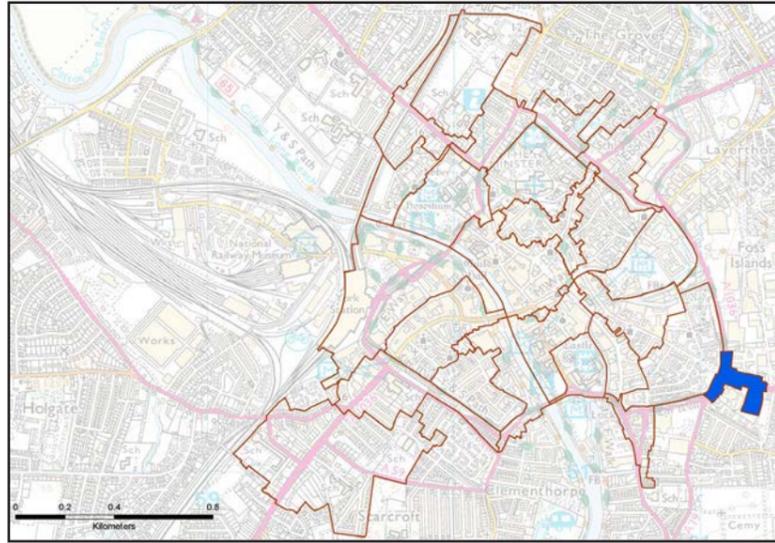


## Character area 17: Walmgate Bar



The location of the character area within the historic core.

### Description

Lawrence Street was part of the Roman route from the city to the east and retained its importance during the Middle Ages as the main road to Hull. Destruction during the Civil War meant very little of its medieval past remains. Today, Lawrence Street is a traffic dominated street of eroded historic character and poor quality modern development. This makes it the weakest of the city's Bar approaches.

*Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal*

## Archaeological background

### Prehistoric

A watching brief in 2005 at the corner of Lawrence Street and Leake Street uncovered a Middle Bronze Age cremation urn during excavations for building foundations. This represents the only archaeological evidence for prehistoric activity within the historic core. Whether this was an isolated cremation or part of a larger cemetery is not known.

### Roman

There is scant evidence of Roman activity within this area other than the Roman road. Limited evidence of land division has been found suggesting a reversion back to open land. Residual Roman pottery was located on the former Reg Vardy site on the south side of Lawrence Street (EYO4108). Further east, outside the character area, the DC Cook site (EYO247) produced evidence of possible Roman occupation and sherds of 8th century pottery. Possible evidence for Roman clay quarries located in the Leake Street area (EYO2235).

### Anglian – Anglo-Scandinavian

The Lawrence Street/Leake Street watching brief also yielded evidence of Anglo-Scandinavian timber buildings situated beneath the foundations of several medieval structures. An investigation slightly further north, beneath Heron House also produced wet and dry evidence for Anglo-Scandinavian timber structures ranging between 0.7m and 1.9m in thickness (EYO2228-2239). These discoveries indicate that the extensive settlement along Walmgate continued at least to this point.

### Medieval

Walmgate Bar contains masonry from the mid-12th century and would have been a gateway cut through the Norman earthwork defences, since the city wall did not enclose the Walmgate area until the late 14th century. The barbican is a 14th century addition.

The 14th century City Walls running from Fishergate Postern to Red Tower (MYO1734) form the western boundary of this character area.

St. Lawrence Church (MYO1327) and St. Michael's Church date to the medieval period. The former was rebuilt in the mid 19th century (MYO1325). Its medieval remains now form part of a larger Scheduled area.

Medieval pits and linear features were found in some trenches dug on the former Reg Vardy Site on the south side of Lawrence Street (EYO4108) and the Lawrence Street/Leake Street watching brief uncovered remains of several buildings. This has provided clear evidence of continuous occupation on this part of Lawrence Street since the Anglo-Scandinavian period.

### Post-medieval – Early modern

Medieval domestic and commercial buildings on Lawrence Street were substantially damaged during the English Civil War siege of 1644. Batteries were set up on Lamel Hill to the east and in St. Lawrence's Churchyard to bombard the Walmgate area. A possible earthwork related to the Civil War defence of the city was revealed on the former Reg Vardy Site (EYO4108). The medieval buildings were destroyed by fire to create a clear area between the Royalist defenders and the attacking Parliamentarians. Walmgate Bar itself was badly damaged but later restored. Today it is one of York's most complete bars, retaining its barbican, portcullis and 15th century inner gates.

A post-medieval inhumation burial was discovered at the Rose and Crown site on the north side of Lawrence Street during a watching brief (EYO3743), and postulated to be a siege victim. The present church of St Lawrence replaced the earlier medieval building in 1881 and St Lawrence Working Men's club was formerly a fine late 18th century residence complete with generous formal gardens to the rear. A large timber yard existed to the rear of properties close to the barbican. By 1854, Foss Islands Road was created.

