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PICCADILLY GARDENS

Non-Technical Planning Application



PLANIT

Document Control

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Please Note: This document has been produced to provide an accessible summary of the Piccadilly Gardens proposals. It highlights key elements of the scheme but does not include all of the information contained within the full Design and Access Statement. For full details of the design, consultation process and supporting assessments please refer to:PLA-2026-001348 on the Manchester City Council Planning Portal.

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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

improved management strategy

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

9 tree species incorporated from key public realm schemes across Manchester

A Bright New Chapter for Piccadilly Gardens

Piccadilly Gardens is one of Manchester city centre's busiest and **most important** public spaces, serving as a gateway for visitors, a destination for residents, workers and shoppers, and a major transport interchange.

Manchester City Council is now taking the first step in a wider long-term vision to transform the area into a world-class public space that better reflects the city's identity:

Diverse **Welcoming** **Creative** **Full of Life**

The initial phase will transform Piccadilly Gardens into a greener, more vibrant and family-friendly destination, improving nature, accessibility, safety, movement and opportunities for events. Alongside the redesign, a new management approach involving key partners will help ensure the Gardens remain safe, clean and well-maintained while addressing antisocial behaviour.

We've been listening...

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

The proposals have been shaped by extensive consultation and engagement undertaken over a number of years, which has provided a clear understanding of how people want to use the space and the changes they would like to see.

Key themes included:

- Strong support for increased planting, trees and biodiversity;
- A safer, more welcoming environment; improved accessibility and inclusivity;
- better-quality public spaces; and more opportunities for events, culture and community activities.

Respondents also highlighted the need for more attractions for children and families, while emphasising the importance of celebrating the site's heritage and identity. This transformation will form part of a broader programme of investment, including future plans for a new modern transport interchange and wider improvements across the Piccadilly Gardens area.

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


Albert Square


Glade of Light, Medieval Quarter


St Peter's Square

Why do we need to redesign Piccadilly Gardens?

An updated round of public consultation took place between 17 June and 15 July 2026, with detailed designs shared online and through public drop-in events at Manchester Art Gallery. Feedback was gathered through online and in-person channels, alongside targeted engagement with parents through local Sure Start Centres and Family Hubs, helping to shape proposals for the new children's play area.





Stewardship and Management

A long-term stewardship model is being developed to ensure Piccadilly Gardens **remains** a high-quality, safe and welcoming public space long after the physical improvements are complete. Led by Manchester City Council in collaboration with businesses, transport operators, Greater Manchester Police and other stakeholders, the framework will provide strategic leadership, support ongoing funding and investment, encourage partnership working, and oversee management, maintenance, events and activation.

This will be supported by a **comprehensive management plan** covering landscaping, cleaning, security, lighting and public realm maintenance, with regular monitoring and review to ensure the Gardens continue to meet the needs of residents, workers and visitors over time.

How will safety and anti-social behaviour be addressed?

The redesign forms part of a wider approach to improving Piccadilly Gardens. Alongside physical improvements to the space, Manchester City Council and its partners are developing new management and stewardship arrangements to help support a safer, more welcoming environment for everyone.

What role will Piccadilly Gardens play in the city centre?

Piccadilly Gardens will continue to be Manchester's principal green public space, providing a place for people to meet, relax, move through the city centre and enjoy events and activities. The proposals seek to better balance these different roles while creating a greener and more welcoming environment.

Why is the children's play area being expanded and relocated?

Consultation identified a desire for improved facilities for children and families in the city centre. The proposed location provides a larger play space that can be better integrated into the wider Gardens while benefiting from improved visibility and natural surveillance.

How will the long-term success of Piccadilly Gardens be secured?

The redesign has been developed alongside a long-term approach to stewardship, management and maintenance. This includes ongoing monitoring, partnership working and regular review to help ensure the Gardens continue to evolve, respond to changing needs and remain a valued city centre destination over time.

What happens next?

Subject to planning approval, Manchester City Council will continue to work with public, private and community partners to develop the stewardship arrangements that will support the Gardens after delivery. Alongside the physical improvements, this will help shape future management, maintenance, funding, programming and activation, ensuring the Gardens remain safe, welcoming and well used over the long term.

