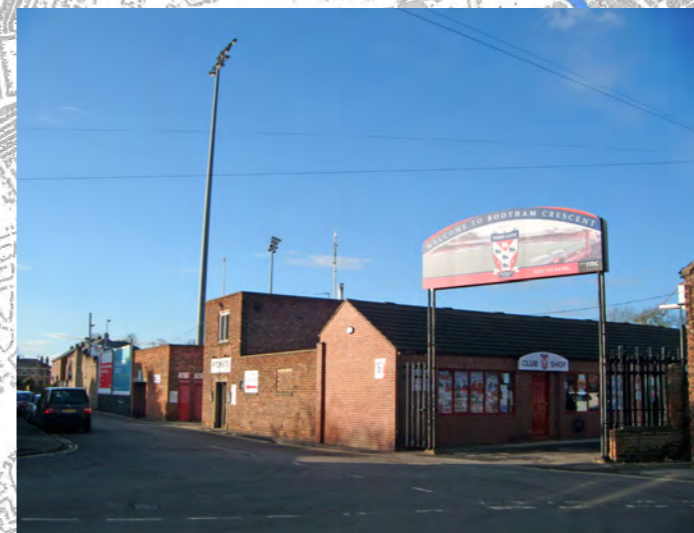


City of York Historic Environment Characterisation Project



Overview and methodology

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Executive Summary

The City of York Historic Environment Characterisation Project has, for the first time created a narrative and graphic baseline understanding of the character and significance of the suburban areas of York: part of the setting of the historic core. It has also added an archaeological component to the character area statements contained within the York Central Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal (Alan Baxter, 2011). The study is a major component of a number of key initiatives aimed at enhancing York's historic environment evidence base: for development management; strategic planning; and, better revealing the significance of this great city for its citizens and its visitors.

The two Principal outputs of the project are: Character Area Statements (76 in total) and interactive 2D digital map layers forming part of the City of York Council's corporate Geographical Information System (GIS) and the City of York Historic Environment Record (HER).

Section one: Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This study, and its Character Area Statements, is designed to help people get under the skin of York, especially in those areas away from the historic core, and to explore some of the less well known aspects of York's history and townscape. They are not aimed at an academic audience, although researchers will doubtless find them a valuable source of information and insight. They are primarily aimed at citizens and the city's decision makers, including planners and developers so that they can have a better understanding of local context and plan accordingly.

These Character Area Statements can form a solid basis for developing more detailed Neighbourhood Plans, Village Design Statements, development briefs and landscape management plans.

“Characterisation helps to manage change in the historic environment by tracing the imprint of history. Piecing together information from maps new and historic, from aerial photos, and from the wealth of data that we already have about archaeology and buildings, it builds up area-based pictures of how places in town and country have developed over time. It shows how the past exists within today's world....Characterisation is not an academic exercise but a vital tool for developers and planners to make sure that a place's historical identity contributes properly to everyone's quality of life.”

English Heritage 2013

For further information on characterisation please go to:
<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/conservation-bulletin-47/>

1.2 Predecessors

North Yorkshire, York and Lower Tees Valley Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)¹

Completed in 2008, this study examined York as part of North Yorkshire, at the strategic level, identifying 74 character units within the unitary authority boundary. This formed the base line for examining the city in more detail.

York Central Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal²

This study, adopted on the 24th of November 2011, has resulted in 24 detailed character area assessments accompanied by a strategic overview, key views analysis and a detailed management framework and action plan. These assessments specifically did not examine sub-surface archaeology or detailed streetscape features. These were to be picked up by other projects.

Ove Arup Development & Archaeology Study³

Published in 1991, this comprehensive examination of the constraints and opportunities presented by development related archaeology has informed the City of York Council's policy on development management and archaeology to the present day.

Ove Arup Development & Archaeology Study review (2013)⁴

Ove Arup have been commissioned to review the study and consider whether a new framework is required and to examine issues arising out of changes to the national, regional and local policy and strategy context since 1991.

City of York Draft Local Plan – Heritage Topic Paper (revised 2013)

The Topic Paper, considered the strategic significance and character of the City of York Unitary Area through factors,

1 Partlett et al, 2008

2 Alan Baxter Associates, 2012

3 Ove Arup, 1991

4 Ove Arup, 2014

themes and characteristics. The main output has been the identification of six principal characteristics to formally define York's key special qualities. These are:

- Strong Urban Form;
- Compactness;
- Landmark Monuments;
- Architectural Character;
- Archaeological Complexity;
- Landscape and Setting.

City of York Streetscape Strategy & Guidance (consultation draft 2013)⁵

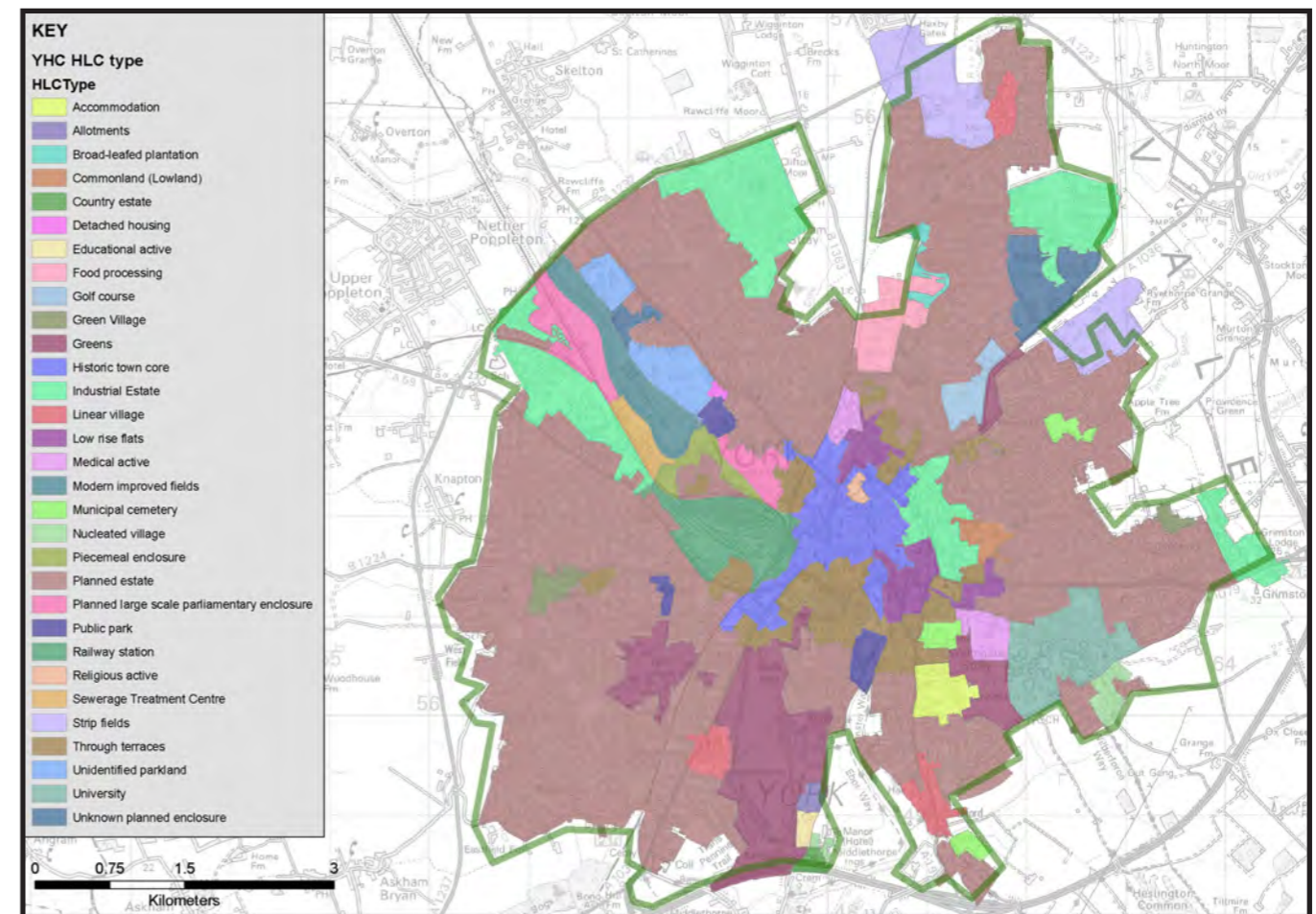
This document examines the history of York's streets and spaces and critically examines existing street furniture,

5 Sydes, 2013

surfacing and signage. It also provides guidance on appropriate materials and furniture for the city centre and suburban York. The following seven key principals provide strategic guidance:

- A City for People;
- Access & Mobility;
- Design;
- Distinctiveness;
- Wayfinding and legibility;
- Light and Dark;
- Management.

North Yorkshire Historic Environment Characterisation Project, showing character types within the study area. The majority is characterised as "planned estates"



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1.3 How to use this study

The project documentation is divided into three distinct parts.

Part one: Overview and methodology (this document).

This comprises an overview of the project in terms of basic background - history, geology and topography, but specifically examines the connections between York's six principal characteristics, as defined for the draft City of York Council Local Plan Heritage Topic Paper. For the user, this provides a useful strategic assessment of character. For those who wish to understand how characterisation was achieved in practice, there is an examination of the methodology used.

Part two: Area A character statements.

It was never the intention of this study to define yet more character areas for York and those areas already defined through the Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal (HCCAA) form the basis for these statements. They should be used in conjunction with the HCCAA. These statements provide further assessment and analysis of archaeological character and streetscape character, both of which were deliberately left out of the HCCAA. These documents will be particularly useful for anyone involved in public realm improvements, development or any other activity requiring permanent or temporary change in the built environment of Central York. These are best accessed either via the Archaeological Data Service website or the City of York Council website. The latter is more accessible in that character statements can be accessed via an interactive city map.

Part three: Area B character statements.

These represent the most important outputs from the project and are presented in a way that is both accessible and meaningful. These statements provide important evidence and analysis based on carefully defined character areas that give an insight into what local character and local distinctiveness mean outwith the historic core. They can be accessed through the City of York Council website at http://www.york.gov.uk/info/200163/conservation_and_archaeology. The full project documentation will also be available on the University of York Archaeological Data Service website at <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/>.

Part four: Appendices.

These comprise data extracted from the Historic Environment Record and a list of the full GIS data layers.

1.4 Policy context

This study forms part of the evidence base informing local planning policy and development management. It does this through making a significant contribution to understanding the character and significance of the whole of York's built environment (excluding the rural villages). In particular it contributes enormously to enhancement of the City of York's Historic Environment Record, and provides detail to support the City of York Council Local Plan Heritage Topic Paper, and development of the City of York Council Local Plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework DCLG 2013

“Local planning authorities should have up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and use it to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment. They should also use it to predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future. Local planning authorities should either maintain or have access to a historic environment record.”

Para 169 of the National Planning Policy Framework

The study is of great value to anyone involved in drafting up neighbourhood plans.

“...Neighbourhood Plan (s) should be based on appropriate evidence, and information on how a place has developed and evolved is often a key element. This could include a description of the historic character of the area, as well as identifying any listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas, registered parks and battlefields or local heritage assets. An assessment of the condition and vulnerability of the local historic environment will also help in identifying the need for any future management action.”

English Heritage, Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment February 2014.

Assessment of character is also of great benefit to the design, layout, massing and density of new development as the City of York Local Plan recognises.

“...Design is important in the quality of public spaces, how easy it is to move through them, how legible and adaptable places are and how existing character is responded to. It is especially important for development proposals to respond to York's special qualities, character and significance whether in the historic core or at the edges of the urban area and in rural; village communities...”

City of York Council Local Plan, Preferred Options, June 2013.

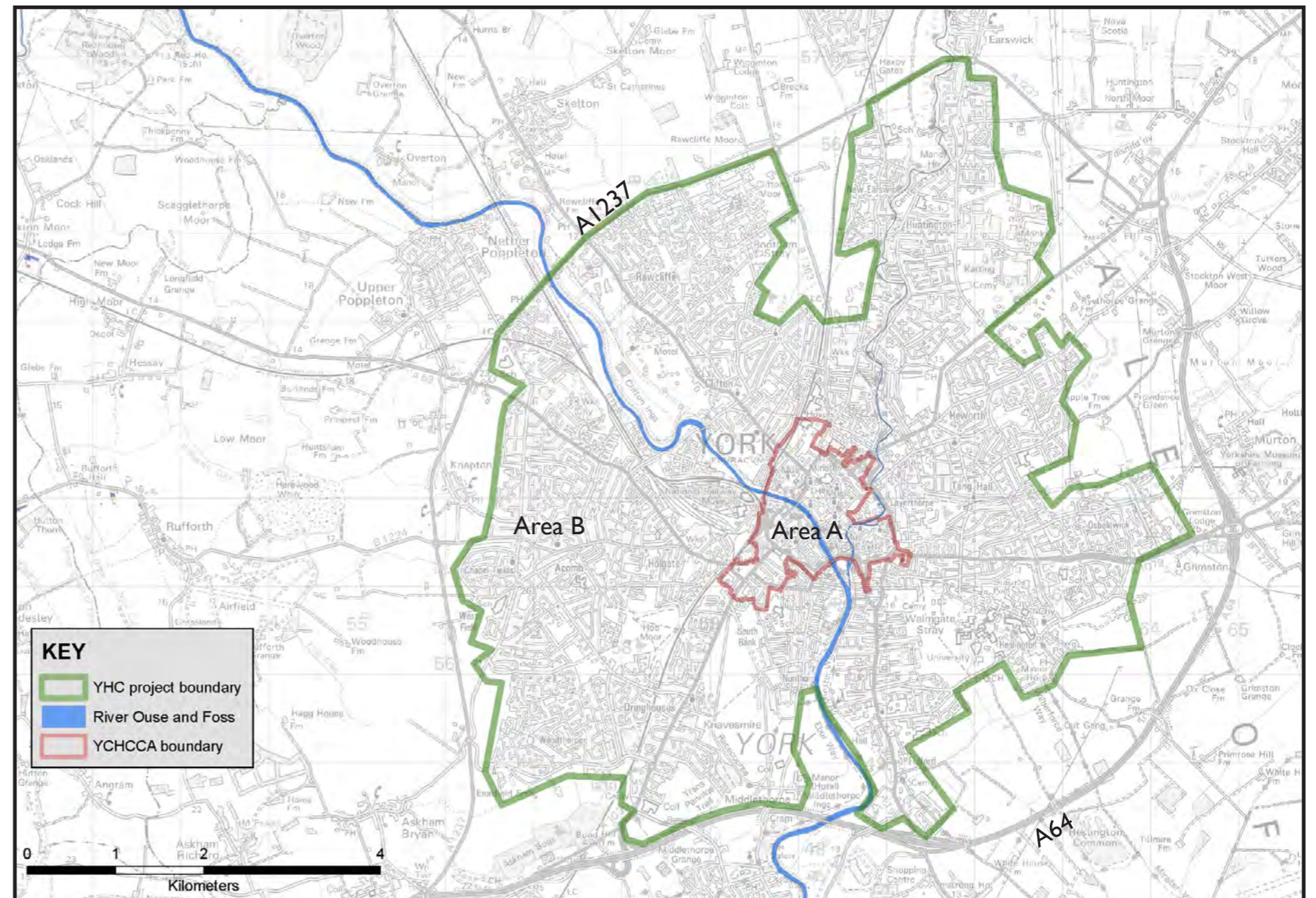
Assessment of character is particularly important in examining the relationship between open space and the built environment and in York, setting is absolutely critical.

“Landscape and setting is a principal characteristic of York which includes the strays and lngs that penetrate the urban fabric as well as the city's rural hinterland. The City of York Council will expect evidence based landscape assessments to reference the Landscape Institutes's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment English Heritage's the Setting of Heritage Assets (2011) and the York Landscape Character Appraisal as well as conservation area appraisals and historic character assessments where they exist.”

City of York Council Local Plan, Preferred Options, June 2013.

1.5 Study area

The study area was chosen to cover the whole of the built environment lying within York's Outer Ring Road, the A64 and the A1237. It includes Rawcliffe Ings and the Knavesmire but excludes Fulford Ings and open country between New Earswick and Clifton Moor. The reason for this is purely practical. The study area is divided into Area A, essentially the Historic Core Conservation Area; and, Area B the Victorian and later suburbs.



Section two: Background

2.1 Overview

Context

York is located on the River Ouse approximately 40km from Leeds to the west, 61km from Hull to the east, 88km from Darlington to the North, and 67km from Doncaster to the south.

York's population stands at just over 200,000 based on the 2011 census returns.

There are two universities, York St John and the University of York, both of which have, and are, benefiting from increasing investment. The University of York has a thriving archaeology department with well attended undergraduate and post graduate courses. Conservation related MAs are particularly popular with students placed with local businesses and organisations.

The city benefits from hosting the Yorkshire and Humber regional offices of English Heritage and there is an active and informed Civic Trust.

The City Council currently employs a City Archaeologist and two conservation officers, one of whom is a conservation architect. The council also retains a small team of masons augmented by external staff to repair and maintain the city walls and bars.

Over the last 30 years York has transformed from a regional shopping centre into one of Europe's premier visitor destinations. In 2012 York welcomed 7m visitors of which 22% stayed at least one night. The origins of these visitors are varied but the majority of day visitors are regionally based. On most days the city centre is a very busy place with some streets, such as Coney Street extremely crowded at peak times. The impact of traffic on the city has been a significant issue since at least the immediate post-war era and removing traffic from the historic core has long been

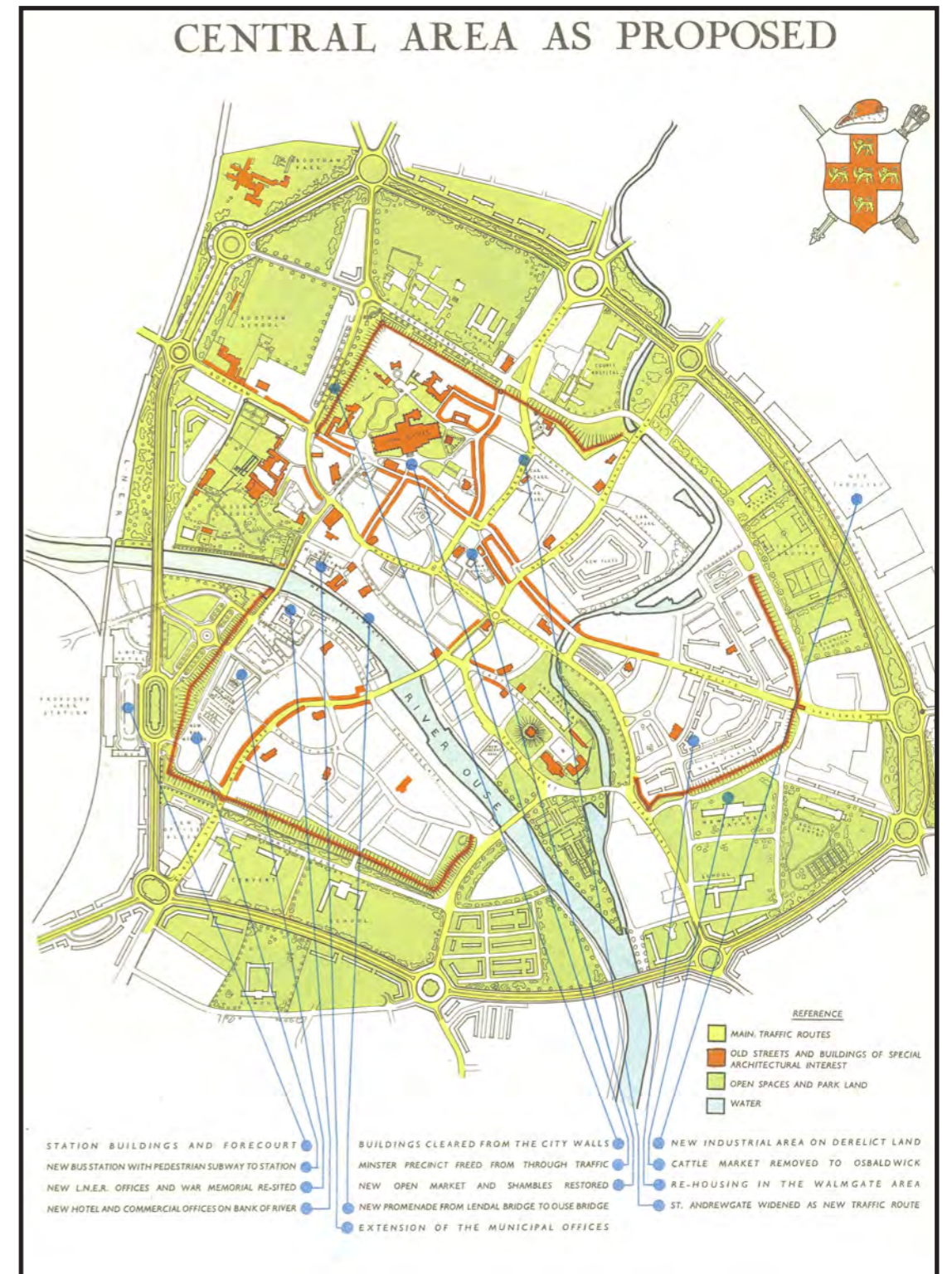
an ambition, realised in part by the introduction of the Footstreets in the late 1980s. At the time this was both controversial and innovative. Earlier, in the 1970s, proposals for an inner ring road outwith the city wall were quashed by the then Secretary of State on the grounds of adverse impact on the city. This proposal itself was a reworking of the 1948 City of York Plan.

