Issued — 12 August 2026

PICCADILLY GARDENS

Design and Access Statement



PLANIT

Document Control

File Name	Prepared by	Checked by
4004-ID-009-03-Piccadilly-Gardens-Design-and-Access-Statement.pdf	SC	SPL

Revision Description

05 - PLANNING ISSUE

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1 Introduction

What if we could...

49 trees planted

15 different tree species proposed

increased tree cover

consolidated lawn

800% increase in ornamental planting

rainwater stored on site for planting irrigation

over **200m³** **rainwater attenuated throughout the site**

over 10% biodiversity net gain onsite

Better access and sight lines

48 species of **flowering** plants

extended frontages to Piccadilly One

space for a permanent structure

280% increase in play area

improved **lighting** strategy

Better **CCTV Coverage**

385% **increase in seating**

with 32 new **benches** proposed

Over **5000sqm** of new/reused paving to be relaid

improved management strategy

9 tree species incorporated from key public realm schemes across Manchester

Vision

Piccadilly Gardens is more than a public space; it is part of Manchester's collective memory.

Speak to any Mancunian and they will tell you they know Piccadilly Gardens. Everyone we have spoken to has a story to tell; meeting friends, travelling across the city, attending celebrations, demonstrations, and events, or simply watching life unfold. This place is woven deeply into the everyday life and identity of the city.

As Manchester's front door, Piccadilly Gardens is where first impressions are formed, where journeys begin and end, and where the energy, diversity and character of the city are on display every day. As one of Manchester's most important public spaces and transport gateways, it performs a unique civic role, connecting people, places and experiences at the heart of the city.

Today, those first impressions are not what we all need and expect them to be. Structures and behaviours have crept in, meaning the gardens of today hold all the wrong associations and do not speak positively to the city and its citizens.

Shaped by extensive public engagement and informed by a renewed ambition for the city centre, this vision looks to reimagine Piccadilly Gardens as a greener, safer, and more welcoming destination that reflects modern Manchester: confident, inclusive, creative, and cosmopolitan. The proposals will transform the Gardens from a place people simply move through into a destination where people of all ages and background choose to spend time, meet, play, relax and connect.

The regeneration is far more than a physical redesign. It is an investment in Manchester's social, environmental, cultural and economic future - creating a landscape that celebrates nature, supports wellbeing, encourages activity, and opens opportunities for all. New tree planting, vibrant gardens that respond to our ever-changing climate will reconnect the space to Manchester's growing network of green infrastructure, contributing to a more resilient, healthy, and resilient city centre.

At its heart, this vision is about people. A new, inter-generational, inclusive play destination will establish Piccadilly Gardens as a key part of Manchester's growing family-friendly city centre, while improved accessibility, lighting, stewardship and public amenities will ensure the Gardens are welcoming, comfortable and accessible for all. Beyond simply physical change, the project will deliver anew model of citizen-led stewardship and governance, jobs, apprenticeships, construction skills growth opportunities, and wider social value, ensuring the benefits of investment are shared by Manchester's communities.

Together, these proposals mark the first step in delivering a renewed Piccadilly Gardens: a civic space that embodies the pride and spirit of Manchester, strengthens connections, and creates a distinctive green heart worthy of its place at the centre of one of Europe's most dynamic and forward-looking cities.

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement supports the application for a Full Planning Permission, submitted on behalf of Manchester City Council and the Piccadilly Gardens project. This report is also accompanied by a suite of drawings and supplementary design / technical information.

"The project team" is commonly referred to in this report and is represented by the Manchester City Council client team, Planit as Landscape Architects and lead designers, Galliford Try as main contractor with CIVIC providing engineering, civil and heritage guidance. Hoare Lea have provided lighting design input and Massey and Harris as technical play specialist. Arup have been contributing to Inclusivity and Access reviews and the physical security strategy. Additional reports from each of these disciplines have been produced to support this application and are readily available.

The design proposals have gone through rigorous technical and cost control processes managed by Galliford Try to ensure that they not only offer best value for the city but are fit for purpose and respond directly to the design brief.

The project team have established the baseline conditions, challenges and opportunities within the public realm.

Stakeholder engagement has been extensive, facilitated through a number of focused stakeholder workshops, spanning the last several years. Workshops included one-to-one consultations and groups of people that have unique knowledge of Piccadilly Gardens and understand its complex functionality, culminating in a public consultation.

In 2024, following some earlier improvement / renovation works to the existing pavilion structures, Manchester City Council announced a much larger intervention was required to deliver transformative change; addressing the long standing issues suffered within Piccadilly Gardens. Since that time, extensive public consultations have led to this detailed planning application being submitted.

The result of that collaboration and public engagement has directly influenced the design rationale, vision and emerging design proposals seen within this application.

The Piccadilly Gardens project starts the next chapter of the story – one where addressing the historic issues is not one design alone can solve. Working in partnership with Transport for Greater Manchester and Greater Manchester Police – as well as city centre businesses and residents – the new management plan will ensure Piccadilly Gardens is a safe, clean and well-maintained space,

addressing community concerns about antisocial behaviour with a proactive, problem-solving approach.

The project team have gained an in-depth understanding of the history of Piccadilly Gardens, its civic function and how and why it has evolved into the space that we see today. We, the design team, are all immersed in this project experiencing first hand as locals and residents, the scale of issues to be addressed. The opportunity to contribute a collective expertise and understanding towards our designs to create the right sense of place and setting to be celebrated as a key arrival space within Manchester.

A bright new chapter for Piccadilly Gardens

The beating heart of Manchester since the 1930s

Piccadilly Gardens is one of Manchester city centre's busiest public spaces. It's an arrival point for visitors, a place for residents, workers and shoppers of all ages to enjoy, and a major transport interchange.

Piccadilly Gardens is getting a fresh new look. This is the first step in a bigger plan to make the area a world-class space. These improvements will help make Piccadilly Gardens more colourful, fun, accessible and safer for families, visitors and people who live nearby.

As well as a brand-new design, we are also working on a completely new approach to managing Piccadilly Gardens. Working in partnership with Transport for Greater Manchester and Greater Manchester Police – as well as city centre businesses and residents – the new management plan will ensure Piccadilly Gardens is a safe, clean and well-maintained space, addressing community concerns about antisocial behaviour with a proactive, problem-solving approach.

We have already hoarded off half of Piccadilly Gardens to undertake surveys and prepare the site for the work to come. Before we submit a planning application, we want to share our designs for your feedback.



Manchester city centre is busy day and night, so cleaning takes place every day from early morning to evening, with extra work at nights, weekends and during major events.

We've recently increased investment in cleaning, with more staff, vehicles and improved methods such as jet washing. This helps keep the city clean, safe and welcoming throughout the day.

We've already transformed some of Manchester's busiest public spaces, ↓



Albert Square



Glade of Light, Medieval Quarter



St Peter's Square

We've been listening...

There has been lots of previous consultation and engagement about Piccadilly Gardens, so we already have a clear idea of what improvements people would like to see and how they would like to use the space. We now want to move forward practically and get on site.

2021:
"Help reshape Piccadilly" consultation, with over 1,700 responses

2022-25:
Key partners discuss and establish multi-agency steering group for Piccadilly Gardens

March 2026:
Galliford Try, Planit and Civic appointed to deliver the design transformation

June - July 2026:
Community engagement to help shape detailed design proposals

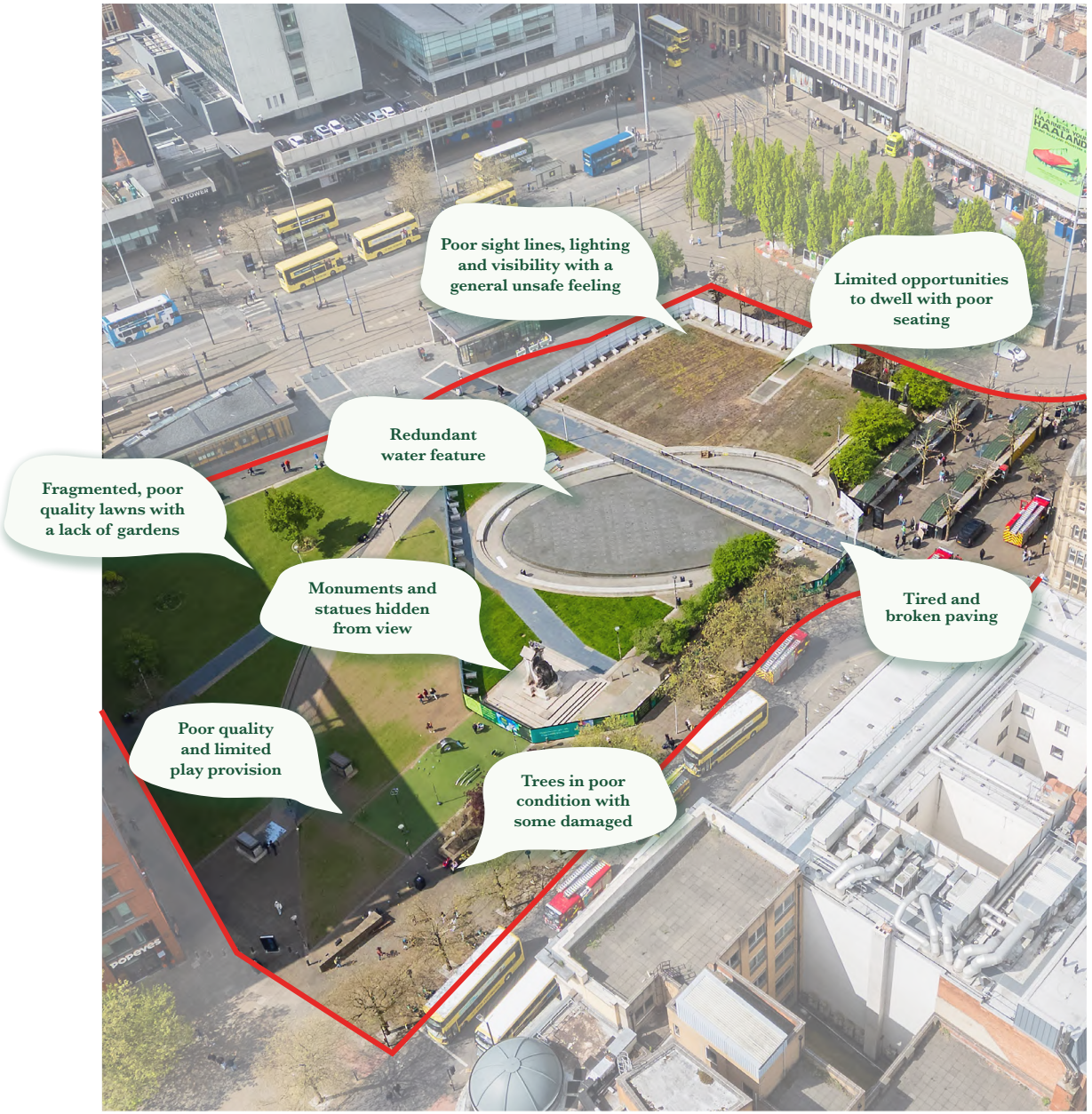
Why do we need to redesign Piccadilly Gardens?

A renewed Piccadilly Gardens needs to reflect who we are as a city – diverse, welcoming, creative and full of life.

The overall approach is a two-part journey to transform the Piccadilly Gardens area and make it an attractive, well-managed and welcoming space.

The first part of this journey sees Manchester City Council lead on a transformation of the design of the Gardens, making it a more vibrant and colourful space which functions better. Funding has been secured to commence these works.

The second part of the plan will see a transformation of the wider area in the coming years, including a multi-million pound investment by Transport for Greater Manchester to create a new, modern transport interchange.



Key elements of the brief for the redesign:

Nature | Accessibility and safety | Activation and events | Ease of movement | Perception and local pride

Executive Summary

The design approach to Piccadilly Gardens has been refined through extensive consultation of the space and through the numerous stakeholder engagements, consultation events and design workshops that have taken place during the design development process. The breadth of supporting information provided alongside this report is testament to the interrogation that has been applied across all aspects of the project.

This collaborative approach has identified some area of key consideration that need to be considered to inform a positive design response.

There is an intrinsic relationship between the following key areas, as lead designers a holistic approach has been taken to ensure there is cohesion between the sometimes conflicting requirements on the space.

Security and Counter Terrorism

The importance of security and public safety is paramount. Greater Manchester Police have been a key and active partner in developing the design and management plans. The design response to security has been a multi-layered approach;

Ensuring clear sight lines; significant trees with high canopies, avoiding designing in visual barriers that block views and create opportunities for concealment.

A well-designed lighting scheme that not only creates an attractive atmospheric space after dark, but provides a consistent level of illumination across the whole of Piccadilly Gardens.

Integrating Hostile Vehicle Mitigation within the scheme - where possible designing these in to be a visually unobtrusive as possible.

We have worked with the city's CCTV providers to integrate the scheme into the wider surveillance network with camera coverage across the whole of the proposed gardens.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Day-to-day anti social behaviour (ASB) has blighted Piccadilly Gardens over the last few years. As mentioned the solution to this is broader than just a design response - and something the wider MCC teams are addressing as part of a new Management Model.

Along with the physical security measures outlined previously the redesign will create an inclusive environment that encourages positive use throughout the day and evening.

Space has been allocated for a future structure to sit within the gardens, further activating the space, improving natural surveillance and helping deter the potential for ASB to establish.

On a practical level, finishes and materials proposed will need to be durable, easy and cost effective to repair and replace to keep the gardens looking in great condition for years to come.

Highways and TfGM

Studies into pedestrian movement routes and numbers have been key in developing a design which responds to the movement and desire lines of the people using the space. The layout prioritises pedestrian movement whilst maintaining a safe and efficient relationship with the existing adjacent bus and tram services.

TfGM have been another stakeholder, the designs presented here have been developed with the foresight into proposed future phases of work aspiring to rationalise vehicle movements and prioritise pedestrian movements along and beyond Piccadilly Gardens.

Events Strategy

It is to be made clear, Piccadilly Gardens is not a space intended for large scale events.

Instead the proposals create a flexible civic space for small scale events and seasonal activities. Any events will be carefully designed to balance everyday functionality of the space with events based-uses. For example, the creation of multiple route options through the gardens allow for temporary access if required.

Monuments

A substantial amount of background research has been undertaken by the project team in order to fully understand the historic development of the gardens and the significance of the monuments. Heritage advice from both Catherine Dewar and Civic Heritage have assisted in developing the proposals.

The existing setting of the monuments, through an aggregation of adjacent changes and additions, is poor.

We have approached the monuments with respect, improving and celebrating their setting, prominence and historic significance.

Queen Victoria is being re-set into her own high quality setting of a square within the gardens. Watt becomes a gatekeeper to the gardens and Peel is revealed as the focal point within another garden square space, in the future complemented by a new structure and the increased activity this will bring.

Trees and Planting

Members of the project team met with MCC Senior Tree Officers to review the condition and long term prospects for the existing trees within the gardens. A number of trees have had to be removed from the southern portion of the existing lawns due to poor health - an indication of poor specification choice against micro-climatic conditions. This has been considered in detail when developing the new planting vision for the space.

Despite having a relatively large number of trees within the existing Piccadilly Gardens, they have relatively little visual impact on the green perception of the space, the relatively small canopy size in such a large open space fails to make an impact on the place.

The approach to trees is simple; to focus mainly on large impactful trees which will bring a step change in the perception of the space from day one.

Some existing trees will need to be removed; the replacement trees will be diverse, will outnumber those removed, and will be of a significant size, as seen in St. Peter's and Albert Square. The positioning of new trees around the gardens has been considered as part of providing more open, usable space as well as providing areas people can move / dwell underneath the canopies.

Bring the gardens back into 'Piccadilly Gardens' means introducing significant planting beds around the central lawn creating green garden spaces.

Piccadilly Gardens is to be a place for the city and citizens of Manchester and the tree planting concept is an expression of this. 'The Botany of Manchester' draws inspiration from the planting from the mosaic of green civic spaces such as Cathedral Gardens and St Peters Square, Piccadilly Gardens becoming a linking node tying these together. The planting palette will bring seasonal variety and interest using low level plant species that can be kept low to maintain visual permeability.

Materials

This is a space that is subject to very high levels of footfall and occasional servicing traffic. The wear and tear on materials is high.

There has been significant development of the materials palette, detailed paving and edgings during the design process.

Materials have been selected for their durability, robustness and appropriateness for the setting and use of the gardens. The key paving materials are complementary in colour tones to create a unified space, whilst variance in module size and laying patterns define the different character areas.

Natural stone setts to the garden areas bring a more human scale whilst the existing yorkstone flags to Market St will be retained or replaced where broken. The works to Piccadilly will introduce new stone and a variance in size of flags to provide interest and better integrate the repairs. Accent stones will be lain which drawn reference from the wider natural stone palette used in other city square - the Schist and Burlington used within Albert Square for example.

The design identifies opportunities for re-use of re-claimed materials throughout the public realm such as reusing the existing yorkstone paving to Piccadilly, where in good condition.

Around the lawn to the pedestrian routes a decorative in-situ concrete is proposed. The aggregate for this will be reused from the stock of redundant stone paving that exists on site.

Access and Inclusivity

At each key arrival points to the gardens, there will be clear views across the lawn and beyond, retaining clear sight lines. Further, the strategic positioning and size of trees and other features will ensure clear sight lines are maintained.

Materials and other enhancements, such as lighting and wheelchair accessible seating will further contribute to the clarity of the new Piccadilly Gardens for all users. Levels are worked to be fully inclusive and accessible across the site. The proposed play area will also remain step free, with items of play equipment carefully chosen to provide a range of options accessible to a wide range of users, including wheelchair accessible equipment and inclusion of sensory play items and planting.

There are no steps proposed across the site and all crossing points will have the necessary corduroy hazard paving installed.

Play

The play area has been designed with families in mind, with a particular focus on children under ten. Located within a landscape of planting and trees,

it provides a range of inclusive physical, sensory and social play opportunities that encourage exploration, leaning and imaginative play. Positioned to benefit from natural surveillance and with adjacent seating for carers the play area supports longer family visits and contributes to a more diverse and vibrant city centre destination.

Application Boundary

The project and planning boundary is as illustrated in the adjacent diagram.



Aerial view of site

Key:

Application Boundary

Previous Consultation Summary

Initial consultation on potential changes to Piccadilly Gardens, titled “Help Shape Piccadilly” took place between January 25 and March 23, 2021. Conducted primarily online due to Covid-19 restrictions, this consultation featured a virtual exhibition with early-stage designs from LDA Design.

The consultation asked users of the area what changes they would like to see, including their ideas for new features and events. Despite using a slightly different site boundary and including questions about transport which are outside the scope of the current plans, relevant feedback from this consultation was used to inform the new designs for the Gardens, which were made public in 2026.

2026 Update

Subsequently, a second phase of public consultation was conducted between 17 June and 15 July 2026. The Applicant shared detailed designs for the site, which were made available online and through a series of public drop-ins held in Manchester Art Gallery. A feedback form was made available at the drop-in events, at Manchester Central Library, and on Manchester City Council’s website.

In addition, detailed engagement was undertaken with parents of young children through local Sure Start Centres and Family Hubs, which helped inform the designs for the new children’s play area. A full description of consultation activities undertaken, and analysis of all feedback received, is available in the Statement of Community Involvement submitted with this application.

A summary of this and the bodies consulted with can be found in the appendices.







The Approach

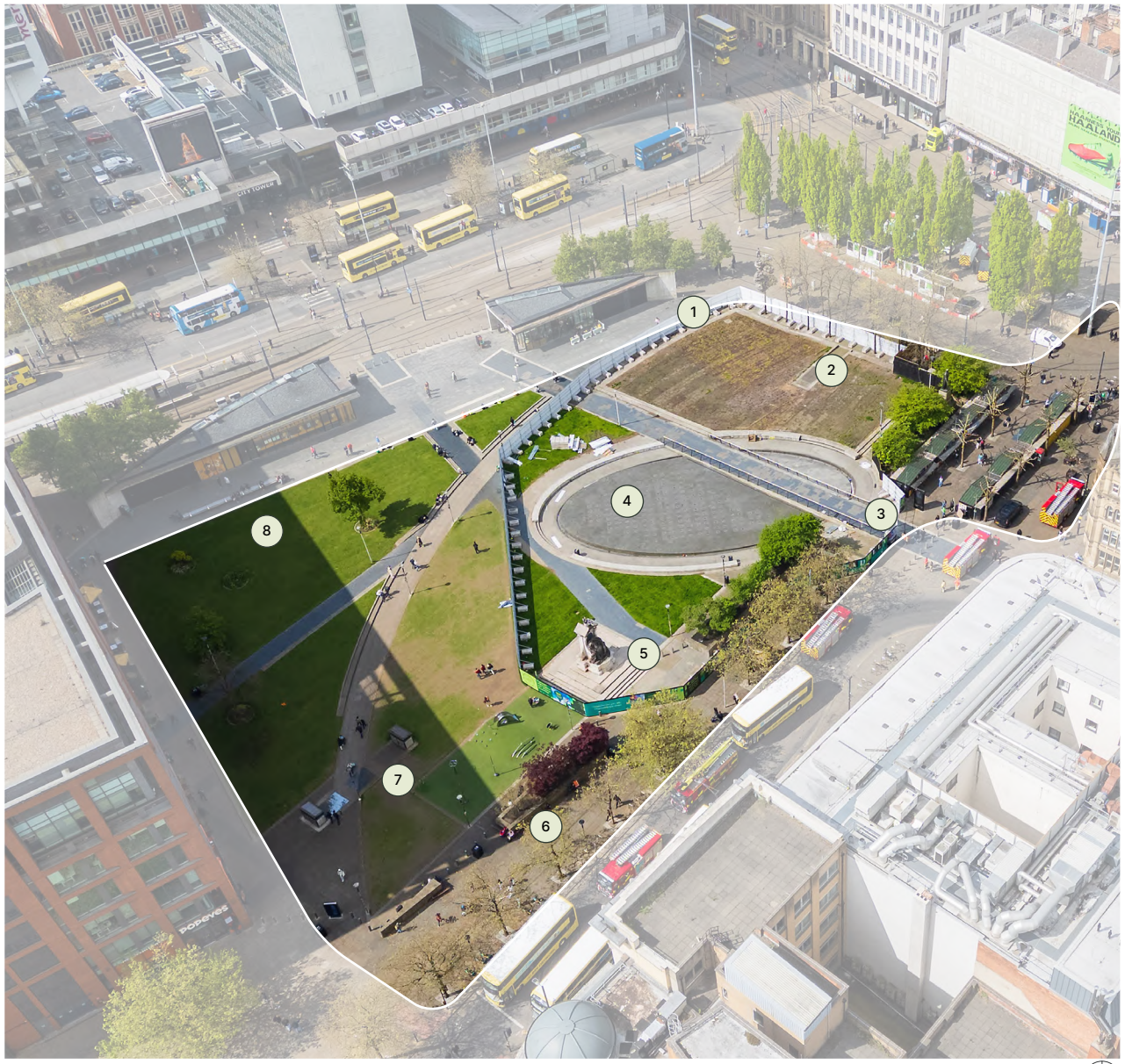
The overall approach is a two-part journey to transform the Piccadilly Gardens area and make it an attractive, well-managed and welcoming space.

The first part of this journey sees Manchester City Council lead on a transformation of the design of the Gardens, making it a more vibrant and colourful space which functions better. Funding has been secured to deliver these improvements over the next year.

The second part of the plan will see a transformation of the wider area in the coming years, including a multi-million pound investment by Transport for Greater Manchester to create a new, modern transport interchange.

Current issues with the site, based on previous consultation feedback →

1. Poor sight lines, lighting and visibility with a general unsafe feeling
2. Limited opportunities to dwell with poor seating
3. Tired and broken paving
4. Redundant water feature
5. Monuments and statues hidden from view
6. Trees in poor condition with some damaged
7. Poor quality and limited play provision
8. Fragmented, poor quality lawns with a lack of gardens



Current issues with the site

2 Site Context

Site Context:
City Context

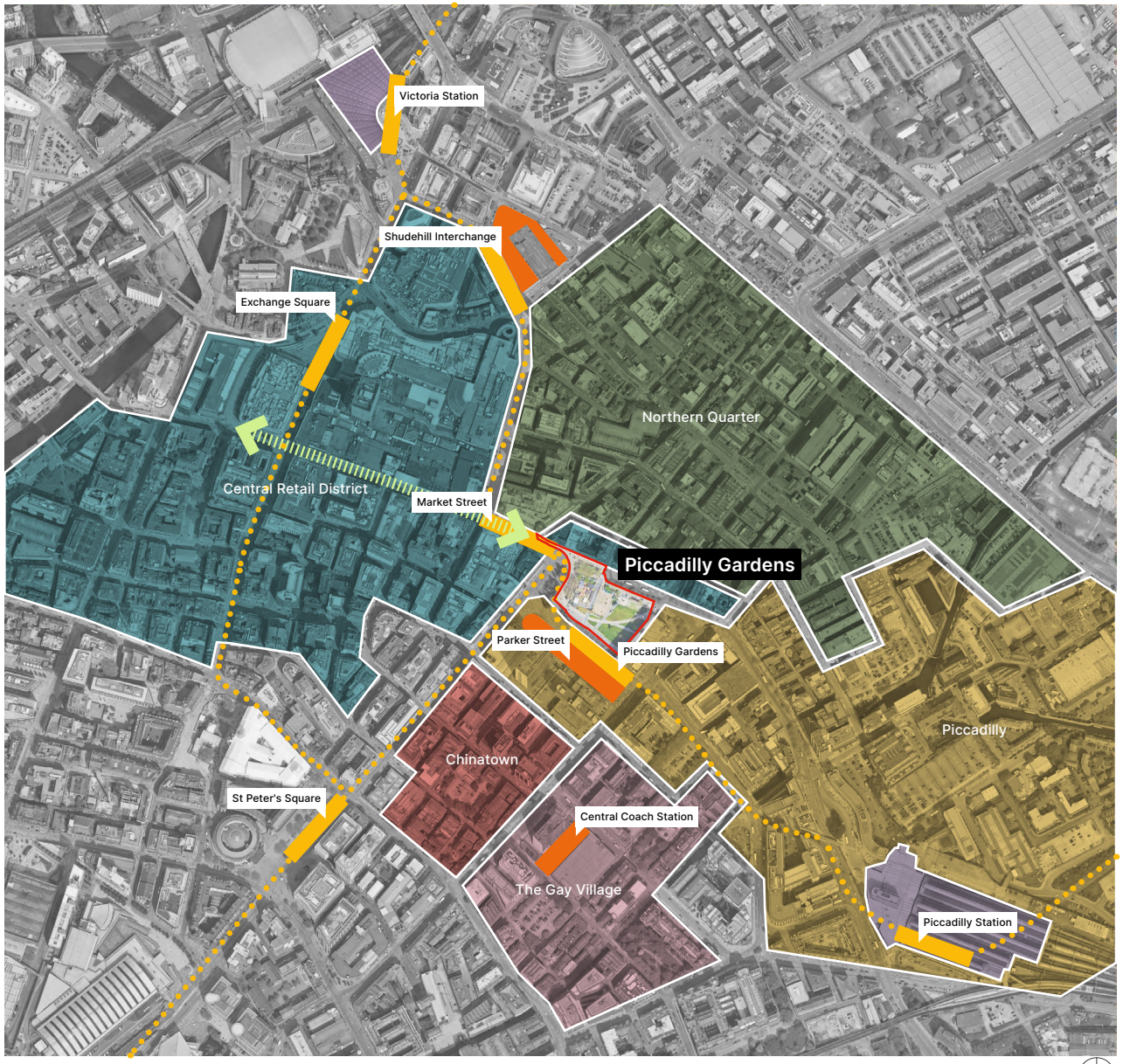
Piccadilly Gardens sits at the geographical and functional centre of the city. A key arrival point from Piccadilly Station, transport interchange and retail hub of Market St.

