

Archaeology and history

The earliest evidence of human activity dates to the period of Roman occupation in York although the River Foss would have provided an important resource for centuries prior to that time. Although outside of the military and civilian centres of Eboracum, other land surrounding the fortress was used as cemeteries and training areas. Two Roman cemeteries were discovered in the south-west corner of this area, now forming part of an Area of Archaeological Importance.

Heworth Green forming part of the southern boundary of this area has Roman or prehistoric origins. The road leads from the former north-east gateway of the Roman fortress.

An Anglo-Saxon burial ground is known to exist in the south-west corner of this character area. Aside from burials, there is nothing else to suggest that this area was in use during the early medieval period. An earthwork was identified on early 20th century Ordnance Survey plans in the vicinity of the Roman and Anglo-Saxon burial grounds has been linked to a possible second early medieval burial site although it is perhaps more likely to be the site of a post-medieval windmill which were scattered in the vicinity.

The area became agricultural land following drainage during the medieval period. It partly formed the estate of Heworth Grange, held by a religious foundation until the Dissolution. It also comprised of unenclosed grazing land of Heworth Moor and Monk Stray which would have served the small village of Heworth located to the south-east. The land, at some point, was ploughed attested by large swathes of ridge and furrow identified on historic aerial photographs prior to development in between Malton Road and Stockton Lane. Ridge and furrow has also been noted on the northern section of the golf course away from the extraction works in the southern part of the course. The farm changed from monastic farm to gentry estate in the post-medieval period following the Dissolution.

In the mid 18th century, Malton Road was the York to Scarborough Turnpike Road.

Following enclosure in the early 1820s the surrounding land was separated into fields which were again reduced in size during the later 19th and 20th centuries. The majority of field boundaries shown on the 1852 plan, date to this earlier period of enclosure. Several windmills are known to have existed across this area on the open moorland. Boundary stones dating to the medieval period marking the areas of ownership or grazing rights can still be seen on Monk Stray. A boundary cross stood once stood on the moor at the junction of Malton Road and Stockton Lane, another existed further south between Heworth Road and East Parade. Both were replaced in stone during the 16th century.

During the 1830s and 40s large villas and townhouses were constructed on the area immediately to the south of the character area, on the south side of Heworth Green. These include 'Queen's Villa' which later became Heworth Grange and, by the 1890s, Heworth Croft.

By the mid 19th century several small scale industrial practices had developed in the area. Two potteries and a brick field existed on the now golf course site as well as a brick field south of Malton Road. Elsewhere within the character area scattered small detached buildings existed such as The New Slip Inn on Malton Road, Stokers House, Old Mill Cottage, Eden House and The Herdsman's Cottage.

During the second half of the 19th century several cottages on Malton Road were constructed and industrial practice had been scaled down to just one pottery – named Heworth Grange Pottery and a clay pit. The old mill cottage was renamed Muncaster House and the Foss Islands rail line (1879), which connected the Scarborough Line to the power station at Foss Island, was constructed cutting through the south-western corner of the area. On the north side of Heworth Green – Crown Cottage and New Villa were built to accompany Heworth Croft villa. Rose Villa on Stockton Lane was one of several other villas continuing the 19th century ribbon development eastwards out of the city.

By the early 20th century the pottery went out of use and was demolished making way for Heworth Golf Course. And the former public house The New Slip Inn was renamed Elmfield House. During the early 1930s a nationwide housing shortage and slum clearance programme led to an explosion in house construction across the country. This rural area on the fringes of Heworth was a prime location to create a new suburban area. The development began simultaneously on the north side of Heworth Green, surrounding the golf course on the north and south side. Council housing was also built at this time on the west side of the golf course meaning that the golf course was now enclosed on three sides by housing. The small building at the junction of Malton Road and Heworth Green, now a flower shop, was originally a charging point for electric battery operated buses in use between 1915 and 1920. A similar building can be seen in Clifton.

Small pockets of development dating to the early 21st century exist within this character area on the north side of Heworth Green.

Character

This area is characterised by early 1930s-1940s cul-de-sac, planned estates of two-storey semi-detached, detached houses and bungalows. Modern apartment developments within the area range between two-four storeys in height.

