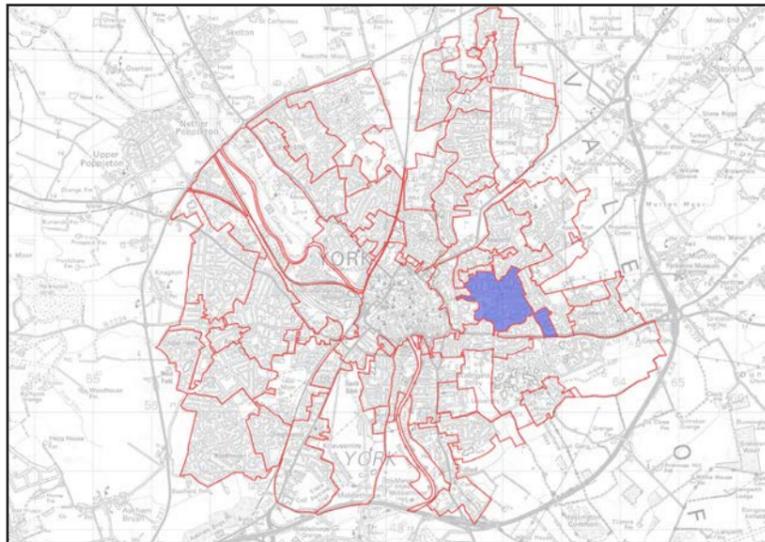
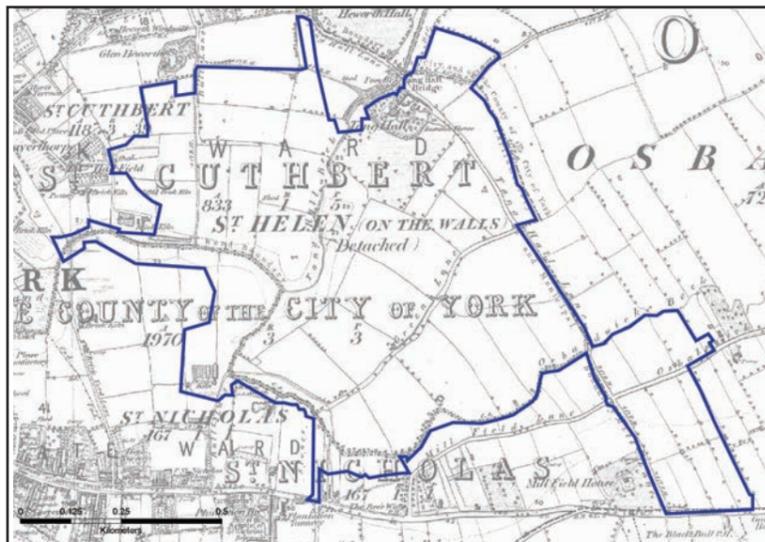


Character area 56: Tang Hall Estate



Location of character area



Extract from First Edition Ordnance Survey Plan 1852

Key Characteristics

General Character: Large residential 1920s social housing estate including a contemporary primary school, allotments, and local commercial and retail amenities.

Strong horizontal and vertical rhythm in a mixture of sinuous and linear streets that have no distinctive York features

Situated on undulating ground, Tang Hall and Osbaldwick Beck occupy the low-lying areas with the higher ground in the vicinity of Fourth and Fifth Avenue and Tang Hall Lane

The area is bounded by Third and Fourth Avenue to the north, Layerthorpe to the west and Tang Hall Beck to the south. It is roughly bounded by Tang Hall Lane to the east although the character area continues beyond the lane in places. Large open green spaces, many original garden hedgerows and tree-lined streets

Anonymous suburban area

Approximate walking/cycling distance to the city centre from the junction of Tang Hall Lane and Fourth Avenue 2.4km via Fourth Avenue and Layerthorpe

Dominant Housing Type: Two storey linked houses in a plain, uniform appearance, front and rear gardens, arched access doorway, flat porch roof, hipped roofs to buildings, on-street and communal parking unless garden converted to driveway. Houses are set in well planned estates containing grass verges.

