

23 Canute Road

Context

A linear, flat area fringing the Docks: the nineteenth and twentieth century gateway from the town, allowing access to the ocean liners. The area shares a boundary with Queens Park (CA18) to the west, the Docks (CAs 36 and 37) to the south and CAs 21 and 22, to the north and CAs 38 and 39 to the east.

Canute Road marks the line of the historic shore before the first phase of the development of the docks in the 1840s. During Southampton's era as a spa town Canute Road was a promenade along a bathing beach. The character of the area changed to having a commercial focus with the construction of the docks and the associated offices, the arrival of the railway terminus and the construction of the South Western Hotel (originally the Imperial Hotel).

Grain

Mainly wide front shallow plan fine to medium grain buildings fronting the south side of Canute Road. There is also a short range of narrow frontage buildings on the north side of the road indicating an early finer grain to the street. The semi-continuous frontages are interrupted by gates for road, rail and pedestrian passage north and south of the road.

Scale

South Western House is by far the tallest of the buildings in the area at six to seven storeys, although some of the more recent apartment blocks are also of six and seven storeys. Where pitched roofs occur, they are usually low with ridges generally aligned parallel to the street.

Uses

Mixed use, but the mix is changing from Shipping Company buildings to mainly residential with some small office suites. There is a limited amount of convenience shopping and a public house (recently closed), at the eastern end of the area. This is a traffic-dominated area with limited pedestrian movement.

Public Realm

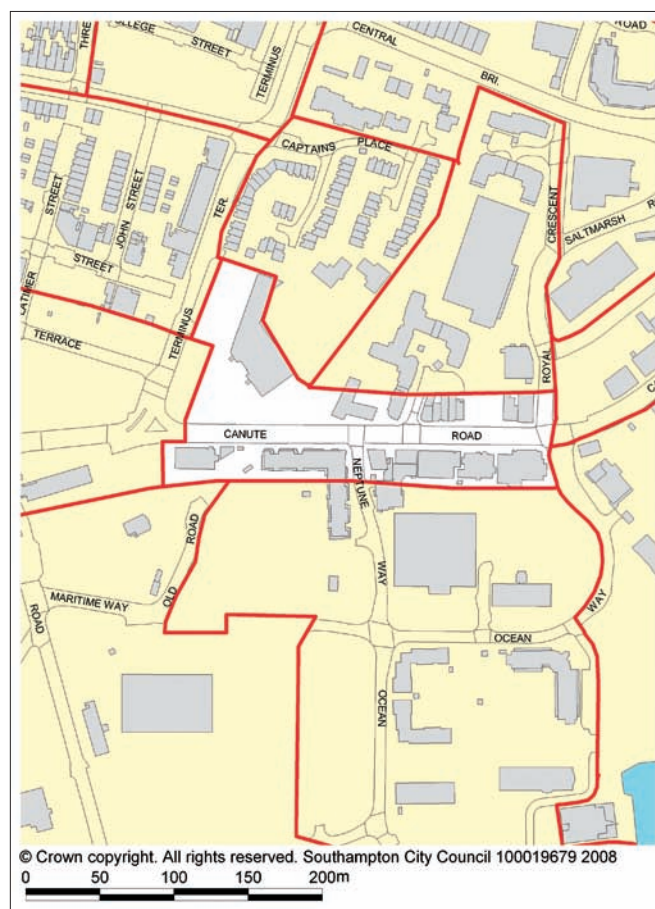
Strictly confined to the pavements. There are no trees or grassed areas in this zone, but this is offset by the views to the abundant soft landscape in Queen's Park.

Connectivity

Good east – west connections. Strong links to Ocean Village at the south-east corner, otherwise very restricted.

Views

The cupola on the two storey Grade II listed Union Castle building is an effective landmark, despite its low profile. This is a strategic view picking up on some of the impor-



tant built form to the docks. It can be seen the length of Terminus Terrace to the north. The roofline of South Western House can be seen on looking west along Canute Road and forms an important part of the townscape quality.

