. One theory suggests that these decapitated skeletons may represent a population of gladiators or similar.

North of the school, at 39 Holgate Road (EYO134) excavation of two trenches exposed ditches and other cut features. Above this level, garden soil and post-medieval material were encountered. The data from this investigation suggests that deposits at the property frontage areas are deeper than at the rear of the site (c.2.5m to 1.0m).

Away from The Mount, on Dale Street, a watching brief recorded disarticulated human remains and pottery no deeper than 0.55m below ground level (1995.0354) suggesting that cemeteries also exist away from the main Roman roads. Ground reduction and other disturbance are likely to have been caused in this area in the 19th century when the residential area was created. At Moss Street several phases of Roman activity were identified including evidence for the dumping of domestic waste (presumably from the civilian), an intra-cemetery thoroughfare and burials (EYO4206).

### Description

The Mount is a leafy suburb with a good number of grand Victorian houses and attractive terraces. It has remained a desirable place to live because of the high number of houses with gardens and the proximity of good schools. Its distance from the city centre and relatively late development mean its character is distinctly more suburban than other parts of the Conservation Area. There is little about the area which identifies it as 'York' rather than another city or town

*Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal*

### **Anglian-Anglo-Scandinavian**

During the 19th century a number of Anglian cremation urns were found behind Dalton Terrace on The Mount (MYO3628). This was confirmed by further investigations in 1957. These urns, dating to the 5th century, are amongst the earliest known of their kind in York. No other evidence for early medieval activity within this area is known although the former Roman roads to Tadcaster and Aldborough would have continued in use.

### **Medieval**

During much of the medieval period, land outside the city walls in the area would have been open, common and agricultural land. Within the area of The Mount, some structures did exist such as St. James' Chapel, St. Katherine's Hospital and several windmills. The Mount was formerly known as St. James' Hill. A chapel, dedicated to St. James was founded in the 12th century roughly in the area of the Mill Mount and The Mount junction. The ruins stood until the early 18th century (EYO268). St. Katherine's Hospital (14th century) is believed to have been located near the junction of The Mount and Holgate Road. Holgate is first recorded in 1368 and derives from Old Norse meaning 'street in the hollow'.

A watching brief at 89 The Mount (EYO10) revealed build up and dump deposits dating to the medieval period. Further east on Park Street (EYO186) a watching brief in 1999 revealed a 1.4m thick medieval agricultural deposit beneath modern layers.

At Moss Street, evidence of medieval agricultural activity has been recorded including the use of long rectangular plots. Pottery and domestic rubbish dumping evidence indicates occupation in the immediate vicinity (EYO289 & 4206). Post-medieval activity included a substantial boundary ditch which had been cut along the line of Moss Street during the 17th century.

Traditional access to Micklegate Stray from the city, was via Scarcroft Lane leading off Nunnery Lane. Micklegate Stray was also accessible from Tadcaster Road.

### **Post-medieval – Early modern**

During the mid 17th century, at the beginning of the Civil War, an earthen fortification (the Sconce MYO3626) was constructed on The Mount close to Albemarle Road. This was one of several defensive fortifications constructed by the city's Royalist sympathisers located outside the city walls. The Sconce would have been a large impressive structure with ramparts c.3.0m in height and ditches c. 2.5m deep (EYO268). This was later levelled and historical accounts noted many Roman burials making up the mound of the Sconce. This hints at the amount of archaeology destroyed during its creation. It has been suggested that unusual topographic features in nearby gardens may form part of the original defences.

Archaeological evidence dating to the post-medieval period is common around The Mount. Build up deposits, pottery and drains have been recorded in the area as well as lead musket balls from Mount School playing fields and a barrel-lined pit at 117 The Mount (not on HER). The pit has been interpreted as a possible well or storage pit, perhaps for fire fighting purposes at the Sconce.

During the first half of the 19th century, the area underwent extensive development as The Mount became a residential area for the middle classes. Large houses and villas were constructed along the line of The Mount, with later 19th century terraces leading off it and in the surrounding areas. As this area has always been an affluent suburb, later clearance programmes have never occurred. Mount School and Scarcroft Primary School were also built during the 19th century.

## Visible character

Important historic route into the city

Affluent leafy Victorian suburb

Predominant building height of two-three storeys

Contains three schools, shops and hotels

Green spaces and gardens throughout area

Some late 18th to early 19th century long garden boundaries survive e.g. 117-129 The Mount

## Sub surface character

### Ove Arup Development & Archaeology Study Research Zone: 16

**Deposit Depth (where known):** Ove Arup Archaeology and Development Study suggests archaeological deposits relating to the Roman through to medieval periods across The Mount area.

Natural levels were recorded at numerous points across the area varying between c.0.25m to 0.5m below ground level at Mount School, c.0.55m Dale Street, c.0.8m below ground level at The Mount, c.1.07 to 1.2m below ground level on Holgate Road and c.1.5m to 1.8m below ground level at Driffield Terrace

Roman burials exist to shallow depths such as c.0.3m below ground level at Mount School

Roman cobbled surfaces were observed at levels of c.1.0m below ground level Driffield Terrace

**Period Survival:** Significant Roman cemeteries outside the civilian town exist within this area. Anglian burials are also known in the Dalton Terrace area. medieval and post-medieval deposits predominantly relating to agricultural and horticultural land use are known throughout the vicinity.

**Interventions (recorded on HER April 2013):** There are approximately 39 archaeological interventions recorded on the City of York Historic Environment Record (HER). 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. Many records of interventions within the HER are vague in description. See Appendix 1 for a brief summary.

## Significance

**Overview:** The Mount is located within the Extramural (south-west) zone as identified by Ove Arup in the Archaeology and Development Study outside the Roman civilian area now bounded by the medieval city wall. The study identified the extramural area as containing Roman to medieval deposits, although there was insufficient data at the time to produce a likely depth of deposit.

Substantial stratified Roman deposits including inhumation and cremation cemeteries survive within this area at depths of c.0.3 to c.1.0m below ground level. Medieval and post-medieval deposit survival and depths depend on the amount of disturbance which has taken place.

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

There are 5 Grade II\* listed buildings and 133 Grade II listed buildings predominantly clustered on The Mount and Holgate Road.

