

18 Queen's Park

Context

Flat, slightly sunken, formal Victorian Park bounded by Queen's Terrace and CA19 to north. Note that the character area includes all buildings fronting the park which give the space its well-defined character and positive enclosure. South Western House fronts onto the park as well as Canute Road (CA23) to the east, the South East Docks (CA36) to the south and CA13 High Street South to the west. It is closely although not directly related to the waterfront and views of shipping.

The area of Queen's Park can be identified on maps from the eighteenth century; in 1791 it was called Porter's Mead, a name that continued in use into the late nineteenth century. There is, however, archaeological evidence for an area of medieval suburban development in the western part of the area.

Grain

A relatively fine to medium grained arrangement of streets and narrow plots, though many have been amalgamated in post-war reconstruction with only modest larger footprint buildings which generally respect the vertical emphasis and bay divisions of their neighbours.

The park setting is strongly defined by the peripheral streets which create a well-defined structure to the area.

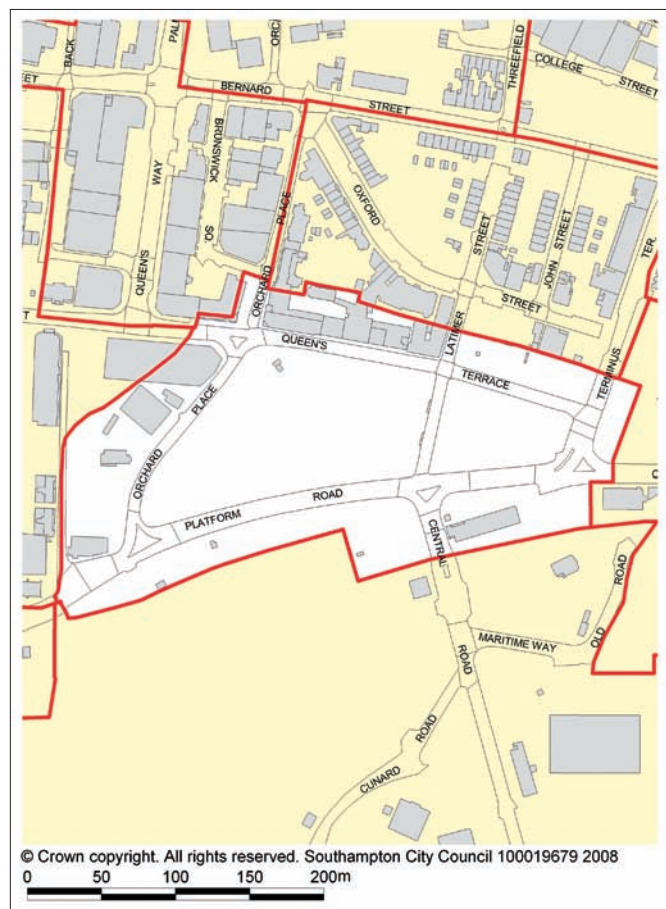
Scale

The scale of the space is determined by the heights of the buildings surrounding the park. The highest building (thirteen storeys) is at the north west corner of the park, this steps down to six to eight storeys. This landmark building can be seen from the Itchen Bridge and many places in the southern parts of the city. South Western House, a massive Grade II listed Victorian hotel building is of comparable size and massing. Queen's Terrace itself consists of three and four storey buildings. To the south buildings relating to the historic and modern docks area line Platform Road (which forms the south side of the park). A grand traditional three storey and a modern flat-roofed four storey.

Of note is the considerable height and number of the mature trees on the northern and western fringes of the park in particular, and the trees lining Latimer Street as it runs north-south through the park.

Uses

There is a mix of uses surrounding the park which includes a small sandwich shop, a restaurant, a bowling green and office and residential accommodation (mostly houses converted to flats). Some shopfronts survive from an earlier period but most have been converted back to residential use. The park is a good but under-used amenity space, but is well tendered and managed.



It is a welcome green space of considerable ecological value in a very built-up part of the city. A small car park exists at its eastern end.

The long established Bowls Club and bowling green are located in a prominent position adjacent to the south-west corner of Queen's Park, the town wall and God's House and close to the waterfront (located in the adjacent CA13).

Public Realm

The area is dominated by trees and grass with a small Victorian fountain as a focal point. A hedge forms half of the southern boundary, partially screening views of the waterfront.

