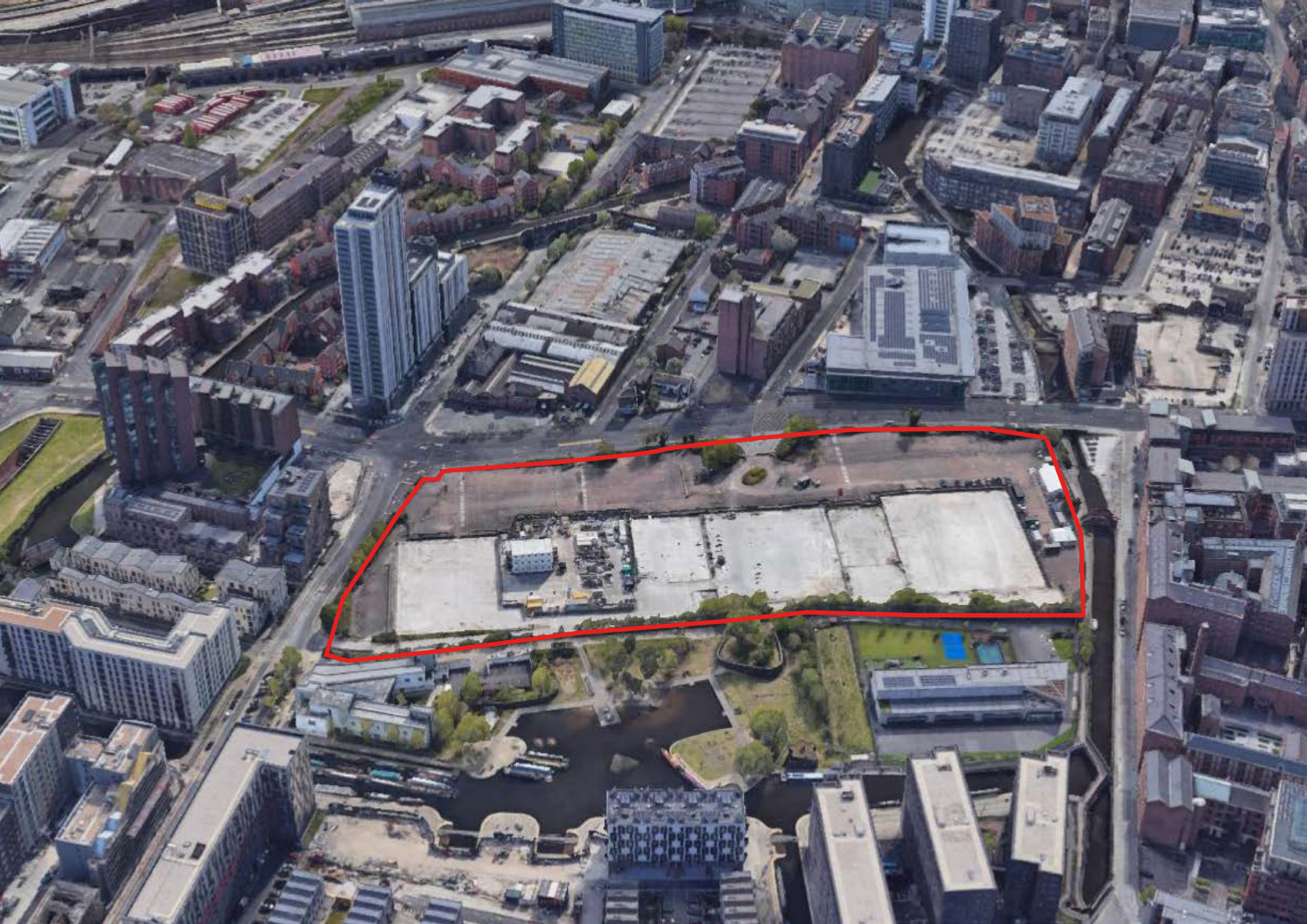


STRATEGIC REGENERATION FRAMEWORK

FORMER
CENTRAL
RETAIL PARK

MARCH 2023

 MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL



CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|----|
| 01 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 4 |
| 02 | INTRODUCTION | 8 |
| 03 | SITE CONTEXT | 11 |
| 04 | SITE OPPORTUNITIES AND PARAMETERS | 19 |
| 05 | DESIGN DRIVERS | 32 |
| 06 | ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN | 46 |

01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The vision for the Former Central Retail Park is to create a high-quality, sustainable office district with an attractive public realm at its centre, including a new green space. This scheme builds upon the strategic location of the site and its strong connections to the local neighbourhoods, city centre, and transport networks. The site will include ancillary retail and leisure accommodation, providing facilities for those who live and work in the area.

The proposals respond positively to the area and surrounding uses, creating public routes through the site, new connections, and building upon Cotton Field Park, New Islington Marina and the Rochdale Canal.

The site is vacant and owned by Manchester City Council (MCC). This Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) provides a comprehensive approach to the development of the site, supporting Manchester City Council's aspirations to drive economic growth through the provision of new high-quality Grade A offices to attract new businesses to Manchester. It also responds to potential interest from the Government Property Agency (GPA) to locate Government offices on the site. The GPA are working collaboratively with the Council to help unlock this development opportunity. Were GPA to commit to offices at Ancoats this would provide the catalyst to realise the masterplan and deliver significant socio-economic benefits to the area.

The SRF supersedes the 2020 Former Central Retail Park Development Framework, which promoted commercial offices and a mixed residential scheme. It builds on many of the key design principles set out within it and positively responds to latest market requirements to provide purpose-built offices and high-quality facilities for staff. The significant amount of new public realm will be attractive, safe, and fully integrated with the wider community and promotes well-being. The new SRF sets out design drivers informed by the site parameters, the potential requirements of the GPA and a detailed understanding of the local context.

Supporting Regeneration and Economic Growth

Manchester's reputation as a world-class city continues to grow attracting an increasing volume of commercial office and business activity. As companies recognise the growing opportunities available in the city region, investors continue to view Manchester as a highly viable investment option. The city is well placed to facilitate new and future developments with high-quality infrastructure, diversity, a flourishing residential market, and high-profile organisations such as the Google and Amazon, etc., bringing increased job opportunities and skills to the jobs marketplace.

As Manchester's economy continues to develop and diversify, further provision of new office stock is required to facilitate this expansion. The regeneration of the site responds precisely to this need and aids key strategic objectives relating to place making, job creation and supporting local communities.

Regional investment – GPA is exploring options for delivering office solutions in Manchester to meet the needs of various civil service departments, which supports the Government's commitment to locate more civil servants outside of London and support levelling up. GPA is looking at Ancoats as a potential option, and by securing investment from the GPA this would be a significant boost to the future economic growth of the local area and the region.

New employment opportunities – The proposal will deliver a range of new employment opportunities through the design, construction, and occupation of the scheme, providing significant opportunities for local residents including apprenticeships and training opportunities. Once developed the scheme is likely to support in excess of 8,000 jobs, many of which are new to the city.

High quality office spaces – The proposals are capable of delivering circa 1.0 – 1.25 million ft² (circa 93,000 – 116,000 m²) of new office accommodation, making a significant contribution to Manchester City Council's policy to deliver over 20 million ft² (circa 1.85 m²) of new office floorspace by 2037. This will strengthen the city economy, enable its continued growth agenda and deliver substantial local socio-economic benefits.

Connectivity – The Former Central Retail Park is strategically located, with Great Ancoats Street to the south, the inner-city ring road that connects to important routes that further lead to the M60 and M62 regional and national connections. The site will benefit from its proximity to Manchester's two main rail stations, Piccadilly, and Victoria, including the proposed investments of HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR). New Islington Metrolink tram stop is also on the doorstep of the site providing local connection across the city. Future investment will further enhance its position as a premier office location, providing access to a larger and more diverse pool of skilled labour.

Variety of office space – The Northern Quarter and the Ancoats neighbourhoods have become popular destinations for a variety of businesses in many sectors. As a result, the demand for space has increased significantly and the lack of floorspace has led to rapidly rising prices. The site provides the opportunity to create a business hub that is a vibrant and attractive destination for all business sizes, thereby helping to also meet existing office demand from local businesses and allowing them to grow. High quality new public realm and improved connectivity – At the centre of the site, a variety of new spaces are proposed which provide benefit for the local community and the building occupants. In addition, the SRF proposes to deliver extensive new public realm, with new attractive and safe routes connecting New Islington and East Manchester back to the rest of the city.

A new public park – Serving the local community, occupiers of the site and visitors, providing an attractive green space in which to relax, play and promote well-being.

New retail and leisure facilities – A range of retail and leisure facilities will be promoted to serve both local residents and the office workers, providing a new and exciting offer and associated employment opportunities.

Investment – The scheme will attract substantial financial investment which will deliver positive socio-economic changes for Ancoats, New Islington and Greater Manchester as a whole, providing opportunities for people and local businesses.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key Principles

Place making – Place making has been a key part of the masterplan from the outset as it helps deliver the overarching vision for the new district. The proposals will create a mix of spaces including the public realm and retail facilities. This will help create a vibrant destination for employees and visitors alike. Creating a high-quality integrated development will be a key driver as it will have a positive effect on future growth and job creation.

High quality development – The SRF promotes high-quality architecture and urban design that responds to the local context while establishing its own distinct character. New offices should be of high-quality architectural design with the use of appropriate materials. The public realm will also be a high-quality inclusive open space for the local community, staff and visitors. A new green space will be at the centre of a new masterplan.

Connectivity – The SRF promotes new and improved links and permeability for pedestrian and cycle routes in the area, making it easier, safer and more attractive to walk or cycle into the city or towards key transport hubs. The site's proximity to Manchester's main transport routes will make it a prime location for future business. Building upon wider connections will promote accessibility to the site and enable business collaboration.

Sustainability – The development, including the buildings and landscape areas, will aim to achieve the highest standards of sustainable design. The public realm will extend Cotton Field Park and the Marina, creating new ecological habitats that contribute positively to the city's sustainability goals.

Scale and mass – Scale and massing follows the key principles already established by the previous 2020 Development Framework. As you transition from Old Mill Street towards Ancoats conservation area, the offices become lower in height and are respectful of the listed mills. Conversely, and in the other direction, the height increases towards the eastern side of the site, where it will be well integrated into the existing urban context.

Form and layout – The public realm will enable the site to be separated into two developable areas allowing a phased delivery. The two parcels of land naturally extend the urban grain of Ancoats and New Islington, stitching the site into its local context. The significant green space serves as the centre of the scheme and provides multiple new connections between existing elements.

Use – Primarily a commercial office led proposal the scheme is focused on delivering a significant amount of new office space to meet the potential requirements of GPA and recognised market demand. This will be complemented by a retail and leisure offer. The uses will be distributed across the site, with retail and leisure at ground level providing primary active frontages along key routes to secure the area's vitality throughout the week.



SITE LOCATION PLAN

Report Structure

The Report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 1 – Executive Summary:** Setting the scene for the SRF.
- **Chapter 2 – Introduction:** Setting out the development. Strategic economic, regeneration and planning context that is driving the redevelopment of this key site.
- **Chapter 3 – Site Context:** Analysis of the Former Central Retail Park site in a comprehensive Manchester city context.
- **Chapter 4 – Site Opportunities and Parameters:** Analysis of the parameters informing the future opportunities on site.
- **Chapter 5 – Vision:** Development objectives setting out the focus for Former Central Retail Park, parameter plan and conclusion.
- **Chapter 6 – Illustrative Masterplan:** Illustrative Masterplan and conclusion.



02 INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) has been prepared by Manchester City Council (MCC) with input from the GPA to guide the future development of a key long-term strategic regeneration site in the city centre.

This SRF area covers a site of approximately 10.5 acres in Manchester City Centre and was formerly an 'out of town' style retail destination, characterised by large retail warehouses surrounded by car parking. However, changes in shopping habits in recent years led to many of the units becoming vacant, and the retail park became increasingly out of place amidst the on-going regeneration of the surrounding areas. Following acquisition by MCC, and supported by planning policy, the retail park has been demolished. The site now presents a strategically important location for the city both as a site in single ownership with the potential to create a new commercial office led district of real ambition, and as an opportunity to improve links and permeability between the surrounding districts which the former retail park had always turned its back on.

The redevelopment of the Former Central Retail Park is a long-standing strategic priority for MCC and identified for development in previous documents, including the Ancoats and New Islington Neighbourhood Development Framework (2016) and previous Development Frameworks for the site prepared in 2015 and 2020.

This new SRF provides a comprehensive approach to the future redevelopment of the site, supporting MCC's aspirations to drive economic growth through the provision of new high-quality Grade A offices to attract new companies to Manchester. It supersedes the 2020 Former Central Retail Park Development Framework, which promoted a speculative commercial office-led mixed-use development. While many of the key design principles set out in the 2020 Development Framework are carried over, the new SRF is focused on delivering an entirely commercial scheme positively responding to

The vision is to create a new high-quality, sustainable office district with attractive public realm at its centre. A new park will provide an appealing green space and recreational facility for the local residents, new office workers, employees, and visitors. The proposals build upon the strategic location of the site and its strong connections to the city centre and transport networks. The GPA has a need for commercial offices in Manchester and this site would provide flexibility to meet future office demand in the city centre. It will include ancillary retail and leisure accommodation, providing attractive new facilities for the new working population of the site as well as local people who live and work in the area.

SRF Process and Status

Process

The SRF has been developed with full regard to National Planning Policy, Manchester's Statutory Development Plan Documents and the suite of strategic and regeneration policies that are driving renaissance in the city.

A period of consultation on the draft SRF with the local community, businesses, landowners and other key stakeholders will be undertaken following its endorsement by MCC's Executive. MCC is committed to work in full collaboration with key stakeholders and the local community.

Role of the SRF

Following endorsement, the final SRF will be a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications relevant to the SRF area. Whilst it does not form part of the Development Plan, it has been prepared to be consistent with the policies of the Council's adopted Development Plan. The SRF replaces the following non-statutory regeneration frameworks where they are relevant to the SRF area, including the Ancoats and New Islington Neighbourhood Development Framework (2016), the Central Retail Park Development Framework (2015), and the Central Retail Park Development Framework (2020).

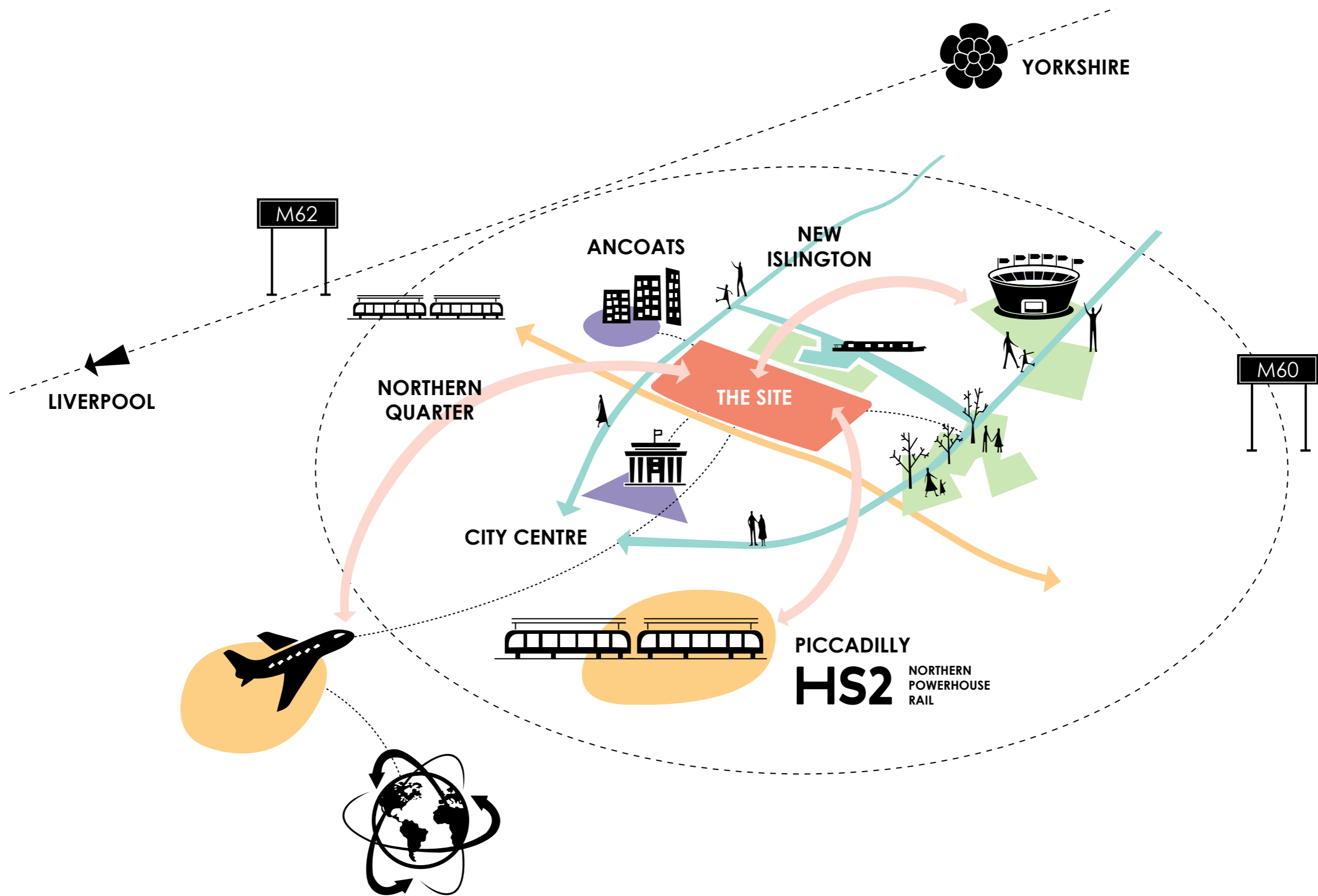
Delivery Partners

MCC has worked collaboratively with the Government Property Agency (GPA) in the preparation of this SRF. GPA is an Executive Agency of the Cabinet Office and a national organisation, working with government departments across the UK. GPA delivers property and workplace solutions across government, delivering benefits through efficient and effective use of the civil estate.

GPA delivers great places to work for a modern Civil Service. The creation of departmental office accommodation in Manchester and across the UK represents an opportunity to provide cutting edge and innovative working environments, attracting and developing a skilled and talented workforce.

These facilities will be closer to the communities they serve and able to deliver better outcomes. GPA is committed to investing in regional growth and delivering office solutions meeting Government's needs and objectives. GPA welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the SRF, which once endorsed will open up an option for the GPA. GPA is keen to work collaboratively with Manchester City Council to help facilitate the regeneration of the site.





03 SITE CONTEXT

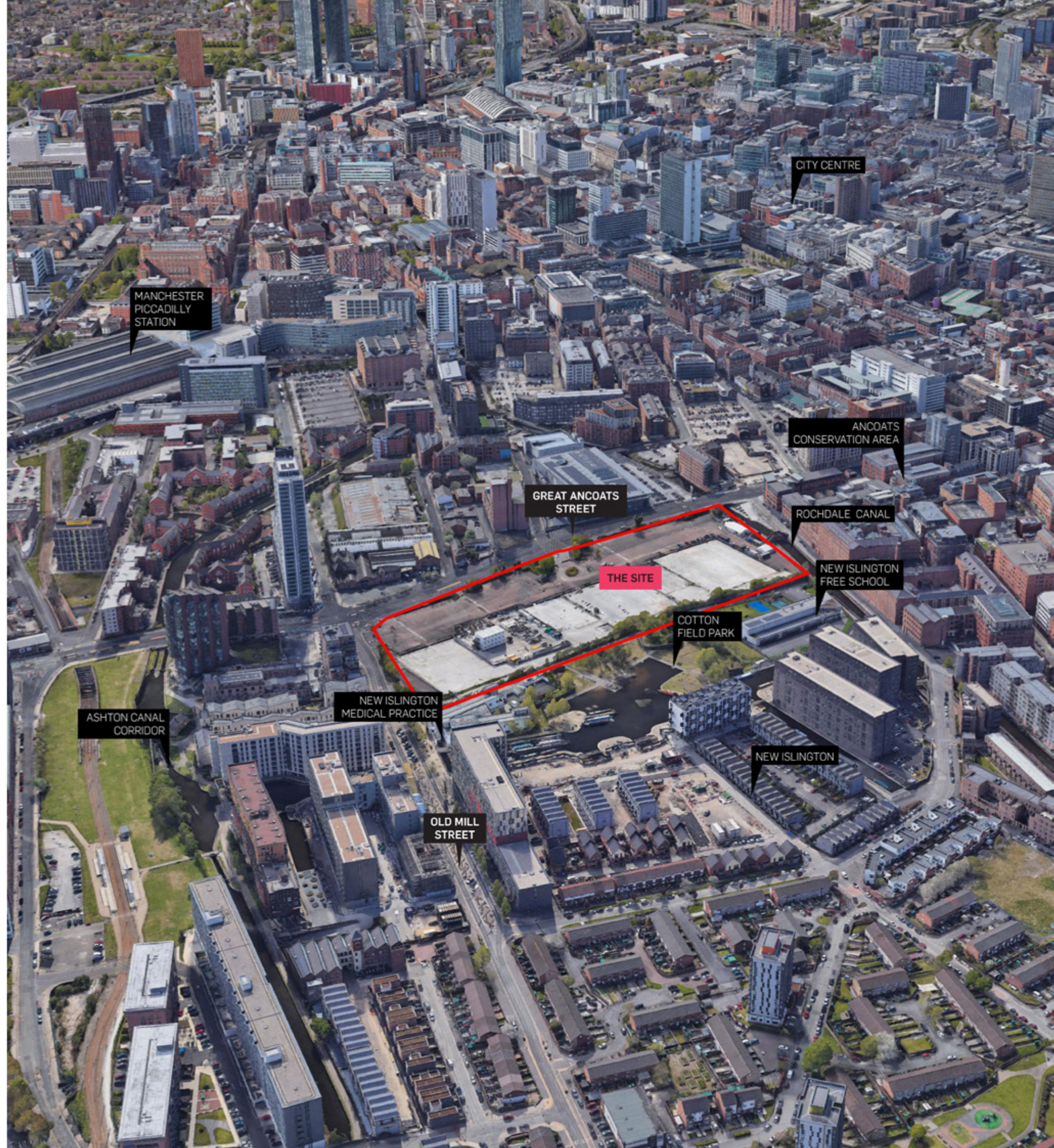
THE SITE

The 10.5-acre site is located within the administrative boundary of Manchester City Council (MCC). It sits on Manchester city centre's north-eastern fringe, in an area undergoing significant change and redevelopment.

The site was acquired by MCC in 2017 with aspirations to bring forward an office-led business district. The site was formerly a retail park, which has now been demolished and the site is now vacant. There is a significant level change across the site, with a 5-metre difference between its north corner, descending towards its south corner of Great Ancoats Street and Old Mill Street. This level difference is currently reflected in the form of tall retaining walls along the site's eastern and northern boundaries (along Old Mill Street, New Islington Medical Centre and Cotton Field Park).

To the site's north-west boundary sits New Islington Free School and to its north-east end site New Islington Medical Practice, and Cotton Field Park. Although it does not sit within the Ancoats Conservation Area, the boundary of the conservation area runs adjacent to the site boundary along the banks of the Rochdale Canal.

The site has a main vehicular access point, which is off Great Ancoats Street, and a secondary access point off Old Mill Street, formerly used for deliveries and waste collections.



