

Sparkle: The National Transgender Charity

National Transgender Monument

Planning Statement

Reference: Planning Statement

Final | 11 March 2024



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1. Introduction

This report has been prepared by Ove Arup and Partners Ltd (Arup) on behalf of Sparkle: The National Transgender Charity (Sparkle) to support a planning application for a new National Transgender Monument, which will be a replacement for the current Memorial, which was damaged by fire in 2022.

The proposed description of development is as follows:

“Erection of a free-standing Monument and associated landscaping”

The previous National Transgender Memorial, originally the Transgender Remembrance Memorial Project (Manchester), was located in the north-east of Sackville Gardens, and was carved from a solid piece of sycamore tree. It was decorated with plaques remembering those from the trans community who have lost their lives. This Memorial gradually became the default National Transgender Remembrance Memorial, by virtue of it being the first such Memorial to be constructed nationally.

It remained until 2022 the only significant memorial for the trans community in the UK. The Memorial, and the small garden surrounding it, was built to provide a focal point for the events marking the Transgender Day of Remembrance and was unveiled in August 2013. Shortly after this it was damaged by vandalism and required restoration. The Memorial was finally restored by March 2014 and became a central focus for that year’s Sparkle Weekend, and subsequent community events since.

Following substantial fire damage in 2022, concerns around the structural integrity of the Memorial grew and as such it is currently cordoned off by the Council from the public due to safety concerns. Members of the community have also questioned the use of imagery on the previous Memorial, with comments questioning whether the imagery of butterflies is an accurate metaphor for the full scope of transgender lives and experiences.

It is as a result of these two considerations that Sparkle, as community custodians for the Memorial, have commissioned the development of a new design.

In consultation with the transgender community, Sparkle, and the wider project team, have taken this opportunity to ensure that the replacement is a Monument to the community. This aspiration is driven by a desire to acknowledge the resilience, resistance, community, and strength of trans people, and also to represent the permanence of trans communities.

However, it is recognised that the new Monument should also serve a commemorative role, given its continued importance as a focal point for reflection and remembrance at events such as Trans Day of Remembrance and for individual use. The submitted design represents a balance between these two purposes. It embodies the wide range of trans experiences and fully represents these communities, their needs and wishes.

1.1 Planning Application Submission

This application has been submitted to the local planning authority, Manchester City Council (the Council), through the Planning Portal and comprises the following documentation:

- Planning application forms and certificates;
- This Planning Statement;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Site Location Plan, Existing and Proposed Site Plans, Existing and Proposed Elevations¹ and Sections, Sculptural Uprights and Groundworks drawings;

¹ Due to the Monument’s appearance being the same from all elevational directions, the drawing shows the Monument in the context from a single elevation.

- Drainage information (within this Planning Statement);
- Ground information;
- Tree Protection information; and,
- Heritage Statement.

1.2 The Applicant

Sparkle is the custodian of the current National Transgender Remembrance Memorial and future National Transgender Monument in Sackville Gardens, Manchester.

Beginning as founders of the Sparkle Weekend, the original celebration of trans joy and gender diversity, hosted in Sackville Gardens at the heart of Manchester's Gay Village each year, Sparkle became a registered charity in 2011, long before other larger LGBTQIA+ charities became trans inclusive. Held over the second weekend in July, the Sparkle Weekend has grown exponentially, and is now one of the largest events of its kind in the world.

The Charity also organises and delivers Manchester's annual Transgender Day of Remembrance service, and offers guidance and training to businesses, public sector organisations, and educational institutions on how to support trans colleagues, customers, service users, students, and other stakeholders.

Run by a team of passionate and dedicated volunteers, the Charity also undertakes projects throughout the year to further its aims of promoting a positive representation of trans and gender diverse communities.

1.3 Structure of this Report

This Planning Statement provides a summary of the application and supporting documents. The report is structured under the following headings:

- Site and Surrounding Area;
- Public Consultation;
- Proposed Development;
- Planning Assessment;
- Development Management Considerations; and
- Summary and Conclusions.

The statement concludes that the proposal is in full compliance with planning policy and should be supported by the Council.

2. Site and Surrounding Area

This section provides a description of the proposal site and the immediate surrounding area. This is followed by a summary of the relevant planning history for the site.

2.1 Application Site

The application site is located towards the northern part of Sackville Gardens, and comprises a site area of approximately 29.09 sq.m. The land that is now Sackville Gardens was first purchased by Manchester Corporation in 1900, and was landscaped into an urban park around this time – and has remained as such up until this day.

The application site is situated in a central location within the Gardens, in close proximity to The Tree of Life and the Alan Turing Monument. Access into the Gardens is taken from three entrances; at the north-west from Sackville Street, and the south-west from the junction of Whitworth Street and Sackville Street and from the south-east from Whitworth Street.

2.2 Surrounding Area

Sackville Gardens is a small park in central Manchester, close to the city's Gay Village and Canal Street. It is located 0.48km from Manchester's Piccadilly Train Station, which provides connections to London, Birmingham, Glasgow and other major UK cities in addition to local transport hubs. A bus stop is located at the SE entrance of the park on the B6469, and the Gardens are accessed from three entrances. The park is constrained on all sides, on two-sides by highly trafficked routes, B6469 to the south-East and Sackville Street to the south-west. To the north-west the canal is separated by a fence to the gardens and the north-east University of Manchester (Shena Simon Campus) building forms the edge of the gardens.

There is a main route through park, diagonally from north-west corner to the south-east. However, there are several other routes, around the perimeter and across the park. The site is prominently flat and level whereas the surrounding site slopes towards the SW. There are 2 steps to enter the site due to the level difference. The other entrances are level from the public footpaths. The site is mainly grass-covered, and paths are tarmacked and approximately 1.5-2m wide. There are trees that bound most of the site, the tree canopy is typically 3m high, however there was some larger trees across the site. There are also some low-level bushes and shrubs that are dispersed across the site. Through the site, there are several benches placed along the main pathways that converge at a central circle which is paved. This is approximately 8m in diameter and centrally there are 4 circular benches and additionally, the Alan Turing bench monument.

