

3. Sensitivity of key heritage assets to tall buildings

3.1 The key heritage assets - defining significance

In order to measure and appraise the potential impact of tall buildings on the key heritage assets identified within the study the consultant team have evaluated the heritage assets using headings set out in Historic England's document Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008). This sets out four key themes within which it is possible to define the significance of heritage assets. The key themes are a good starting point from which to establish an understanding of what is significant for any given asset. These will then enable clear guidance on how that asset might be preserved, enhanced and /or better revealed.

Understanding the heritage significance of a historic asset is essential in order to provide guidance for future management. The key headings for understanding are evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal. These can be briefly defined as follows:

Evidential - the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity (archaeology buried and standing)

Historical - the ways in which the present is connected to the past people, events and aspects of life

Aesthetic - the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place

Communal - the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience, connections through tradition or memory.

In the case of the Waterfront and Central Parks of Southampton these are a very complex and multi-layered set of heritage values. These will differ from those associated with the spire of St Michael's Church or the Campanile of the Civic Centre. Their relative heritage value and how they are experienced will vary but can be weighted through analysis in order to be able to make some informed decisions about the importance of particular views and viewing areas.

The diagram to the right shows the relationship between the four themes and their importance in terms of understanding the heritage asset. Central Government guidance through the NPPF as well as through the Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning notes produced by Historic England, most notably GPA3 (Setting of Heritage Assets) stresses the importance of a clear understanding of the heritage values under the four themes and applying these to all aspects of the heritage asset. Of key importance to this study is the setting of heritage assets and the contribution and weight which should be given to the preservation of this setting in terms of the significance of the heritage asset. This is a statutory requirement for listed buildings and conservation areas within which all development should be judged.

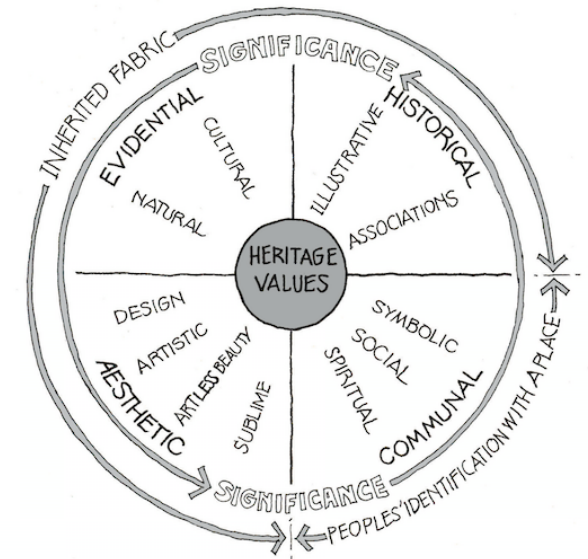


Image courtesy of Richard Guise

Scoring

The study provides an overview of the significance of the key heritage asset under each of the key themes and expresses them as a series of bullet points. For each of the themes a weight is assigned as a numerical value between 1 and 6. This is in order to provide a quick assessment to be made and to allow quick and simple comparison between key heritage assets. The following provides a breakdown of how the weighting has been assigned.

Value	Description
1	Where the collective values are of low significance and individually or collectively they make little or no positive contribution to the heritage significance of the asset
2-3	Where the collective values are of moderate significance. Where negotiation can bring about improvement and/or where appropriate reinstatement, and the degree of change to these values can be, where justified, more significant
4-5	Where the collective values are of high significance. Within these categories there is some potential for negotiation and it may be appropriate to mitigate loss/change through recording, and setting may be as sensitive to change
6	Where the collective values identified within a theme are of very high significance and are elements which are not negotiable and there should be a presumption of retaining them in their present form and setting. Distinction between the top two scores could be in relation to the specific reference to Southampton and the heritage assets role in defining the historic or architectural significance of the city

The existing advice relating to the setting of heritage assets (GPA3) stresses the importance of being able to place the significance of the setting within its historic context. This is often a complex relationship of factors but should always be explicit particularly when seeking to protect a setting which is considered as 'highly sensitive' (see Glossary and section 3.4). The process of defining significance and relating this significance to the setting of key heritage assets is an essential component of any proposals for change. This is particularly important in the case of development which due to its scale and form has the potential in some cases to cause substantial harm to heritage assets within the city centre.

For each of the key heritage assets identified for the purposes of the study, the following information is provided:

- **Location plan** - shows the location of the heritage asset within the city centre and context of nearby designated assets
- **Brief description** - describes the key heritage asset
- **Designations** - lists the relevant designations
- **Heritage asset values** - highlights the main features of the heritage asset related to the four heritage significance themes
- **Significance of heritage asset** - summary diagram which scores and provides a value for the four themes in relation to their significance.

Figure.5
Key heritage assets

The key heritage assets identified and agreed with the project team in this study are:

- **Bargate (BG)**
- **Central Parks (CP)**
 - Watts and East
 - Palmerston
 - Houndwell
 - Hoglands
- **Civic Centre Campanile (CCC)**
- **Town Walls (TW)**
- **St Michael's Church (STMIC)**
- **Waterfront (WF)**

They are shown diagrammatically in Fig.5.

