

The closure of the Radical Road – critique of update from Historic Environment Scotland

Description

Holyrood Park Radical Road update April 2025

As part of our commitment to improve access to the Radical Road, please find an update on the recent and ongoing works.



Start of newsletter from Historic Environment Scotland

After writing about my walk along the Radical Road on 1st April [belatedly published on Parkswatch two days ago – Ed] ([see here](#)), I was passed an update ([see here](#)) from Historic Environment Scotland (HES), an incredible piece of corporate-speak. I am sure HES believe what they say but this is only because they are democratically unaccountable and don't permit any challenge.

- This update has not been publicised, it is not on HES's website.
- It's interesting that HES call it the Radical Road. For a long time HES have tried to downplay the significance of the Radical Road and talk about Holyrood Park as a whole, perhaps hoping the issue will get forgotten. (Talk about the Park as a whole, of course, only exposes more incompetence.)
- Our commitment to improve access to the Radical Road is of course nonsense. It's a form of words and a delaying tactic. Any serious commitment would not have got HES to where they are and would have had the road opened long ago.

- The “scaling works” are idiotic/pointless and expensive. Rocks fall off cliffs. No amount of descaling will alter this natural process. No other similar organisation/sensible body/private owner is/would be doing this.
- “our dedicated teams have also been working hard to carry out essential activities to improve access to the Radical Road”. The reality is exactly the opposite! The evidence on the ground of ugly barricades and collapsing signage show indifference and neglect.
- A habitat survey sounds good but is entirely irrelevant. Of course it’s a wonderful habitat but this is no reason to deny everyone the right to roam.
- “we have designed and will be installing appropriate signage”. Really? The original sensible signage is already there, it just needs cleaning. The current, modern, signage is in a state of collapse and disarray.
- The use of drones or “unmanned aerial vehicles” (UAV) may sound impressive to some but anyone who understands the issues knows these to be useless in assessing the state of the monuments that HES closed because of the consequences of closing the Radical Road. Visual information does not tell anyone what is loose or about to fall. Touch is the only way, as experienced on rocks by climbers. The closure and failure to reopen many monuments throughout Scotland is still affecting communities and businesses.
- There is a major difference of the impact of rockfalls on a pedestrian track and a vehicular highway by Samson’s Ribs.
- This note doesn’t mention how the risk of falling off the top of Salisbury Crags is infinitely greater than walking along the Radical Road underneath, or that there have never been any fatalities on Radical Road, unlike, say, the top of Arthur’s Seat itself.
- Nor does it mention the northern section; clearly this is something HES are unable to cope with, because of who HES are and how they operate. HES are the problem.

[Ben initially added this critique to his walk post but I thought it deserved a post in its own right. Ed]

Category

1. Access rights
2. Other parts Scotland

Tags

1. access rights
2. Governance

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