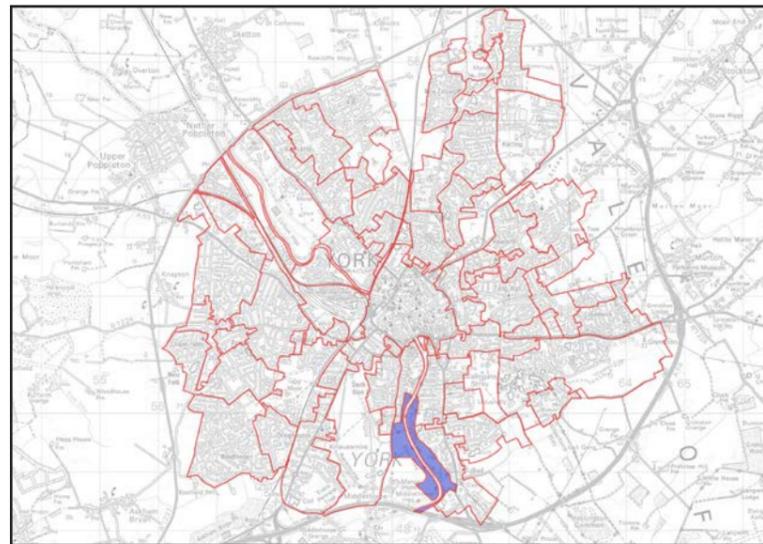
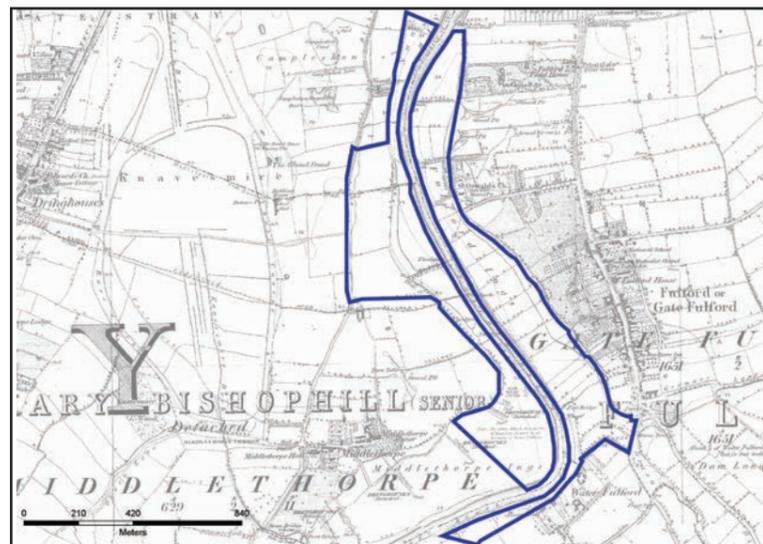


## Character area 69: Fulford and Nun/ Middlethorpe Ings



Location of character area



Extract from First Edition Ordnance Survey Plan 1852

### Key Characteristics

**General Character:** River Ouse floodplain of the Ings on the banks of the River Ouse bounded by 19th to 20th century residential properties

Nun/Middlethorpe Ings located on the west bank and Fulford Ings on the east bank

Area extends northwards to New Walk and Rowntree Park, is bounded by Fulford to the east, Bishopthorpe Road to the east and agricultural land to the south

The topology of the area is low lying in the vicinity of the river with higher ground in the vicinity of Fulford Road and Bishopthorpe Road

Germany Beck meets the river on Fulford Ings

Site of Special Scientific Interest

Integral part of York's flood defence

Distinctive landscape feature

Part of York's Green Infrastructure

Continuous history over 2000 years

Mid to long distance cycle and footpaths through open countryside – a key component of one of York's principal characteristics (Landscape & Setting)

Approximate walking/cycling distance to the city centre from Fulford Ings 2.7km via cycle route 66

**Dominant Housing Type:** None

**Other Key Buildings:** York Motor Boat Club House and Pump House

**Designated Heritage Assets:** None

**Non-designated Heritage Assets:** Site of Second World War searchlight battery and 18th century enclosure boundaries

**Key Views:** Good views of the river and Millennium Bridge with glimpses of the Terry's clock tower

**Surviving historic roads and tracks:** Bishopthorpe Road and various footpaths along the riverside such as the one between Fulford Ings and Fulford itself

## Archaeology and history

There is no evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity or settlement except for an intriguing reference in the Historic Environment Record to a Roman burial from Nunthorpe Ings (MYO65). This is not surprising considering the majority of the area is fully in the River Ouse flood plain.

