Square Gardens Travel Plan

Development Details

Development: Square Gardens, First Street, Manchester
Planning Reference: 125573/FO/2019
Operator: Downing Living
Date: January 2025 / Reviewed May 2026

1. Introduction

This Travel Plan has been prepared in accordance with Condition 24 of planning permission 125573/FO/2019. As Downing Living are managing both developed blocks with a consistent approach and messaging, we feel it appropriate to produce one Travel Plan. However, recognising that the planning consent is structured such that each phase of development needs the conditions satisfying separately, we have structured this document so that it splits information relevant to each phase of development – Phase A (Block D/Fernley) and Phase B (Block AB/Acer) – so that the single document can be used to discharge the condition for both phases.

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the measures implemented to reduce dependency on private vehicles, promote sustainable travel, review resident travel behaviour and provide an updated Travel Plan based on actual operational data gathered since occupation.

Square Gardens is a purpose-built co-living development located within the First Street neighbourhood of Manchester City Centre. The development benefits from excellent access to employment opportunities, educational institutions, retail, leisure facilities and public transport services.

The development was occupied in two phases:

- Phase B – September 2024
- Phase A – June 2025

2. Travel Plan Objectives

The objectives of the Travel Plan are to:

- Reduce reliance on private car ownership and use.
- Promote walking, cycling and public transport as primary modes of travel.
- Support Manchester City Council's sustainable transport objectives.
- Reduce traffic-related emissions and improve air quality.
- Monitor resident travel behaviour and review the effectiveness of implemented measures.

3. Site Accessibility

Square Gardens occupies a highly sustainable city-centre location with excellent access to public transport and active travel routes.

Rail Connections

The development is located within walking distance of:

- Manchester Oxford Road Station
- Manchester Piccadilly Station
- Deansgate Station

Metrolink Connections

Residents have convenient access to:

- Deansgate-Castlefield
- St Peter's Square
- Cornbrook

Walking

The development is within easy walking distance of:

- Manchester City Centre
- Spinningfields
- University of Manchester
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Piccadilly Station
- New Islington
- First Street leisure and retail destinations

Cycling

The development connects directly to Manchester's growing cycling infrastructure and Bee Network routes.

4. Measures Implemented to Reduce Dependency on Private Cars

A range of measures have been implemented since occupation to encourage sustainable travel choices:

Resident Information

Residents receive information regarding:

- Walking routes
- Cycling routes
- Public transport options
- Local amenities
- Sustainable travel opportunities

Resident/Community App and Digital Screens

Travel information and resident communications are distributed through the dedicated resident and community app, providing a convenient platform for promoting sustainable travel options, bus timetables/routes and local transport information.

The resident and community app is supplemented by the Building User Guide, which contains information on local transport connections, walking routes, cycling facilities, e-bike and e-scooter charging facilities, public transport services and other sustainable travel options available to residents. All residents receive the Building User Guide upon check-in.

Walking Promotion

The city-centre location enables residents to access employment, education, retail and leisure destinations on foot. Walking routes to key destinations are promoted through resident communications.

Cycling Promotion

The development provides substantial cycle storage facilities internally (for residents) and externally (for guests/visitors) and encourages residents and visitors to utilise Manchester's cycling network for both commuting and leisure purposes.

Public Transport Promotion

Information regarding rail, Metrolink and bus services is made available to residents throughout their tenancy.

5. Parking and Cycling Provision

Cycle Parking

Square Gardens provides approximately 531 secure cycle parking spaces for residents, split across the first two phases – Phase A Fernley 249 spaces and Phase B Acer 282 spaces.

The cycle facilities are:

- Secure and access controlled
- Conveniently located within the development
- Available to all residents
- Monitored and maintained by the on-site management team

The significant level of cycle parking provision supports active travel and exceeds the level typically associated with residential developments.

In addition to the provision of 531 secure cycle parking spaces, Square Gardens provides dedicated charging facilities for electric bicycles and electric scooters. These facilities support the growing use of low-carbon transport options and encourage residents to adopt sustainable alternatives to private vehicle ownership.

The provision of dedicated charging infrastructure ensures residents can conveniently charge and store e-bikes and e-scooters within the development, further supporting active travel and reducing reliance on private cars for local journeys.

Car Parking

The development provides 22 car parking spaces – 19 nr in Phase A and 3 nr in Phase B.

These spaces are prioritised for:

- Disabled residents
- Accessibility requirements
- Essential operational purposes

Our Disabled Parking Spaces Strategy and Parking Management Strategy have each been approved by Manchester City Council, further to our separate S106 and Condition 25 obligations, respectively. The limited provision of parking supports the Travel Plan objective of minimising private vehicle use while ensuring accessibility needs are accommodated.