Local views can be had into the well-treed Queen's Park to the west giving some relief to this well-developed section of Canute Road.

Building types

Some converted residential buildings (Victorian) with later shopfronts but still retaining residential elements. New apartment blocks, converted Dock and Shipping Line Office buildings with a linear footprint. It should be noted that a number of these buildings are double fronted presenting a formal front to both Canute Road and the former docks (now largely parking areas).

Architectural qualities

There is a very attractive and eclectic mix of architectural styles in the classical idiom; Italianate style (Canute Hotel), High Victorian (No.1 Canute Road), Edwardian Baroque (Wight House) and Queen Anne/Dutch Renaissance style (Canute Chambers). The group to the south side of Canute Road which includes Wight House, Maritime Chambers, Canute Chambers and the former Ferry House (now a public house) is of very high architectural value both as individual buildings and as the group, and charts the styles and fashions and corporate commitments to certain styles and materials over the mid to late nineteenth century period.

Heritage Assets

The area is considered to possess a high degree of evidential value due to fact that it includes part of the historic shoreline prior to the development of the docks to the south. It is known that there was a windmill in this area in the medieval period. Accordingly, the area is within a Local Area of Archaeological Importance to reflect this potential to yield significant evidence for past activity in the area.

A number of important buildings associated with the development of the passenger liner business in Southampton are Grade II listed including the South Western Hotel and the former offices of the White Star Line which parallels that in Liverpool. As well as the design quality and use of materials in these buildings (reflecting the success of these businesses), both of these buildings have a high degree of associative value given their strong links to the *Titanic* specifically and the Atlantic liner business generally. The building has communal and associational value being the place where the cities people awaited news of the *Titanic* disaster in April 1912.

The buildings to the south of Canute Road, both individ-



- 01 The view looking east along Canute Road from Queen's Park
- 02 Canute Road – an attractive and eclectic mix of architectural styles
- 03 Ocean Village dominating views east along Canute Road

ually and collectively as a group, are of significant architectural and historic interest. Their heritage value is cultural, associative and aesthetic in that they chart the evolving use of the docks by an emerging leisure class in Victorian and Edwardian society enjoying the pleasures and enlightenment of ocean-borne travel.

There are remnant physical survivals of elements of the former Dock Railway which are of historical significance.

Materials

Red brick and buff-yellow brick (Beaulieu brick), stucco and natural slate roofs, where seen. Provincial House has a plain clay tile roof but is the exception rather than the rule. Some decorative plaster used for window architraves, pilasters, string courses, decorative parapets, and rustication. Some dressed stonework detailing to buildings also.

Condition

Generally good.

