

# Central Retail Park

Development Framework

February 2020

**DRAFT**  
for client comment



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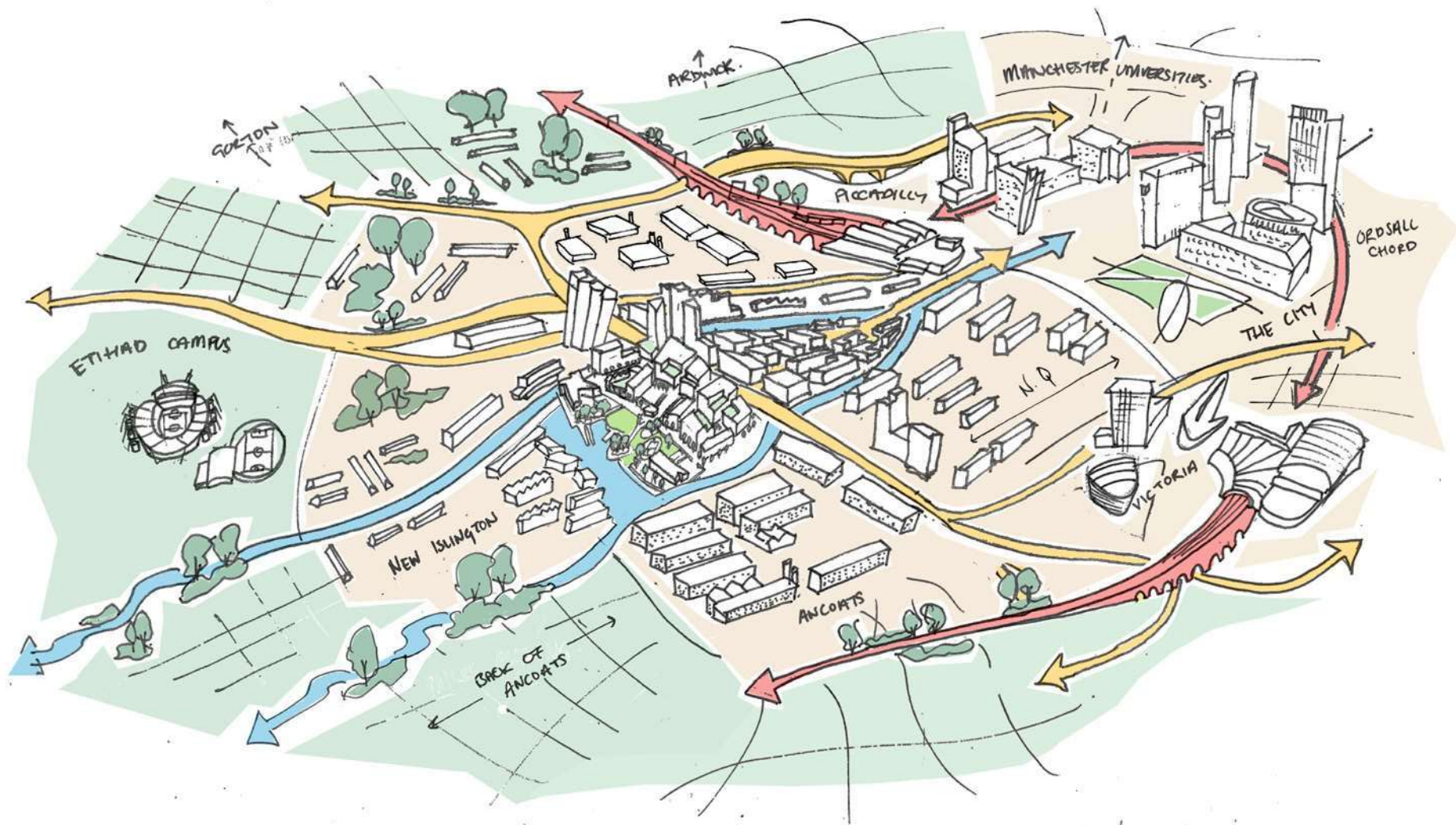
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## 1.0 VISION

*Central Retail Park is to become an exemplary net zero carbon commercial district with the ability to attract new businesses and talent to Manchester. The development should bring together activities and people to create a vibrant mixed use neighbourhood, complementing and uniting the surrounding districts. In doing so, the proposal represents a key opportunity to help unlock the potential of East Manchester.*





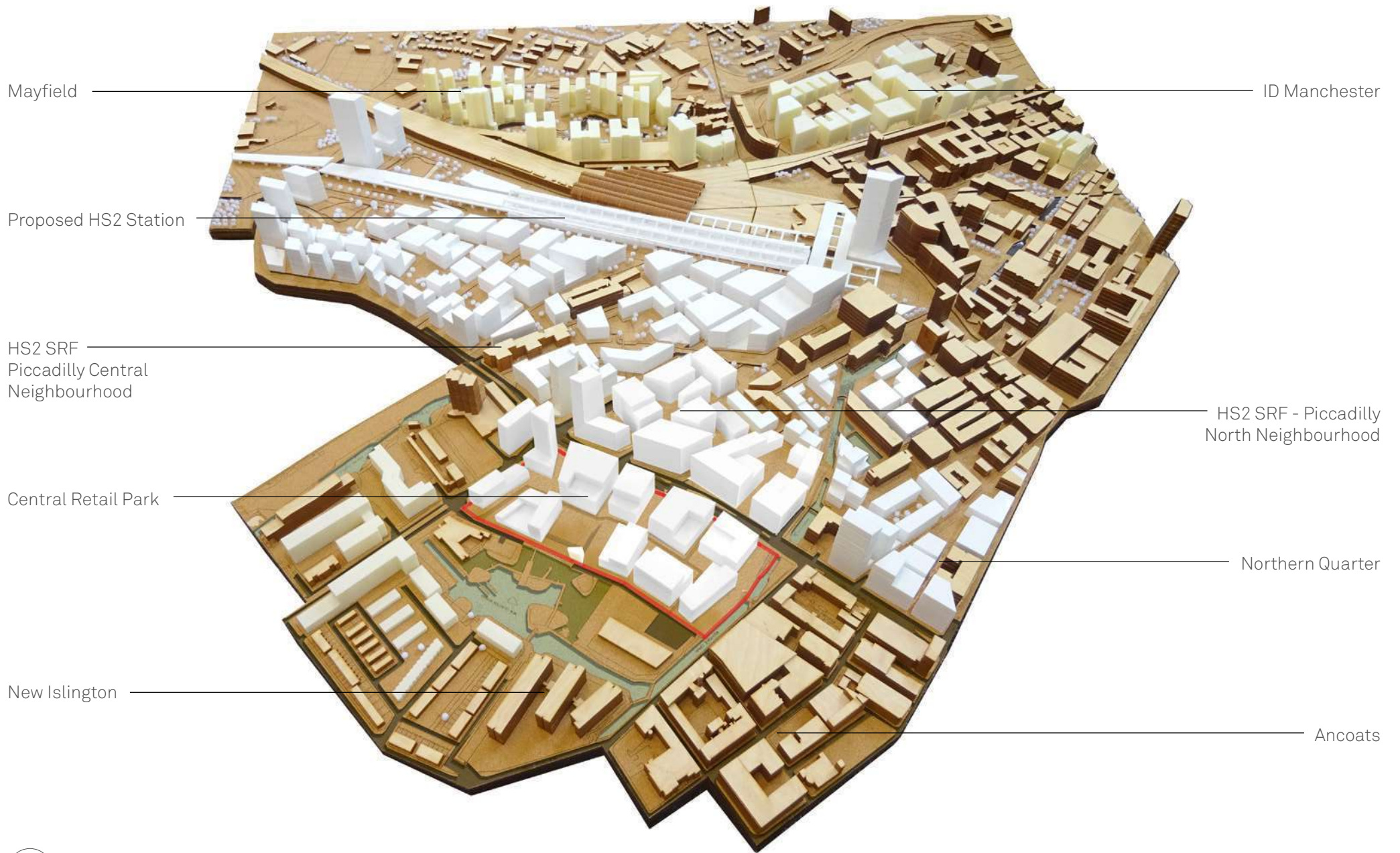
Central Retail Park is vital in unlocking the full potential of East Manchester

The background of the slide is a detailed architectural site plan for Central Retail Park. It shows a complex layout of buildings, courtyards, and green spaces. A prominent feature is a large, irregularly shaped green area in the center, which is identified as Cotton Field Park in the list. The plan also shows various streets, walkways, and parking areas. The overall style is a light, technical drawing with muted colors like greens, greys, and blues.

## *The objectives for Central Retail Park are...*

- Attract talented people to want to work in this location and attract leading companies to want to be based there;
- Deliver circa 1 million sq. ft. of new workspace/ offices in the city capable of being the home to circa 10,000 jobs;
- Become an exciting new destination where employees, residents and visitors will come to spend their time;
- Revive and extend Cotton Field Park;
- Play its part in realising a carbon neutral Manchester by 2038, and addressing the twin crises of climate breakdown and biodiversity loss;
- Be attractive, healthy, safe and accessible and inclusive for all;
- Compliment a significant and growing culture, leisure and tourism sector;
- Create comfortable and pedestrian friendly public realm.





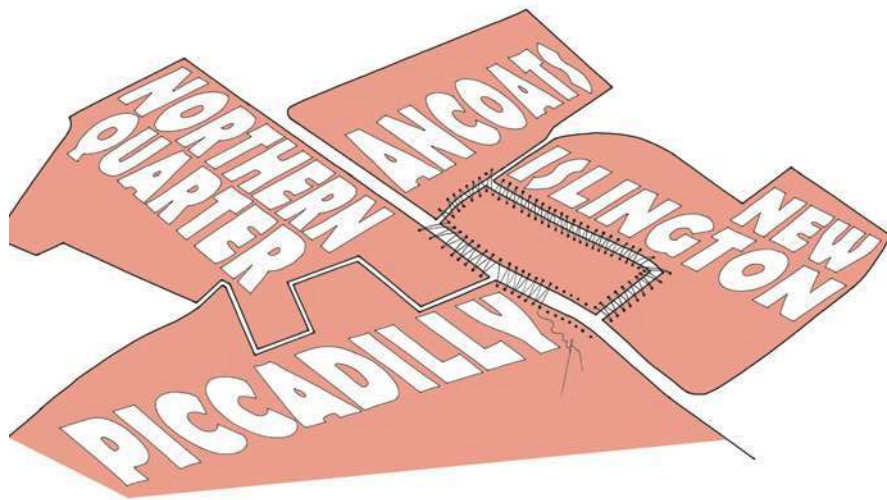
The Central Retail Park masterplan sitting within the future HS2 development and Piccadilly SRF

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

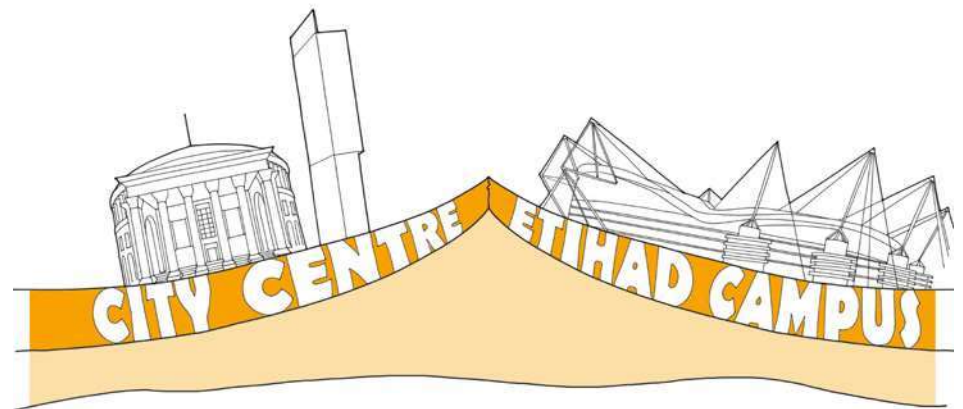
This study has been jointly commissioned by Manchester City Council and Manchester Life, to develop a masterplan for the former Central Retail Park site which has recently been acquired by the City Council to meet environmental, social, design and economic objectives.

### Central Retail Park

The 10.5 acre site was formerly an 'out of town' style retail destination, characterised by large low level warehouses surrounded by car parking. However, changes in shopping habits in recent years had 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 and supported by planning policy, the retail park has now been demolished. This presents a landmark, strategically important site for the city: both as a site in single ownership with the potential to create a new commercial 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.