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

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

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.**

Access and Movement

Piccadilly Gardens is one of Manchester's busiest public spaces, with millions of people passing through each year. The design prioritises clear, accessible routes that make it easier to move through the Gardens while connecting seamlessly with the surrounding city.

Seating, planting and activity spaces are carefully arranged to support movement without creating obstacles, ensuring the Gardens work equally well as a green destination and a vital city centre thoroughfare. Essential servicing and maintenance access has also been discreetly integrated, helping keep the Gardens safe, well-maintained and welcoming without impacting the visitor experience.



Proposed pedestrian flows mapped onto proposals

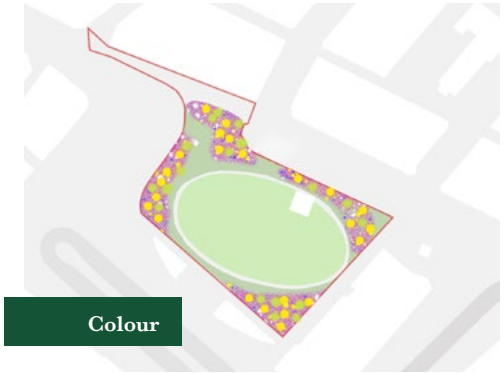
Developing the Concept

This place is woven deeply into the **everyday life** and **identity** of the city.



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

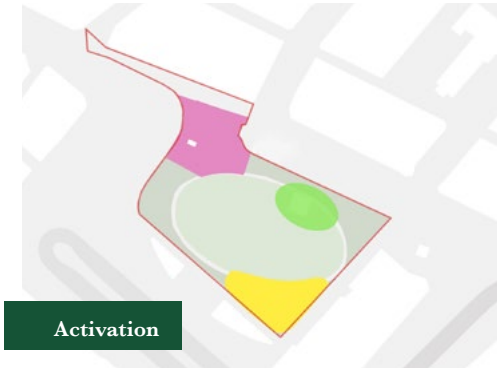
Improve safety with more lighting, CCTV and proactive management.

Better walking routes and connections

A greener and more climate resilient environment

Improved lighting and materials

Opportunities for small scale activities and events



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

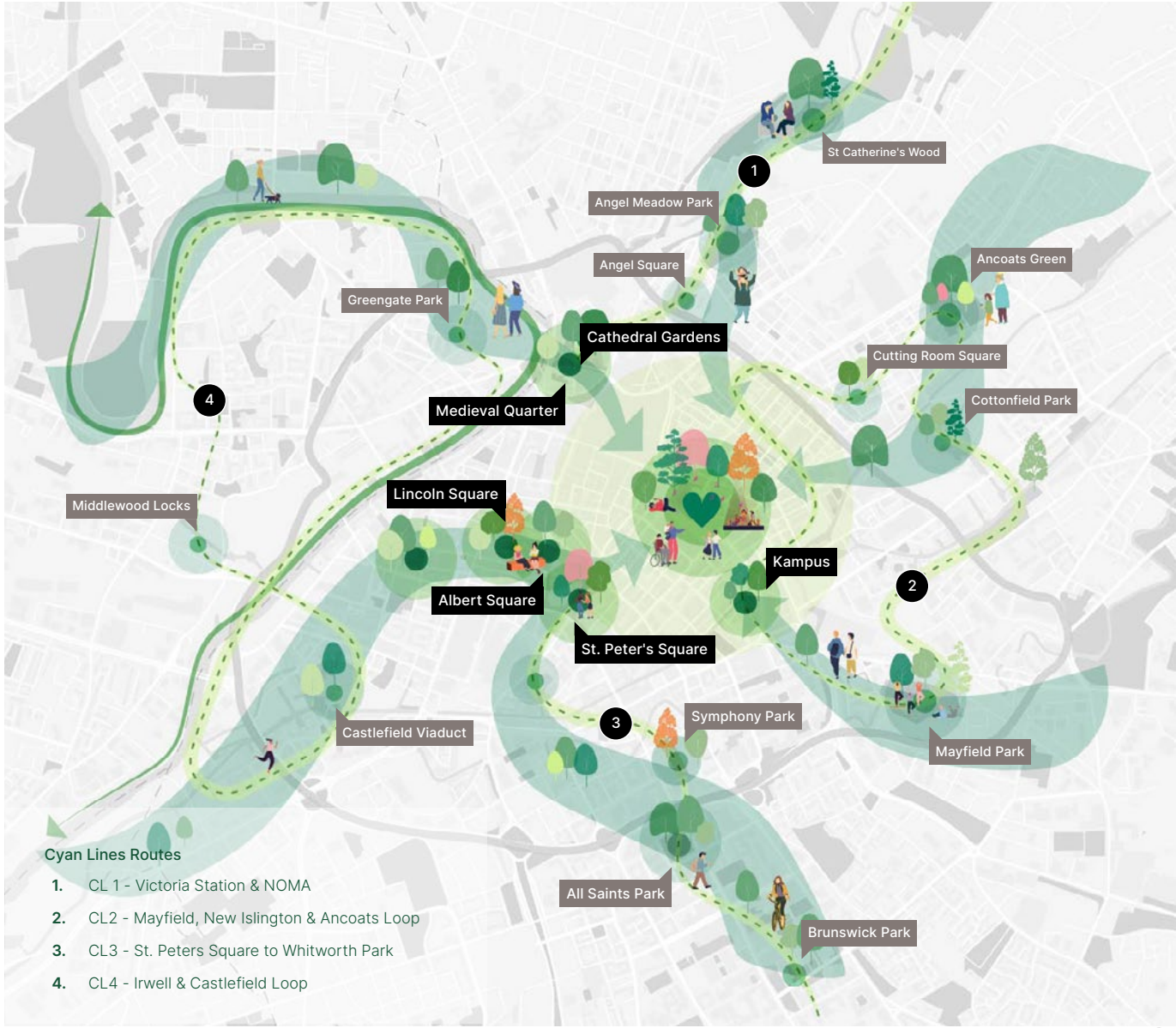
Keep existing monuments to protect and celebrate the area's heritage.

