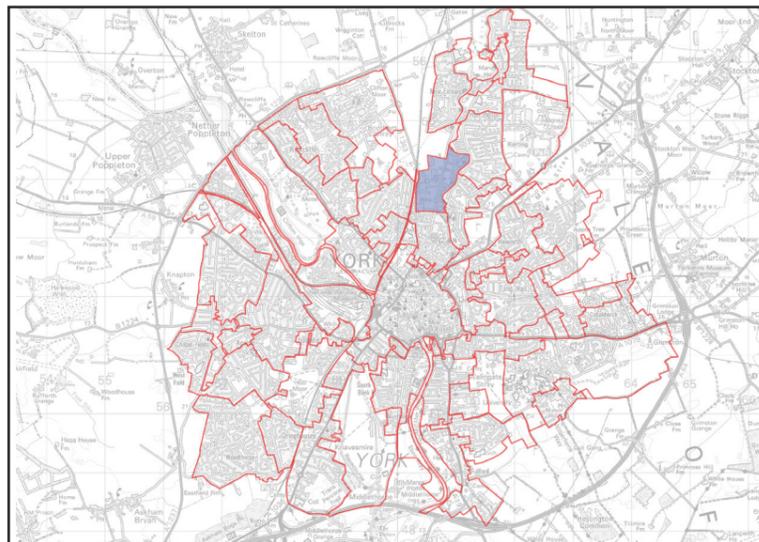
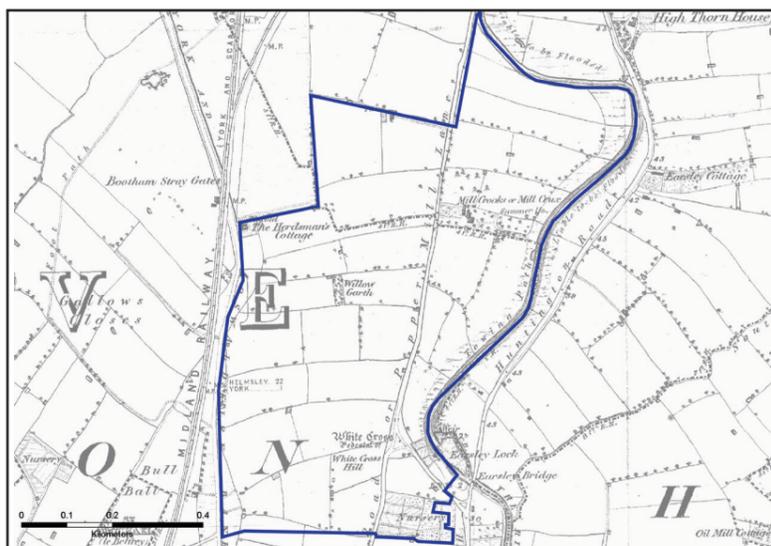


Character area 44: Rowntree-Nestlé Chocolate Factory



Location of character area



Extract from First Edition Ordnance Survey Plan 1852

Key Characteristics

General Character: Large early modern and contemporary industrial buildings which make up the Nestlé Rowntree site. Several other recreational buildings within this character area are associated with the factory and the Rowntree family. Housing in the area consists of small scale late 19th century development and a modern housing estate.

The land is relatively flat with a slight incline to the north, although the topography has been altered by the construction of the rail line and bridge crossing over it

The area is bounded by River Foss, disused railway (Foss Islands Branch), Wigginton Road and sports fields

Landmark buildings spanning important period of factory growth

Location of railway played an important role in the selection of the site for the factory

Major source of employment and Rowntree family associated with social reform

Chocolate and sweet making a key characteristic of York known nationally and internationally

Characteristic smell when factory in production

Contains Nestle/Rowntree Conservation Area

Link to city reinforced by Minster views from Haxby Road, elsewhere a suburban, anonymous vibe

Approximate walking/cycling distance to the city centre from Haxby Road/Haley Terrace 2.3km via Haxby Road and Clarence Street

Dominant Building Type: Large red brick and concrete three-five storey early 20th century industrial buildings and 20th and 21st century one-six storey glass and steel offices and industrial buildings