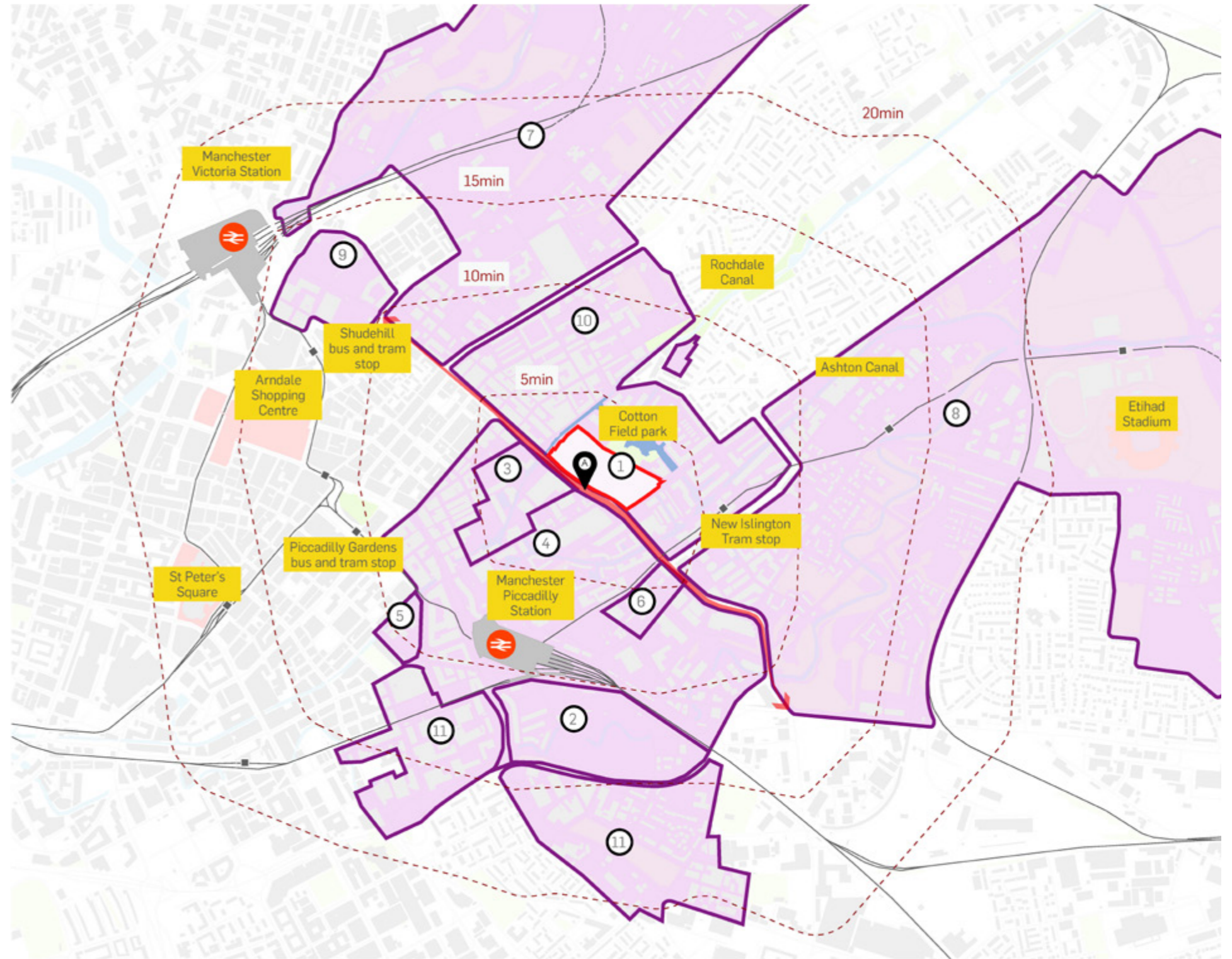
CITY CONTEXT

The site is approximately a 10 minute walk from Piccadilly Gardens, 10 minutes from Piccadilly station and within Manchester's vibrant city centre. It has the opportunity to capitalise on its ideal location and its proximity to other successful key regeneration projects, such as the Ancoats and New Islington NDF and the mixed-use quarter of Manchester Piccadilly SRF.

The site has good transport connections, including the delivery of the Metrolink station at New Islington which was added in 2013 and increases access to Piccadilly from the north.

The site sits parallel to the Rochdale Canal, which runs through the city, and provides strong connectivity along it. On its northern boundary the site is bounded by the newly restored New Islington community which includes the Marina and Cotton Field Park. The canal, the park and Marina have proved to be very popular and successful, providing opportunities for entertainment and leisure. The New Islington area is an attractive asset that has opened up opportunities for future development and businesses.

- Site boundary
- Existing key destinations
- Regeneration projects (planning policy)
- ① Central Retail Park Development Framework (2020)
- ② Mayfield SRF
- ③ Piccadilly Basin SRF
- ④ HS2 Manchester Piccadilly SRF
- ⑤ Aytoun Street "Kampus" SRF
- ⑥ Portugal Street East
- ⑦ Northern Gateway SRF
- ⑧ Eastern Regeneration Framework
- ⑨ NOMA Strategic Regeneration Framework
- ⑩ Ancoats and New Islington Neighbourhood Development Framework
- ⑪ North Campus SRF
- ⑫ Ardwick Green NDF
- Existing green spaces
- New Islington Marina
- Great Ancoats Street
- 5 to 20m walking isochrones from point A



Wider City Context Plan and Key Regeneration Areas

ROAD HIERARCHY & LAND USES

The New Islington neighbourhood, Free School and Medical Practice sit along the northern boundary of the site. Towards its south, across from Great Ancoats street, there is an industrial and retail development which includes a gym space and a supermarket (ALDI). The south-eastern boundary is defined by various warehouses and the recently built 32 storey high residential tower, 'Oxygen Manchester'.

There is a key open space, Cotton Field Park, to the north of the site and there are a number of other public spaces nearby.

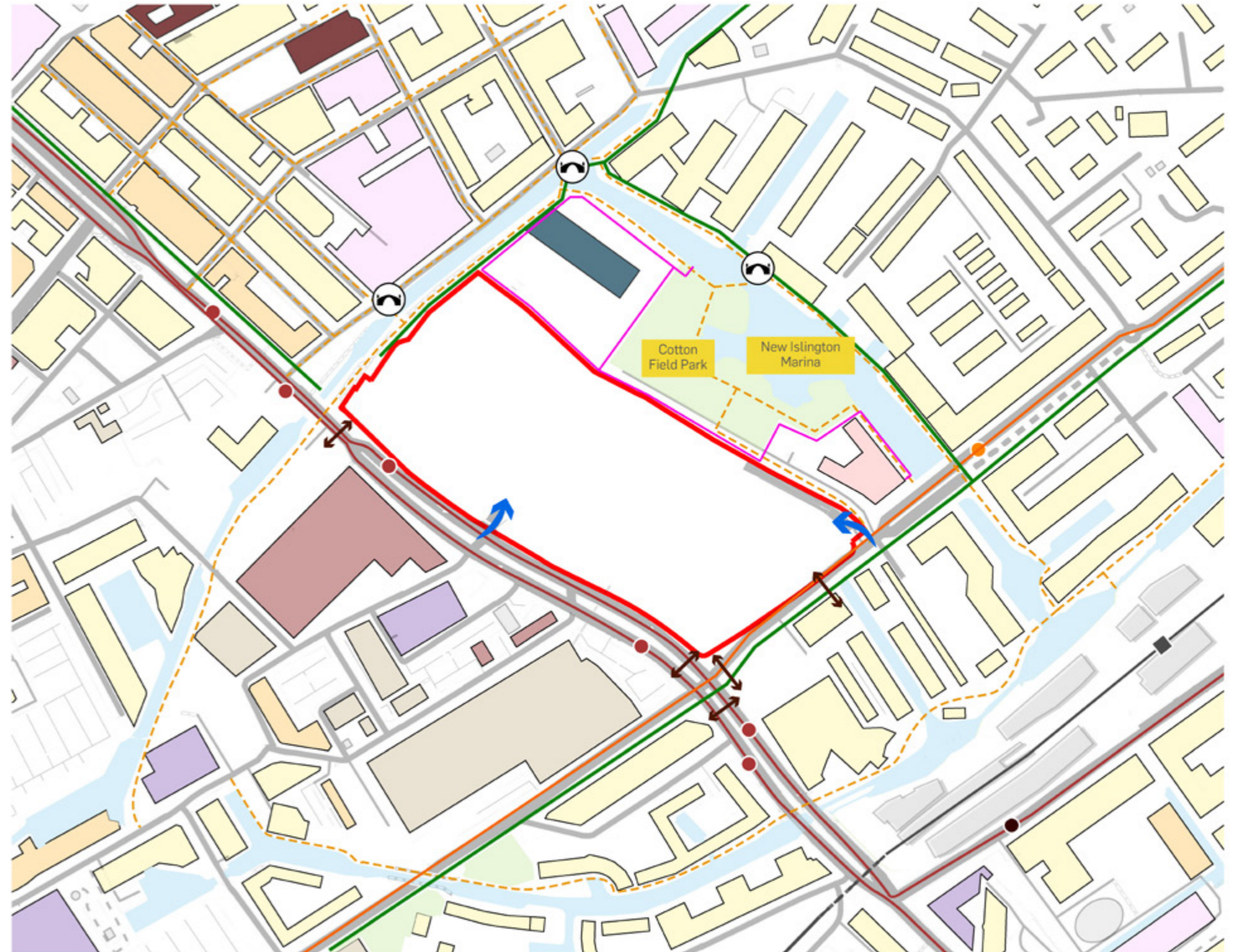
The site is bounded by Great Ancoats Street (the city's Inner Ring Road) to the south and is well connected to a variety of arterial routes that lead to the M60 and the wider motorway network.

Great Ancoats Street is a 3 by 2 lane carriageway, with a speed limit of 30mph. It is a car-dominated road, with heavy traffic and currently acts as a visual and physical barrier.

There are two vehicular access points to the site, which were part of the former retail park, which are now fenced off and barricaded. The first from Great Ancoats Street and the second from Old Mill Street. Access from Great Ancoats Street is signalised, allowing full movement when previously exiting the former retail park. The signal also allows for vehicles on Laystall Street to either turn right onto Great Ancoats Street or move directly into the former Central Retail Park. The second access from Old Mill Street was previously for delivery and services. The site is currently fenced and inaccessible.

The SRF will improve accessibility to the site by opening it up to local neighbourhoods around it, helping to stitch them together and connecting them to the city centre. It will also have a positive impact on its direct surroundings.

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Site boundary |  Great Ancoats Street (City inner road) |
|  Residential |  Secondary road – one way, three lanes |
|  Mixed Use |  Secondary road – two way, two lanes |
|  Commercial |  Local road – two way, two lanes |
|  Retail |  Local road – one way, two lanes |
|  Educational |  Local road – one way, one lane |
|  Health care |  Restricted access road |
|  Industrial | |
|  Green / Open spaces | |
|  New Islington Marina | |



Road Hierarchy and Land Uses

PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

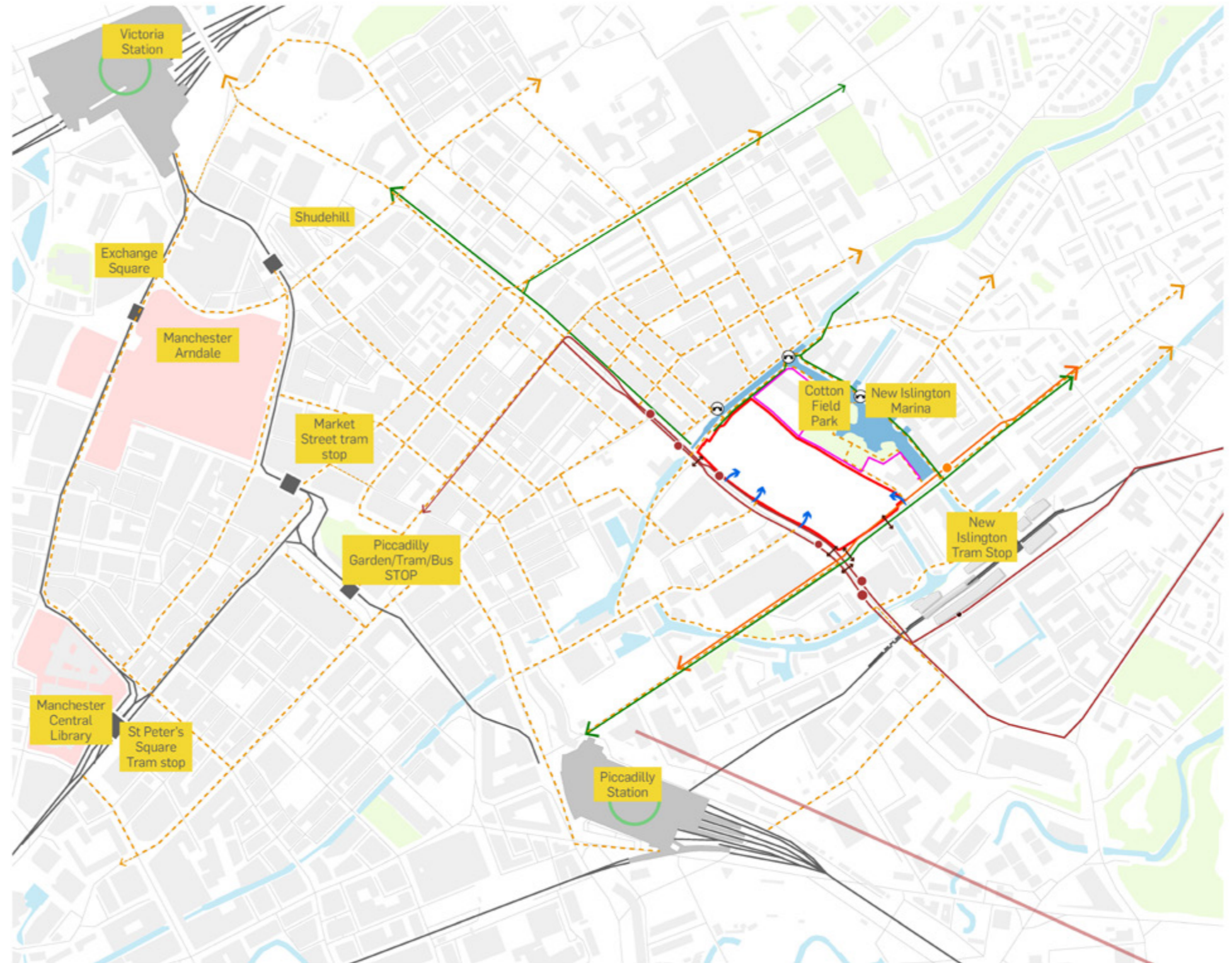
The site is currently fenced, preventing access. However, the former Central Retail Park previously had four pedestrian access points, three of which were located towards the south of the site along Great Ancoats. Great Ancoats Street is a major car-dominated road with limited pedestrian crossings. The pedestrian crossing in close proximity to the Rochdale canal provides a connection point into the site and to the tow path of the canal. The fourth access point is on Old Mill Street, towards the east of the site. There are no other pedestrian access points to the site.

In terms of public transport, buses run along Great Ancoats Street and Old Mill Street, with a frequency of 15 to 30 minutes. The site is also in close proximity to key transport points, such as New Islington tram stop which is a 7-minute walk from the site, and key transport hubs, such as Piccadilly train station which is a 10-minute walk from the site.

There are existing cycle routes surrounding the site as part of the Transport for Greater Manchester cycle network. However, none of these routes have an allocated cycle path, instead they are classified as on-road routes or shared surfaces with pedestrians.

The masterplan will look to enhance links to existing transport networks, maximising the opportunity to create a sustainable district in travel terms. Pedestrians and cyclists will be given priority over vehicles to promote a sustainable and people led development.

- ▭ Site boundary
- - - Pedestrian links
- ➔ Existing pedestrian access to site (currently fenced)
- ↕ Existing pedestrian crossings
- ⊙ Existing bridges
- Existing fences around Cotton Field park
- Bus routes and stops (230, 216, 231)
- Bus routes and stops (709, 230, 216, 231)
- Bus deviation (216)
- Existing cycle routes, part of the TfGM cycle network
- Green / Open spaces
- Tram routes
- HS2 line



Public Transport Plan

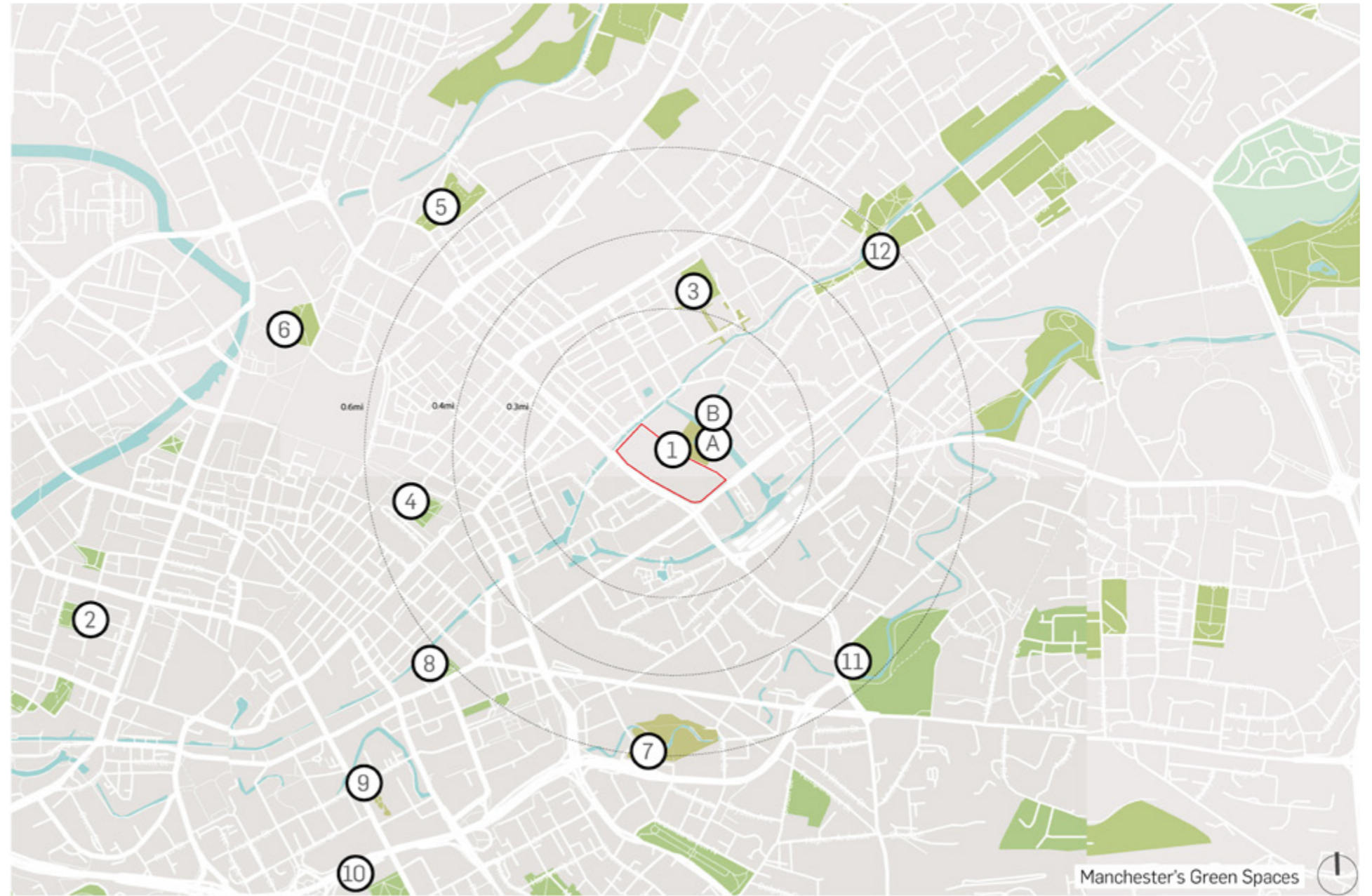
Manchester's green space

The site is located directly adjacent to Cotton Field Park, the Rochdale Canal and New Islington Wharf, and is within close proximity to a number of major public parks and green spaces including, Mayfield Park and the planned enhancements to Ancoats Green public realm.

The site is bounded to the north by Cotton Field Park, an urban park at the centre of the New Islington community which opens from 8am to 8pm.

The site provides an opportunity to add to the existing green and public spaces by delivering a significant new public realm connecting to and extending Cotton Field Park. This will give east Manchester a series of green spaces for pedestrians to travel into the city centre. The new public realm will help provide a connection to the existing green spaces located around the city as well as establishing its own sense of place and becoming a destination for the local and neighbouring communities.

- Site boundary
- ① Cotton Field Park
- ② St Johns Gardens
- ③ Ancoats Green
- ④ Piccadilly Gardens
- ⑤ St Michael's Flags & Angel Meadow Park
- ⑥ Cathedral Gardens
- ⑦ Mayfield Park
- ⑧ Sackville Garden
- ⑨ Circle Square
- ⑩ All Saints Park
- ⑪ Pin Mill Brow
- ⑫ Ashton Canal Park



Cotton Field park



Cotton Field park



New Islington Marina

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Ancoats Conservation Area

A key consideration for the future of the site is its location immediately adjacent to a number of key heritage assets, and in particular, the Ancoats Conservation Area. Ancoats was once one of the most densely developed industrial landscapes. During the 18th century it was home to textile mills and was the centre of manufacturing of machinery, glass, and newspapers. During the second half of the 20th century, the district saw a decline with factories closing down and communities leaving the industrial areas for the suburbs. The area includes several Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings, many of them facing Rochdale Canal. The Ancoats Conservation Area boundary reaches the western edge of the site.

The area has gone through significant investment. The successful and sensitive regeneration has maintained the special character of the area and has made Ancoats into a popular destination. Businesses have capitalised on the popularity of the area and helped it grow and build upon its character.

The Rochdale Canal

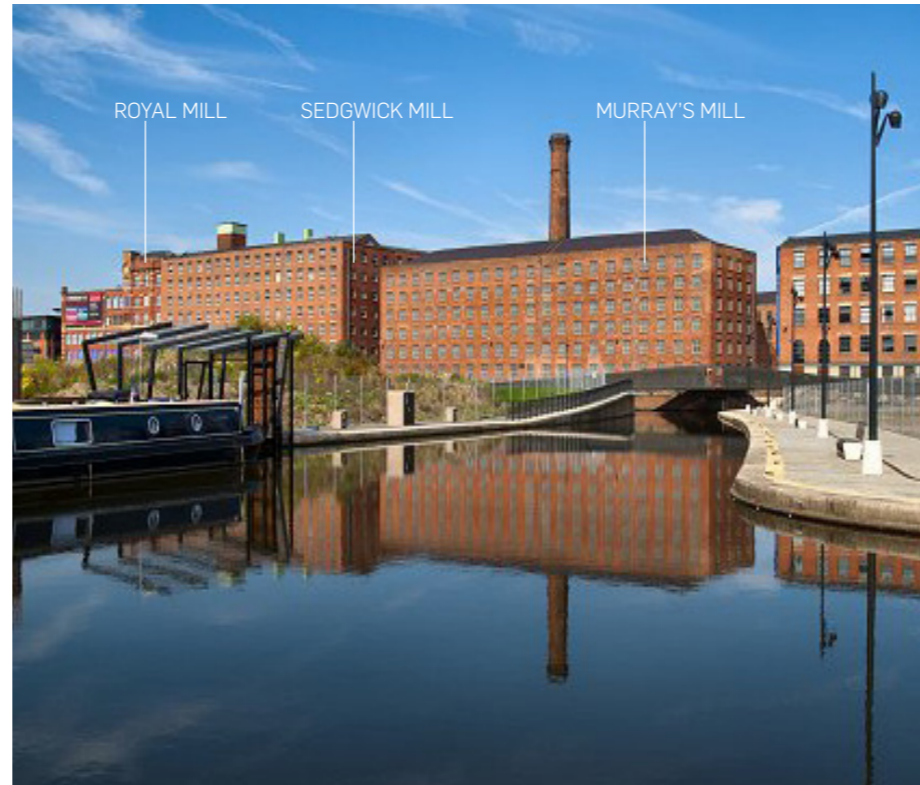
Alongside the historic buildings in the city the canal infrastructure is a key defining feature of Ancoats, with two major waterways crossing the area:

- The Rochdale Canal, defining the west boundary of the site
- The Ashton Canal, to the east of Old Mill Street.