Cobbled road margins survive in places, replacing earlier grass margins used for grazing cattle.

## Visible character

Very busy approach to junction

Visible landmark medieval city walls and postern

Compromised view of Walmgate Bar

Cobbled margins survive in places

Predominantly mid-late 19th century, two-storey buildings

## Sub surface character

**Ove Arup Development & Archaeology Study Research Zone:** 13 and 14

**Deposit Depth (where known):** The Ove Arup Archaeology and Development Study suggests deposits at average depths of c.1.5m below ground level.

Anglo-Scandinavian archaeology was recorded as being between 0.7m and 1.9m thick, immediately to the north of Lawrence Street at Heron House.

**Period Survival:** Evidence of Prehistoric to early modern activity has been found within the area. All periods have the potential to survive here but the depth and level of disturbance is variable. Observations at the corner of Lawrence Street and Leake Street suggest that where later disturbance is minimal, survival of medieval and Anglo-Scandinavian will be extremely good.

**Interventions (recorded on HER April 2013):** There are approximately 6 interventions recorded on the City of York Historic Environment Record (HER). Few of the interventions are recorded in any detail and a brief examination of some grey literature suggests several interventions are yet to be recorded in the HER. See Appendix 1 for HER summary.

## Significance

**Overview:** Walmgate Bar occupies slightly higher ground away from the River Foss in the south-east Extramural area as identified by Ove Arup Archaeology and Development Study. The study suggests that archaeological deposits dating between the Anglian and medieval periods exist at an average depth of c.1.5m below ground level.

The limited information which is available proves that relatively undisturbed patches of substantial wet and dry stratified deposits do survive within this area. There is some evidence of prehistoric activity and very limited evidence of Roman land use. Evidence for Anglo-Scandinavian settlement and activity is limited but of high quality and high potential.

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

The Lawrence Street area contains some architecturally and historically significant buildings. There are 11 Grade II listed buildings dating between the 18th and 19th centuries. The City Walls (Fishergate Postern to Red Tower) (MYO1734) and medieval tower (MYO1327) and the sub-surface remains of St. Lawrence's Church are Grade I listed and Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM30 & 34838). Several Buildings of Merit have been identified in the Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal such as the Tam O'Shanter Public House and St. Lawrence's Parish Hall.

**Streetscape components:** Paving is a mixture of riven English Pennine Sandstone and pre-cast concrete flags (Marshall's Saxon paving principally). Pre-cast concrete flags are used on Leake Street and Lawrence Street while small amounts of natural stone flags are located on Barbican. The carriageways are generally asphalt.

Throughout the area, modern street lighting, Edinburgh style waste bins, late 20th century traffic signage and bus stops are in use. Areas of former cobbling (which replaced earlier grass verges) along Lawrence Street have been replaced by tarmac to provide parking spaces although some cobbling survives.



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



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

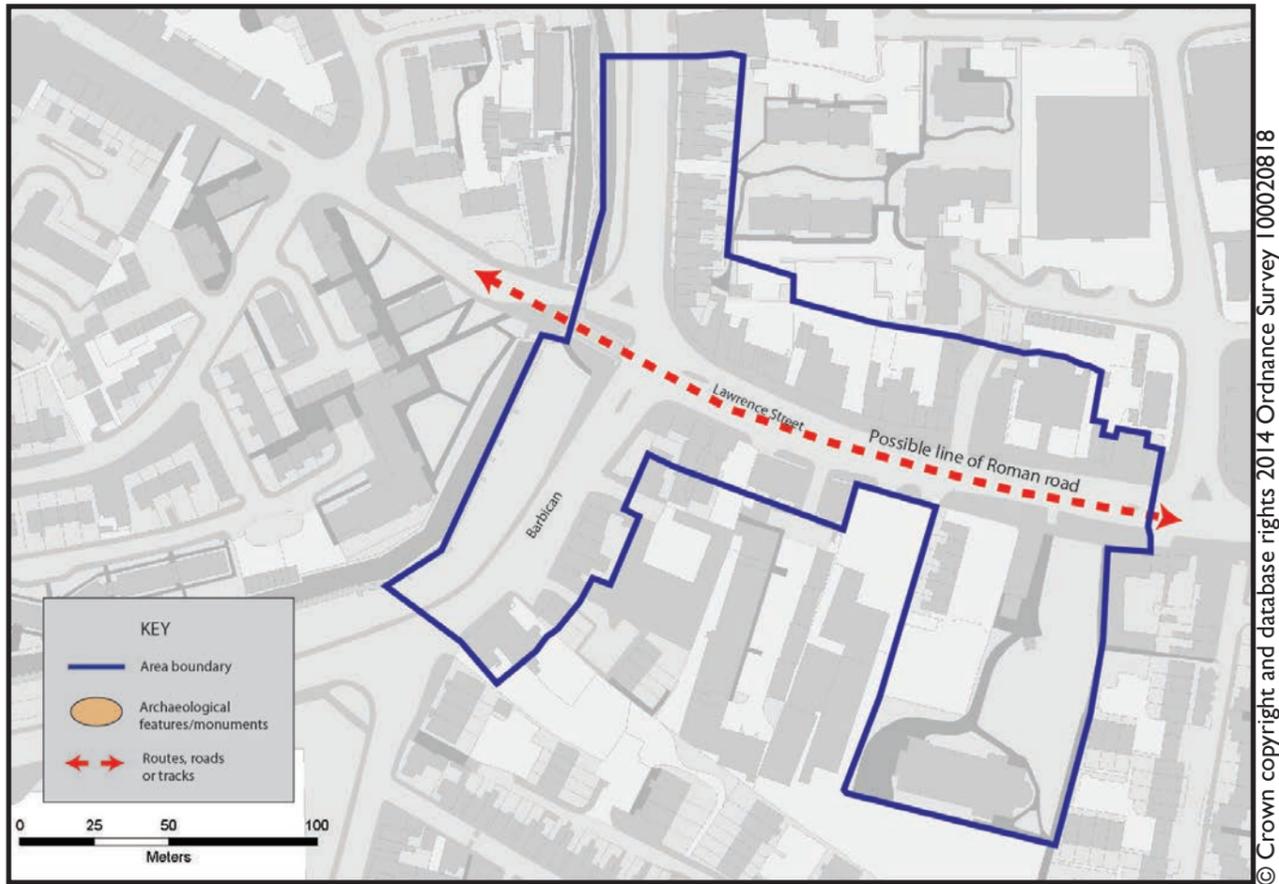
Below: Plan showing the construction dates of the buildings within the area.



