

Please cite the Published Version

Kanellopoulou, Evgenia , Ntounis, Nikolaos  and Millington, Steven  (2025) Managing and navigating Manchester's Privately Owned Public Spaces: Understanding publicness. Journal of Urban Management. ISSN 2476-4698

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jum.2025.07.001>

Publisher: Elsevier

Version: Published Version

Downloaded from: <https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/640774/>

Usage rights:  [Creative Commons: Attribution 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Additional Information: This is an author accepted manuscript of a forthcoming article that will be published in Journal of Urban Management, by Elsevier.

Enquiries:

If you have questions about this document, contact openresearch@mmu.ac.uk. Please include the URL of the record in e-space. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our Take Down policy (available from <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/library/using-the-library/policies-and-guidelines>)

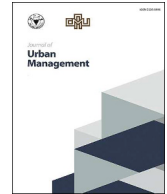
HOSTED BY



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Urban Management

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jum

Managing and navigating Manchester's Privately Owned Public Spaces: Understanding publicness

Evgenia (Jenny) Kanellopoulou^a, Nikos Ntounis^{b,*}, Steve Millington^b

^a Manchester Law School, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK

^b Institute of Place Management, Department of Marketing, International Business and Tourism, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Privately owned public spaces
Publicness
Place management
Legal geography
Manchester

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the processes of understanding publicness in the management of Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS), in the context of a rapidly developing city in the UK (Manchester). By adopting a pluralistic approach that applies legal geography in place management literature in the context of POPS, we explore the intricacies of managing these spaces from the perspective of estate managers. Taking an 'outside-in' perspective to the complex question of publicness, we highlight how estate managers navigate such complexity through their day-to-day operations and present their important role in foregrounding the everyday and mundane in the regulatory, lived, managerial, and experiential dimensions of POPS.

1. Introduction

The blurring of the lines between public and private space is well documented in academic accounts of contemporary urban development under conditions of neoliberal governance (Harvey, 2012; Kohn, 2004; Madanipour, 2003), with research particularly concerned about the emergence of POPS (privately owned public spaces), often dismissed as pseudo-public spaces. POPS may have originated within mid-20th century US cities but are progressively becoming a feature of 21st century urban regeneration in the UK (Garrett, 2017) and beyond the West (Jian et al., 2024).

POPS are generative of multiple concerns about social equality and rights to city, not only within spatial planning research, but also expanding into urban studies, architecture, and a wealth of legal literature dedicated to the doctrinal and socio-spatial dimensions of POPS. These include legal geographic and land law perspectives that critique the nuances of the public/private divide (Page, 2021; Montgomery, 2013; Layard, 2010 inter alia). Meeting various degrees of approval, authors provide evidence of 'the decline of publicness' (Leclercq et al., 2020; Wang, 2018), addressing the nuanced layers of ownership behind these places. Pervading this literature is a concern; freely accessible public space is contracting, as an undernourished local state steps away from place stewardship, raising serious questions about equitable access to open or recreational space in urban environments. Whilst not discounting this overarching concern, Von Hoffman (2022) draws attention to the fragmented, complex and evolving nature of hyperlocal government, whereas Carmona (2015) suggests POPS can represent the publicisation of private space instead. Furthermore, Noszczyk et al. (2022) argue that an appreciation of access to public space in all its forms became much more vital during the Covid-19 pandemic. With access to public space at a premium, therefore, it is timely to revisit the role of POPS, which for some communities might be the only open space they can use.

This article is part of a special issue entitled: Managing (for) the Public published in Journal of Urban Management.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: j.kanellopoulou@mmu.ac.uk (E.(J.) Kanellopoulou), N.Ntounis@mmu.ac.uk (N. Ntounis), s.millington@mmu.ac.uk (S. Millington).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jum.2025.07.001>

Received 30 September 2024; Received in revised form 20 May 2025; Accepted 2 July 2025

Available online xxxx

2226-5856/© 2025 The Authors. Published by Elsevier B.V. on behalf of Zhejiang University and Chinese Association of Urban Management. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Please cite this article as: Kanellopoulou, E. et al., Managing and navigating Manchester's Privately Owned Public Spaces: Understanding publicness, Journal of Urban Management, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jum.2025.07.001>

Whilst acknowledging the labyrinth of academic and practical implications that constitute the nature of the POPS debate, this contribution chooses to offer a novel perspective to understanding this type of public space, by focusing on POPS' management, visibility, actual use, and day-to-day operations. Our contribution therefore builds on three place management and legal geographic tenets that help us tackle the ownership debate's infinite loop:

- a. Whilst acknowledging how entrepreneurial modes of governance shape contemporary urban development (Harvey, 1989; Molotch, 1976; Turok, 2009), we extend the focus of study to include the overlooked prosaic operational management of POPS. We argue, therefore, place management is crucial to understanding how daily POP managers oscillate between managerial, promotional and commercial decisions. We echo Graham and Thrift's (2007) call to locate everyday practices of maintenance and management more centrally within urban management studies, to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the daily activities and operations that sustain the public realm.
- b. We focus on the place's *public purpose* as opposed to ownership status (Page, 2022; Massey, 1980; Christophers, 2018) to examine the marketisation of the public realm. In this context we often refer to the public realm as an offering, defined by the American Marketing Association as products and services according to their perceived value as attached by customers, clients, partners, and society at large.
- c. Adopting a pluralistic approach, we read *place* as manifested through its constitutional nexus of interlocking rights, obligations, and soft policy approaches, including those deriving from ownership and fear of liability. In this sense, we approach *place management* as a place-based and porous activity that allows intelligence and input from the location (Millington et al., 2015) when it comes to the daily maintenance, upkeep, and stewardship of the public realm.

At the same time, we address Carol Rose's (2022, xvii) plea to adopt an 'outside-in' approach and subvert the dominant exclusionary perspective (property), by embracing a range of interests, opinions, values, and subtleties that emerge from the management of the public realm (cf Ntounis et al., 2020). We wish to offer a grounded appreciation of the POPS debate, to circumnavigate the multiple layers of legal and ethical dichotomies that tend to foreclose the field of inquiry, by bringing the practice of public realm management directly into the picture. We examine the public space offering and the multiple ways POPS are used in the everyday context of the rapidly developing city of Manchester, UK. Acknowledging the importance of the mundane and the potentialities arising from it (Binnie et al., 2007), we focus on three different sites in Manchester city centre, which demonstrate varying degrees of publicness in their management and experience approaches: First Street, Great Northern, and Mayfield Park.

In the next section we highlight the value of reviewing POPS through a place management lens to foreground the lived everyday of working, visiting, and experiencing the publicness on offer. We argue that this becomes possible by adopting a plural property perspective, which bypasses the legal binaries (private/public) that foreclose the POPS debate, and by widening the discussion on publicness and participation in the public realm beyond ownership. We bring this to life through a legal geographic approach, which combines our positionalities as researchers, visitors and residents, with desk-based research and analysis. We thus demonstrate that understanding the public role of POPS requires a pragmatic, grounded, and multi-dimensional review, which appreciates the coproduction of publicness by various stakeholders and space users. To this end, we offer place management as a novel, viable solution.

2. Literature review

2.1. POPS from a place management prism

While POPS are essentially hybrid spaces (Dunlop et al., 2023; Lee, 2022; Nissen, 2008) whose function relies on multiple agreements between the public sector, private owners/the market, and the public (Lee, 2022), issues of ownership and control can remain unclear to the public. For example, Leclercq (2018) argues that the separation of the 'public' and the 'private' in the context of legal ownership does not provide sufficient clarification during the design, implementation and management phases of these spaces. Moreover, POPS management is perceived as a contentious endeavour, if it is seen to overtly restrict the movements or activities of the public.