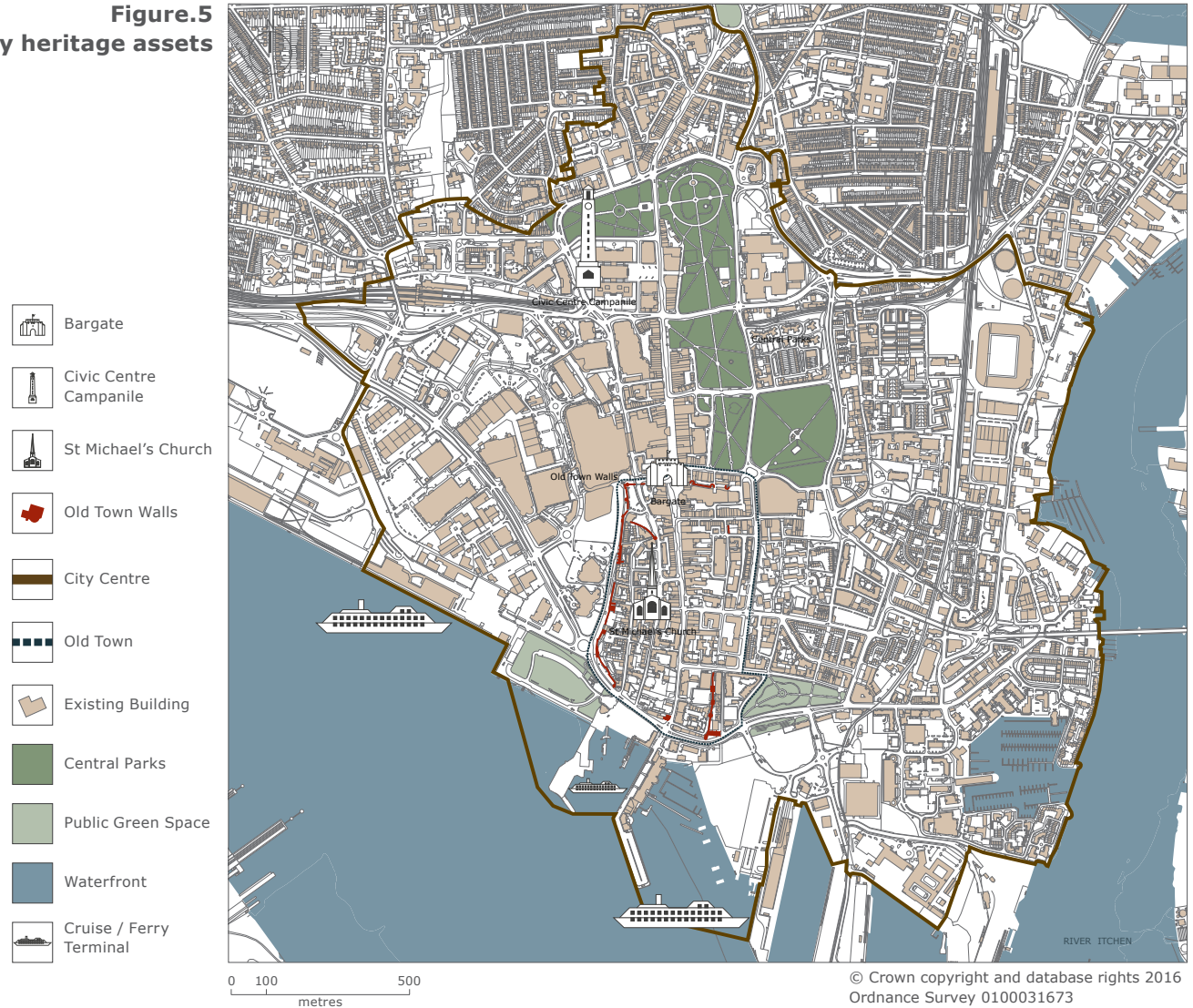
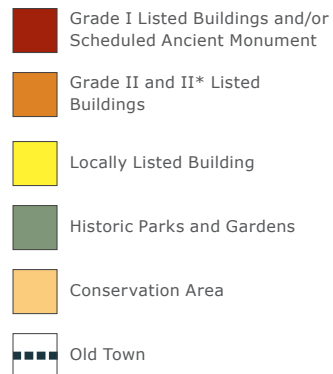




Figure.6 Location plan

Bargate



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A. High Street, Below Bar c.1890 (www.fgo-stuart.co.uk/postcard/9/the-high-street-southampton)
B. Present day northern facade

Brief description

One of the finest town gateways in England. Dates from circa 1180 with addition and alterations of c1290, C18 and restored in 1864-5. It was built as a town gateway with Guildhall at first floor level. Breaches were cut in the adjoining Town Walls in the 1930s. Two storeys built of stone and flint. Ground floor has a central round-headed archway of circa 1180-1200 the arch and responds round-chamfered with small square abaci. Two other arches added in 1764 and 1774. Large drum towers were added on the north side circa 1280-90. These retain arrow slit windows. Embattled north front added circa 1400. Once forming part of continuous Town Walls, the eastern road around the structure was built in 1932 and the western route six years later. The result is the Bargate is now free-standing.