Key Concept: Nature in the City

Putting the gardens back in Piccadilly Gardens

The 'Botany of Manchester' → Celebrating the diversity of landscapes found across the city and positions Piccadilly Gardens as a central destination within this emerging green network.

A rich palette of trees and ornamental planting will increase biodiversity, decrease urban heat, improve seasonal interest and bring the gardens back. As a result, the gardens will become a greener, healthier and more resilient urban environment.



Manchester's Botany Network

Key Concept: Heritage

Respecting the Past, Shaping the Future

Piccadilly Gardens holds → significant heritage value as demonstrated by the monument collection. Currently, they feel lost in visual clutter, obscure pathways and are unappreciated.

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.



Aerial View: Proposed



Before

Developing The Character Areas

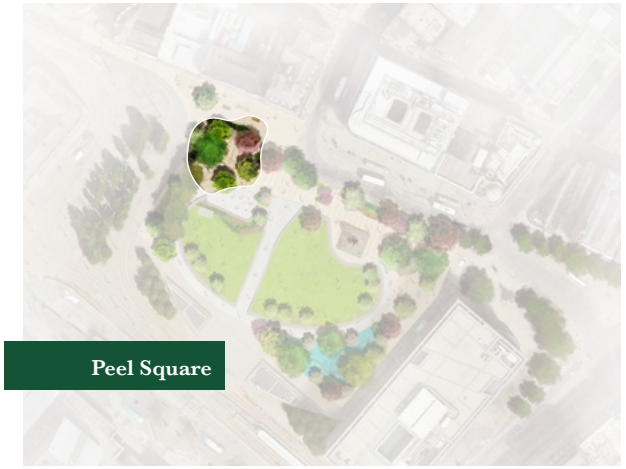
The proposals create four unique destinations within Piccadilly Gardens, each with its own character and purpose. Shared materials, planting and furniture tie them together, **creating one connected and welcoming public space.**

