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Glasgow City Council

Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration  
City Policy Committee

Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director of  
Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability

Item 7

4th June 2024

Contact: Jane Laiolo

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**Glasgow Avenues**  
**George Square and Block C Avenues (Phase 1) – Progress Update**

**Purpose of Report:**

To provide a final report on the design for George Square and surrounds, and to outline the planned procurement and construction methodology.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Members:

- (i) Consider the completion of RIBA Stage 4 technical design;
- (ii) Note that the next main activity will be preparation of tender documents for the various contracts required to deliver the refurbishment;
- (iii) Note that all activity outlined in this report is subject to ongoing cost, budget and wider Avenues programme monitoring and analysis;
- (iv) Consider that future updates on the progress of George Square's redevelopment will be included in the annual report on the Avenues to this committee.

Ward No(s): 10

Citywide:

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

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### 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Members may recall that the most recent report on George Square was submitted to the Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration (EHTR) City Policy Committee on 14 November 2023. This report can be found [here](#). It provided an update on progress of the design of George Square and Phase 1 Block C Avenues (see **Appendix A Phasing Map**) during the design phase of RIBA Stage 3.
- 1.2 For ease of design and construction programme management, Block C has been split into two phases, namely Phase 1 and 2 (see **Appendix A**).
- Phase 1 comprises of George Square, John Street, North Hanover Street, George Street (between Nelson Mandela Place and Montrose Street) Cochrane Street, St Vincent Place and Hanover Street, and Miller Street.
  - Phase 2 comprises of St Vincent Street (from Buchanan Street to Newton Street) and George Street (from Montrose Street to High Street)
- 1.3 This new report provides an update on progress of the design of George Square and Phase 1 Block C Avenues during RIBA Stage 4. Phase 2 Block C Avenues will commence RIBA Stage 2 Concept Design works in September 2024 and associated progress reports will be incorporated into the Avenues annual reporting to EHTR committee.
- 1.4 This report will also provide an update on the progress of ancillary contracts that are being developed in parallel to the main contract, namely:
- (i) Site Boundary and Hoarding contract
  - (ii) 11 Bronze Statues removal, transport, and storage contract
  - (iii) 11 Bronze Statues design and conservation contract
  - (iv) 11 Stone plinths, Sir Walter Scott monument and Cenotaph design and conservation contract
  - (v) Festive Lighting design and installation contract
- 1.5 Members should note that the tender documents preparation stage of the process for George Square, and the adjacent Avenues that form Phase 1 of Block C design works, will be subject to:
- (i) Application, comments and approval of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) application for the new finalised technical designs
  - (ii) Further development of costs from the ongoing consultation with various service-providing companies with infrastructure in the grounds of the project area
  - (iii) Completion of design information for ancillary contracts that need to be incorporated with the main contract

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- (iv) Ongoing budget and cost evaluation of the overarching Avenues programme based on the current costings derived from recent construction tender returns
- 1.6 The outcome of these exercises will help to inform the final cost plan and programme for the refurbishment works.

## 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the Glasgow City Region City Deal is investing approximately £115m within Glasgow city centre to deliver the Enabling Infrastructure Integrated Public Realm (EIIPR) programme – also known as the Avenues programme. This has also been supplemented by an additional £23m from Sustrans. The Avenues programme is essentially a quality place-making scheme that will transform key streets in Glasgow's city centre. This investment will introduce a network of pedestrian and cycle priority routes across Glasgow city centre that will incorporate green/blue infrastructure, increased pedestrian and cycle space, and improved connectivity, delivering the central core of the People First Zone.
- 2.2 John McAslan and Partners (JMP) were awarded the Block C design commission, and this includes producing RIBA Stages 0 - 4 designs for George Square, John Street, St Vincent Street and Place, West George Street and George Street, Hanover and Miller Street, North Hanover Street, Dundas Street and Dundas Lane, and Cochrane Street.