Mixed styles of low boundary walls to front gardens are present across the estates with the exception of the Thorn Nook area. The houses contain a variety of styles but all appear to contain three bedrooms. Generally all the houses have multi paned, double bay windows with either round or square frames and hipped roofs. Arched porches are common with survival rates varying but generally around 60% survive unaltered. Anomalies in style exist such as square doorframes in some areas and white/cream painted houses on Elmfield Avenue.

The north side of Heworth Green contains some of the oldest and newest buildings in the character area – Heworth Croft (Grade II listed) an 1830s villa, an 1860s villa now a doctors surgery, and St. John's Walk a 21st century development. This stretch of road predominantly contains semi-detached, inter-war housing in small cul-de-sac estates built on former villa sites. Some side streets such as Dalguise Grove retain a concrete carriageway. This cul-de-sac provides a good example of how, even within a small area rather than over a large estate, several different styles of construction have been used such as rounded and square doorframes. Several houses fronting onto Heworth Green are larger detached properties these may date to the 1920s. At the eastern end of Heworth Green where the road forks, there is a one storey building, now a flower shop, which was formerly a battery charging station for battery operated buses, in use c.1915. Another example of one of these buildings survives in Clifton.

The southern part of Dodsworth Avenue, before it is continued on as part of the council estate, and its side street Irwin Avenue contain semi-detached red brick two- storey houses with white painted stone window frames on the upper and lower bays and above the door arches. This design is quite distinct and seems to mimic late 19th to early 20th century design.

Similar styles can also be seen on Seymour Grove to the east of the Heworth Green area. The bays on these houses appear to be the same dimensions as other examples of inter war housing, however they do not feature a weatherboard or plastering between the bays. Concrete road surfaces are present on this street, with paved footpaths and grass verges. Malton Avenue contains white painted square door frames (some have lost their original recessed form) and the east end of Irwin Avenue contains a different style of semi detached house featuring two pointed gables above the windows. This housing features buildings with one-two bay windows in a traditional 1930s style. Almost 50% of houses on this street contain extensions in the form of an attached garage with room above. The Minster is visible from Irwin Avenue; presumably this was a designed feature of the street. A contemporary sub-station exists on the corner of Dodsworth Avenue and Irwin Avenue. The western side of Dodsworth contains late 20th century residential buildings.

The area of Muncastergate, Abbotsway, The Crossway and Thorn Nook is distinctly different from the surrounding (later) social housing estates and the nearby contemporary private estates. These houses are large detached and semi-detached buildings, many containing a timber-frame effect on front gables. There are some more individual buildings such as an art deco design located on The Crossway. This discreet area contains grass verges and is tree lined on Muncastergate. The houses retain many original c.4m high concrete boundary walls to the front gardens and circular windows are just one common noticeable 1930s architectural feature. There are some new builds present, particularly on Thorn Nook, and solar panels are in use on several buildings throughout the area.

Several roadways in-between this area of large affluent housing and neighbouring social housing have been blocked by a semi-permeable barrier allowing access for pedestrians and cyclists only. These boulders have been put in place to restrict vehicle access between the areas.

Historically the barrier was a brick and concrete high wall with located gateways for resident access only, presumably this was erected following the construction of the social housing after 1936. An original gate pier can be seen at one of these points at the boundary between Muncastergate and Fossway. These are an unusual feature and it is perhaps even more unusual that it should partly be still in place today (see www.yorkstories.co.uk for some residents memories of this barrier).

Older housing on Malton Road consists of two storey large detached buildings and a row of terraced houses with a lower bay window and small enclosed front area. Street lighting here is modern although one older post survives, unfortunately without its lantern. The former Stokers house, noted on the 1858 ordnance survey plan survives on Sefton Avenue situated off Elmfield Avenue to the rear of the Malton Road houses.

Housing on Elmfield Terrace and Stockton Lane (outside of this character area) front onto Monk Stray. These streets in particular picturesquely frame the slice of Stray which has been separated from the golf course area by Malton Road. The Herdsman's Cottage c.1840 (Grade II listed) is situated at the southern end of Malton Road.

The presence of the golf course, Monk Stray and former agricultural building The Laurels in between residential estates is a reminder of the former open nature of the area. The golf course and Stray provide well used recreational facilities and an open green space in an urban environment. The inner streets lose the 'green' feel and are more urban. The main road of Malton Road/Heworth Green is an extremely busy route to and from the city. The road has more of an impact along Heworth Green where, despite being a major routeway for over 2000 years, the presence of double decker buses and trucks seems slightly out of place with the tree lined street and grand architecture on the southern side.

