

# YORK MINSTER PRECINCT MASTERPLAN

*...A sustainable future for York Minster*

*York Minster is the centre of Christian life in the North of England, a place of prayer and pilgrimage, and one of the best known buildings in the United Kingdom. It is a magnet that draws people to visit the City of York from all corners of the globe.*

The Minster sits within a 'Precinct' which contains Dean's Park, the Minster School, a Library and Archive, homes for Minster Clergy, a Stoneyard and Minster offices which all support the day-to-day running and care of the Minster.

We are working with the City of York Council, Historic England, a wide range of stakeholders and the community to get the best plan in place. We are at a very early stage, and this exhibition explains what we hope to achieve through the masterplan process.

## Why do we need a masterplan?

The Minster is preparing a masterplan to explore how the Precinct could evolve in the future to meet the changing needs of its community and visitors. It is a sensitive and complex area of the city and its future care must be planned for carefully.

The intention is the masterplan will be adopted as part of the City's planning policy. It will provide the Minster with a clear strategy for the next twenty years and will be used to secure funding for individual projects.

*Your ideas, suggestions and thoughts will help to shape the masterplan – please let us know what's important to you.*

*Did you know?....  
Beneath your feet are the remains of a Roman fortress and a Saxon cathedral – over 2,000 years of history.*

## Plan showing current land uses and the masterplan boundary

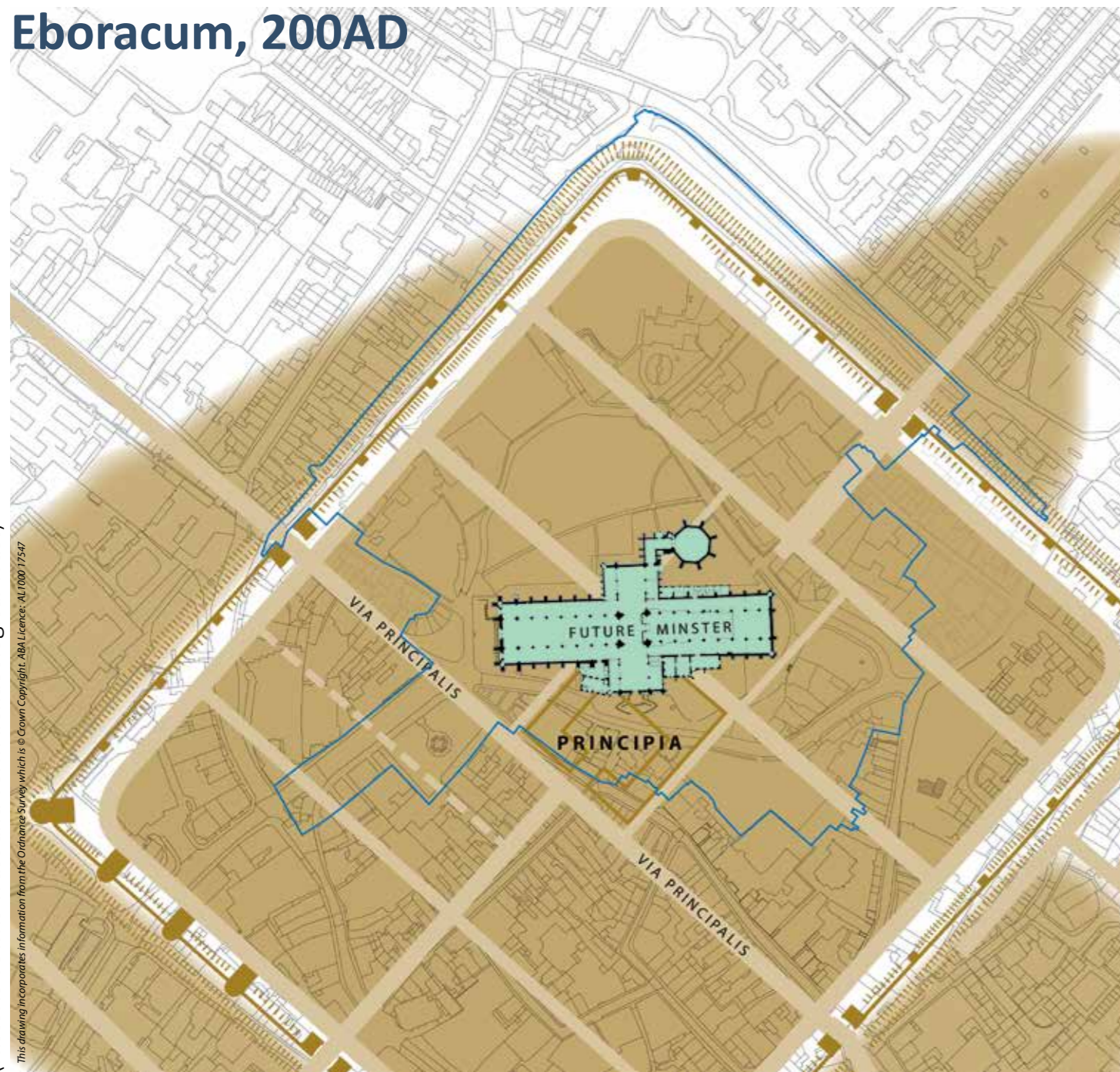


# YORK MINSTER PRECINCT MASTERPLAN

*...The birth of the Precinct*

*York Minster may appear to have changed little in centuries, but its Precinct has been continuously evolving for 2,000 years.*