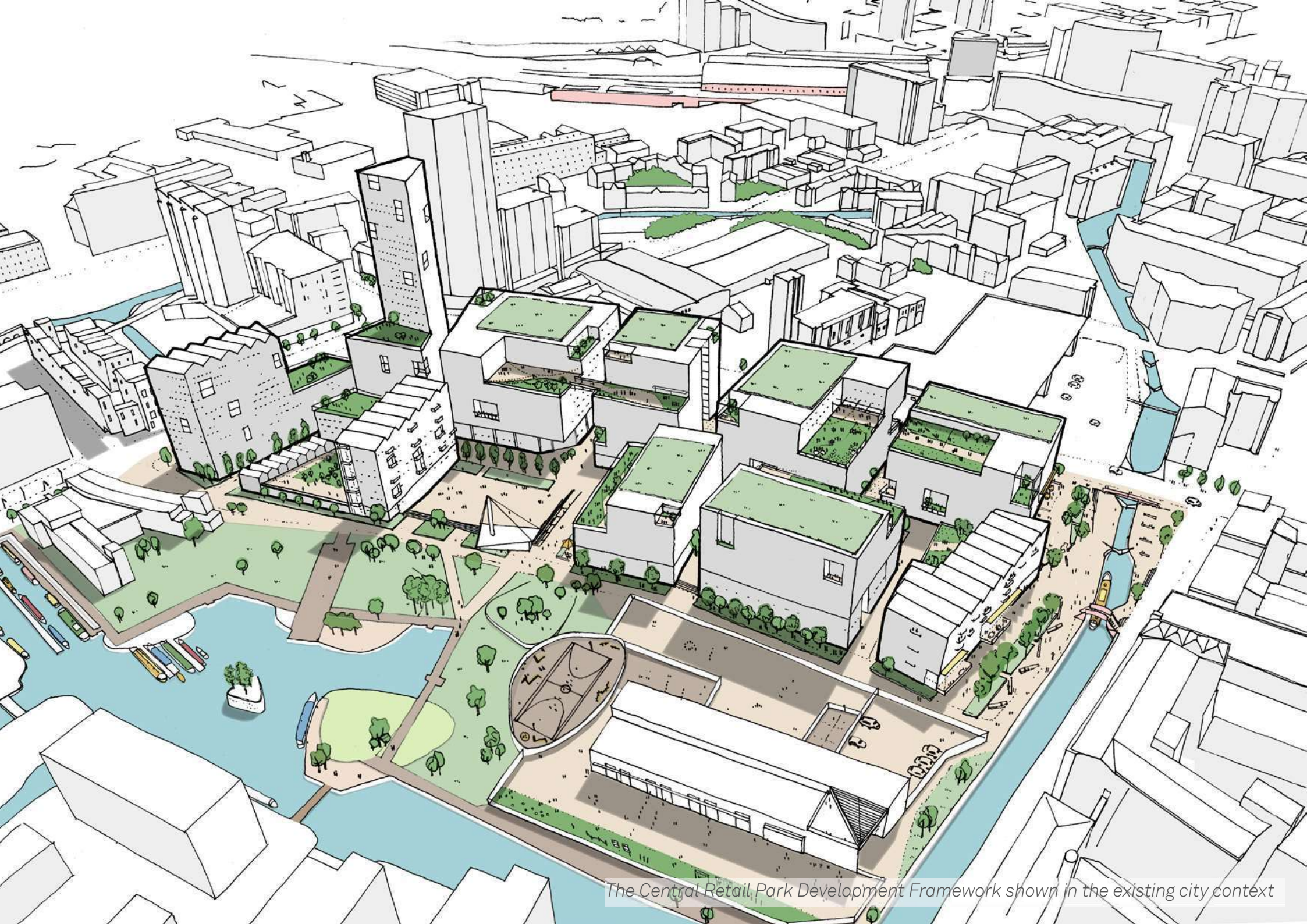


*The site has the ability to stitch together the surrounding districts*



*The client identified the site as the junction of two tectonic plates*





The Central Retail Park Development Framework shown in the existing city context



## A Key Regeneration Opportunity

The neighbourhoods of the Northern Quarter and Ancoats have increasingly become a destination for smaller office occupiers, particularly in the technology/media/telecom sectors who are attracted by their raw and characterful stock of smaller buildings. However, the area is lacking in new build stock to continue to attract these occupiers, facilitate their expansion, and attract the larger occupiers that would develop their ecosystem. The Central Retail Park has the potential to meet this demand for large scale, purpose-built, characterful commercial floor space.

Significant investment in residential stock over the recent years is creating a neighbourhood with a genuine range of typologies, with developments including for-sale homes and build-to-rent apartments currently underway. These are complemented by nearby community facilities including the primary school and medical practice, as well as a growing number of local restaurants and café's. The Central Retail Park has the potential to add to this mix, providing new employment opportunities and public spaces.

## Assessed Within a Wider Radius

In addition to the preferred proposal, which seeks the optimal balance and location of uses and their curation within the masterplan, the proposal remains flexible and able to adapt to a changing wider context and priorities.



Central Retail Park is a key strategic site capable of meeting demand for new technology/media/telecom space in Ancoats and the Northern Quarter

## Planning Context

In accordance with the planning policy framework the NDF emphasises strategies to establish a neighbourhood that is fully integrated; a seamless transition between the characteristics that make up the rich tapestry of the area. The design of the public realm should celebrate the historic features which define the special character of the district. Where possible, designs should seek opportunities to take advantage of the areas existing assets such as the canal side, heritage buildings and established mix of uses. This builds on and ensures that Ancoats and New Islington remains a vibrant, neighbourhood of choice supporting a high quality of life for visitors and residents alike. New developments should build on and complement planned improvement works to Great Ancoats Street working towards enhancing the quality of the environment, further to this designs should ensure a walkable, pedestrian and fully accessible place for all.

## Purpose of this Document

This document outlines the key objectives that need to be adhered to which will define the development of the Central Retail Park site. A series of high level principles are outlined which summarise how the development and meet the brief whilst addressing and responding to key opportunities and constraints such as access, levels and building heights.

All the site specific images in this framework are illustrative and indicative.

## Development of this Masterplan

This study has been commissioned to develop a Development Framework for the former Central Retail Park site which has recently been acquired by the City Council. The masterplan has been developed by Bennetts Associates over May-August 2019, with landscape input from Exterior Architecture, and transport, civils and sustainability input from BuroHappold Engineering.

Five key client engagement meetings have been held over the course of the design process, with representatives from Manchester Life, and key stakeholders from the Planning and Development departments of Manchester City Council. An engagement session has also been held with the headteacher of New Islington Free School, which sits adjacent to the site.

# *‘Consider life between buildings first’*

## The Approach to Urban Design

The approach to urban design is rooted in 6 key principles:

**People and Place** – *Consider life between buildings first; A sense of place is the primary objective; Place endures but buildings come and go; Never forget human scale*

**Context and Composition** – *Places that relate to their context (social, economic, historic, environmental); Places that evoke the distinctive character and spirit of a locality; Place as memory; Place as future*

**Web and Weave** – *Places that are well connected and woven into contextual fabric*

**Balance and Blend** – *Places that aim to balance the full range of factors; For example, maximising development return whilst delivering social value;*

**Framework and Flexibility** - *Places that can adapt over time; Processes that allow evolution*

**Observe and Absorb** – *Take time to understand how people use places; Spend time talking listening to stakeholders; Reevaluate and evolve ones own thinking*





BENNETTS

*Brownsfield Mill, part of the rich context of Ancoats which is to be respected and extended.*



## 3.0 PLANNING POLICY

The Development Plan consists of The Manchester Core Strategy (2012); and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995) . The Core Strategy was adopted in July 2012 and sets out the long term strategic planning policies for the City. A number of UDP policies were saved and accompany the Core Strategy. Planning applications must be decided in accordance with the Core Strategy, saved UDP policies and other Local Development Documents. The NPPF requires applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant policies within the Core Strategy are set out below.

A series of Strategic Spatial Objectives form the basis of the Core Strategy policies.

### Policy S01 - Spatial Principles

This is a highly accessible location and commercial development here would reduce the need to travel by private car and would support sustainable development and help to halt climate change.

### Policy S02 - Economy

Jobs would be created during construction along with permanent employment and facilities in a highly accessible location. The employment created would support the City's economic performance, reduce economic, environmental and social disparities,

and help to create inclusive sustainable communities.

### Policy S05 - Transport

The site is highly accessible and development here would reduce the need to travel by private car and make the most effective use of public transport facilities. The availability and of sustainable transport would enhance the functioning and competitiveness of the city and provide access to jobs, education, services, retail, leisure and recreation.

### Policy S06 - Environment

This is a brownfield site and its development would protect and enhance the natural and built environment and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources. This would help to mitigate and adapt to climate change; support

biodiversity and wildlife; improve air, water and land quality; and, ensure that the City is inclusive and attractive.

### Policy SP 1 - Spatial Principles

Development in the City should create neighbourhoods where people choose to be. This site presents an opportunity to create a place that has been well-designed and one that enhances and creates character. It would make a positive contribution to the community's health, safety and wellbeing and meet the needs of everyone. Commercial development would be highly sustainable and complement regeneration at Ancoats, New Islington, Piccadilly and the Northern Quarter. The creation of a new place would enhance nearby neighbourhoods and provide jobs, amenities and open space.

### **Policy EC1 - Land for Employment and Economic Development**

This is an appropriate location for employment, and commercial development would help to spread the benefits of growth to nearby communities. This would reduce economic, environmental and social disparities and help to create an inclusive sustainable community. The site is well connected to transport infrastructure and would encourage walking, cycling and public transport use.

### **Policy EC3 - The Regional Centre**

This is an appropriate location for commercial development which would be close to all forms of sustainable transport. It would establish a new destination and complement commercial development in the City Centre.

### **Policy CC1 - Primary Economic Development Focus (City Centre and Fringe).**

Development at the site would provide office accommodation in part of the City Centre identified in Policy CC1 as a focus for primary economic development.

### **Policy CC5 - Transport**

The site is accessible by all modes of sustainable transport and the development of this brownfield site would

help to improve air quality.

### **Policy CC6 - City Centre High Density Development**

Development should use the site efficiently. High density development would maximise the efficient use of land available within the constraints of the site.

### **Policy CC7 - Mixed Use Development**

There is an opportunity to create active ground floor with the potential for A1, A2, A3, A4, B1 or D2 uses.

### **Policy CC8 - Change and Renewal**

Development would create temporary employment during construction.

### **Policy CC9 - Design and Heritage**

A high quality design could enhance the setting of nearby listed buildings and conservation areas.

### **Policy CC10 - A Place for Everyone**

The development of the site would complement ongoing regeneration, particularly at Ancoats and New Islington. It would have to be fully accessible.

### **Policy T1 - Sustainable Transport**

The site is accessible by all forms of sustainable transport and should encourage modal shift away from car

travel. Pedestrian routes may need to be improved and priority should be given to pedestrians and disabled people, cyclists and public transport.

### **Policy T2 - Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need**

Development would connect residents in nearby communities to jobs, local facilities and open space.

### **Policy EN1 - Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas**

A high quality design should result in development that would enhance the character of adjacent conservation areas and the image of Manchester. It could create activity at street level and provide improved connections to local communities.

### **Policy EN3 - Heritage**

The proposal would have an impact on the settings of the nearby listed buildings and conservation areas. This would have to be considered carefully but there is an opportunity to enhance their setting.

### **Policy - EN6**

The development would be expected to comply with the target framework for CO2 reductions from low or zero carbon energy supplies.

### **Policy EN8 - Adaptation to Climate Change**

Development would be expected to meet the highest standards and be an example of best practice in terms of sustainability with zero carbon.

### **Policy EN16 - Air Quality**

The site is highly accessible by all forms of public transport and there would not be any car parking on site.

### **Policy EN18 - Contaminated Land and Ground Stability**

Any risk arising from ground contamination could be considered during the formal planning application process.

### **Policy EN19 - Waste**

Any development would have to follow the principles of waste hierarchy and waste production must be minimised during construction and operation. This would be addressed through the formal planning application process.

The following saved UDP policies are relevant.

### **DC18.1 - Conservation Areas**

The character and appearance and setting of the adjacent conservation area must be preserved or enhanced.

### **DC19.1 - Listed Buildings**

The character and appearance and setting of the nearby listed buildings must be preserved or enhanced.

### **Policy DC20 - Archaeology**

An archaeological desk based assessment concludes that the development would not have an impact on any significant remains.

### **Saved Policy E3.3**

The development would upgrade the appearance of the Inner Relief Route with a high quality scheme.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (2019)**

The revised NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development which must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need. In order to achieve sustainable development the planning system has three overarching objectives – economic, social and environmental

The planning system is required to build a strong and competitive economy with sustainable transport. It must provide healthy and safe communities which are inclusive.

### **Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and Planning Guidance (April 2007)**

Part 1 of the SPD sets out the design principles and standards that the City Council expects new development to achieve, i.e. high quality developments that are safe, secure and accessible to all. Proposals should seek to ensure that the use of the building reflects their purpose and the place in which they are located. Development should enliven and define neighbourhoods and promote a sense of place. Development should have regard for the location of sustainable public transport and its proximity.

### **Wider Context**

#### **Manchester's Great Outdoors – a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Manchester (2015)**

Adopted in 2015, the vision for the strategy is that 'by 2025 high quality, well maintained green and blue spaces will be an integral part of all neighbourhoods. The city's communities will be living healthy, fulfilled lives, enjoying access to parks and greenspaces and safe green routes for walking, cycling and exercise throughout the city. Businesses will be investing in areas with a high environmental quality and attractive surroundings, enjoying access to a

healthy, talented workforce. New funding models will be in place, ensuring progress achieved by 2025 can be sustained and provide the platform for ongoing investment in the years to follow'

### **Eastlands Regeneration Framework: A 2019 update**

The broad vision for Eastlands has remained consistent for nearly twenty years – it is to become a place which is attractive for people to live, work and to visit; an area which builds upon its assets to provide a distinctive contribution to the overall success of the city region; and crucially to be a place where all residents are able to share in the long term success of the area.

### **Ancoats and New Islington Strategic Regeneration Framework (2016)**

This document updated that approved by the Council in 2014, to take into account changes in policy context and the progress made in delivering the 2014 proposals. It outlines core development principles to guide development. The NDF states that Ancoats is suitable for complementary new employment and commercial space alongside residential development and is critical to maintaining activity throughout the day. It outlines considerations which must be taken into account for development.

### **Manchester Strategy (January 2016)**

The strategy sets the long term vision for Manchester's future and how this will be achieved. An important aspect of this strategy is the City Centre and how it will be a key driver of economic growth and a major employment centre. Furthermore, increasing the centre for residential is fundamental along with creating a major visitor destination.

