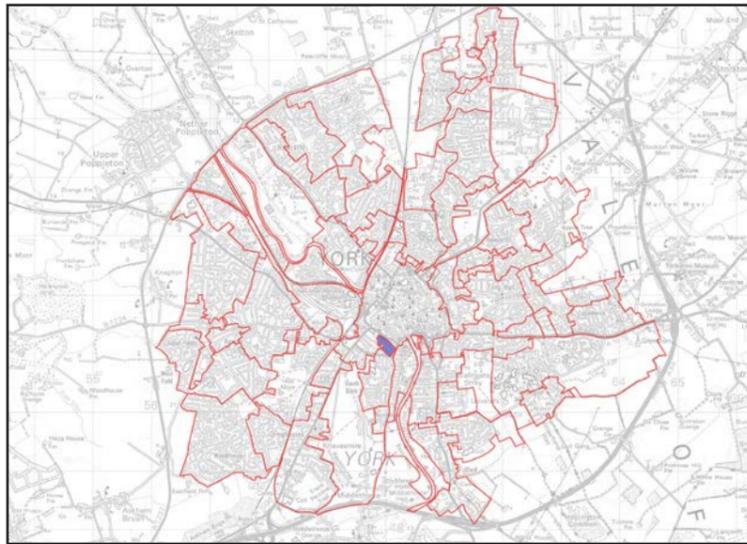
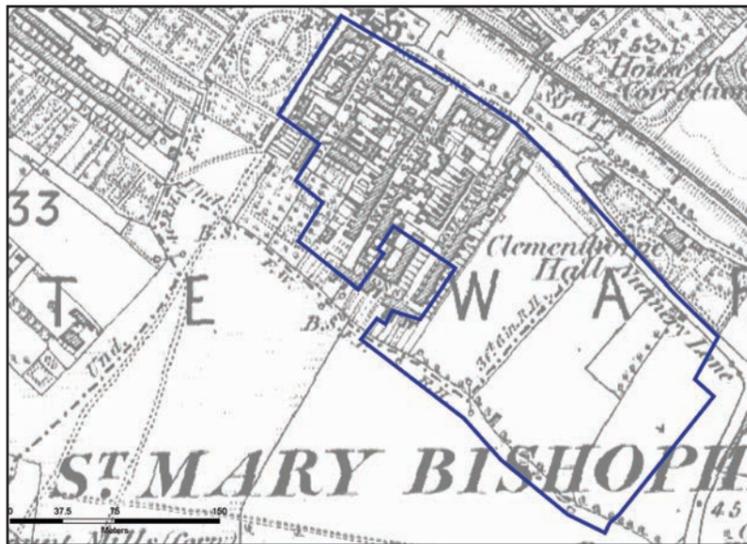


## Character area 73: Nunnery Lane



Location of character area



Extract from First Edition Ordnance Survey Plan 1852

### Key Characteristics

**General Character:** A largely redeveloped area of social housing dating to the mid 20th century. Former Victorian terraced housing remains on Nunnery Lane.

Bounded by Nunnery Lane to the north, St. Benedict Road to the south and east and Scarcroft Lane to west

Low lying topography gently rising southwards towards St. Benedict Road

Core Area of Archaeological Importance

1950s redevelopment has retained 19th century linear street pattern

1960s redevelopment has created new street layout with no reference to the original streetscape

Approximate walking/cycling distance to the city centre from the centre of St. Benedict Road 0.9km via Bridge Street

**Dominant Housing Type:** Two to three storey 1950s and 60s social housing apartment blocks

**Other Key Housing Types:** Two storey 1960s linked terrace housing, surviving two storey 19th century terraced housing and two to three storey 21st century townhouses

**Designated Heritage Assets:** Area of Archaeological Importance

**Non-designated Heritage Assets:** Historic boundary preserved as rear division between Nunthorpe Road and St. Benedict Road

