

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Function:</u>	Resources
<u>Date:</u>	7 November 2023
<u>Title of Update:</u>	Union Terrace Gardens Granite reconciliation report - final
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UPDATE

- 1.1 Following concern around the removal of granite and other items from the Union Terrace Gardens project in early Summer 2021, at the Full Council meeting held on 21 June 2021 the Chief Officer – Capital and Chief Officer – Governance were instructed to bring a report to the next meeting of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny with a full audit of all the granite and other items removed from UTG to ensure that the main contractor can provide Council with a guarantee that all granite and other items from Union Terrace Gardens can be accounted for
- 1.2 At Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee on 29 September 2021, the Chief Officer – Capital and Chief Officer Governance submitted a report collating all appropriate records, at that point in time, satisfying the committee that a full audit of all granite downtakings, and other similar related items including railings, heraldry shields and lamps, had been carried out by the Principal Contractor and that they had confirmed all items, as per the site start inventory, are accounted for and are now within safe and secure storage at an approved location.
- 1.3 Following on from that meeting a reconciliation of relevant items was carried out and a Service Update was issued to Audit and Risk Members on 15 November 2021. It is noted that works were still ongoing at that point in time.
- 1.4 This Service Update considers the status of the granite downtakings, and other similar related items including railings, heraldry shields and lamps from Union Terrace Gardens, now that project works onsite have concluded.
- 1.5 Practical completion was issued in December 2022.

- 1.6 It is considered appropriate to close out this Service Update at this stage as December 2023 marks the end of the 'making good defects' period for the project and it is highly unlikely that the Principal Contractor will need to make any use of the retained and stored materials

GRANITE AND RELATED MATERIALS RECORDS

- 2.1 As a point of reference, and given time has passed, it is worth reminding members, some of whom are new, the background to the project.
- 2.2 In April 2017 a comprehensive Conservation Statement was prepared on Union Terrace Gardens for the Council detailing the cultural heritage on the site. The conservation statement was produced by an architect accredited by the Royal Incorporation of British Architects (RIBA) and the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS). The statement contains an extensive back catalogue of the existing assets, materials, and features of the gardens. It also provides commentary on the heritage and history of such assets, prior to works starting.
- 2.3 Following production of the Conservation Statement, the project design team produced further detailed survey drawings and reports on the existing gardens along with design proposals for the new gardens. These documents and addendums were formally submitted, considered, and approved as part of the formal planning and listed building applications, non-material variations and the further purification of conditions to the Planning Authority.
- 2.4 The aforementioned documents, drawings and records acted as the primary reference inventory of Union Terrace Gardens prior to works commencing. The existing information is viewed in conjunction with proposed tender design information to assist in the reconciliation of assets prior to their re-use or long-term storage.
- 2.5 The Planning Authority granted planning permission to the Council for the development of Union Terrace Gardens in March 2018. Listed building consent was granted in May 2020 following the normal statutory process.
- 2.6 The decision to grant planning permission and listed building consent was subject to specific conditions. The planning conditions were included as part of the tender documentation and the listed building conditions were confirmed following the granting of consent. The appointed Principal Contractor has the contractual responsibility to satisfy, comply with and discharge the conditions.
- 2.7 One of the listed building conditions dealt with granite storage. It states that no downtakings of any granite features were allowed until details of

the safe storing of the granite were submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

- 2.8 Appendix A contains the details submitted to the Planning Authority by the Principal Contractor in respect of satisfying the listed building granite storage condition. The Planning Authority reviewed the proposals and subsequently sent notice discharging the condition.
- 2.9 The discharging of this condition allowed the Principal Contractor to enter a contract with their chosen sub-contractor, Graeme W. Cheyne (Builders) Ltd, for the latter to uplift and temporarily store granite downtakings, as instructed, at Graeme W. Cheyne's secure storage yard in Torry.
- 2.10 Following the award of Contract and after taking possession of the site the Principal Contractor carried out a site start inventory of all items identified for re-use or potential re-use. proceeded
- 2.11 As the design and construction works progressed the preferred location for storing, handling, and re-using materials was on-site. However, when site operations restricted the availability of space, the alternative temporary storage system, approved by the Planning Authority, was brought into use. The Principal Contractor was accountable for managing this process and maintaining a schedule of material movement as part of the works, to suit the construction programme.
- 2.12 Throughout the construction period as materials were required back on site, a cross-check was carried out with the site start inventory to ensure all items removed were accounted for.
- 2.13 As the project neared completion any identified surplus granite was removed from both the Torry yard and Union Terrace Gardens and transported to the designated/approved Aberdeen City Council's storage facility. The granite will now remain there indefinitely until directed otherwise by the Council.
- 2.14 The project team and the Principal Contractor have carried out a comprehensive reconciliation exercise as the project nears its one year anniversary post practical completion.
- 2.15 Both parties are content that the granite downtakings and other similar related items including railings, heraldry shields and lamps from Union Terrace Gardens have either been re-used within the new project or can be accounted for within the final communal reconciliation exercise and are now located in permanent storage. It should be noted , as previously reported, that a small quantity of granite was disposed due to either being damaged beyond re-use, or foundation rubble stone which was removed offsite.

2.16 There is a significant array of stone and metalwork from Union Terrace Gardens now held in storage. In summary this includes:

- Over 200m of granite road kerbs
- Over 100m of retained granite from wall structures
- 75 No individual balustrades
- Feature coping granite
- Feature base granite
- Remaining lengths of armorial railings
- Dressed granite
- Rough granite
- Miscellaneous railings (iron)
- Metal Signage

2.17 In addition to the Union Terrace Gardens granite there is wider consideration being given to what should be done with all the historical granite materials sited at the current storage location. The bulk of these materials have been stored for an extensive number of years, probably going back decades.

2.18 It is expected a consolidation exercise will be undertaken in the short to medium term to reduce stock and bring the granite back into use in any construction projects deemed suitable.

2.19 The Union Terrace Gardens granite will be considered as part of that exercise.

Appendix A Listed Building Consent re Granite Storage

<p>Granite Storage</p> <p>That no dountaking of any granite features, shall take place until details of the safe storing of said granite have be submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. Thereafter no works shall be carried out unless in complete accordance with such details as so approved unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.</p> <p>- to safeguard the special architectural and historical character of the site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The down takings of the granite balustrade will be kept on site where possible, however if specialist work or repair of individual items of balustrade need to be done these items will be taken to the granite specialist Graeme Cheyne (https://www.gramecheynebuilders.co.uk/)• Off-site material storage address: Graeme W Cheyne builders 2 Walker Lane Toray AB11 8BW• All materials taken off site will be covered under a separate insurance policy to cover damage and theft.• All materials taken off site will be tracked and traced via the unique identification number.• All granite down takings that are identified to stay within the site will be placed on pallets, padded with hessian or other soft material and then banded to secure to the pallet. No more than three items of granite per pallet and no pallets will be stacked. A specified area will be given for granite storage that is fenced off from other site activates.
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