

**26 Evans Street and Threefield Lane Environs**

**Context**

This is a small flat area where the dual carriageway of Kingsway meets the smaller scale road network. The Central Park lies to the north (CA7), St Mary Street (CA29) to the north-east, Maryfield and Marsh Lane to the south-east (CA25), CAs 16 and 20 to the south, and CAs 9 and 14 to the west. This area is very much in transition with much of the built form to the west of the character area in need of complete replacement.

This area formed part of the medieval suburb that extended eastwards from the East Gate along Lower East Street to St. Mary's Church. However, the historic east-west grain of the area has been completely altered. The north side of Lower East Street continued to be developed into the mid-eighteenth century with only limited development to the south side. By c.1790 the area of Spring Gardens had been laid out to the south of the road. The line of East Street has now been truncated by the East Street Shopping Centre and the busy Kingsway/Marsh Lane route cuts across the area. The area within the angle between St Mary Street and Marsh Lane was formerly the garden of The Chantry, a large house that stood to the south of St Mary's Church. This area remained undeveloped until the early twentieth century when Central Hall, a Methodist church, was built.

**Grain**

This is an area of intersections and individual buildings. It is largely determined by late twentieth century highway planning. Its structure is predominantly coarse grained. There is little sense of enclosure due to the width of the highway which in places is around 50 metres between frontages.

**Scale**

There is considerable variation of building height from two to four storeys in the east to the slab block of the East Street Shopping Centre, known as Dukes Keep, at fourteen storeys, to the western edge of the small character area.

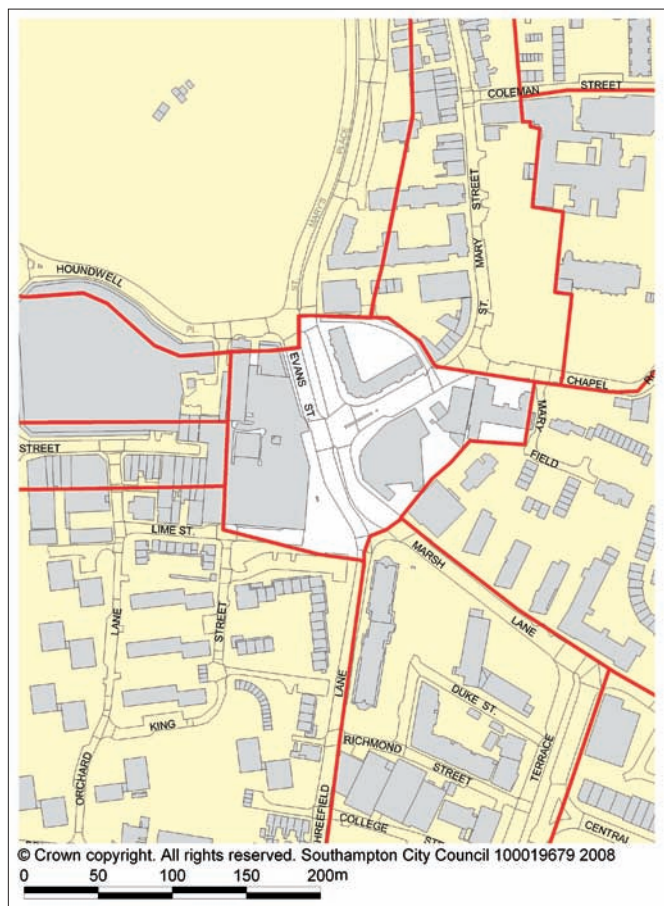
The East Street Shopping Centre and Lime Street multi-storey car park is an example of a mega-structure of the 1960s – 1970s; a mix of retail, residential and car park within a large-scale Brutalist concrete structure.

**Uses**

Retail, residential, communal and car park. Very low level of pedestrian use.

**Public Realm**

Very poor and ill-defined, especially on west side, associated with the car park/shopping centre. Large gloomy undercroft areas, subway, and highway above pavement



level in places. Eastern end has more conventional streets/public realm. Virtually total hard landscape. The street landscaping has in places compromised the setting of historic buildings.

### Connectivity

A dual carriageway passes through the centre of the character area and creates a significant barrier to east-west connectivity. The subway is under-used and unattractive. There is little evidence of desire lines in this area. There is a pedestrian paved area to the south, which provides a link to CA16 (Holyrood Estate).

A well-used footpath link passes to the southern edge of the East Street Shopping Centre providing a pedestrian link between the Holyrood Estate and student accommodation to East Street, High Street and Above Bar.

### Architectural qualities

The most important building is the Edwardian Central Hall with its entrance surmounted by a dome, which is a minor but significant landmark. The 1980s building (a hall of residence for Southampton Solent University) on the northern corner is designed to address the road junction with a building of urban scale. This may have been achieved with its four storeys and pitched roofs. The 1960s – 1970s slab block in exposed reinforced concrete is a not particularly accomplished example of the 'Brutalist' style.

### Views

There are a number of local views focussed onto the cupola of Central Hall. There is a good view looking north-east into St Mary Street which is centred on the church and its spire, perhaps one of the best views of the entire church (as opposed to just the spire).

