CyanLines

100 miles of nature in the city

CL5 / ROUTE GUIDE

Mayfield Park to Etihad Stadium

Ashton Canal and Medlock Valley explorer

The CL5 circular route begins at Piccadilly station and follows the Ashton Canal through New Islington and Holt Town. It meaders down the Ashton canal, once the lifeblood of its industrial neighbours, and takes in the impressive Etihad Campus - home to Manchester City Football Club and Co-op Live Arena one of the biggest music venues in Europe. Along the way, look out for artworks by Stanly Chos and Akse P9's 'Love Letter to Manchester'.

The route will loop you back towards the city centre, joining the existing CityLink, before heading through Medlock Valley to the award-winning and thriving Mayfield Park. Then route ends back at Piccadilly station. It is expected the first phase of improvement works to this route will begin in 2027.

Practical information

Distance	Start point	End point
6.93 km	Piccadilly Station M60 7RA	Piccadilly Station M1 2BN
	what3words: ///happy.react.drives	what3words: ///plant.hours.race

Notices

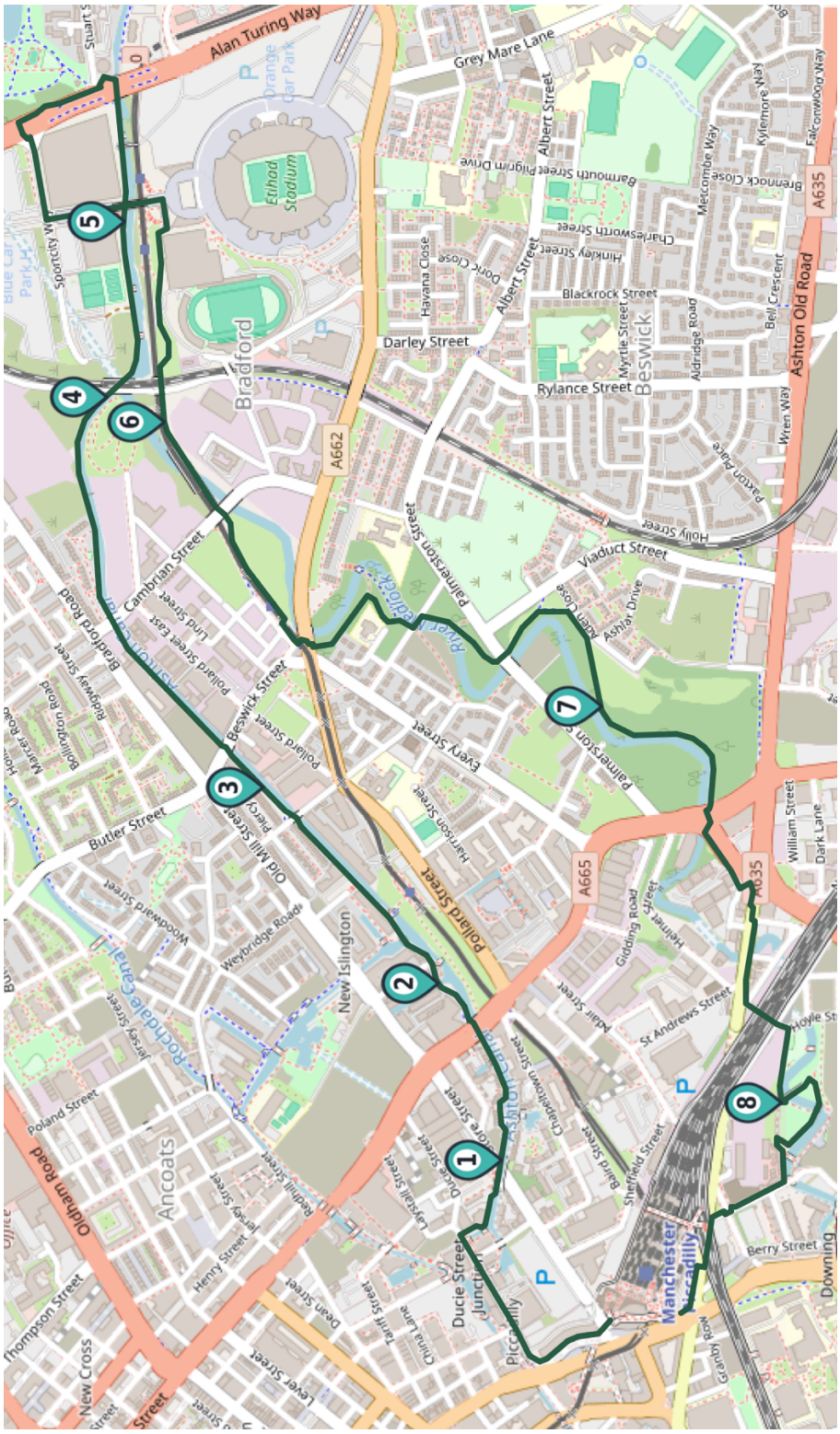
The route is as accessible as currently possible for a wide variety of users. There is currently a considerable amount of construction work on the Etihad campus, and there may be temporary diversions - but in the main the route forward will be apparent.