Archaeological evaluation on Bishopthorpe Road, immediately to the north of part of this site revealed evidence of Roman and medieval agricultural activity (EYO128), and possible Roman occupation on the site of Terry's factory (EYO786). There is some evidence to suggest that Bishopthorpe Road may also be Roman in origin as a compact cobbled surface was discovered in 1981 2m below ground level (referred to in EYO786).

The stretch of Ings towards Rowntree Park and Nunthorpe on the east side of the Ouse is known as Nun Ings. A Roman pottery sherd has also been located in this area (MYO214) as well as evidence for Roman occupational activity during the excavation of gravel pits (referred to in report for EYO786). The name Nun Ings derives from the ownership of the land in the medieval period by St. Clement's Nunnery. Further south it becomes Middlethorpe Ings.

By the 11th century references are made to 20 acres of meadow at Fulford in the Domesday Book. The Battle of Fulford may have been fought on Fulford Ings in 1066 although other sites further east have been suggested. The majority of the Ings in this area were later bestowed upon St Mary's Abbey. After the dissolution in 1539, most ecclesiastical lands were re-distributed by the Crown although the church did retain significant holdings in this area and in Clifton. Although the lowest lying areas would almost certainly have been water meadow, there are substantial earthwork remains of medieval ridge & furrow on Nun Ings on the higher ground indicating that arable cultivation had also occurred.



View from Nun Ings towards St. Oswald's Hall  
c.1895 - City of York Archives

Following enclosure in the mid 18th century several of the Ings fields were portioned into smaller fields. At Bishopthorpe, 50 acres of Ings meadow were enclosed in 1756 and at Fulford 50 acres in 1759. Ditches or hedgerows would have partitioned the Ings.

Several boundaries, particularly on the Fulford Ings date back to this period.

The river continued to provide a means of commercial transport in York despite the construction of the railways. Fulford contained a wharf area while various rail lines ran across Nun Ings and Fulford Ings in the mid 19th century serving nearby gravel extraction sites.

A Second World War searchlight battery (MYO3558) was situated just to the south of Nun Ings. The site was levelled by 1986 but concrete remains can still be seen in the ground.

## Character

The Ings area is characterised by large open green floodplains that provide recreational spaces as well as traffic free, scenic footpaths and cycleways leading to and from the city centre.

The predominant use of the area appears to be as a transient area as people use the quiet riverbanks to access the city. However at the northern end of these Ings, close to South Bank, larger flat open spaces exist which are used for recreational purposes.

The area, surrounding the Millennium Bridge is a busy crossroads between Fulford, South Bank, the city centre and Middlethorpe further south. Seating and wayfinding signage is more abundant in the vicinity of the bridge. Local residents and those that work nearby use the area to sit and have lunch on warmer days.

The area is generally screened from nearby development by mature trees and hedgerows. Access to the Ings can be gained from a number of locations. Seating is provided throughout, particularly in the most picturesque and frequently used stretches closer to the city centre/northern end.

Towards the south and the Middlethorpe area the Ings become less populated and feels much more rural. Along the most popular areas the cycle and footpaths are asphalt. However, in this area, the paths peter out into informal tracks. Several houseboats are moored on the Fulford side of the river. These have small garden areas between the river and the towpath and are accessed by car via St. Oswald's Road, Fulford.

A small seating area is located close to the entrance to the Fulford Ings from Selby Road. The seating is of low quality and has suffered from vandalism, presumably due to its isolated location. A sign informing the visitor about the Tansy Beetle is also situated here.

