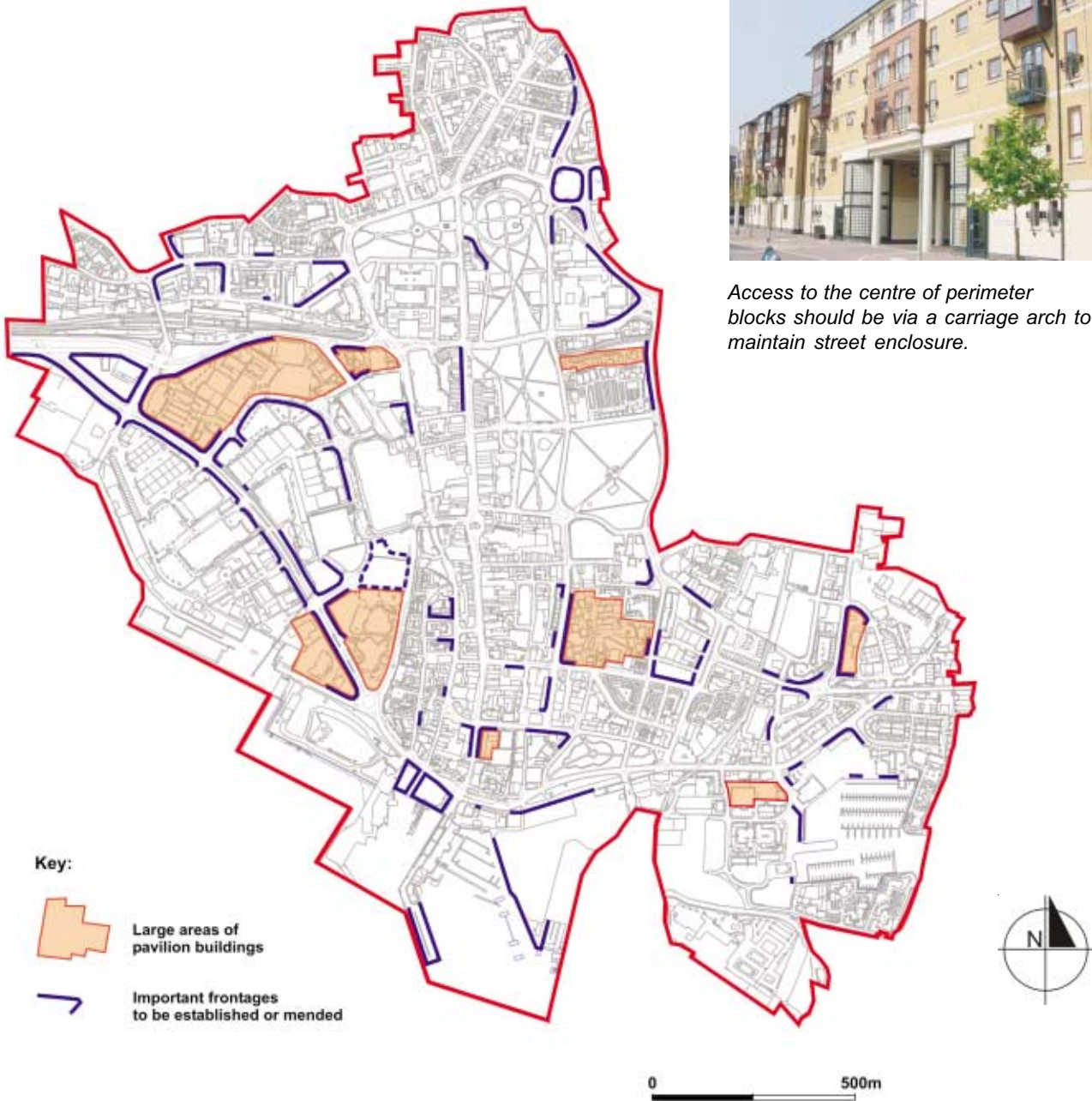


Plan 3.1 POOR QUALITY URBAN FORM



Access to the centre of perimeter blocks should be via a carriage arch to maintain street enclosure.



Pavilion buildings such as this sit in space, whereas perimeter blocks enclose it.

Based on the Ordnance Survey's 2003 map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright reserved. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Southampton City Council License No. 100019679, 2004.



### 3.0 CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE

#### 3.1 Building pattern

##### Objectives

To create development with a highly urban character which respects the context, is legible and resolves conflicts between private and public activities.

