

03 Bedford Place

Context

This character area comprises Bedford Place and includes the western section of the Carlton Crescent Conservation Area. It contains attractive, sought-after early and late Victorian terraced and semi-detached housing stretching to the west and north. Bedford Place in particular is a strong edge to City and serves as a district centre to the residential areas adjacent and beyond.

Development of this area began in the 1830s, Bedford Place being an area of houses and commercial premises servicing the quality houses of Grosvenor Square and Carlton Crescent.

Grain

Most of Bedford Place has a fine historic grain for much of its length, broken only occasionally by double-fronted buildings which still retain the rhythm and proportion of plot widths. However the lower section of the street is dominated by modern office buildings forming part of Grosvenor Square. These are of a coarse grain but form the western edge of the street running down to the parks. The building lines are consistent throughout with the eastern side of Bedford Place to back of pavement for its entire length. This tight street section complements the positive sense of enclosure felt along the length of the character area.

Scale

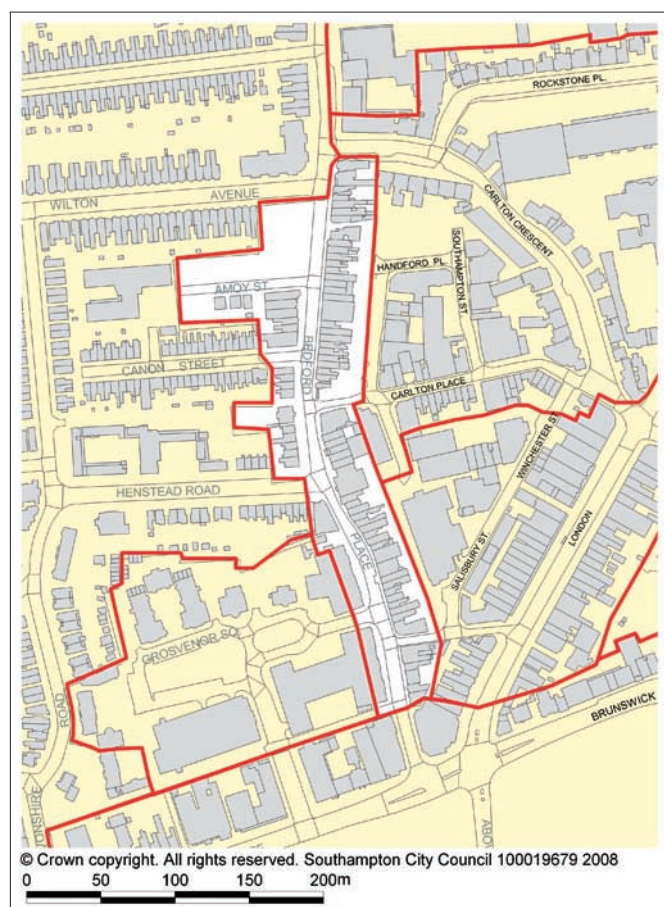
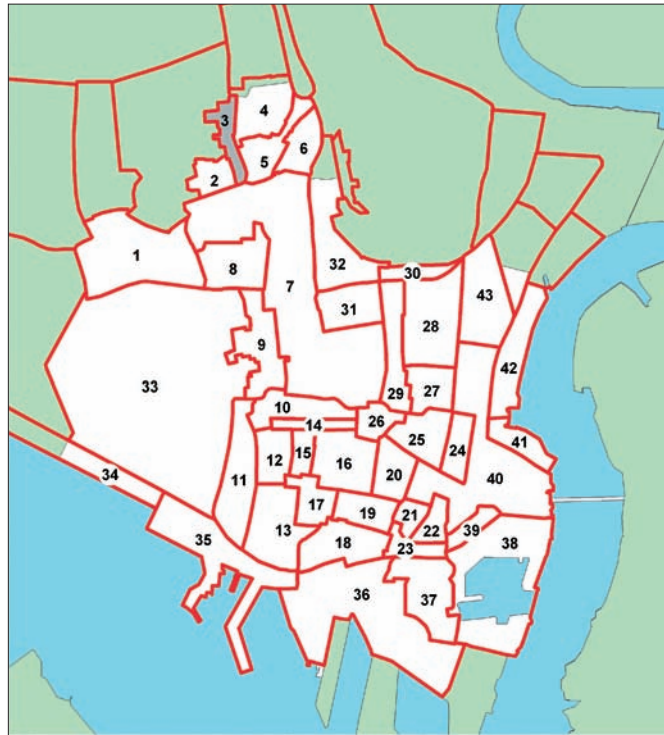
Buildings are predominantly two to three storeys. The exception to this is the four storey blocks to Grosvenor Square also forming the western side of Bedford Place in part. The majority of the built form is on a traditional scale with very modest eaves heights to the lower sections of Bedford Place. This is consistent in groups but there is much variation to the way buildings address the street; some with pitches, some gables and other roofs set behind parapets. This adds to the rich and complex variation in the street-scene but the scale and massing of buildings is consistent.