## 3 PHASE 1 DESIGN PROPOSALS

### Design Stage Overview

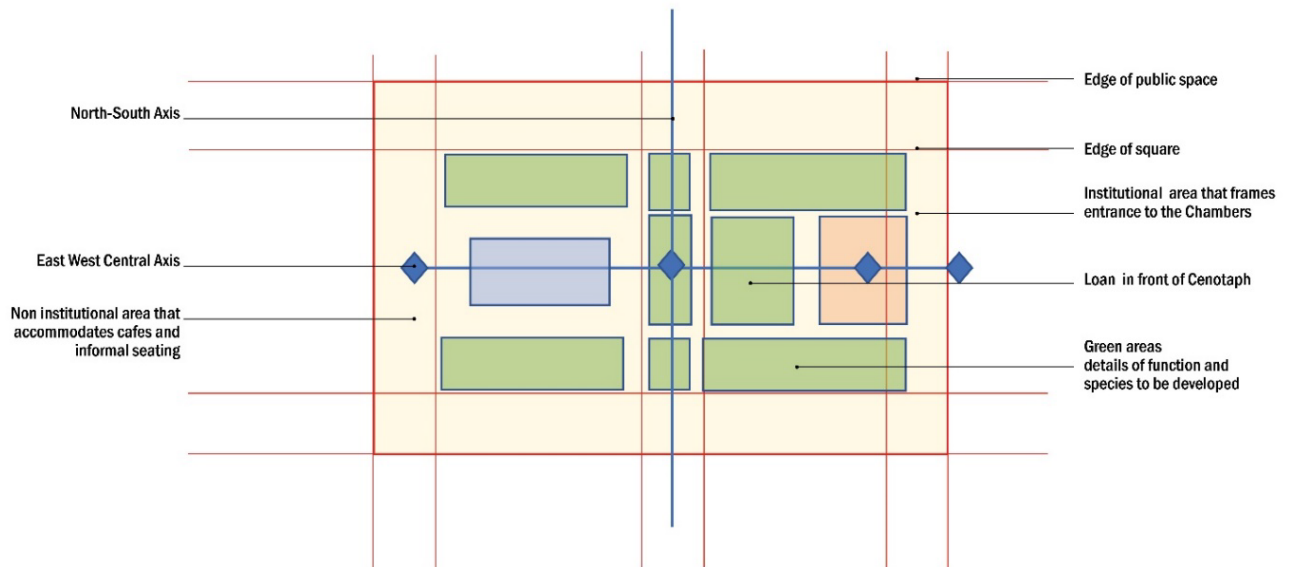
- 3.1 During RIBA stage 4 the appointed team of consultants led by JMP progressed the developed RIBA Stage 3 designs into technical Stage 4 designs which will be used for tender information and subsequently become part of the construction information package. The technical design is a result of the analysis of all the data gathered from the comments received in multiple events of in-person and digital public engagement and stakeholder consultation that occurred over a two year period between 2022 and 2023.
- 3.2 A RIBA Stage 4 developed design proposal for the Avenues was prepared in line with the overarching programme ethos of reducing road capacity for private vehicles whilst providing enhanced walking and cycling facilities and green infrastructure.
- 3.3 The current proposals continue to develop the key underpinning design statements for George Square (see **Figure 1**), which have now been developed into detailed technical design, and propose that the final design:

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- (i) Respects vistas, whilst enhancing the views towards key architectural features
- (ii) Enhances North-South axis
- (iii) Protects and extend greenery
- (iv) Recognises that the edge of the public space is defined by the line of the buildings surrounding the Square
- (v) Recognises that the edge of the Square is defined by the east-west corridors (West George Street and St Vincent Street)
- (vi) Responds to the institutional character of the eastern area of the Square in front of the City Chambers
- (vii) Responds to the non-institutional character of the western area of the Square
- (viii) Respects the central east west axis in the Square (City Chambers, Cenotaph, Sir Walter Scott)

**Figure 1:** Design Statements developed during RIBA Stage 2 and approved at Avenues Board on 10/11/22



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3.4 The final design denoted by the image below is now ready to progress to procurement.



