

JANUARY 2022

# UNION STREET FAÇADE REVIEW

## HUB NORTH SCOTLAND

BUILDING & PROJECT CONSULTANCY v1.2





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# 01

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YOUR REQUIREMENTS

# Your Requirements

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## Scope of Instructions

This report has been undertaken in accordance with our fee proposal dated 6 December 2021 and the scope of services set out therein, with minor amendments following subsequent discussions with HUB North East and Aberdeen City Council.

For the avoidance of doubt, this includes the following workstreams:

1. Prepare plan to confirm extent of survey boundary area
2. Extend original survey (Zone B) to the east and west of the central section of Union Street. Review output already completed for Union Street Central (Zone B) report and update as required to ensure consistency with the rest of the study area.
3. Drone survey of main roof structures within identified area (the full roof of each building which fronts on to Union Street (or other primary street as defined via the plan and agreed upfront with ACC) is to be included - excluding any rear additions.
4. Visual, exterior only, survey of facades and roof and subsequent reports to be set out on the basis of the following categories:
  - a) Green – Property is in good condition. Does not require significant expenditure. Any large costs identified may be subjective (e.g. reinstating heritage standard shop front)
  - b) Amber – Property is in fair condition. Costs and works identified would bring significant benefits to the overall appearance of Union Street.
  - c) Red – Property is in poor condition. Significant disrepair items have been identified and should be rectified.

Within each property report we have identified whether grant funding may be available for identified works.

5. Report to include budget costs for each of the properties with a focus on aesthetic outcome for Union Street
6. Utilising public records and any other available data to provide a list of owners and occupiers of premises.

## Description

We have identified 134 properties on Union Street. Many of these properties are multi-tenanted but have been grouped together. We have grouped properties in order to avoid a 'piecemeal' approach to improvements and maintenance.

The vast majority of properties are mid-late 1800's granite-built properties. Of these granite-built properties approximately half are listed.

The focus of the report has been on the period properties on Union Street, however we have made comment on all properties, with a focus on essential repairs only to more modern properties.

All properties on Union Street fall within the Union Street conservation area (CA458).



