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Project:	<b>The Green Streetscape Improvements</b>	Job No:	<b>48797TABE</b>
Subject:	<b>Design Approach</b>	Date:	<b>18 February 2009</b>

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### **Place making in Aberdeen's Conservation Area**

The proposals seek to retain and improve the unique character of the Green area, whilst addressing the current provision of road and footpath surfaces. There also exist opportunities to increase pedestrian permeability of the area - improving connectivity through the Green's area, between the new Union Square development and Union St - and to further enhance the Green area as a destination.

The streetscape of the Green is defined by the vertically enclosed, sometimes narrow streets which are partially surfaced in traditional granite material. These features are a key component to the character of the Conservation Area. Over time the distribution of granite flags, setts and kerbs has become fragmented with large surface areas now covered by stretches of tarmac, concrete and pre-cast concrete paving. This has detracted from the aesthetic quality of the area. Additionally, in their current condition, localised areas of the pedestrian and vehicular surfaces are sub standard, creating Health and Safety issues.

The area contains two squares historically used for markets, the well known Green itself and the ground to the south of the Market shopping centre, which currently functions primarily as a through route for vehicles wishing to access the Green and as a taxi rank.

Pedestrian movement throughout the Green has been compromised by both poor condition of walking surface and by the dominant access requirements of vehicles. A mixture of HGV's, OGV's and cars all access the Green area which currently creates conflict within pedestrian routes.

This area of high quality heritage value would also benefit from reduced clutter created by street furniture, large scale refuse bins and signage

The proposals seek to resolve the highlighted issues and execute change by design in a manner that reflects the character of the area.

### **Re-use of existing material**

The re-use of material local to the area and subsequent relaying in key areas is key to the proposal. The distinctive setts from the area will be retained for re-use on the road carriageways wherever possible. Similarly granite flags and kerbs will be assessed for suitably for re-use. It is anticipated that during the selection process that there may be up to 30% wastage of original material. This approach will ensure that the warmth of character to the area that the existing granite brings will continue to be preserved. In addition this approach is sustainable, meets with requirements of THI funding and should prove cost effective.

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Fig 1: Existing cobbled roads in poor condition

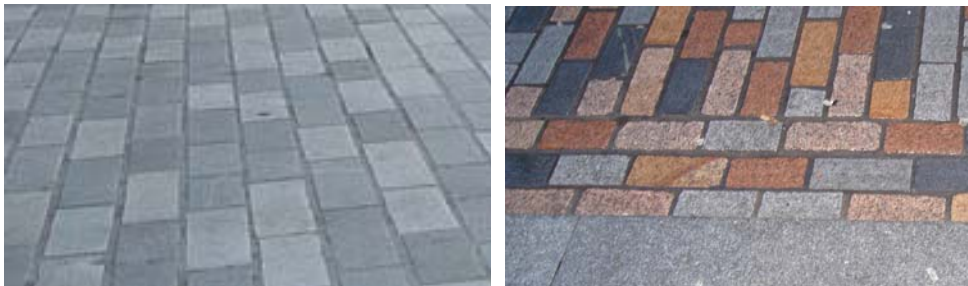


### Introduction of new materials

It is anticipated that there will be insufficient material within the project area to re-surface entirely in reclaimed granite. There is limited potential to salvage granite material from Aberdeen Council's store; therefore a source of new material will need to be identified.

It is intended that the inclusion of new material will be implemented in such a way as to complement the Conservation Area character of the Green's area and for material choices to reflect ongoing environmental improvements and new developments within the city.

Fig 2: Shiprow and Belmont St recent streetscape improvements using new, imported, granite



### Hierarchy of materials

A hierarchy of use for the different granite components will be developed. This will indicate to different user groups the intended function of each area. It is intended to re-dress the priority towards the pedestrian through design within the Green's area. Historic details such as kerb widths will be retained where possible. The materials palette will in addition enhance the aesthetic of the environment.

Examples of treatment styles are described below and shown in full by Drawing No: 48797TABE M003 SK01

Hadden St - a broad footpath of granite flags bordered by wide granite kerbs is proposed. This would improve the primary heavy footfall route into the Green from Market St. On street taxi lay over would be highlighted by use of setts in different scale or colour to main carriageway.

It is intended that there would be no up stand on kerbs within this area, allowing for future flexibility of use of this space. The location of trees, lighting and street furniture will be utilised to separate people from traffic. With temporary traffic management this arrangement would create a single flush surface suitable for temporary events such as markets.

Elsewhere, setted road carriageways bounded by narrower footpaths as shown by the proposals for Carmelite Lane would indicate that this is a secondary route for both vehicle and pedestrian alike.

Carmelite Street – a shared surface is proposed with a mix of granite setts and flags. Soft landscape details augment areas of extended pavement. These measures along with the carriageway alignment will reduce car speeds ensuring the area is suitable for pedestrians.

### Soft Landscape

The inclusion of street trees within the Green area has been proposed at a number of locations. Species choice include *Carpinus betulus* 'Frans Fontaine'; (Hornbeam) *Quercus ilex*; (evergreen Oak) *Acer* species and *Sorbus* species. (Sycamore and Rowan). Trees have been selected for their size and habit, comprising upright small diameter crowns with clear stem heights and good all year round interest.

Proposed trees have been located taking cognisance of adjacent properties and vehicular movements. Trees would be located in tree pits with root barrier and irrigation systems. Underground guying would be implemented to new trees; existing tree guards on mature trees could be removed. Tree grills should be back filled to avoid voids that accumulate rubbish. Final position of trees would be subject to on site investigation establishing location of underground services.