Following publication of *York New City Beautiful, Towards an Economic Vision*¹, and its recommendation to invest in the public realm, the city council has embarked on the Reinvigorate York Programme. This programme is investing in public realm improvements to several areas of the city including King's Square and Exhibition Square.

The city now stands at an interesting point in its 2000 year history where it needs to reconcile growth with conserving its rich heritage legacy - the city's unique selling point. There are also tensions in the city with fears of over-gentrification, and, what some see as the prioritisation of visitors over citizens. There is no doubt that York's uniqueness is under pressure and new, more relaxed planning guidance² coupled with fears of economic stagnation are key issues. The stretched resources of the City Council may not be adequate in medium and long term. to help manage this tension.

1 Simpson, A 2010

2 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012

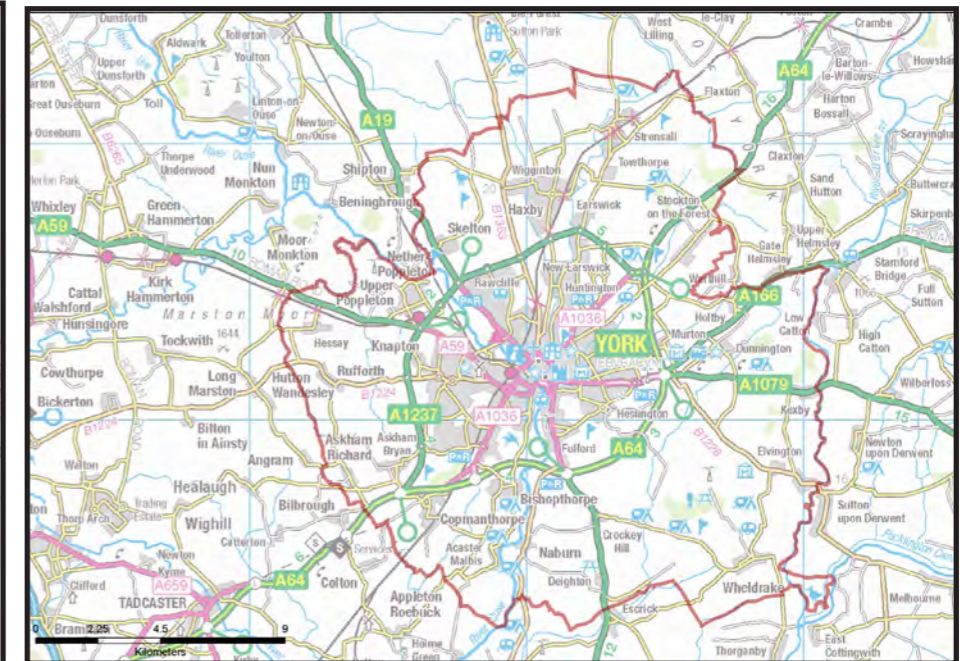


The proposed ring road in 1948. One of the fascinating aspects of this plan is the amount of proposed green space. The city would have been dramatically different had this scheme been implemented.



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Location map showing York in relation to neighbouring settlements. Note the main north south route, the A1 goes nowhere near York and visitors need to detour to the east to visit. Curiously York is only signed immediately before junction 44 on the journey north.



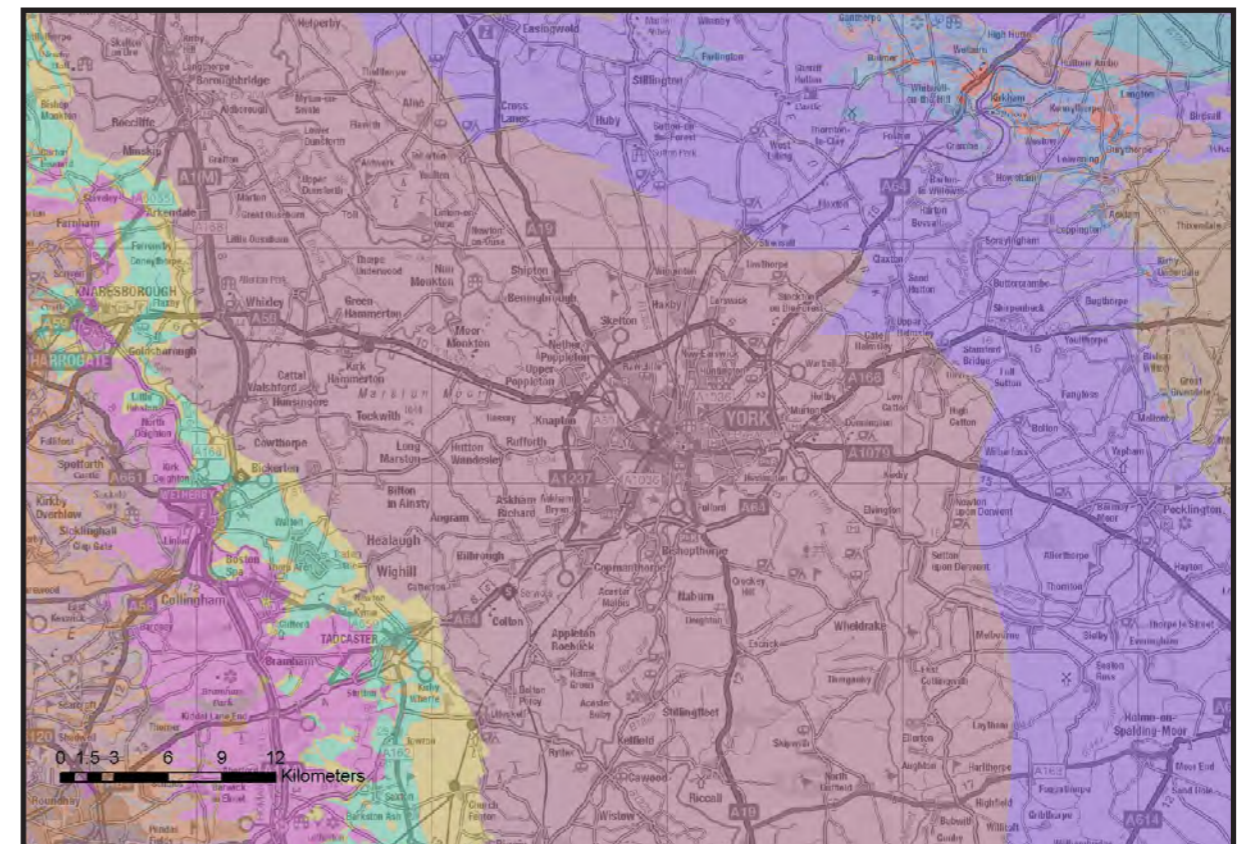
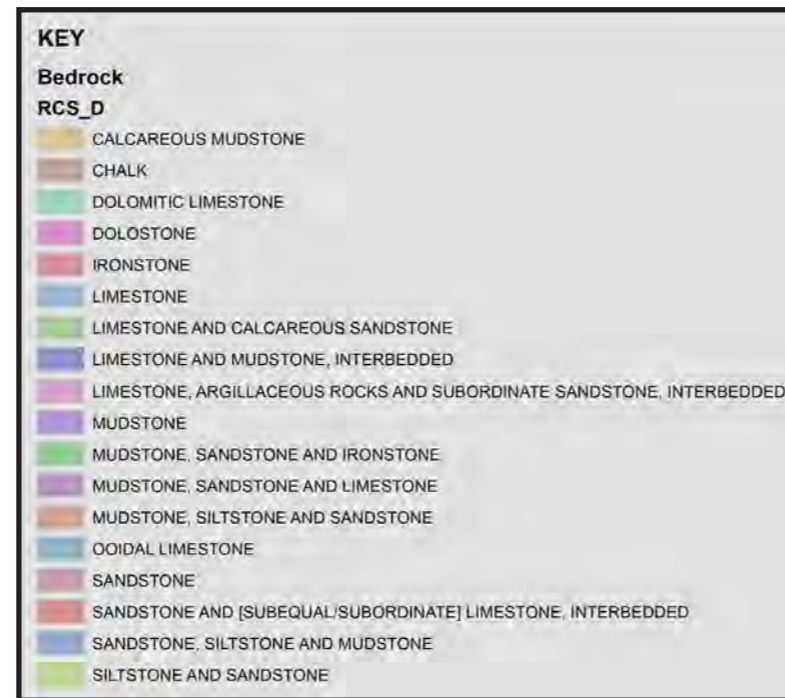
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Location map showing the Unitary Authority boundary. The biggest settlements beyond the outer ring road are: Haxby/Wigginton; Strensall/Towthorpe; Copmanthorpe; and, Poppleton.

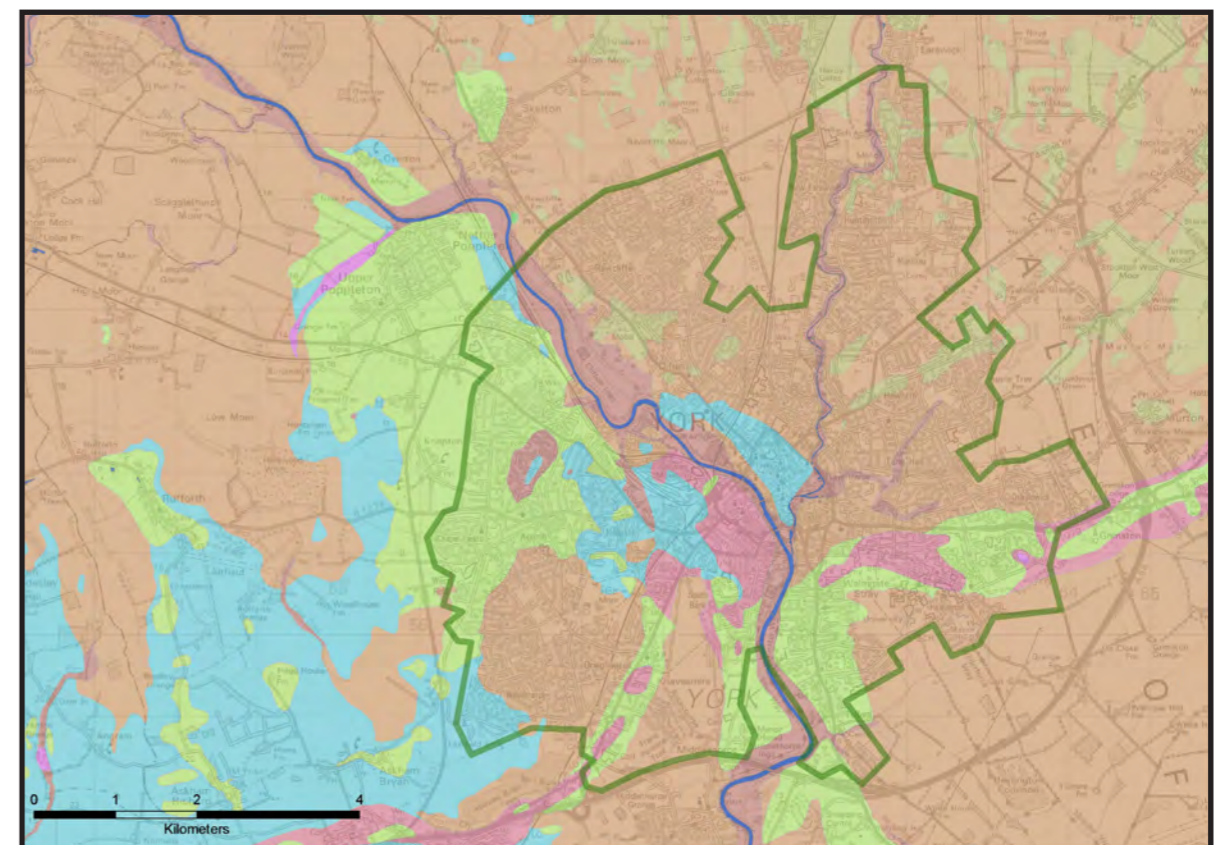
Geology and topography

York sits firmly at the southern end of the Vale of York, essentially a lowland plain carved out by successive glacial ice sheets from the underlying Sherwood Sandstone which stretches from Hartlepool, skirting the North York Moors uplands to Nottingham in the Midlands.

Overlying this is a complex of glacio-fluvial deposits of sands, gravels, clays and till, mostly relating to the effects of the last Devensian glaciation and its decline.



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2.2 Historic development

The absence of substantial archaeological research in the rural hinterland has left us a little in the dark as to the intensity and complexity of pre-Roman and prehistoric settlement and activity in the area. Recent investigations (early 21st century) at the University of York's new Heslington East Campus, has demonstrated that in some areas at least, rural settlement was complex and long lasting.

What is undisputed and clear are the urban origins of York, founded as a legionary fortress in AD71, Eboracum developed a civilian, commercial, and industrial suburb to the southwest and south/southeast of the fortress as well as a more formal settlement (colonia) south of the River Ouse (Bishophill and Micklegate). It is likely that part of the present surviving medieval defences around this area reflects an earlier Roman stone defence although direct evidence is elusive¹.

The primary Roman road system, together with the defences of the fortress and settlement morphology south of the River Ouse, form the backbone of the city's contemporary urban grain.

Many of the roads, lanes and alleys in the centre are at least Anglo-Scandinavian in origin - names such as: Skeldergate; Goodramgate; Micklegate; and, Coppergate are a lasting testament to the influence of the Scandinavian settlers, traders and rulers of York, or Jorvik, in the 9th and 10th centuries.

Some of these streets such as Spurriergate and High Ousegate, probably also reflect earlier Roman extra-mural

¹ The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England references a number of possible identifications of this wall during the 19th century through the creation of the two railway arches at Toft Green (RCHME 1962)

roads². High and Low Petergate follows the line of the Roman fortress, *Via Principalis* and Stonegate, the *Via Praetoria*. Blossom Street and Tadcaster Road lie on, or very close to, the main road linking Tadcaster (*Calcaria*) and York. Modern Bootham reflects the line of the main road from York to Catterick (*Cataractonium*) and Holgate, a route through to Boroughbridge (*Aldborough - Isurium Brigantum*).

Some suburban medieval villages including: Dringhouses; Acomb; and, Clifton, lie on these early routes and archaeological evidence suggests that Roman roadside settlements pre-date them³. Until the 19th century, the urban core of York remained relatively compact and largely confined to the walled areas. It is likely that Roman visitors to the medieval city would have recognised both the urban area and its rural setting, the biggest difference perhaps being the Minster, dominant in the skyline.

Two sides of the legionary fortress survived as part of the Minster and St Leonard's Hospital enclosure as well as acting as part of the city defences. These defences continue through the city walls south of the river and around Walmgate, formalising in part, a possible Roman antecedent in Bishophill, and Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian earthen defences in Walmgate.

Urban morphology was also influenced by the many religious establishments in York including the wealthy St Mary's Abbey and much of the land surrounding the city walls was in church ownership. In fact, the almost unique nature of the York Stray's (Formed by the early 19th century as residues of much greater areas of common land) is testament to the limited pasturage that was available to York's citizens. The

² For example, excavations on High Ousegate and Spurriergate in Brinklow et al, 1986

³ Excavations at Calcaria Court, Dringhouses for instance uncovered clear evidence for Roman road side settlement (City of York Historic Environment Record)

majority of remaining land lay in the townships of adjacent villages such as Acomb, Fulford, Clifton and Heworth based on a network of their own open fields, pasture and woodland. Other land, such as Bishop's Fields (between Holgate and the River Ouse) were in church ownership.⁴

Within the city walls, not all parts outwith the religious settlements were developed as residential and commercial, and significant areas of Bishophill and Walmgate for instance were cultivated land. The King's Pool, created in the 11th century as part of the castle defences added to the open space within the city walls. The centre however, continued to be very densely occupied with small, intimate spaces used for fairs, markets and other public and civic events.

Beyond areas of pasture and mire, the open fields of Acomb, Dringhouses, Heworth, Osbaldwick, Heslington, Clifton and Huntington were still in evidence up to enclosure in the 18th and early 19th centuries and even as late as the 1950s this earlier medieval landscape was still in evidence. Areas of earthwork ridge and furrow survive today in a number of locations as a visual reminder of York's extensive medieval arable hinterland.⁵

Interventions into the largely early to late medieval townscape are not immediately apparent. St Leonard's Place was part of an early 19th century speculative urban transformation project that saw removal of part of the city wall. Not long after, the two market areas of St Sampson's Square and Pavement were linked, through the creation of Parliament Street. The most profound change was the replacement of medieval Lop Lane with Duncombe Place opening up views of the Minster and creating a large open space at the west front.

⁴ The History of York, From Earliest Times to the Year 2000 provides excellent detail on medieval York (Nuttgens, 2007).

⁵ The History of Acomb has a useful coloured map based on the 1774 enclosure award for Acomb with land ownership related to the former open fields (Hodgson, 2001).

In common with most English towns and cities York's expansion began in the 18th century with up-market town housing along the arterial roads and more modest terracing in other areas. 19th century expansion included the development of previously open land within the city walls such as Bishophill and Walmgate and continued with a variety of terrace developments for railway workers (Holgate, Acomb), the military (Fulford Road) and foundry and factory workers generally (Clementhorpe, Scarcroft, Heworth, the Groves). Retention of the city walls and bars almost certainly constrained development within and around the centre at this time. Preservation of the walls and bars dates back at least to the early years of the 19th century following the damage done through the creation of St Leonard's Place and threats to Bootham Bar. Preservation of Clifford's Tower dates back to the 17th century.

York of the 19th and early 20th centuries was relatively industrial - not to the extent of the West Yorkshire towns - but with a number of significant iron and steel firms including the Albion Iron and Steel Works off Leeman Road and the Phoenix Iron Foundry within the walls behind Fishergate Postern.

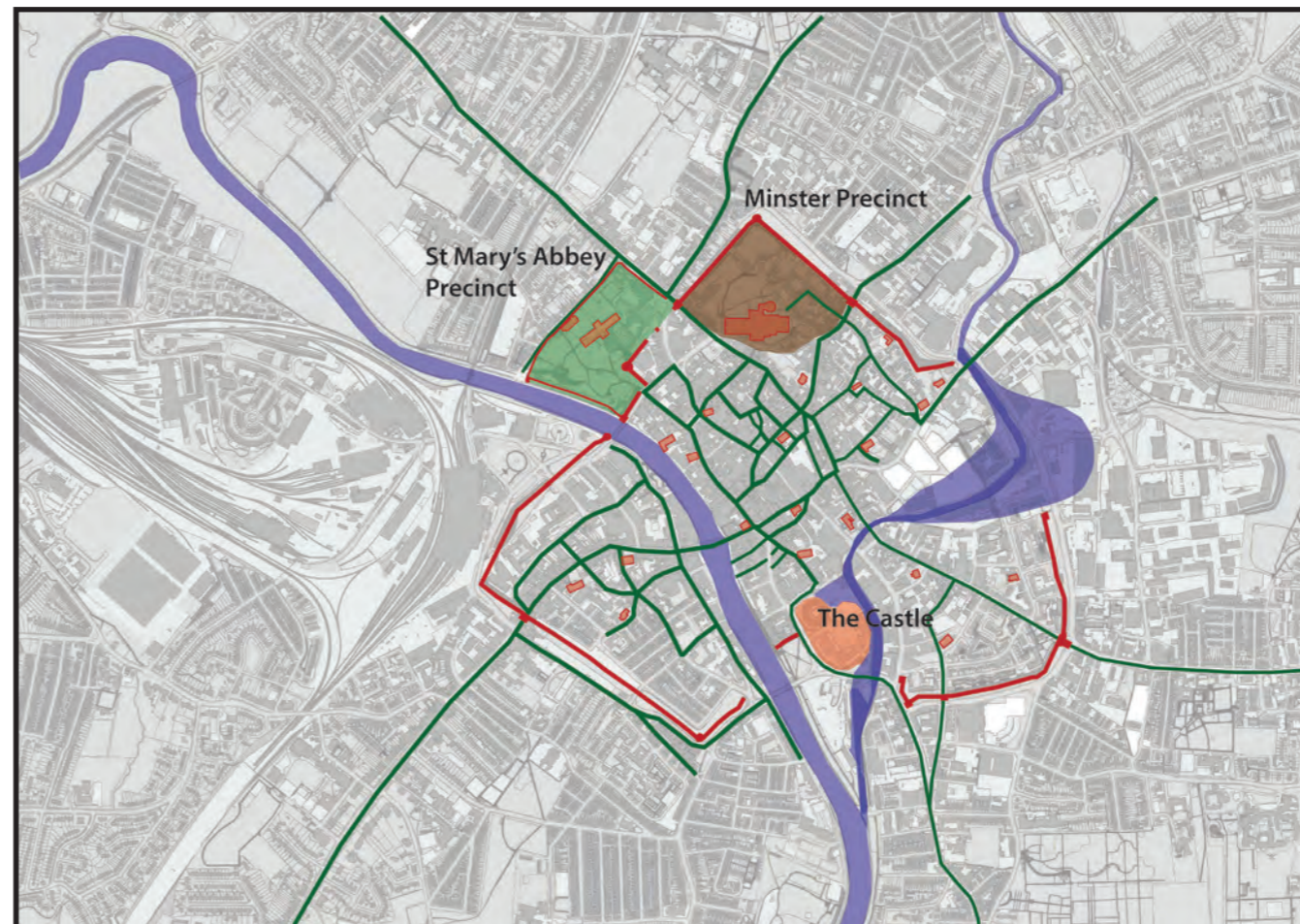
The two most significant industries however, were chocolate and railways. Two principal families, Rowntree's and Terry's dominate in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Rowntree to the north of the centre and Terry to the south. The railway station (originally within the city walls at Toft Green), associated track, and coach and carriage works, utilised the former Bishop's Field (Church land between Acomb and the River Ouse enclosed in the late 18th century) and land between Blossom Street and Holgate.