02

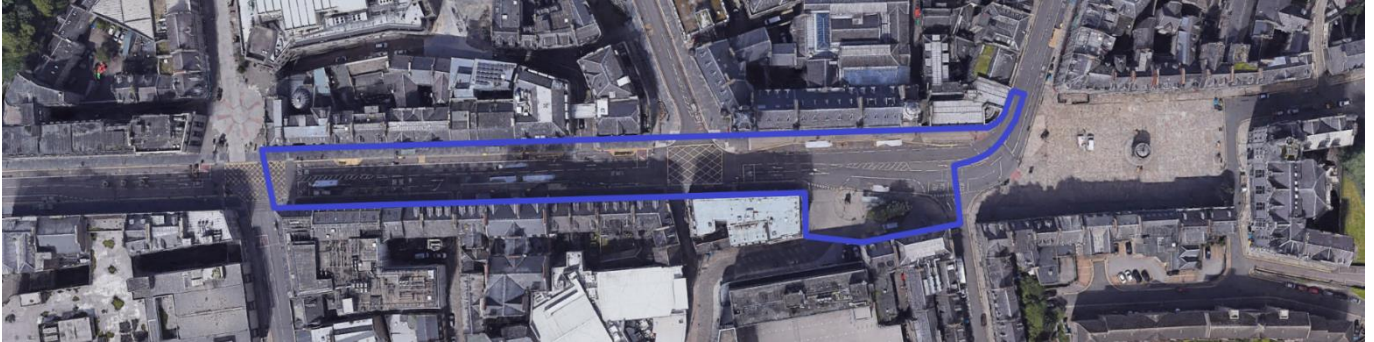


OUR APPROACH

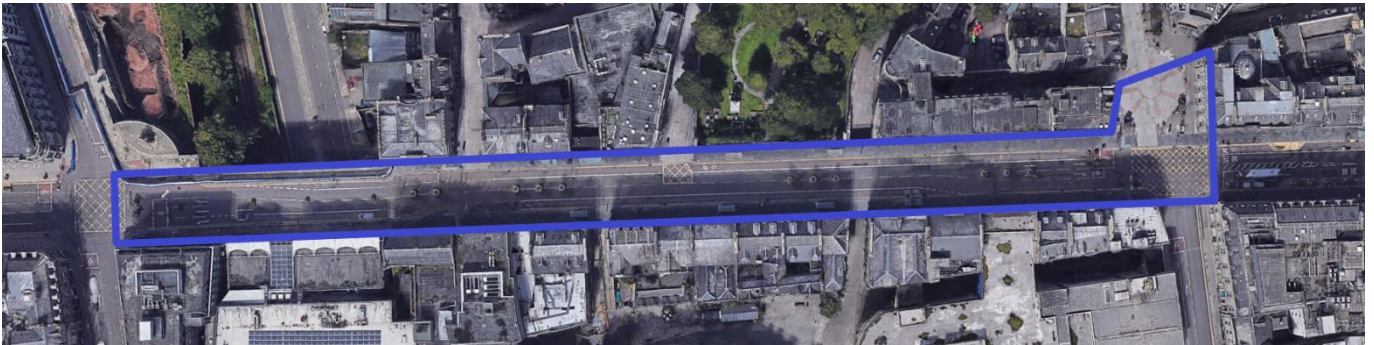
# Survey Boundaries

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Zone A – King Street to Market Street



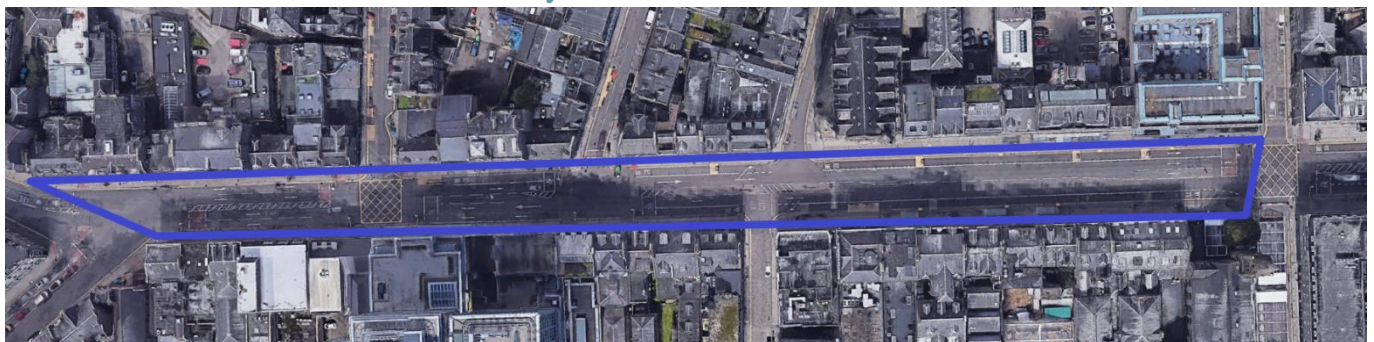
Zone B – Market Street to Bridge Street



Zone C – Bridge Street to Bon Accord Street



Zone D – Bon Accord Street to Albyn Lane



# Scope of Services and Limitations Commercial Building Surveys

We set out, in detail, our full scope of services which we have provided on your behalf.

**Inspection:** Our inspection and report concentrates on the state of repair and condition of the exterior of the properties, potential future capital expenditure and other risks. The inspection and report covers all reasonably and safely accessible exterior parts of the property. Detailed attention has not been given to relatively minor maintenance or cosmetic defects unless we consider them to be material or a pertinent issue.

**Building Design & Fabric:** We report on the principal external building elements to assess the form of construction, standard and state of repair.

Particular emphasis will be given to any serious defect, condition or risk. Additionally, we will consider future maintenance liabilities and building components that are likely to require repair or replacement within the foreseeable future.

For modern buildings within Union Street we have focused on essential improvements only and have not provided re-development recommendations.

High level reporting has been provided for the purpose of providing budget costs. Detailed specifications should be prepared in advance of progressing with any refurbishment works.