Canals were the essential prerequisite to the area's industrial development as they allowed transporting materials at a much cheaper rate than using roads. Smaller branches from the major waterways used to serve the major industrial sites within Ancoats and New Islington, creating a local network of waterways.

The Rochdale canal dates back to 1804, and the first mills defining its frontage go back beyond that. An example of that is Old Mill, which dates back to 1798. The mills alongside the west side of the Rochdale Canal have historically presented an impressive frontage to what is now the designated Ancoats Conservation area.

The locks, which sit to the southwest of the site and the canal wall define the west of the canal, are also protected assets.



View from Cotton Field park towards Ancoats Conservation Area.



Mills at Rochdale canal in 1820



Long Mill and Old Mill defining the frontage of Rochdale canal in 1913
Source: 'Ancoats. Cradle of industrialisation.' English Heritage



Mills at Rochdale canal in 1835

Residential community

In the last 20 years, the area has experienced rapid residential growth, including the development of the New Islington Community along the new marina and the Ashton canal corridor, to the east of Old Mill Street.

The new residential-led developments in New Islington and Ancoats are coming forward in a coordinated manner under policies presented in the adopted Neighbourhood Development Framework (NDF). New Islington has become a popular destination for living with typologies ranging from townhouses to apartments, defined by award-winning architecture and public realm.

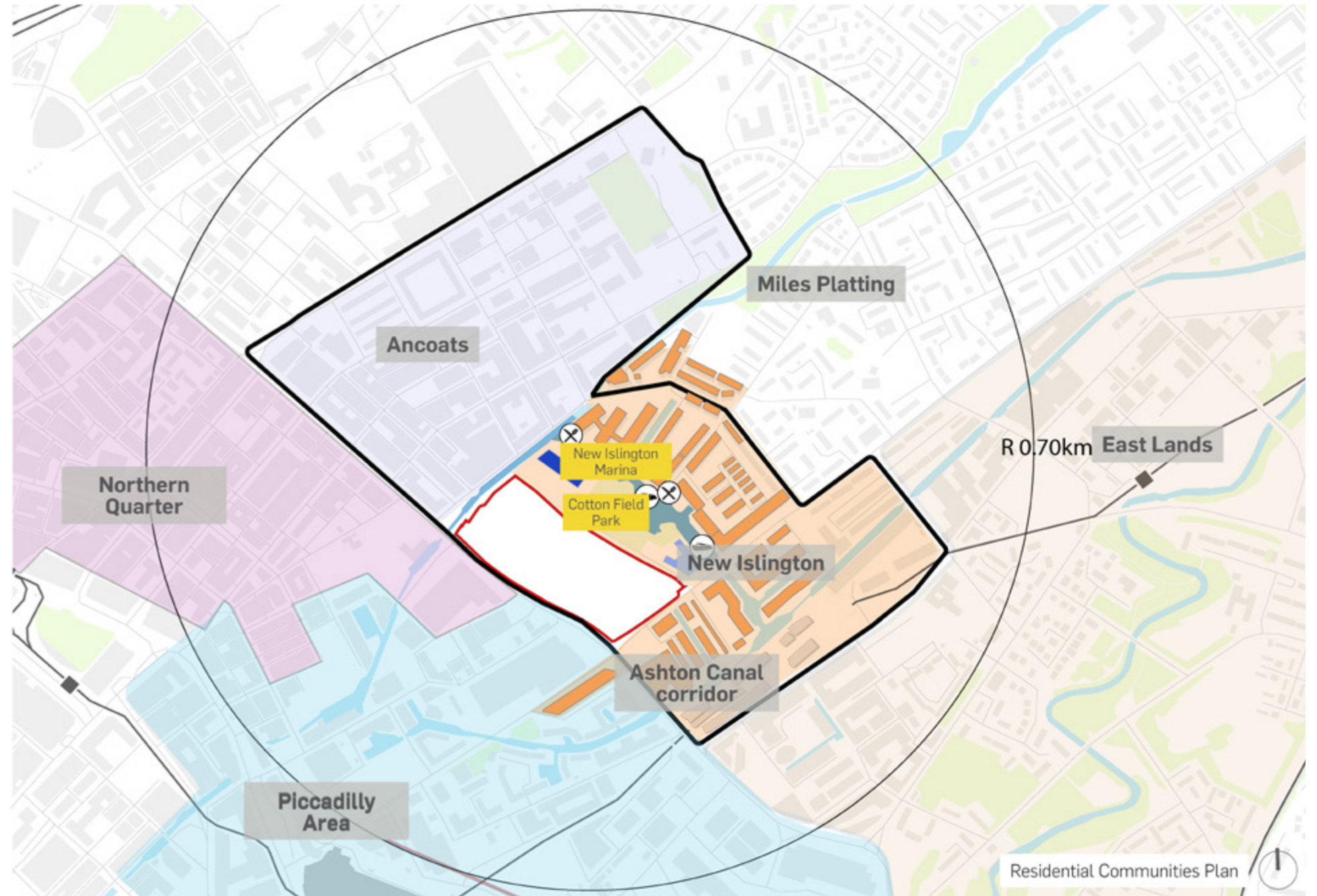
There is a thriving existing community living in the Rochdale canal basin, with 33 permanent residential units and 7 visitor moorings.

The community in New Islington is supported by new social infrastructure such as the New Islington free school, opened in 2016, and the medical practice, both sitting to the north of the site.

The site is connected to the Etihad Stadium by the metrolink via New Islington and Piccadilly tram stops. The Etihad Stadium forms the centre piece of the significant regeneration being delivered pursued in the Eastlands regeneration framework. This is supported by the investment of Manchester Life, a partnership between Abu Dhabi United Group and MCC. The partnership has the long-term goal of regenerating the immediate surroundings of the Etihad Stadium and establishing wider benefits for the area.

Further development has taken place close by high-rise buildings located towards the southeast boundary of the site. This includes the 32-storey "Oxygen Manchester" residential tower on Store Street.

- Site boundary
- Ancoats and New Islington NDF area boundary
- New residential developments
- New Islington Free School
- Medical Practice
- Existing green / Open spaces



Chips Building



Woodward Place housing, New Islington by Fat



Coppersmith Road Residential



Urban Splash Housing Development

04 SITE OPPORTUNITIES
AND PARAMETERS

SITE OPPORTUNITIES AND PARAMETERS

Methodology

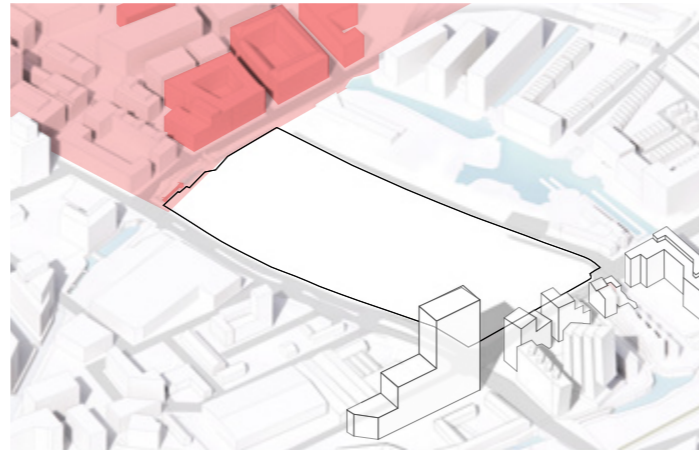
In this chapter the analysis of the site's context and the opportunities it presents for redevelopment have been summarised into a series of diagrams and photographs, which have been distilled into six distinct zones to form a suite of opportunities and constraints.

These diagrams help to prioritise factors that the redevelopment of the site should respond to.

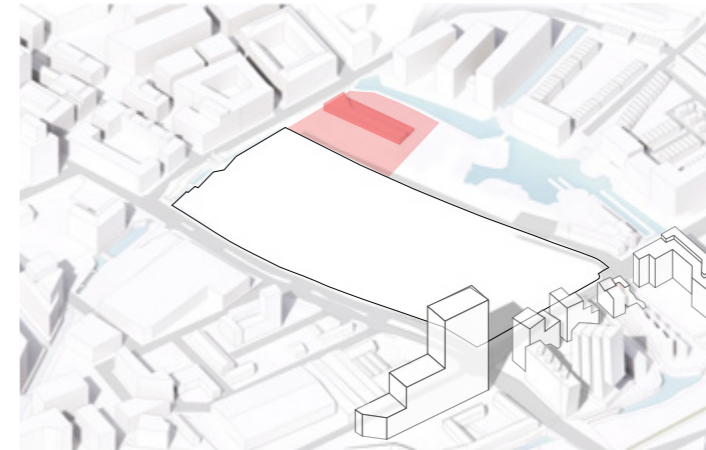
The following are the six distinct zones:

- Ancoats Conservation Area
- New Islington school
- New Islington community
- New Islington Medical Practice
- Old Mill Street
- Great Ancoats Street

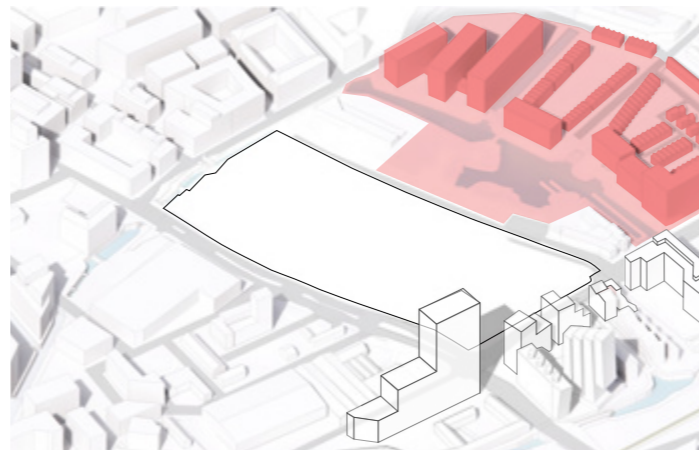
6 DISTINCT ZONES



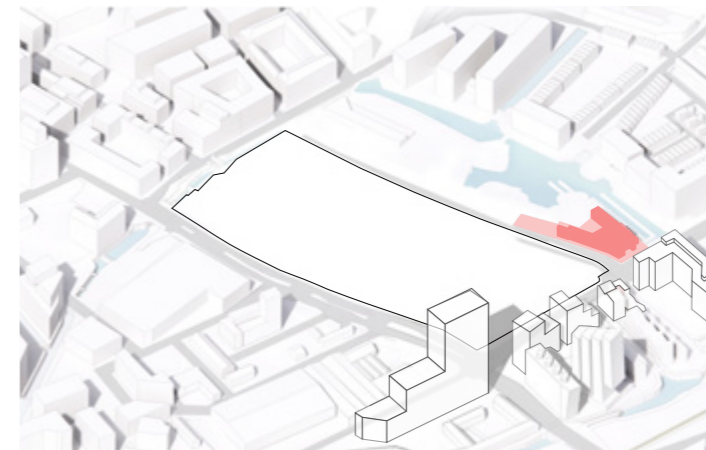
01. ANCOATS CONSERVATION AREA



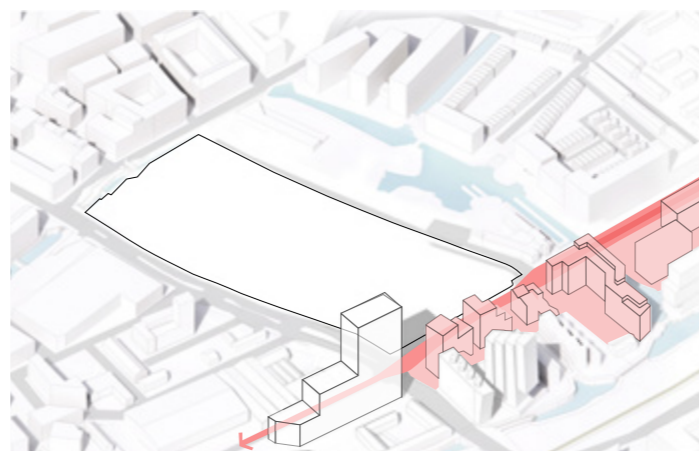
02. NEW ISLINGTON SCHOOL



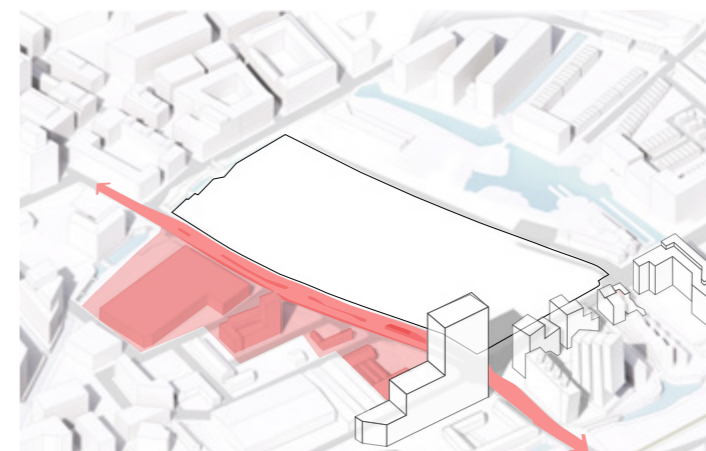
03. NEW ISLINGTON COMMUNITY



04. NEW ISLINGTON MEDICAL PRACTICE



05. OLD MILL STREET



06. GREAT ANCOATS STREET

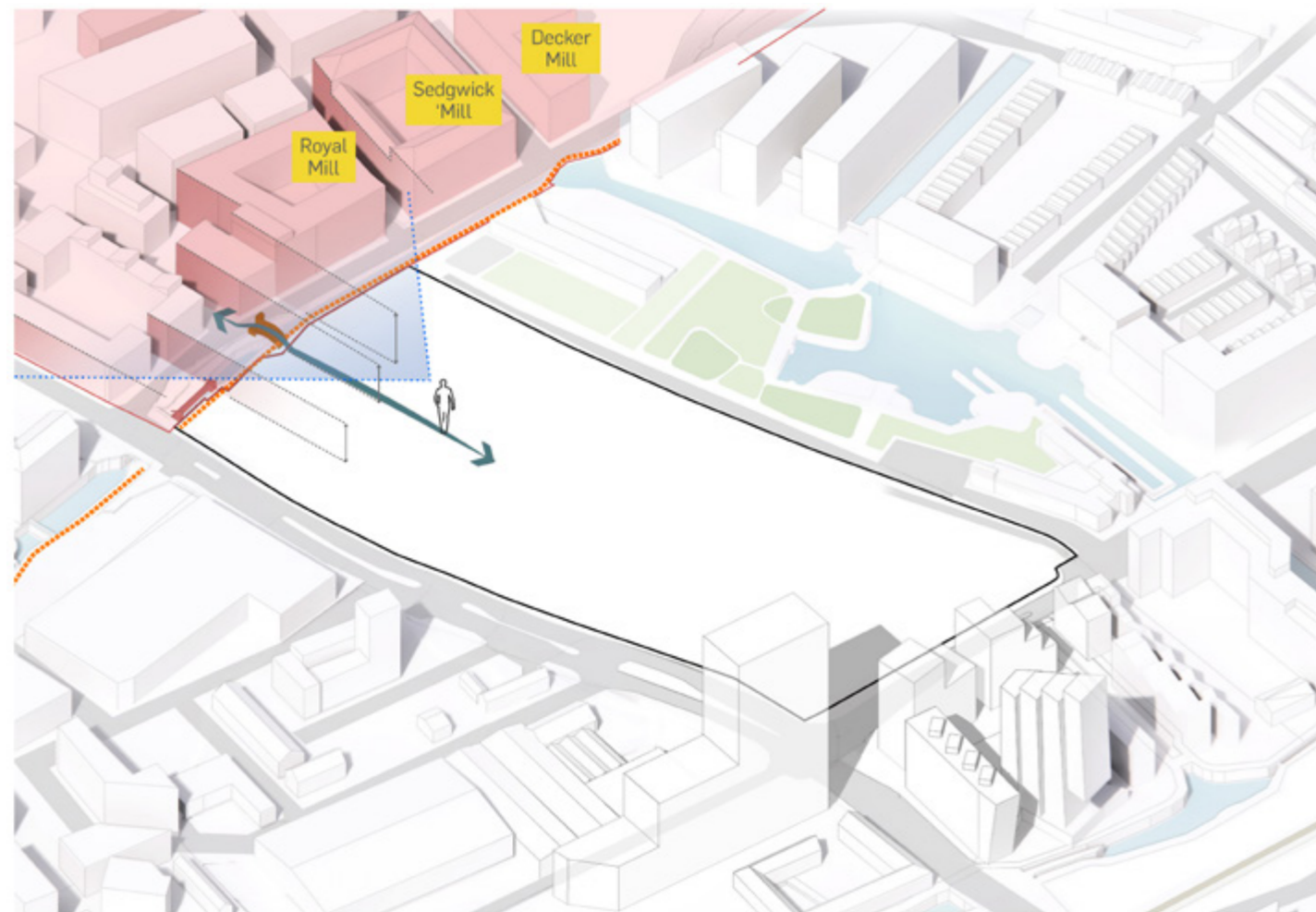
 Site boundary

01. ANCOATS CONSERVATION AREA

Character

It is important that the site takes into the consideration the character of the conservation area and responds positively to it, respecting its heritage, key features and views from and towards the area.

The average building heights in the conservation area are ground plus 7 storeys. Any offices proposed for the site will need to consider the heights of adjacent buildings and their relationship to the setting of them. Strategies such as stepping the building heights down to respect the conservation area could be employed. The listed buildings and structures adjacent to the site include Royal Mill, Sedgwick Mill, Decker Mill and the Lock number 82.



- Site boundary
- Conservation area
- Listed buildings
- Listed lock
- Buildings heights
- Historic bridge
- Tow path
- View from site to conservation area

Rochdale Canal

The tow path provides the opportunity to connect to the neighbouring districts, however currently the tow path is narrow and is impeded by the canal locks adjacent to the site. This limits continuous pedestrian and cyclist movement.

There is an existing cycle route (National Cycle Route 66) which connects north to Littleborough. The redevelopment of the former Central Retail Park should encourage pedestrian and cyclist connectivity and a greater interaction with the canal.



02. NEW ISLINGTON SCHOOL

Character

New Islington School is located on the north-west boundary of the site, and it is separated by a private road which provides access to the school's surface parking area. The site boundary in this location is made up of a 1.5m high wall with railings, mature trees and planting which help screen the school from the site. The school is a modern two-storey building with its parking facilities and multi-use playground defining the northwest corner of the site.