The Rowntree family created a new settlement at New Earswick for its workers based on Sir Ebenezer Howard's Garden City Movement principles which in part influenced York's post 1st world war response to social housing as required by the 1919 Housing Act or 'Addison Act'. The first of these was Tang Hall built on land acquired from the Church.

These inter-war and immediate post-World War II years saw York's biggest expansion and the creation of key suburbs of a mix of low-density council, and private housing. Although development continued through the 1960s to the early 21st century, the pace of development slowed and the limits of the city have remained largely as they were in the 1960s.

York's uniqueness owes much to generations of conservation minded citizens from William Etty in the 19th century to George Pace and others in the 20th and 21st century. The city is however, an economic success story, partly through the impact of tourism but also through the success of other industry, commerce and education. The most significant early 21st century development in York has been expansion of the University of York onto the Heslington East Campus, and expansion of York St John University off Lord Mayor's Walk. The city needs to expand spatially to meet new demands, particularly in new housing allocations. The York skyline and the dominance of the Minster are key factors in determining scale and massing of new building and the conservation and enhancement of existing open spaces as well as retaining compactness and links to open countryside are significant challenges to urban expansion. Brownfield sites are few and far between and the largest, York Central will not be sufficient to meet future demand for growth on its own. There is general agreement however that the historic environment is York's Unique Selling Point and any threat to that will be fiercely contested by its citizens.

It is hoped that this project's character statements will be of great value to this process.



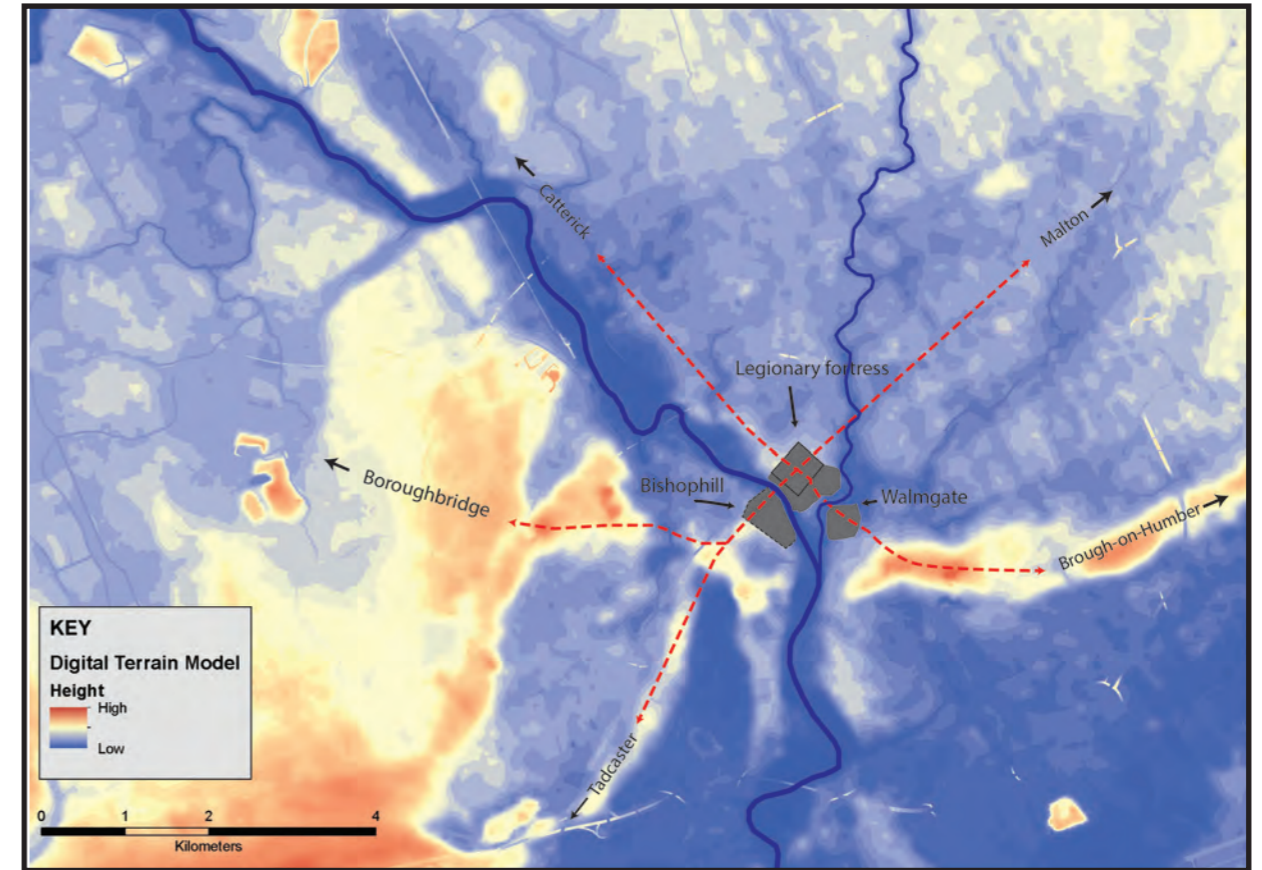
Medieval York showing the developed road network, areas of the principal civic and ecclesiastical sites and some of the major churches. The city walls clearly pick up the line of the earlier Roman fortress but are essentially 14th century in origin.

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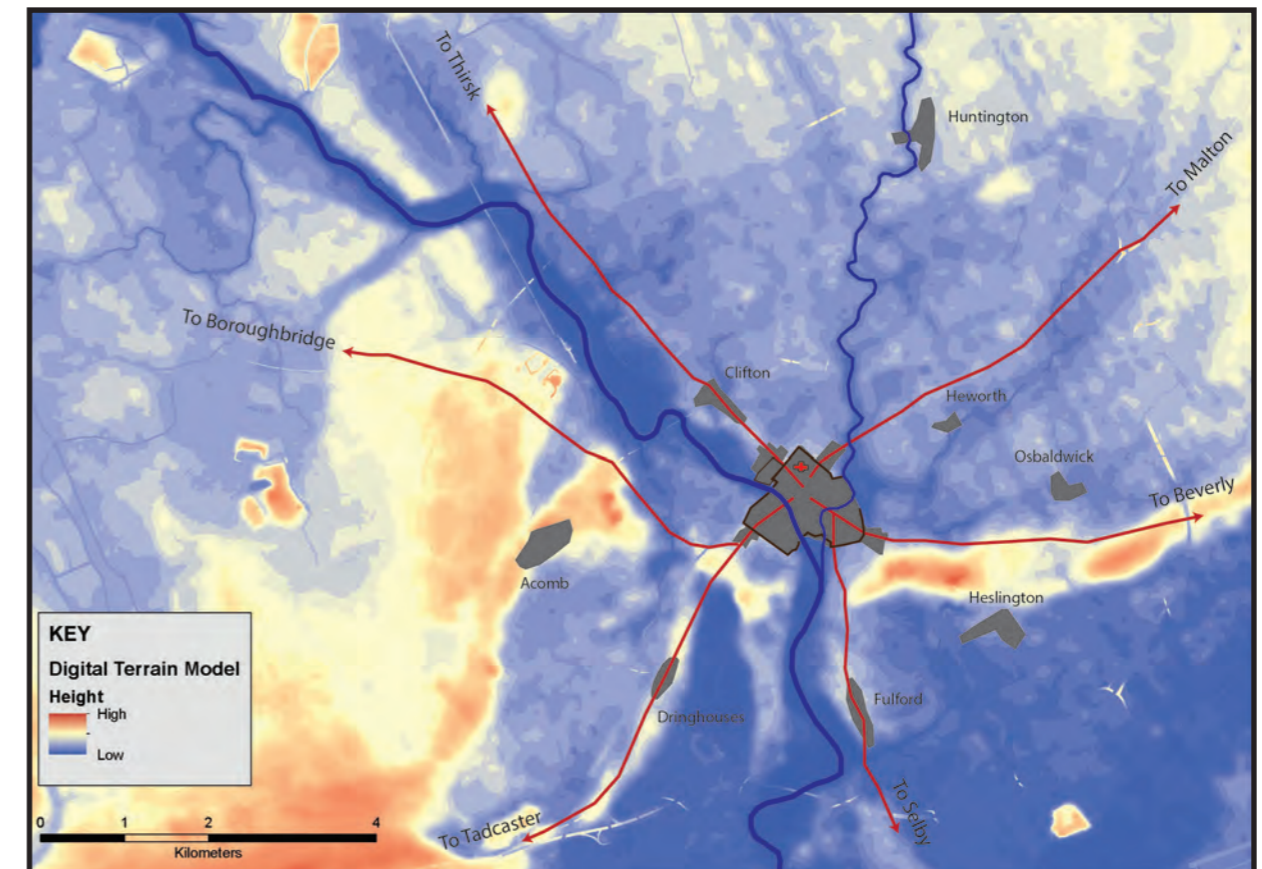
Time slices of urban development.

The following graphics illustrate, in broad terms, the physical development of York from its 1st century beginnings to the present day in a series of time slices. These are designed to illustrate how little urban development there had been until the 20th century when the suburban expansion really took off. The 19th century graphic is slightly misleading in that the city did in fact expand quite dramatically with an influx of working families from Ireland in particular. However, much of the associated housing was accommodated within the city walls giving the illusion of stasis.

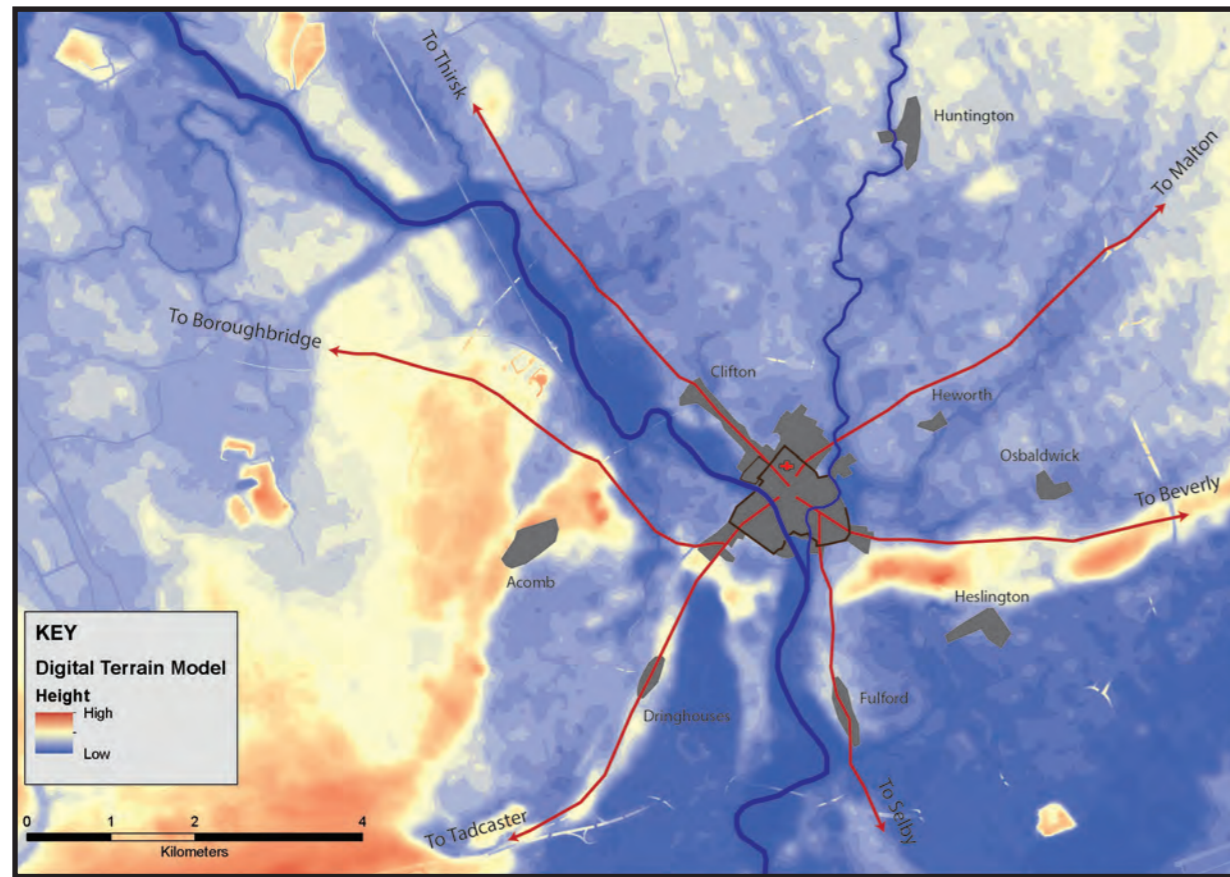
Only the suburban medieval villages are indicated on these graphics so that their inclusion into the urban fabric can be better understood. Also, only the principal roads are indicated for clarity. The underlying topography is shown to illustrate the relationship between low lying (flood prone) land and urban development.



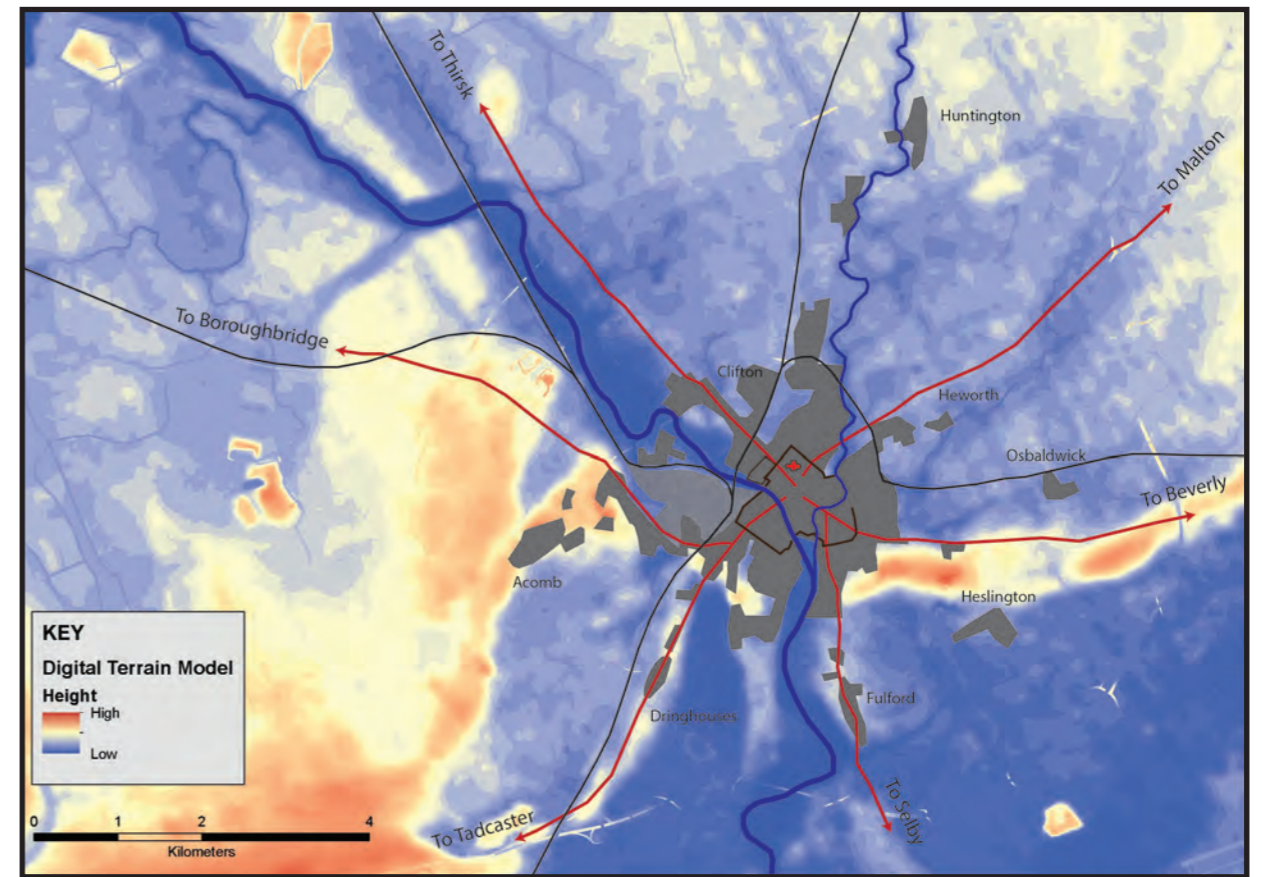
Top: Roman. bottom: medieval.