**Eboracum, 200AD**

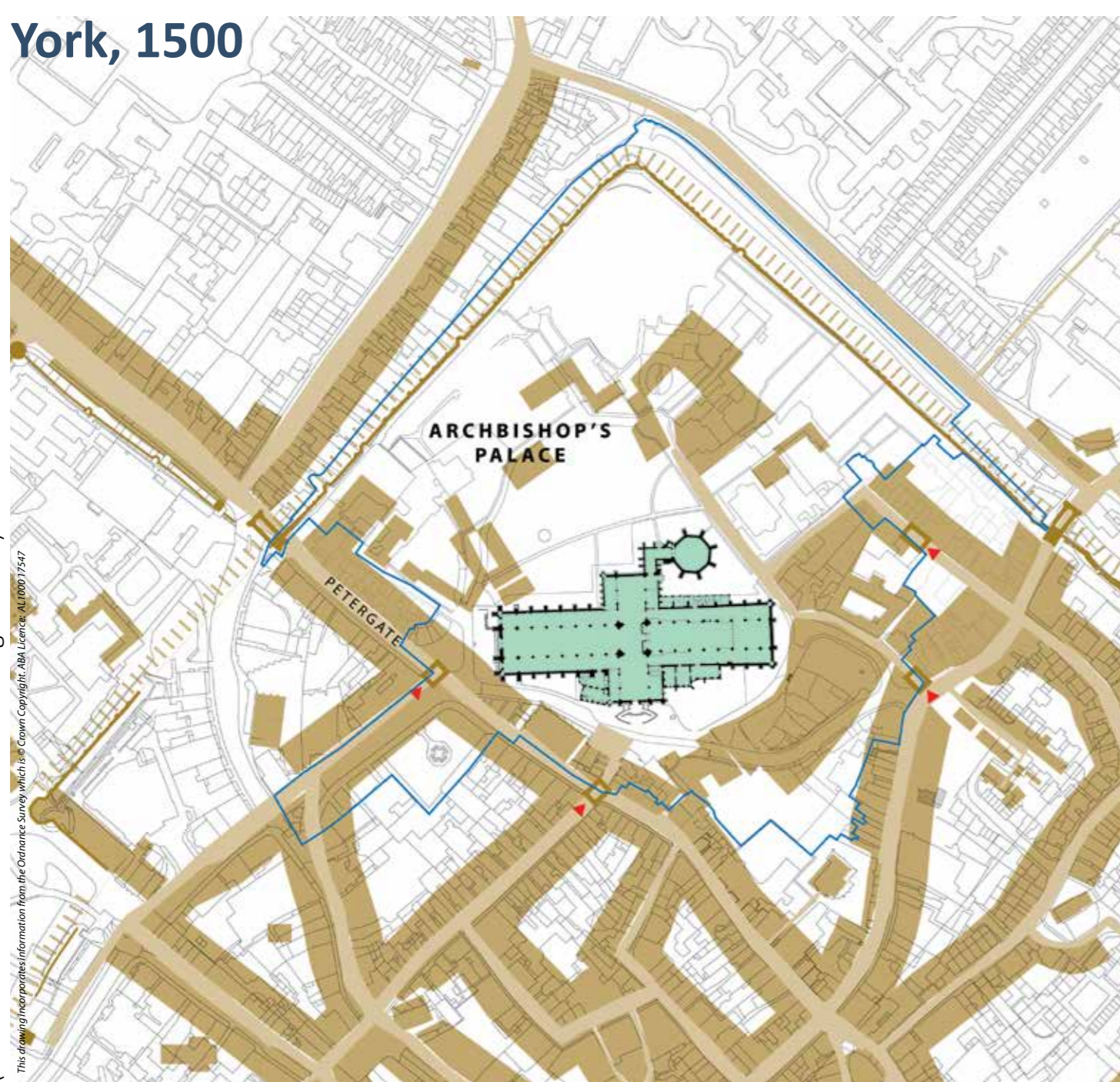


## Roman and Anglo-Saxon York

You are standing on the site of a 2,000 year old Roman legionary fortress, Eboracum. Today's Precinct occupies a quarter of the area of that fortress. Part of the Precinct boundary is still defined by the line of the Roman fortifications, later adapted as the medieval walls of the city. A third side, now Petergate, was the main street of the camp and the headquarters building – the 'Principia' – lies under the Minster itself.

The last Roman soldiers left Britain in 409AD. In the following centuries York was revived as an important city in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria. A Christian cathedral – or Minster – was built in 627. No-one knows for certain where this wooden building was, but it is generally thought to be north of the medieval Minster: perhaps under your feet right now. It would have been surrounded by an enclosure, containing the houses of priests and the bishop, and other facilities.

