

Piccadilly

Manchester's Piccadilly encompasses the mainline station, surrounding canal basins and extends towards Piccadilly Gardens, all of which are undergoing major redevelopment and renewal to present a new face to the city. New build projects include a major multi-storey office development that has recently been completed on the southwest part of Piccadilly Gardens and a Japanese style pavilion by the famous Japanese architect Tadao Ando.

Gateway House

Piccadilly, 1969

Architect[s]: [R. Siefert & Partners](#)

Area[s]: [Piccadilly](#)

Theme[s]: [1960's Modern](#)

A 500 feet (175 metre) long lazy 'S', this building sweeps up Piccadilly Station Approach providing a striking modern image appropriate for the move by British Rail away from steam to diesel and electric and the concurrent corporate re-branding by Sir Misha Black and others. Anodised aluminium curtain walling and standard glazing units produce a dramatic façade of continuous horizontal ribbons, acting as a datum against the falling ground level towards Ducie Street. The ends of the building are articulated by a full height cleft, emphasising the idea of the scheme as a continuous ribbon, the offices over forming a canopy for pedestrians and retail accommodation at ground level. The recent refurbishment of the station has resulted in the addition of an overwrought 'landmark' mast structure by Downs and Variava (2002) that clashes with the restraint of the main building. The station concourse has been rebuilt by BDP Architects (2002) to meet the demands of the 21st century.

London Road Fire Station

London Road, 1906

Architect[s]: [Woodhouse, Willoughby & Langham](#)

Area[s]: [Piccadilly](#)

Theme[s]: [Grade II Listed](#) [Manchester Edwardian](#)

Housing a fire station, police station and coroner's court (still in operation), this buff terracotta and red brick building fills an entire triangular block. The central space can be viewed through the main gates off London Road, revealing an institutional courtyard used for drills overlooked by several storeys of tenement balconies and the fire training tower. The complex functional programme of the building, including gymnasium, library, stables, a bank and flats for over 40 firemen, policemen and families is housed behind Baroque façades common to the period. Encrusted with years of grime, the building presents a romantic silhouette and frequent proposals for conversion to hotel use have failed to materialise. The completeness of the surviving ensemble is due to its occupation until the 1980s.

Malmaison Hotel

London Street, 1905

Architect[s]: [Darby Associates](#) [J.W.Beaumont](#)

Area[s]: [Piccadilly](#)

Theme[s]: [Bars and Cocktail Lounges](#) [Contemporary Interiors](#) [Grade II Listed](#) [Manchester Edwardian](#)

This fine Edwardian façade was narrowly saved from demolition in the late 1980s and in its new guise as part of the Malmaison Hotel continues to greet visitors as they arrive at Piccadilly Station. The green terracotta base supports six storeys of turn-of-the-century swagger. Cream terracotta bays pierce a layered brick surface, combining with an elaborate roofline of gables and a turret on the angled corner. The new extension is far from timid, with its own glazed tower and canopied entrance, while the rear elevation tries to imitate the exuberance of the highly original colour scheme by means of a flat panelled surface. A particularly noteworthy feature of the original building (and entirely typical of its date) is the fenestration treatment of the staircase, with staggered windows and diaper patterns in a shallow arched vertical frame.

Manchester Metrolink

Bury – Altrincham - Eccles, 1992

Architect[s]: [GMPTE](#)

Area[s]: [Piccadilly](#)

Theme[s]: [Regeneration](#)

The 26-kilometre Metrolink begins in Altrincham, the affluent suburb south of the city, and runs along Railtrack lines until the G-MEX stop. Then it switches to purpose-built tracks laid in the road, taking the trams into the heart of the city, to Piccadilly mainline station or north to Bury. Stops are frequent and passengers' needs are catered for with carriage flooring at the same height as the platforms and designated areas for wheelchair users and those with prams. Murano shelters, designed by a subsidiary of JC Decaux, the French company, have been used, providing adequate shelter for passengers waiting on the platforms. Fares are competitive - tickets must be bought before travelling. Phase 2 - from Manchester through to Eccles in Salford - opens up a vital corridor, linking the city to Salford Quays and beyond, and providing easy access to Dimplington shopping centre and The Lowry. If successful, many more routes are planned for the Metrolink, providing an extensive tram network for Manchester, and an integrated public transportation system unrivalled anywhere in the UK.

Piccadilly Pavilion

Piccadilly Gardens, 2002

Architect[s]: [Tadao Ando](#)

Area[s]: [Piccadilly](#)

Theme[s]: [Contemporary Buildings](#)

In June 1997 the City Council adopted the Piccadilly Development and Investment Framework and designated Piccadilly as a regeneration area. The key to unlocking the area's development and associated employment potential lies in delivering regeneration schemes on three focal sites: Piccadilly Gardens, Piccadilly Station and the Rochdale Canal Basin at Dale Street.