Other Key Housing Types: Short row of Victorian two-storey, semi-detached buildings and two-storey modern housing estate of predominantly linked terrace buildings

Designated Heritage Assets: White Stone Cross, Joseph Rowntree Theatre and Memorial Library (all Grade II listed), Nestle/Rowntree Conservation Area

Non-designated Heritage Assets: Yearsley Pool, White Cross Villa, late 19th to early 20th century factory buildings, allotments, possible pre-enclosure boundaries

Key Views: View of Minster from Haxby Road

Surviving historic routes and tracks: Haxby Road and Wigginton Road

Archaeology and history

There is no evidence of prehistoric activity in the immediate vicinity. However, there is reference to the discovery of Roman pottery, a wall and querns discovered within an enclosure in the late 1920s (MYO2267) Probably during sand and gravel quarrying off Haxby Road to the north.

This area, to the north of the city remained relatively undeveloped during the medieval period. It was part of the unenclosed grazing land of Bootham Stray. Following 18th century enclosure the land was divided into fields which were reduced in size during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Medieval Ridge and furrow has been identified on historic aerial photographs in the northern half of the area prior to development. Haxby Road was previously known as Pepper Mill Lane due to the existence of a pepper mill on the east side of the road to the south of the area. The white cross stone (Grade II listed), a medieval boundary stone marked the boundary between St. Mary's Abbey land and the city in its original location at the junction of Haxby Road and Haley's Terrace. It was moved to its current location outside Yearsley Pool in the mid 20th century when Haxby Road was widened.

In the mid 19th century the area remained largely undeveloped. The small farmstead of Mill Crooks or Mill Crux is shown on the 1850s ordnance survey map situated between Haxby Road and the River Foss. A cottage, labelled Herdsman's Cottage is shown in the north-west corner of the area. This cottage survived until the late 1960s.

Despite rapid residential growth to the south of the area during the mid-late 19th century the area surrounding the site of the chocolate factory remained rural in nature. Mill Crux Farm was built at this time on the northern boundary of the character area. Further south, White Cross Villa (1880s) was constructed on the east side of Haxby Road at the junction where the 'white cross' then stood. This white brick house with distinctive gothic detailing belonged to Samuel Haley, York's Chief Constable (1862-1888).

Haley's Terrace adjacent to this house takes its name from him – perhaps these houses were built under his instruction.

The opening of the Foss Islands rail line in 1879 connecting the Scarborough Line to the power station at Foss Island made the land to the north of it, which was also bounded by arterial roads, an attractive site to the Rowntree Company who wanted to expand their company based in North Street.

The site was bought in 1890 and a factory for the production of gum-based confectionary was built. The factory expanded again in 1899 when the site was connected to the rail line with its own sidings. In 1907 all of the company's production moved to the Haxby Road site resulting in further expansion to the north. By 1920 the factory employed 6000 people.

Joseph Rowntree, who became head of the company in 1897 and his son Seebohm were pioneers of social reform and industrial relations. They constructed Yearsley Swimming Pool (originally open air) in 1908 and New Earswick village to the north of the factory amongst other public amenities throughout the city. For the employee's free schooling, pensions and healthcare were among the benefits provided as well as sanitary and pleasant working conditions.

Throughout the first three four decades of the 20th century the factory continued to grow with buildings such as the dining block (now Nuffield Hospital) added in 1913 and the Cream Block in 1936.

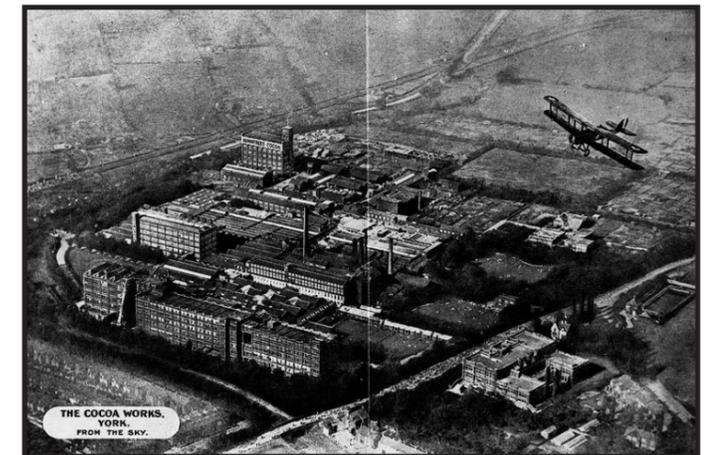
The Joseph Rowntree Memorial Library was built in 1927 followed by the Theatre in 1935. Both of these buildings are Grade II listed.