The measures in this section include some of the fundamental principles of urban design. Their adoption by designers will contribute greatly to compliance with some of the most important urban design policies in the Local Plan. These are SDP 1, concerned with the general safety, amenity and quality of development; SDP 8i about active street frontages; SDP 8ii requiring clear distinction between public and private space and SDP 10i and ii concerned with the natural surveillance and safety of public space.



*Perimeter block architecture need not be bland - Berlin.*

##### 3.1.1 Perimeter block form

The basic unit of development should be the perimeter block with buildings facing onto public routes and spaces. The perimeter block is the best way to accommodate a diversity of building uses at medium to high densities.



*Perimeter block proposal for Canon's Marsh, Bristol*

© Edward Cullinan Architects

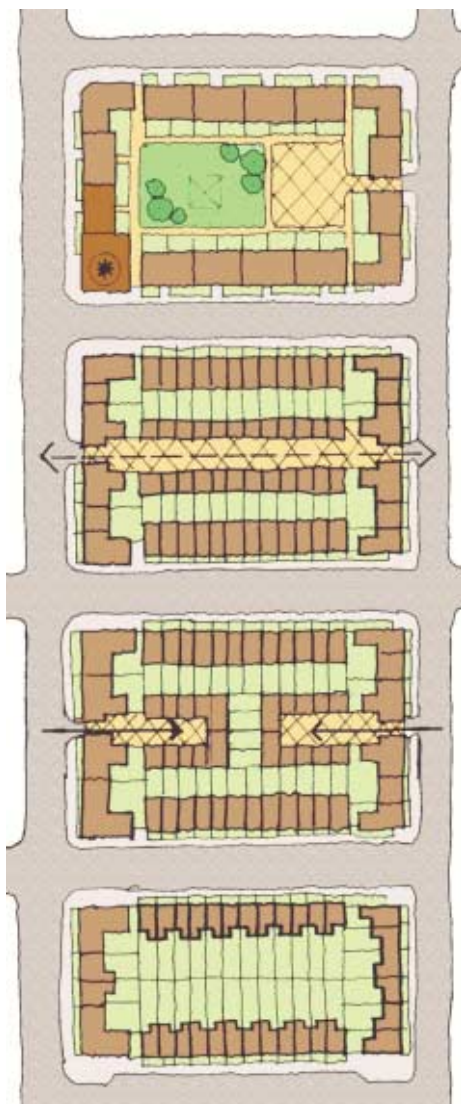
Use of perimeter block form will help deliver legible townscape in which public and private space are clearly distinguished, marking out territory and improving security. Its use is an indispensable way of meeting the requirements of Local Plan policy SDP 1ii requiring that development respects and improves the existing townscape. Plan no. 3.1- Page 34, identifies locations where perimeter block frontages are currently missing.

**Design Principle 3.i : Development should contribute to or create perimeter block form.**

**3.1.2 Get connected**

Infill developments of single plots should physically connect with neighbouring buildings or anticipate future connection if neighbouring plots are not built up to the plot edge.

Building form with a continuous, uninterrupted block edge defines the street better than pavilion buildings. It encloses the public space and offers its active edges to enliven the street, whereas pavilion buildings sit in space and their doors and windows are



**Apartment Blocks** – apartment buildings front onto a public street, with the rear private open space divided between private gardens, private communal open space and a parking square. Access to internal private open space is controlled to ensure the safety and liveability of the spaces. This option allows for the highest density development and is suitable for central urban locations within the City Centre.

**Terraces/Mews Lane** – this option structures terraces around the perimeter of the block with internal mews housing in a *line* arrangement. There is a smaller proportion of private open space but it is of a high quality and accessed by residents only. Mews housing forming an internal lane allows for through public access but this space should be carefully designed to protect liveability by emphasising the semi-privateness of the space. This is a moderate density housing type arrangement and can be utilised in transitional zones as the bridge between higher and lower density housing areas.

**Terraces/Mews Courtyards** – this option structures terraces around the perimeter of the block with internal courtyards of mews housing structured within the block. This structure does not allow through public access and thus fosters a controlled intimacy within the internal mews courtyards. Again, private open space is tighter but of a high quality and robustness. This would also be classed as a moderate density housing type arrangement.

**Terraces** – a perimeter block made up of terraces facing the street maximises the quantity of private open space within the block. There is no public access into the block, thus ensuring a high degree of liveability within the rear gardens of the plots. This option may be more appropriate in lower density areas within the City Centre.

**The Robustness of the Perimeter Block:** illustration of the variety of possible house types



divorced from the public realm. A loose framework of buildings is unlikely to be considered appropriate. However, in exceptional circumstances gaps in the block may be allowed or required either for movement, visibility or historical context.