Indeed, literature on POPS typically draws attention to a managerial preoccupation with security and liability over public use and value (Bennett and Gibbeson, 2010; Németh, 2009), emphasising the lack of transparency on what activity and behaviour is permissible upon entering a POP. Weaver (2019) highlights how POPS can enclose human behaviour and undermine citizenship, if conditions of using the space for certain activities are not clear. Additionally, managers of POPS may also need to navigate the over-regulated and formulaic nature of their areas, a phenomenon Sendra and Sennett (2020) refer to as 'caging'. In essence, the main challenge for managers is to sustain the vitality of POPS, all while complying with various regulatory requirements (Huang and Franck, 2018), meeting the expectations of powerful stakeholders, such as property asset holders and developers (Manifesty et al., 2022), and safeguarding intrinsic qualities of publicness - such as safety, respect, pleasurability, and the right to roam and mix socially (Jacobs, 1961; Mehta, 2014; Sennett, 2018). We argue that this necessitates a place management approach that considers POPS as open-ended systems, to accommodate multiple combinations of physical, economic and social connectivity.

A way forward is to understand what good place management entails from the perspective of publicness. As a practice, place management can be understood as a coordinated, area-based approach that utilises the potential of multiple actors to make a place better. This is achieved via a series of operational day-to-day and strategic long-term interventions that are developed with input from within the location (van den Berg and Braun, 1999; Millington et al., 2015; Ntounis et al., 2020). Such arrangements are typically contractual and aim to implement solutions regarding maintenance, placemaking, place marketing and long-term place development.

Addressing the issue of publicness, [de Magalhães and Trigo \(2017\)](#) argue that these arrangements are defined by several stakeholders, who employ their regulatory powers and capacity to affect day-to-day management, and, consequently, shape both the nature and extent of access and use of space. As such, there are different levels of publicness associated with varying understandings of openness and accountability. Whereas it is not the scope of this paper to further delve into the contractual arrangements of POPS, it is important to foreground these complexities, in order to project a different type of publicness that stems from the day-to-day interactions of people and estate managers; one that becomes clearer through the place management lens.

2.2. Publicisation and publicness in POPS

Defining publicness from a place management lens in POPS is therefore closely linked to the publicisation of private space, and the resulting, ever-increasing responsibilities and tensions that follow ([Carmona, 2022](#)). In this context, publicisation has both descriptive and normative components ([Braithwaite, 2008](#); [Schindler, 2018](#)), including the process of privately owned property being made available for public use and the requirement for private actors to increasingly commit to public goals and deliver goods and services. These are constantly negotiated between POPS' managers and the public, within the physical activities and experiences of public life ([Terzi and Tonnelat, 2017](#)). Several academic discourses have navigated these pragmatic complexities, exploring the blurred boundaries of public and private spaces, highlighting issues of ownership, control, permitted uses, and available features or amenities ([de Magalhães, 2010](#); [Dunlop et al., 2023](#); [Langstraat and Van Melik, 2013](#); [Németh and Schmidt, 2011](#); [Varna and Tiesdell, 2010](#); [Wang and Chen, 2018](#)). While exploring these dimensions is important, it can also blur the boundaries of what is considered truly public in the context of POPS, partly due to a general lack of understanding about what POPS are ([Lee, 2022](#)).

Additionally, studies that adopt a people-oriented focus have also examined the lived aspects of publicness - such as accessibility, spontaneity, and sociability - emphasising how the public interprets and experiences space ([Li et al., 2022](#); [Zhu, 2023](#)). Current debates centre on balancing the rights and responsibilities of property developers and managers in designing and curating the public realm. Discussion also focuses on improving access and use of space ([Carmona, 2022](#)), increasing public awareness ([Lee, 2022](#)), and fostering more inclusive, attractive environments through greater involvement of key stakeholders, such as communities, local authorities, businesses, and the third sector ([Dunlop et al., 2023](#)). Therefore, to move beyond these negotiations and nuances of publicness, necessitates a different understanding of publicisation within the context of POPS. As [Lee and Scholten \(2024\)](#) suggest, publicisation in POPS entails various stages of co-production between the public and private sectors and the wider public. The management of POPS can then be understood as a shared responsibility between all relevant actors. This resonates with the practice of place management, as it necessitates a symbiotic relationship between all stakeholders for the effective planning, design, placemaking and day-to-day maintenance of a place ([Coca-Stefaniak and Bagaen, 2013](#)). A place management approach can, therefore, help clarify the public role of POPS, by encouraging a place-based partnerships perspective, as well as the use of shared knowledge to improve and maintain public spaces.

3. Investigating the public purpose of POPS; plural property as a methodology

The previous sections highlight the importance of framing an understanding of publicisation and publicness in POPS based on input and knowledge from within the location. Further, it is essential to examine how publicisation and publicness can be facilitated in practice, to ensure that POPS fulfil a public purpose - fundamental to the ways in which public and private actors interact with citizens ([Mazzucato, 2019](#)). A plural property ([Anker, 2024](#)) approach can help reconcile common (mis)understandings around access and use, which can damage people's connection, rootedness and belonging in a city ([Gwendolyn Ross, 2024](#)). To this end, [Essert \(2022, p. 101\)](#) suggests that a starting point to understanding public purpose in the context of POPS, is that public space and private property are not necessarily contrasting categories. Rather, what matters is how these spaces are open to the public and 'designed to act like a public park or square', and what conditions and rules are imposed by local government to effectively communicate their openness. [Essert \(2022\)](#) contends such impositions need to fall within a permissible public purpose, which in the POPS context can serve to safeguard their vitality and excitement. This poses a question of what is deemed as a "reasonable access rule" ([Gray and Gray, 2004](#)) within the public offering element of POP if thought as a spatially defined unit ([Layard, 2010](#)).

Plural property builds on the concept of legal pluralism, as encountered in legal geographic studies, to explain the coexistence/overlapping of multiple legal orderings within a single sovereign state ([Merry, 1988](#)). From there, we borrow the broadened appreciation of what constitutes (here, property) law beyond state or formal law, to encompass the approaches, policies, and priorities associated with a given place, including informal customary practices, as understood by multiple actors. From any grounded and individualised point of view, the nexus of policies, behaviours, and approaches that are (or should be) followed to successfully manage or experience a given place, constitute as much law as, for example, state legislation or council byelaws. With respect to property law in particular, plural property is a way of understanding the day-to-day dynamics in POPS, as emerging from distinct public-private (public - manager) perspectives, without necessarily having to prioritise the formal rights deriving from ownership over the rights of the public. Adopting a plural property perspective lays a level playing field vis-a-vis our daily interactions anchoring the place where publicness and ownership meet. Unpacking property as a plural construct helps us revisit and critique the provision of public space in the city as a microcosm of conflicting rights and guides us to adopt the outsiders' perspective with respect to the *offering* that the public realm is in the neoliberal city context.

3.1. Wading through the day-to-day of the public realm

Our engagement with the Manchester POPS started in September 2023. As experts on place management, we were invited to run a workshop on the development of best practice standards for public realm stewardship and management of POPS. The workshop was attended by more than 20 participants including developers, estate managers, local government officers, the Business Improvement District (City-Co), and placemaking professionals. The workshop was used as a foundational exercise towards understanding local place-based problems (Steadman and Millington, 2022) and concerns regarding day-to-day management of POPS. The workshop also allowed us to establish an ongoing research partnership with participants, to facilitate the mapping and concord of their duties and broader tasks with respect to managing the public realm. Between June–July 2024, we participated in two additional focus groups where estate managers provided information about their everyday tasks on site, and three meetings-on-the-go in July with estate managers and other members of staff, shadowing their activities and daily tasks.