**Streetscape components:** On the west side of The Mount, Original riven English Pennine Sandstone flags survive in situ but generally, paving is predominantly a mixture of pre-cast concrete (Marshalls Saxon paving) and asphalt. Carriageways are all asphalt. Natural stone flags also survive on part of Albemarle Road and Driffield Terrace. Pre-cast concrete flags are predominant on Park Street, East Mount Road, Dale Street, Wentworth Road and Scarcroft Hill as well as in part of Albemarle Road.

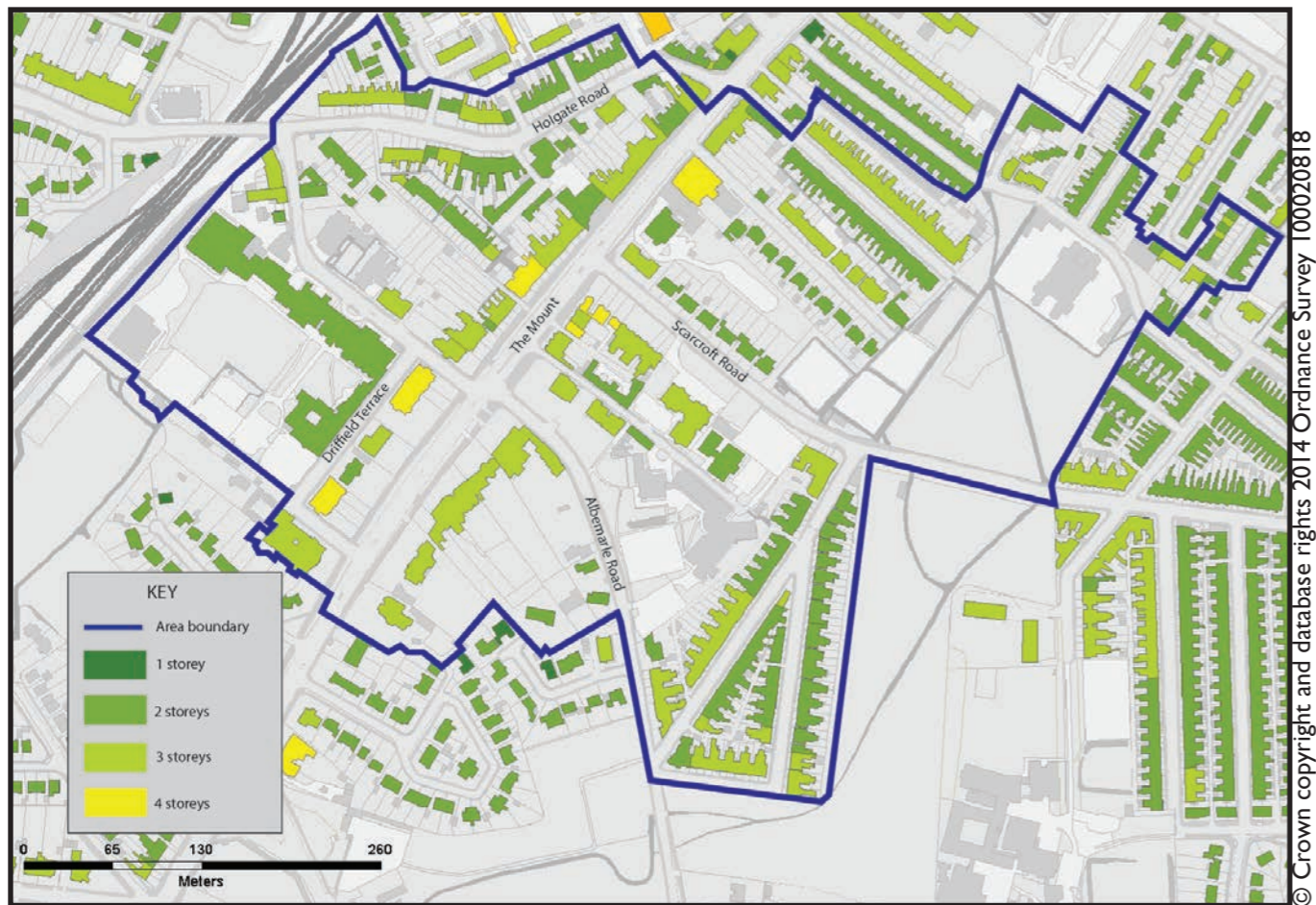
The west side of the The Mount retains significant areas of original cobbled margins and street trees. These are now used as parking spaces. These cobbled areas on this main approach road to the city were once grassed areas used for cattle grazing on their journey into the city for market. They were replaced by cobbles in the 18th and 19th century to inhibit this practice as in other areas of the city such as Bootham.

This area contains contemporary street signage, late 20th century phone boxes and traffic signage, seating and Edinburgh style waste bins. Late 20th century-early 21st century street lighting is in use on the main thoroughfares, earlier examples can be found on side streets.