The perimeter block manifested in the terraced form is also highly sustainable. The reduction of external wall area leads to a low embodied energy in construction, affordability (which supports the sustainability goal of equity of choice), good thermal insulation (hence low energy consumption) and improved durability. Improved sound insulation will deal with a criticism of terraced housing that noise pollution is a problem.

**Design Principle 3.ii : Buildings should where possible connect physically with neighbouring buildings.**

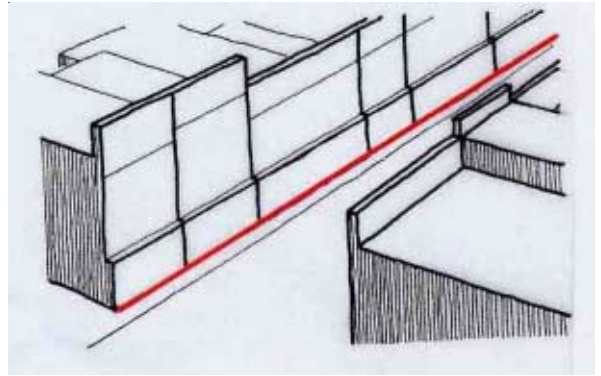
### 3.1.3 Block shape and size

Block shape can be modified to create public spaces such as squares or circuses. The plan on page 50 (4.1 Block Size) shows the City Centre's urban grain is very coarse in the western character area and relatively fine (i.e. with smaller block sizes) elsewhere and especially in the Old Town. Overlarge block sizes inhibit permeability.

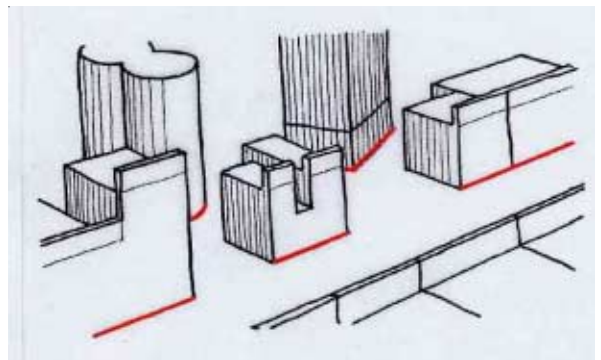
### 3.1.4 Orientation

The main aspects of buildings ( the facades of a building containing main entrances) should front onto public streets. 'Public street', in this context, excludes access roads within car parks. Generally buildings should be parallel with the streets they face.

**Design Principle 3.iii : Buildings should be parallel to public streets and main entrances should front onto them.**



*A cohesive streetscape is not possible unless buildings define the linear space of the street.*

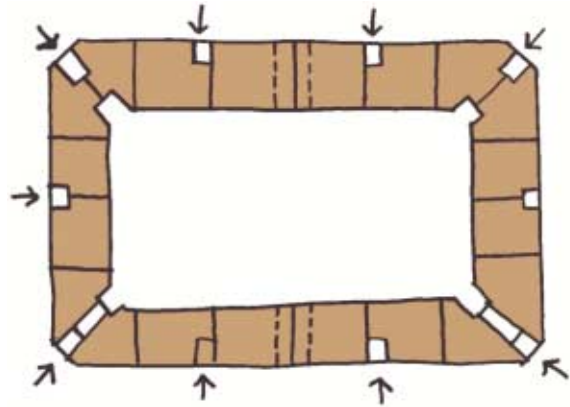


*Varied and unrelated building shapes and siting patterns do not achieve the desired streetscape cohesion.*

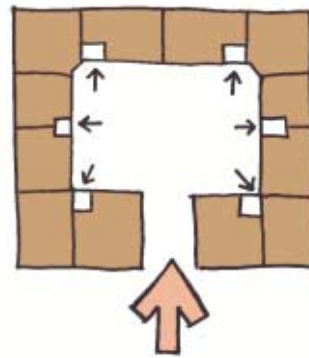
**3.1.5 Typologies**

The perimeter block can be made up of a range of form types, including flats, urban villas or terraces. In certain special circumstances, an alternative form type to the outward fronting perimeter block could be the inward oriented courtyard type. These are illustrated in the diagrams opposite.

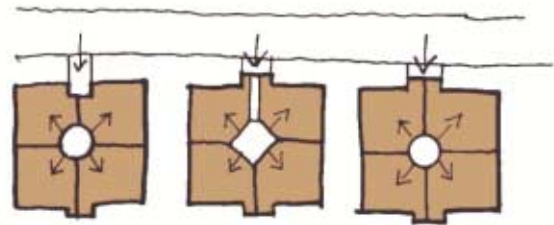
**Typical Perimeter Block** – continuous edge activation, accommodates high density development, robust enough to be made up of a range of house types within a plot-based structure, high quality internal private open space.