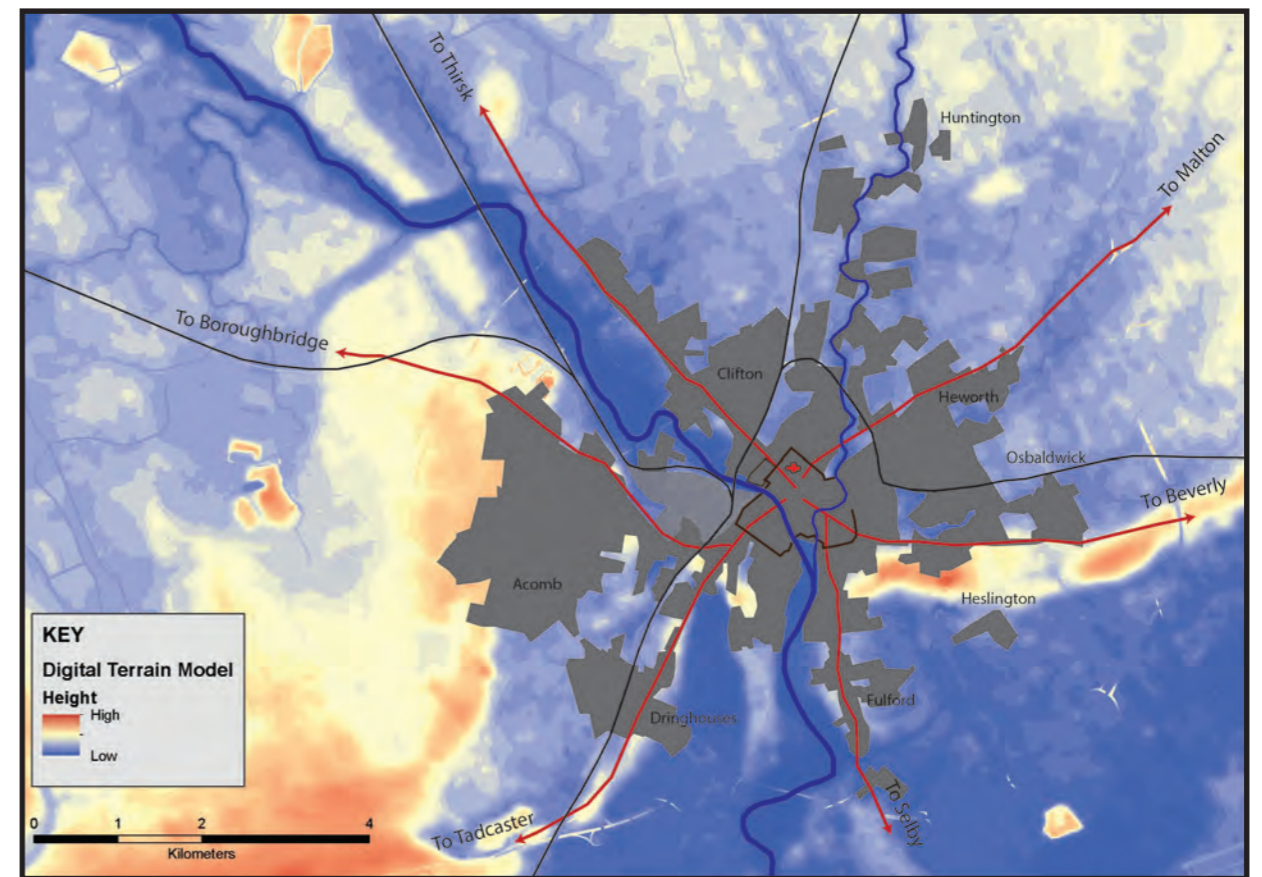
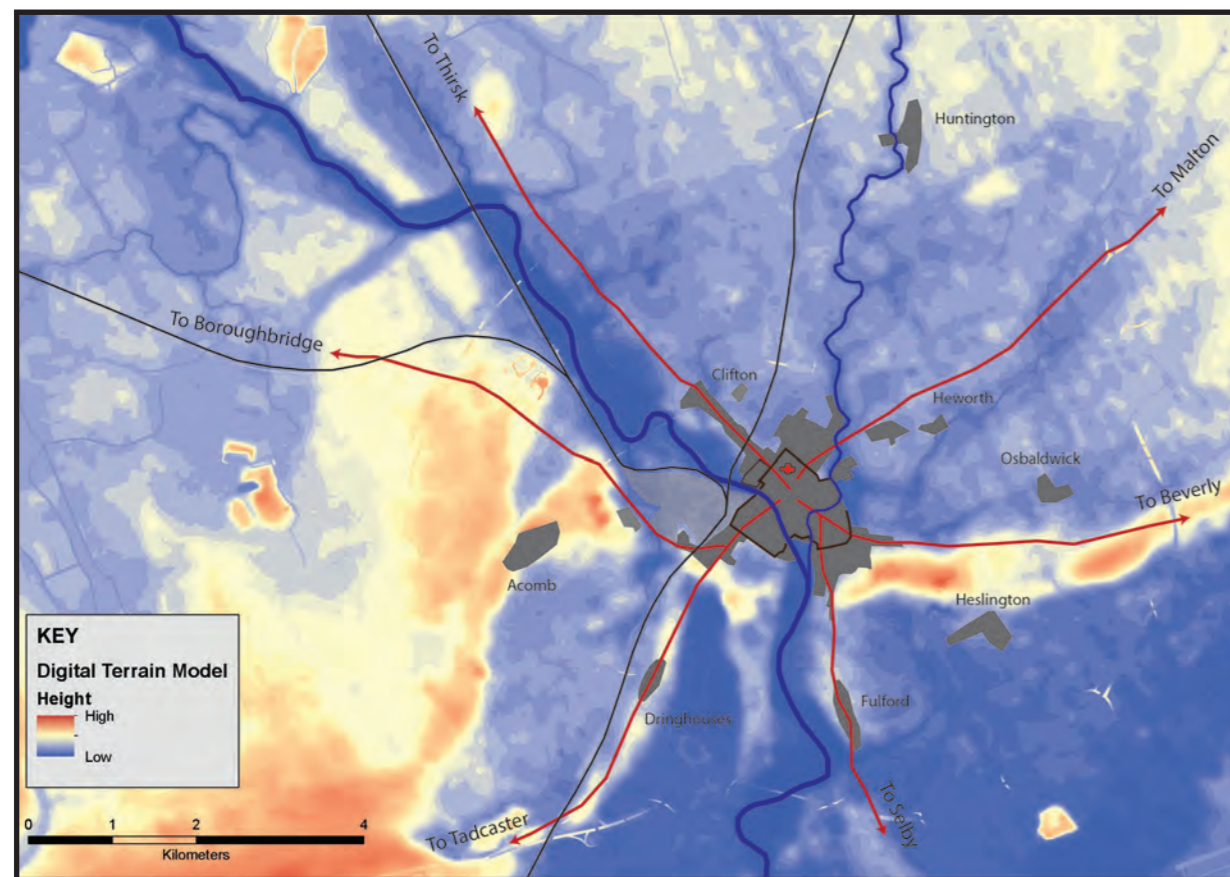
City of York Historic Environment Characterisation Project - 2013, Overview and methodology



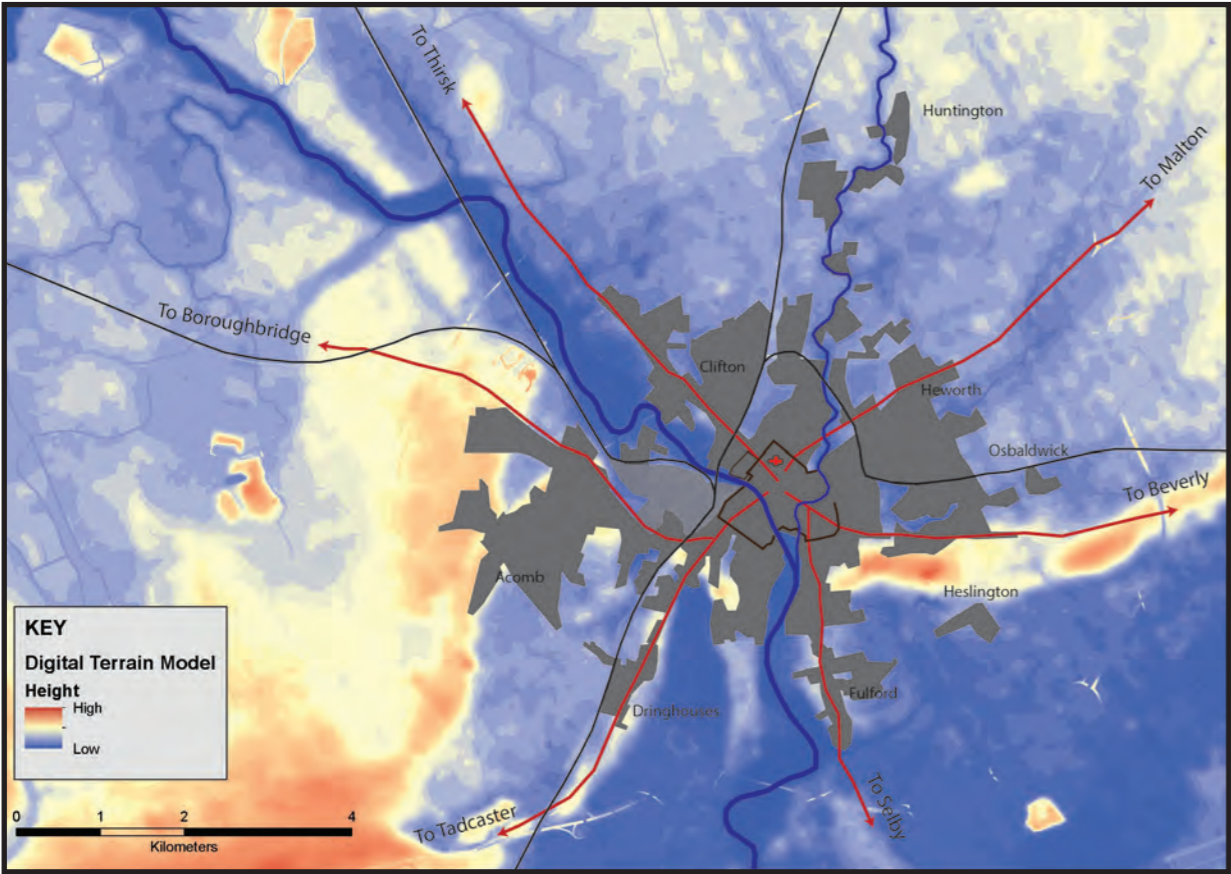
Top: 18th century. Bottom: 19th century



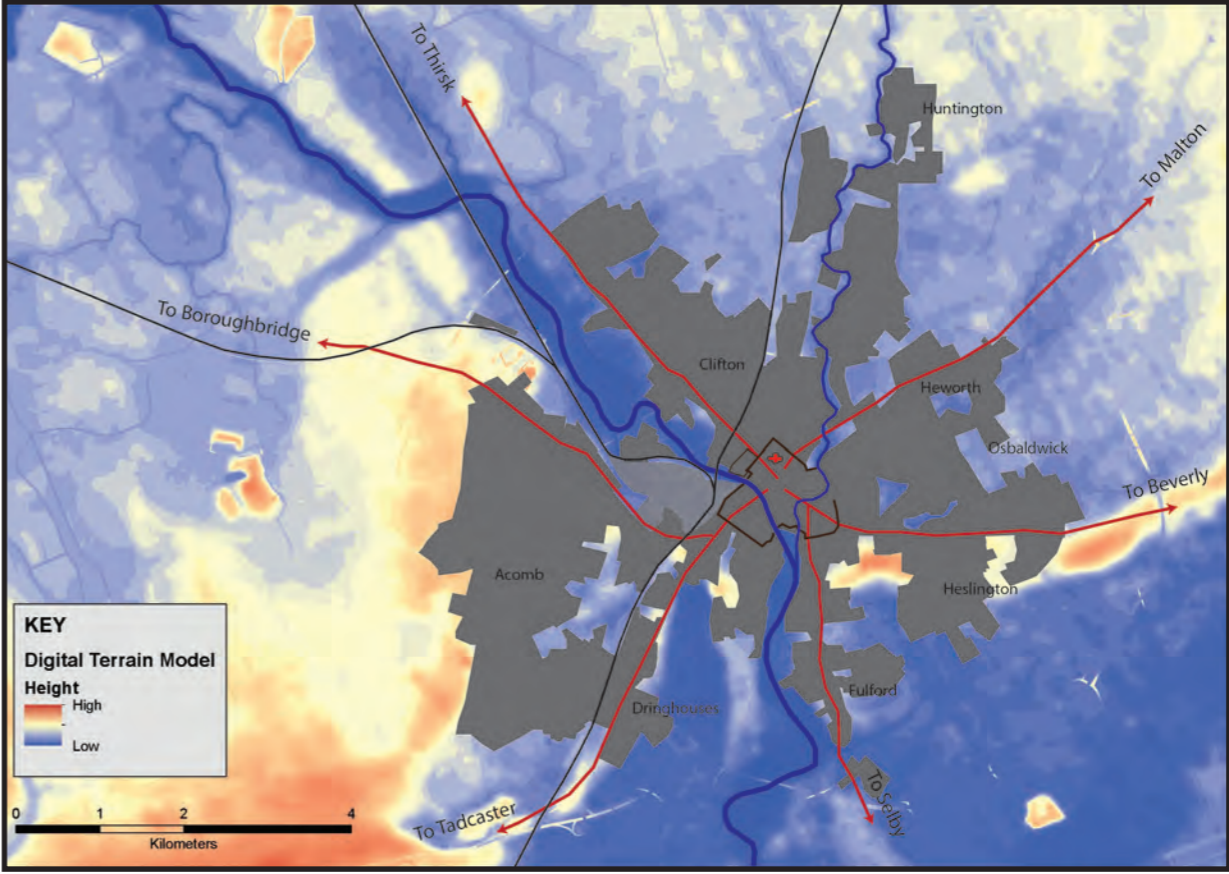
Top early 20th century: bottom inter-war (1919 to the 1930s).



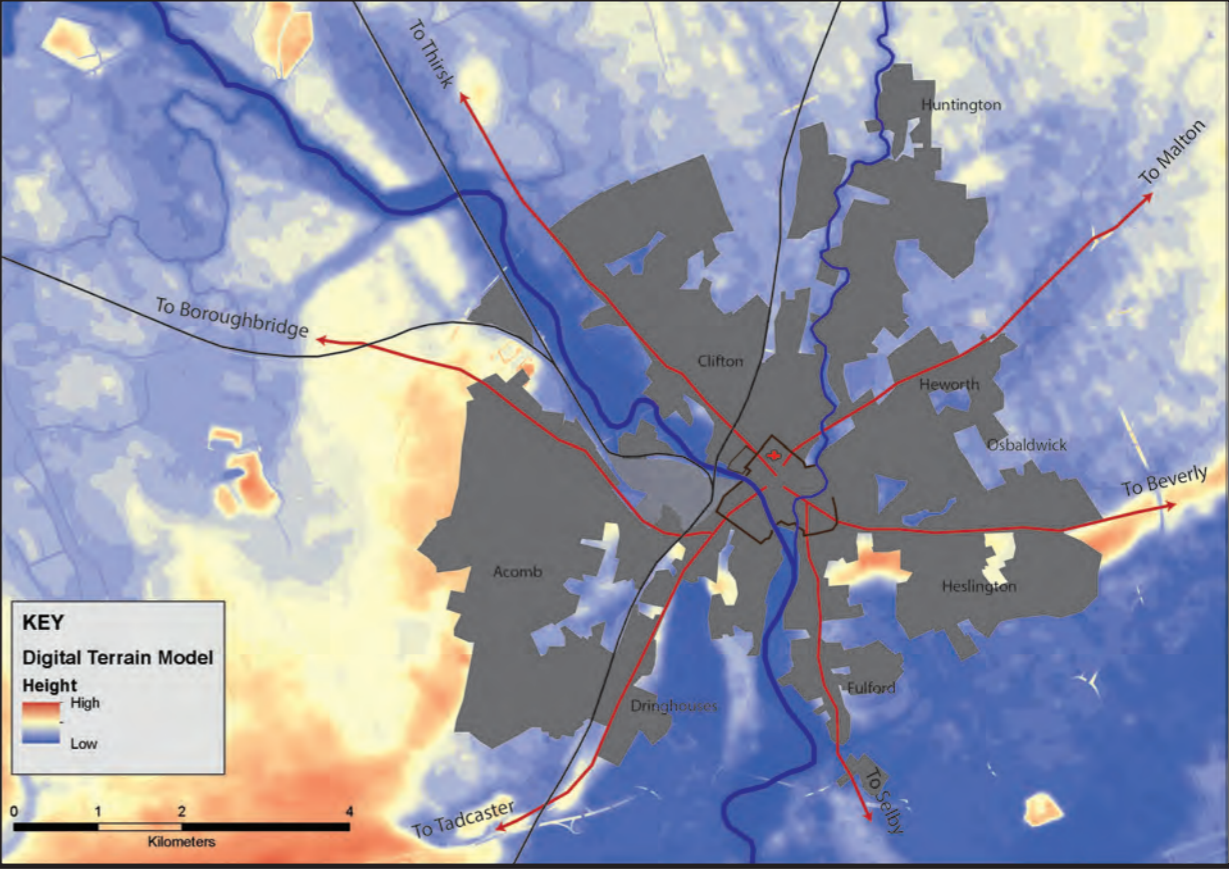
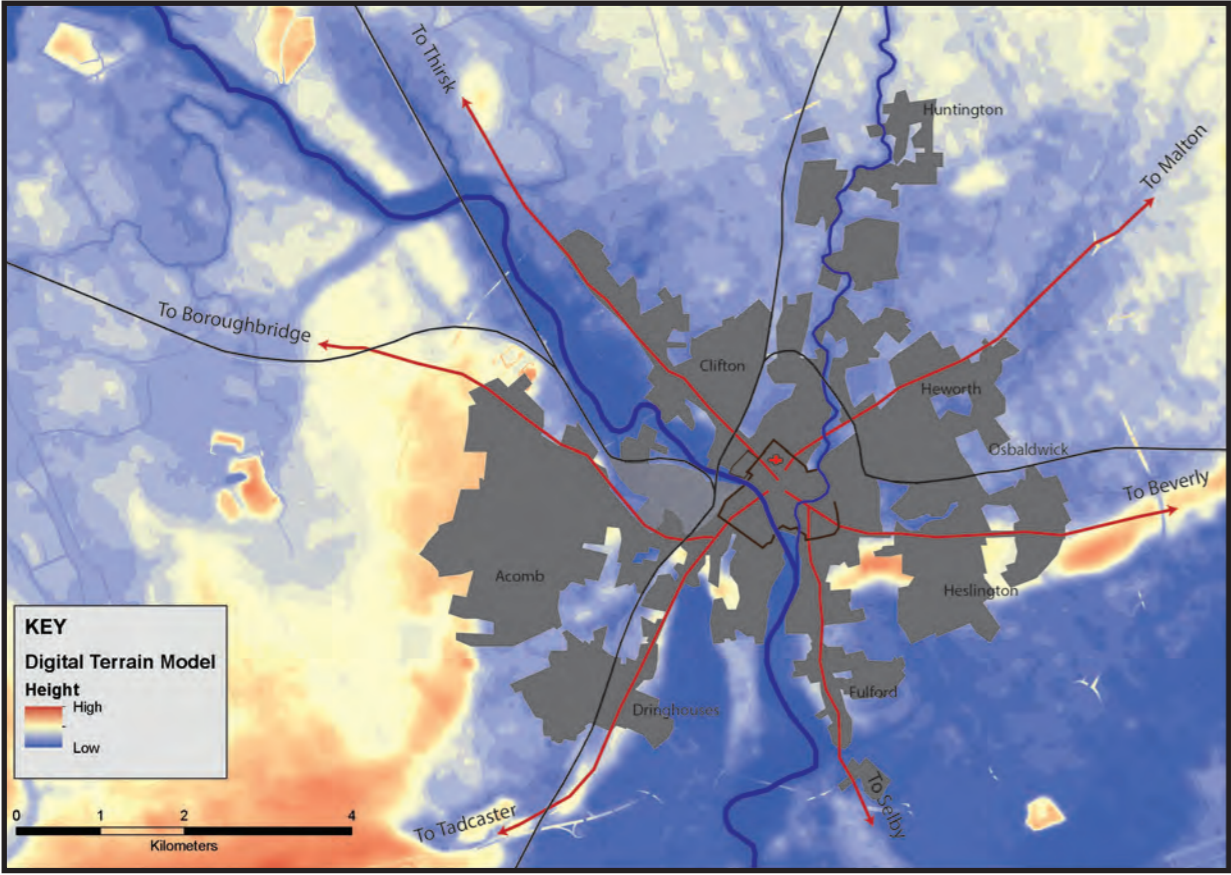
City of York Historic Environment Characterisation Project - 2013, Overview and methodology



Top: post-war (1950s). Bottom 1960s



Top 1970s. Bottom: late 20th century.



2.3 The contemporary city

The contemporary city has two thriving universities: York St John located in the centre; and, the University of York, located in suburban Heslington. Both have undergone substantial investment in the late 20th and early 21st century with the latter almost doubling in size, spatially. Chocolate continues to be manufactured albeit through Nestle rather than Rowntree and Terry's closed in 2005. Heavy industry is very much a thing of the past and surviving industrial structures are fast disappearing. Part of a tool shed and offices (both derelict) are all that currently remains of the Albion Iron and Steel Works. Former carriage works off Blossom Street together with those still in use off Holgate Road represent all that remains of a once thriving and important York industry. A newly built regional signal and railway training centre is however, testament to the enduring importance of York in the national rail network and the station is still one of the largest and busiest outside London.

Former offices of the Albion Iron & Steel Works off Leeman Road



Clifton Moor; the Designer Outlet; and, Monks Cross, all out-of-town shopping centres built in the late 20th centuries have been added to through a recent (2013-14) expansion of Monks Cross. As part mitigation, the city council has invested heavily in reinvigorating the centre with substantial public realm projects at King's Square and Fishergate Bar with others to be concluded by the end of 2015 including Exhibition Square and Fossgate. These represent the most significant spend on the public realm since creation of the footstreets in the late 1980s. The King's Square work has attracted much interest from York's citizens, and there has been lively debate on the impact of the new surfacing on the square's character. Although the materials are new and pre-existing riven sandstone flags have been removed, most people support the changes, particularly as traditional materials have been used throughout. The resulting surface is far more accessible than previously

19th century engine shed that survived until 2012 when it was demolished for health & safety reasons



King's Square re-designed and resurfaced as a shared space in 2014 offering at least twice the space as previously.



Completed in 2013, the Network Rail regional signal and training centre seen beyond the platform canopy and with a surviving late 19th century carriage works.



“York has grown and changed since the mid twentieth century when the city was a very different place to the one we see today. Long recognized for its historic and archaeological significance, York in the 1960’s was a ‘smaller’ place than it is today – certainly in terms of population. York was at that time a city far from the international tourist trail it sits on today; without the university now ranked in the top 100 in the world; without the quality shopping centre we now see; and without the ambition current within the city to become more widely recognized for its culture and its physical attraction – its beauty; for its ability to do good business in a growing economy; to teach and carry out research at the highest level; and to welcome and entertain the visitor in a manner most UK towns and cities fail to achieve. Amongst many great cities around the world from which York can learn, none improve upon the rich mix of history, tradition and culture York has displayed over time, never more so than it displays today, nor in its potential to do yet better tomorrow – economically, culturally, and as a place of beauty.”

Alan Simpson, York New City Beautiful, Towards an Economic Vision 2010



The 19th century Bonding Warehouse, unused since the floods of 2000 and now being retrofitted as offices and upmarket residential. Flood resilience is built in. Some architectural compromises have been made externally and internally but overall this is a good example of York ensuring that its inherited heritage assets are given a new lease of life, economically and culturally.