**York, 1500**

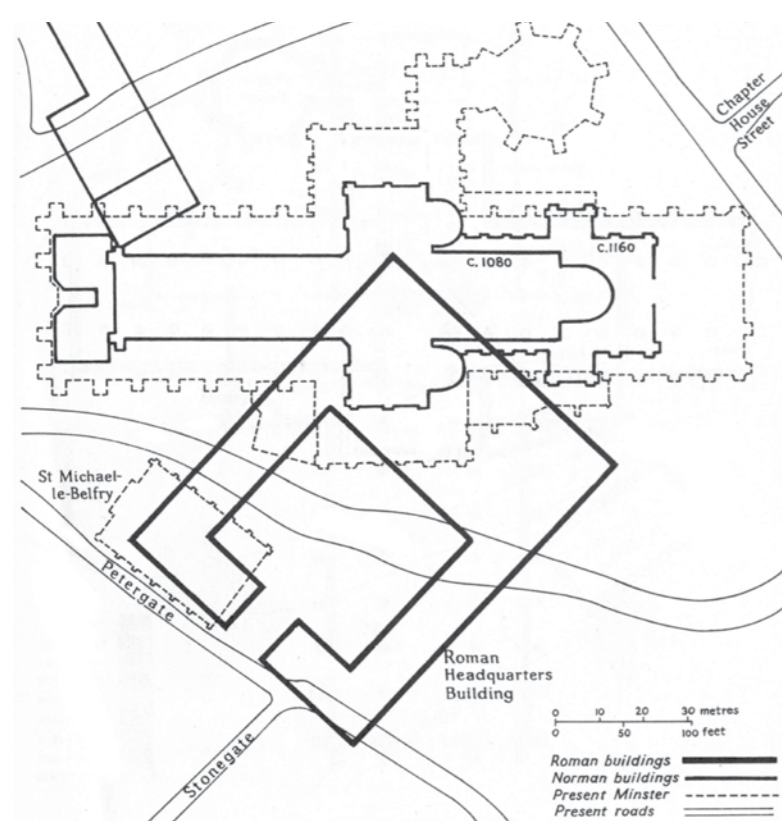


## Medieval Precinct

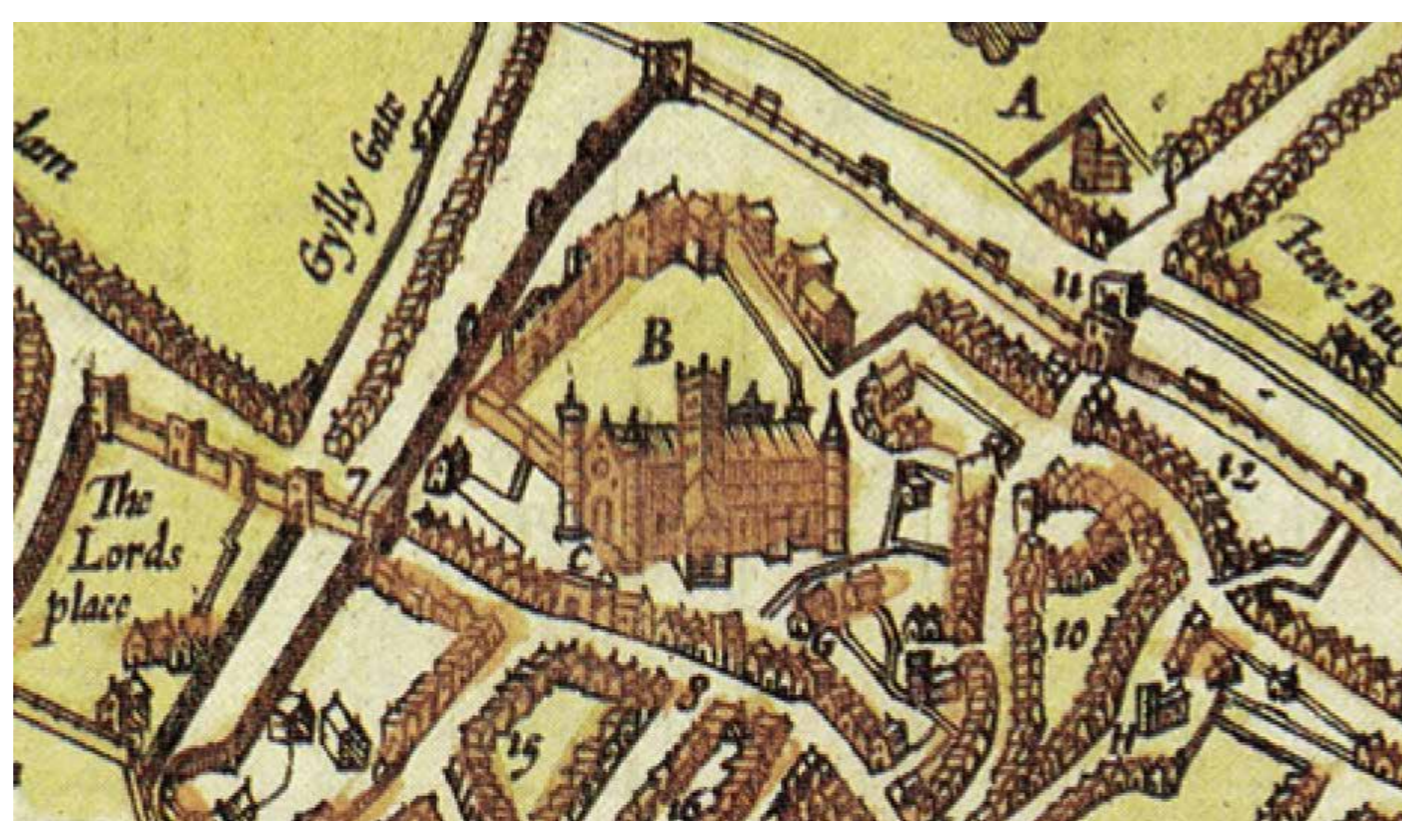
Soon after the Norman Conquest of 1066, a grand new Minster was built on the site of the present cathedral. It was surrounded by a Precinct, extending from the city walls to Petergate. The Precinct was administered by the church: it was subject to separate laws, and was densely built up with streets lined by dozens of houses for the Minster's clergy, churches and chapels, and a large palace for the Archbishop, which occupied most of the area north of the Minster. The chapel of the palace survives as the Minster Library. A school was founded by Alcuin, the pre-eminent York scholar, in the seventh century.

To protect church property and enforce its laws, the Precinct was surrounded by a ditch and wall. Access was via gateways. The most important was on Petergate, outside the west end of the Minster.

*Did you know?....  
In the Middle Ages the Minster was surrounded by a wall, with four gateways.  
Only one gateway survives: do you know where it is?*



**Relationship between the Roman 'Principia', the Norman Cathedral & the present Minster (derived from Aylmer & Cant, A History of York Minster)**