Despite good transport and cycle networks, there isn't an obvious connection with York within the estates themselves but in the area of the Stray, Heworth Green and Irwin Avenue the Minster can be seen and the close proximity of the city felt.

Significance

Archaeology: Below ground, this area partly falls within an Area of Archaeological Importance known for Roman and Post-Roman burials. Significant archaeological deposits representing a valuable finite resource may be present here, often at sufficient depth to be protected from development. These potentially rich deposits are one of the principal characteristics of York. Ridge and furrow is visible in patches on both the course and stray.

Architecture: 1930s private housing estates built on the fringes of the early 19th century expansion of Heworth. This area is different from the social housing estates which surround it on the west side and Heworth village to the south-east. It is also different from the late 19th century-1930s development to the south and west of it largely due to the inclusion of the green space and area of affluent housing near Muncastergate. Heworth Croft, electric bus charging station and the Herdsman's Cottage are all Grade II listed.

Historic: The residential streets do not generally follow historic boundaries. Anomalies exist such as Irwin Avenue/ Malton Avenue and Elmfield Avenue/Sefton Avenue where the street pattern has been guided by existing boundaries. Historic field boundaries, shown on the 1852 Ordnance Survey plan, do however have an approximate survival rate of 70% throughout the area. The boundaries between the golf course, stray and housing such as Thorn Nook are earlier in date and are shown on the 1822 enclosure plan. Thorn Nook, facing the golf course contains several mature trees along its historic border with the course.

The former 'gated' community around Muncastergate is significant as it is an unusual feature and a rare survival of this type of social segregation despite now being semi-permeable. This area also contains several names with a religious connection in the area between the golf course and South Beck such as Abbotsway, Templemead and The Crossway.

This may be in connection to former land ownership by St. Mary's Abbey or may be related to the site of a religious building previously in the area. It may also possibly be connected with former boundary lines marked with wooden crosses, later replaced by stone.

Villa Grove off Heworth Green provides another example relating to an area formerly occupied by several villas.

The presence of the golf course and the portion of the stray which remains relay a sense of the historic open nature of land. Monk Stray has an historical importance as an area of common pasture. The combination of the Herdsman's cottage, ridge and furrow and stone boundaries in the vicinity provide an historical, communal and evidential link to the past.

The smell of the confectionary making process from the nearby Rowntree/Nestle Factory, one of York's signature smells, can be experienced within this character area.

Streetscape components: The estates generally follow a linear pattern with short streets forming cul-de-sacs generally with tarmac footpaths and carriageways although on some streets, such as Elmfield Avenue and Dalguise Grove, concrete road surfaces are visible. On this particular street several areas have been replaced in tarmac when repairs have been made and when traffic calming measures have been introduced. Grass verges, often containing trees, are common in these estates.

Street lighting in this area is provided by a range of lights dating from the mid 20th century-early 21st century with modern units the most common. The exception to this is the Thorn Nook area and Heworth Green where a high proportion of 1930s-40s street lights are in use. Street signage is provided on street lights and is modern in date.

Aesthetics: Large green, open spaces provided by Monk Stray and the golf course. Several streets are tree lined and contain grass verges such as on Muncastergate.

The view of the Minster from Heworth Green is particularly significant as this routeway has been in use since at least Roman times, meaning that the Minster and the fortress before it have been viewed from this road for centuries. Intermittent views of the Minster and early 20th century destructor chimney at Foss Island can also be gained from Monk Stray. The Minster is visible from Irwin Avenue; presumably this was a designed feature of the street.

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. Street furniture, including street signage and streetlights, should integrate with the character of the area.

Opportunities for improving the quality and consistency of contemporary street furniture and the public realm should be identified, in particular the enhancement of existing pedestrian surfaces, cycling facilities and upgrades of existing street furniture. 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 where this is not possible, they should be carefully retrofitted with new lanterns where appropriate and column replacements should reflect the style of originals. The scale (height in particular) of lighting column 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.

Wherever possible and practical, it is strongly recommended that inherited historic landscape grain evidenced through post-medieval and 19th century former field 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 surviving hedgerows or where 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 new trees along grass verges and in existing hedgerows should be identified in partnership with local residents. A programme of regular monitoring of original hedgerow boundaries and grass verges should be secured.