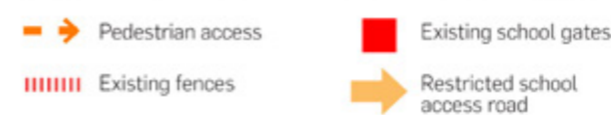
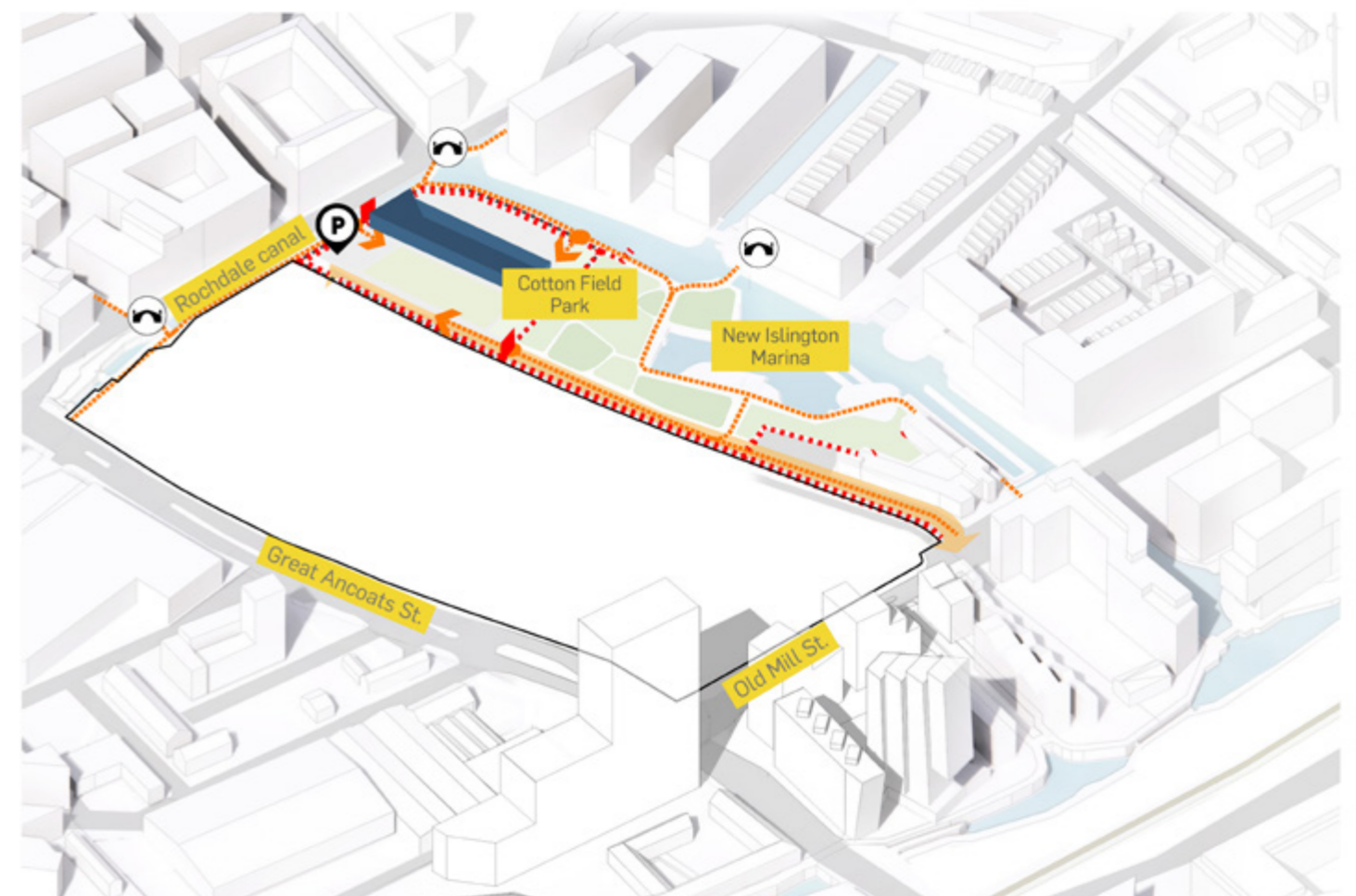
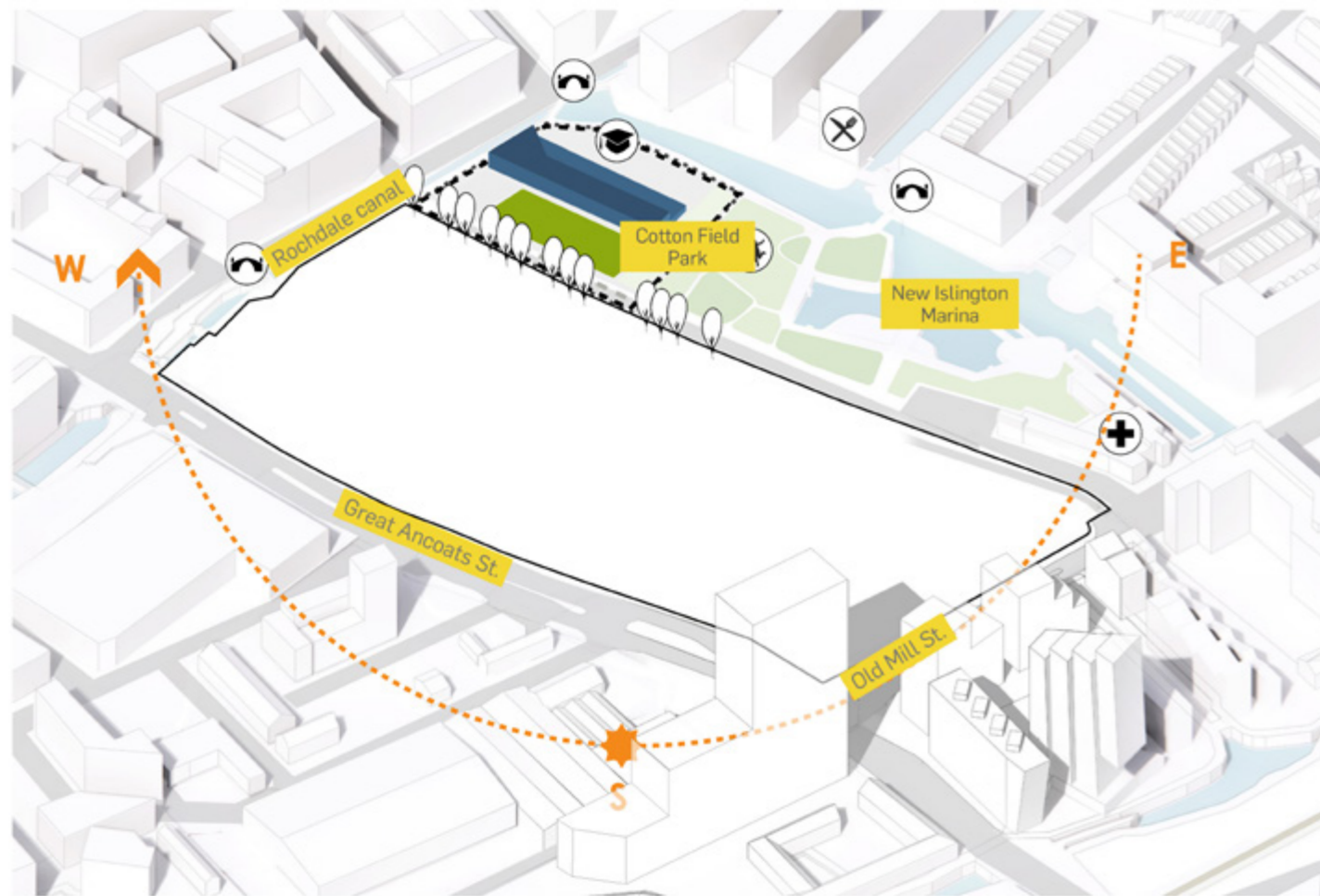
Any new buildings proposed on the site will need to be cognisant of potential negative impacts and the need for security at the school. As well as managing these impacts there are opportunities to implement positive improvements to boundary edges and the access road thus enhancing the relationship between the school and the site.

Site northern boundary

The north boundary of the site is defined by a private road, accessed from Old Mill Street, and which provides the only vehicular access to the school. The access to the school is controlled by a gate which is closed when the school is not in use. The proposed development will need to be cognisant of the school's needs and respond to vehicular access around and on the site.

Pedestrian and arrival zones

The boundary of the school is fenced off and pedestrian access is only available from two points. The first access being from the Rochdale canal and a second from Cotton Field Park.



03. NEW ISLINGTON COMMUNITY

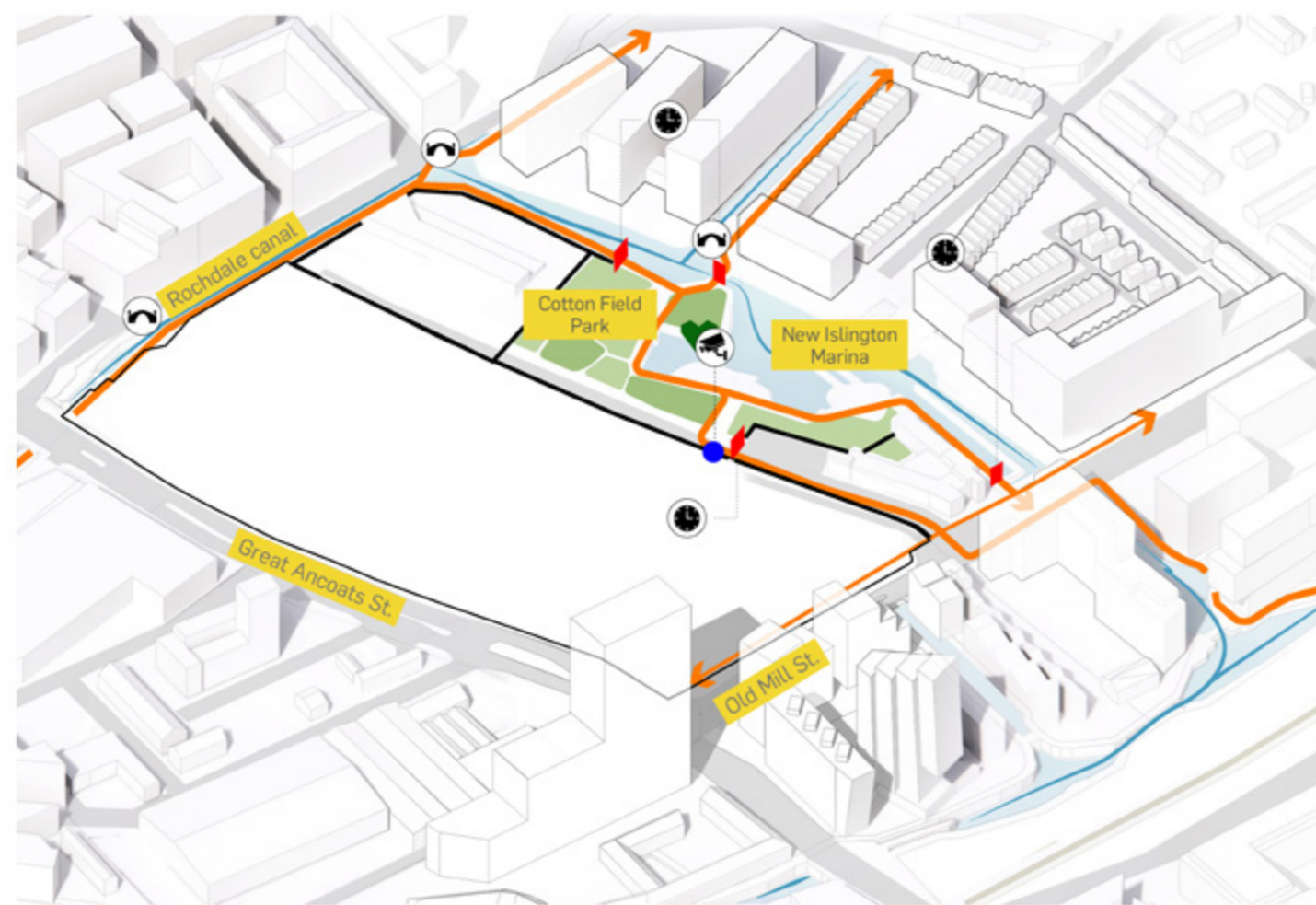
Cotton Field Park

Cotton Field Park consists of a series of urban green spaces sitting within the New Islington Marina. It has become the 'green centre' for New Islington. Its green space is an eco-park which consists of a body of water, a boardwalk that forms the main pedestrian route and several distinctive islands. There is an opportunity to maximise this great asset by extending it into the proposed site.

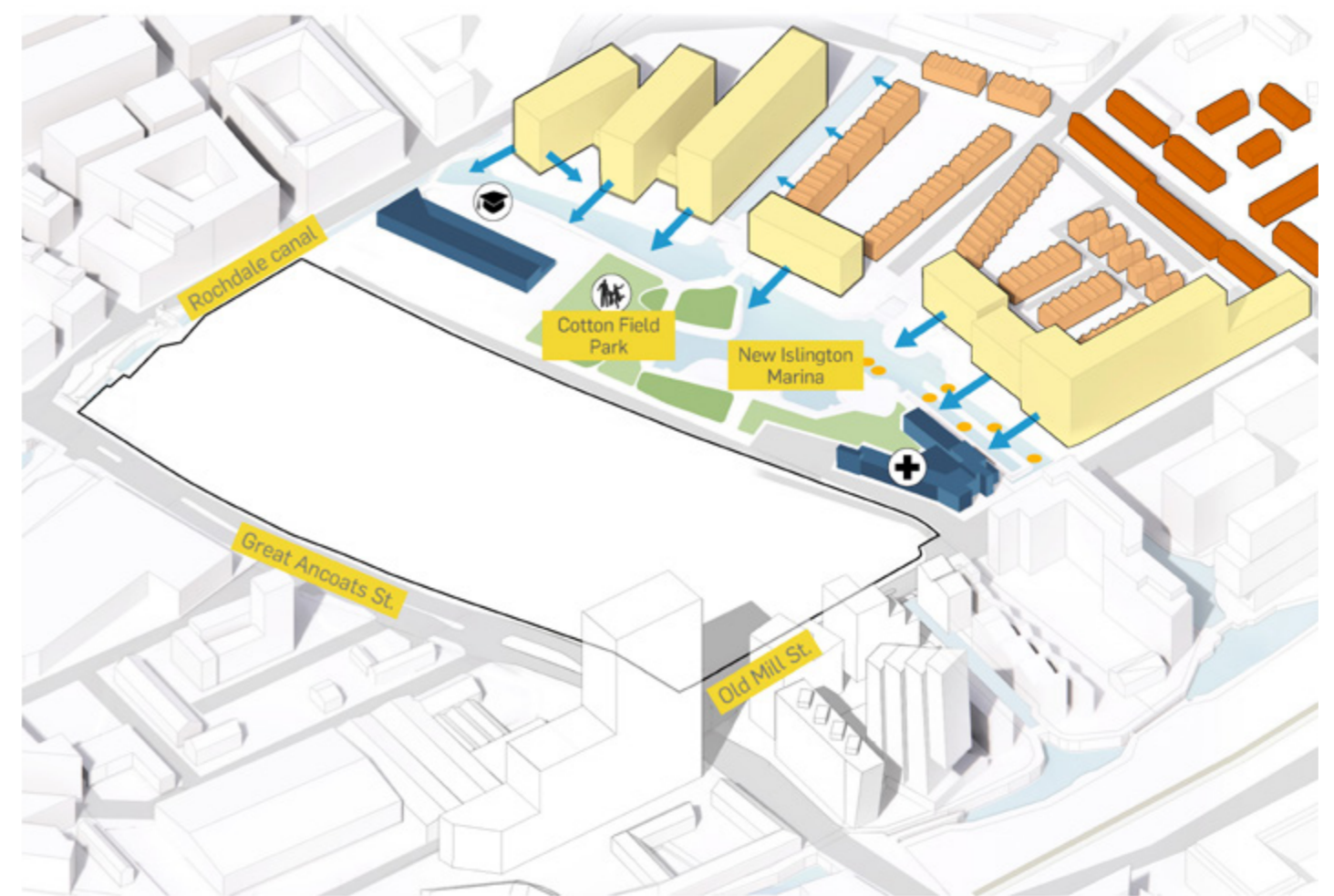
Cotton Field Park is a gated park which opens from 8am to 8pm. The Park is secured during the nights to prevent the disturbance of the community, there are several residential barges sat in the marina. The site's proposal will need to respond and respect the existing community.

Typologies

New Islington continues to grow and includes more than 1,400 new homes, a school and a medical practice. The community has a mix of architectural styles and typologies, with connections to the park and the marina. There are a range of family homes and apartments. There is an existing floating community living in the Rochdale Canal basin with 33 permanent residential units and 7 visitor moorings. Independent businesses offer activation and the park and canal offer places to run and play, seat and gather.



- Site boundary
- Existing fence
- ~ Navigable zones
- Existing bridges
- ➔ Pedestrian routes
- Surveillance camera
- Existing gates
- New Islington school



- Site boundary
- New Islington school
- Apartments
- Town houses
- Semi detached houses
- Barge residents

04. NEW ISLINGTON MEDICAL PRACTICE

Character

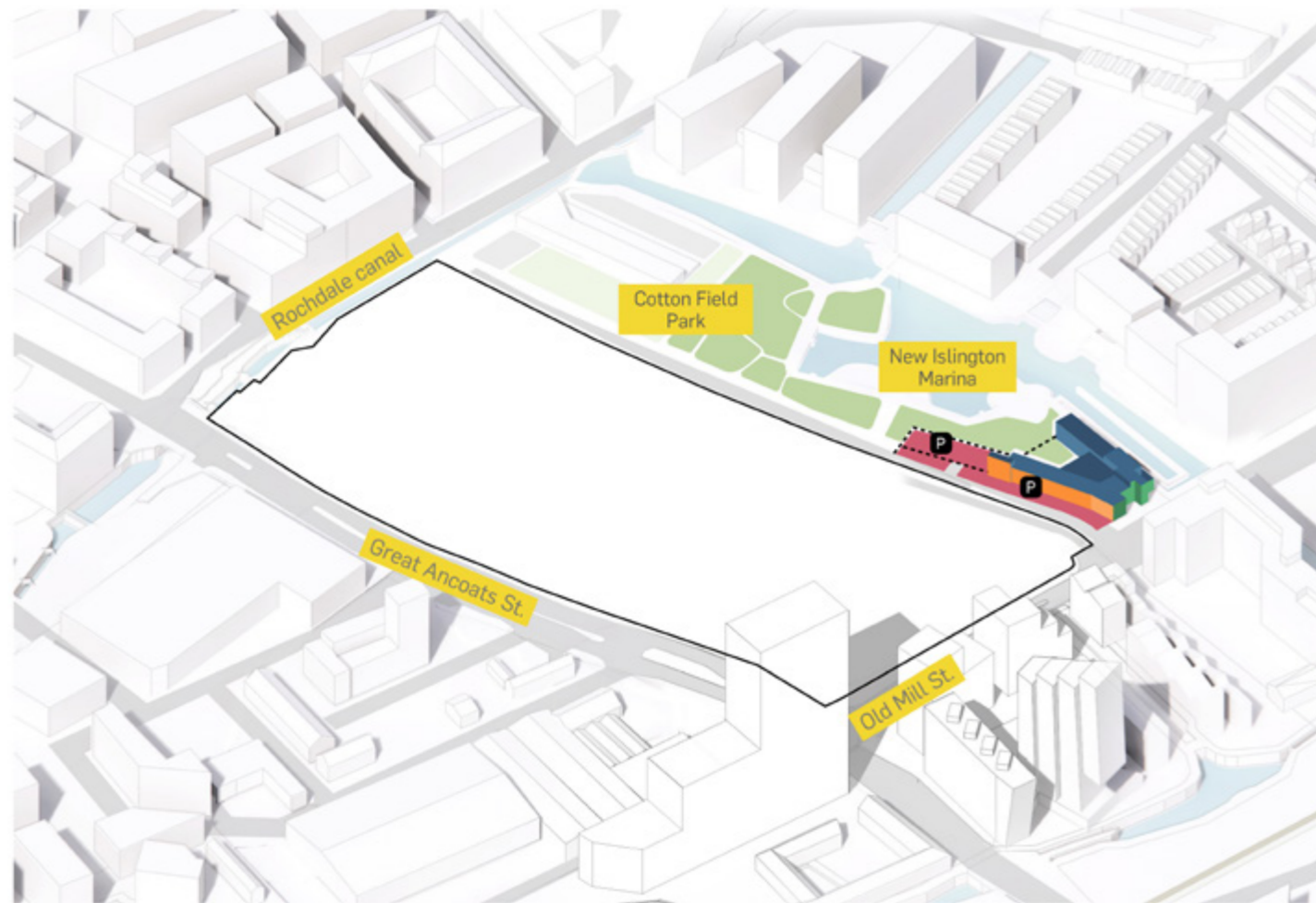
The Medical Practice sits on the corner of Old Mill Street, fronting the New Islington Marina, with Cotton Field Park sitting on its western boundary. The back of the Medical Practice and its parking area are separated from the site by a private road.

Pedestrian Arrival Zones

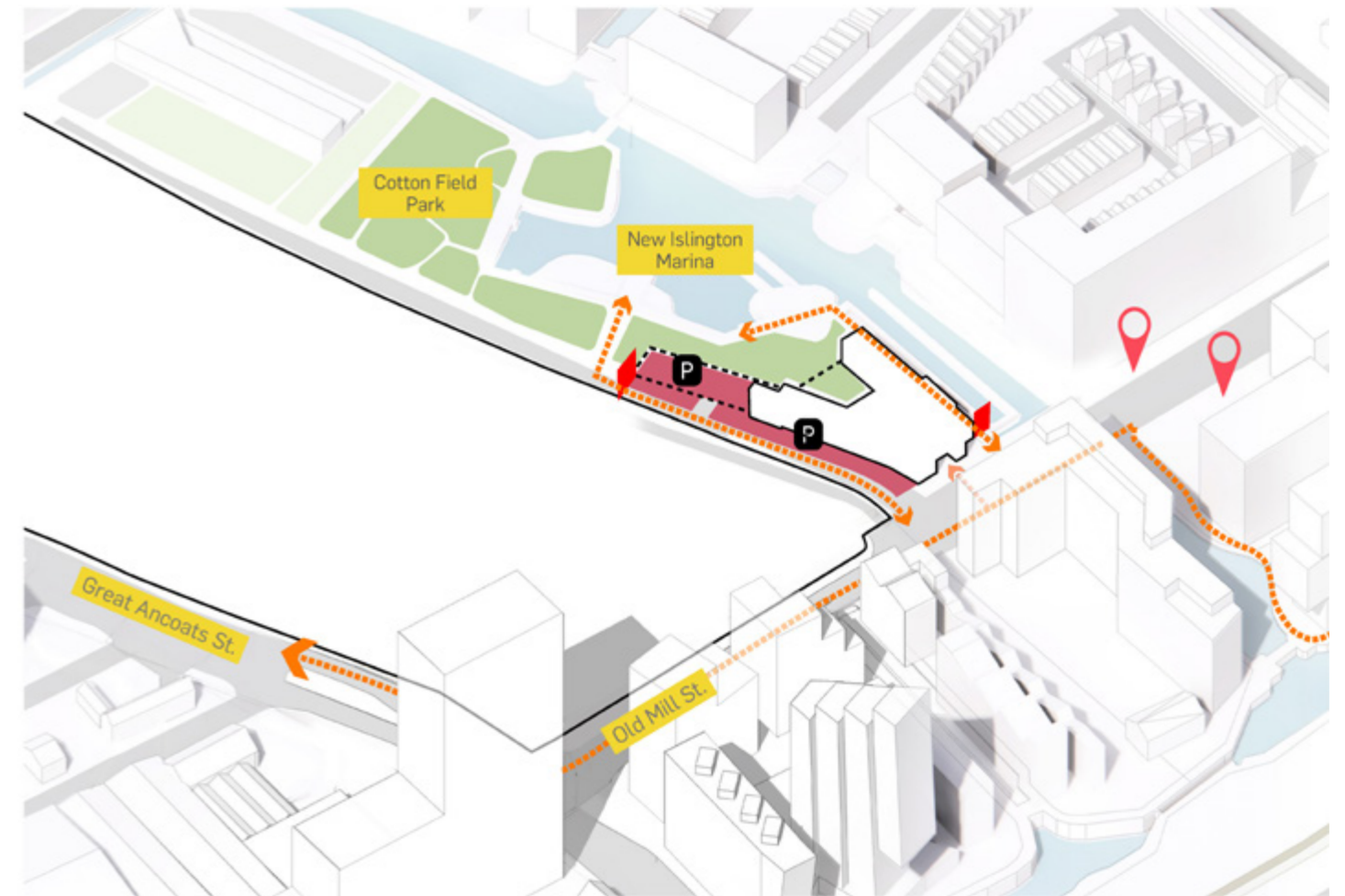
There is pedestrian access between the park and Old Mill Street on either side of the medical practice which will be maintained.

Vehicular Access and Parking

Staff parking for the Medical Practice is from the private road off Old Mill Street. The main entrance is from Old Mill Street, so visitors tend to park along that road or somewhere nearby.



