Piccadilly Gardens Redevelopment

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

August 2026

PREPARED FOR

Galliford Try on behalf of Manchester City Council



Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

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Executive Summary

Galliford Try on behalf of Manchester City Council has commissioned Civic Heritage to prepare an archaeological desk-based assessment to support a full planning application for the redevelopment of Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester (NGR 384383, 398250). The desk-based study aimed to identify, as far as possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the archaeological resource within the site and the character of the historic built environment within the vicinity of the proposed development site, in order to understand the potential impact of the proposals on below and above-ground heritage assets.

The proposed development site lies within Manchester city centre and partly falls within the Smithfield Conservation Area and Stevenson Square Conservation Area. The site is located outside Manchester's medieval core and would have formed part of the agricultural hinterland during the medieval and early post-medieval periods. Early cartographic sources indicate that the site lay on the edge of the expanding town at the end of Market Street Lane, characterised by open fields and a series of clay/mud extraction pits known as the Daube Holes, used for the construction of wattle and daub buildings.

The first significant development within the site occurred in the mid-18th century, when the Manchester Royal Infirmary was established in 1752, followed shortly by the construction of the adjacent Manchester Royal Lunatic Asylum in 1763. By the late 18th century, the site had developed into a substantial institutional complex, with associated buildings including a dispensary and baths, set within landscaped grounds. The Infirmary continued to expand throughout the 19th century, incorporating specialised medical facilities and ancillary structures, reflecting Manchester's rapid urban growth.

Following the relocation of the Infirmary in 1908, the buildings on the site were largely demolished by 1910, leaving the area temporarily vacant and referred to locally as the 'Great Hole of Piccadilly'. Despite, several proposals for development, the site remained largely undeveloped until the 1930s, when it was laid out as public gardens. This incorporated a sunken garden within the footprint of the former Infirmary basement.

The site has undergone substantial development and infilling over its long history. During the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the sunken garden was infilled, and the site was redeveloped to form the current gardens. Despite this, an archaeological watching brief undertaken in 2000 recorded remnants of late 18th-century walls of the former hospital and deep silty deposits likely associated with the daube holes and ornamental pond, demonstrating that archaeological remains survive within the site.

The potential for the site to contain buried archaeological remains is considered to be moderate. Remains likely include the Daube Holes and Manchester Royal Infirmary. Any remains that do exist within the site are likely to be of low or potentially medium significance. Without a programme of mitigation, the proposed development could adversely harm (damage or destroy) these remains.

Following consultation with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS), it is anticipated that an archaeological watching brief will be required during any deep ground-breaking / earth-moving works associated with the excavation of the attenuation tank and drainage runs.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

1.1.1. Purpose

Galliford Try on behalf of Manchester City Council is submitting a full planning application for the redevelopment of Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester city centre (NGR 384383, 398250). The development proposals comprise the “redevelopment and reconfiguration of Piccadilly Gardens comprising works to the public realm including public open space and use of space for events, together with decommissioning and removal of the existing fountain; creation of play space, lawn area, hard and soft landscaping; lighting; and drainage and other associated infrastructure; and a severable plot for a future ancillary structure with associated interim landscaping”. The proposals make provision for a future structure within the Gardens, which will complement the ongoing investment in and refurbishment of the Piccadilly Gardens landscape. The structure does not form part of this application and will be brought forward under a separate full planning application.

In accordance with National, Regional and Local Planning Policies Galliford Try on behalf of Manchester City Council has commissioned Civic to carry out an archaeological desk-based assessment to support the scheme. The desk-based study aimed to identify as far as possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the archaeological remains within the site so that an informed decision may be made regarding the nature and scope of any further scheme of archaeological works that may be required in relation to the proposed development. The archaeological resource may include below-ground remains, earthworks, standing buildings and other structures.

1.1.2. Location

The proposed development site comprises Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester and is bounded by properties on Piccadilly and Market Street to the north, properties on Portland Street to the east, Piccadilly Plaza to the south and Mosley Street to the west (centred at NGR 384383, 398250; herein referred to as the ‘Site’; see Plate 1). Land within the Site is characterised by a public open space and pedestrian routes, together with a modern fountain, and a mixture of hard and soft landscaping. Pedestrian routes link the surrounding area to Piccadilly Gardens Metrolink stop and adjacent bus stops/transport interchange to the south. The Site also contains three Grade II Listed statues.



Plate 1: Satellite view showing the Site boundary

1.1.3. Topography and Landuse

Manchester occupies low-lying land in the Mersey River valley. The River Irwell passes *c*. 650m west of the Site and the now culverted River Tib passed to the north-west of the Site. The Site lies at a height of between 49m and 51m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), reaching its highest elevation in the north-eastern corner.

1.1.4. Geology and Soils

The solid geology of the Site comprises sandstone of the Chester Formation that fluvial in origin. Superficial deposits within the Site comprise Glaciofluvial deposits of Devensian-Diamicton Till (BGS, 2026).

General Made Ground is anticipated to be present across the Site given the historical development of the Site, including the infill of the historical canal/ornamental pond, former sunken gardens and multiple phases of redevelopment across the Site. Made Ground was observed in the trenches being carried out by others at the time of the site walkover (Plate 24).

1.2. Designated Heritage Assets

1.2.1. Summary

The Site contains three Grade II Listed statues and partially lies within the Smithfield Conservation Area and the Stevenson Square Conservation Area (Table 1). The Site does not contain any Scheduled Monuments, or any Registered Parks and Gardens. The Site is also located within 30m of 12 Listed Buildings and two Conservation Areas (Table 2). The proposed development will have an impact on the setting of the designated heritage assets; however, a detailed consideration of the above-ground historic environment is not considered within this assessment, which is focused on below-ground heritage assets. A separate Heritage Statement has been prepared to consider above-ground heritage (Civic, 2026).

Description	Designation	HER No	National Grid Reference
Peel Statue	Grade II Listed Building	8544.1.0	SJ 84337 98322
Watt Statue	Grade II Listed Building	8545.1.0	SJ 84388 98309

Queen Victoria Monument	Grade II Listed Building	8546.1.0	SJ 84393 98290
Smithfield Conservation Area	Conservation Area	DGM1608	SJ 84405 98598
Stevenson Square Conservation Area	Conservation Area	DGM1609	SJ 84589 98374

Table 1: List of designated heritage assets within the Site

Description	Designation	HER No	National Grid Reference
1 Piccadilly	Grade II Listed Building	8538.1.0	SJ 84299 98380
Electricity Junction Box, Tib Street	Grade II Listed Building	19660.1.0	SJ 84290 98386
15 and 17, Piccadilly	Grade II Listed Building	8539.1.0	SJ 84370 98358
47 Piccadilly including warehouse facing Back Piccadilly	Grade II Listed Building	11401.1.0	SJ 84481 98299
49 Piccadilly	Grade II Listed Building	11402.1.0	SJ 84492 98293
Gardens Hotel and shops	Grade II Listed Building	11403.1.0	SJ 84515 98292
Clayton House, 59 Piccadilly and 61 Piccadilly	Grade II Listed Building	11404.1.0	SJ 84523 98277
St Margarets Chambers	Grade II Listed Building	11405.1.0	SJ 84543 98278
The Portland Thistle Hotel	Grade II Listed Building	8557.1.0	SJ 84485 98178
No. 10 Mosley Street	Grade II Listed Building	8484.1.0	SJ 84220 98290
12 Mosley Street	Grade II Listed Building	8485.1.0	SJ 84213 98270
Harvest House	Grade II Listed Building	8486.1.0	SJ 84207 98257
Wellington Statue	Grade II Listed Building	8547.1.0	SJ 84456 98266

Table 2: List of designated heritage assets within 30m of the Site

2. Methodology

2.1. Introduction

The aim of the desk-based assessment is to consider the potential impact of the proposed development upon any buried archaeological remains within the Site. The production of the assessment followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) standard and guidance for undertaking archaeological desk-based assessments (CiFA, 2020).

2.2. Research sources

The desk-based assessment consists of existing written, cartographic, photographic and electronic information, which have been analysed in order to identify known and unknown heritage assets. These include:

- National Library of Scotland;
- The Historic Environment Record, supplied by GMAAS on 14th May 2026;
- The National Heritage List for England (NHLE);
- Reports of archaeological work carried out in the Study Area;
- Manchester Local Libraries
- Britain from above;
- Historic Newspapers; and,
- Historic Landscape Characterisation.

2.3. Study Area

The study area has been defined in consultation with Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) and is based upon the Historic Environment Record (HER) search area agreed with them (250m radius from the Site). The study area encompasses the proposed development site and an appropriate surrounding area, enabling the identification of designated and non-designated heritage assets and known archaeological remains, providing the wider historical and archaeological context required to assess the archaeological potential and likely effects of the proposed development.

2.4. Site walkover

The aim of the Site walkover was to relate the findings of the desk-based study to the existing land use of the application area, in order to identify any evidence for surviving below-ground remains. The site walkover also aimed to locate and assess the extent and severity of modern ground disturbance, in order to evaluate its potential impact on any buried archaeological remains.

2.5. Archaeological potential

The potential for the Site to contain archaeological remains is rated ‘high’, ‘moderate’, ‘low’, or ‘unknown’ (see Table 3). This assessment is based on an understanding of the archaeological resource as a whole and takes into account the Site’s geology, topography, relevant research sources (listed in 2.2) and the likelihood of modern ground disturbance.

Potential	Criteria
High	The Site lies within an Area of Archaeological Potential, Priority or Sensitivity.

	The Site contains known archaeological remains. While the Site may have experienced phases of redevelopment, any resulting disturbance is considered likely to have been limited in extent, and there remains a high likelihood that archaeological remains survive.
Moderate	There is evidence that archaeological remains survive within the Site, based on the archaeological, historical or topographical context. Documentary evidence or favourable conditions for preservation indicate a reasonable likelihood of archaeological remains being present. The Site contains known archaeological remains however, these may have been subject to multiple phases of redevelopment that may have resulted in some truncation or disturbance of archaeological deposits. However, there remains a moderate likelihood that archaeological remains survive within the Site.
Low	There is little evidence for archaeological remains within the Site, and the archaeological, historical or environmental context suggests a low likelihood of remains surviving. Previous disturbance, truncation, quarrying, modern development or other groundworks may have reduced or removed any archaeological deposits.
Unknown	Insufficient information is available to assess the archaeological potential of the Site. There may be a lack of previous investigation, limited historic information, or uncertainty regarding the extent of previous disturbance.
No	No archaeological sites have been identified. Development has comprehensively removed archaeological remains.

Table 3: Criteria for determining the level of archaeological potential

2.6. Significance and impact assessment methodology

The Secretary of State's criteria for the scheduling of ancient monuments, outlined in Annex 1 of 'Scheduled Monuments: identifying, protecting, conserving and investigating nationally important archaeological sites under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979' (DCMS, 2013) provides a methodology for assessing archaeological significance. These criteria have been utilised in Chapter 7) of this assessment.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) issued '*Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties'* in January 2011 (ICOMOS, 2011), which outlines an option for assessing heritage value. This document draws on the ICOMOS guidance, and states that an archaeological asset's significance can be assessed as very high, high, medium, low, negligible or unknown (Table 4; Chapter 7.3).

Value	Attribute
Very High (international)	Sites of acknowledged international importance inscribed as World Heritage (WH) property. Individual attributes that convey Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WH property. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged international research objectives.
High (national)	Scheduled Monuments Undesignated sites of the quality and importance to be designated. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged national research objectives.
Medium (regional)	Designated or undesignated assets that can contribute significantly to regional research objectives.

Low (local)	Designated or undesignated assets of local importance. Assets are compromised by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations. Assets of local value, but with potential to contribute to local research objectives.
Negligible	Assets with little or no surviving archaeological interest
Unknown	The importance of the asset has not been ascertained.

Table 4: Criteria for assessing the value of an archaeological heritage asset

The impact assessment on below-ground archaeological remains assesses the potential impact of the proposed development upon the significance and potential of the archaeological resource within the Site. Mitigation strategies may be recommended in order to reduce the level of impact on the significance of the identified assets (Chapter 10.3).

3. Planning Policy

3.1. Introduction

This assessment accords with National, Regional and Local Planning Policies which relate to the historic environment. National planning policies relevant to heritage asset management are contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024).

3.1.1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England, which aim to achieve sustainable development (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Feb 2024). Sustainable development is defined by three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental. Section 16 deals specifically with Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paragraphs 202-221). The section states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that can range from buildings of local historic importance to World Heritage Sites, that should be conserved "in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations".

Paragraph 203 states that "Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place".

Paragraph 207 states that "local planning authorities, when determining applications, should require the applicant to describe the significance of any affected heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation".

Paragraph 216 states that "the effect of a proposal on non-designated heritage assets (designated assets are covered in paragraphs 207-210) should be taken into account in determining a planning application".

Paragraph 218 states that "local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of any heritage assets to be lost, in a manner appropriate to their importance and impact, and to make this evidence publicly accessible".

3.1.2. NPPF revision draft

The NPPF is currently undergoing a major reform, with the government publishing the draft reforms in December 2025. This proposes significant structural changes to how land is promoted, planned, and approved. The consultation on the revised framework closed in March, and the finalised version is expected to be published in summer 2026.

The historic environment will be covered by several new policies, the most relevant of which are listed below:

“HE5: Assessing effects on heritage assets

1. Development proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected (including any contribution made by their setting) and of the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is necessary to understand the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The relevant historic environment record should be consulted as a minimum, and appropriate expertise employed where necessary.

2. Assessments of the potential effects of development proposals on heritage assets and their setting should identify whether proposals would be likely to:

a. Have a positive effect, which is where a heritage asset would be enhanced, or its significance better revealed; or

b. Have no effect on the significance of the asset; or

c. Result in harm to the significance of the heritage asset, either from work affecting the asset itself or from development within its setting. The degree of harm should be identified: substantial harm would occur where the development proposal would seriously affect a key element of the asset’s significance; or

d. Cause the total loss of the significance of the heritage asset.

3. In making this assessment it is the effect on an asset’s significance rather than the scale of the development which should be considered.

4. Decision makers should be satisfied that this assessment accurately reflects the effects on heritage assets caused by the proposals.

5. Where a development proposal involves, or has the potential to involve, heritage assets with archaeological interest, an appropriate desk-based assessment should be employed and, where necessary, a field evaluation”.

“HE10: Archaeological assets

1. Where a development proposal has the reasonable potential, based on evidence, to affect an archaeological heritage asset, discovered or undiscovered, an appropriate investigation of the asset’s significance and the potential effect on this should be undertaken to identify the design of the development proposal, mitigation and implementation of the development.

