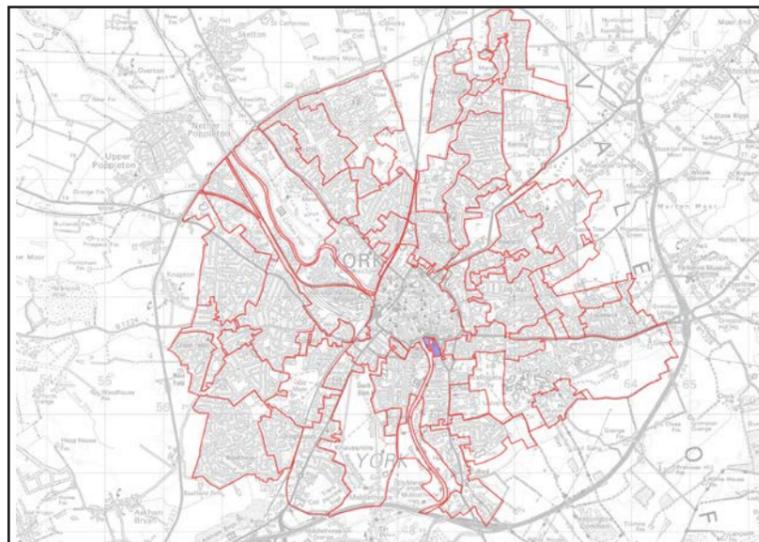
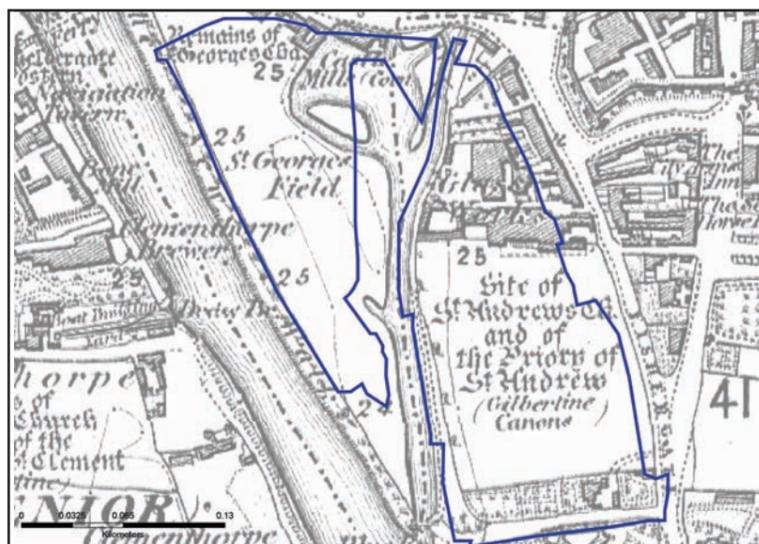


## Character area 66: Fishergate-River Ouse



Location of character area



Extract from First Edition Ordnance Survey Plan 1852

### Key Characteristics

**General Character:** Late 20th to early 21st century redevelopment including pattern book two-three storey residential developments, bingo hall and five storey hotel building

Bounded by Tower Street to the north, River Ouse to west, Fishergate to east and Blue Bridge Lane to the south  
River Foss runs roughly NE-SW through the centre of this area

Includes St. George's Field car park/flood plain

Low-lying topography

Partly within New Walk/Terry Avenue Conservation Area

Area of Archaeological Importance

Approximate walking/cycling distance to the city centre from Fewster Way 0.8km via Piccadilly

**Dominant Housing Type:** Two to three-storey linked terraces and apartments in variety of styles featuring mixture of communal parking and driveways.

**Other Key Housing Types:** Three-storey townhouse with garage to ground floor

**Designated Heritage Assets:** Site of St. George's Chapel (SAM), Grade II listed Skeldergate Bridge (part) and Central Area of Archaeological Importance and the New Walk/Terry Avenue Conservation Area (part)

**Non-designated Heritage Assets:** Unlisted historic River Foss Navigation structures including Castle Mills Lock, Site of St Andrew's Priory, Site of Castle mill and former glass works.