The Gardens itself is recognised as a national gathering point for LGBTQ+ history, with several memorials and monuments already located throughout Sackville Gardens. These include The Alan Turing Monument (since 2001), The Beacon of Hope (since 2000) and The Tree of Life (since 1993). The addition of this Monument continues in this vein, and provides a further gathering and focal point for commemoration and celebration, particularly for the trans community who have lacked a permanent memorial since the damage caused to the previous memorial in 2022.

Figure 1: Location of the application site within Sackville Gardens and the wider area



2.3 Planning History

A search of Manchester Council's planning applications register has identified the following applications of note within Sackville Gardens:

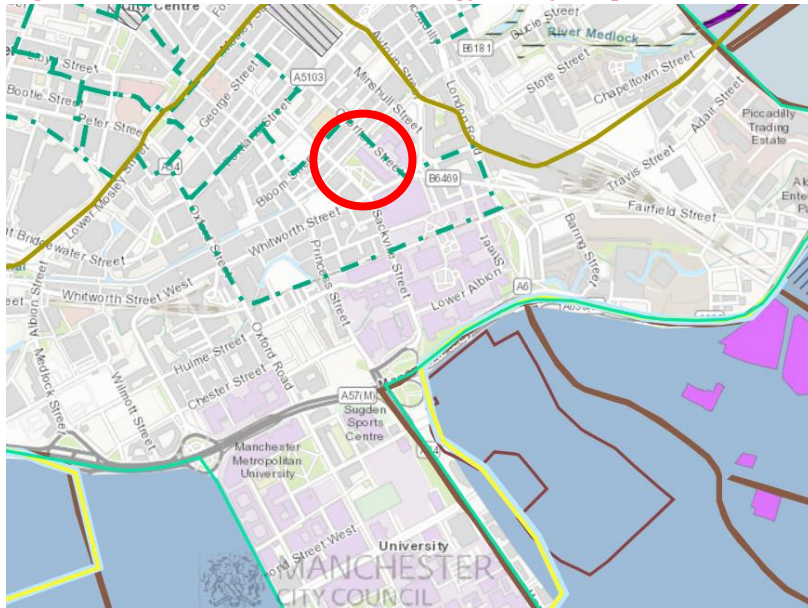
- **Application reference 055290/FO/CITY3/98** – Erection of a bronze memorial statue (The Alan Turing Monument). **Approved in November 1998.**
- **Application reference 057154/FO/CITY3/99** – Construction of HIV/AIDS memorial, illuminated beacon and associated seating. **Approved in September 1999.**
- **Application reference 106591/TCA/2014/C2** – Works to trees - proposed felling of 4 Norway Maple trees. **Approved in August 2014.**
- **Application reference 054278/VO/CITY3/98** – Use of open land (within Sackville Gardens) as a Market on Sunday only. **Not Proceeded With, July 1999.**

2.4 Local Plan Allocations and Relevant Designations

The application site is not allocated for any specific use within the Core Strategy Policies map, although the site is located within the defined extent of the City Centre, and is situated within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area. With reference to the MappingGM map, Sackville Gardens is noted as a 'Public Park Or Garden' as identified by the OS Open Greenspace sites.

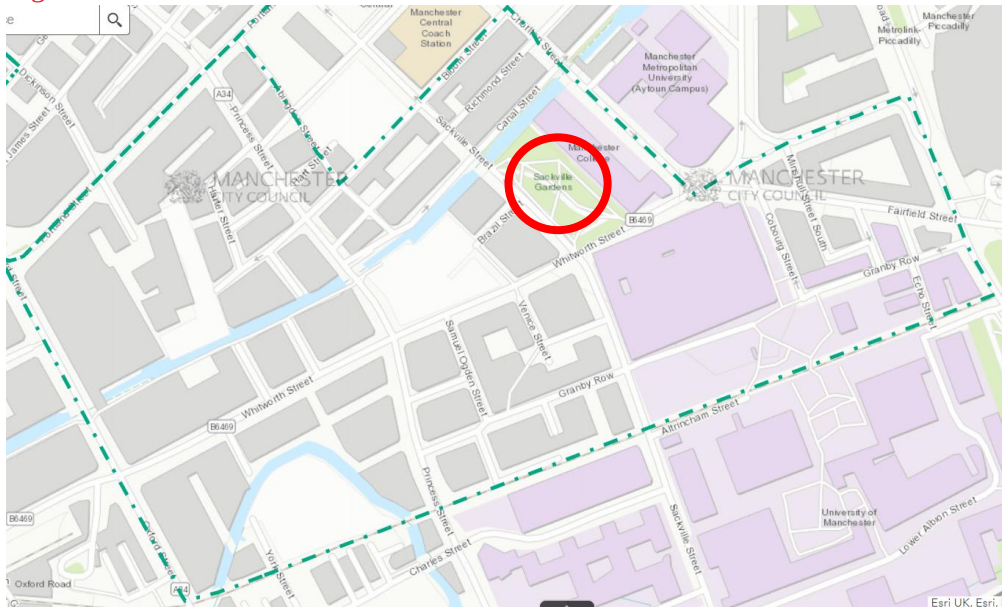
Figure 2 below shows an extract from the Policies Map, showing designations in the vicinity of the site, and the site's location within the wider City Centre.