Uses

There is a real village community feel to Bedford Place with a range of shops, bars, cafes and restaurants which support this community. The evening economy is spread between Bedford Place and the bars and clubs behind and in London Road and this gives the area a variable but distinct vitality during certain periods of the day and week. There are a number of recently completed schemes for flat conversions above shops and some historic premises still retain this mix of uses.

Public Realm

The public realm is defined by narrow footways in places on this busy thoroughfare. There is a good (and in some



places unique) survival of historic street surfaces (clay pavements and stone kerbs and setts), however this is patched in places with unsympathetic materials. Many front areas which had low boundary walls or railings are now positively used for outside seating areas for bars and cafes. This adds a real sense of activity and vitality to the relatively narrow streets. The street line is successfully maintained by simple railings and street trees to the public car park at the north-west end of the street.

Connectivity

The character area is well connected to adjacent areas and pedestrian and traffic routes are very popular – often leading to conflict between car and pedestrian. The connecting streets and alleys to London Road are well used and lead to further shops, bars and associated uses such as surface level and multi-storey car parks.

Views

The consistent enclosure to this street and Henstead Road in particular allows for funnelled views to focal

points such as the campanile of the Civic Centre and the spire of the Central Baptist Church on Devonshire Road terminating Henstead Road respectively.

Building types

The predominant building type to the northern section of the character area is the small town house with later shop inserted into the ground floor. Some houses remain as houses but have commercial uses such as offices, cafes and restaurants. There appears to be a higher than average use of upper floors for residential use.

Architectural qualities

Much of the character area retains its built form from the early nineteenth century and some of the architectural and historic quality of the buildings is reflected in Grade II listing. Characteristics of this late Georgian-early Victorian transition are the high quality bow-fronted elevations, canted bay windows, bow oriel windows to first floor (a common domestic historic Southampton characteristic), bracketed painted plaster architraves to



01 Projecting bays, view looking n along Bedford Place
02 Commercial core (independent retailers) of conservation area section of Bedford Place

03 Bedford Place – outside the conservation area
04 The Red Lion PH cnr. Bedford Place and Waterloo Terrace

window surrounds, moulded parapets and the general use of the timber framed vertical sliding sash windows. Further south along Bedford Place the detailing and finish become noticeably simpler and more modest in its execution.

There are a number of good examples of late nineteenth century shopfronts as well as some good reproduction timber shopfronts which generally make for a very pleasing group of commercial buildings.

A notable building to the lower group is the the Red Lion public house. This building forms part of a Southampton-wide group of early twentieth century public houses designed in Arts and Crafts influenced 'Tudorbethan' and Domestic Revival styles.

Heritage Assets

The area served as agricultural land until the first half of the nineteenth century. The area could be considered to possess a high degree of evidential value due to underlying archaeological potential relating to prehistoric, Roman and late Saxon occupation and use of the area. The area lies within a Local Area of Archaeological Importance to reflect this potential to yield evidence for past activity in the area.

Part of the character area falls within the Carlton Crescent Conservation Area and within this area there are a number of Grade II listed buildings as well as some very fine unlisted groups, for example, in the area between Amoy Street and Canton Street on the west side of Bedford Place. Both listed and unlisted buildings display a high degree of design quality and are significant as being representative of the early nineteenth century, an important period of development in Southampton. Most of the traditional buildings surviving within the conservation area section of the character area make or are capable of making (with some reinstatement of traditional features such as windows) a positive contribution towards the character or appearance of the conservation area. Given the high degree of aesthetic value in the buildings themselves and the quality of the townscape produced by groups, there would be a presumption in favour of their retention.

The strong feel of a village community would also give this familiar local scene a high degree of collective social value, in part related to the emerging uses in this area

and to the general scale and quality of the built environment.

Materials

The predominant materials for the traditional buildings in the character area are buff brick or stucco elevations and natural slate roofs. Windows are timber framed sashes. Slate hanging is common to side and rear elevations and to chimney stacks. Most of the shopfronts are timber.