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### George Square Developed Design Proposal Overview

3.5 The procurement strategy and timetable for this project is outlined as follows.

Contract	Start	Completion
1 - Site Compound and Hoardings around George Square	January 2025	January 2025
2 - Bronze Statues Removal and Storage	February 2025	December 2027
3 - Bronze Statues Conservation and Reinstallation to new location in the Square	July 2025	December 2027
4 - Block C Phase 1 Public Realm Works	April 2025	April 2027
4b - Statues Stone Plinths and Stone Monuments Conservation	April 2025	April 2027
4c - Festive Lighting Design	April 2025	April 2027

**Contract 1** – Create a site compound and hoard the Square in January 2025 as soon as the decorations for Christmas 2024 come down.

**Contract 2** – From January 2025 to March 2025, removal of 11 Bronze Statues to be transported to an adequate storage facility.

**Contract 3** – Conserve and restore the 11 bronze statues between July 2025 and July 2027. Return statues to their new location on the completed Square from July 2027 onwards.

**Contract 4** – The **main contract** for public realm works of George Square and surrounding Block-C avenues to start in April 2025 with phased completion up to April 2027 (with George Square delivered by August 2026).

**Contract 4b** – Downtakings of 11 stone plinths, conservation, and reinstallation of the plinths to the newly finished Square and conservation of Sir Walter Scott Monument and The Cenotaph. The specifications of this contract will be merged into the tender package of Contract 4.

**Contract 4c** – Renewed Festive Lighting Design. The specifications of this contract will be merged into the tender package of Contract 4.

### 3.6 Contract 1: Site Hoardings Update

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This contract will form a part of enabling works in preparation for the main contract. A hoarded compound will be created around George Square at the start of January 2025 once the Christmas decorations of 2024 come down. The hoardings will display graphics communicating the progress of key current and future projects, images and interpretation on the statues, and viewing areas to enable public visibility of the construction activity.

Work is ongoing to develop the graphics, interpretation material and communication strategy for the hoardings.

### 3.7 **Contract 2: Statues Removal and Storage Update**

This contract will form a part of the enabling works in preparation for the main contract. The 11 bronze statues within the Square will be carefully removed, transported, and securely stored at an appropriate facility in preparation for their conservation under Contract 3.

The removal of statues in advance also provides the public realm works contractor with a clean site start, without the risk of damaging the precious bronzes. The statues are programmed to be removed as soon as the site hoarding is set up. The removal should commence in late January 2025 and complete in March 2025.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) have been engaged with extensively to obtain guidance on the project. A Prior Information Notice (PIN) was published in April 2024 to check the interest and availability of this specialist contractors in the market. It is intended that the design and specification of the statue's removal will be developed during the coming months followed by a tender exercise in Autumn 2024 with the intent of procuring a specialist contractor by December 2024.

### 3.8 **Contract 3: Statues Conservation Update**

This contract will be an independent stand-alone contract focusing purely on the conservation and reinstallation of the 11 bronze statues. Due to the very specialist nature of this project a procurement strategy, methodology and specification of conservation will be developed first.

HES have been engaged with extensively to obtain guidance on the project.

A PIN was published in April 2024 to check the interest and availability of this specialist contractors in the market. It is intended that the design and specification of the conservation work will be developed by the procurement and appointment of a specialist consultant, or by a collaboration directly with HES. The terms of both options are being developed.

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The design and specification will be developed between July and October 2024, followed by preparation of tender or collaboration terms from November 2024 to January 2025. The tender period and appointment of specialist conservators is planned between February to June 2025. It is expected that the conservation work will continue for up to two years until July 2027, after which the statues will be returned to their new positions on the Square on a periodic basis up to the end of 2027.

### 3.9 **Contract 4: George Square and Block-C Public Realm Works Main Contract Update**

The final technical design proposal (see **Appendix B and C**) continues to respond to the original design statements of creating a greener, sustainable, and accessible high quality public space for the people of Glasgow and its visitors. Extensive engagements and consultations over the course of two years have helped shape this final technical design.

It is anticipated that the tender will be published in August 2024.

The tender period will last until early November 2024, followed by tender evaluation period during November and December 2024. The tender returns will indicate a firm cost for the project which will guide the development of the Full Business Case (FBC). Approval to award the contract will be sought from the first GCC Contracts and Property Committee of 2025 (dates are not yet available), and then the FBC will be submitted to the Glasgow City Region for approval of construction funding shortly thereafter (estimated date for this meeting is first week of February 2025), subject to tender return costs coming in under or at par with the estimated budget.