Surface materials are utilitarian though there is some survival of granite with wide clay pavements lining gutters.

Connectivity

The area is well connected in all directions, especially the east to west – Platform Road (A33). However, the latter is a busy road traffic route.

Views

There are some glimpsed views of shipping, dockside buildings and structures (such as the travelling cranes) seen through the canopies of the trees to the park.

The view south along Latimer Street is nicely terminated by the Palladian grandeur of the Post Office Building (former Cunard Offices) (1899). Views west through the park are dominated by the newly built apartment block to the western fringe of the park. The stepping up of this building to its thirteen storey corner creates a dramatic skyline though the building is somewhat overpowering in totality.

Building types

There is a broad array of building types from early and mid nineteenth century houses, some of which have been subsequently retrofitted with shopfronts, to grand Victorian hotels and offices, to modern office blocks of both the 1950s (Queen's Terrace) and 1960s (Portcullis House). There is also a new complex of apartments to the north-west corner.

Architectural qualities

There are some very high quality historic buildings fronting Queen's Park. This includes a fine group at nos 23 -33 inclusive with their distinctive first floor bow oriel windows and classical simplicity of form and modest detailing.

The South Western Hotel is impressive for its scale alone but is also finely detailed, particularly to its roof which forms an important part of the skyline when seen in distant views from the park. Other buildings of note



- 01** The imposing scale of Oceana Boulevard stepped up to thirteen storeys at the north west corner of the park
- 02** Characteristic oriel windows to this Regency terrace on the northern edge of the park
- 03** Platform Road, partly defined with the mature trees to Queen's Park

include the 'impeccably Palladian' (Pevsner p.554) Post Office Building, former Cunard Offices, to the south side of Platform Road, with its array of classical motifs seemingly crammed into the facade.

A further building of note is the Southampton Seafarers Centre, Queen's Terrace. This building is in brick and is finished in an international jazz moderne style with some good detailing to the door surrounds and flag poles which enliven the skyline.

Heritage Assets

This area lay outside the limit of the medieval walled town but it is considered to possess a moderate degree of evidential value due to evidence for some medieval suburban development at the west end of the area. The bowling green is an historic feature of considerable cultural as well as communal value dating back to the seventeenth century at least – it is shown on Speed's map of 1611. The area lies within a Local Area of Archaeological Importance to reflect this potential to yield significant evidence for past activity in the area.

The area contains a high number of listed buildings dating from the early to mid- nineteenth century. A particularly significant group in terms of both their historic and aesthetic values can be found on Queen's Terrace to the east of its junction with Latimer Street.

The Grade II listed South Western Hotel (contains replica principal staircase from the *Titanic*) is an important building, the scale and grandeur of which reflects the popularity of Southampton's ocean liner trade in the late Victorian/ Edwardian period. This is also seen in the architectural refinement of Post Office House, Platform Road. Both of these buildings reflect cultural and associative values of one of Southampton most successful periods as a world leading city based largely on its port and dock capabilities and facilities, during the first heyday of the ocean liners.

There is a monument to General Gordon. He was known as 'Chinese Gordon' for his service in the Far East. On the memorial in Queen's Park, Chinese characters can be seen (being the nearest representation to his name in that language). To reflect the associative and communal values of this monument it is statutory listed at Grade II. The park forms part of the setting for this monument.

Materials

Stucco render and natural slate roofs (the latter are largely obscured from view by parapets). Some brown-red brick to later twentieth century buildings with earlier

buildings (Post Office Building) of red brick offset with Bath-stone type dressing and buff brick (Bowling Green House). Notable use of copper for the roof of the latter.

Modern apartments are a mix of painted render and red brick with metal roofs (probably zinc). Glass and steel framed balconies provide some articulation to what are large buildings.

Condition

The Park is reasonably well maintained, with some evidence of wear and tear. The surrounding buildings are all in reasonable repair and appear to be maintained despite some vacant units (Portcullis House at the time of writing is vacant).

Ownership

Residential developments are probably combination of leasehold and rental with corporate landlords on short, medium and long term leases. Some possible freehold interest along Queen's Terrace, but mostly leasehold and commercial agents and landlords. The bowling green is owned by its Club organisation.

