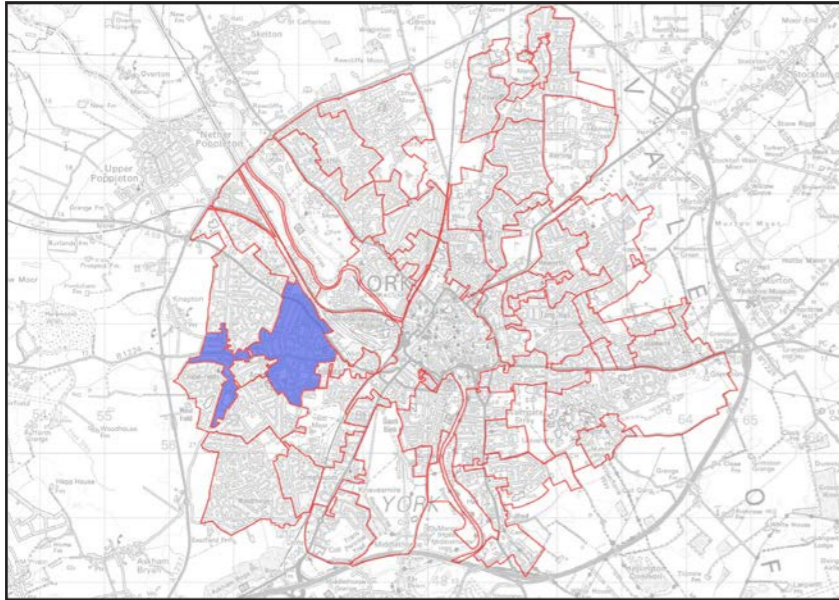
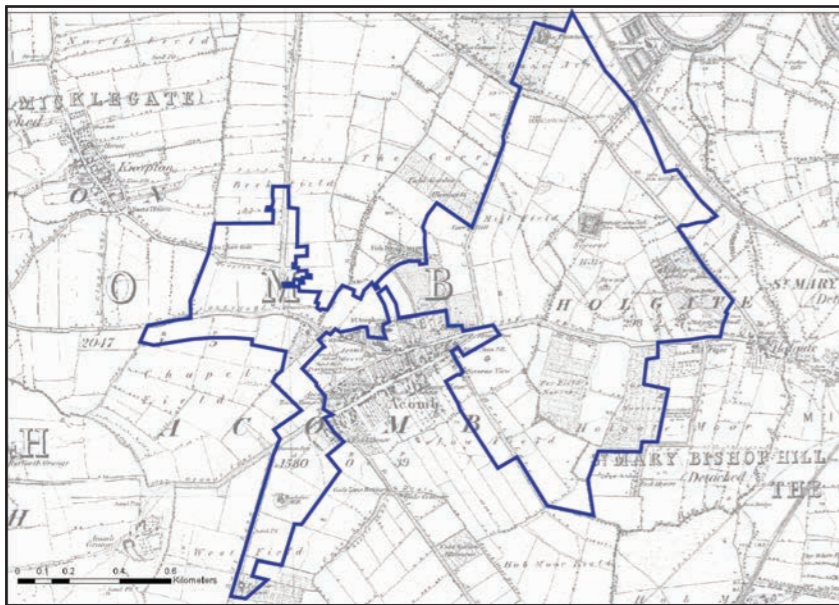


Character area 26: Westfield, north Acomb and Holgate



Location of character area



Extract from First Edition Ordnance Survey Plan 1852

Key Characteristics

General Character: Mix of predominantly late Victorian terraced housing and inter-war housing estates with pockets of mid to late 20th century development which includes social housing encircling Acomb village on all sides except the south, where medieval toft and croft boundaries remained clearly visible until post-war development

Predominately higher ground consisting of underlying sands and gravels overlooking the flood plain of the River Ouse to the north east and low lying land to the south

Community amenities include Acomb and Poppleton Road Primary Schools

Commercial premises are generally restricted to the main roads

Open space includes Bachelor Hill, Acomb cricket ground and various allotment sites

Partly within Area of Archaeological Importance

Severus Hill and Howe Hill, which gives its name to a 1960s estate, are two significant landmarks of underlying glacial till deposits

Anonymous suburban feel with tenuous relationship to the city

Approximate walking/cycling distance to the city centre from the bottom of Beckfield Lane 4.3km via Acomb Road, Wilton Rise and Cinder Lane

Dominant Housing Type: Inter-war, private housing in planned estates, horizontal emphasis, front and rear gardens, driveways and garages, generally semi-detached with bay windows and hipped roofs.