Condition

Most of the character area is reasonable to good condition. There is a marked change between the conservation area and non-conservation area sections in terms of the general condition of buildings and the quality of signage in particular and general finishes.

The pavements are in a poor condition and have been repaired with unsympathetic materials in places.

Ownership

There is multiple ownership throughout the character area with freeholders and long and short term leaseholders and the potential for a high degree of absentee landlords.

Intervention

- 20 mph zone.
- Raised crossing points for side roads.
- Build out kerb lines where possible particularly at junctions and on east side of the road.
- Encourage living over the shop type schemes.
- Continue to encourage and enhance pedestrian connectivity between Bedford Place and London Road.

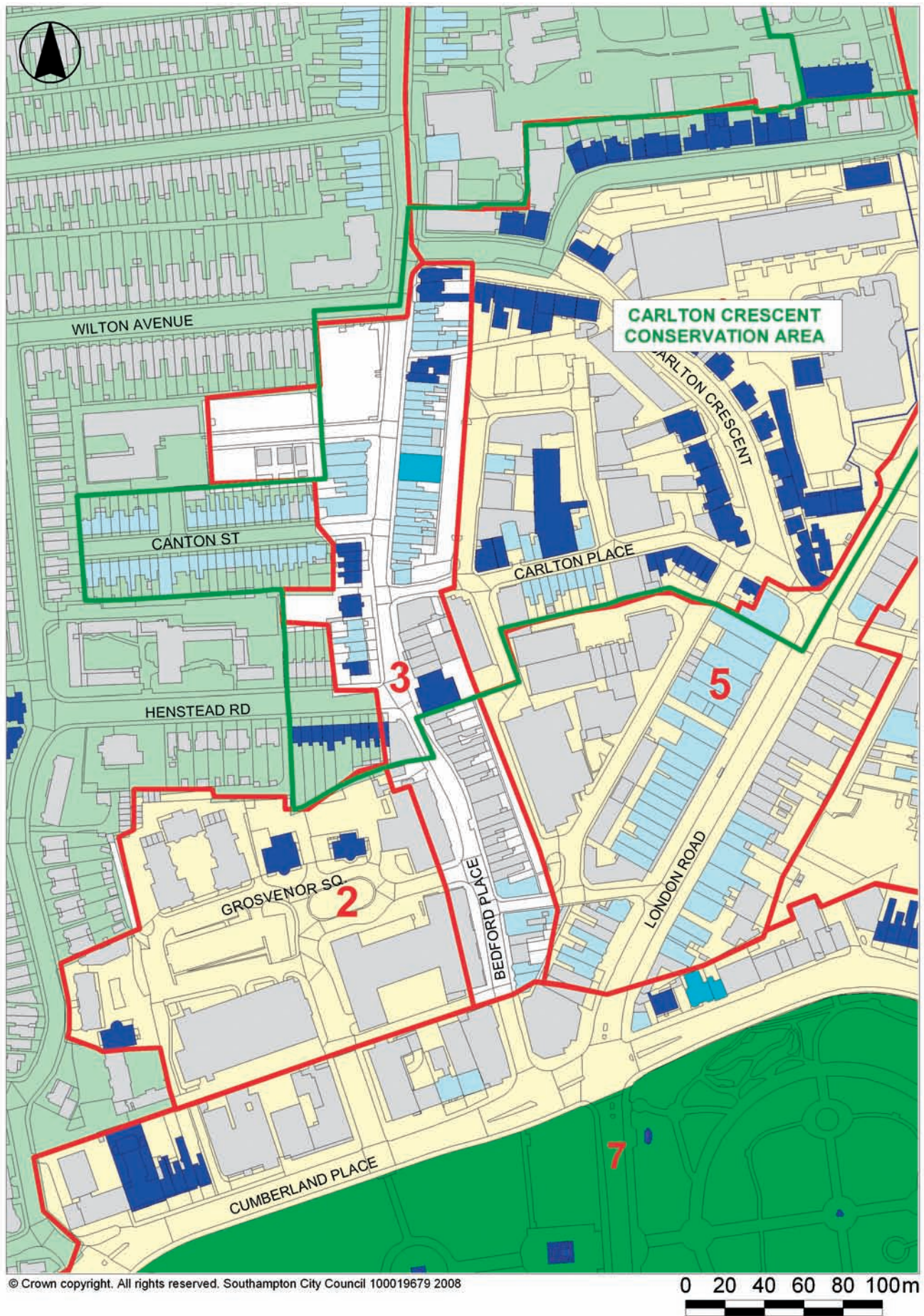
Key design principles

- Maintain the important mix of A1 and A3 uses.
- Provide active frontages to Bedford Place at all times.
- Retain and reinstate historic features wherever possible.
- Adopt the principles and materials of traditional shopfront design.
- Provide for interesting and well-designed signage which enhances the built form.
- Encourage by development, signage and street finishes connectivity between Bedford Place and London Road.

