

# Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 15 June 2023

## George Street and First New Town – Operational Plan and Project Update

Executive  
Wards  
Council Commitments

Executive  
11 – City Centre

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 Transport and Environment Committee is asked to:
  - 1.1.1 Approve the updated principles of the proposed George Street and First New Town (GNT) Operational Plan (Appendix 1), which are key to preparing the statutory road orders required to construct the final George Street project;
  - 1.1.2 Note that, subject to approval of the Operational Plan, work will commence to progress preparation of final statutory road orders for George Street, with outcomes of the statutory process reported to the Licensing Sub-Committee (if required);
  - 1.1.3 Note that additional engagement will be undertaken with residents, businesses and stakeholders prior to finalising specific detailed designs and operational changes relating to North Hanover Street, Frederick Street and North Castle Street with final proposals reported to Committee for approval; and
  - 1.1.4 Note the project design and programme updates provided, including the outcome of the recent stakeholder design workshop relating to landscaping and central spaces on George Street.

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## George Street and First New Town – Operational Plan and Project Update

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report provides an update on the George Street and First New Town (GNT) project and seeks approval for the updated principles of the proposed Operational Plan (Appendix 1), which are key to preparing the statutory road orders required to construct the final George Street project.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 Edinburgh's 'First New Town' is of significant, and unique, value within the UNESCO World Heritage Site. George Street, which forms its core, is arguably the city's premier shopping street, and carries a strong appeal as a civic space and unique shopping, hospitality and visitor experience.
- 3.2 GNT is a major public realm project that aims to reconfigure the use of space in George Street and intersecting streets to create an exceptionally high-quality place making environment. In keeping with the Edinburgh City Centre Transformation (ECCT) vision, the plans for GNT will make it attractive for people to visit, shop, rest, and make active and sustainable travel choices. The project will also support the Council's commitment to become a net-zero carbon city by 2030.
- 3.3 Building on several years of continuous engagement and consultation, RIBA Stage 3 developed design principles were approved by the Transport and Environment Committee in [November 2022](#). However, approval of RIBA Stage 3 designs was conditional upon further discussions taking place with Committee, local elected members and key stakeholders with regards to the installation of trees and potential risks associated with "Central Spaces"
- 3.4 A number of operational changes are required to support the delivery of the GNT project to ensure that design outputs are maximised. Building on previous work, an exemplar, innovative and creative Operational Plan is critical in supporting the final design proposal. The Operational Plan is a crucial component of the project, as it proposes (in detail) future arrangements for loading, servicing and vehicle access in the area. Initial fundamental principles of an Operational Plan (delivering pedestrian priority, through set periods of the day where the streets operate without non-essential vehicle access) were presented to the Transport and Environment

Committee in November 2022. Committee were informed that a final operational plan would be presented in 2023 following final stakeholder engagement and additional traffic data collection.

### **Strategic Priorities**

- 3.5 At a strategic level, GNT forms a key part of the approved ECCT and City Mobility Plan (CMP) strategies. For example, the ECCT strategy identifies key quiet zones where people will have priority, with vehicles given access treated as ‘guests’. George Street is identified as one of these areas, where significant public realm improvements and pedestrian priority will be delivered.
- 3.6 GNT is one of the earlier programmed projects within the ECCT delivery plan, and once implemented, will make a significant contribution towards realising the vision of transforming the city centre as a revitalised, more vibrant and people focused place.
- 3.7 Ensuring people have had the opportunity to influence and shape the future of the city centre is essential to achieving a robust and sustainable design for the GNT area. In addition to observing relevant strategic consultation exercises, distinct consultation and engagement approaches for the GNT project have ensured appropriate, continuous and wide input at key stages:
  - 3.7.1 Design Principles Setting stage (2016 - 2017);
  - 3.7.2 Design Objectives and Initial Concept Evaluation stage (2018 - 2019);
  - 3.7.3 Concept Design and Operational Plan Development stage (2019 - 2020);
  - 3.7.4 Final Concept Design stage (October 2020 - March 2021);
  - 3.7.5 Stage 3 Developed Design and Operational Plan (Oct 2021 – August 2022); and
  - 3.7.6 Stage 3 Final Operational Plan (November 2022 – May 2023)

### **RIBA Stage 4 Procurement**

- 3.8 Finance and Resources Committee on [8 September 2022](#) approved procurement of RIBA Stage 4 technical design consultancy services. Faithful + Gould, appointed to deliver the Stage 3 design process, were reappointed in December 2022 to progress Stage 4 Technical Design, finalisation of the Operational Plan and publication of Statutory Orders.

## **4. Main report**

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- 4.1 Delivery of high-quality public realm improvements within the GNT area is essential to supporting a safe walking and cycling environment, business recovery and growth with a focus on delivering inclusive access for all.

### **Principles for a George Street and First New Town Operation Plan**

- 4.2 Several operational changes will be required to support the transformation of the First New Town. The final operational plan (Appendix 1 – Executive Summary) will form the basis of the development of the statutory notice process. Construction of

the public realm improvements scheme requires publication of statutory notices which will commence subject to final approval of the operational plan.

- 4.3 Given the significant operational changes proposed, further detailed engagement and analysis will be undertaken during the Stage 4 process. In addition, a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework will be established to assess the impact of any operational changes (once in place) over a 12-month period. At the conclusion of the 12-month evaluation period, operational changes will be fully assessed to determine what, if any, adjustments and/or amendments are necessary to support both the design and operational principles of the project.
- 4.4 The final principles of the operational plan, aligned to the ECCT Strategy, include:
- 4.4.1 Delivering a “pedestrian and cycling priority zone”, where George Street will operate without non-essential vehicle access during set periods of the day but permitting blue badge access at all times. Proposed pedestrian and cycling zone periods will be between 10.00am – 7.00pm Monday to Saturday and 12.00pm – 7.00pm on Sundays. Creation of a restricted pedestrian/cycling zone aligns with a number of other UK city centres streets including Glasgow, Leeds, Perth and Manchester;
  - 4.4.2 Criteria to be applied for access for essential and “exempt” vehicles during the pedestrian and cycle zone windows will be finalised during Stage 4. Examples of permitted vehicles include emergency services, events (weddings, funerals, festivals) postal services, statutory works e.g. utilities, emergency “trade” repairs, Council/Scottish government vehicles;
  - 4.4.3 Permitted vehicle access including loading/servicing is proposed out-with the “pedestrian and cycling” zone period. General traffic, other than blue badge, will not permitted access to George Street during this access period;
  - 4.4.4 Maintaining local bus passenger services within the GNT area, including direct crossing points at Hanover Street, Frederick Street and North/South St David Street with George Street (but not along George Street). Future bus service proposals will be determined by the outcome of a wider city bus network review;
  - 4.4.5 Prioritising blue-badge parking (including George Street) and essential resident parking (excluding George Street) within the wider area, to support access for this group of key users (noting that blue badge access to George Street will be limited to the number of spaces available);
  - 4.4.6 Licensed taxis will continue to be permitted access throughout the First New Town area, however specific restrictions will be applied to George Street whereby access will only be permitted out with the pedestrian and cycling zone windows. Taxi rank spaces will be retained on George Street and in the wider First New Town. This recognises how critical taxis are to supporting operations in the GNT area, especially the evening/night-time economy and the key role they play in public safety. Any permitted access for taxis during the pedestrian and cycling zone window presents a challenge to promoting the principle of creating an enlarged, enhanced and

safer space for pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists within George Street. In addition, ensuring public safety is critical with the need, as discussed under section 4.4.8, to introduce Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) measures to protect the general public;