Designated Heritage Assets: None

Non-designated Heritage Assets: Original community assets/buildings such as Hull Road Park, the former Presbytery and Tang Hall School. Original wooden signage, doorways, garden fence posts and an 1870 boundary stone.

Key Views: Views of Minster protected by design of estate

Surviving historic roads and tracks: Tang Hall Lane, Bad Bargain Lane and Sixth Avenue

Archaeology and history

Unusually, the area lacks any evidence of prehistoric, Roman or medieval land use which is not to say that there was none. The 1852 Ordnance Survey map depicts a rural landscape of enclosed former medieval strip fields especially to the north of Osbaldwick Beck. However, the relatively early development of this area has precluded any 1936 aerial photographic evidence of medieval ridge and furrow.

The Anglo Saxon word Tang, meaning the meeting place of two becks, is where the name originates from.

Windmills were in use in this area on the higher ground, including one recorded near East Parade. Several historic lanes, which may be medieval in origin, exist within, and on the borders of this character area such as Tang Hall Lane, Green Lane (possibly represented in part by the modern Burlington Avenue) and Mill Field Lane. The western extremes of this character area formed part of Hall Fields and Far Fields Common shown on a 1772 enclosure award map. Following enclosure, these larger medieval fields were divided into smaller areas, which were again reduced in size during the later 19th and 20th centuries.

Heworth became popular during the early 19th century as a place for the gentry to build their villas away from the crowded city. Two of these villas, Tang Hall and Heworth Hall (c.1830) may have had medieval origins, perhaps as manorial residences. By the mid 19th century small-scale industry including several brick kilns (one marked as 'old' on the 1852 map) were in existence at the western end of this character area and in the adjacent Layerthorpe. Industrial expansion continued into the later 19th century, in particular St Nicholas Brick and Tile Works which survived into the 1950s. The construction of Vicarage Farm on the northern fringes of this character area by the late 19th century attests to the continuing importance of the rural economy.

The early 20th century saw the construction of terraced developments in the surrounding areas while the Derwent Valley Light Railway (1913) opened, and ran W-E across the Tang Hall area from Layerthorpe to Selby. The line eventually closed completely in 1981.

Following the First World War, land was purchased at Tang Hall to construct a modern social housing estate to solve a housing shortage in the city due to the slum clearance program and create sanitary, affordable homes. The estate was begun in 1920 on Fifth Avenue and Carter Avenue. The rest of the estate was constructed between 1922-1930, with priority for housing given to war veterans, war widows and TB sufferers. It included a primary school, allotments, park and social club that helped to reinforce the identity of the new community. The surrounding areas were purchased for private housing development during the 1930s. The land associated with Tang Hall was sold for housing in 1925, although the building itself was used as a public house until the 1960s and was finally demolished in the late 1970s. Heworth Hall and Vicarage Farm survived into the 1930s.

There are small pockets of mid-late 20th century development in the Tang Hall area. One of the largest clusters is situated immediately north of the, now disused, railway line, on the former site of a small school, playing fields and social hall. This site was probably re-developed in the 1980s and now contains a church, community centre, care home and a two-three storey apartment complex. Further 1980s and 21st century re-development can be found on Fourth Avenue, on the former site of Tang Hall.

Residential development dating to the 1960s and 1970s are evident south of the railway, such as Welborn Close and Hewley Avenue. These buildings have been constructed in the former back gardens of the surrounding houses. St Nicholas Fields local nature reserve and home of the York Natural Environment Trust was created on the site of the former St Nicholas Brick and Tile Works which was used for landfill for many years.

Character

This area is characterised by a large late 1920s council estate predominantly consisting of short linked terraces. The estate contains educational, religious, social and commercial amenities. The first houses to be built were on Fifth and Carter Avenue, which were constructed by 1921 continuing on from a small area of contemporary privately owned homes. The predominant housing style within the council estate is the red brick short linked terrace, containing four properties, creating a uniform vertical and horizontal rhythm. This housing style is the same as others found across York and nationwide. Anomalies in style do occur such as pointed gables to the end properties on some blocks and the use of the timber frame effect. Lightly coloured paint/stucco on top of the brickwork to the upper floor is present throughout the estate in patches. It appears to be more common in the area south of Fifth Avenue.

