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For further information and images please contact the National Galleries of Scotland's press office on:

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TRANSFORMATION OF SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY BEGINS AS PLANNING IS APPROVED

#CelebrateArt

The National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) is delighted to announce that the major project *Celebrating Scotland's Art* has begun this week after the City of Edinburgh Council formally approved the planning applications.

The £16.8 million extension will radically improve access to the National Galleries of Scotland's world-class collection of Scottish art. The Scottish rooms, Print Room and Library in the Lower Level of the Scottish National Gallery (SNG) closed this week to allow for the preparation of the building. Actual construction work will commence on site in spring 2017 and will continue until autumn 2018. The new spaces will open to the public in early 2019. During the renovation, the SNG will remain open to the public with access to rooms at the ground and upper levels.

Michael Clarke, Director of the SNG and Project Director commented: "*We are delighted that we can now move forward with this exciting development. I would like to thank the City of Edinburgh Council for their support of this project which will truly*

Pictured:
Scottish National Gallery Project:
External View
Graphic interpretation: Hoskins Architects



LOTTERY FUNDED

transform this site at the heart of Edinburgh and enable new audiences to enjoy the magnificent Scottish art collection.”

The planned redevelopment of the Scottish National Gallery, will triple the exhibition space available to the Scottish collection from 440 m to 1320 m, vastly improve visitor access and circulation throughout the SNG complex, and create a more sympathetic setting and entrance for the SNG within East Princes St Gardens.

One of Scotland’s leading architectural practices, Hoskins Architects, which has been widely praised for a number of high-profile designs in the arts and cultural sector, was appointed to the project in 2014. Before his untimely death earlier this year, the firm’s founder, Gareth Hoskins OBE, created an outstanding design, which is being taken forward by the practice team, led by Director Chris Coleman-Smith.

Designed by the celebrated Scottish architect William Henry Playfair (1790-1857) and situated right in the heart of Edinburgh, the SNG is the most popular UK art gallery outside of London, attracting over 1.4 million visitors in 2015/16. It is home to the world’s finest collection of historic Scottish art, rich in the works of incomparable artists such as Allan Ramsay, Sir Henry Raeburn and Sir David Wilkie, as well as many, many others.

The completion of this project will give this wonderful resource the prominence it deserves, and enable the NGS to engage visitors and highlight the history, significance and impact of Scottish art, both nationally and internationally, to a much wider audience.

During the redevelopment and on opening, there will be an extensive programme of activity, which will give the National Galleries a chance to involve the community in the project and dramatically improve learning opportunities, especially for schools and families.

The Heritage Lottery Fund announced a £4.94 million grant towards the project earlier this year.

ENDS



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Notes to Editors:

Project Overview

The new displays will tell the story of Scottish art from the 17th to the mid-20th century (including the Scottish Colourists), within a clear chronological framework, while also exploring themes of wider cultural relevance. The presentation will be regularly refreshed with the addition of dynamic and changing displays drawn from the riches of the collection, including the outstanding holding of Scottish graphic art.

The design will open up a suite of new rooms which, for the first time, will be directly accessible from East Princes St Gardens, and will utilise former office, print room and storage space to maximise the area given to the new displays. The area will be enhanced by natural light, and will also offer stunning views into the Gardens and the city beyond. Circulation throughout the entire SNG complex will be rationalised and radically improved, and sympathetic landscaping will integrate the SNG with the Gardens, significantly enhancing this important part of Edinburgh's World Heritage Site. The terrace outside the Gallery will be substantially expanded and a new pathway created. Access to the Gardens as a whole will be much improved, with major enhancements to disabled access.

In January of this year, the National Galleries of Scotland Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament to allow the transfer of a narrow strip of common good land in East Princes St Gardens to the NGS. Incorporating this strip – a steep, grassy bank between the pedestrian walkway and the windows of the Gallery's office accommodation – will create a new elevation which aligns with that of the existing visitor facilities at Gardens level. As well as contributing to the increase in exhibition space within the Gallery it will also create a wider footpath at the level above, which is a busy and often congested pedestrian thoroughfare. The increased connectivity between Edinburgh's Old and New Towns, from Princes Street and the Royal Mile, at both the Gardens and street level, will be of great benefit to the city as a whole.

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Hoskins Architects

The practice has worked with a wide range of cultural organisations including: the Victoria & Albert Museum, National Museums Scotland and the National Theatre of Scotland. They are currently working with the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh, Aberdeen Art Gallery, Strawberry Fields in Liverpool and a handful of reference health centres throughout Scotland. Further afield the practice designed Scotland's pavilion for the Venice Biennale in 2008 and won the international competition for the Landesmuseum in Schleswig Holstein. They have recently completed the redevelopment of the Berlin State Library, and are currently onsite for the World Museum in Vienna.

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Brief history of the Scottish National Gallery

Designed by the architect William Henry Playfair (1790-1857), the Scottish National Gallery and the adjacent Royal Scottish Academy building stand in the heart of Edinburgh. Although originally built as separate structures, their histories have long been intertwined, and since the completion of the Playfair Project in 2004, they have been physically joined by the underground link, which contains a number of important visitor facilities and is entered via East Princes St Gardens.

The National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) cares for, develops, researches and displays the national collection of Scottish and international fine art and, with a lively and innovative programme of exhibitions, education and publications, aims to engage, inform and inspire the broadest possible public.

Architecture

Playfair was Scotland's leading architect of his era and was responsible for a number of Edinburgh buildings, although his two galleries on The Mound are generally regarded as his finest. These two classical temples to the arts achieve a picturesque harmony with the dramatic backdrop of Edinburgh Castle.

Press Release

The most recent phase in The Mound's history saw the completion of the underground link between the Royal Scottish Academy building (RSA) and the Scottish National Gallery. Award-winning architects John Miller and Partners rose to the challenge of developing the site for modern use, and refurbishing the RSA. This is now a world-class exhibition space, while the underground facilities created include the Clore Education Centre, a 200-seat lecture theatre and cinema, an IT Gallery and a 120-seat restaurant.



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