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

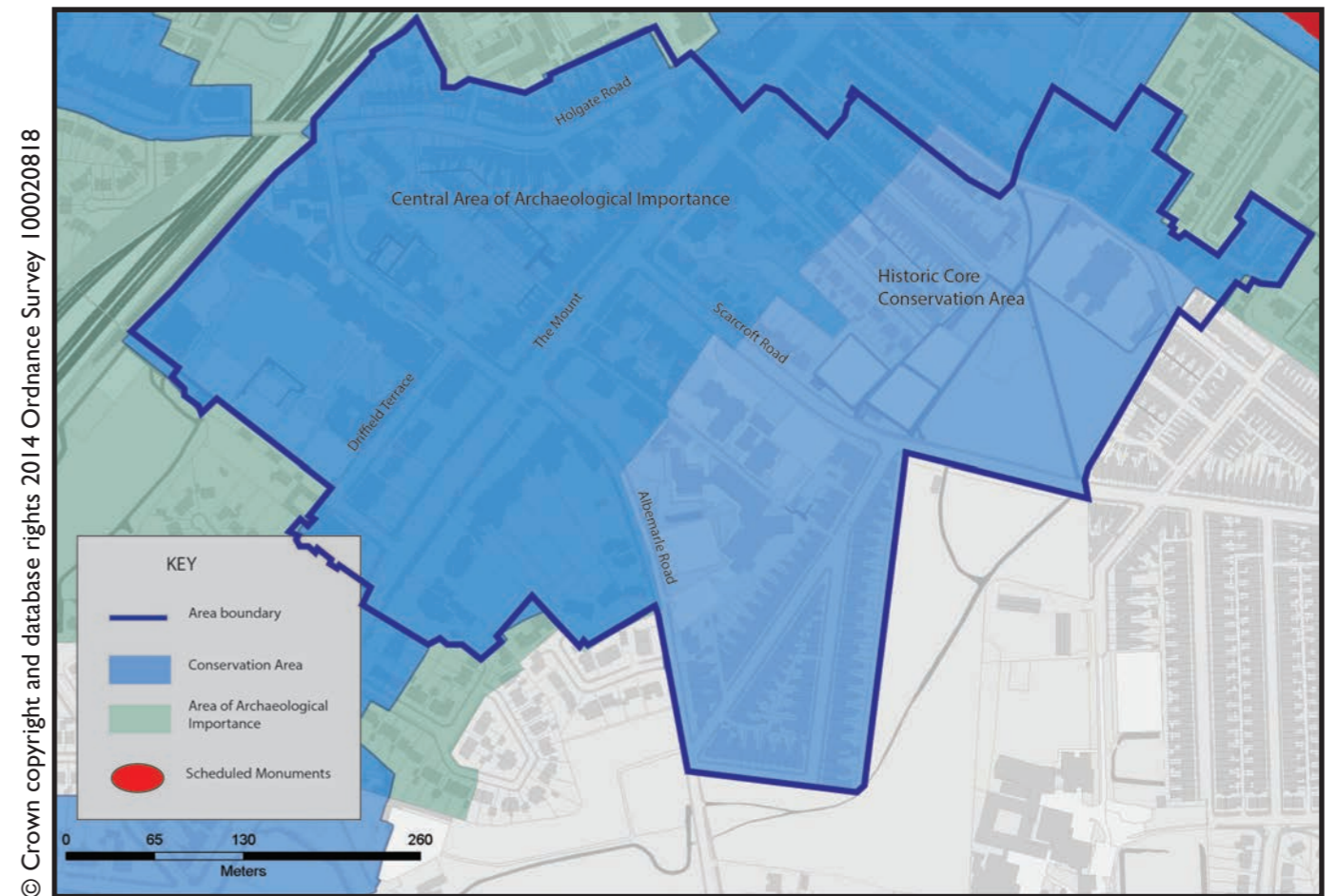


© Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100020818



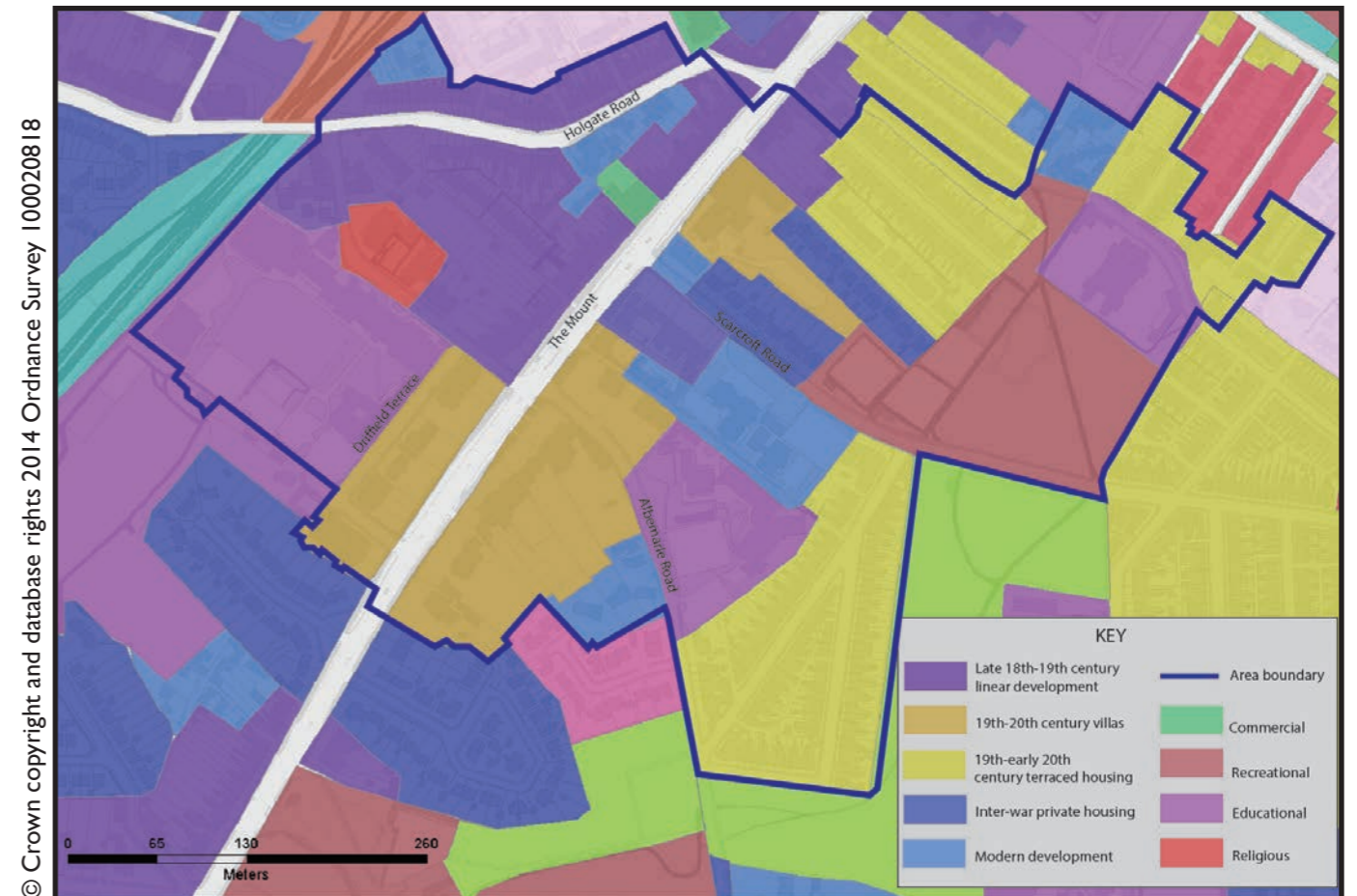
Above: Plan showing the heights of the buildings within this character area.