2. Archaeological assets should be preserved in situ wherever feasible. Where the archaeological asset cannot be preserved or managed on-site, appropriate provision should be made for the investigation, understanding, recording, dissemination and archiving of that asset, and should be undertaken by suitably-qualified individuals or organisations”.

“HE11: Loss or removal of heritage assets

1. Where a development proposal would result in the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset (whether designated or not):

a. The development should not be approved without all reasonable steps being taken to make sure that the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred, including through the use of planning conditions and planning obligations to secure the development against the loss of the asset;

b. The applicant should record and advance understanding of the significance of the asset to be lost in a manner proportionate to its importance and the potential impact upon it; and should make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible by being deposited in the relevant Historic

Environment Record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository. The ability to record evidence of our past should not be a decisive factor in deciding whether such loss should be approved.

2. Development proposals to remove or alter a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument (whether listed or not), should retain the feature in situ wherever possible (and, where appropriate, be supported by an explanation of their historic and social context)".

3.1.3. Local Development Framework

The NPPF outlines the need for local planning policies to create local plans and frameworks to implement the NPPF at a local level. Manchester City Council adopted a Core Strategy in July 2012. *Policy EN 3 – Heritage* sets out the approach to the Historic Environment.

Policy EN 3 states:

Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.

New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.

Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset (Manchester City Council, 2012, p. 172).

An addendum was produced in 2024 to be read in conjunction with the Core Strategy. The addendum states that the second paragraph of Policy EN 3 is to be replaced by Places for Everyone (PfE) policies (see below).

3.1.1. Places for Everyone

Places for Everyone (PfE) was adopted in March 2024 and forms part of the development plan for nine districts in Greater Manchester. Places for Everyone Plan is a strategic plan, and it does not cover everything that a local plan would, therefore Local Plans set out more detailed policies (both strategic and non-strategic).

In relation to the historic environment, Policy JP-P2: Heritage: '*We will proactively manage and work with partners to positively conserve, sustain and enhance our historic environment and heritage assets and their settings. Opportunities will be pursued to aid the promotion, enjoyment, understanding and interpretation of heritage assets, as a means of maximising wider public benefits and reinforcing Greater Manchester's distinct character, identity and sense of place. Local Plans will set out the key elements which contribute to the district's identity, character and distinctiveness and which should be the priority for conserving and enhancing in the future and demonstrate a clear understanding of the historic environment and the heritage values of sites, buildings or areas and their relationship with their surroundings. This knowledge should be used to inform the positive management and integration of our heritage by:*

1. Setting out a clear vision that recognises and embeds the role of heritage in place-making;

2. Ensuring that the heritage significance of a site or area is considered in accordance with national planning policy in the planning and design process and opportunities for interpretation and local engagement are optimised;

3. Integrating the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, with creative contextual architectural responses that contribute to their significance and sense of place;

4. Delivering positive benefits that sustain and enhance the historic environment, as well as contributing to the economic viability, accessibility and environmental quality of a place, and to social wellbeing; and

5. Exploring opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that restoration of historic buildings offer.

Particular consideration will be given to ensure that the significance of key elements of the historic environment which contribute to Greater Manchester's distinctive identity and sense of place are protected from harm. These include historic town centres, places of worship, historic transport routes including the canal network, industrial buildings and structures including textile mills, farmsteads and other sites, buildings, and areas of identified archaeological, architectural, artistic and/or historic value. Development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and/or their settings will be considered having regard to national planning policy. Where heritage assets have been identified as being at risk, Local Plans should identify specific opportunities for them to contribute to regeneration and placemaking, and they should set out strategies for their repair and re-use. Development proposals which will help safeguard the significance of and secure a sustainable future for Greater Manchester's heritage at risk will be supported in principle, provided they are not contrary to national policy or other policies in the development plan. Proposals should be informed, as necessary, by the findings and recommendations of the appropriate heritage assessment(s) in the development plan evidence base and/or any updated heritage assessment submitted as part of the planning application process" (Greater Manchester combined authority, 2024, pp. 192-4).

Manchester City Council is advised on archaeological matters by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS).

4. Historical and Archaeological Background

4.1. Introduction

The historical background provides context for the Site.

4.2. Prehistoric (pre-10,000 BC to AD 43)

The current understanding of human activity in the Manchester region during the prehistoric period is poor, although it is reasonable to suggest that several areas in the centre of the city, such as Castlefield and Ardwick, may have been conducive for late prehistoric settlement on account of the natural topography and the abundance of natural water sources (i.e. rivers) (Gregory, 2007).

No evidence of prehistoric activity has been recorded within 250m of the Site. The Site is located close to a culverted watercourse, which may have been attractive to early settlers.

4.2.1. Archaeological potential

There is no known evidence for prehistoric activity within the Site or the study area, and the potential for any such remains to survive from this period is considered to be **low** given the later development of the Site.

4.3. Roman (AD 43 – AD 410)

Archaeological evidence for Romano-British activity in Manchester is focused on the Roman fort of *Mamucium,* located in Castlefield, and established during the governorship of Agricola (AD 77-84). The fort was initially constructed of wood but underwent several phases of development and was rebuilt in stone around AD 200. The fort was located *c.* 1.2km to the south-west of the Site.

As this military complex developed, a grid of roads was laid out and a substantial extramural settlement, or *vicus*, developed. Based on archaeological excavations and the distribution of Roman finds, the limits of this civilian settlement appear to have extended south-eastwards along Chester Road, terminating somewhere in the vicinity of Great Jackson Street, northwards from the fort to approximately Quay Street, westwards along Liverpool Road for *c.* 100m from the north-west corner of the fort, and eastwards across Deansgate to the area now occupied by Viadux.

The Roman Road from the fort at Castlefield to Castleshaw, near Oldham, is believed to pass through the vicinity of the study area. The precise course of this road is unknown. One alignment has the road pass to the south-east of the study area itself and particularly close to the junction of Piccadilly with London Road (UMAU, 2001).

Although the Site lies beyond the limits of the Roman fort and its associated extramural settlement, chance finds have been discovered in the vicinity. A bronze coin of Claudius Gothicus (AD 268-70) was found in *c*. 1882, in a hole in the basement of a warehouse in Piccadilly, *c*. 25m south-west of the Site (HER 1390.1.0). This may be related to the line of the Roman Road or be merely a stray find relating to low-level activity on the fringe of the Roman settlement.

An oak spade with possibly an iron sheath or an iron pick was found in 1907 while digging foundations of the telephone exchange on York Street (HER 8685.1.0). The finds were uncovered at a depth of *c.* 14 feet below street level in what was believed to be an old pond. Three inches above this level were traces of a road crossing the site from Pine Street to George Street. The spade is considered to be Roman, Saxon or late medieval, however this is dubious (HER 8685.1.0).

4.3.1. Archaeological potential

There is little known evidence for Roman activity within the Site or the study area, and the potential for any such remains to survive from this period is considered to be **low**.

4.4. Medieval (AD 410 – AD 1540)

There is very little archaeological evidence in the region as a whole that represents the period between the end of the Roman occupation and the Norman Conquest of 1066. Edwin took control of Manchester in AD 620, and it is believed that this may have marked the beginning of a settlement near the site of the present-day cathedral (Farrer & Brownbill, 1908). Later, in AD 919, Edward the Elder established a fortified stronghold known as a burh in Manchester, which at the time was part of Viking-controlled Northumbria.

After the Norman Conquest, William I granted most of the territory between the Ribble and Mersey rivers to Roger of Poitou, who retained the manor of Salford demesne (Tupling, 1962, p. 116), but divided his other newly acquired land into several fiefdoms (Kidd, 1996, p. 13). The substantial of these was the estate centered on Manchester, created by the grant of extensive lands in the hundreds of Salford, Leyland and West Derby to Albert Grelley (Tupling, 1962, p. 116).

By the 13th century, the Grelley family had established a manor house at the confluence of the rivers Irwell and Irk, where they governed both the manor and the extensive barony (Hartwell, Hyde, & Pevsner, 2004, p. 256). In 1222 Manchester was granted an annual fair, and in 1301 Thomas Grelley was granted the Great Charter of Manchester by Edward I, and thus it became a free borough (*ibid*). A survey of the Area of Medieval Manchester (HER 16050.1.0) was undertaken by GMAU in 1980 (Morris, 1983).

The Site lies *c.* 600m to the south-east of Manchester's medieval core, within open fields. Springs were also known is this area, giving rise to the street names Fountain Street and Spring Gardens (DGM1474) *c*. 90m and 160m, respectively to the west of the Site.

4.4.1. Archaeological potential

The Site lay within an area of low-level activity, potentially associated with agriculture. The potential for archaeological remains dating to the medieval period is considered to be **low** given the later development of the Site.

4.5. Post-medieval (AD 1540 – *c* AD 1750)

By 1539, John Leland was able to describe Manchester as the 'finest and busiest town in the whole of Lancashire, with the best buildings and the greatest population' (Chandler, 1993, p. 263), at a time when the textile industries in South Lancashire were beginning to flourish. Manchester emerged as a centre for the textile finishing processes, as woollen cloth was brought in from outlying areas for bleaching and dyeing. Most importantly, however, Manchester expanded its role as a market centre for textiles produced in the towns and hamlets of the surrounding district (Frangopulo, 1964, p. 26).

Manchester underwent a rapid expansion during the post-medieval period. The population of Manchester increased from approximately 1800 people in 1563 to just over 3000 people in the year 1642 (Willian, 1980, pp. 38-9). The Hearth Tax Returns of 1664 listed 820 households, which suggests a population of approximately 3690. The population of Manchester roughly doubled between 1563 and 1664, despite an outbreak of plague in 1645 (Phillips & Smith, 1994, p. 7). By the census of 1773, the town's population had dramatically increased even further, with approximately 24,937 people living in the township of Manchester, 23,032 of which were living in the town itself. During the post-medieval period, Manchester changed from what had been a small market centre into the largest town in Lancashire (Nevell, 2003) (DGM1609).

The 1650 map of Manchester shows the layout of the medieval town, centred on St Mary's Church (Plate 2). The Market Place lay to the south of the church, with Market Lane (presently Market Street) extending south-east, away from the centre, with development on either side of the street. The south-easternmost property was a timber-framed house owned by Mr Lever situated *c*. 5m north of the Site (HER 11261.1.0). The plan also shows the location of a conduit (labelled 'H' on the plan) within fields on the south-west of Market Lane. In 1557 a pipe was laid to carry the water to the marketplace near the present location of the Old Shambles. This was the principal water supply for the town for over 200 years (DGM1474). The Site lies beyond the extent of the plan, on the fringe of the growing town.

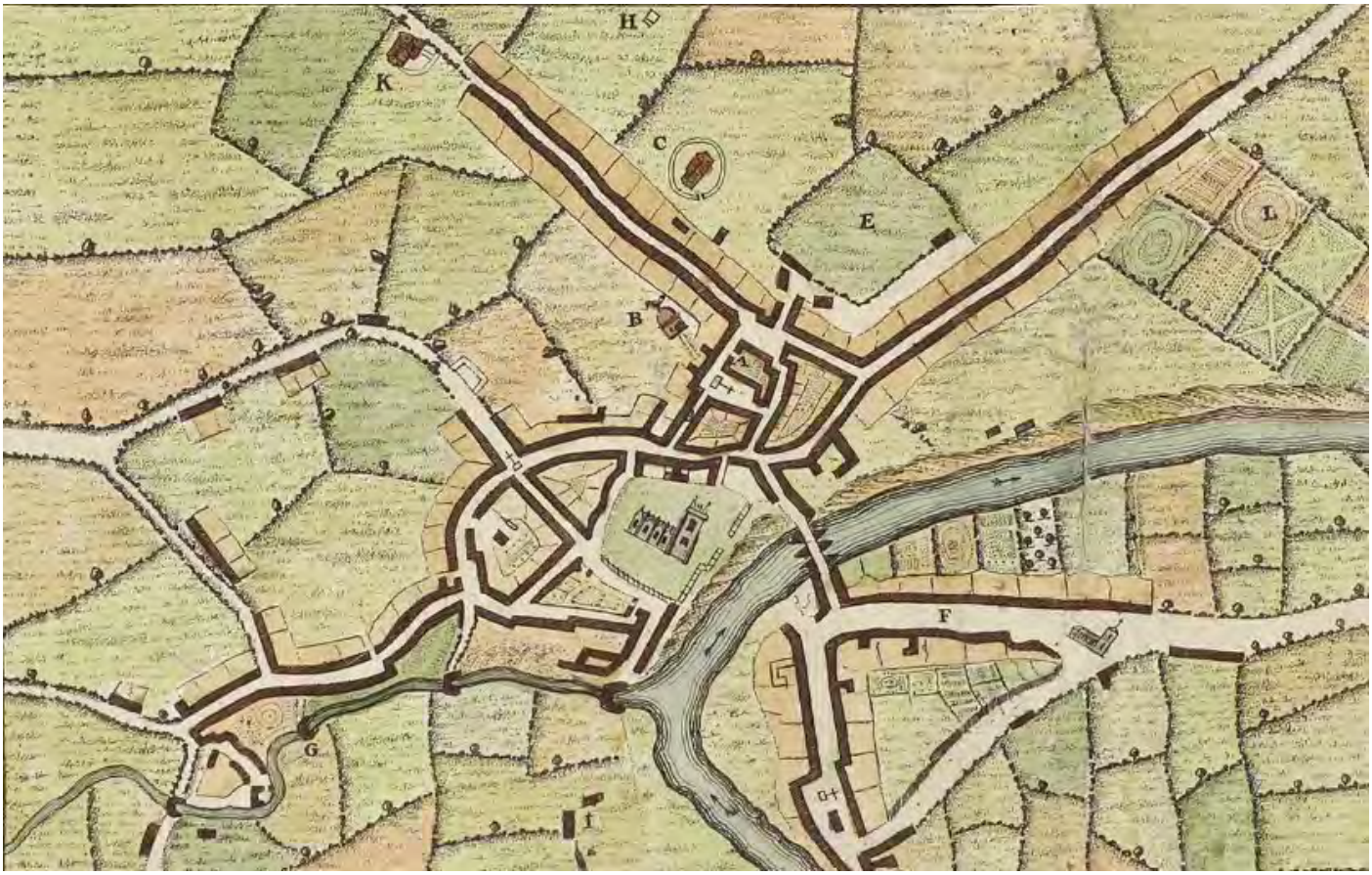


Plate 2: 1650 Town Plan published in Berry's 1750 Plan of the Towns of Manchester and Salford; the map is not orientated north.

