

63412 Crash Decks in Saunders Street

Fully clarifies the nature of the seen and suspected damage and why this was declared an emergency.

Crash deck scaffolding was erected at 1-8 Saunders Street following concerns raised by a structural engineer who was on-site in relation to works being overseen by the Council's High-Rise Management & Investment team.

These concerns were raised with Edinburgh Shared Repairs Service (ESRS) on 23/12/25, following which a site visit was carried out by an ESRS Property Officer and the consultant Structural Engineer on the same date. The attending Property Officer determined that the likelihood of falling masonry proposed a potential danger to public health and safety, and as such a Council framework contractor was instructed to erect crash deck scaffolding to mitigate any risk.

Make-safe works of this type are carried out under the City of Edinburgh District Council Order Confirmation Act 1991. Section 24(2) of the Act empowers the Council to act as the sole judge of whether a defect is considered an emergency:

"...the Council may, in a case of emergency (of which they shall be the sole judge), execute without notice [works under the Act] and the expense reasonably incurred in so doing shall be recoverable by the Council from the owner of such building."

Explains the reasons for the slow response by the Council over the past six months and how this aligns with a declared emergency.

Shares the details of the other tenders and the reasons why G3 was selected.

Emergency works carried out under the City of Edinburgh District Council Order Confirmation Act 1991 are only intended to remove any immediate risk to public health and safety. In this instance, the presence of crash deck scaffolding mitigated any risk from falling debris, following which responsibility for any further repairs returned to property owners. The time taken to carry out further investigative and repair works has no bearing on the defect's emergency nature as outlined above.

Irrespective, investigative works have been ongoing since January 2026, as outlined below:

- Following the installation of crash decks in January 2026, the High-Rise Management and Investment (HRMI) team began procurement of the structural investigations.
- Procurement routes for the Structural Engineers were to make use of the Council's CT2675 Professional Services Framework, LOT 7 – Structural and Civil Engineering services. G3 Consulting Engineers were approached as the Rank 1 consultant on that Lot, in line with the Framework agreement and conditions. Initial quotes for the commission received in February 2026.
- Additional time was taken for G3 to procure the structural surveyors as part of their scope (Mid-February to the start of April). Throughout March and April, there were discussions to confirm the scope and access arrangements and time for internal Council governance for awarding a contract.
- 21/04/26 - Contract Award Letter signed by the Council for commission with G3 including the third-party costs for specialist structural testing.
- 08/05/26 - Contract Award Letter receipt acknowledgement by G3.

- Until the site start date, the design team were confirming the Construction Phase Plan, finalising Risk Assessment and Method Statement, coordinating access and arranging for permits for lane closures to allow the scaffolds to be erected.

The estimated costs of the crash decks since December.

£9,904.60.

The cost of the masonry repair survey.

The works ongoing are not a masonry repair survey; it is a borescope cavity wall inspection survey to inspect the cavity and provide an assessment of the wall tie density and condition, and the cavity condition.

The commission of the borescope cavity wall inspection survey costs £18,600.00. This excludes the costs relating to scaffold access.

Owners have been issued a letter stating the total cost for their block and their apportioned amount, as defined by their title deeds.

States whether other and cheaper options were considered, such as using a cherry picker, rather than scaffolding, and why these other options were either not considered or rejected.

The following statement from G3 outlines the access options for the survey:

“During the initial discussions with the tendering contractors, the various access options were considered. While the investigation works could potentially be undertaken from a Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP), this was likely to increase costs because productivity would typically be reduced and the overall duration on site extended.”

The Council subsequently agreed to this approach and advised that they would contact ESRS regarding adjustment of the existing scaffold, noting that a new scaffold would be required for Blocks 3 and 4 where scaffold had not previously been necessary to manage an immediate health and safety risk.

Having reviewed the site access, it is possible that a MEWP may have been capable of providing access to certain areas, particularly some of the gable elevations. However, its use would have brought other practical considerations, including occupation or closure of sections of footpath and/or carriageway, traffic and pedestrian management, repeated positioning of the MEWP as works progressed, and the absence of a continuous working platform or readily available access should urgent follow-on investigations or remedial works have been required.

Accordingly, while alternative access methods may have been technically possible in certain locations, our view is that the use of scaffold was a reasonable, pragmatic and safety-led approach for the nature of the investigations being undertaken.’

Explains why there was no attempt to arrange a scheme decision, given that the procurement process took six months.

ESRS wrote previously to advise that they used emergency powers to do this under Section 24(2) of the City of Edinburgh District Council Order Confirmation Act 1991. This allowed work to be done to make the building defect safe as it was a risk to public safety (installation of crash decks to some areas).

Procurement of the commission did not take 6 months. Following the installation of crash decks in mid-January, the HRMI began procurement of the SE investigations. The procurement of the Structural Engineers is noted in our response above.

To carry out a full Tenement Management Scheme vote in full accordance with the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004 would have delayed progress by at least 2 months, excluding any time for consultation or engagement with owners. We felt it was appropriate to commission the survey as an emergency action in accordance with Rule 7 of the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004 as a co-owner of the block.