Figure 2: Extract from the Core Strategy Policy Map



As noted above, the site is located within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area, the boundaries of which are shown in Figure 3 below. The Conservation Area was designated in September 1974, and further extended in June 1985. The Conservation Area Appraisal notes that Canal Street and the immediate area are a vibrant area, and that open space is “not in the nature of the area”. However, as the main open space in the Conservation Area, it is noted that the site now known as Sackville Gardens was acquired in 1900 to preserve the setting of the adjacent educational buildings. It has been maintained as open space since that time. Although the Conservation Area Appraisal notes that there are a few trees within it, the importance of those within Sackville Gardens is clear insofar as they are identified as being the location of the few significant numbers of trees which exist within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

Figure 3: Extent of the Whitworth Street Conservation Area



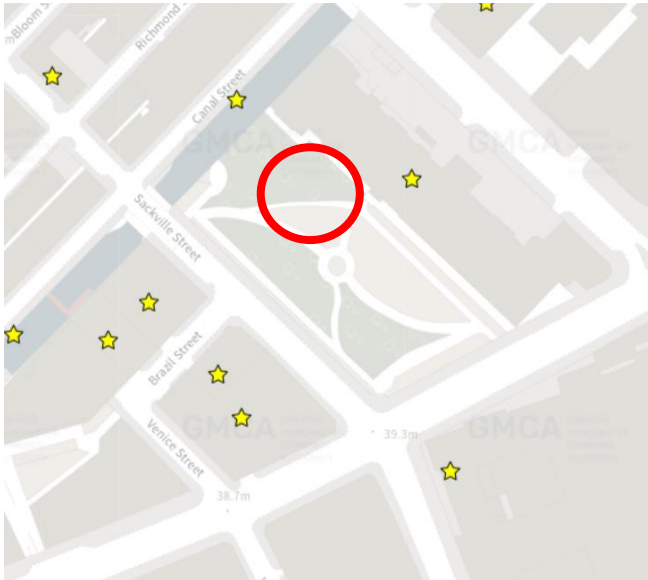
In addition to the wider Conservation Area, the application site is also in relatively close proximity to a number of Listed Buildings, which are shown in Figure 4 below.

In order, clockwise from the north of the site, these are as follows:

- Rochdale Canal Boundary Wall To Canal Between Sackville Street And Chorlton Street (Grade II listed);

- The Shena Simon Sixth-Form College (Grade II listed);
- Institute Of Science And Technology (University Of Manchester) (Grade II listed);
- Regency House With Barclays Bank (Grade II listed);
- 46, Sackville Street (Grade II listed); and,
- 42 and 44, Sackville Street (Grade II listed).

Figure 4: Location of Listed Buildings around Sackville Gardens



The site is not located within a Coal Mining Reporting Area (but will not result in significant ground disturbance). The site is also located within Flood Zone 1.

3. Public Consultation

3.1 Overview

Prior to the submission of this planning application, extensive consultation was undertaken with the trans community, relevant community and local stakeholders, Councillors and Manchester City Council Officers.

These discussions have informed the design of the Monument, and have influenced the development of this submission through the discussion of matters of relevance that were identified by those consulted to be the key considerations in the development and consideration of this proposal.

3.2 Engagement with the Trans Community

The first stage of consultation focused around a detailed consultation process on the Vision Statement that informed the approach to the development of the design. This took place between October 2022 and January 2023, and included both an online survey, public drop-in sessions, group round tables, individual one-to-one meetings, and independent worksheets.

The demographic data of respondents was considered holistically, and the consultation adapted to ensure responses were considered from intersectional perspectives. This included interviews and group sessions from demographic groups less represented in the online survey and public drop-in sessions.

The initial intention of the consultation was focused on a replacement design for the National Transgender Memorial.

However, it became apparent many of those from transgender communities felt a memorial was not the best use of this opportunity. Through a series of group consultations, worksheet participation and 1:1 sessions a desire for a Monument, not a Memorial, became clear. This was informed largely by two areas of thought:

- The desire to move away from the narratives that imply being trans is a negative in one's life; and,
- Reservations concerning appropriating or claiming deaths of trans people from abroad, particularly those from countries with more frequent transphobic violence.

Following this, the shape of the consultation adjusted to ensure the question 'Memorial or Monument?' was adequately explored. The vast majority of participants felt that the replacement should be a monument, rather than a memorial. The priority of the new monument should be on trans visibility; acknowledging the resilience, resistance, community, and strength of trans people. It should represent the permanence of trans communities. Whilst this shift should be embraced, it is vital to recognise the need of a new monument to still serve a commemorative role.

The design submissions were then assessed by an independent jury panel of approximately 12 people², with due care given to ensure that a wide perspective and live experiences were represented by the panel. This process led to the selection of the application design, which has been further developed and refined prior to submission of this application.

3.3 Engagement with Manchester City Council

Prior to the finalisation and submission of the planning application, a period of engagement with Officers at Manchester City Council was undertaken.

A meeting with Planning Officers was held on 22 August 2023. During the meeting, the details of the proposal and necessary planning submission documents required to support it were discussed. Comments were also provided from the Council's Parks and Events departments, focused around establishing the understanding as to how the Monument would function alongside the holding of events within Sackville Gardens, and how the Gardens could continue to be successfully maintained. Officers also sought to

² The jury panel comprised a representative from Sparkle and Arup, in addition to representatives from the wider city, arts and transgender communities.

understand the approach to the identification and selection of the chosen location for the Monument within the Gardens. Feedback was also sought from Regeneration, but this was not provided. The feedback from Officers also included confirmation of the validation list, which has informed the scope of supporting information and drawings provided as part of the application submission.

Officers expressed reservations around the indicative location shown at that time (see Section 4.2 below) and advised that the design team revisit the proposed location and explore solutions to mitigate the Monument impacting the events hosted in Sackville Gardens.

The advice sought from Planning Officers also included guidance in respect of ground conditions, in that it was confirmed by Officers that this assessment should focus on whether the land may or may not be contaminated, and that by virtue of the scale and nature of the proposals themselves a full investigation would be disproportionate. As such, this information should be proportionate to the proposals.

