

29 St Mary Street

Context

St Mary Street sits between CA28: Golden Grove Estate and CA27: City College Campus and St Mary's Church to the east, and CA7: Central Parks and CA31: Kingsland Place to the west. To the south is CA26: Evans Street and Threefields Lane and to the north is CA30: Northam Road.

St Mary Street, possibly the oldest surviving street in Southampton, runs north-south to the east of Hoglands Park. A street on or close to the line of St Mary Street formed one of the principal streets of Saxon Hamwic. At its southern end is St Mary's, a minster church of Saxon origins which served the settlement of Hamwic. The importance of the church is reflected in its retention of its Mother church status in the medieval period. The area was linked to the walled town by a medieval suburb outside the East Gate. By the eighteenth century occupation extended into the southern part of St Mary Street, the northern part being redeveloped during the nineteenth century.

The street rises up to meet Northam Road but is for the most part level.

Grain

St Mary Street has a fine grain with only one or two infill exceptions. The buildings lines are consistent throughout and this provides comfortable enclosure to the pedestrian for almost the entire length of the street with the exception of the market place. The market place is also a well enclosed space and gives excellent views to Hoglands Park beyond. Density is between 50 and 70 dph.

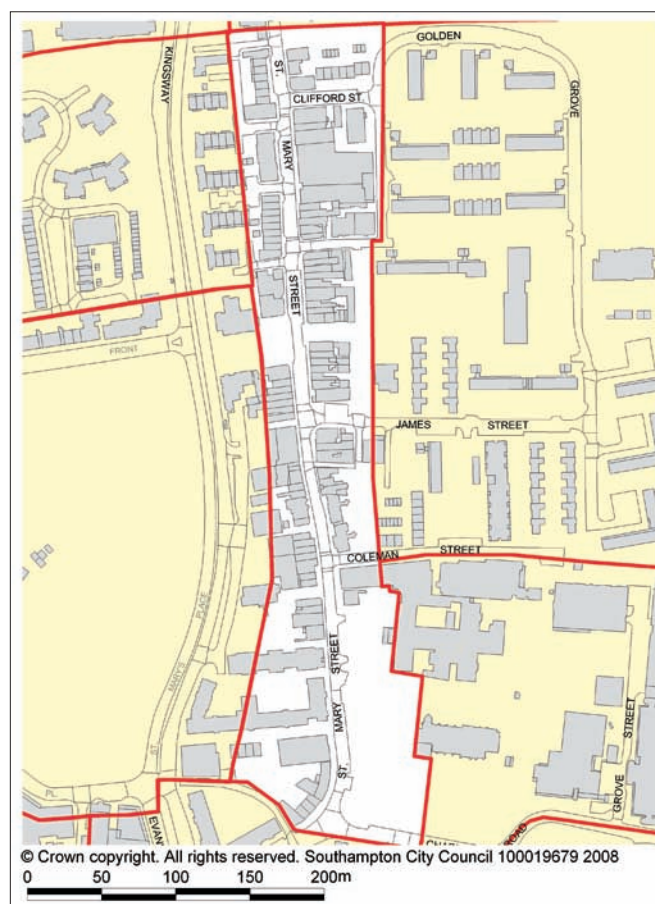
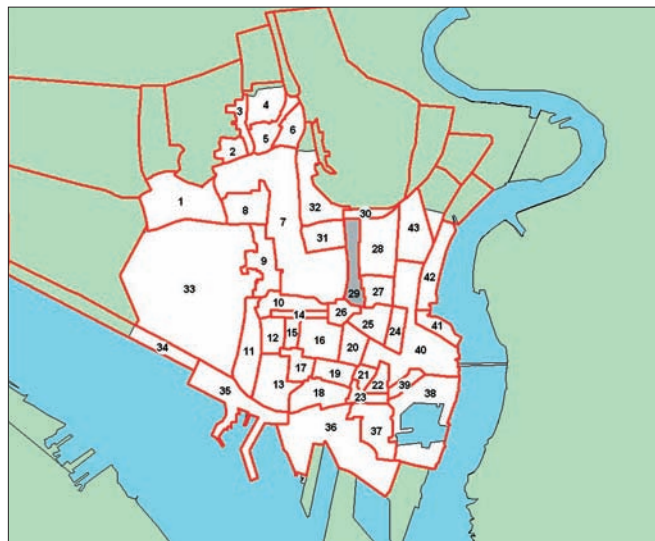
Scale

The height of buildings varies between two and four storeys with an average of three storey traditional built form. The older sections of the street have developed piecemeal and have an attractive variation of pitches of roofs to the street with some parapets and the occasional gable (for example the striking neo-baroque gable to the Joiners Public House).