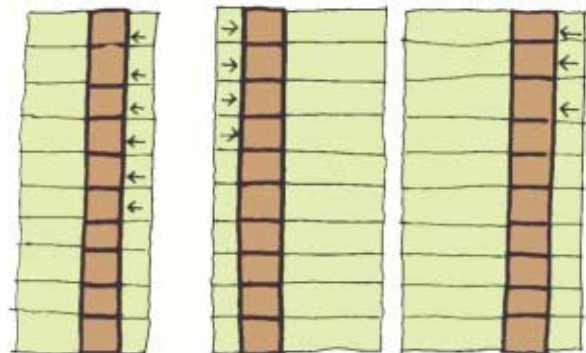
**Courtyard** – control over a single entrance for safety and security reasons justifies an exception to 3.1.4 above for a particularly sensitive educational or care facility. This maintains street enclosure, and internal intimacy within the private open space of the court.



**Urban Villa** – provides continuous frontage and breaks down the scale of the building line and provides housing options for families, empty nesters, and older people. The urban villa is a bridge house type between flats and the terrace as units are generally larger than flats but they don't have individual front doors onto the street as the terrace does.



**Terrace** – line of plot-based party-wall housing that is organised front to front or back to back. Provides an enclosed and activated perimeter but reduces the scale of the building line to create a sense of domesticity in the streetscape, as with development in the Old Town. Provide each household/family access to their own front door off the street and maximises the quantity and robustness of private open space.



### 3.1.6 Hiding the 'big-box'

Stand alone 'big-box' buildings, such as retail sheds, warehouses, factories and leisure facilities with associated private car parking are not acceptable. These buildings usually present two or three 'dead' edges to the public realm and are finished using cheap, low quality cladding materials.

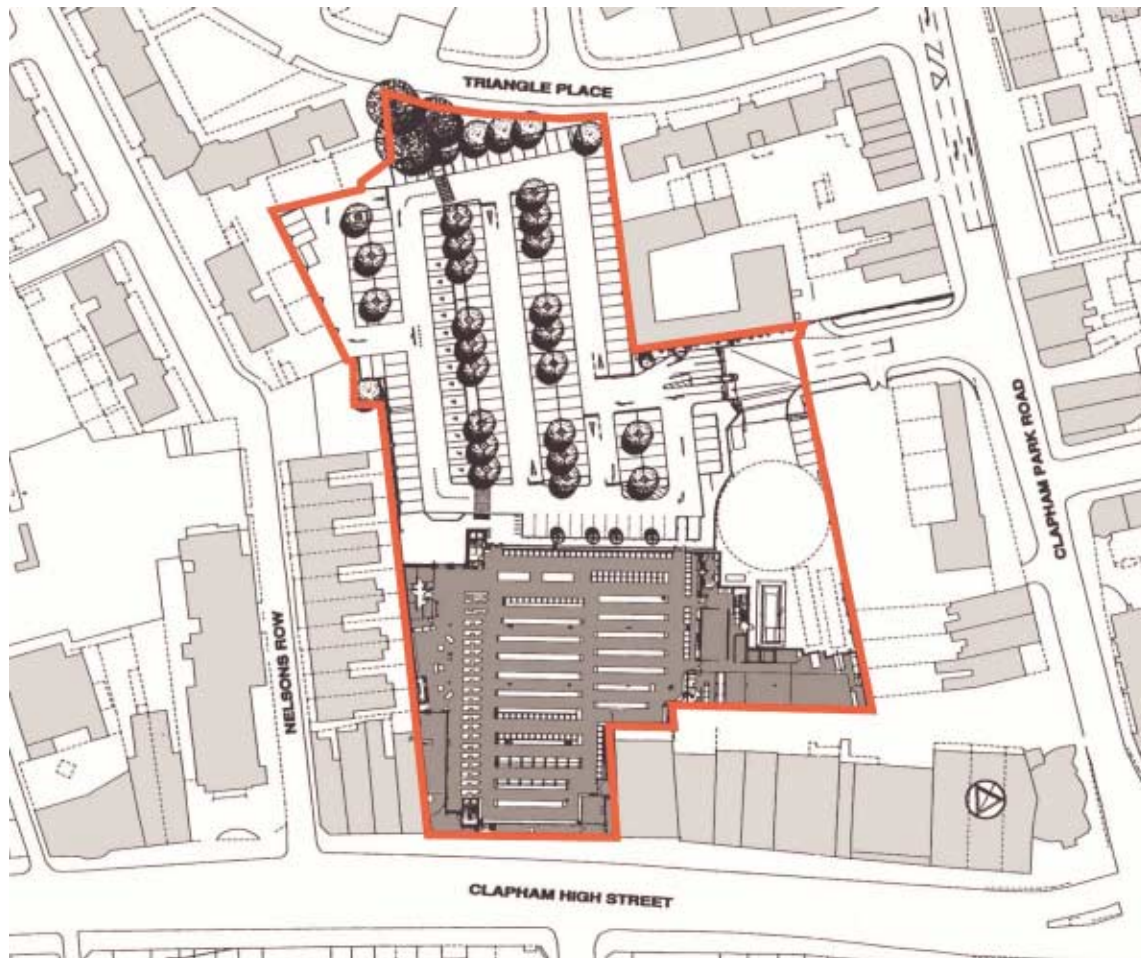
Government Guidance PPG 6 (1996) establishes that key City Centre uses (retail, leisure, offices) should establish a need for new development and adopt a sequential approach to their location, starting first with the City Centre. Current debate and ministerial statement suggest that this need should be for the