- Site boundary
- Back of house
- Medical Practice
- Main entrance
- Existing fence
- Parking for medical practice



- Site boundary
- Existing gates
- Parking for medical practice
- Existing fence
- Pedestrian Access
- Bus stops



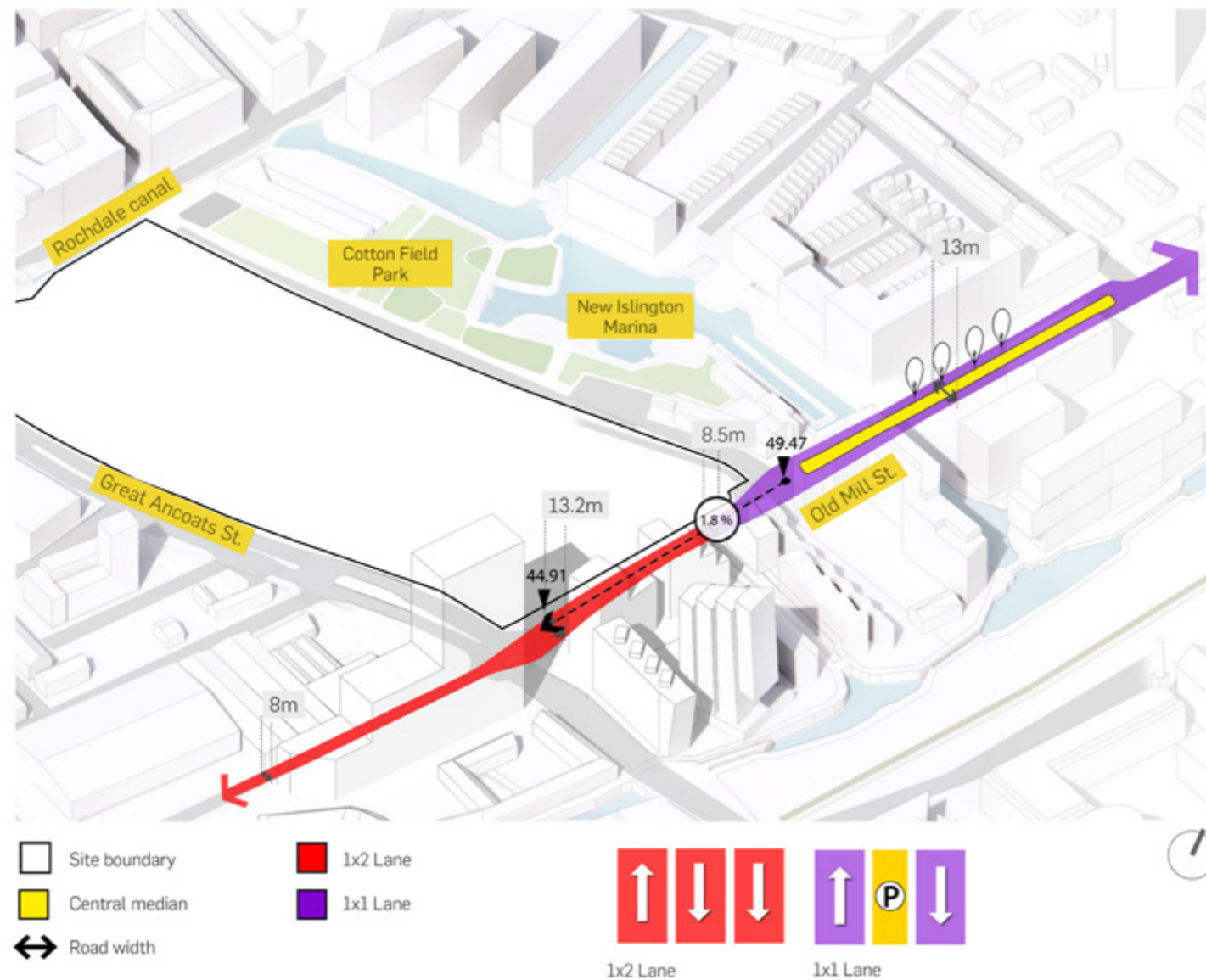
05. OLD MILL STREET

Character

Old Mill Street slopes up from Great Ancoats Street towards the medical practice. The carriageway at this point changes from a 2 x 1 lane to a 1 x 1 lane. Along it, there are parking bays adjacent to the footpath and diagonally in the central median broken down by tree planting and seating.

Level

Old Mill Street slopes up 1.8% from an approximate level of 44.91 to 49.47 AOD. The change in levels does not present a challenge to walk up; however, the environment of the road appears to leave the pedestrian exposed.

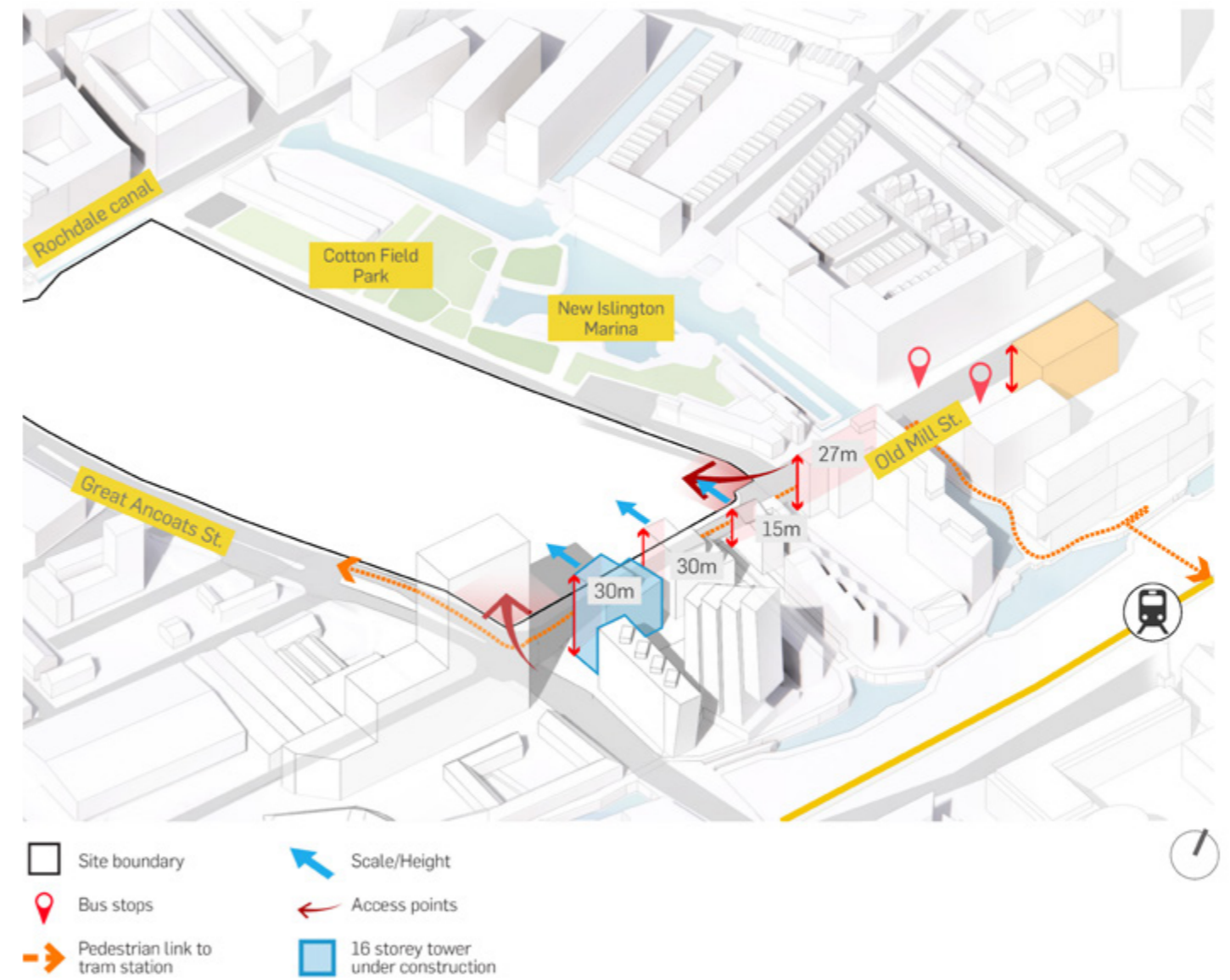


Adjoining residential developments

The residential apartments are at similar height along Old Mill Street and begin to step down towards the Ashton canal (east). The apartments along Old Mill Street overlook the site, and any design proposal will consider the relationship and impact on these existing homes.

Public transport and pedestrian arrival zones

The New Islington tram stop is towards the east of the site and can be accessed through Old Mill Street. It is anticipated that the corner of the site, adjacent to the medical practice will welcome a number of pedestrians to the development.



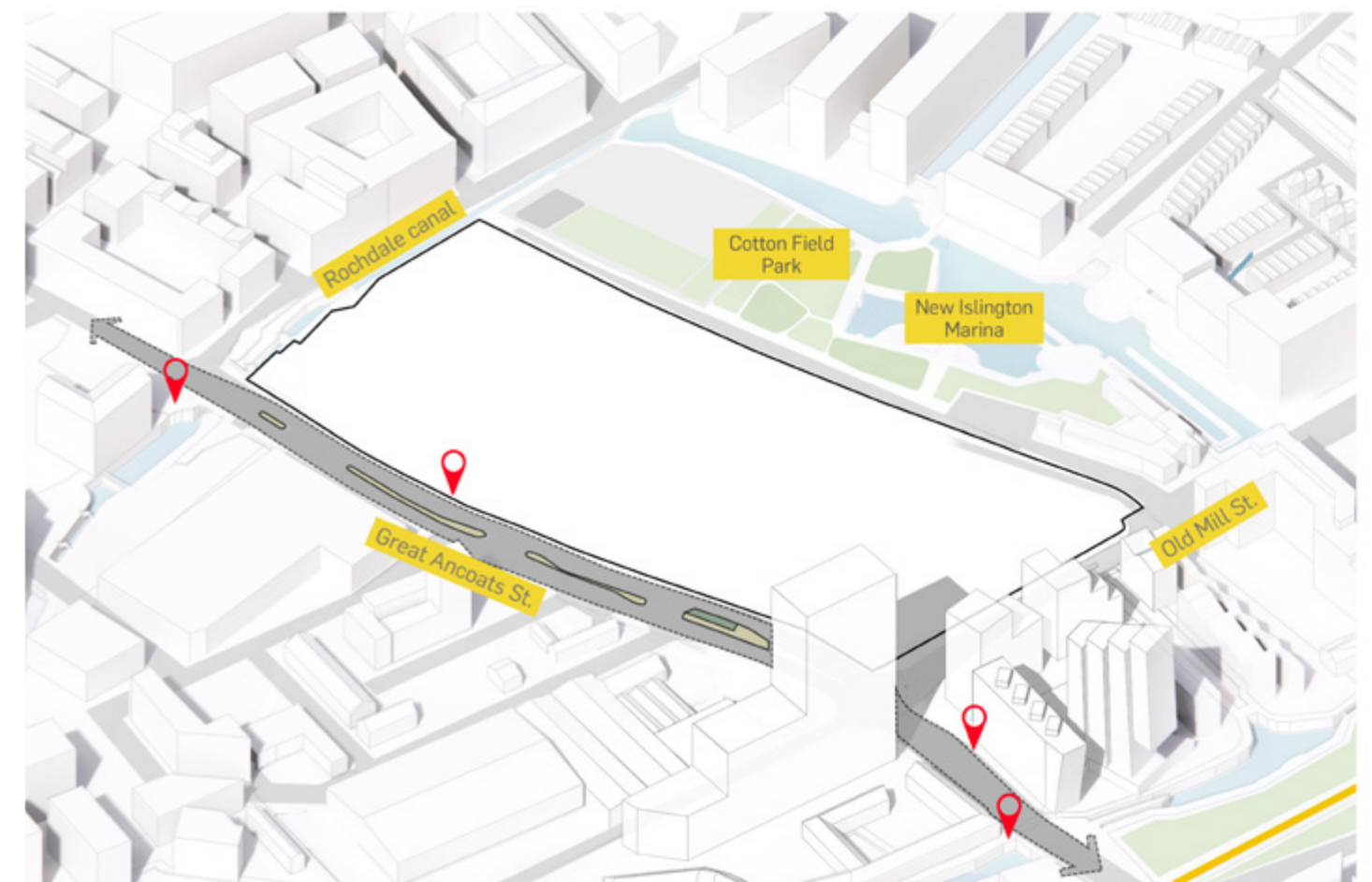
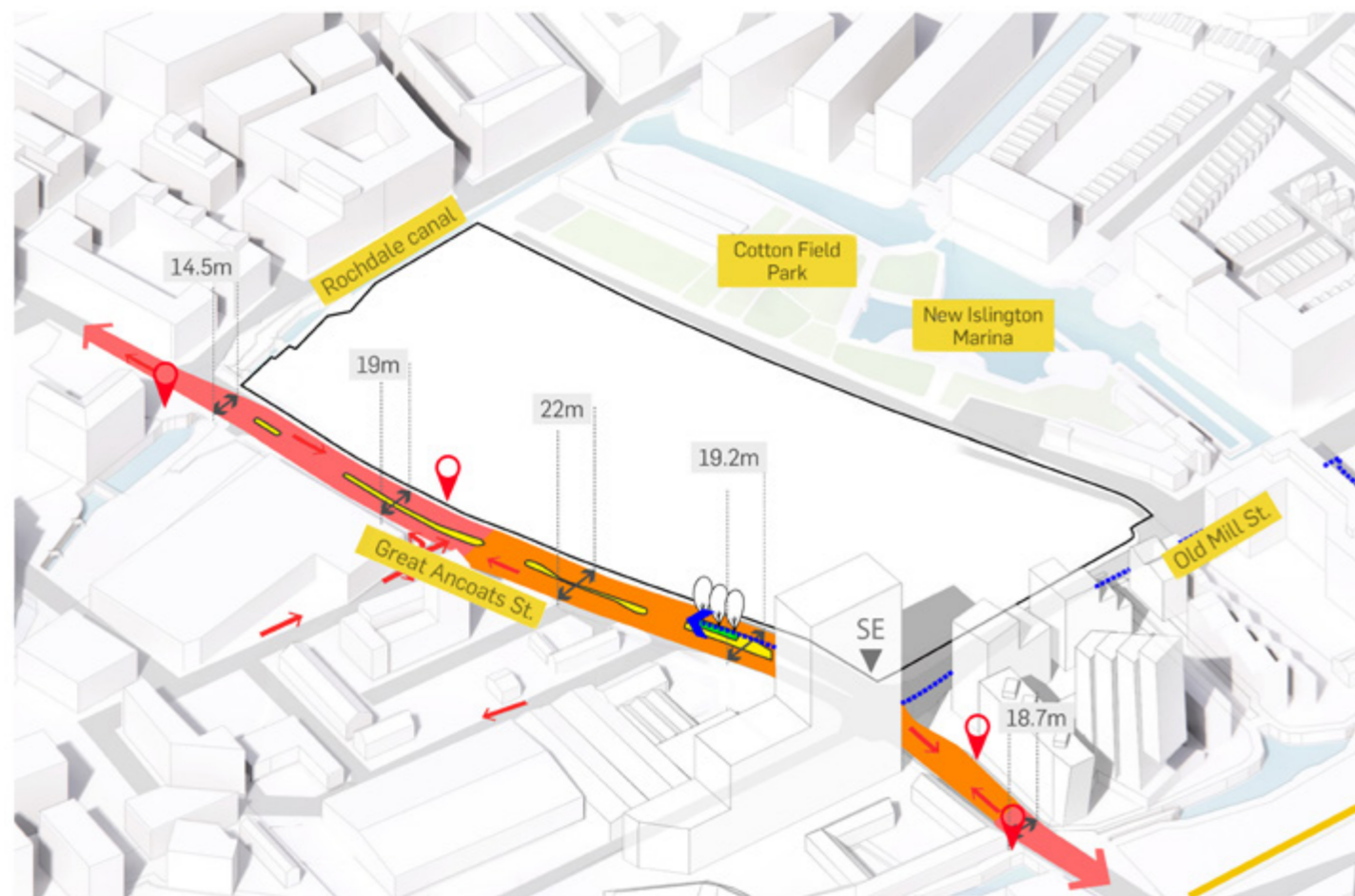
06. GREAT ANCOATS STREET

Character

Great Ancoats Street is a car-dominated environment, with heavy traffic creating noise and air pollution leading to an unpleasant atmosphere. It is a 3x2 lane carriageway with limited crossing points. Its makeup constrains connectivity to the wider districts and contributes to Ancoats and New Islington's insular character.

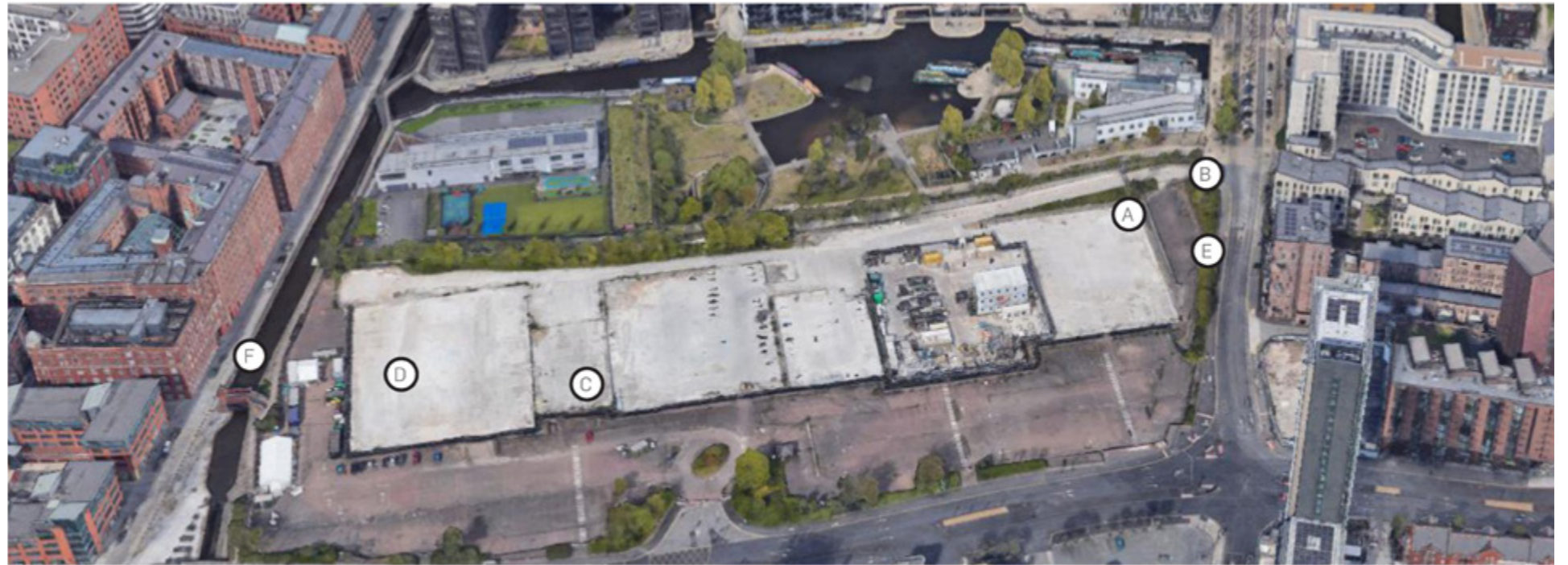
Public transport

The following transport hubs are in close proximity to the site. Their approximate walking times have been taken from the southeast corner of the site: New Islington Tram Stop (6 minutes), Piccadilly Garden Bus Station and Tram Stop (12 minutes), Piccadilly Train Station (14 minutes), Shudehill Bus Station and Tram Stop (14 minutes), Victoria Train Station and Tram Stop (18 minutes). The site is also served by several bus routes that run along Great Ancoats Street and Old Mill Street, with a high frequency rate. This illustrates how well connected the site is to public transport.



THE SITE – THE FCRP DISTRICT OPPORTUNITIES

The site is vacant, overgrown and unattractive in its current form, sitting within an area that has gone through significant regeneration. The site has the potential to provide a substantial amount of commercial office space, together with new public realm and a green space to improve amenity for the local community and the city. The site will include ancillary retail and leisure accommodation, providing facilities for workers and those who live and work in the area. It has the potential to generate a significant economic benefits for the city.



View across the site towards the Great Ancoats Street, Oxygen tower on the left.



Vehicular access to the site from Old Mill Street



Self seeded vegetation within the site



View across the site towards the Ancoats Conservation Area



View from Old Mill Street across the site towards the Ancoats Conservation Area

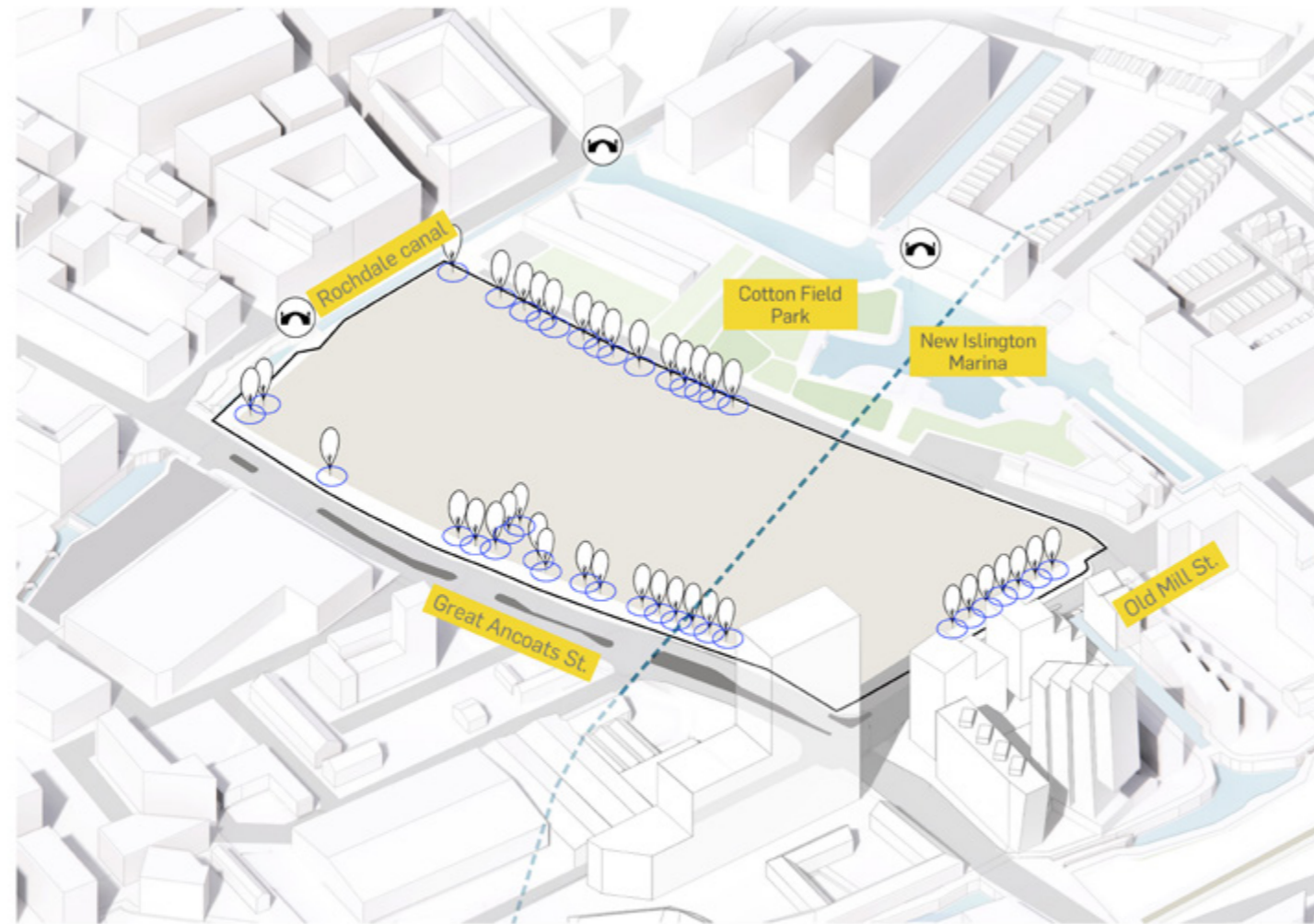



View from the historic bridge into the site. Oxygen tower on the right

THE SITE – THE FCRP DISTRICT OPPORTUNITIES

Retention of the existing trees and integration of the culvert

Existing trees present an opportunity to act as noise, air quality and visual buffers to the site, and should be retained where possible. The existing culvert (Shooters Brook) will be surveyed, and any challenges and opportunities arising will be explored.