**Key Views:** Glimpses of castle area from riverside and views of River Ouse upstream and downstream as well as views of Skeldergate Bridge

**Surviving historic roads and tracks:** Blue Bridge Lane and New Walk

## Archaeology and history

Prehistoric artefacts found during archaeological excavations in the Blue Bridge Lane area are evidence of a background of prehistoric activity along the ridge of relatively high ground overlooking the River Ouse (EYO610). Lamel Hill to the east may also have prehistoric origins. The convergence of the Rivers Ouse and Foss is likely to have played a significant role in the development of this piece of land from the earliest times.

Evidence from excavations in the Fishergate/Fulford Road area suggests the presence of a main Roman road by the late 1st century. The road ran through Fishergate Bar and onto Fawcett Street towards Fulford Road. Roman inhumation and cremation cemeteries are known close to Fishergate (MYO2021) and along Lawrence Street, another Roman route to the north-east of Fulford Road. A Roman period ditch is also known within the Fishergate vicinity (MYO2286). Further evidence for Roman settlement and agricultural activity was uncovered during the Fishergate investigations and in Fulford to the south.

Evidence suggests the area was reoccupied during the 7th-9th century, part of a wider Anglian settlement of Eoforwic. No structures were excavated during archaeological investigations here (EYO610) but rubbish pits were encountered as well as evidence for bone, antler, leather and horn working. Anglo-Scandinavian occupation followed. At Fishergate House a sunken-featured building and associated rubbish pits were encountered.

Excavations in the Fishergate House-Blue Bridge Lane area on the border of this character area also revealed evidence for the cemetery of the pre-Conquest church of St. Helen's.

The Fishergate suburb has been continuously occupied from the 11th century to the present. The land between Fishergate and the River Foss was partly occupied by St Andrew's Priory (MYO3633) from the 12th to 16th century. A cemetery has been located to the south of the monastic precinct. St. George's Chapel (MYO2031), built in the 12th century was the castle chapel until granted to the Knights Templar in the late 13th. This gave its name to St. George's Field.

The site of the chapel is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 34837). Part of the Priory wall was discovered standing some 2m high during excavations in 1990 (EYO4).

Following the Dissolution St Andrew's Priory cemetery fell into disuse and the land may have been used as an orchard or put to arable use. The tree-lined New Walk (now a conservation area) was created in 1730 and by the late 18th century, Fishergate had become a fashionable residential area.

Construction in the vicinity of Blue Bridge Lane of Freshfields House in the mid 18th century and commercial buildings in the late 19th century destroyed part of the cemetery.

At the northern border, adjacent to George's Chapel was Castle Mills, a corn mill served by a mill race controlled by a lock (MYO1775) and weir (MYO301). The mill and chapel were demolished in the mid 19th century in order to expand the basin and the lock. During the late 19th-early 20th century a public bath was constructed on St. George's Field which remained in use until the 1970s. A glassworks occupied the northern part of the site between Fishergate and River Ouse. The area between the glass works and Blue Bridge Lane remained open until the 1920s-30s. The business expanded until its relocation to Tadcaster in the 1950s. Several large buildings were constructed north of Blue Bridge Lane by the 1930s.

The glassworks site was cleared in the late 20th century and redeveloped to include a large housing estate and hotel. Further redevelopment occurred to north of Blue Bridge Lane in the early 21st century including another residential development and a Bingo Hall.

## Character

There are two residential developments within this area, Fewster Way and William Court. Fewster Way consists of two-three storey linked terrace, townhouse and apartment developments constructed in red/-brown brick. Few houses have garages but communal parking areas are provided.