### **Ancoats Conservation Area declaration**

The significance of the Ancoats Conservation Area is derived from the former cotton spinning mills, which dominate the area and are principally located adjacent to the Rochdale Canal and the nearby housing. Historically throughout the area, there have always been commercial and residential buildings. This juxtaposition, and interlinking of manufacturing, transport and residential uses meant that Ancoats functioned as the first industrial estate in the world. The concentration of mill buildings within Ancoats has become an important landmark in the history of the Industrial Revolution. Murray Mills, McConnel and Kennedy Mill, along with others in the area, represent a clear chronology of development of cotton mill architecture from 1800 to the 1920s. Although the area is dominated by the mill buildings, the Conservation Area

also contains other Listed Buildings of differing character.

### **Other legislative requirements**

Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the "Listed Building Act") provides that "in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works to a listed building, the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses". Section 66 Listed Building Act requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. This requires more than a simple balancing exercise and considerable importance and weight should be given to the desirability of preserving the setting. Members should consider whether there is justification for overriding the presumption in favour of preservation. Section 72 of the Listed Building Act provides that in the exercise of the power to determine planning applications for land or buildings within a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

## 4.0 OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

The opportunities and constraints presented by the site are key in defining the response to achieving the key development objectives:

01. The marina and Cotton Field Park provide a potentially amazing aspect to the north of the site, but the development needs to lead in reinvigorating this space.

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02. Key routes/linkages from Piccadilly and the City Centre should be responded to, as well as onward routes to Ancoats and New Islington.

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03. There is potential of a building of significant height to form a 'set piece' with the Oxygen Tower at the junction of Old Mill and Great Ancoats Streets..

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04. The Rochdale Canal to the west provides an opportunity for waterside development, but the proposal should be sensitive to scale of the adjacent mills of Ancoats.

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05. The school and health centre to the north need to careful consideration, and constraints including access should be incorporated in the proposal.

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06. Great Ancoats Street borders the southern edge of the site, a major artery which forms a barrier to the city centre. The previous buildings on the had also failed to enclose the street, and the proposal should address this.

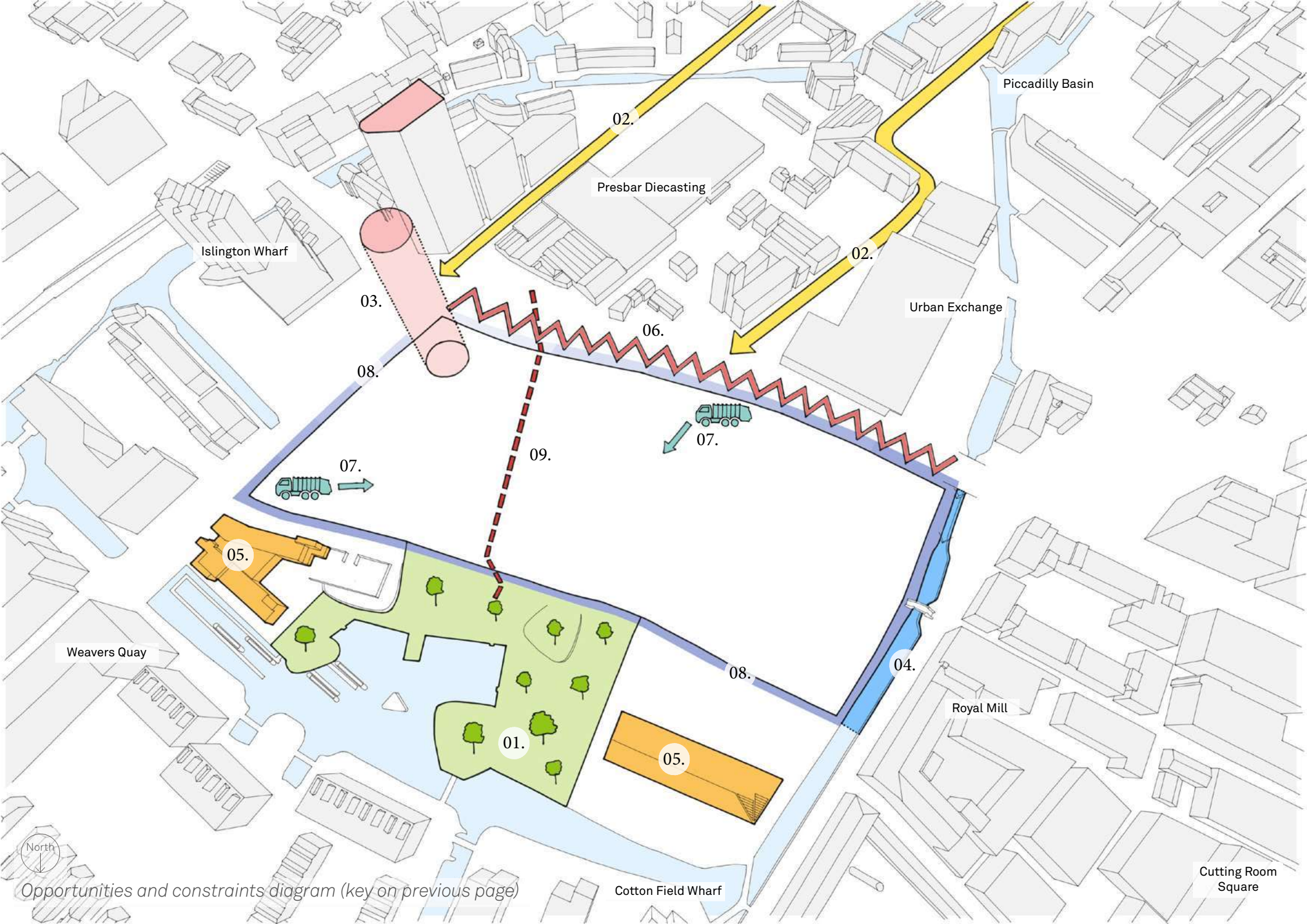
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07. Potential for service vehicle access is limited, and will need to be configured from either the existing junction on Great Ancoats Street, or an improved junction off Old Mill Street.

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08. The site perimeter contains significant level differences from 0 to over 5m, which will need to be mediated in order to create a permeable site.

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09. Shooters Brook culvert crosses the site north to south: It is estimated that the culvert is between 12-15m deep within the site based on the culvert invert level at an adjacent site, Kampus Project, however, a survey will be required to determine accurate depth, location and condition.

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Opportunities and constraints diagram (key on previous page)





Potential for canal side development



New Islington Free School



Cotton Field Park and New Islington Marina



New Islington Medical Centre



Key approach from Piccadilly via Laystall Street



Great Ancoats Street - a major artery



Existing site entry point from Old Mill Street



The site perimeter contains a significant level difference of over 5m







## 5.0 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Embedded in the policy framework is a requirement for all development to achieve the highest design quality that will be attractive, inclusive and sustainable, create a sense of place and contribute to Manchester's unique identity. Within this context the draft Central Retail Park Development Framework sets out the following twelve design principles:

# *The Central Retail Park offers a unique opportunity to further transform East Manchester.*

### Principle 1 - Connecting to adjacent neighbourhoods

Central Retail Park is a strategically important site of great significance. The large single ownership has the ability to unlock the potential of East Manchester, and create a significant commercial usage location whilst connecting communities and creating opportunities for unlocking social value. The development offers the opportunity to remove the impermeable barrier of the former retail park, thus uniting, building upon, and complementing the surrounding districts to create a vibrant mixed use neighbourhood.



Ancoats - Cutting Room Square

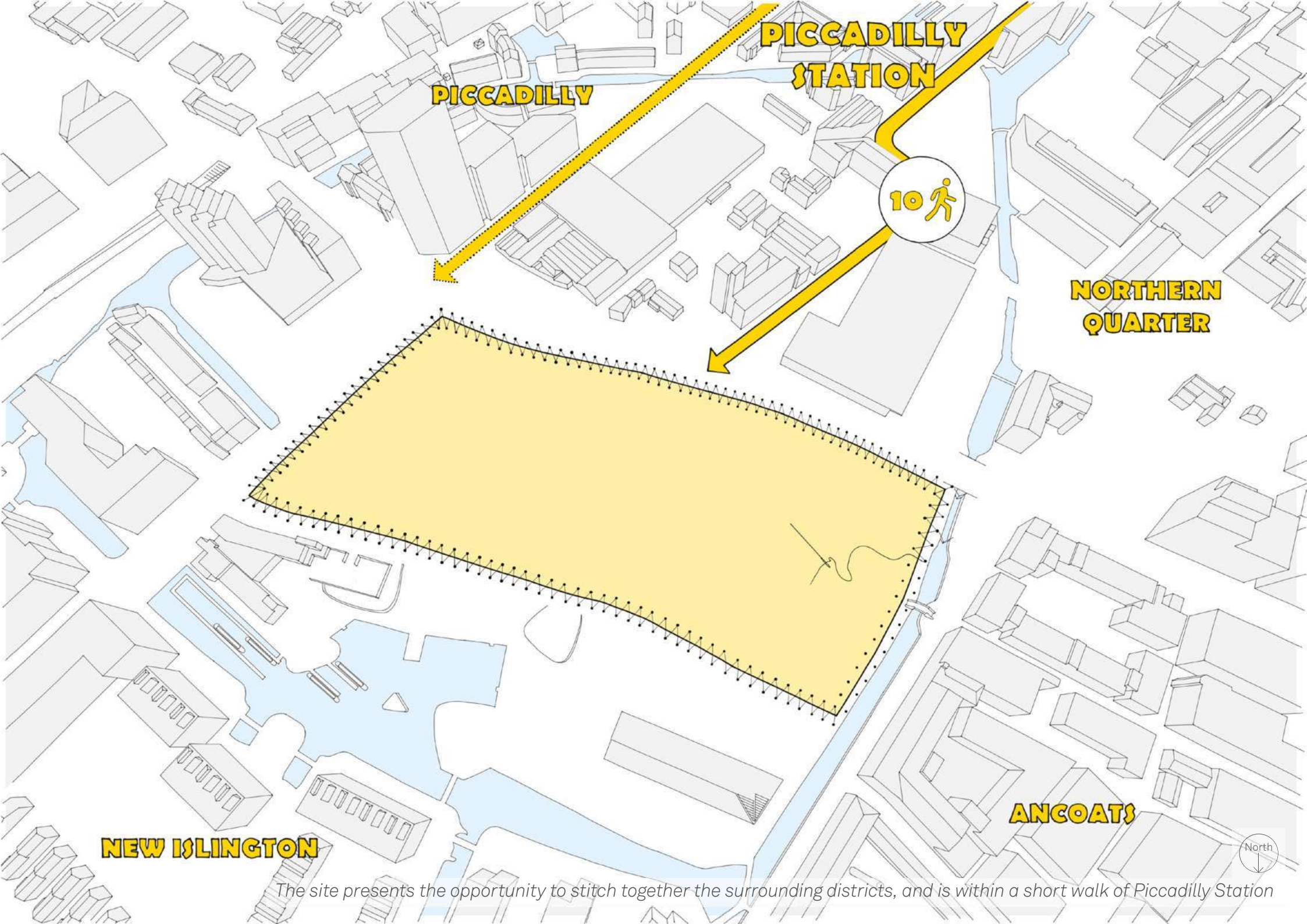


Northern Quarter - Stephenson Square



New Islington Marina and Cotton Field Park (CGI)

*The hearts of the surrounding districts*



**PICCADILLY**

**PICCADILLY  
STATION**

10 

**NORTHERN  
QUARTER**

**NEW ISLINGTON**

**ANCOATS**



*The site presents the opportunity to stitch together the surrounding districts, and is within a short walk of Piccadilly Station*



# The site and locality are fused together by a new weave of connectivity and key entry points

## Principle 2 - New routes and entrances established

The layout responds to the key pedestrian entry points to the site, including the current pedestrian route from Piccadilly Train Station via Laystall Street, the future Station route via Store Street, and routes from the city centre via Great Ancoats Street.

Upon entering, a new network of streets and squares could facilitate connectivity across the site for the first time, drawing people through Cotton Field Park and onwards to Back of Ancoats, New Islington and Miles Platting. Amongst the benefits of the resulting footfall will be added safety, trade and activation as well as the wider environmental and wellbeing advantages of encouraging walking and cycling.