Late Victorian terraced housing in linear street pattern, vertical emphasis, pitched roofs, rear yards, on-street parking

Other Housing Types: Mid 20th century private and social housing, 1970s low rise flats and modern short terraces

Designated Heritage Assets: Cold War Bunker (SAM), Holgate Windmill (Grade II Listed), Poppleton Road School (Grade II Listed), The Old School (Grade II Listed), Area of Archaeological Importance (part)

Non-designated Heritage Assets: 18th and 19th century boundaries now existing in an urban form, views of and from the windmill site, inter-war street lighting, Victorian stable paving and ironwork

Key Views: One of the best suburban views of the Minster from Holgate Windmill

Surviving historic roads and tracks: Carr Lane, Acomb Road, Askham Lane, Beckfield Lane and Poppleton Road

Archaeology and history

On the higher land in this area some form of prehistoric settlement/land use may have occurred. The remains of a Roman road running from York to Aldborough was reportedly discovered in 1960 (EYO4171) approximately following the boundary between the waterworks/Howe Hill area and Bentham Drive/Asygarth House. More recent theories discount this in favour of a line through Acomb village.

The area lies within the former fields of Acomb village (Mill Field, part Chapel Field, Low Field and West Field) as well as Far Field. Mill Field and Far Field may be shared with the medieval hamlet of Holgate. Broad ridge and furrow is noted on the Historic Environment Record as having existed on the north side of Acomb Road (MYO3464, 3465, 3466). Enclosure dates to 1774, however by the mid 19th century further subdivisions created smaller fields distributed between scattered farms.



Acomb Road in 1909 - City of York Archives

The areas to the west and north of Acomb village appear to have remained as farmland until the end of the 19th and into the first few decades of the 20th century.

A ribbon of development, predominantly dating to the 1930s can be traced from the west side of Acomb and along the roads out of the village. To the north of the village, 1930s development encroached upon the few surviving toft and croft boundaries. On the eastern side of Acomb, a waterworks had been established by the mid 19th century. Small areas of Victorian terracing, providing accommodation for waterworks and railway employees, were constructed along Carr Lane and Poppleton Road and on the south-east corner of the village itself. These older developments, including larger, grander Victorian terracing on Acomb Road were eventually surrounded during the 1930s as mass building continued in a linear fashion along the major roads east and north out of Acomb. This phase of development ended with the outbreak of war in 1939.

Meanwhile, Holgate had developed westwards from the late 19th-early 20th century as it became a popular place for the gentry to escape the crowded city. Villas such as Holgate Lodge and Severus House were constructed.

By 1940, the suburbs of Acomb had 'merged' with the small settlement of Holgate. However, the two villages have very distinct identities.

Windmill Rise (1930s) incorporates Holgate Windmill, a Grade II listed, 18th century flour mill. The windmill, built in 1770 was in use until 1933. More recently (2011-12) this has been restored by the Holgate Windmill Trust as a working flour mill.

Prefabricated buildings were erected along Lindsey Avenue in the 1950s while semi detached (continuing a pre-war style) housing was constructed on newly vacant sites such as Holgate Lodge, which made way for Holgate Lodge Drive.

The prefabricated buildings were demolished in the 1960s and replaced with a large council estate containing a majority of link houses, but also three-four storey flats, bungalows and a play area. This estate occupies How Hill and its tower blocks and the water tower from the nearby waterworks, can be clearly seen from the earlier surrounding estates and are visible from the city walls and other locations.

A semi-subterranean cold war bunker, home to No. 20 Group Royal Observer Corps was built on the north side of Acomb Road in 1961. It was in use until 1991 and situated behind the Government Building of Shelley House, which has now been redeveloped into residential properties. It is now in use as a visitor attraction and was granted Scheduled Ancient Monument status in 2000.

Character

This area contains three distinctive types of housing: Victorian terracing for middle and working classes, inter-war private housing and 1950s-60s council housing. These styles can be found together along the main roads leading in and out of Acomb. Small scale, 1970s and 1980s development can be found along Poppleton Road and to the south of Acomb Road near West Bank Park.