Casson and Berry's map of 1745 captures the rapid expansion of Manchester at the beginning of the industrial period (Plate 3). The plan shows that the Site seems to have lay within an area labelled *Daube Holes*, where clay was extracted and used for the construction of wattle and daub buildings (see 4.2). This was situated on the outskirts of the growing town during the post-medieval period.

4.5.1. Archaeological potential

The potential for archaeological remains dating to the period is considered to be **moderate** due to the later construction within the Site.

4.6. Development of the Site

One of the earliest maps to depict the Site was Casson and Berry's 1745 map (Plate 3, Figure 3). The map captures the Site lying at the south-eastern extent of the medieval Market Street, which defined the outskirts of the medieval town. Most of the Site was occupied by *Daube Holes*, a series of pits formed from the extraction of mud and clay, which was used in the construction of wattle and daub/timber-framed buildings (HER 9133.2.0). The pits are documented as early as 1555 when a court leet ordered Robert Holme to make a stile over the daube holes, but would have been in use much earlier (UMAU, 1999; Archaeology Collective, 2017).

Casson and Berry's plan also shows that a series of field boundaries to the south of the Daube Holes, representing agricultural land owned by Sir Oswald Mosley, 2nd Baronet of Rolleston, lord of the manor of Manchester. During the 18th century, Sir Oswald Mosley, donated the land to the city on the condition that it remained in public use in perpetuity, subject to reversion to the Mosley family if this condition was not upheld (Hartwell C. , 2002, p. 188).



Plate 3: Casson and Berry's 1745 map, with Site boundary

The Manchester Royal Infirmary was initially established in 1752 in a house on Garden Street (Lane), Shudehill under the direction of surgeon Charles White and cotton manufacturer Joseph Bancroft, with an initial capacity of just 12 beds (Hartwell C. , 2002, p. 188). The institution was subsequently relocated to purpose-built premises on the Site in 1754-6 (HER 9133.2.1). The original Infirmary building, built in 1754, was a symmetrical Georgian building, nine bays long with a lower wing at either end (HER 9133.2.1 (UMAU, 2001)). The Manchester Royal Lunatic Asylum was constructed adjacent to the Infirmary in 1763 (HER 9133.2.4), accepting its first 22 patients in 1765 (Brockbank, 1952, p. 161). Both institutions are first depicted on Tinker's 1772 map (Plate 4). The main infirmary building had a rectangular footprint and partly occupied the Site, whilst the lunatic asylum seems to be represented by a much smaller L-shaped building that lay beyond the Site boundary.

By this date, the Daube Holes were no longer labelled, although the former pit seems to have turned into an ornamental lake. This requirement was stipulated by Sir Oswald Mosley as a condition of his grant of land

for the construction of the Infirmary (Bradshaw, 1985, p. 39). The pond is said to have been cleaned and extended to 615 feet, serving as one of the main water supplies in the town, with water fed in pipes laid under Oldham Street from Shudehill (Swindells, 1907, pp. 69-70). The pits may have functioned as a pond much earlier as historical accounts associate the pond with the use of the ducking stool, employed as a form of public punishment for women accused of scolding or other moral misdemeanours (Barlow, 2018). A single stool was installed in 1602, later increased to six by the 1620s. Although the stools were reportedly removed by 1673, when the moat surrounding the nearby Radcliffe Manor House was infilled, a knot and bridle is said to have hung from the door of a stationer's shop on Market Street into the following century as a "reminder for the towns womenfolk to behave" (Barlow, 2018).

The map also shows Market Street Lane, annotated as 'to London', highlighting its role as a principal route within post-medieval Manchester. A further route labelled 'The Intended Street' is shown running north-south indicating planned urban expansion within the area.

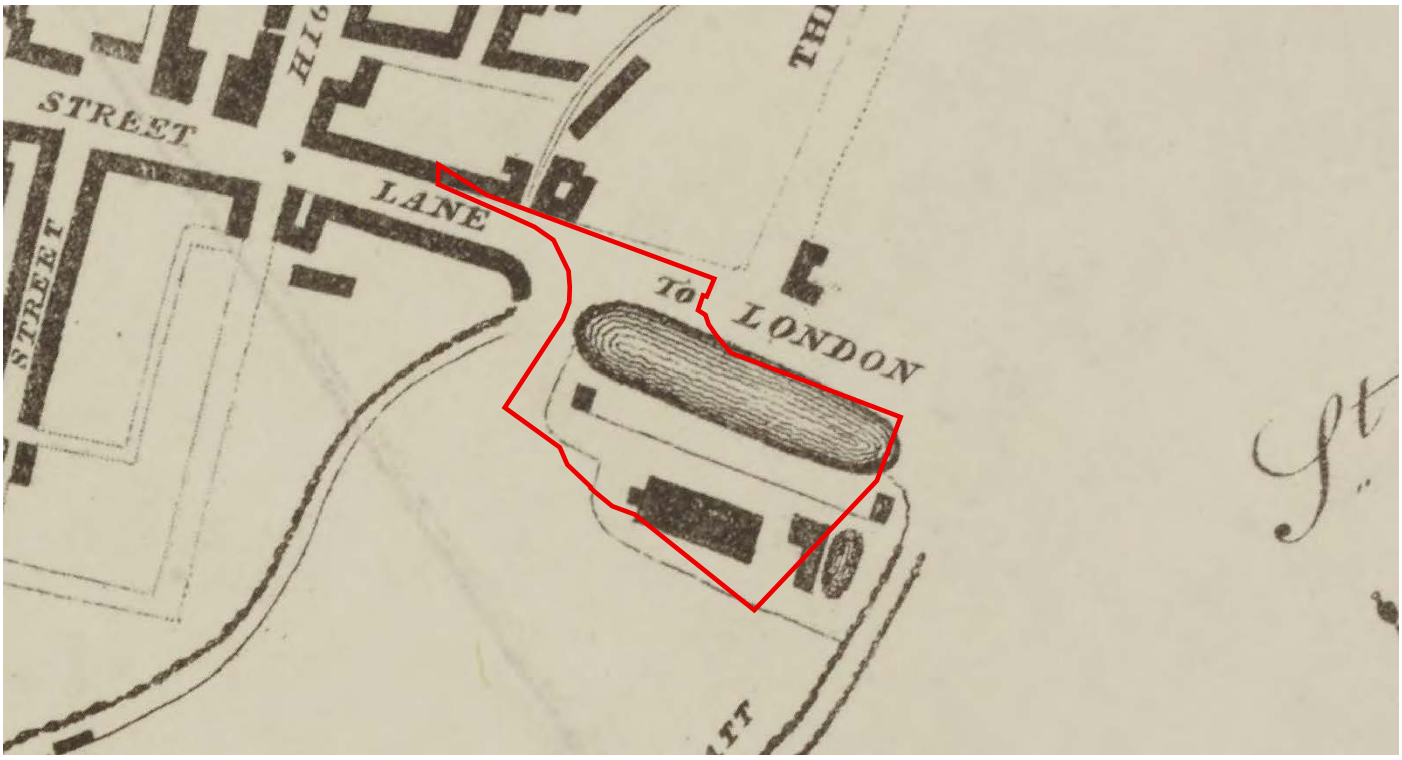


Plate 4: Tinker's 1772 map, with Site boundary

Green's 1794 map is the next available map that captures the Site, showing the expansion of the Infirmary and Lunatic Hospital, following extensions to the asylum in 1772, 1780 and 1788 (HER 9133.2.4). These are shown as two distinct but internally connected buildings (Plate 5, Figure 5). Additional, small structures had been built to the south of the infirmary, one of which lay within the south Site boundary, aligned broadly east-west. A *Dispensary* is illustrated adjoining the southern elevation of the Infirmary, forming part of the expansion of the medical complex in 1792 (HER 9133.2.1), though this lay beyond the Site boundary. A structure labelled 'New Baths', built in 1781, is depicted fronting the newly established Bath Street to the west of the Site (HER 9133.2.2).

The public baths were built by the trustees of the hospital, who charged for their use, operating at a profit to support the Infirmary. In the early 19th century, they were described as consisting of hot, tepid, vapour and cold baths, with water being supplied from a spring. It was decided that the baths would not serve the needs of patients but provide bathing facilities to those that could afford the subscription or pay the price for single sessions (Aston, 1916, pp. 126-127). The Manchester Mercury (26th June 1781) announced the opening of the baths advertising "Gentleman's & Ladies Cold Baths" at 6 pence each time, a Matlock and Buxton Bath, Almond Bath and Sweating Rooms. Persons were obligated to pay double prices on Sundays. By the 1840s,

the baths had been considerably extended to include a Baths Keepers House and a Reservoir (Plate 7, Figure 8).

Pigot & Slater's directory of 1841 (p.135) notes that "Baths of a similar nature, for the use of the patients are separately established in a distant situation and are altogether unconnected with these Baths". This refers to the baths connected to the main Infirmary building, depicted as sulphur baths on the 1851 Ordnance Survey (OS) Map to the south of the Site boundary (Plate 7, Figure 8).

The area between the Baths and the Dispensary was charactered by soft landscaping or formal gardens. The area previously identified as the Daube Holes is labelled as a 'Canal', referring to the ornamental pond, more commonly known as the Infirmary pond (Aston, 1916, p. 125). Aston described how the gardens included public walks noting that they 'are open to the use of all orderly persons, at proper hours. In front of the buildings, is a gravel walk, the whole length of the land, margined with grass, and partially planted with trees. The pool of water in front [i.e. the Infirmary Pond] adds considerably to its appearance and renders it a most eligible promenade. The other parts of the public garden are situated between the Dispensary and Public Baths [where gardens are clearly shown on Green's map]; they are laid out with shrubs, grass-plats, and flowers. Beside this, there is a kitchen garden, belonging to the charity, which surrounded as it now is, by high buildings, cannot be expected to be very prolific' (ibid). Market Street Lane has been extended east-west along the northern boundary of the Site as *Lever's Row*, named after Ashton Lever (DGM1609), before continuing further east to become Piccadilly.

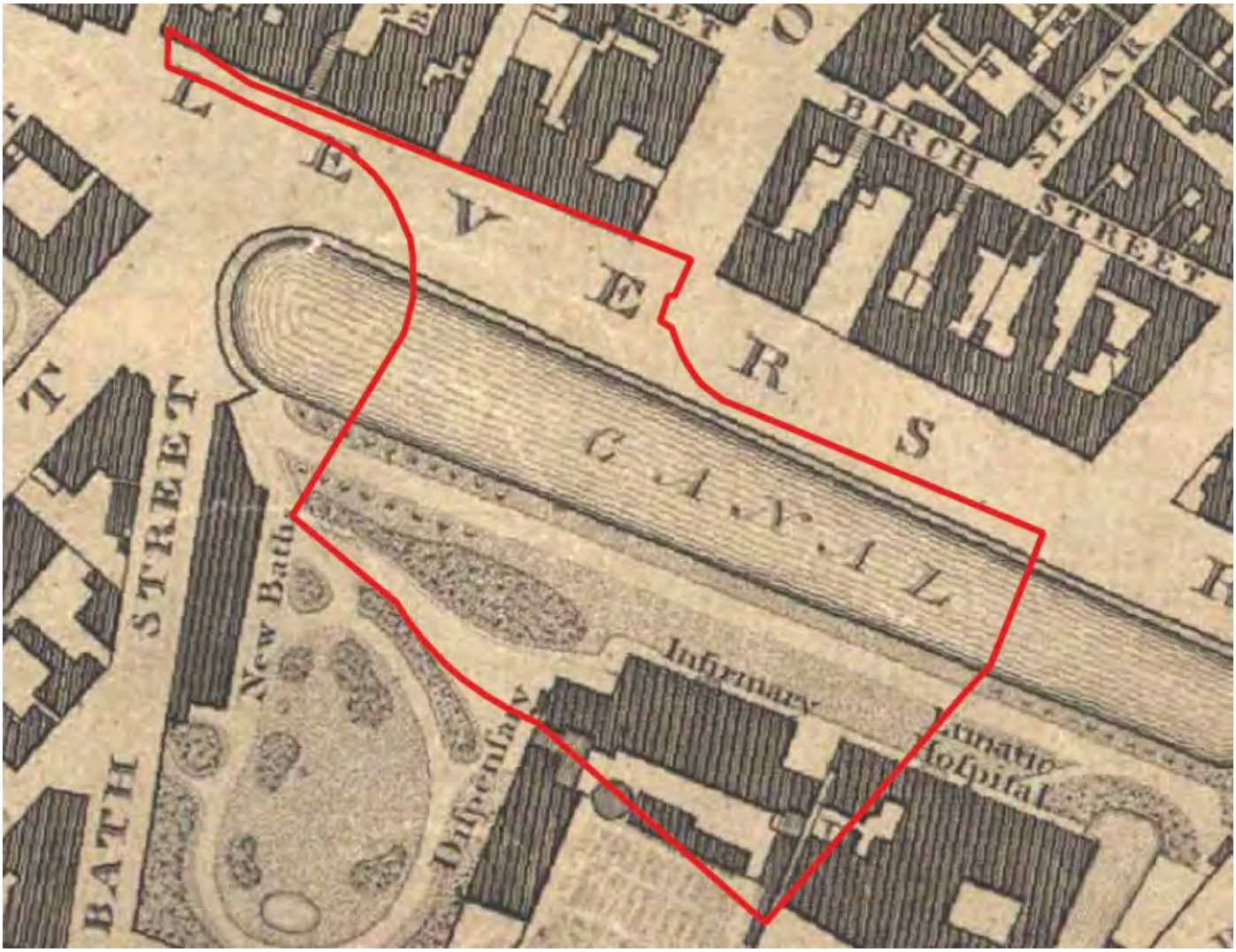


Plate 5: Green's 1794 plan of Manchester, with Site boundary

During the early 19th century, the Manchester Royal Infirmary attracted notoriety in 1819 following the Peterloo Massacre, which took place approximately one mile from the Site. Casualties from the event were transported by carriage to the Infirmary's outpatients' facilities, prompting considerable political comment at the time. It was alleged that the authorities had anticipated violence, as beds at the Infirmary had reportedly been cleared in advance of the gathering. However, many of the injured are understood to have avoided seeking treatment at the hospital, fearing that staff with known loyalist sympathies might report them to the authorities (Barlow, 2018).

The next map to illustrate change within the Site is Swire's 1824 map of Manchester (Plate 6, Figure 7). This map shows that the Infirmary complex had been extended southwards, with additional buildings to the south of the Site. The surrounding street network also demonstrates notable changes. Bath Street is shown as having been renamed George Street, while the street along the northern boundary is now labelled Piccadilly, replacing the earlier name of Lever's Row.