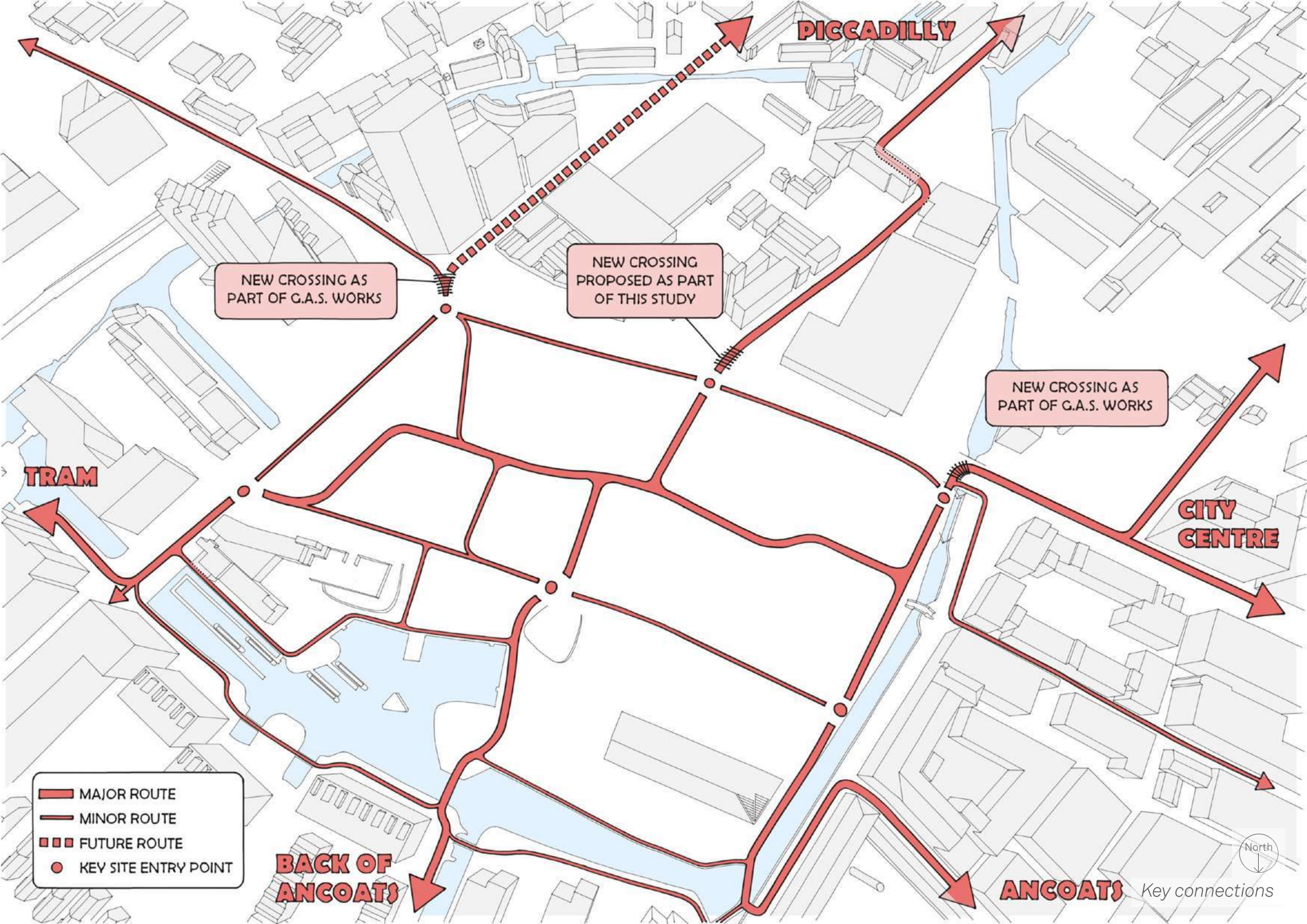
The approach from the tram via Old Mill Street

*Key approaches to the site*



The proposed Great Ancoats Street improvement works





**PICCADILLY**

NEW CROSSING AS PART OF G.A.S. WORKS

NEW CROSSING PROPOSED AS PART OF THIS STUDY

NEW CROSSING AS PART OF G.A.S. WORKS

**TRAM**

**CITY CENTRE**

**BACK OF ANCOATS**

**ANCOATS**

Key connections

- MAJOR ROUTE
- MINOR ROUTE
- FUTURE ROUTE
- KEY SITE ENTRY POINT

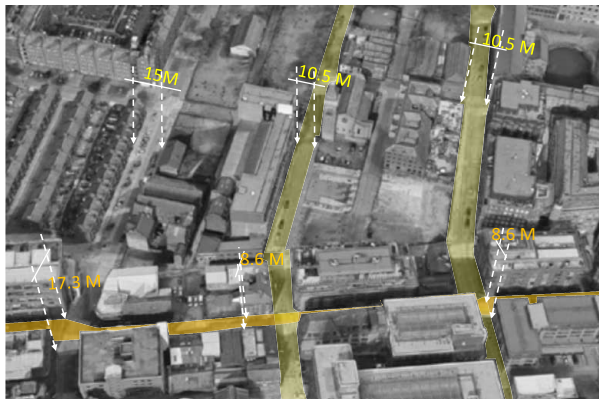




# *The rich and varied grain of the surrounding districts is reinterpreted and extended to give a distinctive sense of place that is uniquely and inherently Mancunian*

## Principle 3 - Establishing a contextual grain

The grain of the neighbouring districts should be echoed throughout Central Retail Park. The contrasting weave of narrow streets and pocket squares hold an affinity with the grids of Ancoats and the Northern Quarter, whilst the east of the site reflects the more irregular grain of New Islington. These grids converge to form a varied and interesting sequence of spaces, as well as a heart and identity for each phase of the development. The buildings to the periphery should work to hold the street edge and support activation, opening up to signify key routes into the site and towards Cotton Field Park.



The varied, characterful grain of Ancoats

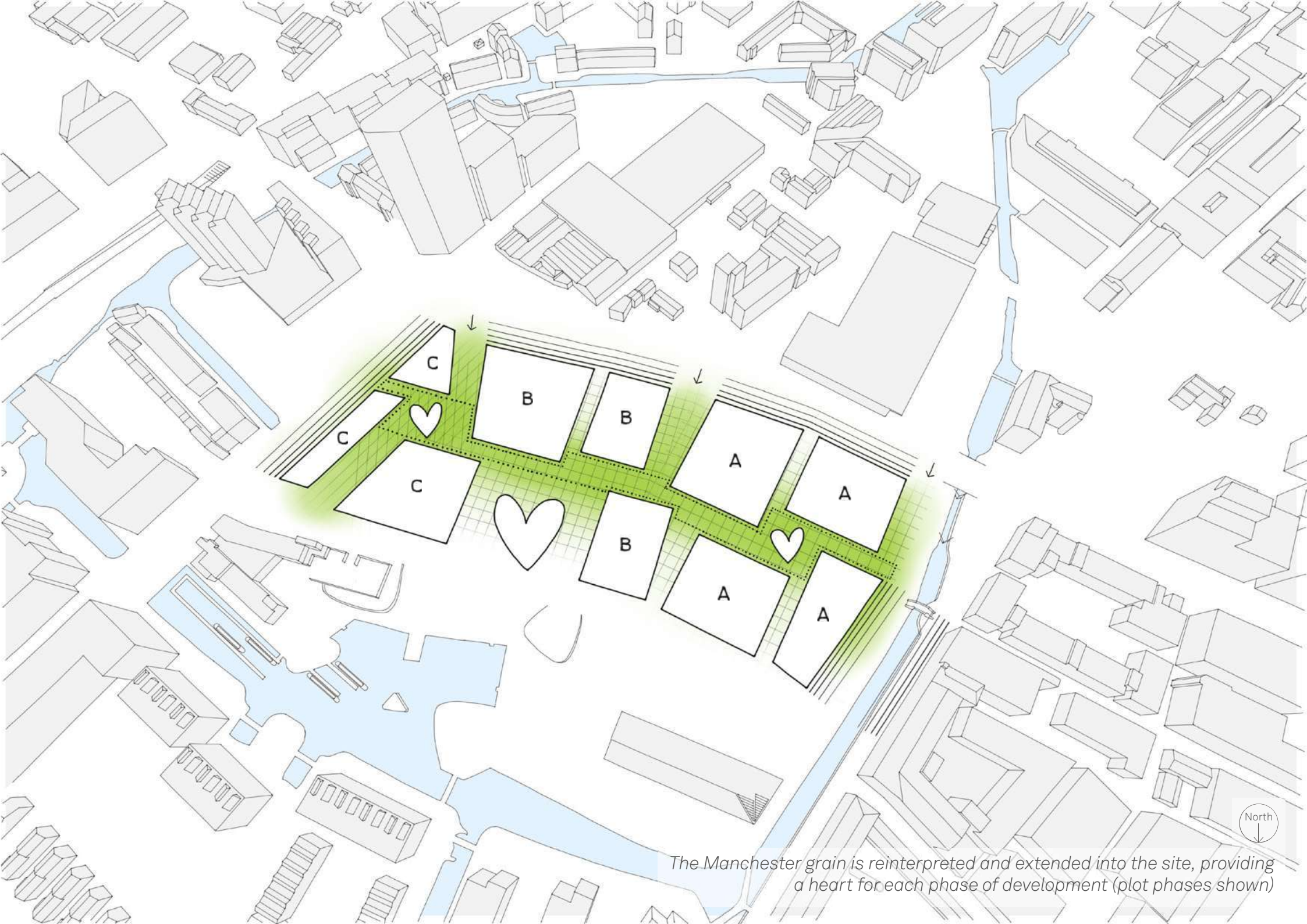


The clashing grids of the surrounding districts



Pocket squares create a heart for each phase

*Grain analysis - see appendix A3 for further information*



The Manchester grain is reinterpreted and extended into the site, providing a heart for each phase of development (plot phases shown)



# The challenge of significant existing level differences is carefully resolved to bring character and diversity to the public realm.

## Principle 4 - Mediation of levels across the site

The perimeter of the existing site has threshold conditions that vary from level to over 5m difference, the mediation of which is key to facilitating and curating the desired permeability through the site. The strategy ensures that all streets are accessible to everyone, whilst maximising the potential for active frontage at ground floor around key public spaces and routes. The amount of additional earth required to achieve these goals has also been minimised in order to reduce the financial and environmental cost of significant earthworks. The strategy highlights how these challenges could be met by using the level differences to sculpt and define the public realm into a characterful, inclusive and varied landscape that binds the buildings together.



Level changes are used to bring character



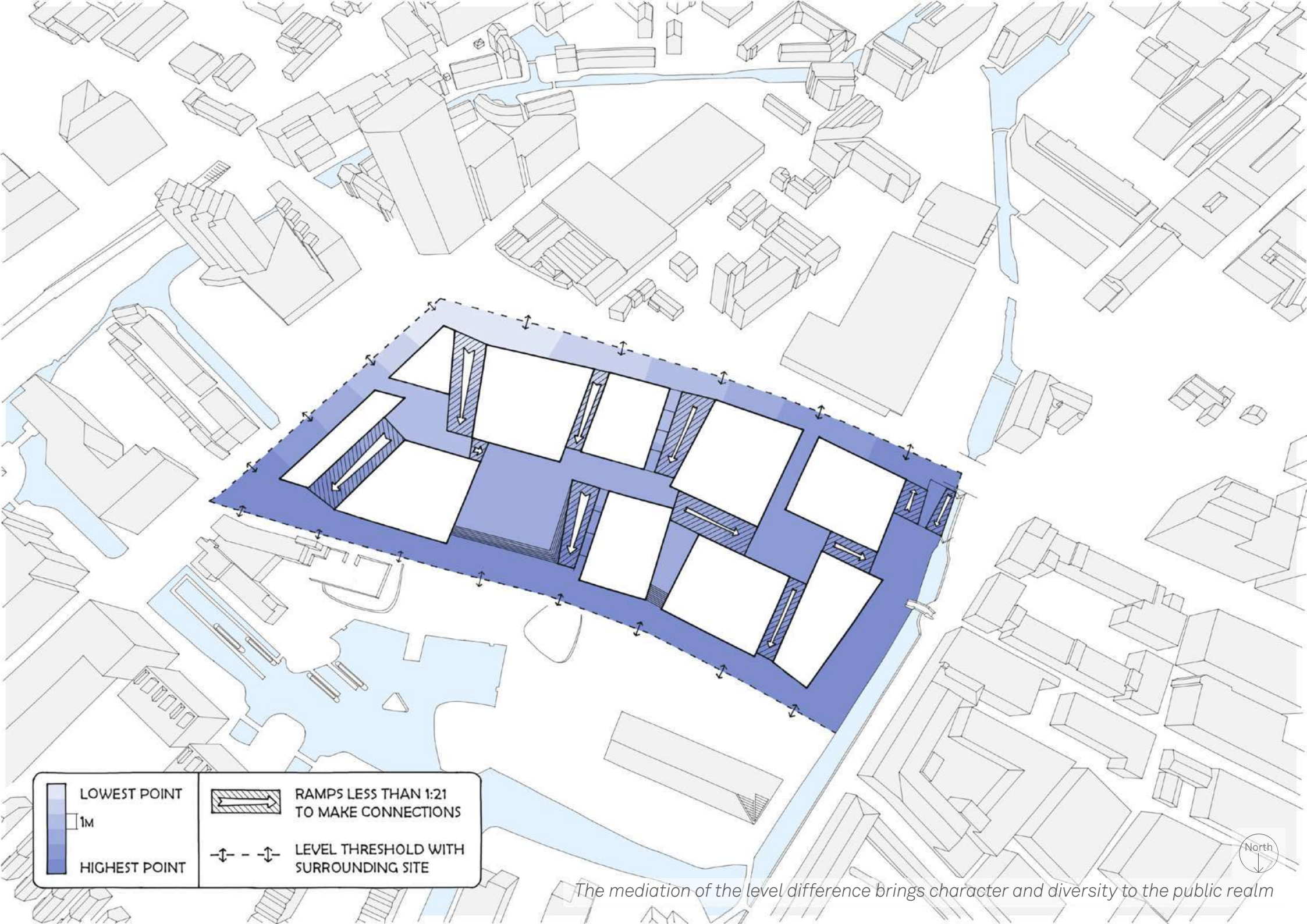
An amphitheatre provides a space to gather







Terraces are created along sloped streets

*Precedents for using levels to create character*





 LOWEST POINT	 RAMPS LESS THAN 1:21 TO MAKE CONNECTIONS
 HIGHEST POINT	 LEVEL THRESHOLD WITH SURROUNDING SITE

1M

*The mediation of the level difference brings character and diversity to the public realm*

# A green and pedestrian friendly public realm provides healthy spaces to gather, pause and play

## Principle 5 - Creation of a people focussed public realm

A key environmental objective is to introduce the concept of a new square, "Cotton Field Square", a complementary public space which together with an enhanced Cotton Field Park could form one of Manchester's most significant public spaces. Greenery extending from the park and across the development, with building lines set back to accommodate a significant number of trees, and planting used to define public spaces. This green infrastructure is vital in improving wellbeing and air quality, providing external shelter, and sustainably managing surface water run off. The materials and design of street furniture too should be inclusive and used to help reinforce an identity across the site, whilst providing opportunities to linger sit or play. Engagement with New Islington School has highlighted a requirement for enhanced play space, both for the school and for children to use during evenings and weekends. The draft Framework identifies a section of the park and an unused area to the east of the school that could be transformed into a play area, would have the potential to be locked and accessed from the playground during school hours, and can then be opened up to the park during evenings and weekends.