The predominant houses within this character area are the brick, two-storey, private housing estates built in the inter-war period, which are similar in style to the same phase of development elsewhere around York and indeed the country. They contain front and rear gardens, driveways and garages (some freestanding). The properties are generally semi-detached and feature bay windows to the both storeys and hipped roofs with chimneys.

A cinema built on Acomb Road in 1934, on the fringes of the village, closed in 1959 but the building survives in commercial use.

Approximately 70% of houses retain original arched porches. Anomalies in style include Moorgate, dating to c.1910 and probably completed c.1920, constructed by the Holgate Gardens Estate Society based on the emerging Garden Cities design. The Society aimed at a higher target market than Rowntree's in New Earswick.

Large amounts of Victorian housing also exist here which evidences how settlement between the scattered villages and the city was created along the road networks by the mid to late 19th century. The Victorian terraces contain varying architectural styles and brickwork designs. They are generally constructed in linear street patterns and are designed with more of a vertical emphasis than the more horizontal 1930s style.

They best retain their traditional features and are an aesthetically interesting element within the working class terraces closest to Acomb village and the stretch of grander, three-four storey terraces on Acomb Road. 90% of the terraces behind Acomb Road open onto the street.

The back lane stable paviours have been tarmaced over in this area and can only be seen in worn through patches, however it survives better in the terracing off Poppleton Road. Several corner shops exist while many have been converted to dwellings. These streets provide a turning and parking area for traffic visiting the commercial area of Acomb. Approximately 5% of the houses in these terraces retain their ornate iron boot scraper within the wall at the front of the house.

The Acomb village terraces and the Poppleton Road terraces retain their original school buildings and are both Grade II listed.

Holgate Lodge Drive is similar in design and build to the pre-war semi-detached estates. It was begun in 1933 but was not completed until the 1950s following the Second World War. This was a common situation repeated across the country. The estate was constructed on land previously occupied by a detached villa- Holgate Lodge.

The 1960s social housing estate by contrast contains pitched roofs, lighter colour materials and consists of a mixture two and four storey buildings facing in several different directions. This estate replaced earlier (post war) pre-fabricated buildings. Post war housing on the south side of Acomb Road dating to the 1950s-60s consists of several cul-de-sacs containing bungalows.

Dwellings dating between 1970s-90s can also be found in small pockets south of Acomb Road, these consist of apartment blocks and link houses and have a much higher density per hectare than the earlier housing.

Significance

Archaeology: The area has not produced significant evidence other than the reputed Roman road on the north side of Acomb Road (Richardson's History of Acomb reports Roman material being found on Bachelor Hill in the 1930s – not recorded in the HER). However, this is largely due to the uncontrolled development of the area during the late 19th and early 20th century rather than the absence of archaeological deposits. Some areas, closest to Acomb, fall within an Area of Archaeological Importance potentially containing well preserved medieval and Roman remains.

Architecture: The more confined, clustered areas, such as the terraces and the 1960s estate may provide more of a sense of community rather than the sprawling inter-war developments. The Acomb village terraces and the Poppleton Road terraces still contain their school buildings which are both Grade II listed. Other buildings of note are the Holgate Gardens Estate Society dwellings on Moorgate and the 1930s cinema on Acomb Road. This area is distinct from Holgate and Acomb village nearby, however, it contains similar architecture to other inter-war and post-war social housing in the city and nationwide. It illustrates how settlement from the rural villages surrounding York spread towards the city during the Victorian period and into the 20th century.

Historic: The late 19th and early 20th century schools in Acomb (now a Christian Fellowship) and Poppleton Road primary school (built 1904) are both Grade II listed buildings. Holgate Windmill dating to the 18th century, now a visitor attraction is also Grade II listed. The windmill is surrounded by a 1930s housing estate although it still retains a significant presence in the area due to its visibility above the rooftops. Poppleton Road school, designed by Walter Brierley, is still in use and is surrounded by a mix of inter-war and the Victorian terraces it was built to serve.

Brierley, designed a number of buildings in York including Goddards, however it is his work on the schools in York that is of significance. Park Grove School, Scarcroft School and Haxby Road are all extant examples of his work.

The existence of this school and the Old School in Acomb, although no longer used for education, add further value to the terraces they were originally part of.