In the northern half of the character area a large factory (Cooke, Troughton & Simms) producing guns, range finders, periscopes etc stood on the east side of Haxby Road from 1939 until 2008.

During the second half of the 20th century the company merged to become Rowntree Macintosh Ltd. In 1980 the rail line to the south of the site closed.

The company, which became Nestlé Rowntree at this time, was one of the largest employers in York.

By the mid 2000s Nestlé Rowntree began to redevelop the site, creating new buildings to the north of the old factory. The older buildings, less suited to modern methods of manufacturing have been vacated or sold such as the dining hall building which is now Nuffield hospital.



1920s aerial image of the factory site - City of York Archives



Library and factory buildings c.1950 - City of York Archives

Character

This area is characterised by large early modern and contemporary industrial buildings which make up the Nestlé Rowntree site. These buildings reflect the long evolution of the factory. Several other buildings within this character area are associated with the factory and the tree family. Housing in the area consists of small scale late 19th century development and a modern housing estate.

The General Office (1896) is the only 19th century building surviving on the site. Two early 20th century buildings survive. These are the Almond Block (1907) and its extension (1911). Both of these buildings were designed in-house and are a mixture of brick and reinforced concrete. The dining block (1913) was a pioneering building of the time using reinforced concrete. It also included a gym and school facilities for employees.

The Cream Block (1936) a large steel framed building with brick cladding and the aforementioned Almond Block Extension are the largest most recognisable buildings on the site which confirm the industrial nature of the area.

The buildings range in height from single storey mid 20th century industrial units to six storey office blocks. The older buildings generally have a red brick facade despite their concrete shells however the newer buildings have more of a 'space age' feel about them and are in silver tones with large windows and glass panels. The contemporary buildings are situated outside the Nestlé/Rowntree conservation area to the north of the original site.

Around the original factory site, mature trees, railings and ornamental planting form a strong boundary, reducing the impact of the large factory buildings. This gives the impression of a factory within a landscaped setting despite the small amount of greenery planting within the complex itself. White free-standing clocks are situated outside the former entrances.

The memorial buildings to the Rowntree family were constructed in the arts and crafts style. While White Cross Villa, the oldest building in the character area but not connected to the factory or the Rowntree's, was constructed in a Gothic style with a distinctive turret. The villa is bounded by the same style of railings as the factory. The houses on Haleys Terrace (1880s) are generally two-storey semi-detached houses in narrow plots with front and rear gardens. Parking is restricted to the roadside. Each house frontage contains two windows upstairs and downstairs. The windows contain arched lintels and although all of the windows have been replaced in UPVC they all match and contain two panes of glass. A street light dating to c.1940s-50s exists on this street featuring a long arm stretching horizontally to the roadway.

Yearsley Pool (1908) replaced an old bath in the River Foss downstream of Yearsley Bridge. The new pool was originally open-air but was modernised in 1964/5 when it was roofed over. The 1908 building is made of red brick and retains its original stone carved frontage.

The modern housing estate of Bowling Green Croft dates to the late 20th century. These houses are predominantly two-storey linked terraces and semi-detached houses with rear gardens constructed with red/pink and orange/yellow brick. Some houses have a small front garden or enclosure as well as a driveway and garage. The houses are generally small in narrow plots with a high density rating.

This character area is served locally by commercial premises on the main roads and Haxby Road Primary School nearby. On the east side of Haxby Road towards the northern part of the site the bowling green and the allotments contribute significant open space.

The verges on either side of Haxby Road are tree lined.

The 1930s factory which existed at the northern tip of the site has recently been demolished. Its low boundary wall topped by a hedge is still present. One residential property exists in this part of the site – an early 20th century bungalow.