Very few three-storey apartment blocks exist within the estate, such as on Fourth Avenue. This type of higher density construction is more common in the post-war social housing estates. On Fourth Avenue they feature pitched roofs, front grassed areas bounded by a low brick wall. Two storey apartments can be found on Tuke Avenue although these generally have the same appearance as the link house with two protruding porches each featuring two entrances.

Tang Hall estate contains a lot of greenery despite it being a very suburban environment. The estate was created in a similar fashion to the suburban village model set out by the Rowntree Foundation at New Earswick. This model includes large gardens, public park and allotments, all contributing to a strong community identity.

The large number of garden hedges, combined with the many trees and grass verges, contribute to the overall green streetscape. Remnant apple and pear trees from former orchards may exist in some rear gardens throughout the estate.

The crossroads between Fourth and Seventh Avenue provides a good example of the generous spacing and greenery in the estate.

The crossroads is surrounded, and fronted by links of three houses featuring white, timber-frame effect to the upper floor and surrounded by green hedges. Grass verges, containing trees are also present on each side of the crossroad. Housing on Eighth Avenue have much longer front gardens overlooking a large green space, which includes the culverted Tang Hall Beck. The culvert is in effect south of Fourth Avenue with only a small section visible running westwards parallel with the disused railway line. The former railway land now provides a cyclepath leading into York from the east. South of the railway, St. Nicholas Fields provides further recreational green space covering the Tang Hall Beck, while Hull Road Park, in the flood plain of Osbaldwick Beck to the south of this character area contains a bowling green, tennis courts and play area.

Garden to driveway conversion rates vary throughout the estate and are on the whole lower than in other similar areas where provision for car parking was not created. Fifth Avenue contains approximately 50-60% of gardens which have been converted for car parking. Where this has occurred, the grass verge has often been replaced with asphalt to provide access from the road to the garden. In comparison, Fourth Avenue comprises approximately 10% front garden conversions.

Car parking is therefore restricted to areas where verges may have been removed altogether in a conscious effort to widen the footpath and provide a parking area for example on Alcuin Avenue, Carter Avenue and outside the Tang Hall Primary School.

Generally throughout the character area approximately between 50-60% of original gate piers and hedgerow posts survive, usually supporting more recently acquired gates, fencing or hedgerows.

Extensions to the side of housing, attached garages and carports are uncommon throughout this estate compared to others. Where garages are in use they are usually detached and situated to the rear of the property.

Extensions to the front of properties in the form of bay windows and porches are the most common type of addition.

Originally all houses had a flat porch roof above the front door. Around 90% of these still exist, although some may be replacements of the original. Modification to buildings is largely confined to changes in fenestration and doors.

Many examples of original, or replica replacement doors exist across the estate, for example, around 20% of these exist on Fifth Avenue. These are wooden with a square glass pane to the top of the door. On some designs these were divided into 6 smaller panes similar to the windows.

Original windows appear to have contained six square panes per window, similar to the doors. All properties now feature UPVC windows including a small number of bay windows and porches. Windows generally have not been moved from their original locations. The majority of houses to the east of Melrosegate include bay windows as an original feature although now modified and replaced in UPVC. The upper fenestration on these houses also differs.

Mid to late 20th century development on Fifth Avenue, replaced a school and social hall (also originally used as the dining hall to the school) immediately north of the railway. One mid 1930s building remains as the presbytery adjacent to the Catholic church of St. Aelred's. The plot also contains post-war two-storey flats similar to styles elsewhere in the city, a late 20th-century community centre and two to three storey apartment complex for older residents.

On either side of Alcuin Avenue, in areas formerly rear gardens, two small 1960s residential developments containing bungalows and two storey apartments have been constructed. These buildings are similar to contemporary styles elsewhere and contain pitched roofs and separate flat roofed garage blocks. A similar 1970s estate can be found to the rear of Constantine and Burlington Avenue surrounded by ill-defined area of open grass.

Late 20th century housing in the area of the former Tang Hall comprises of a small 1980s cul-de-sac featuring pitched roofed, semi-detached housing including gardens, garages and driveways and a short linked row without provision for vehicles.