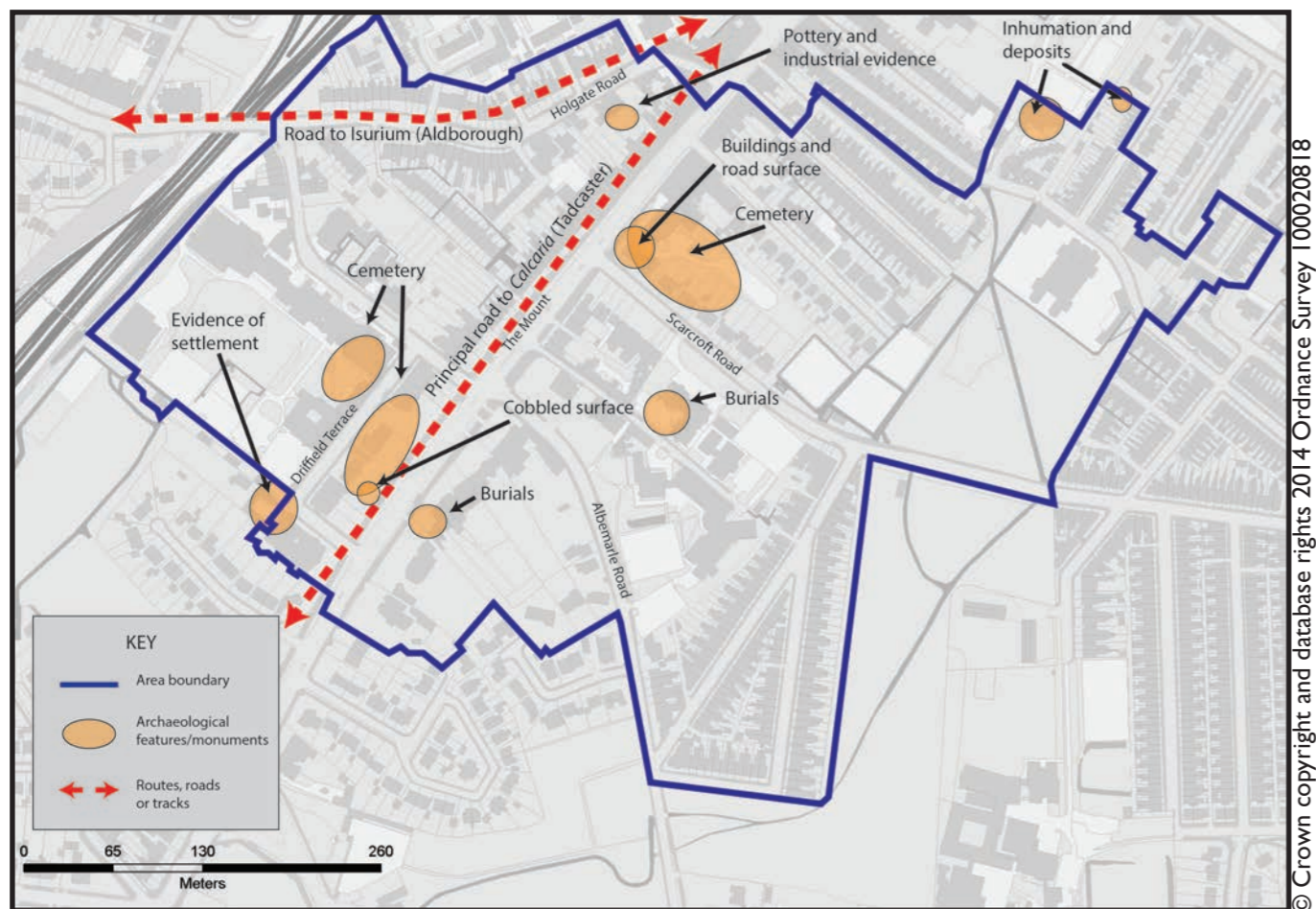
Below: Plan showing the construction dates of the buildings within the area.



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.