For the avoidance of doubt, when providing detailed scope of works Aberdeen City Council's supplementary guidance should be adhered to, specifically shop front and signs and stone cleaning.

- <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/1.2.PolicySG.ShopsSigns.pdf>
- [https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/aldp\\_stone\\_cleaning\\_interim2017.pdf](https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/aldp_stone_cleaning_interim2017.pdf)

**Building Structure:** Savills have inspected accessible parts of the external structure from a building surveyor's perspective. Should we identify areas of concern or consider specialist testing or input from a structural engineer should be sought we will advise you following our survey.

**Drone Inspection:** We will utilise our own DJI Mini 2 drones for the roof inspections. Drone inspections are weather dependent and subject to relevant CAA legislation/ drone code. All operators have flyer IDs and drones have operator IDs.

**Budget Cost:** We have provided high level budget costs based on reasonable estimates for essential maintenance works and proposed cosmetic works to improve the overall appearance of Union Street.

Some of the works identified to the shopfronts are subjective and further discussion is warranted on each property.

**Occupier Review:** Savills have reviewed existing documentation provided by the client to ensure no duplication of work. The occupier search will be limited to this exiting documentation, any existing and relevant information retained by Savills and search of the Scottish Assessors website.



# 03

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS



# Executive Summary

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## Introduction

Inspections were carried out on 23 December 2021, 5 January, 11 January, 19 January and 26 January 2022.

The inspections were carried by six building surveyors from Savills Scottish Building and Consultancy, with additional consultation provided by a conservation accredited surveyor.

## Summary of Facades

We are of the opinion that to improve the cosmetic appearance of Union Street the following items need to be addressed:

- Replacement/ repair to shop fronts and signage
- Redecoration of windows
- Repairs to rainwater goods
- Cleaning of stonework

Properties themselves generally did not exhibit any significant items of disrepair, therefore it is our opinion that any expenditure is more focused on improving the visual appearance of the street.

Shop fronts do not adhere to a consistent design and as a result contribute to the hap-hazard appearance of Union Street.

We have therefore proposed that a large proportion of shop fronts are renewed to achieve consistency across Union Street.

A number of these identified shopfronts are in fair order and do not require any significant works, however for the purposes of improving the aesthetic appearance of Union Street replacement has been proposed.

Windows are in varying states of repair. To achieve a consistent finished we have proposed redecoration, repair and reintroduction of traditional sash and case windows in lieu of any uPVC or metal framed units.

Stonework is generally in fair order, however hole damage from previous signage was prevalent on a number of properties. Facades were found to be lightly soiled through the length of the street.

We have proposed that all hole damage is appropriately infilled and the majority of properties, in consultation with the planning department, are cleaned in an appropriate manner.

## Summary of Roofs

Identified roof repairs do not necessarily contribute to the overall cosmetic appearance of Union Street, nevertheless, to maintain building integrity a number of repairs have been recommended. Given a large number of properties are listed proportion of the works, regardless of whether they can be seen from ground level or not, will require to be carried out to a heritage standard.

Typical works identified are:

- Cleaning of roof surfaces;
- Cleaning/ repair of gutters and downpipes;
- General slate, lead and chimney repairs;
- Reinstatement of lead flat roofs in lieu of felt flat roofs;
- Removal of unsightly dormers (where it does not significantly affect the internal space of the property)

## Grant Funding

Based on previously provided guidance we have noted that grant funding may be available on items. Typically, this relates to shop front replacements, roof replacements, stone repairs, window replacements and any preliminary items related to the works.

Further investigations are required in this area and will be part of future strategic steps in any refurbishment works.

# Executive Summary

## Summary of Ownership

Utilising information held with the Scottish Assessors we have identified the majority of commercial property owners on Union Street. Residential property owners have not been included in the review and further investigative work will be required to identify these people.

We propose carrying out this on an ad hoc basis, following identification of priority projects.