Reflection on the workshop and the priorities discussed with participants, enabled us to appreciate the qualities of day-to-day operation and management during the three site visits, when we felt more readily equipped to locate signs of managerial practice imprinted into the landscape of POPS. We also took with us into the field our own meanings and experiences, as both ordinary residents who routinely encounter Manchester's POPS as part of daily life, and as professional researchers with a particular interest in public space management. Our positionalities enabled an 'outside-in' perspective and a more engaged autoethnographic practice through which to uncover and experience the varied levels of publicness on offer. Subsequently, to understand perceived/experienced and managed publicness and its interstitial nature, we adopted a walking narrative approach, focusing on legal and regulatory manifestations in the built environment (Kanellopoulou et al., 2024). Our walks foreground the lived experience of everyday open settings, adding depth and context to the workshops, which in contrast took place indoors in a nearby office complex. Importantly, the act of walking fostered an embodied connection to place, as the sensory and emotional experience of moving through each locale step-by-step revealed multiple layers of experiential qualities (Wunderlich, 2008).

We visited all three sites within the space of a week to ensure our experiences as members of the public remained comparable and still vivid in memory. We started each visit by walking and experiencing each study site, tracing out the landscape and parameters of each POP, noting their structural and material qualities, design features, and services on offer, to develop an overarching perspective of how other people used and traversed the space. Our attention, perhaps by heightened by our academic professional capacity, was drawn to visible signs setting the rules and prohibitions emplaced by the asset managers. We began to chart how ourselves and others subtly negotiated the spatially constitutional nature of legal text inscribed in multiple street-level instructions.

Finally, walking with and shadowing POPS managers and their staff afforded another perspective, providing insight into how those in charge observe public interaction, and more importantly, how they perform their roles along an axis of compliance, safeguarding, and public stewardship. During the walks, we let the managers lead the routes and the discussion, affording them space to more freely describe their roles and responsibilities without recourse pre-determined questions. This way, we were able to listen to the concerns, priorities, and tasks comprising management roles directly from them, allowing us to appreciate the differences in the *making* of the city's public realm, operating under the umbrella term POPS (Zhang and He, 2020; Dimmer, 2012, *inter alia*).

In summary, a pluralistic approach to methodological design, enabled us to combine our prior experience of the study sites, with our academic knowledge on the topic of POPS (outside-in), and ultimately, with the perspective of the place's stewards (inside-out). This way, we do not regard our positionalities, subjectivities and findings as fragmented; rather, we view them as part of the same journey into the production of knowledge (Rose, 1997), which enables our combined experiences to transcend sites, as we move across the different POPS (Middleton, 2010; Kusenbach, 2003). Consequently, this approach allows us to "*celebrate the complex, kaleidoscopic nature of a place*" (Warnaby and Medway, 2013, p. 356) and its various facets beyond the public-private dichotomies that prescribe the formal status of POPS.

4. Findings

4.1. What do estate managers think of their POPS?

Our current interest in Manchester's POPS necessitates a shared understanding of how these spaces can uphold a high standard of day-to-day management, whilst tackling common issues without jeopardising their publicness. Indeed, one of the main goals of the workshop was to explore how estate managers can overcome the barriers that may constitute POPS as exclusionary and inaccessible spaces, without compromising standards of custodianship and legibility that are necessary to safeguard the interests of POPS' various stakeholders (including private companies and their employees, traders, residents/visitors, local government, and the police).

Table 1

Summary of estate managers' perceptions of good public realm, themed under Mehta (2014) and Li et al. (2022).

Dimensions of Publicness	Estate Managers' Perception of a Good Public Realm
Accessibility	Ease of access for the many; Openness; Good connectivity; Flat, open, good use of space
Inclusivity	Communal; Vibrant and community-led; Diverse and multifunctional space; The meaning of place (akin to <i>genius loci</i> 'spirit of place')
Safety & Comfort	Safe space; No vehicle traffic; Cleanliness; Sleek and comfortable; Protected from weather; Presence of amenities and necessities
Pleasurability	Green/Blue space; Atmosphere/energy; Convivial/Thriving; Place of interest
Meaningful Activities	Play space; Programme of events and activities; Presence of buildings and businesses; Historical Context; Place of Interest

Therefore, one important workshop exercise was to understand what estate managers think makes a good public realm.

Regarding estate managers' appetite to collaborate with each other to "*define what the fundamentals of managing POPS are and getting a framework where everyone can operate in*" (quote from estate manager during meeting), the exercise was a good icebreaker for participants to start this discussion. Additionally, it gave us a benchmark from which we tailored our walking meetings to highlight perceived vs managed publicness. The main points are presented in [Table 1](#) and themed under categories for evaluating publicness. Intriguingly, during the exercise the participants placed more emphasis on meaningful experiences, comfort and sensory pleasure ([Mehta, 2014](#)) as the main factors for a flourishing public realm. Less emphasis was placed on the mechanisms and the regulations that are needed to maintain the right balance of publicness in POPS ([Li et al., 2022](#)). Contrastingly, in the next sections we highlight how the focus on the managed publicness of POPS becomes prominent when walking in these sites, as it challenges the seamless transition from the public to the private.

4.2. Visiting and managing publicisation: a three-site guided walk in manchester

Equipped with 'insider knowledge' from the workshops and our own prior experiences with the studied POPS, we examine the publicisation and management of the public realm in the three case studies within Manchester's city centre presented earlier. POPS, as they are commonly understood and defined in academic literature, are a relatively new phenomenon in Manchester. The first, and first stop in our study, Great Northern, was established in 2003, with another seven constructed before 2025. Overall, our chosen sites demonstrate varying levels of publicness/openness in design: a publicly accessible square fronting a larger conversion/listed building surrounded by vibrant nighttime economy provision (Great Northern); a versatile regeneration project/neighbourhood that expands Manchester's centre (First Street); and lastly, a purpose-built park, located on the fringe of the city centre (Mayfield Park). Although all three are designated as POPS, their management, visitability and ownership status varies. The public offering at each site is quite different, with each site generating specific managerial operations. Considered together, however, they represent multiple nuances associated with what constitutes a privately owned public space to begin with.

4.3. Great Northern

The site of Great Northern is a complex comprising a Grade II-listed former Great Northern Railway Warehouse, a new-build retail and leisure complex, and external square, originally entitled the Courtyard. Unsurprisingly the site and its environs have been subject to considerable transformation over two decades. Our site visits reveal a public square bordered by multiple entertainment and leisure outlets, including highly popular venues, clubs and restaurants. An amphitheatre ([Fig. 1](#)) was once the dominant feature of the public square, but its public purpose never truly materialised, leading to criticism from the municipal authority:

"The Great Northern Square has under-performed as a public space. The *amphitheatre space has rarely functioned as it was intended*" ([Manchester City Council, 2015](#)).

Much of the amphitheatre was filled in and replaced with a children's sandpit and play area, following recommendations outlined in Manchester City Council's Strategic Regeneration Plan. This called for the redevelopment of the Great Northern as "*a space that brings people together, which encourages social interaction and a sense of community [...] It should be comfortable, safe, welcoming and accessible to all*" ([Deloitte, 2017](#), p. 3). We should reveal here the public realm element is on a long-term lease from Manchester City Council, which enables a much stronger public voice in the management of the POP than might otherwise be expected.

During the day, the play area has become a popular attraction for families with children, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic,



Fig. 1. Great Northern's amphitheatre, source: Authors.

mirroring our own experiences as carers and residents seeking out one of the few outdoor play areas in the city centre. The spot is also popular at lunchtimes as place to sit for office workers but far as the visitor is concerned, the Great Northern's public offering is the remains of amphitheatrical seating around the sandpit and a dedicated space for families. Approaching the sandpit, however, signs dictating the use of place are prominently located, indicating the enclosure of the public realm by ownership-derived rules (Fig. 2). Yet the greatest prohibition to the enjoyment of the public realm does not come overtly prescriptive rules and regulations, but from a poor design which continues to limit the utility of the Great Northern. Put simply, one might imagine a space designed for children to play might also be accommodative of buggies and prams, and other wheeled access. It becomes clear that as an add-on to the initial design, the amphitheatre-as-sandpit, was never designed with accessibility in mind, even though it has *de facto* become one of the few child-friendly spaces in Manchester city centre. As a result, the public realm is in fact doubly foreclosed, by both regulation and materiality.