## Significance

**Archaeology:** Important in the prehistoric and Roman periods for grazing, hunting and fishing but unlikely to reveal any significant evidence. The higher ground adjacent to Fulford Road and Bishopthorpe Road has the potential to reveal evidence of Roman roadside settlement but there has been limited evidence.

During the medieval period, this rich agricultural land was divided into strips to be farmed by individuals. Ridge and furrow is recorded on a small patch of higher ground between Nun and Middlethorpe Ings.

**Architecture:** Modern and inter-war houses partly border the Nun Ings. Otherwise the area is devoid of structures except for the boat club house and small industrial work, both located on the east side of the river.

**Historic:** Examples of mid to late 18th century boundaries can still be seen on Fulford Ings, running in a NE-SW direction. Many were lost during the mid 20th century. The riverside towpaths themselves are also historic in nature and are likely to date to the medieval period.

Overall approximately 25% of the field boundaries shown on the 1850s ordnance survey plan are extant including the boundaries of the flood plain itself.

The significance of the Ings grassland cannot be over emphasised. This site provides a significant flood defence for the city and provides a visible link to how the area appeared over centuries. It is a valued resource to many interest groups as well as being an aesthetically pleasing open area. It is one of a number of Ings meadows within York, which form one of the city's distinct landscape features.

Fulford Ings is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest as it supports a sequence of plant communities now uncommon as a result of the drainage and fragmentation of wetlands.

**Streetscape components:** A mixture of late 20th century and early 21st century signage, lighting and seating is in use throughout the area. Some of these components were erected as part of the New Walk Millennium project when the bridge was constructed. Cycle paths and footpaths are generally asphalt although on the east side of the river along Fulford Ings, the pathway is a gravel/informal track.

**Aesthetics:** Large open green areas including recreational areas and wild grasslands. Views of the Terry's factory clock tower and the Millennium Bridge can be glimpsed from various points along the riverside.

The meadows are a national stronghold for the Tansy Beetle (data list 2 species). The meadows are managed by a number of local interest groups and professional bodies. However, they are still under threat from pollution and neglect.

The riverside contains a well-used cycle (part of National Cycle Route 65) and footpath linking the city centre to open countryside and Selby. These mid-long distance cycle and footpaths through open countryside contribute to York's principal characteristic, Landscape & Setting.

## Opportunities and recommendations

Presently the national cycle route is a shared route with pedestrians and there are tensions between these two uses, especially on the Ings.

Pedestrian movement is significant and includes many families, older people and disabled access is generally good. Opportunities for creating separate cycle paths should be considered. Also, in some places the existing path is too narrow for the volume of use.

The Ings are part managed through time limited stewardship agreements and plans for more long term management could usefully be worked up.

There is an opportunity to open up more of the riverside path to Bishopthorpe for disabled access.

Opportunities for improving the consistency of modern street furniture should be identified, in particular the enhancement of existing pedestrian surfaces, cycling facilities and upgrades of existing street furniture. This should be done following guidance contained in the City of York Streets and Spaces Strategy and Guidance.

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 heritage assets and local landmarks should be maintained and enhanced to help orientation and enhance local distinctiveness.

## Character Area 69: Images



*West side of the River Ouse*



*Lane leading west to the Bishopthorpe Road area from riverside.*



*East side of the River Ouse*



*West side of the River Ouse*



*View of Terry's Factory from the east side of the River Ouse.*



*West side of the River Ouse*



*Faint traces of ridge and furrow close to the hedgerow on the west side of the River Ouse.*



*View of the Millennium Bridge and contemporary seating on the east side of the river.*



*Example of late 20th century seating on the west side of the river.*



*Wayfinding and cycle gate on Fulford Ings.*



*Seating area on Fulford Ings.*



*Terry's clock tower viewed from the Millennium Bridge.*



*Contemporary wayfinding and late 20th century street lighting on the west side of the River Ouse.*