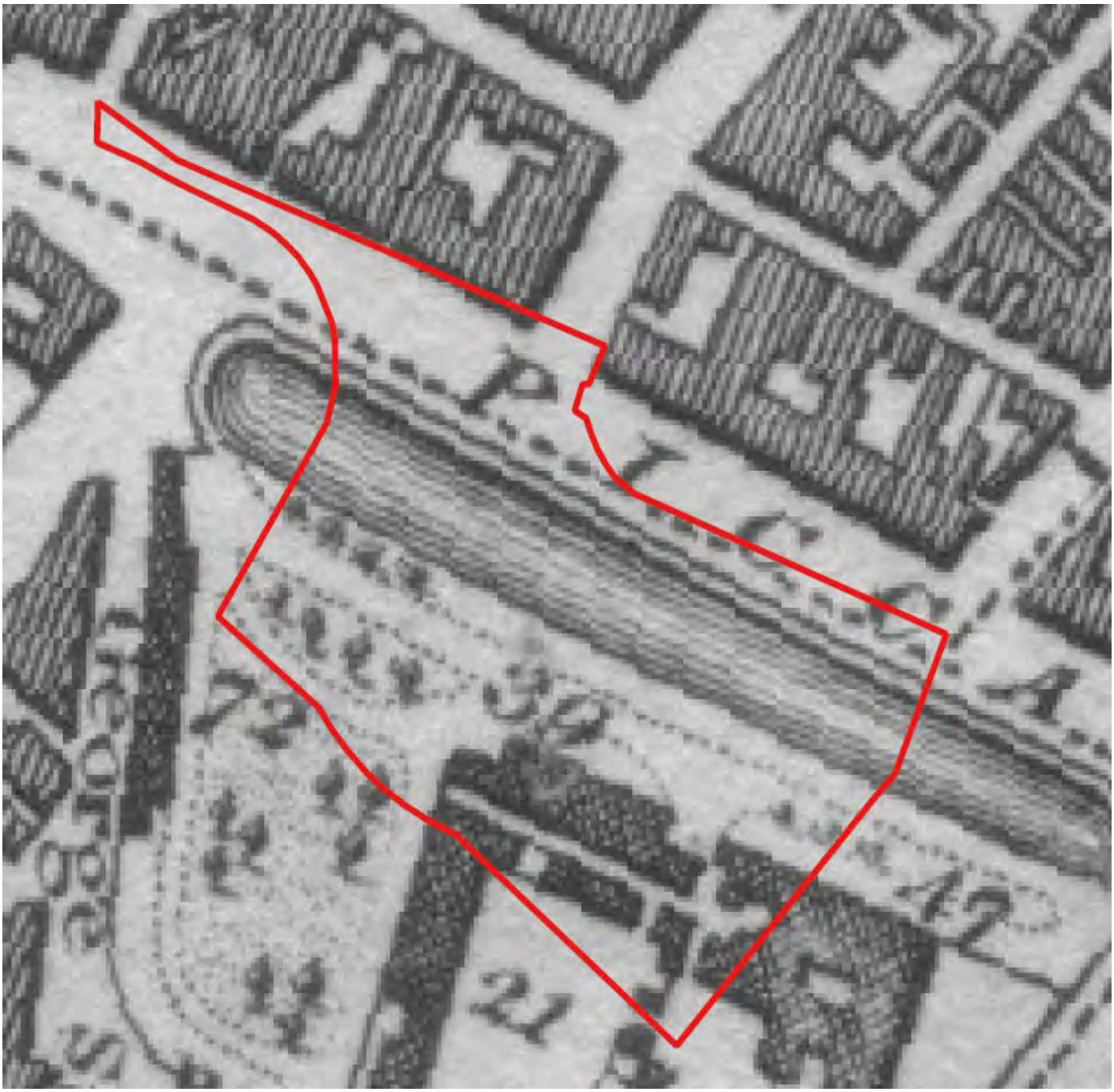


Plate 6: Swire's 1824 map with Site boundary

During the 1830s, the Infirmary was remodelled and extended to form an L-shaped plan (UMAU, 1999). This consisted of a brick structure dating to around 1835 that was faced in stone, with a classical portico that was added by architect Richard Lane. In 1850, the building was radically remodelled with a U-shaped structure with a classical portico was added on main elevations (HER 9133.2.1).

The 1851 Ordnance Survey map is the first available map that accurately depicts the Site, capturing the layout and internal organisation of the Manchester Royal Infirmary and the adjoining Lunatic Asylum (Plate 7, Figure 8). The Infirmary complex is shown in considerable detail, with individual rooms labelled to reflect its increasingly specialised medical functions. These include the *House Surgeon's Room*, *House Physicians Clerks Room* and *Apothecary's Room*, alongside domestic and administrative spaces such as kitchens, dining rooms, a library and Committee and Board Rooms.

Since the 1830s, the ornamental pond became stagnant in dry weather, which caused a public nuisance (UMAU, 2001). In 1851, Queen Victoria visited Manchester, in which the procession passed along Piccadilly. In order to improve its appearance, the council set up three fountains, fed by the pond. Nevertheless, the problem of stagnating water persisted, and in 1853 the council and the Infirmary trustees decided to fill in the pond (Swindells, 1907, p. 70; UMAU, 1999). In 1854 this area was laid out by Manchester Corporation as a public esplanade, designed by Sir Joseph Paxton (Krieger, 1987, p. 24). The esplanade included a fine ornamental fountain, forming a focal point of the new space and several statues commemorating prominent national and scientific figures, including Sir Robert Peel (HER 8544.1.0) added in October 1853 (18 October 1853, Greenock Advertiser), the Duke of Wellington (HER 8547.1.0) in August 1856, and John Dalton in 1855, although this was relocated in the 1960s to the forecourt of the former John Dalton College.

Contemporary accounts outline the redevelopment with Joseph Perrin's account within *Perrin's Manchester Handbook* (1857): "The open space in front of the infirmary, formerly occupied by a pond of water, has lately been given up to the corporation, and has by them been laid out as a public walk, with fountains, which were displayed at the inauguration of the Wellington Statue on the 30th August 1856."



Plate 7: 1851 Ordnance Survey (OS) map with Site boundary (Image courtesy of National Library of Scotland)

The 1891 Ordnance Survey map (Plate 8, Figure 9) is the first plan that captures the esplanade to the north of the infirmary, including the incorporation of the statues within the north of the Site. By this date, the Manchester Royal Infirmary is depicted as a single unified building, remodelled into a U-shaped structure (Plate 9), with the Lunatic Asylum no longer shown, following its relocation to Cheadle in 1849. The footprint of the building had also been altered following the partial infilling of the central court between 1886-1889 (HER 9133.2.1), with a '*Dispensary for Outpatients'* extending to the south, and a '*Nurses' Home*' occupying the south-eastern corner, beyond the Site. The earlier open yard spaces had largely been built over.



Plate 8: 1891 Ordnance Survey map with Site boundary (courtesy of the National Library of Scotland)



Plate 9: Photograph showing Manchester Royal Infirmary as a single unified building taken in c. 1880s, courtesy of Manchester Libraries

The Manchester Royal Infirmary became increasingly constrained by its central location limiting its long-term development. Following an offer of £400,000 from Manchester Corporation for the Site, it was agreed that a new, purpose-built hospital accommodating 500 beds would be constructed at Oxford Road, which opened in 1908 (Barlow, 2018). The original buildings on the Site were almost entirely demolished by April 1910, with the exception of the outpatient department, which remained in use for minor treatment and dispensing medication until the 1930s (HER 9.133.2.1) (Plate 10, Figure 10). The largely vacant site is captured on the Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1922 and 1934 (Figure 11). The only additional feature shown on the plan is a monument dedicated to Queen Victoria, which was added in 1901 (HER 8546.1.0).

In advance of the relocation, a committee of Manchester Corporation met in June 1907 to consider the future use of the Site. Proposals included the construction of a municipal art gallery and public library, as well as a scheme for a new replacement for Manchester Cathedral on the Site, put forward by architect Richard Carpenter (Barlow, 2018). Progress on any redevelopment was significantly delayed by the outbreak of the First World War, and in 1916 the Site, referred to as the “Great Hole of Piccadilly”, was temporarily occupied by a marquee, used for the recuperation of wounded soldiers (England, 2010). Ultimately, none of these proposals were realised and the Site remained largely undeveloped throughout the 1910s and 1920s. Despite this, *The Manchester Public Free Library Reference Department* lay to the east of the Site and is captured on the 1922 OS Map (Plate 10, Figure 10) and 1934 OS Map (Figure 11). In 1912, a new home was needed for the city’s central reference library and temporary accommodation was built in the Infirmary grounds (Makepeace, 1987, p. 32) .The library remained here until the opening of the new central library in St Peter’s Square in 1934.

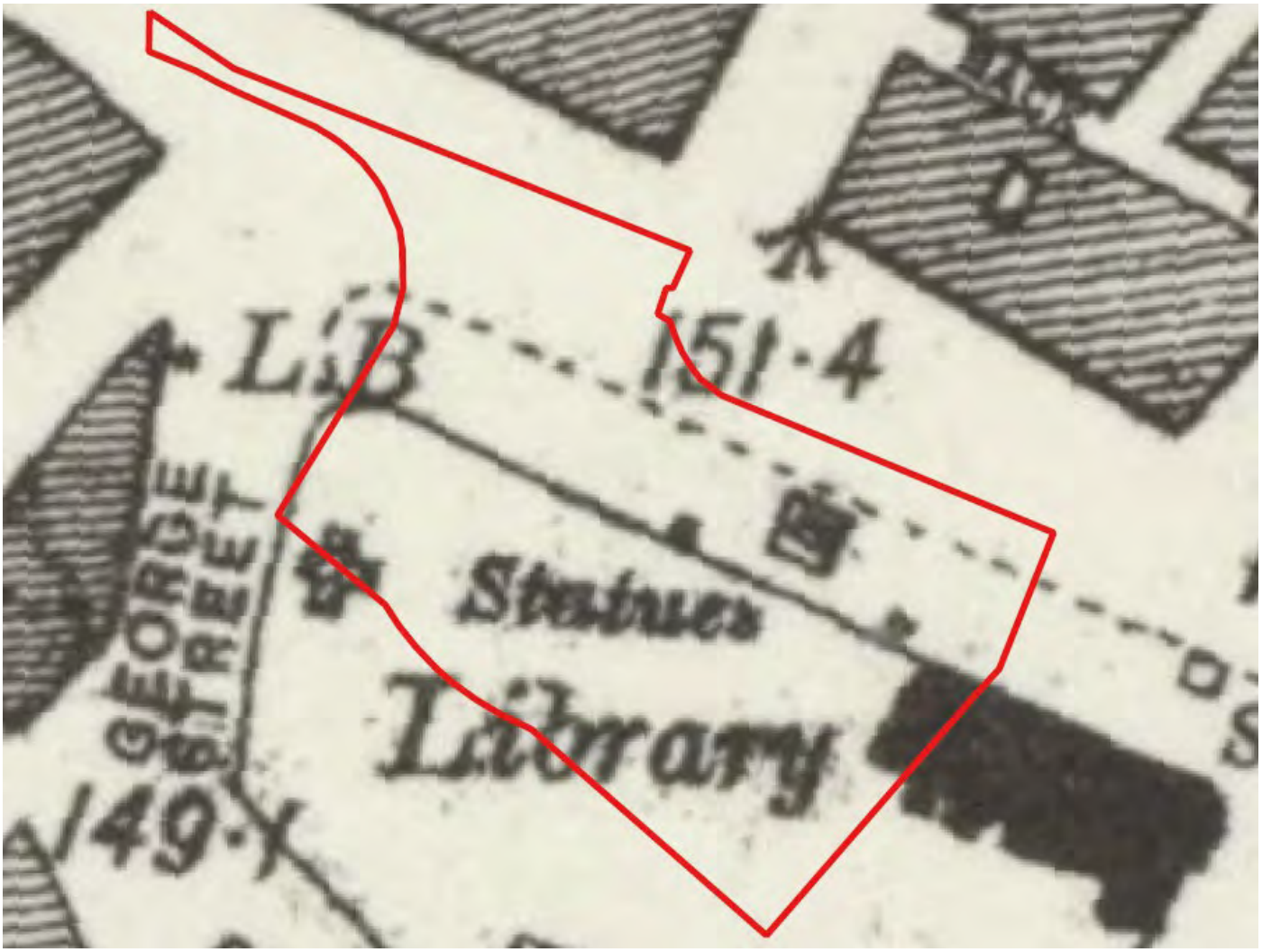


Plate 10: 1922 Ordnance Survey 6-inch map with Site boundary (courtesy of the National Library of Scotland)

By the 1930s, it was definitively resolved that the Site would not be redeveloped but instead transformed into a public garden, incorporating a sunken garden within the surviving footprint of the former Infirmary basement. This design included formal flower beds, a rose garden, and ornamental planting such as flowering cherry trees (Glinert, 2008) (Plate 11). During the Second World War, the gardens accommodated air raid shelters (Plate 12). However, the surrounding urban fabric was significantly affected by the conflict, with many warehouse buildings along Parker Street destroyed during the Manchester Blitz (Plate 13).

In the post-war period, Manchester Corporation reaffirmed its commitment to public open space, and the gardens were restored. A bronze sculpture titled *Adrift*, depicting a family clinging to a raft in turbulent seas, was installed as a central feature within the sunken garden (England, 2010). In 1953, this sculpture was relocated to the southern end of the gardens and replaced with a commemorative fountain marking the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. This arrangement is captured in L.S. Lowry's 1954 painting *Piccadilly Gardens*, which clearly depicts the fountain set within the sunken garden (Glinert, 2008).



Plate 11: Postcard/illustration showing the sunken garden at Piccadilly Gardens taken c. 1930s (Modern Mooch, 2021)



Plate 12: Photograph showing air raid shelters occupying the Site during the Second World War, courtesy of Manchester Libraries (Modern Mooch 2021)



Plate 13: Photograph showing the post-war bomb damage along Parker Street, courtesy of Manchester Libraries (Modern Mooch 2021)

The 1951 OS map (Plate 14; Figure 12) captures the sunken garden, showing a landscaped layout defined by tree-lined paths. In addition, an *Omnibus Station* had been established to the south of the Site. This was Parker Street bus station, which opened in 1931 as part of the wider redevelopment and subsequently extended in 1935, providing a centralised interchange for bus passengers, as seen today. Further change occurred on land to the south of the gardens previously cleared during wartime bombing. Between 1959 and 1965, the former bombsite along Parker Street was redeveloped with Modernist buildings known as Piccadilly Plaza juxtaposing mid-20th-century modernism with the historic landscaped gardens.