Accessibility

The route has been designed to be step and barrier free where possible. It's worth noting the following:

- There are some uneven or worn surfaces that may affect comfort or stability for some users.
- In the autumn there are some slippery leaf fall sections on Limekiln Lane.
- There are two short uphill sections on the Ashton Canal towpath on the approach to the Etihad Campus.

Route map



Map data © Openstreetmap contributors

1 Ashton Canal ‘Skew Arch’ Aqueduct

2 Britner Bridge

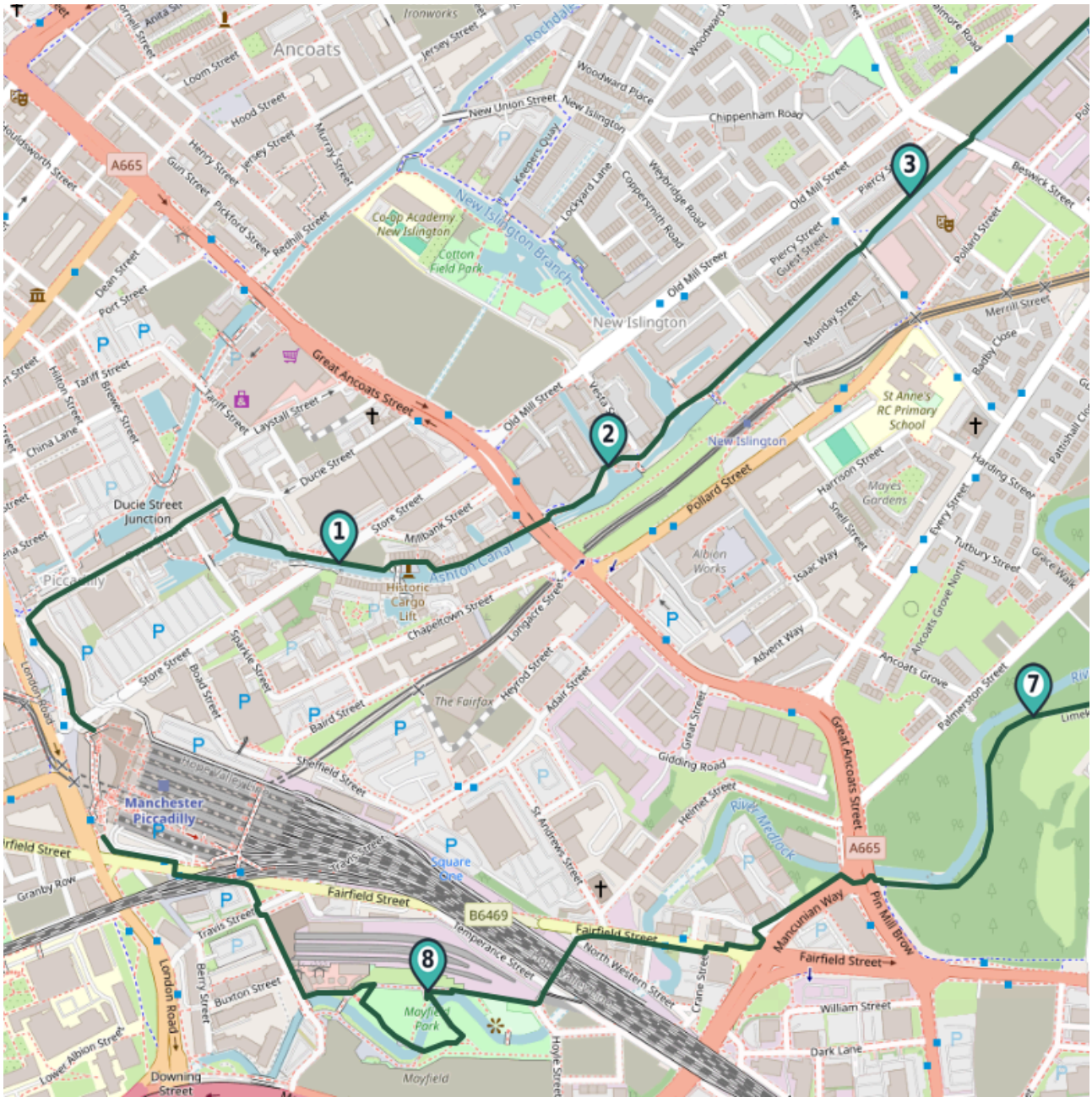
3 Hope Mill

4 The Seven Wonders

5 Etihad Stadium and Co-op Live

6 A love letter to Manchester

Route detail



Map data © Openstreetmap contributors

Route detail



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CL5 / ROUTE HIGHLIGHTS



1 Ashton Canal ‘Skew Arch’ Aqueduct

This aqueduct might not look that dramatic when you're walking across it, but it was an important feat of early canal engineering. Built in 1797 by engineer Benjamin Outram, its unusual skewed arch allowed the Ashton Canal to cross Shooter’s Brook at an acute angle – one of the earliest aqueducts of its kind in the UK and probably Europe. The brook later became so polluted that it was culverted, with Store Street built over it.