The spire of St Mary's Church can be glimpsed and finally viewed in its entirety as the pedestrian travels south along the street. The consistent scale to the street allows for these important glimpses to the spire.

Uses

A mix of uses with a good number of independent shops, public houses, cafes, sandwich bars and small supermarkets. There are niche food shops and specialist shops supplying electronic goods and musical instruments. The shops are supplemented by a well-frequented regular market which stretches across the shopping street.



There is real sense of community to this street and the survival of independent retailers, open food and veg markets, cafes and bars contributes towards the vitality of this character area.

Public Realm

The public realm is looking dated and is in poor condition in places. There is a very rare survival of a Purbeck Stone crossover, pavement and kerbing stone to a side lane on the east side of the street.

The market space is successful and is well used.

The trees and wall to the churchyard of St Mary's Church provide a welcome relief from the built form but continue the important enclosure to the street.

Connectivity

St Mary Street is well connected with pedestrian lanes which link through to St Mary's Place and the park, though St Mary's Place is a significant barrier to pedestrian flow on this east-west axis. The Golden Grove Estate to the east is well-connected to St Mary Street through a series of side roads.

Views

To the east is CA28: the Golden Grove Estate, which contains Albion Towers, a sixteen storey slab block of large panel construction which dominates St Mary Street in places and is completely out of scale with this small shopping street.

There are views and glimpsed views of the St Mary's Church spire along the length of St Mary Street.

There is a strategic view of the campanile from Itchen Bridge which travels across the character area just north of St Mary's Church.

Three of the city's strategic views to historic assets centre on the magnificent and townscape dominating spire of St Mary's Church. These are from Itchen Bridge in the east, along Hanover Buildings in the west and across the parks from the north-west.

Building types

Traditional houses converted to shops at ground floor with accommodation above, a number of well-designed historic public houses. Purpose-built shops with offices and residential above.

Architectural qualities

There is a good survival of well-considered modest buildings with good architectural detailing and finishes. The public houses to the street are of particular note especially the way in which they address corners.

There is a fine eighteenth century survival at No.153



- 01 Small street markets are an important part of the vibrancy of St Mary Street
- 02 St Mary Street looking north – a consistent modest scale
- 03 Derelict historic buildings and vacant site on St Mary Street

with a good Doric doorcase with open pediment and fanlight. This is a high status house revealed by the use of headers only for the front facade and the finely detailed dentil cornice to the parapet.

Heritage Assets

The area is considered to possess a high degree of evidential value due to fact that St Mary Street, being the successor of one of the main streets of mid-Saxon Hamwic, is a highly significant element of the city. The area of Hamwic is nationally important due to the extensive archaeological evidence for the Saxon settlement. 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 a number of important listed and unlisted buildings in the character area. Of the listed buildings, No.76, St Mary's Hall, was a Masonic lodge which subsequently became Southampton's first free public library. For this reason, this building has cultural, communal and associative values. No. 153 is an eighteenth century house of two parallel ranges a remnant of the eighteenth century development of the street and as such has a high degree of cultural and illustrative value. There is also an attractive and highly detailed cast iron lamp standard in the small market place. This is a rare survival of Victorian street furniture and is of aesthetic as well illustrative value.

Locally listed buildings include some late eighteenth/early nineteenth century houses (now much altered) and the highly distinctive sequence of late nineteenth/early twentieth century public houses which are seen to line St Mary Street but are also part of a larger city group of eclectic public houses of this date, commonly seen (where they survive) on prominent corner sites. This group has high aesthetic value given their distinctive designs (with a high degree of ornamentation and flamboyant use of materials such as terracotta and faience tiles) but also reflects some of the

social values of the City and its population at the turn of the last century.

The City College building is referred to in more detail in CA27: City College Campus but it has a dramatic presence on the street scene despite being set back from the road. The present building was a nineteenth century workhouse, built on the site of an earlier poor-house.

Materials

Predominantly traditional – red brick, natural slates and clay tiles. Some buildings are rendered and painted. There is a very limited survival of original or traditional timber sash or casement windows.