- 4.4.7 Licensed Private Hire Cars (PHC's) will still be able to fully access the First New Town however, in line with the adjacent Meadows to George Street project, where licensed PHC restrictions are proposed under current proposals, licensed PHC's will be restricted from directly accessing George Street during and out with the pedestrian and cycling zone periods;
- 4.4.8 During the Stage 3 design process, an assessment of enforcement methods currently applied to promote "pedestrian and cycling zone" spaces within Edinburgh, Scotland and elsewhere in the UK was undertaken. The key outcome was the need to address current challenges associated with traditional enforcement methods, which rely on signage and lining restrictions to enforce traffic violations. At this stage, a similar enforcement method to that in place for the High Street and Grassmarket is proposed (whereby an automated bollard system will effectively control access). In addition, technology-based enforcement methods, e.g., Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), will continue to be explored to assess their effectiveness to monitor any non-compliant vehicles;
- 4.4.9 The proposed introduction of a bollard-based enforcement system will also align with the need to create a safe and secure environment for all users. A final HVM strategy will be developed, in partnership with Police Scotland, to align with wider City Centre Community Safety and HVM measures during the Stage 4 design process;
- 4.4.10 In developing a final operational plan for George Street particular consideration has been given to the operational needs of hotels and places of worship (including the Intercontinental George Hotel and St Andrew's and George's West Church). For example, exemptions will be permitted for access for Coaches, minibuses and "other" vehicles deemed necessary to support the operations of such premises;
- 4.4.11 In addition to George Street operational changes are required to be introduced to the adjacent First New Town streets of North Hanover, Frederick and North Castle Street. The operational plan indicates the potential location of loading, taxi rank, blue badge, bus stop, motor cycle parking and general parking (permit and pay and display). Current plans are indicative with further detailed discussions undertaken with key stakeholder groups, including local businesses and residents, during the Stage 4 technical design stage prior to finalising operational changes and promotion of statutory orders; and
- 4.4.12 The final operational plan recognises the potential challenges for accessibility groups accessing George Street especially during the pedestrian and cycling zone period. To minimise any impact bus stop, taxi

rank and blue badge spaces are prioritised on adjacent First New Town streets including Hanover and Frederick Street. In addition to blue badge access, Dial-A-Ride vehicles will be permitted access to George Street 24/7 to support disabled users. Further research and discussion will also take place during the Stage 4 process with regards to potentially operating a city centre Dial-a-Bus service via George Street. Consideration will also be given to the availability of Shopmobility within the immediate area. Both initiatives will be subject to securing necessary revenue support and indication of potential demand.

### **Design Update – Landscaping and Central Spaces**

- 4.5 During presentation of final RIBA Stage 3 design principles to Committee in November, Elected Members recommended that additional discussions take place with key stakeholders on the potential introduction of trees to George Street and address any potential risks, especially for accessibility groups, associated with proposed central spaces on George Street.
- 4.6 Committee should note that further detailed discussions have now taken place with representatives from several key stakeholders including Edinburgh World Heritage, Historic Environment Scotland, Cockburn Association, Edinburgh Access Panel and New Town and Broughton Community Council. Stakeholders, including Committee and Local Elected members were invited to attend a design workshop at the Royal Society of Edinburgh chaired by the Transport and Environment Convener in April 2023.
- 4.7 Consensus was reached during (and after) the design workshop that trees can potentially be introduced into George Street. However, in arriving at this decision the special and unique characteristic of George Street, as part of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site cannot be underestimated. George Street represents one of finest examples of “Rus in Urbe” in Europe – the countryside in the city - whereby streets and squares are predominately hard in character with important vistas to planned parks and gardens. To protect and sustain the street’s contribution to the Site’s Outstanding Universal Value, any positioning of trees must compliment the area’s original design principles (including James Craigs masterplan and not “overly soften” George Street) while maintaining views of the street’s unique architecture, monuments and axial alignment with Charlotte and St Andrew Square.
- 4.8 Indicative illustrations (Appendix 2) highlight the potential sighting of trees, including height and species which, subject to further dialogue during the Stage 4 design process, could compliment the existing landscape proposals for George Street. The siting of any trees at this stage will only be located at either end of George Street to minimise any risk to the street’s Outstanding Universal Value. Any final decisions on tree locations, numbers, species, height will also be determined by the outcome of final location of basements and major utilities. A ground penetrating radar survey to identify these was undertaken early June with the results of the study expected late Summer 2023.

- 4.9 During the design works, all parties also recognised the value of street trees with regards to social, environmental, economic and urban design benefits. The potential introduction of trees as part of the GNT project will not only compliment the projects desire to support the Council become a net zero city by 2030, but also reduce potential “urban heat” island effects, help mitigate against the impact of extreme rainfall and finally contribute to the pledge for Edinburgh to become a million tree city by 2030.
- 4.10 During the Stage 4 design process careful consideration will be given to final detailing of the central “uncluttered” spaces on George Street. The design workshop concluded that it is essential that via the use of materials including kerb detailing that spaces are defined clearly for use by cyclist and pedestrians to minimise any conflict between users in these locations. Indicative designs (Appendix 2) have been revised to define clearer separation of carriageway and footway in these areas. It should be noted that during the Stage 4 design process a specialist accessibility consultant will be engaged to audit the final design of these spaces and the wider GNT plans and will compliment any final road safety audit.

## 5. Next Steps

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- 5.1 If Committee approve the recommendations in this report, the next stage is to progress promotion of all necessary statutory processes for George Street (Traffic Regulation and Redetermination Orders) which provide the powers to enable the construction of the project, earmarked for 2025. It is expected that promotion of these Orders will commence autumn 2023 and will subject to final approval by the Licensing Sub-Committee.
- 5.2 Continued engagement will continue during the Stage 4 design process with local residents, businesses and key stakeholder groups prior to finalised details for the First New Town streets of North Hanover, Frederick and North Castle Street being presented to Committee and to progress promotion of all necessary statutory processes. Promotion of final orders will be subject to final approval by the Regulatory Committee.
- 5.3 Continued engagement will continue during the Stage 4 design process with key stakeholder groups prior to the production of finalised detailed technical designs. This will include landscaping proposals, hostile vehicle mitigation and accessibility considerations. To ensure the project addresses the needs of disabled users a specialist accessibility consultant will be engaged during the Stage 4 process to engage with specific accessibility user groups and supporting the design team to ensure designs comply with the Council’s and national accessibility standards.
- 5.4 During the Stage 4 process, the project team, in liaison with Procurement Services, will consider options to secure the construction expertise to deliver the project. Early contractor engagement will assist in preparing final programme and projected constructions costs ensuring the project is deliverable.
- 5.5 At this stage in the process, and subject to promotion of statutory orders, it is expected that the Stage 4 design process will conclude summer 2024. Subject to

securing full funding support, securing all necessary statutory consents and appointment of a principal contract it is expected that construction works could commence early to mid 2025 with completion by 2027/28.

## 6. Financial impact

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- 6.1 As reported previously to Committee, a revised costs plan was produced as part of the Stage 3 design process and has estimated that, based on current design proposals and market conditions, construction costs for George Street are likely to be in the region of £30-32m with total project costs totalling £36m. This cost estimate is reflective of increases across the construction industry which has been impacted by Covid-19 and inflationary increases especially with regards to labour and material costs.
- 6.2 A revised cost plan will be prepared during the Stage 4 design process.
- 6.3 As part of the revised five year Active Travel Investment Programme (approved in [October 2021](#)) GNT has been allocated multi-year funding up to £15.07m (funded through Sustrans Scotland Places for Everyone programme and the Council's capital programme). During the Stage 4 process, additional grant funding from Sustrans will be sought to support the final estimated project costs prior to formalising any final construction start date.
- 6.4 Multi-disciplinary consultancy fees for Stage 4 and the Council's project management costs will be 100% funded by Sustrans. Construction costs will be 70% funded by Sustrans with the Council required to contribute 30%.
- 6.5 At this stage in the process, a further capital budget allocation from the Council will be required to deliver George Street and could be in the region of up to £10m. Given the ongoing pressures on budgets caused by inflationary increases and supplier chain issues, it is proposed that the Active Travel Investment Programme will be reviewed at a future date to reflect these changes.