There is however a significant diurnal quality of the Great Northern, as after dark the space transitions from child-friendly to a more predominantly adult environment. Surrounded by busy late-night bars and eateries, this part of Manchester has a vibrant nighttime economy. Now the seating is taken up by recovering revellers and late-night diners feasting on takeaways from the food truck situated on site. It is clear nobody observes the prominent signs prohibiting the consumption of alcohol on the amphitheatre's steps. We doubt this rule is effectively enforced during the day, never mind at night. As such, the site operates in tandem with the surrounding streets and subject to a wider metropolitan timetable. As far as the site manager is concerned, their daily experience of managing and maintaining the site is dominated by activity to safely facilitate its night-time occupation.

The manager reveals that whilst on site “security aims to be discreet ... police presence is often visible at night”. With excessive alcohol consumption and potential for violence (including a recent fatality) a real concern security becomes a matter of greater priority for the Great Northern necessitating closer cooperation with public police services. The manager explains the role involves maintaining a direct line of communication with Greater Manchester Police. With respect to safeguarding the premises, security personnel are equipped with bodycams, whereas emergency response services are provided with physical access to the square. Nevertheless, separating the privately-owned public realm from the drinking public while abiding by the principles of discreet surveillance, is a challenge for the site manager wishing to enforce the rules on alcoholic consumption. Unsurprisingly the estate manager's daily practice is primarily focused on health and safety assessment and concerned with safeguarding the owners from liability. Here, managing the space has become a largely a performative activity of hierarchical compliance, where visitability and openness of the amphitheatre is not a priority. Instead, the diurnal nature of Great Northern and Peter Street necessitates “ongoing strategies to ‘deal’ with [this place]” (Dunn, 2020, p. 156), guided by broader compliance and box-ticking exercise. Whereas one might imagine a dedicated team engaged with programming and activation of the Great Northern with a range of placemaking interventions through the year, it appears the role of the management team is essentially reduced to one of asset protection and liability safeguarding.

The Great Northern, however, is subject to redevelopment which will replace the amphitheatre and play area with a more conventional design blueprint. (Marketing Manchester, 2023). This may address another recommendation of the 2017 Strategic Regeneration Plan, “to improve the accessibility and functionality of the public space” (Deloitte, 2017, p. 55). Proposals offer a tantalising vision of “a green oasis for the city with spaces designed for work, rest and play” (Trilogy, 2022), draw attention to the persuasive power of speculative hyper-real renditions of urban futures (Deegan, 2012). Much of the Great Northern's commercial offer will change, with much of the leisure offer replaced by high density housing, raising questions about the publicness of the space, with a lurking concern future signage will dictate “for residential use only”. Consequently, the Great Northern's public realm is provisional, awaiting



Fig. 2. Sign in Great Northern, “No Alcohol to be consumed in the amphitheatre” Source: Authors.

redevelopment and demonstrating the clash between ownership of the land and its usage, with the current plans shifting *publicness* to other parts of the site, subjecting it to an ‘allowance’ or ‘trade-off’ vis-a-vis the forthcoming residential investment.

The Great Northern demonstrates the hitherto under-explored overlaid temporal and rhythmic dimensions of POPS, which reveals their fragility and instability. In one sense, the exacerbated diurnal quality of the Great Northern renders its publicness as open and fluid, whilst its privateness might shrivel, as the borders separating two realms become highly permeable during nocturnal hours. [Sendra and Sennett \(2020\)](#) might celebrate this temporary publicisation as an urban form generative of the Open City, but over the decades POPS are also subject to the vagaries of the property market, hence the Great Northern’s public qualities are insignificant in the long-term plans of developers. One might argue, therefore, durability be added to the list of qualities of publicness. We leave the site, contemplating on the liminality of the public space, caught between day and nighttime use, between an adult and child space, as well as between the previous, current and forthcoming redevelopment plans, invisible to the passing-by and visiting public.

4.4. First Street

A 10-min walk from Great Northern, First Street offers “one of Manchester’s most important sustainable development and regeneration opportunities [...] a vibrant new place on the edge of the City centre, catering for the city’s expansion needs, and creating a dynamic and high-profile new entrance sequence into the City” ([First Street Manchester, 2024](#)). Established in 2015 First Street is becoming a destination for both office workers and cultural visitors. The public realm is defined by ‘First Street’ a paved pedestrian corridor connecting the North and South parts of the development. First Street North is anchored by HOME, Manchester’s premier independent cinema, theatre, and art gallery which ensures the site remains activate during the evening and across the weekend. Opposite is No.1 Tony Wilson Place, a large office constructed in the 1990s and before the current regeneration framework. Between these two buildings is First Street Central, a public square, which anchors several eateries and bars, a gym, indoor golf attraction, hotel, student accommodation, multistorey carpark, and a convenience store.

Ultimately, the First Street partnership aspires to create an independent ‘neighbourhood’ and capitalise on an emergent community of young professionals, civil servants and university students who will be housed in their new developments. These ambitions are being realised through the expansion of First Street South ([SimpsonHaugh, 2024](#)), and the simultaneous positioning of the First Street brand and marketability to international investors and pension funds. At the time of the visit, notable construction was underway on this southern plot, with several office complexes, three large residential schemes, and a food hall all at various at stages of completion.

Our afternoon visit begins underneath a Victorian railway viaduct which marks the boundary between the space and city centre, and the beginning of the First Street pedestrian corridor. Here, the entrance is marked by in-situ advertising to highlight what people can do in First Street (marketed as Summer at First) and is decorated with elaborate flower arrangements for the Manchester Flower Festival, a cross-city initiative organised by the Manchester Business Improvement District (BID). The public square is lively with office workers on their lunch break and other visitors enjoying the day. This is a familiar place for our research team, an area often used for post-work drinks and events.

Many were sat on wooden garden benches that double-up as a canvas for artists - the latest temporary placemaking intervention as part of a wider programme to programme the space. Others sit on deck chairs positioned in front of large outdoor TV screen showing sedate sports. The public realm, however, accommodates more permanent placemaking features, the most notable being the Friedrich

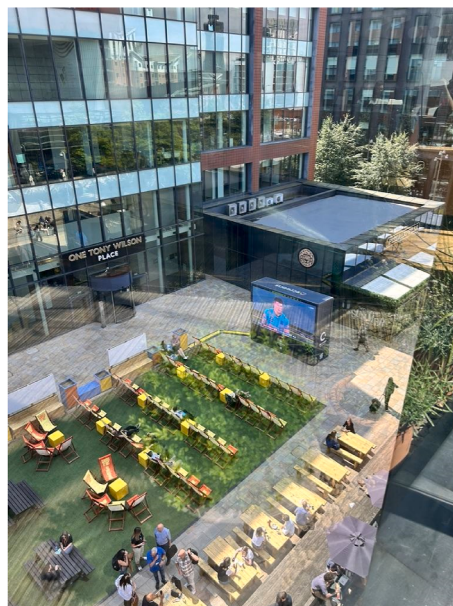


Fig. 3. View of Tony Wilson Place from the HOME terrace, First Street (photo: authors).

Engels' statue, rescued from Ukraine and deposited here in 2017, to gaze over Manchester's emergent landscape of glass skyscrapers. Local historian and walking tour operator Jonathan Schofield (2017) suggests positioning Engels at a POPS can be “a focus for discussion over the relationship between private and public space” (Schofield, 2017), hence a feature Sendra and Sennett (2020) might describe as a ‘punctuated moment’.