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

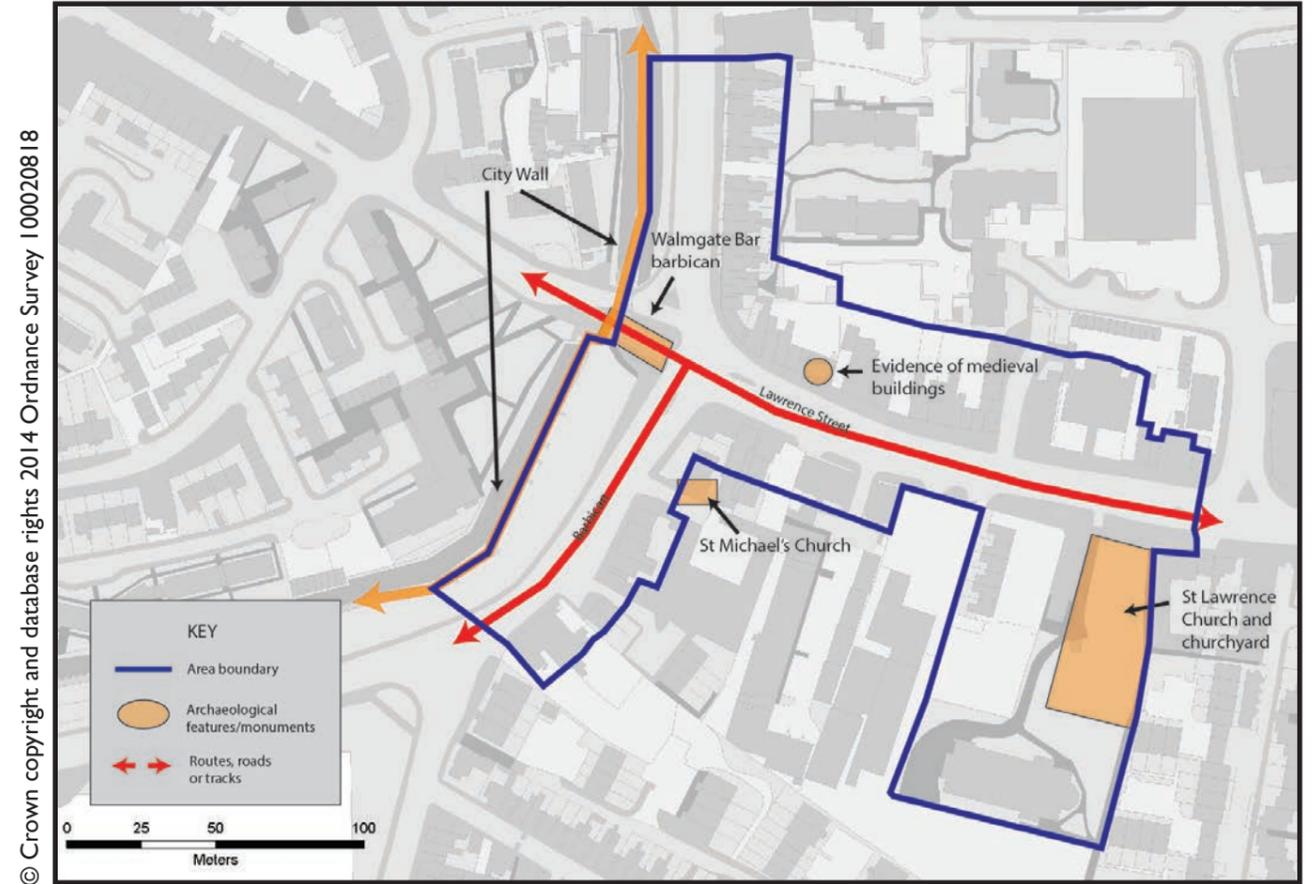
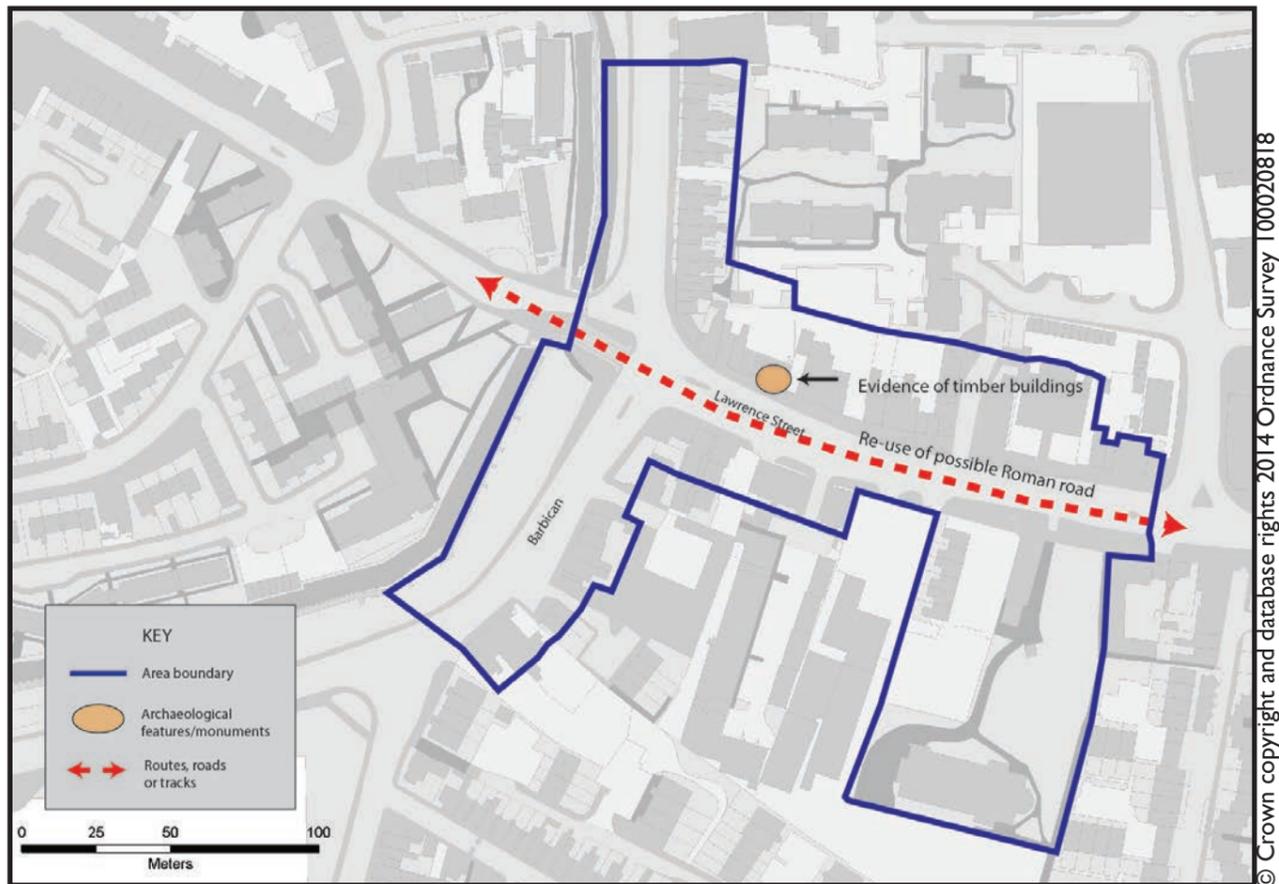
Below: Plan showing the Broad Type characterisation of the area. White roadways indicate roads or lanes visible on the 1852 Ordnance Survey Plan.