Adjacent to this stands an early 21st century development featuring three-storey townhouses containing garages at ground floor level and Juliet balconies to the first floor. These houses all feature similar front doors and are practically identical, as enough time has not elapsed since construction for modifications to be made.

The estate follows a gently curving street pattern with the majority of streets linking to one another in some way via the many main roads that criss-cross the area.

Solar panels are generally in use on a very small number of houses, probably less than 3%. However, in some areas, still predominantly under council control, a green energy scheme has seen the addition of panels to the rooftops of many more buildings, such as on Constantine Street.

Significance

Archaeology: This area has not produced any evidence from any period, but the presence of two becks and a couple of areas of high ground may have potential. The site of Tang Hall may still have the potential for revealing evidence to support the existence of a medieval manor on the site.

Architecture: The housing boom of the 1930s is evident across York, as other cities, in the form of private housing. Pre-war social housing is less evident but is significant in its role to provide a modern sanitary home for the lower paid working classes, previously housed within the city centre in Walmgate, Hungate and other locations.

Tang Hall Estate is distinct from surrounding earlier developments and 1930s private housing. Although it is architecturally similar to other social housing estates in the city such as the Clifton estate, the fact that this is the first area to be developed as part of the post First World War 'homes for heroes' initiative gives Tang Hall a special significance. The Tang Hall Estate retains many original concrete hedgerow post and gate piers and wooden front doors.

Historic: This suburban area, fairly anonymous in nature, contains early social housing. Tang Hall is believed to be the second oldest such estate in the country. Its social value lies in the strong identity of the Tang Hall community. As well as the greenery, the presence of educational, religious and commercial amenities serving a suburban area such as this are important in re-affirming a sense of place and identity.

The street pattern does not follow historic boundaries. Unsurprisingly historic field boundaries, shown on the 1850s ordnance survey plan, do not survive well in this area with an approximate survival rate of less than 15%. Examples include the rear fence line to Rockingham and Starkey Crescent, the line of Sixth Avenue and the rear boundary between Rawdon Avenue and St. Nicholas Field.

Many of these boundaries are early to mid 19th century in date, although the line of Sixth Avenue follows an earlier boundary of at least 1822.

A boundary stone dated 1870 exists in the undergrowth on the corner of Fourth and Sixth Avenue. It is unclear what this marker defines the boundary of.

Streetscape components: The estate features grass verged, often tree lined streets with a mixture of paved and asphalt carriageways with late 20th century traffic calming measures on some main roads. In some places, in the rear alleys of Seventh and Eighth Avenue, sett paving still exists. Edinburgh style waste bins are provided close to bus stops. Street lighting is provided by a range of units spanning the mid to late 20th century. The oldest identified units have a swan neck, a common 1930s type, often replicated in the 1950s. Contemporary street signs are fixed to lighting columns although an illegible original wooden sign has been noted on the side of a house on Seventh Avenue.

Aesthetic: The estate has an anonymous suburban feel and appears 'worn around the edges' in places. Despite modifications, it also retains a sense of greenery in places, which formed part of the estate's original design with many streets still featuring original hedgerow garden boundaries, wide boulevards and tree-lined avenues.

On face value, apart from the extensive bus service to the area, there is nothing to suggest that these housing estates form part of the City of York. It is not until you see the Minster standing at the west end of Fourth and Fifth Avenue that you feel the closeness of the city centre. This view has clearly been protected by the design of the estate. At the west end of Fifth Avenue, the view of the Minster has been interrupted by three storey 21st century apartments.

The impingement of the view may have begun several years earlier with the construction of an industrial estate to the rear of the new housing. This area was previously devoid of housing and would have been open with a view towards Layerthorpe and the Minster over railway sidings.

St Nicholas Fields nature reserve and Hull Road Park are highly valued local green spaces.

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).

Over the past 30 years a large proportion of social housing has been sold to tenants and others, often resulting in modifications that have significantly and adversely impacted on the original character of the estate. This has been exacerbated over time through the removal of original streetscape features and the use of poor quality replacements – further erosion of these features should be avoided where possible and extensions and alterations should be carefully considered.

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.

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 such as Hull Road Park, retail areas and school, 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.