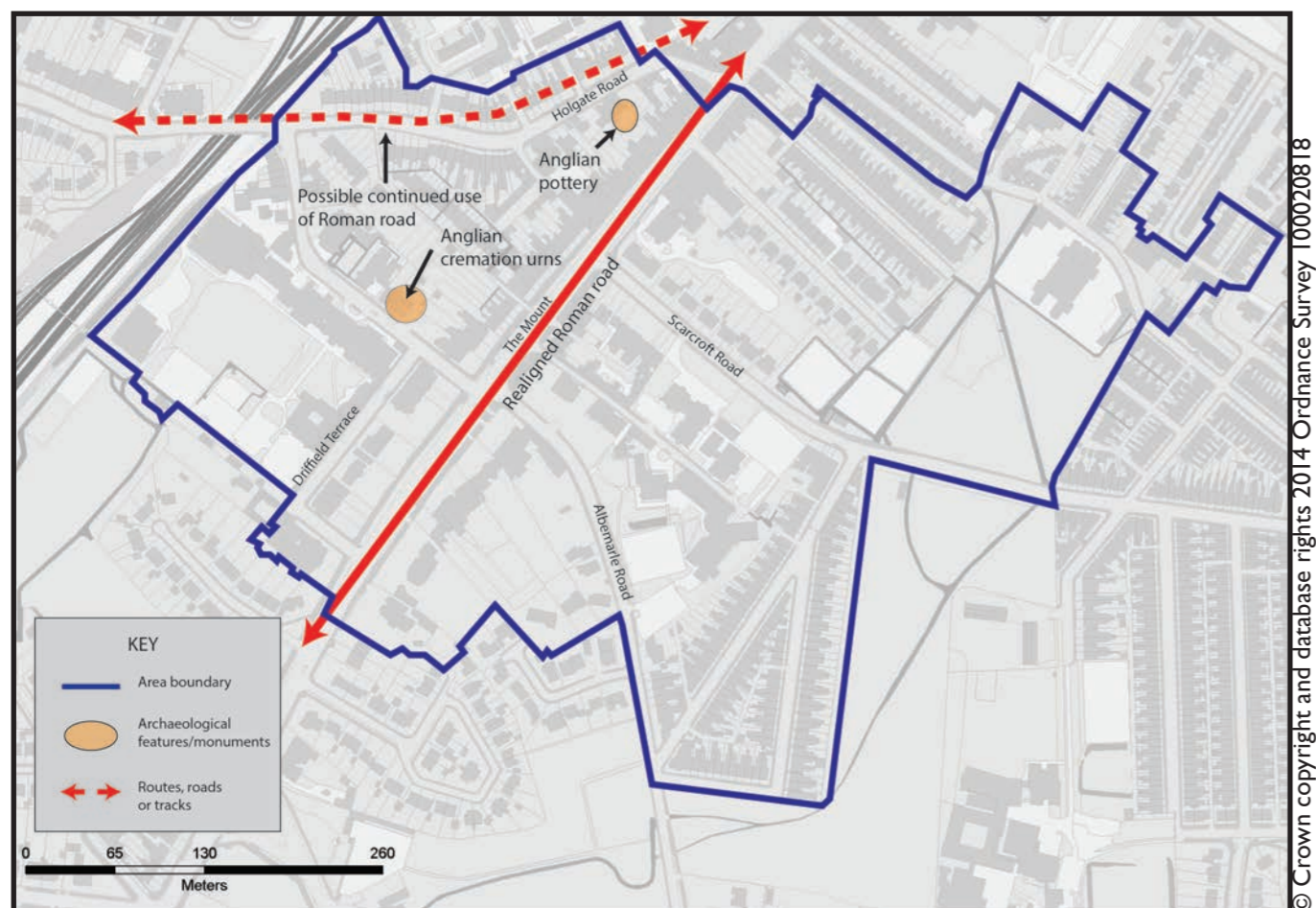




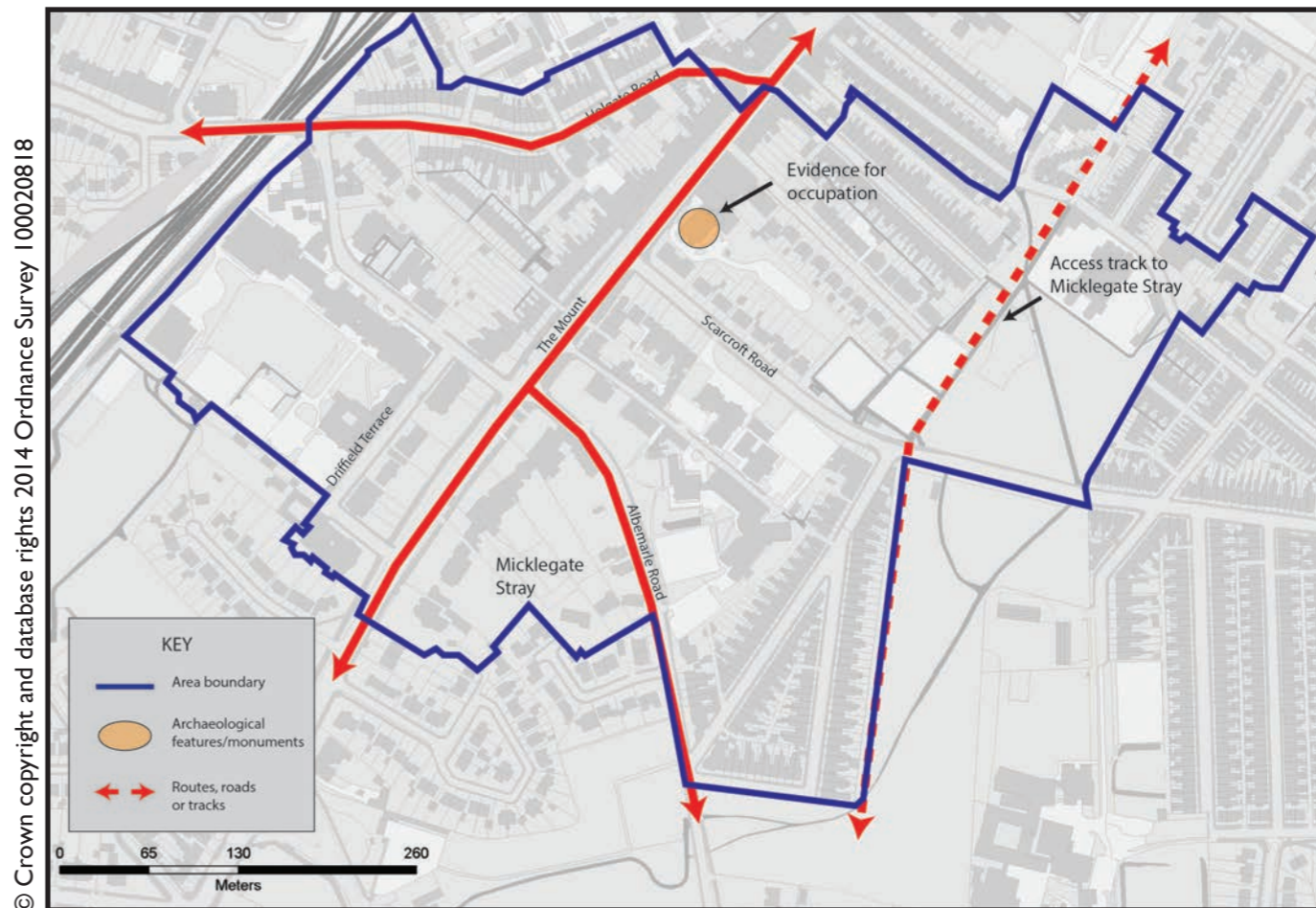
© Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100020818

Above: The Roman landscape.