## 7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

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- 7.1 The input of stakeholders, including local residents, key stakeholder groups, businesses, interest groups, people with protected characteristics and the general public, has been critical in delivering design and operational proposals to date.
- 7.2 In arriving at a final operational plan, further engagement was undertaken with key stakeholders, both during a formal group stakeholder session organised between and, where necessary, on a one to one basis. Further local business and resident engagement exercise will be undertaken during the Stage 4 design process to garner further detailed feedback on specific operational plan proposals for George Street and First New Town streets.
- 7.3 Wider public engagement will continue via the dedicated project website.
- 7.4 A revised [Integrated Impact Assessment](#) (IIA) has been undertaken as part of the Stage 3 process and will be maintained throughout the Stage 4 design process.



This identifies many positive impacts for people with protected characteristics, and notes where some potential negative impacts require further development.

- 7.5 During the Stage 3 process, Rettie and Co were commissioned to undertake an Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) to determine the potential economic impact of the project on the local economy. The report concludes that “in this economic impact assessment the ‘full investment’ option is judged to make a major contribution towards delivering the benefits associated with the strategic objectives, to deliver significant net economic impacts and to achieve a relatively strong benefit-cost ratio”. Over a 20-year period the estimated cost-benefit analysis indicates a potential positive benefit-cost ratio of 2.2 generating a potential net Gross Value Added (GVA) benefit to the economy of £95m. Positive economic and non-economic impacts include local job creation and sustainability, increased property values, increased visitor spend and a healthier, safer and more relaxed urban environment.
- 7.6 The project will create a significant number of construction jobs from 2025 onwards and, in turn, create opportunities for local suppliers and businesses. As with all major Council construction contracts, community benefit clauses will be included in any contracts aiming to secure benefits such as local apprenticeships and training opportunities.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 George Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order, Concluding Report and Design Principles - Transport and Environment Committee [7 June 2016](#)
- 8.2 George Street and First New Town Design Project Update - Transport and Environment Committee [5 October 2017](#)
- 8.3 George Street and First New Town – Consultation and Design Development Update - Transport and Environment Committee [16 May 2019](#)
- 8.4 George Street and First New Town Project Business Bulletin Update Transport and Environment Committee [12 September 2019](#)
- 8.5 George Street and First New Town Project Business Bulletin Update – Transport and Environment Committee [11 October 2019](#)
- 8.6 George Street and First New Town Project Update – Leadership Advisory Panel [31 March 2020](#)
- 8.7 Edinburgh City Centre Transformation (ECCT) Business Bulletin Update – Transport and Environment Committee [12 November 2020](#)
- 8.8 George Street and First New Town Public Realm Project\_Business Bulletin Update – Transport and Environment Committee [28 January 2021](#)
- 8.9 George Street and First New Town (GNT) Public Realm Project – Transport and Environmental Committee [22 April 2021](#)
- 8.10 George Street and First New Town (GNT) Public Realm Project – Transport and Environmental Committee [17 June 2021](#)

- 8.11 George Street and First New Town (GNT) Public Realm Project – Concept Design and Operational Plan - Transport and Environment Committee [August 2021](#)
- 8.12 George Street and First New Town (GNT) Public Realm Project – Business Bulletin - Transport and Environmental Committee [6 October 2022](#)
- 8.13 George Street and First New Town (GNT) – RIBA Stage 3 Design and Operational Plan update – Transport and Environment Committee [3 November 2022](#)

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Final GNT Operational Plan
- 9.2 Appendix 2 – Updated GNT landscaping / central space designs

# Appendix 1

Project:	George Street and First New Town (GNT) Design Project		
Subject:	RIBA Stage 3 (Refresh) Operation Plan - Technical Summary		
Author:	Andrew Combe - Atkins		
Date:	31/05/2023	Project No.:	5208834

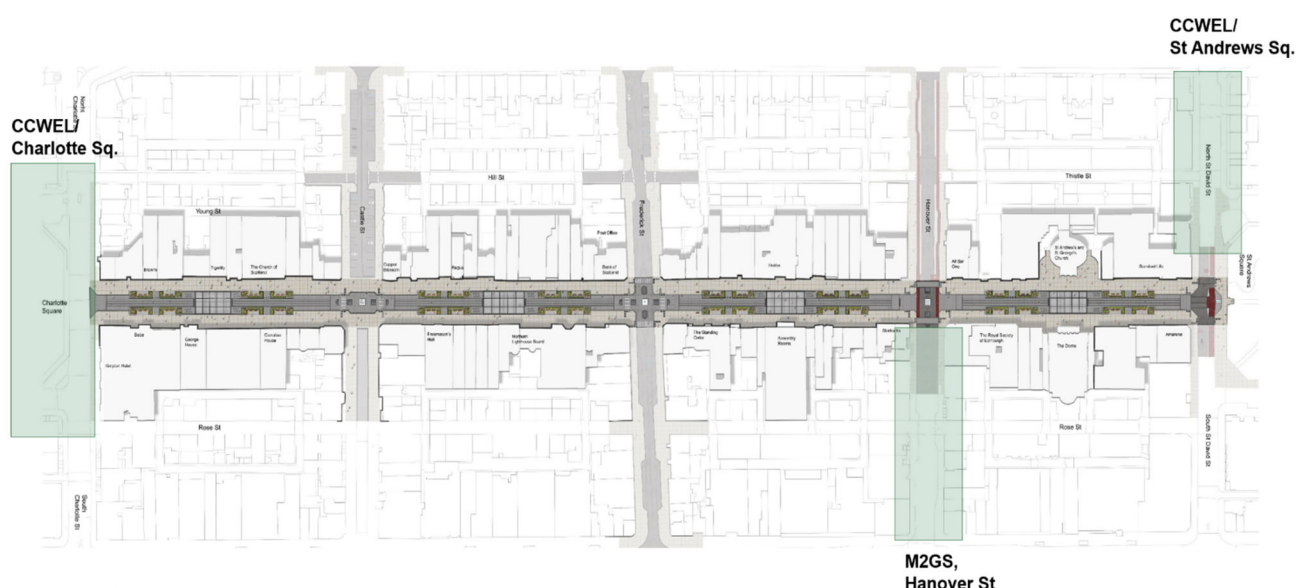
## Abstract

The GNT Design proposal has been developed in line with the Council's 2030 City Plan, 2050 City Vision, Low Emission Zone (LEZ) and ongoing proposals such as Meadows to George Street (MGS) and City Centre East-West Link (CCWEL). It will support the sustainable growth of the city and promote active modes and public transport over private travel. Over time, this would reduce carbon emissions within the city centre, improve public health and the attractiveness of the city.

Edinburgh's City Centre offers a unique experience, providing a true variety of functions and local business types including retail/shopping, bars/restaurants, nightlife, hotels and events; all within a historic medieval and Georgian architectural setting. George Street specifically, serves as the city's main shopping thoroughfare and is known for its historic architecture, many cafes, restaurants, bars and use during The Fringe as an on-street event space. A challenge of the existing city centre's operation is the required level of maintenance, construction and servicing works (scheduled/unscheduled) on a daily basis alongside management of parking sources. In short, the Operational Plan seeks to manage vehicle access to George Street and First New Town, remove non-essential components such as pay & display parking from the street and rebalance the remaining kerbside spaces for essential everyday uses such as blue badge parking, loading bays and taxi ranks. In minimising vehicle demand, the project seeks to promote a greater experience for non-motorised users and increase the attractiveness and sustainability of local business.

The Final Operational Plan (RIBA Stage 3) develops upon research prepared during prior design stages and puts forward a package of measures which would seek to reallocate and reprioritise spaces within the public realm to improve accessibility, promote active travel and prioritise public transport. The study also discusses the future methods of access and operation of all travel modes within the First New Town study area, and how people will come to interact with and navigate the city centre following the implementation of the design proposals.

