

Character Area One: Bootham Park Hospital



Overview

This is a unique character area consisting of a large institutional site - Bootham Park Hospital - created as an asylum in the 18th century on what was then the very edge of the city. Set in extensive landscaped grounds, it is still in use for NHS mental health services and is adjacent to York Hospital on Wigginton Road. Alongside the Bootham Park Hospital is Bootham School, a distinguished Quaker school.

Boundaries

This area is comprised of the grounds of the historic Hospital buildings ❶, the School ❷ and a small attractive side street to the east, Union Terrace. It does not include the modern buildings of York Hospital to the north of Bridge Lane.

Historical development

Until the 18th century, the area north west of the city remained as farm land. This was therefore a quiet and sufficiently distant setting from the city for Archbishop Drummond, Dr Alexander Hunter and 23 Yorkshire men to open one of the first purpose built lunatic asylums in the country in 1777, where the poor would be relieved from the horrors of prison.

The building was designed by John Carr to house fifty-four patients. By 1784 the Hospital governors decided to accept a small number of wealthy patients to subsidise the poor but their numbers grew so as to undermine the institution's charitable objectives.

In 1813 an inquiry revealed a number of problems at the Hospital including gross mistreatment, differentiation between rich and poor, cramped conditions and falsification of accounts. This spurred reform of the Hospital and its subsequent enlargement in the 19th century. Further expansion in the 20th century reflected changes in patient care and treatment ❸.

The Hospital was joined by the Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting Boys' School in 1846 when it moved to 20 Bootham from Lawrence Street. The School had been founded on Quaker principles by William Tuke in 1822 and included some of the Rowntree family amongst its pupils. Now known as Bootham School, it is a mixed independent boarding and day school and its grounds occupy much of the 18th century asylum grounds.

Ambience and use

York Hospital generates a high volume of activity and is always busy with patients and visitors, mostly arriving by car. Nevertheless the ambience around Bootham Park Hospital and its surrounding streets remains subdued.

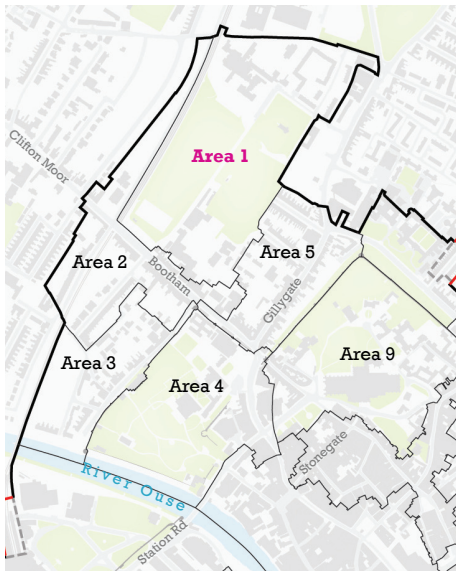
Some noise is generated by the pupils from Bootham School, mostly during break times and when using the playing field.

Although the Scarborough railway line passes the hospital, the trains are not frequent or fast moving so there is little impact.