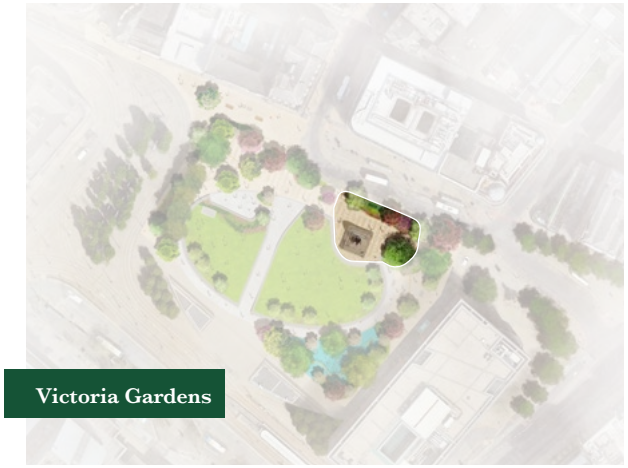
The character areas break down as the following spaces:

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

* The Community area also includes a plot for a future structure that would support small events and activities.









Character Areas: Community

A Space For All

Designed for both movement and moments of pause, Piccadilly Gardens will offer spaces to **connect, play, relax** and **enjoy** nature. From civic squares and play areas to the central lawn, a mix of new seating, tree canopy, planting and year-round lighting will create a welcoming destination for all.





Proposed visual highlighting key community areas

Character Areas: Peel Square

A New Civic Heart

Peel Square creates a new civic focus for Piccadilly Gardens, celebrating the Grade II listed Robert Peel Monument with improved views, high-quality materials and a more attractive setting. Framed by lush planting, the flexible square provides space for events, gatherings and everyday activity, creating a vibrant destination that **brings together** heritage and contemporary city life.





Proposed visual of the Peel Square area

Character Areas: Victoria Gardens

Heritage in Bloom

Victoria Gardens creates a calmer, greener setting around the Queen Victoria Monument, giving this historic landmark the space and prominence it deserves. Framed by vibrant planting and generous seating, the garden offers a peaceful place to relax while improved sight-lines reconnect Manchester's historic monuments and create a welcoming space for everyday use, small events and installations.





Proposed visual of the Victoria Gardens area



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.

Character Areas: Play

Play, Discover, Explore

Designed with families in mind, the new play area offers a **safe, imaginative space** inspired by Manchester's history and the story of Piccadilly Gardens. Nestled within trees and planting, it creates opportunities for play, discovery and social interaction while feeling fully connected to the wider gardens. The new position benefits from excellent natural surveillance and is the furthest from the roads and trams.

