

Manchester Square FAQs

Theme	FAQ
Pedestrians	<p>1. What improvements will there be for pedestrians?</p> <p>Manchester Square currently offers a poor pedestrian environment with wide crossings and a narrow inner pavement, which is difficult to access due to parked vehicles. These pedestrian conditions are hazardous especially for the elderly and people with disabilities.</p> <p>The proposed improvements to crossing points, the widening of pavements and the pedestrianisation of the northern space, would reduce crossing distances, improve sight lines and provide more pavement space to allow safer movement around the area.</p> <p>A solution to ‘curve off’ the outer corners of the square, to increase this pavement space was initially considered, but this solution would significantly reduce the parking provision which is valued by local residents.</p> <p>Following engagement with stakeholders, the project team is also considering pedestrian improvements for the Duke Street junction and how these could be incorporated. This is not part of this consultation however.</p>
Pedestrians	<p>2. Will there be new pedestrian crossings?</p> <p>Work to improve the crossing points and reduce the crossing distances mean that with the relatively low pedestrian and vehicular traffic, pedestrian crossings are not necessary in Manchester Square. This will also protect the character of the square. As part of the work, the carriageway will be raised, creating a more accessible environment for pedestrians.</p>
Cycling	<p>3. How will these proposals support cycling?</p> <p>A dedicated eastbound cycle route will be included around the northern perimeter of the square. Westbound cyclists will continue to travel around the southern perimeter of the square as they do now.</p> <p>Westminster City Council is considering a wider cycling strategy which includes a cycle route via Upper Berkley Street and Manchester Square to be delivered as part of future Oxford Street District proposals. This route is preferred to a route via George Street, as it provides a quieter traffic environment.</p> <p>The works to Manchester Square would complement the wider cycling strategy, by providing a dedicated cycle route around the top of the square, to encourage people to travel more sustainably.</p> <p>New cycle stands will also be installed in the area.</p>
Cycling	<p>4. What other options for cycling routes through Manchester Square have been considered?</p> <p>The project team have explored other options for cyclists such as a contraflow facility around the southern side of the square, or a more carriageway-like treatment through the closed northern area. However, the proposed new cycling arrangement was deemed preferable as it avoids significant loss of parking bays.</p>

	<p>The proposals involve cyclists using a separate cycle carriageway, allowing cyclists and pedestrians to be effectively separated through the physical design, thereby minimising conflict and maximising safety. This is an arrangement that has been successful in other areas of London including in the City of London or Walthamstow.</p>
Sustainable Transport	<p>5. How will the proposals promote sustainable transport? The proposals for Manchester Square will create a better environment for both walking and cycling. Manchester Square also benefits from being highly accessible by public transport (London Underground and bus) and in the near future will be a short walk from the Elizabeth line.</p>
Parking	<p>6. How will the proposals affect parking in the area? A number of 'pay by phone' parking bays in the north of the square will need to be relocated. Overall, the number of 'pay by phone' bays will be reduced to better reflect demand, with some bays being relocated on neighbouring streets, and only a small number remaining in the square.</p> <p>There will be no net loss of residential parking bays proposed through the scheme, the location of residential parking bays will be adjusted to continue to meet the demand within the square, whilst also addressing the demand on neighbouring streets.</p>
Traffic Displacement	<p>7. How will the work reduce the number of vehicles in the square? Traffic surveys tell us the flow of traffic in the northern section of the square is very light during peak hours, only around two cars a minute would be displaced by the changes to the square.</p> <p>Detailed traffic modelling carried out shows we do not expect all the displaced traffic to follow one alternative route. We anticipate a proportion of the displaced vehicles to choose an alternative route earlier in their journey, avoiding the area altogether, and leading to reduction in traffic in the immediate area.</p>
Air Quality	<p>8. Will the proposals have an impact on air quality? Parts of Westminster are widely regarded as having poor air quality, mainly due to its location in the heart of London. As a high priority for the council, Westminster's Air Quality Action Plan (2019-2024) and the Climate Emergency Action Plan are closely interlinked, and provide considerable opportunity for eliminating local sources of emissions and improving air quality.</p> <p>This scheme forms part of a set of network proposals that have been monitored by Westminster City Council to provide an overall improvement to air quality across the District by reducing emissions from traffic.</p> <p>The scheme will be one of the first public realm schemes to be procured under the council's new environmental agenda with a view to minimising new embodied carbon.</p> <p>The council's sustainability ambitions are not limited to carbon mitigations and the scheme performs well across a range of health, wellbeing and sustainability measures, much due to the introduction of new greening and seating in the new public space and the encouragement of sustainable transport such as walking and cycling</p>