The Main Contractor is planned to be appointed by February 2025 followed by a site mobilisation period of two months and the contractor commencing the construction works by April 2025. It is expected that the construction of George Square and its surrounds, along with West George Street and St Vincent Place, will be completed by August 2026, followed by the rest of the Phase 1 design area streets by April 2027. It should be noted therefore that there will be ongoing disruption in the area, until April 2027, even after the main Square is complete.

### 3.10 **Contract 4b: Statues Stone Plinth and Monuments Conservation Update**

The design team of John McAslan and partners are currently developing the scope and specification for the conservation of the stone plinths associated to the bronze statues, Sir Walter Scott Monument and The Cenotaph. HES will again be engaged with in the coming weeks and the developed specification will be reviewed.

This developed specification for stonework conservation will be included in the tender package for the main contract and the actual conservation of the plinths and monuments will be factored into the public realm construction work programme due to be completed in April 2027.

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### 3.11 Contract 4c: Festive Lighting Design Contract Update

The new design has considered feature lighting, and images are in production to illustrate the winter lighting options.

The design primarily proposes the use of gobo projectors which are capable of projecting images on the floor of the Square and also on the façade of the City Chambers. The projectors have multiple projecting images built into them along with the functionality to change the light colours, lighting style and angles remotely. The gobo projectors are further supported by a more traditional use of catenary cables and pealights between the new light masts. The design team of John McAslan and partners are currently finalising the specification and design of this element of the works.

This technical design and specification for festive lighting will be included in the tender package for the main contract and its installation will be factored into the public realm construction work programme due to be completed in April 2027.

## 4 RISK AND ISSUES

- 4.1 Listed Building Applications are currently under review with regards to the conservation and restoration of the statues and monuments on the Square. **Mitigation:** Ongoing engagement with GCC Planning and HES is expected to ensure a positive outcome. A Conservation Expert appointment is being progressed to ensure that the conservation plan and specification is developed to a standard that will be accepted by HES.
- 4.2 Tender return figures may come inflated beyond budget calculations, and there may be a need to retender adding time and cost to the programme. **Mitigation:** Costs have been calculated on the basis of recent Avenues construction tender returns and are deemed to have been as accurately estimated as possible.
- 4.3 Trial Pits and Service diversions. There is a risk of finding previously unaccounted for service runs that may need diversion and could cause a delay to the programme). **Mitigation:** Designers have employed all possible non-invasive surveys and engaged extensively with service companies to ascertain the location of existing services. The final designs have been developed in a manner that they have a minimum impact on these existing services.
- 4.4 TRO applications for new designs (objections may arise and cause delays). **Mitigation:** Businesses and residents, and all other relevant stakeholders have been engaged with during the course of the design development over last two years. It is therefore anticipated that there will be limited opposition to the new designs.

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- 4.5 A Negotiated tender process could extend past the allocated duration (based on lessons learnt from recent tenders). **Mitigation:** To limit the risk that the tender period is extended during the negotiation process, it is key that all relevant information is available to tenderers and that it is clear and prescriptive enough to allow the appropriate pricing and quality information to be submitted for assessment and to also limit the areas that require negotiation.
- 4.6 It has been established that there is a limited availability of specialist bronze conservation metal workers. The conservation of bronze statues and their return to the Square may take longer than anticipated. The true condition of the statues will remain unknown until the thick layers of paint are stripped off them. This may have an impact on their conservation programme. **Mitigation:** Extensive pre-tender conversations and engagements are being carried out with HES and other independent companies and experts to ascertain the condition of the statues as far as possible prior to stripping them of the paint. A Conservation Expert will be appointed in due course to carry out further close up visual and laser surveys to understand the true condition of the statues.
- 4.7 George Square is programmed to open in August 2026, but works will continue in surrounding streets and this may have an impact on the use of the Square until such time as the surrounding Avenues are fully complete. **Mitigation:** GCC will work closely with the appointed contractor to devise a delivery phasing plan in a manner that works on the surrounding Avenues after August 2026 is as further away from George Square as possible. Internal GCC Services and other stakeholders will be updated through a regular communications plan to ensure an early understanding of any constraints.
- 4.8 The multi-contract approach has a number of interdependencies where risk and issues of one contract may impact another contract and vice versa. **Mitigation:** Expert resources are being employed to develop the ancillary contracts in a manner that the specification and programme are reasonable and achievable, while supporting the main contract at the same time.
- 4.9 The risk of new major events being delivered by the city in the same timescale as George Square's redevelopment could impact the programme significantly if the city centre becomes an event zone, or limits are placed on key arterial routes. **Mitigation:** ongoing engagement with Glasgow Life and GCC events teams to understand at an early stage any related requirements.