**Speed's map of York c.1610. One of the very few illustrations of the Archbishop's Palace**



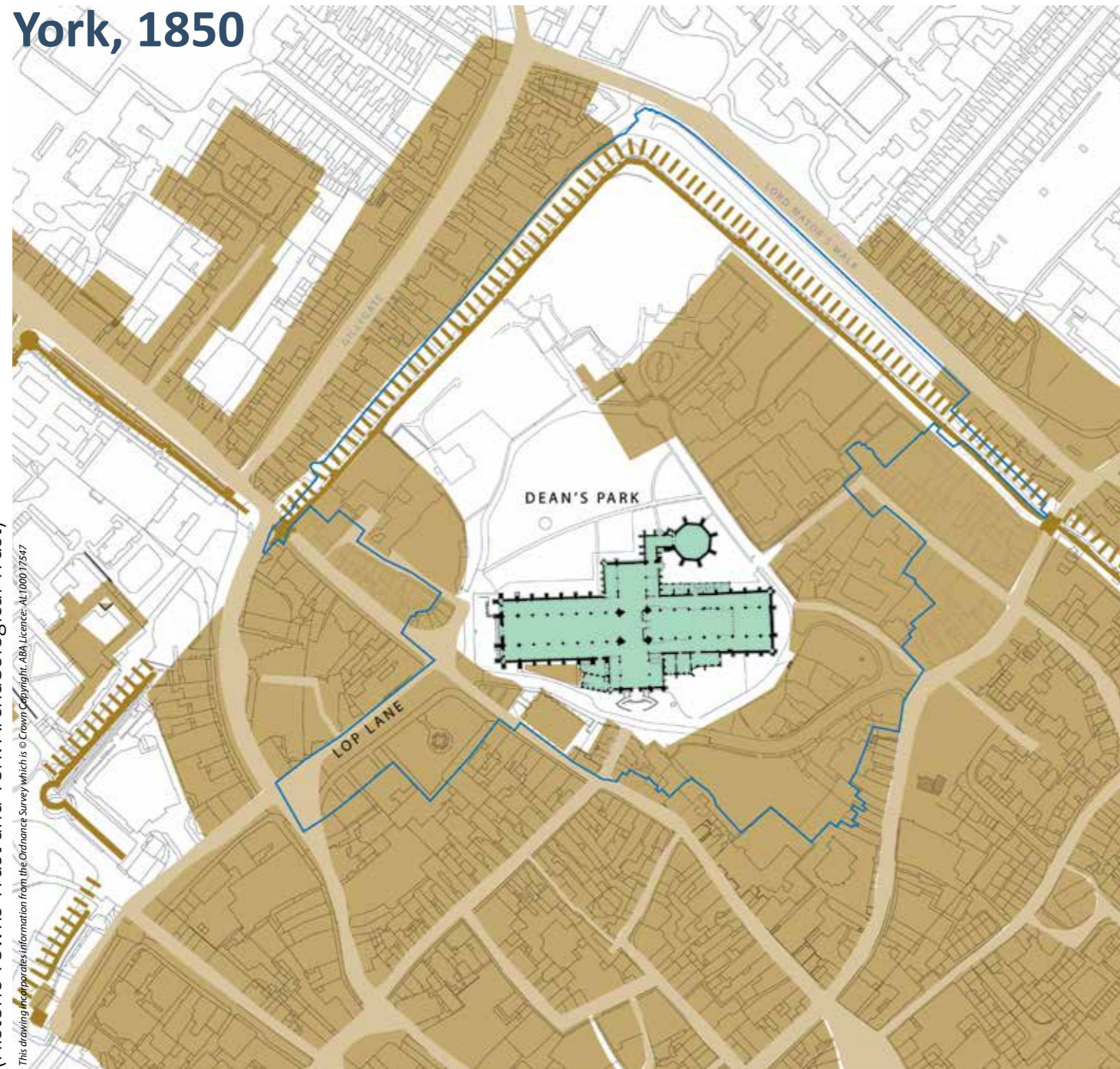
**The Archbishop's Palace as recreated by Edwin Ridsdale in 1917 (Murray et al, York through the eyes of an artist)**

# YORK MINSTER PRECINCT MASTERPLAN

## ...Opening up the Precinct

Following the Reformation, the character of the Precinct began to change: it became a less separate place, increasingly occupied by secular (non-religious) uses.

York, 1850



Mapping based on the British Historic Town Atlas of York (Historic Towns Trust and York Archaeological Trust)

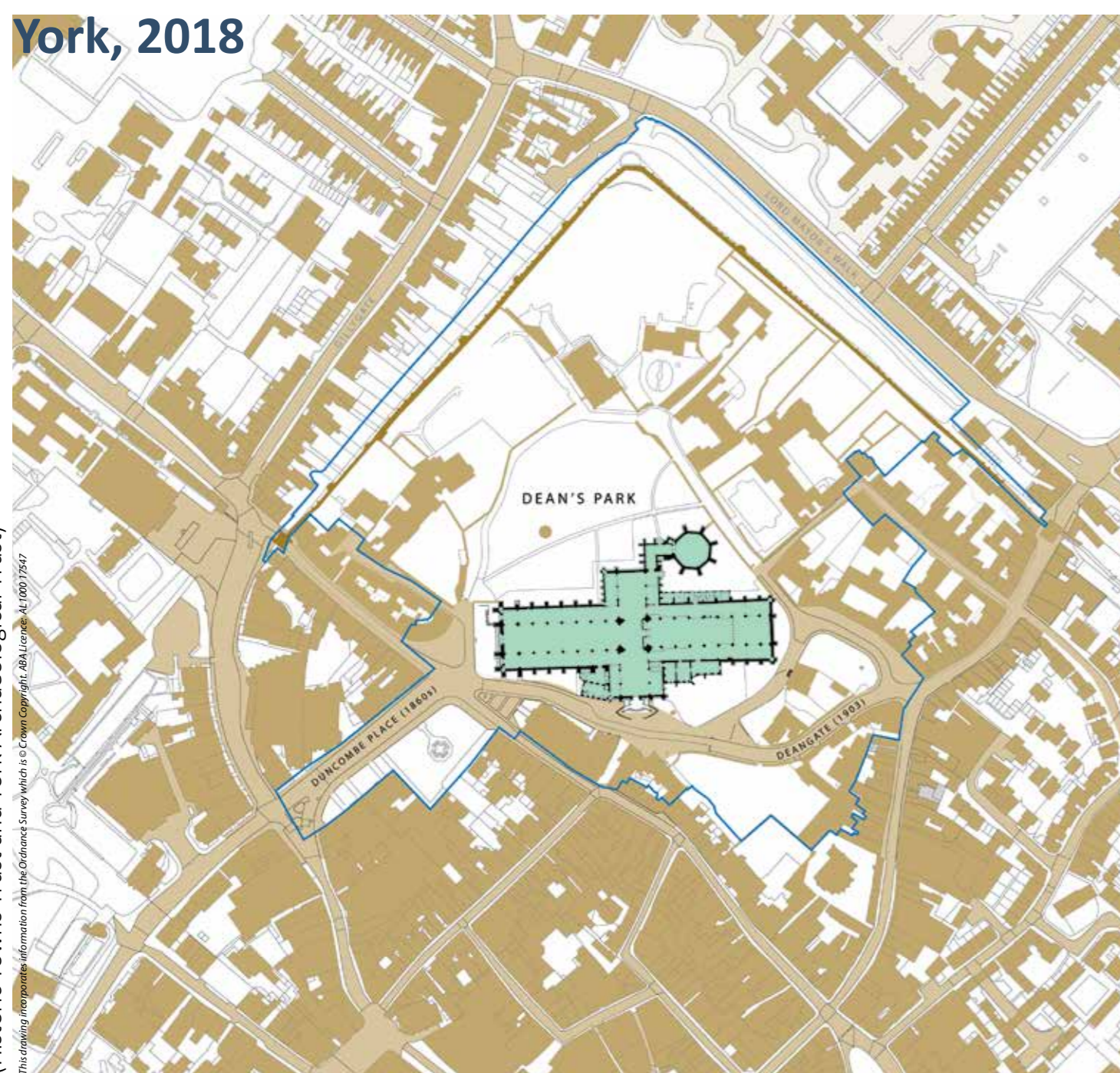
### Opening up the Precinct

By 1600 the Archbishop's Palace had been vacated in favour of Bishopthorpe on the Ouse, south of York. Most clergy also chose to live outside the Precinct. Instead, shops were built against the west end and south transept of the cathedral.