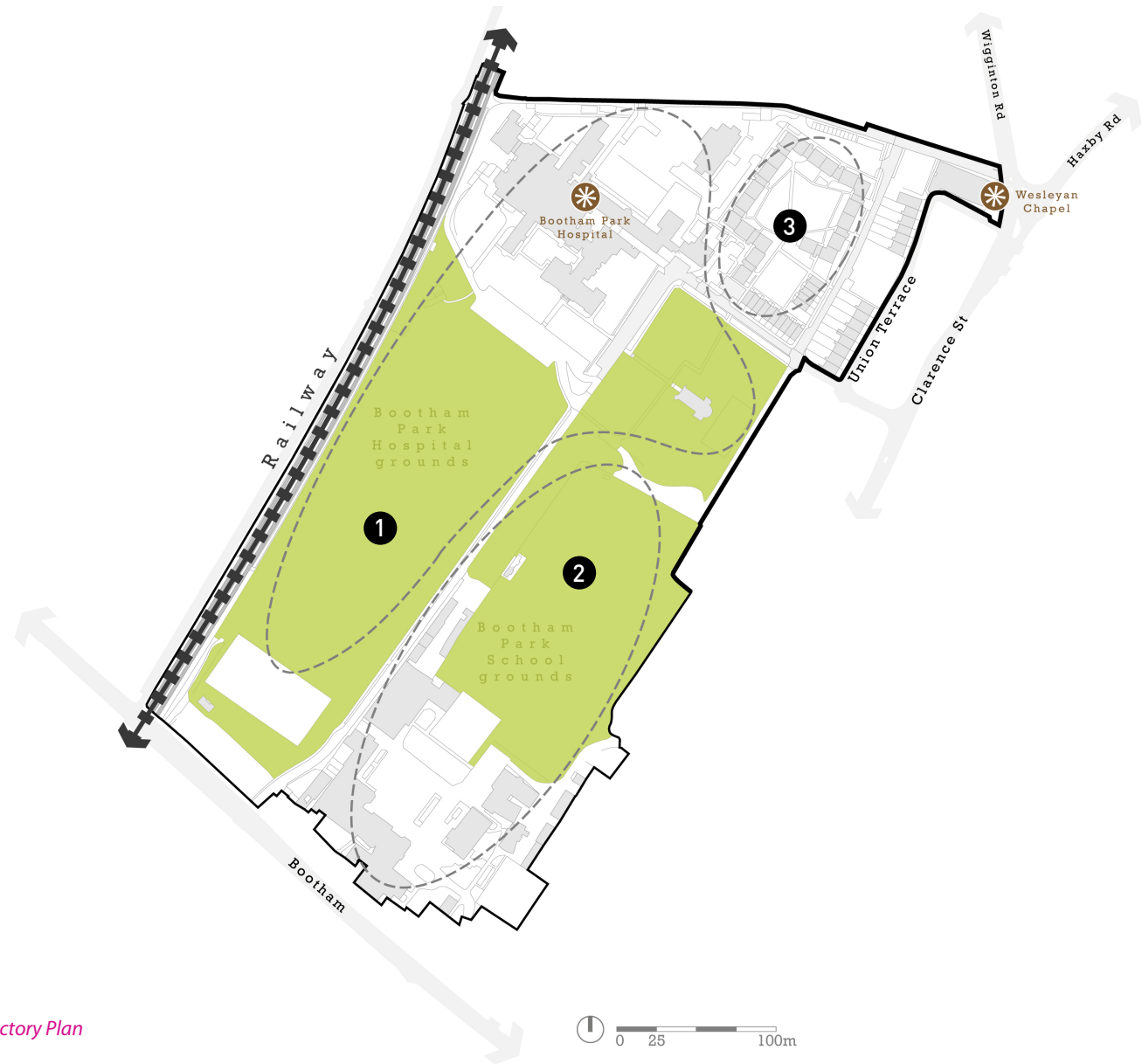
Part One: Understanding the City > Character Areas > One: Bootham Park

- 1** Bootham Park Hospital and grounds
- 2** Bootham School and playing fields
- 3** 20th century staff accommodation currently vacant
- Green space
- Landmark
- Railway
- Conservation Area boundary
- Character area boundary

Area 1 location plan



Introductory Plan



Designations

Compared to others, this area is sparsely populated with buildings and none pre-date the 18th century. Therefore, there are fewer listed buildings or those of merit.

Most of the historic hospital buildings are listed, including its chapel and a former Methodist chapel on Clarence Street.

The Assembly Hall at Bootham School was put forward for listing by the 20th Century Society about 10 years ago and was designated in 2007. Although a striking modern building in the area, it is hidden from Bootham and therefore does not impact upon the Georgian character of the street.