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

Character Area 56: Images



Fifth Avenue



Cobbling to the rear of Fourth Avenue



Fourth Avenue shops



35-39 Seventh Avenue - note solar panels



Hedges on Fourth Avenue



Melrosegate showing high rates of garden to driveway conversion



35-39 Seventh Avenue as built - note concrete posts to support hedgerows - City of York Archives



Fourth Avenue crossroads



Tang Hall Primary School - note the loss of verged areas for car parking



Etty Avenue with example of older door design on right hand side



Alcuin Avenue



Hull Road Park



St. Aelred's Church



Constantine Avenue showing high numbers of solar panels



Playing fields near Eighth Avenue



Welborn Close



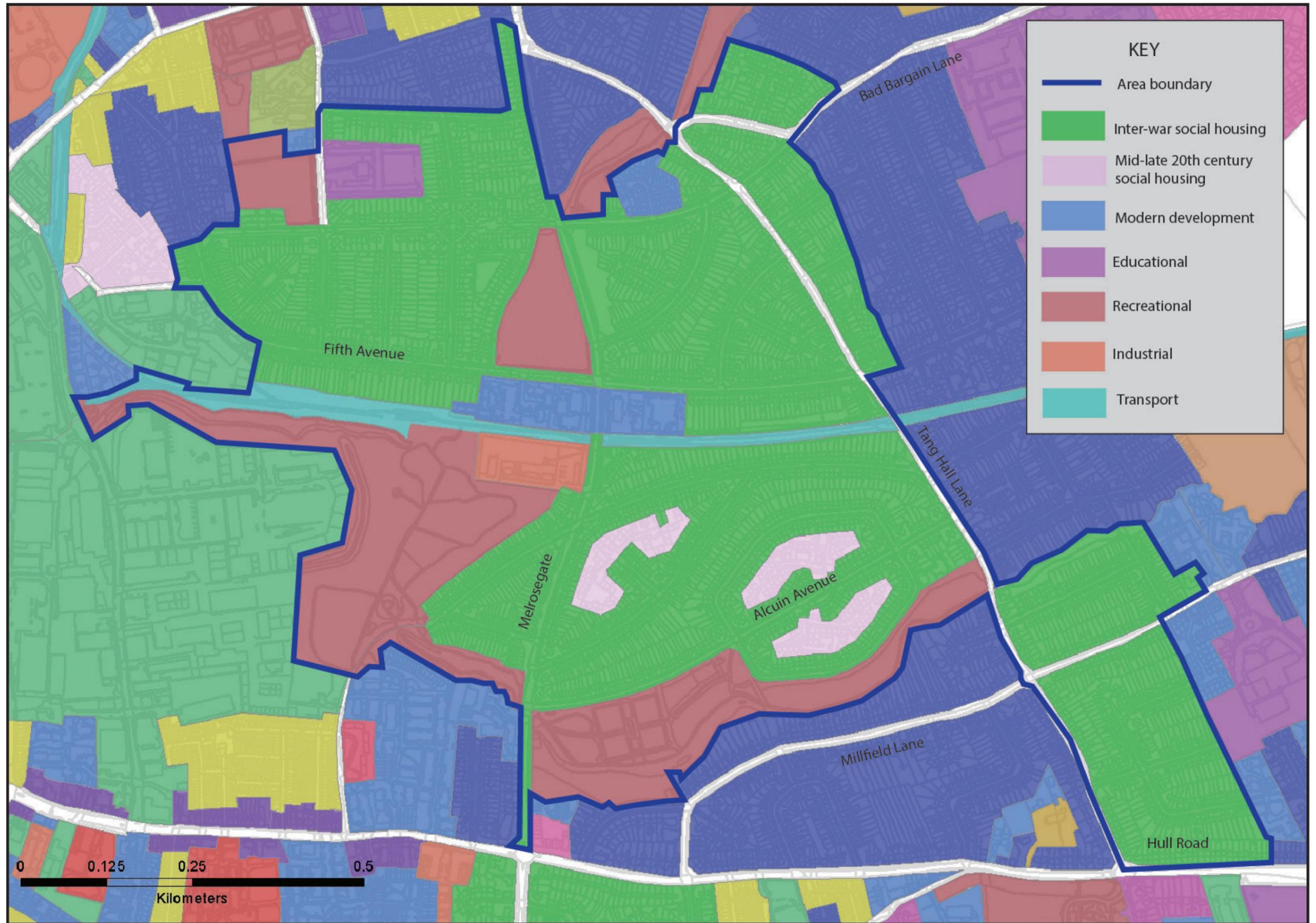
Stone marker at corner of Fourth and Sixth Avenue