In the eighteenth century the Minster began again to be recognised and celebrated as a magnificent building. Some considered the houses, shops and other buildings cheek-by-jowl around it to be insensitive. They were swept away so that the cathedral could be seen and enjoyed without hindrance. This is the origin of Dean's Park, and how we experience and see the Minster today.

*Did you know?...*  
**In 1633 Charles I criticised shops that had been built against the wall of the Minster: the beginnings of building conservation in York.**

York, 2018



Mapping based on the British Historic Town Atlas of York (Historic Towns Trust and York Archaeological Trust)

### Building roads

The Victorians continued this process of change. A view of the Great East Window was created by demolishing buildings to form College Green. With the arrival of the railway, an entirely new approach to the Minster was created from the station, via a new bridge, Lendal Bridge, and a grand new avenue, Duncombe Place, created by demolishing a warren of medieval housing. Before this, there had been no view of the west end of the Minster.

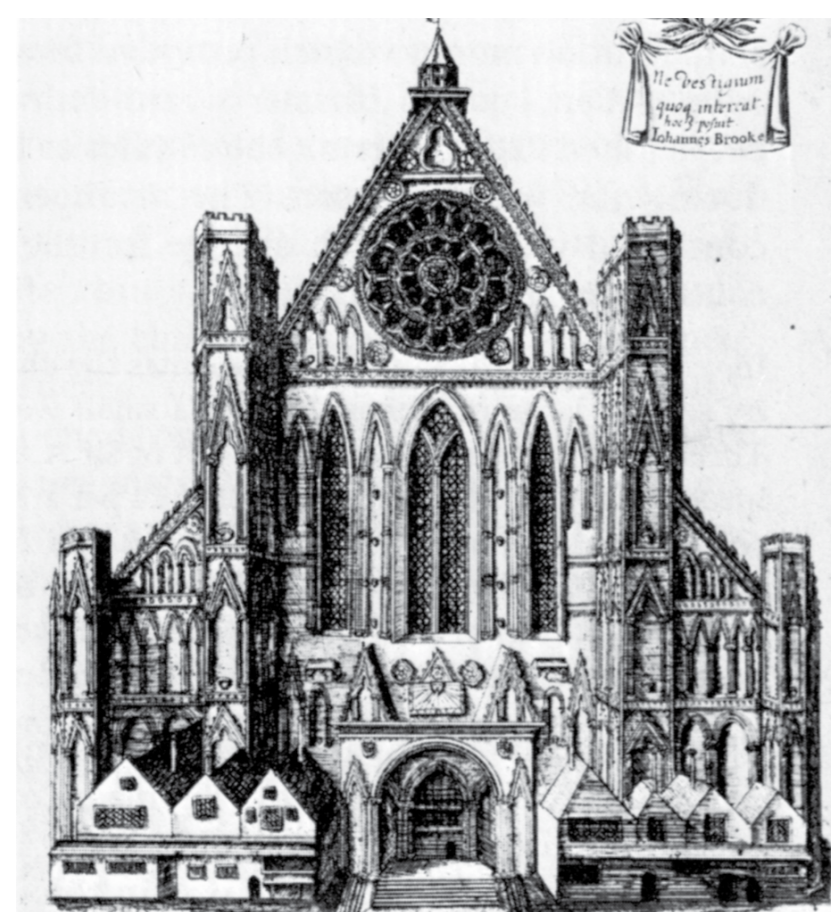
In 1903 this route was extended by demolishing many more historic buildings, to form Deangate. This was not just a street: it was the main road to Hull and Scarborough, and by the 1960s lorries were pounding past the Minster. Thankfully, the road was closed, so that we can all enjoy the Minster in peace and quiet.

The cumulative consequence of these changes is that any sense that there had ever been a defined, separate Precinct is entirely lost south of the Minster.

### Conserving the Precinct today

At over 800 years old, the Grade I listed Minster is subject to a complex and continuous cycle of repair, restoration and conservation, requiring specialist skills fostered in the Stoneyard. The wider Precinct contains many other historically important listed buildings, and the site sits above exceptionally important archaeology from the Roman occupation onwards.

- Gateway into the Precinct
- Historic buildings
- Masterplan boundary
- Historic streets



Shops built against the south transept of the Minster, illustrated c. 1700



Drawing by James Malton in 1794, showing the newly revealed north side of the Minster following the demolition of medieval buildings



Lop Lane in the 1850s, before it was swept away to create Duncombe Place (York City Library)

# YORK MINSTER PRECINCT MASTERPLAN

...The Precinct today

Today, the Minster welcomes over 600,000 visitors per year. It is a major tourist attraction in the North of England but it remains, first and foremost a house of prayer.

**Our Mission at York Minster is to invite everyone to discover God's Love through our Welcome, Worship, Learning and Work.**

The Minster's Mission and our emphasis on caring for the Minster for future generations, have led us to look at how the Precinct could be used differently to address current shortcomings:

- Dean's Park is an important green space, but feels cut-off from the wider city and lacks activity.
- The lack of defined Precinct boundaries presents challenges for security and the quality of our public spaces.
- The Minster School is an important element of Minster life providing choristers for our daily sung services. But its site is fragmented and lacks facilities such as a school hall.
- Other buildings in the Precinct – St William's College and the Old Palace – require restoration and could be used differently.
- Unlike many other cathedrals the Minster has no dedicated cafe to offer our visitors refreshments and no welcome centre for orientation and tickets.
- The Minster itself can be cluttered and noisy and the visitor experience is not consistent.
- The Minster is the only cathedral with museum accreditation, but the artefacts on display in our undercroft are at risk due to the high humidity of this space.
- The Minster has no dedicated community space for youth groups or community meetings.

It costs £22,000 per day to care for and operate the Minster. The Minster receives no ongoing Government funding or central Church of England financial support and relies entirely on the generosity of our community, paying visitors and funding bodies to maintain its care and operations. Ensuring a viable and sustainable business to underpin the care of the Minster lies at the heart of how we plan for the future.