The majority of houses have a small rear garden and a paved enclosed front garden area. Juliet balconies are in use on the apartment blocks and townhouses. The five storey Novotel Hotel is situated at the southern end of this residential area but is very much part of it, sharing brick colouring, paving and an access road into the site.

To the south, the more recent developments of William Court and the Bingo Hall exist. This smaller residential area consists of three-storey town houses with garages taking up the ground floor footprint and Juliet balconies to the first floor. The location of the garages may be a flood defence although the Foss Barrier keeps water levels low in this area. These residential buildings and the bingo hall are constructed of yellow/buff coloured bricks.

Both residential developments are bordered by high, brick boundary walls and back onto the River Foss tow path. The Blue Bridge (MYO296) links the New Walk, which follows the east bank of the River Ouse, across the Foss and back onto the Ouse riverside.

## Significance

**Archaeology:** The area runs alongside Fishergate/Fulford Road, an important Roman and possible prehistoric route. Prehistoric lithic scatters and evidence of Roman settlement and agricultural activity are known throughout the area.

The site north of Blue Bridge Lane was reoccupied during the 7th to 9th centuries attested by evidence craft activities. The Fishergate suburb was continuously occupied from at least the 11th century to the present and included St Andrew's Priory (MYO3633) and associated cemetery. St. George's Chapel (MYO2031) was located at the northern part of the site.

The glassworks buildings would have had a detrimental effect on any surviving archaeology; however, recent excavations have proved that the area in general contains important archaeological deposits.

**Architecture:** The residential and commercial buildings of this part of Fishergate date to the late 20th and early 21st century. Fewster Way and William Court are high density developments similar to other styles across the country.

**Historic:** Blue Bridge Lane dates to at least the mid 19th century. The brick wall along Browney Dyke is the remains of the old glassworks boundary. No other internal historic boundaries survive in the area.

The name Browney Dyke may be medieval in date as it was the final point of the Foss from the Norman dam to the River Ouse.

**Streetscape components:** Generally asphalt footpath and carriageway surfaces throughout although herringbone paving is present on Fewster Way and cobbling features in some riverside areas. The riverside contains a mixture of 20th century cycle route signage, black bollards, notice boards, late 20th and early 21st century street lighting and seating.

**Aesthetics:** The riverside area of New Walk which passes by the western boundary provides an attractive route to and from the city. However, there are generally no aesthetically pleasing features within the character area.

## 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).

The existing car and coach park is a degraded space and opportunities for enhancement of the landscaping could usefully be identified. This is an important visitor destination and the pedestrian journey from here to the city centre could be significantly improved (see further, the York Access & Mobility Audit and Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal)

Wherever possible and practical, it is strongly recommended that inherited historic landscape grain evidenced through post-medieval and 19th century former field boundaries should be enhanced and conserved. These play a key role in explaining the historic development of the area. Where historic boundaries have been identified, either as surviving hedgerows or where retained as part of historic development, efforts should be made to ensure their continuing survival as part of any future development opportunities.

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

Thought should be given to providing interpretative panels which would better reveal the significance of sites such as the former churches/priory, Foss Barrier and Castle Mills.

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

Despite their age and text book appearance the styles and features of the modern housing estates should be noted to inform future proposals and monitor change. Any further housing development in this area should attempt to match existing modern housing in terms of style, material and proportions.

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

St George's Field is a flood prone area with views of the Rivers Ouse and Foss as well as York Castle. Development should be restricted to low rise, river based activities.