## GNT Project Study Area and connections to CCT Projects



## RIBA Stage 3 Engagement

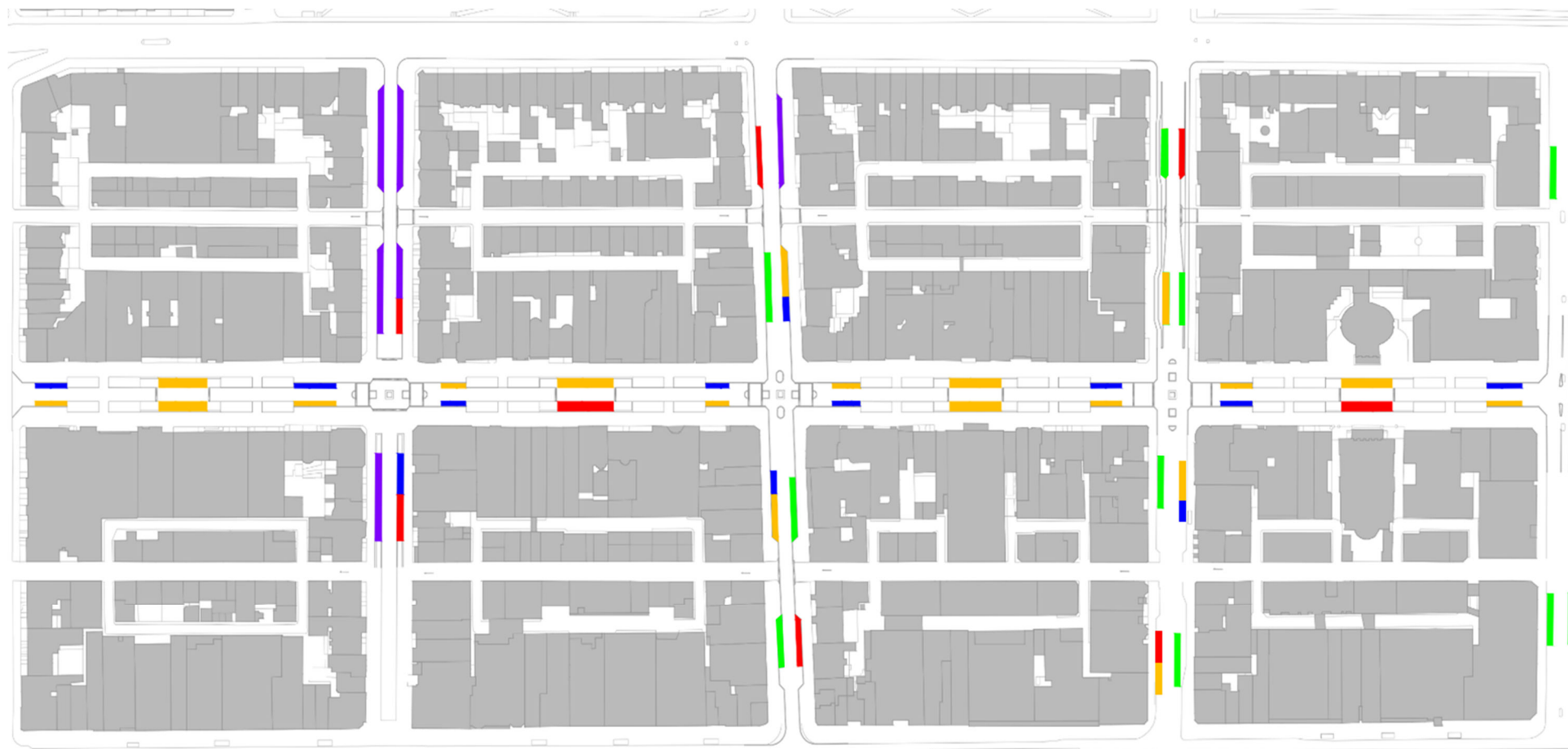
To support the progression of the design and development of the final Operational Plan the Atkins Design Team undertook a rigorous schedule of online and one-to-one style engagement with local stakeholder organisations, businesses and residents of the GNT study area throughout March – July of 2022. This focussed on gaining feedback from respondents on their every-day access requirements and opinions on proposed operational measures such as restricting vehicle access and imposing daily loading and servicing windows. In parallel from March – October of 2022, the team also undertook a series of technical meetings with City of Edinburgh Council Officers regarding elements of the Operational Plan. A total of 25 officers were met to understand the potential impact on their specific areas of responsibility. Response to the proposals were generally very positive and highlighted a number of key remaining issues/decisions to be made at this stage such as enforcement and taxi access.

## Research and Project Benchmarks

In addition to engagement surveys performed earlier in the stage, a series of parking surveys and traffic counts were undertaken to review current weekday traffic demand and understand peaks in traffic, taxi, coach and pedestrian travel demand within the City Centre. In order to best understand peak demand these surveys were timed to coincide with the Six Nations Rugby match between Scotland and Ireland W/C 6th March 2023.

The proposed traffic restrictions and operational measures of the Operational Plan have also been benchmarked against other development and servicing/vehicle management schemes introduced across Edinburgh, Scotland and other UK cities such as Manchester and London. It was seen most commonly, physical reinforcement such as bollards or barriers have been used in addition to signage, timed restrictions etc. were required to manage vehicle access.

## GNT Operational Plan & Proposed Kerbside Uses



## GNT Design and Operational Plan Summary

The design proposal sets out to reconsider the current transport hierarchy and restrictions to vehicle access to George Street with an aim to unlock the potential of the currently cluttered, fatigued and untidy public realm spaces in the area. The following provides a short summary of the anticipated accessibility and operation for all modes of travel within the First New Town following the potential implementation of the design.

### Pedestrians

The RIBA Stage 3 design has been developed to support the needs of pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Proposed revisions to footways, public realm spaces and junctions promote improved desire lines, high-quality and level surface finishes, improved navigation and wayfinding.

With the proposed removal of parking and reductions in carriageway spaces, there is c.30m of space (measuring building threshold to building threshold) to accommodate each of the street's required uses; as a pedestrian space and thoroughfare, a cycle / vehicle corridor and source of essential parking and loading facilities. Following a more sustainable approach, pedestrians have been given the greatest priority on the street. A zone-based design has been used to create areas of distinct character and functions on George Street, this includes spill-out zones adjacent to frontages, main footway areas and landscaped seating areas.

Footway widths are proposed to be significantly increased and all crossings realigned to better meet pedestrian desire lines. Pedestrians within the proposed design would be provided additional priority when crossing through improved raised and continuous crossing types. Within the design, footways and crossing locations have been designed to be ergonomic, intuitive, improve movement capacities and provide a greater quality of pedestrian experience. Inclusive design measures such as audible buzzers and tactile cones at controlled crossings, dropped kerbs and tactile materials at informal crossing locations and contrasting materials to illustrate footway zones have been used to improve the visual coherence of the scheme. Use of innovative technology to support inclusive design will be considered during RIBA Stage 4.

An update to the project's Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been undertaken as part of the RIBA Stage 3 design process and will continue to be maintained throughout the remaining stages. This identifies many positive impacts for people with protected characteristics, and notes where some potential negative impacts require further development.

### Cycling

The removal of parking, reduction of carriageway facilities and restrictions to vehicle movements brings potential benefits for both pedestrians and cyclists in the city centre. The removal of buses from George Street also provides opportunities to further reduce carriageway geometry and provide traditional forms of traffic calming to deter through-traffic movements. The space itself can then be designed to prioritise the movement of pedestrians and cyclists. The RIBA Stage 3 design measures have been developed to reinforce a new transport hierarchy, which aims to deter car and vehicle use and prioritising cycling. The George Street carriageway is proposed to become a 'cycle street' in future. The design aims to create an environment in which vehicles are guests. Cycle streets operate using the following principles:

- The carriageway is reserved for bicycles and essential vehicle movements only.
- Vehicle access is limited, this is typical done using physical enforcement and timed restrictions.
- Maximum carriageway speeds for vehicles should be the equivalent to the speed of an average cyclists, this is anticipated to be 10-20 mph.
- All road users should be conscious and considerate of each other and pedestrians, overtaking cyclists would be discouraged.
- In order to minimise conflicts, parking and loading should only take place within specified bays and not on the main carriageway lanes.