Modern developments also use stock red bricks but orange and buff bricks have also been used.

Condition

The condition of this character area is generally poor to very poor with some derelict buildings and vacant sites on the Street.

Ownership

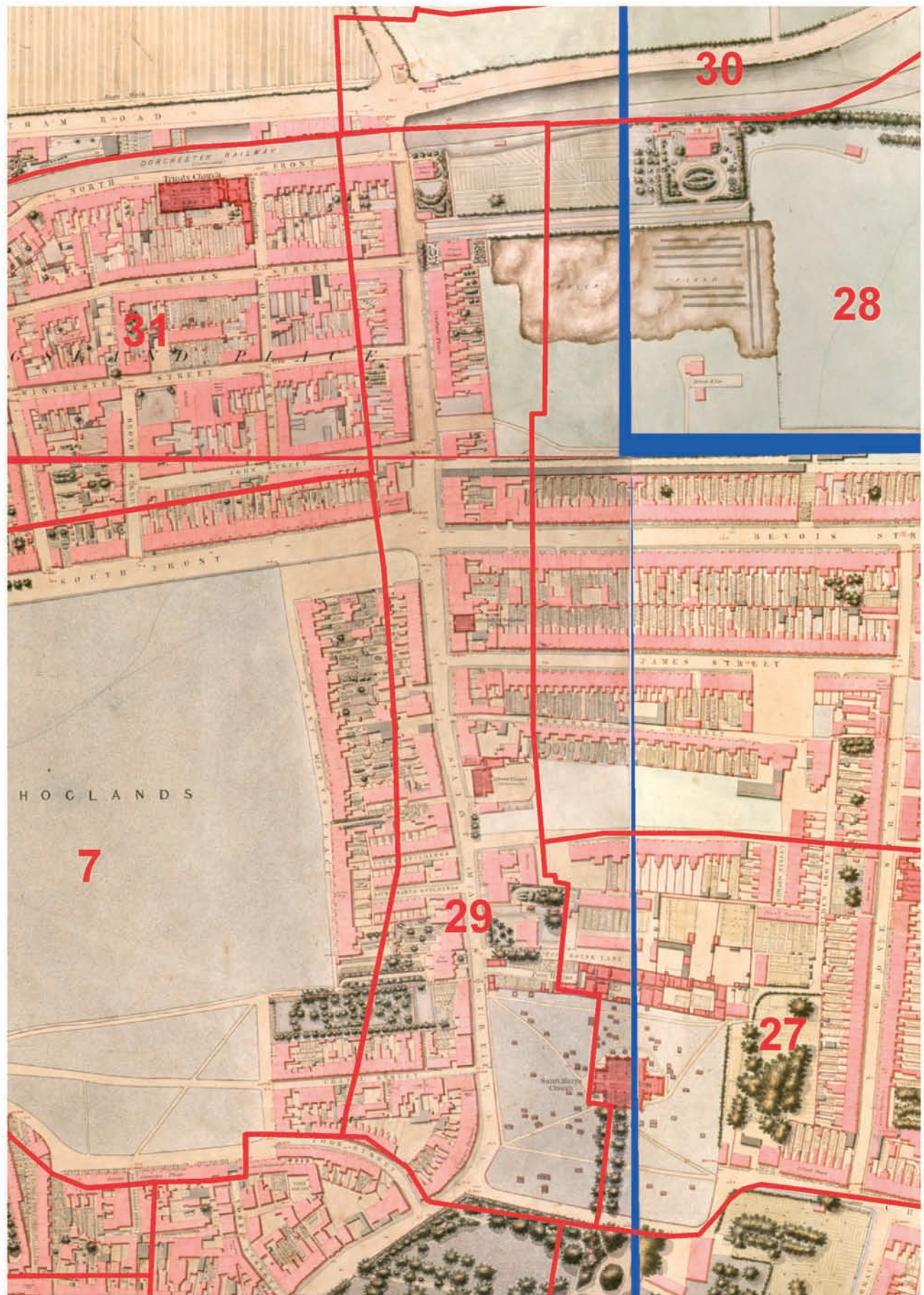
Multiple private ownership.