The square and park will work in tandem



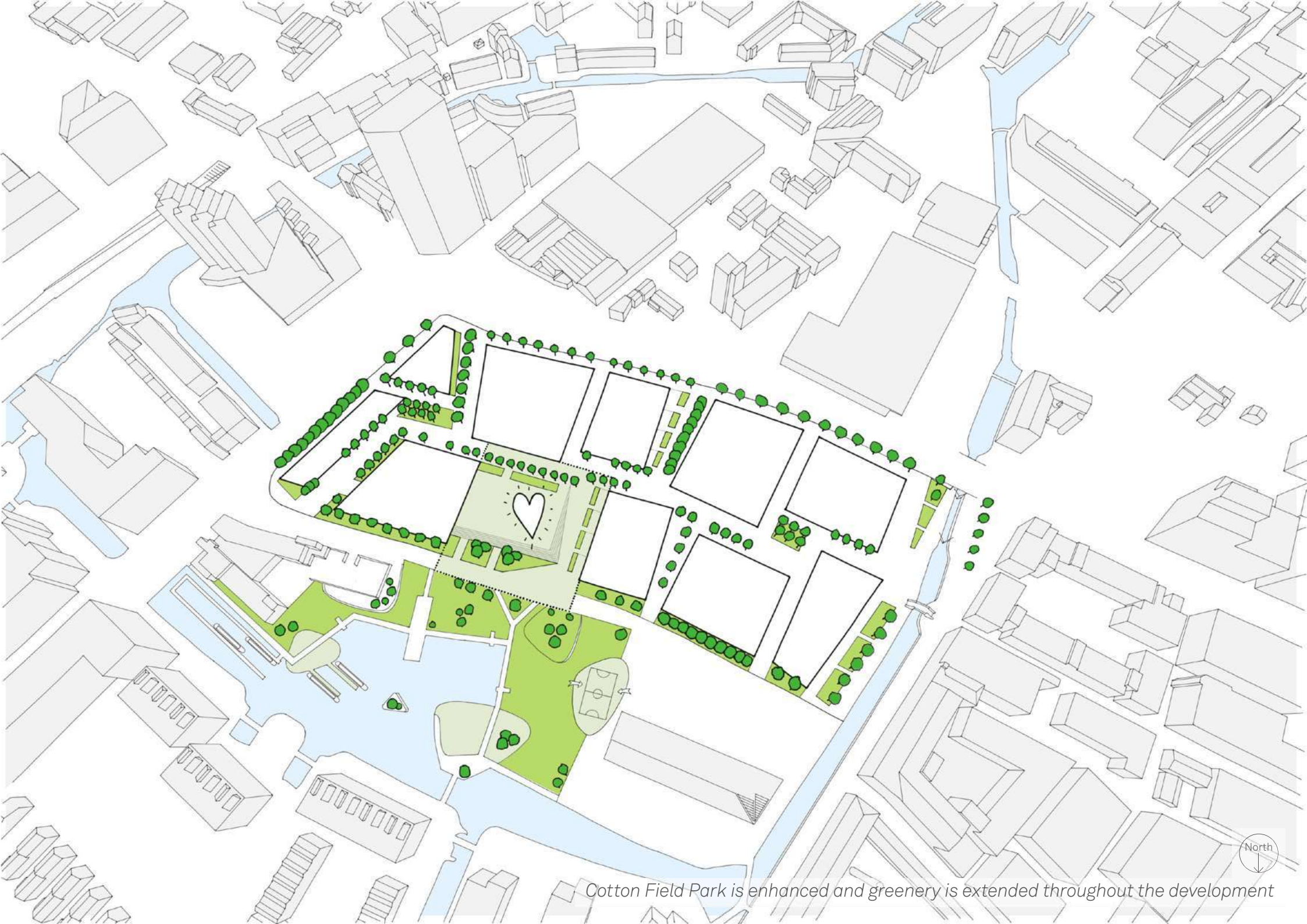
Streets are greened and provide places to sit



Identity is brought through paving and materials

*Public realm precedents*





Cotton Field Park is enhanced and greenery is extended throughout the development

# A commercial led scheme is supported by a diverse mix of uses to create a ‘round the clock’ city district for all.

## Principle 6 - Arrangement of uses across the site

A vital balance has been established in order to achieve the vision for a ‘vibrant, commercially led, mixed use district’. A substantial commercial core of efficient, regular floorplates, across a range of scales provides the flexibility to meet varying commercial demand. This is bookended by a range of smaller plots with flexibility to accommodate other non-large scale commercial typologies. These play a key role in avoiding a monoculture across the development, helping blend into the surrounding neighbourhoods as well as mediating the particular geometry of the site. This illustrative plan takes into account the need to accommodate a substantial pre-let, both in allowing floor space requirements to be met within the probable phases and in mitigating the potential dominance of a large occupier through the creative deployment of the other uses. The distribution of this mix allows key public spaces to be wrapped in a range of commercial and residential uses, critical in creating a safe and welcoming development with 24/7 passive surveillance.



Commercial provides weekday animation



Which combined create safe, welcoming spaces



Residential provides evening/weekend activation

*Precedents for how uses can activate public spaces*



PLOT HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS SUITABLE FOR SMALL BUSINESS UNITS AND IS ALSO SIZED TO ACCOMMODATE RESIDENTIAL IF REQUIRED

PLOT HAS ALSO BEEN IDENTIFIED AS SUITABLE FOR RESIDENTIAL

PLOT HAS ALSO BEEN IDENTIFIED AS SUITABLE FOR A HOTEL

**COMMERCIAL - SPEC.**  
**COMMERCIAL - PRE-LET**  
**RESIDENTIAL**



*The use mix is carefully curated to surround key public spaces with a range of typologies*

# *A significant quantum of commercial floor space is created within a landmark mixed use development.*

## Principle 7 - Height & density

Viewed in the context of policy and a developing city core, analysis has proven the site is capable of accommodating a significant density of development. The indicative layout shows a Floor Space Index (FSI) of 4.0, which balances provision of a high density development whilst meeting key design principles outlined in this document. These principles set out how the buildings on the site could step and mass in order to respond to the surrounding context, and provide a welcoming and high quality public realm. Alongside the Rochdale Canal, buildings should step down to respect the height of the adjacent mills of Ancoats, creating a balanced and welcoming route into the site. At the crossing of Old Mill and Great Ancoats Streets, there is an opportunity for a substantial tower to match the height of Oxygen, and create a 'set piece' gateway to East Manchester. Within the development the buildings should step down to the key public squares in order to maximise the amount of light entering the spaces.



Control of heights maximise sunlight to public spaces

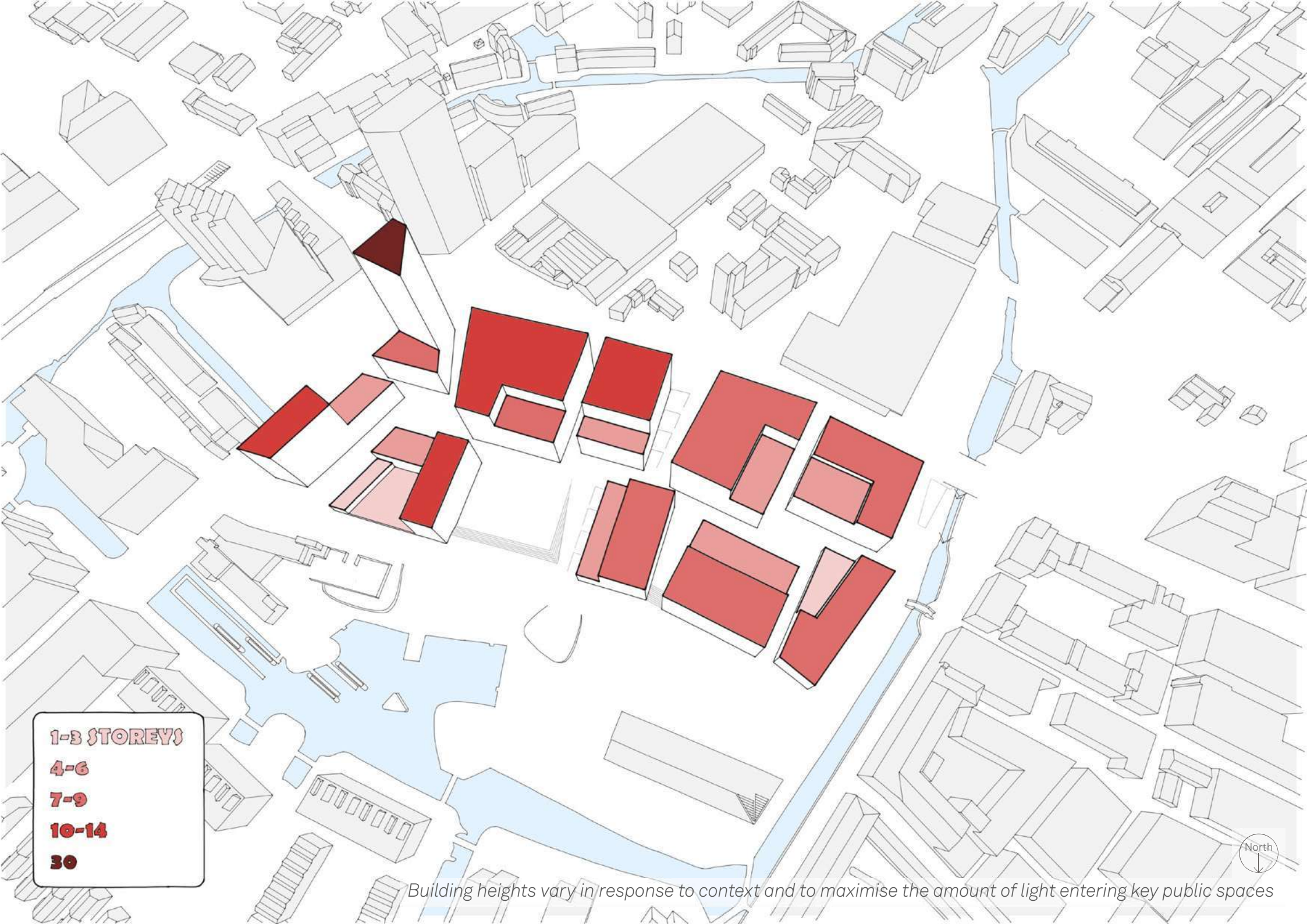


An opportunity for a tower to meet Oxygen



The buildings step down to respect the historic mills





- 1-3 STOREYS
- 4-6
- 7-9
- 10-14
- 30



*Building heights vary in response to context and to maximise the amount of light entering key public spaces*

# *In clustering the more animated, leisure focused content around an exciting new public space, the proposal establishes itself as the beating heart of New Islington.*

## Principle 8 - Activating the public realm

A strategic approach has been taken to activating the surrounding context, with active ground floor uses that support occupier demands. The objective is to create life and activity over an extended period into the evening. The indicative layout includes the opportunity for a dedicated 'activator', a pavilion free from the constraints of being situated within another building with the potential to house an alternative function and play a key role in defining the identity of the development. Retail opportunities along Great Ancoats Street could be created to soften the approach, whilst secondary modes of activation such as residential and commercial entrances should be collated around nodes such as pocket squares. The public realm too plays a vital role in activating the development, with components including an amphitheatre and spaces for play.