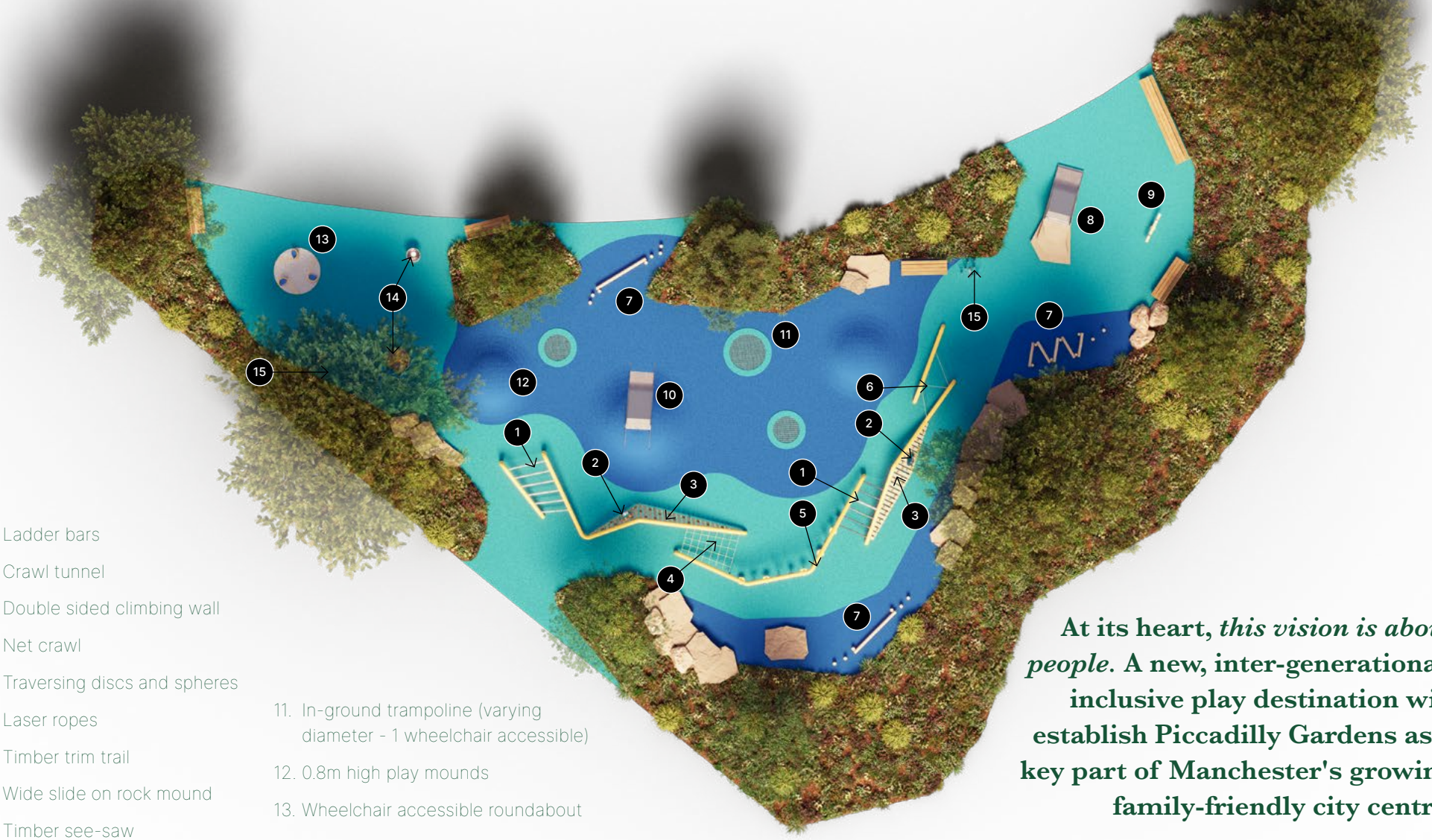
Plan View





Proposed play area integrated within lush planting

N



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

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,


ONE

Materiality: *Furniture Palette*

385%
increase in seating

The furniture strategy prioritises accessibility, durability and flexibility.

A simple, durable family of furniture will bring comfort and consistency. A range of seating options caters to different needs, while robust, repairable materials and standard city centre furniture help keep the Gardens welcoming, safe and easy to maintain for years to come.

Furniture has been positioned where there is plenty of formal / informal surveillance, as per the GMP request. They will be along key movement routes to provide opportunities for rest and interaction whilst complimenting the surrounding character of the area.



