

14 East Street

Context

A compact linear area sloping from west to east with a difference of level of about 3 metres. It lies between the grander rebuilding and remodelling of the High Street around and above the Bargate and the survival of the more distinctively historic core of the High Street to the south. It backs onto CAs 12, 16, 17 and 26 to its south and east. It is a relatively inward looking, contained area.

East Street was one of the principal streets of the medieval town leading from High Street out to the mother church of St Mary's beyond the walled area in the old area of Saxon Hamwic. By c.1300 the street was provided with a gate to control access into the town. Beyond the gate and the defences constructed in the early thirteenth century there was a suburb stretching as far as St Mary Street and along to the area of the church. By the late nineteenth century the street contained fine two and three storey buildings. The area was badly damaged by bombing during WWII resulting in the clearance of the historic buildings of the street.

Grain

Predominantly regular, relatively narrow-fronted buildings five to seven metres wide, with shallow depth of approximately ten metres. East Street is an almost completely rebuilt street with only a few surviving individual and small groups of pre- Second World War buildings. A High level of enclosure. The majority of the street is fine grained with a large footprint store (Debenhams) at the east end though this retains the street scale with well-considered windows to its East Street facade. There is a regular unbroken building line.

Scale

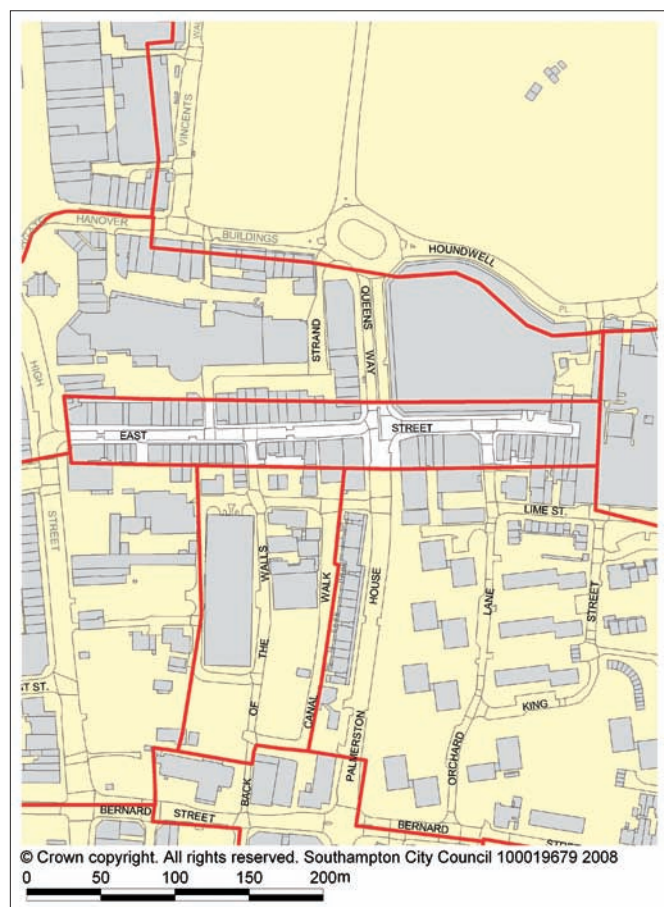
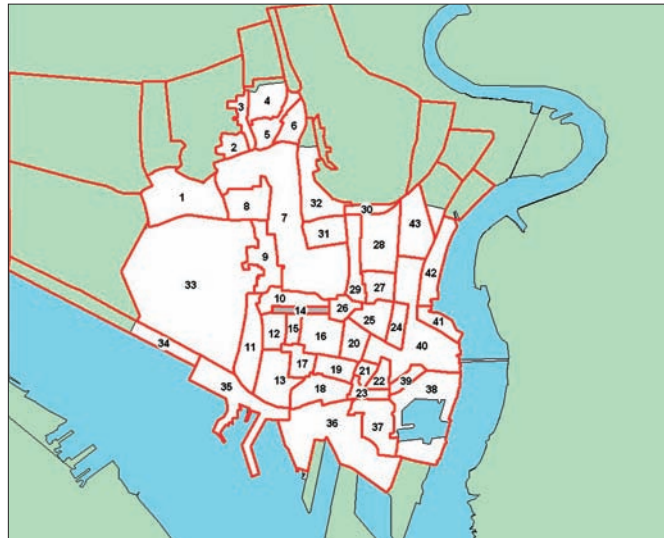
East Street has a very human scale and is a far more intimate shopping experience when compared with the alternative Mall type offers above Bargate. Buildings are mainly two storey buildings to parapet height. Street section 1 : 2 : 1. The Debenhams store to the north-east corner is of four storey (equivalent height).