### Heritage Assets

The area is considered to possess a high degree of evidential value due to fact that Marsh Lane and the section of St Mary Street represent historic roads. Some mid-Saxon occupation evidence has been found in the eastern part of the area associated with the minster church of Hamwic on the site of St Mary's Church and so any areas not destroyed by modern development will be regarded as being of national importance. The area is within a Local Area of Archaeological Importance to reflect this potential to yield significant evidence for past activity in the area.

Chantry Hall, a 1920s church hall to the south of St Mary's Church, was listed Grade II but it has been severely damaged by fire and as a consequence has lost much of its heritage value. The area is not within a conservation area. Central Hall is a locally listed building with a good degree of aesthetic, associative and communal and spiritual values. It is a valued building in the community of some considerable quality



- 01 The dominance of the highway in the character area  
 02 Central Hall – its setting has been severely compromised by highway interventions  
 03 View along St Mary Street to the spire of the Church of St Mary

and has a strong presence on its corner site despite being heavily compromised by changes to the level of the carriageway which as a result partially obscure the entrance.

Hoglands, part of the 07 Central Parks Character Area which adjoins the area to the north, is a Registered Park and Garden.

**Materials**

Reinforced concrete; brick, red and buff. Natural slate and lead roofs to Central Hall. Otherwise concrete interlocking tiles and modern clay tiles. Some traditional paving materials (kerbs and gulleys).

**Condition**

The East Street Shopping Centre needs considerable outlay to bring it back into reasonable condition with any hope of achieving lettable space. The Central Hall is in reasonable condition and is well used.

Chantry Hall is in a ruinous condition after a major fire.

**Ownership**

Privately owned with some education and institution ownership.

**Intervention**

- Create active frontages where possible on the south boundary and east elevation of the car park.
- Consider grade crossing if possible and remove the subway.
- Longer term; re-align the road, to improve the setting of the Public Hall.