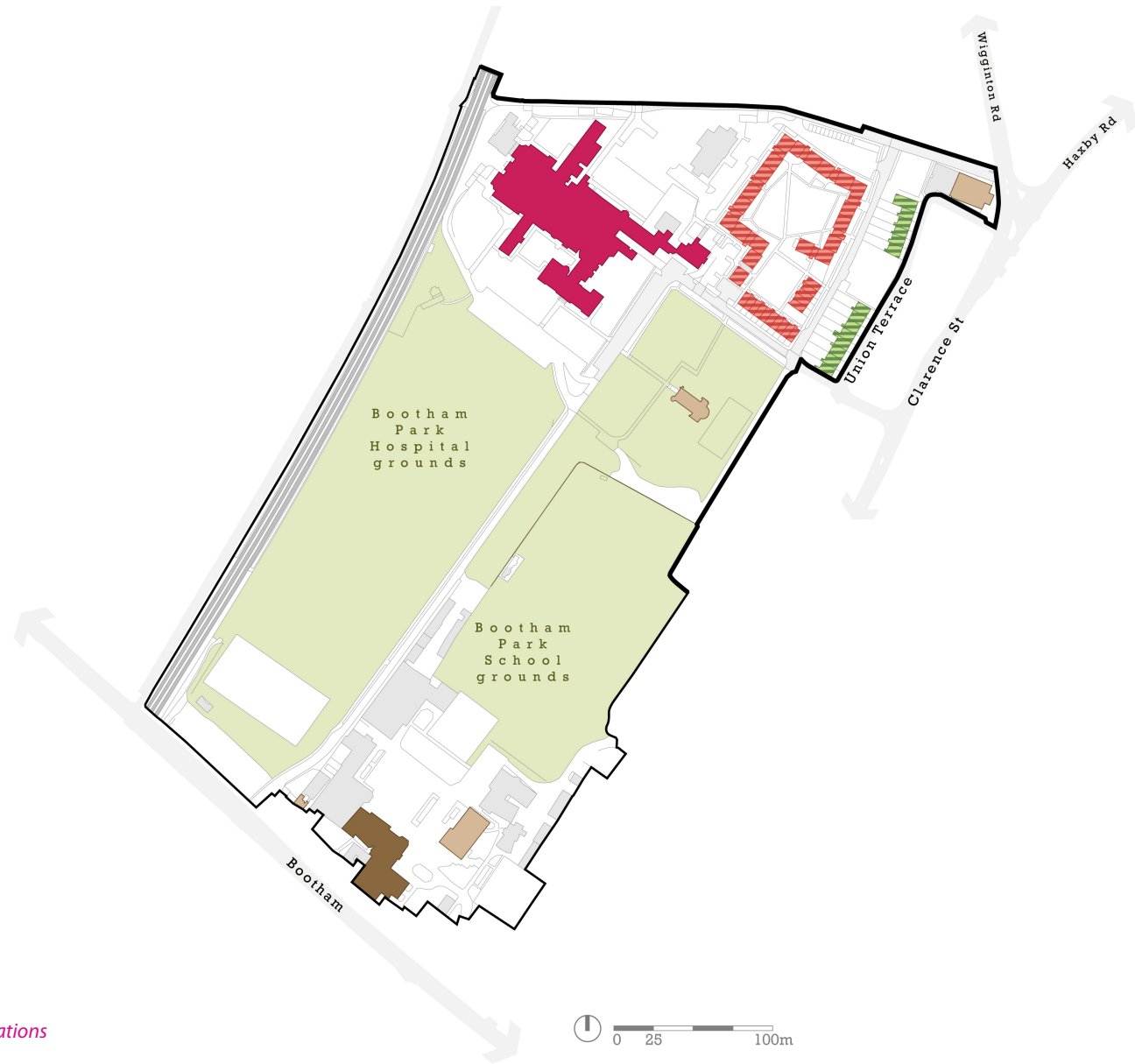
Union Terrace contains two rows of houses which are considered to be of merit. They are attractive examples of mid-19th century cottages and all that remain of a more substantial street.

A number of nurses' accommodation blocks within the hospital grounds detract from the setting of the listed hospital buildings. This is primarily to do with their present condition – boarded up and vacant – rather than their location per se. They are actually hidden by trees from the historically important view of Carr's building from Bootham.