Uses

Except for Debenhams the whole street is devoted to small scale shops and services, either independent or minor multiples. Ancillary shop uses or semi-vacant on first floors. Generally busy atmosphere during opening hours – mainly due to heavy pedestrian movement and narrow streets.

Public Realm

Rather cramped pavements with on-street parking. Concrete paving slabs. All hard landscape; no trees or vegetation.



Connectivity

Reasonably legible connections to the west and north – south; links to Bargate Shopping Centre via a side street. Queensway running north – south bisects the area and significantly impairs pedestrian connectivity. The East Street Shopping Centre substantially reduces connectivity beyond to the east and is an underused and outdated asset at present (October 2008).

Views

The low profile of East Street Shopping Centre allows view to dome beyond. The residential slab-block (twelve storeys) on the edge of the east end of the character area partially closes the view. The escape stairs to this slab-block form a strong skyline element. There is a good terminated view of the west end of the street by a well-detailed late nineteenth century bank building.

Building types

Purpose-built shops on small floorplates with storage or showrooms above. Small cafes and restaurants in purpose-built units. Large department store (in part).

Architectural qualities

Most of the buildings date from the 1950s and are utilitarian in appearance. Despite this, the groupings and vertical emphasis to many of the units give some articulation to the facades. This is combined with strong emphasis (in part) of the cross-walls. The Debenhams department store is of a more civic style but of the same period. It continues the vertical emphasis with a series of vertical projecting fins between window slots.

Heritage Assets

The area is considered to possess a high degree of evidential value due to the line of the town wall (which would include the medieval defences – ditch, rampart, subsequent wall, gate, possible bridge remains) crossing the area in line with Back of the Walls but there are no upstanding remains in this section. A short section of the town wall survives immediately to the south of the character area on Back of the Walls. This area also contains part of the main medieval settlement including the site of All Saints' Church and part of the suburb that lay beyond the East Gate. As part of the medieval town, the archaeology of the area is regarded as being nationally important. The area lies within a Local Area of Archaeological Importance to reflect this potential to yield significant evidence for past activity in the area.

There are no listed buildings within the character area. Debenhams, dating from the 1950s, forms a corner at the south end of the Central Parks (CA07) but also formally addresses Queensway and East Street. It forms the north side of East Street at its eastern end. This building has been identified as a building of architectural or historic interest making a positive contribution to the character of the area due to its confident 'Festival Hall'



- 01 East Street looking west – modest two storey development
- 02 Capital House to the east with its striking external stair – a local landmark in East Street
- 03 Signage in East Street encouraging a sense of place separate from the main commercial core

styling and successful active frontage to three major thoroughfares. The building is largely unaltered from its original design. As such it could be considered to be of some aesthetic value. The western end of the character area extends into the Old Town (North) Conservation Area.

There is a small group of nineteenth century buildings near Back of the Walls which are of local interest as the few surviving pre-war buildings in East Street. These are considered to have mostly aesthetic value reflecting designs and architectural styles from earlier periods but could also be considered to have illustrative value in their role as some of the few surviving elements of pre-war Southampton.

Materials

A mix of buff and red brick. Some variation to infill panelling with patinated copper used towards the western end. Windows are often expressed with projecting frames of precast concrete. Shop windows, fascias and signage are invariably of standard designs and indifferent quality.

Condition

Debenhams is in good condition. The remainder of the

building stock is in a fair condition.

Ownership

Mainly small independent and small multiples. Debenhams large multiple/corporate.