Within a short walking distance of the Gardens are the Northern Quarter, Chinatown, St. Peter's Square, the Gay Village and Market Street. It is one of the most heavily used public spaces in the region.

The Gardens provide one of the few significant open spaces within the city core and act as a meeting place for residents, workers, students and visitors throughout the day. Given its strategic location and visibility, improvements to Piccadilly Gardens present an important opportunity to enhance first impressions of Manchester and enhance connections between the surrounding city quarters.

Locations:

- Piccadilly
- Northern Quarter
- Central Retail District
- Chinatown
- The Gay Village
- Train Stations
- Metrolink Tram Routes
- Bus / Coach Stations
- Market Street



Location of the site within the city centre

Site Context:
Existing Constraints

There are a number of existing constraints that have influenced the design response. A series of existing listed heritage assets, mature trees, existing level thresholds, busy pedestrian movement thoroughfares and significant below-ground basements/infrastructure must each be considered.

The design seeks to retain (or re-locate) and celebrate significant heritage features, work around existing infrastructure and ensure that accessibility requirements are maintained throughout.

By understanding and integrating these constraints from the outset, the proposals deliver a practical, build-able and contextually responsive solution.

Locations:

1. **Retained trees -** surrounding levels retained
2. **Retained statues -** surrounding levels retained
3. **Retained boundary levels** to facilitate access requirements
4. **Retained electric infrastructure** - levels around substation and vents retained
5. Approximate footprint of below ground plant/ storage tank basement rooms
6. Existing trams and associated infrastructure
7. Existing below ground services (full extent not shown on this diagram
8. Existing service route
9. Existing spill out/frontage
10. Busy + noisy road



Existing constraints diagram

Site Context:
Opportunities

The site benefits from exceptional levels of footfall, excellent public transport connectivity and a position at the meeting point of several key city centre destinations. These characteristics create the potential for a vibrant civic landscape that supports everyday use while acting as a positive gateway into the city.

The re-design seeks to capitalise on these strengths by:

- Simplifying movement routes
- Improving accessibility
- Improving visibility and sight lines for way finding and addressing anti-social behaviour issues
- Introducing significant new planting, and utilising the basements for rainwater harvesting and irrigation
- Consolidating lawn into functional public space
- Enhance the setting of the monuments
- Use the scale of space to deliver high impact mature trees
- Introducing colour and flowers into the 'Gardens'



Green



Blue



People

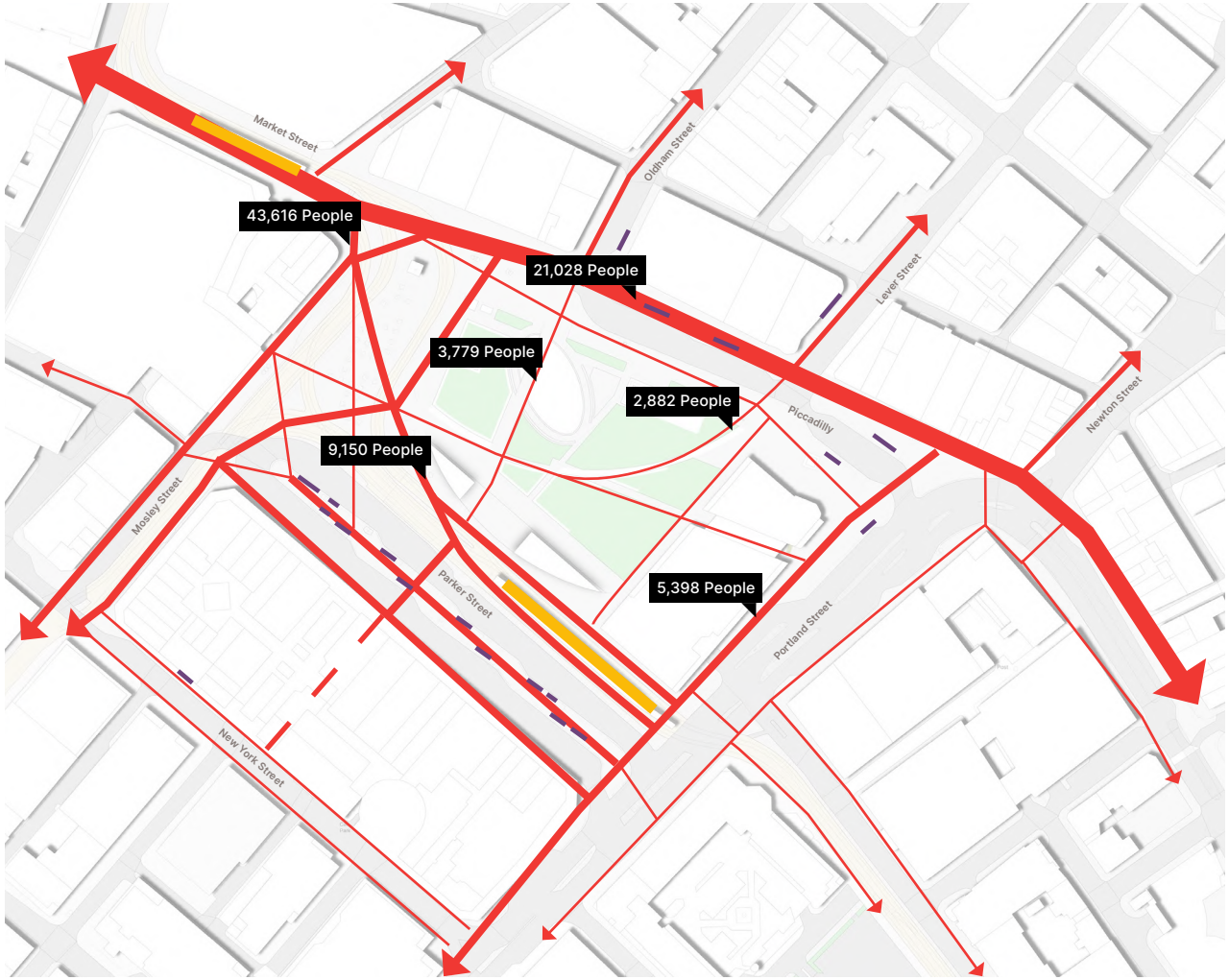


Place

N

Existing Movement

Surveys have been commissioned to record the existing pedestrian movements through Piccadilly Gardens. This has been essential data which has fed into the design to reflect the movement and desire lines through the space.



Illustrative pedestrian flows - Indicative only

Pedestrian routes
Bus stations
Metrolink station

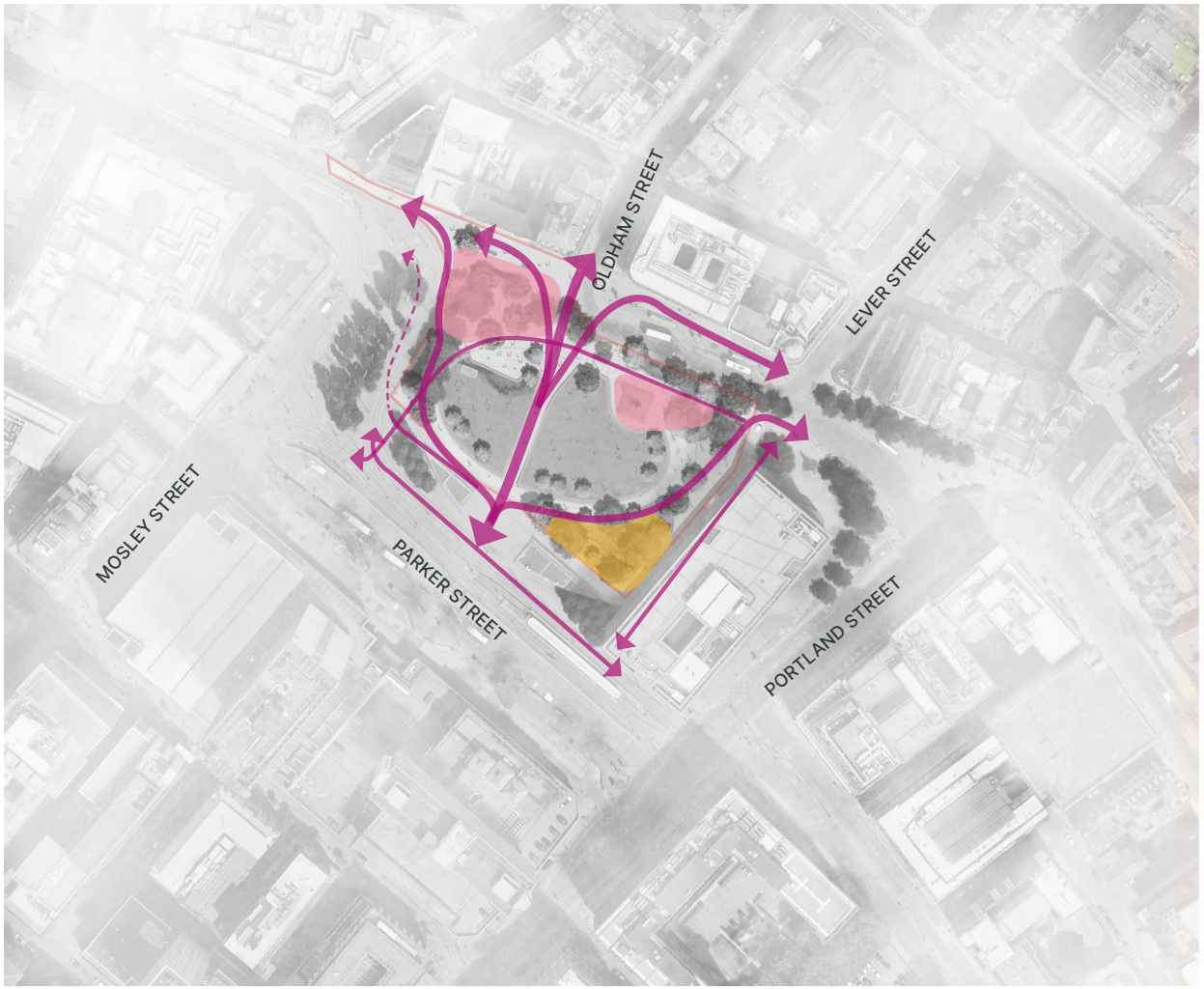
Proposed Movement Strategy

Pedestrian movement has been a primary driver in the development of the public realm design. Survey information shows approximately 24 million people move through Piccadilly Gardens every year.

The proposed layout responds directly to these movements by creating clear, legible and accessible routes that align with established patterns of use.

By reducing unnecessary clutter, improving visibility across the gardens and planning a more intuitive network the gardens will more successfully connect adjacent streets with the wider city centre.

Seating, planting and activity spaces have been arranged to support movement without creating barriers to allow the gardens to function efficiently as both gardens to dwell in and the busy city centre thoroughfare it will continue to be.



Proposed pedestrian flows mapped onto proposals

Wider strategies, access and movement

The proposals for Piccadilly Gardens are the central piece of a wider strategy of improvement works. Planit are working with the city council, GMP and TfGM on the wider vision to improve access for all.

Pedestrian circulation, active travel routes, rationalising bus routes and stops and enhancing the quality of the public realm right through the heart of the city centre.

The areas which form the wider proposals are highlighted here. The phasing of these is still being worked through with the complicated web of through movement these spaces deal with.



Current constraints diagram

1. Piccadilly
2. Mosley Street
3. Portland Street
4. Parker Street
5. Rylands Manchester

3 Vision

Our ambition is to create a New Piccadilly Gardens, a cohesive, high-quality and resilient public realm centred around a generous lawn, year-round planting and a richly varied tree canopy. Working with Galliford Try, MCC's Construction Partner, the project will replace the outdated layout with a safer, more accessible and welcoming civic landscape.

The design aims to deliver smoother pedestrian movement, a greener and more climate-resilient environment, enhanced lighting and materials, and opportunities for small-scale activation.

The renewed layout will strengthen Piccadilly Gardens' role as both a civic destination and a key transport interchange, creating a modern, adaptable and visually coherent space at the heart of Manchester.

Developing the Vision

Creating a welcoming, green and vibrant space that puts people first, reflecting Manchester's identity and civic ambition on the national international stages we stand.

A garden for the city and the citizens of Manchester, Piccadilly Gardens should draw together and represent everything we are as Mancunians, born and adopted.

Bringing the 'gardens' back is central to our ambition. This scale of space at the heart of the city demands significant trees alongside planting for year round colour and interest. Drawing inspiration from spaces around the city the 'Botany of Manchester' will be celebrated here.

The design will celebrate and re-frame the heritage of the site. Through literal action of opening up and re-setting the various monuments within the space. But also more subtly, through re-using in creative ways some of the materials that already exist.

The ambition is to create a space that can be once again loved by residents and visitors. Design alone cannot address the historic issues, but the design has developed in hand with a re-imagined approach to management to transform the perception of Piccadilly Gardens.



4 Design Proposals

Developing the Concept

Our aim is to create a renewed Piccadilly Gardens a better designed, high-quality and resilient public space centred on a generous lawn, year-round planting and a varied tree canopy.

The project will replace the outdated layout with a safer, more accessible and welcoming design.

Better walking routes and connections

A greener and more climate resilient environment

Improved lighting and materials

Opportunities for small scale activities and events

The renewed layout will strengthen Piccadilly Gardens' role as both a civic destination and a key transport interchange, creating a modern, flexible and more attractive space at the heart of Manchester.



Lawn

A large central lawn to create an open and welcoming space for people to spend time in.



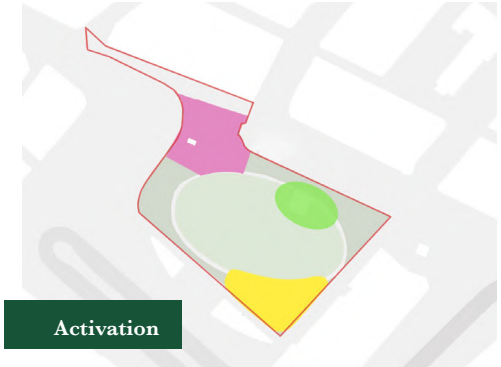
Colour

Bring back the gardens with colourful planting and year-round bloom.



A place for all

Improve safety with enhanced lighting, CCTV and more proactive management.



Activation

New public realm and play encourage people into the space and provide activation and surveillance of spaces



Nature in the City

A variety of different spaces to enjoy with high quality seating, open lawns, shaded areas and improved children's play.



Heritage

Integrate existing monuments to protect and celebrate the area's heritage.

Masterplan



Locations:

1. Raised Lawn
2. Peel Square
3. Robert Peel Statue
4. Plot for Future Structure
5. New Crossing Point
6. James Watt Statue
7. Queen Victoria Statue
8. Victoria Gardens
9. Pedestrian Thoroughfare through lawn
10. Play Area
11. Restaurant Spill Out Retained (Beyond Red Line)
12. Resurfaced and De-cluttered Design to Piccadilly
13. Retained Hatch for Basement Access
14. Retained Trees

Concept:
Lawn

The central lawn forms the heart of the new Piccadilly Gardens. Consolidating the previous fragmented patches of lawn, we are creating a generous area of open sunny green space within the city.

The lawn re-establishes the concept of 'gardens' and creates a focal point around which the wider public realm is organised.

Its position and scale have been carefully considered to improve visibility and support natural surveillance. An enhanced specification and raised edge (with a central level access) ensure the lawn remains robust despite the significant levels of footfall experienced within the city centre.





Proposed lawn area



Broadgate Exchange Square, London



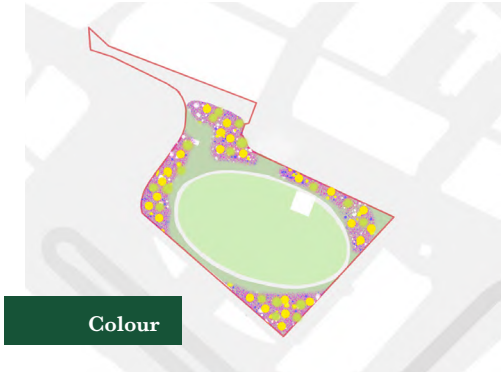
All Saints Park, Manchester

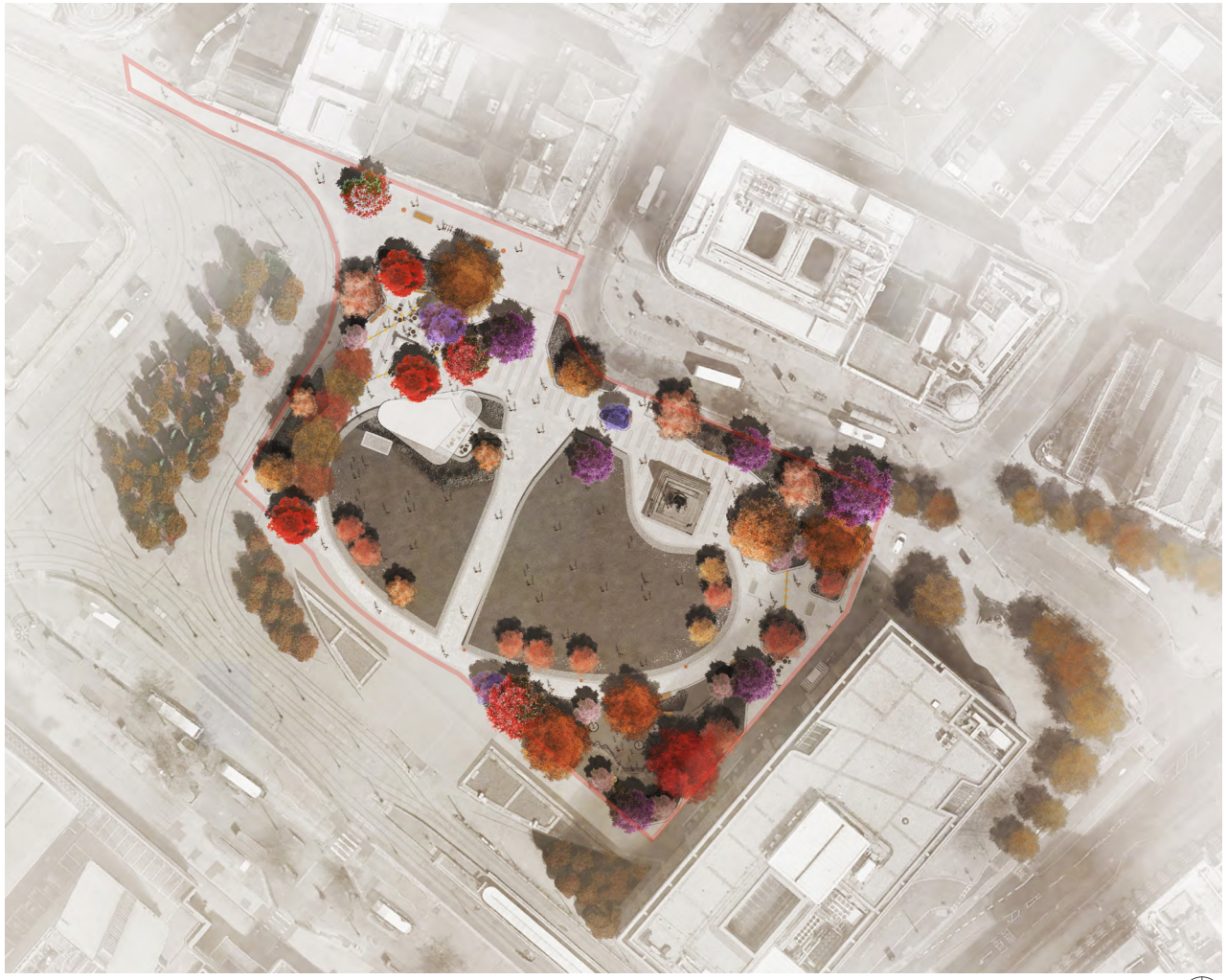


Bryant Park, NYC

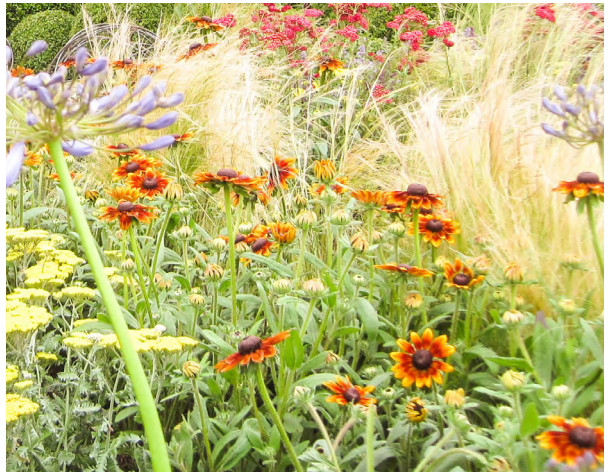
Concept:
Colour

Colour is so important in restoring the identity of Piccadilly Gardens. The planting palette introduces a rick and evolving selection of trees and ornamental plants that provide year round interest and seasonal change. The landscaping will create a vibrant and welcoming environment that reconnects the space with its historic role as a garden at the heart of the city.





Trees chosen for seasonal colour



Example of varied colourful planting



Example of autumn leaves providing colour



Blossom trees in St Peter's Square

Concept:
A Place for All

Every space within the city should form part of a wider equitable and inclusive built environment. And with its history, Piccadilly Gardens more than most should be a welcoming, safe and accessible space for people of all background and abilities.

Clear sight lines, step-free routes, accessible seating, inclusive play opportunities and a high quality lighting and CCTV strategy contribute to a space that can be used throughout the day and into the evening.

The design also supports a range of social interactions and activities recognising Piccadilly Gardens as one of the most diverse public spaces in Manchester.

Arup's Accessible and Inclusive Environments (AIE) specialists have supported the developing design to ensure all groups are represented and included.





Proposed inclusive and secure areas



A safe and accessible place for all

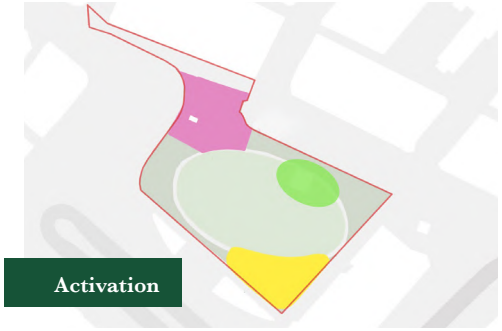
Concept:
Activation

The design brings together a series of spaces which provide opportunity for positive everyday activation, without compromising upon the functioning as a public open space and pedestrian thoroughfare.

The Lawn, Peel and Victoria Squares, future structure and play area form a complementary series of activation spaces all capable of supporting informal gathering, outdoor dining, community activities and small seasonal events.

Providing space to support activation has been carefully balanced with the need to maintain movement routes and open views. By allowing for a greater variety of uses throughout the day and evening, a higher degree of natural surveillance will be afforded contributing to a safer and more vibrant atmosphere.

The improved Gardens will also benefit from, and improve the existing activation from Piccadilly One and the existing pavilions to the south.