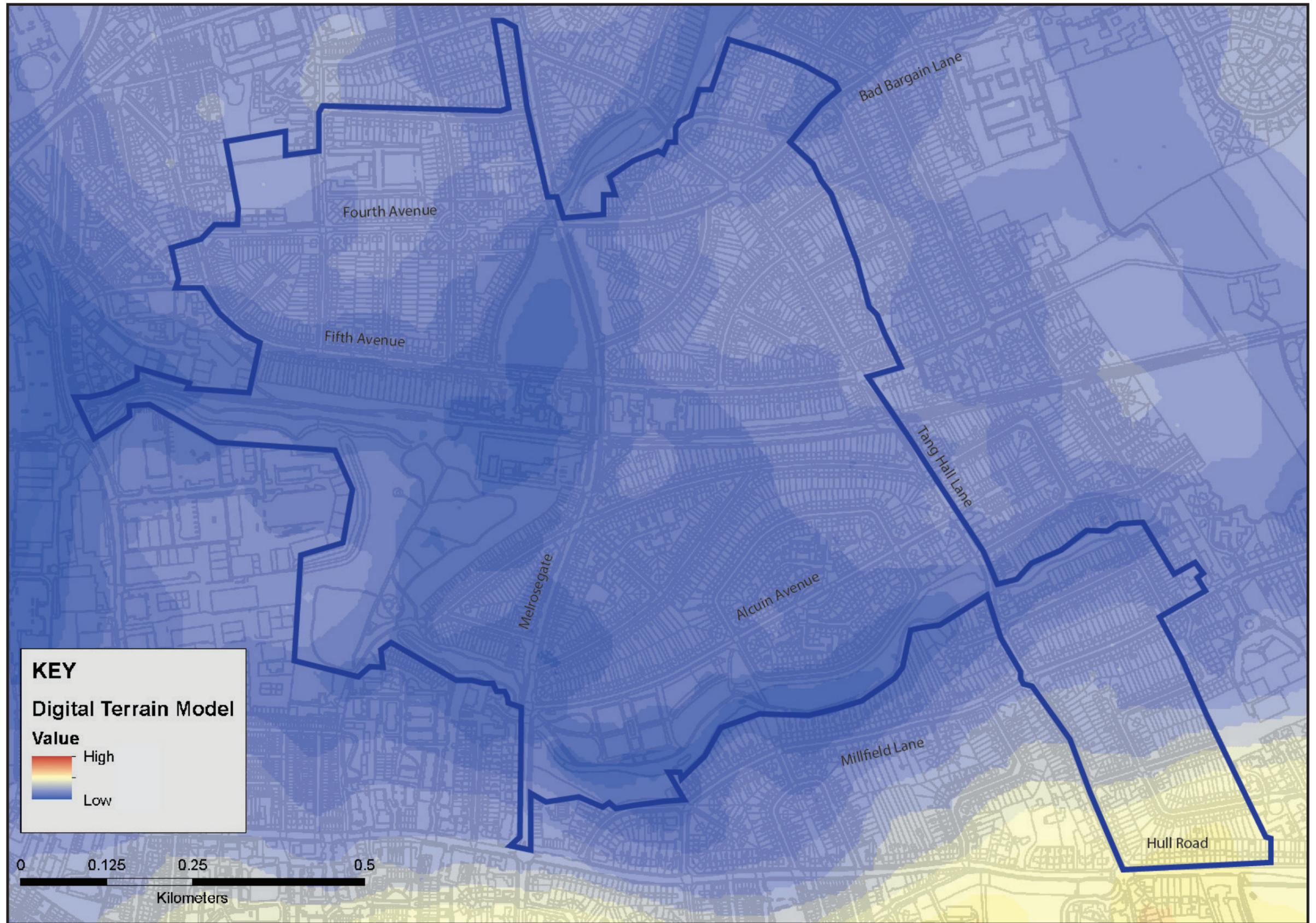
St. Nicholas Fields

Character Area 56: Maps

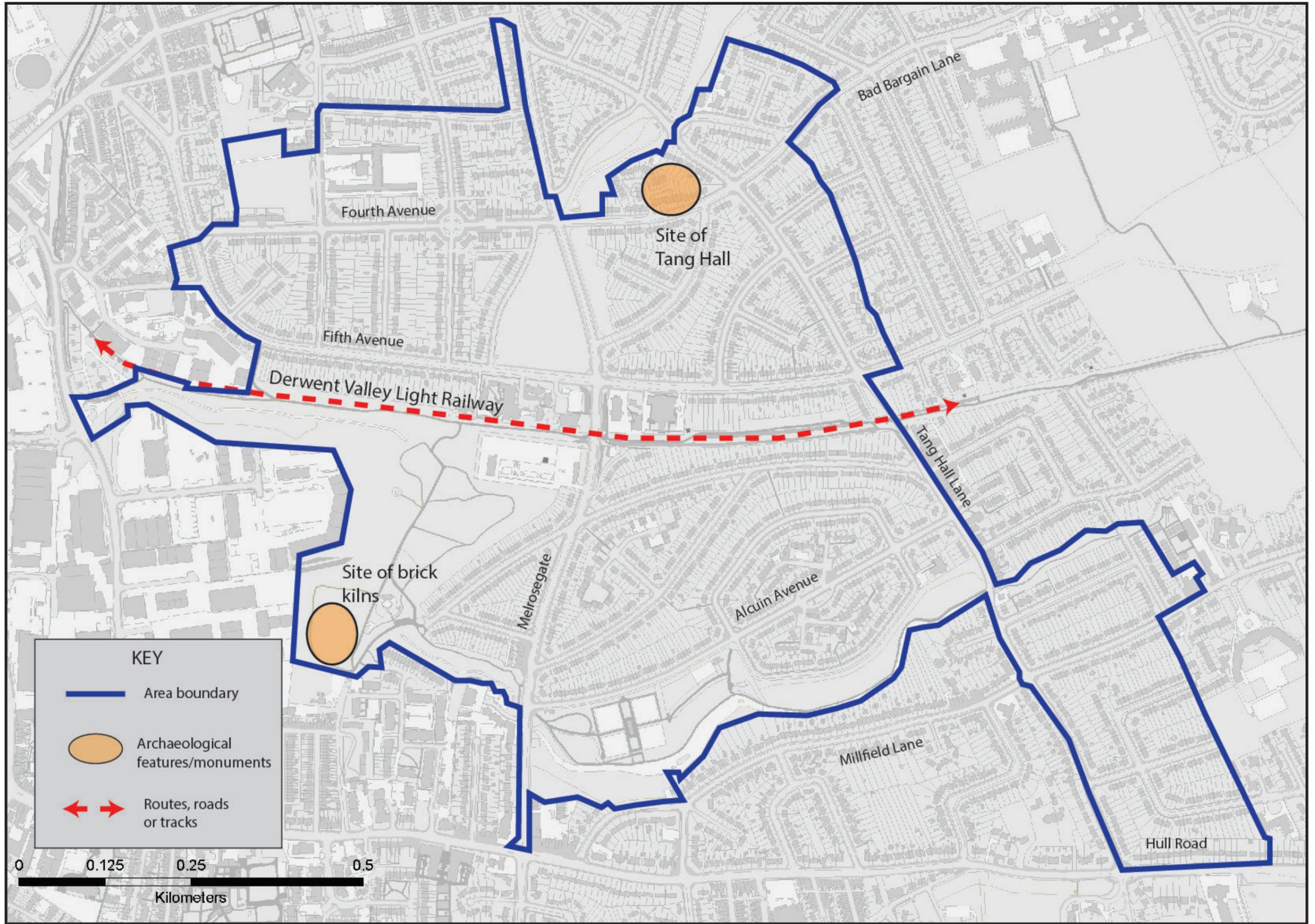
Broad Type characterisation plan. The white roadways indicate roads or lanes visible on the 1852 Ordnance Survey Plan.