This character area is distinct from adjacent residential areas. Its industrial and community buildings form part of an important part of York's heritage relating to chocolate/sweet production and the Rowntree family.

Significance

Archaeology: No significant deposits have been identified in this character area. This is partly due to unmonitored development and the former agricultural nature of the area. The construction of the factory and agricultural practices prior to that will have had a negative effect on any surviving archaeology although undisturbed deposits may survive in pockets throughout the area.

Architecture: The historic factory buildings are significant as they are well known visual landmarks as well as buildings which span an important growth period of the factory (1900s-1940s).

Non commercial and non residential buildings within the area are all connected to the Rowntree family or factory. Yearsley Pool has been nominated for inclusion on the Local List of Heritage Assets due to the retention of original features such as pool side cubicles. The pool continues to contribute to the well being of the community. White Stone Cross, a medieval boundary stone, has been relocated outside the pool within its entrance area. In its current location it can be easily overlooked.

The Theatre and Library are both Grade II listed due to their arts and crafts style, original features and links to the Rowntree family. The theatre was designed by Barry Parker who also designed the New Earswick village to the north of the factory site. They are both still in use and provide a social and cultural aspect to an otherwise industrial area.

Historic: The factory as a whole has provided York with an important economic boost and a large source of employment for over one hundred years. One of York's best known characteristics is its chocolate/sweet production, each factory having its own distinctive aromas. The factory also played a huge role in the revolution of employee's benefits and working conditions started by the Rowntree family.

York's railway played a vital part in the original selection of the site for the factory and in its expansion at the turn of the century. Today, as a cycle path, it forms a boundary between the industrial site and neighbouring residential areas.

Discounting the roads, approximately 10% of the historic field boundaries remain readable in the urban landscape. The construction of the factory destroyed the majority of the landscape it was built upon. A few surviving examples can be found at the northern end of the factory site in a small field off Haxby Road which also contains ridge and furrow, and on the east side of Haxby Road such as the boundary between the modern development of Mallards Landings and earlier buildings on Huntington Road. The field boundaries which existed prior to the construction of the 1840s buildings in this area have not been examined as part of this study. However several boundaries, which partly survive today, may date to the pre-enclosure period as they have a curved appearance and appear to have once formed part of large thin medieval strip fields. The three main roads surrounding and running through this area are all historic in nature and probably date to the medieval period, although Huntington Road may have earlier origins.

The social value of this area is high as generations of employees, many from the same family, will have a connection to the factory.

Streetscape components: Carriageways and footpaths are generally asphalt. Street lighting is modern and consists of a variety of different units. In several places, such as bus stops, Edinburgh style waste bins are in use. A bus shelter dating to the first half of the 20th century stands outside the theatre. It uses the brick boundary wall as its rear side and has a corrugated iron roof supported by carved wooden beams. The shelter contains two seats and side panels. It is painted green with a mixture of green and red railings either side of it associated with White Cross Villa (red) and the theatre (green). The roof is in need of repair.

Aesthetics: The area has a semi-rural feel due to the mature trees in the area of the factory and the open areas of the bowling green and allotments towards the north of the site. The gardens in front of the Cream Block, provided for the employees on the factory site contain lampposts by Robert Thompson featuring his carved mouse 'signature'.

These gardens along with the clocks at the site entrances attest to Rowntree's philosophy of providing an attractive environment for employees.

A significant view of the Minster can be seen from Haxby Road travelling southwards towards the city.

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).

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. 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 Yearsley Pool, allotments, Rowntree theatre and library, 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.

Further demolition of the older factory buildings should be halted and opportunities for reuse should be explored.

White Cross Stone should be re-sited to a more prominent position – perhaps back to the roundabout where it once stood.

Despite their age and text book appearance the styles and features of the modern housing estate 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.

The area contains several listed buildings and Yearsley Pool which should be considered for listing or at least inclusion on the Local List of Heritage Assets. The pool adds significant value to the character of the area and is intimately connected with the Rowntree family as are several other listed buildings in the vicinity. Every effort should be made to ensure that these buildings are retained and kept in productive use. Their loss or inappropriate alteration would have significant impacts on the character of this area.