The GNT Project will form a central part of the city centre cycling network, though its street design must also lend itself to become a destination where pedestrians, cyclists and other users are encouraged to visit, travel through at slower speeds and dwell in. In parallel to the GNT Project, The Meadows to George Street Active Travel Route (MGS) and City Centre West to East Link (CCWEL) are also being progressed. These would interface with the project study area at Charlotte Square, Hanover Street and St Andrew Square/St David's Street. Cycle parking for up to 160 bicycles is also to be provided with the proposed design. Within each of the four blocks of George Street 40 cycle parking is proposed at locations adjacent to the central zones and seating areas. Additional stands are to be located on Castle Street, Fredrick Street and Hanover Street, the final locations of these are to be agreed.



**Proposed GNT Design – Landscaped seating areas**



**Proposed GNT Design – Indicative Seating Design**



**Proposed GNT Design – Cycle Street Design**



## Public Transport

Bus travel will likely continue to be the dominant mode of transport in the city centre. In support of the project, a review of the city centre public transport network is being conducted by The City of Edinburgh Council as part of the City Mobility Plan (CMP) and City Centre Transformation (CCT) strategic policies. This is with a view to optimise service provision within the inner city and provide journey time improvements by rerouting services, repositioning stops and turnaround locations to reduce congestion and free up footway/carriageway spaces for public realm schemes. While the impact of the 'Bus Network Review' study will have on local bus routes is still to be fully realised, it is proposed that bus access, including tour buses be removed from George Street in future. This enables a reduction in carriageway areas required to facilitate vehicles turning movements and traffic lanes, allowing greater allocation of space for pedestrians and cyclists within the proposed design. Within the study area, bus services are proposed to be retained on Frederick St. and Hanover St.

Improving the accessibility of bus stops and reducing onward walking/wheeling distances to local destinations is also critical to maintaining the attractiveness of bus travel in the City Centre. At this stage, bus stops will be retained in Hanover Street and Frederick Street and are key to providing access to the first new town for a range of passengers. Final detailed discussions with bus operators on bus stop locations and capacity are ongoing with the aim to conclude these discussions by end Summer 2023. Those bus stops on the northern section of Hanover are proposed to use a 'floating' bus stop style design. This is in order to segregate cycle movements from the dominant flows of north-south traffic, mitigating potential conflicts with pedestrians and other vehicles and generally promoting greater road safety for all users.

## Vehicle Travel

Following the principles set out The City of Edinburgh Council's City Mobility Plan, numerous action plans and City Centre Transformation Strategy, the GNT project seeks to contribute to a wider reduction in private vehicle travel (and commercial vehicle) and mitigate the impact of harmful congestion, particularly on cross-city centre movements and other key routes. Removing general traffic (and parking) from a route such as George Street offers the potential to significantly improve conditions for local residents and everyday commuters through improvements to air quality, health benefits associated with being more active and reductions in journey times for public transport and essential vehicle journeys.

### General traffic access

It is proposed general traffic access be removed from George Street and a 'pedestrian and cycle zone' be created in order to ban general traffic and better manage access for essential vehicle movements (e.g. blue badge holders and daily servicing and deliveries).

This ban would be physically enforced through the use of controlled bollards. Significantly reducing general traffic access allows for the prioritisation of bus services on interconnecting streets, aiming to improve their reliability and journey times, likely attracting additional patronage.

Removing general traffic (and parking) from a route such as George Street offers the potential to significantly improve conditions for local residents and everyday commuters through improvements to air quality. Within the study area this would primarily be done by reducing congestion, reducing the time buses spend alighting in the city centre and reducing the need for buses to accelerate when in stop-start traffic.

With the implementation of the Edinburgh LEZ air quality and traffic conditions are anticipated to improve in the immediate area surrounding George Street and known hotspots such as Hanover Street, as a direct result of reducing through traffic volumes and imposing vehicle emission standards.

### Parking

The GNT proposal has been developed in line with the Councils ambition to reduce on-street parking. It is thought that St James Quarter and its c.1,500 space parking capacity will generally offset any reductions to parking provision. It is likely that this new source of parking has also changed background traffic patterns within the city centre. The removal of non-essential forms of parking (such as pay & display) on George Street and its adjacent side streets are anticipated to significantly decrease the attractiveness for vehicle travel in the area. Introduction of physical enforcement measures to eliminate through traffic on George Street for much of the day, in addition to the wholesale removal of parking is also anticipated to significantly reduce volumes of traffic circulating in the area.

Additional priority is now given to providing parking blue badge holders, taxi ranks and spaces for everyday loading and operations. Final allocation and positioning of kerbside facilities on Castle St, North Castle St, Frederick St and Hanover St. are still to be agreed, current proposals would reduce non-essential parking by c.50%.



### Taxi travel

Licensed taxi access is proposed to be retained on George Street in future. However, this is proposed to be only during the daily 'access window' from 7:00pm – 10:00am Monday to Saturday and 7:00pm – 12pm on Sundays. Outwith these times, taxis would not be permitted access and would be expected to pick-up or drop-off at kerbside areas on adjacent streets. Licensed Private Hire Cabs (PHCs) will not be permitted to enter George Street at any time. Taxi access and Licensed PHCs would remain unrestricted on Castle Street/North Castle Street, Frederick Street, Hanover Street, Charlotte and St Andrew Squares. Taxis would retain the ability to alight at the kerbside for up to 5 minutes to pick-up or drop-off. Two taxi ranks, each with capacity for 5 taxis are proposed on George Street between Castle Street-Frederick Street and Hanover Street-St Andrew Square. Taxis would only be permitted to alight within these bays during daily operating hours noted above. Discussions with taxi and licensed PHCs operators will continued with final draft taxi rank locations and capacity concluded late summer 2023.

### Loading and Operations

Loading within the study area is proposed to be permitted during the daily 'access window' from 7:00pm – 10:00am Monday to Saturday and 7:00pm – 12pm on Sundays. As discussed above, this is proposed to be enforced through the use of controlled bollards. This is anticipated to influence the vehicle types operating in the city centre and guide local businesses towards more sustainable methods of conducting their daily deliveries and servicing. Under CCT, the City of Edinburgh Council are investigating the provision of 'last mile' logistics and other freight consolidation centres across the city to optimise servicing methods and operation.

Loading on George Street is proposed to be consolidated into fourteen dedicated loading bays, these would be equally distributed along the street on the north and south sides. This would provide for up to c.40 LGVs at any given time during daily operation.

Similar to the current operation, loading and servicing on Castle Street/North Castle Street, Frederick Street and Hanover Street would continue at the kerbside within designated loading areas. It is noted that provision on each side street is likely to see further consideration and is to be finalised during the RIBA Stage 4 Technical Design process. Existing pedestrianised areas and loading facilities (with a capacity of 14 LGVs) on Castle Street are to be retained.

### Waste Collection

CEC and private waste collection has also been agreed to be undertaken during access window hours only. This aims to concentrate the times in which waste service vehicles are present in the area and encourage providers to consolidate their services. This also looks to promote a clutter free and vehicle free environment out with these operational hours. Locations of public litter bins and other street furniture has yet to be finalised within the design, ensuring streets remain clean and tidy is an important part of increasing the attractiveness of the area overall.

### Safety and Security

At this stage, independent to the Project Design Team, the Atkins' Women's Safety and Physical Security Teams were commissioned to appraise the proposal to assess risks and to ensure public safety and security elements were embedded into both the design and operational plan.

The 'Get home safe' audit found that RIBA Stage 3 designs would likely improve the safety for women and girls compared to existing conditions through enhancing pedestrian spaces. For example, through providing formal and informal crossing opportunities, removing obstructions on footways and encouraging greater visibility through increasing positive on street activity.

Considering physical security, the greatest safety risks were identified to potentially occur at road junctions and streets spaces (such as landscaped seating areas) where people congregate. These primarily concerned the potential for vehicle-as-a-weapon attacks (VAW). From this it was agreed a Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) Strategy would be undertaken during the RIBA Stage 4 Technical Design and bollard-based enforcement would be required to mitigate this risk and serve as enforcement for proposed traffic restrictions. This HVM Study would investigate the provision of additional traffic calming measures, vehicle deterrents (such as street furniture or landscaping) to provide people and building-fronts in the area protection against a hostile vehicle.