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### 5 COSTS AND FUNDING

- 5.1 The final cost will be determined through the procurement process and will be funded through the City Deal capital programme.

### 6 POLICY AND RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

#### Resource Implications:

*Financial:* There are no new financial implications with this report.

*Legal:* The report raises no new legal issues.

*Personnel:* No direct personnel issues.

*Procurement:* Works will be procured according to Council Standing Orders.

#### Council Strategic Plan:

*Specify which Grand Challenge (s) and Mission (s) the proposal supports. Where appropriate the relevant Commitment can also be listed.*

The project supports the following items:

#### **GRAND CHALLENGE ONE – Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities**

MISSION 3: Improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities

*Commitments: 2*

#### **GRAND CHALLENGE TWO – Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens**

MISSION 1: Support Glasgow residents into sustainable and fair work

*Commitments: 1,5*

#### **GRAND CHALLENGE THREE – Fight the climate emergency in a just transition to a net zero Glasgow**

MISSION 1: Deliver sustainable transport and travel aligned with the city region

*Commitments: 3,4,10,11,16,26*

MISSION 2: Become a net zero carbon city by 2030

*Commitments: 9,14,15*

#### **GRAND CHALLENGE FOUR – Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative and efficient way for our communities**

MISSION 1: Create safe, clean and thriving neighbourhoods

*Commitments: 18,19*

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### Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.</i>	Yes. The delivery of Avenues Block C will contribute to achieving Outcome 1 by leading to the provision of more employment opportunities for a diverse workforce and Outcome 6 by helping to create a more vibrant and attractive city centre with more opportunities for social interaction.
<i>What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?</i>	Positive - The Avenues programme will encourage, employment opportunities and opportunities for all city centre residents and beyond by improving connectivity and accessibility.
<i>Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.</i>	The proposal will enhance accessibility and promote a socially inclusive environment and encourage skills development and business development more generally by improving access to jobs and areas of prosperity.

### Climate Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:</i>	Yes. When delivered, the public realm developed as part of the Avenues Block C will enhance the opportunities for active travel, biodiversity and climate mitigation, as well as traffic reduction and support citizen's behavioral change/modal shift. Supports Climate Plan Actions: 1, 2, 36,37,38, 51,56
<i>What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?</i>	Positive. The potential impacts are on carbon reduction, increases in active travel, connected green and open spaces, support for circularity, public realm that promotes well- being and empowers local communities and community wealth building.
<i>Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?</i>	Yes. Delivering new attractive public realm and active travel infrastructure will mean less reliance on carbon emitting modes of transport. The project will also enhance biodiversity in the city centre as well as introduce climate mitigations measures (trees, rain gardens).

### Privacy and Data Protection impacts:

*Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report Y/N*

There are no immediate data protection impacts. These will be assessed as the action plan is developed, and DPIA's will be completed as required.

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## **7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) Consider the completion of RIBA Stage 4 technical design;
- (ii) Note that the next main activity will be preparation of tender documents for the various contracts required to deliver the refurbishment;
- (iii) Note that all activity outlined in this report is subject to ongoing cost, budget and wider Avenues programme monitoring and analysis;
- (iv) Consider that future updates on the progress of George Square's redevelopment will be included in the annual report on the Avenues to this committee.