The Royal Observer Corps Group HQ AKA The Cold War Bunker was in use between 1961 and 1991. This example of an ROC control building is the only one that is preserved in its operational condition.

In very few cases, street names reflect historic names of the area. Severus Avenue (1930s) and Severus Street (19th century) are two examples, the 1930s-50s developments provide a few more Holgate Lodge Drive and How Hill Estate. Medieval field names also survive in some areas, particularly to the west; they are usually used when referring to larger areas or estates, for example, Chapelfield and Westfield.

Historic lanes such as Carr Lane, Acomb Road, Askham Lane, Beckfield Lane and Poppleton Road remain. Internally up to 50% of historic field boundaries exist in some way perhaps as a boundary wall or fence line, these survive better to the south of character area. Several boundaries exist in this manner dating to the 1774 period of enclosure such as the division between the waterworks, Howe Hill and the 1960s council housing and between the 1930s housing estate and the terraces on the edge of Holgate.

Streetscape components: Early to late 20th century street lighting, mid to late 20th century seating and post boxes, late 20th century phone boxes, modern bus stops and waste bins.

The area generally contains concrete and tarmac carriageways and a mixture of paved and tarmac footpaths. Modern street signage is in use affixed to street lights and finger posts. Stable pavements can be found in some back lane areas.

Aesthetics: One of the best suburban views of the Minster can be experienced from Holgate Windmill. This significant local view sees the Minster silhouetted against the North York Moors seen in the far distance. Mature hedges and grass verges throughout estates add significant interest.

Opportunities and recommendations

It is recommended that any extensions, new development or re-development in the area should be sympathetic in terms of style, material, proportions and density and should complement and enhance existing character. Particular attentions should be paid to the historic buildings on Gale Lane. Street furniture, street signage and streetlights, should integrate with the character of the area.

Opportunities for improving the consistency of contemporary street furniture should be identified, in particular the enhancement of existing pedestrian surfaces, cycling facilities and upgrades of existing street furniture near retail facilities. This should be undertaken following guidance contained in the City of York Streets and Spaces Strategy and Guidance (City of York Council, 2013).

Removal of original streetscape features over time has had a negative impact on the character of the area – further loss of these features should be avoided where possible.

Original street lighting columns should be retained wherever possible and carefully retrofitted with new lanterns where appropriate. The scale (height in particular) of lighting columns should always respect the character of the street. Lighting columns on residential streets with low traffic volumes should reflect traditional heights. Further guidance is contained in the City of York Streets and Spaces Strategy and Guidance.

The 19th and early 20th century terraces contain a number of original features which should wherever possible be retained and enhanced. This should include maintenance of existing ironwork and conservation of remaining areas of stable paving. The stable pavements in particular are a unique feature of York's streetscape and any street works affecting them should carefully store and reinstate following guidance contained in the City of York Streets and Spaces Strategy and Guidance.

Development proposals that set out to bring Shipton Street School back into use and retain and enhance its character should be actively encouraged.

The inter-war housing estates still retain a large number of original architectural features such as arched doorways as well as examples of historic street lighting.

It is recommended that further erosion of the original aspects of the estates, as well as changes such as garden to driveway conversions and inappropriate extensions should be monitored and avoided where possible.

A local survey of architectural and streetscape features (gate piers, sett paving, street signs) of the whole area could usefully be carried out in the near future, in conjunction with the local community, to further assist with the monitoring of existing features and to identify those at risk.

Wherever possible and practical, it is strongly recommended that inherited historic grain evidenced through post-medieval and 19th century boundaries should be enhanced and conserved. These play a key role in explaining the historic development of the area.

Where historic boundaries have been identified, either as hedgerows or retained as part of historic development, efforts should be made to ensure their continuing survival as part of any future development opportunities.

Great care should be paid to the retention of socially valued buildings and spaces with appropriate weight given to local opinions.

Hedgerows and trees should be carefully managed and opportunities for planting trees along grass verges and in existing hedgerows should be identified in partnership with local residents. A programme of regular monitoring of the removal of original hedgerow boundaries and grass verges should be secured.

Key views of the Minster, other major heritage assets (such as the windmill) and local landmarks should be maintained and enhanced to help orientation and enhance local distinctiveness.