Otherwise, First Street uses street-names to establish its connection to place; a well-rehearsed mechanism of place management to not only brand a place, but also to imprint symbolic meaning, inscribe identity and construct a related public-facing offering (Azaryahu, 2011; Light, 2013; Rusu, 2021). Hence, Tony Wilson Place (Fig. 3) is named after a local TV personality and the figure behind Factory Records and Hacienda nightclub. During our walk we learn Tony Wilson's family “insisted on naming it a place, and not a square”. Such measures reveal how placemaking has come to undergird First Street's publicisation through attempts to leverage historical and cultural authenticity as the basis of place attachment (Rose, 2017).

In contrast to Great Northern, at First Street we are met with a team of people, including a representative of the developers, the placemaking and experience officer, and the head of security, all representing the multiple dimensions to place management on First Street. Although First Street is not part of the BID, the First Street team reveal how they are members of an extended network which provides access to the latest opportunities to animate the public realm and draw on the BID event management expertise. The team talk about a range of place management activities, such as health and safety, diversity, women's night-life economy charter training, carbon literacy training, access to urban data, and advocacy/partnership meetings (CityCo, 2024). Indeed, throughout our walk, such initiatives were repeatedly highlighted as examples of a flexible, inclusive decision-making approach that starts with ‘discovery-led consultations’ with the commercial and business tenants of the estate. These consultations necessitate making great effort to ensure everyone is on the same page, as one of the managers highlights. For example, First Street has a non-legally binding Memorandum of Understanding in place that stipulates close cooperation and collaboration between occupiers and the management company to promote culture, connectivity and lifecycle carbon neutrality in the site. It appears, therefore, that First Street adheres to high standards of place management practice.

The vision for First Street is to become somewhere “... people come to enjoy more than just work, in a place that's easy to love. Culture, entertainment, and gastronomic delights, it's a place to nourish your mind, body and soul” (<https://www.firststreetmanchester.com/>).

Indeed, this matches our outsider experience as visitors and members of the public who frequent the on-site leisure and culture activities. Yet, despite the abundance of public realm provision, clearly the marketing and placemaking in First Street attempts to appeal to socio-demographic targets as opposed to a wider public. During the walk the management were explicit in their intentions support the requirements of paying tenants and “to keep the office workers here after 5pm”. At First Street therefore, we find yet another management team engaged in the familiar balancing act between measures to attract and retain visitors to underpin the site's commercial viability, and the normal safeguarding rules and regulation, we have come to expect in POPS. As opposed to our experience at Great Northern, however, during our walk-along at First Street, security is not mentioned unless prompted. Visible security presence remains discrete, yet we learn about the existence of cameras and a staffed security office located on site. Safety concerns mirror those of the broader urban fabric (e.g., disorderly conduct), whereas the head of security does not seem to remember any immediate incidents where intervention was required. However, occupiers' liability dictates the site remains free from danger to visitors, aligning with similar concerns expressed by the management at Great Northern. In both cases the public is regarded as a potential liability/litigant rather than as a direct recipient of ‘publicness’. Publicisation and publicness at in First Street therefore yield to the financial



Fig. 4. Mayfield Park's entrance, with a Park Ambassador in the background, Source: Authors.

vitality of the site.

We leave First Street acknowledging the clash between our outside localised experience and the ambitions of the developers and management team. In contrast to Great Northern, where the public realm is limited by design and conflicting usage, First Street prides itself in being part of the city's festive and cultural provision, and as a real and cohesive "neighbourhood". Hence, publicness for First Street is part of the marketing *offering*, reinforced via non-legally binding memoranda and tenets' frameworks that operate for the broader benefit of the site, yet not necessarily for the public per se, which is instead considered transient vis-a-vis the estate's commercial, cultural, and investment purpose.

4.5. Mayfield Park

In contrast to the predominantly hardened landscapes of Great Northern and First Street, Mayfield is a 6.5-acre park opened in 2022 as the first city-centre 'public' park for over 100 years (Mayfield Park, 2025). With 142 trees and 120,000 plants around reclaimed river front, the project has established an area of biodiversity on a polluted brownfield within walking distance of Manchester's main railway station. The park's design and commitment to sustainability have already been acknowledged with a Green Flag Award (Green Flag, 2024), honouring its good practice in the management of outdoor recreational space. The timing of this development may align with wider calls to establish and protect open space in cities in a post-pandemic context (Rodgers, 2020) or signal a return to Victorian philanthropic values which led to the establishment of public parks in British cities in the first place (O'Reilly, 2019). Nevertheless, Mayfield Park is only the first stage of a 24-acre strategic regeneration scheme which aims to extend the city-centre with new housing, office space, retail and leisure activity. Whereas the environmental benefits are clear, the consortium of public and private partners behind the development are explicit in their intentions:

"Integrating sustainable practices in the development of new spaces will make a significant impact on the local environment and community, enhancing quality of life and helping to attract long-term investment" (LCR Property, 2025)

The co-option of blue and green infrastructure by urban growth coalitions is well-established (Castree, 2008; Harvey, 1989), as is the well-rehearsed neoliberal policy lever of creating aesthetically pleasing green environments to replace degraded urban space for economic benefit (Lang and Rothenberg, 2016; While et al., 2004). Mayfield (Fig. 4) may become yet another example of sustainable urbanism, illustrating how blue and green infrastructure provision is becoming devolved to private property interests (Raco, 2005), or simply a temporary cipher within Manchester's international place branding strategy (McCann, 2013). With promises to be a 'true oasis' and a 'place for all', together with an emphasis on non-commercial usage and public access, however, Mayfield Park might be a POPS with a difference. Hence, the site became the third field of investigation, where we examine how design, visitability, and place management combine to comprise publicness as the (neoliberal) public offering.

We visited Mayfield Park at 10am, just after its opening. There are only a few other visitors, including a handful of locals enjoying a morning stroll and an elderly couple from London. The couple exclaim (perhaps in exaggeration) on the place's uniqueness and modern landscape: *"you can't find a park like that in London!"* Indeed, Mayfield Park runs the length of a now disused Victorian railway viaduct. Whereas these red-brick vestige of Manchester's industrial heyday might sharp contrast between hard and soft landscapes, here they resonate to create a serene environment. The Londoners join us as we meet with Mayfield Park's general manager, who is primarily in charge of its upkeep and security, and are interested in learning as much about the park as we were: *"in fact,"* explains the manager, *"this is part of our job ... me and the security guards, we don't call them security guards here, they rather are Park Ambassadors"* and they are tasked with safeguarding and security as much as they are with explaining the story of the park to its visitors. We learn how park ambassadors have received cultural training as part of their appointment procedures, to maintain a commitment to inclusivity. Hence it is not surprising to learn that Mayfield is frequented by Jewish and Muslim families, who appear to purposively visit this place, rather



Fig. 5. Family recreation at Mayfield Park, Source: Authors.

than other public parks in the city.

"Families feel safe, everyone is welcome here" explains our interlocutor, pointing out the public restrooms are designed with disability in mind. At the design stage the main concern was: *"can this be used by an adult disabled person?"* Indeed, the public restrooms next to the giant playframe are quite exemplary in their design, comprising automated soap dispensers with integrated water fountains and dryers, and ample of room to change. These can be used by all visitors with relative ease. Lastly, commercial activity within the park is regulated, with a permanent cafe and an ice-cream truck operating under contract with the owners: *"the ice cream truck pays rent during the summer months, but in the winter, nobody buys ice-cream ... they can stay on site for free."*

Mayfield Park appears to keep true to its public mission, whereby no member of the public is *prima facie* excluded, if they follow the park's rules. Indeed, Mayfield Park is adamant about monitoring and enforcing the rules, which are visibly located at the entrance gates. Regulations relate to responsible dog ownership, prohibition of alcohol, BBQs, and smoking. The first green space in Manchester to impose a smoking ban, Mayfield Park has remained smoke and vape-free since June 2023. Whilst this is explicitly displayed upon entry, we do witness the occasional visitor lighting up a cigarette: *"Park ambassadors will remind people of the rules ... most people don't actually know or paid attention to the non-smoking signs, but we have never had issues with non-compliance"*.