One example of the costly but necessary conservation work at the Minster is the restoration of the South Quire of the York Minster Aisle. This dates from 1361 and its construction took around 60 years to complete. It bears dramatic evidence of six centuries of exposure to the elements and the industrial revolution, with issues including extensive cracking and erosion to the stone work and serious damage to the medieval glass, which has buckled and cracked in places allowing water in. The scheme involves work to repair and replace stone and glass in 15 window bays, which will take around 11 years and cost £11 million.

*Did you know?... Residents of York and worshippers can enter the Minster for free. Why not join us for evensong and experience the Minster in all its glory.*



Dean's Park



Minster entrance



Stone corrosion



Old Palace library



View from the City Walls



St William's College

# YORK MINSTER PRECINCT MASTERPLAN

*...Our vision for the Precinct*

*“In 2038 York Minster Precinct continues to be a welcoming and special place loved and used by the local community and visitors from around the world. It is acknowledged as a lynchpin in the cultural identity and daily life of the City of York and reaches out to engage the community in discovering God’s Love.”*

*It is both a place full of activity and colour, which actively welcomes everyone to engage in exploration, play and learning; and a quiet, safe space for prayer and pilgrimage.*

*It is conserved and managed sustainably for the enjoyment of future generations.*

***Do you agree with our vision for the Precinct?***

***What is important to you?***

We are at a very early stage in thinking about how the Precinct could evolve in the future to deliver the vision. Importantly, the vision is focused on how we care for the Minster over the next 20 years, and how we might better use the Precinct to support this important work. We have identified different areas within the Precinct which might suit certain types of activity or could benefit from improvement.

Our initial ideas are explored in the rest of the exhibition and we welcome your ideas and comments.

*Did you know?...*  
*York Minster is one of only seven cathedrals in the world to maintain its own private police force. Established in the 13th century the York Minster Police constabulary have the same powers as regular police constables within the cathedral's precinct.*



Drawing by Ptolemy Dean Architects

# YORK MINSTER PRECINCT MASTERPLAN

*...A welcoming Precinct*

*Creating a welcoming and safe environment for our visitors is at the heart of the Minster's Mission and our vision for the Precinct.*

*Did you know?...  
Dean Duncombe created Duncombe Place as the main civic approach and grand view to the Minster. The trees have grown to be much larger than anticipated!*



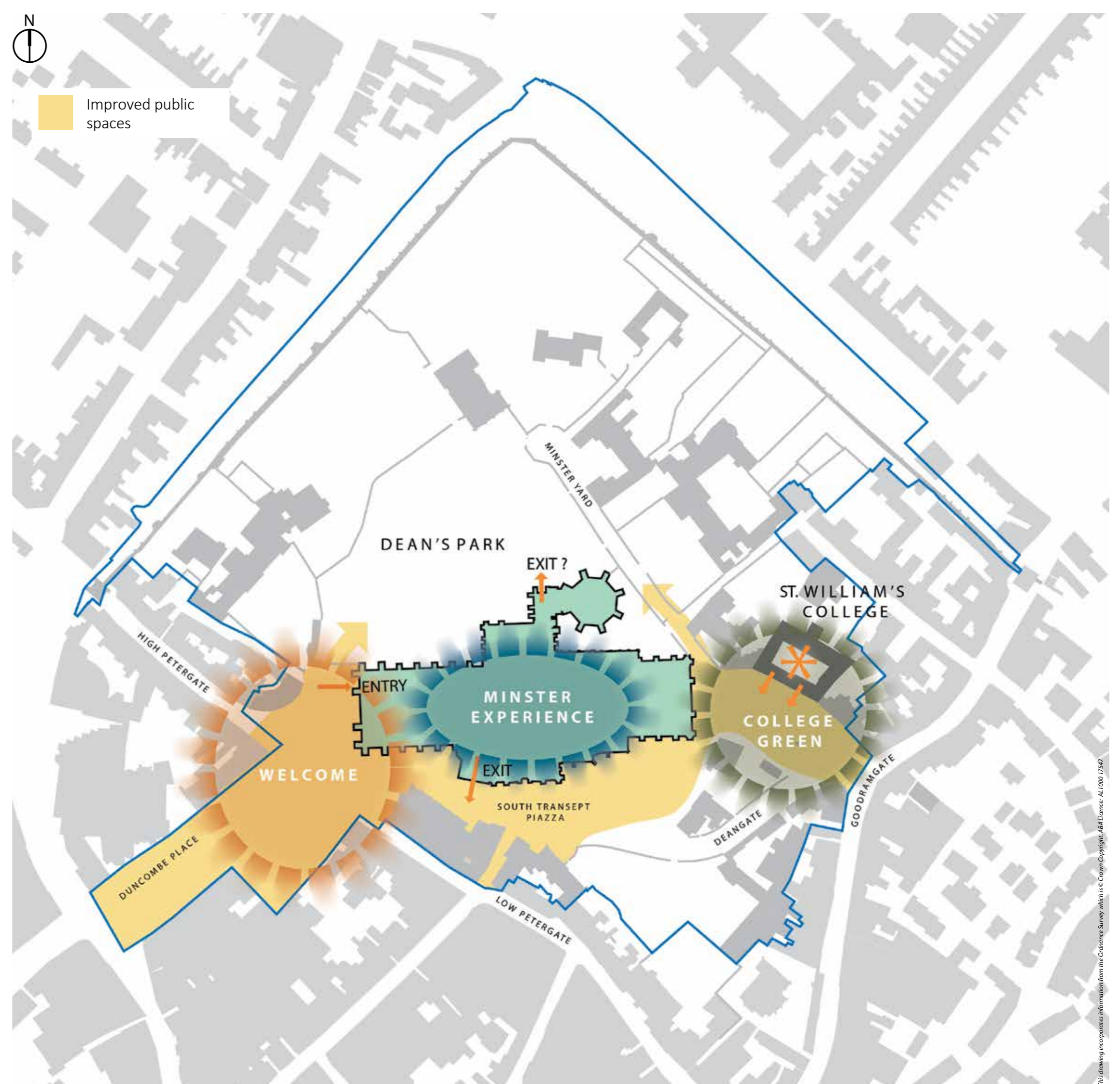
Improvements to Duncombe Place and College Green could create more useable, high quality public spaces, with a similar character to the south transept piazza. The emphasis would be on creating space for people not cars.