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

Victorian villas along Heworth Green should be afforded some protection and respected by future developments.

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.

The Muncastergate area contains a high number of 1930s architectural and streetscape survivals, as well as retaining its 'boundary walls'. Some small scale recording of features and housing styles in this area should take place in the near future ahead of further modifications. Further social exploration of the gated community should also be encouraged.

A local survey of architectural and streetscape features (gate piers, sett paving, street signs) of the 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.

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.

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 would benefit from further study and consultation with residents to inform on its character and how that has changed over time.

Character Area 5 I: Images



Heworth Green



Former battery charging point, Heworth Green



Dodsworth Avenue



Heworth Green and The Minster



Herdsman's Cottage (1840s)



Dodsworth Avenue



St. John's Walk



Former villa of Heworth Croft on Heworth Green



Monk Stray with Minster in distance



Heworth Road



Muncastergate



The Crossway



Elmfield Avenue



Muncastergate showing example of half timbered gables, solar panels, concrete walls, and loft extensions



Art Deco housing on The Crossway



Sefton Avenue after bombing in 1940 - City of York Archives



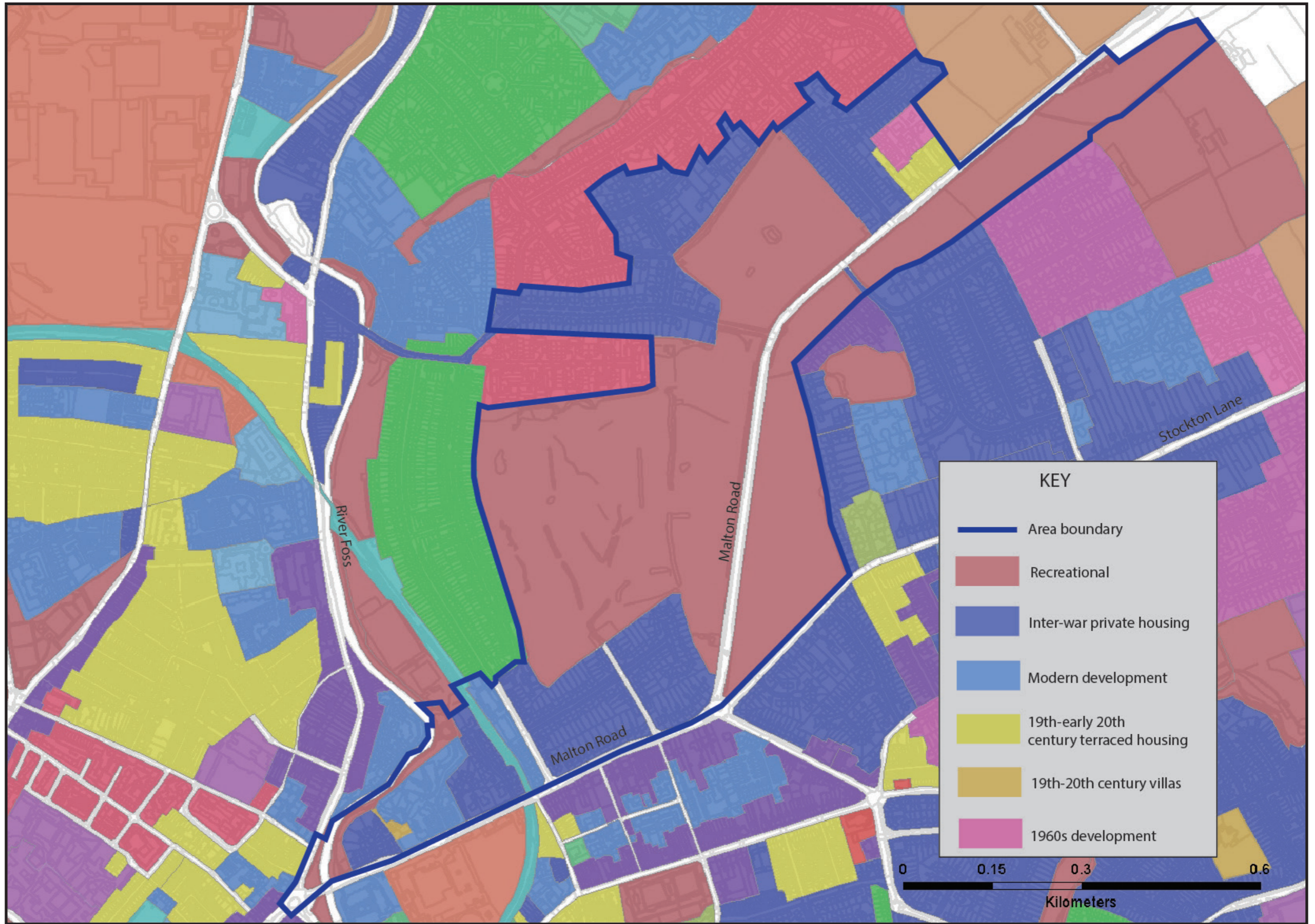
Semi-permeable barrier between Muncastergate and Fossway.