Proposed areas of activation



Small events / exhibitions



Activities/classes on the lawn



Opportunities for small scale events



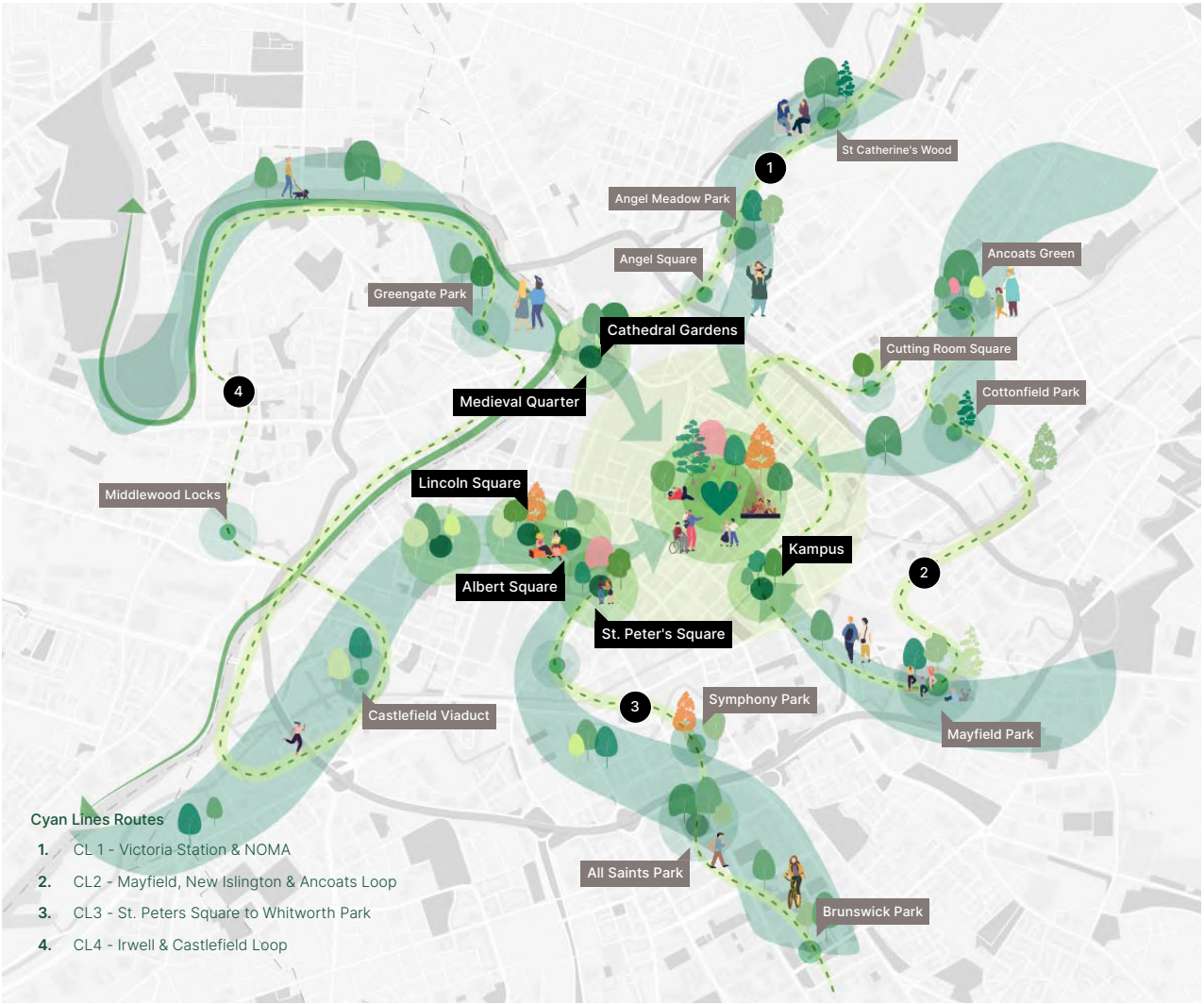
Concept:
Nature in the City

The tree planting vision for Piccadilly Gardens draws inspiration from the wider network of civic green spaces that contribute to Manchester's identity. The 'Botany of Manchester' concept celebrates the diversity of landscapes found across the city and positions Piccadilly Gardens as a central node within this emerging green network.

A rich palette of trees and ornamental planting will increase biodiversity, decrease urban heat island, improve seasonal interest and bring the gardens back. We have the chance to strengthen the ecological value of the site whilst also enhancing user experience through colour, scale of planting and sensory characters. The result, the gardens become a greener, healthier and more resilient urban environment.



The Botany of Manchester

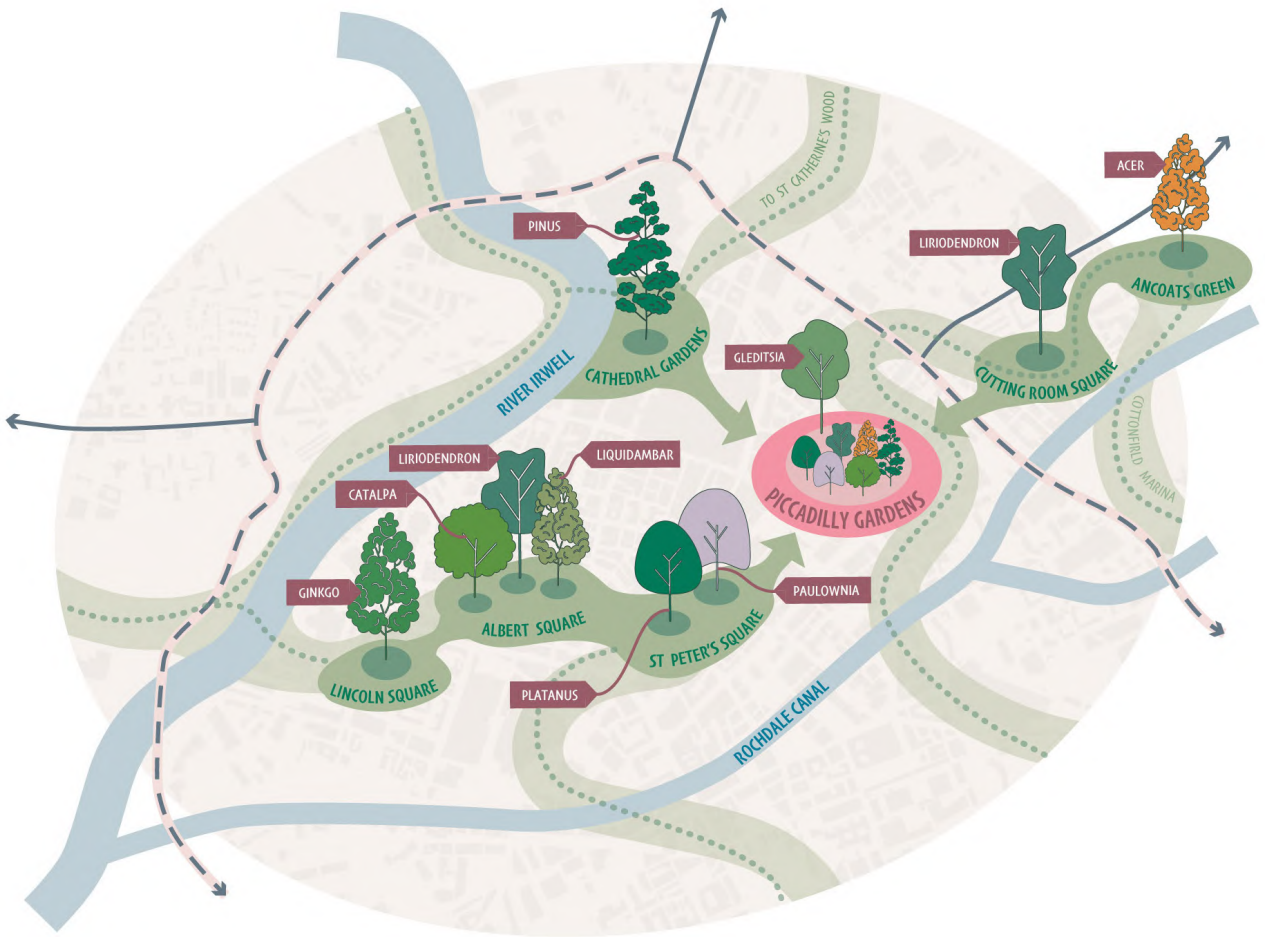


Manchester's Botany Network

Concept:
Nature in the City

Piccadilly Gardens draws reference from the variety of successfully planted tree species across other key public realm schemes across Manchester. The species list has been carefully developed to be both Manchester specific and responsive to the exact conditions (sunny, shady, high traffic etc) for its location within Piccadilly Gardens it is proposed to be planted.

Rooted in Manchester

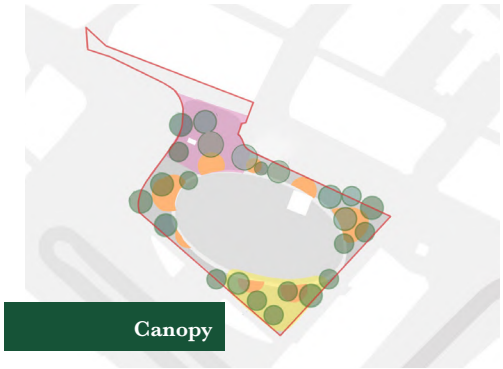


Mapping tree species across the city

Concept:
Canopy

Trees are central to the transformation of Piccadilly Gardens and play a key role in re-defining its character. The proposed strategy for tree planting considers the impact of canopy on the space by introducing larger, high-quality, specimen trees capable of making immediate visual impact. The perception of gardens is brought front and centre to all visitors.

The arrangement of trees around the central lawn provides a distinct character shift between the peripheral retail streets/transport interchanges and the central lawn space and gardens. Whilst still maintaining, important views and sight lines across the gardens, ensuring safety and visibility remain an integral component of the design.





Proposed tree canopy highlighted over plan

Concept:
Blue and Green Infrastructure

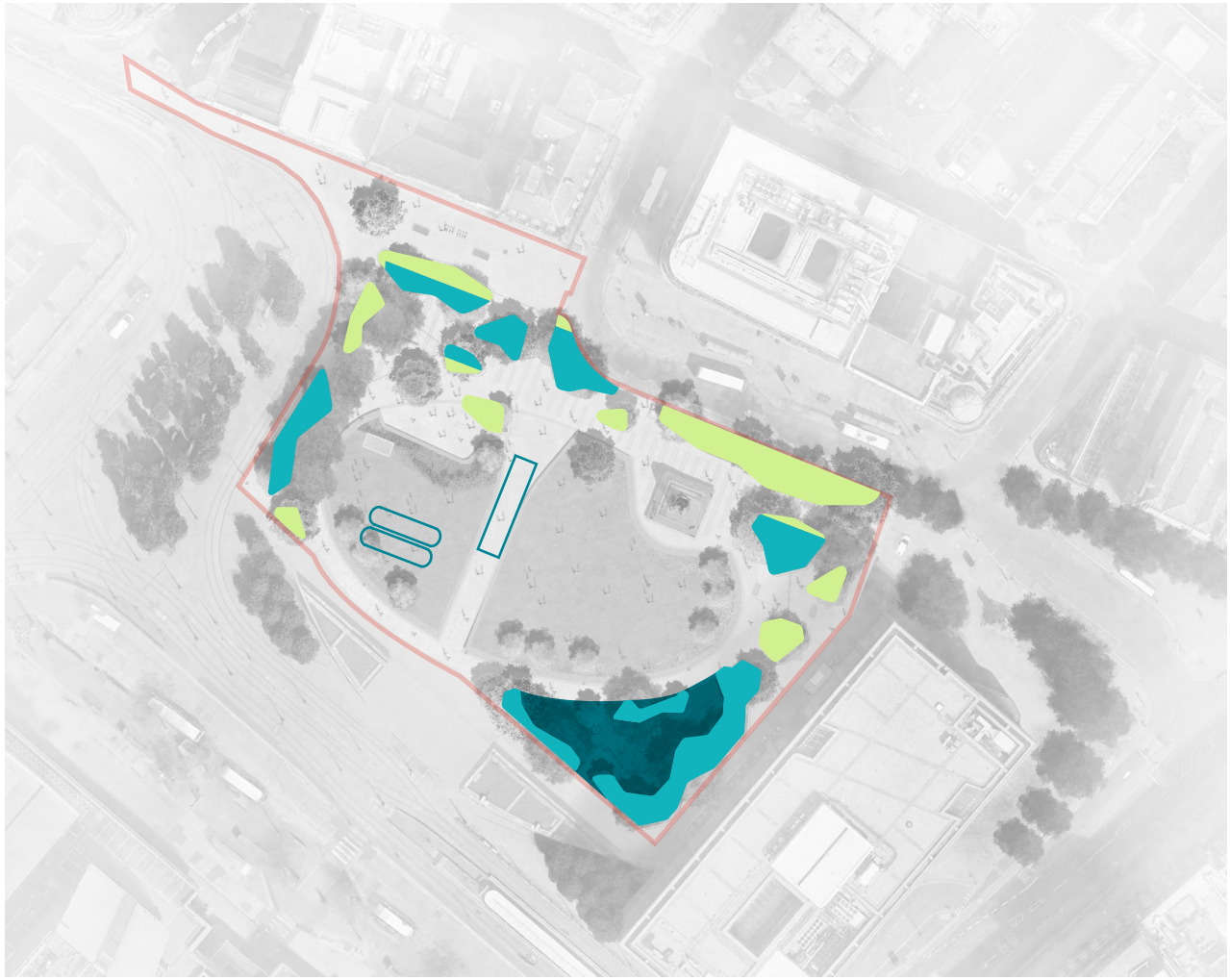
We are looking to integrate blue and green infrastructure throughout Piccadilly Gardens as one part of the wider Civic network of public spaces. Planting areas incorporate rain gardens to sustainably managed surface water run-off and reduce pressure on existing drainage networks.

The existing basement, which housed the infrastructure for the former fountains, brings an opportunity to collect rainwater for use in the existing (adapted) irrigation system. Supplying all planting and lawn areas with a consistent but low maintenance approach to watering.

This integrated approach delivers multiple benefits; biodiversity enhancements, urban cooling and visual storytelling of the way blue and green infrastructure can be embedded within a public realm scheme. There are a series of interpretation boards proposed for the site which will, amongst other subject, provide further information of this to the general public (refer to Planit furniture plan for indicative locations: 4004-PLA-XX-XX-DR-L-4000)

Key:

- Rain Gardens
- Permeable Surface
- Attenuation Tank
- Areas of Planting



Proposed areas of blue and green

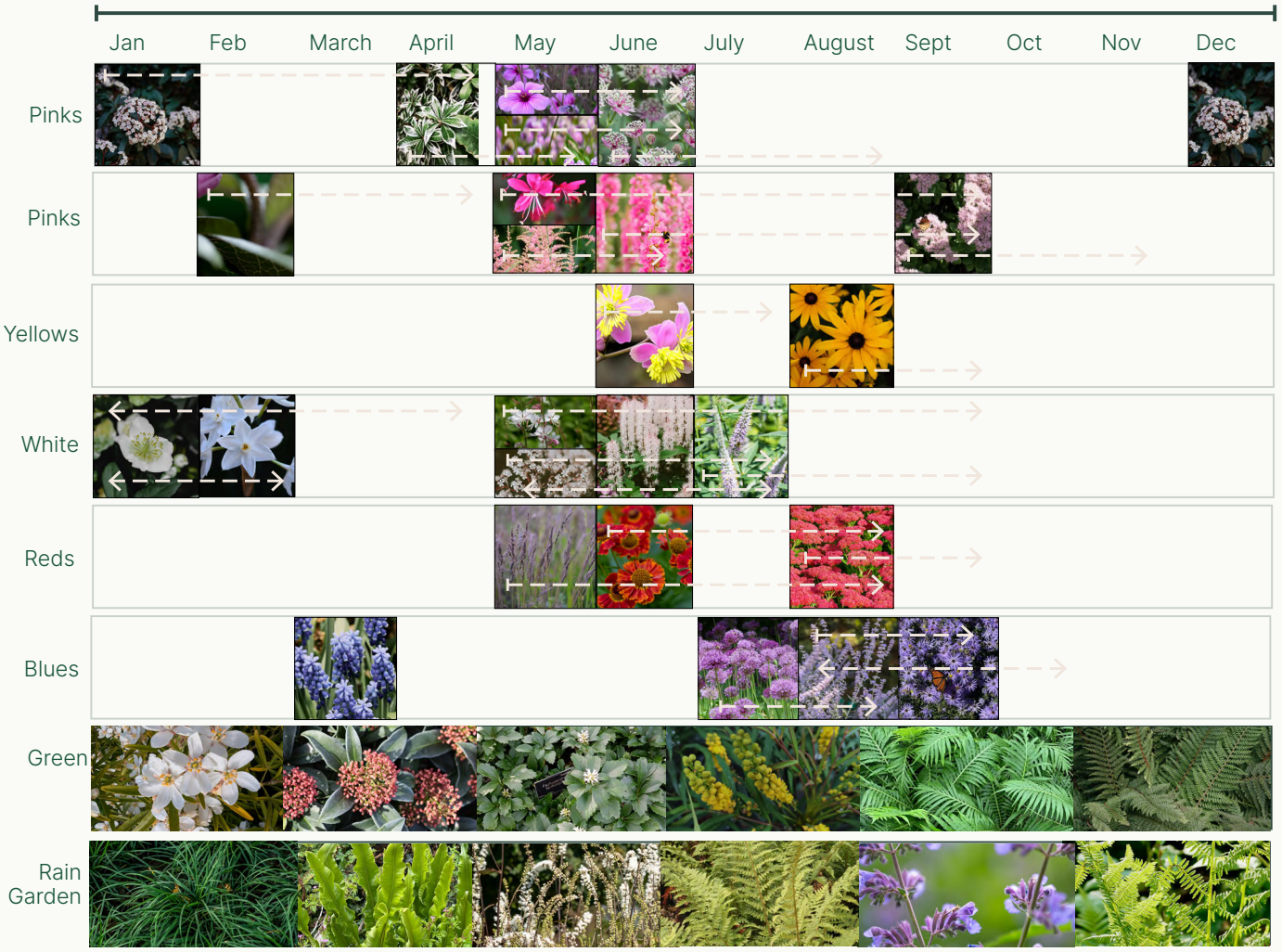
Concept:
Sensory and Seasonal

The planting design provides all-year-round interest, ensuring Piccadilly Gardens remains visually appealing across all seasons. A palette of flowering perennials grasses, shrubs and trees create changing colours textures and forms throughout the seasons. No two visits should be the same.

An important part of the planting strategy will be its conveyance to the general public. A series of interpretation boards are planned throughout the gardens some of which will elaborate on the botany of Manchester concept. The design for a smaller sign board has also been developed to sit within the planted beds to pick out specific tree or shrubs species of interest and ecological value.



Precedent



Concept:
Heritage

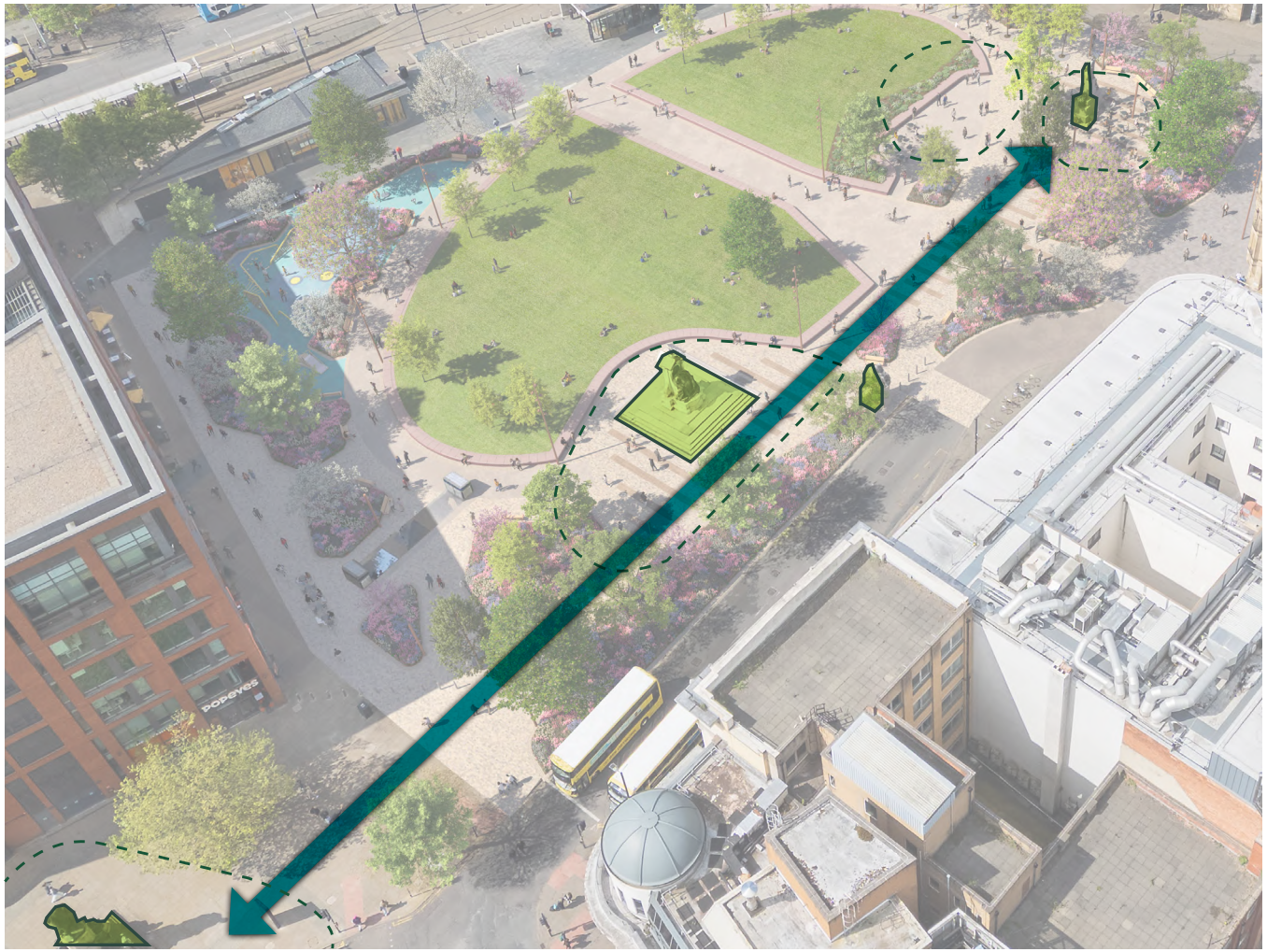
Piccadilly Gardens holds significant heritage value, the collection of listed monuments stands testament to this. The proposal seeks to improve the setting and appreciation of these assets by reducing visual clutter, improving sight lines and creating high-quality surrounding public realm.

Currently these stand as a series of isolated monuments obscured by temporary clutter, the design incorporates them into the overall composition of the gardens. New planting, paving and creation of civic spaces around the monuments create appropriate settings that enhance their prominence and allow their historic and cultural significance to be better appreciated by visitors and residents alike.





Proposed enhanced setting of monuments



In conclusion, the impact on all statues would be positive, with the proposed changes to the setting of the assets enhancing or better revealing their significance.

The heritage impact assessment finds that the appropriate new development of the Site will result in neutral and slight (beneficial) levels of impact upon the significance of the heritage assets.

Taken from the Heritage Assessment (Civic)

Aerial View: Proposed



Before

Developing The Character Areas

Four distinct character areas have developed across the proposals. Each responds to different site conditions such as heritage assets and user groups. Together they create a variety of experience, each has a distinct character but consistent themes of materials, planting and furniture to achieve a cohesive public realm.

The character areas break down as the following spaces:

- **Community**
  Everyday City Life
- **Peel Square**
  Civic Heritage and Small Scale Events
- **Victoria Gardens**
  Quiet Gardens and Small Scale Events
- **Family**
  Play and Recreation









Character Areas:
Community

The gardens is a space for all. Giving space for people to stay and enjoy needs to work alongside being an infrastructure exchange and facilitating the movement through the space. A series of spaces will facilitate this, accommodating the everyday activity that will define the gardens, creating a welcoming and accessible destination for residents, workers, students and visitors alike.

Community can be fostered within the smaller civic squares, play area and the open lawn. A key part of this is the provision of numerous seating options, a range of different character spaces, a tree canopy that offers both exposed and shady spots, high-quality planting and a lighting scheme that will facilitate use through the winter and into the evenings. The lawn, focal point for dwell and bringing people together to enjoy a picnic or yoga, offers everyone living or visiting the city a green space to enjoy.



Proposed visual highlighting key community areas

Lush planting and seating amongst tall tree canopies where views are maintained throughout



Precedents







Character Areas:
Peel Square

Peel Square creates a new civic focus around the Grade II listed Robert Peel Monument. The proposals significantly improve the setting of the monument by opening important views, reducing visual clutter and creating an enhanced setting through the introduction of high quality materials and setting. The monument becomes a focal point within a flexible hard landscape designed to support informal events, gatherings movement and civic activity.

The square acts as a transitional space between the lawn, gardens and Piccadilly. The provision for a future structure adjacent to this space provides further potential to activate and enliven the space. The result is a vibrant civic space set within lush planting that enhances both the heritage value of the monument and the everyday functionality of the gardens.



Proposed visual of the Peel Square area

Provision for future structure and associated spill out and flexible area of hard standing



Precedents







Character Areas:
Victoria Gardens

The proposals for Victoria Gardens establish a distinctive garden setting around the Queen Victoria monument. Slightly smaller in scale than Peel Square, however, still able to create a calmer and more contemplative character within Piccadilly Gardens.

The hard landscaping expands around Victoria to enhance her setting, the immediate context clear of clutter or distraction. The expansion and contraction of hard landscape create clear sight lines and routes through the public realm which respond individually to each of the monuments. This also creates a coherent visual and physical link, regrouping the monuments as part of the original albeit lost intent when installed in the context of the former infirmary.

Again, ample seating is set against vibrant planting making this another character of space for people to dwell and enjoy spending time in Piccadilly Gardens. The additional area of hard landscaping gives the flexibility for potential for smaller events or installations.

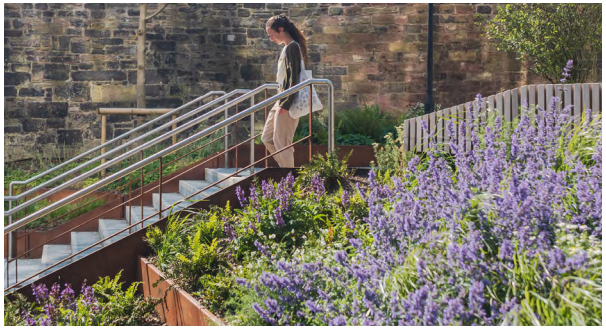


Proposed visual of the Victoria Gardens area

A new setting in the form of a public square for Queen Victoria



Precedents









Character Areas:
Family

The inclusion and expansion of a re-imagined play space within Piccadilly Gardens creates yet another character of space within the heart of Manchester City Centre, specifically for children and carers.

The design draws reference from the landscapes beyond Greater Manchester and the three river story, introducing a variety of play opportunities that encourage imaginative exploratory and social play whilst being carefully integrated into the wider design of the public realm.

The play area is surrounded by planting and seating, allowing families to comfortably spend time within the gardens whilst maintaining clear views and convenient access to surrounding facilities.

The design of the space has been shaped from engagement with local families and seeks to provide enjoyment for a broad range of ages and abilities, but with more of a focus towards under tens.



Proposed visual of the Family area

Formal and informal play with small mounding within lush planting and tall tree canopies

Inclusive and accessible play features are incorporated throughout, both physical wheelchair accessible items of equipment and sensory elements of play. The design also incorporates informal, exploratory features such as natural stone slabs.

Together the play area with the adjacent lawn and proposed gardens create a positive environment for families encouraging regular use and contributing to a safer and more diverse public realm.



Precedents








ONE

Play:
Strategy

The play area has been developed to create a unique family area that encourages exploration and social interaction, both with each other and to the local area through its design response drawn from the history of Manchester and Piccadilly Gardens.