class of goods being provided not the format of the store. The traditional argument for isolated warehouse style retail developments is no longer justified and the City Council would expect developers to show clearly how their proposal fits in with the surrounding context, network of routes and scale of development (see Local Plan policies REI 2 and 3).

Any 'dead' edges should be wrapped by small units. Incorporating other uses over the building including parking would be beneficial; so also would externalising some of the active ancillary uses, such as cafes and providing windows offering views into the unit or illuminated window displays where this is impractical. The fine grain of certain city centre locations cannot accommodate the 'big-box' form.

**Design Principle 3.iv: 'Big-box' type developments should be integrated within perimeter blocks.**

#### **Plan 3.2 'BIG BOXES' SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO FIT AND REINFORCE THE PERIMETER BLOCK - SAINSBURY'S STORE: CLAPHAM**





### 3.2 Scale and massing

#### Objective

**To ensure that the shapes and volumes comprising the townscape are harmonious, legible and continuous.**

The Local Plan requires that development is sympathetic to the layout, scale, density and proportion of existing buildings (SDP1ii, 7iii, iv and 9). This section gives supplementary advice.

#### 3.2.1 High fliers

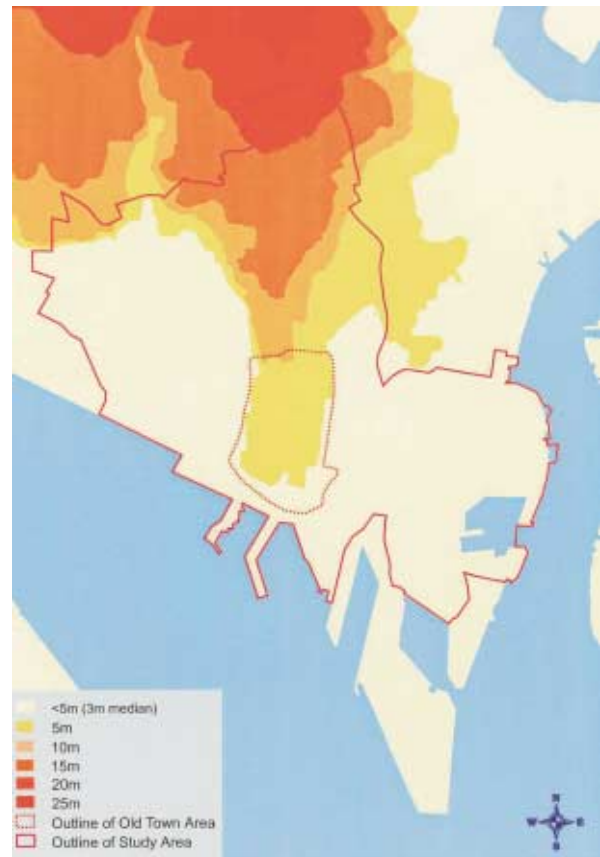
Building height determines the impact of a development on views, vistas and skylines. The scale and mass of larger buildings has a positive role to play in defining a place as essentially urban in character. The mass of a building is the combined effect of arrangement, volume and shape and as it increases, so the place is increasingly perceived as impressive and exciting.