**Key Views:** Views of City Walls on Nunnery Lane

**Surviving historic roads and tracks:** Nunnery Lane, Swann Street, Dale Street and Scarcroft Lane

## Archaeology and history

Despite the area lying within the Central Area of Archaeological Importance, little is known from this area. 100m to the north west, archaeological investigations (EYO4206) revealed evidence of Roman burials and cobbled surfacing but no evidence of occupation. Interestingly, one trench uncovered a peaty deposit that corresponds to the low lying ground indicated on the topography map and is thought to represent a boggy area contemporary with the Roman period and later. About 150m to the north East, evidence of a possible Roman villa was located during archaeological investigations (MYO2013). Development within this area in the 1950s and 1960s was not accompanied by any archaeological investigation.

The area outside the city walls was virtually all agricultural land until the late 18th and early 19th century, the exceptions being the principal routes into the city. Scarcroft Lane provided an access point to the Knavesmire and Micklegate Stray which were the grazing grounds for the Freemen of the Ward.

By the early 19th century (1820s), residential development had spread outside of the city walls in this area. This phase of development included Dale Street, Swann Street and Dove Street. These houses were terraced but were constructed in shorter rows than the later Victorian terraces. Further east towards Bishopthorpe Road, the area remained open and undeveloped. In between Nunnery Lane and the city walls was Clementhorpe Hall and associated gardens.

Between 1852 and 1893 the remaining vacant land, the former site of Clementhorpe Hall and the St. Clement's Priory site were developed as terraced streets.

By 1951 some of the older housing on Dale Street and Swan Street was demolished followed in the 1960s by the demolition of the late 19th century housing in between Custance Walk and Bishopthorpe Road. These streets, including Victoria Street, Drake Street and Spencer Street, were replaced by blocks of low rise council flats with wide streets and spaces between. 19th century terraces remain fronting Nunnery Lane. Part of Dove Street and Dale Street are also extant and form part of the Historic Core Conservation Area.

## Character

The oldest buildings in the area are situated on Nunnery Lane. These buildings are predominantly two storeys in height and consist of a mixture of residential and commercial premises including five public houses. Original timber sash windows survive in places. The Trafalgar Bay Public House has decorative brown glazed bricks to the exterior. On the corner of Dale Street stands the former Britannia Inn. It was converted into a residential and community facility in the mid 20th century. Guppy's Enterprise Club provides a meeting place for many clubs and societies. The building retains a glazed fanlight on a side entrance bearing the name 'Bottle and Jug' which refers to a 'take-away' service where people could take their own bottle/jug to be filled to consume at home.

The terraces on Nunnery Lane are generally without front garden areas with the exception of a handful of houses close to where the road branches off onto Price's Lane. Several Victorian buildings also remain on Custance Walk (formerly part of Dove Street). One house is of particular interest as it retains a carriage arch, now in use as a garage.

The post-war clearance of Dale and Swann Street was followed by the construction of brick, two storey apartments. These buildings were constructed in similar styles to contemporary social housing designs elsewhere and consist of four properties linked together in a short terrace with an arched doorway giving access to the rear. These flats have front and rear gardens and on street parking. On Swann Street the western side of the road contains three storey apartments built in the same short terrace style. In this area there are no garden driveway conversions and where originally constructed, hedgerows supported by concrete posts to front gardens survive well. Concrete washing line posts have also been noted in this area.

The Cygnet Public House replaced a pub of the same name in the post-war period, which had originally occupied the corner of Price and Cygnet Street. It has itself been recently (2013) replaced by a small townhouse development.

During the 1960s further redevelopment took place. Two-three storey apartment blocks and linked terraces were constructed served by communal parking areas and flat roofed garage blocks.

Orientation plans are provided at several locations as non-residents may find the layout disorientating. These houses contain front and rear gardens often bounded by wooden fencing, pitched roofs and white and dark green weatherboards. The bricks used in this development are a lighter colour than earlier developments. The houses in this estate were constructed in an irregular pattern, not following the Victorian linear street pattern which existed previously. St. Benedict's Road was created as an access road running around this residential area. Small squared communal green spaces have been created within the estate although this does little to break up its urban nature.