Section three: Character

3.1 Overview

Forming part of the evidence base for the City of York Council's Draft Local Plan (City of York Council, 2013), the Heritage Topic Paper (City of York Council 2013), defines six principal characteristics that help explain York's unique, distinctive, and special character. The Historic Environment Characterisation Project has set out to look in detail at what these mean at character area, or community and neighbourhood level.

This is particularly important in helping to better understand the distinctiveness of the city outside the walls. Sir Ron Cooke, in his 2006 publication, "Why York is Special" (Cooke, 2006), considered the city outside the walls to be an integral part of York's overall distinctiveness and character which in many ways sets it apart from other similar historic places. Part of this lies in the retention, almost intact, of an architectural and development history from the historic core along all the principal routes and, York's open spaces connecting the historic core to open countryside. Added to this is the distinctive quality of York's suburban communities where the segregation of rich and poor is far less noticeable than in other places¹

The city is extremely walkable and the city walls have been brilliantly described as the longest elevated urban footpath in the country (@Yorkwalls, twitter post March, 2014). From all locations, the wall walker has fantastic views into and outwith the historic core. The walk from Micklegate Bar to Lendal Bridge reveals views of former coach building workshops off Queen's Road; Holgate windmill and Severus hill beyond; the low horizontal form of the platform canopies of the Prosser and Peachey 1877 railway station; and, views of the Minster; the 1841 station, now, York City Council's West Offices; Lendal Bridge; Lendal Tower; Museum Gardens; The River Ouse; the former railway station (West Offices) and much more.

¹ York has very little executive housing and where it exists it is largely dispersed.

The city wall walk can be undertaken in half an hour, briskly. It is also possible to walk from the centre to open countryside in half an hour either along the River Ouse to Clifton Ings, or along New Walk to Fulford Ings.

Unfortunately there is no access to the walls for anyone with mobility issues and this unique experience is currently unavailable to many people. It is to be hoped that this will change in the not too distant future.

"All towns are unique; only a few are special. York is special, not for one reason, but for a multitude. The inner city is world famous; outside the city walls, York is distinctive. The city as a whole is a mirror of British history and architecture. It is a special community whose evolution is exceptionally well recorded. It is a city whose future wealth is likely to be built successfully on these assets. As a special place, York needs special care..."

Ron Cooke, York Civic Trust, Why York is Special, 2006



New Walk from Skeldergate Bridge. Open countryside can be reached from here in around 20 minutes on foot.

Views of the Minster open up from all over the city and this is a particularly good example from the city wall off Nunnery Lane



Again from the city wall off Nunnery Lane, this image highlights the importance of the walls to York's green spaces.

Former coach works and the Railway Institute from the city wall off Queens Road. Non of these structures are formally designated.



3.2 Architectural character and landmark monuments

Character elements include an architectural legacy that spans the 2000 years from the largely Roman Multangular Tower to the few brutalist structures of the late 1950s and early 1960s and into the early 21st century with signature developments at the Heslington East Campus of the University of York.

Although there is a perception that York is a difficult place to develop, in fact, York has some very well designed buildings and groups of buildings from the late 20th and early 21st century. Unfortunately, poor design still receives support and some developments do little to enhance or complement York's character and significance. The successful annual York Design Awards¹, has set out to challenge this and encourage better design.

Design is not only about the form of buildings but the materials, detailing and how they respond to context - space, light, surrounding structures, skyline etc. York has a historically diverse architectural material culture of brick (shades of red and cream), stone (mainly magnesian limestone but also sandstones and granite), and timber. The 20th century has added glass and concrete and later buildings have introduced zinc and steel. Sometimes these materials are brought together, sometimes through retrofitting historic buildings such as the Former Railway Station (now the Council's, West Offices) and sometimes through new buildings such as the Hilton Hotel on Tanner Row

The city contains some relatively untouched examples of the earliest 20th century public housing in Tang Hall with its wide streets and orientations designed to maximise the amount of light into individual parlours: a huge conceptual leap from the airless and lightless 19th century slums of Walmgate and Aldwark. The bricks for these 1920s developments came

¹ Run as a voluntary venture with corporate sponsorship including the City Council who also provide facilitation services.

from local brick yards, opened up especially for the purpose², having closed during the first world war. What perhaps sets York apart from other similar cities is the diverse locations for much of its inter-war and post-war social housing and the mix of private and public in many areas such as Dringhouses, Heworth and Clifton. Coincidentally, York also possesses some of the oldest social housing in the country in form of the timber framed 14th century almshouses on Goodramgate.

Not all 20th century architecture attracts praise and the Park Inn Hotel overlooking the River Ouse is almost universally acclaimed as York's most poorly designed and positioned post-war building (its height and massing alone more than qualifies it). Examples of late 1950s/early 1960s brutalist architecture are rare and relatively subdued although find little favour amongst York's citizens which is a great shame and potentially a real tragedy for York's architectural diversity and character. We are in danger of losing much of the city's post-war architecture. Ryedale House on Piccadilly, may be retrofitted for residential use but the future of Hudson House on Toft Green and the Stonebow are not assured. A former 1960s tax office in Aldwark is also being retrofitted for residential.

² Corporation minutes for 1919



Limestone, brick (cream and red) and slate - at least 500 years of architecture in one view from the 14th century city walls.



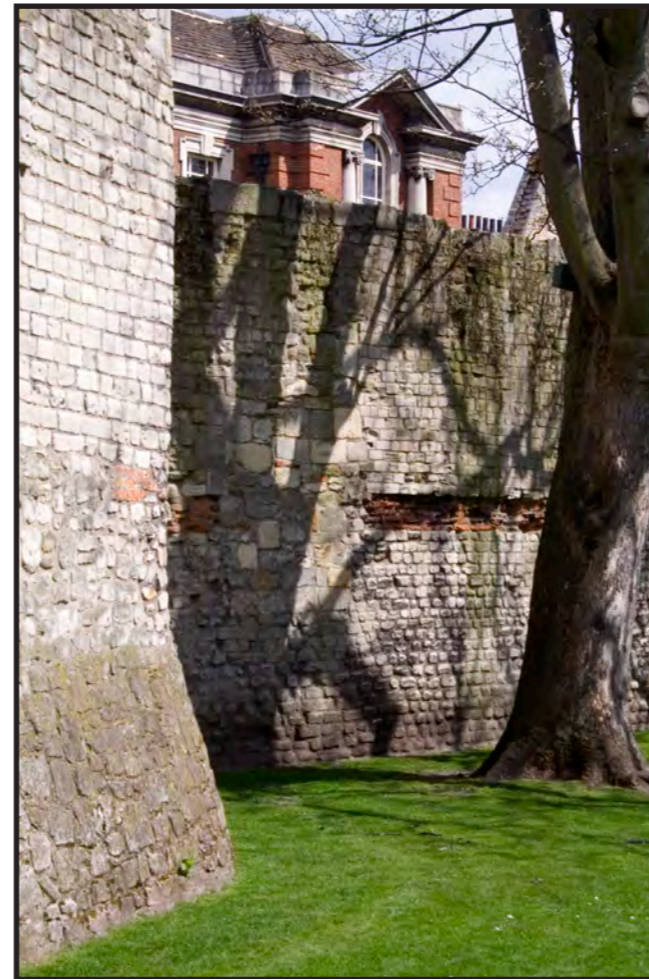
Zinc, timber glass and steel at the new East Heslington Campus at the University of York



The clean geometry and simple pallet of materials used in the the early 1960s brutalist Hudson House



1950s link terrace council housing in the Clifton area of the City.



Roman and medieval masonry with brick and tile repair including the Multangular Tower



14th century Almshouses on Goodramgate.



14th century Barker Tower with magnesium limestone ashlar and English Pennine Sandstone roof tile.



Terraced street in Bishophill, within the city walls.

3.3 Urban form and compactness

The city is very contained within the outer ring road and even in those locations where development has occurred right up to this boundary, subtle tree planting and landscape strips, as at Clifton, continue to give the impression of open countryside.

In many locations the Minster rises above the surrounding cityscape and dominates the skyline within the predominately flat landscape. Within the city this flat landscape is transformed by the underlying fluvio-glacial geology into a series of high points and ridges from which views of the Minster and other points of interest become more local and more immediate.

The view from the grounds of Millthorpe Secondary school and views from Holgate Windmill are examples of this. Before the city spread out to these areas, the views would have been quite spectacular in an otherwise very flat landscape. There are many places within the urban area where the connection with landscape, as opposed to built environment can be appreciated within walking and cycling distance of the centre. This is a key feature of York, it is a very walkable city: Journeys from most suburban districts can be made via the city's green wedges; the strays and rivers. A short walk, 20 minutes or so, will take you from King's Staith to Fulford Ings and open countryside beyond. Stand in the middle of Hob Moor (a 20 minute walk to the city centre) on a summer's day, surrounded by wild flowers and grazing cattle and you can be transported to a different place and a different time.

The historic centre is quite a different place, largely unchanged from its medieval form, contained within the constraints of the city walls to the north east and north west, the River Ouse to the south west and the River Foss to the south east. Here, there are overlays of historic routes, many with their origins in the Anglo-Scandinavian

period: narrow, well enclosed streets, sinuous lanes, ginnels and alleys threading through blocks of buildings and yards that still respect property boundaries dating back at least to the late medieval period. Glimpses from streets into more private enclaves add richness, diversity, contrast and surprise. Glimpsed, revealed views of the Minster are always present and its dominance affirmed.



This is one of the most dramatic ground based views of the Minster and the traditional roofscape of York. This is taken from the front entrance to Millthorpe Secondary School, a former private residence within landscaped grounds. The towers of Bishophill Junior church and St Georges Catholic Church can also be seen to the left of the Minster. The view is marred only by the bulk of the 1950s telecom building rising up from Hungate.

In this graphic, the relationship between the built environment and open space is made clearer through reversing the normal colour contrast of black for buildings. The denseness of the historic core contrasts with the more open suburbs and the compactness of the overall city can be readily appreciated in its landscape setting.



3.4 Archaeological complexity

The historic environment of the City of York is internationally, nationally, regionally and locally significant. This has been recognised in a number of ways from Lord Esher's 1968 report, "A study in Conservation"¹ to the designation of large swathes of the city as an Area of Archaeological Importance² and having the largest concentration of listed grade I & II* buildings in the country. The Historic Core Conservation Area covers 205 hectares of which 19.6 hectares are designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Significant parts of the historic core contain deeply stratified and waterlogged (anaerobic) archaeological deposits associated with the Roman, Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian periods in particular. The history and development of the post-Norman conquest city to the present is supported by a rich and complex archive unparalleled outside London.

The contemporary city therefore comprises an almost 2000 year inherited urban landscape overlying a complex glacial and post-glacial geological landscape scoured by ice and water. The River Ouse and River Foss being the largest inherited water courses.

¹ York was the first of three similar studies: the others being: Bath; Chichester; and, Chester.

² Designated under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Canterbury; Chester; Hereford; and, Exeter are the others.



Above: excavation of well preserved wicker lined cess-pit of the Anglo-Scandinavian period at Hungate and; below: investigation of a tipper flush communal toilet block at the same site. Organic preservation was variable on this site. Photographs courtesy of John Oxley, City Archaeologist





Above: foundations of All Saint's Church, Fishergate prior to redevelopment of the Barbican site, and; below: late Iron Age archaeology at the East Heslington Campus in the form of ring gullies marking the sites of former circular houses. Photographs courtesy of John Oxley, City Archaeologist



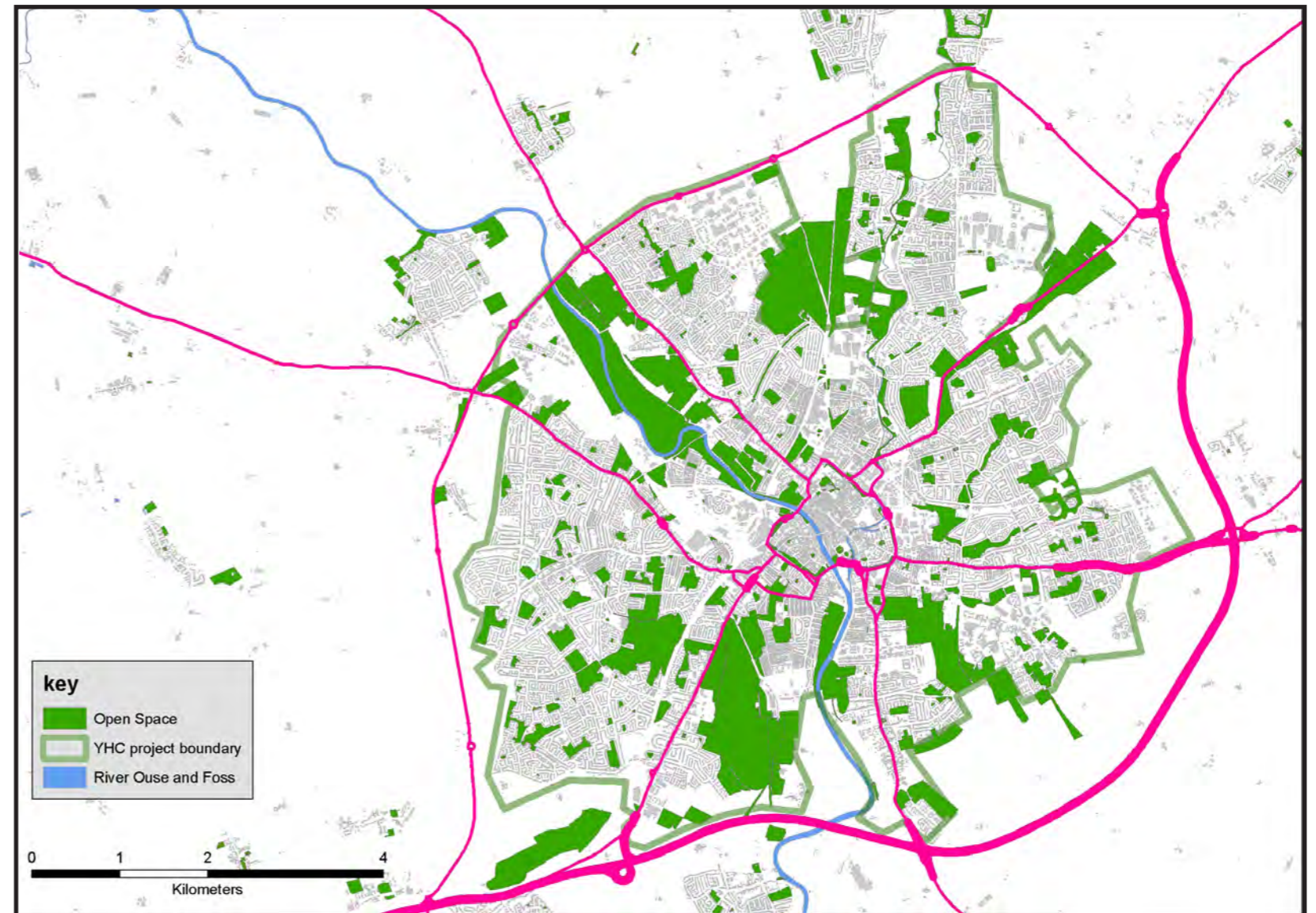
Two 19th century railway wheelhouses represented by well preserved foundations, including all the inspection pits, some of which are visible as excavated features. These have been preserved beneath the foundations of Network Rail's early 21st century operations and training centre. Photograph courtesy of John Oxley, City Archaeologist

3.5 Landscape and setting

The landscape within which the city of York sits, is as much part of its defining character as the concentration of historic built assets in its centre. More than any other English city, the landscape itself connects right up to the centre and forms part of the historic core itself in the form of the city wall embankments.

“The landscape provides the city and its outlying villages with a rural setting and a direct access to the countryside, and thus has a value/status that reaches beyond the relative quality of the aesthetic landscape... Its relevance lies in the conglomeration of layers and relics of old landscapes, in part conserved through time by continuous administration, absence of development, and centuries of traditional management. It is the combination of the various elements such as the Ings and strays that provides York’s unique make up.”

Heritage Topic Paper 2013



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The open space illustrated here is all publically accessible and includes the historic strays, parks and ings. There are many different routes from the centre that will provide access to open countryside beyond the outer ring road



Terry's clock tower and, just visible in the far distance, the central tower of the Minster taken from National Cycle Route 65 on the approach to Bishopthorpe from the north.



A view of Walmgate Stray looking south east across the main National Cycle Route 66 through to the University of York and beyond.



The Minster viewed from Hob Moor in full summer display. From here into the centre of York is about a casual 25 minute walk or a 10 minute cycle ride.

Section four: Methodology

4.1 Overview

The City of York Historic Environment Characterisation Project (YHECP) is the latest in English Heritage's long running characterisation programme (<http://www.helm.org.uk/guidance-library/using-historic-landscape-characterisation/>).

The methods used reflect three things: available resource; required outputs; and, best practice. Best practice in historic characterisation has been developed over many years and indeed, the programme itself has long recognised that it is, and should be an iterative process, each project adding something new to the mix.

The required outputs were to be a suite of documents (character statements) based on interactive map data (the project Geographical Information System) that would be used to support the development of planning policy (the Local Plan); development management (the determination of planning applications) and better revealing the significance of the historic environment generally.

Attempting to characterise the City of York was always going to be challenging and the project parameters changed as the project developed. Suburban areas were given a higher priority than the project design allowed better reflecting both the needs of the emerging local plan (housing growth agenda in particular) and to better reflect the priorities identified in the National Heritage Protection Plan (4A1, Historic Towns and Suburbs, <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/nhpp-plan-framework/nhpp-plan-framework.pdf>). The original Project Design involved intensive examination and mapping of sub-surface archaeology within the historic core (based on the existing 24 conservation area character sub-divisions) and a lighter touch in the suburban areas (a total of 12 character areas).

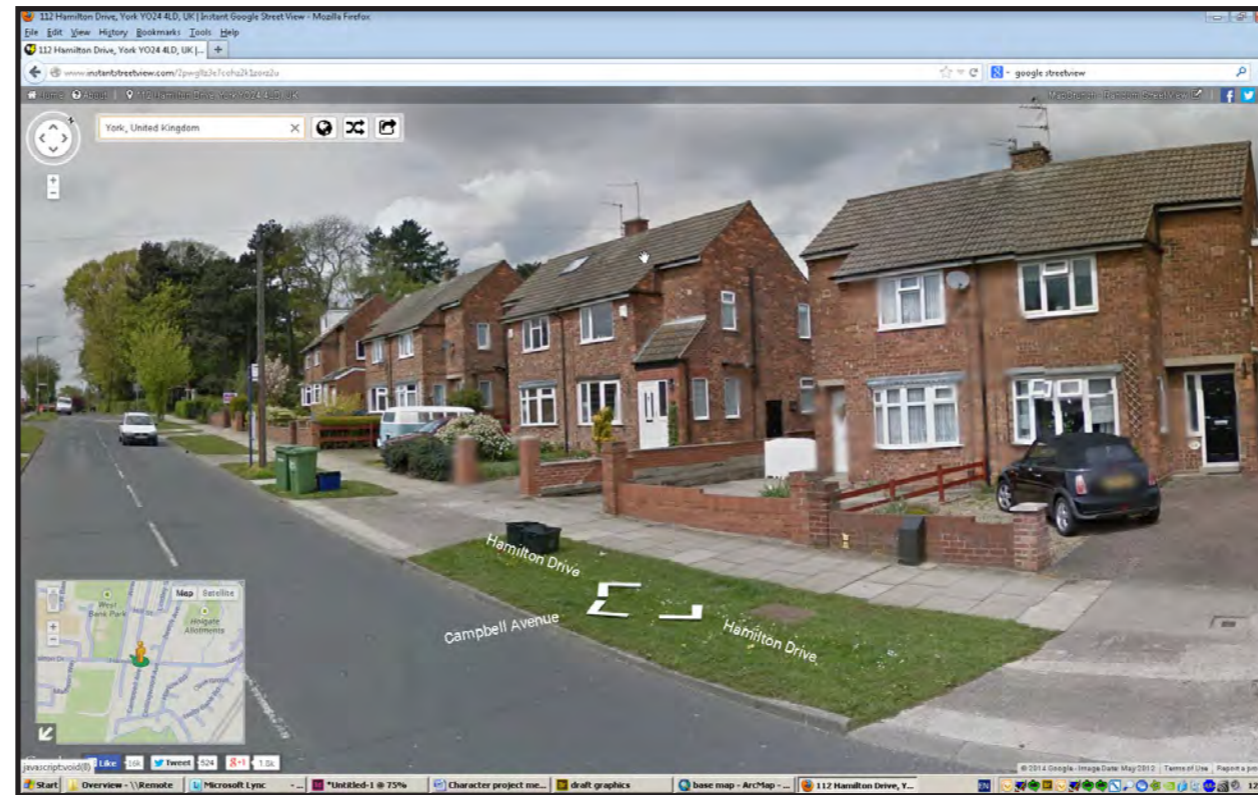
Once detailed character work commenced it became clear that this needed to change and a total of 52 character areas were eventually agreed on for the suburban part of York and sub-surface mapping will be picked up as part of a separate project.