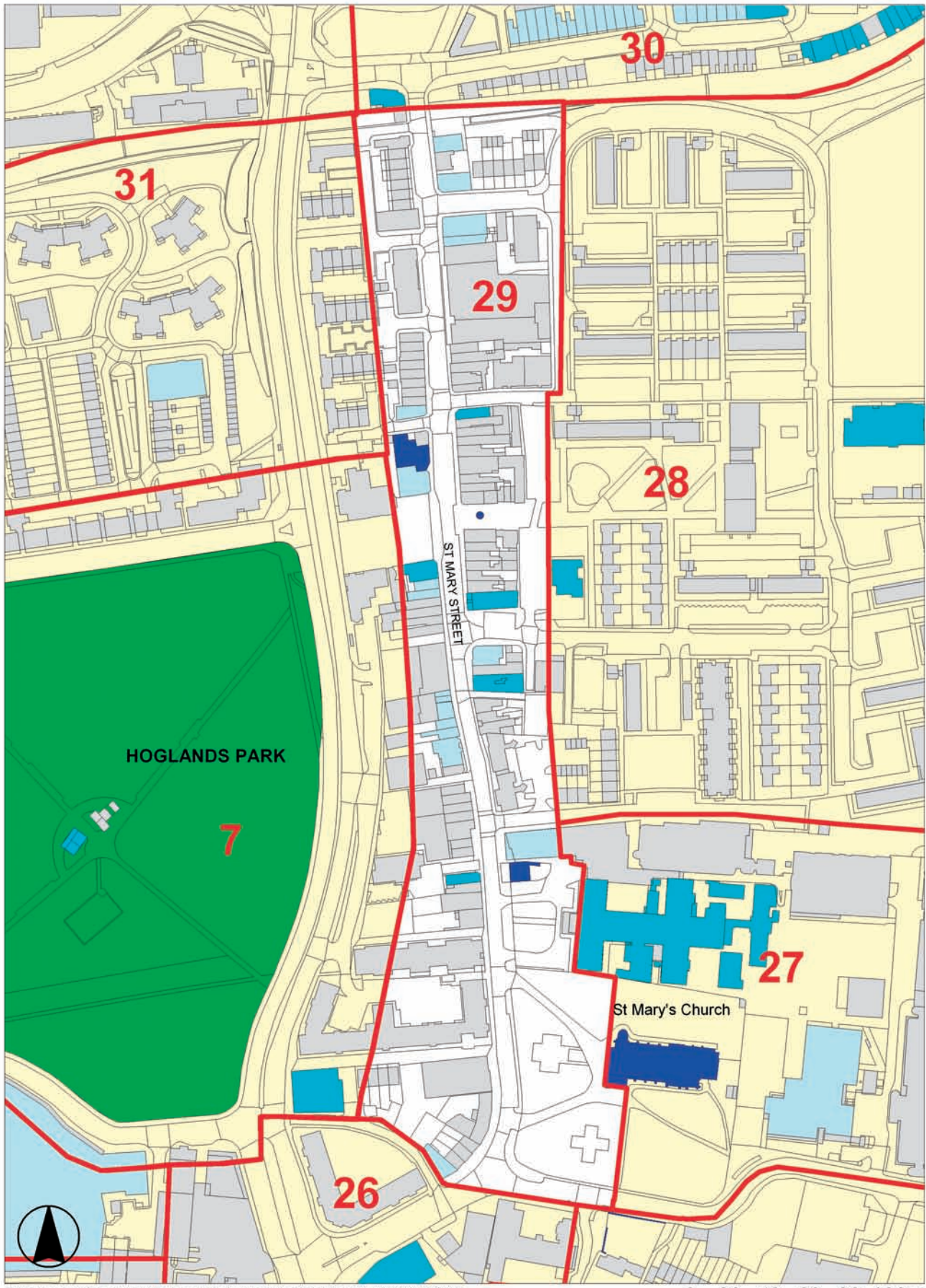
Intervention

- Enhance linkages to the parks particularly adjacent to the market place. This could take the form of an at grade crossing which continued the line of the market place. This could be closed for markets or special events.
- Encourage development in vacant sites, consider compulsory purchase where necessary.
- Consider improvements to pavement surfaces similar to the recent work (March 2008) to London Road.

Key design principles

- Maintain the present scale and height of buildings to ensure continued views and glimpses of St Mary's spire.



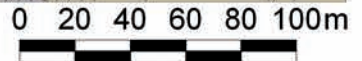


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Heritage Assets



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Townscape