

In photos – East Princes Street Gardens

We had to go and have a look at the new path in the gardens and to be honest I feel a bit underwhelmed by it. I had thought the idea was to bring people in the gate on Waverley Bridge, allowing them to enjoy the approach to the galleries across the gardens using a less steep access.



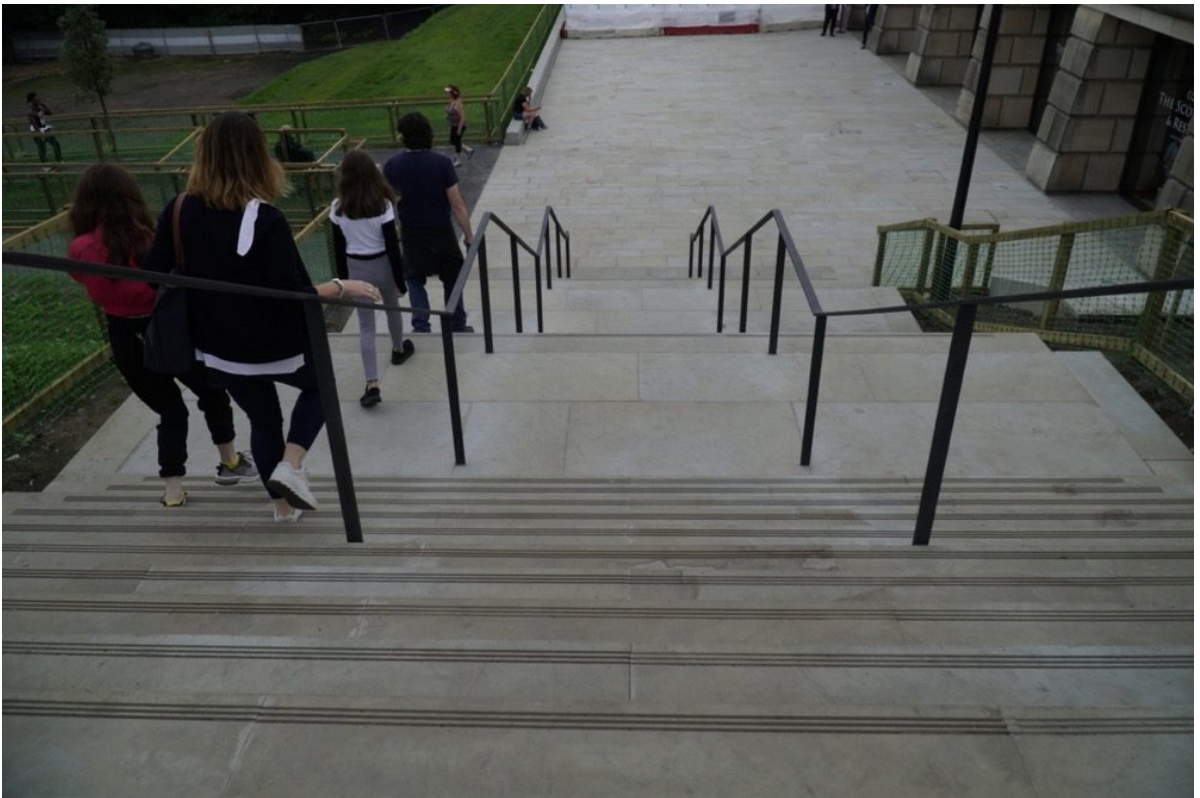
Scottish National Gallery /East Princes Street Garden. Photo: Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

Instead what we have is a pathway from the Mound side of the garden which winds its way down to the National Galleries of

Scotland (NGS). Anyone entering from the east end of the garden would have to walk along the top and then descend with the new 'easier access' pathway. (Or they could risk life and limb on the old steep pathway at the Waverly end of course).

Yes, the area still has to be properly landscaped, but for the moment it looks very unkempt and a bit of a mess.









What we have ended up with is a lot more tarmac and less grass as you will see from our photos. I understand that the fencing is only temporary as turf is to be laid in the coming weeks in the lower part of the garden and lawn has been seeded on the upper slopes. The temporary barriers are there to protect the seedlings while they take hold. It will be up to the City of Edinburgh Council parks department when these barriers can be removed.



Sir John Leighton, Director-General of the National Galleries of Scotland, said: “I am pleased to announce that the new accessible path in East Princes Street Gardens is open, along with the Mound Precinct, which opened in July.

“East Princes Street Gardens is an extremely important public space for the city and it is essential that this resource is accessible for all. I want to offer my thanks to the public, particularly those who live or work in Edinburgh, for their patience while we carried out this important work.

“Our vision, as part of our wider redevelopment plans, is for the Scottish National Gallery to be a space that everyone can enjoy and where we can showcase art in a whole new light.

“With The Scottish Cafe & Restaurant also opening, we look forward to the Gardens Entrance and the Gallery shop opening later this month.”

22 new trees have been planted by NGS all between 4.5 metres and 6.5 metres in height. They are expected to grow to full

maturity and the species have been chosen to complement the trees already in the gardens. One tree in the lower part of the gardens looked a little unwell to my untrained eye, but perhaps gardeners among you will know better. (See photo below)/

A further 30 trees were donated by NGS and planted in West Princes Street Gardens, Lauriston Castle grounds, Saughton Walled Garden and elsewhere in East Princes Street Gardens.

The main idea behind the new pathway, the felling of trees which belatedly caused such an outcry, and the reorganisation of pathway access in the gardens, is to allow the galleries to become more accessible. Those with mobility issues are supposed to find it easier to get into the galleries via the gardens which NGS plan as the principal entrance in future – but in truth it is only from the Mound end.



Victor Contini of the Scottish Café and Restaurant which reopened today

Photo: Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

Underneath the National Gallery of Scotland The Scottish Café & Restaurant has opened again in Princes Street Gardens. It has had a refurbishment and is resplendent with its Mairi Helena designs and wallpaper by Timorous Beasties. There was still a slight odour of fresh paint when we paid a fleeting visit earlier, but mine host Victor Contini explained this is what is called in the industry a 'soft launch' of an Edinburgh favourite.

Bookings are available from 11 August 2019 for everything from afternoon tea, brunch, that old Scottish Favourite High Tea and cullen skink or Fish & Chips. The menu here shows off some of the new [Mairi Helena](#) design.



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Now work will start on the interior of the galleries turning former offices into new Scottish art galleries which by 2021 should open bursting with light and colour and with views to the gardens. Artists such as Sir Henry Raeburn, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Phoebe Anna Traquair and the Glasgow Boys will find a home there.



Has this tree died already or will the parks staff be able to nurse it back to life? PHOTO ©2019 The Edinburgh Reporter