Below: The Anglo-Scandinavian landscape



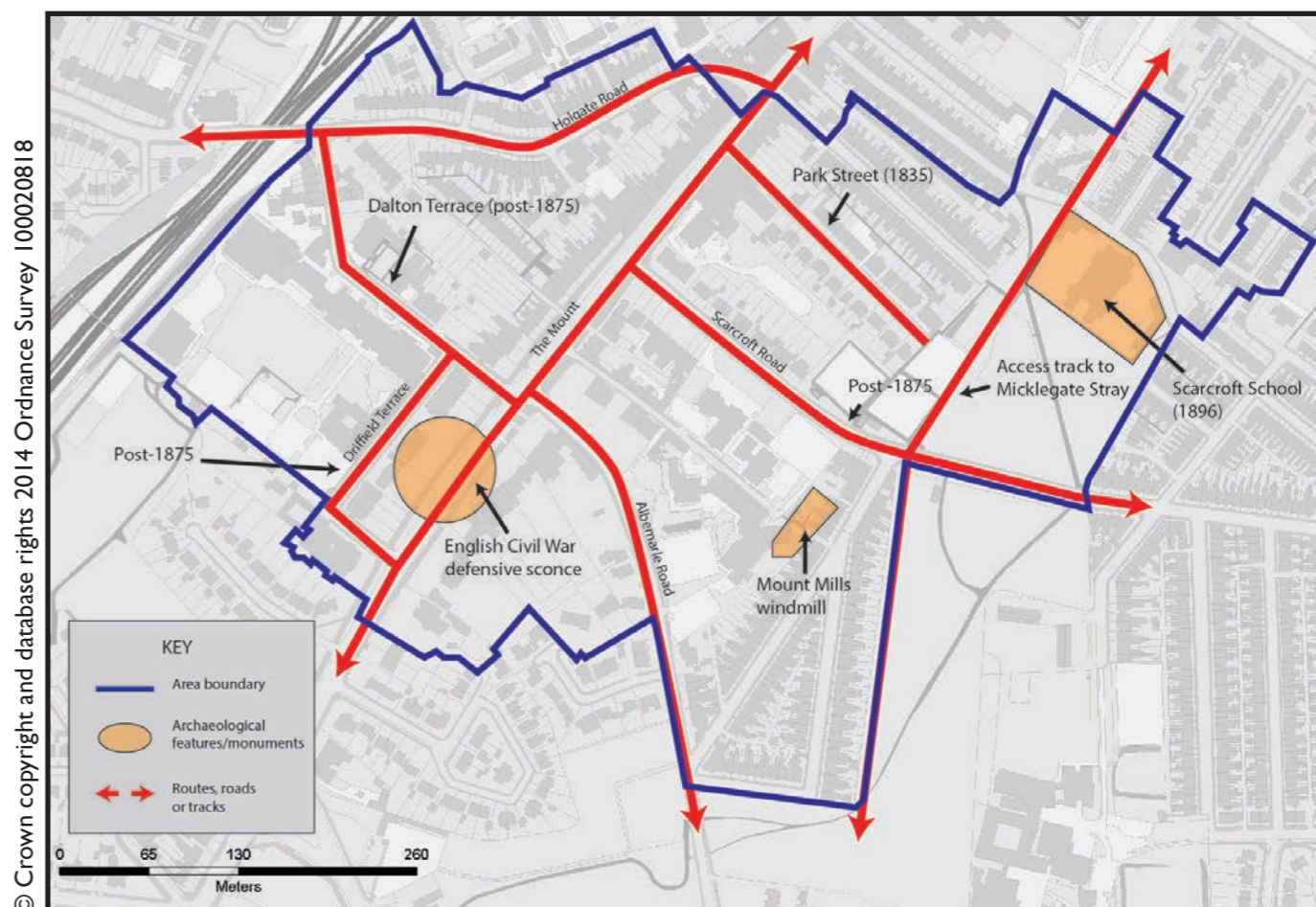
© Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100020818



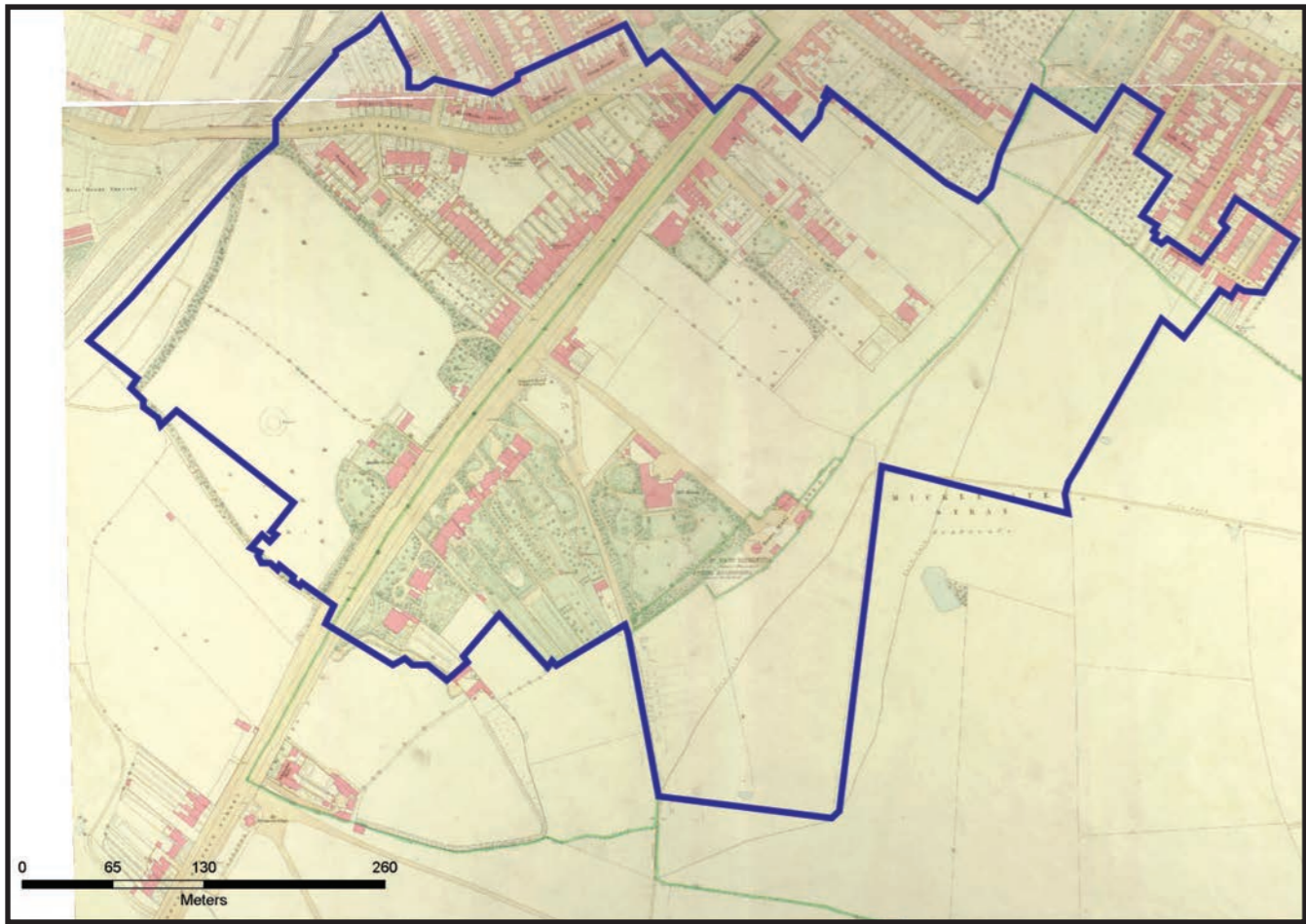
© Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100020818

Above: The medieval landscape.

