# London plans underground health complex beneath Cavendish Square Gardens



Westminster City Council is moving forward with plans to redevelop Cavendish Square Gardens, a public park located near Oxford Street, with significant changes poised for the underground car park beneath it. The council is being urged to accept the surrender of the lease for the car park by Q Park and subsequently hand over the space to the developer Reed Group. In addition, council officers are recommending granting Reed a short occupational lease of no more than seven years to carry out improvement works.

The redevelopment proposal includes enhancements to the garden itself, such as nearly doubling the size of the pedestrian footway surrounding the square, installing a new "moat-like" water feature, and constructing new entrances on the southwest side of the park. Meanwhile, the existing underground car park—a three-storey facility built in the 1970s with 432 parking spaces—is set to be transformed into a cutting-edge subterranean healthcare and wellbeing complex. Plans call for converting and expanding the car park from three to four basement levels, incorporating healthcare facilities that could include a hospital, alongside offices, retail, entertainment, and leisure areas. This ambitious development aims to establish the UK’s first underground health and wellbeing destination.

Q Park, which currently operates the underground car park with a lease running until 2036, has expressed support for the redevelopment plans and is willing to surrender its lease in favour of Reed Group’s vision. The council intends to retain ownership of the garden area but sell the underground space to Reed Group, anticipating that the transaction will generate around £42 million in revenue. This approach requires formal advertisement and approval due to the land’s status as part of an open space, a necessity under the council’s regulatory obligations.

Construction is anticipated to begin next year, with an expected completion date in 2023. The transformation of the car park into a health and leisure hub aligns with broader regeneration efforts underway for Oxford Street, aimed at revitalising one of London’s busiest shopping districts by enhancing its appeal and functionality.

This development reflects a growing trend in urban planning where subterranean spaces are repurposed to maximise land use in densely populated city centres. While the original car park provided essential parking facilities for shoppers and visitors to the surrounding retail area, the shift toward a multi-use health and wellbeing complex also signals a pivot towards integrated community services in central London.

Q Park’s current underground facility includes 24/7 access, security features such as CCTV, and dedicated disabled parking spaces. However, height restrictions and lift access limitations have been noted, factors that highlight the necessity for modernisation. Reed Group’s redevelopment plans appear designed to remedy these constraints while creating a new landmark destination beneath Cavendish Square.

The project is not without its complexities, especially given the historical nature of Cavendish Square, which dates back to its layout as a garden in 1717, and the legal protections for open spaces under acts like the London Squares Preservation Act of 1931. Nevertheless, the council’s approval marks a significant step in reconciling heritage with contemporary urban development demands.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cavendish-square-gardens-oxford-street-plans-b1252356.html), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cavendish-square-gardens-oxford-street-plans-b1252356.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cavendish-square-gardens-oxford-street-plans-b1252356.html), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/seventies-car-park-to-become-ps150m-underground-wellness-centre-a4426996.html), [[7]](https://www.planningresource.co.uk/article/1682054/westminster-approves-plans-turn-underground-car-park-health-wellbeing-centre)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cavendish-square-gardens-oxford-street-plans-b1252356.html), [[6]](https://www.ianvisits.co.uk/articles/a-shopping-centre-under-cavendish-square-33378/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/seventies-car-park-to-become-ps150m-underground-wellness-centre-a4426996.html), [[7]](https://www.planningresource.co.uk/article/1682054/westminster-approves-plans-turn-underground-car-park-health-wellbeing-centre)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cavendish-square-gardens-oxford-street-plans-b1252356.html), [[7]](https://www.planningresource.co.uk/article/1682054/westminster-approves-plans-turn-underground-car-park-health-wellbeing-centre)
* Paragraph 6 – [[4]](https://www.q-park.co.uk/parking/london/q-park-oxford-street/), [[5]](https://www.justpark.com/uk/parking/cavendish-square/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[6]](https://www.ianvisits.co.uk/articles/a-shopping-centre-under-cavendish-square-33378/), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cavendish-square-gardens-oxford-street-plans-b1252356.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cavendish-square-gardens-oxford-street-plans-b1252356.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cavendish-square-gardens-oxford-street-plans-b1252356.html> - Plans to redevelop Cavendish Square Gardens near Oxford Street are advancing, with Westminster City Council set to approve the appropriation of the land for developer Reed Group. The proposal includes nearly doubling the pedestrian footway, installing a new 'moat-like' water feature, and building new entrances to the park along the southwest. Reed Group also intends to convert the existing underground car park into a healthcare facility, potentially including a hospital. Q Park, which currently operates the car park, supports the plan and is willing to surrender its lease, which runs until 2036. The council aims to sell the underground space to Reed while retaining the garden, expecting to generate £42 million in revenue. As the landowner, the council is required to advertise any plans to appropriate or dispose of land that forms part of an open space, in this case, for planning purposes.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/seventies-car-park-to-become-ps150m-underground-wellness-centre-a4426996.html> - Westminster City Council has approved plans to transform the 1970s underground car park beneath Cavendish Square into a £150 million subterranean healthcare and entertainment complex. The development aims to repurpose the existing three-level car park into a four-level facility offering healthcare, office, entertainment, retail, and leisure spaces. The project is described as the UK's first subterranean health and wellbeing development, with construction expected to start next year and completion in 2023. The development is part of broader improvements planned for Oxford Street and is expected to enhance the area's appeal.
4. <https://www.q-park.co.uk/parking/london/q-park-oxford-street/> - Q-Park Oxford Street is an underground car park located beneath Cavendish Square, behind the John Lewis store, and within walking distance of Oxford Street and Regent Street. The facility offers 432 parking spaces, including 7 disabled spaces, with a drive-through height of 1.95 meters. The car park operates 24/7 and provides services such as bicycle parking, CCTV, and help points. Access to level -1 is via a pedestrian entrance by Harley Street, with no lift access due to improvement works. The car park is accessible via the what3words address ///trader.insect.shirt.
5. <https://www.justpark.com/uk/parking/cavendish-square/> - JustPark offers secure underground parking spaces at Q-Park Harley Street, conveniently located just a 2-minute walk from Oxford Street and Regent Street. The car park operates 24/7 and has a height restriction of 1.82 meters. Users are advised to ensure their vehicle registration is correct on the booking before it begins, as cameras will read the registration on entry and exit. Extensions are not available through JustPark at this location, so users should ensure they book for the total time needed.
6. <https://www.ianvisits.co.uk/articles/a-shopping-centre-under-cavendish-square-33378/> - Plans are underway to transform Cavendish Square, a public park behind Oxford Street's John Lewis store, into an underground shopping centre. The square, laid out as a garden in 1717, currently has a three-storey underground car park built in the 1970s. The London Squares Preservation Act 1931 allows subterranean developments beneath public gardens. The car park is privately owned and leased to Westminster City Council until January 2062. The council has proposed selling the underground space to Reed Group while retaining the garden, with the development expected to bring £42 million into council coffers.
7. <https://www.planningresource.co.uk/article/1682054/westminster-approves-plans-turn-underground-car-park-health-wellbeing-centre> - Westminster City Council has granted planning permission for the conversion of the 1960s car park at Cavendish Square Gardens into a health and wellbeing centre. The scheme includes a mix of healthcare, office, retail, entertainment, and leisure uses, with the existing three-level car park being extended to a fourth basement level. The development aims to create the UK's first subterranean health and wellbeing destination, with construction expected to start next year and completion in 2023. The project is part of broader improvements planned for Oxford Street and is expected to enhance the area's appeal.