6. Travel Survey Programme

In accordance with the approved Travel Plan, resident travel surveys have been undertaken since occupation to understand travel patterns and monitor the effectiveness of implemented measures.

To date, two resident travel surveys have been completed.

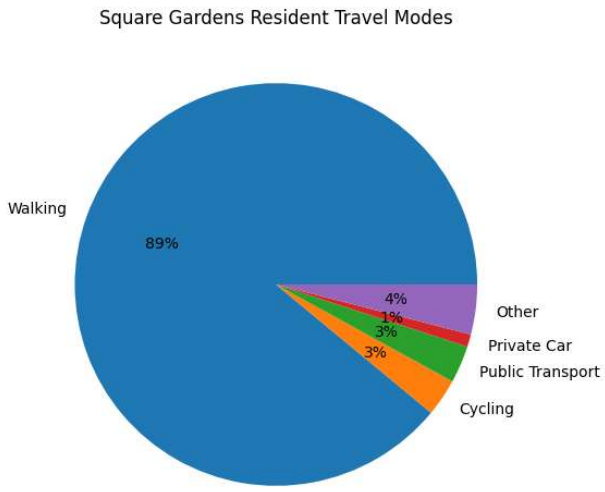
The surveys have gathered information relating to:

- Primary mode of travel
- Travel to work and education
- Use of active travel modes
- Public transport usage
- Car ownership and use

7. Survey Results

The most recent survey identified the following primary travel modes among residents (Sample size 25.6%):

Travel Mode	Percentage
Walking	89%
Cycling	3%
Public Transport	3%
Private Car	1%
Other	4%



Key Findings

The survey results demonstrate:

- 95% of residents travel using sustainable transport modes.
- Walking is the dominant mode of travel.
- Private vehicle use is exceptionally low at only 1%.
- The development is successfully achieving the objectives established within the approved Travel Plan.

The results reflect the highly sustainable location of the development, the accessibility of local services and employment opportunities, and the effectiveness of the travel measures implemented by the management team.

8. Assessment of Travel Plan Performance

The Travel Plan has proven highly successful in reducing dependency on private vehicles.

With only 1% of residents identifying private car use as their primary travel mode, the development significantly exceeds the objectives set out within the approved Travel Plan and contributes positively towards Manchester City Council's wider transport and environmental strategies.

Travel Plan Objective	Outcome	Evidence
Reduce dependency on private vehicles	Achieved	Only 1% of residents identified private car use as their primary mode of travel.
Encourage walking	Achieved	89% of residents identified walking as their primary mode of travel.
Encourage cycling	Achieved	531 secure cycle parking spaces are provided, together with dedicated e-bike and e-scooter charging facilities.
Promote public transport	Achieved	The development is within walking distance of rail, Metrolink and bus services, with 3% of residents using public transport as their primary mode of travel.
Reduce transport-related emissions	Achieved	95% of residents travel using sustainable modes of transport, helping to minimise transport-related emissions.
Support sustainable city-centre living	Achieved	The development's central location enables residents to access employment, education, retail and leisure facilities predominantly on foot.

9. Future Measures and Monitoring

Square Gardens will continue to promote sustainable travel through:

- Ongoing resident communications through the resident and community app.
- Provision of travel information for new residents.
- Promotion of walking routes to key city-centre destinations.
- Promotion of cycling and secure cycle storage facilities.
- Promotion of local public transport services.
- Continued monitoring of resident travel behaviour through periodic resident surveys.
- Annual review of Travel Plan performance.

10. Conclusion

This Travel Plan Review demonstrates that Square Gardens is successfully meeting the objectives of the approved Travel Plan.

The development benefits from a highly sustainable city-centre location, extensive cycle parking provision and limited car parking provision focused on accessibility requirements.

The provision of dedicated charging facilities for e-bikes and e-scooters further enhances the sustainable transport offer at Square Gardens and supports the increasing adoption of low-carbon travel options amongst residents.

Resident survey results indicate that:

- 89% of residents walk as their primary mode of travel.
- 95% of residents use sustainable modes of transport.
- Only 1% of residents use a private car as their primary travel mode.

The findings demonstrate that the development is making a positive contribution towards reducing private vehicle dependency, supporting sustainable travel choices and promoting healthier, lower-carbon lifestyles.

Square Gardens will continue to monitor travel behaviour and implement measures that encourage sustainable travel in accordance with the objectives of the approved Travel Plan.