

17 Queensway, Bernard Street and Brunswick Square

Context

This area abuts the line of the eastern town wall, cutting into the walled area in the north-east part of the area. The land is slightly lower than the area to the west and it also falls slightly from north to south. The area is less cohesive than most, but the spine of Queensway provides an axis. To the north the area abuts CA15 and CA16, CAs 18 and 19 to the east, CAs 12 and 13 (High Street north and south respectively) to the west. The area is in a state of transition and its character is likely to change over a relatively short period.

This area includes part of the line of the ditch at the foot of the town wall forming part of the town defences. The ditch was also re-used in the late eighteenth century as the course of the canal. This was abandoned in the early nineteenth century and by the middle of the century houses were being built in the area. This was an area of small shops and businesses in the early twentieth century. Canal Walk was severely damaged by bombing during WWII.

Grain

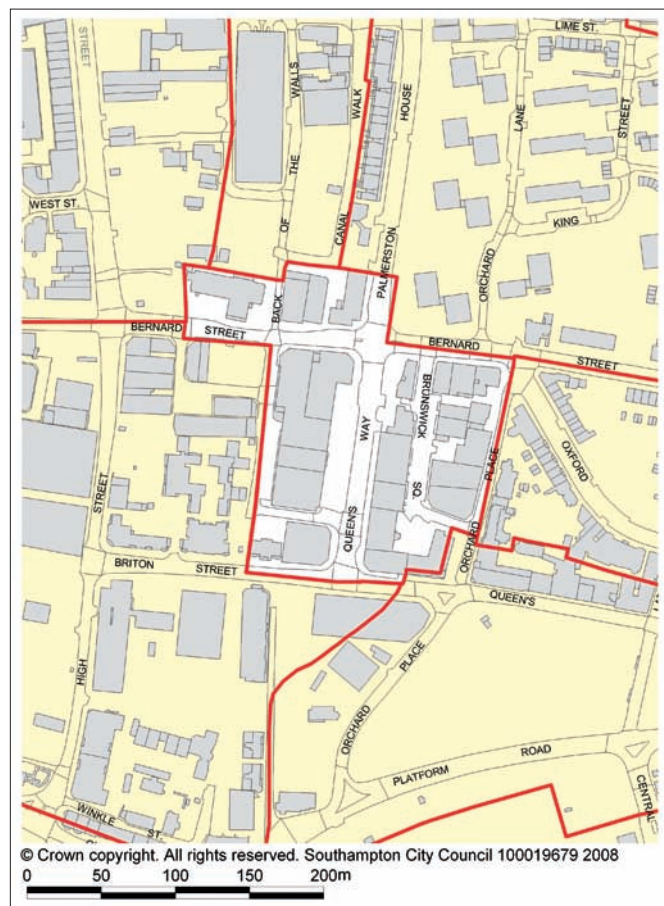
This area has a medium to coarse grain due to its almost total post-war resurrection especially when compared with its Old Town neighbour. Queensway is wide and the service yards tend to be generous. The line of Back of the Walls and the Canal survive on the west side of the area, although modern development does not always conform to the medieval building lines. Most building footprints are medium to large; the smallest usually being medieval or pre-war fragments.

Scale

Building heights are consistently between two and three storey (industrial/commercial) with the exception of the Job Centre and offices on Queensway which is at six storeys and projects slightly forward of the remaining building line, making it a very prominent building in extended views towards St Michael's spire. Street sections are also variable; the widest, in the market warehouse area is 1 : 4 : 1. Most buildings are flat roofed and therefore parapet heights are the main determinant of built form. This gives a very horizontal emphasis to the streetscape and makes for bland roof-scape with distant buildings often glimpsed above the existing buildings on the street frontage.

Uses

The area is partly characterised by mixed uses. The most potentially interesting (and vulnerable) is that of the market and market warehousing. This is housed in 1950s warehouses and low rise commercial premises. The associated open spaces and service yards, whilst unattractive, are used by vehicles associated with the



market. Manufacturing exists in 1950s premises in the south-east corner of the area, with little apparent evidence of adverse impact.

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. The only soft landscape consists of a single tree fronting the service yard on Queensway.

Connectivity

The regular grid of closely spaced north – south streets and slightly wider east – west streets allows for a high level of connectivity, both vehicular and pedestrian to all parts of the central area.

Views

There are few external views from the area; perhaps the most significant being at the crossroads of Queensway and Bernard Street looking west towards the spire of St Michael's Church. Internally the view south terminated by the stepped profile of the new apartment complex rising from six to thirteen storeys is the most striking. Looking north up Queensway, the four squat towers above the two storey shopping parade create a strong punctuation in the street scene.

Building types

The area contains a cluster of warehouse, industrial and associated buildings, perhaps the most significant group within the city centre.

Architectural Assets

The predominant period and style is 1950s modernist, located mostly in the centre of the area and of low rise, utilitarian, industrial, warehouse and commercial character. About half is vacant and faces possible redevelopment in the near future.