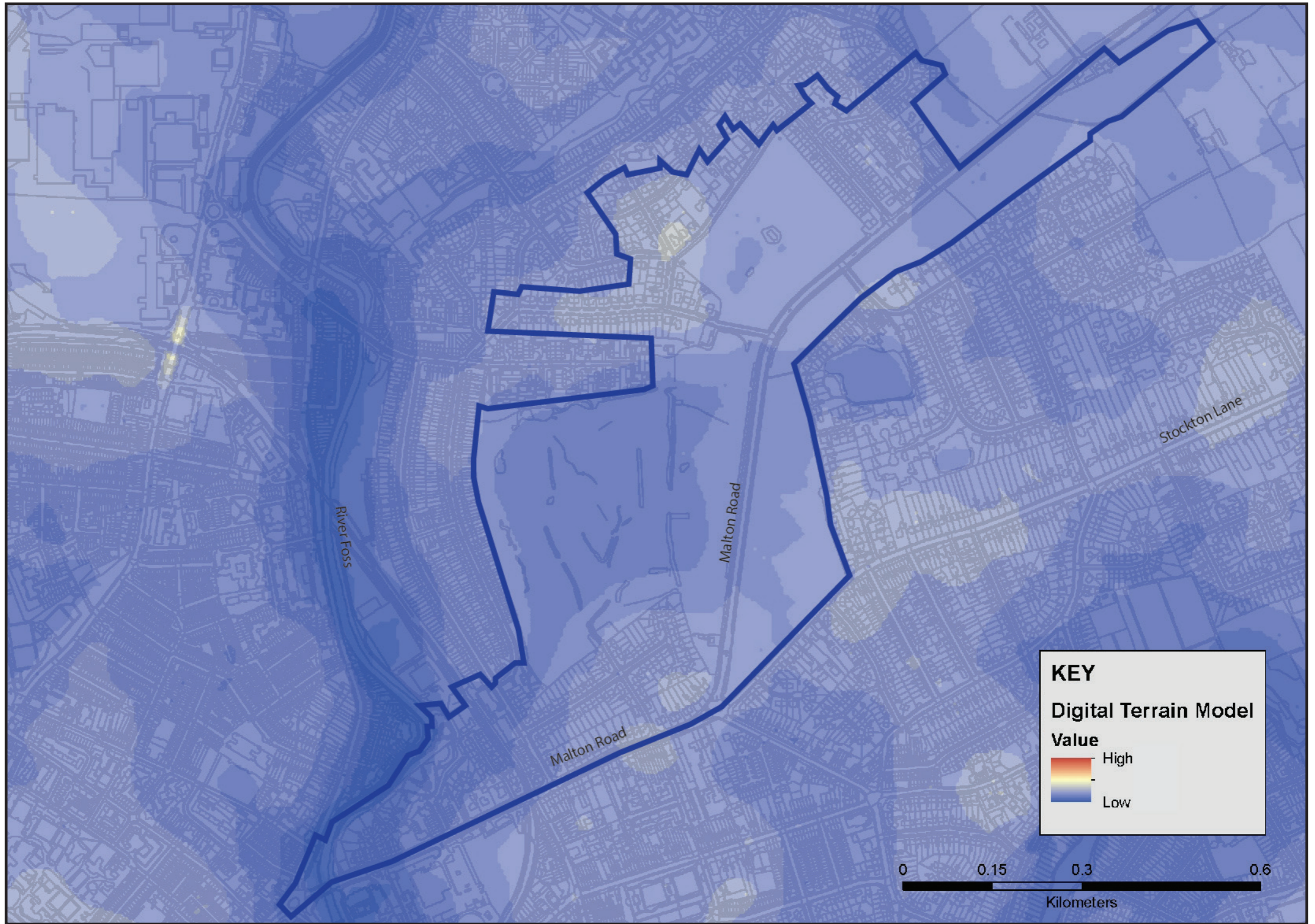
Elmfield Terrace facing Monk Stray

Character Area 51: Maps

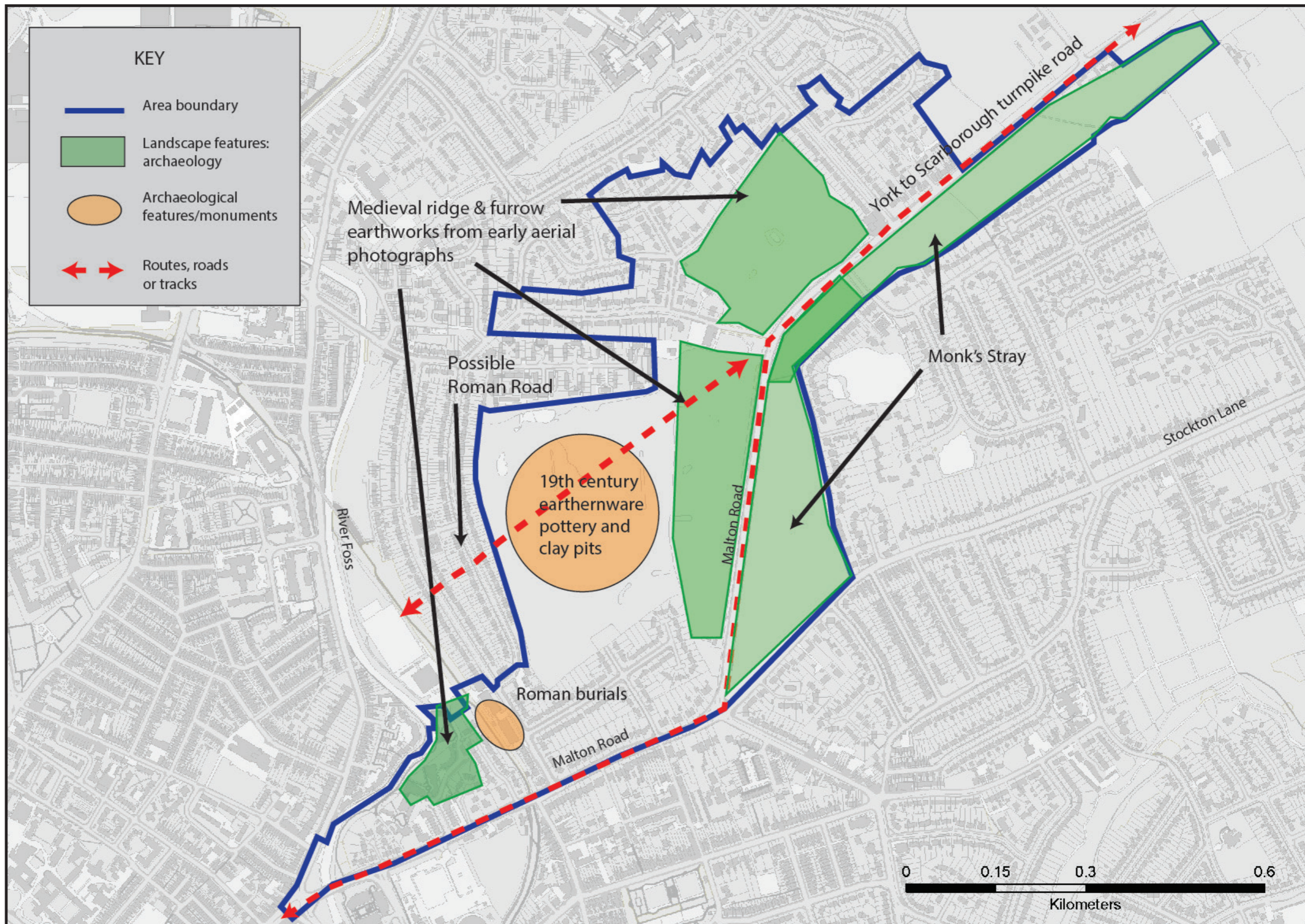
Broad Type characterisation plan. White roadways indicate roads or lanes visible on the 1852 Ordnance Survey Plan



