

15 Back of the Walls and Canal Walk

Context

This area lies parallel with the eastern line of the medieval town wall. The area abuts CA12: High Street North to the west, CA17 to the south, CA16 to the east and the rear of East Street (CA14) to the north. The area has a significant number of vacant plots which are in need of redevelopment.

This strip of land lies either side of the line of the town wall, a short section of which survives at the northern end of the area. To the east of the wall which ran along the east side of Back of the Walls was a ditch which was re-used in the late eighteenth century as the course of a canal. This was abandoned in the early nineteenth century and by the middle of the century houses were being built in the area.

Grain

The lines of Back of the Walls and the Canal survive and form the principal building lines and define the plot depth within the character area, although modern development does not always conform to the medieval building lines. Building footprints are widely varied with some very small, some medium and large; the smallest usually being medieval or pre-war fragments.

Scale

Building heights vary between one storey (industrial/commercial) to the five (including open deck) storeys of the multi-storey car park. The street section narrows at the north end of Back of the Walls to 1 : 0.8 : 0.5.

Uses

Small scale enterprises are located in smaller scale premises to the rear of East Street. There are car parks, both temporary surface parks on cleared sites, and the low multi-storey. They appear to be under-used during some periods of the working day.

Public Realm

In this area the public realm comprises pavements. Surfaces are paved mostly with a utilitarian finish of tarmac, pre-cast concrete slabs or concrete.

Connectivity

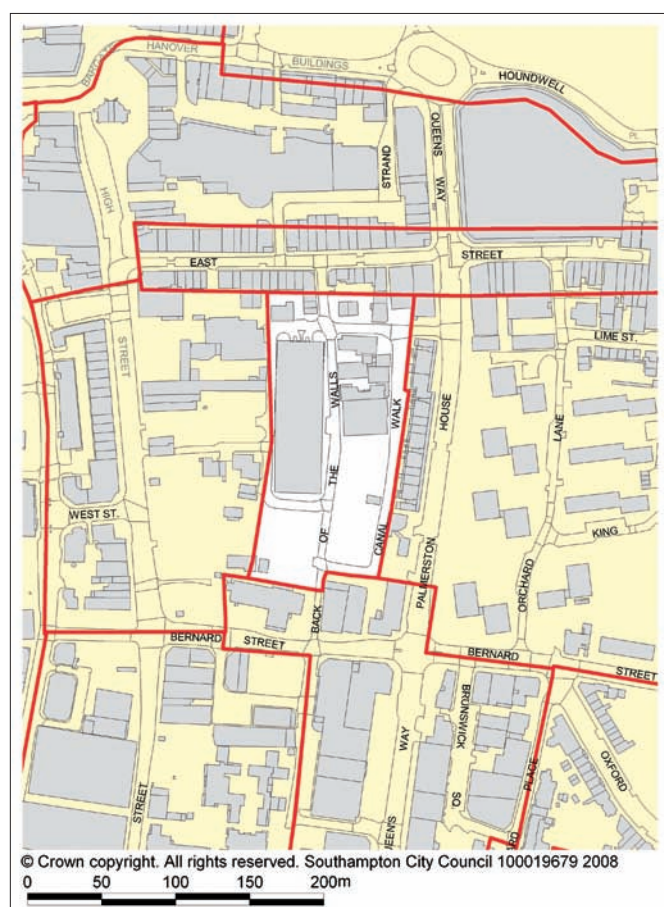
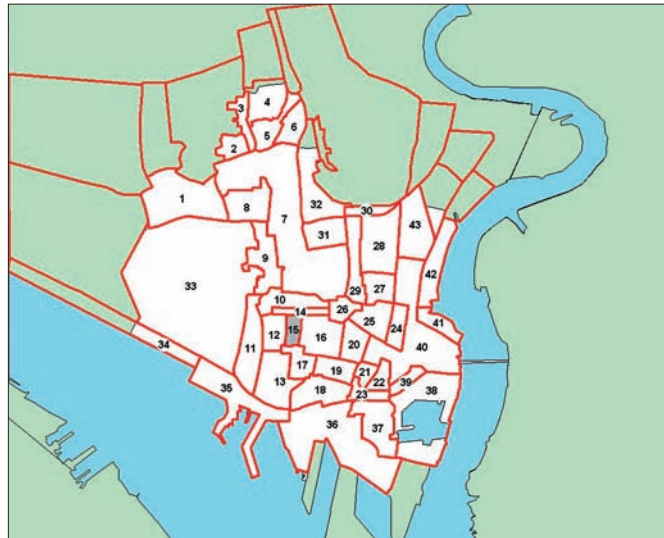
The small block sits between a regular grid of closely spaced north – south streets and slightly wider east – west streets allowing for a high level of connectivity.