The only building of the eighteenth century is the much-altered town house situated in what is now the service road behind Queensway.

Heritage Assets

Although beyond the area of the medieval walled town the area is considered to possess a high degree of evidential value due to, the fact that prior to the construction of the defences there was occupation in this area including evidence for Saxo-Norman occupation preserved by the remains of the bank of the defences. There is also some evidence for Bronze Age activity in the area. As part of the late Saxon/Norman town as well as including part of the defences of the town, this area is regarded as being of national importance. It lies within a Local Area of Archaeological Importance to reflect this potential to yield significant evidence for past activity in the area.



- 01** View looking south from Bernard Street into Brunswick Square
02 Low rise warehousing and workshops, Orchard Place
03 View north along Orchard Place looking towards Holyrood Estate.

There are no listed buildings, locally listed buildings or buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the area within the area. The area adjoins the Oxford Street, Old Town North and Old Town South conservation areas and as such is considered to be important and pivotal to the setting of all of these areas.

Materials

The predominant material of the area is brick mostly of a light red-brown. Buff brick is also used, but less widely.

Condition

The overall impression of the area is of average to poor condition, due to the vacant and under-used properties 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 area may require some coordinated consideration

regarding its future. The possibility of enhancing the established mixed use nature of the area could be explored, with the aim of forming the focus of a new quarter, creating vitality in this part of the city. The increased interest in local food of high quality could prove a considerable attraction for the city centre. The precedent of the Borough Market in Southwark, London and Farmers Markets generally could be explored. Additionally, markets tend to have associated uses which increase the diversity of the immediate area.

- A zone of landscape designed to increase biodiversity should be considered in this very 'hard' area. Lighting, signing and access are an essential ingredient in this zone.