Proposed bins



June bench with armrest



Freestanding furniture

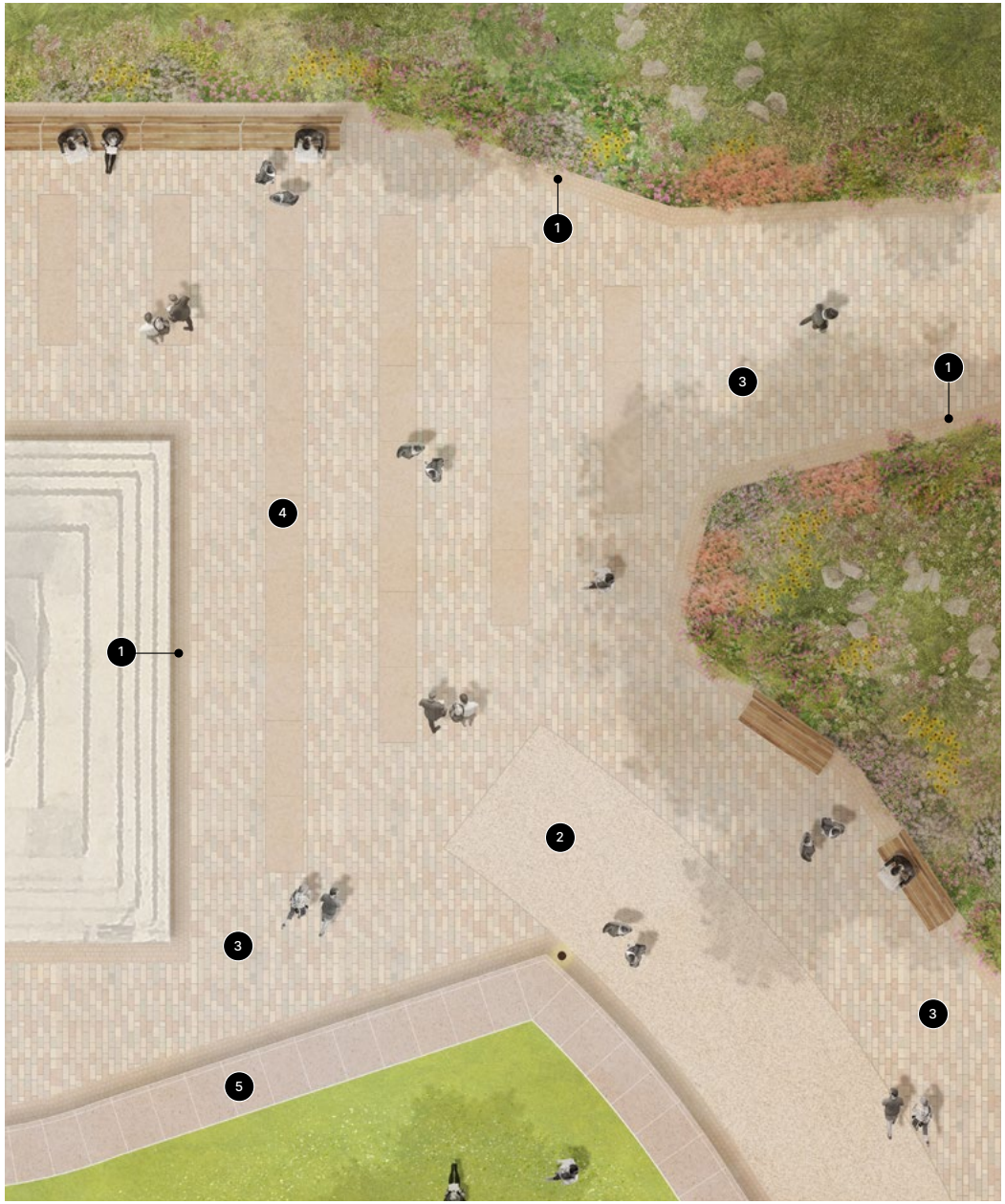
Materiality: *Hard Landscape*

A carefully selected palette of materials ties the Gardens together, creating a clean, timeless look that reduces clutter and strengthens its identity.

High-quality, simple, natural stone paving helps shape routes and spaces and references the other civic spaces within the city centre. Variations in pattern and texture will assist in defining areas and movement routes, making the Gardens easy to navigate and enjoyable to explore.

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**



Over
5000sqm
of new/reused paving to be relaid

Key Considerations



Designed for Safety and Comfort

Piccadilly Gardens has been designed to feel safe, welcoming and easy to enjoy at all times of day. Clear sightlines, improved lighting, CCTV and active management will help create a secure environment, while trees, planting, seating and other landscape features are carefully integrated to provide safety without compromising the character of the Gardens.

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



Lighting the Gardens after Dark

A carefully designed lighting scheme will help make Piccadilly Gardens safe, welcoming and easy to enjoy after dark. Different areas of the Gardens will have lighting tailored to their character and use, helping to highlight key routes, gathering spaces and landmarks while creating a cohesive night-time identity.

Intelligent lighting controls will help balance safety, accessibility and environmental considerations, ensuring the Gardens remain attractive, comfortable and sustainable throughout the evening.



Easy to Use, Easy to Enjoy

Accessibility and inclusion have been central to the design process, with specialist advice from Arup, Manchester City Council's Access Officer and wider stakeholder engagement helping to shape the proposals. Every aspect of the Gardens has been carefully considered, from routes, seating and lighting to play, wayfinding and levels, ensuring Piccadilly Gardens is welcoming, accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

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**.



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.

We design for all life to thrive in balance.

For today, tomorrow and the next 200 years.

Manchester

+44 (0)161 928 9281

Gloucestershire

+44 (0)1453 607080

Leeds

+44 (0)113 824 6413

Liverpool

+44 (0)151 363 1230

London

+44 (0)207 253 5678

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