## Enforcement and Management of the design

Reducing the opportunities for misuse (such as nuisance parking) and deterring through traffic has been a historic challenge of the GNT project. During the RIBA Stage 3 design process, a key outcome has been to address current challenges associated with traditional enforcement methods, which rely on signage and lining restrictions to enforce traffic violations. While not currently feasible, technology-based enforcement methods such as Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) will continue to be explored as a method to monitor and appropriately penalise non-compliant vehicles entering the proposed pedestrians and cycle zone in future.

Acknowledging physical deterrents are required to mitigate the risk of VAW attacks, at this stage automated bollards have been selected as the primary physical means to control vehicle access and deter misuse use of the street and provide formal management of the street through intercom-style control system for access during restricted hours. The initial feasibility of these methods, possible design solutions and their positioning have been explored, however further research is required during RIBA Stage 4 to understand preferred configurations/types (sliding/retracting etc.) and final positioning at building thresholds.

An intercom-based management system (similar to that of Edinburgh's High Street and Grassmarket) is the current preferred option as this would effectively eliminate the possibility/risk of use and general traffic vehicles accessing the street during restricted hours. Only through appropriately gaining permission and providing their destination would a vehicle be permitted to enter. In providing this type of system, it is assumed a short conversation with those also monitoring the system via CCTV and vehicle drivers would be required to coordinate access (or deny those attempting to inappropriately access the street). A detailed technical summary would be developed during RIBA Stage 4 Technical Design detailing how bollard management including applications for entry during restricted periods will operate. Pre-booking access will be encouraged to minimise any permitted access during restricted periods.

In order to manage flows of permitted vehicles during access window hours, the bollard system is proposed to remain 'open' from 7:00pm in the evening, therefore requiring secondary physical protections. During Summer 2023 and RIBA Stage 4 detailed transport modelling of the implications of the current proposals is to be undertaken.

## Permitted Vehicle Access and Exemptions

In addition to permitted vehicles, such as loading/servicing vehicles and licensed taxis accessing George Street during evening and morning operational hours, there are a number of vehicle types and users which are typically given 'exempt' status from traffic restrictions proposed as part of the project's Traffic Regulation and Road Orders and to be managed day-to-day through bollard-based enforcement. Detailed below, are some examples of road users which would be granted access to George Street during daily restricted hours. This includes, but is not limited to:

### No permits or permissions required

- Blue badge holders;
- Cyclists (including e-bikes and cargo-bikes);
- Coaches (and other passenger carriers e.g. mini vans) for the purposes of hotel guest travel;
- Emergency vehicles (Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance);
- Funeral and undertaker service vehicles;
- Governmental (including Non-departmental Public Bodies) and City of Edinburgh Council vehicles undertaking their statutory duties;
- Medical practitioners (GP, nurse and midwife) administering care to a local resident;
- Post Office vehicles delivering to local residences and business premises; and,
- Secured deliveries (to banks etc).

### With appropriate Council permits or permissions in advance

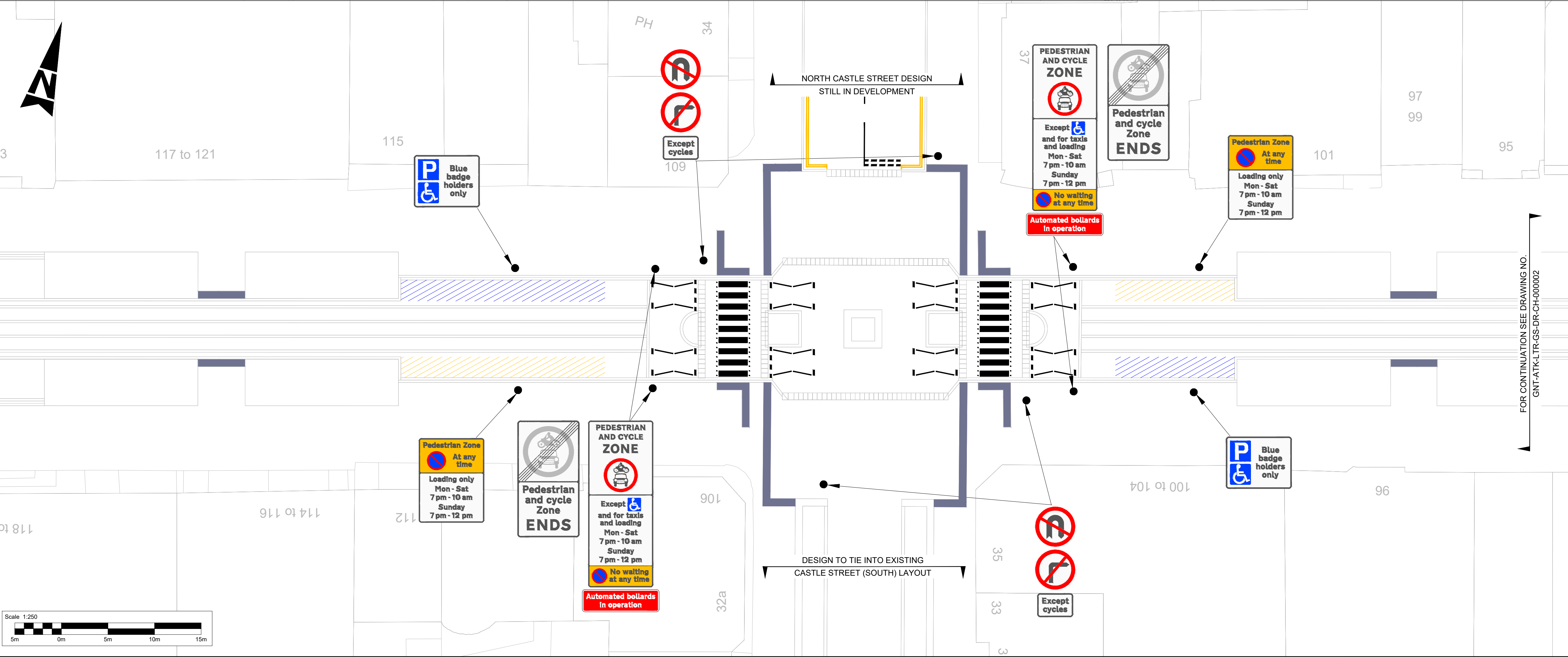
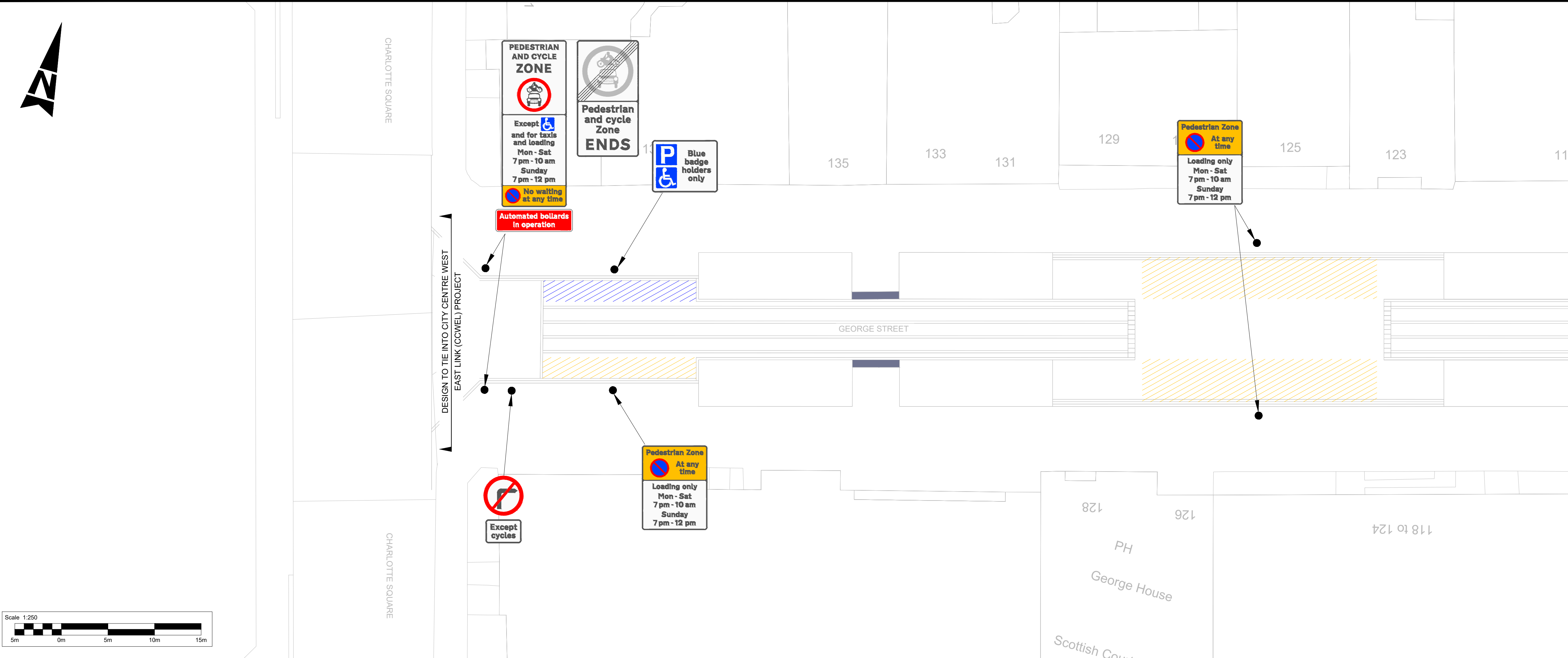
- Events vehicles (e.g. large and heavy goods vehicles required to transport equipment);
- Trades vehicles required to conduct building, construction or excavation works, the maintenance improvement or reconstruction of roads and utilities works; and,
- Special events e.g. weddings, conference facilitators, VIP visits.