Designations

- Grade I Listed
- Scheduled Ancient Monument (Number: 1001930)
- Old Town North Conservation Area

Heritage asset values

Evidential

- Complex series of physical alterations including embattled parapet providing a strong time depth for historic fabric although there has been much change
- Continued civic use from inception to the present day
- Closely linked evidentially with separate but integral section of surviving town walls to east and west
- Heavily compromised by C20 interventions which have truncated the Bargate from associated heritage assets and left an undistinguished immediate architectural setting
- The patina of stonework provides an authenticity to the monument

Historical

- A remarkable survival of one of the best sections of medieval town defences of national importance in England
- Strong links with the civic management of the town and city over time (was used as the Guildhall prior to it moving to its present site)
- Is the subject of numerous etchings, paintings and early photographs looking both north up High Street and south from Above Bar
- Symbolises some of the true contradictions of the city in terms of its recently traumatic history with much of its surroundings being rebuilt post-war and its constant expansion and evolution as a progressive city with its decision to sever the Bargate from its surrounding defences in the early C20
- Has seen much change over time particularly in terms of its immediate setting

Aesthetic

- The Bargate sits centrally on the north-south Above Bar/ High Street axis and closes views along these streets
- The castellated parapet remains a dominant and distinctive feature in views from the north and south
- The immediate townscape is sympathetic and responds positively to the scale of the Bargate
- Its original purpose as a closure to the main access to this part of the medieval settlement and the visual dominance that would have clearly formed part of its design is still readily apparent
- The predominantly unrelieved stonework to the north elevation is visually convincing and has a strong form following function character to its composition reflective of its former defensive and administrative role
- The Bargate is viewed from some distance and is clearly seen to define the edge of the former walled section of medieval Southampton
- The truncation of the Bargate from its associated walls has almost accentuated its monument-like status
- The fact that the gate can still be walked through and appreciated in its original use is of high value

Communal

- By placing the monument in a pedestrianised setting the public (locals and visitors alike) is encouraged to enjoy and interact with the Bargate in a way not possible until the late C20
- The Bargate is symbolic (both physically and metaphorically) for the city and its continued civic administration (it forms part of the City Council’s logo)
- The Bargate is a locally recognised landmark and wayfinding point
- The section of the pedestrianised street to the immediate south of the Bargate hosts regular local markets

Significance of heritage asset





Figure.7 Location plan

Civic Centre Campanile

- Grade I Listed Buildings and/or Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Grade II and II* Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Building
- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Conservation Area
- Old Town

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A. Present day

Brief description

The Civic Centre was constructed between 1928 and 1939. The building was conceived by architect E Berry Webber following a competition. Nikolaus Pevsner describes the building as 'Perhaps the most ambitious civic building erected in the provinces during inter-war years, a symbol of Southampton's heyday as a port.'

The plan comprises a quadrangle of buildings with their principal facades facing outwards. On the west the Law Courts, on the south The Municipal Offices, on the east the Guildhall and on the north the Art Block. The buildings are set in a symmetrical composition, generally in what Pevsner refers to as 'Free Classical' in style. All is faced in Portland stone. To the west of the plan and above the entrance to the Law Courts rises a tall, gently tapering tower or campanile with clock, open bell stage and low pyramidal roof. According to Pevsner, the tower is 'the landmark of Southampton (his emphasis)... pleasing and assertive in just the way the architect must have intended.'

Designations

- Grade II* Listed

Heritage asset values

Evidential

- A series of complementary civic uses combined imaginatively and seamlessly in a single building form (despite varying dates of development between 1928-39)
- Formerly part of the sequence of open green spaces, medieval in origin which later became the Central Parks
- A strong relationship with West Park to the north both physically and historically
- Likely the site of the medieval leper hospital of St Mary Magdalen
- A building which in its scale and quality reflects something of the relative wealth of the city of Southampton (as a successful port) in the inter-war period

Historical

- A powerful symbol of city pride and confident scale for a new administrative hub for the city
- Designed by eminent municipal building designer, architect E Berry Webber (designer of the Grade II listed Dagenham Town Hall and Hammersmith Town Hall also Grade II listed)
- Strong association with the artistic community of Southampton

Aesthetic

- A cohesive and confident use of high quality materials (Portland stone and copper roofs) which unify the various elements of the whole
- A bold and distinctive campanile which is viewed and glimpsed throughout the city and for some distance particularly on arrival by train from the west and on travelling south-west along London Road upon which the campanile is aligned
- A relatively rare (for Southampton) use of a Free Classical architectural style (as defined by Nikolaus Pevsner)
- Strongly defined and re-asserted termination of the newly created Guildhall Square with the Guildhall pediment and entrance
- Sensitive modern extension to the north-west corner housing the SeaCity Museum

Communal

- A powerful symbol of civic pride for the city of Southampton
- Strong links to the local, regional and national art community with its successful art gallery and collection
- Centre of administration for much of the cities social and community roles

Significance of heritage asset