3.4 Engagement with Friends of Sackville Gardens

During the design development process, the design team engaged directly with members of the Friends of Sackville Gardens (FoSG). An initial meeting was held with FoSG in December 2023, where initial designs for the Monument were discussed with those present. Although feedback on the design was positive, and the vision and need for the Monument within the Gardens was understood, as a key custodian of the Gardens, FoSG were concerned around the location of the Gardens as presented (see Section 4.2). FoSG were concerned that this location could impact the holding of events in the Gardens, lack suitable accessible routes for all users, lacks strong relations with other monuments in the Gardens and would not support the reinstatement of historical routes within the Gardens. FoSG suggested an alternative potential location, in proximity to The Tree of Life and submitted that the suitability of this location be considered.

After this initial meeting, it was agreed that a second meeting should be held once a more considered design was in place before seeking feedback, and to allow the design team to take account of the feedback provided by FoSG, as well as giving thought to the suitability of the suggested alternative location.

Accordingly, New Practice undertook an appraisal of the design to consider the location in relation to the matters raised by FoSG, with the intention being to present the revised option to FoSG. This process included detailed consideration of the exact location suggested by FoSG, which was considered not be appropriate due to accessibility concerns, access to natural light for the monument's artistic concept, and security and natural surveillance. Added to this were concerns around impacts to trees, which correspondence from MCC confirmed that the removal of any trees to support the delivery of this location would not be supported.

However, an alternative location, slightly stepped forward towards the path and next to The Tree of Life was considered by the design team. This location was considered to address many of the comments from FoSG, but also addressed the concerns and issues associated with the location suggested by FoSG. This revised location is the location shown on the submitted drawings.

A subsequent meeting was held with FoSG in January 2024, at which the revised location and design was presented. This was received positively by FoSG, who noted the following:

“Just to say thank you for convening this afternoon’s update meeting, and to everyone for all the work and thinking on this project since we last met. The designers’ response to the December site visit discussions, and to the physical context of the Gardens now and going forward, has been so helpful and imaginative. The Friends group is very happy to have been involved at this crucial stage and can feel very positive about the next steps.”

4. Proposed Development

Planning permission is sought for the construction of a new National Transgender Monument, which will be a replacement for the current Memorial, which was damaged by fire in 2022. The proposed description of development is as follows:

“Erection of a free-standing Monument and associated landscaping”

4.1 Purpose for Development

As set out in Section 1, this application seeks permission for a new Monument within the grounds of Sackville Gardens that both replaces the previous, fire-damaged Memorial and is considered to better represent the full scope of transgender lives and experiences.

As with the previous Memorial, the new Monument will provide a national focal point for the trans community in the UK, that provides a focus for commemorations and events, such as Trans Day of Remembrance and for individual use, but which also acknowledges the resilience, resistance, community, and strength of trans people, and also to represent the permanence of trans communities. With these aspirations in mind, Sparkle and the design team, in consultation with the transgender community and other stakeholders within the City, have developed a design that responds to this brief.

4.2 Site selection

The selection of the application site has been carefully considered through the lens of a number of factors, such as the need to ensure the Monument benefits from both natural and passive surveillance, that it is situated within the Gardens in such a way as to ensure the continued holding of events within the Gardens and the long-term maintenance of the space, and in a location suitable for the proposed design and in which the proposal would be sympathetic to the wider Conservation Area.

The site selection was informed by an initial site walkover and subsequent consultation ‘Experience Walks’. These highlighted that the previous Memorial’s location was no longer considered to accord with the above criteria. Accordingly, during the consultation and brief generation, a total of five potential locations were appraised and given consideration. These did not include the Memorial’s previous location. These proposed locations are shown on Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Initial potential locations considered for the siting of the Monument



In considering the most appropriate location within Sackville Gardens, due regard was also given to relevant local plan policies, particularly Core Strategy Policy DM1, which relates to Development Management. This

policy requires all development to have regard to issues such as appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail, impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development and should have regard to the character of the surrounding area. The policy also requires that development should also consider impacts on amenity, such as privacy, light and noise, be designed for community safety and crime prevention, and consider their effects relating to biodiversity, landscape or built heritage.

In addition to the criteria set out above, the matters highlighted by Core Strategy Policy DM1 have informed all stages of the development of the Monument, including the initial site identification and selection process.

The initial location considered was Location P4, located centrally within the Gardens. This location was considered to meet the requirements sought by Sparkle and identified through the consultation process.

As set out at Section 3.4, discussions were held between the design team and FoSG in December 2023 and January 2024. Initially, these discussions were carried out on the basis of the Monument being sited at Location P4. However, as detailed above, concerns were raised by FoSG in respect of this location, with these adding to the initial comments from MCC. These comments noted that Location P4 could potentially interfere with event viewing areas, complicating event management and safety when events are held within the Gardens.

Accordingly, the design team undertook an in depth review of potential locations with Sackville Gardens and in doing so to take into consideration the feedback received during the consultation process.

This process concluded with a new location being proposed that considered the wider context and offers significant improvements in comparison to the previous location. This is the location on which the Monument is proposed to be located.

It has been concluded that this location offers considerable strengths, delivering the objectives both of Sparkle and the community as expressed through the consultation process, but also in addressing the comments from both MCC and FoSG. These strengths of this site include:

- that it provides the sought-after surveillance relationship to prevent vandalism and anti-social behaviour;
- that it occupies a key location, that is both highly visible and also provides a focal point for events and celebrations in the Gardens;
- that it would not result in negative amenity impacts to neighbouring properties, through the use of artificial lighting and its spillage;
- that it is well-integrated with the overall layout of the Gardens and responds strategically to established routes through the Gardens;
- the adjacency of the location to hard surfaces not only facilitates accessibility but also reflects the model implemented for other fully accessible monuments in the Garden;
- that it offers a more cohesive curation with the wider monuments to the north of the Gardens, with better standards of access and opportunities for joined-up wayfinding;
- that it would not result in any impacts to the trees in the Garden, which are a key feature identified in the Whitworth Street Conservation Area Appraisal; and,
- that it would occupy a little-used space in the Gardens at present, and do so in a manner which enabled the continued holding of events in the Gardens.