...somewhere to eat



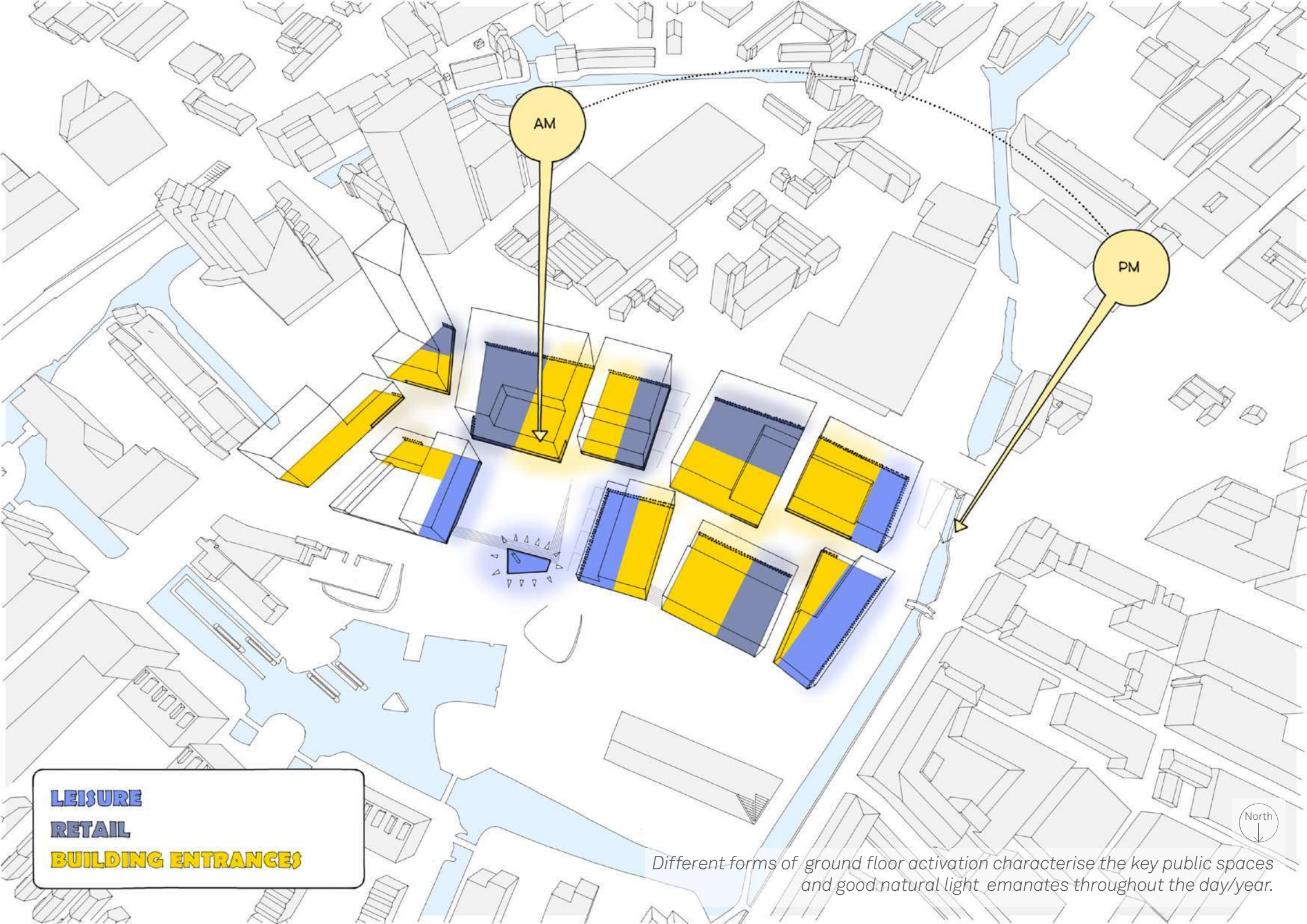
...somewhere to learn



...somewhere to be entertained

*Ideas for an activator*





AM

PM

**LEISURE**  
**RETAIL**  
**BUILDING ENTRANCES**

*Different forms of ground floor activation characterise the key public spaces and good natural light emanates throughout the day/year.*





# The careful management of vehicle and service routes is key in curating a pedestrian centred district.

## Principle 9 - Transport/servicing strategy

In order to provide pedestrian friendly entry points along Great Ancoats Street consideration should be given to all service and vehicular access being configured from Old Mill Street. This could take the form of a one way service route which loops around the development and back along Hugh Oldham Way, with loading bays clustered around spurs into the secondary streets. In 'Cotton Field Square', the approach should be to avoid vehicular routes along the sides where ground floor leisure uses have been identified, and which receive the best light. The ambition is to create an exemplar development whereby this is a car free environment and any requirement for access should therefore be restricted to essential servicing. Phasing has also been considered, with potential to utilise the emergency vehicle entry point off Great Ancoats Street to enter the West phase of the development whilst the remaining phases are constructed.



A soft edge is created along Great Ancoats Street



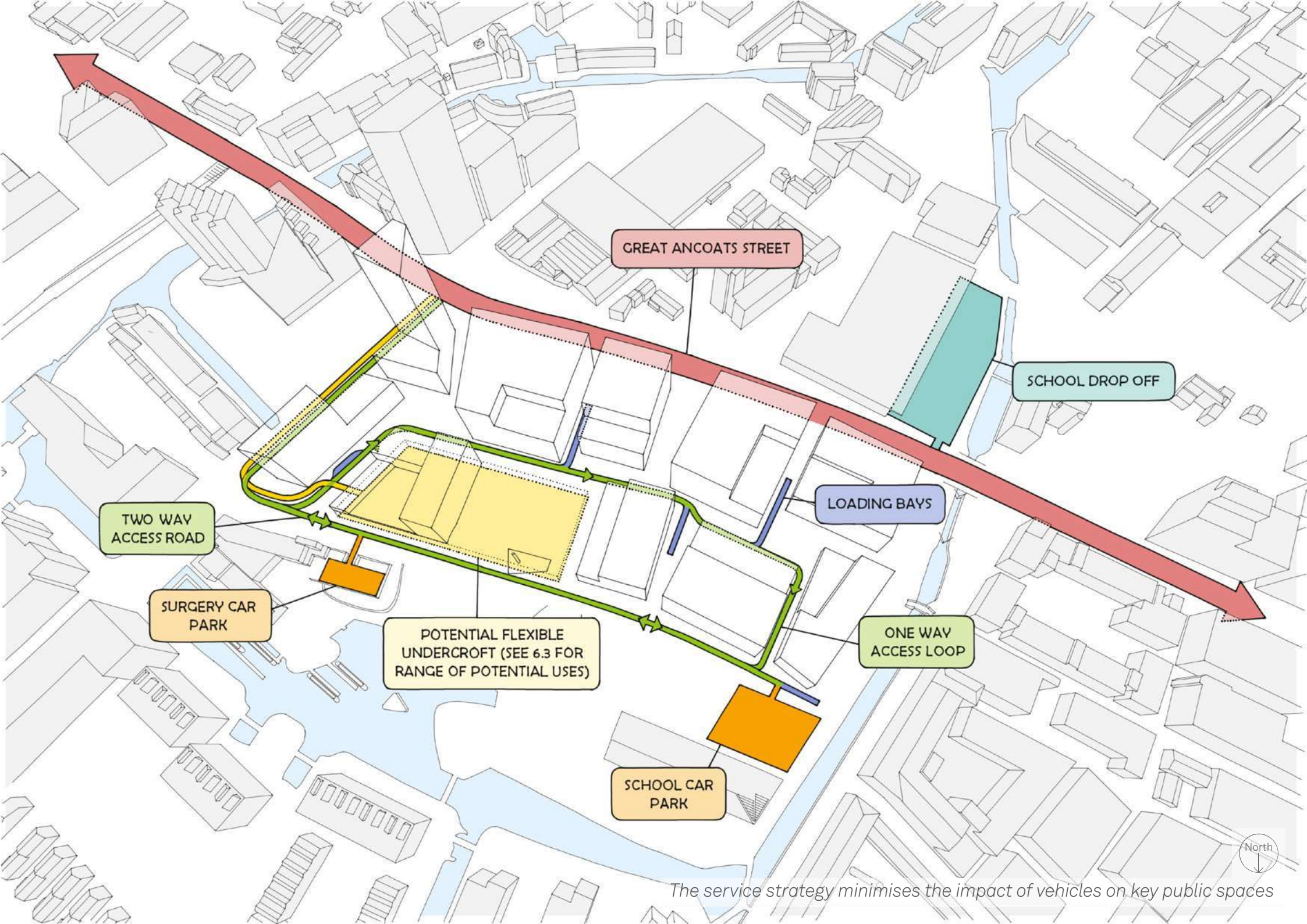
Vehicle routes are avoided along key public spaces



A shared surface service road loops the site

*Precedents for the potential of pedestrian friendly developments*





GREAT ANCOATS STREET

SCHOOL DROP OFF

TWO WAY ACCESS ROAD

LOADING BAYS

SURGERY CAR PARK

POTENTIAL FLEXIBLE UNDERCROFT (SEE 6.3 FOR RANGE OF POTENTIAL USES)

ONE WAY ACCESS LOOP

SCHOOL CAR PARK



The service strategy minimises the impact of vehicles on key public spaces



# A contemporary yet contextual set of characters.

## Principle 10 - Development of character areas

Surrounded by a range of characters and conditions, the proposal defines a series of overlapping 'character areas', which each draw on and reinterpret these conditions in a contextual yet contemporary way:

- Canalside: A character inspired by waterside developments that both contain and address the canal.
- Great Ancoats Street: A continuation of the bold and impressive façades that characterise one of Manchester's main arteries.
- Cotton Field Park/Square: Buildings which contain and animate this landmark public space, maximising opportunities for spill out, views and balconies.
- Old Mill Street : A potential for mix of uses with a character defined by rich and textured façades composed of natural materials and punctuated by balconies and deep reveals.
- Commercial core: A character which draws influence from the rich repetitive, façades of Ancoats to inform efficient, contemporary workplaces.



Cotton Field Park/Square



Great Ancoats Street



Commercial core



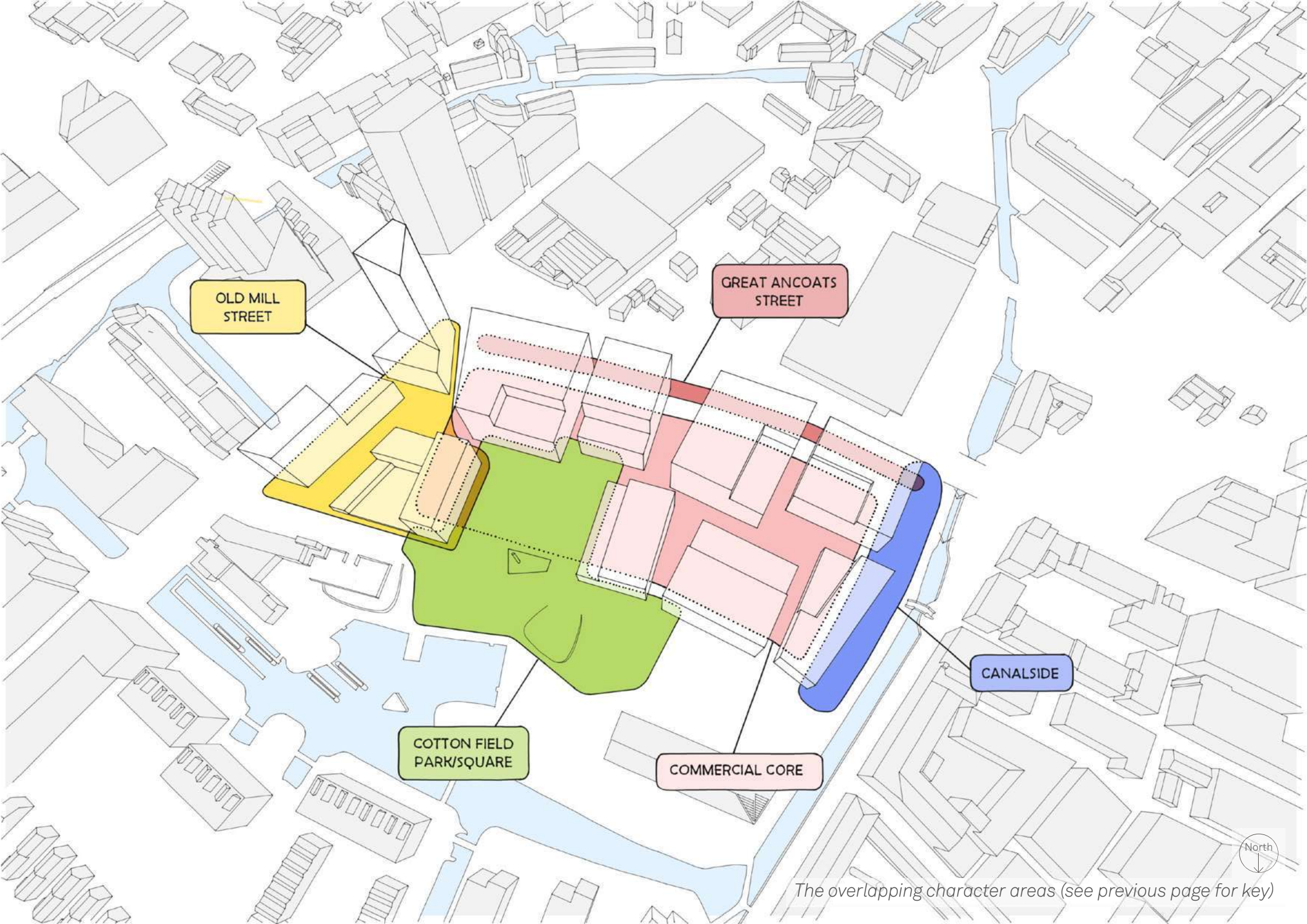
Canalside



Old Mill Street

*Precedents for each of the character areas*





OLD MILL STREET

GREAT ANCOATS STREET

COTTON FIELD PARK/SQUARE

COMMERCIAL CORE

CANALSIDE



The overlapping character areas (see previous page for key)

# Modern workplaces that reflect the needs of occupiers whilst evoking the spirit and adaptability of Ancoats

## Principle 11 - Workplaces for the future

Ancoats is defined by its much loved mills and warehouses, buildings whose large regular floorplates have stood the test of time and adapted to new uses and ways of living/working. The workplaces of Central Retail Park should be a re-imagining of this concept, meeting occupier requirements with a general ethos to use simple, regular floorplates to maximise efficiency and flexibility, as well as opportunities for Design for Manufacture and Assembly (DfMA). The resulting modularity brings within an inherent character, a regular façade that can be manipulated to create external atria, terraces and recesses. On the insides the modular structure should be left exposed, the raw and robust materials themselves characterising a commercial district like no other in Manchester. Organisationally, communal functions should be clustered on the lower floors, encouraging employees to mix and optimising animation at street level.



Mills have been able to be continually reinvented...