Intervention

- The small car park could be more sensitively designed and managed in terms of surface treatments, demarcation of parking bays, signs etc. or removed altogether if surplus to requirement.
- A viewing platform might be considered in order to provide an improved view of shipping.
- An imaginative lighting system could be installed to make the park attractive and safe at night-time. This could also incorporate the sensitive lighting of historic buildings enclosing the park.
- There may be potential for a shared space along part of Queen's Terrace and the encouragement of uses which could spill out onto the park (subject to the amenity of residential uses).
- Portcullis House, the four storey office block facing the park, presents a good opportunity for a sensitive but imposing building between the Union Castle Building and the Edwardian Dock Office.

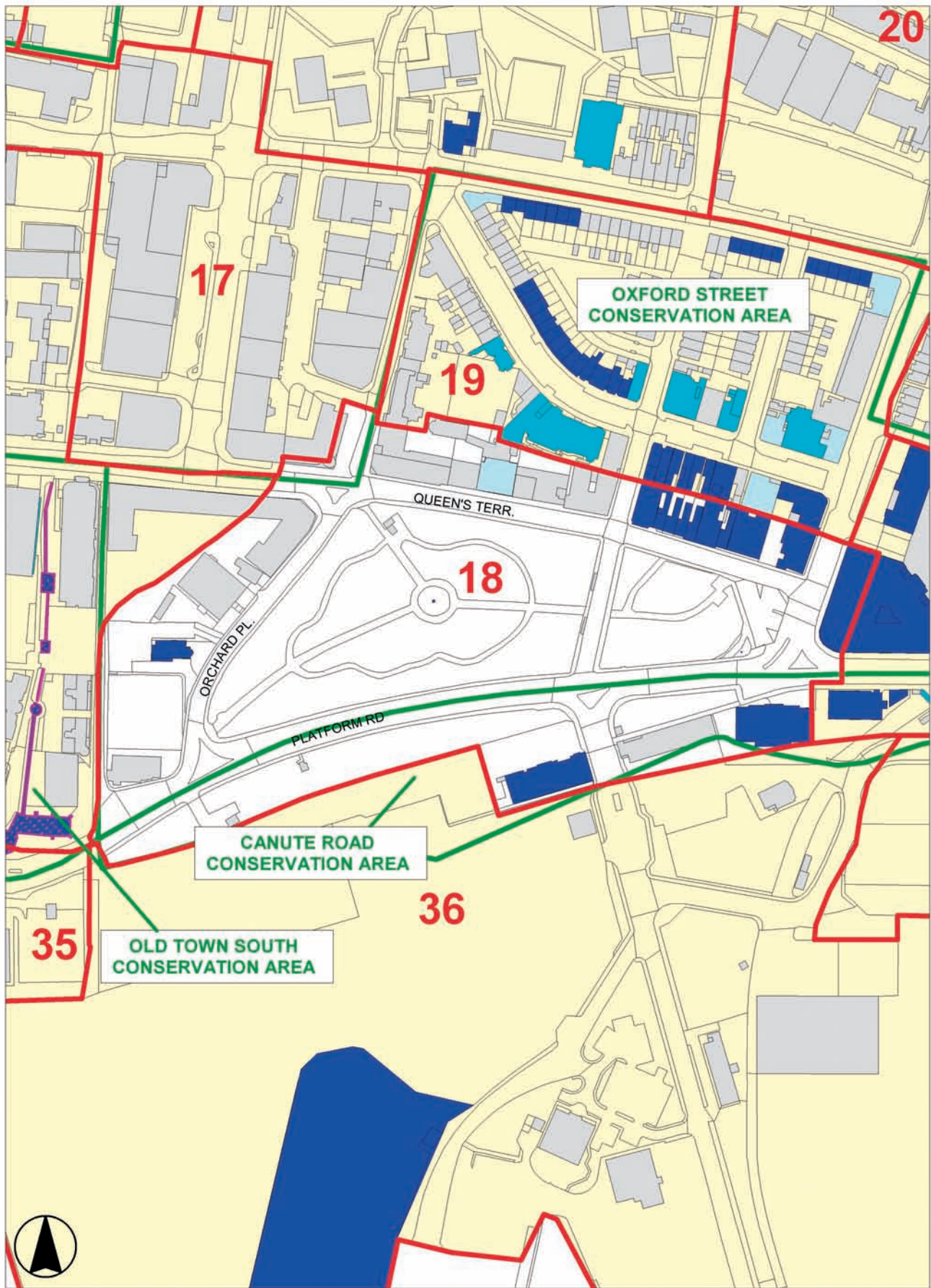
Key design principles

- The park is a very well defined space and development, where appropriate, should continue at a scale commensurate with positive enclosure of the park (recent development is however somewhat overbearing).
- Mixed use should be encouraged along Queen's Terrace to provide a quantum of visitors which could provide improved vitality for the park space.