Topography



Archaeology and heritage assets



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

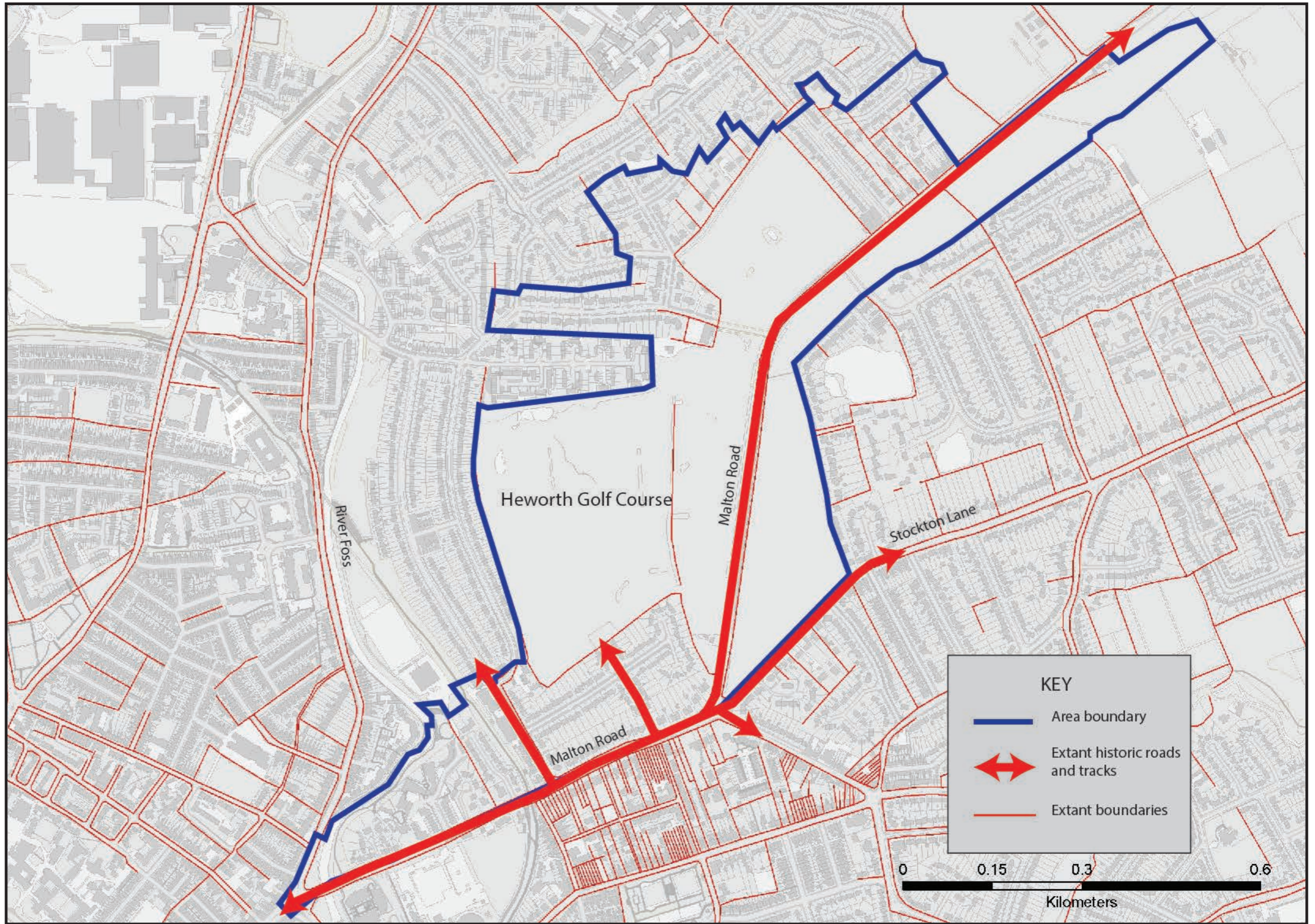


Figure ground map showing the relationship between open space (black) and the built environment



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