Yet, it is precisely this open and public character and mandate that inevitably blurs the proprietary lines associated with POPS. The decision to set and enforce property-derived rules, maintain constant (albeit subtle) surveillance, adopt a particular stance to commercial activity, regardless of how socially beneficent this maybe, are all decisions resting outside the local democratic process.

By creating a secure environment, where it seems people from all backgrounds feel safe lies at the heart of the park's open and public nature (Fig. 5). We discovered, however, security is the largest single expense raising concerns about the site's visibility, if jeopardised. The site manager feels this pressure daily. Whereas they experience the joy the park brings to the local communities and visitors, the precarity of the site's future remains a lurking presence as future financing is tied to the leveraging of estate fees from adjacent private-led development. One wonders how long Mayfield laudable commitments can be maintained, especially if the market conditions in which the scheme's future is dependent take a downturn, as is such with speculative urbanism (Leitner and Sheppard, 2023). Unfortunately, at the time of writing the wider development has stalled as the developers struggle to raise the necessary funds.

Indeed, the trade-off between the public offering and financial resilience has plagued Mayfield Park since its inception. Whereas the development costs were much less than anticipated, this was achieved through significant readjustments to the design, scaling back the space as it was conceived. Without the injection of £23 m of national government funding in 2020, it is unlikely the project would have been completed without state support. There is also little possibility, however, that the local municipality might take on the ownership of the park due to ongoing austerity measures in Britain, and even if it could, it is unlikely local government could maintain the same level of quality of access and publicness either. Herein lies the paradoxical nature of POPS in Manchester. As we leave the site, we agree that this sense of urgency has – luckily – yet to imprint on the actual park.

5. Conclusions and reflections

POPS in the UK are regarded with a large measure of scepticism, often bordering hostility and negativity, generative of an expectation that POPS denote spaces of exclusion (Dowdy, 2019). Under English law - which notoriously operates against the publicness of space (Layard, 2016) - POPS are regulated by private property rights, thus enjoying superior spatio-legal protection against any rights the public might have in relation to the same place. Recourse to a binary understanding of public/private property, however, overlooks how publicness in practice possesses fluid and dynamic qualities, which call for novel, pragmatic, and multi-dimensional approaches.

In this paper, therefore, we have begun to explore the more nuanced concepts of publicisation and publicness in POPS, accounting for the experiences of the places' custodians who are called to navigate their day-to-day activities. Our 'outside-in' approach, comprising walks, discussions, and close interactions with POPS' managers, reveals how the latter are embroiled with safeguarding the lived dimensions of publicness, encompassing accessibility, unplanned activity, sociability, and inclusiveness (Li et al., 2022). Such attributes align with commonly understanding conceptions of 'what makes a good public realm', as seen in our workshops. However, as our site visits demonstrate, these priorities are often restricted by the material and market conditions that limit what POPS managers can do. This precariousness prompts to consider durability as an additional dimension of publicness in Mehta (2014) and Li et al. (2022), aspiring to the preservation of the public-facing aspects of POPS.

Overall, we pay attention to the more prosaic day-to-day place management operations, particularly in relation to safety procedures and amenity provision, which are neglected in critical debates about POPS. While urban entrepreneurial strategies and related literature are often associated with the production of privatised and exclusionary urban spaces, our empirical findings suggest that the outcomes of such strategies are rather localised and place-contingent. This underscores the importance of place management theory and practice, which provide the tools and frameworks necessary to navigate the complex, context-specific public realm.

Indeed, the subtleties and nuances of managers' actions can lead our understanding of POPS to a more pragmatic position that necessitates a partnership-working ethos with respect to improving the *public offering* provision in the neoliberal city context. Our interactions with (and within) Manchester's POPS highlight the constant negotiation and dialogue that frames hyperlocal governance, and the 'balancing act' that these managers perform. In the shifting environment of POPS, a place-based partnership approach is therefore needed to develop a common understanding of minimum standards and localised approaches to safeguard publicness (cf Musso, 2022).

What was clear from our empirical engagement is that a place management ethos is evident in both the operational and strategic planning of Manchester POPS, but the local experience requires further unpacking to reflect the 'messy' realities of these spaces, and the external and internal complexities that stem from any associated legal dichotomies (private/public, owner/visitor). Indeed, our

research has highlighted that publicness is a fluid concept also in the estate managers' minds, affirming the need to adopt a plural property lens instead. Additionally, in all three cases, imminent long-term redevelopment plans pose big challenges to the already nuanced definition of the public offering, placing additional burden on estate managers to maintain a permissible public purpose (Essert, 2022), considering further marketisation of the city.

Based on these findings, further research on the daily operations of POPS from a managerial perspective can explore how their tasks and practices align with the main elements of place management (place maintenance, place marketing/branding, placemaking) (Parker, 2011), following a pluralistic-property lens that allows more direct input from the ground-up (Millington et al., 2015). Whereas the place-based focus of Manchester POPS is evident in the form of public-private partnerships consortia, arguably more input from the public and those in direct contact with the particular spaces, could benefit the next stages of the sites' development. As our paper shows, people on-the-ground can act as conduits or stewards between public and private interests, and they possess relevant knowledge and skills that are malleable based on their daily encounters with the space. Paying emphasis on such interstitial functions, operating between the more established and formalised property lines, can reveal how the flow of publicness operates in-between rights, uses, and place-hierarchies, and can truly carry meaning from and for the public. Foregrounding the everyday and the mundane can achieve exactly that.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Evgenia (Jenny) Kanellopoulou: Writing – review & editing, Visualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Conceptualization, Writing – original draft, Project administration, Investigation, Data curation. **Nikos Ntounis:** Writing – original draft, Project administration, Investigation, Data curation, Writing – review & editing, Visualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Steve Millington:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Investigation, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Conceptualization.

Conflict of interest

The authors report the following details of involvement in the subject matter of Managing Manchester's Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS):

- The authors were involved in discussions regarding a Manchester Charter of POPS and ran workshops for estate managers and the Manchester City Centre Management Company (CityCo Manchester), the main membership organisation representing businesses in the city.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Matt Davis, Emma James, and Alex King-Byatt for organising the workshops and supporting us during data collection.