The selection of the application site has been carefully considered through the lens of a number of factors, such as the need to ensure the Monument benefits from both natural and passive surveillance, that it is situated within the Gardens in such a way as to ensure the continued holding of events within the Gardens and the long-term maintenance of the space, and in a location suitable for the proposed design and in which the proposal would be sympathetic to the wider Conservation Area and the character of the Gardens themselves.

4.3 Use and Amount of Development

The proposed Monument covers a site area of approximately 29.09 sq.m, and has a minimum width of 1,200mm. The proposed surface of the Monument has been chosen to integrate seamlessly with the existing path at level grade to ensure wheelchair access. Careful consideration has been given to the shape and

placement of the Monument with the Gardens, in order to ensure that it is compatible within its wider context and that it therefore complements the surroundings while making a distinctive statement.

A total of five uprights are proposed throughout the Monument. The structural uprights throughout the Monument have been designed greater than human height, extending to 2,160mm. However, it should be noted that the sculptural uprights will be manufactured by a sculptor and each one will be bespoke with slight varying heights, whilst maintain the overall 'human-like' scale.

4.4 Layout

The spatial arrangement of the Monument was designed with access being a key driver. Accordingly, - a 1,500mm turning circle and ample space between the uprights is provided in order to accommodate wheelchair users. This approach extends to level access from the path, ensuring everyone can enjoy and interact with the space. This layout arrangement seeks to provide a gathering spot for the community or a tranquil retreat for individuals seeking a moment of respite.

4.5 Design

The proposed Monument has been designed sympathetically to its surrounding context, with the application of materials which provide robust, high-quality design, complemented by a carefully considered approach to complement the site's surroundings, and to provide a sensitive built form within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

Sackville Gardens includes a number of other monuments, which are strategically positioned throughout the Gardens in order to create a sense of cohesion and community. Of these monuments, some are located on the grass while others site on the terrazzo ground surface. These differences add to the creation of a diverse and inviting landscape.

The ground surface of the Monument is formed from a light-hued pink terrazzo-like finish, which provides a vibrant and unique ground surface to add a subtle burst of colour to the garden, creating a visually appealing and tactile experience for visitors. For cohesion, a bronze trim is incorporated into the surface, referencing the textures on the sculptural uprights and tying together different elements of the Monument. This palette of materials has been selected to ensure cohesion throughout the structure. Functionally, the ground surface serves not only as an aesthetic choice but also as a foundation, providing practical structural stability to the monument. The threefold integration of accessibility, aesthetics, and functionality demonstrates the thoughtful and intentional approach that has been taken to the design of the Monument.

The structural upright design has been developed, prioritising accessibly and inclusivity as fundamental principles. The incorporation of reflective bands at specific heights is a thoughtful consideration that caters to a diverse audience, encompassing children, wheelchair users, and individuals standing or sitting. This deliberate arrangement ensures that the visual impact and engagement with the Monument remain consistent, irrespective of the viewer's height or position.

The use of concrete as the base serves a dual purpose, contributing both to structural stability and symbolic grounding. This material not only provides a robust foundation for the sculpture but also establishes a connection to the earth, enhancing the monument's presence within its environment. The intentional choice of corten steel further reinforces the commitment to durability and longevity. This weather-resistant material is both hardy, but also adds a distinctive aesthetic quality with its rich patina integrating with historic surroundings.

Maintaining a human-like scale for each sculpture ensures a relatable and intimate experience for viewers, creating a sense of connection to the Monument. Although slight variations in height may be apparent, an overall adherence to the established approach to the reflective band heights throughout the design guarantees that accessibility remains a constant priority.

In respect of the foundations of the Monument, these will extend 200mm. During pre-application discussions with MCC, the presence of Shooters Brook, which brook intersects the southern section of Sackville Gardens, was highlighted. By virtue of both the Monument's location in the northern half of the Gardens, and the limited amount of ground works required, it is not considered that the proposal would impact any subterranean infrastructure related Shooters Brook

Further detail on the design development, and the approach to how this has been refined to reflect the site's surroundings is provided in the accompanying Design and Access Statement (DAS).

4.6 Access

The proposed Monument situated within Sackville Gardens, which is currently accessed through three entrances; at the north-west from Sackville Street, and the south-west from the junction of Whitworth Street and Sackville Street and from the south-east from Whitworth Street.

The overall design of the Monument has been developed to ensure that people of various mobility can easily navigate and access it. The need to ensure the Monument is integrated with existing pathways and routes has also been considered throughout the development of the Monument.

5. Planning Assessment

This section provides an assessment of the proposal against relevant national, regional and local planning policies. A summary of the relevant policy documents is provided, followed by an assessment of the principle of development and detailed development management matters.

5.1 National, Regional and Local Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The adopted Local Plan for Manchester City Council comprises the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted July 2012), alongside Saved Policies in the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (adopted July 1995) and the Policies Map. The Local Plan also includes the Greater Manchester's Waste Plan and Greater Manchester's Minerals Plan. Alongside this are relevant Supplementary Planning Documents adopted by Manchester City Council.

The Council are also in the process of producing a new local plan, however, this plan is still being drafted and was most-recently subject to a period of consultation (the Issues Consultation) in May 2020. According to the Council's latest Local Development Scheme (dated June 2022) the new Local Plan is anticipated to be adopted in Winter 2024.

Places for Everyone (Pfe) is a regional plan that has been drafted by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority as a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts. The Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in February 2022, and was subject to Examination in Public between November 2022 and July 2023. The Plan is subject to a Proposed Modifications consultation, which is due to end in December 2023. Currently, Pfe is a material consideration although limited weight can be attributed to it at this time. However, once adopted, it will provide strategic planning policies and allocations across the nine Greater Manchester local authority areas, including Manchester. Pfe focuses on strategic issues at a regional scale.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in England. The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied, providing a framework within which locally-prepared plans can be produced.

