

Strictly embargoed until 1100hrs, Friday 14 December 2007

HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND AND SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT PUT PORTRAIT GALLERY IN THE PICTURE WITH £ 10 MILLION INVESTMENT

The National Galleries of Scotland, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Scottish Government will today announce two major contributions to the £17.6 million project to refurbish and transform the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh. After meeting this week, the HLF Trustees have awarded the project a Stage One pass for £4,531,000 and development funding of £269,000. Linda Fabiani, Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture will announce the Scottish Government's support for the *Portrait of the Nation* project with a contribution of £5.1 million.

This ambitious project aims to recover the vibrant character of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, a magnificent Arts and Crafts building which opened in 1889 as the first purpose-built portrait gallery in the world. *Portrait of the Nation* will double the amount of gallery space within the building, and will re-invent the way in which the national collection is displayed, with a new focus on photography and Scottish art. The project, which will also create a range of new visitor and education facilities, aims to bring the story of Scotland - its peoples, histories, places and cultures - to the widest possible audience. The transformation of the Gallery will confirm its status as one of Scotland's major visitor attractions, and will radically extend the ambitions and national role of the National Galleries.

Work on *Portrait of the Nation* will begin in 2009, and the project's provisional completion date is autumn 2011. The Gallery will be closed to the public for 2 years.

Following the announcement of the grants from the HLF and the Scottish Government, the National Galleries will launch an initiative to raise £7.7 million from private sources.

Commenting from the HLF, Colin McLean, Manager for Scotland, said: 'This is excellent news for Scotland and our country's cultural history. This was a highly competitive round of funding so I am delighted that the Scottish Portrait Gallery has achieved such a substantial commitment from the Heritage Lottery Fund. We have worked in close partnership with the Portrait Gallery to get to where we are today and are delighted that the Scottish Government is also supporting this contemporary project. New life will now be breathed into this beautiful historic building so that treasures that have been stored away for years can be showcased to the world.'

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For the Scottish Government, Linda Fabiani, Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture, said: 'I am delighted today to announce Scottish Government funding of £5.1m for the redevelopment of this wonderful building which will open in 2011 as one of the most exciting galleries in Scotland. The National Galleries have worked extremely hard on their proposal to rejuvenate the building, and I'm pleased that the Heritage Lottery Fund has also agreed to award £5m to this worthwhile project. This is an inspiring project which will further enhance the National Galleries' national and international reputation and help realise its full potential as a focal point for exploration of Scotland's art, culture and history.'

John Leighton, Director-General, NGS added: '*Portrait of the Nation* will be a very significant development for the National Galleries of Scotland. Following this refurbishment we will at last be able to make effective use of one of the most outstanding buildings in Edinburgh. More important, the project will enable the wonderful collections to be presented in a coherent and understandable way, appealing to a wide range of new national and international audiences. We are very grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Scottish Government for their generous support, which gives us the opportunity to let this much-loved institution reach its full potential.'

ENDS

Notes to editors:

The key features of the *Portrait of the Nation* project are to:

- increase the public and gallery space within the SNPNG by more than 50%
- create a new way to interpret the collection, making it accessible to a wide variety of audiences
- increase the number of works on display by 50%
- refurbish all three floors of the building, and install modern services
- restore original features of the building
- create a new Education Suite, including community gallery, art studios and a seminar room
- establish a Research and Study Centre
- reorganise the ground floor, with new lift, and improved facilities, including a larger cafe and shop

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) enables communities to celebrate, look after and learn more about our diverse heritage. From our great museums and historic buildings to local parks and beauty spots or recording and celebrating traditions, customs and history, HLF grants open up our nation's heritage for everyone to enjoy. To date it has invested over £480 million in Scotland's heritage.

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A 'Stage One Pass' means that money has been earmarked by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the project in question. Competition at this stage is tough, and while a Stage One Pass does not guarantee funding, it is an indication of positive support, and money for the scheme is set aside. The applicant can then progress to Stage Two and submit a further, fully developed application to secure the full grant. On occasion, at Stage One, funding will also be awarded towards the development of the scheme.

To date, the Heritage Lottery Fund has invested £160 m in Scotland's museums and galleries.

Further information

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