Views

There is a glimpsed view west to St Michael's spire and across the car park and rear yard to the Dolphin Hotel.

Building types

The area contains a number of purpose-built small manu-



facturing units some of which have now been converted to storage or lock-up garages. There is an open deck five storey car park and a small nineteenth century warehouse known as The Old Bond Store.

Architectural Assets

The Old Bond Store is of architectural merit with its strong rusticated quoins brought out in a dark grey (engineering type) brick. The gable makes a significant contribution to what is extremely fragmented townscape and provides a remnant survival of the scale and character of these former lanes.

Heritage Assets

The area is considered to possess a high degree of evidential value due to the area straddling the line of the medieval town defences taking in part of the rear of the plots fronting High Street. Evidence from south of this area indicates that Saxon and medieval settlement extended beyond the line of the walls and it is possible that a similar situation existed here. The potential for archaeological remains relating to the medieval town and its defences leads this area to be regarded as of national importance. The area lies within a Local Area of Archaeological Importance to reflect this potential to yield significant evidence for past activity in the area. Back of the Walls is an element of the medieval street pattern and marks the line of the medieval town wall.

The Bond Store, located on Back of the Walls is a single storey red brick warehouse with low arched doorway, is a Grade II listed building. This building is considered to have strong cultural, illustrative and aesthetic values as it represents a lost building type for Southampton where such stores were once commonplace.

Materials

The predominant material is brick mostly of a light red-brown. The multi-storey car park is clad in profiled steel panels, reflecting its somewhat temporary character.

Condition

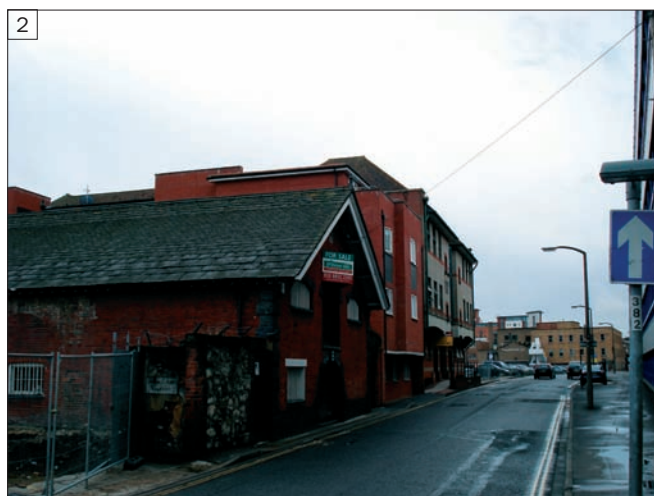
The general impression of the area is of average to poor condition, due to the vacant and under-used sites and the impression of uncertainty as to the future of the area.

Ownership

The main ownership pattern is of smaller to medium commercial and retail ownership.