Further community projects could be done to enhance the various existing oral history recordings conducted with former employees of the factory.

Character Area 44: Images



View of Almond Block (far left) and Cream Block (background) with Rowntree Memorial Library and clock in foreground



Modern factory buildings



White Cross Villa



Rear of Cream Block from Hambleton Terrace



Yearsley Pool with White Stone Cross in the centre of image



Hayleys Terrace with theatre building in background



Former Dining Halls now Nuffield Hospital building



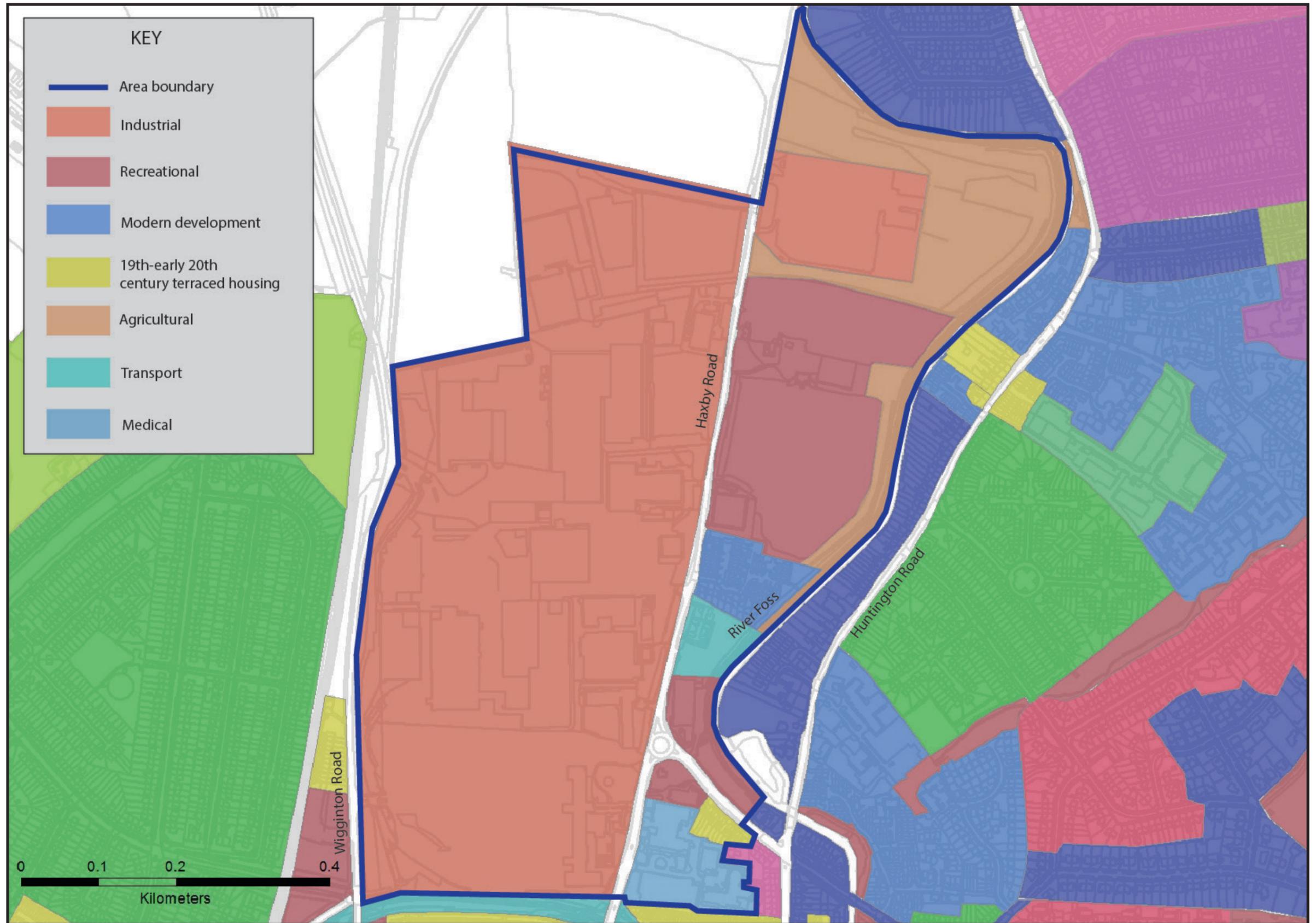