Positioned to the south, it benefits from excellent natural surveillance and is positioned to be the most distant from roads or trams as possible.

The play area is integrated within soft landscaping and large tree canopies ensuring it is integrated into the wider landscape.

Plan View





Proposed play area integrated within lush planting

Play:
A City of Play

Rooted in Manchester

Piccadilly Gardens draws inspiration from Manchester's network of successful and well-loved play destinations, positioning itself as a central node within a wider "City of Play". The proposed play space complements a diverse range of play environments across the city, including Ancoats Green, Heaton Park and Mayfield Park. Together, these spaces provide a variety of play experiences for different age groups and settings, creating a connected city-wide play offering.

The Piccadilly Gardens play space has been carefully designed to respond to its unique city-centre context while drawing on the success of Manchester's established parks, helping to create an inclusive, accessible and vibrant destination for children and families at the heart of the city.



Mapping key play across the city

Play:
Design

The design draws inspiration from both the natural landscape surrounding Manchester and historic origins of Piccadilly Gardens. Forms inspired by the Hills Moorlands and Peaks of the wider region have been reflected in the topography of the central climbing structure and land form. References to the sites historic 'daub' holes are represented by the introduction of play mounds and in-ground trampolines.

The combination of these elements help establish a strong sense of place and provide opportunities for children to engage with local stories through play. This will be further enforced through the inclusion of interpretation boards and elements of bespoke artwork set into the play equipment and natural stones surrounding the play area conveying these themes simplistically and pictorially.

The play area has been designed to incorporate a range of physical sensory and social play experiences. Climbing, balancing, spinning, sliding and active play opportunities throughout the play area address a wide range of ages, abilities and confidence levels. Informal routes have been made possible alongside the edge of soft landscaping incorporating natural boulder features, encouraging discovery and movement allowing children to create their own play Journeys.



← **Inspiration: Nature / Woodland / Trees** Set within planting, timber/ natural stone used throughout play equipment



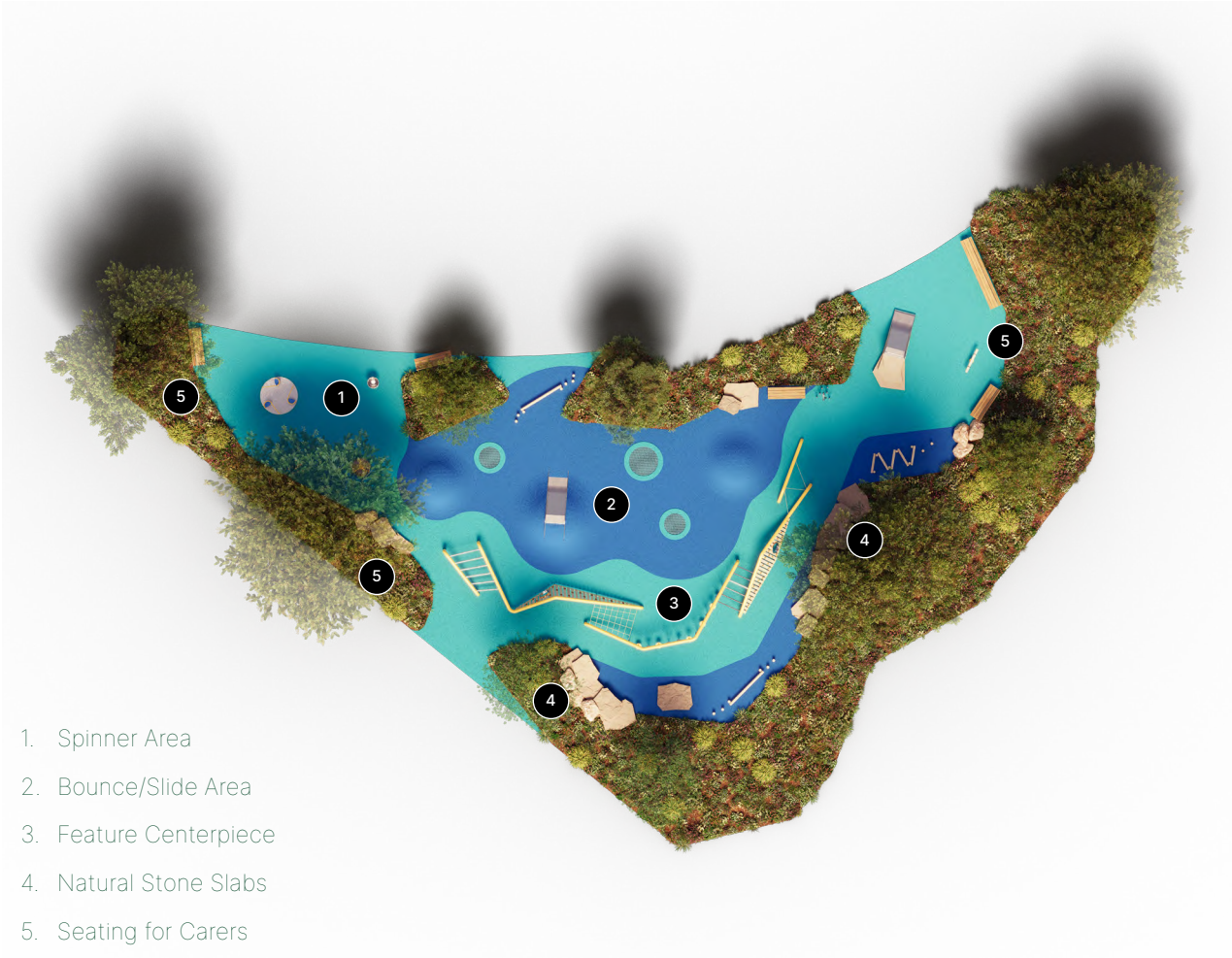
↓ **Inspiration: Moorland / Hills / Peaks** Referencing the terrain surrounding

The play area is organised around a central feature climbing structure whose form is inspired by the silhouette of the hills surrounding Manchester. This feature provides climbing, balancing traversing crawling and sliding, encouraging both physical and imaginative play. This structure is the visual and functional heart of the play area creating a focal point visible from across the gardens.

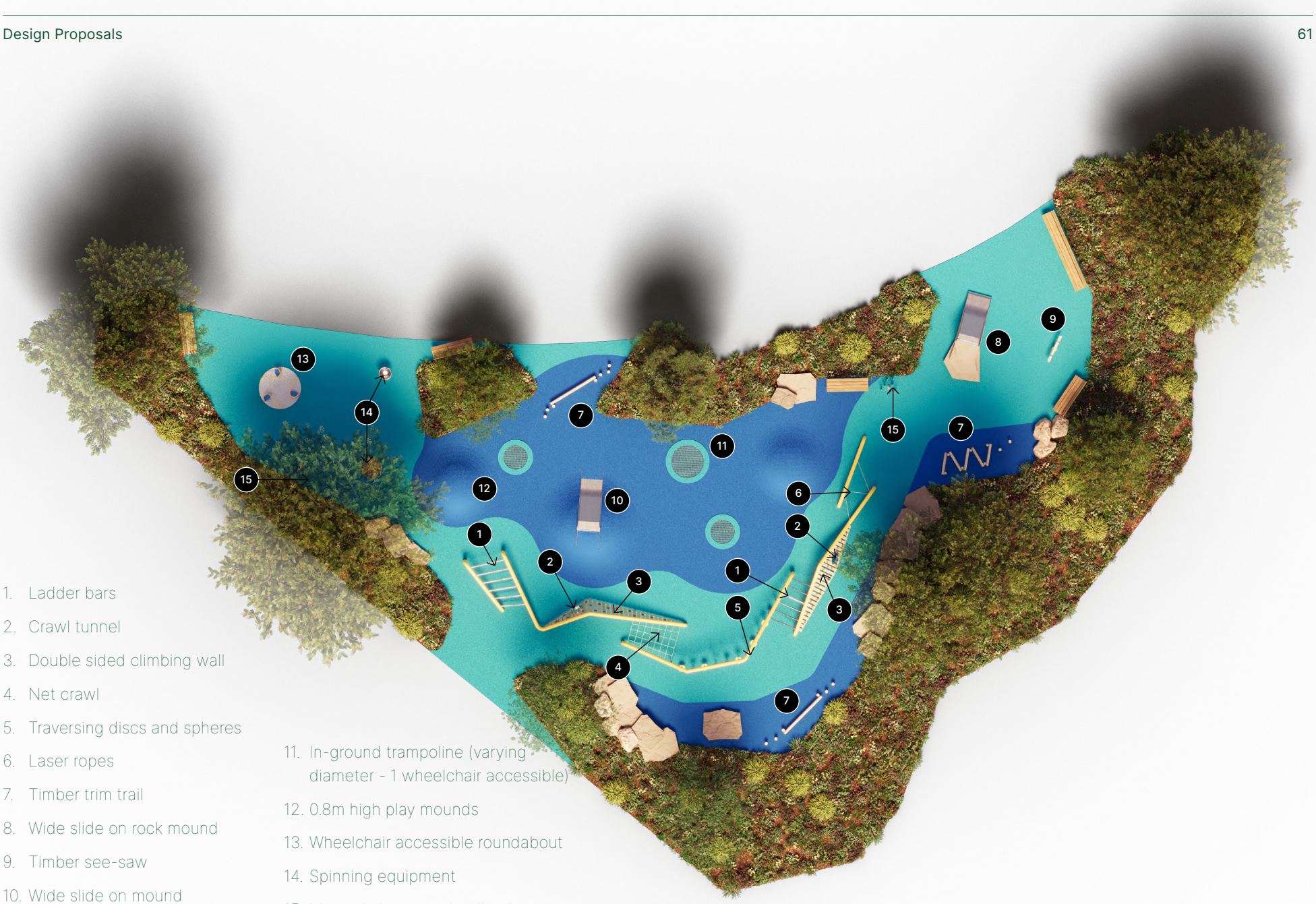
Surrounding this central structure are a series of complementary pieces of equipment designed to support different play styles, physical abilities and age groups. Climbing, integrated slides and trampolines provide opportunities for dynamic movement and free play. While balance beams, natural stone slabs, talk tubes and musical chimes encourage sensory play and social interaction.

The arrangement of equipment has been carefully considered to create an open and welcoming environment. Entrance points have been located to avoid direct links with trafficked areas. Planting is kept low and tree canopies high to provide clear sight lines across the whole play area for surveillance of children.

Inclusivity has been a key principle throughout the development of the play area. A wheelchair accessible roundabout and trampoline are included sitting within the suite of equipment proposed.



Proposed play area plan - planting indicative only (not representative of final scheme)



1. Ladder bars
2. Crawl tunnel
3. Double sided climbing wall
4. Net crawl
5. Traversing discs and spheres
6. Laser ropes
7. Timber trim trail
8. Wide slide on rock mound
9. Timber see-saw
10. Wide slide on mound
11. In-ground trampoline (varying diameter - 1 wheelchair accessible)
12. 0.8m high play mounds
13. Wheelchair accessible roundabout
14. Spinning equipment
15. Musical chimes with talk tubes

There is also a range of difficulty levels ensuring the children of different needs can participate alongside one another.

Seating is included around the play area for comfortable supervision and the placement of stacked stone slabs doubles not only as informal play / route finding but also tiered seating.

The colour of the feature play equipment, flooring and associated lighting will be playful yet reflective of the wider Piccadilly Gardens palette. Natural timber is proposed throughout the play equipment to reinforce the wider character of Piccadilly Gardens and the natural palette the increased planting and tree canopy brings.

Overall, the play area seeks to deliver an engaging inclusive and memorable experience, supporting healthy activity, social interaction and family use right at the heart of Manchester City Centre.



View through play area (planting indicative only)



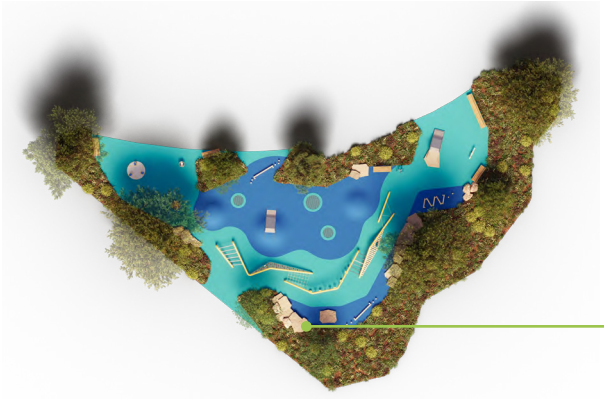
View through play area (planting indicative only)

Uniquely Piccadilly Gardens

The design of the play area responds to Piccadilly Gardens and the surrounding landscape. We will also be exploring fun ways to make it more bespoke again. The feature play wall is bespoke, and some of the other items will feature bespoke imagery to make this specific and special for Piccadilly Gardens.

Durability

We choose local wherever possible, Massey + Harris, the play specialist who have developed the play area design, are based in Stockport. Here they both design and fabricate much of the proposed equipment to order. A close network of suppliers ensures on hand support into the future, local people in local jobs and reduces the carbon footprint of items being brought to site.

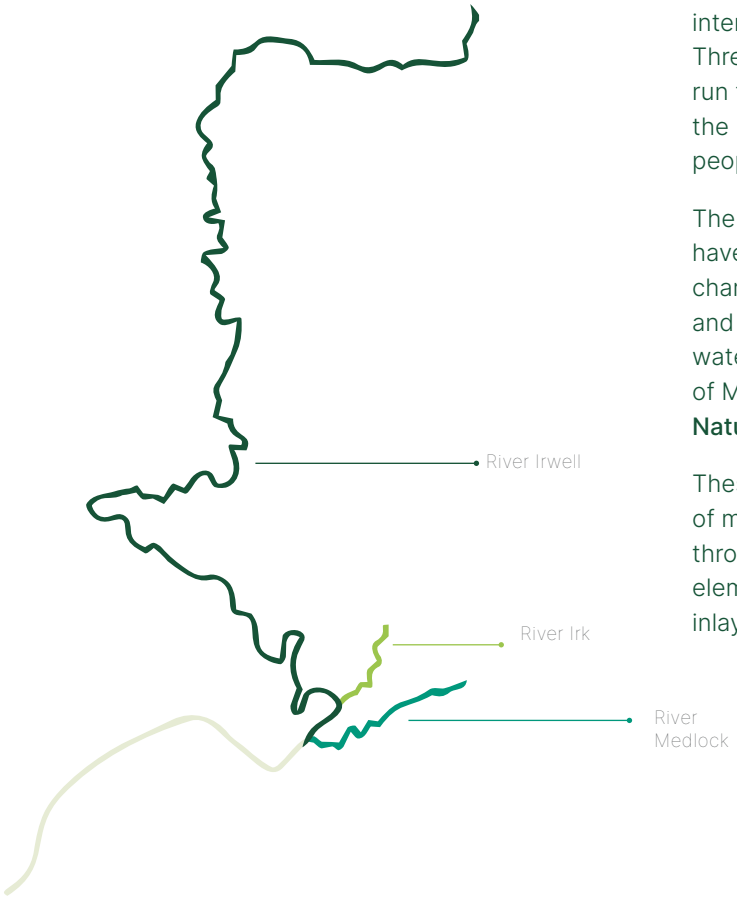


Example for potential bespoke interpretation woven through the play area design. Tiered stone slabs form part of the informal play opportunities but also feature storytelling / games etches upon them.





Intepretation Concept:
The Three Rivers



We have developed a concept to support the interpretation strategy of the site. The concept 'The Three Rivers' centres around the three rivers that run through Manchester, and how these tie together the relationships between landscape, industry and people, and what makes us uniquely Manchester.

The River Irwell, the River Irk and the River Medlock have shaped the cities history and is intrinsic to the character of Manchester today. The interpretation and artwork strategy will draw inspiration from these waterways, using them as a framework to tell a story of Manchester through three interconnected themes; **Natural, Industrial** and **Cultural.**

These stories will be conveyed through a number of means; formal interpretation boards distributed through the site, bespoke artwork etched into stone elements in and around the play area, and in bespoke inlay details within the in situ concrete paths running through the site. These will be dispersed throughout the site, visitors encountering stories, images, textures and symbols as they move through the gardens.

We have developed this concept as a framework, the detailed approach to storytelling and artwork represents an opportunity for the public and local artists to be further involved in helping to shape Piccadilly Gardens.



A number of interpretation boards are proposed for around the site. Each will convey information about the re-design or the history of the site.

Themes could include:

- The History of the Site
- Sustainable Drainage Features
- The Botany of Manchester
- The Three Rivers Concept

There will be two styles of boards, a larger more information heavy version, and a smaller signpost that will be dispersed throughout the planting to note different plant or tree species of note.





Plan with indicative intepretation board locations

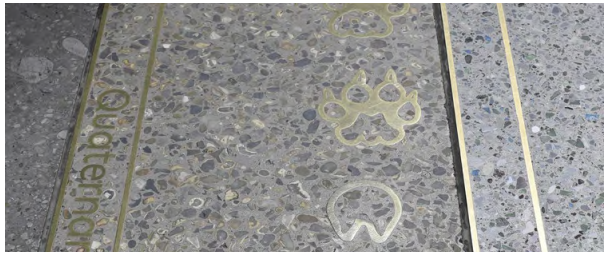
Storytelling through graphics and text etched into natural stone slabs



Storytelling through interpretative signage



Storytelling through paving - inlay artwork within in-situ concrete paths



5 Materiality

Furniture Palette:
Lawn Edge

The lawn is elevated held by a raised edge.
This defining design feature establishes a clear and robust transition between the central lawn and the surrounding pedestrian thoroughfares whilst also helping to guide people through the space.

Given the significant levels of footfall experienced through the site, the design of this edge is intended to be decorative yet guide movement flow. Robust stone detailing with integrated anti-skate measures to the top echoing the 'Picadil' collar shape. A variety of surface textures and a decorative fluted base protects the edge from damage whilst maintaining a simple and elegant appearance.

This design feature is also a method to protect the lawn from excessive wear. It discourages unintended movement across vulnerable lawn margins, reducing soil compaction and supporting the long-term health of the central lawn.

The path which crosses the lawn rises and falls providing a dedicated point for level access onto the grassed areas.

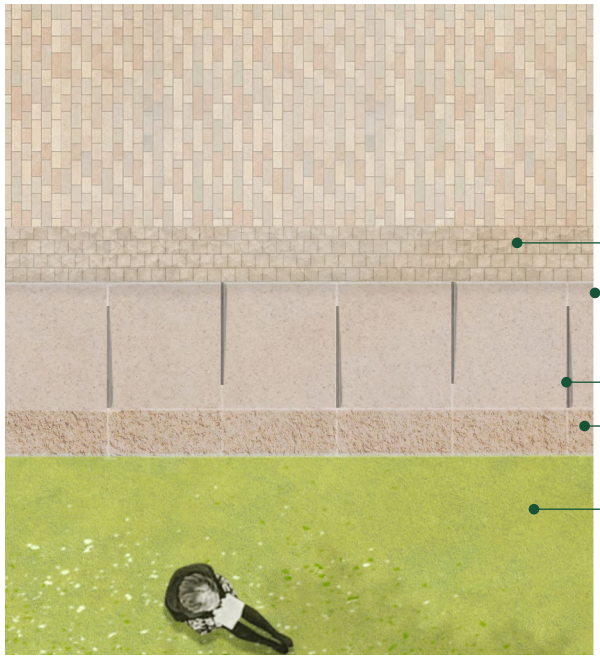


Design Intent 3d View



1:5 Physical Mockup (not stone proposed)





Anti-skate dealt with through layered approach:

- Feature anti-skate fixed to stone
- Anti-skate extends over top of edge to prevent skating on top
- Large diameter leading edges
- Texture paving around skate features to prevent rolling over

Furniture Palette:
Free Standing Furniture

A simple palette of robust contemporary furniture has been selected to support the everyday enjoyment of the gardens. Benches have been located on key routes and within garden spaces to provide opportunities for rest, social interaction and the enjoyment of the landscape. Durable materials, accessible locations and a consistent design language/specification ensure the furniture not only looks good, but is easy to repair or replace individual components quickly and economically in the future.

Benches

Benches are proposed along key movement routes within the scheme, providing opportunities for rest and informal social interaction whilst complementing the character of the surrounding public realm.

Bins:

Manchester City Centre bins are proposed throughout the landscape scheme at key pedestrian locations.



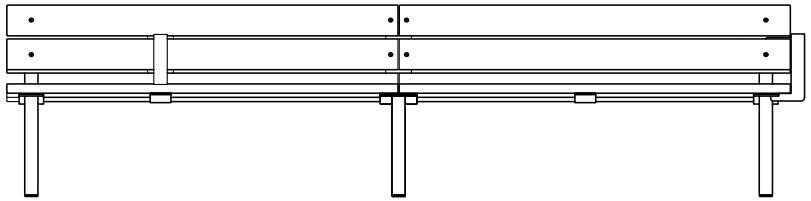
Freestanding furniture

Variations on the bench designs have been incorporated to ensure there are options for all - a variety of options have been developed. Including arm rests/no armrests, wheelchair side transfer seats and variable seated heights.

Bringing consistency with the wider city centre and collection regimes, the standard Manchester bin will be located throughout the plan.



Proposed bins

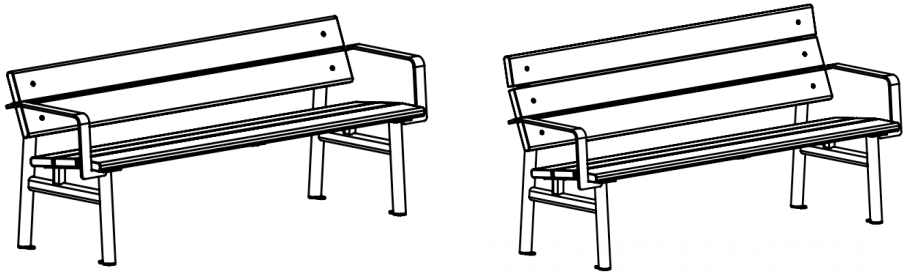


Modular design allows longer runs of continuous benches. Example of inset armrest for wheelchair transfer

Street furniture should be designed to withstand casual acts of vandalism. When selecting or designing street furniture, consider how easily and quickly items can be repaired or replaced following damage.

[omitted text] These features are best positioned where there is plenty of formal and informal surveillance, so any criminal acts are more likely to be witnessed.

Text extracted from GMP Crime Impact Statement supporting this application



Further variants proposed - varying seat and backrest heights

The upkeep of a development over its lifetime can be crucial to the level of security and safety within the area. Aspects of a development, which are left to deteriorate, have the potential to attract further crime.

Lack of repair of damaged and vandalised structures creates a negative impact, and gives the impression that disorder is tolerated which can lead to an escalation of abuse.

Durable

The proposed supplier offers 15+years guarantee on materials and lifetime guarantee on rust.
The supplier manufactures all their products in-house and guarantees spare parts are available for life.

We are conscious Piccadilly Gardens, more than most public spaces will be associated with high levels of use, and the associated wear and damage that comes with this. This product has been selected as each component is quickly and easily replaceable meaning repairs can be undertaken quickly with minimal impact on the public, or cost on the council.

Flexible

Although the benches will be fixed down, it will still be possible to remove and relocate benches. This allow flexibility to add or subtract benches and change their locations should future use dictate better locations.

Sustainability

Using a product with durable materials, timeless design, and long-term performance, reduces total cost across a product's entire lifespan.

A product that is durable and easily repairable inherently is a less resource intensive product over its lifespan. At the end of life this bench is easily broken down for reuse-recycling demonstrating good circularity.



June bench with armrest

Planter Edge Railings

Decorative railings edge all the soft landscaping. These are a light touch approach to clearly defining planting areas while preserving visual permeability, prevents trampling of planting, stops mulch migrating onto trafficked areas and allowing uninterrupted views of the planting within.



Plan illustrating proposed edge treatments

Key:

- Planter edge railing (with kicker plate)
- Raised lawn feature edge
- Tapered lawn feature edge

In response to inclusivity comments, a solid up-stand to the base of the railing has been introduced. This ensures clear visual edge clarity to planters whilst also ensure a continuous solid edge which supports white cane detectability. This feature has the practical benefit of preventing mulch from migrating onto circulation areas improving management demands on the space.

In locations where the planting behind is a rain garden, the baseplate will incorporate perforated openings to allow rain water to enter the rain garden. The size of these will be balance between reducing blockage risk and requirements of white cane users.

The arched top design draws reference from the shape of the lawn and will be finished in the same consistent colour as the rest of the metalwork. This feature ensures a visual legibility and cohesion across the whole space.

The detailed design of the railing will be modular to allow for easy replacement of short isolated sections if required. A simple but robust paint finish will be applied, this is easy and low cost to maintain over the life of the metalwork.

Planter beds will have standardised radii to corners which will further aid in rationalising the railing design and future replacement if necessary.



Render of railing



Elevation of planting railing

Hard Landscape Strategy

A palette of materials has been developed that responds not only to the different character areas within the proposed design but relative to the adjacent public realm areas. A reduced palette of high-quality materials has been chosen to create tonal consistency throughout Piccadilly Gardens, reducing visual clutter and helping establish a strong sense of identity.

Natural stone paving is the predominant material proposed to the public realm, referencing the other civic spaces within the city centre. Natural stone is also incredibly durable making it ideal for use in such a high traffic environment. Variations in paving module texture and laying pattern assists in creating character areas and movement routes without the need for excessive way finding signage.



Key

1. **Cropped Cube Block Border**
2. **Exposed Aggregate In Situ Concrete - Buff**
   Slate reclaimed from site used within Mix
3. **Granite Paving Blend**
   Stretcher Bond (125 x varying lengths)
4. **Feature Stone Banding**
   Stacked Bond (780 x 1500mm)
   Accent stone from paving blend (3.)
5. **Granite Lawn Plinth**

Hard Landscape Strategy

The colour palette It's looking to bring a warmth through the proposed hard landscape materials proposed. Tonally, materials are within a spectrum of buff and red tones. This not only complements the existing Scoutmoor Yorkstone of the existing adjacent retained public realm but also other major civic public realm schemes across the city, such as Albert Square.

Durability and long-term maintenance have been central considerations throughout the development of the hard landscape strategy. Materials must endure high levels of pedestrian footfall, servicing requirements and ongoing maintenance activities. Opportunities for material reuse have also been embedded within the design, including the retention and re-purposing of some of the existing stone stock that exists on site. This represents opportunities to reduce waste and bring a strong narrative around the evolution of Piccadilly Gardens through into the new scheme.