2 Britner Bridge

Look closely at the sandstone parapet of this bridge and you’ll find the name ‘Britner’ carved into it. Members of the Britner family grew up in a now-demolished cottage here, while their grandparents lived in the Grade II Listed lock keeper’s cottage across the road. Paul Britner cheekily carved the family name into the soft sandstone – and it remains there today, a small but lasting reminder of the last working lock keepers on the canal.



3 Hope Mill

Look across the canal to the south-eastern side and you'll see a series of former mills built along its banks. The Ashton Canal was once the lifeblood of local industry, bringing raw materials to the mills and carrying finished goods away. Hope Mill is one of those survivors. Today, its industrial past has given way to a new creative life, home to Hope Mill Theatre, AWOL Studios and Comme Ca Art.



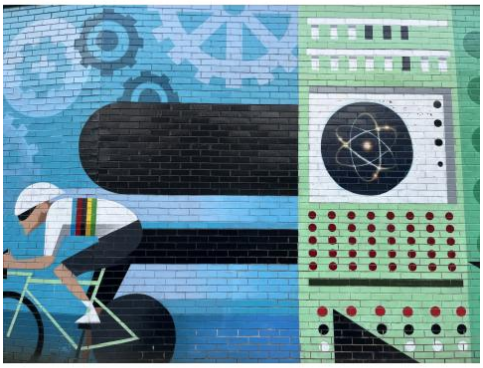
4 The Seven Wonders

Just before Lock 4 of the Ashton Canal there's an exciting combination of three elements of infrastructure and one of nature. The Ashton Canal crosses high above the River Medlock on the Beswick Aqueduct, while road and railway bridges add further layers overhead. . There's even a small waterfall below. This remarkable meeting of canal, river, road, rail and waterfall is part of an area known locally as the 'Seven Wonders'. It's also at the heart of plans for a greener Holt Town, with new homes, green spaces and a new river park.



5 Etihad Stadium and Co-op Live

From the canal, you get a great view of two of Manchester's biggest venues: the 23,500-capacity Co-op Live and the Etihad Stadium, now expanded to hold more than 60,000 people. Between them, the new Medlock Square includes the 400-room Medlock hotel and a growing mix of places to eat, meet and visit. It's quite a transformation for an area where coal was once mined 900 metres beneath your feet.



6 A love letter to Manchester

Among the artworks on this part of the Cyan Lines route, which skirts the Metrolink line, is Stanley Chow and Akse P9's colourful ‘A Love Letter to Manchester’. The mural celebrates people, places and things synonymous with the city – see how many references you can spot as you walk past. Look out for the Hive viaduct artwork nearby too.



7 Limekiln Lane and the River Medlock

Around Limekiln Lane, this stretch feels surprisingly rural, with the River Medlock winding its way through woodland. It wasn’t always so peaceful – this was once an industrial hotbed, and you can still spot traces of that past along the route. Today, nature has reclaimed much of the riverside, with kingfishers, thrushes and brown trout returning, and self-seeded sunflowers and orchids adding splashes of colour in the warmer months.



8 Mayfield Park

Mayfield brings together one of Manchester’s newest city-centre parks with one of its most distinctive historic buildings. Mayfield Park follows the River Medlock through six and a half acres of green space, with lawns, planting, play areas and waterside paths. Alongside it, the former Mayfield railway depot has been brought back into use as a major venue for music, culture and events, giving this part of the city a completely new lease of life.

CL5 Mayfield Park to Etihad Stadium Accessibility notes

The CL5 route has been reviewed to make it as accessible as possible for a wide range of users. There are a number of locations where gradients, uneven surfaces, pavement conditions and restricted access may present difficulties, particularly for wheelchair users, people using mobility scooters and those with limited mobility.

The main accessibility considerations are outlined below.

Narrow or restrictive access points

These include locations where the route passes through gateways or barriers that may be tight for larger mobility aids or pushchairs:

- Locked barrier at SW end of Limekiln Lane, passable only via a stepped kerb3
- Swing gates and barriers onto and off road crossings along Limekiln Lane
- Low-roofed tunnels along the Ashton Canal

Uneven or degraded path surfaces

Several sections contain uneven or worn surfaces that may affect comfort or stability for some users:

- Loose slabs and rough patches on the canal towpath
- Uneven cobbles and rough gradients near Beswick Lock and further east
- Slippery leaf fall sections on Limekiln Lane

Personal safety considerations

- Some users could feel at risk in the following two locations:
- Tree-covered, remote feeling sections of Limekiln Lane
- Hoyle Street tunnel dark and affected by pavement parking

Temporary or recurring obstructions

- Works have affected the following location at certain points over the last year:
- Narrow or uneven pavements near Mayfield Park during works in early 2026

Gradients

- Two short uphill sections on the Ashton Canal towpath on the approach to the Etihad Campus