## Character Area 66: Images



*Fewster Way development from the Foss riverbank*



*William Court from the Blue Bridge*



*Novotel located within the housing estate*



*Mecca Bingo Hall, Fishergate*



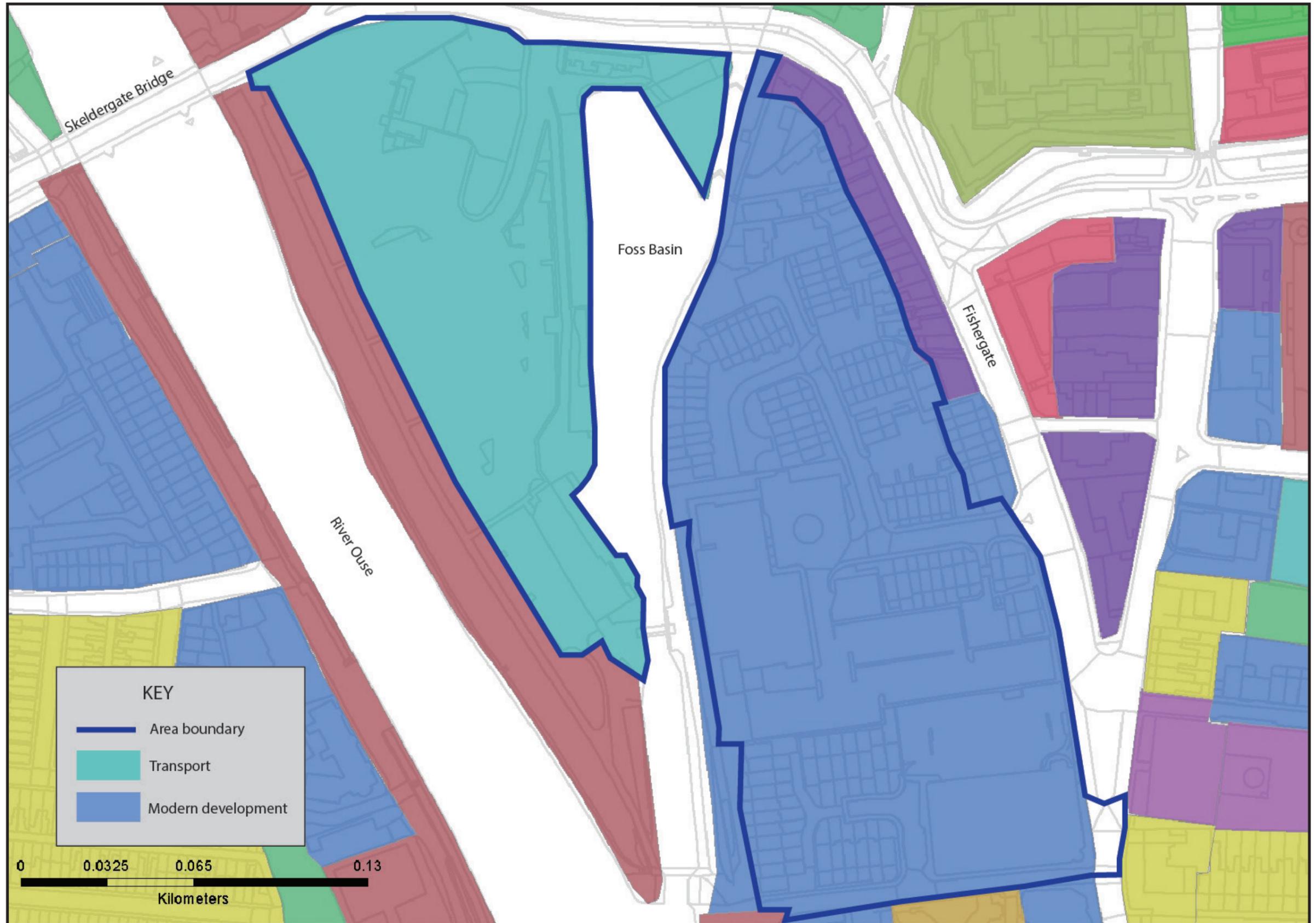
*View from Blue Bridge facing north-east*