*Track at southern end of Fulford Ings.*



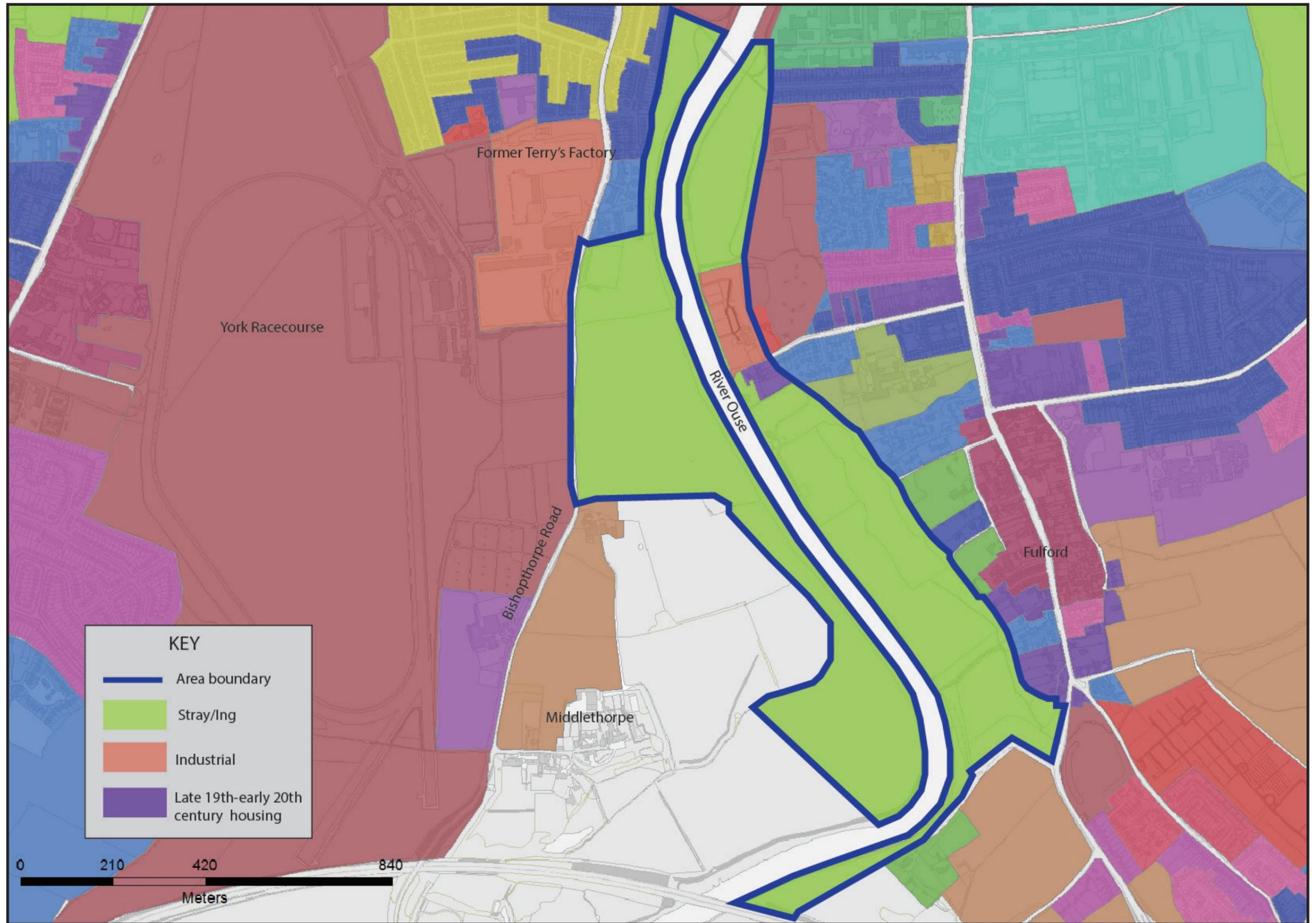
*View northwards from the Millennium Bridge.*