Barstow House is located within this area providing sheltered housing. It was refurbished in 1999.

Several new build town houses have been constructed on St. Benedict Road facing the car park area to the rear of Bishopthorpe Road. These houses are between two-three storeys in height and seem have more in common with the large Victorian houses of Bishopthorpe Road than the mid 20th century buildings adjacent to them.

## Significance

**Archaeology:** Not much information recorded on HER although Nunnery Lane lies close to riverside areas of high Roman–medieval activity as well as the medieval city and early castle area. It is therefore included within the Core Area of Archaeological Importance.

A small amount of monitoring work on Bishopthorpe Road to depths of 2m below ground level revealed truncated modern road surfaces situated on top of natural clay (EYO779).

**Architecture:** The residential buildings consist of several terraces and public houses dating to the early to late 19th century. The majority of houses date to the 1950s and 1960s and are devoid of architectural or historical merit. There are no listed buildings within this area.

**Historic:** Approximately 40% of the field and street boundaries shown on the 1852 Ordnance Survey are retained in the contemporary streetscape. Nunnery Lane may have pre-Conquest origins due to the recording of it as Baggersgate in 1241 (Palliser 1978). The southern boundary of this area, to the rear of St. Benedict Road and housing on Nunthorpe Road has been dated to at least the late 17th century. Scarcroft Lane was formerly part of the access route to the Knavesmire and Micklegate Stray.

The first phase of redevelopment in the 1950s kept the linear street pattern and street names of the 19th century terraces. The 1960s redevelopment is much more typical of its time and was constructed in an irregular layout disregarding previous street patterns and names. The northern tips of the Victorian creations of Drake Street, Spencer Street, Victoria Street and Clement Street can be seen leading southwards from Nunnery Lane. These are all now used as parking and access areas – they are all blocked (with the exception of Drake Street) by concrete bollards to prevent vehicles joining St. Benedict Road.

**Streetscape components:** Generally asphalt footpath and carriageways with the exception of the former Victorian streets leading from Nunnery Lane e.g. Spencer Street which contain a mixture of asphalt covering and concrete flags.

Dale Street and St Benedict Road have restricted access from Nunnery Lane for pedestrians and cyclists only. This is enforced by black iron bollards. An ornate cast iron post is situated on the corner of Nunnery Lane and Swann Street – possibly a telegraph pole. Nunnery Lane contains a mixture of 20th century cycle route and traffic signage, post boxes, bus stops, Edinburgh style waste bins, mid to late 20th century seating and mid-late 20th century street lighting including many concrete examples. On St. Benedict Road, concrete bollards and mid-late 20th century street lighting are in use.

**Aesthetics:** Two small paved seating areas are situated on the busy bus route of Nunnery Lane, presumably created in the late 1950s-60s. The City Walls can be glimpsed from within the post-war and 1960s estates. However, the traffic on Nunnery Lane as well as the car parking areas in front of the walls detracts from the aesthetic value of this grand medieval structure. The bell tower of the nearby Scarcroft Road primary school can be clearly seen from Dale Street as well as from St. Benedict Road where it runs behind Nunthorpe Road.

## 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).

Removal of original streetscape features over time has had a negative impact on the character of the area – further loss of these features should be avoided where possible. 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 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.

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

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.