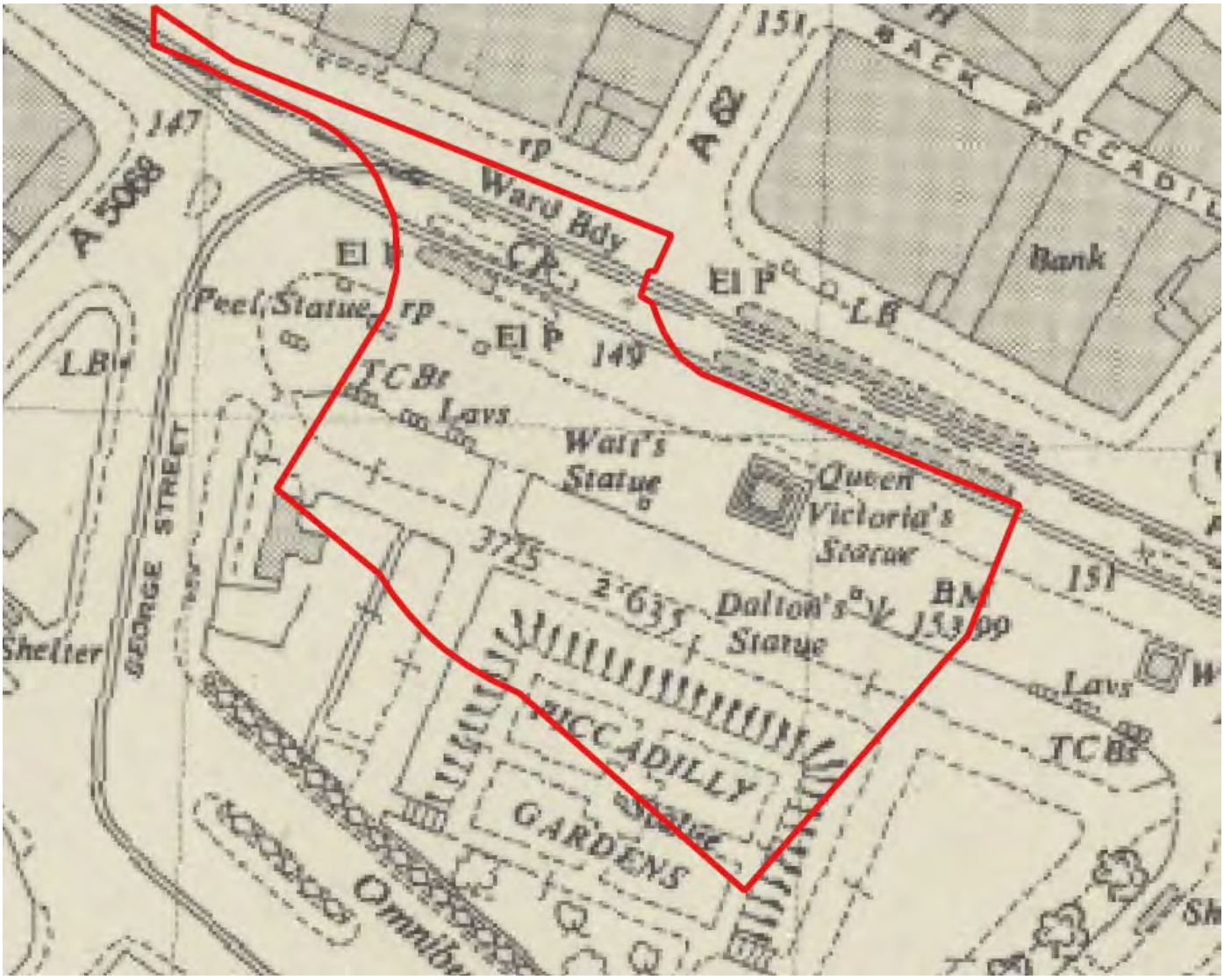


Plate 14: 1951 Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map with Site boundary (courtesy of the National Library of Scotland)

More recent development within the Site includes the construction of the Manchester Metrolink, which introduced a new light rail system into the city centre (Reed, 2005). Tram lines were laid along the southern and western edges of Piccadilly Gardens, accompanied by the construction of a new tram stop consolidating the Site's status as a key transport interchange. By the 1990s, however, the sunken garden had increasingly fallen out of favour. Its below-ground level and enclosed form created a sense of detachment from the surrounding city, and it became widely perceived as an unwelcoming space associated with anti-social behaviour (Reed, 2005). These concerns contributed to growing calls for redesign of the area.

A major catalyst for change came with the 1996 Manchester bombing, prompting a city-wide urban renewal programme to modernise the city centre and improve connectivity (Byass, 2010, pp. 72-73). In response, an international design competition was launched for the redevelopment of Piccadilly Gardens. The winning scheme resulted in the removal and infilling of the 1930s sunken garden, replacing it with a level, open landscape. The new design introduced geometric pathways laid out in formal arrangements of straight lines and sweeping arcs, surfaced in sandstone and blue Welsh slate. At the centre of the redesigned space, a large oval fountain plaza was installed with programmable water jets. Along the southern edge, a modernist concrete pavilion designed by Tadao Ando was constructed, accompanied by a curving concrete wall and a landscaping scheme incorporating tree species such as London plane, flowering pear and magnolia (Byass, 2010, pp. 72-73). Most of the original statues were retained within the Site.

More recently, redevelopment of the Piccadilly Gardens has occurred. Following comparisons to the Berlin

Wall and negative public response to the 2003 developments, the partial demolition of the free-standing curved wall along the northern edge of the gardens took place in 2020 (Britton, 2020). In 2024, further works aimed for the upgrade of the Piccadilly Pavilion with the removal of a roof structure connecting two commercial units and the installation of a new lighting feature (Whelan, 2024).

4.7. Previous archaeological work

In total, 28 archaeological events have been recorded within the 250m study area, comprising 18 desk-based assessments (DBA), six heritage statements (HS), two watching briefs and one building recording.

The HER notes that a watching brief was undertaken immediately to the east of the Site in 2001 by UMAU. The HER entry notes that: “A watching brief was undertaken during development works at Piccadilly Gardens in 2001, formerly the site of the Manchester Infirmary and lunatic asylum prior to its development as a city pleasure garden. The results of the watching brief revealed only two substantial remnants connected with the former mid-/ late 18th-century buildings. Fragmentary brick walling in two separate areas was revealed. One of the walls related to the nurses' home and the other to the south-eastern corner of the lunatic asylum. It is presumed that much of the below-ground evidence was disturbed or removed when the area was landscaped for the formally laid-out gardens” (HER 9133.2.5).

4.7.1. Previous archaeological investigations within the Site

A watching brief was undertaken at Piccadilly Gardens in 2001 by UMAU (HER EGM3376) designed to look for evidence of the line of the Roman road from Manchester to Castleshaw, the clay extraction Daube Holes and the 1780s public baths. It also observed the infilling of the sunken gardens. The only features of archaeological interest observed were the poorly preserved remains of a white and green tile wall, which were likely the only surviving remains of the Georgian bath houses, a Victorian fluted column base in Ionic style and deep silty deposits thought to be the possible remains of the 'daub holes', though these could not be investigated further (UMAU, 2001). No human remains were found during the development, and no evidence of the Roman road believed to have passed through the vicinity was seen. The report doesn’t provide a plan of where the watching brief took place. The report demonstrates that, although fragmentary, archaeological remains survive within the Site.

There has also been a subsequent desk-based assessment at Piccadilly Gardens by Archaeology Collective in 2017 (HER EGM4807).

5. Site Walkover

The Site currently comprises a mix of hardstanding and soft landscaped surfaces, including a concrete water feature, an elevated footway and surrounding grassed areas, part of which is within temporary hoarding (Planning Ref: 144971/VO/2026) associated with the future development (Plate 15; Plate 16; Plate 17). The condition of the grass cover is variable, with areas of good growth present alongside patches of poor or absent vegetation, resulting in exposed topsoil, particularly across the western part of the site (Plate 15). Access to the hoarded area is provided via a padlocked metal gate located on the northern boundary, opposite Oldham Street (Plate 20; Plate 21).

The Site is situated within a prominent transport and commercial hub, adjacent to the Piccadilly Gardens tram stop and bus terminus, and is surrounded by a dense concentration of commercial uses, including cafés, restaurants and retail premises (Plate 22; Plate 23). As a result, the area experiences consistently high levels of pedestrian activity and commercial use. The tram lines run along the western edge of the Site.

During the Site walkover, trenching works within the east of the Site were observed, exposing layers of infilled and made ground beneath the existing surface (Plate 24). There is an underground chamber, with a metal ventilation grille, associated with an LV basement switch room within the western section of the hoarded area (Plate 19).

The Peel Statue (HER 8544.1.0; Plate 26), Watt Statue (HER 8445.1.0; Plate 25) and the Queen Victoria Monument (HER 8546.1.0; Plate 18) were observed within the walkover. The Queen Victoria Monument stands in the north-eastern corner of the hoarded zone.



Plate 15: General view of the hoarded area and approximate location of the former Daube Holes, facing north-east.



Plate 16: General view of the hoarded area, facing south-west.



Plate 17: View showing the current water feature from an elevated footway within the hoarded area, facing north-east.



Plate 18: View showing the Queen Victoria statue in the north-eastern corner of the hoarded area, facing north.



Plate 19: LV basement switch room underneath the Site, facing west.



Plate 20: General view of the Site, facing north.



Plate 21: General view of the Site from the junction of Picadilly and Oldham Street, facing south-west.



Plate 22: View showing the Piccadilly Gardens from the north-western corner of the Site, facing south-east.



Plate 23: General view of Piccadilly Gardens taken from the eastern section of the Site, facing north-west.



Plate 24: View of ongoing trenching which exposes the made ground layers of Piccadilly Gardens, facing east.



Plate 25: View of the Watt Statue in the north of the Site, facing south



Plate 26: View of the Peel Statue, partially blocked by the current food market stalls, facing south-west

6. Gazetteer

The following gazetteer sites (GS) summarise the sites of potential archaeological interest and elements of the historic landscape within the Site and its immediate vicinity. The identification of these heritage assets is drawn primarily from the historic map regression analysis, Historic England, and the HER data, and includes both designated and non-designated heritage assets. The locations of the gazetteer sites are shown on Figure 14 within Appendix A.

GAZETTEER SITE (GS)	01
Site Name	Daube Holes
Designation	-
HER number	9133.2.0
Period	Post-medieval
NGR	384383, 398278
Description	The Daube Holes comprised a series of water-filled clay extraction pits located in the north of the Site, formed through the removal of clay for the production of wattle and daub buildings during the medieval and early post-medieval periods. The Daube Holes are captured on Casson and Berry's 1741 map; a feature that became synonymous with the use of ducking stools for the punishment of suspected scolds during the 17th century. By the late 18th century, the Daube Holes had fallen out of industrial use and became formalised into an ornamental water feature, labelled as a 'canal' in Green's 1794 mapping. In 1854, the waterbody was infilled and transformed as part of a landscaped public esplanade, featuring statues, public walkways and fountains. Part of the former Daube Holes was likely redeveloped into the Infirmary, which may have impacted the survival of the extraction pits in this part of the Site. However, they have potential to survive beneath the former esplanade, and a previous watching brief recorded the survival of deep silty deposits thought to be the possible remains of the 'Daube Holes'.
Assessment	Remains associated with the Daube Holes and ornamental pond may survive within the northern half of the Site and could be impacted by the proposed drainage works and associated attenuation tank (up to a maximum of 3m).

GAZETTEER SITE (GS)	02
Site Name	Manchester Royal Infirmary
Designation	-
HER number	9133.2.1
Period	1752
NGR	384387, 398275
Description	The Manchester Royal Infirmary was established on the Site in the mid-18th century, with the first premises opening in 1752 with a total of 12 beds, depicted on Tinker's 1772 map. By the late 18th century, the complex had developed to include an associated Dispensary and adjacent Lunatic Asylum. Throughout the 19th century, the Infirmary underwent substantial expansion and internal reorganisation, incorporating specialist treatment and surgeon rooms, and ancillary facility. Despite its prominence, the hospital relocated to Oxford Road in 1908, and the original buildings were largely demolished by 1910. The sunken gardens were established within part of the Infirmary's basement in the 1930s. The sunken gardens were only established in a small part of the Site. The sunken gardens later contained air raid shelters during the Second World War, and the area was substantially bombed by the Luftwaffe.

	The sunken gardens were infilled during the 2001 watching brief, which recorded the poorly preserved remains of an 18th-century wall. Furthermore, a substantial basement housing a plant room was installed in the west of the Site, which would have removed archaeological remains within this part of the Site. However, there is potential for remnants of the infirmary to survive within discrete parts of the Site.
Assessment	Remains of the infirmary may survive within the Site and could be impacted by the proposed drainage works and associated attenuation tank (up to a maximum of 3m).

GAZETTEER SITE (GS)	**03**
Site Name	Manchester Royal Lunatic Asylum
Designation	-
HER number	9133.2.4
Period	1763
NGR	384400, 398271
Description	The Manchester Royal Lunatic Asylum was established adjacent to the Manchester Royal Infirmary in 1763, captured clearly on Green's 1794 map. Early mapping depicts the Asylum as a separate but connected building to the Infirmary, with its own internal layout including a Governor's Room and externally segregated areas including a Men's Yard and a Women's Yard. In 1849, the Asylum relocated from the Site to a new, purpose-built facility at Cheadle, now known as Cheadle Royal Hospital. Following its relocation, the original Asylum building on the Site was absorbed into the expanding Infirmary complex.
Assessment	The western edge of the Lunatic Asylum falls within the eastern edge of the Site boundary and will be largely unaffected by the scheme.

GAZETTEER SITE (GS)	**04**
Site Name	Peel Statue
Designation	Grade II Listed Building
HER number	8544.1.0
Period	1853
NGR	384337, 398322
Description	The statue of Sir Robert Peel was erected within the mid-19th-century esplanade, occupying part of the former Daube Holes area, and remains in-situ within the Site.
Assessment	The statue will be retained within the proposed development.

GAZETTEER SITE (GS)	**05**
Site Name	Watt Statue
Designation	Grade II Listed Building
HER number	8545.1.0
Period	1857
NGR	384388, 398309
Description	The statue of James Watt was erected within the mid-19th-century esplanade, occupying part of the former Daube Holes area, and remains in-situ within the Site.
Assessment	The statue will be retained during the proposed development scheme.