Built in 1966, the Bootham School Assembly Hall by Trevor Dannatt is a rare example of a post-war building listed Grade II. It is in the 'Brutalist' style, which is expressed through powerful exposed concrete forms

- Grade I Listed Building
- Grade II* Listed Building
- Grade II Listed Building
- Building of merit
- Detractor
- Conservation Area boundary
- Character area boundary



Designations

Streets & Spaces

Hospital and grounds

Originally, Carr's hospital building sat in landscaped grounds. Despite the growth of the hospital and transfer of part of the grounds to Bootham School, there are still extensive grounds in front of it. These are now used as playing fields and controlled by the NHS. The area is bounded by attractive iron railings and entered via an impressive gate, both dating from 1857. They were manufactured by the Walker Foundry and have suffered from lack of maintenance.

Mature trees form a grand avenue leading from Bootham and surround the grounds to create a pleasant secluded setting, as well as screen the extensive car parking which the hospital generates. However, poor management of the trees and shrubs along the southern boundary means views of Carr's building from Bootham are severely restricted.

Other pleasant green spaces with mature trees can be found in the courtyard created by the modern patient blocks and the surroundings of the hospital chapel. An important line of mature trees features in views from Clarence Street to the chapel.



Activities are restricted on the large playing field

Union Terrace

Union Terrace was built in about 1847 and was once a much longer street, but the southern end was demolished for a car park and to create access into the hospital grounds. It is a narrow street with Victorian cottages on one side and a modern residential block on the other (which is excluded from this character area). The cottage side of the street has on-street parking but the modern block has a purpose built driveway.

At the northern end of the street is a former Wesleyan Chapel surrounded by cars parked on the hard landscape around it, in some cases almost touching the building. These spoil the building's setting and in conjunction with the building's poor appearance, create an unattractive 'gateway' to Bridge Lane and the hospital site.



The houses on Union Terrace have small front and rear gardens with the pavement boundary defined by iron railings on low brick walls

Buildings

Unlike other areas of the city, the buildings in this area are predominantly institutional or ecclesiastical, spanning the 18th to 20th centuries. This means there is not a coherent set of building types, rather a collection of individual designs which changed with architectural taste and patronage.

Bootham Park Hospital

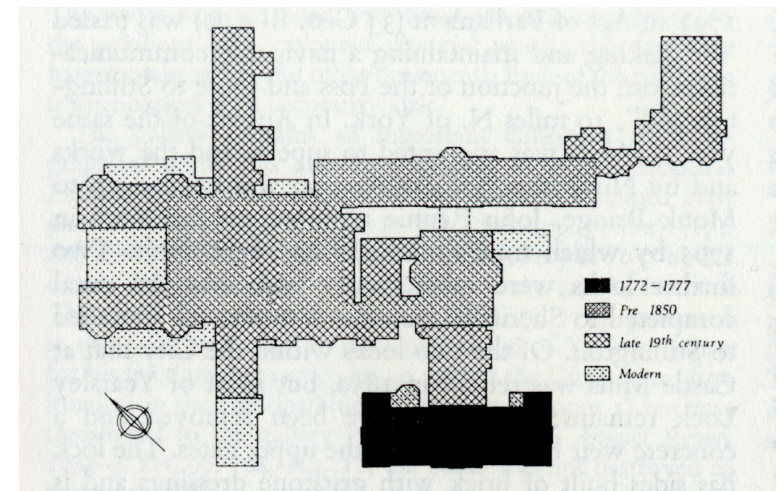
The original block by John Carr was completed in 1777. As a grand brick building with central pediment held aloft by giant stone columns, it provided a remarkably dignified home for its patients: it could almost be mistaken for one of Carr's country houses.

In 1817, a new female wing was added to the north east of the original building, replacing an earlier block which burnt a few years earlier. By 1870, two further blocks were added to the north west, one for wash house and brew house, the other for refractory (hard to manage) patients. In 1886, all these blocks were joined together and re-fitted. Further buildings were later added to the north west.

During the late 20th century, various patient accommodation blocks were erected to the east of the enlarged hospital around a courtyard arrangement. These are two or three storey brick blocks of very plain design.