### **Enclosures**

**Appendix A:** George Square and Block-C Design Phasing Plan

**Appendix B:** George Square Final Design

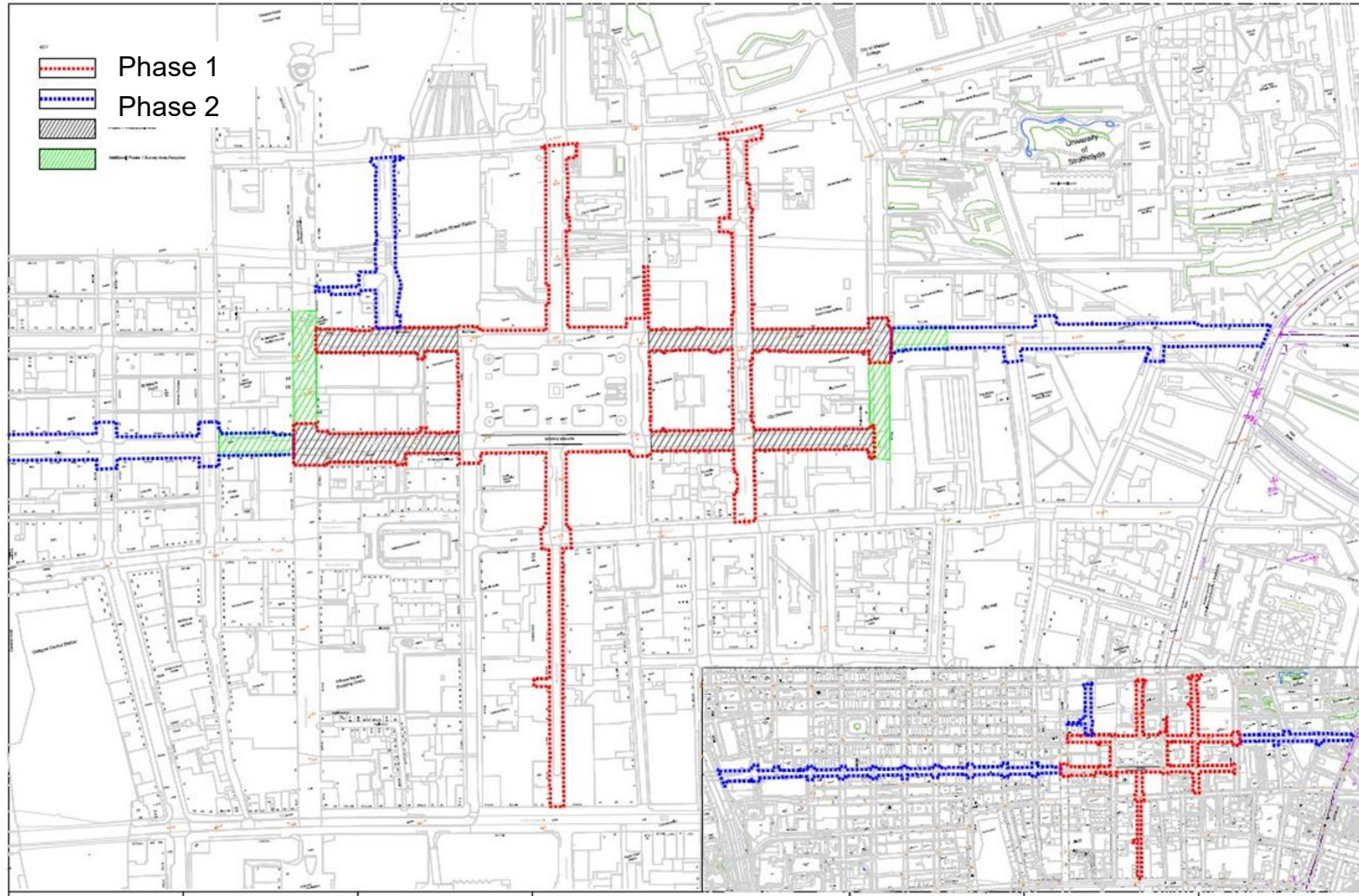
**Appendix C:** George Square Final 3D Views

**Appendix D:** George Square Contracts Programme and Interdependencies

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**Appendix A: George Square and Block-C Design Phasing Plan**