4.2 Scope of the evidence

Historic Core. Google StreetView (re-survey 2011 - 2012 in York) provided an invaluable resource for assessing detailed contemporary character and was used to develop basic data sets including building heights for the historic core. This was supplemented by field visits. Historic and archaeological information came principally from the City of York Historic Environment Record supplemented by some local history publications and archaeological syntheses including the 1960s Royal Commission on Historic Monuments of England volumes for York (RCHME 1968). The 1852 6" Ordnance Survey map of York proved an invaluable resource.

Suburbs. Google StreetView was again used to great effect. This data was supplemented by field visits to all areas of the city to check detail, gain understanding of general ambience and key local views, as well as capturing a photographic record. A basic historic map and aerial photograph regression was also undertaken as follows:

- 1852 1" OS
- 1852 6" OS
- 1891 1" OS
- 1902 1" OS
- 1935 1" OS
- 1952 1" OS
- 1936 aerial photographs
- 1951 aerial photographs
- 1962 aerial photographs
- 1971 aerial photographs
- 2002 aerial photographs
- 2007 aerial photographs



Screen-shot of Google Street View in action.

© Google 2014



A detail of the 1852 6" Ordnance Survey Map of York

4.3 Outputs

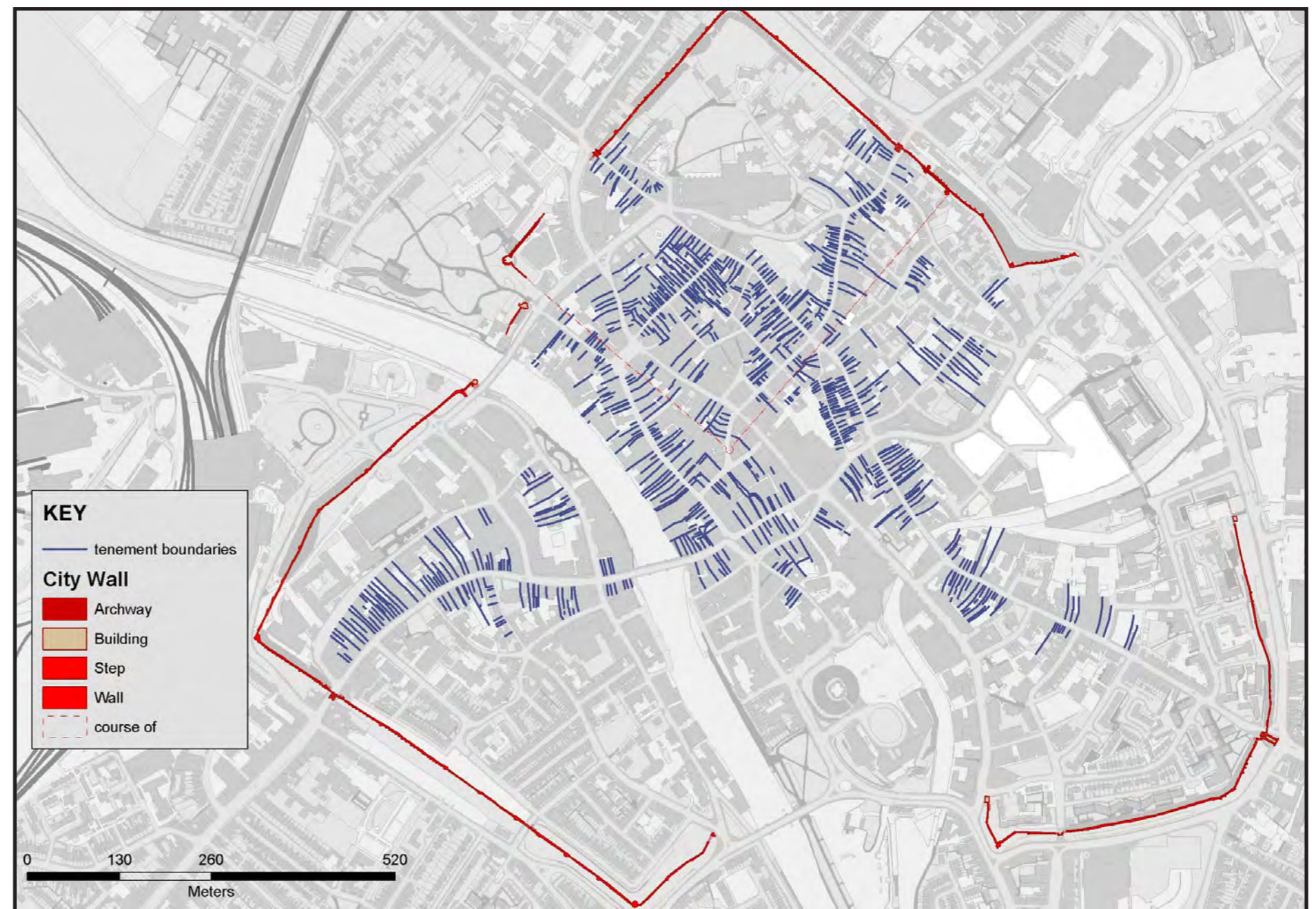
The principal outputs for all areas are character statements. Area A statements are in a different form from the majority Area B statements. They have been designed to complement the existing Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal through examining archaeology (not covered in the appraisal) and streetscape components (covered briefly) rather than reiterating the character of the built environment. The statements for area B deal in more detail with character of place and include a section on recommendations.

Mapping was undertaken using Esri Arcview GIS software. Each dataset was created as a shape file with associated layer file. Polygon colours were generated from within the software and fixed within each layer file. Each shape file contains metadata recording project specific information including creation date and purpose.

4.4 Area A, the historic core

Four main GIS layers have been created: broad type characterisation; building heights; building history; and, burgage plots. The burgage plot layer comprises medieval tenement plot boundary survival into the 21st century urban plan, based on an assessment of urban grain detailed on the 1852 6" Ordnance Survey map projected to the 2012 Ordnance Survey Mastermap and manually adjusted. This assessment was correlated against surviving medieval buildings and detailed archaeological research undertaken in the Shambles and Stonegate area (City of York Historic Environment Record -CYC HER). The resulting layer provides a good snapshot of surviving boundaries from at least the late medieval period.

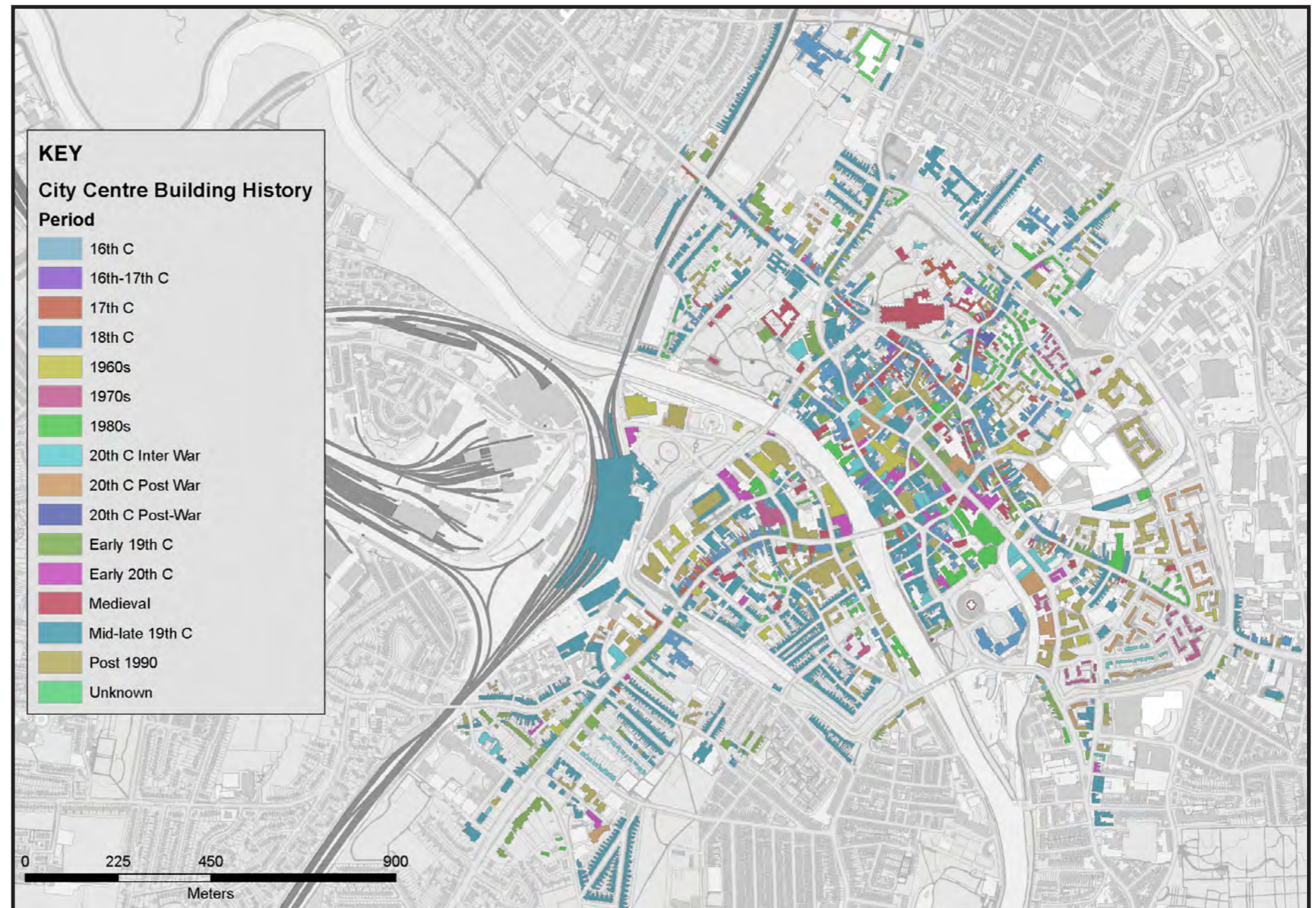
Graphic showing medieval tenement boundaries that survive to the present (extrapolated from the 6" 1854 Ordnance Survey Map). The city wall is also shown.



Building history is based on a combination of data in the Royal Commission of Historic Monuments for England volumes and listed building data as well as field visits, Google Street View and historic map analysis. Date categories are:

- Medieval (pre 1540);
- C16th to C17th;
- C16th, C17th, C18th, etc.;
- Early C19th (1800 to c.1837);
- Mid to late C19th (Victorian);
- Early C20th (1901 to 1917);
- C20th inter-war (1918 to 1945);
- C20th post-war (1946 to 1959);
- 1960s, 1970s, 1980s.

City centre building history overview



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Building heights were recorded using Google Street View and field visits. Height is referenced as building stories, adjusted to residential, commercial and industrial categories with further adjustment made 'by eye'. The height of the Minster for instance has been adjusted to 8 stories. Ceiling heights of typical three story 18th and 19th century town houses are generally higher than mid to late 20th century ceiling heights. Two story housing has been particularly difficult to assess at times, for instance the difference between a 2-story 1980s house and a Victorian house can be severe. Retail warehouses and other large volume structures are difficult to assess. The results however, give a good visual assessment of current building heights and when used in conjunction with the topographical model will be a valuable resource for view-shed analysis and impact assessments.

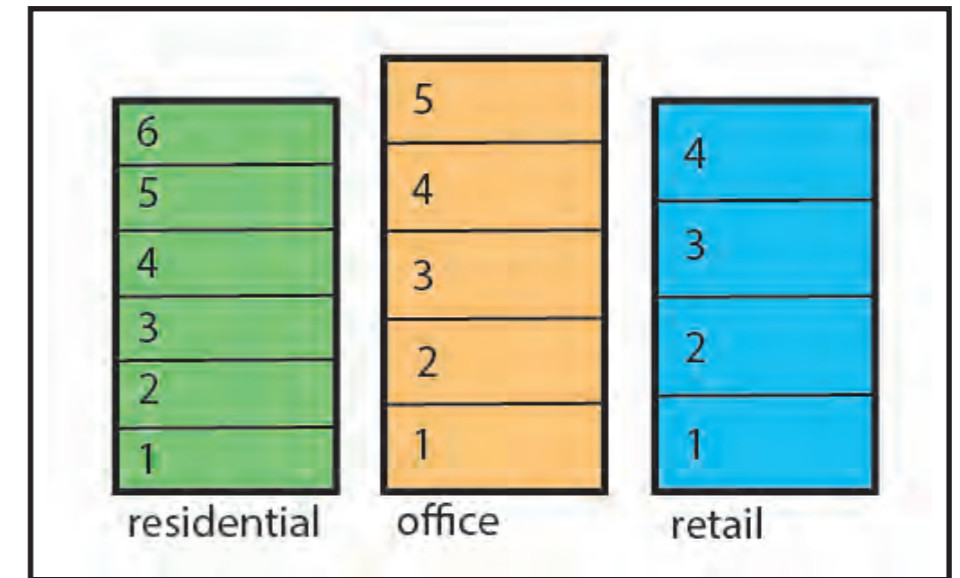
The character statements (24 in all) have referenced the CYC HER and as many relevant grey literature reports as possible in the allocated time. Use was made of some local studies and some overview texts but by no means all. Two general texts were consulted: The History of York edited by Patrick Nuttgens (Nuttgens, 2008); and Patrick Ottaway's excellent synthesis of Roman archaeology in York (Ottaway, 2011). The RCHME volumes (RCHME, 1968) were also consulted and occasional York Archaeological Trust (YAT) monographs. YAT monographs were not routinely consulted due to project resource pressures and other archaeological reports (grey literature) were only consulted if they were accessible from the CYC HER.

Each statement includes: archaeological background; visible character; sub-surface character; and, significance.

Archaeological background is separated into: prehistoric (where relevant); Roman; Anglian /Anglo-Scandinavian; medieval; and, post-medieval to early-modern. The fine distinctions say between 1st century Roman and 3rd century Roman or the 11th/12th century overlap are not covered in any detail.

Each statement includes the following illustrations:

- figure ground map
- building heights
- building history (construction dates)
- designated heritage assets
- broad character types
- the prehistoric landscape (where relevant)
- the Roman landscape
- the Anglo-Scandinavian (including Anglian) landscape
- the medieval landscape (including burgrave plots where relevant)
- the post-medieval landscape
- the 1852 landscape (1852 6" map)
- location of archaeological interventions
- topography
- listed buildings



Building height (by story) adjustment graphic

Building heights in the city centre



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4.5 Area B, the suburbs

Characterisation comprised several stages of assessment:

Mapping historic grain

Mid-19th century historic grain was mapped using a raster copy of the 1" to a mile 1852 Ordnance Survey map adjusted to 2011 Ordnance Survey digital mapping (Mastermap). 1852 boundaries that survived to the early 21st century urban landscape were separately mapped (YHC_field boundaries 1852). In some instances pre-1852 boundaries have also been recorded with reference to earlier maps but this element has not been consistent through the city.

Assessment of character

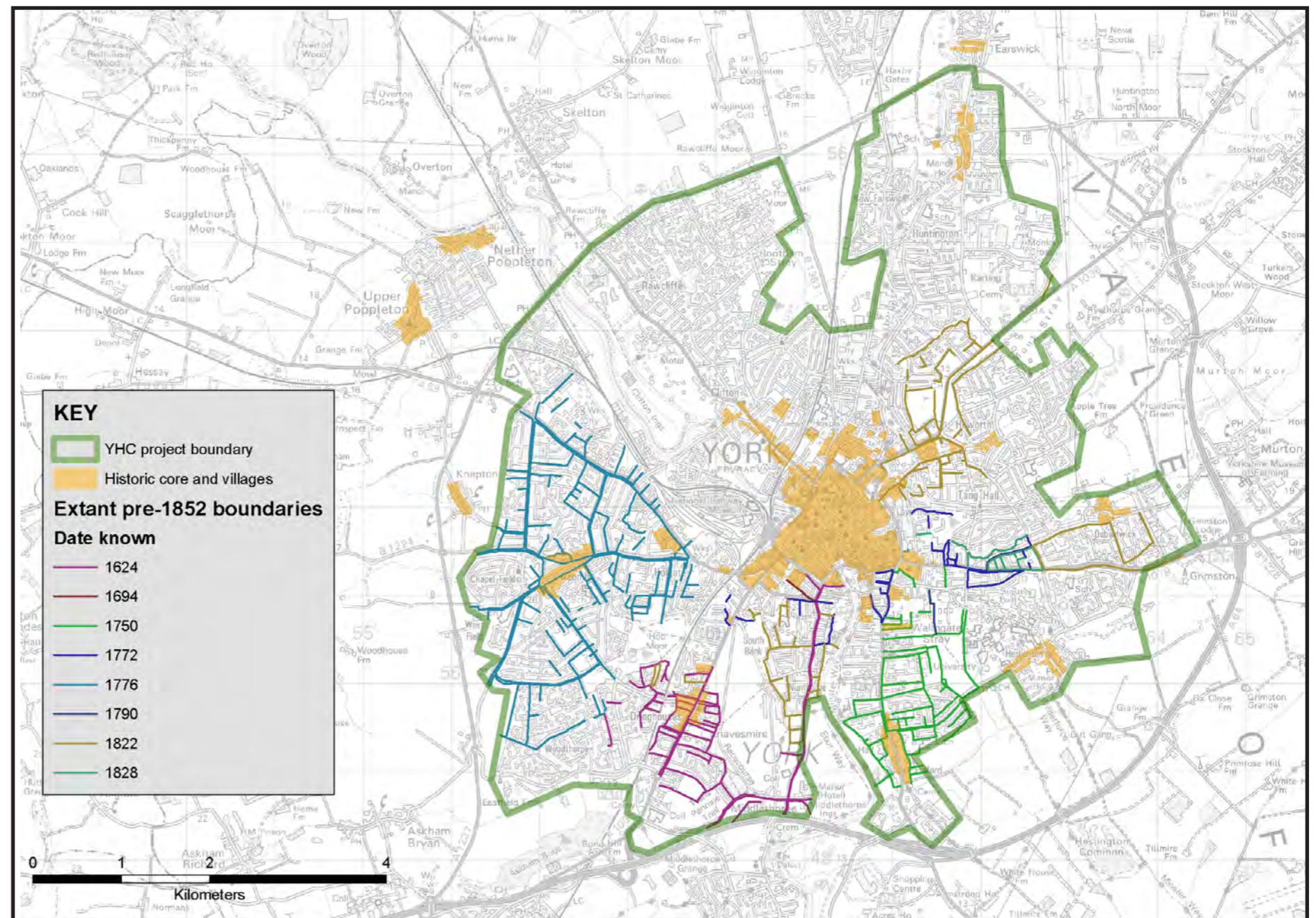
Character assessment has been undertaken in three stages:

Stage one: detailed character types (YHC_character_units) - at street level and house type based on 161 attributes and resulting in 2753 individual character polygons.

Stage two: amalgamation into broad types (YHC_Broad_type) comprising larger groupings of streets into areas based on similarities of housing styles and ages based on 22 attributes and resulting in 611 individual character polygons.