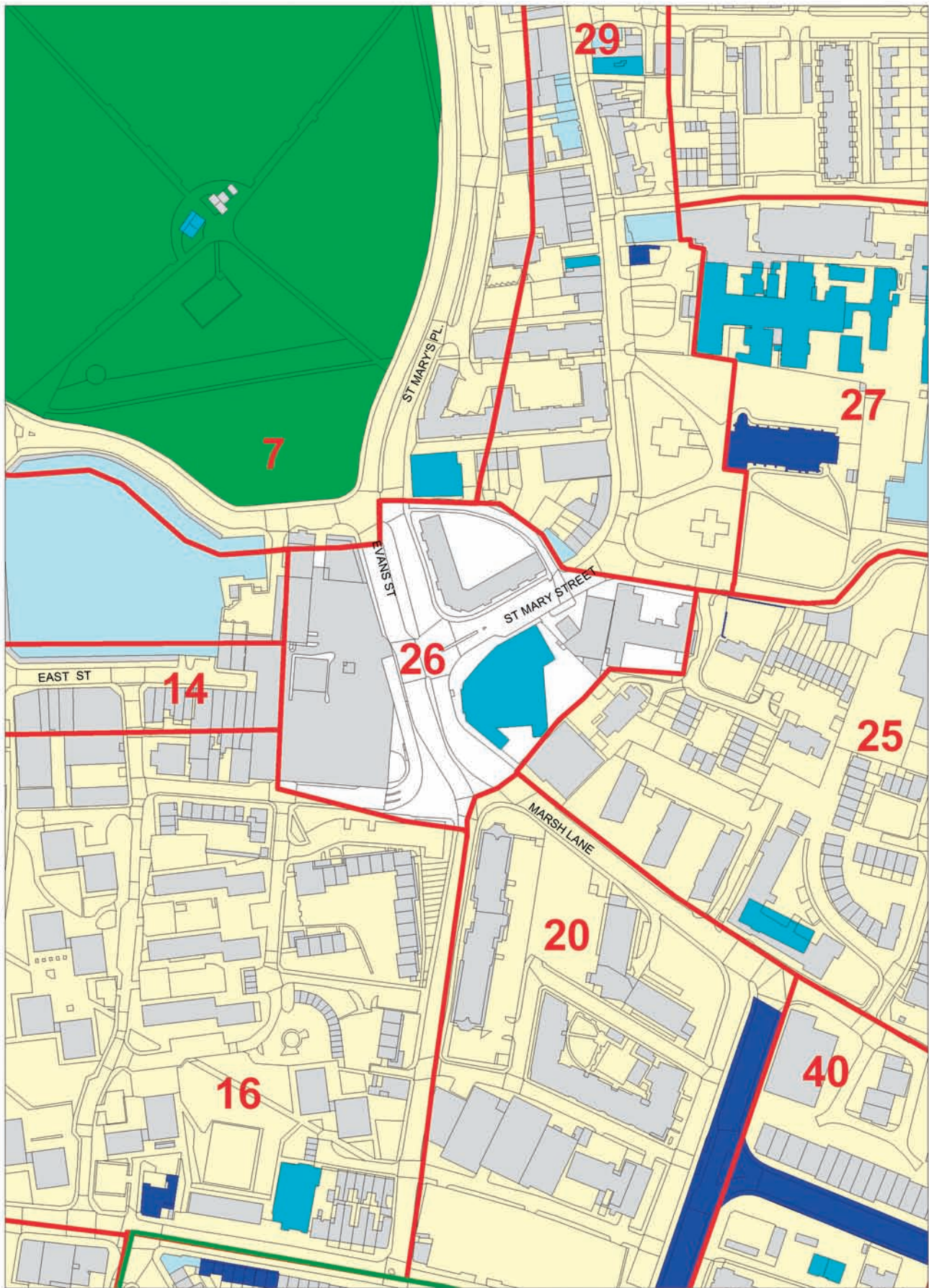
**Key design principles**

- Any major development should seek to improve the highly over-engineered highway network which passes through the heart of this character area.
- The opportunity should be taken to redevelop sites which will improve the sense of enclosure and narrow the highway if possible.
- Major redevelopment should seek the opportunity of visually linking East Street with St Mary Street through this character area.

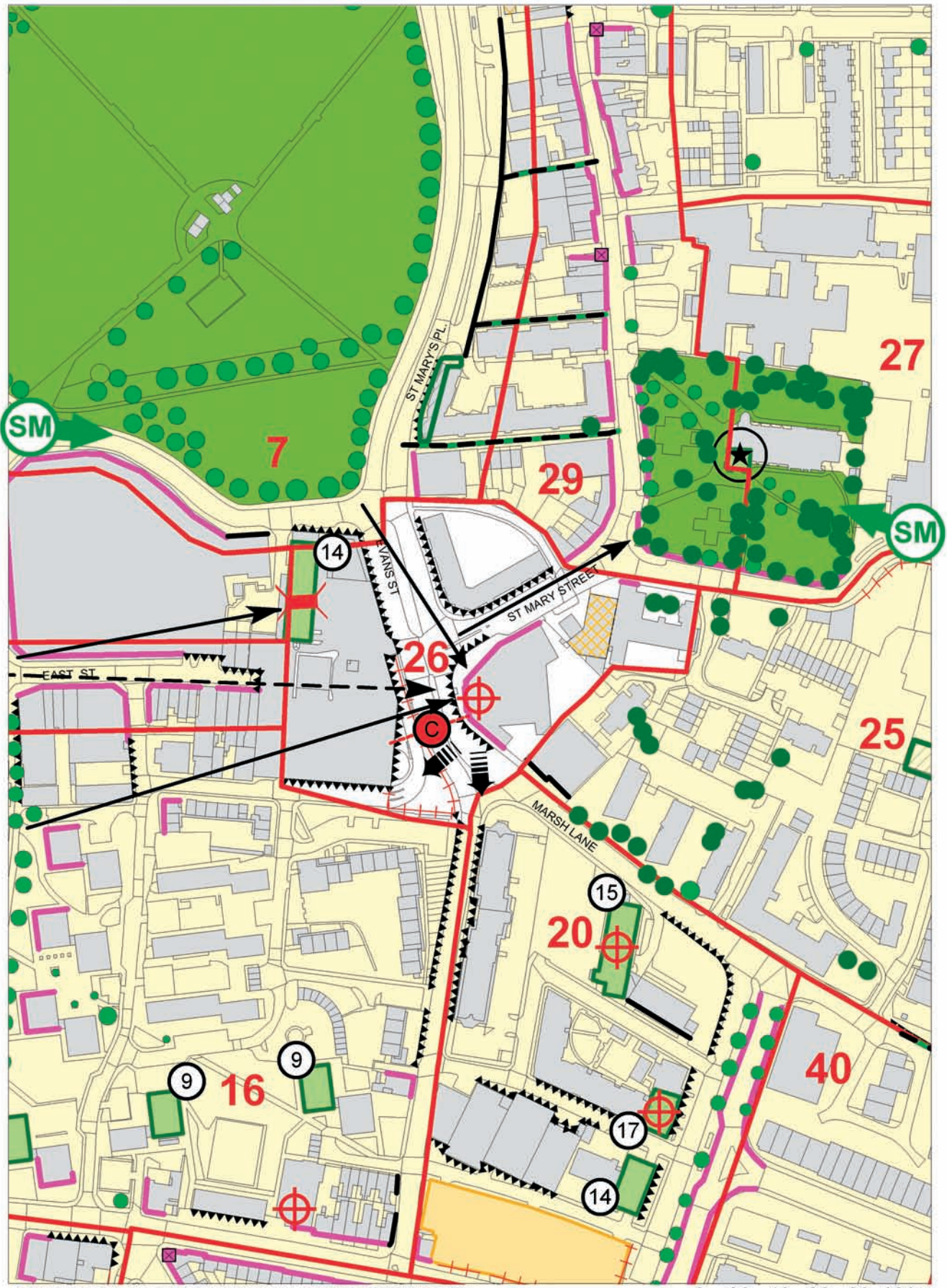


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**Heritage Assets**



**Townscape**