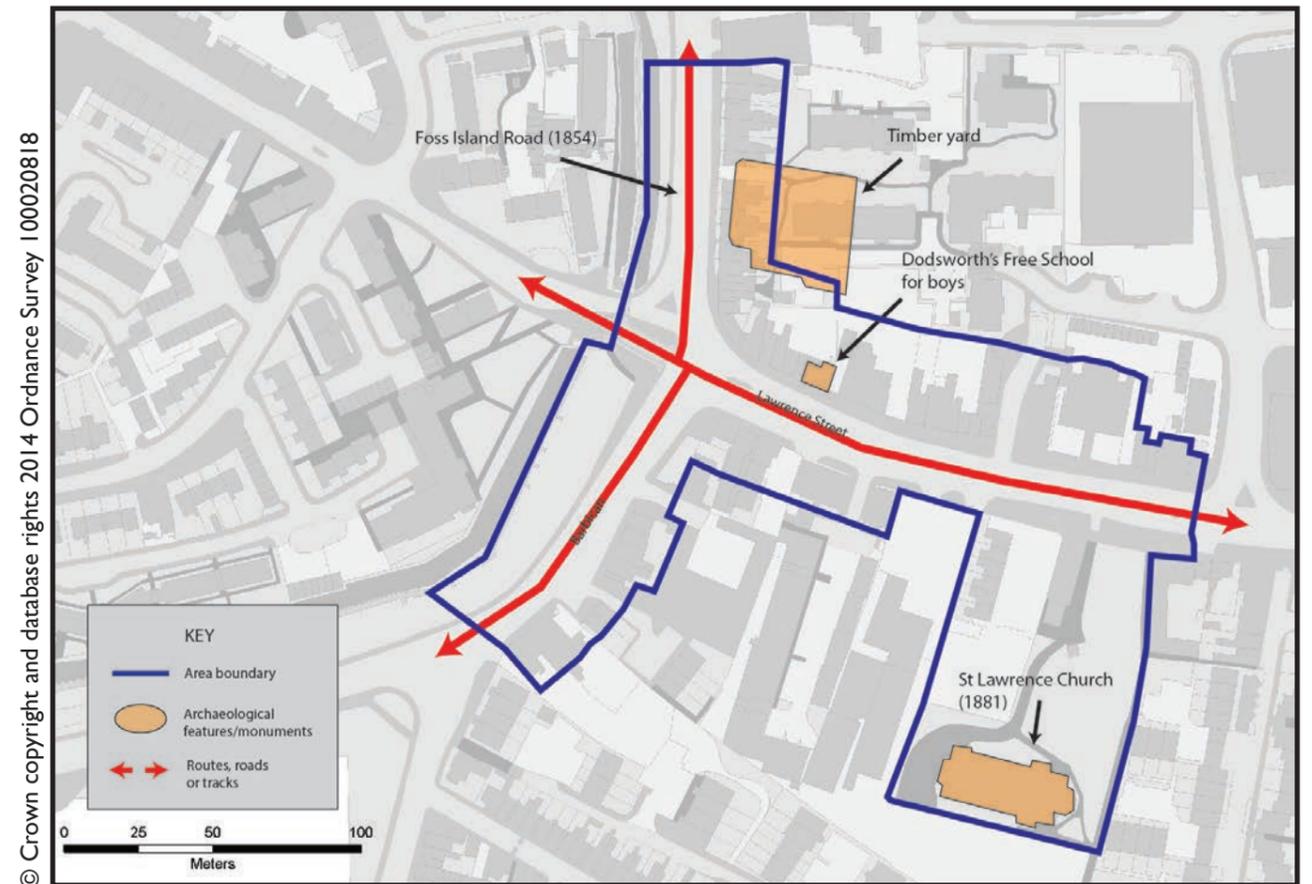
Above: The Roman landscape.