## Key Statistics

Our inspection identified the following:

- 134 individual properties, comprising:
  - 59 'C' Listed Properties
  - 36 'B' Listed Properties
  - 6 'A' Listed Properties
  - 24 Non-Listed Period Properties
  - 9 Non-Period and unlisted Properties

Properties have been categorised as follows:

- 68 'Green' rated properties, meaning the property is in good condition and does not require significant expenditure. Any large costs identified may be subjective (e.g. reinstating "heritage" standard shop front)

- 63 'Amber' rated properties, meaning the property is in fair condition. Costs and works identified would bring significant benefits to the overall appearance of Union Street.
- 3 'Red' rated properties, meaning the property is in poor condition. Significant disrepair items may have been identified and should be rectified.

Within these proposals we have proposed 84 shop front replacements. We have proposed replacement to a number of existing shop fronts that are not exhibiting signs of disrepair however do not contribute to a consistent appearance on Union Street.

For the purposes of this exercise, we have prepared budget costs for shopfronts to be reinstated to a 'heritage standard', defined as:

*"A standard commensurate with the architectural and historic interest of the building with an emphasis on using traditional materials and reinstating historic architectural features where it is desirable or required."*

It is possible that following discussions with Aberdeen City Council planning department special dispensation may be granted to allow for shopfronts to be restored or replaced to a more modern design, in which case budget costs could be altered to reflect a slightly lower sum.

## Budget Repair Costs

ITEM	Zone A	Zone B	Zone C	Zone D	Total (£)
Roof	£109,780	£712,125	£606,415	£638,489	£2,066,808
Rainwater Goods	£66,360	£35,486	£142,761	£143,259	£387,866
Chimneys	£19,404	£36,909	£63,571	£83,246	£203,130
Walls	£146,340	£125,911	£51,119	£77,276	£400,645
Wall Cleaning	£333,951	£285,280	£290,093	£338,135	£1,250,457
Finishes	£96,082	£49,240	£95,712	£38,816	£279,850
Windows	£114,775	£120,823	£269,181	£163,588	£695,367
Doors	£320	£11,634	£8,752	£2,775	£23,482
Shopfronts	£789,834	£1,010,419	£1,015,755	£2,004,045	£4,885,873
Other	£263,378	£215,646	£216,315	£347,428	£1,042,766
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,940,225</b>	<b>£2,603,472</b>	<b>£2,745,309</b>	<b>£3,837,055</b>	<b>£11,126,060</b>

# Next Steps

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## Prepare a strategy for implementation of improvement works.

We believe that the main barriers to owner and occupiers will be cost and inconvenience. We propose a strategy that will minimise these barriers by:

1. Offering grant funding or a 'one-stop' service to cover professional services needed to implement the improvement works.
2. Creating a new fund to enable shopfront replacements to be carried out that do not need to conform to the strict criteria set for heritage shop fronts, offering up to 50% funding.
3. Creating a procurement strategy or service that offers competitive and consistent rates for building repairs throughout Union Street.
4. Simplifying the procedures required for all statutory consents by providing overarching building warrant, planning and listed building consent for the prescribed works. This will require liaison with all relevant third parties to ensuring that all requirements are fulfilled from the outset.

## Agree to a priority list, identifying which assets are to be targeted for refurbishment works:

We propose prioritising works as follows:

1. Zone B
2. Zone A
3. Zone C
4. Zone D

Further to this we propose attending to properties on the south side of Union Street before attending to those on the North and 'Amber' rated properties over 'Green' rated properties.

We propose that Red rated properties are attended to as soon as possible regardless of their zone and should be viewed as standalone projects.

Properties already owned by Aberdeen City Council, such as the newly acquired units at 81-89 Union Street, can be used as test projects where implementation of the strategy is fine-tuned. This will provide real life examples that can form the basis for subsequent repair and refurbishment projects on Union Street.

## Commission a new exercise to review the overall streetscape.

An observation made during our inspection was that to complement any advice in regard to the building facades a coherent strategy needs to be in place for street furniture, lighting, paving, etc. We propose that a similar study is undertaken to review this.

We believe that improving the streetscape of Union Street will help owners and occupier 'buy-in' to the overall desire to improve Union Street and will complement any façade repair works.



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**savills**