The natural stone is incredibly durable, we have sourced all of the stone from within the EU (typically Portugal), this strikes a balance between affordability, security of supply (should additional material be required in the future) and carbon footprint. There is no doubt natural stone has a high carbon footprint, but taken on balance over its long lifetime, it is considered a suitable material for this application.



Plan indicating hardworks strategy

Swatches

1. Yorkstone (existing and new to match)
2. In-situ Concrete
3. Accent stone
4. Granite Plinth
5. Sett Mix
6. Granite Paving Mix:

   75% Buff/Red

   15% Mid Grey

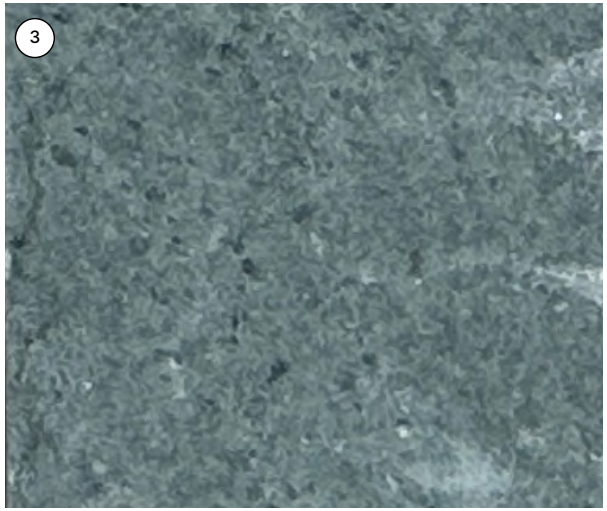
   5% Dark Grey

   5% Green

   *60:40 Flamed:Smooth

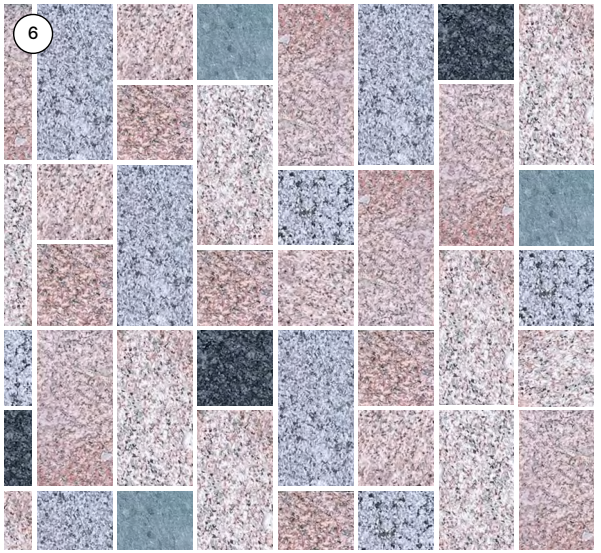












Lighting Design

The external lighting strategy has been developed to create a safe, welcoming and accessible public realm after dark whilst respecting the character of Piccadilly Gardens and minimising the environmental impact of artificial lighting. Rather than applying a uniform lighting solution across the site, the strategy adopts a clear hierarchy of lighting treatments that responds to the differing functions and character of each landscape area. This layered approach reinforces movement, key destinations and civic spaces, whilst creating a cohesive night-time identity across the Gardens.

The proposals have been developed with reference to relevant British Standards, including BS 5489-1:2020 and BS EN 13201, together with the Institution of Lighting Professionals' Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light (GN01/21). The majority of the Gardens are designed to achieve Lighting Class C2 (20 lux average maintained horizontal illuminance with a minimum overall uniformity of 0.40), providing an appropriate baseline for pedestrian safety and accessibility. The lighting installation will incorporate intelligent controls to enable dimming and operational flexibility where appropriate, with the final control strategy and any curfew arrangements to be agreed with Manchester City Council's Director of Highways in consultation with Greater Manchester Police.



Feature columns lighting larger open areas



Lighting to create more intimate feeling within garden spaces



Catenary lighting



Programmable events lighting options


PRIMARK
HAALAND

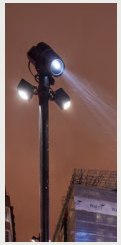
Dialogue with GMP recommends the whole of Piccadilly Gardens is lit 'dusk till dawn' to deter anti-social behaviour and compliment the CCTV requirements throughout the night.



Catenary Pendant



12m column (Multi Head)



Lighting Projector

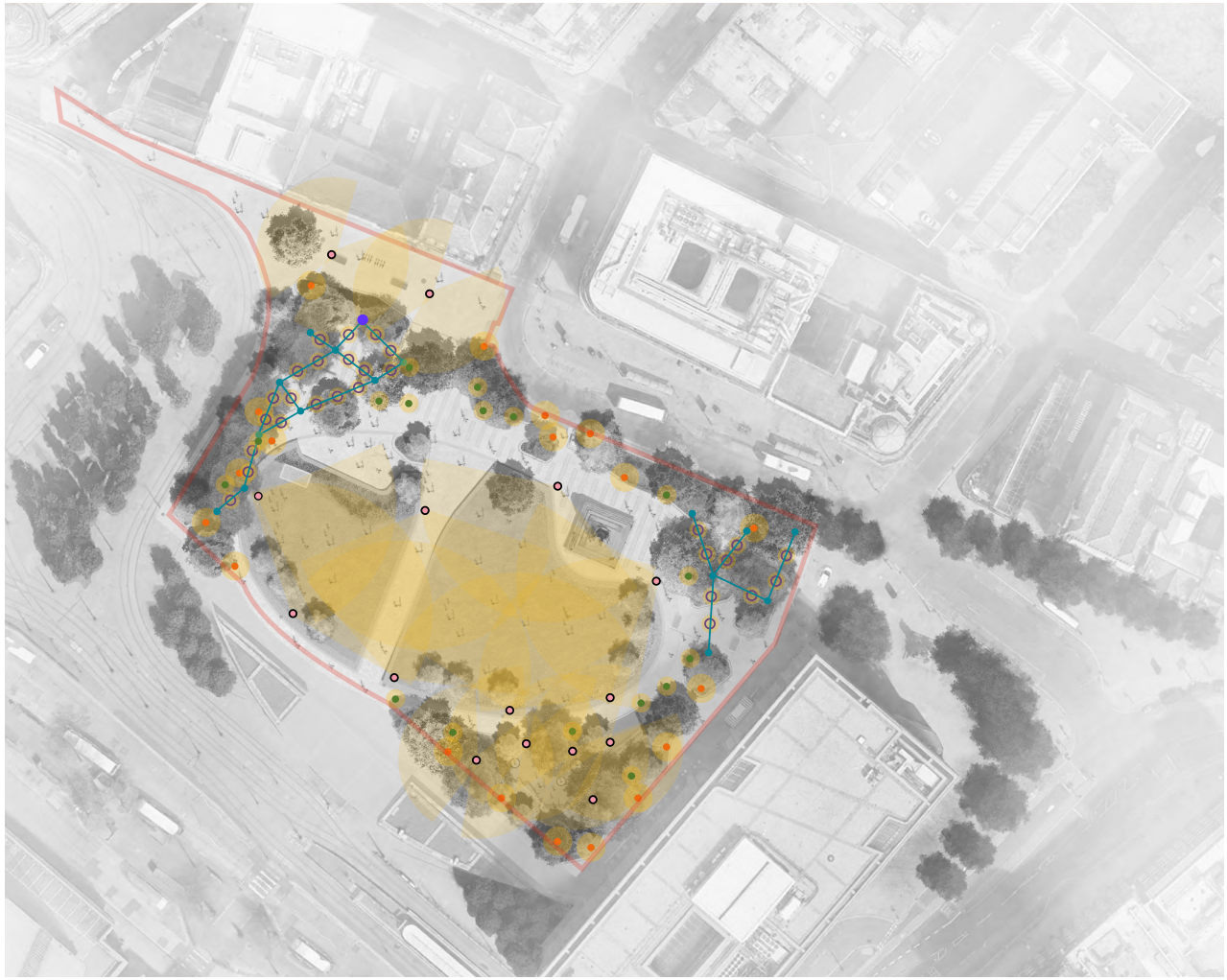


Lighting Bollards



12m column (Single Head)

Lighting specification indicative



Plan indicating lighting strategy

6 Stewardship and Management

Stewardship and Management

Long-Term Stewardship Model

The long-term success of Piccadilly Gardens will be dependent upon the establishment of an effective stewardship framework that promotes shared ownership, strategic leadership and long-term commitment from key stakeholders. Whilst the detailed governance arrangements will be developed as the project progresses, the aim is to establish a collaborative approach capable of supporting the ongoing management, maintenance, activation and enhancement of the Gardens throughout their lifecycle.

The stewardship framework aims to bring together relevant public, private and civic sector partners with a shared interest in the quality, reputation and future success of Piccadilly Gardens. The framework will seek to ensure that the vision established through the regeneration project continues to be supported beyond completion of the capital works and that the Gardens remain a high-quality civic destination for residents, workers and visitors.

Manchester City Council are working alongside a specialist consultant to produce a long term stewardship model around a shared vision. Engagement with major property owners, businesses, transport operators, Greater Manchester Police and other key stakeholders will help identify opportunities for future collaboration, investment and shared governance.

Stewardship Principles

- The future stewardship arrangements seek to:
- Provide strategic leadership and accountability for the long-term management of the Gardens.
- Encourage collaboration between key public, private and community stakeholders.
- Support the delivery of a high-quality, safe and welcoming public realm.
- Facilitate long-term funding, investment and resourcing opportunities.
- Promote place activation, programming and events that contribute positively to the vitality of the space.
- Monitor performance and identify opportunities for continual improvement and adaptation over time.

Public Realm Management

The stewardship framework is be supported by an operational management approach that establishes how Piccadilly Gardens will function on a day-to-day basis. The Management Plan defines maintenance standards, operational responsibilities and performance expectations to ensure the public realm is managed efficiently and consistently.

The operational management arrangements are anticipated to address the maintenance and inspection of landscape and public realm assets - particularly of handworks, trees and planting, cleaning and waste management, irrigation, lighting, security and a small scale activation programme across the year.

Included within this application is the proposed Management and Maintenance Plan - this will continue to evolve with continuing dialogue with the various vested MCC stakeholders.

Review and Monitoring

The stewardship and management arrangements will be reviewed periodically to ensure they continue to support the evolving needs of Piccadilly Gardens and the public. Regular monitoring of maintenance standards, asset performance, public use and operational requirements should inform future management priorities and investment decisions.

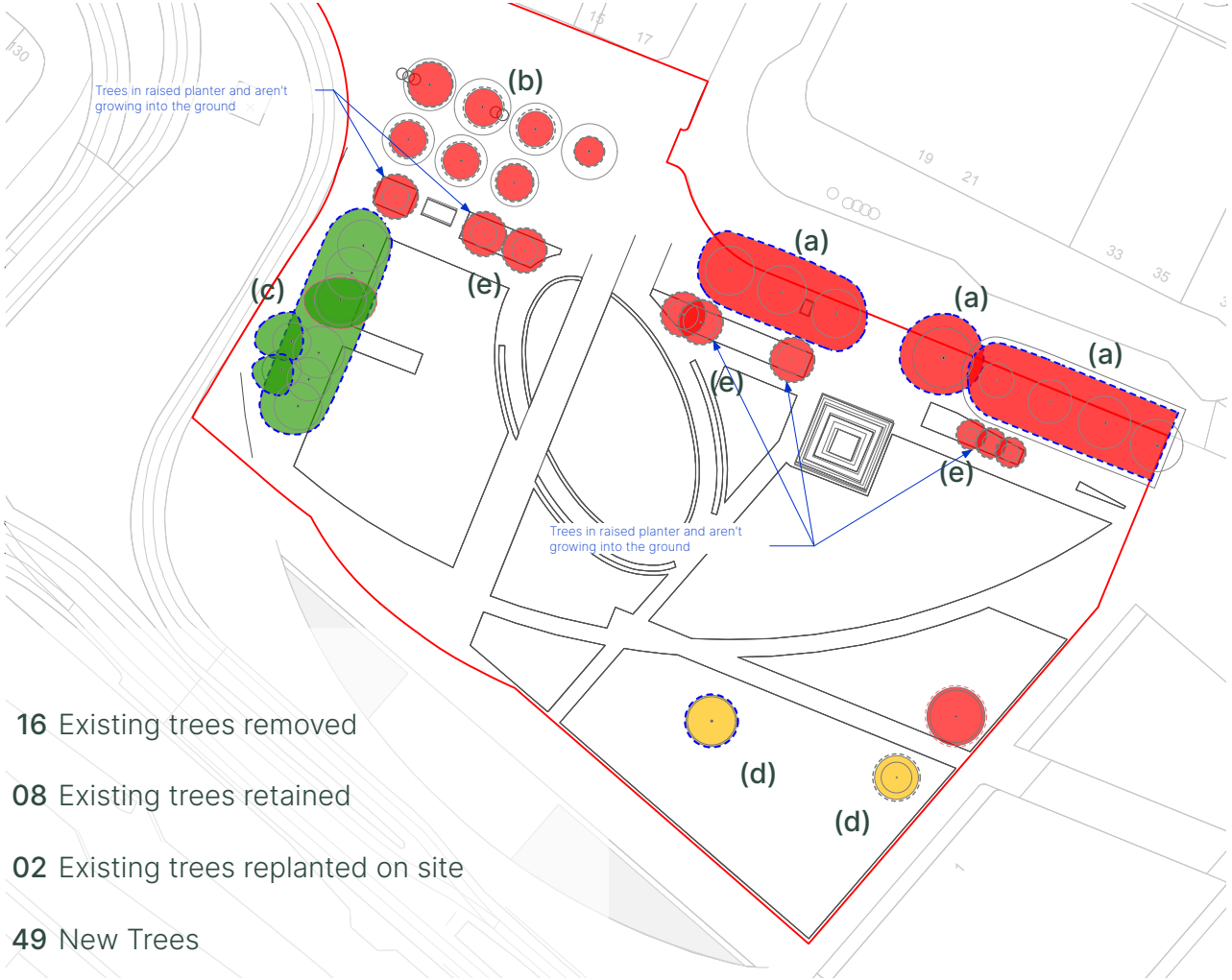
7 Appendix 1 - Supporting Design Information

Existing Trees (Retain and Removed)

A number of trees exist on site, and the re-design calls for the removal of 16 of them.

The 8 London Planes along Piccadilly (a) are proposed for removal. The trunks of these trees have grown into the tree rings and removal is not possible without significantly damaging the trees.

The 7 London Plane trees at (b) are also growing into their original grids suffering damage to the trunks. This and other influences means these are Category C trees - low / poor quality. For both these groups the damage caused by the existing grills has materially affected the health of the tree and will limit its lifespan and potential to grow in the future. For these reasons these trees are proposed to be removed in place of more suitable, better details replacements.



Key

- Existing Tree Retained
- Existing trees retained and relocated within the site boundary
- Existing trees removed
- Root Protection Area
- Category B Tree
- Category C Tree
- Category U Tree

16 Existing trees removed

08 Existing trees retained

02 Existing trees replanted on site

49 New Trees

05 In Hard landscape - all others in soft

Existing Trees (Retained and Removed)

This group of Gleditsia (c) will be retained. Although not suffering the same damage as the London Planes currently, it is evident they will in the near future. Improvement works are proposed for these trees, to remove the grills and refinish with a permeable tree surfacing. We will also investigate the condition of the below ground cells to establish suitable conditions for the long term health of the trees.

The 2 magnolia trees (d) within the existing lawn are in good condition and will be lifted, stored and replanted within the new scheme.

There are a number of small, typically multi-stem, trees within raised planters highlighted in locations (e)

The scheme achieves the 1:3 replacement ratio of new to removed trees required through planning (noting this metric does not consider trees in raised planters to be counted).



Magnolia to be retained (d)



Existing London Planes (b)



Existing London Planes trunk damage (a)



Existing Gleditsia (c)

Levels Strategy

Piccadilly Gardens is a relatively flat and level space already. The proposed levels work with the existing topography of Piccadilly Gardens, with the need to tie in with the surrounding streets, trees and listed monuments.

Accessibility is fundamental to this project and the external environment remains step free, with gradients providing comfortable movement for all users.



Key:

45.06 Existing levels

Existing gradients

45.65 Proposed levels

Proposed gradients

Plan illustrating levels strategy

Access and Servicing Strategy

Servicing requirements have been carefully integrated into the layout, ensuring operational and maintenance needs are met without compromising the character, safety or accessibility of Piccadilly Gardens.

Vehicle access is limited to essential movements only. We are maintaining the existing service arrangements along Piccadilly and the tram route to Mosley Street. Space has been allowed within the site for the manoeuvring of small servicing vehicles associated with the ongoing maintenance and servicing of the space. A secure line around the perimeter of the site controls vehicle movements ensuring safety for pedestrians within the site.



Plan illustrating access and servicing strategy

Inclusive Design Strategy

Arup have been appointed to provide specialist Access and Inclusivity advice. The scheme has been thoroughly reviewed and the design has evolved to take on board comments from both Arup and the wider pool of consultees. A meeting has also taken place with MCC access officer, Lorraine Ward, to review the scheme in advance of submission.

A brief summary of the salient points are as follows:

- Movement Routes and Circulation
- Accessible Levels
- Surface Materials
- Design of the Raised Lawn Edge
- Furniture / Seating
- Edge Treatments
- Planter Railing Design
- Existing Monuments
- Play Area Design
- The Lighting Design
- Cycle Storage Provision
- Wayfinding
- The Management of the Space



Every space within the city should form part of a wider equitable and inclusive built environment

Movement and Circulation

The proposed layout has been designed to provide clear, comfortable and accessible routes throughout the space, supporting safe movement for all users.

- Generous circulation routes typically 3m to 6m wide.
- 2m minimum route width maintained at local pinch points.
- Clear and legible pedestrian connections throughout the site.
- Minimum 2.1m clear height maintained beneath tree canopies and lighting infrastructure.
- Accessible routes designed to accommodate wheelchair users, people with mobility impairments, and families with buggies.

Materiality

A refined palette of high-quality materials creates a cohesive identity across Piccadilly Gardens while responding to its distinct character areas. Durable natural stone paving, inspired by the city's civic spaces, provides longevity and uses variations in texture and laying patterns to subtly define routes and spaces without excessive signage.

Guidance asks for colour contrast of 30LRV. In practice this is rarely possible in external surface materials. We have addressed this through tonal and textural difference, ie. to base of planters, monuments and lawn edge there is a 400-600 band of cropped cube blocks.

All surfaces will be firm and level with adequate slip resistance (wet/dry)



Example of contrast banding on Glade of Light

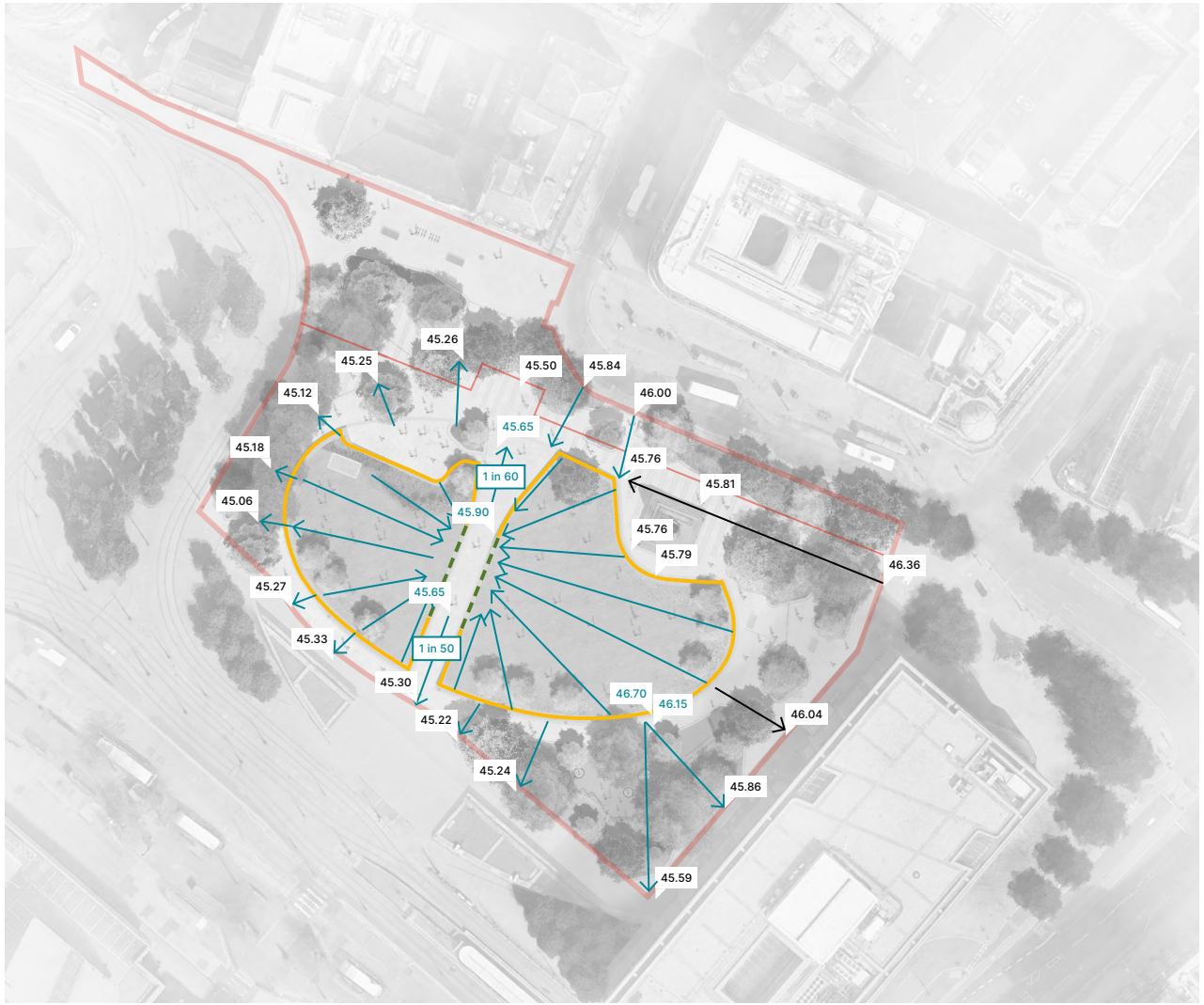


Indicating locations of contrasting cube blocks - note final specification of stone colour TBC further development/testing

Accessible Gradients

The proposed landscape has been designed to provide comfortable and accessible movement throughout the site, with gentle gradients that support users of all ages and abilities.

- Central path gradients of approximately 1:50 to the south and 1:60 to the north.
- The majority of routes maintain an average gradient of 1:50.
- Gradients designed to support inclusive access and ease of movement.
- Comfortable routes for wheelchair users, people with mobility impairments, and families with buggies.
- Smooth connections between key destinations across the site.



Raised Lawn Edge

This edge holds the raised lawn, this is not designed as a seat but may function as a seated perch

Edge detection is required from approach from both lower paving level and raised lawn level:

To base:

- Cropped cube blocks to base offer a tonal and texture contrast to stone colour.

From lawn:

- The stone offers visual contrast to lawn
- The stone top is adequately deep at 1.2m
- A 350mm heavily textured strip to the lawn side edge provides textural contrast
- An up-stand between lawn level and stone top will be provided

The fluted design to the low level up-stand has been reduced in depth to address concerns around white cane users - no guidance for this but will be explored through detailed design



Plan illustrating extents of raised and flush lawn edges

Raised Lawn Edge

Provides a variety of options for seating:

- Locations - seating has been distributed throughout plan - typically never more than 30m from a seat within the redline
- Design - All benches will be provided with arm rests as a minimum
- Variations to the bench product selected have been developed to provide inset armrests to facilitate wheelchair transfer - these are distributed across the space
- Queering Public Space requests more intimate, secluded seating 'cosy corners' - but in this setting this particular suggestion would go against the over-riding security / safety priorities within the Gardens
- Visual contrast - will be provided between furniture items and the adjacent paving material
- Cycle hoops have been distributed across the gardens - accessible spaced options provided

See page 66 for further detail on the furniture proposed.

Planter Railings + Kick Plate

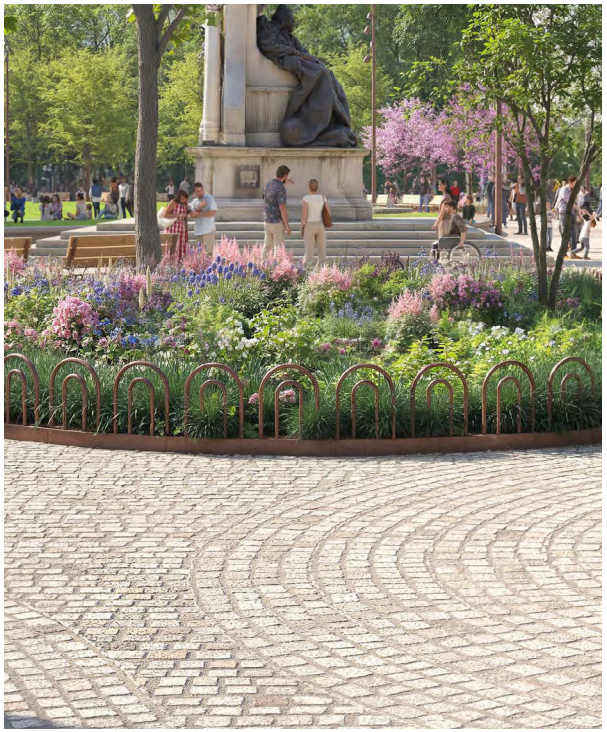
In response to comments relating to potential issues with white cane users, a kick plate has been added to the base of the railings to provide a consistent edge.

The colour of the railing suites with the wider metalwork palette - chosen to provide colour contrast to the adjacent paved areas.

As the design develops, the aspiration is to incorporate edging details that support safe and inclusive movement throughout the site. Key considerations include:

- Minimising gaps to reduce cane snagging risks.
- Providing a 100mm up-stand for cane detectability.
- Achieving good visual contrast with adjacent paving.

See page 69 for further detailed information.



