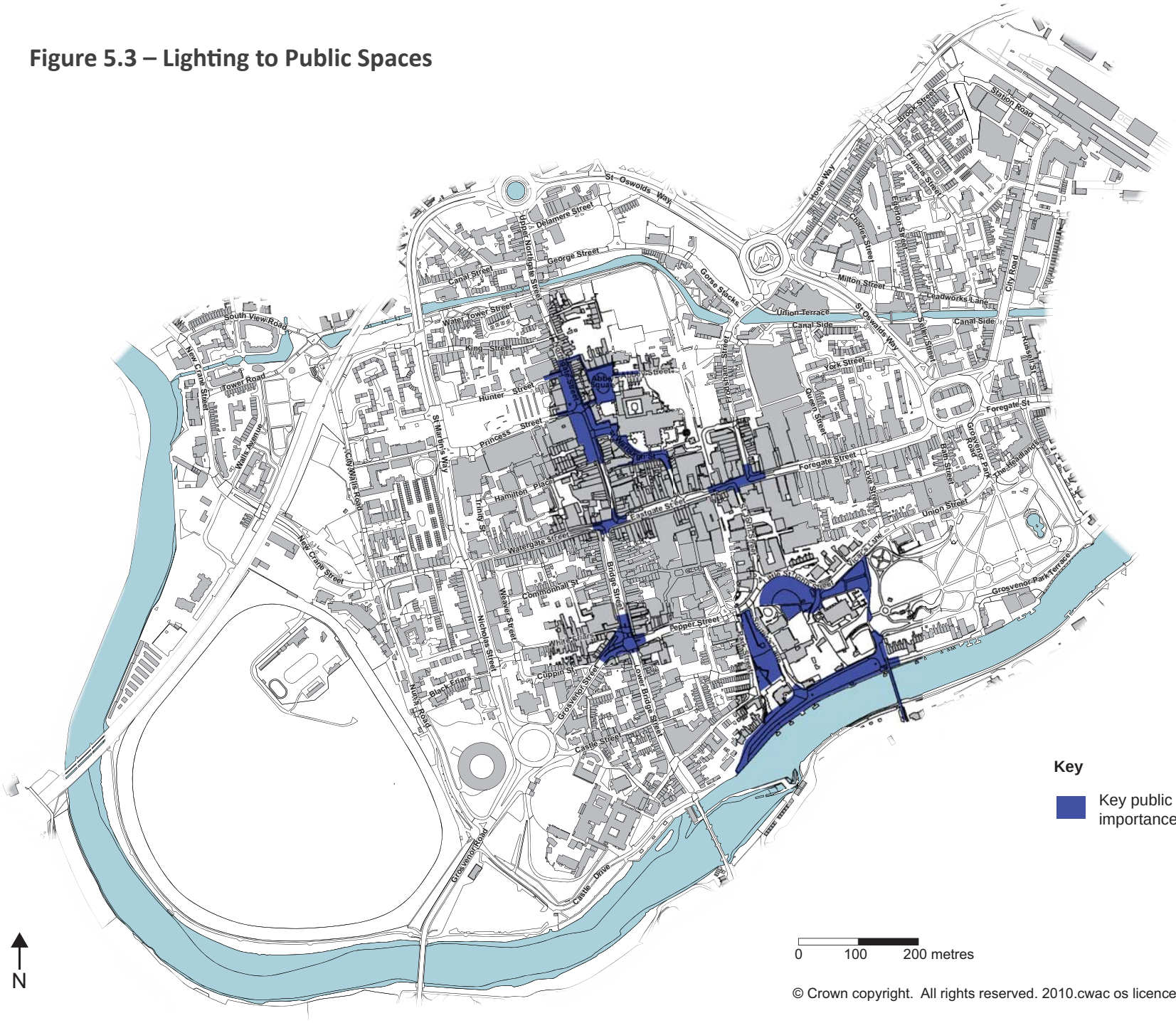
Figure 5.3 – Lighting to Public Spaces



5.7 ~ Public Spaces...

The adjacent map identifies the key public spaces and squares that are of strategic importance at night. This is based on the map in the Public Realm Framework (see Part 3, Figure 3.1) and has been augmented by an analysis of the city at night.

Lighting of public spaces / squares should integrate the street / public lighting with elements of architectural lighting and the lighting of landscape elements, such as street furniture and public art.

The aim of any lighting scheme should be to enhance the space at night and create a safe and pleasant environment for people to enjoy. These public spaces should be appropriate for all sectors of the community and allow for older people and families using restaurants and theatres, as well as young people enjoying the pubs and clubs. These spaces should become the heart of the local community in the city, as places for people to meet and hang out. Some people spend as much as two thirds of their waking hours under artificial light during the winter months and our public spaces should ensure that the lighting delivers the highest quality possible for health and well-being. There are also obvious economic benefits a high quality environment can bring to local businesses. We are already seeing a marked increase in the adoption of a Scandinavian approach to the use of our towns and cities at night, with people sitting outside bars and cafés in their coats (and not solely because of the smoking ban). This kind of reinvigoration of our public spaces in the hours of darkness throughout the year brings animation, which can be enhanced by higher quality lighting. This approach is part of a sustainable approach to public realm design (see section 5.11 on sustainability and the environment)

As well as simply creating an attractive environment / atmosphere, lighting of public spaces also contributes to the following:

- Increased perception of public safety (especially with the application of white light for public / street lighting).
- Recent research undertaken in Liverpool has shown that the lighting of buildings in the city centre contributed very significantly to an increased feeling of safety for both visitors and residents, leading to increased footfall at night and increased spend.
- Academic research has shown that creating vertical illuminance in public spaces, for example the lighting of building façades or tree up-lighting helps define a space, improving legibility, which in turn increases a feeling of safety and well being for its users.
- High quality design can deter vandalism of lighting equipment, partly by increased use of the space, but also due to a higher level of respect for the environment by its users.

Lighting in public spaces also needs to take into account the following:

- An understanding of how and when the space is used.
- An elimination of gloomy or dark corners where perceived or actual attackers could hide
- A design should take into account the composition of the space at night, with light levels balanced between all elements. Consider the use of all the lighting tools available to the designer, including buildings, features and public lighting, to create this composition.

An approach to the lighting for each of the public spaces indicated on Figure 5.3 is described in the conceptual lighting designs. (section 5.13)