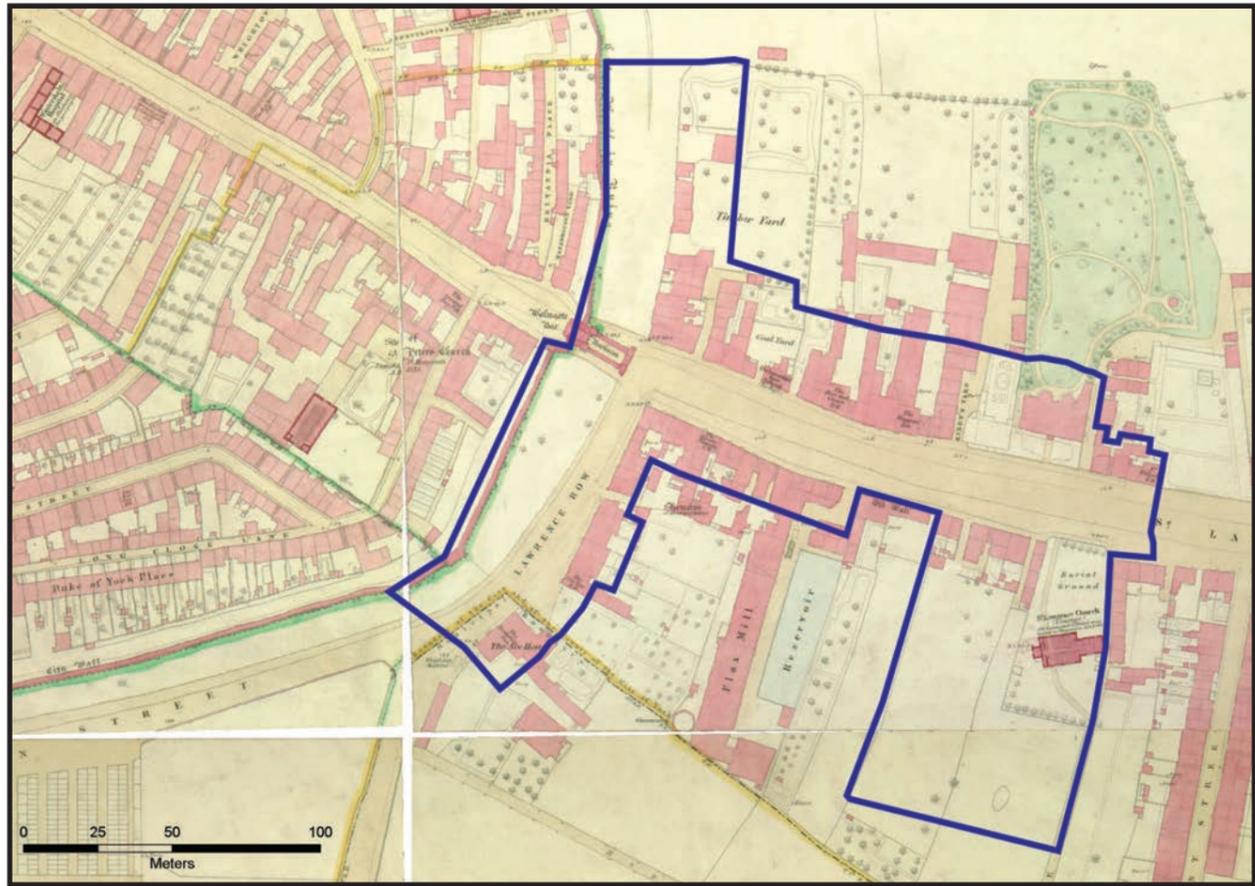
Below: The Anglo-Scandinavian landscape.



Above: The medieval landscape.

Below: The post-medieval landscape.