Ownership

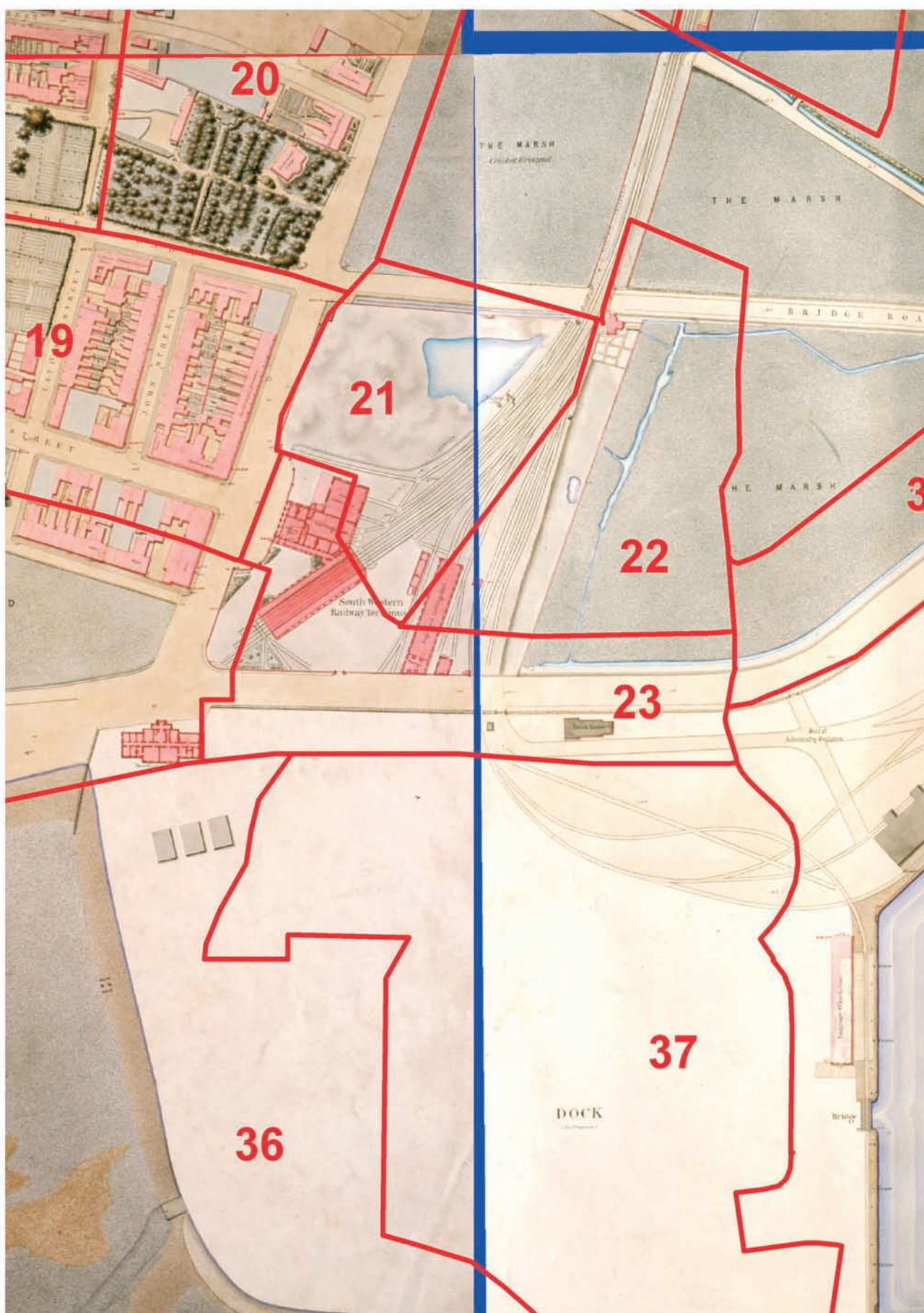
Student flats/halls of residence in corporate ownership. Some smaller householder owners also private landlords. Corporate ownership and possible Associated Ports freehold interest.

Intervention

- Removal of unsightly bill-boards from Canute Road would vastly improve the character and appearance of the area.
- Narrowing of the carriageway to incorporate on-street parking with a change in materials to emphasise the spaces (granite setts for example?).
- Emphasis of the former railway lines in the carriageways.
- Better integration of Queen's Park with the west end of Canute Road.
- Removal of lighting columns from street (completely out of scale with existing historic buildings on south side in particular) – Encourage buildings to be lit and lights to be mounted on buildings.