The grand hospital building



Floor plan for Bootham Park Hospital

Hospital Chapel

The Hospital Chapel was built in 1865 and designed by Rawlins Gould. Its architecture is a revival of the medieval Gothic style known as 'Early English', which was widespread in the 13th century. In 1989 the chapel was converted into offices.

Hospital Lodge

The Lodge was built in 1857 and is located at the Bootham entrance. It was designed by George Fowler Jones. It forms an attractive ensemble with the adjacent iron gates and railings.

Bootham School

The original school buildings burnt down in 1899 following a science experiment that went wrong – a boy burning snail shells left them unattended over night. Rebuilding took place in a number of phases from 1902 and incorporating houses along Bootham and Portland Street.

The most interesting building is the award winning Assembly Hall by Trevor Dannatt (1965-6), built as a focus for the sprawling site. It is in a the 'Brutalist' style – an influential strand of Modernism in the 1960s, in which the buildings display their function by the powerful, often sculptural massing of exposed concrete forms. It is a style that divides opinion!



*The Grade II Listed
Hospital Chapel*

Residential

There are two nearly identical rows of terraced houses on Union Terrace. They retain sash windows and have small dormer windows in the slate roofs. Doors are set within original doorcases with rectangular fanlights above.

Wesleyan Chapel

At the northern end of the Union Terrace is a good example of a Wesleyan Chapel, built 1883 in red brick with large stained glass windows and stone features such as arches, window surrounds and urns. It is now used by Hospital administrative staff as offices, though the side facing Wigginton Road is currently boarded up. Its boundary walls are also in a poor state.



The Wesleyan Chapel is considered 'at risk'

Traffic & Movement

Unlike other character areas, this area has almost no public roads and no through traffic. The main vehicular entry is through the gateway off Bootham along a tree lined avenue. The Hospital grounds contain several private roads, traffic generally moving at a slow pace to and from the car parks.

Pedestrians can enter the site from Bootham in the south, Bridge Lane to the north and Union Terrace from the east. The approach over the railway line bridge is the least appealing given the substantial amount of rubbish along the railway cutting.



The main approach to the hospital is via a tree lined boulevard

Issues & Opportunities

Strengths

- An attractive landscape setting has been maintained for Carr's splendid building.
- This is one of the few large areas of green space in the Conservation Area and given the important relationship between the grounds and the hospital, any development of the playing fields would not be appropriate.

Weaknesses and opportunities

Landscape

- The large playing field is run by the NHS and is not accessible as a public park. Although the space is used by Bootham School, it is vacant for large amounts of the day. If clinical and other management considerations permit, greater public access should be explored so that the grounds could be better used by the local community.
- Poorly maintained railings, overgrown trees and remnants of an old tennis court present a poor front onto Bootham. The poor condition of these railings and those at the north-eastern boundary of the Bootham School, means they will soon be 'at risk' - restoration and ongoing maintenance is required to prevent this. Improved landscape management would re-instate intended views of Carr's building from Bootham.



The southern end of the green space is poorly maintained and unkempt

- The northern approach into the hospital across the railway bridge is not pleasant and could be enhanced by better maintenance of the bridge and management of trackside verges.
- The former Wesleyan chapel in the north east corner of the hospital site has the potential to serve as an attractive 'gateway' into the hospital site via Bridge Lane. Although not vacant, the boarded up windows and parking around the building detract from its setting. These should be removed if possible.
- The late 20th century hospital blocks are of utilitarian design and are presently boarded up, creating an eyesore which harms the setting of the historic hospital buildings. If they are to be re-developed, any replacement buildings need to respond more thoughtfully and sympathetically to the listed hospital buildings.