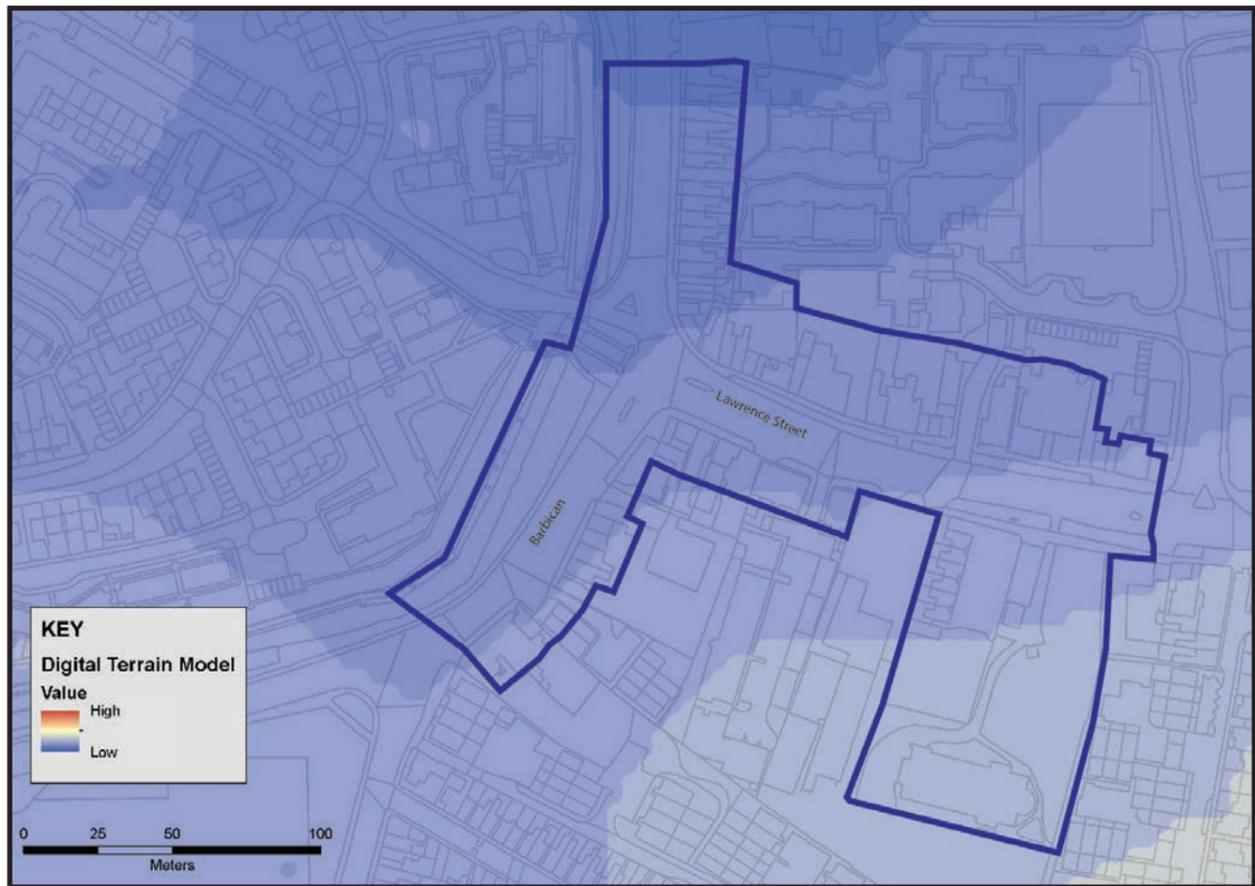




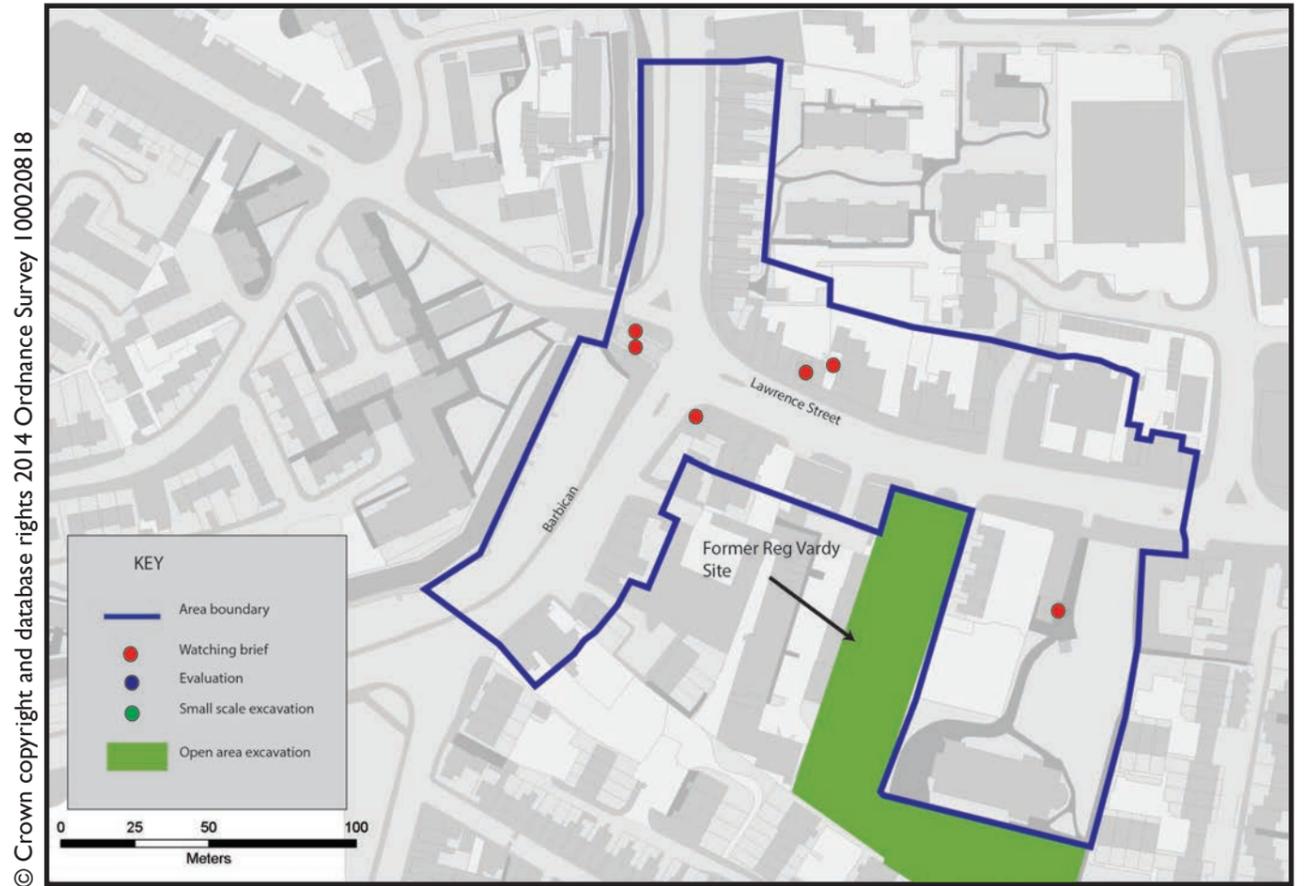
© Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100020818

Above: The 1852 landscape.