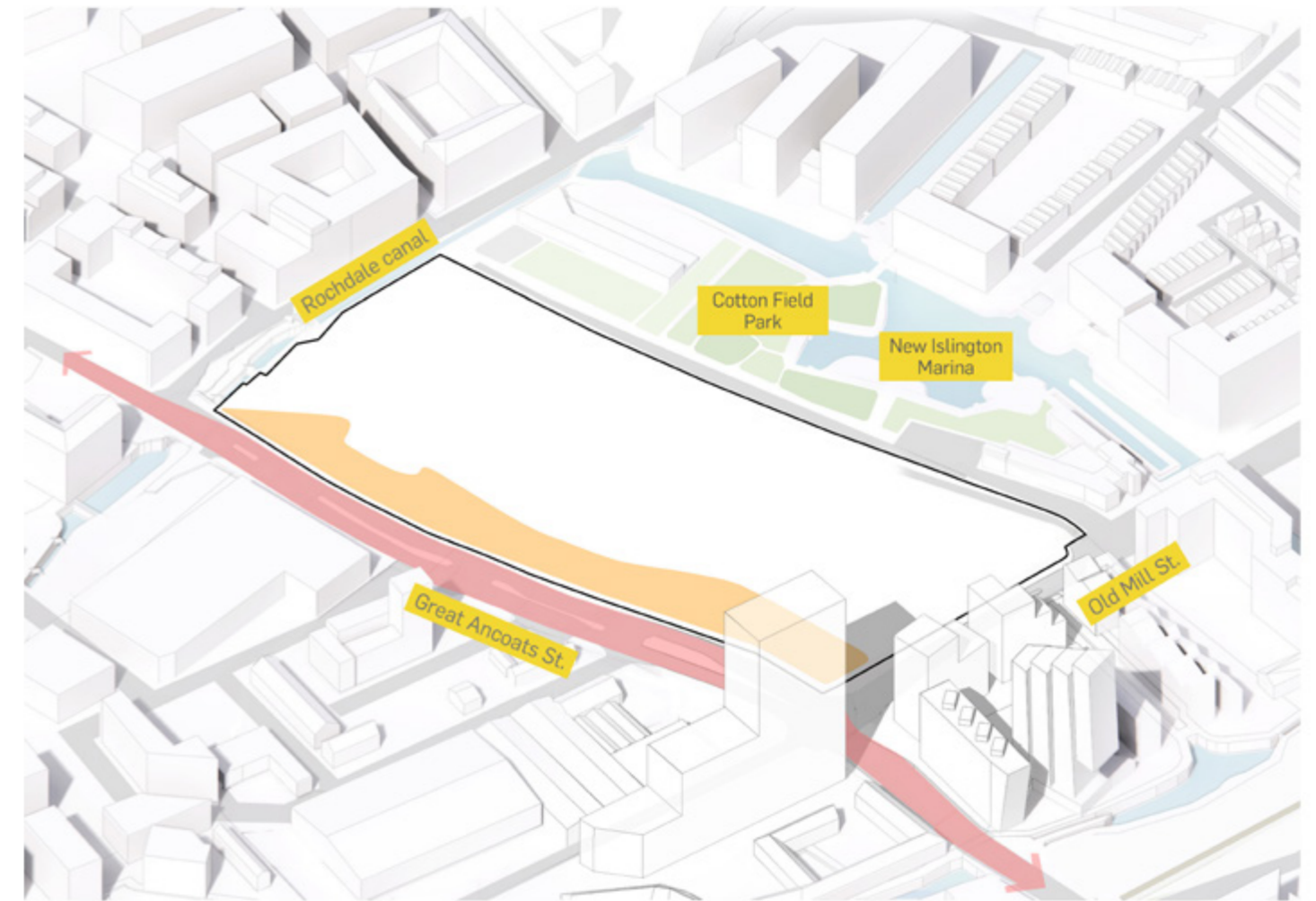


-  Site boundary
-  Central median
-  Existing Culvert



Great Ancoats Street Environment

The potential to improve the site's relationship and active frontage to Great Ancoats Street is encouraged. There needs to be a focus on providing a welcoming and attractive environment that offers a unique experience. Mitigation measures need to be considered to address traffic, access, air quality, and noise pollution of Great Ancoats Street.

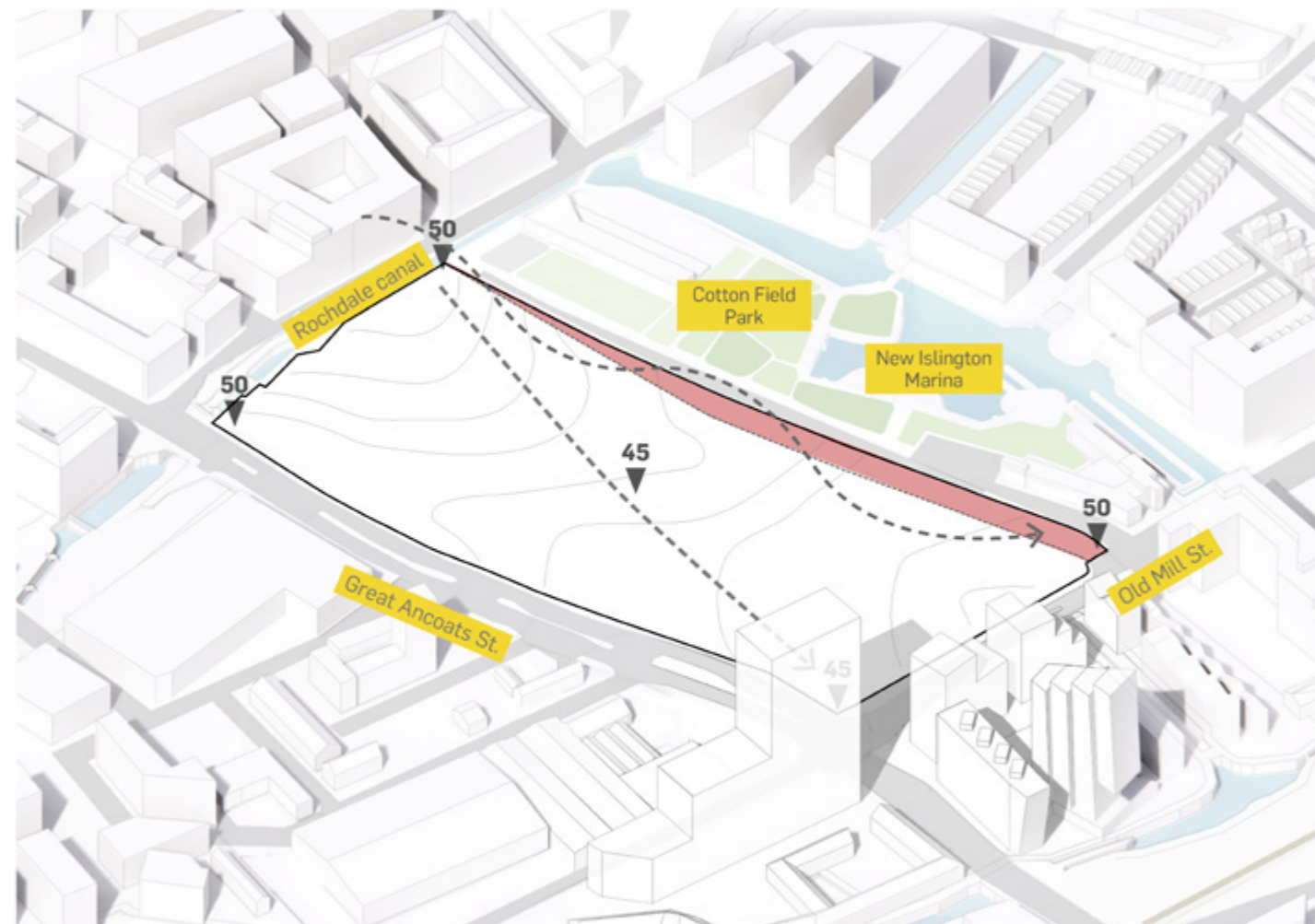


-  Site boundary
-  Great Ancoats Street
-  Activation Zone



Levels

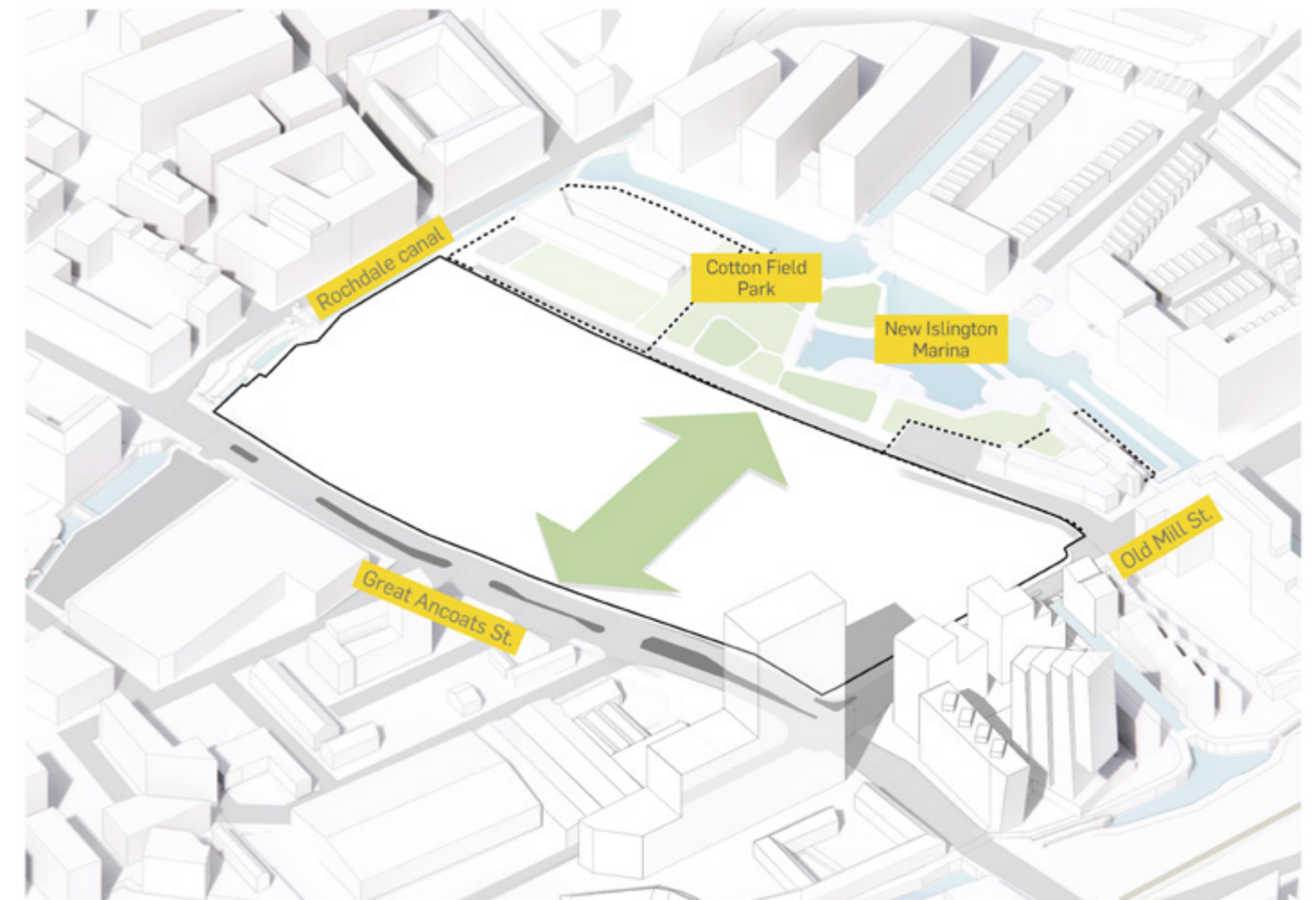
There is a significant change of level across the site with an approximate 5 metre difference between the southern and northern corners of the site (rising to the North). The level difference creates an opportunity to connect to the surrounding context and explore creation of a service and operation under croft for parking and servicing activities.



- Site boundary
- Retaining wall

Extension of Cotton Field Park

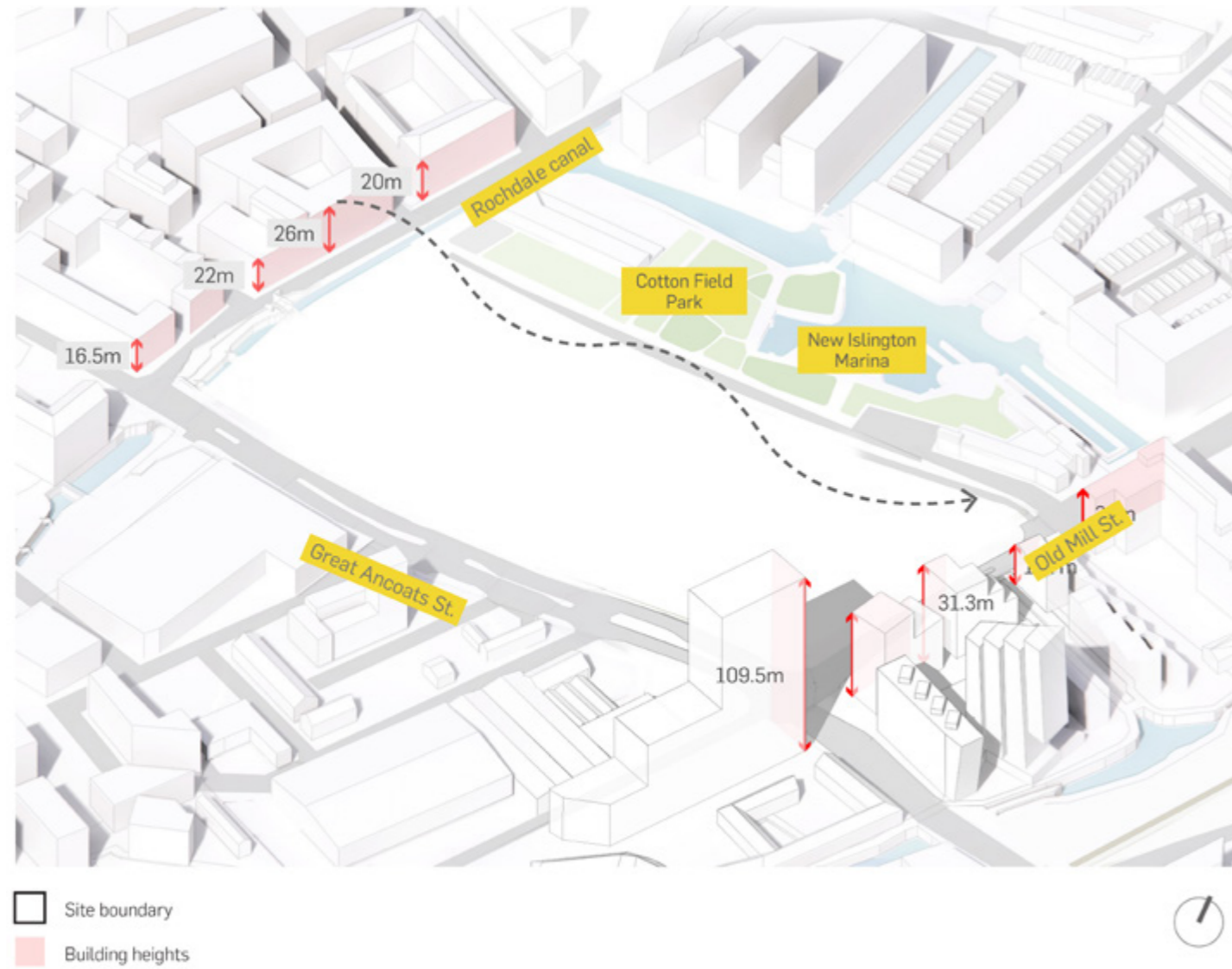
There is an opportunity to extend Cotton Field Park across the site, towards Great Ancoats Street, increasing connectivity and cohesion. The new public realm within the site will take influences from the character of Cotton Field Park but ultimately have its own distinct appeal and design. There are a number of major public realms and green spaces nearby including Mayfield Park and the planned public realm at Ancoats Phase 3, that this site will help connect together.



- Site boundary
- ↔ Opportunity for extension of park

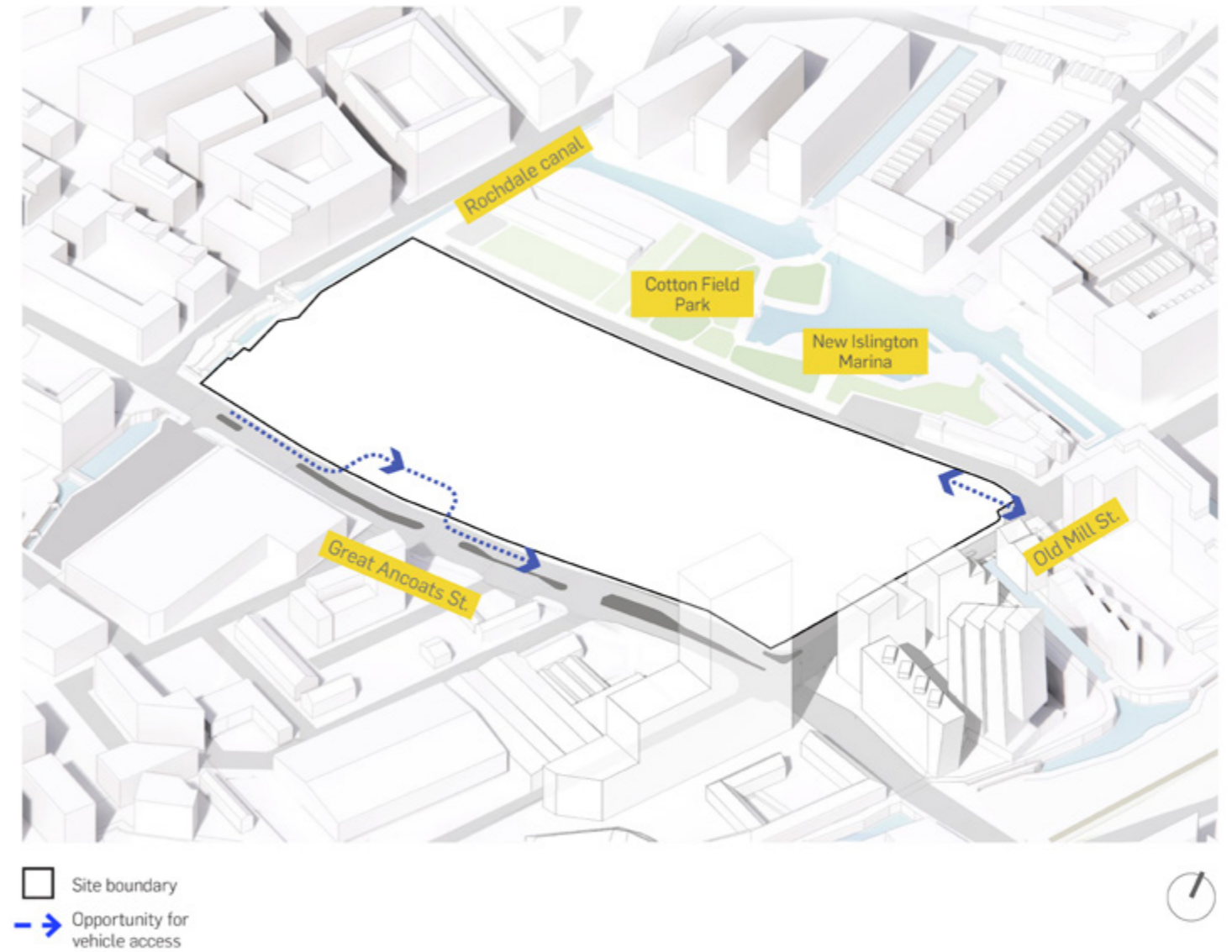
The building heights

The building heights and massing will respond to commercial requirements and their surrounding context, creating a new innovative development on the site with office heights increasing in scale along Great Ancoats Street, towards Old Mill Street.



Vehicular access

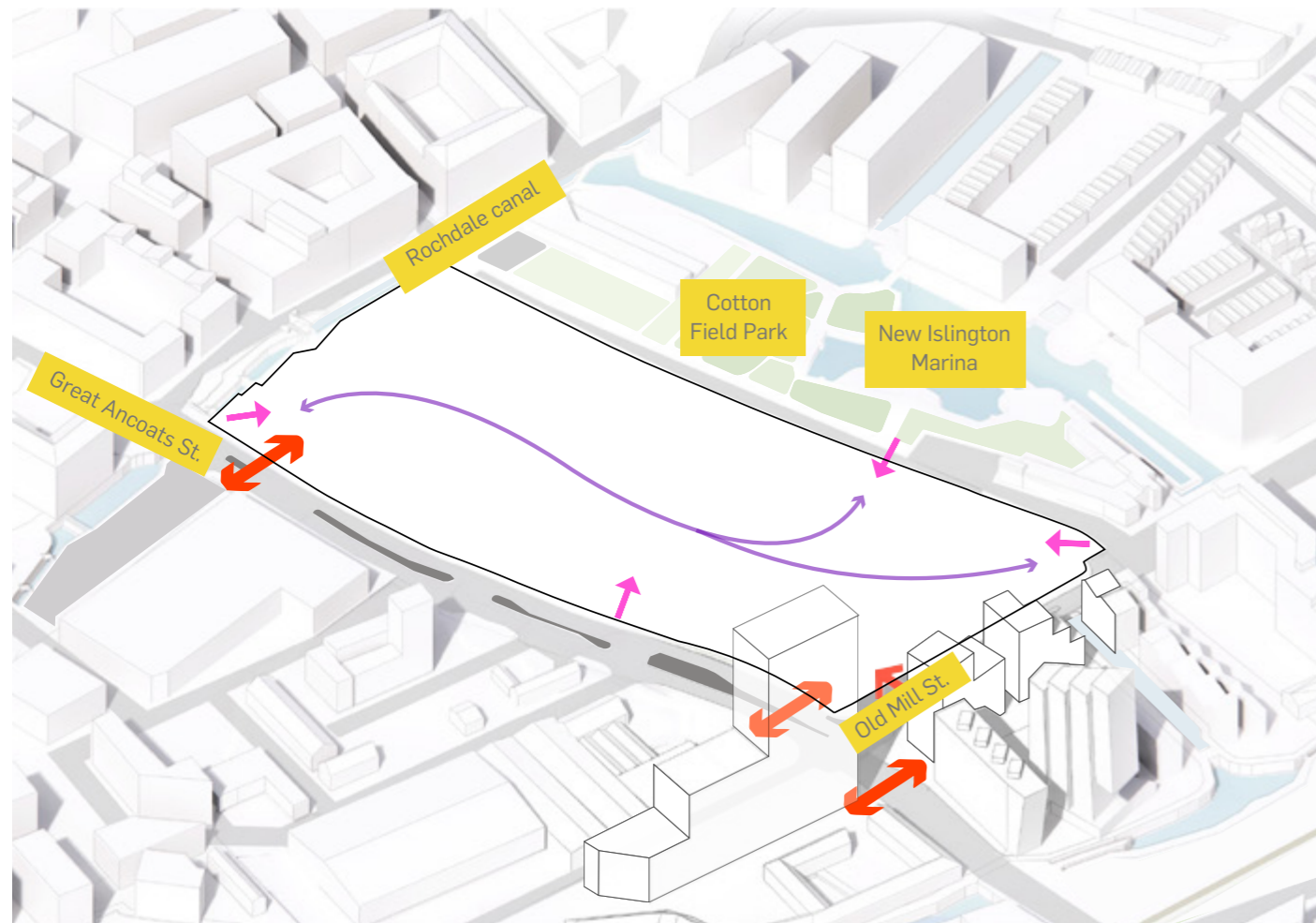
The site can only be accessed from Great Ancoats Street and Old Mill Street. Vehicular access is confined to the perimeter of the site. There are also opportunities to link the access points, however this will need to be studied to assess the impact on the surrounding context.