Intervention

- The medieval walls, which border this area, should be recognised fully as the great asset that they are. They are Scheduled Monuments and a coordinated scheme for improving their setting should be given high priority. Coupled with this, a zone of landscape designed to increase biodiversity should be considered in this very



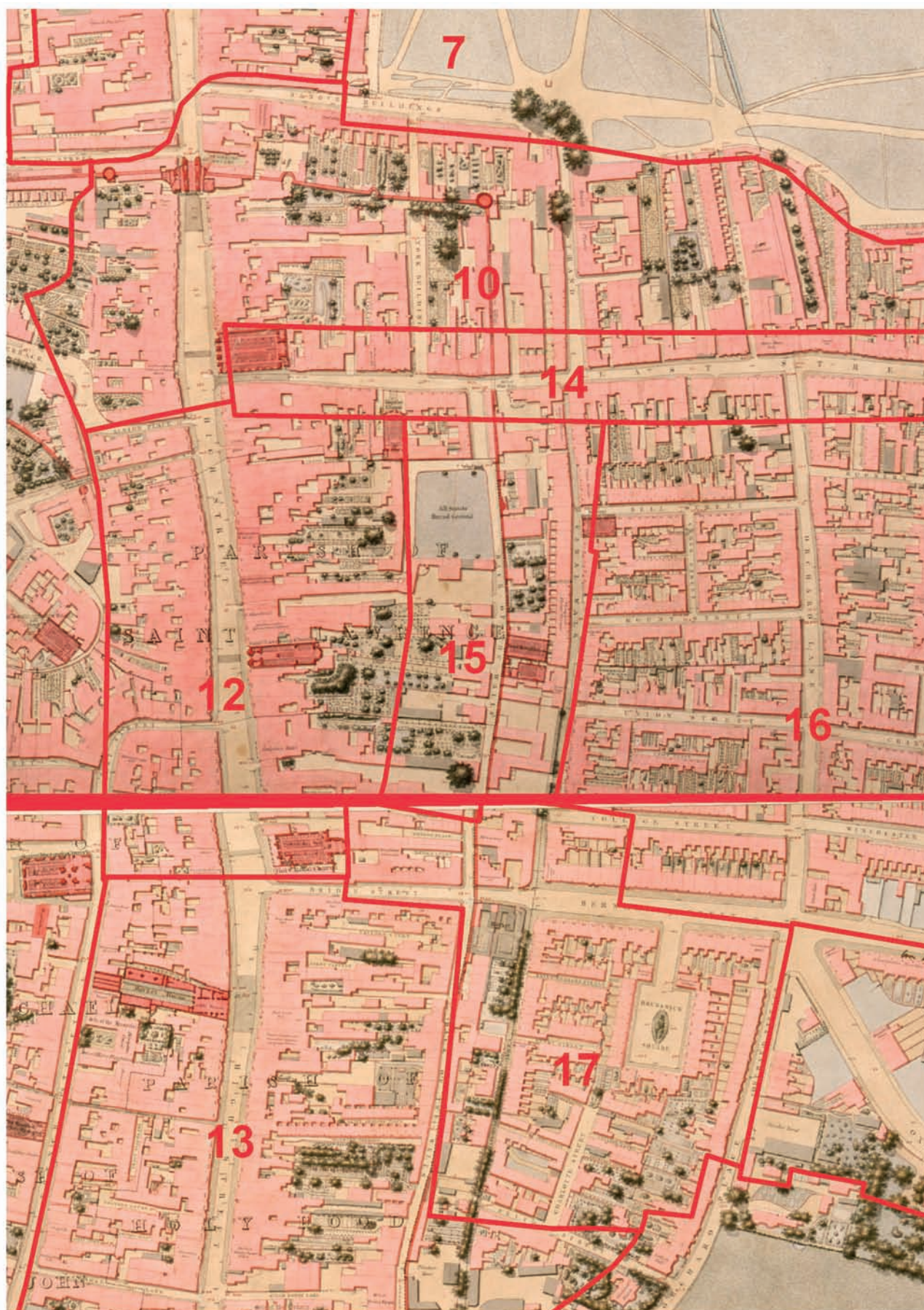
01 View from East Street looking south along Back of the Walls
02 Bonded Warehouse, Back of the Walls
03 Vacant and neglected sites within the character area

'hard' area. Lighting, signing and access are an essential ingredient in this zone.

- An urban design framework for this area (in combination with the potential for redevelopment in CA17) could focus on recreating the fine grain of lanes and alleys with mixed uses feeding off the potential for a market in Queensway (CA17) and the established intimate scale and unique shopping experience of East Street (CA14).