There is an opportunity for this study to be used as baseline data for the local community to develop local priorities, encourage community cohesion, recognise and improve the quality of their environment and strengthen a sense of place. This area in particular would benefit from further study and consultation with residents to inform on its character and how that has changed over time.

Development management policy should take account of the contribution made by locally identified heritage assets to the distinctive character of the area. Sub-surface archaeological sites and landscapes are particularly important. Appropriate mitigation strategies should be agreed to protect potential archaeological deposits for any future development in area.

Character Area 26: Images



Inter-war housing on Askham Lane



Historic streetscape components on Askham Lane



Post-war housing on Holgate Lodge Drive



Inter-war housing on Windmill Rise showing extensions over garages



Moorgate with Victorian terracing on higher ground in background



Howe Hill Close with 1960s Howe Hill development in background



Historic streetscape components on Askham Grove



18-28 Moorgate - City of York Archives



The Green



Surviving boot scraper from Acomb terraces (left) and sluice valve marker from Poplar Street (off Poppleton Road).



Ex-corner shop and patch of stable pavings on School Street



Modern streetscape components on Beckfield Lane



Poplar Street



1960s estate - Howe Hill, with water tower visible in background



Acomb Road



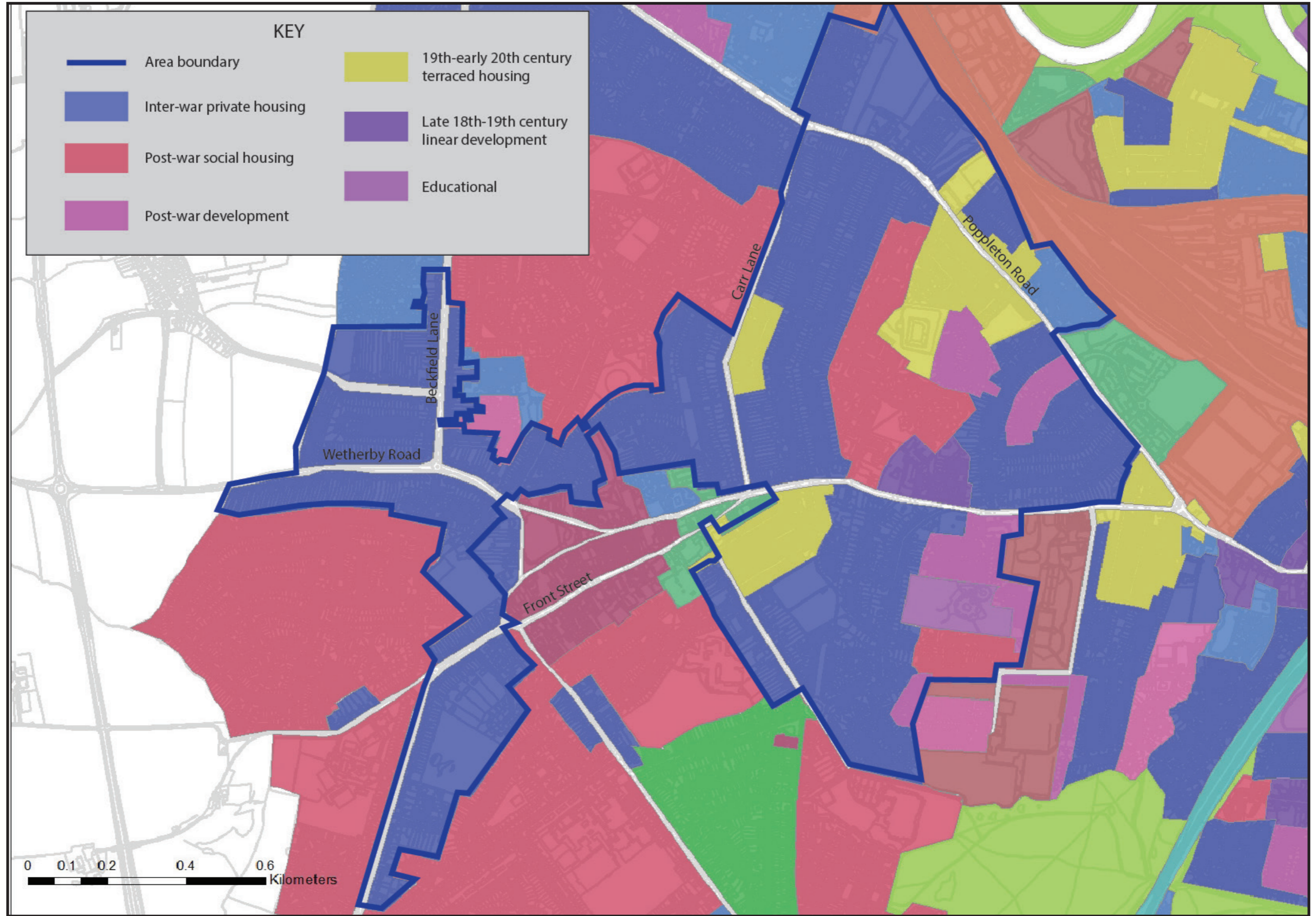
Old loading building in Acomb Terraces



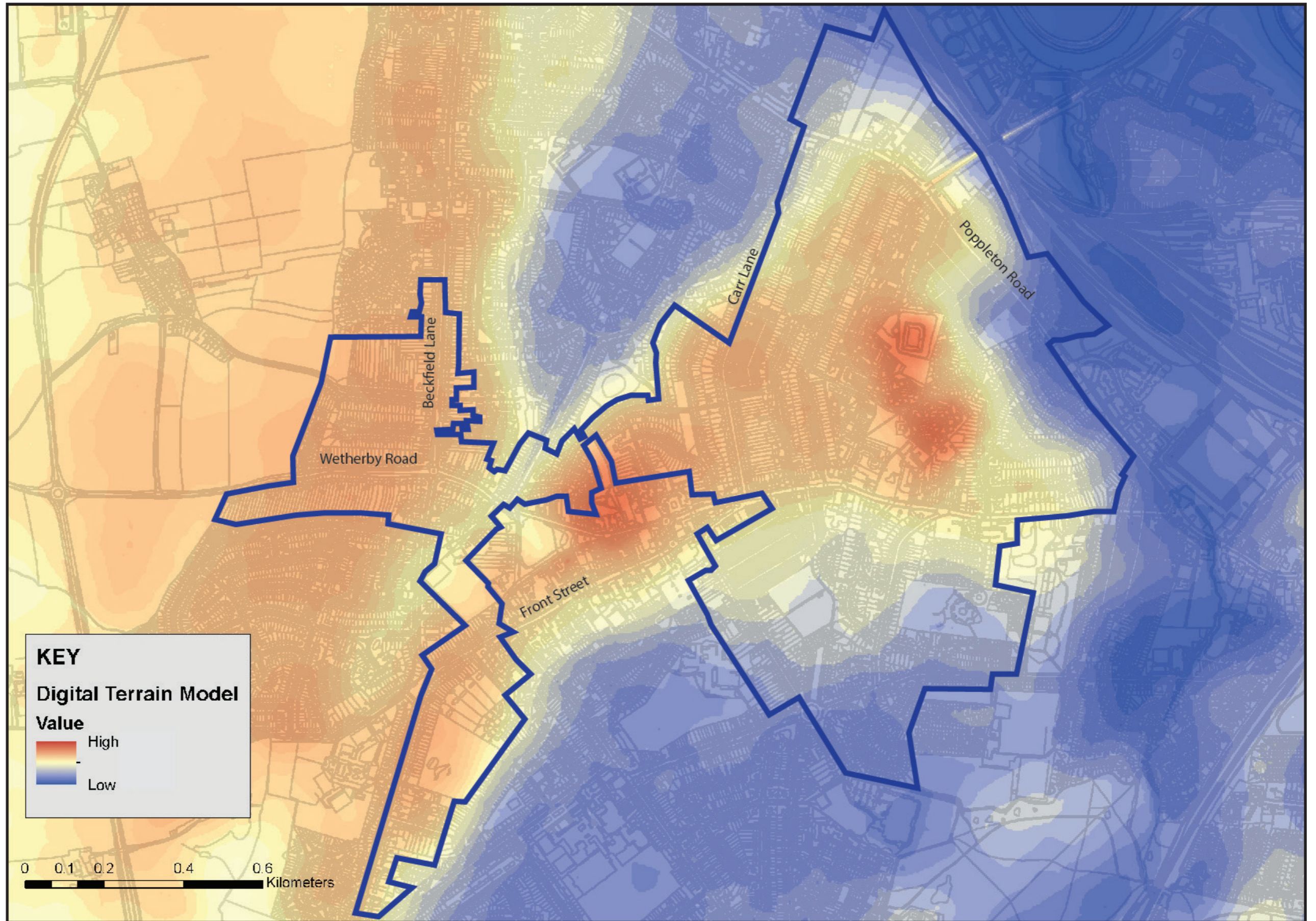
1960s estate - Howe Hill

Character Area 26: Maps

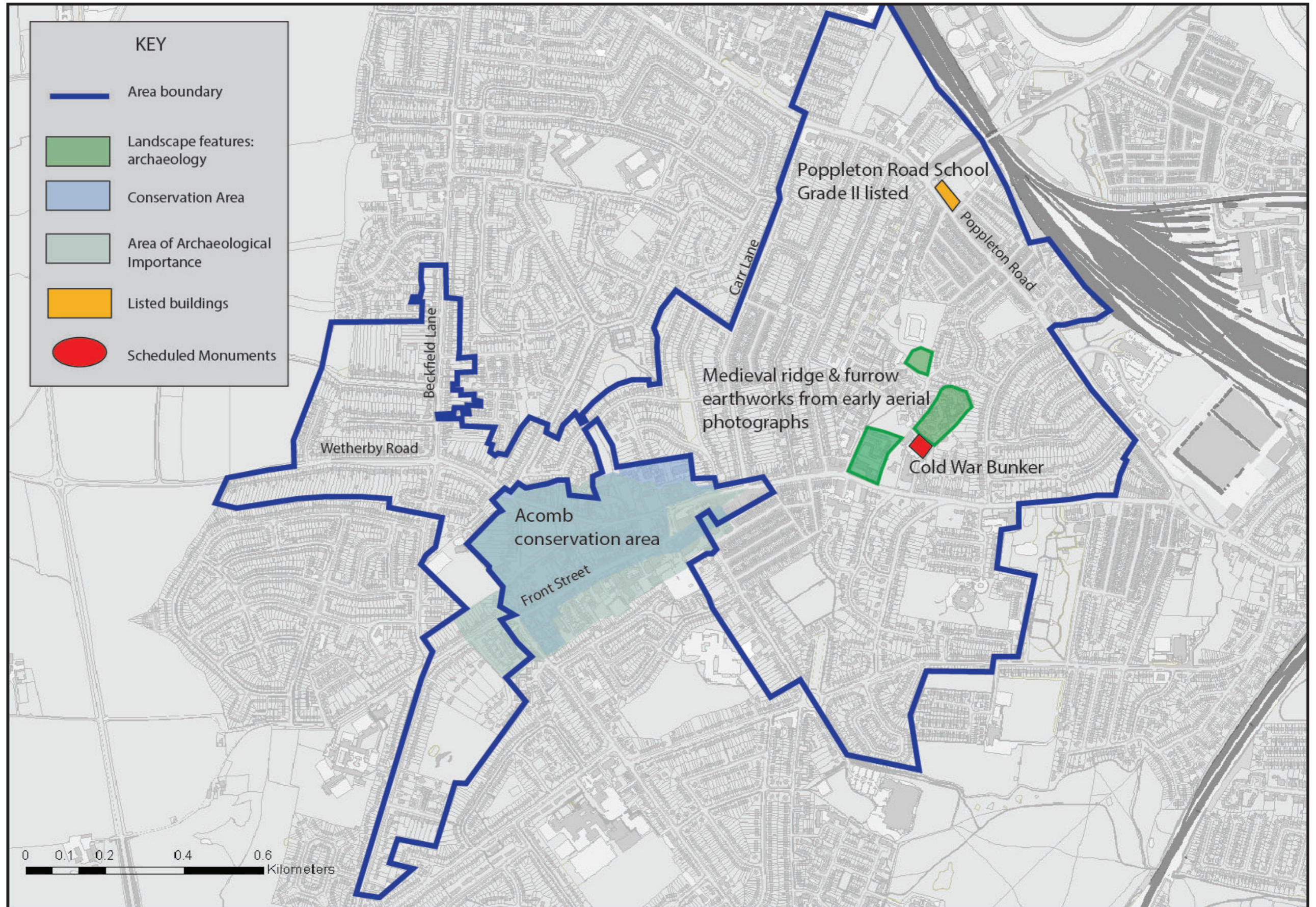
*Broad Type characterisation plan
White roadways indicate roads or lanes visible on the 1852 Ordnance Survey Plan*