Pedestrian Arrival Gateways

The intention is to link new gateways to pedestrian and cycle connections to and from the site and limit vehicular access to the perimeter, creating a pedestrian friendly environment.

The extension of the park creates the opportunity to increase permeability within the site which enhances connections to its surrounding context, creating more usable pedestrian environments. The intention is to prioritise pedestrian and cycle connections to and from the site and limit vehicular access to the perimeter.

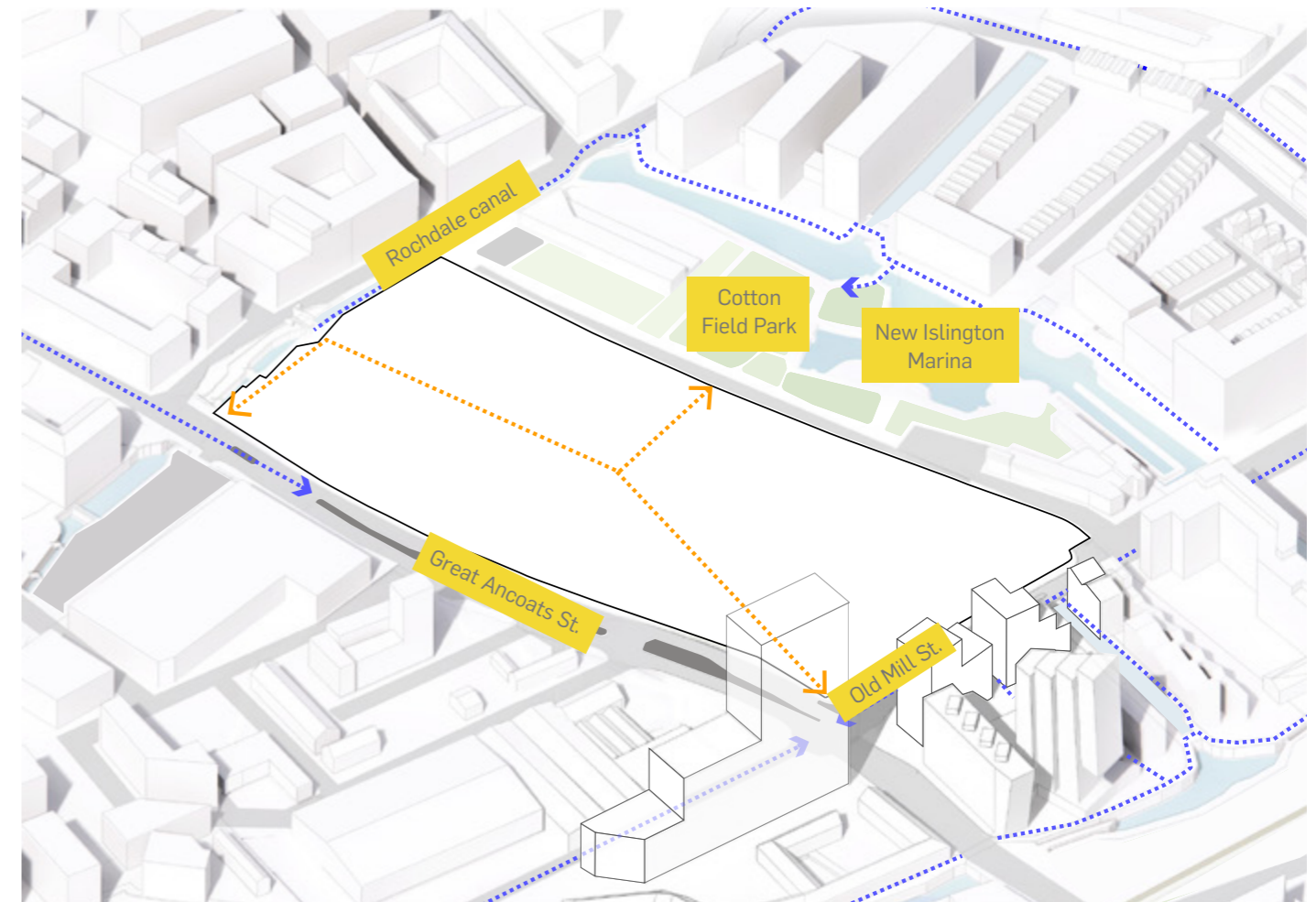






-  Site boundary
-  Existing Crossings
-  Opportunities for new pedestrian access aligned to existing pedestrian crossing



Cycle routes

The existing cycle routes are fragmented, however, there is an opportunity to extend the cycle paths to allow for greater connections. Cycle-friendly routes through the site will maximise permeability and create an area focused on people. This in turn will help in establishing a sense of 'place,' promoting more social interactions within the scheme and encouraging people to visit using their cycles.



-  Site boundary
-  Existing cycle routes
-  Opportunity to extend cycle routes
-  Proposed cycle route under construction



05 DESIGN DRIVERS

VISION: TO DELIVER A NEW THRIVING CITY DISTRICT

GPA is exploring office options in Manchester, including looking at whether the former Central Retail Park site can meet all its requirements. Securing potential investment from the GPA will help to unlock the full site potential and the new SRF is a step towards this.

The prospect of GPA providing commercial offices for thousands of civil servants within Manchester city centre is a once in a generation opportunity for the city. It will be a catalyst for immediate positive impact and longer-term substantial benefits.

Manchester City Council Vision

11 Development principles

A set of 11 principles have been established for the 2022 SRF, which will help create a high-quality destination:

- 01.** Create a world class commercial office district that is attractive, modern and sustainable to address the demand for new Grade A offices.
- 02.** Highly sustainable development.
- 03.** Generating meaningful social value for local residents and workers.
- 04.** Expanding and connecting to the green space and marina to benefit building users, neighbouring communities and users of the site.
- 05.** Providing a safe office environment to support government uses and encourage collaboration between buildings.
- 06.** Building a neighbourhood that people enjoy being part of.
- 07.** Enhancing local biodiversity, and the quantum and quality of public open space.
- 08.** Resolving level changes across the site to improve connectivity across the site.
- 09.** Facilitating links between the district and the city.
- 10.** Respecting the listed mill buildings, the canal setting and the other neighbours.
- 11.** Augmenting local amenities for everyone.



DESIGN DRIVERS: DEVELOPMENT PARCELS

The SRF paves the way for creating an exciting and sustainable new business district to meet market office requirements and potentially secure investment in new offices on the site from the GPA.



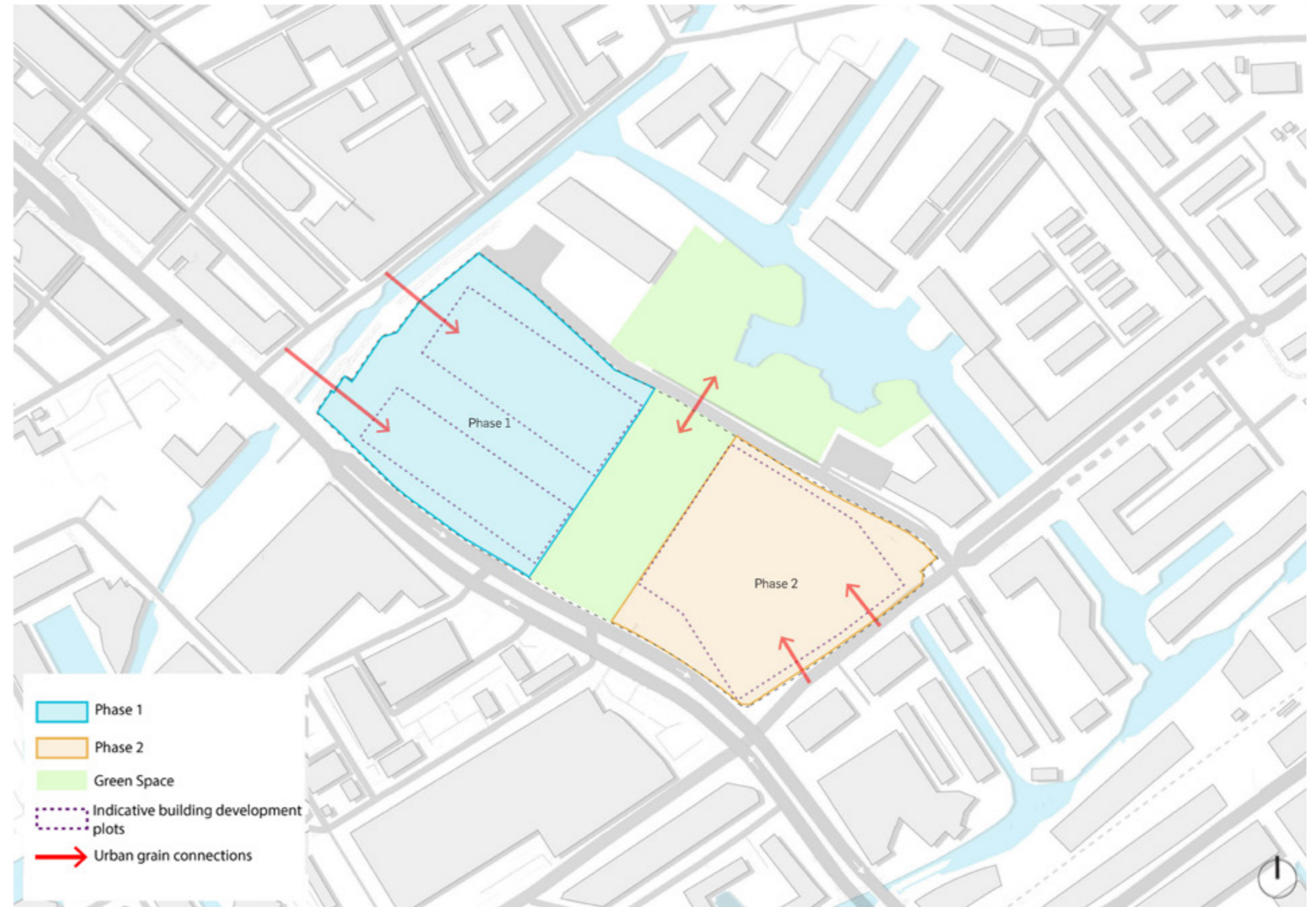
PLACE MAKING, FORM AND LAYOUT

Development Parcels

- A key driver for the development of the former Central Retail Park is to deliver a new green space at the centre of the site, which results in two distinct office developments at either end, linked by the new park.

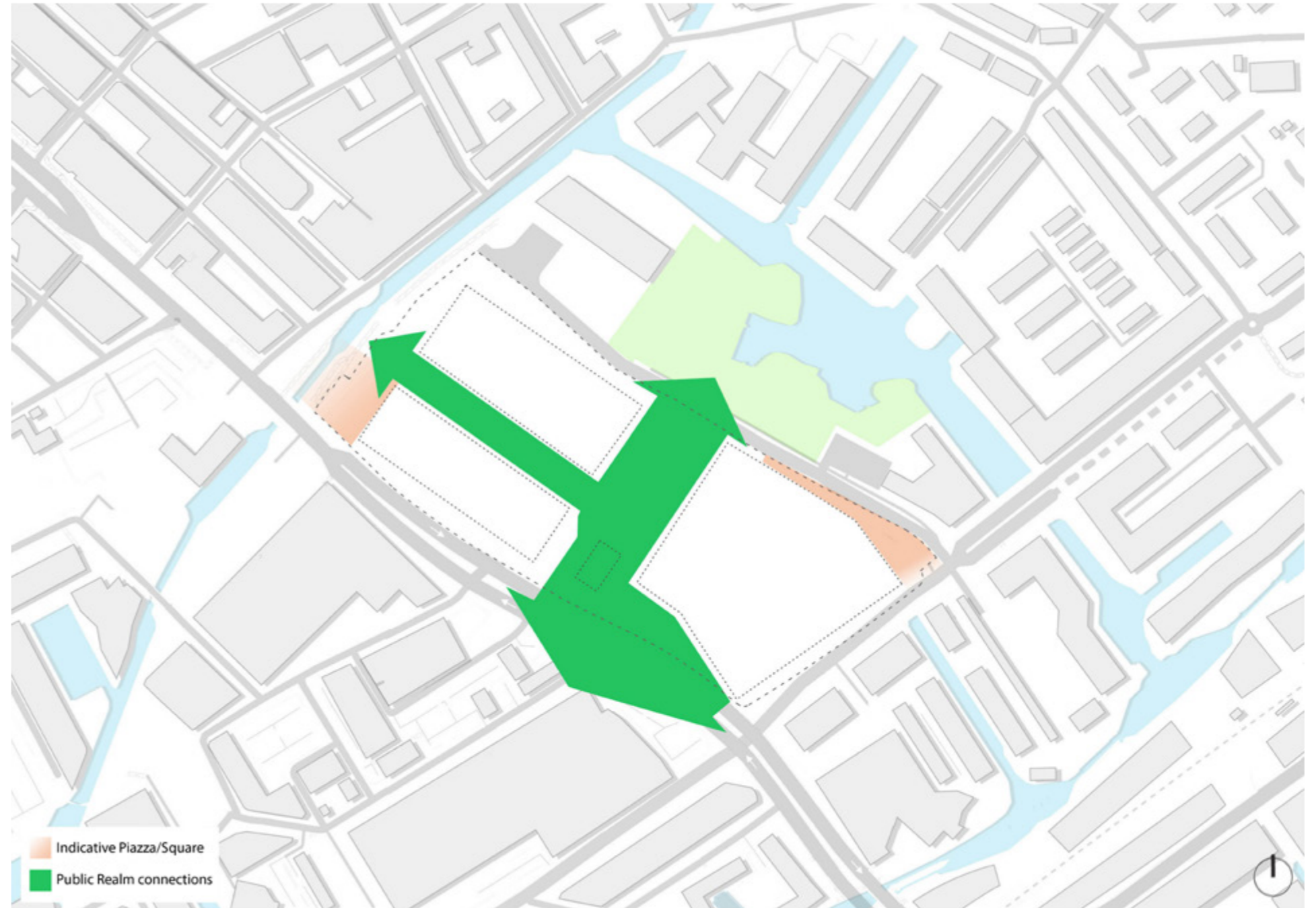
Form and Layout

- The development parcels will respond positively to the neighbouring area. Naturally extending the urban grain of Ancoats and New Islington, helping to stitch the site into its local context.
- The form and layout of the new offices within the development along Great Ancoats Street will create a strong boundary edge which reactivates a key stretch of inner ring road, while simultaneously creating a buffer zone for developments behind.
- A small-scale leisure and retail building could occupy part of the green space and respond to the human scale of this space. The green space will be arranged with a series of hard and soft landscaped areas for use by local residents, workers and the wider public.



PLACE MAKING, THE PUBLIC REALM

- The integration of uses, built environment, and place making will collectively facilitate a new high-quality district that will act as a catalyst for the site's regeneration.
- The masterplan should consider and positively respond to the urban qualities and character of the local area, improve accessibility to public transport and enhance opportunities for cycling and walking.
- Integrating into the existing urban grain of Ancoats and New Islington will help create a strong sense of identity and place. Embracing local neighbourhoods that have successfully seen re-generational growth will help the former Central Retail Park connect into the urban city fabric.
- Whilst it is important to consider the local context, it is equally important that the development creates its own distinct character. The site will focus on creating a place that is unique to the existing public offering as it builds upon the already successful districts making this part of east Manchester a go-to destination.
- A significant new green space at the centre of the site will be known as "The Garden". This will help stitch the site into its local context and provide a connection between two development parcels.



PUBLIC REALM IN MANCHESTER

The following images (Google Earth 1:100) compare the scale of the new green space in relation to well-known and used green spaces within Manchester.



Cathedral Gardens-Manchester



Mayfield-Manchester



Former Central Retail Park and Cotton Field Park



Piccadilly Garden-Manchester



Sackville Garden

TRANSPORT, MOVEMENT AND CONNECTIVITY

- The site is strategically located between the city centre and the local neighbourhoods to the north and east. It will enhance connectivity north-south and east-west, drawing people through the site as people move around the area.
- The integration of new green space and public realm will play a key role in facilitating successful connections through the site and beyond to wider city gateways.

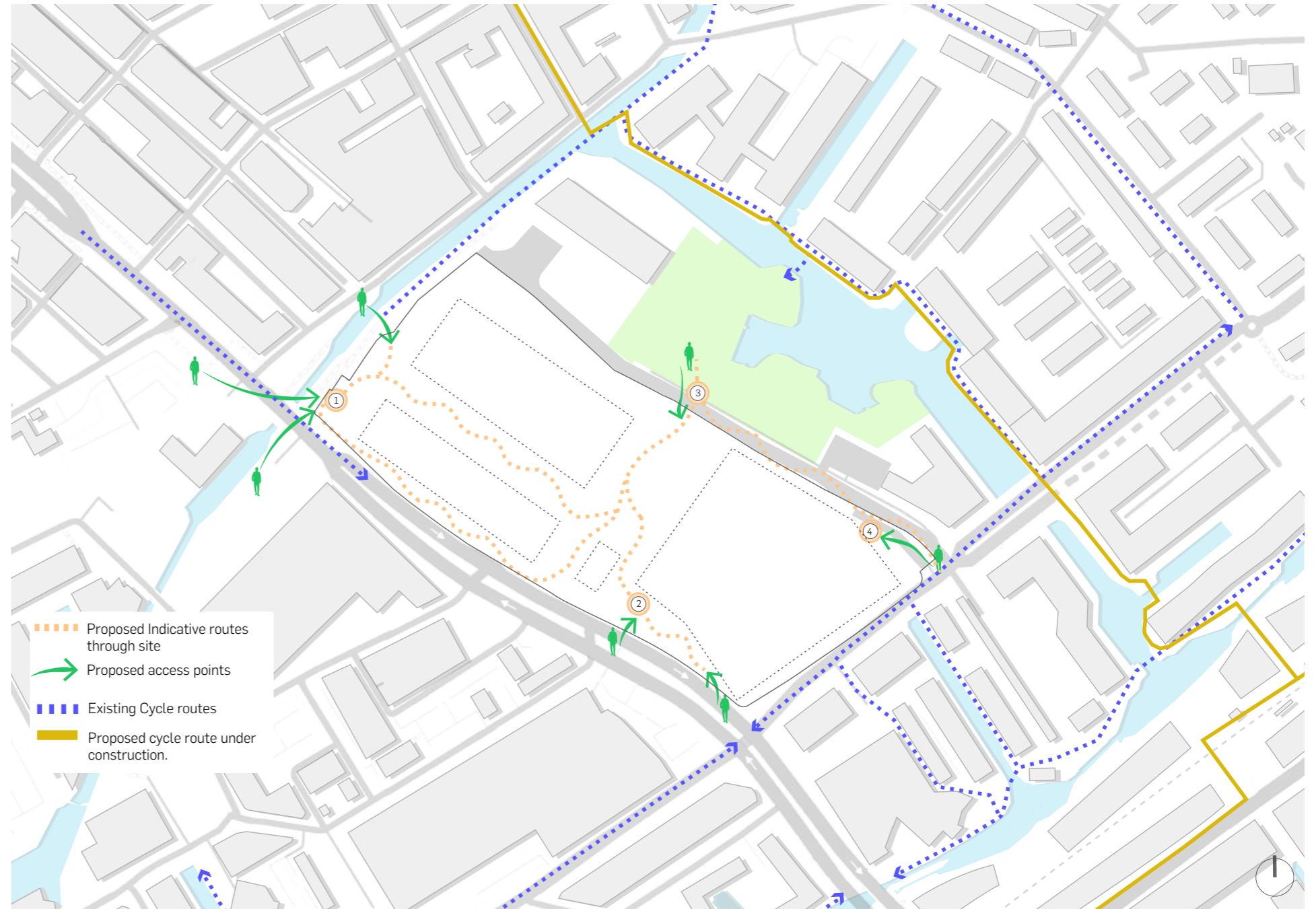
Through the process of urban design and geospatial analysis, several key entry points and potential landscape character areas have been identified, which are:

1. Canal Piazza entrance – The site's regeneration will include the creation of a new public piazza revealing and focusing on the Rochdale canal, enhancing public connections, creating and maximising open space. The Canal Piazza has excellent visibility and will be a key route through the site, linking to and from the Northern Quarter, Victoria Station, and the wider city centre.

2. Great Ancoats Street eastern gateway – This is a pivotal entrance point, located on the central axis of the masterplan. This new area of public realm forms the entrance to the green space and the potential public pavilion building. Identified on a key route into the site from Piccadilly station it will bring activity and vitality to the centre of the masterplan. It will become an area to stop and meet, establishing itself as an important gateway into the site.

3. The Garden – The masterplan will facilitate the delivery of a green space which links Cotton Field Park and the Marina to the north with Great Ancoats Street to south. It will help provide a new amenity to the local community. Known as the "The Garden", this significant piece of green space for the city centre runs through the central spine of the site and will be instrumental in delivering ground floor activity and high-quality building edge treatment whilst also ensuring safe and accessible routes for all. These new connections also serve to allow people from the city to enjoy the established artisan retail offering of New Islington, encouraging pedestrians to fully utilise all aspects of the site.

4. New Islington gateway – New Islington tram stop is located nearby and provides a public transport route to Eastlands and into Piccadilly Train Station and the wider city network. This corner of the site provides an important connection for a tram stop and pedestrians arriving from neighbouring areas such as New Islington and Holt Town.