Intervention

- Signage and street image could be improved.
- Pedestrian priority surface across Queensway.
- East Street Shopping Centre needs to be refurbished to retain its viability.
- On-street parking could be improved and better integrated into an improved pavement design and material finish.
- The local authority should seek to raise the level of the quality of materials and detailed design of the shopfronts and signage.

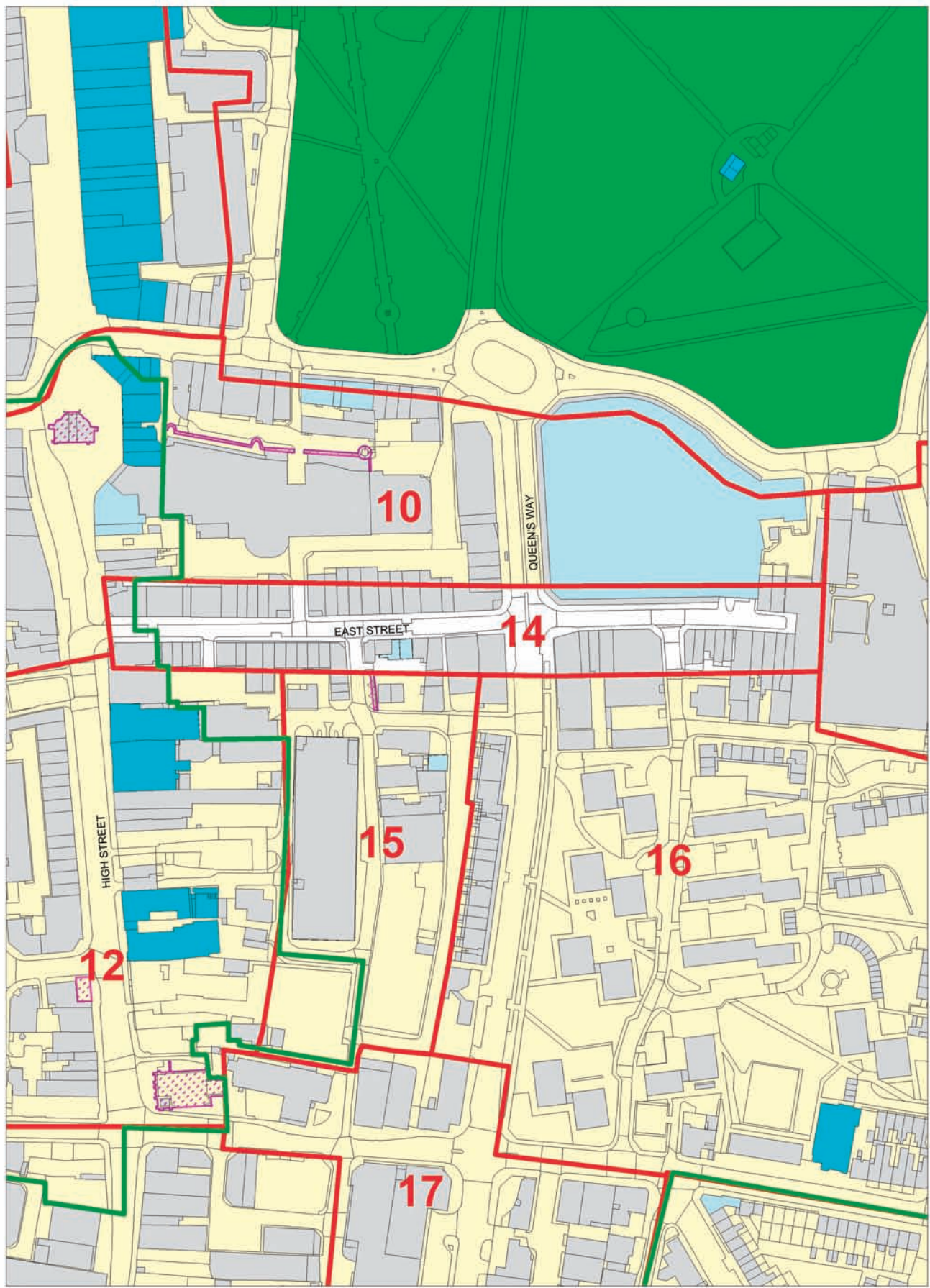
Key design principles

- The scale of this street is very sensitive to change and is one of the key features which sets it apart from the rest of the city.
- Any proposals for redevelopment should seek to maintain the architectural rhythm and language of the street.