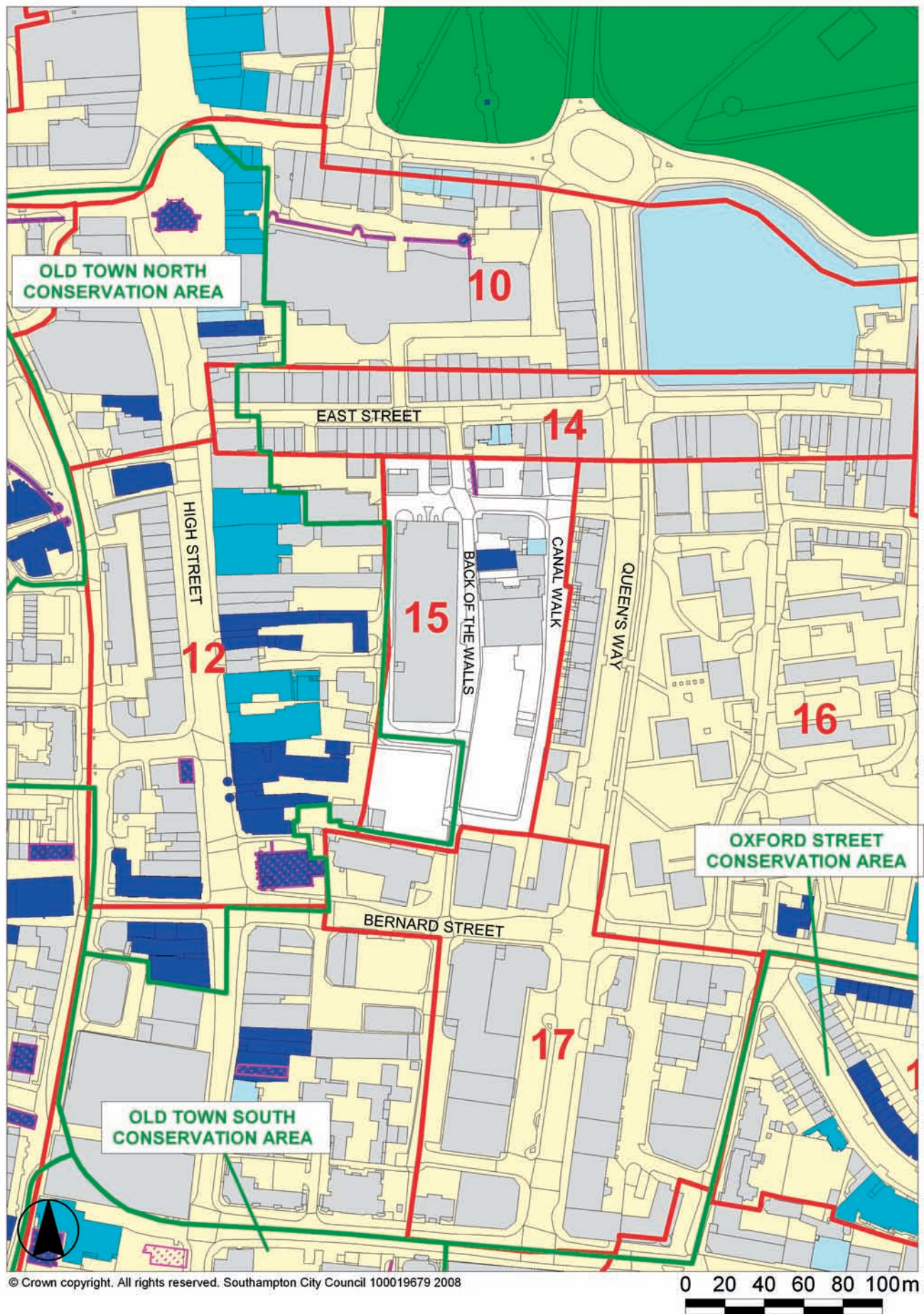
Key design principles

- Walls – A general scheme for the surviving wall sections should be developed as a priority.
- All development should seek to recreate a fine grain commensurate with the lane and alley type scale of the surviving street patterns.
- Mixed uses should be encouraged to generate the potential for a quarter (along with the possibility of redevelopment in CA17: Queensway) with some form of community use such as a market place.