...a quality to be translated to future workplaces



In doing so, creating inherent character

*Precedents highlighting how modularity can be used to bring inherent character*





COWORKING SPACES

WORKSHOPS

BICYCLE WORKSHOP  
SALES-REPAIRS - WORKSHOP

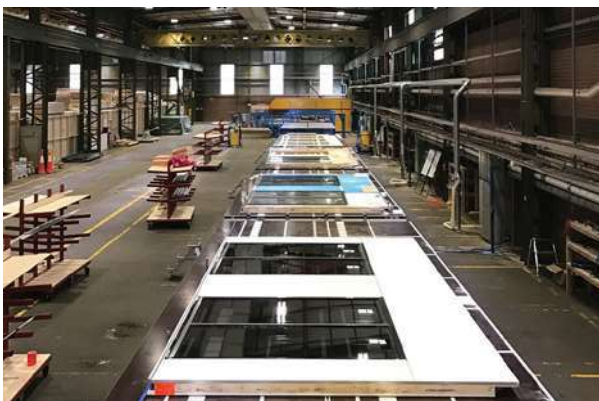
Workplaces should programme their communal functions on the lower floors and play an active role in animating their surroundings. Image: Ted Baker HQ, London - by Bennetts Associates



# Sustainability principles engrained throughout Central Retail Park are aligned with achieving a Carbon Neutral Manchester by 2038

## Principle 12 - Sustainability strategy

Manchester has made a commitment to becoming a carbon-neutral city by 2038, which requires all new buildings and other infrastructure built within the region to be 'net-zero' carbon by 2038. This commitment was clearly made in July 2019 when Manchester declared a Climate Emergency. This declaration is a statement of intent to take action to address the twin crises of climate breakdown and biodiversity loss. It is critical that as the development moves forward it is held accountable to supporting the city to meet these commitments, and is an opportunity to demonstrate best practice in Greater Manchester. Components should demonstrate how regenerative design principles have been adopted, with the aim of delivering architecture and urbanism that goes beyond the standard of net zero carbon in use.



DfMA can reduce embodied carbon

*Precedents for key sustainability principles*



De-carbonation of heat supply - the activator has the potential to house an energy centre



Use of passive design to reduce energy demand



**In terms of delivery of a net zero carbon Business District any development project on the site should adopt:**

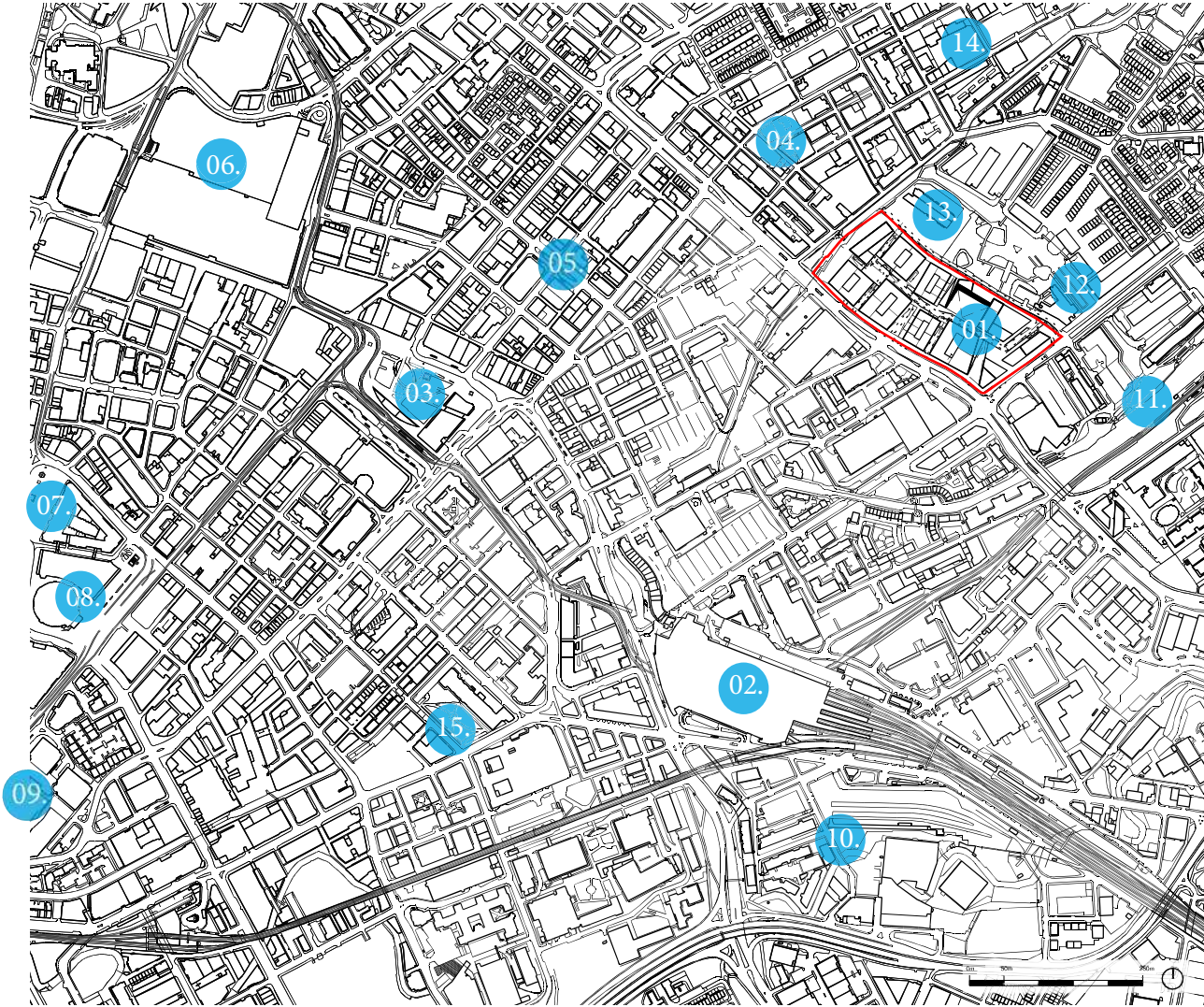
1. A hierarchical approach to resource consumption:
  - 1.1 Energy demand should be minimised through the adoption of passive measures. Opportunities for integrated renewable energy generation including PV and water or ground source systems should be prioritised to meet demand, including opportunities for open loop heat pumps to capitalise on the site's geology. A smart grid implementation philosophy to manage energy flows supported by energy storage including batteries should be specified.
  - 1.2 Focus on designing for low embodied carbon materials from the outset. Strategies should seek to minimise wasteful use of resources in architecture and urban planning, both in quantum and in detail.
  - 1.3 Water systems should seek to limit potable water demand. Strategies should be developed to meet demand through sustainable approaches including on-site rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling.
  - 1.4 Waste management in construction and operation should follow best practice principles of demand minimisation and circular economy.
2. Life cycle costing, whole life carbon modelling and post occupancy evaluation to reduce both embodied and operational resource use.
3. Green and blue infrastructure strategies which support principle of biodiversity net gain across the site.
4. A requirement for contractors to limit construction site impacts through the implementation of robust construction site environmental management policies.

# 6.0 ILLUSTRATIVE PROPOSAL

## 5.1 Locational Context

### Key

- 01. Central Retail Park (showing illustrative plan)
- 02. Piccadilly Station
- 03. Piccadilly Gardens
- 04. Cutting Room Square
- 05. Stevenson Square
- 06. Arndale Centre
- 07. Manchester Town Hall & Albert Square
- 08. Central Library & St Peters Square
- 09. Bridgewater Hall
- 10. Mayfield Regeneration
- 11. New Islington Tram Stop
- 12. Urban Village Medical Practice
- 13. New Islington Free School
- 14. Back of Ancoats Regeneration
- 15. Sackville Gardens







Piccadilly Station

Tram

Ancoats

The Central Retail Park Development Framework shown in the existing city context



## 6.2 Illustrative Layout

### Key

01. Great Ancoats Street	14. New leisure focussed public space created on south bank of Rochdale Canal
02. Old Mill Street	15. New crossings proposed as part of Great Ancoats Street improvement works
03. Redhill Street	16. Additional new crossing proposed
04. High Oldham Way	17. Buildings set back along Great Ancoats Street to facilitate tree planting
05. Laystall Street – current main pedestrian route from Piccadilly	18. Vehicular site entry point
06. Cotton Field Park	19. New sports pitch / play area for school and community
07. ‘Cotton Field Square’	20. Park landscape adapted to respond to route to ‘Back of Ancoats’
08. ‘Redhill Square’	21. School car park reworked to compensate for lost spaces
09. ‘Old Mill Square’	22. Terraces provide opportunities for leisure uses to spill out
10. Potential for new pedestrian bridge adjacent to Great Ancoats Street	23. Steps create informal amphitheatre
11. New Islington Free School	
12. Medical Centre	
13. Marina	





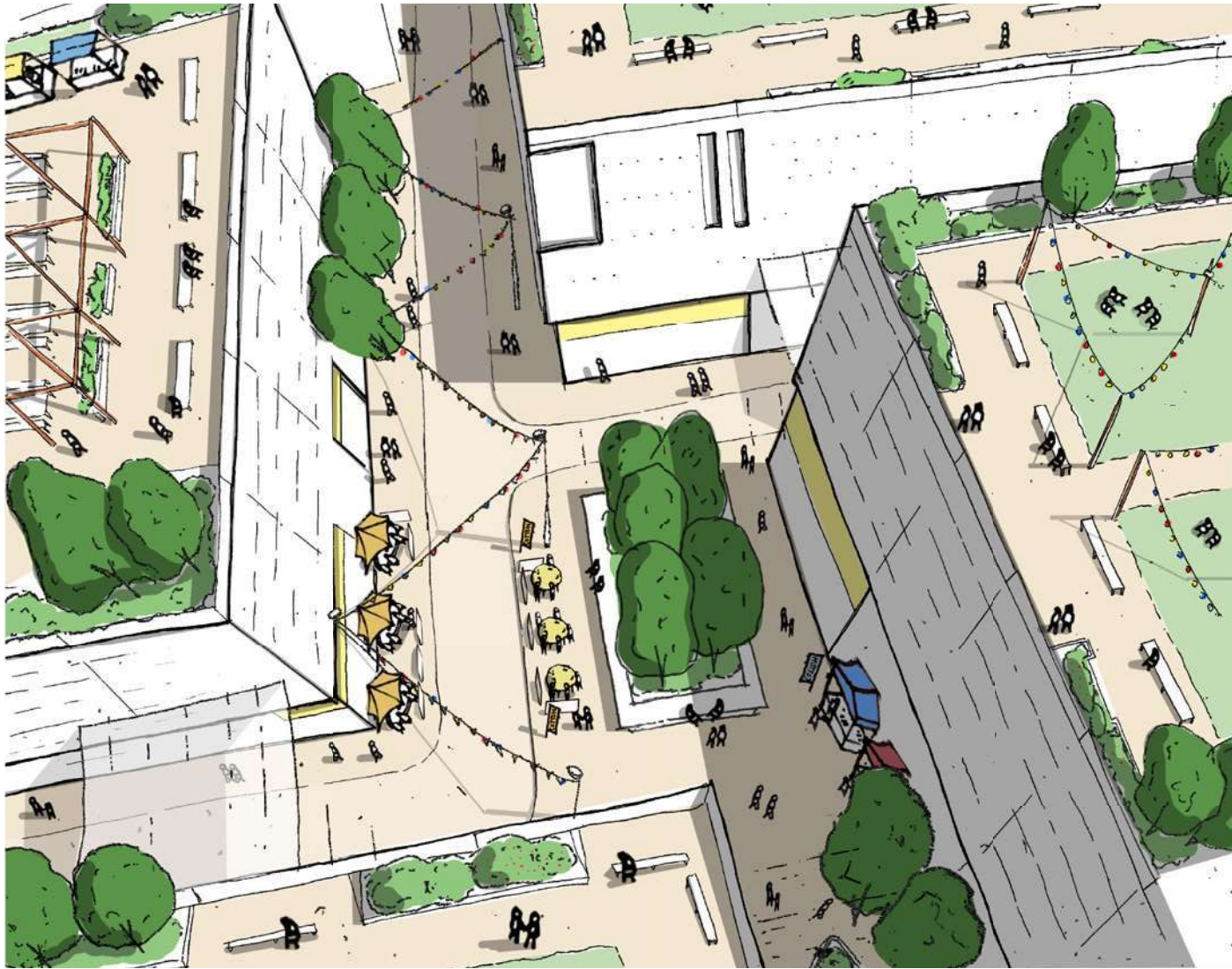
Central Retail Park masterplan - refer to previous page for key





*To meet key environmental objectives 'Cotton Field Square' could extend, contrast against, and complement Cotton Field Park to form an exciting and varied landscape in the heart of New Islington. The diversity of surrounding uses, and forms of activation bring together people around the clock in what will become one of central Manchester's most significant public spaces. This demonstrates how the existing park could be revitalised by the additional footfall and animation, and adapted to provide much needed amenity space for the school and local community.*





*This illustrates how a second 'Redhill Square' could form the heart of the likely first phase of the development, helping establish its identity. The buildings are laid out to encourage pedestrian flow through the centre of the square, which is lined with commercial entrances. Above, the building masses step down towards the square, maximising the amount of daylight entering the space and creating a perimeter of roof terraces.*



*Redhill Street and the Rochdale Canal form a key entry point to Central Retail Park, New Islington and beyond, and the activation of this site plays a vital role in improving the pedestrian experience from Piccadilly and the City Centre. The buildings on the south bank capitalise on the opportunity to create a new canalside destination, with bars and restaurants spilling out onto the tow-path and benefiting from good afternoon and evening light, with passive surveillance from the adjoining developments.*