Boarded up patient accommodation is a detractor



The environment surrounding the pedestrian footbridge into the hospital should be improved

Existing

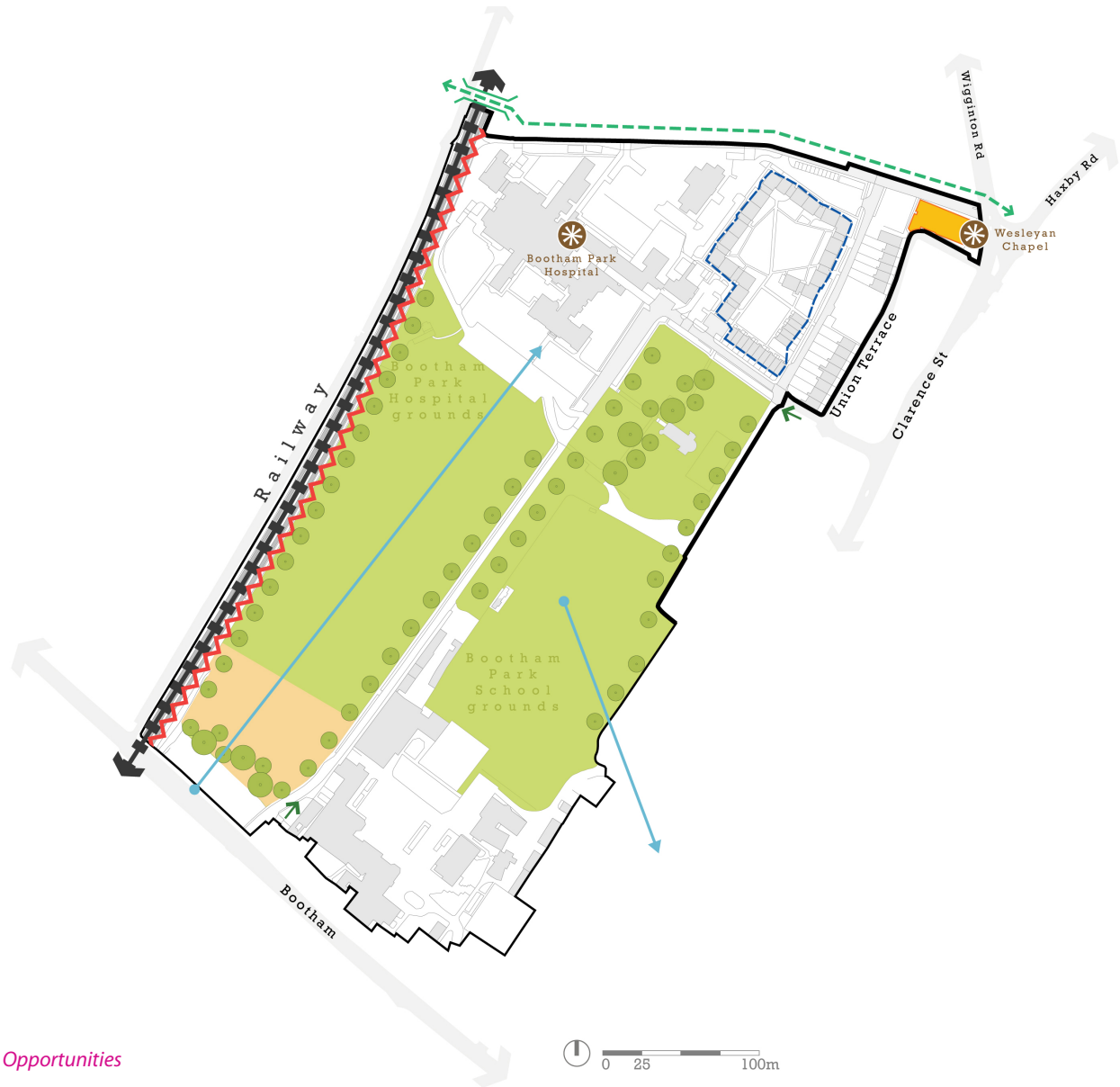
-  Barrier to movement caused by railway
-  Building at risk
-  Significant trees
-  Entrance to green space
-  Landmark
-  Railway

Opportunities

-  Improved pedestrian access via bridge
-  Landscape improvements to enhance southern area of green space
-  Redevelopment opportunity

Views

-  Local fixed with focal point



Issues and Opportunities