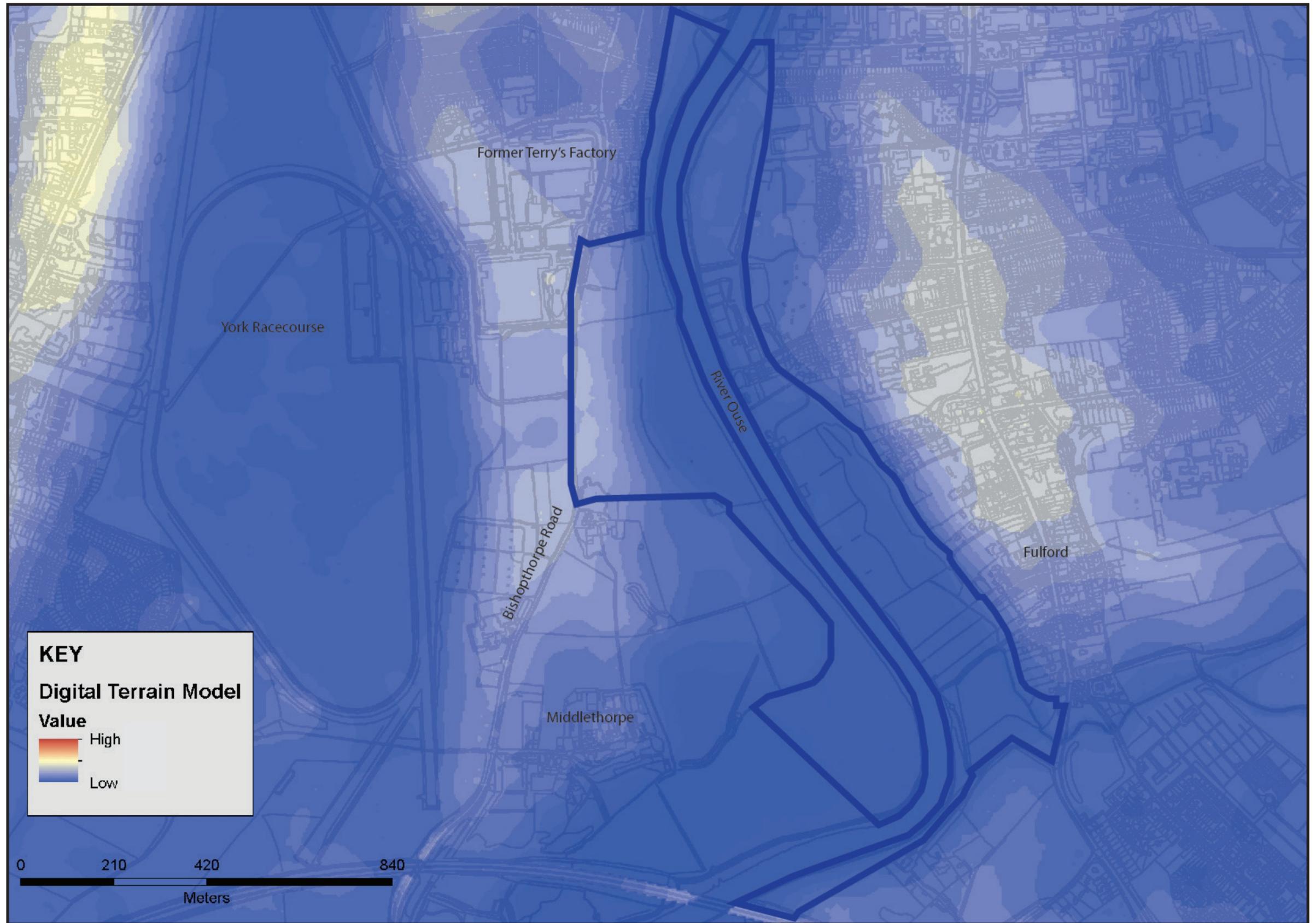
*Field boundary running NE-SW dating to the mid-late 18th century, Fulford Ings.*