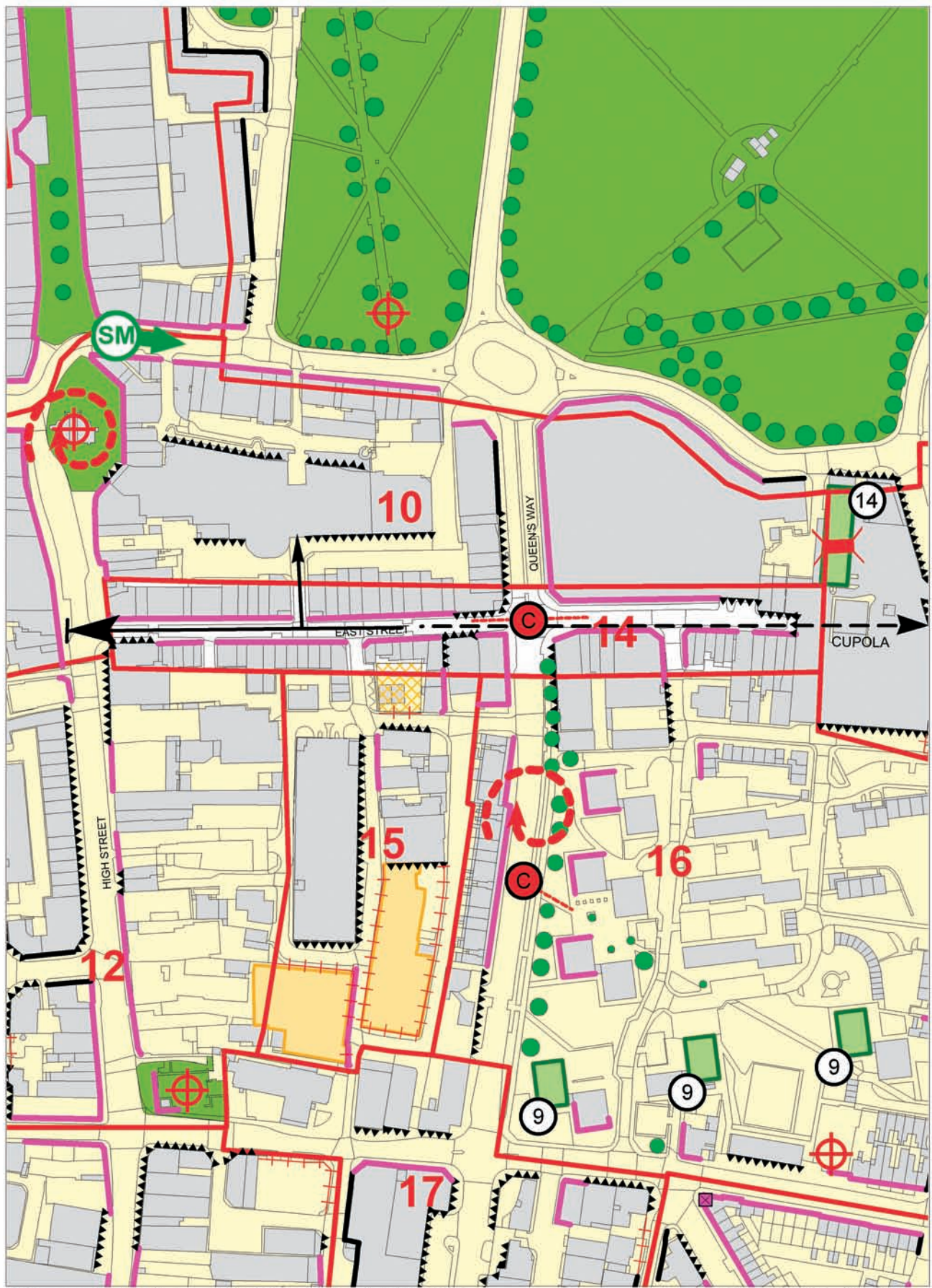


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Heritage Assets



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Townscape