Below: The general topography showing the relatively high position of this area.



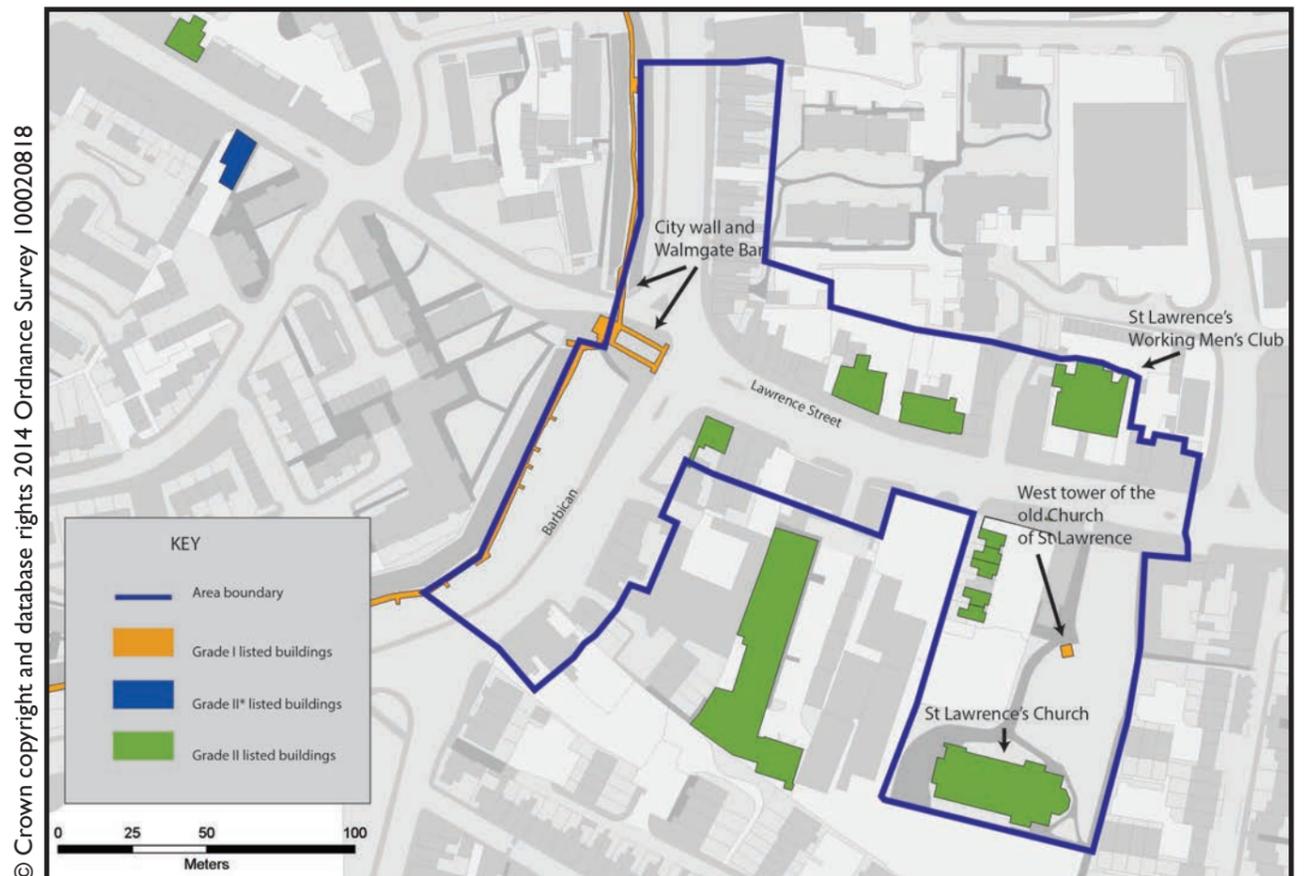
© Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100020818



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100020818

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

Below: Location of listed buildings. Note the Grade I listed structures.



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100020818

## Main Sources

Ottaway, P. 2011, Archaeology in the Environs of Roman York, CBA, York

Ove Arup, 1991, Archaeology and Development Study, York YAT Annual Report 2006

York City Council Historic Environment Record (and grey literature report EYO595)

York City Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal- 17: Walmgate Bar

**Researched and written by:** Claire MacRae

**Graphics:** Bob Sydes

**Edited by:** Bob Sydes

**Funded by:** English Heritage

**Issued:** November 2013

**© City of York Council 2013**