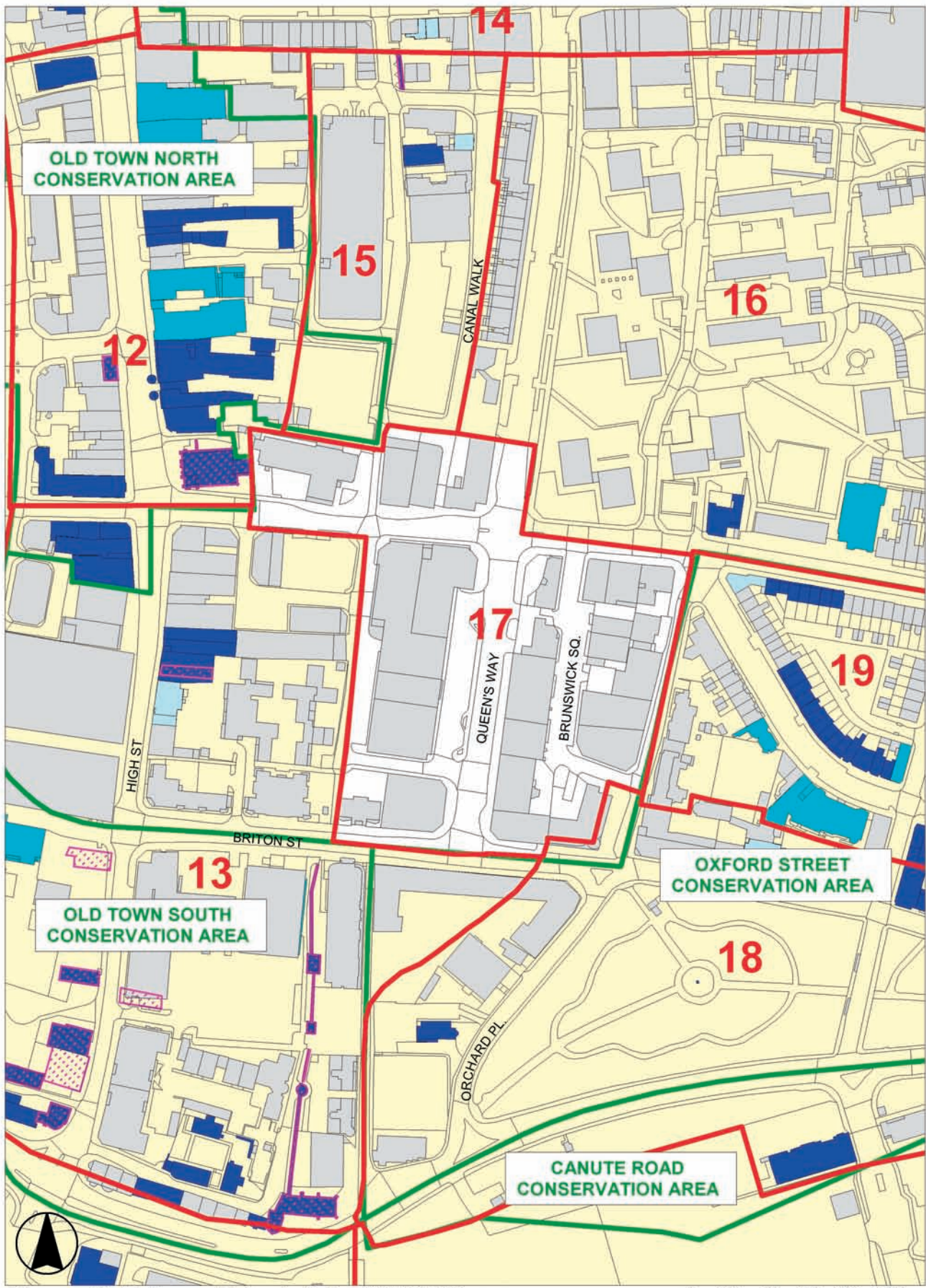
Design Principles

- Possible market scheme.
- The retention of the more interesting 1950s buildings should be an established principle.
- A steel framed glazed vaulted structure could be a centrepiece for a regenerated market.



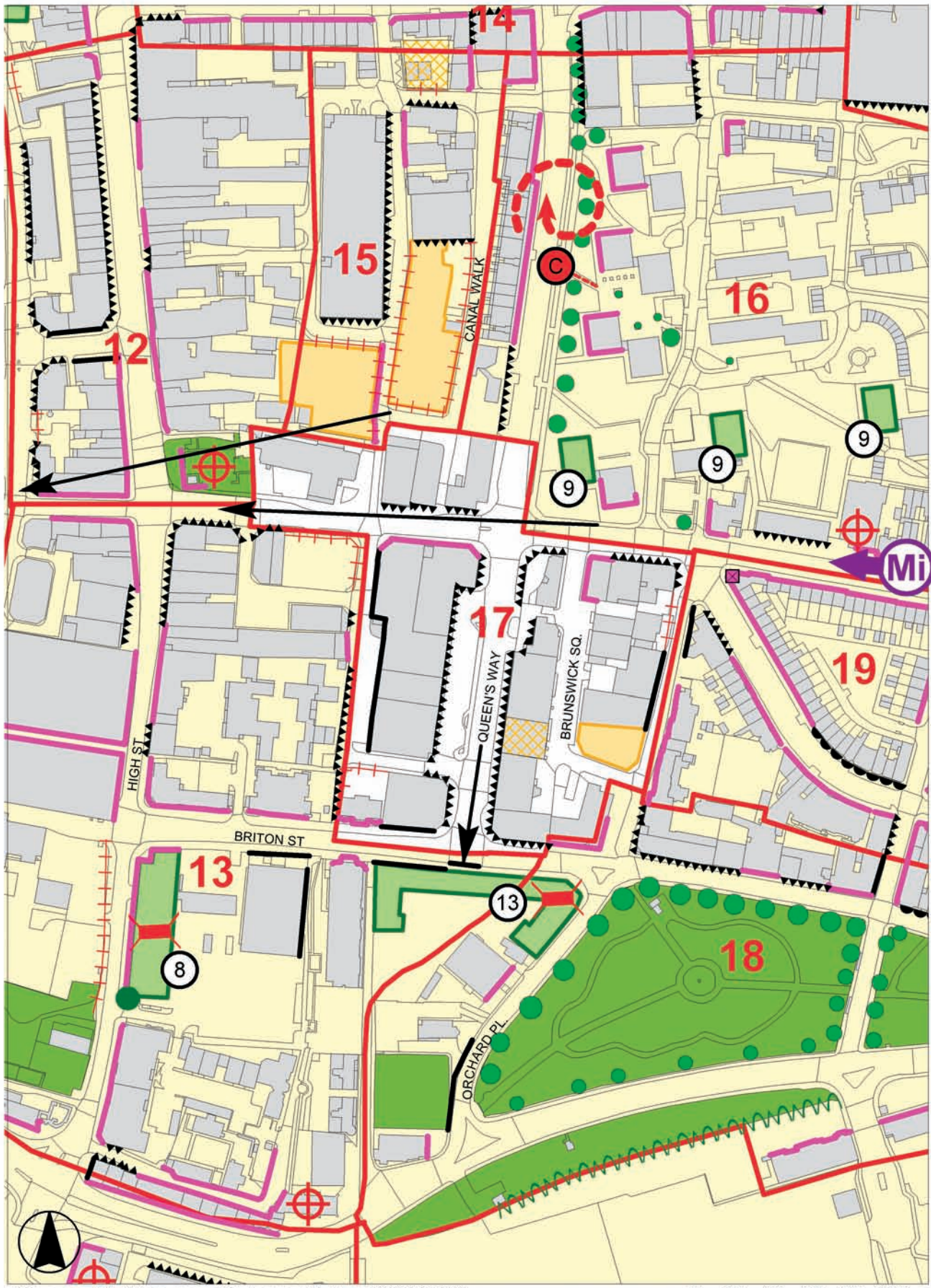
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Townscape