DO NOT SCALE

Millimetres

0 10

0 5m 10m 15m



**KEY:**

- LOADING BAYS
- BLUE BADGE PARKING
- TAXI RANKS
- PARKING
- TACTILE PAVING
- PROPOSED CYCLE TRACK
- ROAD MARKINGS
- SIGN POST

- NOTES:**
- THE DETAILS SHOWN IN THIS DRAWING WILL BE SUBJECT TO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND SITE SURVEYS TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN STAGE 4.
  - ROAD MARKINGS, TRAFFIC SIGNALS AND TACTILE PAVING ARE SHOWN INDICATIVELY. THE DESIGN OF THESE ELEMENTS REQUIRES FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND WILL BE FINALISED DURING STAGE 4.
  - BUILDING LINES TIE INS ARE SHOWN INDICATIVELY AND WILL BE DETAILED AND FINALISED IN STAGE 4.
  - THIS DRAWING SHOWS PROPOSED TRO MEASURES TO BE TAKEN FORWARD AS PART OF THE GNT PROJECT ONLY AND DOES NOT SHOW EXISTING TROS OR THOSE BEING PROMOTED BY ADJACENT SCHEMES.
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Description						
Status	Revision	Drawn	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Issue Date
Description						
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Description						
Status	Revision	Drawn	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Issue Date

**FOR REVIEW / COMMENT**

Status	Revision	Drawn	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Issue Date
S3	PO1	GM	CP	RC	RC	09/05/23

**STAGE 3 FINAL ISSUE**

Status	Revision	Drawn	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Issue Date
A1	CO1	GM	CP	RC	RC	31/05/23

**APPROVED - PUBLISHED** A1

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**EDINBURGH**  
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Project Title  
**George Street First New Town Redevelopment**

Drawing Title  
**BLOCK A  
CHARLOTTE SQUARE TO CASTLE STREET  
INDICATIVE SIGNAGE STRATEGY  
RIBA STAGE 3**

Drawing Number  
Project  
**GNT - ATK - LTR - GS - DR - CH - 00001**

Location  
Type Role Number

Original Size: **A1** Scale: 1:250 Project Ref. No: 6208834 Sheet: 1 of 3 Rev: **C01**

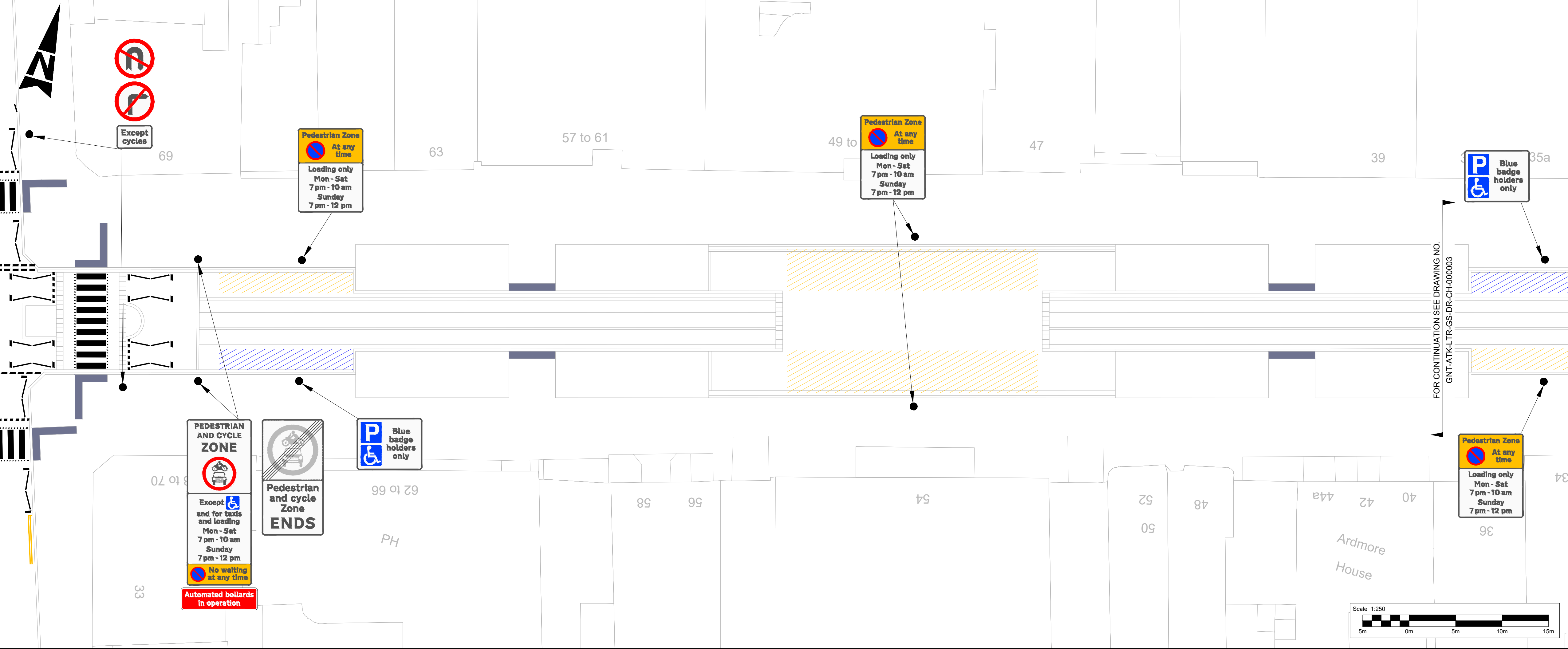
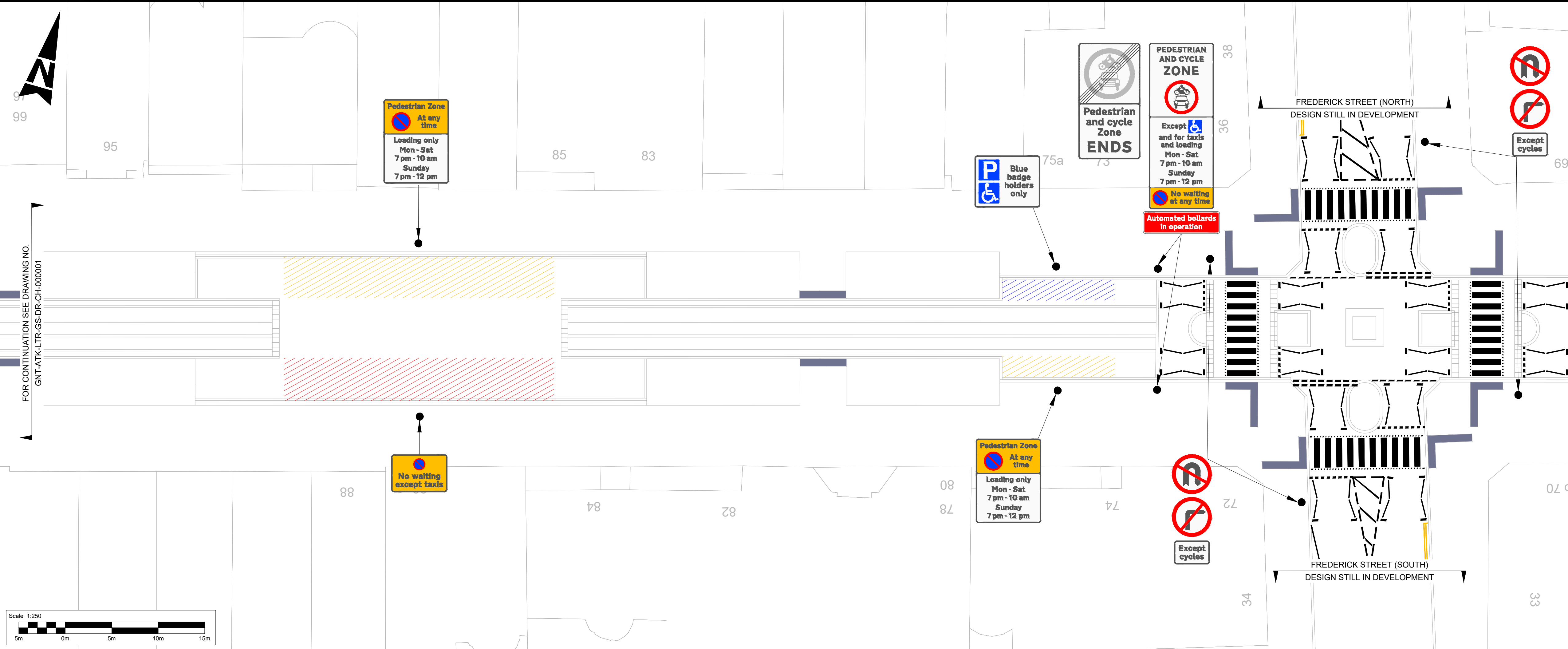