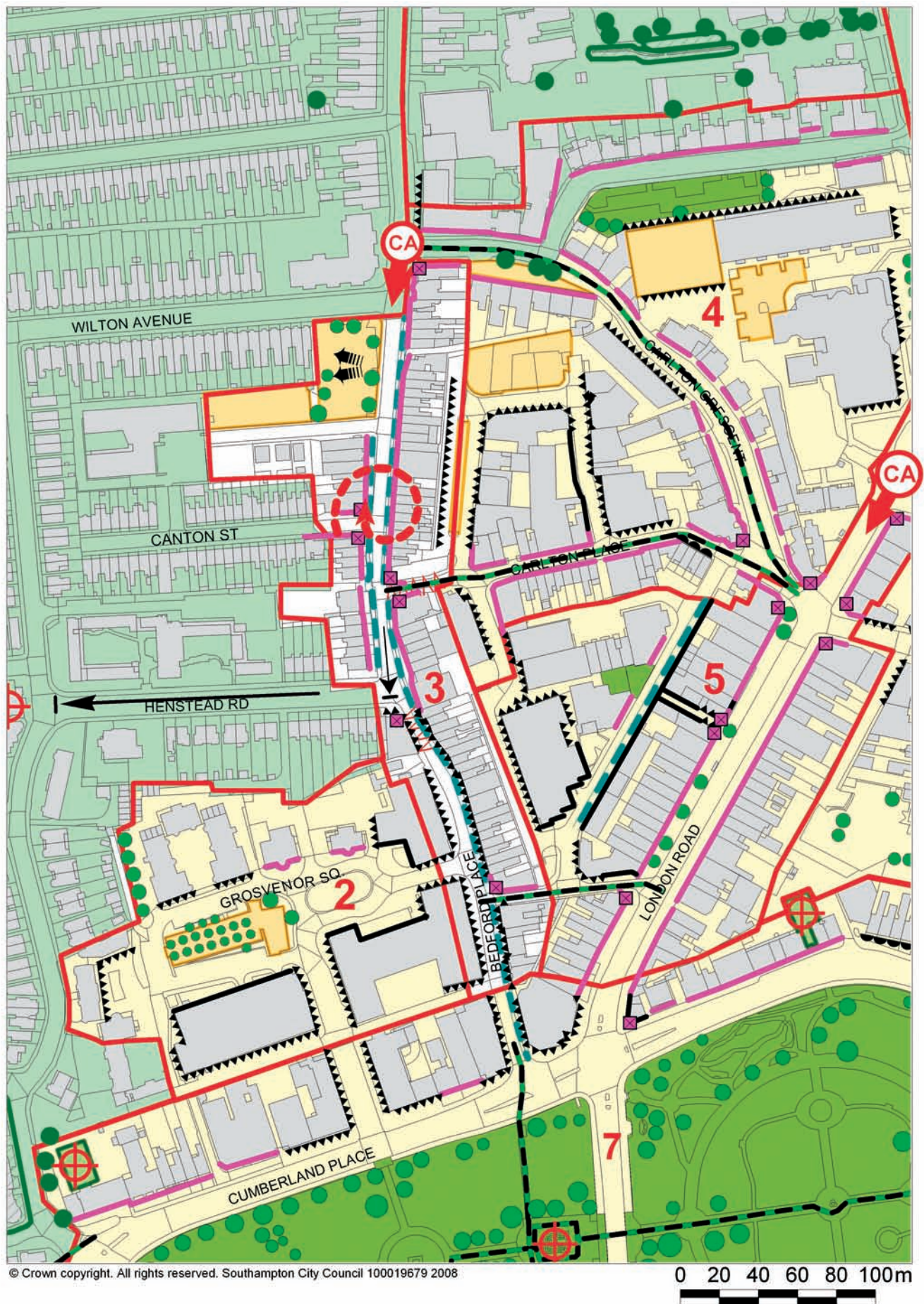


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Heritage Assets



Townscape

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