## Character Area 69: Maps

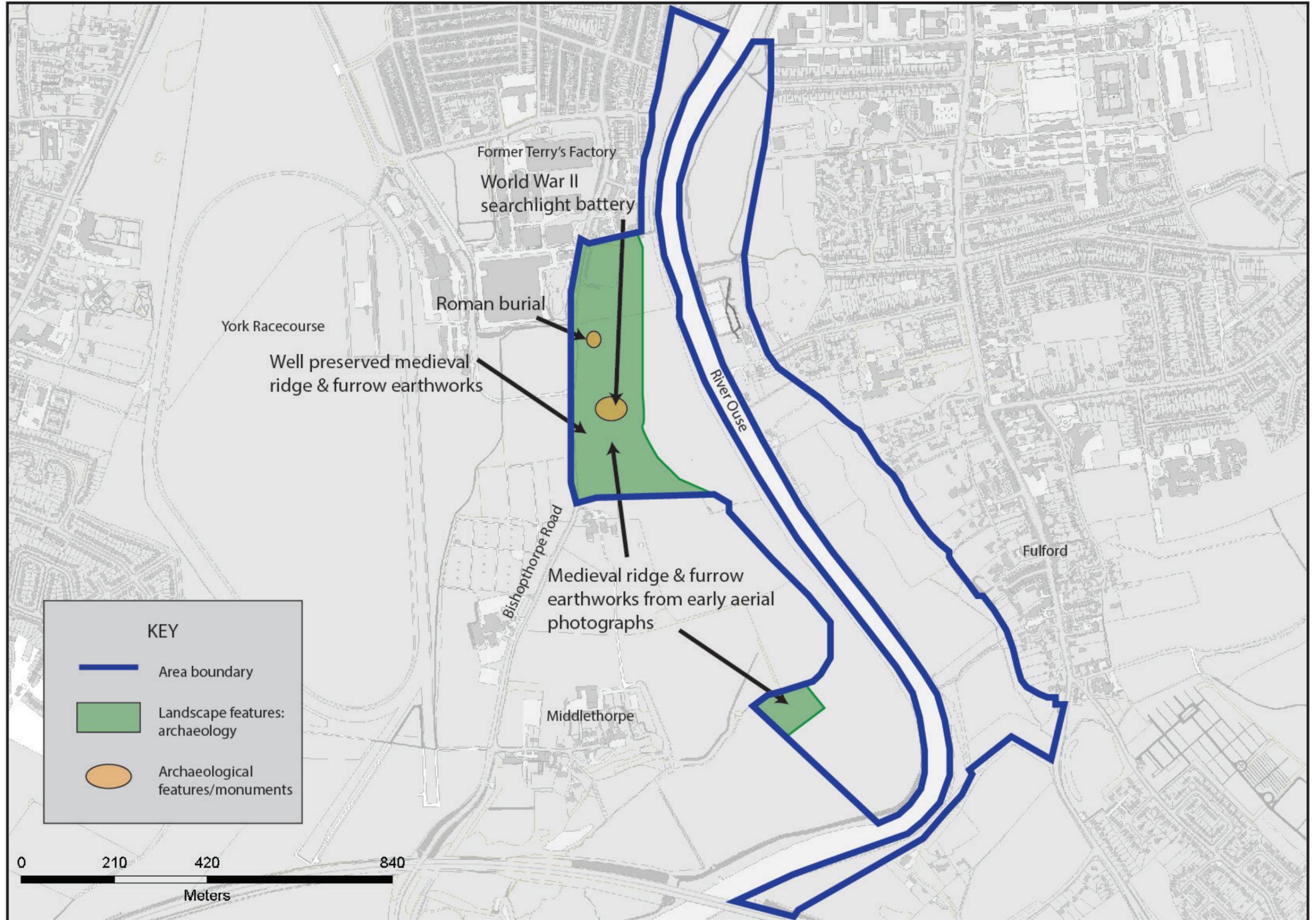
Broad Type characterisation plan. The white roadways indicate roads or lanes visible on the 1852 Ordnance Survey Plan.