DO NOT SCALE

Millimetres

0 10

FOR CONTINUATION SEE DRAWING NO. GNT-ATK-LTR-GS-DR-CH-000001



**KEY:**

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- BLUE BADGE PARKING
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FOR REVIEW / COMMENT	S3	PO1	GM	CP	RC	RC	09/05/23
STAGE 3 FINAL ISSUE	A1	CO1	GM	CP	RC	RC	31/05/23

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**EDINBURGH**  
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Project Title  
**George Street First New Town Redevelopment**

Drawing Title  
**BLOCK B & C  
CASTLE STREET TO HANOVER STREET  
INDICATIVE SIGNAGE STRATEGY  
RIBA STAGE 3**

Drawing Number Project	Originator	Volume
GNT - ATK - LTR - GS - DR - CH - 000002		
Location	Type	Role
A1	Scale: 1:250	Project Ref. No. s208834
Original Size: A1	Scale: 1:250	Project Ref. No. s208834
Sheet: 2 of 3	Rev: C01	









# GEORGE STREET AND FIRST NEW TOWN

Committee Submission



# THE VALUE OF STREET TREES

## Social Benefits

- improving human health and wellbeing, both physical and mental
- encouraging outdoor activity and social cohesion
- reducing noise pollution
- improving educational outcomes
- providing a link with both the past and the future

## Environmental Benefits

- moderating temperature and reducing the urban heat island effect
- airborne pollutant-removal and better urban air quality
- reducing flooding by intercepting rainfall and maintaining soil permeability
- providing habitat for urban flora and fauna, improving local biodiversity
- forming green corridors which connect greenspaces and enhance the green-blue network
- carbon capture including increased soil carbon

## Economic Benefits

- increased property prices
- increased consumer spending
- reduced healthcare spend

## Urban Design Benefits

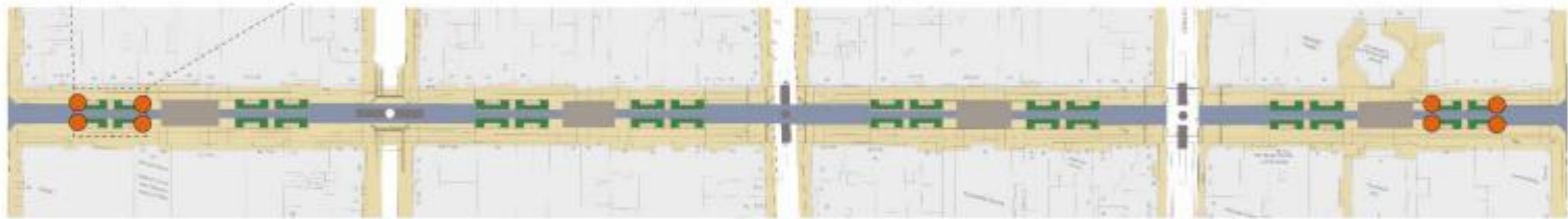
- creating beautiful and appealing places
- providing landmarks
- complementing the architecture
- defining boundaries
- connecting spaces
- providing windbreaks
- providing shade and shelter.



A research study by Natural England estimated that for every £1 spent on tree planting yielded a savings of £7 (potential £2.1 billion nationally) in terms of air pollution removal, carbon sequestration and reducing the amount of water going into drains.

# POTENTIAL TREE LOCATION

Gateway trees at either end of George Street



**Option 1**  
8 trees total



**Option 2**  
16 trees total



# TREE HEIGHTS



# TREE FORMS



Specimen

**Pros:**

- Statement tree
- Seasonal interest

**Cons:**

- May obstruct vista views
- Too dense foliage

**Species:**

- Ulmus 'New Horizon'
- Platanus x hispanica



Columnar / fastigiata

**Pros:**

- Maintain unobstructed eye-level views
- Provide benefits of larger trees but can fit into smaller landscapes
- Narrower form and easy to maintain
- Statement tree with interesting forms and textures
- Seasonal interest
- More sparse foliage

**Cons:**

- More prone to storm damage

**Species:**

- Carpinus betulus 'Fastigiata'
- Betula pendula
- Populus nigra



Pleached

**Pros:**

- Classical and formal style

**Cons:**

- Require a lot more maintenance

**Species:**

- Carpinus betulus
- Fagus sylvatica
- Tilia platyphyllos



Rounded

**Pros:**

- More sparse but rounded crown

**Cons:**

- May obstruct vista views

**Species:**

- Acer campestre
- Acer planatoides
- Quercus macrocarpa

All tree forms to be root trained and maintained so the mature height does not exceed 6.0 – 8.0m

# TREE VIEWS

View taken from Charlotte Sq towards George Street

Option 1: potential no. 4 trees





# TREE VIEWS

View taken from Charlotte Sq towards George Street

Option 2: potential no. 8 trees



Tree location contained to landscaped seating areas



# TREE VIEWS

View taken from Castle St towards Charlotte Sq





# TREE VIEWS

View taken from Hanover St towards St Andrews Sq



Key heritage buildings unobstructed by the tree location

Tree location contained to landscaped seating areas



# TREE VIEWS

Bird's eye view towards the St Andrew's & St George's West Church





Central Spaces – Previous Proposal



Granite setts in central zones and Scoutmoor Yorkstone slabs in footways

\*granite specification for the central zones still under review





Central Spaces – Indicative Proposal



Option 2: Granite setts in central zones and Scoutmoor Yorkstone slabs in footways