In Piccadilly Gardens, Tadao Ando's curving white pavilion brings a touch of his serene calm to the bustling centre of the city - and screens the gardens from the horrors of Piccadilly Plaza behind. Until recently a sunken, traffic-choked island, Piccadilly Gardens is set to become a vital part of the city centre, helped by the fact that for once the designers have not tried to restore it to some Victorian original but have created that rarest of beasts, a modern urban garden.

Piccadilly Gardens

Piccadilly, 2002

Architect[s]: [EDAW](#)

Area[s]: [Piccadilly](#)

Theme[s]: [Civic Regeneration](#) [Urban Spaces and Parks](#)

EDAW were chosen to redesign Piccadilly Gardens after an international design competition. They worked with a team led by ARUP Engineers including Chapman Robinson Architects, lighting designer Peter Fink and Cost Consultants DLE.

The most dynamic element of the new gardens is a large elliptical fountain. From a tiled black granite disk surrounded by a ring of mist, 180 computer controlled foam jets rise and fall in a 'water dance.' Coloured lighting forms an integrated part of the water and light display.

Taken in entirety Piccadilly Gardens comprises bold landscape forms enclosing a large central lawn that forms a new and vibrant focus for the city centre. After almost two years in the making, it may be argued that Manchester now boasts a public open space to rival the best civic spaces in the world.

Piccadilly Plaza

Piccadilly Gardens, 1965

Architect[s]: [Covell Matthews & Partners](#)

Area[s]: [Piccadilly](#)

Theme[s]: [1960's Modern](#)

The imagery of solid state technology is found concretised in the cladding to Sunley Tower, the tallest of the three blocks arranged on a two level shopping podium. The technological theme was continued in the exotic pagoda like hyperbolic paraboloid roof of the now demolished Bernard House skewed at 45° to the plan and the Europe's largest concrete cantilever for the foyer of the Piccadilly Hotel. The hotel projects prow like over Portland Street, envisaged at the time of design as an urban motorway. The unabashed use of sculptural forms is continued by the spiral car ramp to the hotel foyer and underground car park and pyramidal canopies over the hotel restaurant. The scheme was intended to operate as an integrated element to the two level decks covering the city centre. Ironically the proximity of a major transport interchange, Piccadilly Bus Station has meant the podium never worked as intended, blighted by noise and diesel fumes. The current refurbishment by Leslie Jones Architects (ongoing since 2000) destroys the original tripartite composition. Bernard House has been replaced with a commercial tower that fails to achieve the sculptural integrity of the other scheme elements, its weak asymmetric design adopting a contemporary 'business park' language. At podium level the grain of the original composition has been coarsened without addressing the strategic problem of the building's relationship to the street.

Rodwell Tower / 111 Piccadilly

Piccadilly, 1966

Architect[s]: [Douglas Stephen and Partners](#)

Area[s]: [Piccadilly](#)

Theme[s]: [1960's Modern](#)

Technically interesting in that this building spans the Rochdale Canal sixteen storeys of tower sit above a two storey podium. The language of large scaled planar concrete is carried straight from the tower into the podium without articulation. The tower reads as vertically expressive structural elements encasing aggressively horizontal trays of floor and strip glazing. Perhaps making reference to the work of Louis Khan the scheme forms a muscular counterpart to its neighbour, the slinky Gateway House.

Rutherford House

34 George Street, 1967

Architect[s]: [Ministry Of Public Buildings & Works](#)

Area[s]: [Piccadilly](#)

Theme[s]: [1960's Modern](#)

Sitting above the A-Bomb proof telephone exchange Guardian this building demonstrates a sophisticated and controlled design aesthetic. Referring to the work of Italian Rationalist Terragni the primary elevation to George Street carefully manipulates plane and grid to express the activities of the offices and the building's framed structure. At the buildings base the civic façade of reconstituted stone and large areas of glazing to contrasts with large service openings to the building's rear.

S & J Watts Warehouse – Britannia Hotel

35 – 47 Portland Street, 1851

Architect[s]: [Traviss & Mangnall](#)

Area[s]: [Piccadilly](#)

Theme[s]: [Grade II Listed](#) [Late Georgian and Victorian](#) [Warehouses](#)

Manchester's most grandiose textile warehouse innovates the Italian palazzo model through its use of a different architectural style for each floor. Using 27,000 square feet of glass, 40,000 cubic feet of timber, 5,600 tons of sandstone and 700 tons of iron, the massive and ornately decorated structure still dominates Portland Street. Most dramatic are the four pavilions of the top-most floor. Here the combination of the rose windows and the exuberant skyline reflect the commercial optimism that produced the building. Its subsequent conversion to a hotel in the 1980s seems entirely appropriate.