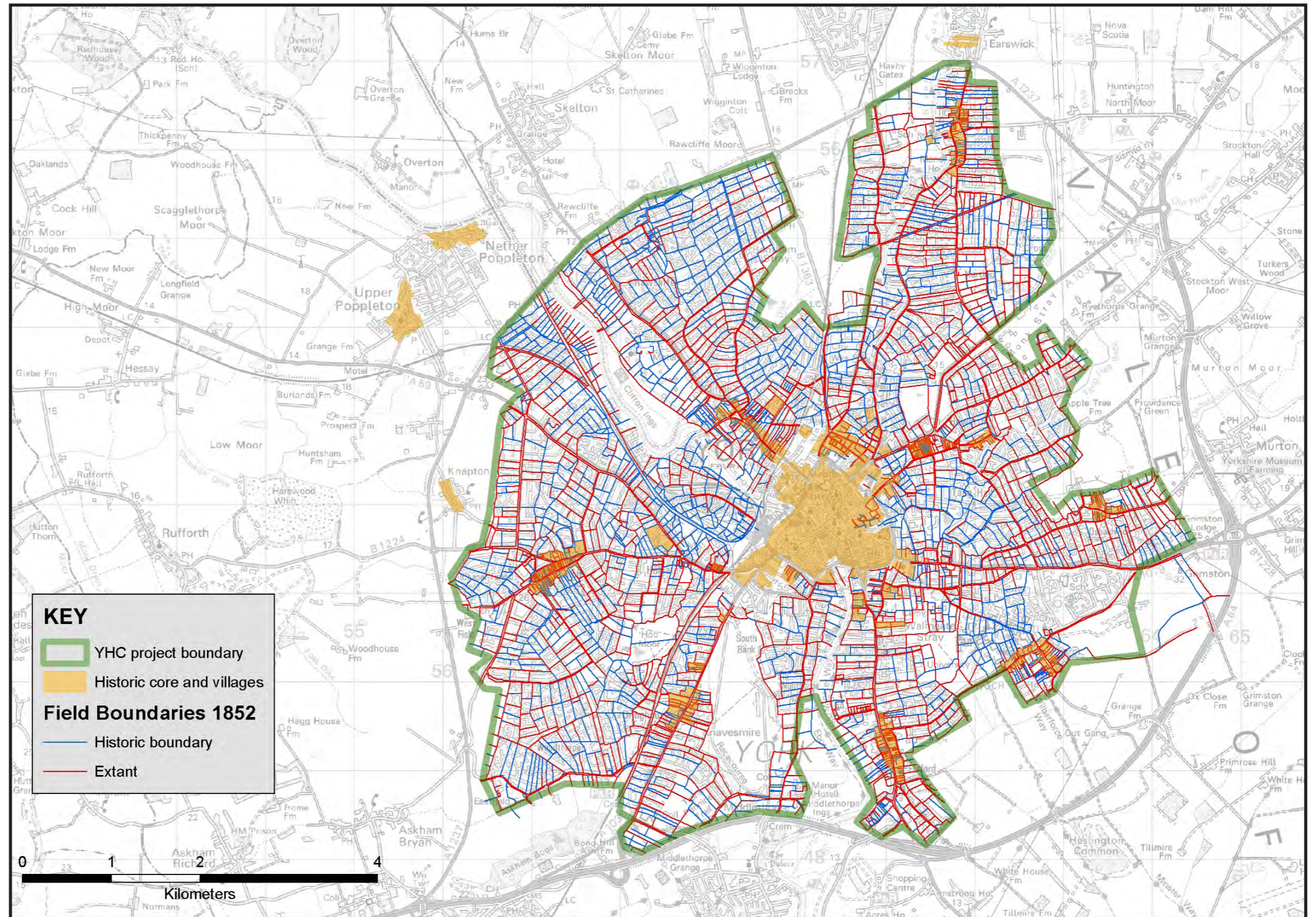
Stage three: merging broad types in character areas (YHC_character_areas) suitable for the production of narrative and graphic character statements. These have generally been determined by the dominant character as defined by broad types (stage two). In the majority of cases this has been relatively straight forward but there are examples where the character is very mixed. This is explained in the narrative portion of the character statements. A total of 52 character areas have been defined.

Pre-1852 boundaries identified mainly from enclosure award and tithe maps



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1852 Field boundaries identified from the 1852 Ordnance Survey map with surviving boundaries shown in red.



4.6 Analysis

Character

The time slices shown on pages 17 to 19 explain in broad terms the development of the built environment through time. What characterisation can show more clearly is the degree of survival of each major expansion of the city through 19th and 20th century slum clearance and various stages of redevelopment. Characterisation records what exists or survives. It does not record the original extent of development. The following graphics derived from the project's digital data illustrates this process well. Each of the graphics is cumulative. The final 1970s graphic includes all the other surviving phases.

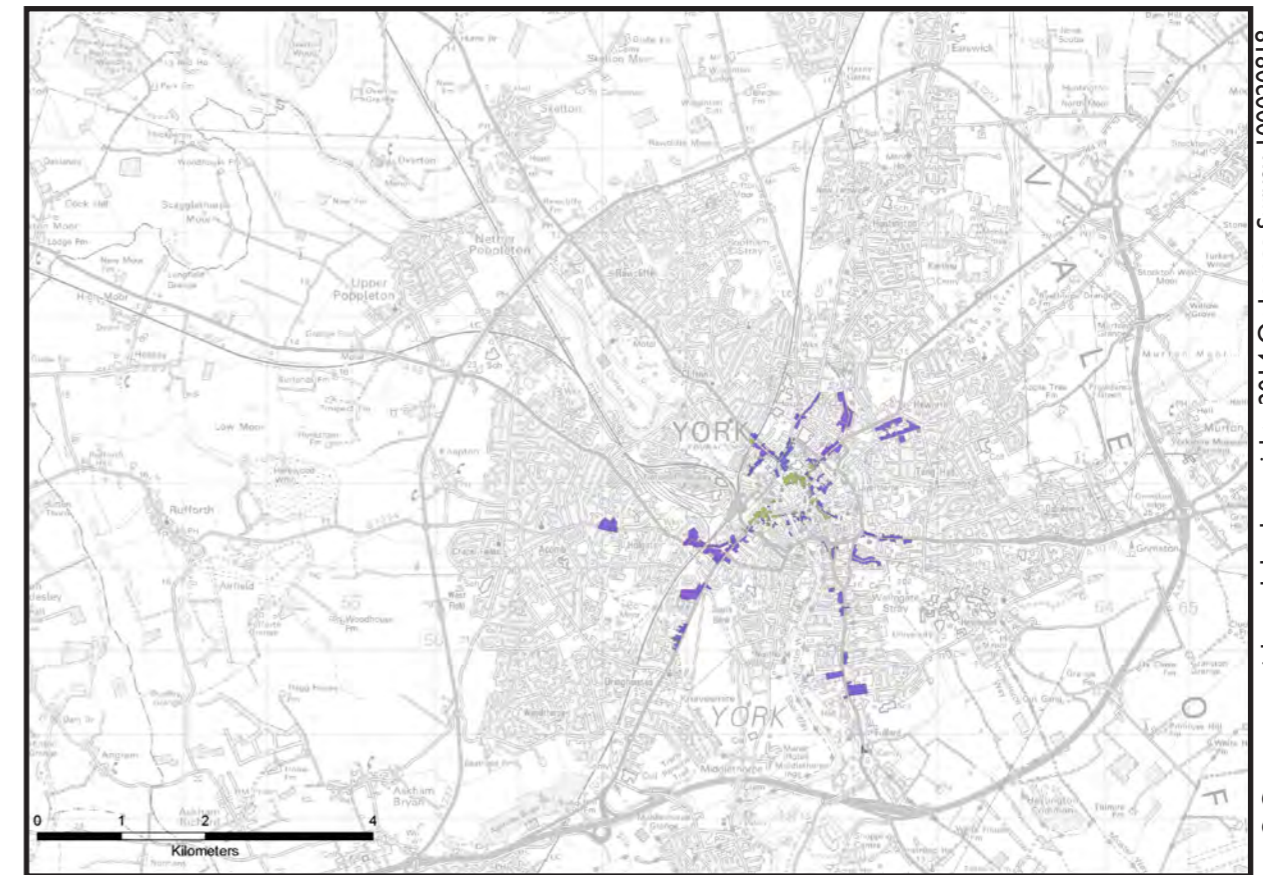
What this exercise does is demonstrate that the character of the suburbs is varied but essentially dominated by inter- and post-war housing. Although, as Professor Simpson noted in his *New City Beautiful* report, the City in the 1960s had a smaller population than today, its physical growth has not been extensive.

The city is still contained within the circuit of the outer ring road and separated from it in several locations by areas of open farmland. The rural villages retain their separate identity and urban sprawl has not consumed them. The exception perhaps, is Haxby which grew from a small rural village to dormitory settlement in the late 1960s and 1970s and is only just separated from York itself. That said, car drivers on the A1237 and the A64 are still able to appreciate the way the city is contained within a landscape of farmland and ings.

This of course means that present and future growth needs to be managed with great care if this unique quality is not to be lost.

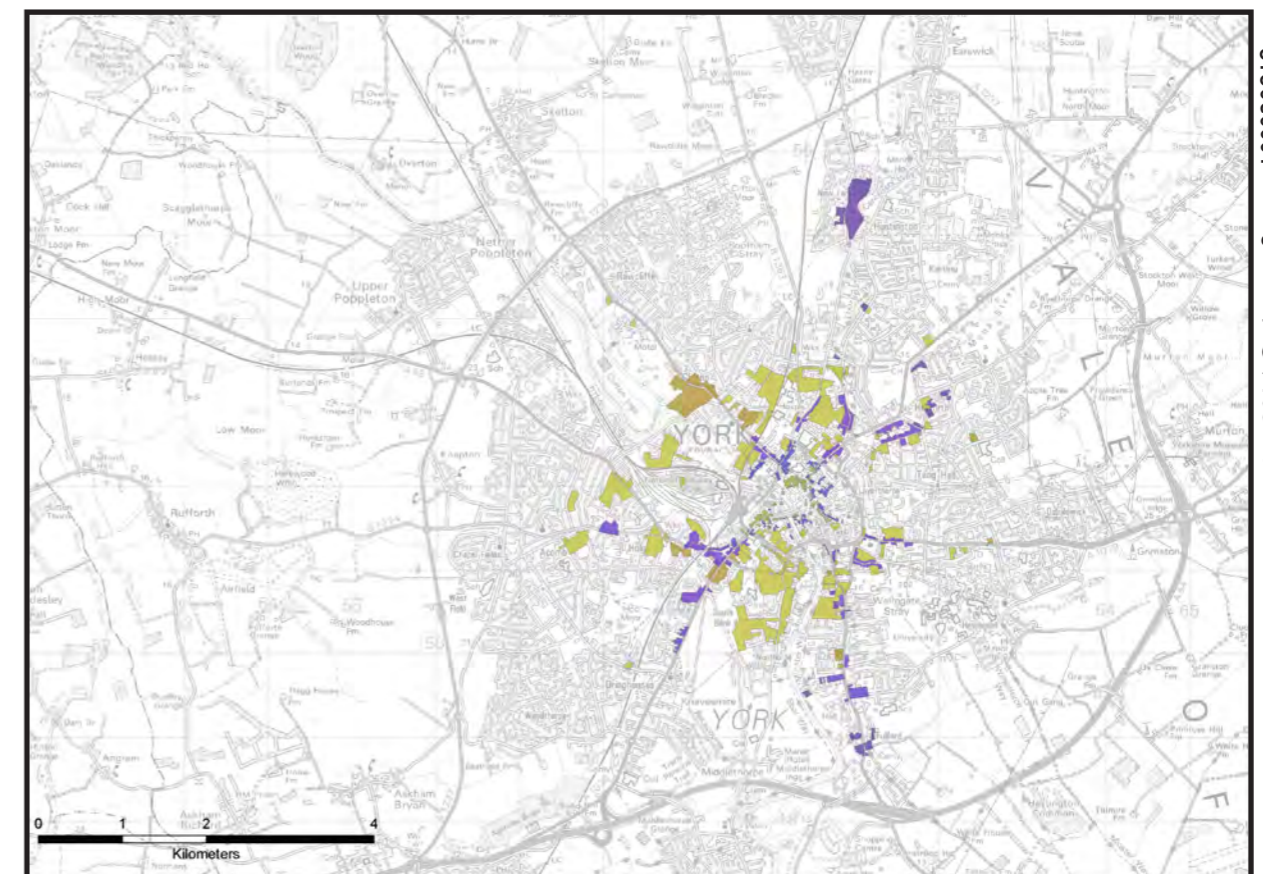
The University of York's East Heslington site is clearly visible from the A64 and has brought the built environment of

York into an area previously open countryside, introducing lakes and other landscaped features as well as structures. Although the individual buildings make a positive contribution to York's architectural heritage, time will tell if the landscaping is successful.

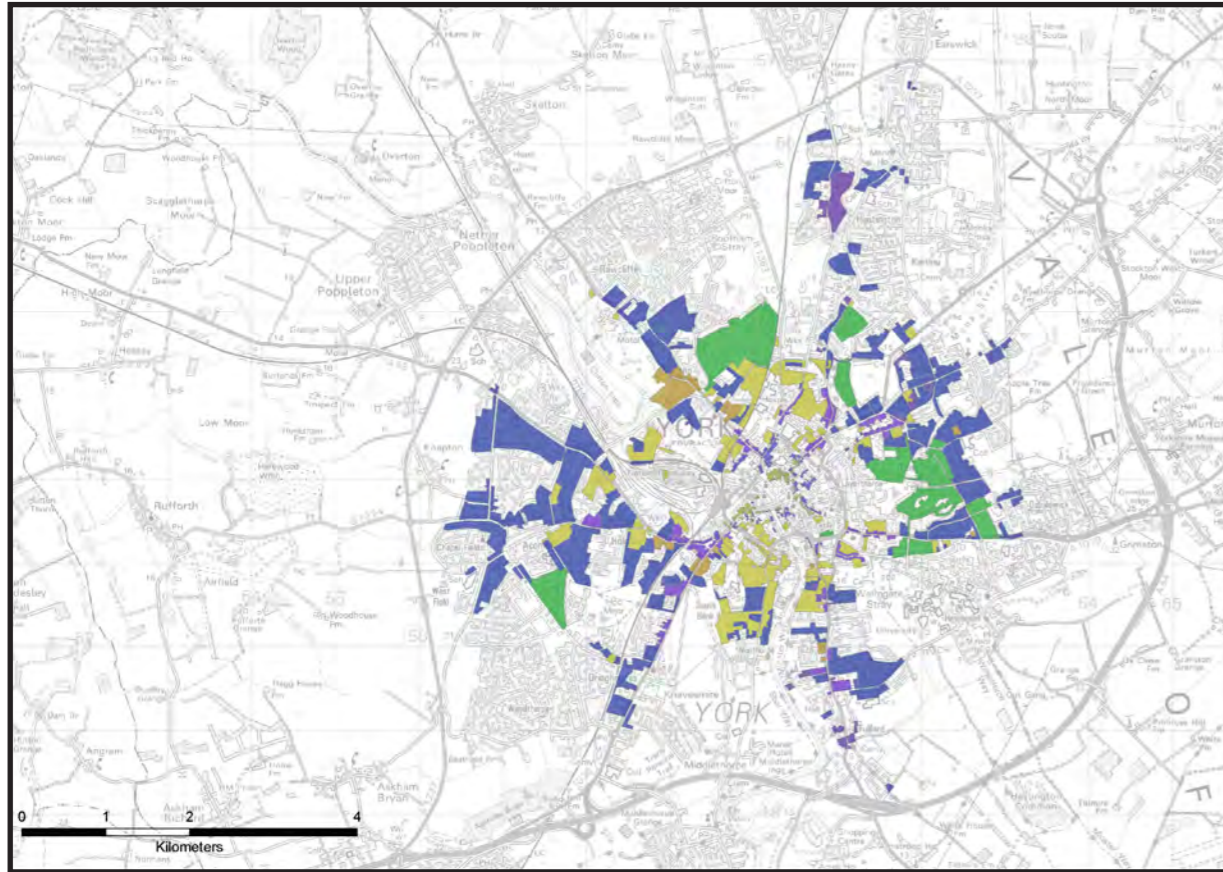


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Above: surviving suburban growth from the 18th to 19th century, Below: surviving suburban growth from the 19th to early 20th century,

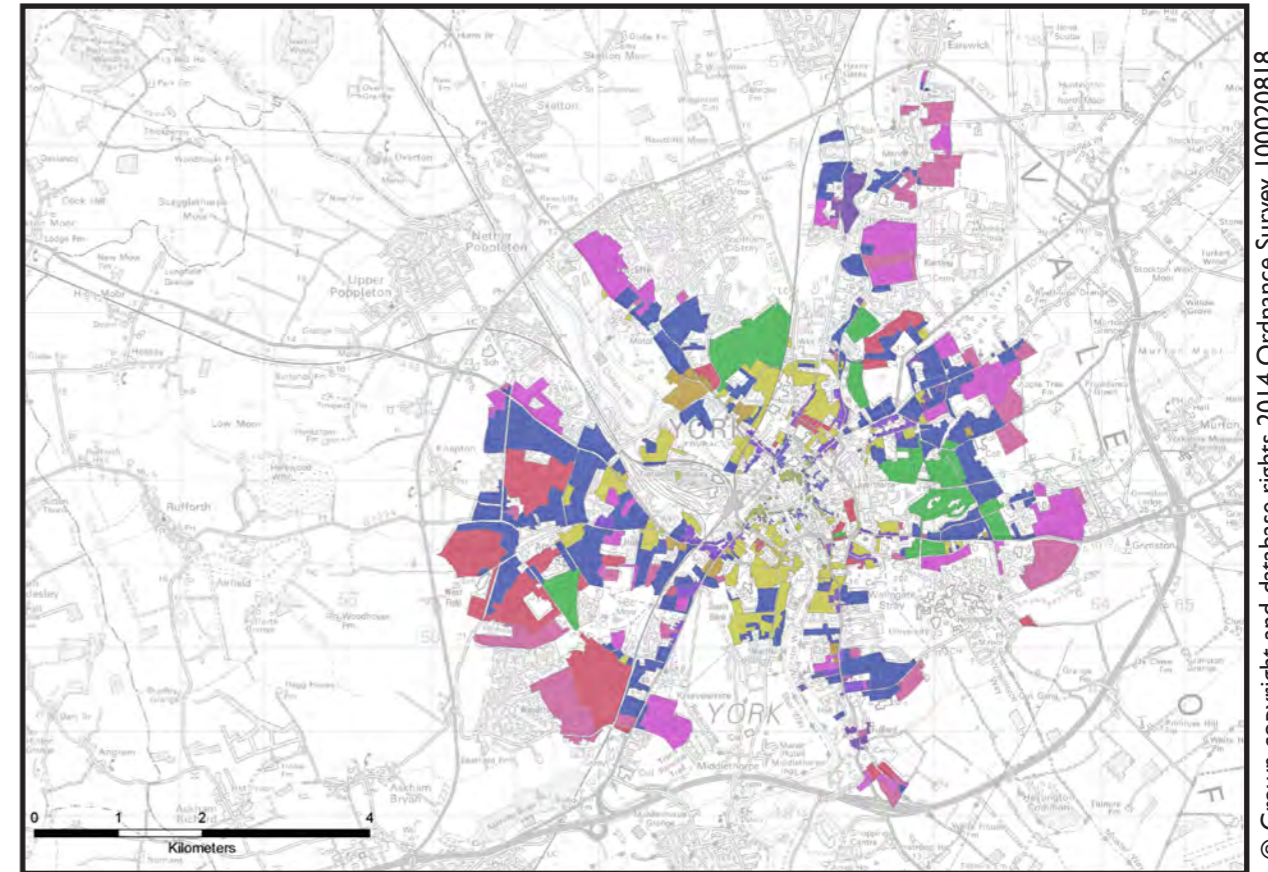


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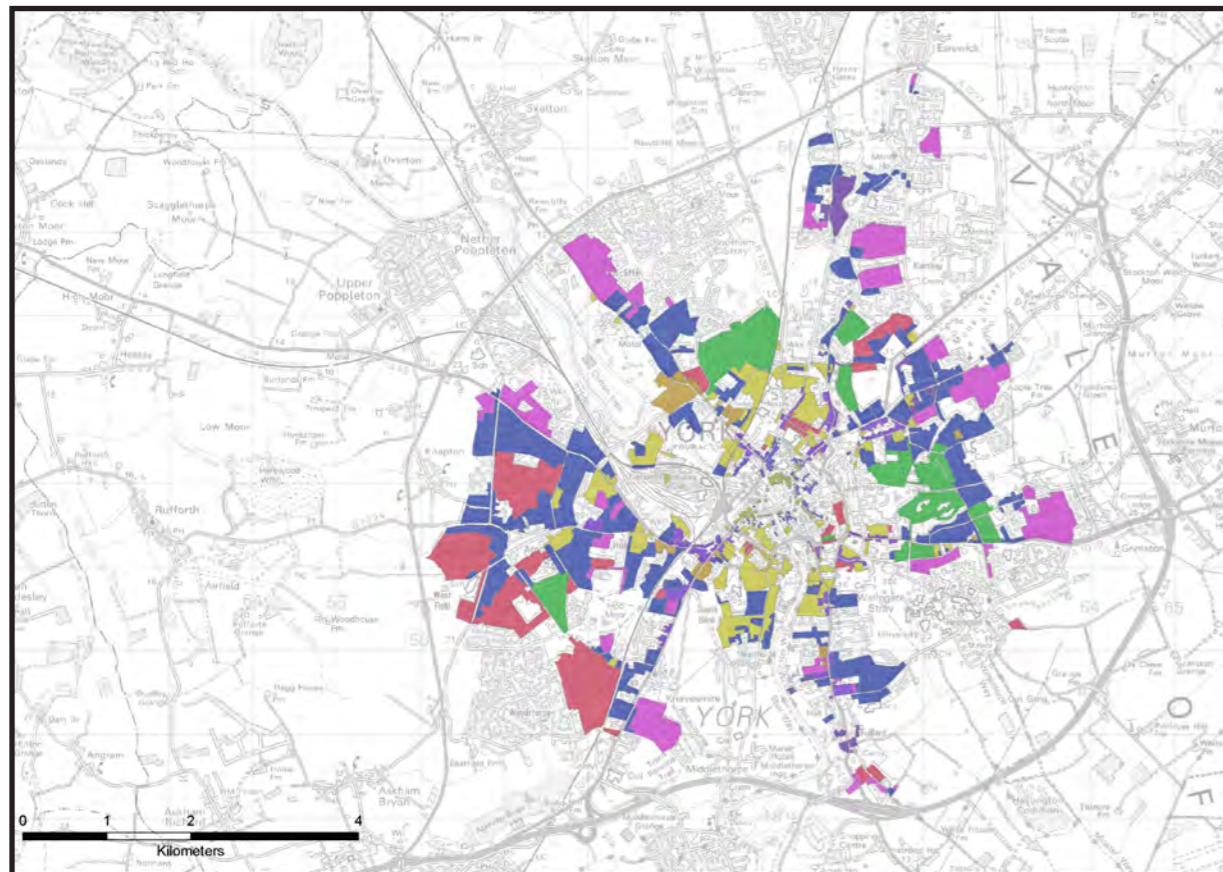
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Above: surviving suburban growth from the 20th century inter-war years. Below: surviving suburban growth from the post war 1950s.