Proposed planter railings with solid kick plate and contrasting the adjacent paving material

Monuments

Piccadilly Gardens holds significant heritage value, the collection of listed monuments stands testament to this. The proposal seeks to improve the setting and appreciation of these assets by reducing visual clutter, improving sight lines and creating high-quality surrounding public realm.

Currently these stand as a series of isolated monuments obscured by temporary clutter, the design incorporates them into the overall composition of the gardens. New planting, paving and creation of civic spaces around the monuments create appropriate settings that enhance their prominence and allow their historic and cultural significance to be better appreciated by visitors and residents alike.



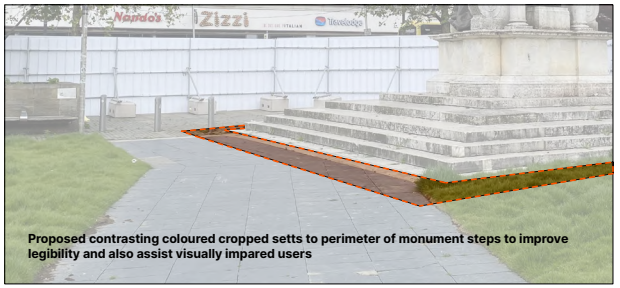
Proposed enhanced setting of monuments

To improve accessibility and reduce potential trip hazards around the monument, the proposed works will provide a level and clearly defined interface between the monument and surrounding public realm through the following measures:

- New paving installed flush with the monument's bottom step, removing the existing trip hazard.
- Contrasting sett band to enhance the monument's legibility and assist visually impaired users.







Illustrating the proposed improvements to the interfaces with the Queen Victoria monument

Inclusive play Experience

The play area is designed to provide a range of play opportunities and challenge levels, enabling children with different abilities and needs to play together and enjoy shared experiences.

- A variety of play activities catering to different ages, abilities and confidence levels.
- Opportunities for children of differing needs to participate alongside one another.
- Spaces that encourage active play, social interaction and imaginative experiences.
- An inclusive and welcoming environment for children, families and carers.

Overall, the play area aims to create an engaging, inclusive and memorable destination that promotes healthy activity, social connection and family use at the heart of Manchester City Centre.

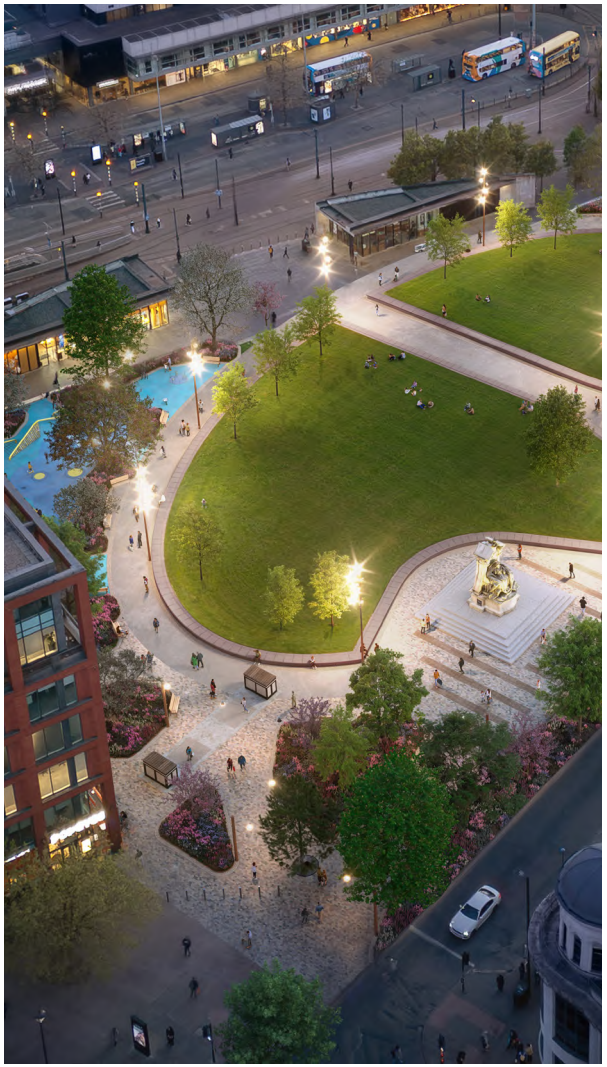
For more information refer the earlier section on play.

Lighting Design

The lighting strategy creates a safe, welcoming and accessible environment that supports day and evening use by:

- Providing clear, well-lit routes for safe movement.
- Enhancing visibility, wayfinding and security.
- Using layered lighting to reinforce character and identity.
- Maintaining consistent lighting levels and CCTV coverage.
- Supporting seasonal events through feature and programmable lighting.
- Carefully controlling dynamic effects to ensure inclusivity.
- Creating a comfortable and welcoming experience for all users.





Cycle Stands

Provided along the main movement axis to the north of the site, running from Market street to Piccadilly:

- Product design to be developed.
- 20 no. cycle stands included.
- 08 no. accessible cycle spaces.

Key:

5 Location of Cycle Stands

*number in circle indicated number of stands



Cycle stands in Albert Square

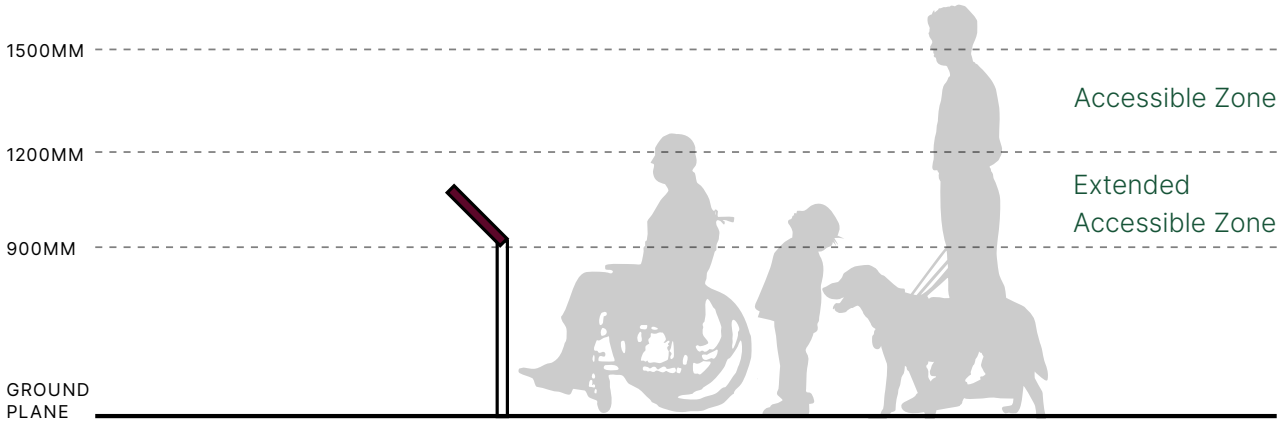


Plan illustrating extents of raised and flush lawn edges

Interpretation Boards

The interpretation boards must be fully accessible in accordance with best guidance, Part M compliance and Equalities Act 2010 for all.

- To deliver this the interpretation boards will:
- Use high contrast with backgrounds.
- Be matt or semi-matt finish and be well-lit without glare.
- Be consistently positioned site wide.
- Be within the extended accessible zone, if possible.
- Include standardised, clear symbols for facilities and key locations, where applicable.
- Potential for tactile elements.



Management and Maintenance

The landscape will be managed to ensure safe, accessible and unobstructed routes for all users through regular inspection and maintenance, including:

- Regular pruning of trees to prevent low-hanging branches obstructing pedestrian routes and reducing visibility.
- Maintenance of a minimum 2.1m clear height above footpaths and accessible routes to ensure safe and comfortable passage for all users.
- Routine clearance of fallen leaves and other debris from paths, crossings and seating areas to reduce slip hazards.
- Ongoing management of planting to prevent encroachment onto footways and maintain clear route widths.
- Regular inspections to ensure the landscape remains safe, legible and accessible for users of all ages and abilities.

Consultation Feedback

Key points raised in the consultations.



Desire for a **safer**, more **welcoming** and family-friendly environment.



Strong support for **increased** planting, trees and biodiversity.



Requests for **more** activities/attractions for children and families.



Improved **quality** and usability of public spaces.



Better **opportunities** for events, culture and community use.



Enhanced accessibility and inclusivity across the Gardens.



Retention and **celebration** of the site's heritage and identity.



Support for creating a more **attractive** and **vibrant** city centre destination.

Key Stakeholder Activities

Multiple engagement sessions have been taking place across a range of stakeholders. In summary this has been:

Greater Manchester Police (including Counter Terrorism Unit):

Several meetings took place between May and July 2026 to provide GMP with the opportunity to comment and feed into the emerging design proposals. This included input on CCTV positioning and the lighting strategy, as well as input on Access and Security stratigies. Specific meetings were held to discuss the Crime Impact Statement.

Transport for Greater Manchester, MCC Highways and MCC Cycle Smart:

Considering the crucial interplay between the design of Piccadilly Gardens and the role of this area as a transport hub, extensive engagement has taken place with transport-related stakeholders during the pre-application period.

Following on from initial briefing sessions, representatives from TfGM were invited to attend the project's regular Design Team Meetings to ensure alignment with their workstream around the wider Piccadilly area and iterative input into the design proposals. Likewise, extensive engagement with MCC Highways and MCC Cycle Smart has taken place to discuss and agree approaches to pedestrian flow and pedestrian crossings; cycle movement and cycle parking; and vehicular movements and servicing.

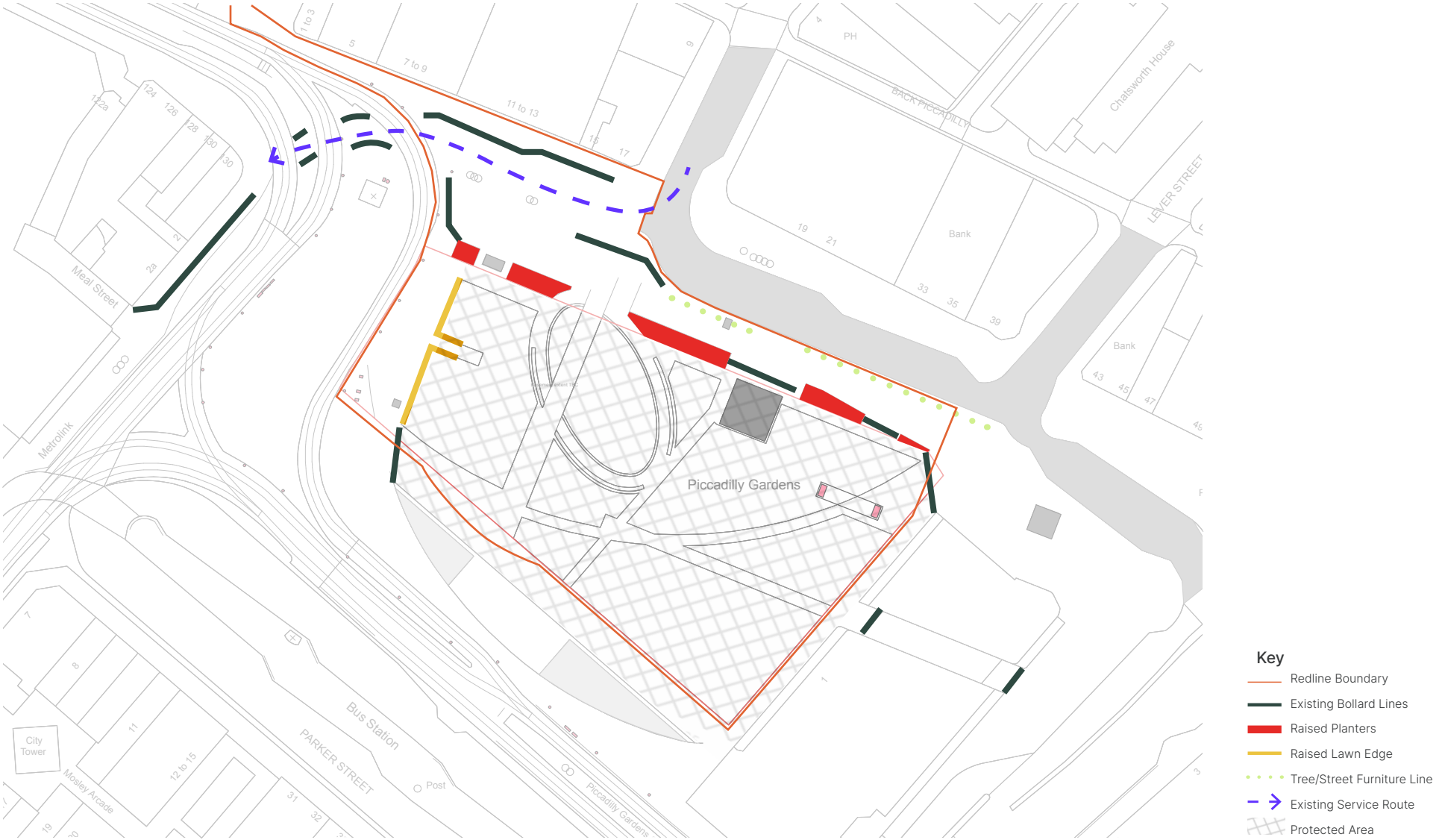
Manchester City Council Estates Management, Facilities Management, Environmental Health, Parks and Trees:

Considering the interaction between these areas, several meetings included representatives from across these areas to input into the detailed design proposals, with meetings held between May and July 2026. Extensive discussions took place around the approach to CCTV and lighting, including the night-time activation strategy, as well as the detailed tree planting strategy. Another key workstream was around the approach to the children's play space, including involvement from members of the Manchester City Council team with previous experience designing and managing play spaces within the city.

List below references all those engaged with and which ones still ongoing:

- GMP - Ongoing
- CTU / GMP - Ongoing
- TfGM - Ongoing
- MCC Estates Management - Ongoing
- MCC Planning Policy - Ongoing
- MCC Highways - Ongoing
- MCC Facilities Management - Ongoing
- MCC Environmental Health - Ongoing
- MCC Welfare, Equality and Diversity - Ongoing
- MCC Cycle Smart - Concluded and within MCC Highways
- MCC Parks Team - Ongoing
- MCC Tree Officer - Concluded
- MCC LLFA - Ongoing
- GMAAS - Concluded informed DBA
- Internal Access Group Panel - Ongoing
- GMEU - Ongoing
- ENWL - Ongoing
- Cadens - Ongoing
- UU - Ongoing

Access and Security - Existing Arrangement



Access and Security - Proposed Arrangement



Overview of Proposed Perimeter Conditions



Access and Security - Approach

The approach to access and security of Piccadilly Gardens has been developed through ongoing engagement with Greater Manchester Police and other security stakeholders. The approach combines physical design measures alongside the improvements proposed to the active management and operational security of the space.

The approach focusses on creating a safe, welcoming space which has clear sight lines, open views through, a comprehensive CCTV network and high quality lighting strategy. Physical security measures are designed as part of an integrated layered approach, semi-mature tree placement, furniture, bollards and planting beds all combine to create a safe but people focusses space.

This approach will continue to be develop alongside key stakeholders from within MCC and GMP and is supported by specialist security consultants.

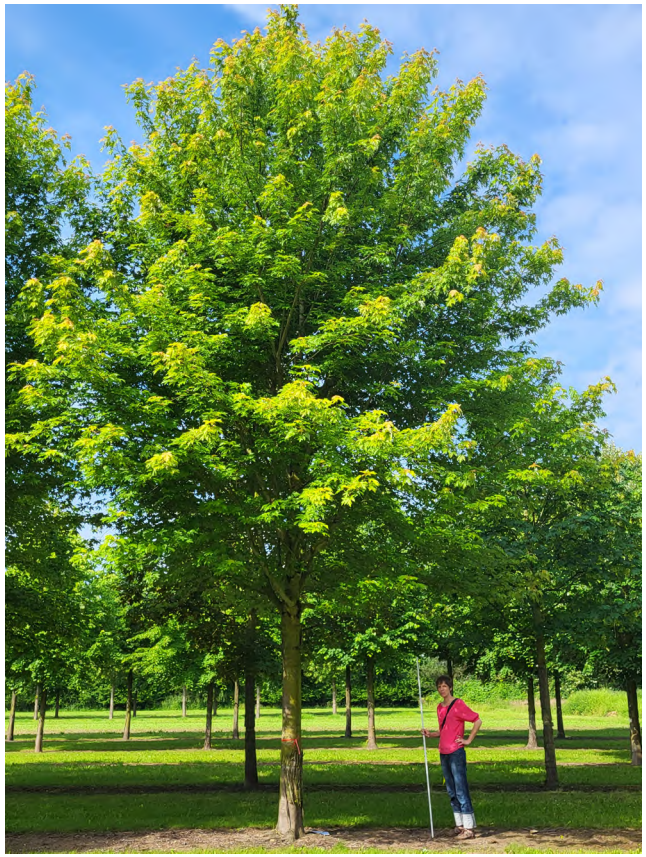


Image of specific tree tagged for use along Piccadilly Edge (Acer x Freemanii) 60-70cm girth trunk. Large mature trees planted from day 1



Existing bollards on site (appear not to be PAS rated) - to be reused within proposed strategy

8 Appendix 2 - Supporting Detail Studies

Movement Studies: Existing Public Transport Infrastructure

For Context Only

Transport infrastructure occupies a large proportion of Piccadilly Gardens, creating conflicts with pedestrian desire lines and impacting on the Gardens' potential to function as an enjoyable public space.



- Metrolink route
- Bus route
- Metrolink station
- Bus stop
- Loading bay
- Taxi rank/stand
- Cars route

Movement Studies: Conflicts

Focus on hazards and conflict with public transport

The high footfall across Piccadilly Gardens should be embraced. It's function as a hub in many ways is always an **opportunity**.

However, the place has become over-burdened. Wherever reasonably possible, sources of footfall should be relocated, additional pressures not be created; existing footfall should be offered improved or alternative routes.

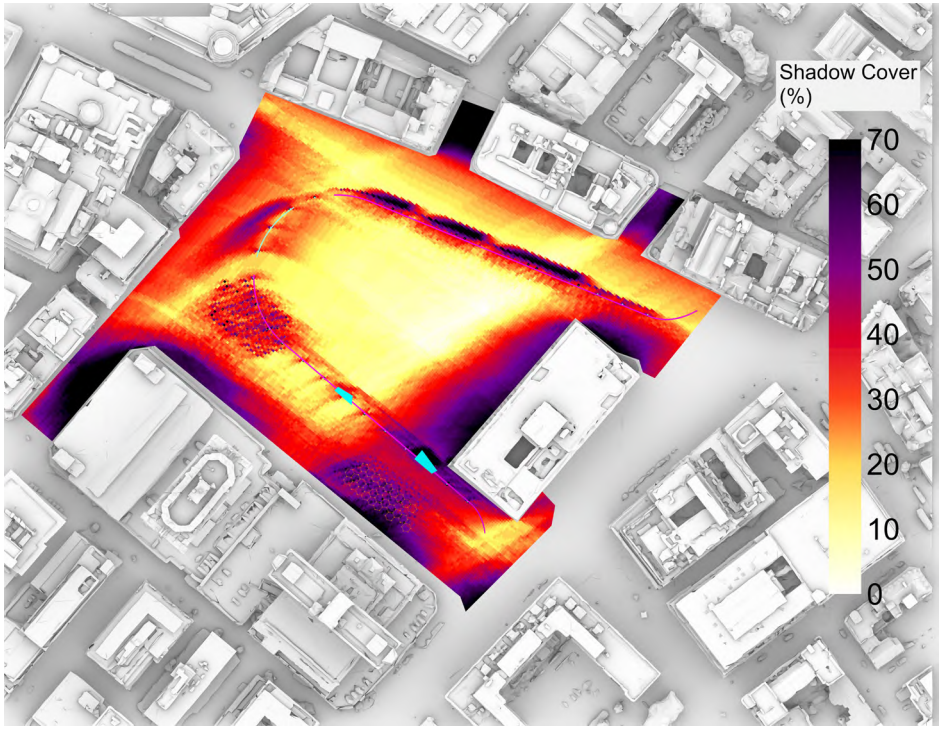
The focus should be on improving bottle necks and the crossings of roads, tram tracks and bus lanes.

These areas are:

A - Junction with Market Street
B - Junction with Oldham Street
C - Junction with Lever Street
D - Junction with Newton Street
E - Junction of Mosley St with Parker Street
F - Central Crossing in Parker Street with the crossing of tram tracks
G - Junction of Portland Street with Parker Street
H - Junction of Mosley Street with New York Street

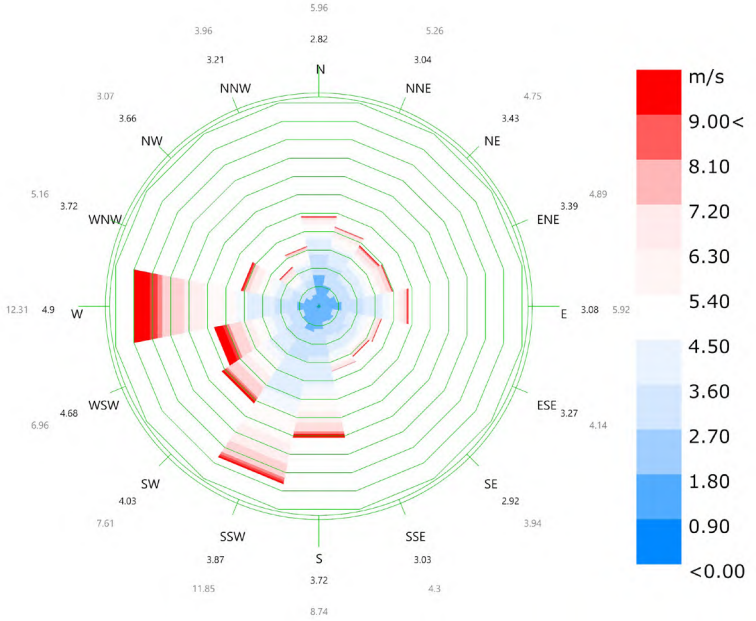


Microclimate Analysis



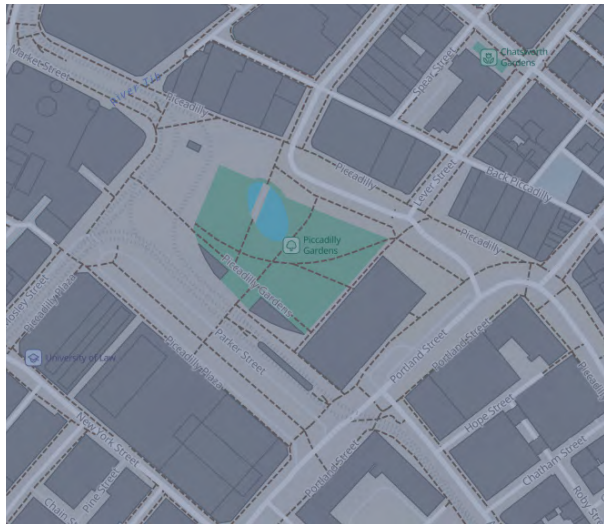
←A shadow analysis on the 21st June shows a mix of shaded and exposed areas will be available during the summer.

The southern part of the square benefits from shading from the tall surrounding buildings. The northern part of the square is more exposed but tree canopy's will provide welcome shade on hot days.