*Central facing area of William Court*

### Character Area 66: Maps

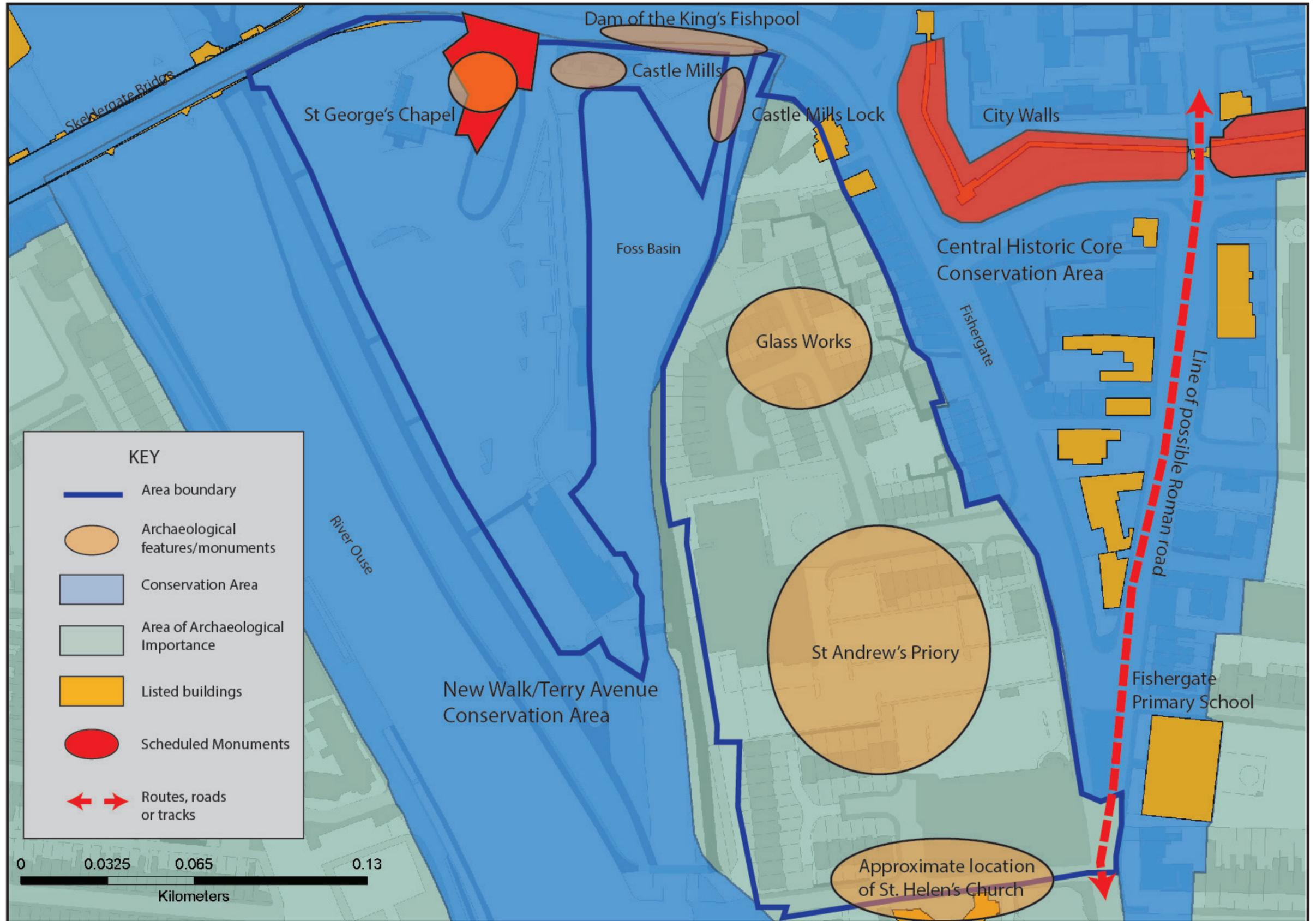
Broad Type characterisation plan. The white roadways indicate roads or lanes visible on the 1852 Ordnance Survey Plan.