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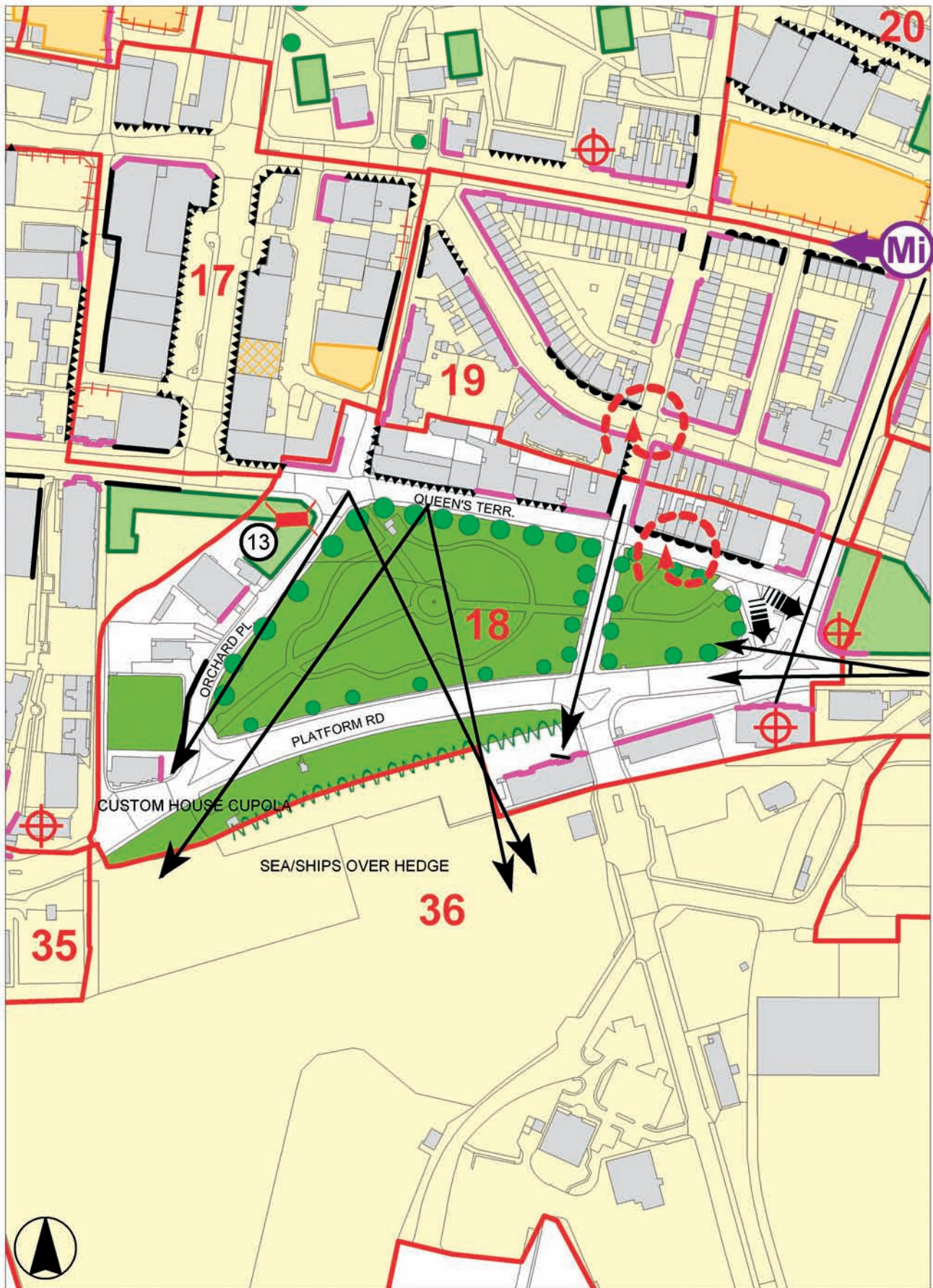




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Heritage Assets



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Townscape