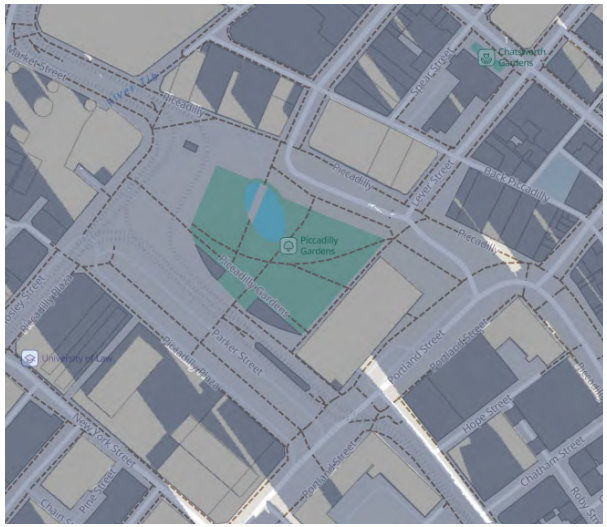


Prevailing winds are from the west and south-west. The western and northern side of the square may be windy. Existing and proposed trees will help mitigate windy conditions and improve comfort levels →

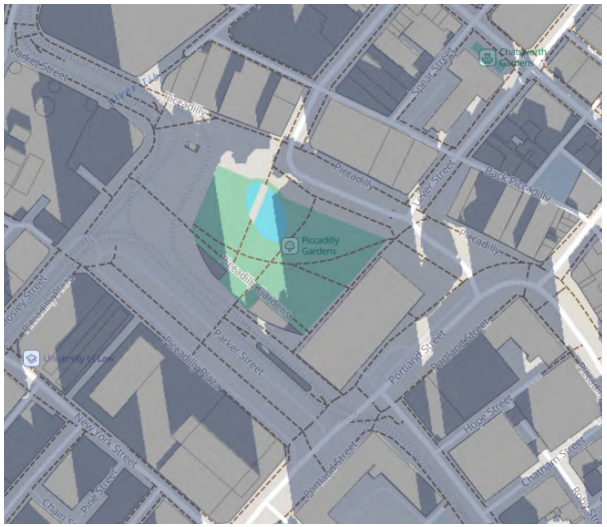
Microclimate Analysis: Sun Shadow Analysis - Winter



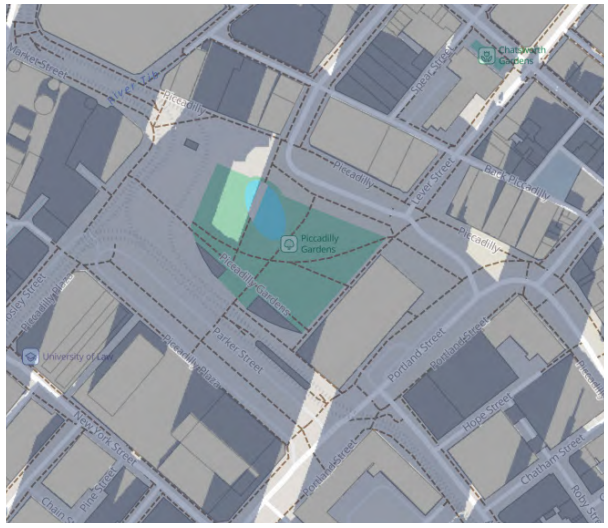
December 7am



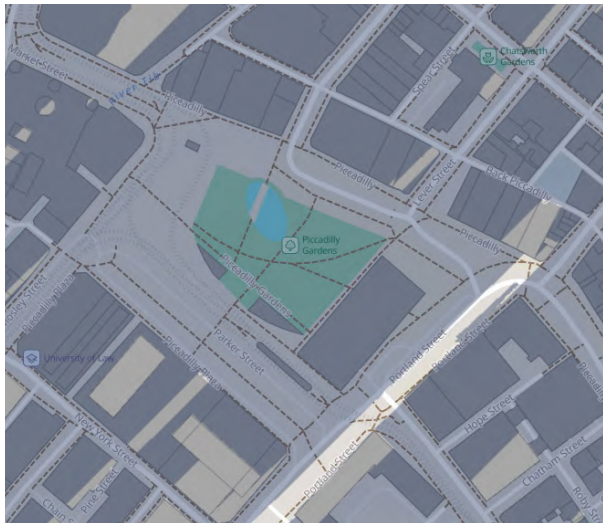
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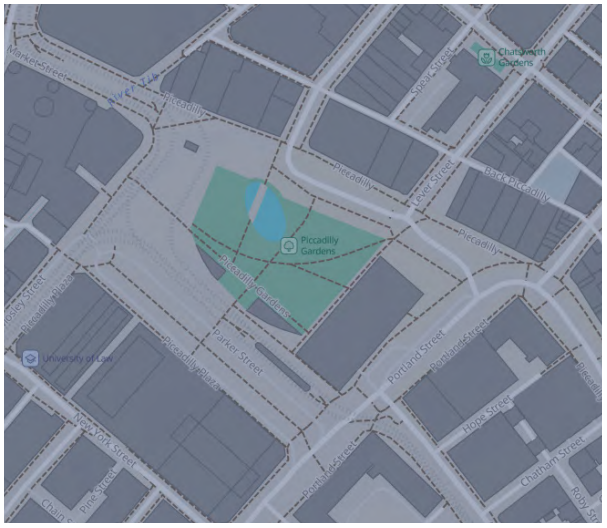
December 11am



December 1pm

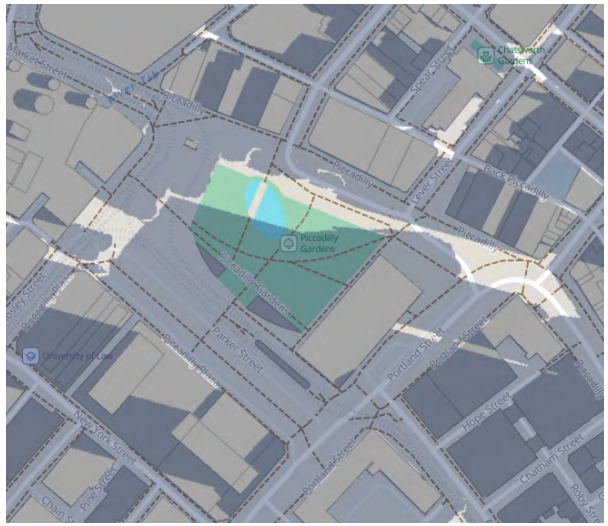


December 3pm

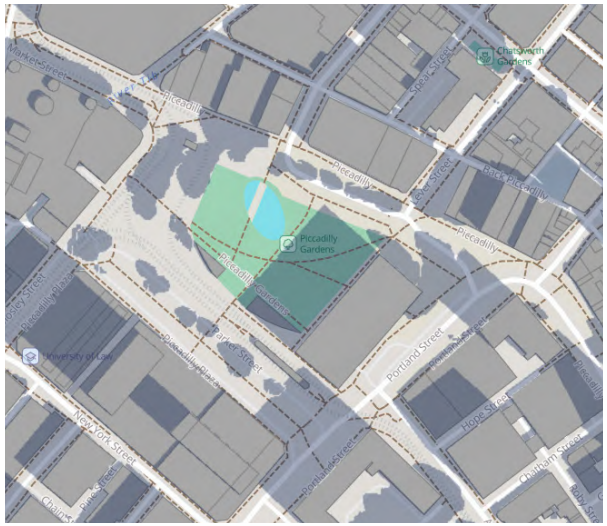


December 5pm

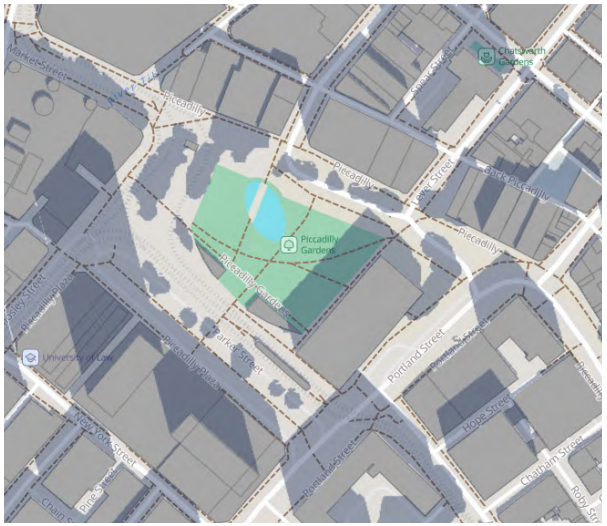
Microclimate Analysis: Sun Shadow Analysis - Spring



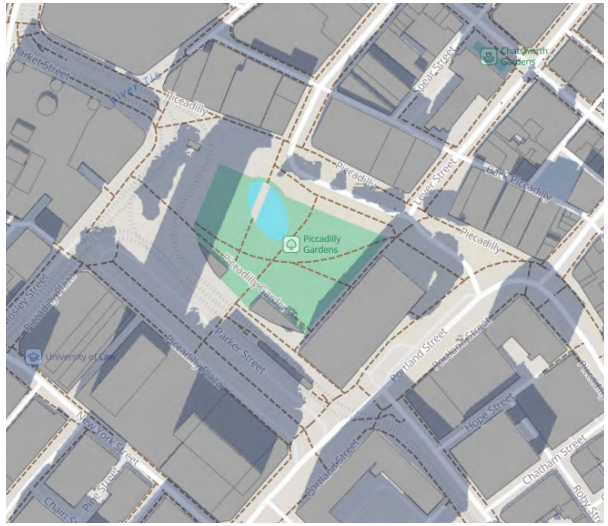
March 7am



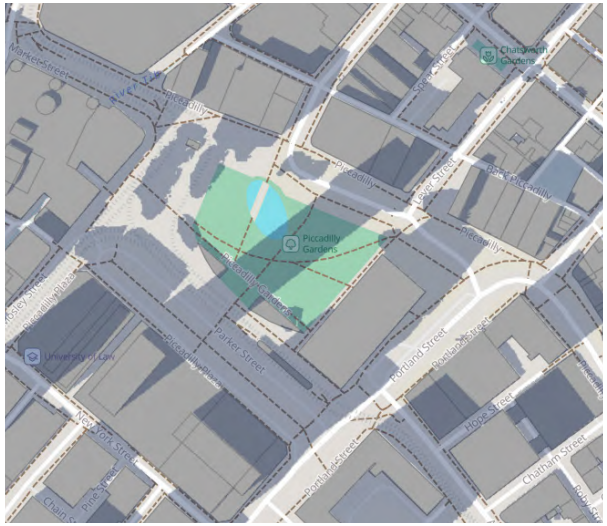
March 9am



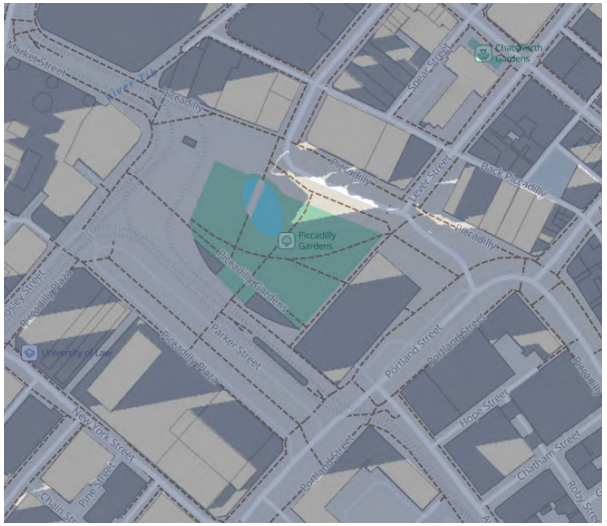
March 9am



March 1pm

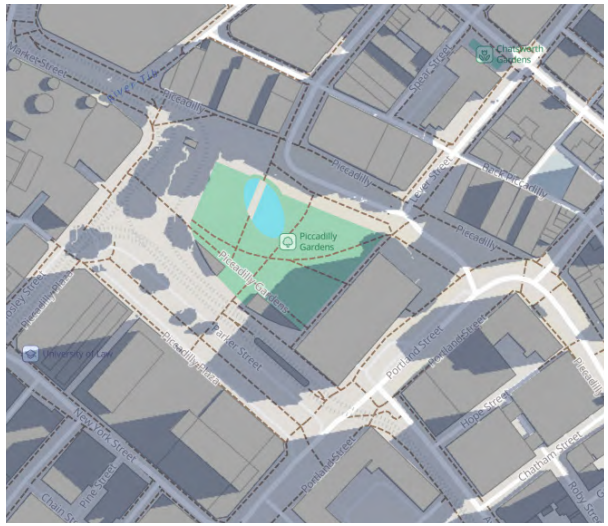


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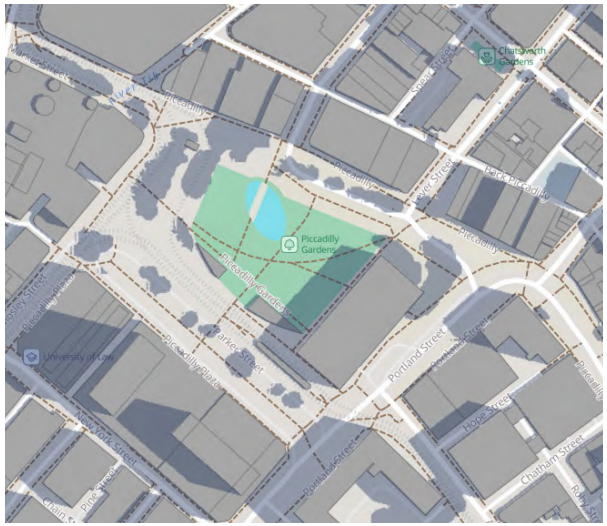


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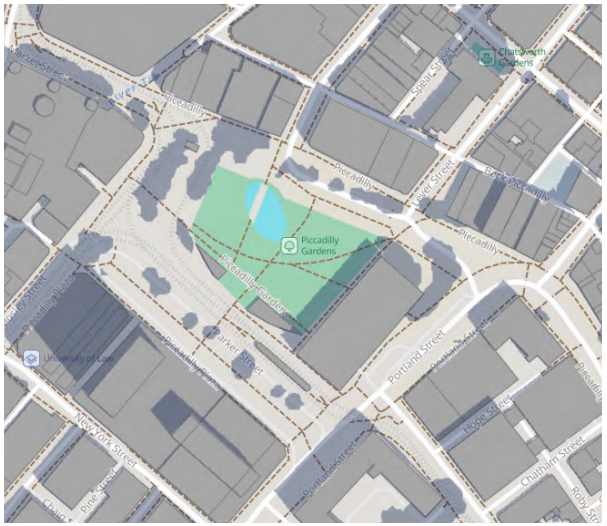
Microclimate Analysis: Sun Shadow Analysis - Summer



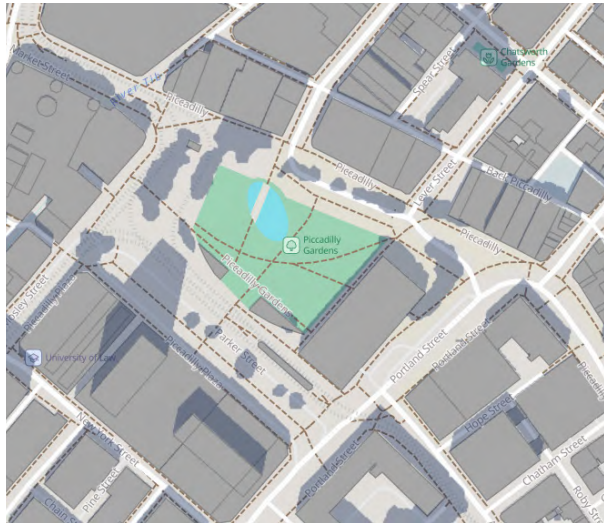
June 7am



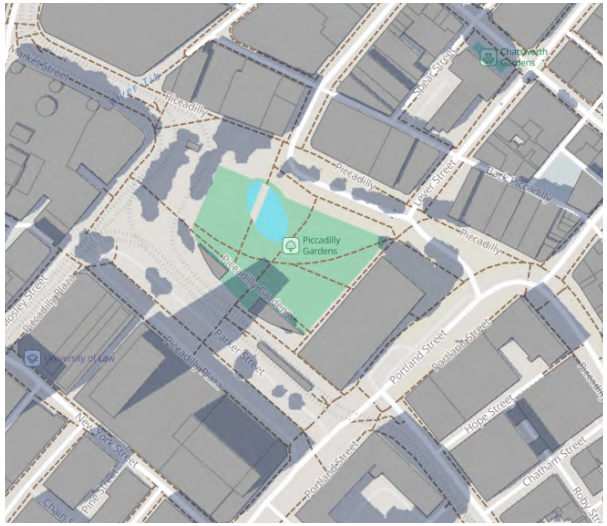
June 9am



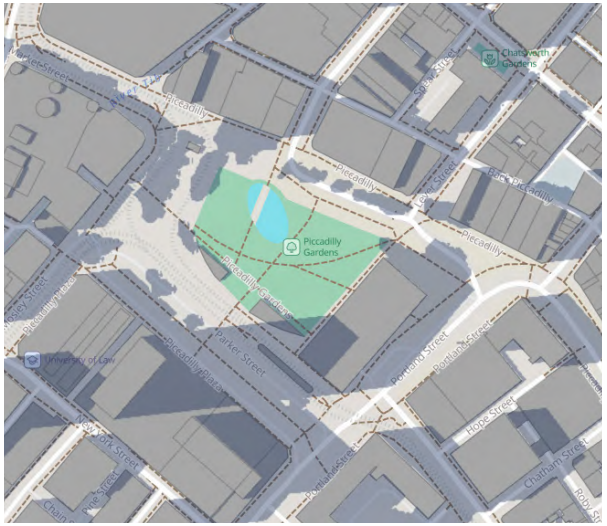
June 11am



June 1pm

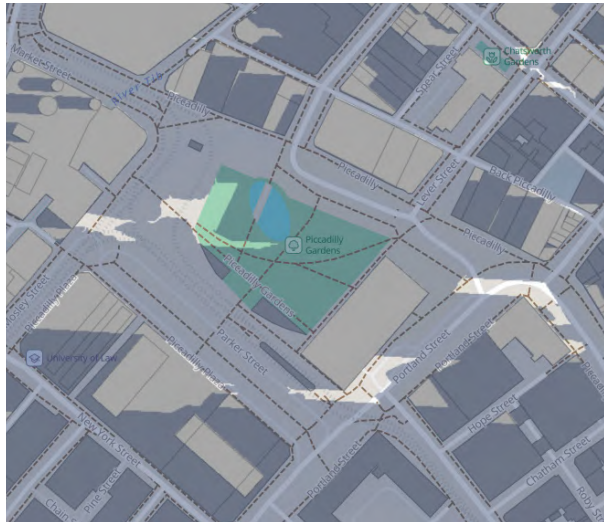


June 3pm

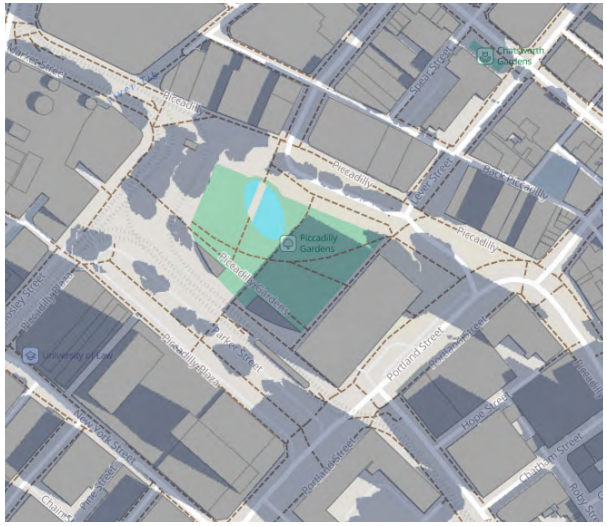


June 5pm

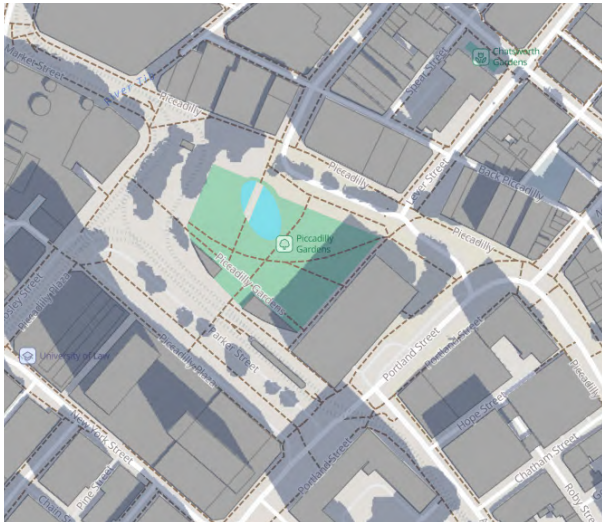
Microclimate Analysis: Sun Shadow Analysis - Autumn



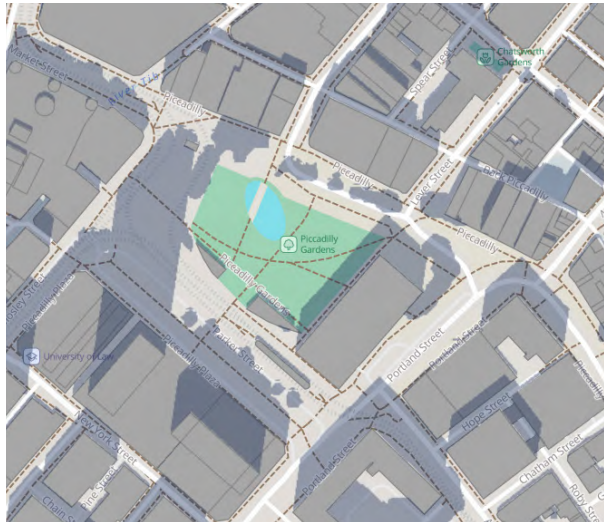
September 7am



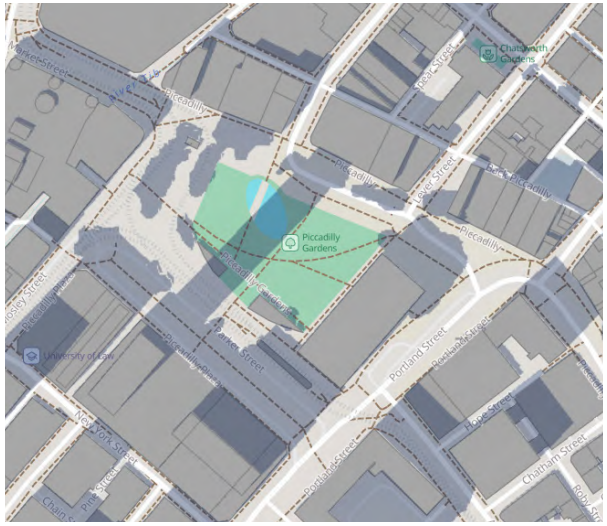
September 9am



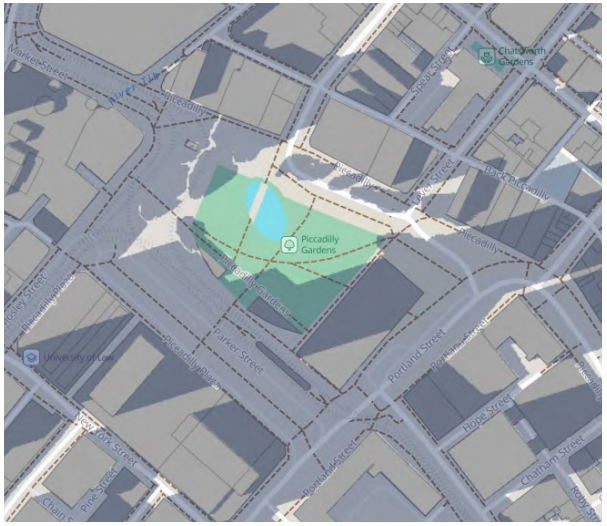
September 11am



September 1pm

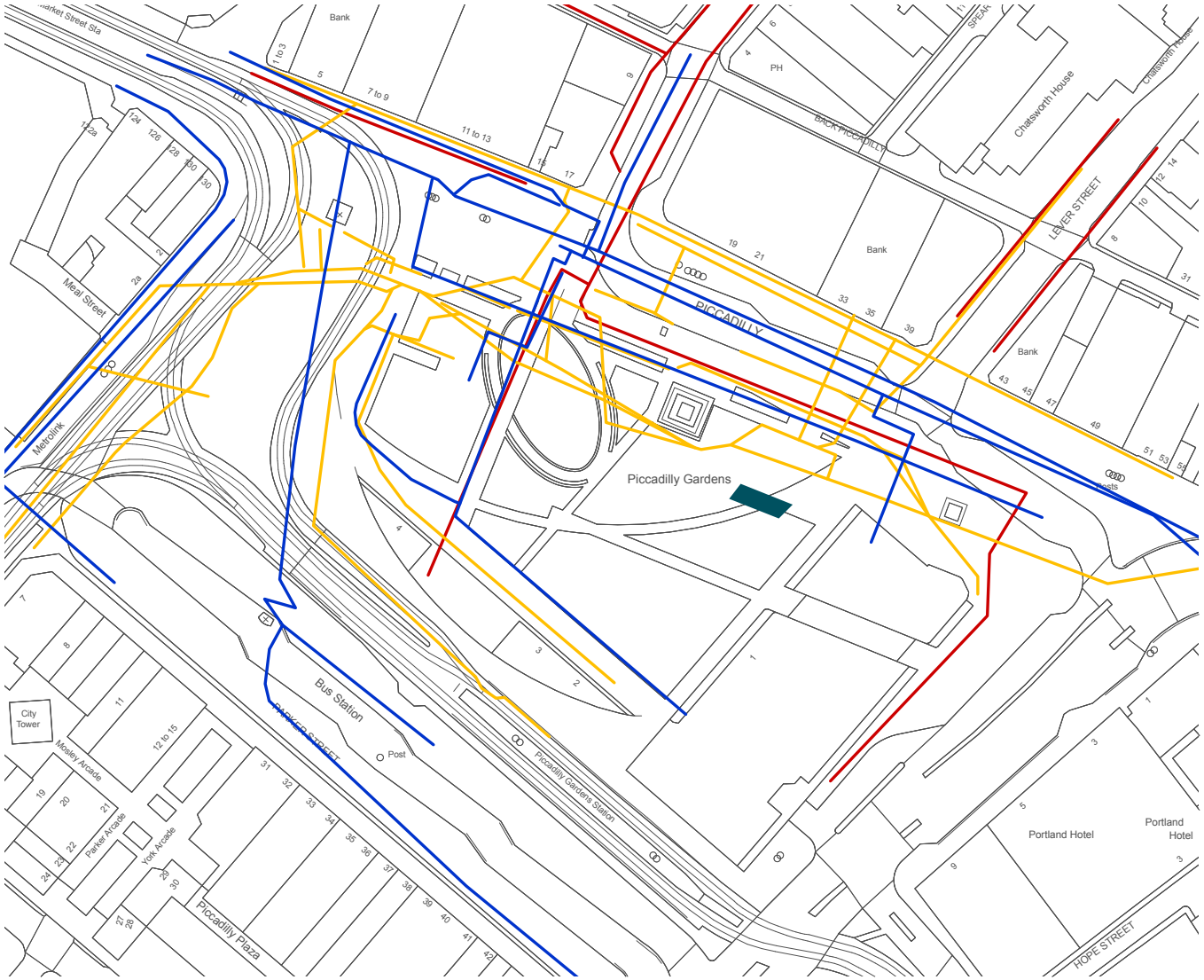


September 3pm



September 5pm

Existing Utilities

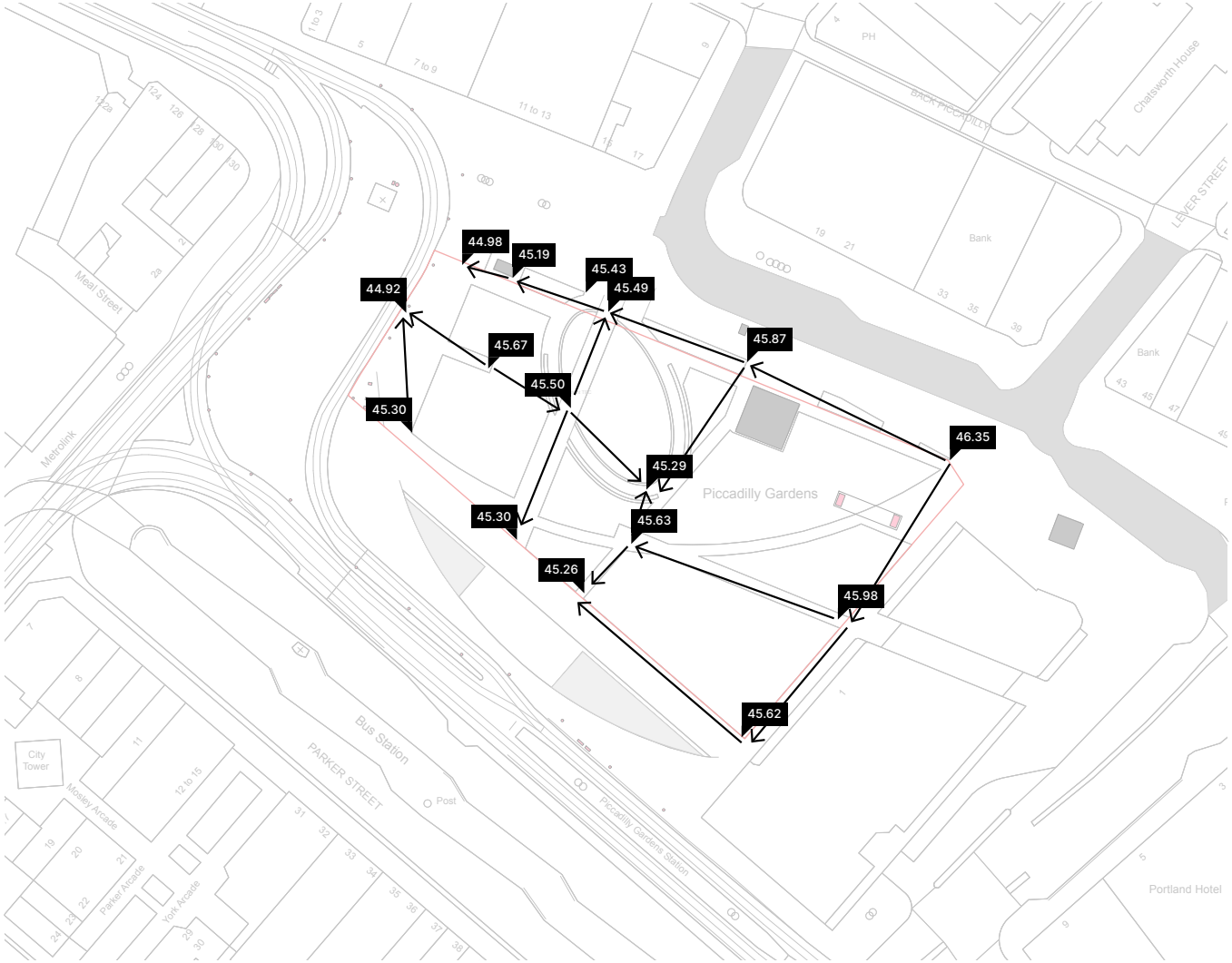


Electricity

Water

Gas

Existing Site Levels

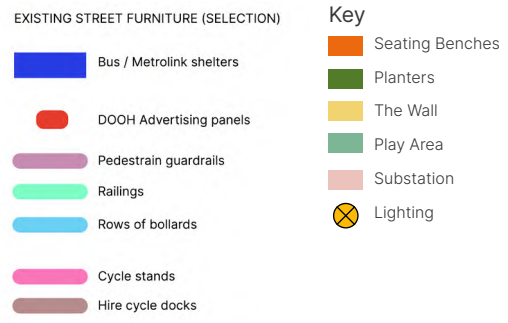


Existing Furniture

Existing 'Street Furniture' is considered an opportunity to reduce clutter in the way of pedestrians.