GAZETTEER SITE (GS)	06
Site Name	Queen Victoria Monument
Designation	Grade II Listed Building
HER number	8546.1.0
Period	1901
NGR	384393, 398290
Description	The Queen Victoria Monument was erected within the Site in 1901, as a prominent late addition to the public esplanade following the death of Queen Victoria.
Assessment	The monument will be retained within the development scheme.

GAZETTEER SITE (GS)	07
Site Name	Public Library
Designation	-
HER number	-
Period	1920s
NGR	384400, 398273
Description	The Manchester Public Free Library Reference Department was located in the south-east corner of the Site and is depicted on the 1922 and 1934 OS maps. Its establishment followed a period in the early 20th century when the cleared Site, known as the 'Great Hole of Piccadilly', remained largely undeveloped after the demolition of the Manchester Royal Infirmary and the failure of several proposed redevelopment schemes.
Assessment	Remains associated with the Library lie largely beyond the Site boundary and will not be impacted by the scheme.

GAZETTEER SITE (GS)	08
Site Name	Sunken Garden
Designation	-
HER number	-
Period	1930s
NGR	384377, 398267
Description	The Sunken Garden was established in the 1930s following the clearance of the Manchester Royal Infirmary complex in 1910 and a period of indecision over the redevelopment of the area. After several proposed development schemes, the Site was formally laid out as public gardens, incorporating a sunken garden within the footprint of the former Infirmary basement. The design comprised formal planting and ornamental features, including a central sculpture and later a commemorative fountain. The garden remained a defining feature of Piccadilly Gardens throughout the mid-20th century, although it was infilled and replaced during the redevelopment of the Site in the late-20th century.
Assessment	Remains associated with the sunken garden may survive within the Site, though they are of no archaeological interest.

7. Significance

7.1. Policy context for heritage assets

Under both national and local planning policy, both designated and non-designated heritage assets are to be considered within the planning process (as previously stated in Chapter 3). The NPPF emphasises assessing the development proposals in line with an up-to-date local plan. Therefore, Policy JP-P2: Heritage (Places for Everyone 2024) and Policy EN 3 of Manchester's Core Strategy were consulted as the key Development Plan Document in the Local Development Framework (LDF).

7.2. Significance of the archaeological resource

The Secretary of State's criteria for the scheduling of ancient monuments, outlined in Annex 1 of 'Scheduled Monuments: identifying, protecting, conserving and investigating nationally important archaeological sites under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979' (DCMS, 2013) provides a methodology for assessing archaeological significance. This criterion has been used to assess archaeological significance, below.

7.2.1. Historical and archaeological interest

The historic and archaeological interest of Piccadilly Gardens initially lies in its association with the daube holes, which lay on edge of the medieval and post-medieval settlement of Manchester. The pits were a primary source of building material, facilitating the construction of timber-framed buildings. The Site was later occupied by the Manchester Infirmary in the 18th century, reflecting its transition from peripheral settlement to an important institutional and urban space.

7.2.2. Baseline Significance conditions

Period

No prehistoric, Roman or medieval activity is known to have taken place within the Site and the potential for remains is considered to be very low.

The most likely remains to survive within the Site date to the post-medieval and industrial period and include the Daube Holes (GS01) and Manchester Royal Infirmary (GS02)

Rarity

Archaeological remains pre-dating the 19th century may be considered significant due to rarity.

Documentation

The historical development of the Site can be traced reasonably well from cartographic and other primary sources. Further documentary research would undoubtedly furnish additional evidence, although this is unlikely to alter the outline and conclusions presented in this assessment.

Group value

Buried remains within the Site may hold group value related to the Manchester Royal Infirmary complex and associated Lunatic Asylum.

Survival / condition

The sunken gardens were constructed within the basement of the Infirmary. Subsequent redevelopment of the Site in the late 1990s saw the infilling of the former garden. A basement plant room occupies the north part of the Site, which has likely removed archaeological remains within this part of the Site.

Fragility / vulnerability

Any buried archaeological remains, should they be present and survive *in situ*, are vulnerable to damage or destruction during any earth-moving works associated with the development scheme.

Diversity

Any buried remains within the Site are unlikely to be considered significant due to diversity.

Potential

The Daube Holes were established in the Site during the post-medieval period, associated with the extraction of mud and clay used in the construction of wattle and daub buildings, as well as more pertinent uses for medieval punishment. The survival of remains associated with the works has the potential to address the research agendas outlined in the current *Archaeological Research Framework for North West England (*https://researchframeworks.org/nwrf/industrial; Table 5):

Post-medieval period	
Agenda No	**Agenda Description**
PM19	How can the study of leisure landscaping inform our understanding of the changing landscape in this period?
PM27	How do the industries associated with the North West evolve and develop during this period?
PM29	How do the extractive industries develop during this period?

Table 5: Post-medieval research agenda

The Site has some potential to contain archaeological remains associated with the daube holes and therefore may address the research agendas listed above.

Manchester Royal Infirmary was established in the Site by 1754. The survival of remains associated with the Infirmary complex have the potential to address the research agendas outlined in the current *Archaeological Research Framework for North West England (*https://researchframeworks.org/nwrf/industrial; Table 6):

Industrial period	
Agenda No	**Agenda Description**
Ind23	What evidence do we have for the improvement of urban public health during this period?
Ind25	How do institutional buildings (e.g. prisons, asylums, workhouses, hospitals etc.) develop during this period and where are significant extant examples?

Table 6: Industrial research agendas

The Site has potential to contain archaeological remains associated with the Infirmary complex and therefore may address the research agendas listed above.

A library and sunken garden were also established within the Site in the early 20th century, following the demolition of the Infirmary buildings. Remains associated with the library and gardens also have has the potential to address the research agendas outlined in the current *Archaeological Research Framework for North West England (*https://researchframeworks.org/nwrf/industrial; Table 7):

Industrial period	
Agenda No	**Agenda Description**
Ind84	How can we identify the development of public parks and the changing uses of green spaces within the urban environment within the industrial period?
Ind85	How do public social buildings evolve, develop and change during this period?

Table 7: Industrial research agendas

The Site has low potential to contain archaeological remains associated with the gardens and therefore has limited potential to address the research agendas listed above (Table 7).

7.3. Summary of significance

A summary of the potential and significance of the archaeological remains within the Site is outlined in the table below (Table 8). These conclusions have been informed by the above criteria, professional judgment,

the ICOMOS guide to assessing the value of heritage assets, as well as contributions that could be made towards local and regional research agendas.

IDENTIFIED ASSET	PERIOD	POTENTIAL	SIGNIFICANCE
Daube Holes (GS01)	Post-medieval	Moderate	Low (potentially medium)
Manchester Royal Infirmary (GS02)	Industrial	Moderate	Low
Manchester Royal Lunatic Asylum (GS03)	Industrial	No potential	-
Public Library (GS07)	1920s	No potential	-
Sunken Garden (GS08)	1930s	Low	Negligible

Table 8: Summary of potential archaeological sites and their significance

This assessment concludes that the Site is of archaeological interest as it has moderate potential to contain buried remains dating from the post-medieval and industrial periods, which would be of low or potentially medium significance.

8. Impact Assessment

8.1. Below-ground archaeological remains

8.1.1. Site conditions

Piccadilly Gardens is an open, public realm space and public transport hub, located in central Manchester, bordering the Northern Quarter of the city centre. The area includes an adjacent Metrolink stop and bus interchange, raised lawns, together with a water fountain. The Site has undergone multiple phases of development, various infilling and was bombed in the 1990s. The Site also includes a modern service basement within the west of the Site.

Archaeological watching briefs in the early 2000s have recorded the remnants of late 18th-century walls associated with the former hospital and lunatic asylum, as well as silty deposits associated with the former daube holes and infilled canal, demonstrating that archaeological remains survive within the Site.

8.1.2. Proposed development

The development proposals comprise the “redevelopment and reconfiguration of Piccadilly Gardens comprising works to the public realm including public open space and use of space for events, together with decommissioning and removal of the existing fountain; creation of play space, lawn area, hard and soft landscaping; lighting; and drainage and other associated infrastructure; and a severable plot for a future ancillary structure with associated interim landscaping”. The proposals make provision for a future structure within the Gardens, which will complement the ongoing investment in and refurbishment of the Piccadilly Gardens landscape. The structure does not form part of this application and will be brought forward under a separate full planning application.

Landscaping works across the Site are likely to be shallow and are unlikely to impact archaeological remains. However, the installation of drainage (to a maximum depth of 2.35m) and excavation works for an attenuation tank (to a depth of 3m) has the potential to impact archaeological remains.

8.1.3. Review of impact on the archaeological resource

This assessment concludes that the Site is of archaeological interest as it has moderate potential to contain buried remains dating from the post-medieval and industrial periods, which would be of low or potentially medium significance.

Deep ground-breaking and earth-moving associated with the installation of drainage and an attenuation tank has the potential to adversely affect buried archaeological remains that may survive within the Site that are considered of low or potentially medium significance. Without a programme of mitigation, the proposed development could adversely harm (damage or destroy) these remains.

9. Conclusions

9.1. Archaeological potential and significance

This assessment concludes that the Site is of archaeological interest as it has moderate potential to contain buried remains dating from the post-medieval and industrial periods, which would be of low or potentially medium significance. Without a programme of mitigation, the proposed development could adversely harm (damage or destroy) these remains.

9.1. Planning policy

The NPPF makes clear that where the loss of the whole or a material part of a non-designated heritage asset's significance is justified by a development, the developer should be required to record that asset and advance understanding of its significance, and to make this evidence publicly accessible.

Any necessary mitigation would be secured through a planning condition in line with paragraphs 207 and 218 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

9.2. Further work

Following consultation with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS), it is anticipated that an archaeological watching brief will be required during any deep ground-breaking / earth-moving works associated with the excavation of the attenuation tank and drainage runs.

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Swire's map of Manchester, 1824

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Appendix A

Figures

Figure 1 – Site location

Figure 2 – Site boundary superimposed on modern mapping

Figure 3 – Site boundary superimposed on to Casson and Berry's 1745 map of Manchester and Salford

Figure 4 – Site boundary superimposed on to the 1751 plan of Manchester and Salford

Figure 5 – Site boundary superimposed on to Green's 1794 map of Manchester and Salford

Figure 6 – Site boundary superimposed on to Dean and Piggot's 1809 map of Manchester and Salford

Figure 7 – Site boundary superimposed on to Swire's 1824 map of Manchester and its environs

Figure 8 – Site boundary superimposed on the 1851 Ordnance Survey Town Plan

Figure 9 – Site boundary superimposed on the 1891 Ordnance Survey 25-inch to 1-mile plan

Figure 10 – Site boundary superimposed on the 1922 Ordnance Survey 6-inch to 1-mile plan

Figure 11 – Site boundary superimposed on the 1934 Ordnance Survey 25-inch to 1-mile plan

Figure 12 – Site boundary superimposed on the 1951 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan

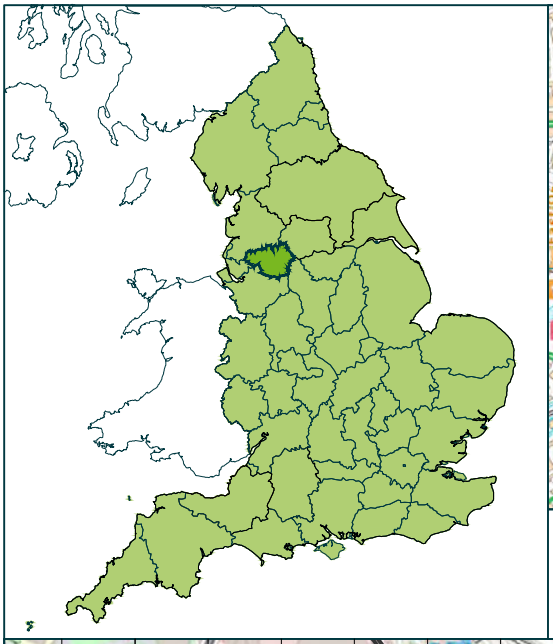
Figure 13 – Site boundary superimposed on the 1969 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan

Figure 14 - Site boundary superimposed on modern mapping showing gazetteer locations

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Picadilly Gardens, Manchester

Project Code: 61438

Figure 1: Site location

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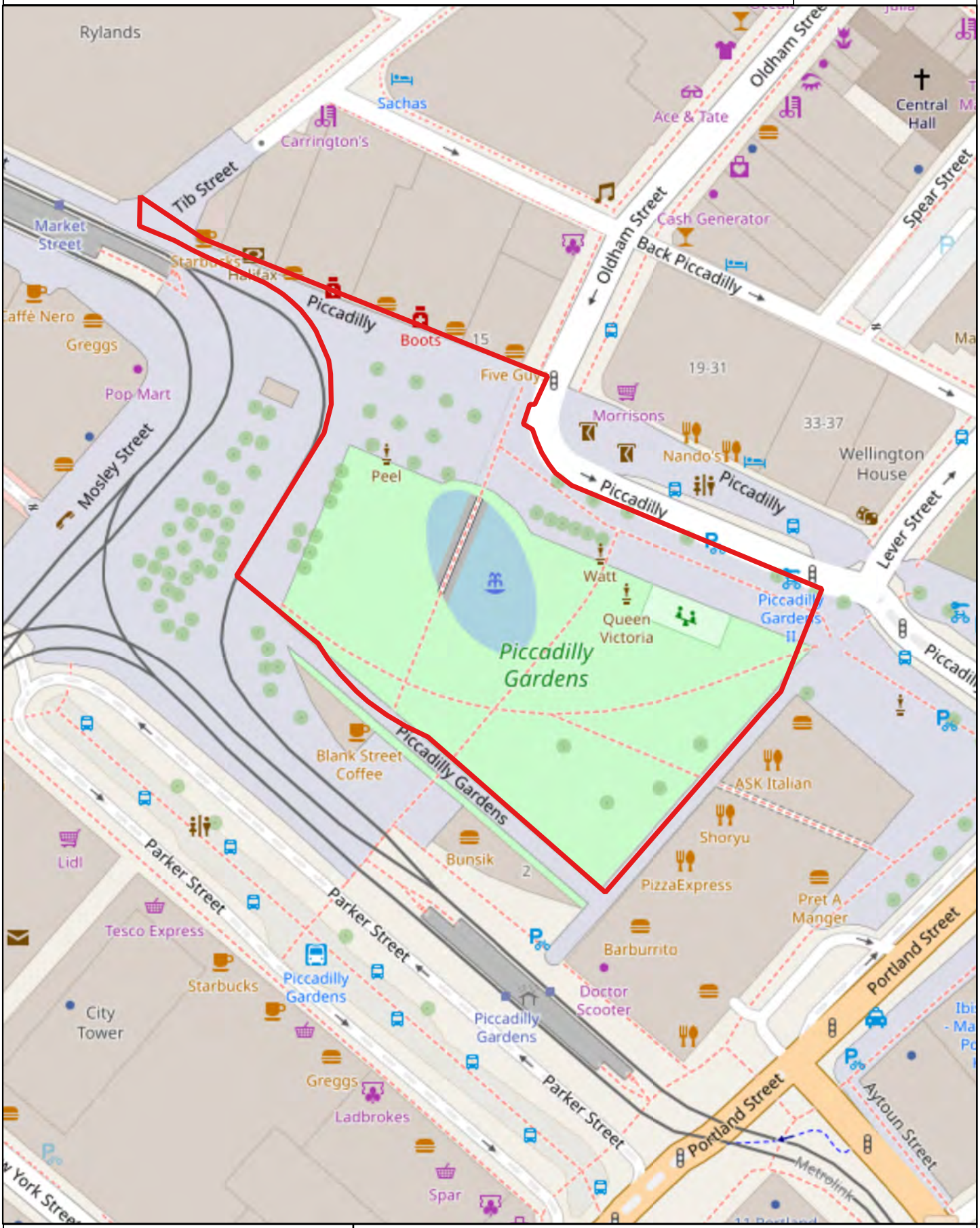
Carver's Warehouse
77 Dale Street, Manchester, M1 2HG