By creating a more consistent character in the public spaces surrounding the Minster, the setting of the Minster and sense of entering the Precinct would be enhanced. Security measures (such as the anti-vehicle blocks outside the west front) are sadly necessary to protect the Minster's visitors and heritage, and would be integrated into the design.

A welcome centre and ticket office could be located outside the Minster where it would have more space to provide visitor information, help with orientation and take queues away from the west front.

Within the Minster there is an opportunity to place Saint William's tomb in a more prominent and suitable location for pilgrimage and reorganise the way in which visitors experience the Minster.

The Minster is exploring opportunities for a new public exit, reusing an old door on the northern side of the Minster. This would give direct access to Dean's Park.



**Improving the Minster's welcome and setting**



# YORK MINSTER PRECINCT MASTERPLAN

...A vibrant park at the heart of the City

*Dean's Park is already a well-loved green space, but could offer so much more to visitors of the Minster and the local community, becoming a destination in its own right.*

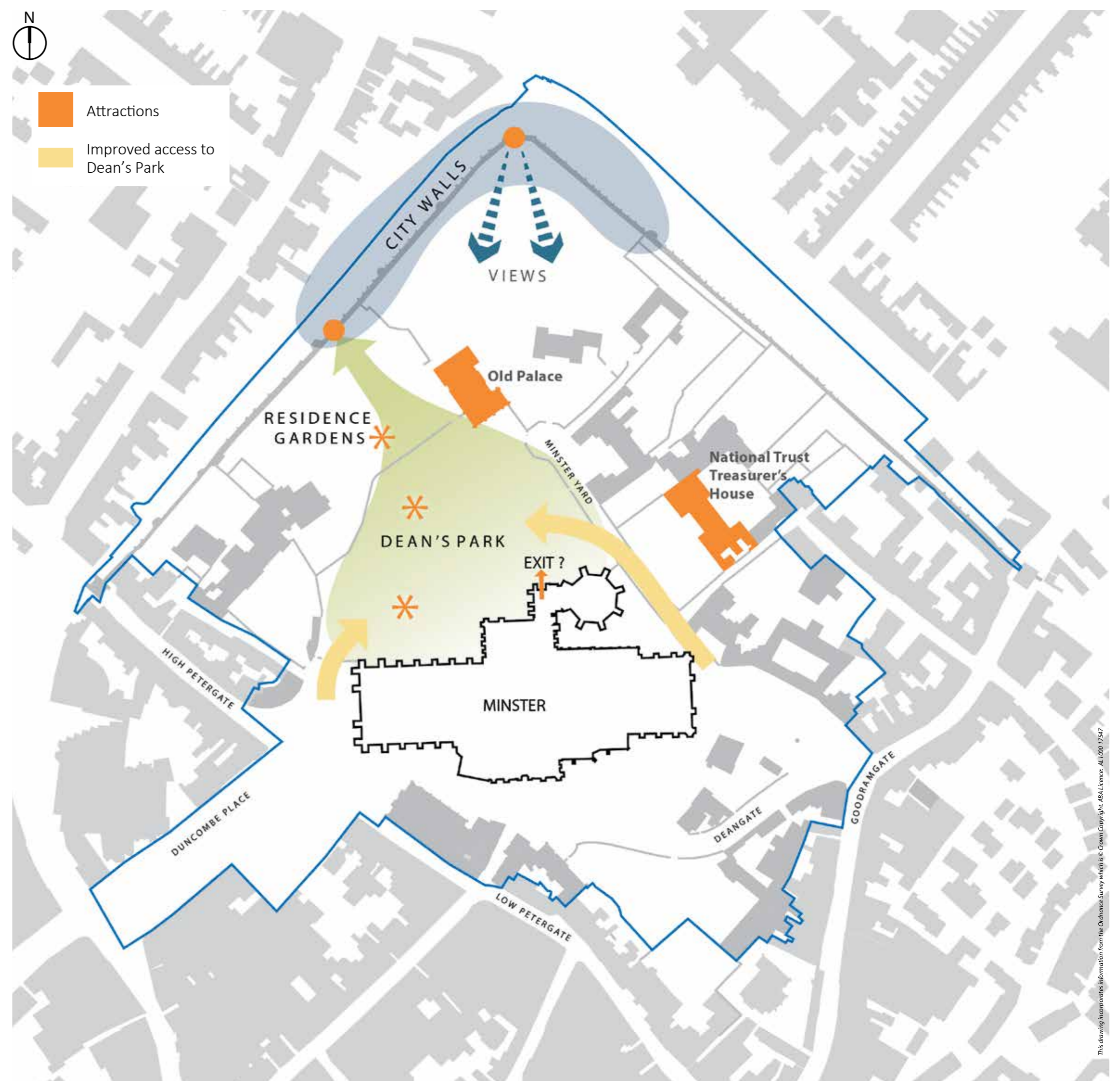
Dean's Park together with the Residence Gardens and Old Palace, occupy a large area which has great potential to provide new visitor attractions. Ideas under consideration include:

- a formal garden
- a high quality children's play and learning area
- a café and toilets
- an exhibition gallery
- a new museum space
- a learning centre
- an events space

### What do you think Dean's Park could provide for the City?

The Minster owns land right up to the City Walls. We are investigating ways to create direct access onto the walls from the Park, so that visitors can more easily experience the fantastic views of the Minster.

The Old Palace houses the Minster's library and archives and is a historic gem. There could be greater public use of this building as part of the Dean's Park plans.



Encouraging greater use of Dean's Park

*Did you know?....  
Underneath the raised section of Dean's Park there is a large water tank which was built during the second world war to provide a supply of water for firefighters.*

Magic Garden playground, Hampton Court Palace



Yorkshire Sculpture Park



Kensington Gardens cafe, London



# YORK MINSTER PRECINCT MASTERPLAN

*...Supporting the life of the Minster*

*Many of the buildings to the north, east and south of the Minster house functions which are essential for the daily operations of the Minster. These have developed in a piecemeal way. There is an opportunity to reorganise and make better use of the spaces available.*

## School and Stoneyard

The Minster School's site is cut in half by Deangate which is no longer needed for vehicle traffic but is a popular cycling route. We are exploring opportunities to reorganise access and redefine the School's boundary together with the Stoneyard to create a more cohesive site.