Below: The post-medieval landscape.



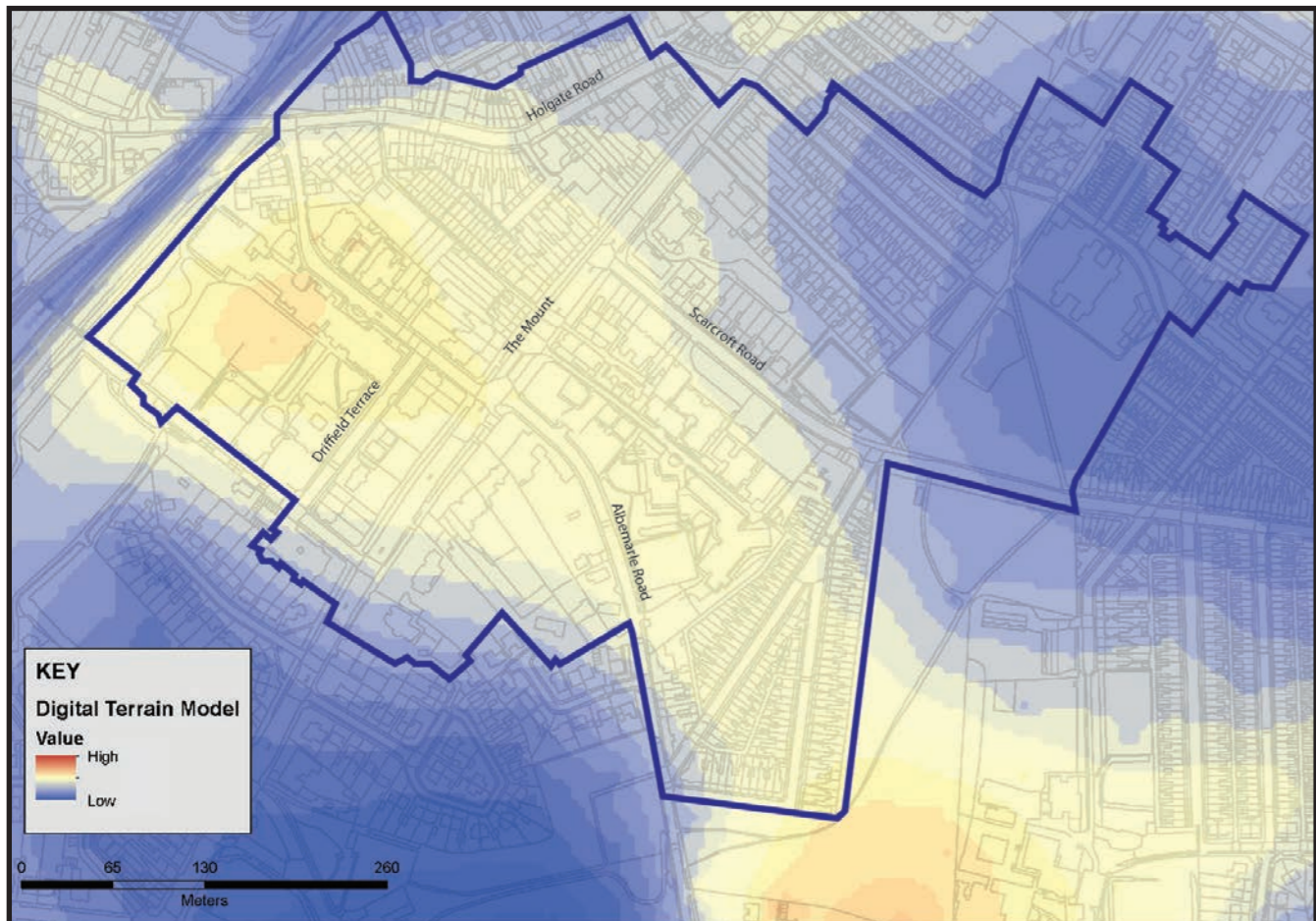
© Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100020818