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Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester
Project Code: 61438
Figure 2: Site boundary superimposed onto modern mapping

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Key:

Site Boundary

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Project Code: 61438
Figure 3: Site boundary superimposed onto Casson and Berry's 1745 map

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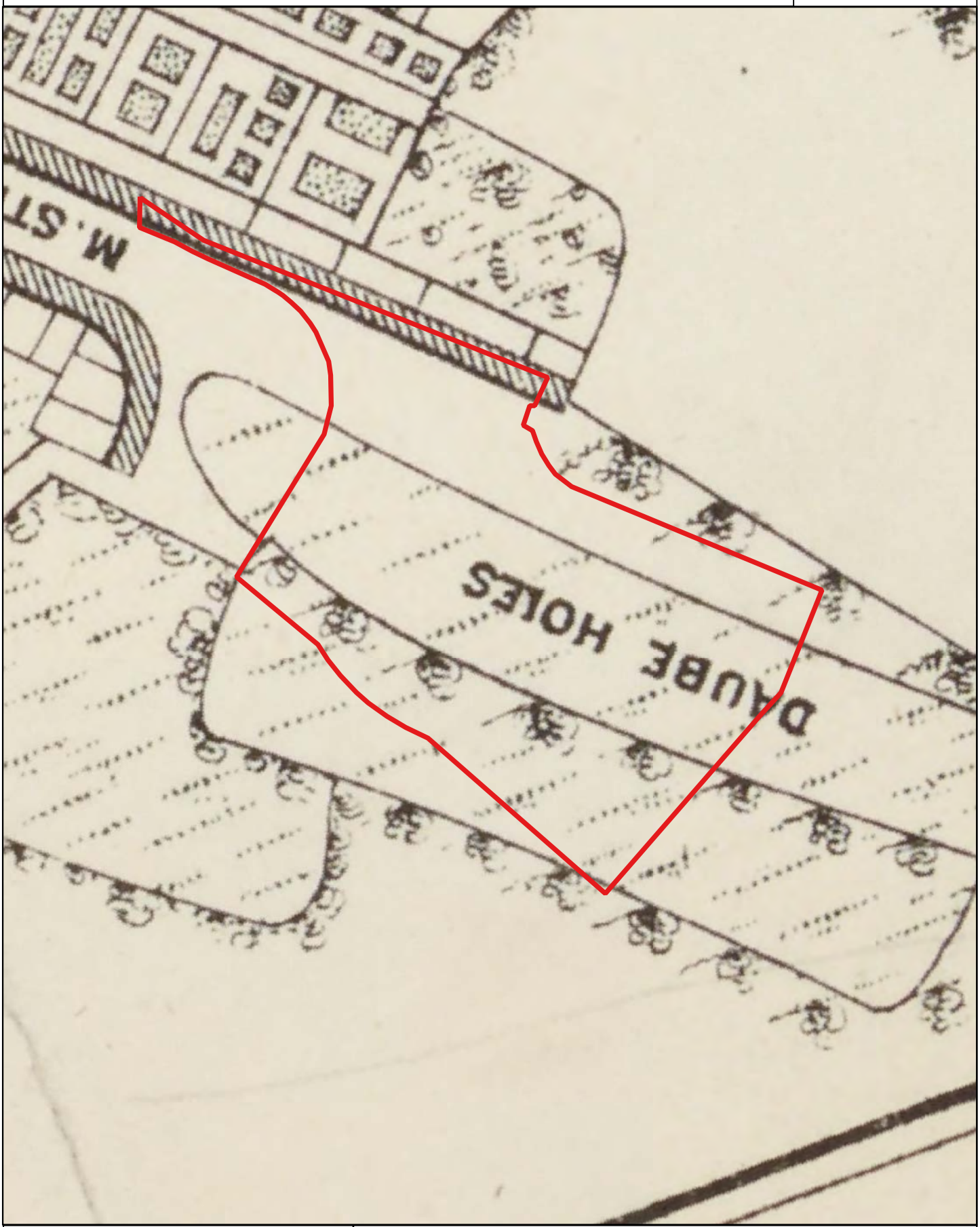
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Figure 4: Site boundary superimposed onto the 1751 plan of Manchester and Salford

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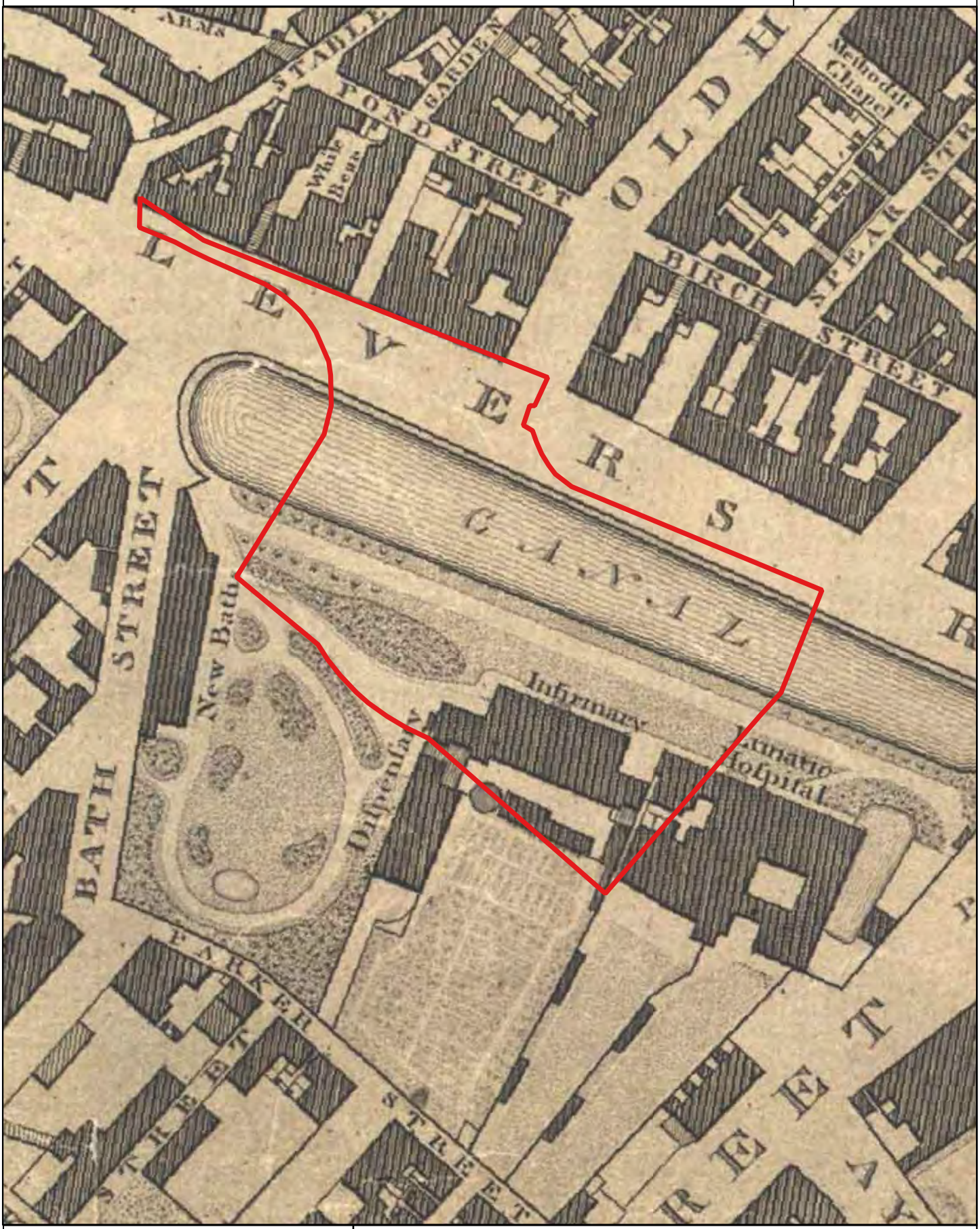
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Figure 5: Site boundary superimposed onto Green's 1794 map

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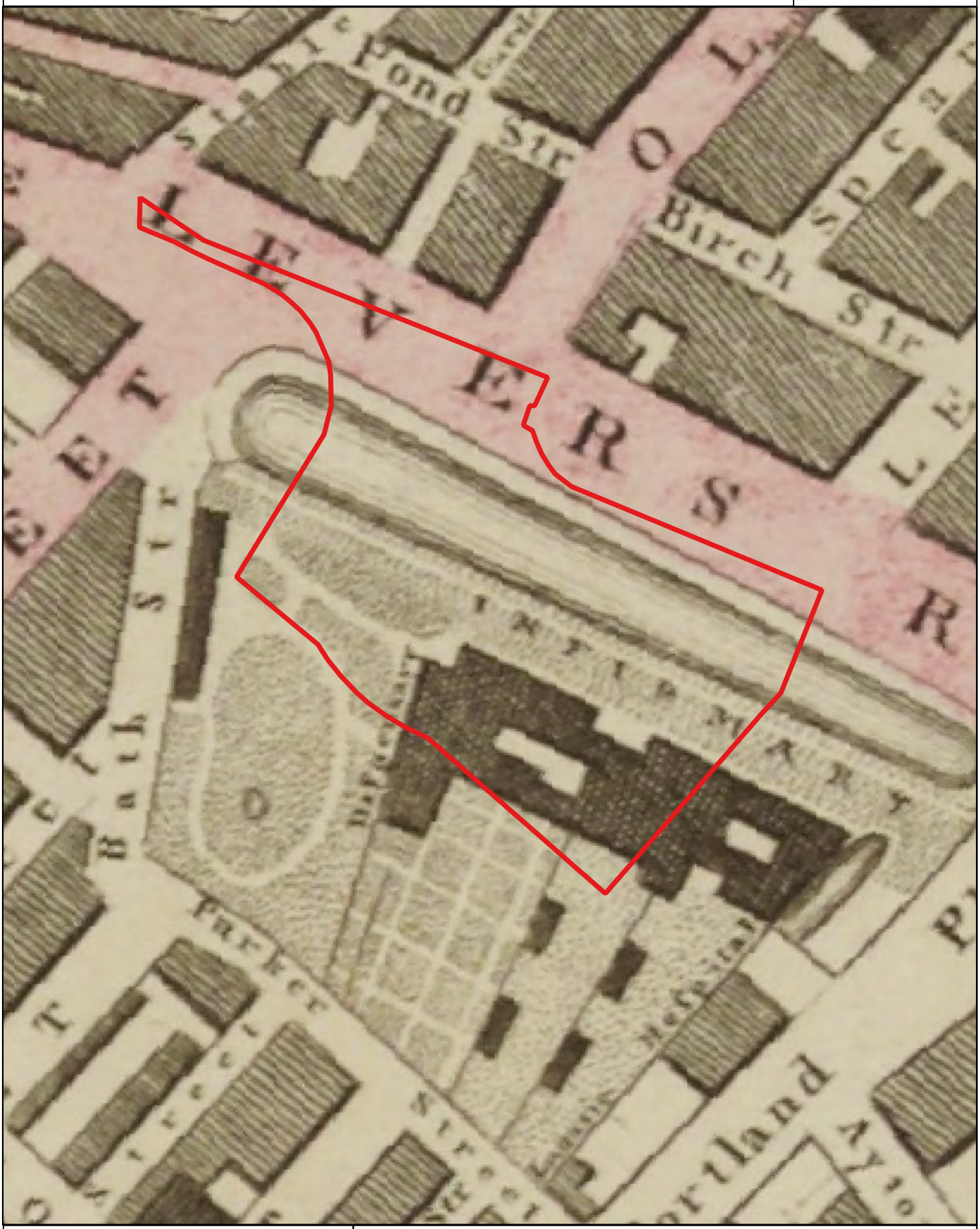
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Figure 6: Site boundary superimposed onto Dean and Pigot's 1809 map