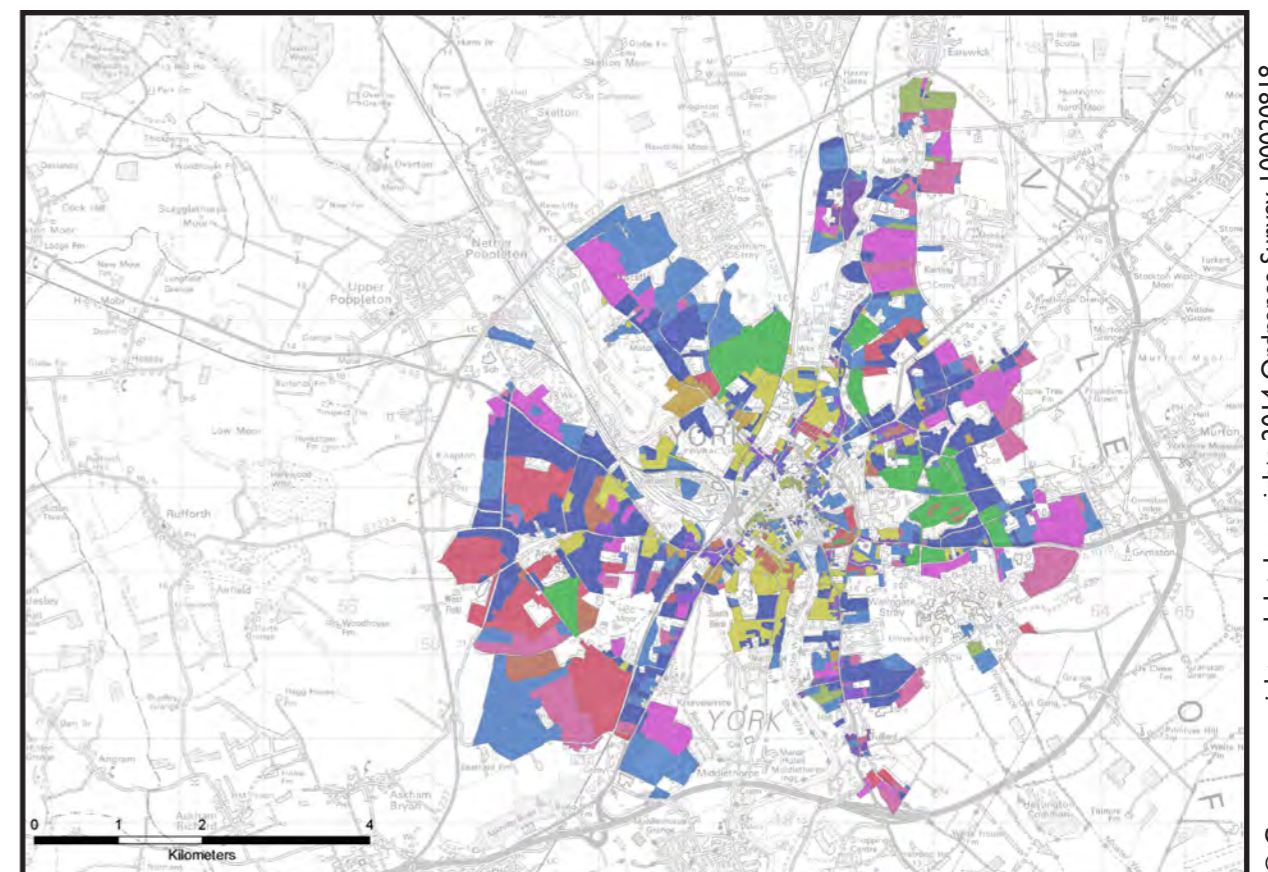


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Above: surviving suburban growth from the 1960s. Below: surviving suburban growth from the post war 1970s.



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Views and setting

The Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal contains a key views analysis which has identified three levels of important views: long distance views, city wide views; and, local views¹. These are by no means the only significant and important views. Many views in York are what the report refers to as dynamic, either as panoramas from a fixed focal point such as Clifford's Tower, or views that open out along a route such as Tadcaster Road or Wiggington Road.

Often cited in terms of views of the Minster, York's views are extremely varied and can be quite complex with open sky playing a very prominent role. Anyone walking across the strays will fully appreciate this point. The Minster itself is always the most dominant feature on the skyline. The importance of this skyline was identified by Lord Esher in 1968 and since at least that time, the city has been reluctant to approve tall buildings that would compete with the Minster. That is not to say relatively tall buildings do not exist. The broad brush research on building heights within the centre (see the graphic on page 37) has identified a number of buildings of 6 to 8 stories in height. When these are overlain on topography, one can see why these work. None challenge the dominance of the Minster.

There are clearly some areas that may be suitable for tall buildings such as on some parts of the York Central site where the land is relatively low lying.

Historic grain

One of the biggest surprises during the project was the extent of survival of historic boundaries, roads and tracks in the suburban areas. Many former field boundaries, some of which reflect earlier features associated with medieval open fields and strips, survive as fence lines to the rear of properties. Some, survive as hedges and other boundaries. In some of the former rural villages, medieval toft and croft boundaries survive well, although not always with buildings intact.

¹ Alan Baxter Associates 2012

In part, this survival is clearly the result of how land was acquired for development and the size of individual developments since the late 19th century. Development appears to have been relatively small scale, field by field. The individual character statements record this in detail.

Linear development

As Sir Ron Cooke noted in his publication, "Why York is Special", one of the unique characteristics of the suburbs is the excellent survival of period development along the major routes into the city. Bootham and Tadcaster Road are two of the finest examples. Medieval burghage plots, sometimes amalgamated, cluster in front of Micklegate Bar giving way to fine 18th and 19th century town houses on Blossom Street and The Mount. Victorian villas, inter-war and post-war semis dominate the rest of Tadcaster Road, interspersed with earlier village properties associated with Dringhouses. The scale is human and suburban overall. The Holiday Inn, a late 1960s structure, set well back from the road and surrounded by mature planting does not detract. More recent, early 21st century housing development on the former site of York College has a quite different impact in terms of height, massing and design and illustrates well how character can be severely eroded through poor decision making by planners and developers.



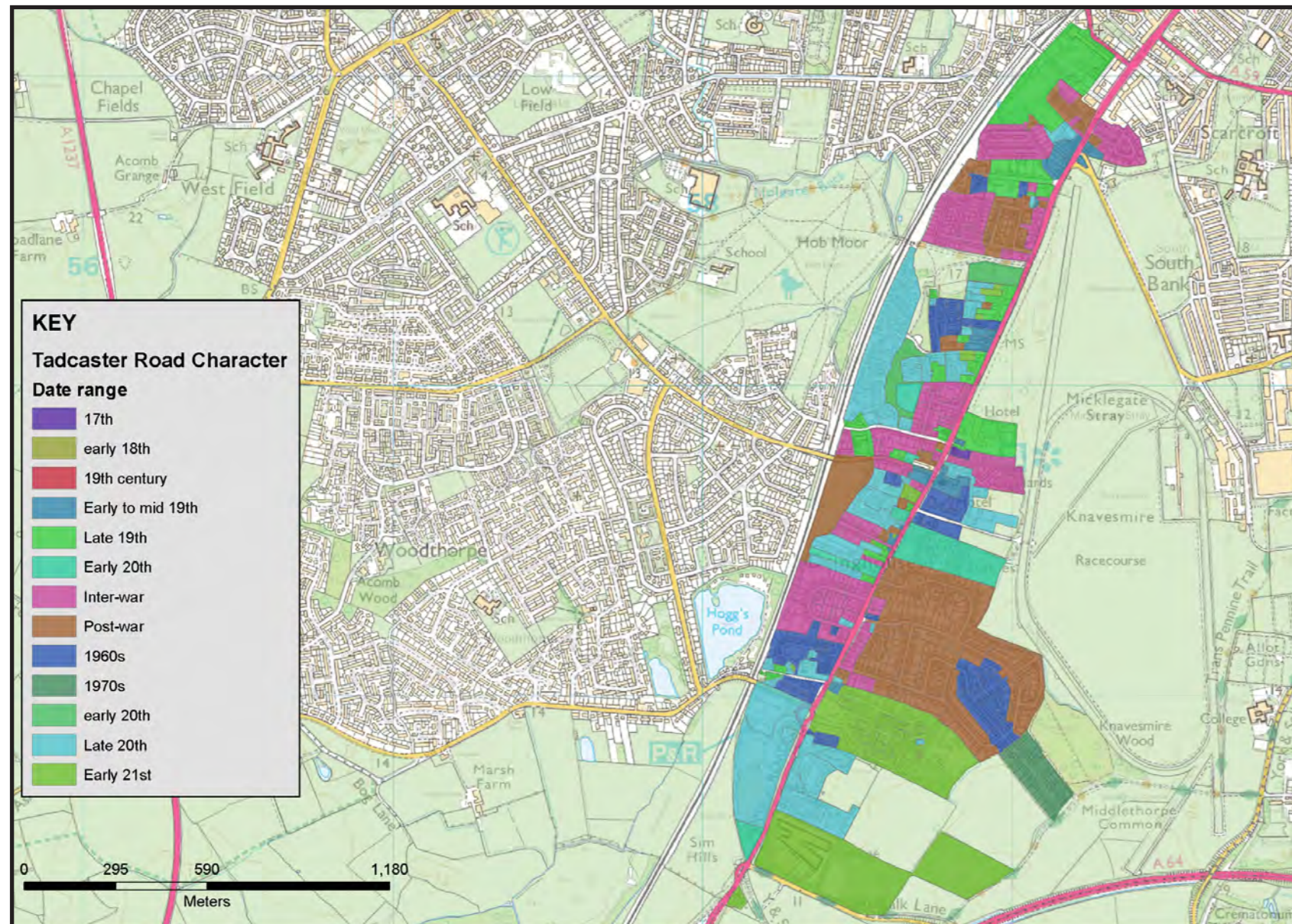
Westgate Apartments viewed from the city wall, a development of 8 + stories overlooking the River Ouse.



Four story apartment blocks on the old York College Site completely out of character to this part of suburban York in terms of massing height and design



Typical 1950s two story semi-detached houses, 200 meters from the four story apartment blocks at the old York College site and a completely different scale and character



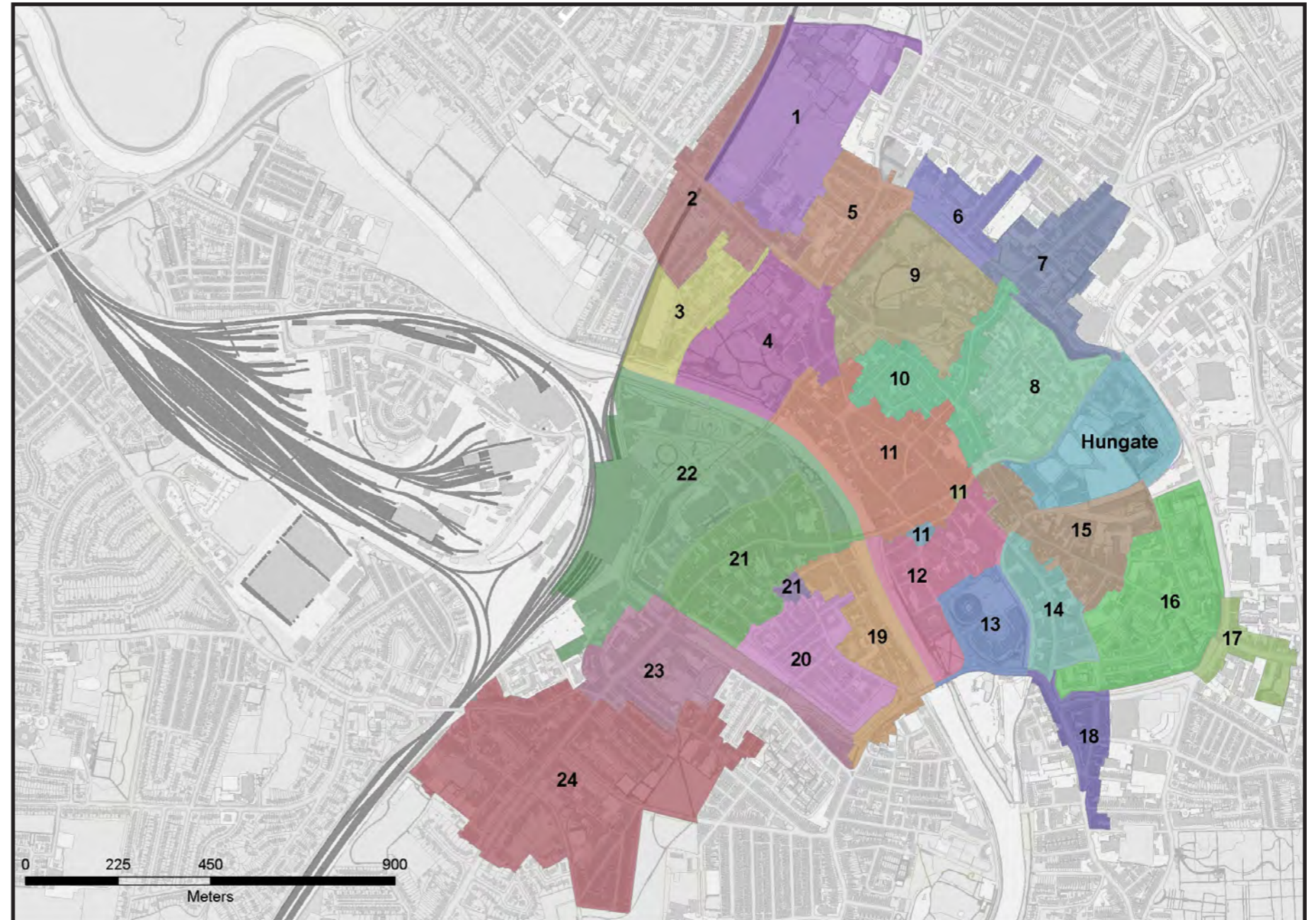
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This graphic illustrates the nature of linear development along one of York's main gateway routes into the city which incorporates Dringhouses village, formerly a rural settlement with its own open fields.

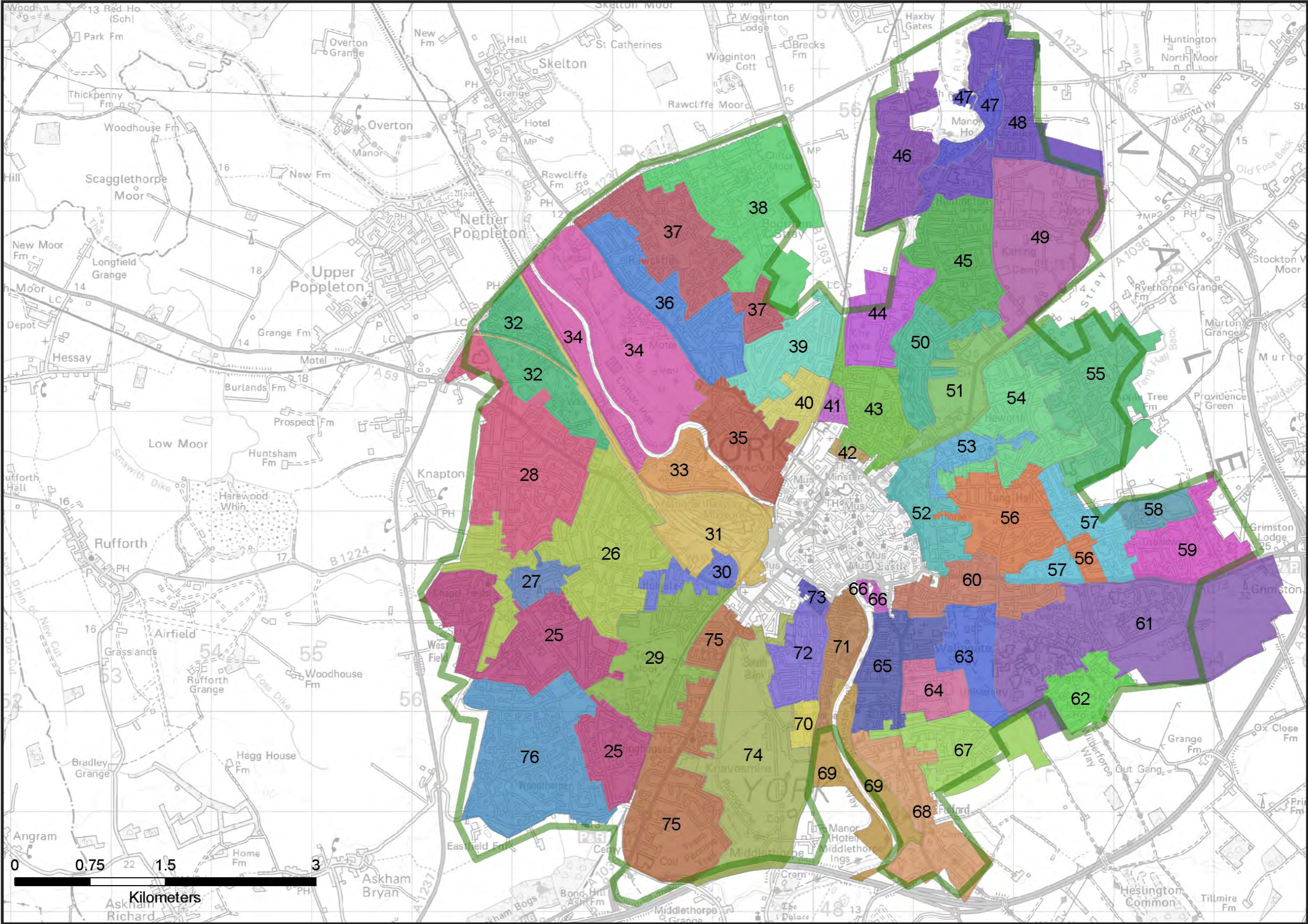
Section five: character areas

Area A

- 1: Bootham Hospital
- 2 & 3: Bootham & Marygate
- 4: Museum Gardens & Exhibition Square
- 5 Gillygate
- 6: Lord Mayor's Walk
- 7: Monkgate
- 8: Aldwark & Hungate
- 9: MInster Precinct
- 10: The Medieval Streets
- 11: Central Shopping Area
- 12: King's Staith & Coppergate Area
- 13: Castle
- 14: Piccadilly
- 15: Fossgate & Walmgate
- 16: Outer Walmgate
- 17: Walmgate Bar
- 18: Fishergate
- 19: Queen's Staith & Skeldergate
- 20: Bishophill
- 21: Micklegate
- 22: Railway Area
- 23: Blossom Street & Nunnery Lane
- 24: The Mount



Area B



Area B

25 Acomb south	44 Rowntree Factory	63 The Retreat & Walmgate Stray
26: Westfield, North Acomb & Holgate	45 Huntington suburbs south	64 Imphal Barracks
27: Acomb	46 New Earswick	65 Fulford Road
28: Acomb north	47 Huntington	66 Fishergate - River Ouse
29: Hob Moor	48 Huntington surrounds	67 Broadway
30: Holgate	49 Huntington South Moor	68 Fulford
31 Railway (industrial)	50 Heworth north	69 Fulford, Middlethorpe/Nun Ings
32: York Business Park	51 Heworth NE & Monk Stray	70 Terry's Factory
33: Leeman Road	52 Layerthorpe	71 Clementhorpe & Bishopthorpe Road
34: Poppleton & Clifton Ings	53 Heworth	72 Scarcroft Terraces & South Bank
35 Clifton	54 Heworth south and east	73 Nunnery Lane
36 Clifton NW	55: Heworth without	74: York Racecourse & Knavesmire
37 Clifton Moor	56 Tang Hall Estate	75 Dringhouses and Tadcaster Road
38 Clifton Moor (Commercial)	57 Tang Hall East	76 Woodthorpe
39 Clifton north	58 Osbaldwick	
40 Clifton NE	59 Osbaldwick south	
41 Hospital	60 Lawrence St and Heslington Rd	
42 St. John's Campus	61 University of York Campus	
43 North of Lord Mayor's Walk	62 Heslington	

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