*Stepping of large buildings reduces their impact at street level.*

The impact of tall buildings on the city skyline will depend crucially on their location. Plan 3.3 - below, shows that a central peninsular of higher ground runs down through the City Centre from the north. This was the earliest part of the city to be developed. It is bisected by the Above Bar / High Street spine which formed the approach and focus of the early town. A steep scarp runs along the western edge of the peninsular, gradually becoming less marked towards the southern tip of the Old Town. Plan 3.4 - opposite, sets out permitted building height envelopes. Refer also to the City Skyline Strategy (SCC 2005). The City Centre Urban Design Strategy indicates that the future of the central area will be of a more urban scale with 4 - 6 storeys the norm across much of the centre (excluding the Old Town). Refer to section 7.1.4 and Plan 7.3 of this document which identify the key locations where buildings of landmark scale will be considered.

**Plan 3.3 THE TOPOGRAPHY OF SOUTHAMPTON CITY CENTRE.**

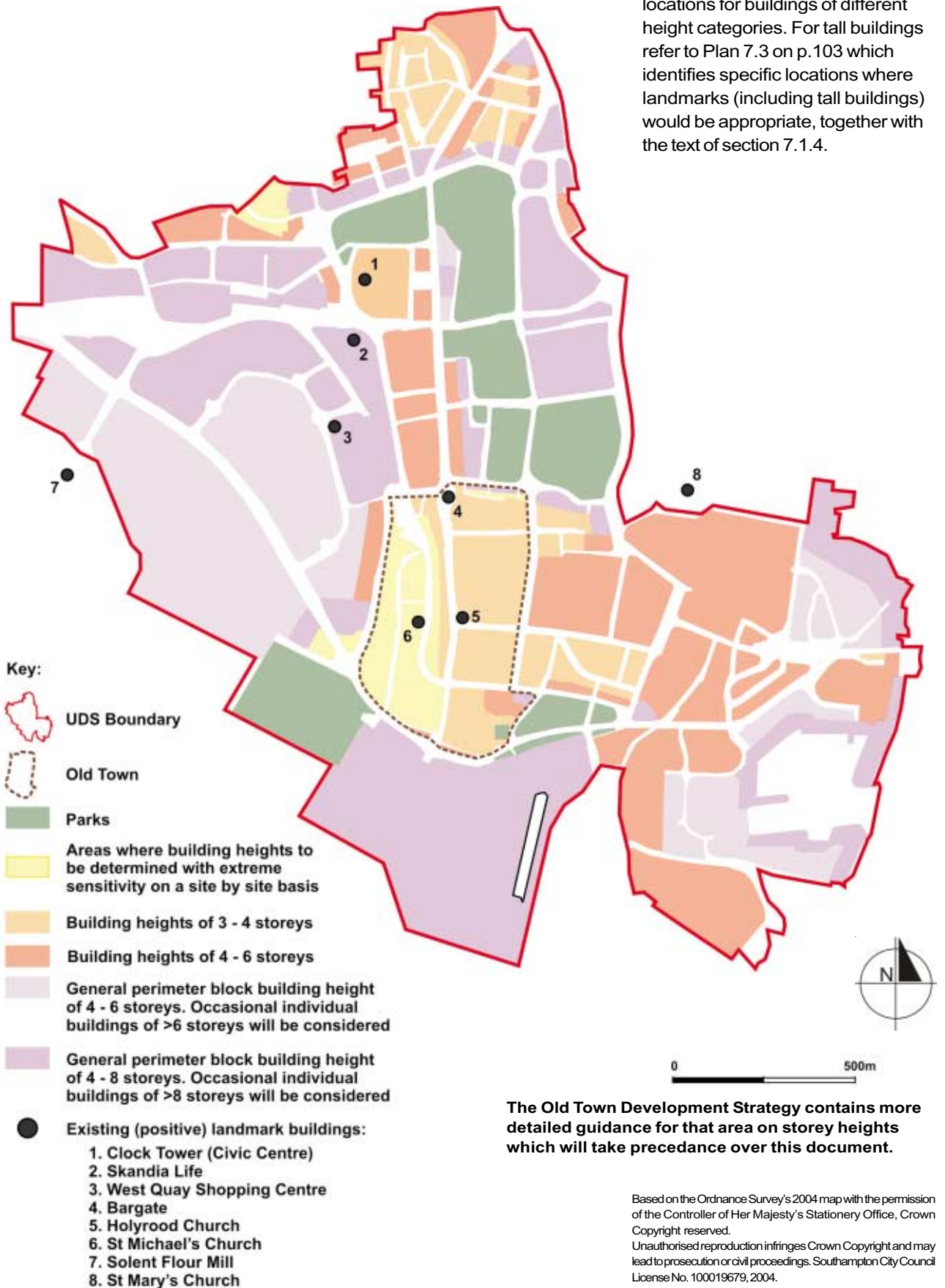


Heights are given 'above mean sea level' Ordnance Datum - Newlyn (ODN).