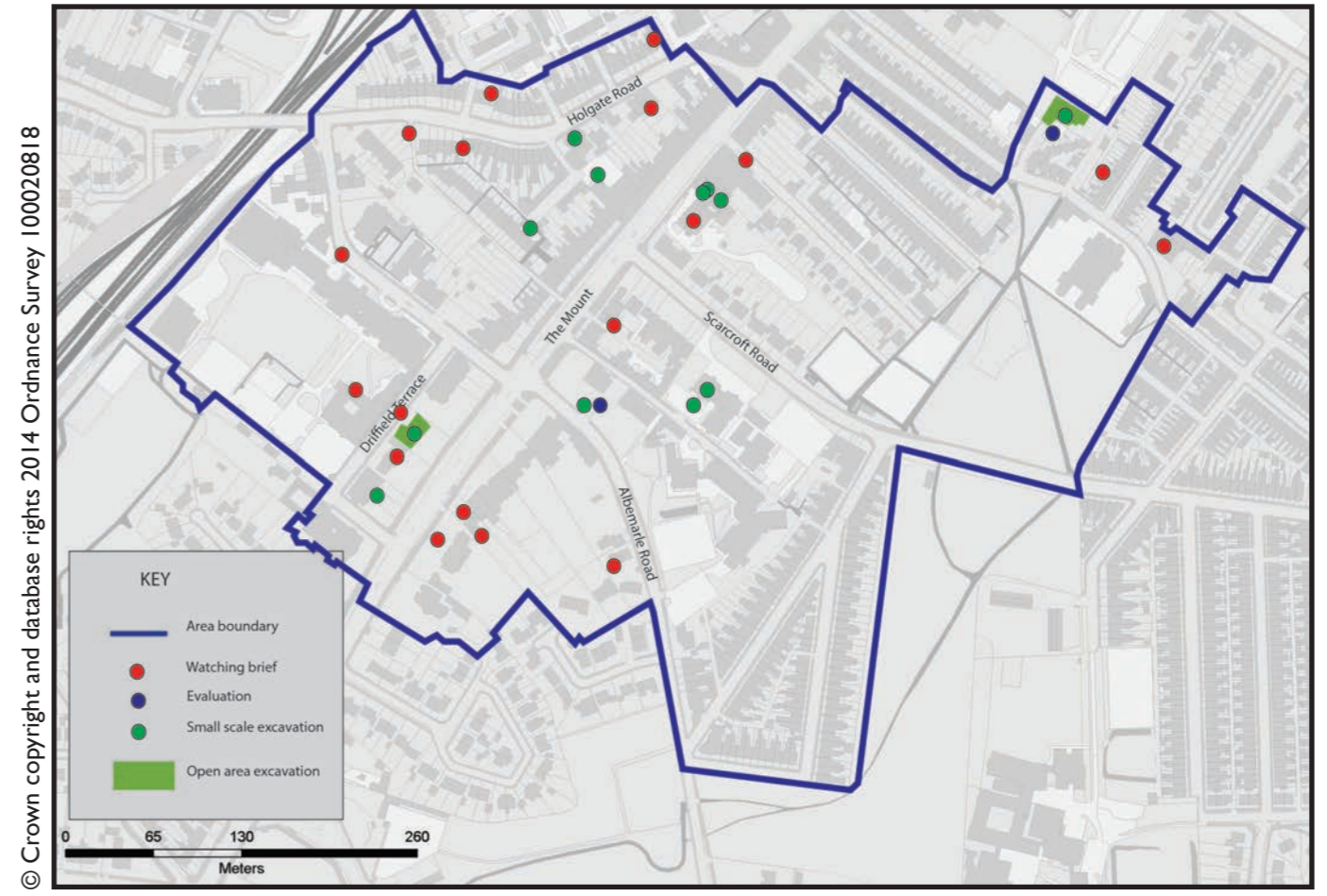
© Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100020818

Above: The 1852 landscape.

Below: The general topography showing higher ground to the south of the railway station.



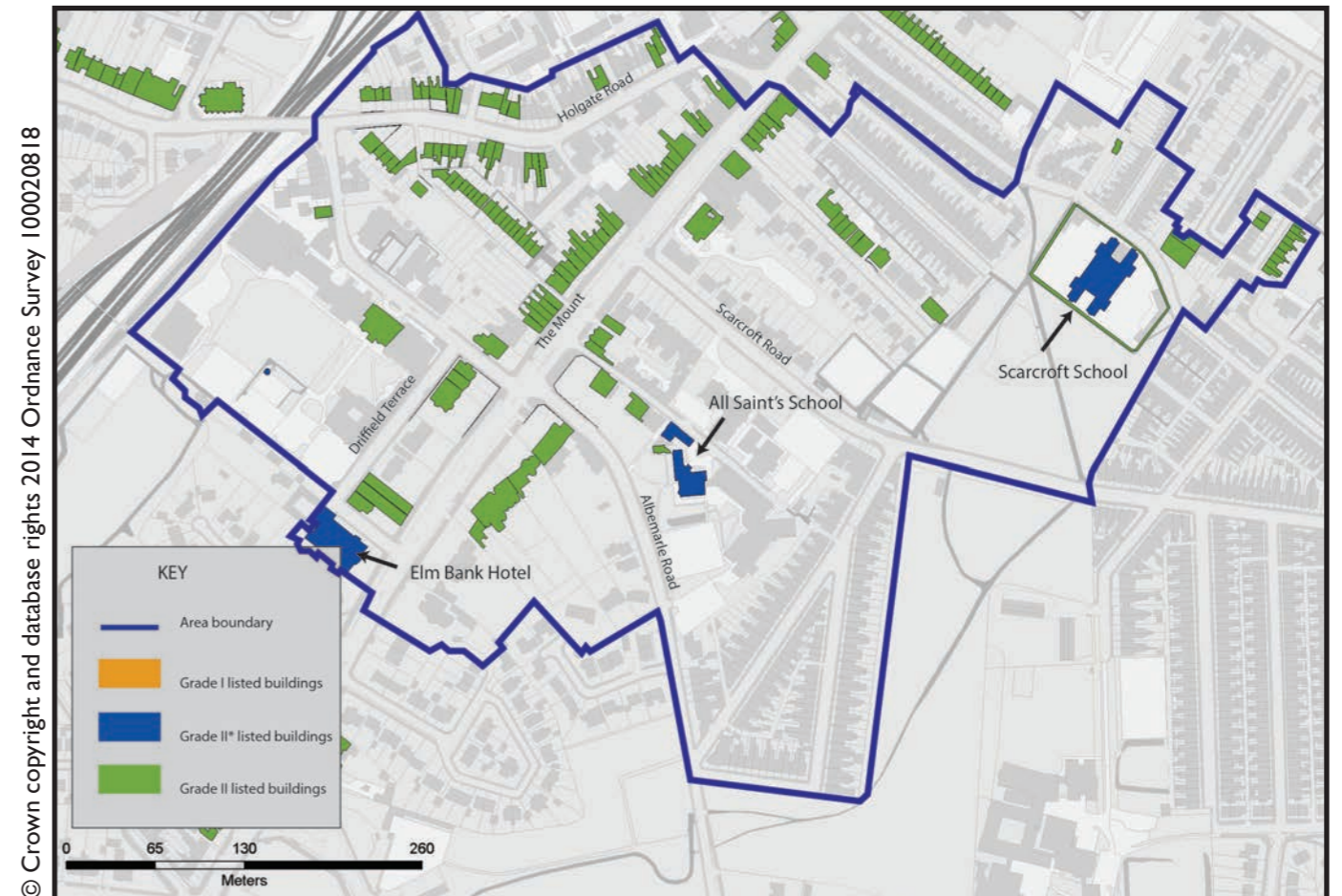
© Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100020818



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100020818

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

Below: Location of listed buildings.



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100020818

## 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 EYO130, 268, 718 and 801)

York City Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal- 24: The Mount

**Researched and written by:** Claire MacRae

**Photographs:** Claire MacRae except where indicated

**Graphics:** Bob Sydes

**Edited by:** Bob Sydes

**Funded by:** English Heritage

**Issued:** November 2013

© **City of York Council 2013**