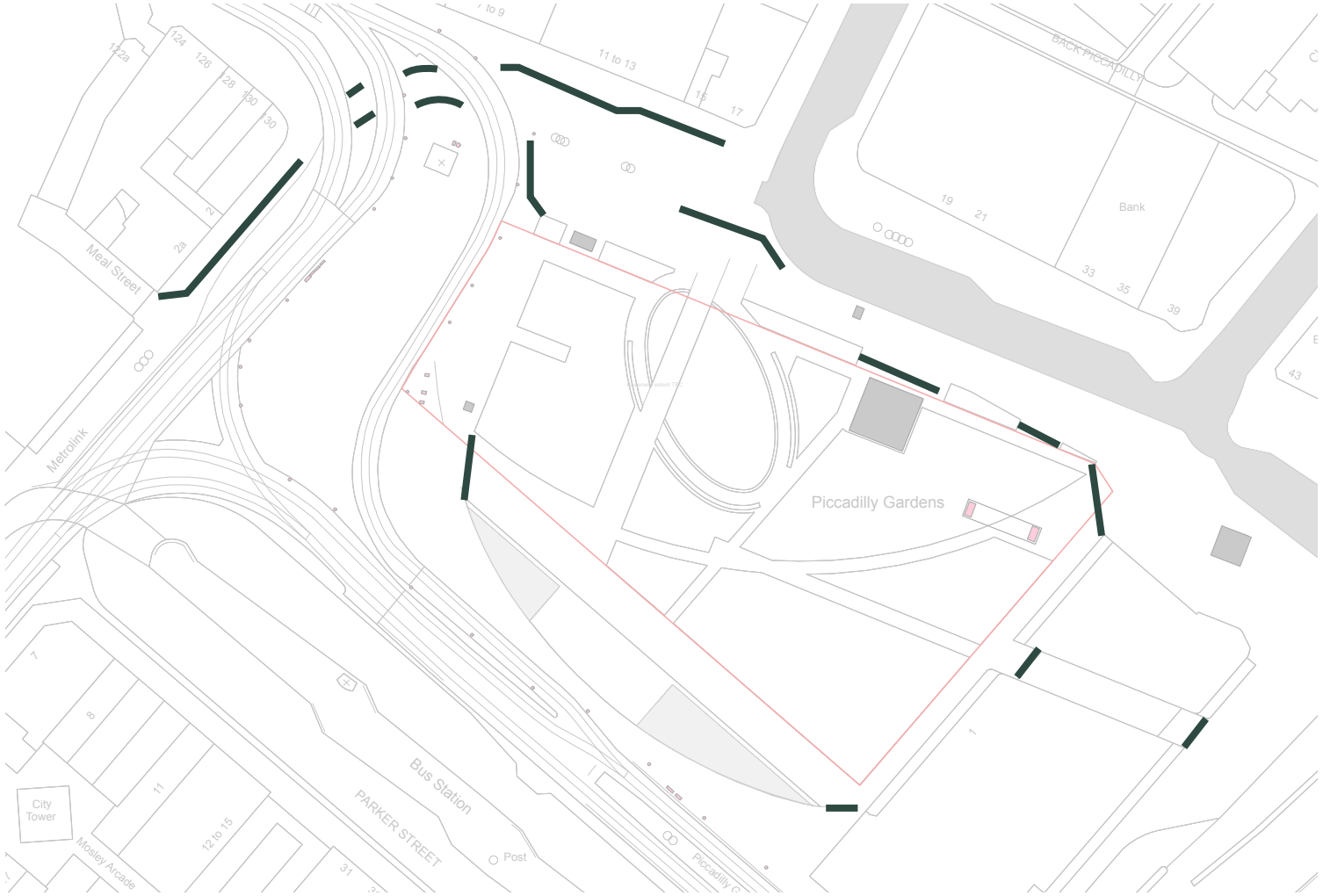
This diagram is far from complete.
Other elements such as lighting, overhead wiring columns, litter bins, telephone booths and mobile food/market stalls are not shown.

- The items shown can be categorised into:
- Deemed necessary for safety (guarding, HVM)
- Public transport amenities: bus/tram shelters
- Cycle parking
- Commercial (advertising panels)





Existing Security Strategy

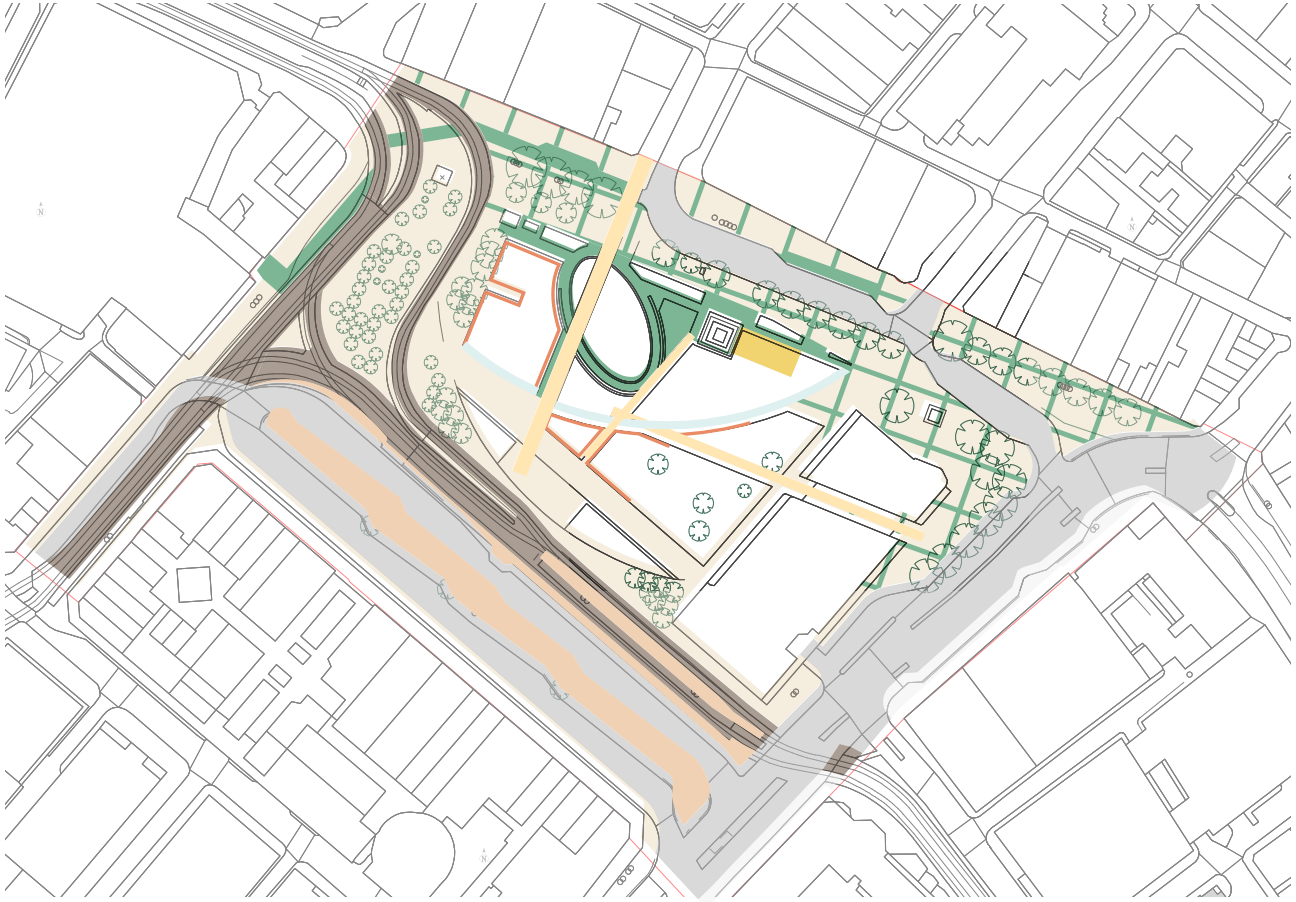


Ground Floor Uses Plan



- Existing supermarket
- Existing eatery (daytime and evening activation)
- Existing cafe (daytime activation)
- Existing retail unit
- Existing bank
- Existing sui generis building
- Under development
- Vacant plot

Existing Surface Materials



Key

- Sandstone Slabs and Squares *13,000m²*
- Yorkstone Setts *3,300m²*
- Silver Gray Granite *280m²*
- Sandstone Setts *5,600m²*
- Back Asphalt *13,300m²*
- Concrete Slab *1000m²*
- Black Gneiss/Granite *830m²*
- Wet-Pour *160m²*
- Herringbone Clay *2,200m²*

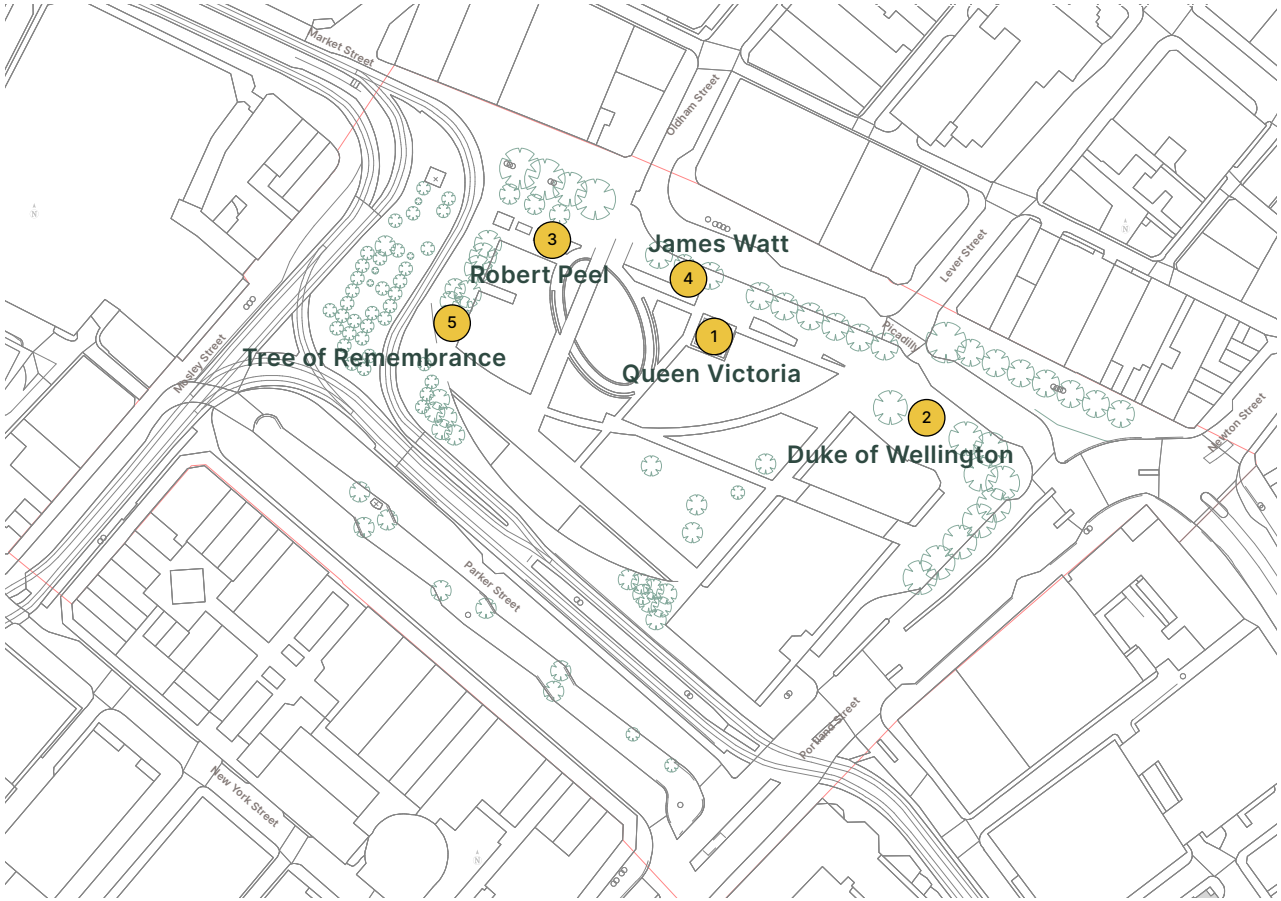


Sandstone slabs, Black Gneiss & Silver Gray Granite

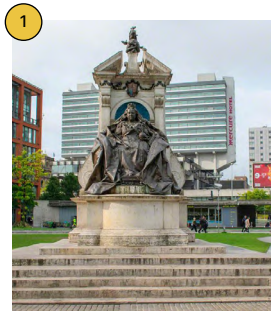


Yorkstone Setts & Silver Gray Granite

Existing Monuments

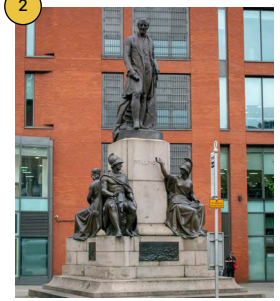


1



Queen Victoria
Grade II Listed

2



Duke of Wellington
Grade II Listed

3



Robert Peel
Grade II Listed

4



James Watt
Grade II Listed

5

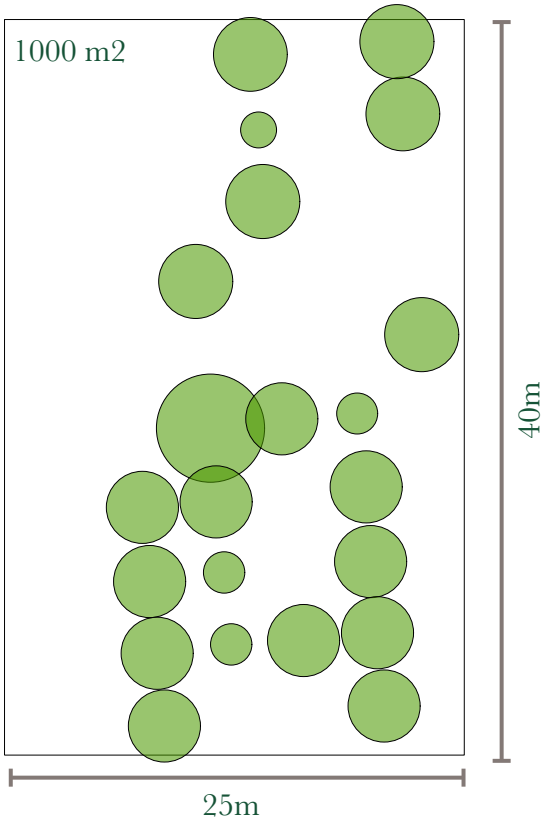


Tree of Remembrance

9 Appendix 3 - Soft Landscaping

Soft Landscape - Tree Strategy

Piccadilly Gardens Existing Trees:

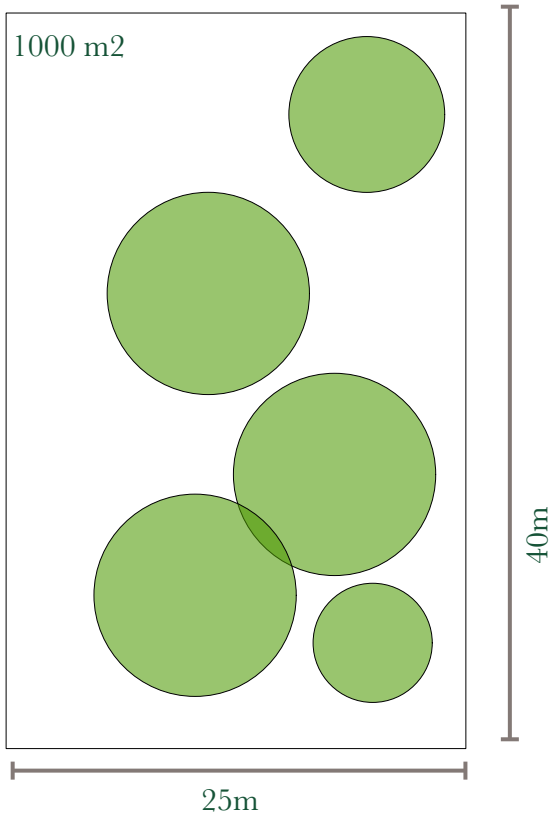


Piccadilly Gardens has 60 in 10,858m2

Total: 22 Trees

Canopy spread range from 2m-7.5m

St Peter's Square Trees:



St Peter's Square has 26 trees in an area of 8500m2

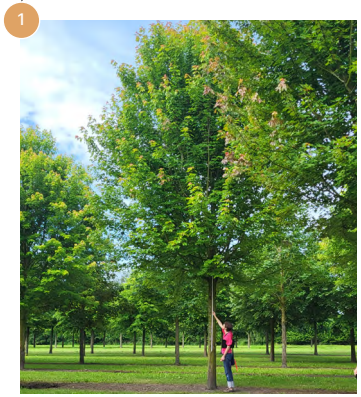
Total: 5 Trees

Canopy spread range from 6.5-11m

Soft Landscape - Tree Planting Palette

Ancoats Green

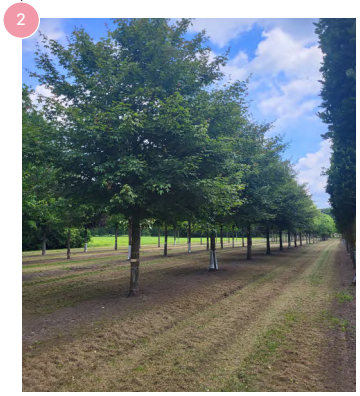
1



Acer x freemanii 'Autumn Blaze'
Freeman Maple

Ancoats Green

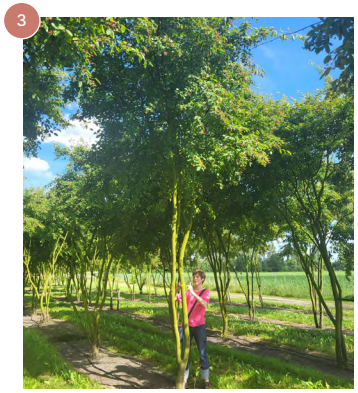
2



Acer saccharinum
Silver Maple

Lincoln Square

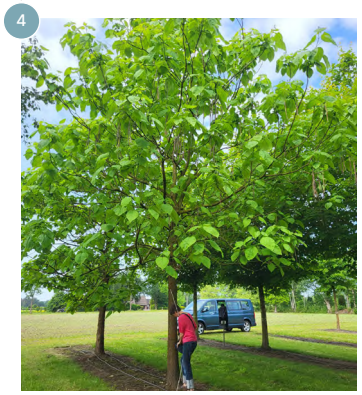
3



Amelanchier lamarckii
Juneberry

Albert Square

4



Catalpa bignonioides
Indian Bean Tree

Lincoln Square

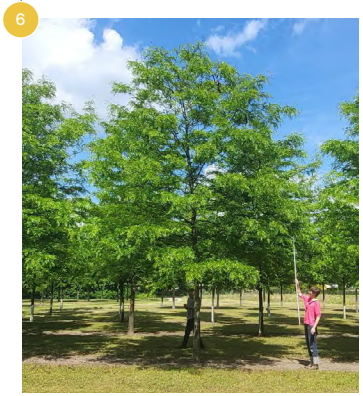
5



Ginko biloba
Maidenhair Tree

Piccadilly Gardens

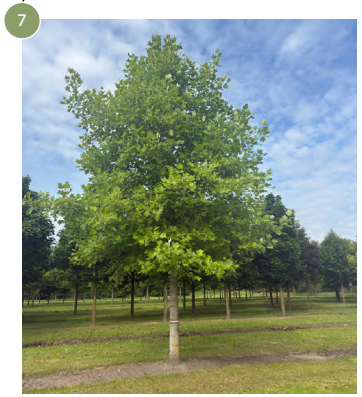
6



Gleditsia triacanthos 'Skyline'
Honey Locust

Albert Square

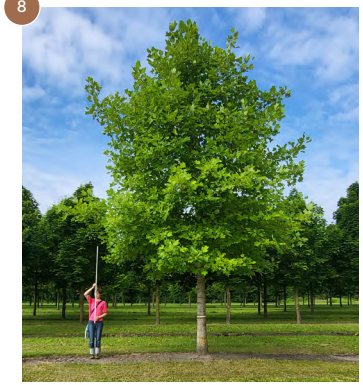
7



Liquidambar stryaciflua
Sweet gum

Town Hall, Albert Square and Cutting Room Square

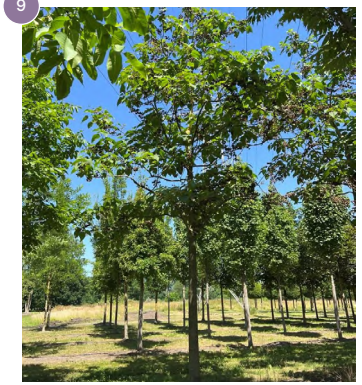
8



Liriodendron tulipifera
Tulip tree

Town Hall and St. Peter's Square

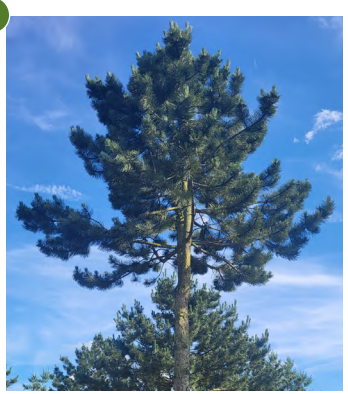
9



Paulownia tomentosa
Empress tree

Mayfield Park and Cathedral Gardens

10



Pinus sylvestris
Scots Pine

Soft Landscape - Planting Palette

Inner flowers

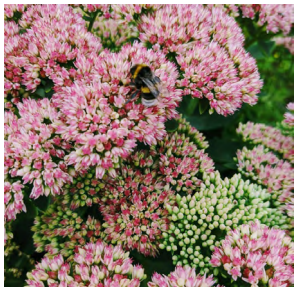

Viburnum tinus *'Gwenllian'*


Pieris japonica *'Little Heath'*


Astrantia *'Buckland'*


Aster x frakartii *'Monch'*


Armeria maritima *'Splendens'*


Hylotelephium spectabile (Brilliant Group) *' Brilliant'*

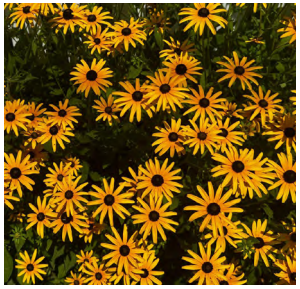

Persicaria *'Flamingo Feathers'*


Molinia caerulea


Anthriscus sylvestris


Geranium *'Ballerina'*


Astilbe *'Flamingo'*


Rudbeckia fulgida *'Little Goldstar'*


Gaura lindh. *'Siskiyou Pink'*


Veronicastrum Lavendelturm


Helenium *'Moerheim Beauty'*


Echinops bannaticus *'Taplow Blue'*

Green and robust


Helleborus niger


Pachysandra terminalis


narcissus papyraceus


Polystichum setiferum


Blechnum spicant


Asplenium scolopendrium


Choisya dewitteana *'White Dazzler'*


Helleborus x hybridus *'Harvington Pink Speckled'*


Mahonia eurybracteata *'Soft Caress'*

Rain Gardens


Carex marrowii *'Irish Green'*


Succisa pratensis


Nepeta *'Blue Dragon'*


Echinacea *'Mallow Yellows'*


Calamagrostis brachytricha


Osmunda regalis


Helleborus niger


Actaea matsumurae *'White Pearl'*


Galanthus nivalis

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