

Opposition to Council plan for George Street Spiegelterrace

✘ The council are planning to allow part of George Street to be closed again this year for the duration of the Festival. They will seek the agreement of the Transport Committee when it meets tomorrow, but there is some opposition to the plan, and a deputation is expected from Essential Edinburgh offering St Andrew Square as an alternative site for the Spiegeltent.

The proposal requires a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTR0) to proceed.

The street was first closed off in this way last year when the Spiegelterrace was sited in the middle of the street and many shows were put on to large audiences. Parking bays were lost to city centre car drivers, and the area between Hanover Street and Frederick Street was pedestrianised. There is a plan attached to the council report which is shown below.

One key difference this year is that Jamie's Italian will have an outside catering outlet stationed on the street near the corner of Hanover Street and the Spiegeltent itself is to be moved a little further west.

Transport convenor Councillor Lesley Hinds said:-“Comments from last year have been taken on board and a few changes have been made to the proposed layout. Some of the George Street traders, including the George Street Association, were concerned about litter and also the opening hours, and we have reacted to these concerns. We will look at these comments for any plans for future years too.

This plan is about trying to bring the Festival into George Street and the city centre. The bid for the lease of the

Assembly Rooms last year included plans for the pedestrianisation of George Street.

I think it is beneficial to the city centre to have the Spiegeltent in George Street but we have to take account of the views of traders in the street.”

✘ Tommy Sheppard of Salt and Sauce Productions, who took on a five year lease of the Assembly Rooms as a Fringe venue last year said:- “We very much welcome the fact that the council is set to pave the way for the return of the Famous Spiegelterrace outside the Assembly Rooms this summer. Last year’s event was a tremendous success enjoyed by several hundred thousand people. We want to build on that success and continue to build a must-visit festival hub right in the heart of the city.

” We’ve listened to the concerns that have been raised by some local businesses and will be making a number of changes which we’re pretty sure they will like. The site will be more open and easier for people – particularly shoppers – to get around during the day. We’ll be working with other local businesses to offer better food and drink opportunities – with five of the six licensed premises in the block involved.

“We also want to work with all businesses in the area to make sure the festival benefits them and we will shortly be writing to our neighbours with a range of marketing opportunities to make sure that the Spiegelterrace benefits everyone.

“We hope also that the Spiegelterrace will help bring the festival to other parts of George Street and we’ll be working with other fringe venues like the New Town Theatre to make sure people try everything the area has to offer.”

Andy Neal, Chief Executive of Essential Edinburgh are not entirely in agreement with the proposals and he explained to The Edinburgh Reporter:-“The Spiegel Tent and Terrace was a

breakthrough last year and we were happy to support it both in principle and financially. The feedback from businesses in George Street did however give us cause for concern.

“We have tried to put that learning to good use by making a counter proposal for this year for the tent to be set up in St Andrew Square, access and parking retained in all blocks, festival attractions along the street and all the street’s food and drink operations coming out to extend the table and chairs space.

“We still believe this is the best option but it seems a repeat of last year with some amendments is all that is proceeding at this stage. We hope all the issues are considered by the council and hope that there is still time for at least some aspects of our proposal to be tested this year. “

Even if the Transport Committee grants the TTR0 the proposal must also be noted by the Corporate Policy and Economy Committees at their next meetings.

The papers for tomorrow’s Transport committee meeting [are here on the council website.](#)

[Item 8-1.11 George Street Festival Traffic Management](#)