## Character Area 73: Images



*The rebuilt Victoria Vaults and remaining 19th century buildings on Custance Walk.*



*Swann Street*



*St. Benedict's Road with rear of Nunthorpe Road terraces (left) and Scarcroft school in background.*



*The Bottle and Jug fanlight on the former Britannia Inn.*



*The former Cygnet PH site.*



*21st century housing to the left with single storey garages and 1960s housing to right.*



*View of Nunnery Lane towards the junction with Price Lane.*



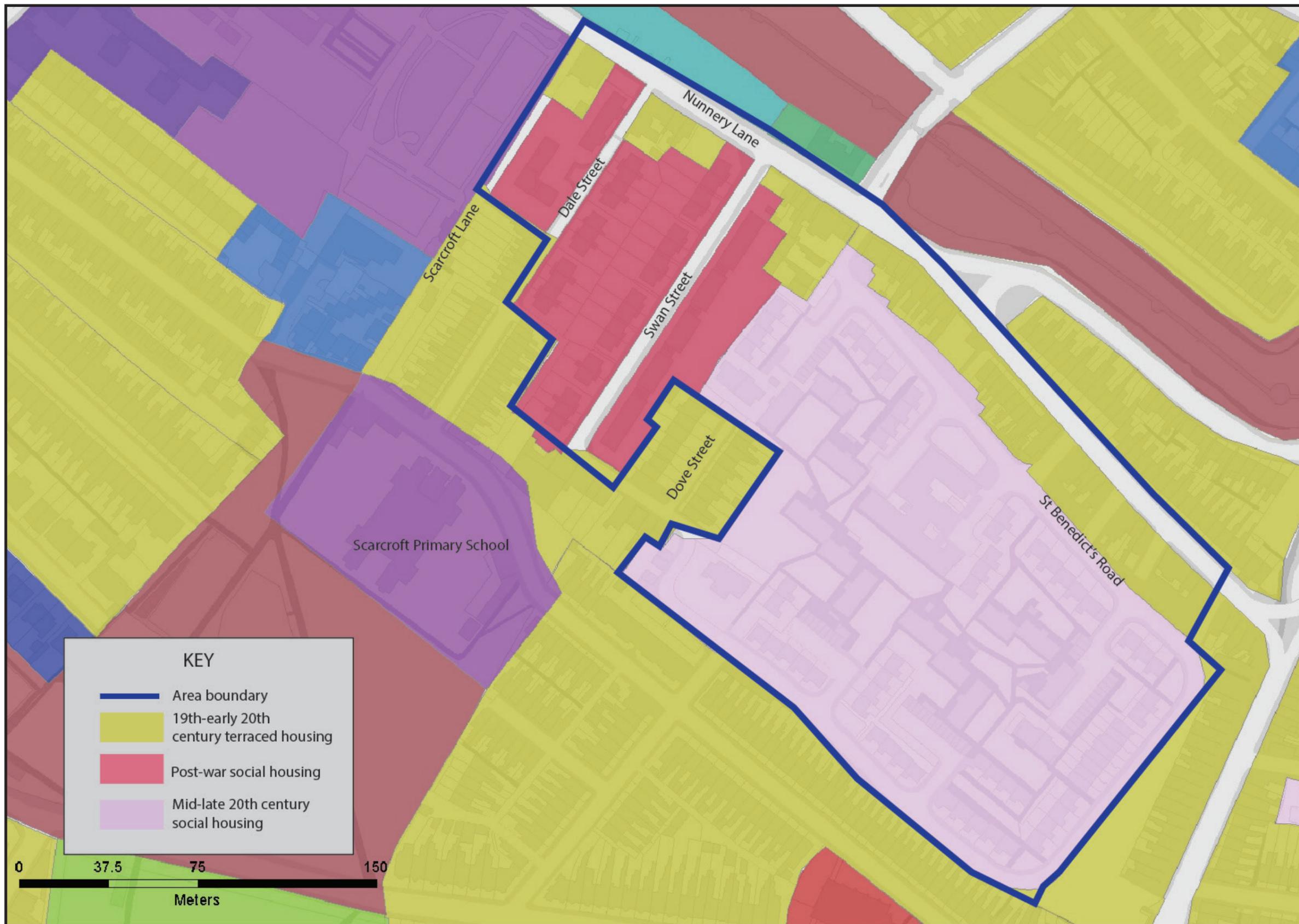
*St. Benedict's Road.*



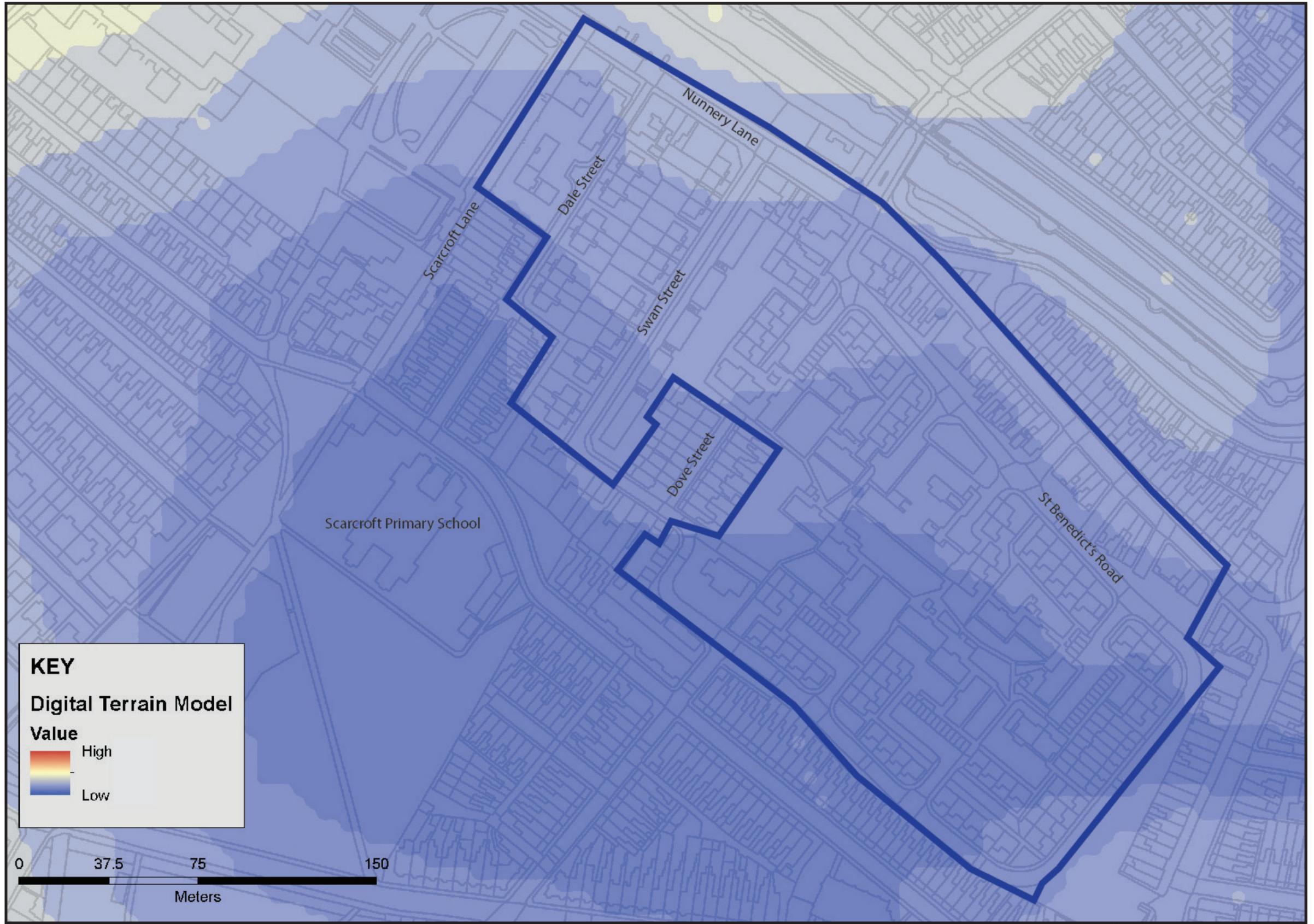
*21st century housing on St. Benedict's Road.*