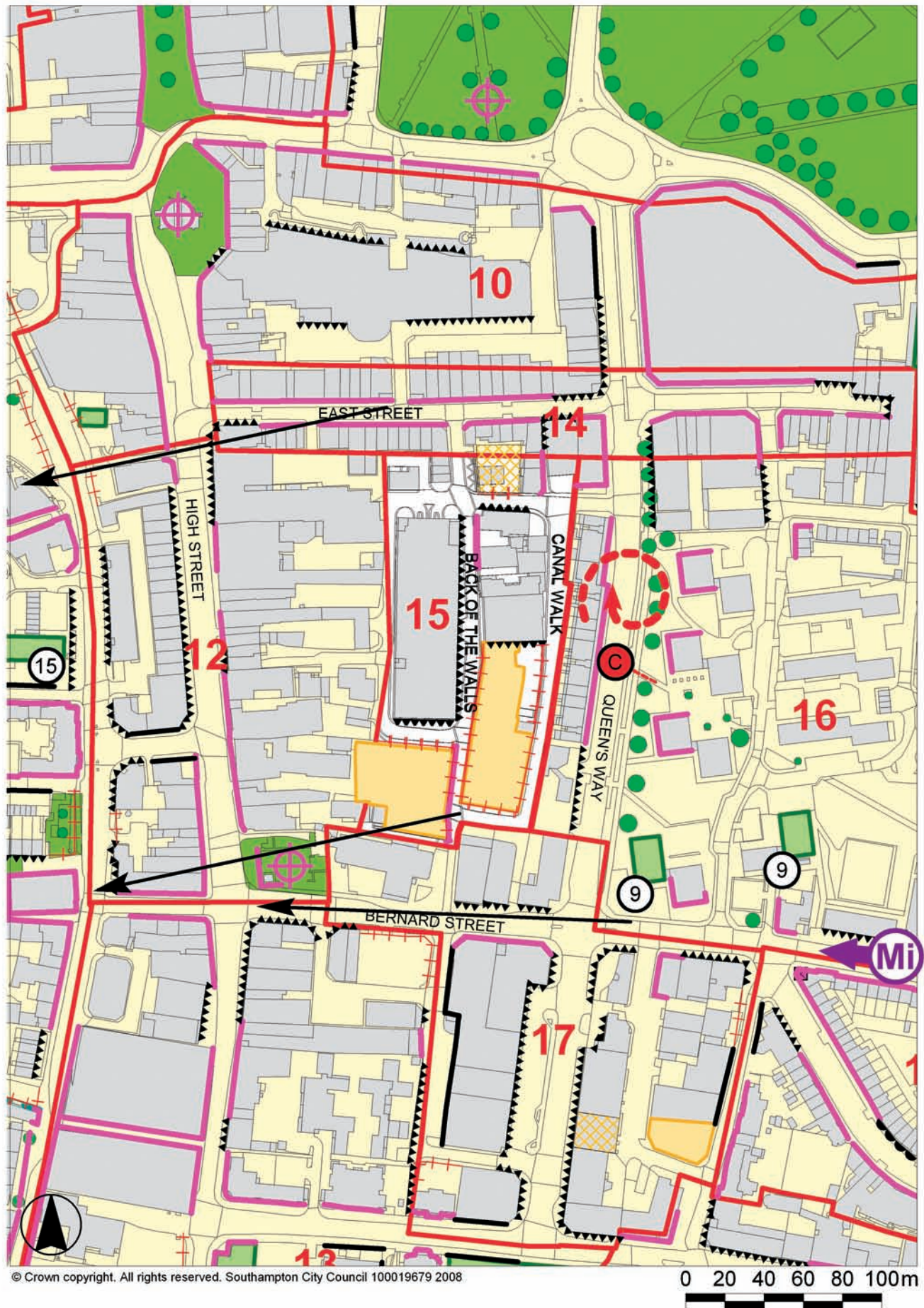


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Heritage Assets



Townscape