The following sections provide an assessment of the principle of development followed by detailed development management matters.

5.2 Principle of Development

The following principles of development are considered in relation to planning policy, with detailed considerations set out in the following section.

This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a free-standing Monument and associated landscaping, and will in effect be a replacement for the current Memorial, which was damaged by fire in 2022. The proposed Monument will be a national focal point for both celebration and commemoration for the trans community, and will sit alongside other such monuments within Sackville Gardens.

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means:

- Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay;
or

- Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date³, granting permission unless:
 - The application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed⁴; or
 - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

The proposal accords with Paragraph 135, which requires planning decisions to ensure developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area over the lifetime of the development, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and layout, are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, establish and maintain a strong sense of place and optimise the potential of the site. This paragraph also emphasises the importance of creating places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

Paragraph 201 of the NPPF requires decision makers to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal, including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset. Consideration should be given to the available evidence in considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Furthermore, according to paragraph 225 of the NPPF, due weight should be given to existing policies within the Local Plan according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

The Manchester Core Strategy

The application site is not allocated for any specific use within the Manchester Proposals Map, although the site is located within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

Although not allocated for a specific use within the Core Strategy, it is noted that Sackville Gardens is shown as a 'Public Park Or Garden' by the OS Open Greenspace sites⁵. It is also noted that the 2009 Manchester City Wide Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study identified Sackville Gardens as a 'Local Park'. Accordingly, due regard has been given to Policy EN10, which seeks to safeguard open space, sport and recreation facilities. This states that the Council will seek to retain and improve existing open spaces, sport and recreation facilities to adopted standards. This policy provides for exceptions where proposals on existing open spaces will be permitted where *"the development will be ancillary to the open space, sport or recreation facility and complement the use or character"*.

This is clearly the case in this circumstance, and the proposed Monument will be ancillary to the continued function of Sackville Gardens, will complement the existing monuments and memorials within the Gardens (which include such as The Alan Turing Monument, The Beacon of Hope and The Tree of Life) and will in effect replace a previous Memorial. In this respect, it is also noted that Core Strategy Policy EN1 encourages the realisation of opportunities to enhance existing and provide new areas of meaningful open space.

The proposed Monument accords with the spatial principles set out at Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy. This emphasises that the Regional Centre should be the focus for cultural activity, and that development should also make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice. This means that development should create well designed places that enhance or create character, consider the needs of all members of the community

³ This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where: (a) the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply (or a four year supply, if applicable, as set out in paragraph 226) of deliverable housing sites (with a buffer, if applicable, as set out in paragraph 77) and does not benefit from the provisions of paragraph 76; or (b) where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was below 75% of the housing requirement over the previous three years.

⁴ The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 187) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 72); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

⁵ With reference to the MappingGM map.

regardless of identity, and should protect and enhance the built and natural environment. This is emphasised through Core Strategy Policy CC10, which states that development within the City Centre must focus on providing ‘A Place for Everyone’ that will develop as a location which appeals to a wide range of residents and visitors, and through development that promotes this objective through the delivery of uses which increase the diversity of activity in the City Centre. The submitted DAS details the design approach, and how the proposed Monument has been designed to take account of its surroundings, including the Whitworth Street Conservation Area and other memorials and monuments within Sackville Gardens.

The focus on change and renewal within the City Centre is set out by Core Strategy Policy CC8, which states that new development should fully exploit opportunities to contribute to the improvement of the City Centre in terms of character and function, whilst also taking into account other policies in the Core Strategy. These include Policy CC9, which relates to design and heritage in the City Centre. This makes clear that development in the City Centre is expected to preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings and Conservation Areas. The design of new development is expected to be of the highest standard in terms of appearance and function, and it must also contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment. Such considerations are also emphasised by Policy EN3, which relates to Heritage. As part of this submission, a Heritage Statement has been prepared which appraises the impacts of the proposed Monument on adjacent listed buildings and the wider Conservation Area.

Saved Policies from the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester

Identified as a ‘Small Area’ under Saved UDP Policy RC20 - Area 17 Princess Street/Whitworth Street/Portland Street/Aytoun Street, this area is identified as a diverse one, containing many substantial buildings, both old and new.

In respect of development and design in Conservation Areas, saved UDP Policy DC18.1 makes clear that the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas, and in doing so will consider the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces, the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees and any further guidance as necessary. Through the detail in this Statement and the submitted Heritage Statement, it is clear that the development aligns with this Policy as the proposals are determined not to harm the character or appearance of the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

Places for Everyone

The PfE plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in February 2022, and were subject to examination hearings between November 2022 and July 2023. In August 2023, a series of main modifications were published, with these being subject to an additional period of consultation, which is due to end in December 2023. Following this, the Inspectors’ Report is anticipated to be published. Given this, a more limited degree of weight as a material consideration can be afforded to the PfE plan at this time.

Notwithstanding this, the proposal accords with Policy JP-Strat 1 – Sustainable Development, which states preference will be given to the use of previously developed land. In respect of heritage matters, the proposals also accord with Policy JP-P2 – Heritage. This policy requires proposals affecting a designated heritage asset and a conservation area to conserve those elements which contribute to its significance. Proposals affecting heritage assets should be informed by the findings and recommendations of the appropriate heritage assessment; accordingly, the application is supported by a Heritage Statement.

6. Development Management Considerations

This section provides an assessment of the development against the following development management considerations:

- Design;
- Amenity;
- Drainage;
- Ground Conditions;
- Heritage; and,
- Trees.

These are addressed in turn below.

