

Princes Street Gardens – no place for exclusion

For the series of concerts at the Ross Bandstand, Summer Sessions, featuring big names such as Sir Tom Jones, Paloma Faith, Brian Wilson and Rag 'n Bone Man who appears there tomorrow night, organisers put up black hoardings on the railings.

The sole purpose, it appears, was to stop people from seeing the concert without paying. The sound system means that anyone in the area can hear the music of course, but organisers did not want anyone to enjoy the view without buying a ticket.



Rag 'n Bone Man appearing at Edinburgh's Hogmanay on 1 January 2018

Then the council leader Adam McVey stepped in. With one single tweet published yesterday, he hopes that he has changed

everything, although it appears that discussions will be held with council officers today.

This is public space & these are public views. Ticketed events cannot put up barriers which are to the detriment of the city.

I've asked officers to remove ASAP & for a guarantee that these won't be erected for any future events.
pic.twitter.com/fAY6NmBCnr

– Cllr Adam McVey (@adamrmcvey) [August 12, 2018](#)

The Council Leader told The Edinburgh Reporter this morning :
“These are the highest barriers I can remember seeing and the first time I recall our skyline being blocked out in this way. I'm confident we'll find a solution with organisers to avoid seriously affecting the character of Princes Street while ensuring public safety.”

There are of course two sides to this. If you have bought a ticket for any of the concerts at over £50 a time, then you may think it unfair that someone passing on Princes Street could effectively watch the whole concert for free. Any viewers would be at a distance, but nonetheless it could be a free concert if these boards are removed.

Boards like these have been used in the past to keep people out of the gardens when they had not paid to get in to an event. I think I am correct in believing that there were boards up during Sleep in the Park and Edinburgh's Hogmanay. So why has this only become something to complain about now?

It may have started with this tweet from @fountainbridge who drew everyone's attention to the narrowed pavement on Princes Street as well as the barriers at the end of last week :

Welcome to [#Edinburgh](#). Please enjoy these spectacular views of [@edinburghcastle](#) from behind these 10 foot high barriers.

We've also closed off 1/3 of the busy pavement for your safety [#edinburghfringe](#) [#edinburghfestival](#) [@LivingStreetsEd](#) [@thecockburn](#) [@theSpurtle](#) [@sto_paul](#) [pic.twitter.com/LejCRJow2P](#)

– Fountain Bridge (@fountainbridge) [August 9, 2018](#)

Locals reacted to this series of photos with rage, particularly as the memorial benches have also been cordoned off. Cllr Lewis Ritchie said he had written to the council to ask that any decision to allow these barriers was revisited.

The Cockburn Association, the architectural conservation organisation, say that they raised the matter as one for concern with the council. On their [Facebook page](#) they praise Councillor McVey's speedy action on the removal of the barriers. We have not been able to find any planning applications on the council's website.

The New Town Flaneur, the unidentified New Town resident who tweets about red trousers and life in the area to the north of Princes Street, tweeted the photo of the hoardings yesterday

This Anti-Proletariat Protection Rampart is essential to the security of the New Town. [#Edinburgh](#) [pic.twitter.com/kBMTupiBMV](#)

– New Town Flâneur (@NewTownFlaneur) [August 12, 2018](#)

Andy Wightman MSP who is a self-appointed guardian of the capital's 'common good' land, also applauded the council leader's initiative.

The matter of common good status will be one hurdle for the Ross Development Trust (RDT) to get across when they develop the new bandstand in West Princes Street Gardens. That along with planning permission, funding and a scheme for management

of the development.

You can read and listen to our interview with David Ellis the RDT Managing Director [here](#).

What do you think? Do you have a ticket for the concerts? Does it bother you that others might watch for free?

We asked the organisers of Summer Sessions for a comment which at the time of publication they had not given us. We will add it here if they come back to us.