Section BB



*Pedestrians travelling from the south – including those from the future HS2 station - will be welcomed by 'Old Mill Square', led in by a ribbon of green which extends down to the junction with Great Ancoats Street.*

6.3 - Public Space Comparators

The following diagrams show how the relative size of Cotton Field Square and Park could compare other Manchester public spaces:



Cutting Room Square



Piccadilly Gardens



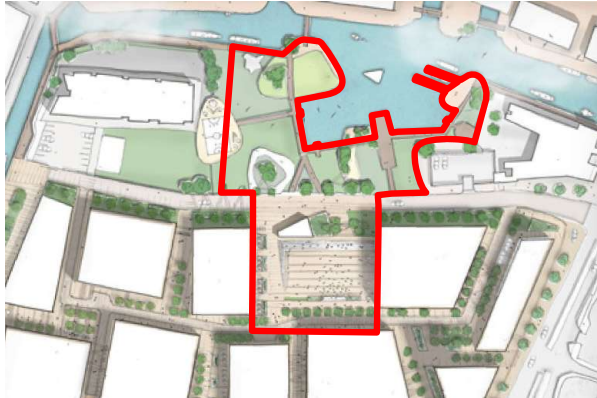
Albert Square



Sackville Gardens



St Peters Square

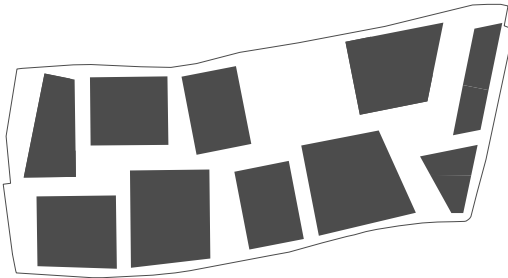
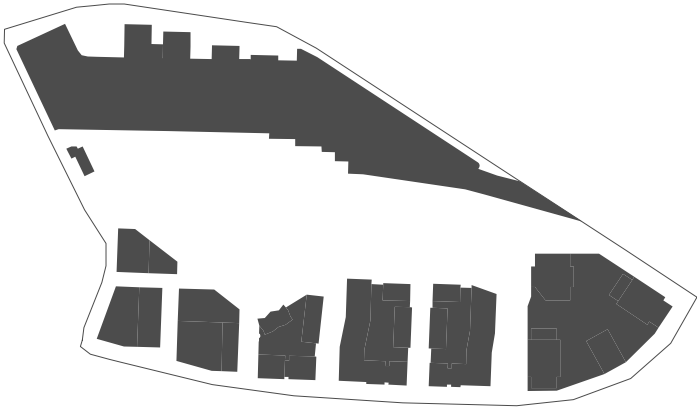
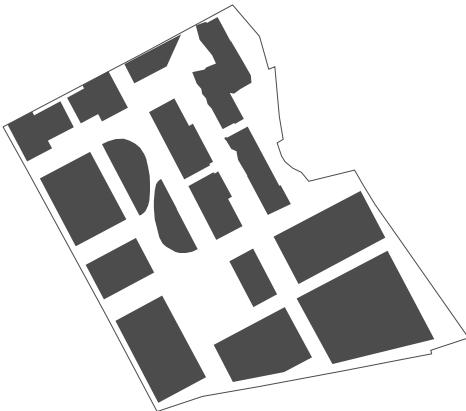


Cotton Field Park and Square



### 6.4 - Density Comparators

The following diagrams are taken from the analysis of comparable Manchester masterplans, which have helped inform the approach to density in the Central Retail Park masterplan.



#### Circle Square Masterplan:

Building to Public Space Ratio 1 : 0.98  
 Floor Space Index 4.6

#### Mayfield Masterplan:

Building to Public Space Ratio 1 : 1.37  
 Floor Space Index 3.8

#### Central Retail Park Masterplan

Building to Public Space Ratio 1 : 0.98  
 Floor Space Index 4.0

# 7.0 FLEXIBILITY

## 7.1 Undercroft Flexibility

The level changes across the site create potential to accommodate a significant undercroft under Cotton Field Square and one of the developments. If required it could accommodate a range of uses. Potential uses include:



An electric vehicle car club



Indoor play



Sports facilities



A last mile delivery hub



Cycle parking

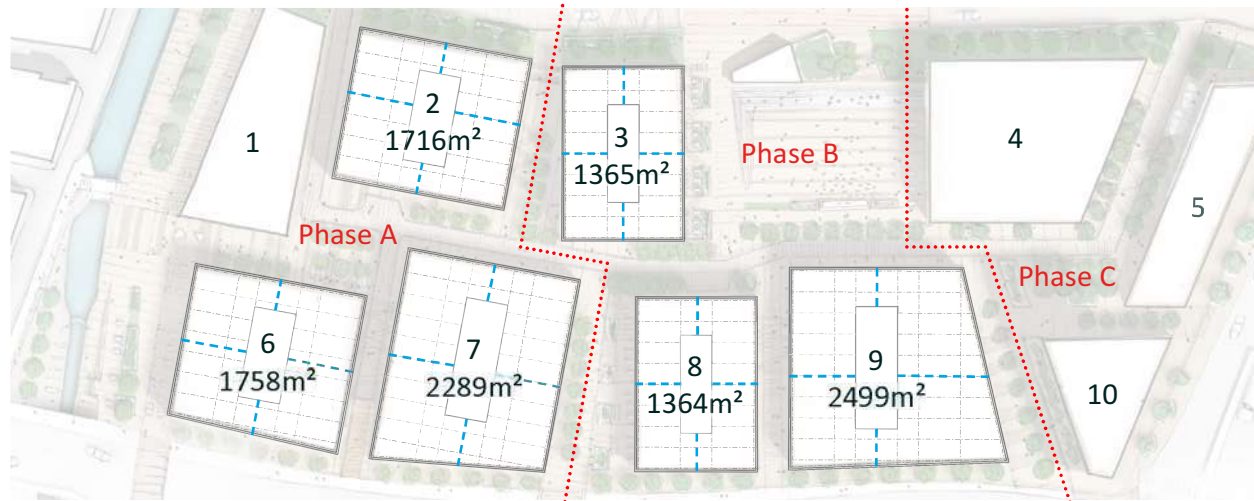


A skate park

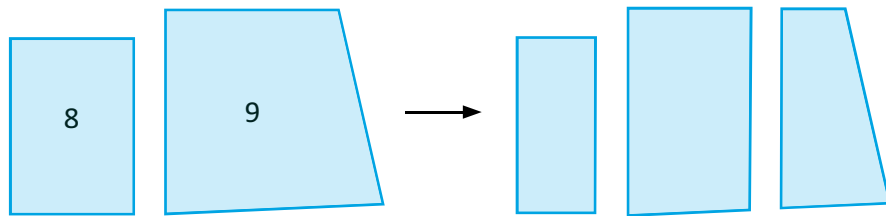


## 7.2 Commercial Floorplate Flexibility

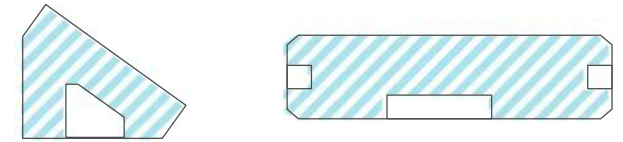
This study has been developed to demonstrate how a potential commercial pre-let of differing floor space requirements could be accommodated (an NIA of 800,000-1,000,000 sqft / 74,000-93,000m<sup>2</sup>, within 2 phases). This could be achieved while creating a range of floorplate sizes, ensuring flexibility should the potential pre-let not need to be accommodated. The Development Framework illustrates how the site could be designed with a core of efficient, regular commercial floorplates, with the public realm and plots to either end of the site used to accommodate its particular geometry. These floorplates allow for central cores and optimise the ease with which they can be split into multiple tenancies if required. Added flexibility is provided by blocks 8 and 9, which can easily be reconfigured into 3 smaller floorplates if required.



Commercial floorplates and areas shown with potential tenancy splits highlighted in blue

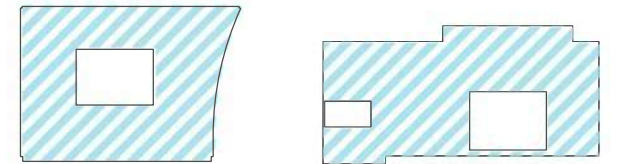


Blocks 8 and 9 can be reconfigured into 3 smaller floorplates if required



Mayfield Plot 0

XYZ Building



One St. Peters Square

No.1 Spinningfields

Manchester commercial floorplates  
(at the same scale)

Areas shown are indicative NIA, assuming GIA is 97.5% of GEA, and NIA is 80% of GIA (for commercial floorplates). All areas to be checked and verified by a Quantity Surveyor before being used for valuation or feasibility purposes.

### 7.3 Approaches to Improving the Visibility of Cottonfield Square

Following feedback on the draft Development Framework, a number of approaches have been explored for improving the visibility of Cotton Field Square from Great Ancoats Street (G.A.S.).

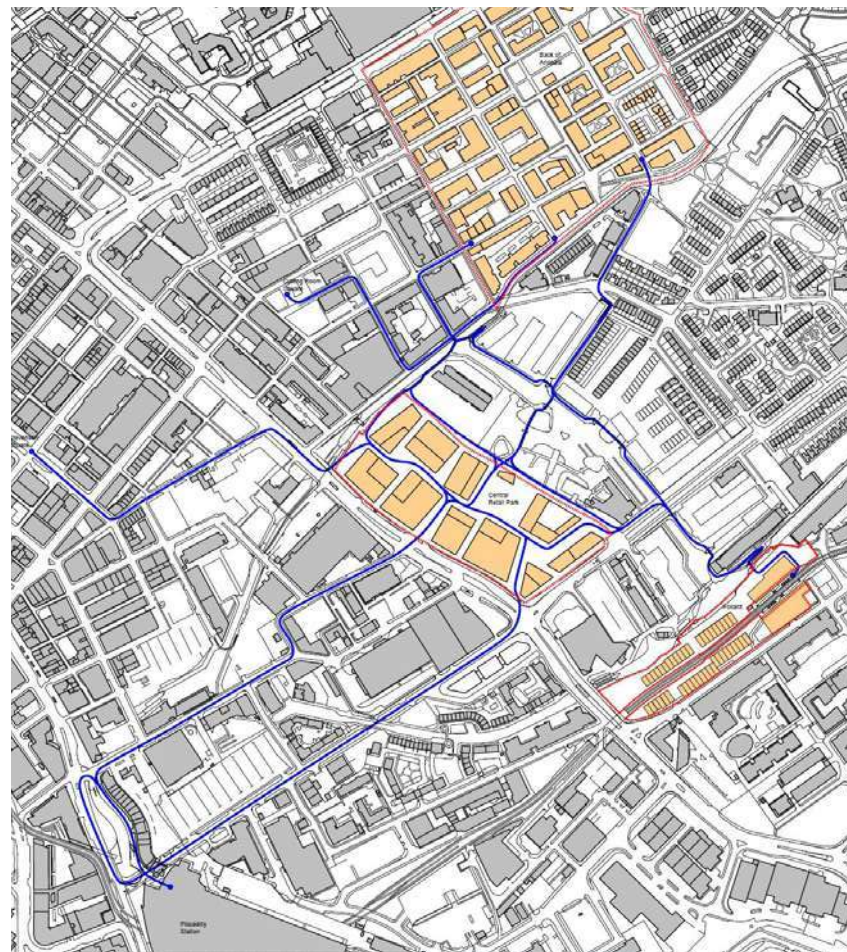
Two key constraints inform the response:

- The fixed site entry points from G.A.S., which are vital to respond to in order to connect the site to Piccadilly and the city centre.
- The position of Cotton Field Square, which again is located to respond to site entry points, and in particular the route through the site and onwards to New Islington and Back of Ancoats. The rest of the masterplan has been built up in response to this position, seeking to maximise activation to the square.

This combination leaves the square/park out of view from the key site entry points from Great Ancoats Street.



*Central Retail Park masterplan with key entry points from Great Ancoats Street and Cottonfield Square highlighted*



*Connectivity through the Central Retail Park proposal, shown in the context of Back of Ancoats and Pollard proposals*



### Approach 1



Amend buildings 7, 8 and 9 as shown to allow views of the park as you cross G.A.S. from Laystall Street.

#### Implications:

- Increase in size of building 7 floorplate
- Less efficient floorplate for building 8
- Reduction in size of building 9 floorplate
- Direct views into square from G.A.S. but square becomes less shielded from its noise and pollution

### Approach 2



Amend buildings 8 and 9 as shown to create a wider street between them which would facilitate views into the square from G.A.S.

#### Implications:

- Routes into square from key entry points off G.A.S. become narrower
- Reduction in size of building 9 floorplate
- Direct views into square from G.A.S. but square becomes less shielded from its noise and pollution

### Approach 3



Amend buildings 9 and 10 as shown to allow views of the park as you cross G.A.S. from Store Street.

#### Implications:

- Reduction in size of building 9 floorplate, which also becomes a less efficient shape
- Increase in size of building 10 floorplate (plinth of the tower)
- Direct views into square from G.A.S. but square becomes less shielded from its noise and pollution

### Approach 4



Rethink the landscaping to put more emphasis on the idea of pulling the green of the park through the square and out to G.A.S.

#### Implications:

- Efficient commercial floorplates retained
- Offers potential to better connect the park and square to G.A.S. within a single identity
- Pedestrian friendly square shielded from noise and pollution of G.A.S.