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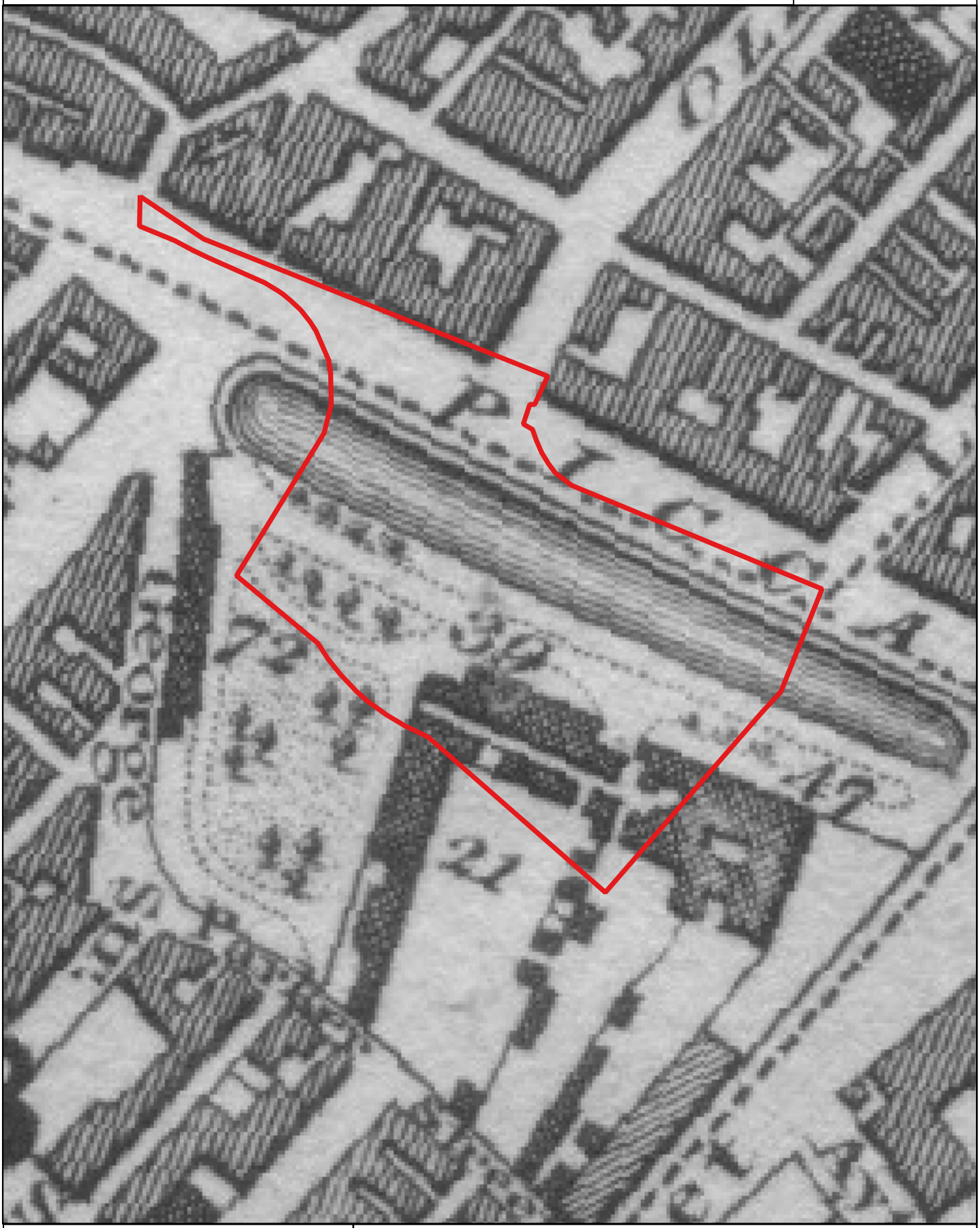
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Figure 7: Site boundary superimposed onto Swire's 1824 map

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Key:

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Figure 8: Site boundary superimposed onto the 1851 OS OS Town Plan of Manchester

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Figure 9: Site boundary superimposed onto the 1891 OS 25-inch map

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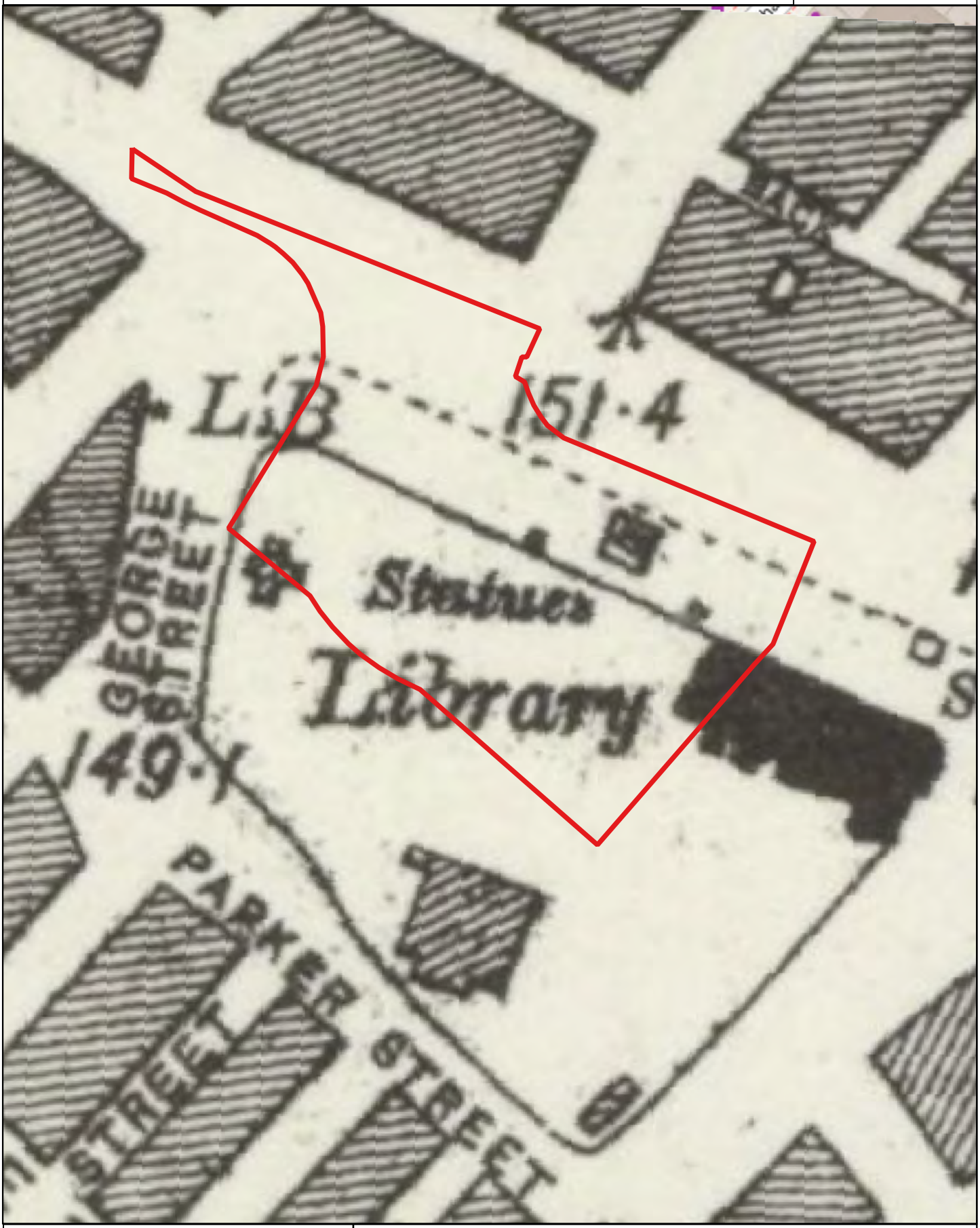
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Figure 10: Site boundary superimposed onto the 1922 OS 6-inch map

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Figure 11: Site boundary superimposed onto the 1934 OS 25-inch map

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Figure 12: Site boundary superimposed onto the 1951 OS 1:2500 map

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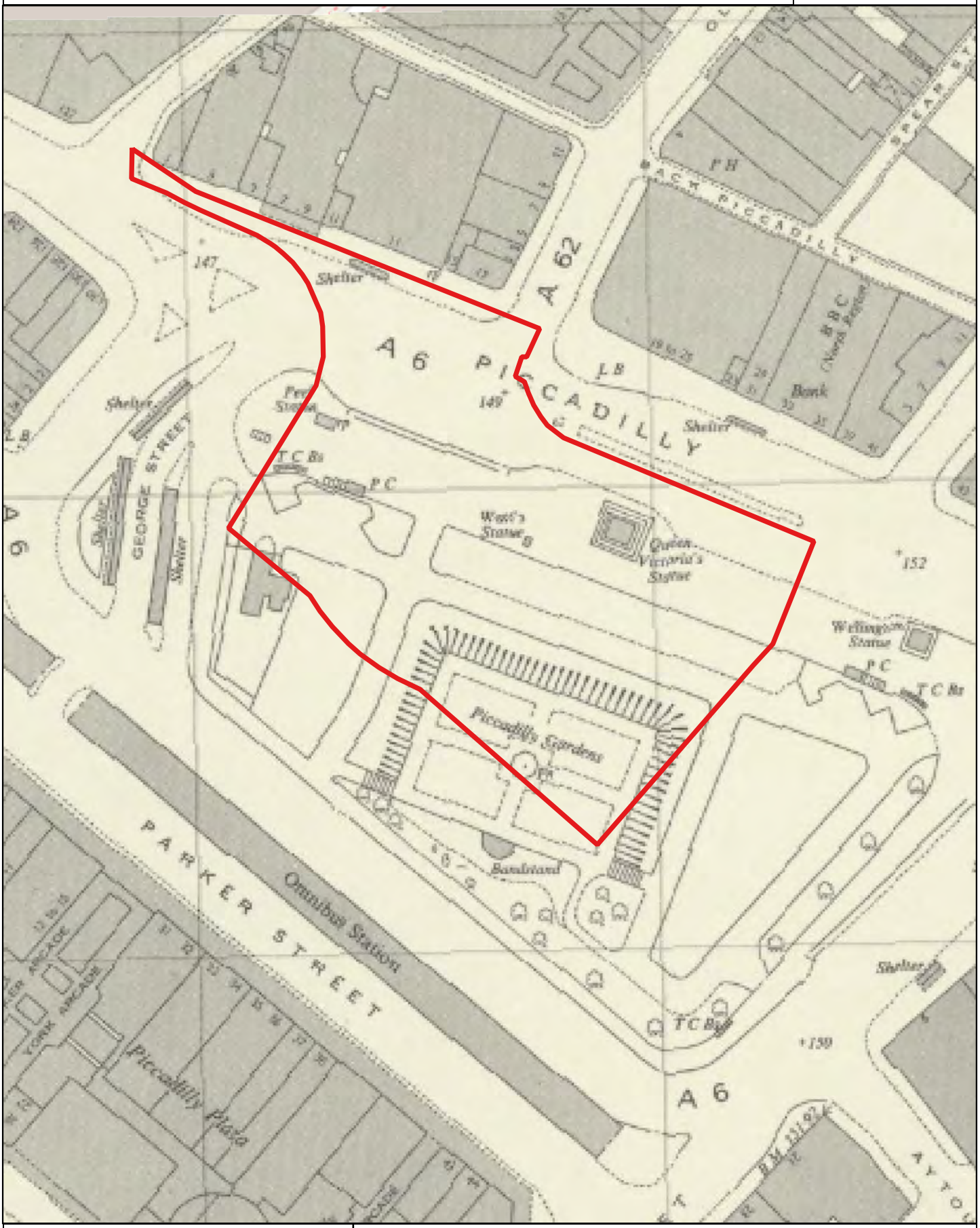
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Figure 13: Site boundary superimposed onto the 1969 OS 1:2500 map

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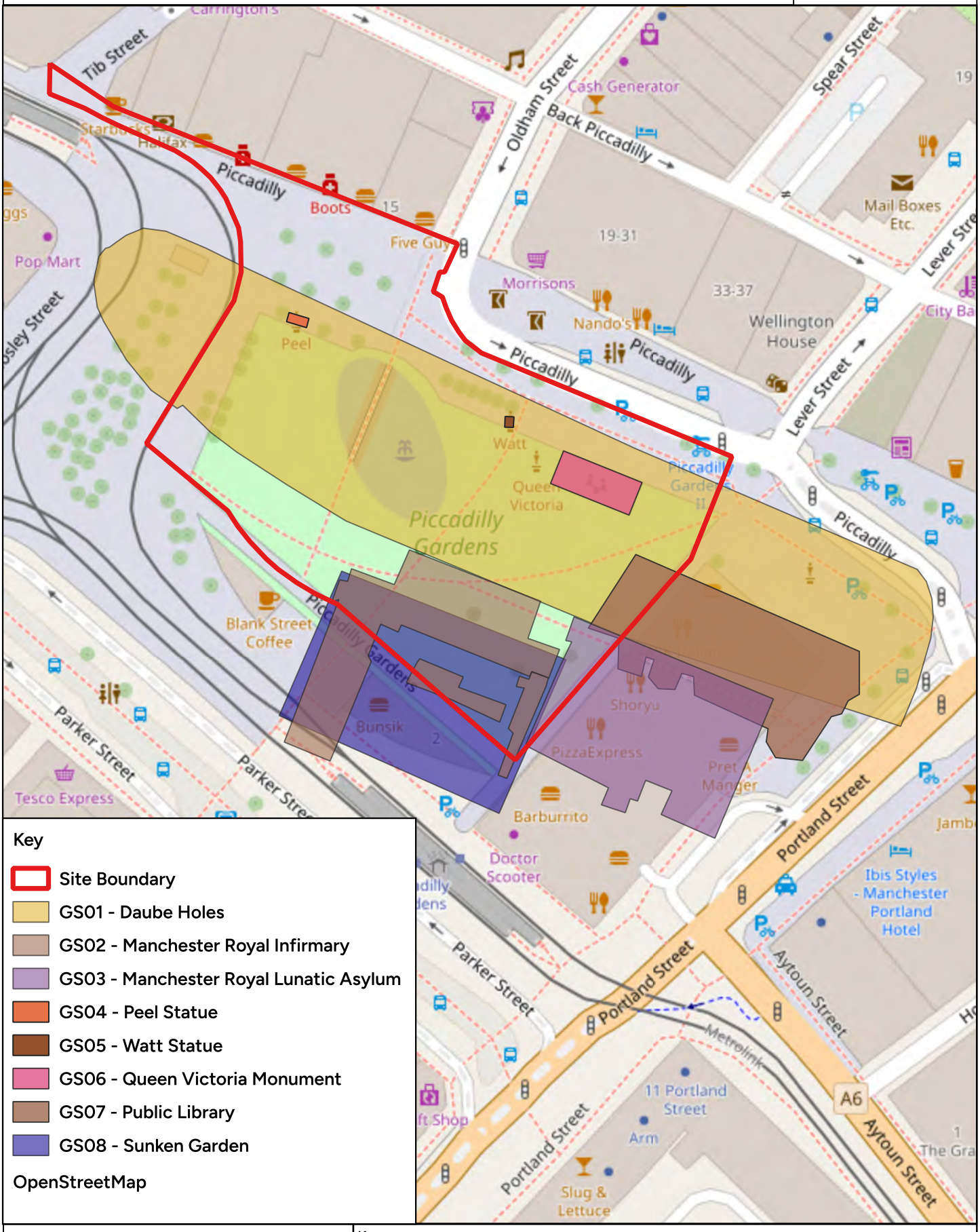
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Figure 14: Gazetteer sites superimposed onto modern mapping

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