**Plan 3.4 PERMITTED BUILDING HEIGHT ENVELOPES.**

This plan identifies general locations for buildings of different height categories. For tall buildings refer to Plan 7.3 on p.103 which identifies specific locations where landmarks (including tall buildings) would be appropriate, together with the text of section 7.1.4.



The following checklist of criteria should be met by buildings taller than six storeys or 18 metres or significantly higher than the surrounding buildings as part of an urban design study of the immediate and wider context (see Section 2.1 and Appendix 1).

New tall developments must:

- Be of exceptionally good design quality
- Be in a location identified for a landmark on Plan 7.4 or in the correct zone on the Building Height Envelopes plan (Plan 3.4)
- Enhance the City skyline, (especially as viewed from primary viewpoints identified on Plans 7.1 (a-c) and from parts of the ring road)
- Not block any views of existing key landmarks from existing primary viewpoints that are protected views (see Plan 7.2)
- Not block important views from and within the City Centre (as defined in this document)
- Not create unfavourable microclimates (see section 5.2)
- Not cause significant overshadowing.
- Not cause substantial interference with radio or television transmission signals without suitable compensating provision
- Be justified by a Part V design statement.

The design statement submitted for tall buildings should address the relevant issues identified in Section 2.1 and Appendix 1. In particular, a contextual massing analysis should illustrate the impact of the proposal on the scale and grain of the surrounding urban fabric. Physical models are encouraged as the primary method of reviewing context and massing, providing an opportunity for people from a range of technical backgrounds, as well as the general public to view the scheme from a multitude of positions and view angles. The effect of the proposals on views (see also Section 7.1.1 Views and Orientation) and shadowing and wind exposure (see also section 5.2 Microclimate Control) should also be explained.

**Design Principle 3.v: Buildings of greater than 6 storeys or 18m height or greater should meet the checklist of requirements for tall buildings.**

### 3.2.2 Form follows function

The use of a building should be hinted at by its outward form, without compromising its adaptability.

### 3.2.3 Fitting in

Marked differences in scale and mass within the same street may lead to a loss of unity and coherence. New buildings should relate to the scale and mass of adjacent property, where this is itself appropriate, by stepping up or down to meet their neighbours (plans showing existing building heights are included in Appendix 2). Their scale should relate to their function and status and be reflected in the scale of their façade treatments, entrances, doorways and windows as well as details. Elevations should be designed as a composition, the scale of the façade relating to the scale of the detail, where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Suburban scales are not appropriate for the City Centre. Over-development or under-development will be unacceptable.

Where building scale changes are required they shall take place incrementally. Generally buildings should be a minimum of four storeys or 12m to the roof-line. In sensitive residential locations such as the Old Town minimum building height may be reduced to two storeys. The degree to which a development overlooks and overshadows other buildings will also be particularly important in this context. Maximum building heights will be determined individually.

Especially at street level, building detailing should reflect the human scale to ensure facades are not monolithic and over-domeering. Setting back the top stories of high buildings can reduce the negative effect of their overall scale and mass on the townscape and neighbouring buildings.

Single use, high mass buildings risk the concentration of the potential active frontage in a few points along the street, which reduces the vitality and perceived safety of the public realm. Finer-grain development is also easier to adapt to changed uses than very high mass building. Large-scale redevelopment should address these potential problems.





*The scale of the rendered building respects that of the existing brick building - new Magistrates Court, Southampton.*



*This development in Nice, France, exemplifies good practice in the way it addresses the change of scale to the adjacent yellow painted building.*



*The Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester is a highly contemporary building that sits well against an old warehouse because it respects the form of the context. The result is rhythmical yet varied streetscape.*



*The detailing of lower floors should relate to human scale aptly illustrated by the 'larger than life' street entertainers.*

**Design Principle 3.vi: New buildings should relate well to the predominant scale and mass of existing buildings in the street.**