TRANSPORT, MOVEMENT AND CONNECTIVITY

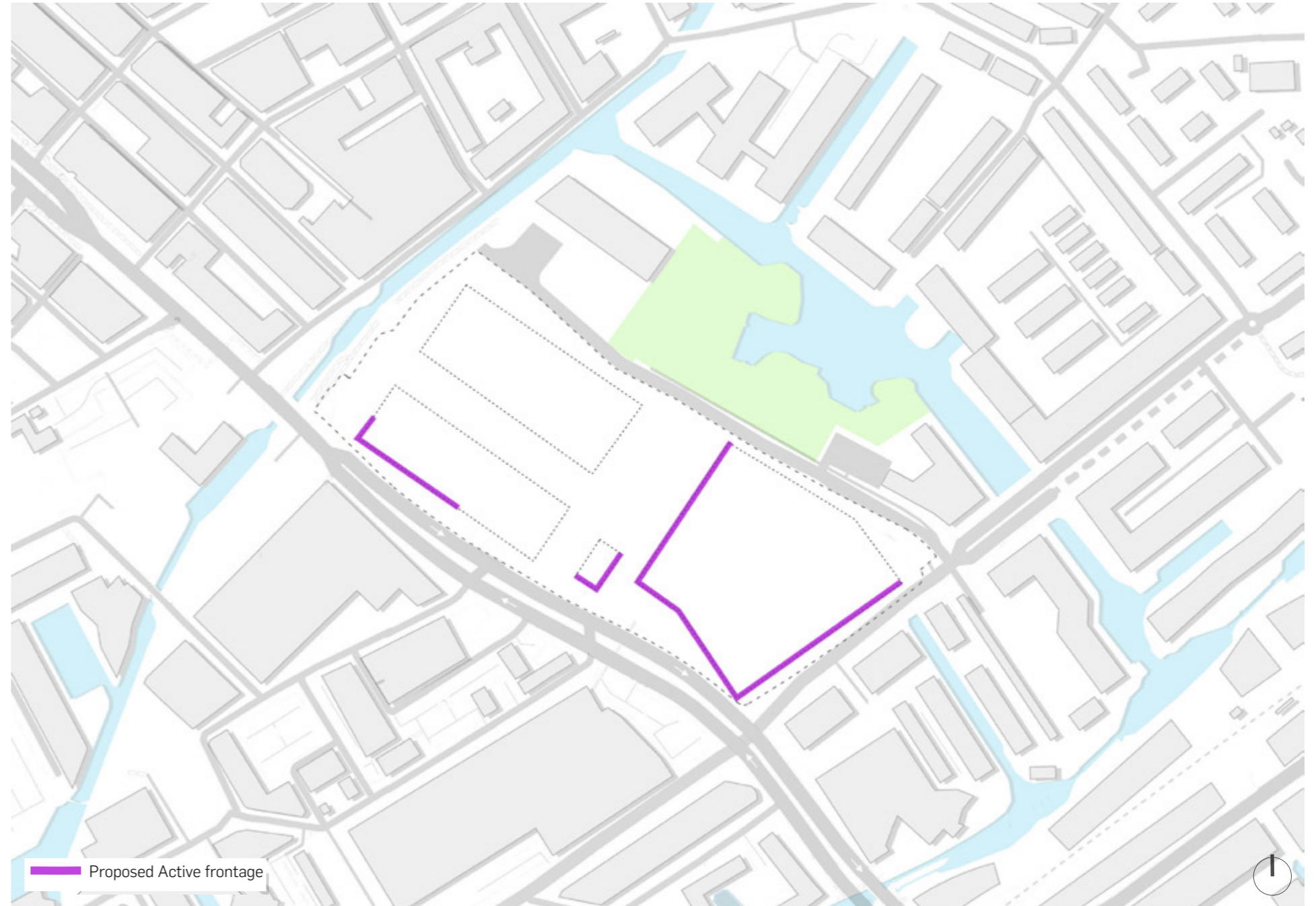
- The site is well served by public transport networks, including Piccadilly and Victoria railways stations, New Islington tram stop, and bus services along Great Ancoats.
- Enhancing and linking to the existing transport network will make the site a highly sustainable development in transport terms, promoting the use of public transport and reducing the provision of car parking to a minimum.
- Creating pedestrian and cycle-friendly routes through the site will maximise permeability and create an area focused on people. This in turn will help in establishing a sense of 'place,' promoting more social interactions within the scheme and encouraging people to visit and stay longer.
- Vehicular access (other than emergency vehicles) is confined to the perimeter of the site with limited proposed points of access. An access point is suggested directly off Great Ancoats Street, and another could be located off Old Mill Street. These entrances would provide the two development parcels with a degree of flexibility to control how vehicles can enter and exit the site.
- Restricting vehicle access to the edges of the site allows pedestrian and cycle routes and connections to be prioritised. Prioritising pedestrians will activate multiple edges of the masterplan maximising public realm space and ensuring that the site becomes a place for people.



BUILDING ACTIVE FRONTAGES

Potential zones for active frontages are proposed along primary routes in the form of commercial office, retail, or leisure uses. The following potential routes have been identified:

- The Canal Piazza represents one of two main gateways into the site for visitors arriving from Victoria Station and the city centre. There is an opportunity for the adjacent building to have an active frontage onto the new public realm, providing animation and activity spilling out into the space.
- The reactivation of Great Ancoats Street is one of the ambitions of the masterplan. The site layout is designed to activate the frontage along Great Ancoats Street while working with the wider public realm design. The aim is to re-establish the street frontage creating a strong boundary edge that ties in with the existing context.
- The second key gateway is the Great Ancoats Street Eastern Gateway, which welcomes people from Piccadilly Station and the south parts of the city centre. A standalone pavilion building along with offices within development parcel B provides an opportunity to activate the gateway edge with a series of ground floor uses e.g., food and beverage outlets.
- Building Parcel B provides an opportunity to create a cluster of strong active retail and leisure frontages that connect back to the wider masterplan. They enhance the connections from Old Mill Street through the site and towards The Garden.
- The plots surrounding The Garden will reinforce the edge of the public space through carefully considered frontages. The building frontages within this space will help keep it activated throughout the week and provide a destination for people to stop and rest.
- Active frontages will also be encouraged fronting onto Old Mill Street, potentially lending themselves to leisure and retail uses.



SCALE & MASS

- The suggested scale and mass of the new offices have been informed by several factors including site analysis, townscape and heritage analysis, design development, microclimate (including sunlight and wind speed analysis), and geospatial analysis (including points of interest, key destinations, connectivity, natural movement, and visibility).
- It is proposed that the offices along the western part of the site step down to respond to the scale of the Ancoats Conservation Area, and its listed buildings, as well as New Islington School.
- Moving southeast on the masterplan, the offices' heights could begin to increase in scale, where they positively respond to the New Islington context and the taller residential buildings in this area.
- Stepping up the building's heights across the site could create a visually interesting design providing a transition in height from west to east and integrating the development into the existing skyline.
- The proposed building parcels will consider critical separation distances to maximise daylight penetration into the public realm to help create comfortable pedestrian spaces.
- The building zones are anticipated to be concentrated on the eastern and western sides of the masterplan separated by The Garden at the centre of the development and stitching the plan together into one cohesive design.
- The distance between the offices, both on-site and off-site, will consider and seek to optimise daylight throughout the year.



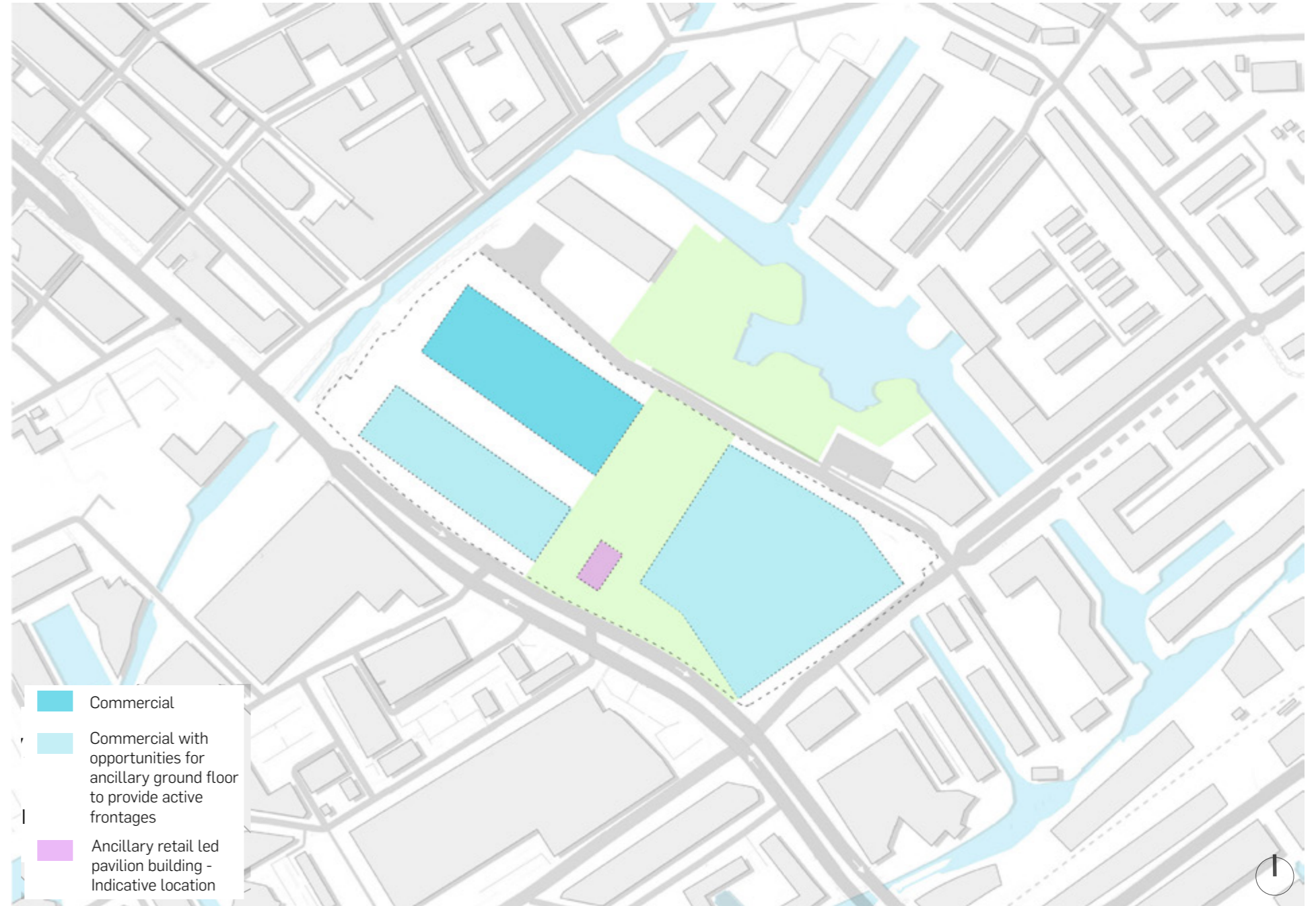
USE & QUALITY

Use Type

- It is proposed that the masterplan will provide high-quality accommodation for a new and innovative office-led district, which achieves a density that optimises and capitalises on the area's strategically accessible location within the city.
- The proposed uses build upon and take account of previous frameworks for the former Central Retail Park and reflect the potential interest of the GPA and other commercial office requirements.
- The ground floor plates should be strategically activated for commercial office, leisure, and retail uses (as noted in the previous section) where appropriate. These will be distributed across the masterplan, with the primary focus within the Garden and along Great Ancoats Street.

Quality of Space

- It is important that the new development delivers the highest possible design quality, materiality, and environment for the end users.
- The masterplan will need to respond to a number of environmental factors including air quality, microclimate, acoustics, and daylighting. A considered response to these factors will enable an environment where people want to work, visit, and socialise.
- Materials that are durable and long-lasting will be given priority. Utilising materials with a prolonged lifespan will reduce the environmental impact caused by the offices and public realm throughout their life cycles.
- The proposals will be designed to provide an accessible, welcoming, safe, and secure environment for all user groups. To help facilitate these ambitions, it is important that the environment is well maintained at regular intervals throughout the year.



PHASING

Whilst this SRF does not seek to be prescriptive with regard to the exact short- and long-term phasing and sequencing of the development a phased approach is proposed to ensure that the full potential of the site is realised over a manageable time period, responding to commercial office and market requirements and seeking to minimise disruption during the construction phase.

While the exact context within each phase, together with the order of phasing, is suggestive at this stage, an indicative phasing diagram illustrates the current proposal.

The public realm within each defined phase will be delivered in conjunction with the associated buildings in that phase. The aspiration is for The Garden to be delivered as soon as possible, during or following construction of the phase one buildings.



SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT ECOSYSTEM

The masterplan will be developed using sustainability strategies which can achieve a highly sustainable district in Manchester, with the objective to create an optimal environment for both human wellbeing and the urban context.

Design approaches such as ensuring excellent daylighting levels within and between the offices will not only improve the wellbeing of staff but also aid the achievement of a truly sustainable masterplan by reducing artificial lighting loads.

The masterplan layout has been developed for energy efficiency, balanced against the other design aims of creating a high-quality office district for all (urban design considerations, logistics, etc.). The design will take a fabric-first approach with the office's structures, and envelopes. This will benefit the project as a whole, bringing sustainability into the centre of the masterplan design.



INDICATIVE PARAMETER PLAN

The indicative parameters plan demonstrates how the individual design drivers and development principles could be realised. It is indicative at this stage subject to further exploration and detailed design and having regard to all planning policies.

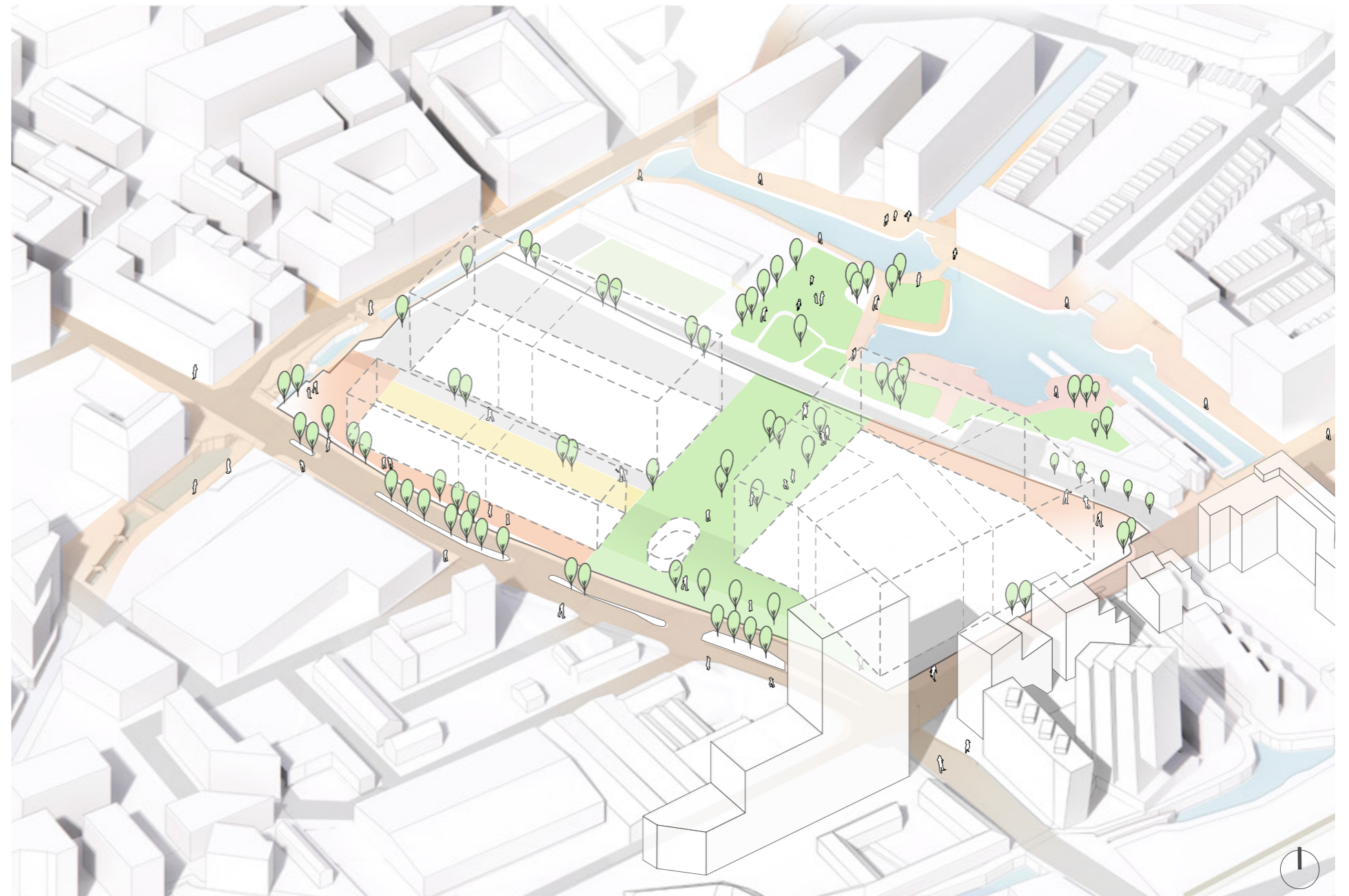


06 ILLUSTRATIVE
MASTERPLAN

ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN AND CONCLUSION

Regeneration of the site will create a high-quality, sustainable office district with attractive public realm at its centre that is open to all. It will also deliver significant socio-economic benefits to the city and the local community. This scheme builds upon the strategic location and the strong connections to the local neighbourhoods, city centre, and transport networks. It will create a new office district for the city with ancillary retail and leisure accommodation, providing attractive new facilities for users and local people who live and work in the area.

The proposals respond positively to the area and the surrounding uses, creating new public routes through the site, new connections, and building upon existing amenities of Cotton Field Park, New Islington Marina and the Rochdale Canal.



ILLUSTRATIVE PLACE MAKING & PUBLIC REALM VISION

The Garden

The Garden will be an inclusive space accessible to all users. It will continue the legacy of new open spaces being delivered in Manchester, including Cotton Field Park, Mayfield Park, and Ancoats Green public realm.

The Garden is the largest green space on the site and sits at the centre of the masterplan. It will be very closely linked to Cotton Field Park through both strong physical connections and also extending the design language of the park through the materials palette of hard and soft landscape. It could provide a range of spaces from terraced lawns and informal seating to lush planting with seasonal interest – all punctuated with large specimen trees. It will provide important usable green space, building frontages and also be viewed from the buildings that frame this space. The Garden represents the opportunity to enhance wellbeing for both the resident workforce and general public, whether experienced from inside or outside the adjacent buildings.

The exploration of the use of water across the masterplan will give the development a strong identity that is rooted in the site context of Ancoats. The use of water specifically within The Garden has the opportunity to provide animation through movement, reflective pools, SUDs and ecological benefits in addition to using water in combination with the substantial level change. Across The Garden, there is a significant 5m level change from Cotton Field Park to Great Ancoats Street. This provides an exciting opportunity to cascade the park down towards Great Ancoats Street through generous terraces and a sweeping accessible route that provides a welcoming frontage to The Garden and effectively linking Great Ancoats street to Cotton Field Park.



The Boulevard

The Boulevard is a major east-west thoroughfare linking all of the key offices in Phase 1 with a direct axial view down to The Garden. The Boulevard is primarily a movement space providing permeability and connectivity, but it does have the opportunity to create a relaxed ambience with lush planting islands and a strong avenue of specimen trees providing a unique sense of place. It will provide an important setting to the offices and form a key pedestrian arterial route within the site. The boulevard facilitates access to the main entrance points of each of the offices along its length promoting a sense of arrival whilst also providing legibility and structure to the urban landscape. Water has the potential to provide a key feature along this linear space, which has a strong and important presence within the site context in terms of both the canal to the west and the marina to the north. The design of The Boulevard will be a combination of hard and soft landscape that links closely to the design language and materiality of the Canal Piazza to the west and The Green to the east.

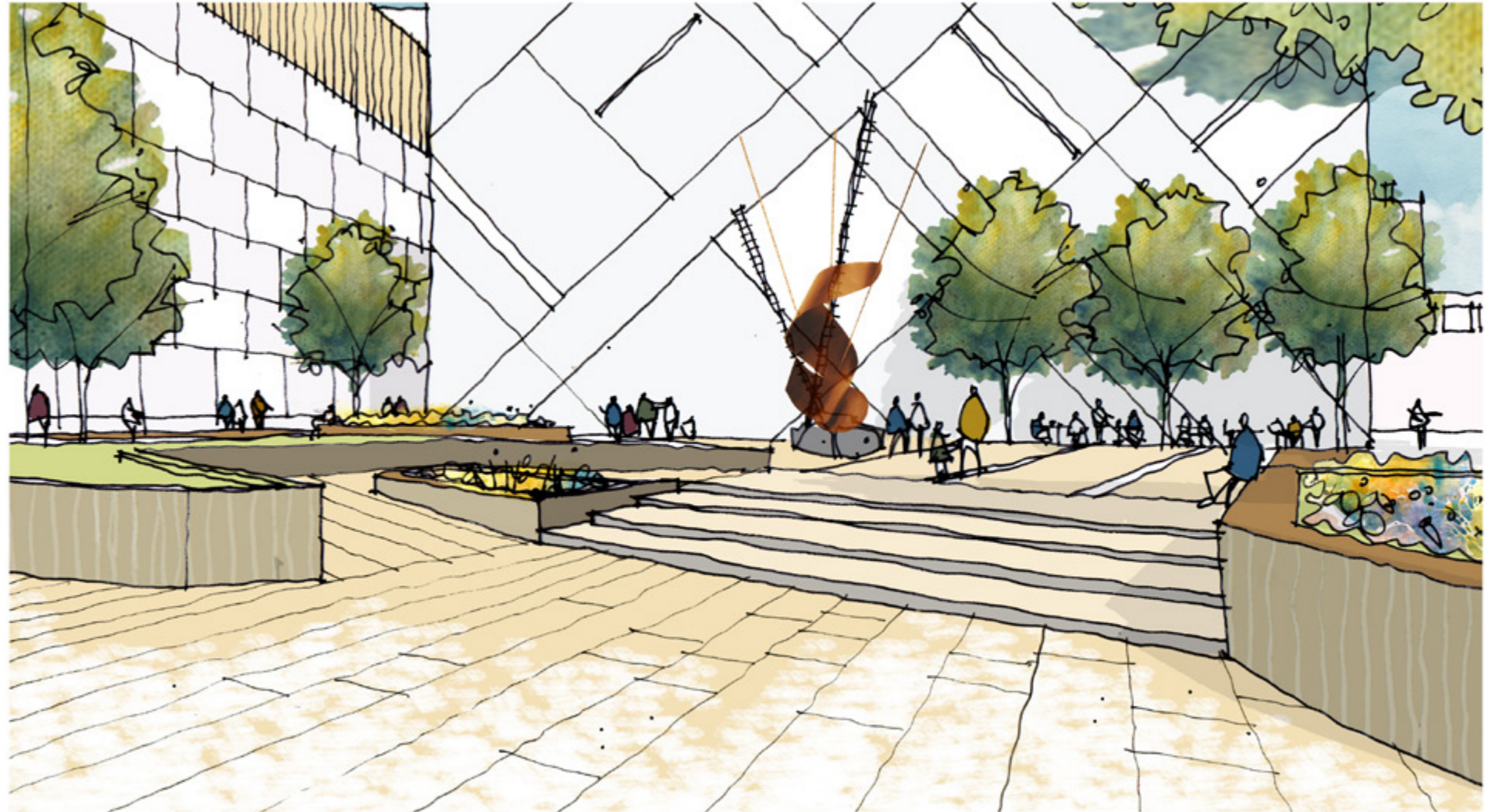


Canal Piazza

The Canal Piazza will be a major landing point for pedestrians into site from the wider city centre. It provides the opportunity to create a high-quality public piazza that embraces the canal and waterfront setting, and with a welcoming and accessible design that provides movement and dwelling space. The space could be anchored centrally by a piece of artwork/sculpture that would make the space instantly identifiable and recognisable as a key orientation point within the masterplan.

The mature trees to the Great Ancoats Street/Canal corner here provide valuable tree canopy and should be retained if possible. The design of this space should celebrate the listed canal heritage features located here and also respond to the context of Ancoats Conservation Area to the west of the site. There is a stepped pedestrian footbridge over the canal into the masterplan area from the centre of Ancoats that needs to be considered as part of the wider design and connect visually and physically to both the Canal Piazza and The Boulevard.

The Canal Piazza is a major pedestrian threshold to the site and therefore should be largely hard paved with opportunity to provide planting and soft landscape around the canal edge and spill out areas with plenty of opportunities for seating.



Great Ancoats Street

The masterplan seeks to provide an improved, greener frontage to Great Ancoats Street. Where possible, street trees and rain gardens will be provided on the development frontage to create a strong green edge and important buffer between the highway and the public realm.

Active frontages are sought that will provide animation along the street with generous footways and attractive soft landscape. Façade arrangement and materials will be given careful consideration ensuring they both enhance and are complementary to the surrounding context whilst promoting visual activity.

There are a number of existing trees along Great Ancoats Street. The potential for their retention should be carefully considered and enabled as far as possible. However many are in poor condition and their locations may make this difficult.

There will be vehicular access required off Great Ancoats Street into a potential undercroft. The design of this should be carefully considered.