Topography



Archaeology and heritage assets



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

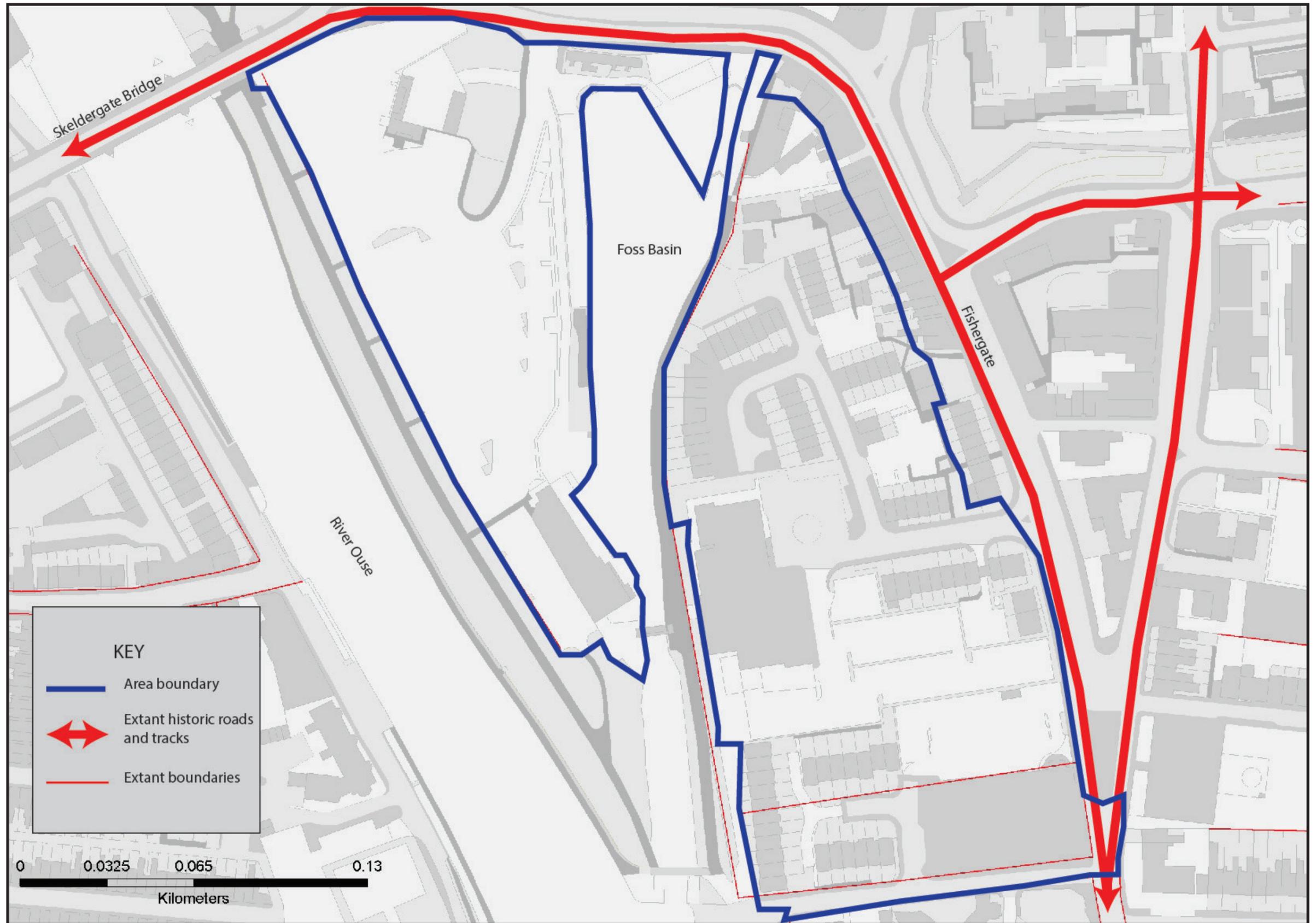
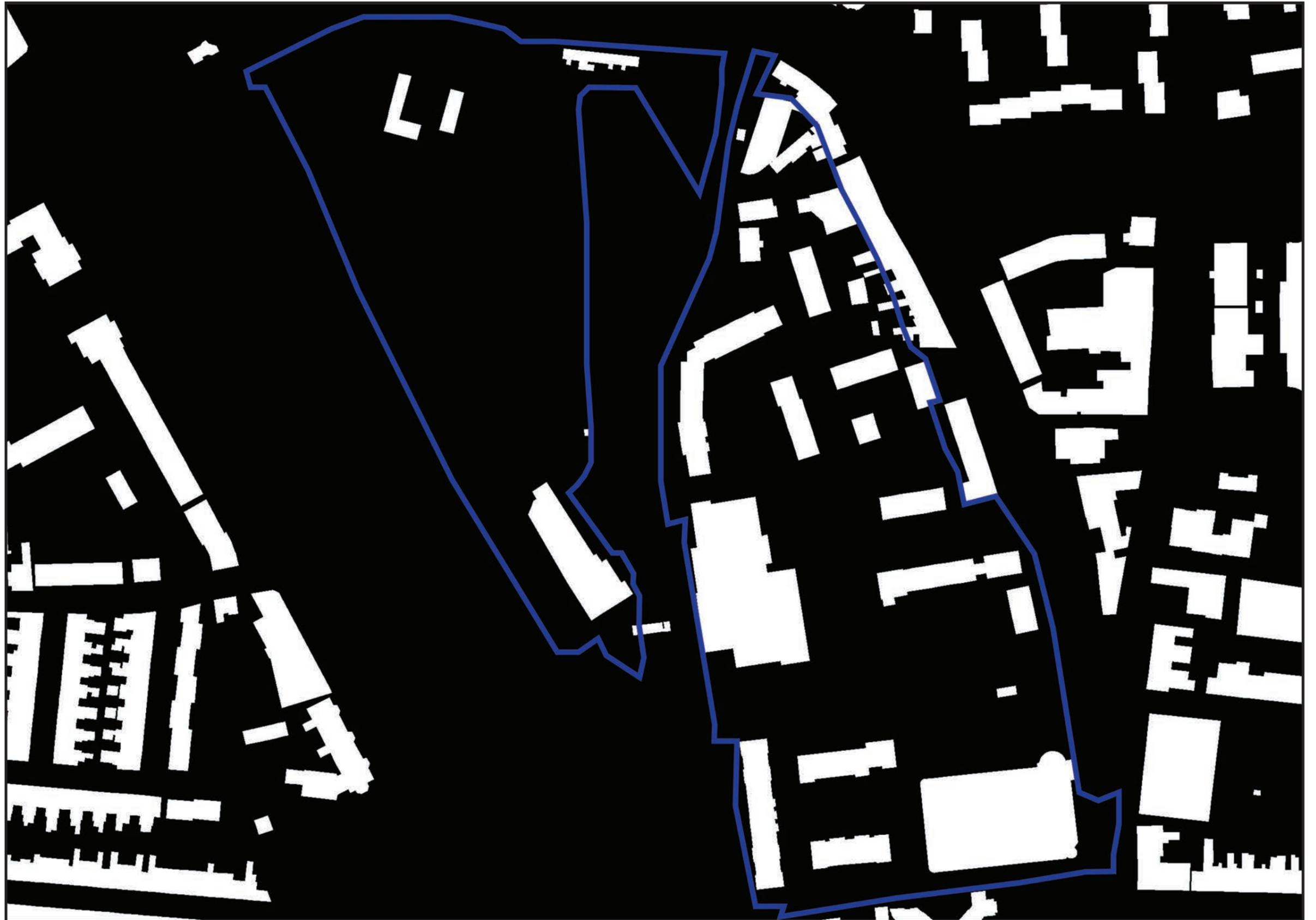


Figure ground map showing the relationship between open space (black) and the built environment



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