Topography



Archaeology and heritage assets



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

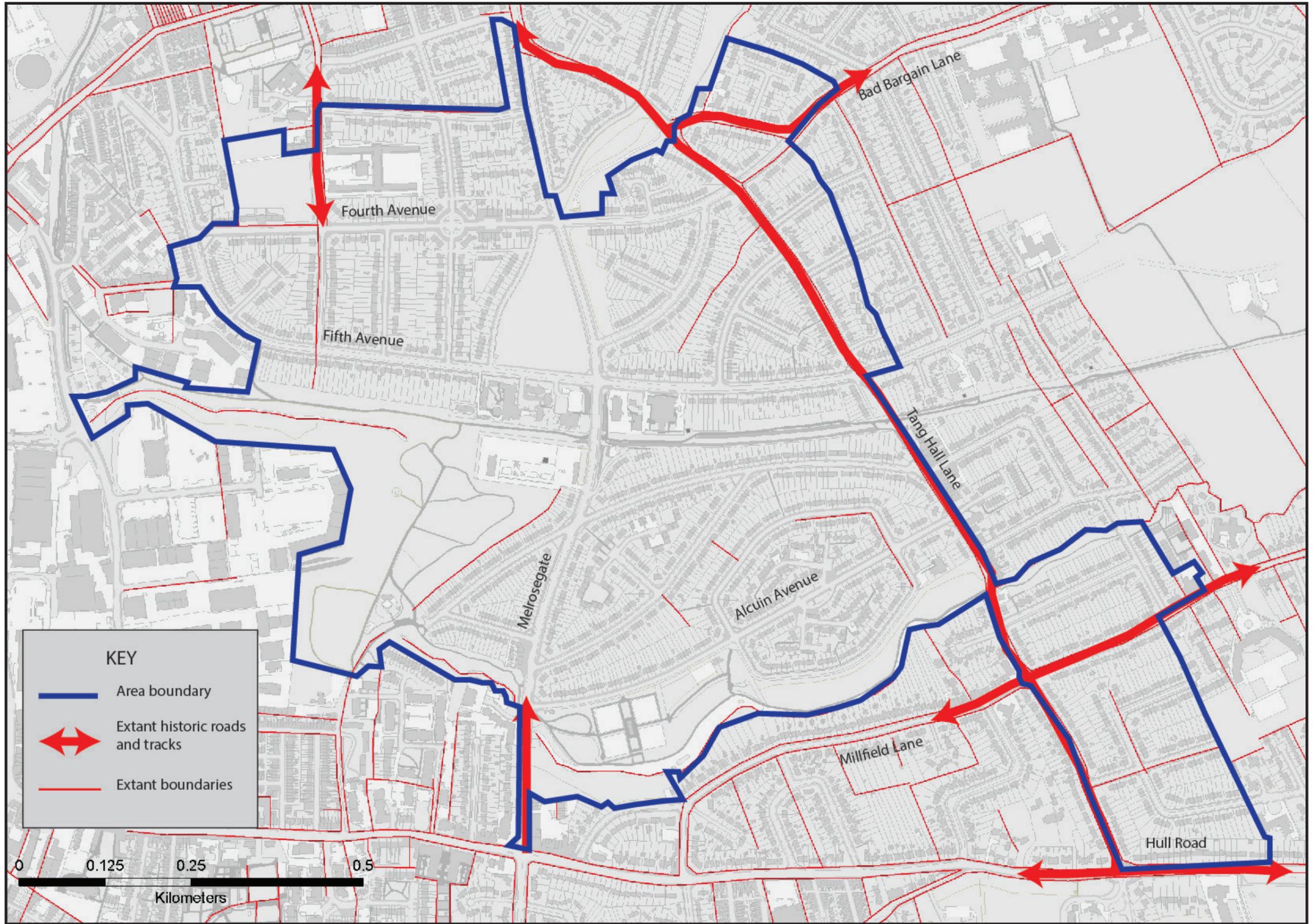


Figure ground map showing the relationship between open space (black) and the built environment



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