### 3.2.4 Losing the plot

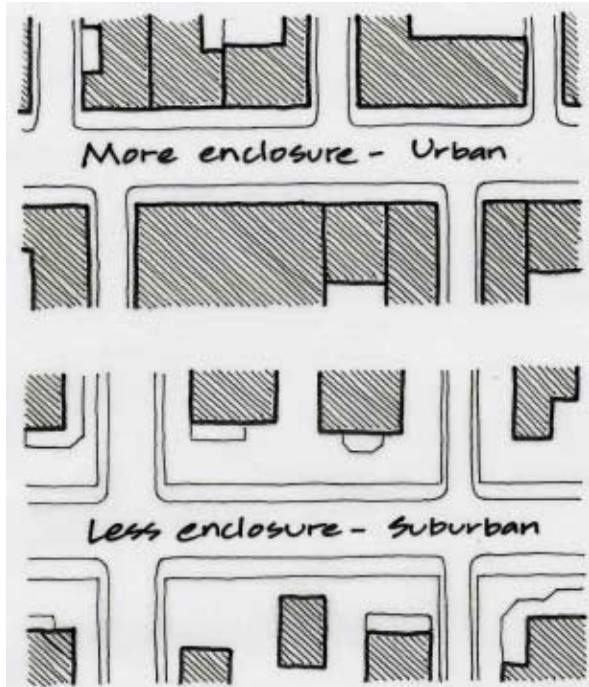
Major redevelopments risk the aggregation of plots with the resulting loss of variety and fine urban grain that gives towns their character. Continental cities have been more successful at ensuring that major new developments match their contextual urban grain. For example urban blocks in the planned Amsterdam city expansion in the Ijmeer have been distributed amongst 30 different firms of architects. Each firm must co-ordinate the urban design of their block by designing some of the buildings themselves and handing over detailed designs of the majority of buildings to a minimum of 3 other firms. The scale of buildings and their detail should strengthen Southampton's character. Façades must



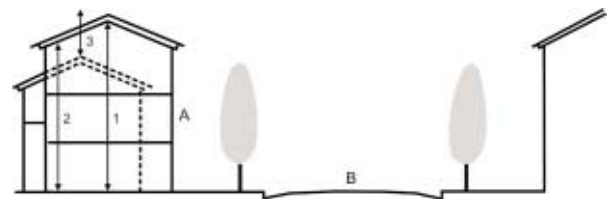
The scale and form of the new building on the right echo the design of the refurbished existing block on the left; Birmingham.

have consistency and depth and details should be bold and well executed, with a richness and diversity which enhances and complements their context. Pages 18-19 of the CCUDS provide a description of the existing urban grain.

**Design Principle 3.vii: Proposals for major development should demonstrate that account has been taken of the need for variety of form and material to avoid the impression of monolithic, excessively large scale and uniform architecture.**



Variety in set-backs and gaps between buildings creates streets lacking definition.



Height to width ratio of street =  $A/B$

This diagram illustrates how street enclosure (ratio of building height to street width) is measured. Building height is also described in the following ways (1) overall height in metres (2) height to eaves (3) height in relation to neighbours or height in storeys.

**3.2.5 Enclosure**

Sense of enclosure is determined by the relationship between the height of buildings and width of the street. The degree of continuity of the building edge along the street also affects enclosure. Adequate enclosure of new streets is important for several reasons:



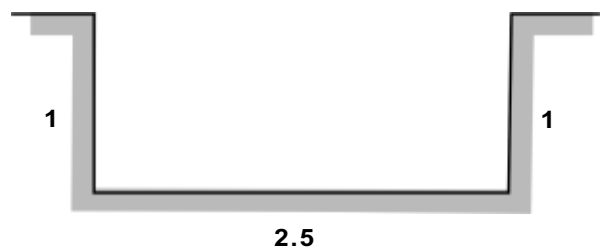


Layering of frontages to add depth to the elevations helps break up large façades that might otherwise appear monolithic.

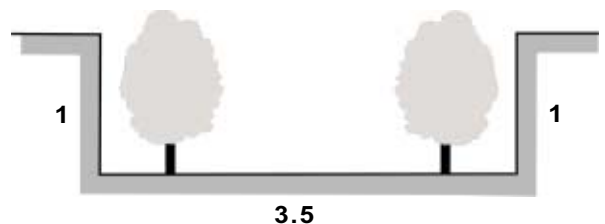
- Strongly enclosed routes are easier for people to visualise and remember
- Degree of enclosure is also a way of expressing the importance of each street
- Continuous frontages avoid the gaps which can make places seem unsafe.

The degree of enclosure of new streets in major developments should be adequate to ensure routes have a strong linear, urban character. The degree of enclosure should preferably be between the height to width ratios of 1:2.5 and 1:1.5. The nature of the enclosure should relate to the importance of the route. Minor routes will warrant narrower streets than major routes, hence to achieve the required minimum enclosure building heights will be relatively higher along major routes.

**Design Principle 3.viii: Building height and street width should lead to a degree and nature of enclosure appropriate to the importance of the street.**



Minimum preferred degree of enclosure should be 1:2.5. This is exemplified by Above Bar.



Trees help to create enclosure in weakly contained routes.



The enclosure of this street creates a strong sense of place - Manchester.