Trees would be positioned within extended pavement areas on each side of Rennie's Wynd. This creates interest at street level whilst filtering views of the adjacent multi-story car park, reducing the dominant scale of this building within the streetscape. Additionally, the trees would reinforce the key pedestrian linkages between Guild St and Union St whilst complementing to the sense of place found in the Green. The proposed trees would be visible from Back Stairs Wynd, highlighting this key pedestrian route.

Additional trees would define the eastern edge of the Green, creating a sense of enclosure and opportunity for attractive seating areas.

At Hadden St, groups of trees separate vehicle users and pedestrians, create a visual link with the Green and serve to reduce the visual impact of the Market building when viewed from Stirling St, Exchange St and Carmelite Lane.

Trees have been introduced at Trinity St to form gateway markers to the Green area and to further enhance the pedestrian environment.

Within Carmelite St shared surface there is an opportunity to provide an element of interest through planting which in addition reduces the available driving width of the road. This would serve to calm traffic speeds whilst also screening the boundary wall to the adjacent private residents' car park.

Existing planters would be relocated within the Green and hanging baskets retained.

### Street furniture

Provision of robust and contemporary street furniture is proposed at key locations. Notably there is opportunity to provide improved seating opportunities in the Green itself. Seats would be timber with arm rests and grouped to maximise social interaction at peak times of use.

At Hadden St, seating would be located amongst the tree planting strip, outwith the main pedestrian through route.

It is proposed that timber seats be used throughout the proposed improvements.

The positioning of large scale street bins will be rationalised, with bins group and relocated off pavements and onto the road carriageway where possible.

Fig 3: Contemporary timber seats



### Signage

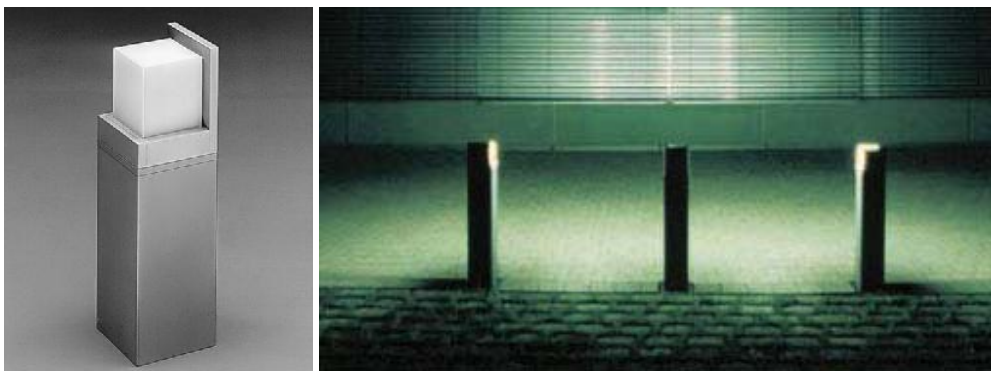
Signage proposals will be developed at detailed design stage. The existing signage has resulted in visual clutter. A simplified approach to signing will be adopted conveying information at key points in a style that complements the streetscape. A review of all legally required signage is being undertaken. This will ensure only appropriate signage is provided to avoid overloading the streetscape with unattractive signage.

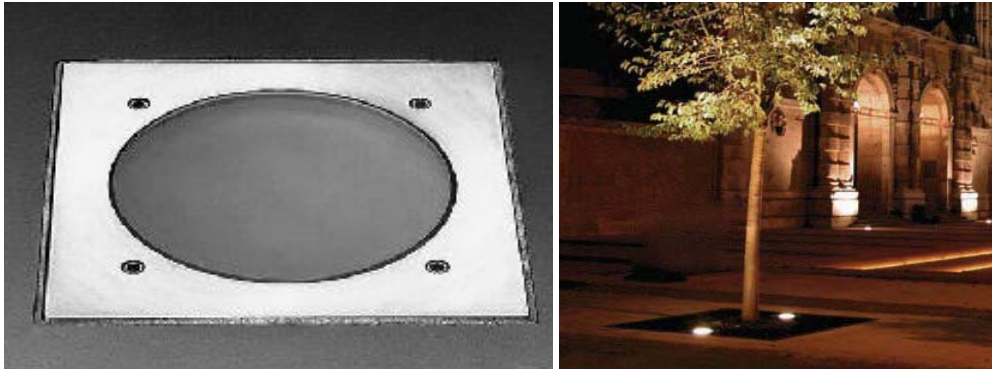
Provision of pedestrian information points will be made at Carmelite St/the Green; junction of Rennie's Wynd and the Green and also at Hadden St.

### Lighting

The inclusion of contemporary lighting is recommended to be undertaken as part of the streetscape improvements. A range of contemporary light fittings in aluminium /galvanised steel would be utilised to highlight key pedestrian routes and up-light trees. Lighting bollards used along the pavement edge at the Green would serve as a deterrent to vehicle users encroaching on pedestrian space. Consideration could be given in the long term to replacing the heritage style lighting columns in the Green with contemporary lighting standards. The opportunity exists to rationalise the wall mounted street lighting throughout the Green Conservation Area.

Fig 4: Range of contemporary lighting including bollards at varying heights





*Fig 5: In ground lighters define pedestrian route and highlight trees*

### **Gateway features**

Opportunities for gateway features have been identified within the proposals. These would take the form of sculptural elements, and reflect in some way the cultural identity of the area. Local artists could be commissioned to produce bespoke sculptural forms, possibly in granite, to signify to the pedestrian their arrival at the Green. Gateway features have been indicated at Hadden St, the junction of Carmelite Street and the Green and one at Rennie's Wynd and the Green.