References

- Anker, K. (2024). Plural property. In N. Graham, M. Davies, & L. Godden (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Property, Law and Society* (pp. 31–41). London and New York: Routledge.
- Azaryahu, M. (2011). The critical turn and beyond: The case of commemorative street naming. *ACME: An International Journal Critical Geographies.*, 10(1), 28–33.
- Bennett, L., & Gibbeson, C. (2010). Perceptions of occupiers' liability risk by estate managers: A case study of memorial safety in English cemeteries. *International Journal of Law in the Built Environment*, 2(1), 76–93.
- Binnie, J., Holloway, J., Millington, S., & Young, C. (2007). Mundane geographies: Alienation, potentialities, and practice. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 39(3), 515–520. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a39131>
- Braithwaite, J. (2008). *Regulatory Capitalism: How it Works, Ideas for Making it Work Better*. London: Edward Elgar.
- Carmona, M. (2015). Re-Theorising contemporary public space: A new narrative and a new normative. *Journal of urbanism. International Research Placemaking Urban Sustainability*, 8(4), 373–405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17549175.2014.909518>
- Carmona, M. (2022). The “public-isation” of private space – towards a charter of public space rights and responsibilities. *Journal of Urbanism*, 15(2), 133–164.
- Castree, N. (2008). Neoliberalising nature: The logics of deregulation and reregulation. *Environment and Planning A*, 40(1), 131–152.
- Christophers, B. (2018). *The New Enclosure: The Appropriation of Public Lands in the Neoliberal Britain*. London: Verso Books.
- CityCo. (2024). *CityCo Manchester 2023-2024 Membership Brochure*. CityCo. https://cityco.com/app/uploads/2024/01/CityCo_Membership-Brochure.pdf. (Accessed 15 July 2024).
- Coca-Stefaniak, J. A., & Bagaen, S. (2013). Strategic management for sustainable high street recovery. *Town and Country Planning*, 82(12), 532–537.
- de Magalhães, C. (2010). Public space and the contracting-out of publicness: A framework for analysis. *Journal of Urban Design*, 15(4), 559–574. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2010.502347>
- de Magalhães, C., & Trigo, S. F. (2017). ‘Clubification’ of urban public spaces? The withdrawal or the re-definition of the role of local government in the management of public spaces. *Journal of Urban Design*, 22(6), 738–756. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2017.1336059>
- Deegan, M. (2012). Revisualizing visual culture: The challenges of CGI architectural visions. In L. Hughes, M. H. Short, & A. Prescott (Eds.), *Revisualizing Visual culture* (pp. 217–234). London: Open Book Publishers.
- Deloitte. (2017). Great Northern, manchester central and castlefield quay strategic regeneration framework. https://www.manchester.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/27280/great_northern_manchester_central_and_castlefield_quay_srf_feb_2017.pdf. (Accessed 30 April 2025).
- Dimmer, C. (2012). Re-imagining public space: The vicissitudes of Japan's privately owned public spaces. In C. Brumann, & E. Schulz (Eds.), *Urban Spaces in Japan* (pp. 74–105). London and New York: Routledge.

- Dowdy, C. (2019). Privately owned public space: Does it matter who owns it? *Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors*. February 25 <https://www.rics.org/news-insights/privately-owned-public-space-does-it-matter-who-owns-it>. (Accessed 24 September 2024).
- Dunlop, A., Hübert, O., Aqel, L., Abdelilah, R., & Lee, D. (2023). How public are hybrid public spaces? Assessing publicness of privately owned public spaces in hamburg. *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking Urban Sustainability*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17549175.2023.2284221>
- Dunn, N. (2020). Place after Dark: Urban peripheries as alternative futures. In T. Edensor, A. Kalandides, & U. Kothari (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Place* (pp. 155–167). London: Routledge.
- Essert, C. (2022). The nature and value of public space (with some lessons from the pandemic). *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, 50(1), 61–103. <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/ulj/vol50/iss1/3/>.
- First Street Manchester. (2024). First street sustainability framework. Ask. Drivers Jonas Deloitte.
- Garrett, B. L. (2017). These squares are our streets: Be angry about the privatisation of public space. *The Guardian*. July 25 <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/jul/25/squares-angry-privatisation-public-space>. (Accessed 12 February 2024).
- Graham, S., & Thrift, N. (2007). Out of order: Understanding repair and maintenance. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 24(3), 1–25.
- Gray, K., & Gray, S. F. (2004). *Elements of Land Law* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Green Flag. (2024). 2,227 parks and green spaces across UK celebrate as 2024 Green Flag Award winners revealed. July 16 <https://www.greenflagaward.org/news/2-227-parks-and-green-spaces-across-uk-celebrate-as-2024-green-flag-award-winners-revealed/>. (Accessed 21 September 2024).
- Gwendolyn Ross, S. (2024). The mysterious case of the attacks against the Halifax public gardens: The enclosure of "common" property, public access to nature, and sustainability in the city. *Villanova Environmental Law Journal*, 35(2), 241–277. <https://digitalcommons.law.villanova.edu/elj/vol35/iss2/2>.
- Harvey, D. (1989). From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: The transformation in urban governance in late capitalism. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 71(1), 3–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/04353684.1989.11879583>
- Harvey, D. (2012). *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. London: Verso.
- Huang, T. S., & Franck, K. A. (2018). Let's meet at citicorp: Can privately owned public spaces be inclusive? *Journal of Urban Design*, 23(4), 499–517. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2018.1429214>
- Jacobs, J. (1961). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House.
- Jian, I. Y., Mo, K. H., Chen, P., Ye, W., Siu, K. W. M., & Chan, E. H. W. (2024). Navigating between private and public: Understanding publicness of public open spaces in private developments in Hong Kong. *Journal of Urban Management*, 13(4), 787–799.
- Kanellopoulou, E. J., Lalor, K., & Bennett, L. (2024). A legal walk of sheffield: Foregrounding the everyday presence of law in the city. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 17(2), 159–170. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPM-03-2024-0023>
- Kohn, M. (2004). *Brave New Neighborhoods, the Privatization of Public Space*. New York: Routledge.
- Kusenbach, M. (2003). Street phenomenology: The go-along as ethnographic research tool. *Ethnography*, 4(3), 455–485.
- Lang, S., & Rothenberg, J. (2016). Neoliberal urbanism, public space, and the greening of the growth machine: New York City's High Line park. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 49(8), 1743–1761. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X16677969> (Original work published 2017).
- Langstraat, F., & Van Melik, R. (2013). Challenging the 'end of public space': A comparative analysis of publicness in British and Dutch urban spaces. *Journal of Urban Design*, 18(3), 429–448. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2013.800451>
- Layard, A. (2010). Shopping in the public realm: A law of place. *Journal of Law and Society*, 37, 412–441. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40835511>.
- Layard, A. (2016). Public space: Property, lines, interruptions. *Journal of Law, Property, and Society*, 2. <http://alps.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/JLPS-2016-08-Layard.pdf>.
- LCR Property. (2025). How Manchester's Mayfield park is championing a sustainable approach to urban regeneration. *LCR Property*. <https://lcrproperty.co.uk/portfolio/the-mayfield-partnership/>. (Accessed 12 May 2025).
- Leclercq, E. (2018). Privatisation of the Production of Public Space. A+BE | *Architecture and the Built Environment*, 8(5), 1–384. <https://doi.org/10.7480/abe.2018.5.2009>.
- Leclercq, E., Pojani, D., & Van Bueren, E. (2020). Is public space privatisation always bad for the public? Mixed evidence from the United Kingdom. *Cities*, 100, Article 102649. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2020.102649>
- Lee, D. (2022). Whose space is privately owned public space? Exclusion, underuse and the lack of knowledge and awareness. *Urban Research & Practice*, 15(3), 366–380.
- Lee, D., & Scholten, N. (2024). Co-production of privately owned public space: Who, why, when, and how? *Urban Design International*, 29, 123–133. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41289-024-00239-2>
- Leitner, H., & Sheppard, E. (2023). Unleashing speculative urbanism: Speculation and urban transformations. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 55(2), 359–366. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X231151945>(Original work published 2023).
- Li, J., Dang, A., & Song, Y. (2022). Defining the ideal public space: A perspective from the publicness. *Journal of Urban Management*, 11(4), 479–487.
- Light, D. (2013). Tourism and toponym: Commodifying and consuming place names. *Tourism Geographies*, 16(1), 141–156.
- Madanipour, A. (2003). *Public and Private Spaces of the City*. London: Routledge.
- Manchester City Council. (2015). *Great Northern Complex - Report to the Executive*. Manchester City Council, 2 December <https://democracy.manchester.gov.uk/Data/Executive/20151202/Agenda/8GreatNorthernComplex.pdf>. (Accessed 30 April 2025).
- Manifesty, O. R., Min, B., & Kim, S. (2022). Maximizing public and private satisfaction for a better privately owned public space: The case of yeouido business District. *Urban Science*, 6(4), 84.
- Marketing Manchester. (2023). Planning approved for great northern reinvention. *Marketing Manchester*. March 3 <https://invest.marketingmanchester.com/manchester-at-mipim/news/planning-approved-for-great-northern-reinvention>. (Accessed 30 April 2025).
- Massey, D. (1980). The patterns of landownership and its implications for policy. *Built Environment*, 6, 263–271.
- Mazzucato, M. (2019). What is public value and why does it matter. In *High Streets and Town Centres: Adaptive Strategies*. Mayor of London: Good Growth by Design). https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ggbd_high_streets_adaptive_strategies_web_compressed_0.pdf.
- McCann, E. (2013). Policy Boosterism, Policy Mobilities, and the Extrospective City. *Urban Geography*, 34(1), 5–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2013.778627>.
- Mehta, V. (2014). Evaluating public space. *Journal of Urban Design*, 19(1), 53–88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2013.854698>
- Merry, S. E. (1988). Legal pluralism. *Law & Society Review*, 22(5), 869–896. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3053638>
- Middleton, J. (2010). Sense and the city: Exploring the embodied geographies of urban walking. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 11(6), 575–596.
- Millington, S. D., Ntounis, N., Parker, C., & Quin, S. (2015). *Multifunctional centres: A sustainable role for town and city centres*. Manchester: Institute of Place Management.
- Molotch, H. (1976). The city as a growth machine: Toward a political economy of place. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(2), 309–332. <https://doi.org/10.1086/226311>
- Montgomery, C. (2013). *Happy City: Transforming Our Lives through Urban Design*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Musso, J. (2022). Power and legitimacy in place government ecosystems: A comparative analysis. In J. S. Vey, & N. Starring (Eds.), *Hyperlocal: place governance in a fragmented world* (pp. 103–126). Washington: Brookings Institute.
- Németh, J. (2009). Defining a public: The management of privately owned public space. *Urban Studies*, 46(11), 2463–2490.
- Németh, J., & Schmidt, S. (2011). The privatization of public space: Modeling and measuring publicness. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 38(1), 5–23. <https://doi.org/10.1068/b36057>
- Nissen, S. (2008). Urban transformation from public and private space to spaces of hybrid character. *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review*, 44(6), 1129–1149. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41132666>.
- Noszczyk, T., Gorzelany, J., Kukulska-Kozielec, A., & Hernik, J. (2022). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the importance of urban green spaces to the public. *Land Use Policy*, 113, Article 105925.