	<p>Our contractor, MCJV will operate hybrid vehicles which make use of electric motors to reduce the reliance on diesel engines and when deploying plant will strive to provide solutions with low energy consumption and reduced CO2 emissions.</p>
Heritage	<p>9. How will the improvements support the heritage of Manchester Square? The proposals are similar to those implemented at Buckingham Palace, which have proved hugely successful in enabling a better appreciation of the Palace.</p> <p>The proposals have been developed through a detailed study of the historic ‘plan-form’ and landscape relationship between Manchester Square and Hertford House (home to The Wallace Collection). The design unifies Hertford House and the gardens as one set-piece, through two symmetrical approaches lined by ‘parterre’, that is, an ornamental arrangement.</p> <p>The soft landscape design, developed to respect the Georgian setting of the square, has been informed by a study of the existing planting in Manchester Square Gardens.</p> <p>The Manchester Square proposals impact stretches of the public highway, but no listed buildings directly. Westminster City Council’s Planning and Conservation Department have been consulted, and support the proposals, and have also confirmed there are no implications in relation to the London Squares Preservation Act (1931).</p>
Day-to-Day Management of the Space	<p>10. How will the space be managed and maintained? The project partners (Westminster City Council, The Portman Estate and The Baker Street Quarter Partnership) are committed to ensuring the space is managed properly on a day-to-day basis. The draft street management plan includes CCTV, response patrols including overnight, as well as additional cleansing and maintenance.</p>
Anti-Social behaviour	<p>11. How can these works discourage anti-social behaviour in the area? The project partners (Westminster City Council, The Portman Estate and The Baker Street Quarter Partnership) are committed to providing enhanced management of the space and a draft Management Plan for the proposed new space includes enhanced security linking 24-hour CCTV coverage with both daytime patrols and overnight patrols/response to address and improve issues currently being experienced by the residents on the square.</p> <p>Design will also play an important role in dissuading bedding-down and misuse of the park benches and reducing the areas appeal to skateboarders.</p>
Design	<p>12. Will the design and quality of materials be of a high standard? High-quality public realm materials will be used throughout the scheme, replacing the damaged and tired paving materials around the Square to improve the overall setting.</p>

	The proposed design for Manchester Square would use the Westminster Way palette of materials which are being used in other parts of the borough, and can therefore be replaced easily.
Safety Consideration	<p>13. What are the safety considerations of more traffic using George Street?</p> <p>It is anticipated that the traffic impact on George Street would be relatively low as the displaced traffic would use a number of alternative routes.</p> <p>A significant number of the accidents on George Street involve cyclists. We believe encouraging cyclists to use Manchester Square a parallel route is a better solution for improving safety.</p> <p>Following engagement with stakeholders, the project team is considering road safety improvements to the Spanish Place / George Street junction. These do not form part of this consultation.</p>
Green Space	<p>14. Why can't the gardens be publicly accessible?</p> <p>The gardens are private property and therefore not public open space. The aim of this project is to develop more public space for people to enjoy in a setting surrounded by the greenery of the gardens and heritage of Hertford House – home of The Wallace Collection</p>
Consultation	<p>15. How can I let the project team know my views?</p> <p>We are keen to hear your thoughts and / or questions on the proposals. You can email the team at stakeholderteam@murphycareyiv.co.uk. The consultation closes on 3 December 2021.</p>
Consultation	<p>16. Have you already been engaging with local stakeholders?</p> <p>The project team have been engaging with and listening to neighbours and interested stakeholders throughout the development of this project.</p>
Proposed Start Date	<p>17. When are the works likely to start?</p> <p>Work could commence in March 2022.</p>
Proposed End Date	<p>18. When are the works likely to be completed?</p> <p>We anticipate the main works in the square could be completed in early Autumn 2022.</p>
Further Information	<p>19. Where can I find out more information?</p> <p>Further information can be found on the Oxford Street District website osd.london</p>