We are exploring opportunities for new facilities here, such as a school hall with dual community use.

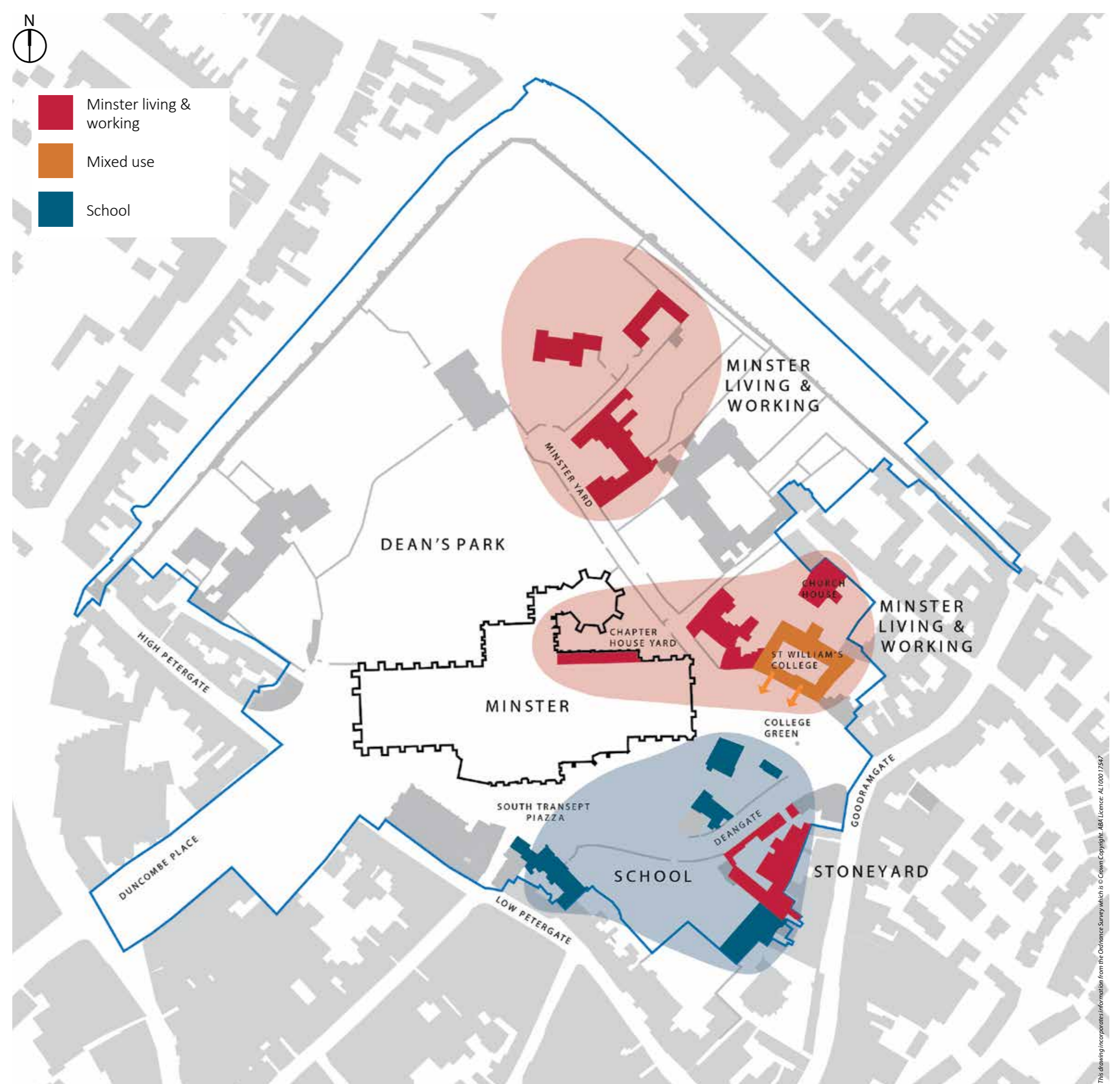
## Minster living and working

Houses for the clergy are located to the north of the Minster. This works well and there may be an opportunity to introduce a small number of new affordable homes for other Minster staff or apprentices.

St William's College was built as a home for medieval priests but has been empty for many years. It is currently undergoing significant restoration works and has potential to house a range of new uses: office space for the Minster and Minster Police, a high quality conference and events space, and a restaurant spilling out onto College Green.

By moving the Minster's offices out of Church House, that building could become a valuable residential development, generating income to support the Minster's restoration work.

Chapter House Yard has potential to provide additional space for Minster back-of-house functions. The unsightly car park could be redesigned and screened.



Living and working within the Precinct

*Did you know?....  
The Minster employs 7 apprentices who are learning the crafts which will help to conserve the Minster for the future.*





# YORK MINSTER PRECINCT MASTERPLAN

*...What happens next?*

*Whatever your reason for visiting the Precinct today, we would encourage you to share your ideas and comments with us and help shape the future of this special place.*

Please provide your feedback online at: [masterplanning.yorkminster.org](http://masterplanning.yorkminster.org) where this exhibition is available to view. The consultation period runs from 24 May – 30 June 2018.

Over the next few months we will review all the comments we have received and develop more detailed proposals which will be presented back to you in the autumn. Comments will be recorded in a Statement of Consultation which will be available on our website. As the masterplan develops we will continue our conversations with stakeholders including the City of York Council, York Minster's Fabric Advisory Committee, Historic England and the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England.

*In the meantime, the important restoration works to the Minster's medieval stained glass windows and St William's College will continue.*

We are hopeful that the final masterplan will ultimately be adopted by the City Council as a neighbourhood plan and will therefore be subject to statutory public consultation and examination by an independent Planning Inspector. Once adopted it will provide a framework against which detailed proposals can be developed and investment secured for individual projects.

*Did you know?....  
During the summer the Minster's Heart of Yorkshire festival will bring an exciting programme of events to Dean's Park. We hope to see you there.*



*Did you know?....  
From the 18 to 20 August, 80 stonemasons from across Europe will attend our Stone Carving Festival which will celebrate a skilled community who have contributed to some of the most iconic buildings in Europe.*