Topography



Archaeology and designated heritage assets



Extant surviving boundaries, roads and tracks as depicted on the 1852 First Edition Ordnance Survey plan

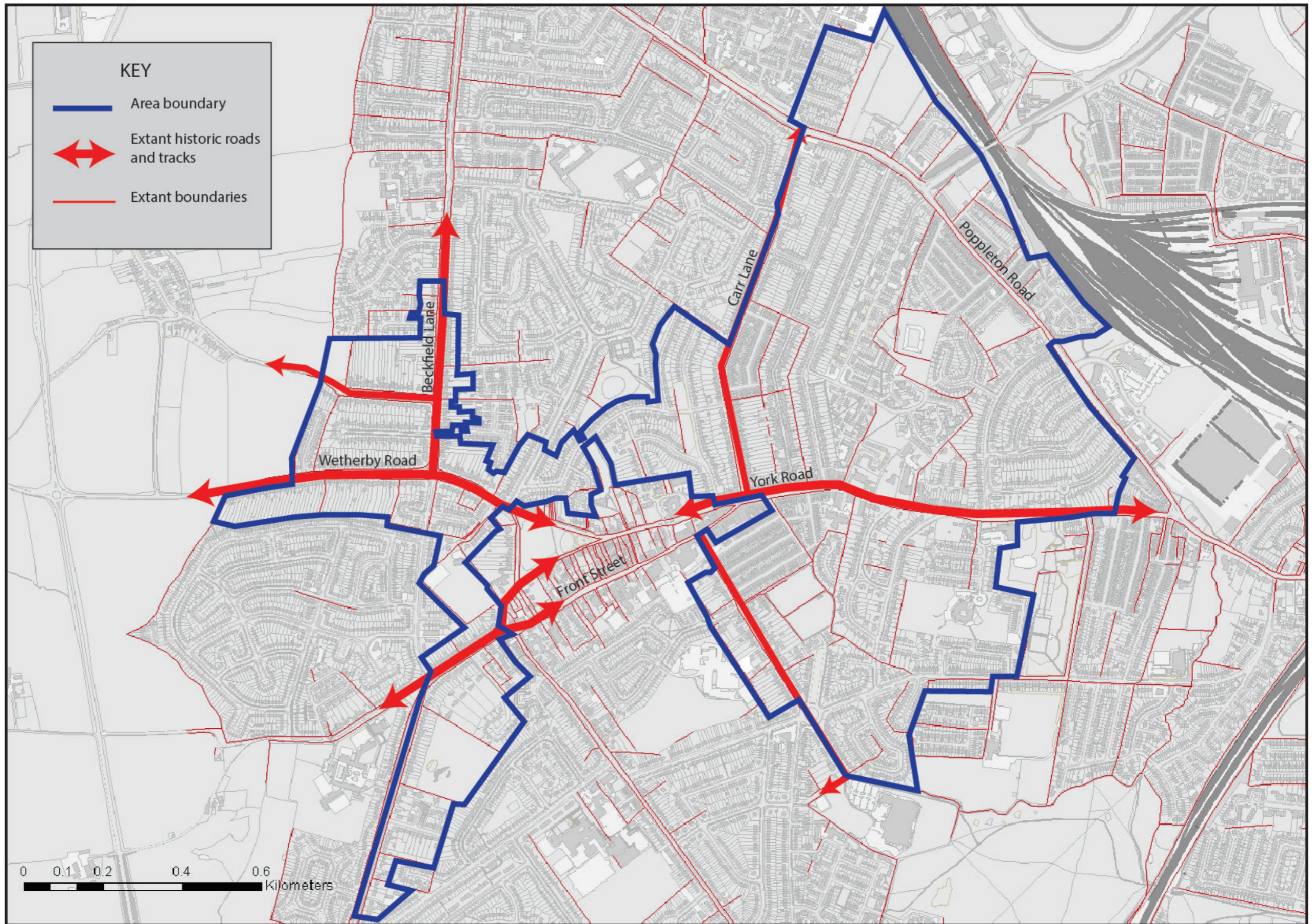


Figure ground map showing the relationship between open space (black) and the built environment



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