## Character Area 73: Maps

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



Topography



Archaeology and designated heritage assets



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

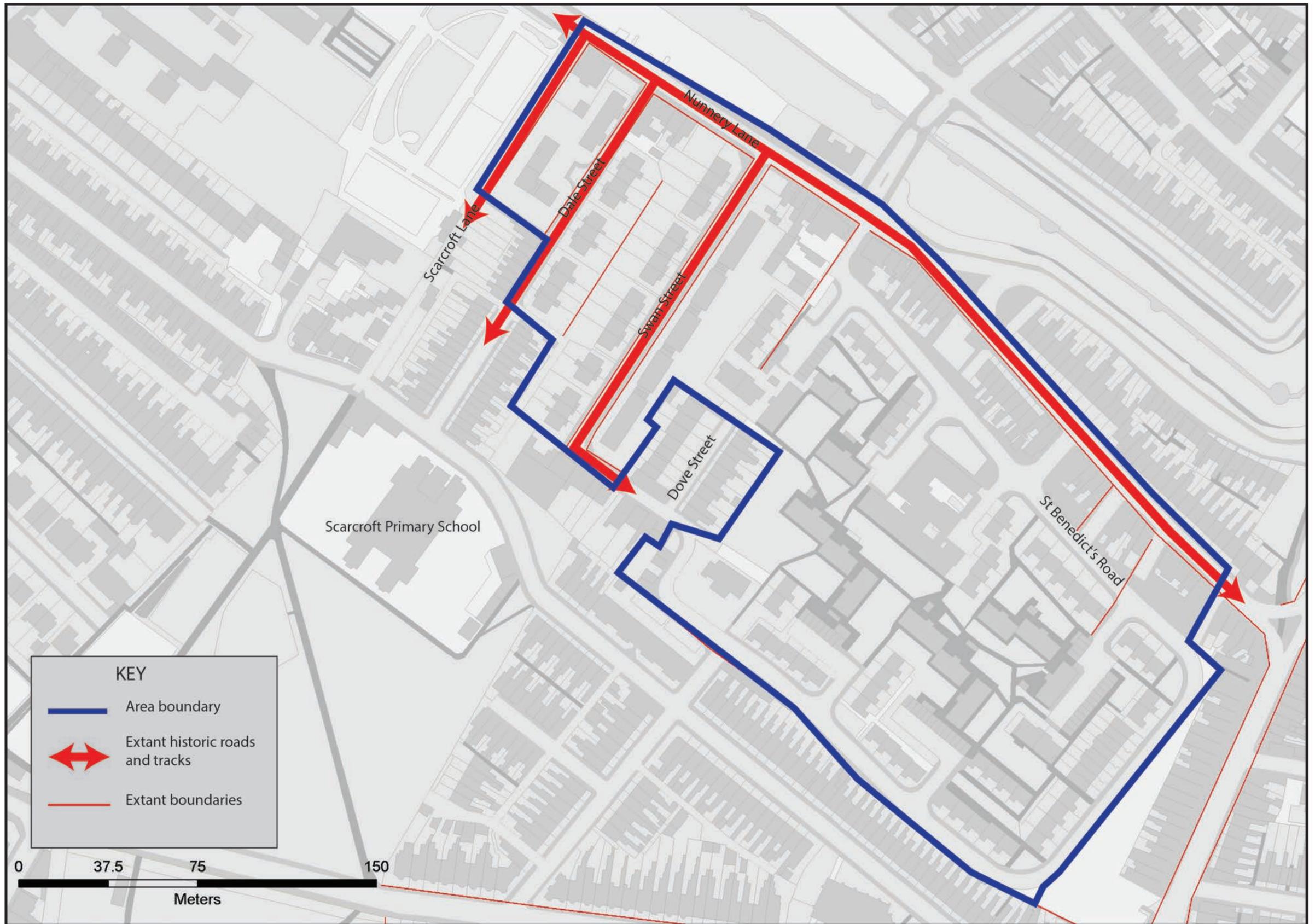


Figure ground map showing the relationship between open space (black) and the built environment



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