

The Famous Spiegeltent is thrown out of St Andrew Square



The Famous Spiegeltent has been evicted from St Andrew Square and will not be there this August. The trouble is that the 3,000 piece structure may not be anywhere unless a suitable alternative is found.

David Bates, who owns the 97 year-old tent has told us there has been little or no explanation from Standard Life, the Royal Bank of Scotland or other private owners represented by Essential Edinburgh.

He was only told this month that the gates to the garden will not be open for his tent and shows, and that no viable alternative has been found. This means a logistical nightmare for Mr Bates who must now ask shows to book elsewhere with other venues.

After 33 years and in this important 70th anniversary year it seems that time has run out for the Grand Old Dame which travels from Australia each year to Auld Reekie to put on shows like this:

Have an uplifting minute by turning up the sound on our video. Then book tickets! [@Captive_LTD](#) in St Andrew Square pic.twitter.com/tT2R6QUC8L

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [August 8, 2016](#)

This is not just any old tent, The Famous Spiegel tent has been coming to Edinburgh since 1983, and was the first ever when she arrived at the Edinburgh International Book Festival in 1983.

She has been located across the city on the rooftop at Waverley Mall, next to the Sir Walter Scott Monument and had a central role in establishing the festival hub at George Square Gardens. When the Spiegel Terrace moved to George Street then she brought class to the new offering there. Since 2014 The Famous Spiegel tent has been the jewel in St Andrew Square.

Interesting facts we learned during our chat with David Bates of [@FamousSpiegel](#) the other day! pic.twitter.com/8LpcUGuQTW

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [August 12, 2016](#)

Roddy Smith Chief Executive of Essential Edinburgh said: “We have been in discussion with City of Edinburgh Council and the owners of the garden for some time about its ongoing use. These discussions have been aimed at finding a balanced and sustainable way of managing the use of the garden for the future.

“Everyone agrees that the garden is a superb, green space in the heart of the city to be enjoyed by local people, visitors and those who work in the city centre all year round. In other words, it is a space for relaxation, as well as providing a pleasing interlude in the pedestrian journey through the city centre. Its importance as a pedestrian route linking the east and west of the city centre will grow as the new Edinburgh St James development comes out of the ground.

“There was also unanimous agreement that – at appropriate times of the year – the garden will be animated with high quality activity that will not adversely impact on the look and feel of the space, and that activity will be designed to

minimise disruption to the garden. We are looking at specific plans and will distribute these in the near future.

“The city’s festivals play a huge part in the city’s reputation as a place to visit, and the footfall they generate is important to local businesses. Therefore we should also recognise the wider work that is being done to identify public spaces in the city centre and how they can be best used in an integrated, sustainable way to help further enhance the special ambience of Edinburgh city centre and ensure the city centre’s continued huge attraction and therefore help its continued prosperity.”

Essential Edinburgh, which runs the city centre Business Improvement District, manages the Square on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council and the owners.

Photo Thierry Franco