- Ntounis, N., Medway, D., & Parker, C. (2020). Managing places. In T. Edensor, A. Kalandides, & U. Kothari (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Place* (pp. 335–345). London: Routledge.
- O'Reilly, C. A. (2019). *The Greening of the City: Urban Parks and Public Leisure, 1840-1939*. London: Routledge.
- Page, J. (2021). *Public Property, Law and Society: Owning, Belonging, Connecting in the Public Realm*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Page, J. (2022). Public property. In N. Graham, M. Davies, & L. Godden (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Property, Law and Society* (pp. 362–373). London and New York: Routledge.
- Park, M. (2025). A place for all. <https://mayfieldpark.com>. (Accessed 12 May 2025).
- Parker, C. (2011). *Place Management : An International Review*. Institute of Place Management. Manchester Metropolitan University.
- Raco, M. (2005). Sustainable development, rolled-out neoliberalism and sustainable communities. *Antipode*, 37(2), 324–347.
- Rodgers, C. (2020). Nourishing and protecting our urban 'green' space in a post-pandemic world. *Environmental Law Review*, 22(3), 165–169.
- Rose, G. (1997). Situating knowledges: Positionality, reflexivity and other tactics. *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(3), 305–320.
- Rose, M. L. (2017). *Women Walking Manchester: Desire Lines Through the 'Original Modern' city*. PhD Thesis. UK: University of Sheffield <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/19889/1/Morag%20Rose%20PhD%20Thesis%20Women%20Walking%20Manchester%20Final%20Version.pdf>. (Accessed 22 July 2024).
- Rose, C. (2022). Foreword: Property from the outside in. In N. Graham, M. Davies, & L. Godden (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Property, Law and Society*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Rusu, M. S. (2021). Street names through sociological lenses: Place governance and political semiotics. *Social Change Review*, 19(1), 1–17.
- Schindler, S. (2018). The "publicization" of private space. *Iowa Law Review*, 103(3), 1093–1153.
- Schofield, J. (2017). The return of Friedrich Engels - right or wrong?. *Manchester Confidential*. July 24 <https://confidentials.com/manchester/friedrich-engels-HOME-first-street-manchester-was-his-return-right-or-wrong>. (Accessed 17 July 2024).
- Sendra, P., & Sennett, R. (2020). *Designing Disorder: Experiments and Disruptions in the City*. London: Verso Books.
- Sennett, R. (2018). *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City*. London: Penguin Books.
- SimpsonHaugh. (2024). *First Street South*. SimpsonHaugh. <https://simpsonhaugh.com/projects/first-street-south>. (Accessed 18 July 2024).
- Steadman, C., & Millington, S. (2022). Researching with places: on using engaged scholarship in marketing. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 25(5), 646–661.
- Terzi, C., & Tonnelat, S. (2017). The publicization of public space. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 49(3), 519–536.
- Trilogy. (2022). Trilogy launch public consultation on plans for Manchester's Great Northern Warehouse. *Trilogy*. September 6 <https://www.trilogyproperty.com/news-1/2022/9/6/trilogy-launch-public-consultation-on-plans-for-manchesters-great-northern-warehouse>. (Accessed 30 April 2025).
- Turok, I. (2009). The distinctive city: Pitfalls in the pursuit of differential advantage. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 41(1), 13–30. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a37379>
- van den Berg, L., & Braun, E. (1999). Urban competitiveness, marketing and the need for organising capacity. *Urban Studies*, 36(5–6), 987–999. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0042098993312>
- Varna, G., & Tiesdell, S. (2010). Assessing the publicness of public space: The star model of publicness. *Journal of Urban Design*, 15(4), 575–598. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2010.502350>
- Von Hoffman, A. (2022). Improvising and innovating: A history of place governance in North America. In J. S. Vey, & N. Starring (Eds.), *Hyperlocal: Place governance in a fragmented world* (pp. 19–63). Washington: Brookings Institute.
- Wang, Y. (2018). A critique of the socio-spatial debate and the publicness of urban space. *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift - Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 72(3), 161–175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00291951.2018.1470564>
- Wang, Y., & Chen, J. (2018). Does the rise of pseudo-public spaces lead to the 'end of public space' in large Chinese cities? Evidence from Shanghai and chongqing. *Urban Design International*, 23, 215–235. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41289-018-0064-1>
- Warnaby, G., & Medway, D. (2013). What about the 'place' in place marketing? *Marketing Theory*, 13(3), 345–363.
- Weaver, T. P. R. (2019). The new enclosures: London, New York city, Philadelphia, and the transformation of public space. *New Political Science*, 41(3), 423–442. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07393148.2019.1642723>
- While, A., Jonas, A. E., & Gibbs, D. (2004). The environment and the entrepreneurial city: Searching for the urban 'sustainability fix' in Manchester and Leeds. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 28(3), 549–569.
- Wunderlich, F. M. (2008). Walking and rhythmicity: Sensing urban space. *Journal of Urban Design*, 13(1), 125–139.
- Zhang, X., & He, Y. (2020). What makes public space public? The chaos of public space definitions and a new epistemological approach. *Administration & Society*, 52(5), 749–770.
- Zhu, J. (2023). Public space and its publicness in people-oriented urban regeneration: A case study of shanghai. *Journal of Urban Affairs*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2023.2279597>