Rowntree Memorial Theatre



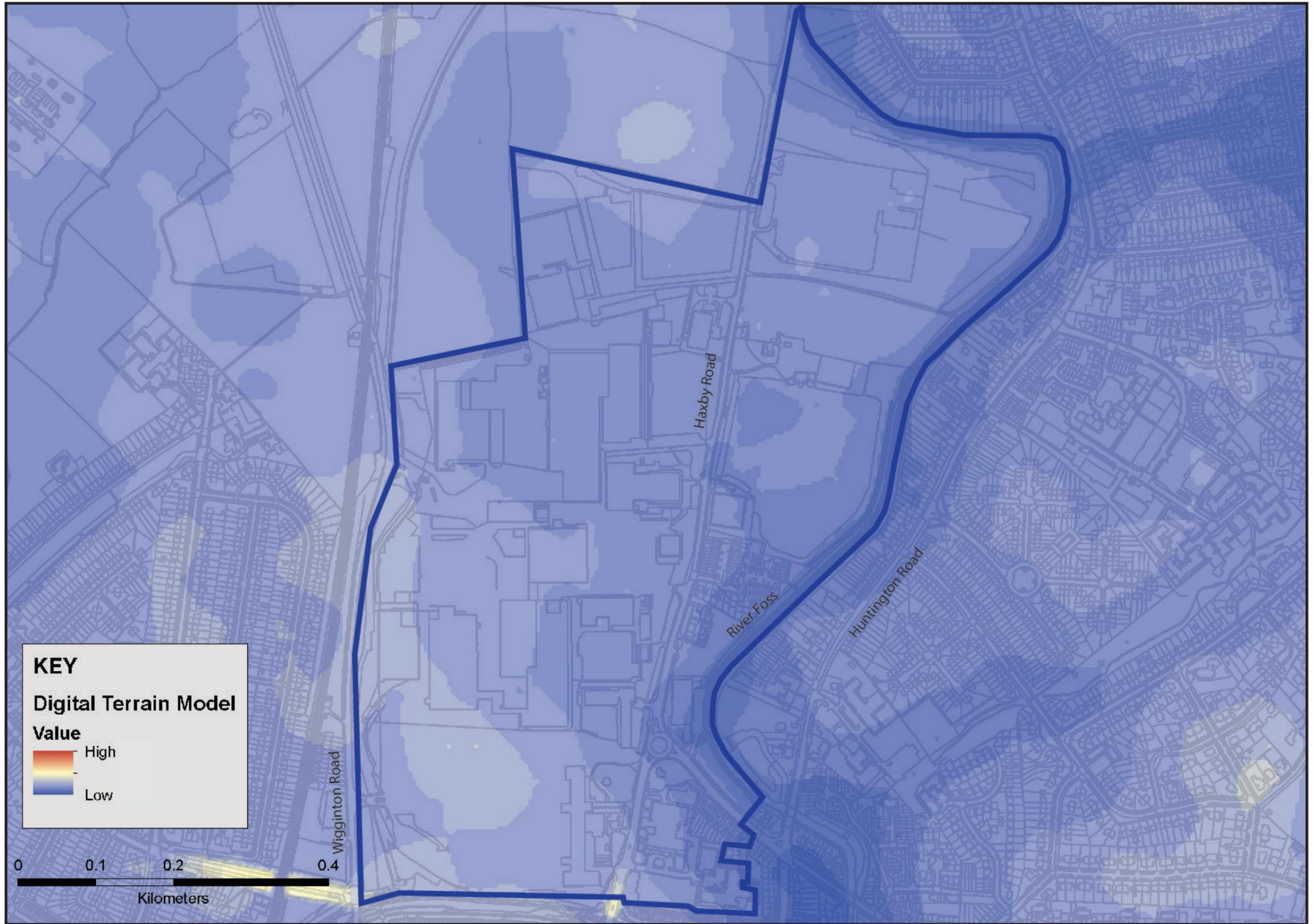
Bowling Croft Green

Character Area 44: Maps

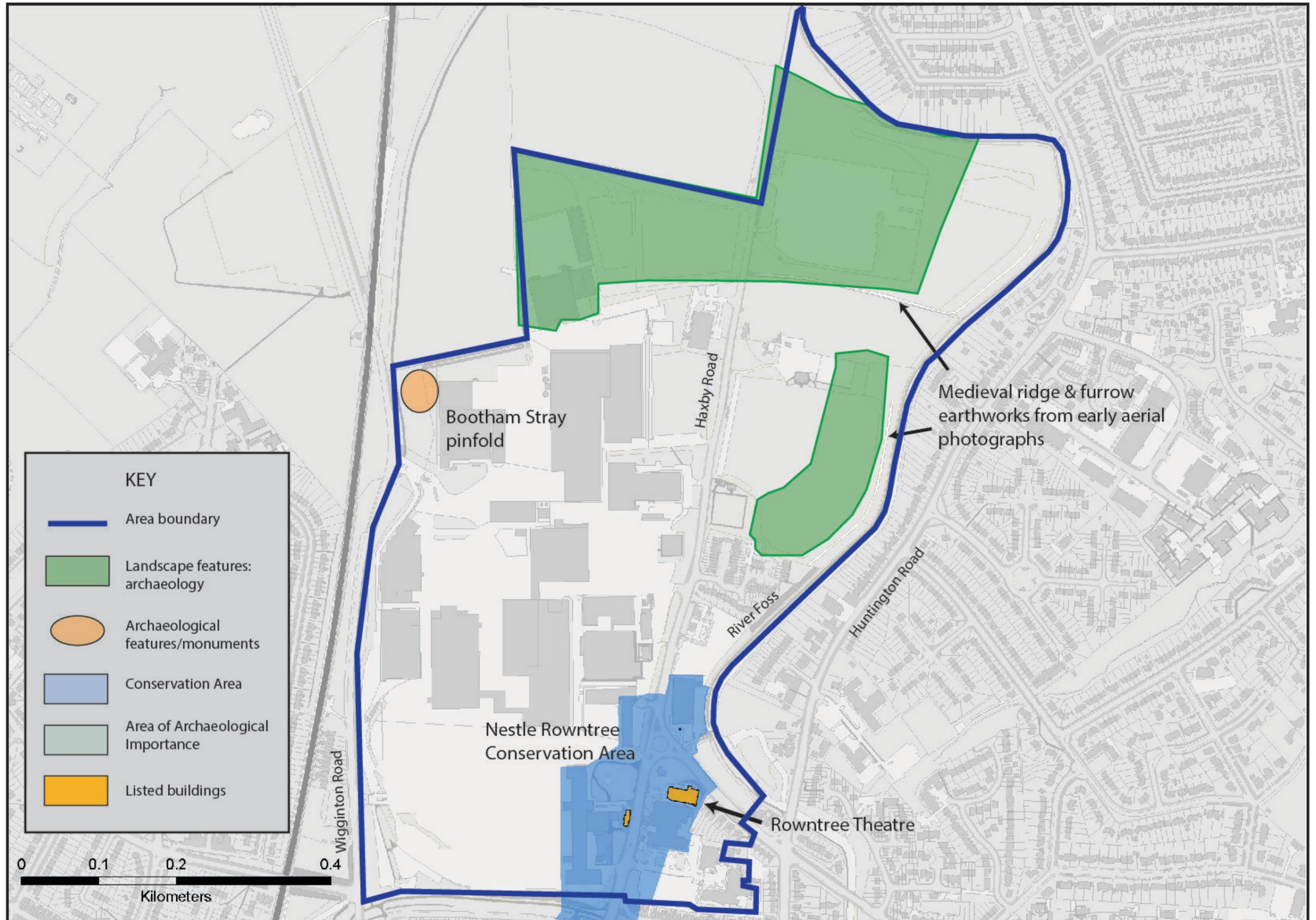
Broad Type characterisation plan. The white roadways indicate roads or lanes visible on the 1852 Ordnance Survey Plan.