Topography



Archaeology and heritage assets



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

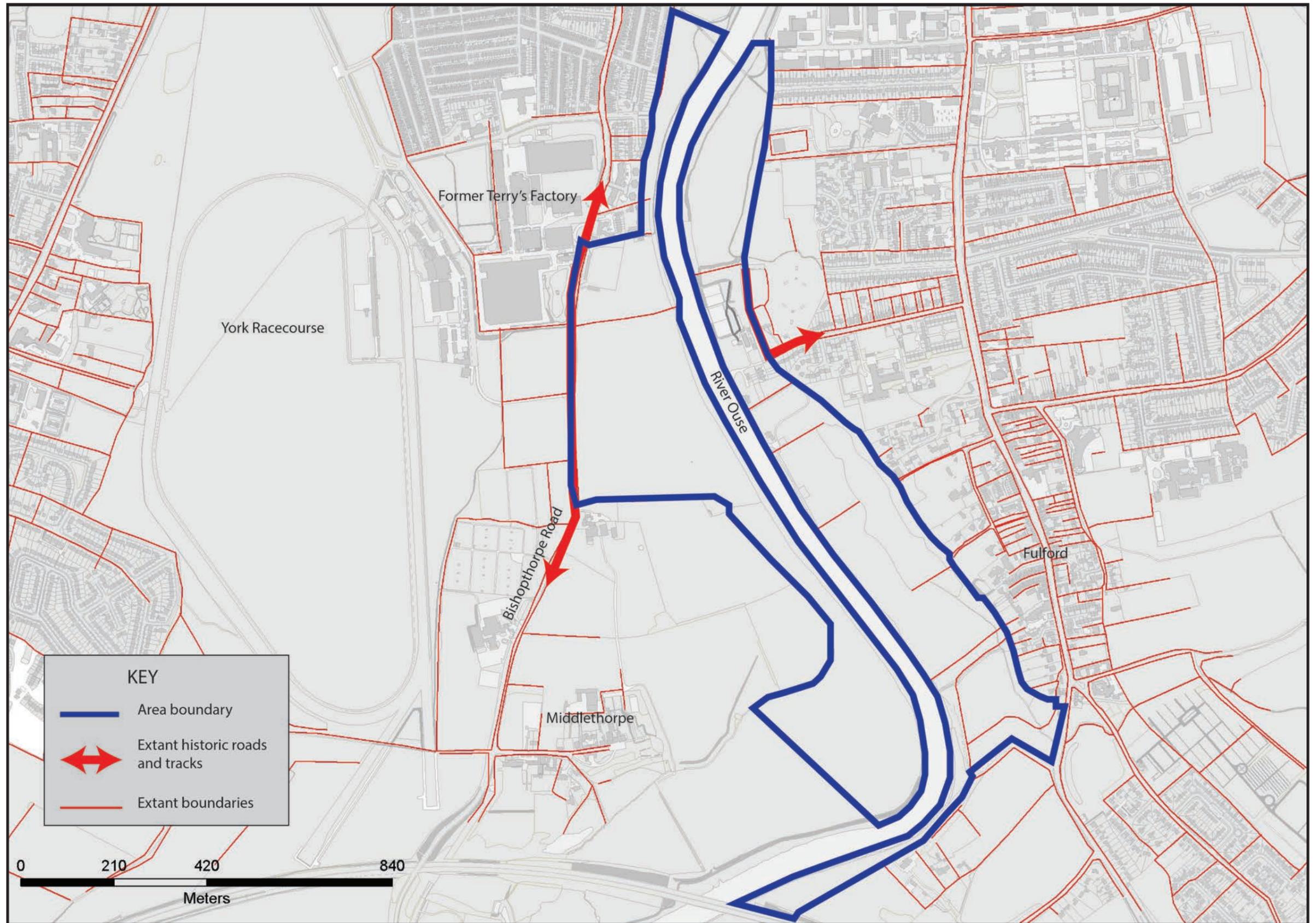


Figure ground map showing the relationship between open space (black) and the built environment



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