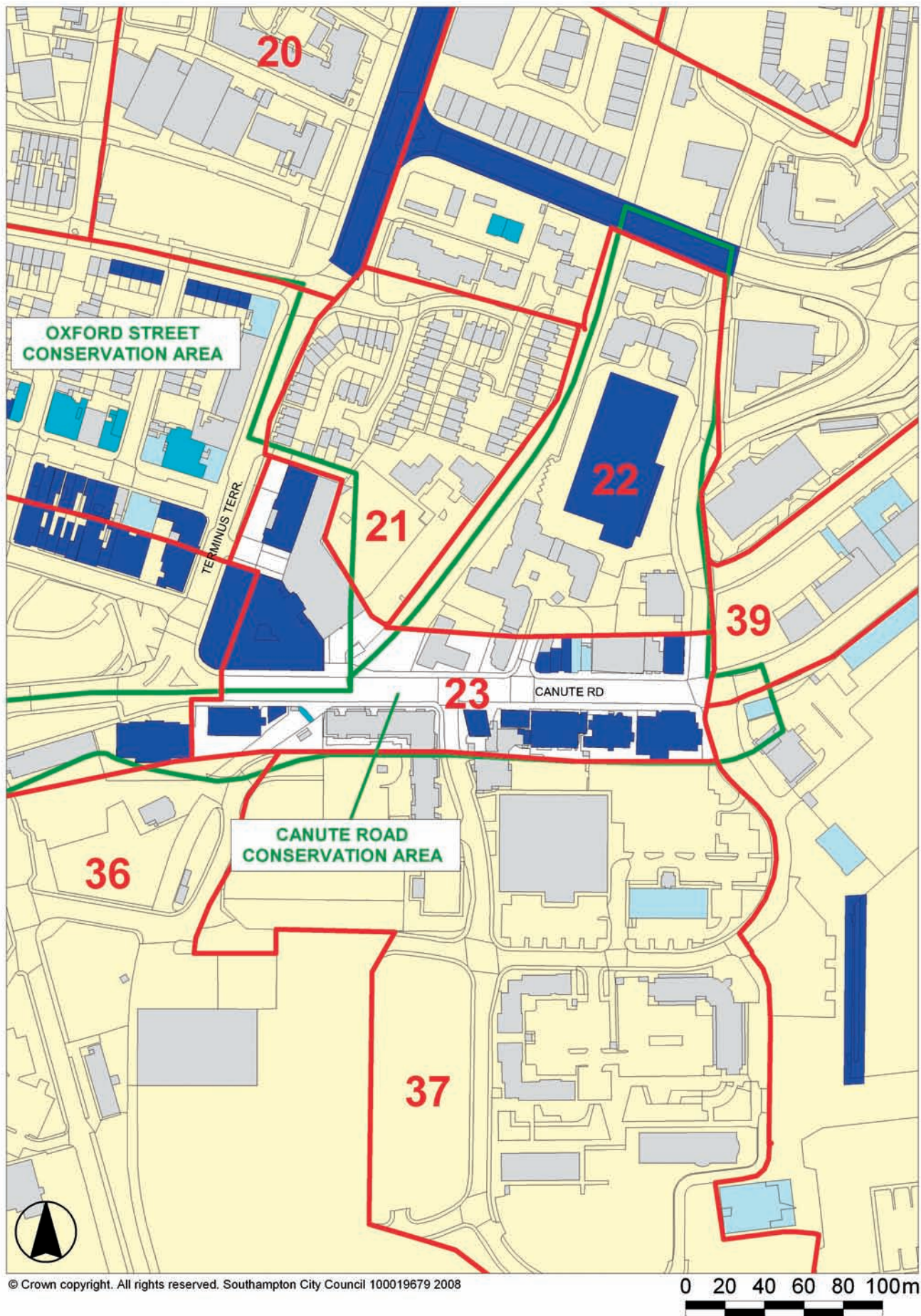
Key design principles

- Maintain a balance of uses to the north side of Canute Road.
- Improvements to the lighting of buildings and the highway – potential for a major scheme of lighting and pavement improvements.
- Elements of the former Dock Railway should be retained in any future development schemes.