Design

Core Strategy Policy EN1, which relates to Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas, states that all development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design. Opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the City should be fully realised, and Design and Access Statements submitted with proposals for new development must clearly detail how the proposed development addresses the design principles, reinforces and enhances the local character of that part of the City. Accordingly, a Design and Access Statement, prepared by New Practice, is submitted as part of this application.

In the City Centre Character Area, developers will be expected to consider the City's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area and to realise opportunities to enhance existing and provide new areas of meaningful open space. This is further emphasised by Core Strategy Policy CC9, which relates to design and heritage.

The proposed Monument has been designed to respond to and integrate with the surrounding environment. Its accessibility is ensured through a responsive sitting, adjacent to existing paths and nearby areas of seating that provide an opportunity for rest, and therefore enhance the viewer experience. The proposed location gives consideration to and reflects upon feedback obtained through engagement with the Council and Friends of Sackville Gardens. In doing so, the design harmonises with other objects within the wider Gardens, including surrounding Monuments and achieves a permanence in the Gardens that does not inhibit or preclude the holding of future events in the space. The visibility and exposure of the location to south-facing light further contribute to this prominence.

The proposed Monument has been designed in such a way as to harmonise within the broader context of the Gardens, particularly in respect of other monuments and features within the Gardens. The design aims to ensure the proposal fits neatly into the surroundings and existing experience of the Gardens, both in terms of its location but also by maximising a location along an existing pathway which connects the range of monuments in the Gardens. This intentional layout enhances offers a meaningful journey for those visiting to view each monument.

In doing so, the design accords with Core Strategy Policy EN1 insofar as the proposed Monument has been designed to addresses the design principles, reinforces and enhances the local character of that part of the City. It is also considered to be in accordance with saved UDP Policy DC18.1, by virtue of the Monument being sited in such a way as to accord with and reflect the location of other monuments in the Gardens, the design seeks to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas through the consideration of the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces.

Amenity

Core Strategy Policy DM1, which relates to Development Management, requires all development to have regard to issues such as appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail, impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development and should have regard to the character of the surrounding area. Development should also consider impacts on amenity, such as privacy, light and noise, be designed for community safety and crime prevention, and consider their effects relating to biodiversity, landscape or built heritage.

These matters have informed all stages of the development of the Monument, particularly the initial site identification and selection process. As detailed in Section 4 above, the proposed site has been selected by virtue of its benefits, and its relationship with surrounding features to ensure amenity, both of the Monument itself and neighbouring features and uses, is maintained. This is in respect of the design of the proposal and its appearance (which is detailed further within the submitted Design and Access Statement) and its potential impacts in respect of light and noise upon adjacent properties. The proposed location and design is therefore considered to accord with Core Strategy Policy DM1, insofar as it maintains the character of the surrounding area and responds to potential amenity impacts on adjacent uses.

This site was also considered to offer real community safety and crime prevention benefits when compared to other locations within the Gardens, insofar as it benefits from a higher impression of natural and passive surveillance. Given the historic instances of vandalism and damage caused to the previous Memorial, ensuring these factors are strong and crime prevention is maximised are key. The proposed location is therefore considered to offer real benefits in relation to these matters, and as such accords with Core Strategy Policy DM1 in respect of community safety and crime prevention.

Moreover, the application site was selected by virtue of its location away from the existing trees within the Gardens. As noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal, the trees within Sackville Gardens are identified being examples of the few trees within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area. As such, ensuring that there were no impacts upon these was a key informant in the selection of the site and the proposed design. Core Strategy Policy DM1 considers effects upon landscape and give regard to impacts of the character of the surrounding area. By avoiding impacts to the trees within the Gardens, the proposals are considered to accord with these criteria of Core Strategy Policy DM1.

Drainage

Core Strategy Policy EN14 relates to flood risk, and states that all new development should minimise surface water run-off, including through Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and the appropriate use of Green Infrastructure.

The site is wholly located within Flood Zone 1, and is located approximately 25 metres to the south of the Rochdale Canal. The proposed design has been assessed by SCP. The proposed Monument has a surface area of circa 13m² and is being built on what is currently permeable area. The proposed Monument will introduce an impermeable surface finish, however it is thought unlikely that this small area will impact the surface water significantly. Surface water will shed onto the permeable grass around the site, and any water that falls onto the adjacent footpath will fall towards the gullies circa 15 metres to the east.

Based on the topography of the location, this existing gully appears to have an existing catchment of circa 70m² from the footpath, without allowing for excess run off into the surrounding grass area during intense storm events. It is therefore anticipated that this gully will have sufficient capacity, even allowing for an event where the surface water runoff from the Monument area sheds into the footpath and then drained to the gully. Accordingly, the proposals do not necessitate any additional surface water drainage or alterations to existing and as such it is proposed that surface water from the Monument will drain into the existing surface water system and/or the surrounding permeable soft landscaping, mimicking the existing condition of the park.

The proposals are therefore considered to be in compliance with Core Strategy Policy EN14.

Ground Conditions

Core Strategy Policy EN18 relates to contaminated land and ground stability and states that the Council will give priority for the remediation of contaminated land, and that all new development within former mining areas shall undertake an assessment of any associated risk to the proposed development.

Central Alliance have produced a Preliminary Ground Conditions Report to review data and undertake a high-level assessment of ground conditions in order to establish the suitability of the site for the proposed development.

Samples of shallow topsoil material were taken from the site for laboratory testing. These samples were tested, and the results identified that no contamination was recorded in this sample. A visual inspection confirmed that there was no evidence of contamination in the proposed location of the monument, nor were there any potential sources of contamination identified in the immediate vicinity of the site.

There is a potential for deeper sources of made ground on the site which may pose a contamination risk. However, given the age of the previous developments and the limited excavation and disturbance to the soils beneath and around the proposed monument during the construction phase, it is assumed the impact of the site end users and construction workers is considered to be negligible. This is supported by the findings of the soil testing.

Any made ground arisings which are generated as part of the construction works off site should be disposed of at a licensed tip off site. However, shallow topsoil arisings may stay on the site, if they can be accommodated.