Topography



Archaeology and heritage assets



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

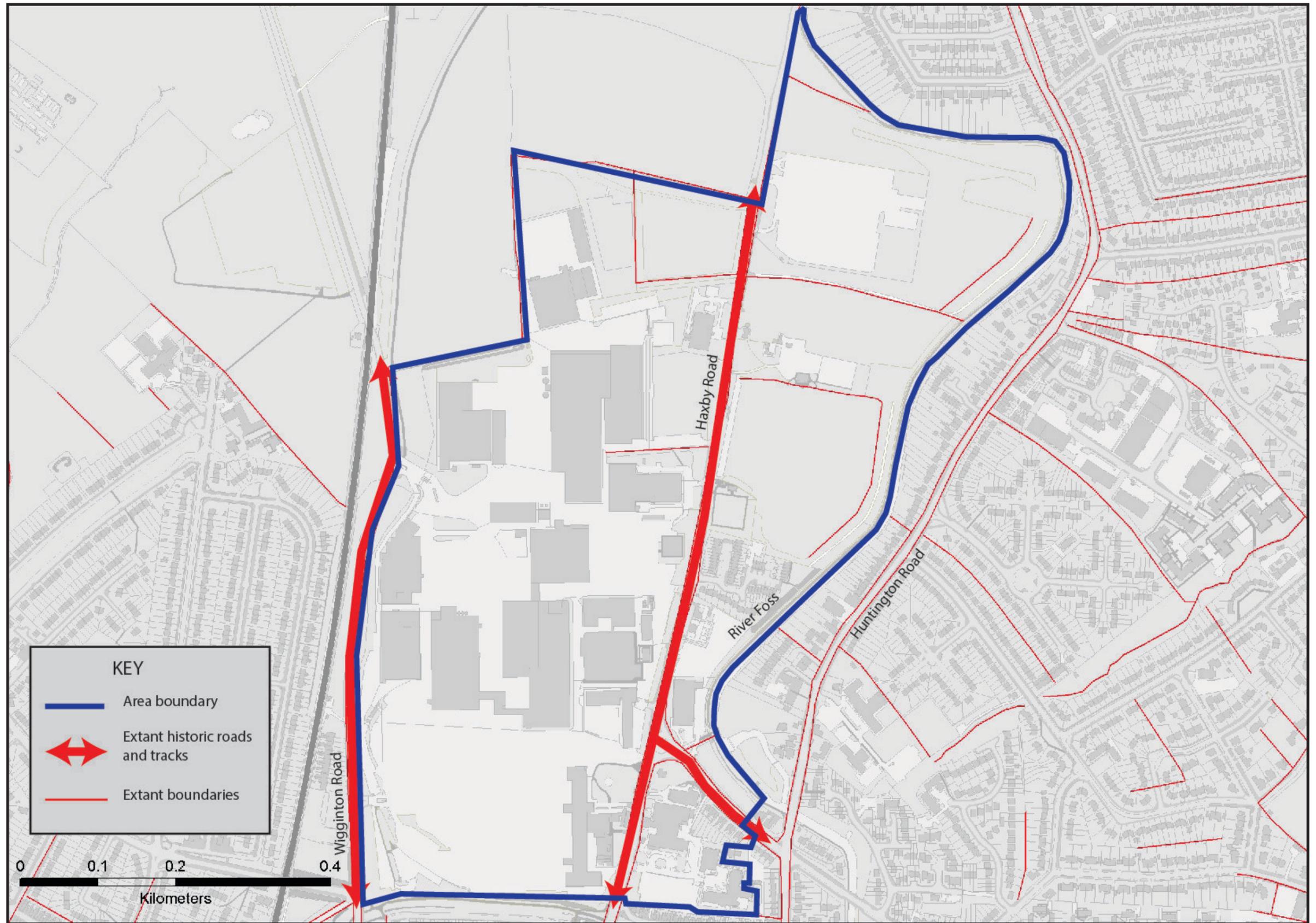


Figure ground map showing the relationship between open space (black) and the built environment



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