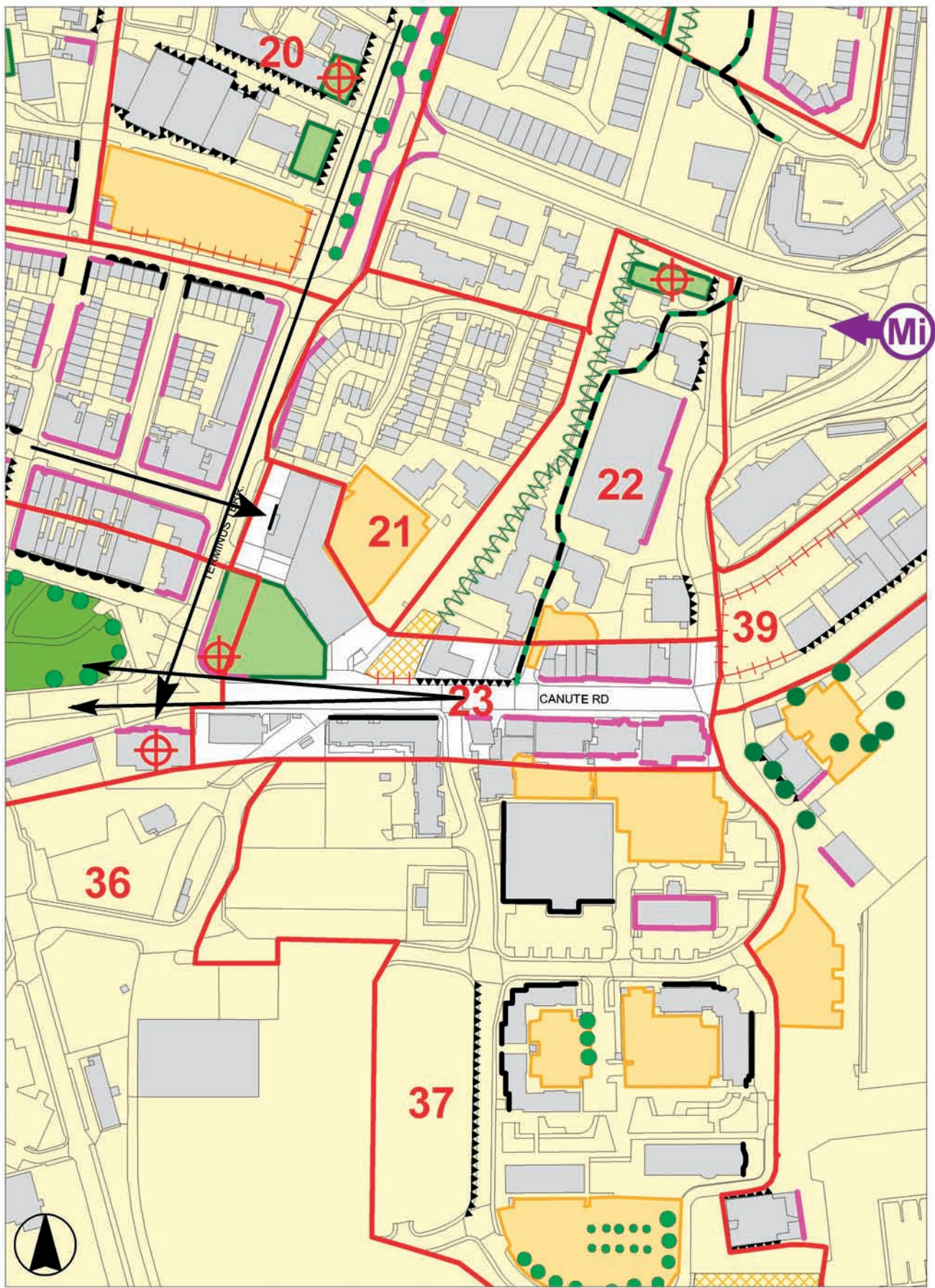


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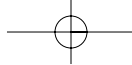
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Heritage Assets



Townscape



Southampton City Council

City Characterisation Project