The proposals therefore accord with Core Strategy Policy EN18.

Heritage

Core Strategy Policy EN3 relates to heritage, and states that new developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including listed buildings and Conservation Areas.

AECOM have prepared a Heritage Statement in support of the application. This identifies that the site is located within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area, and in proximity to a number of listed buildings, including The Shena Simon Sixth- Form College, Rochdale Canal Boundary Wall to Canal between Sackville Street and Chorlton Street, Institute of Science and Technology, 42 and 44 Sackville Street, 46 Sackville Street and Regency House with Barclays Bank (all Grade II listed). Additionally, reference is made to non-designated archaeological assets in the vicinity of the site. The Statement also highlights that historic mapping shows the site to be situated within existing building remains or courtyard area at around 1848.

The Heritage Statement notes that groundworks could have the potential to physically impact building foundations/existing courtyard dating to the mid-19th century. In addition to this, the groundworks associated with the installation of the monument could also physically impact associated remains of the now covered canal located approximately 30m south of the site.

There is potential for the adjacent listed buildings to be temporarily affected during construction with dust, noise and visual intrusion as a result of construction activities. However, this would be temporary and no harm would be caused.

In respect of the site's location within a Conservation Area, the Statement acknowledges that the design has been developed so as to enhance the character and setting of its location. In accordance with the NPPF, no harm will be caused to the conservation area or the surrounding listed buildings.

The Heritage Statement confirms that it is considered that, in accordance with the NPPF, no harm will be caused to the historic environment by the proposals. The proposals are also considered to be in accordance within Core Strategy Policies CC9 and EN3.

Trees

Core Strategy Policy EN15, which relates to biodiversity and geological conservation, states that in considering development proposals particular consideration will be given to the Council's objective to protect and conserve the City's existing trees and woodlands and the aim for a net increase in trees across the City. Moreover, Saved UDP Policy DC18.1 makes clear the desirability of retaining existing features, such as trees, as a means to preserve and enhance the character of designated conservation areas.

Mott MacDonald have prepared an arboricultural survey in support of the application. This outlines measures in relation to minimising or avoiding impact on existing trees.

Desk studies confirmed there are no Tree Preservation Orders, Ancient Woodland, or ancient, veteran or notable trees present within or adjacent to the Site. The Site does however sit within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area. A total of 28 individual trees and three tree groups were identified within the vicinity of the proposed Scheme as part of the survey undertaken on 21 February 2024 and the following provides a summary of their quality as assessed in accordance with BS 5837:2012:

- Category A (i.e. trees of high quality): no trees;
- Category B (i.e. trees of moderate quality): 23 individual trees and two tree groups;
- Category C (i.e. trees of low quality): five individual trees and one tree group; and,
- Category U (i.e. trees recommended for removal for arboricultural reasons): no trees.

No trees have been identified for removal. Six individual trees have been identified as requiring the installation of protection measures to facilitate construction, including trunk and root protection in the form of plywood boxing and ground protection measures in accordance with BS 5837:2012. All remaining trees on site are identified as being a suitable distance from the planned works to not require the installation of protection measures.

The installation of the foundation slab will encroach slightly (less than 5% of total RPA) into the RPA of one tree (Tree 13). The recommendations set out in the submitted Report must be followed during installation of the foundation slab to minimise any impact on these trees. Three trees have also been identified as potentially requiring pruning to facilitate access to the site of the new monument during construction.

7. Summary and Conclusions

This report has been prepared by Arup on behalf of Sparkle: The National Transgender Charity to support a planning application for a new National Transgender Monument, which will be a replacement for the current Memorial, which was damaged by fire in 2022.

This application has been submitted to Manchester City Council, and the proposed description of development is as follows:

“Erection of a free-standing Monument and associated landscaping”

The previous National Transgender Memorial, originally the Transgender Remembrance Memorial Project (Manchester), was located in the north-east of Sackville Gardens, and was carved from a solid piece of sycamore tree. Following substantial fire damage in 2022, concerns around the structural integrity of the Memorial grew and as such it is currently cordoned off by the Council from the public due to safety concerns. This factor, along with debate as to whether the imagery employed on the previous memorial was representative of the full scope of transgender lives and experiences has led to the development of the alternative, new design hereby submitted.

The new Monument seeks to acknowledging the resilience, resistance, community, and strength of trans people, and also to represent the permanence of trans communities whilst providing a focal point for commemoration, such as on Trans Day of Remembrance. Given these aims, it will readily complement the existing monuments and memorials within Sackville Gardens, such as The Alan Turing Monument, The Beacon of Hope and The Tree of Life.

The proposal is considered to be in full accordance with national and local planning policy, and should therefore be approved by Manchester Council for the following reasons:

- The proposals have been subject to pre-application consultation with both MCC and FoSG, and have been designed to address and respond to the feedback received;
- The proposals have been designed to address the design principles, reinforces and enhances the local character of that part of the City and the Gardens. The design of the Monument has been developed with consideration given to effects upon landscape and give regard to impacts of the character of the surrounding area;
- The proposal’s design accords with the requirements set out in national and local policy, and has been developed and designed sympathetically to its surrounding context in order to compliment the site’s surroundings and be reflective of its location within Whitworth Street Conservation Area; and,
- The submitted Arboricultural Report sets out measures including the installation of protection measures, and confirms that no trees have been identified for removal. It also sets out measures that must followed during installation of the foundation slab to minimise any impact on these tree. Through the implementation of these measures, the proposals can seek to minimise or avoid impact on existing trees.
- The submitted Heritage Statement sets out that the proposed development would preserve those aspects of setting that make a positive contribution to significance of the heritage assets. The proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the Whitworth Street Conservation Area nor harm the special architectural or historic interest of the identified listed buildings.

It is therefore considered that the application should reasonably be approved by Manchester Council in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.