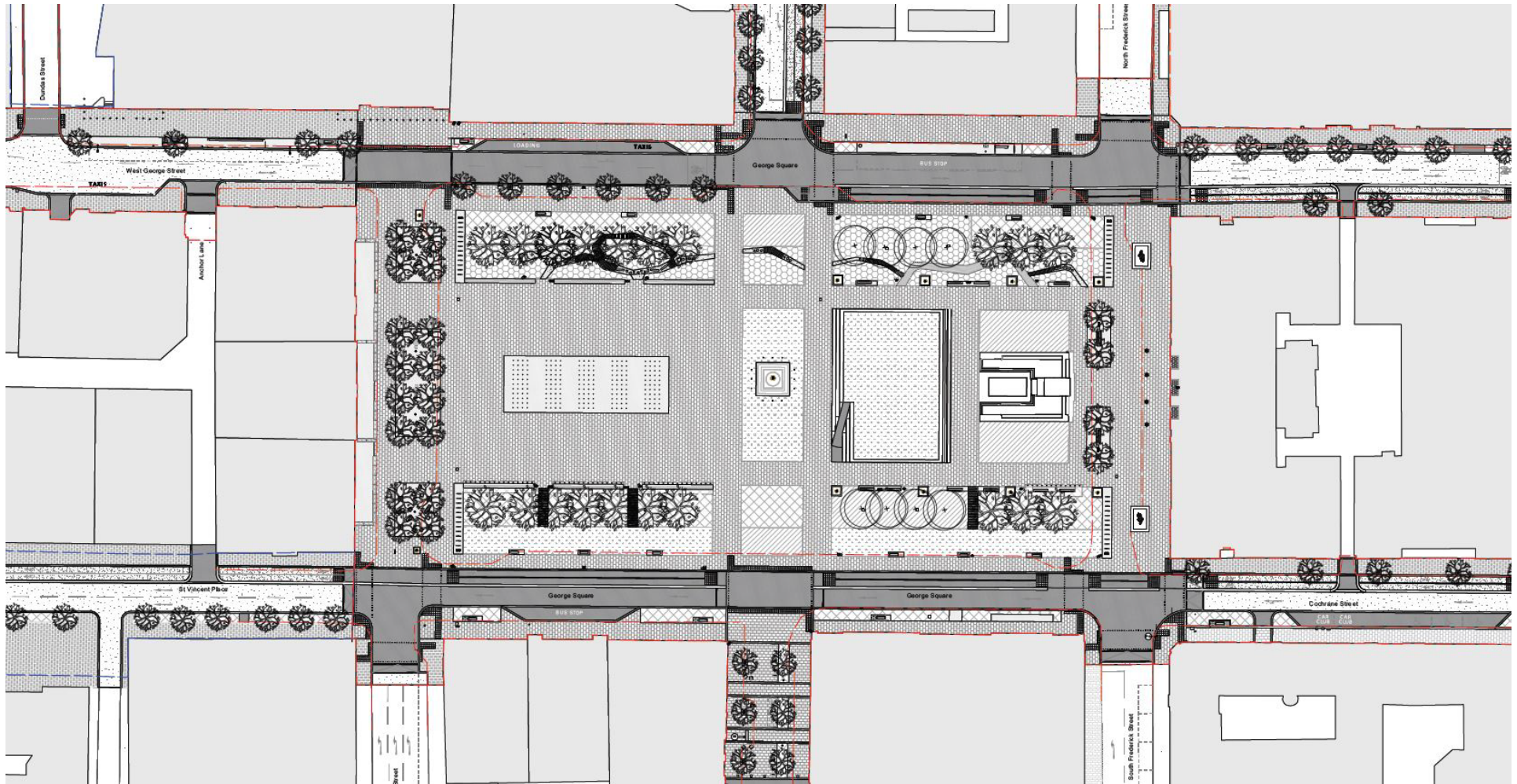


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## Appendix B: George Square Final Developed Plan



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### Appendix C: George Square Final 3D Views

George Square 3D Visual from South West corner



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George Square 3D Visual from North East corner



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George Square 3D Visual from South East corner



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## Appendix D: George Square Contracts Programme and Interdependencies

