

SPEAKER'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WORKS OF ART**Note of the meeting held on 20 October 2020 at 4.30pm [INF04]**

[Virtual meeting]

Members present:	Hywel Williams (Chair) Simon Baynes Sally-Ann Hart Gagan Mohindra Caroline Nokes
Apologies:	Sarah Champion, Chris Evans, Kim Johnson, Barbara Keeley and Dean Russell
In attendance:	Melissa Hamnett, Curator of Works of Art and Head of Heritage Collections Lorcan O'Donoghue, Media Officer Grace Saull, Assistant Curator Melanie Unwin, Deputy Curator

1) Informal Note [INF03]

The Committee **agreed** the informal notes of the meeting on 15 September 2020.

2) Financial statement [WOA 19]

Melanie Unwin, Deputy Curator, briefed the Committee

Ms Unwin said that expenditure relating to the purchase of one of the five photographic prints from the 209 Women exhibition and originally intended for the 2019/20 financial year had been included in the current financial statement. There were no other changes to report.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the financial statement.

3) Collections care

Melissa Hamnett, Head of Heritage Collections, briefed the Committee.

Ms Hamnett reported that the Speaker's State Apartments, where Fire Safety Improvement Works and the associated conservation of artworks were being carried out, had been affected by water ingress caused by heavy rainfall at the beginning of the month. Two paintings in the Crimson Room had been affected though the damage was minimal. The main conservation work required was to the frames of the affected paintings and this was being carried out. She noted that the Engineers' Control Team had quickly responded

to the incident so that staff from the Curator's Office were onsite early the following morning to address the situation.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the update.

4) Works of art and the Northern Estate [WOA 20]

Melissa Hamnett, Head of Heritage Collections, and Joanne Merry, Design Manager, In-House Services and Strategic Estates, briefed the Committee.

[John Bradbury, Fire Safety Manager, Gemma Collins, Head of Design Management, and Jennifer Riordan, Engagement Project Manager, In-House Services and Strategic Estates, were also on the call to answer Members' questions.]

Ms Merry gave a visual on the fire suppression systems (using water mist) that were being installed in 1 Derby Gate as part of refurbishment works to the building and which had been approved by the House governance structures as part of the Parliamentary Fire Safety Strategy. Ms Riordan added that tours of Derby Gate were being run by In-House Services and Strategic Estates and could be arranged for the Committee.

Ms Hamnett noted that the installation of water mist suppression systems had potential implications for the display of artworks and historic furniture in those buildings and that a key question for the Committee to consider was whether artworks should be hung in Members' offices in buildings on the Northern Estate where water mist suppression systems had been installed.

The following points were discussed:

- It was noted that the use of mist suppression system had been agreed at an early stage of the Northern Estate Programme and value for money had been a key consideration when making the decision. This type of system was a requirement in historic buildings such as Derby Gate which could not be compartmentalised to meet modern fire regulations.
- It was noted that mist suppression systems had a higher degree of monitoring in place than other types of fire suppression system so that the risk of false alarms was virtually zero. There was also a failsafe in place as sprinkler heads were only activated by exposure to intense heat.
- It was noted that Portcullis House was a building in which a water-based fire suppression system had been installed and where artworks were on display but there seemed to be no previous formal decision on the hanging of artworks in that building. No artworks had suffered from water damage in PCH though there had been an accidental leak from a fire suppression system once a few years previously.

Decision

The Committee:

- **noted** the update;
- **agreed** to consider whether works of art should be hung in Members' Offices in I Derby Gate where there was a water-based fire suppression system at a future meeting; and
- **expressed** an interest in attending one of the tours of I Derby Gate arranged by In-House Services and Strategic Estates.

5) Updates, acquisitions, displays, moves and loans

a) Potential acquisition — a Welsh silver salver [WOA 21]

Melanie Unwin, Deputy Curator, briefed the Committee.

Ms Unwin invited the Committee to consider the purchase of a silver salver presented to William Jenkins, the Labour MP for Neath from 1922 to 1944, and which was shown to the Committee during the meeting. If acquired, the views of Members representing Welsh constituencies could be sought on potential display locations for the salver or it could be shown in a case on the first floor of Portcullis House.

Decision

The Committee **agreed** to purchase the salver and the associated framed photograph and signatures for the Parliamentary Art Collection.

b) Heritage Collections Online Services (website update)

Grace Saull, Assistant Curator, briefed the Committee.

Ms Saull reported that the project to develop the new Heritage Collections website was due to commence in November. The initial work would focus on data creation and website development, which was expected to take between six and nine months to complete. Further updates would be provided to the Committee during the course of the project.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the update.

c) Display of five photographic prints from the 209 Women exhibition [WOA 22]

Grace Saull, Assistant Curator, briefed the Committee.

Ms Saull put forward a proposal for the display of five photographic prints from the 209 Women exhibition in four possible locations: the northeast corner of Portcullis

House on the first floor; the new reception area and Pass Office in 1 Parliament Street; a common area in Norman Shaw South; or the lift lobbies in 1 Parliament Street.

Decision

The Committee **agreed** to display the prints in the northeast corner of Portcullis House on the first floor.

d) Installation of plaques on ‘Knife Edge Two Piece’ by Henry Moore

Melanie Unwin, Deputy Curator, briefed the Committee.

Ms Unwin reported that two new plaques (approved by the previous Committee) had been installed on both sides of the base of the sculpture on ‘Knife Edge Two Piece’ by Henry Moore on Abingdon Green.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the update.

e) Update on the display of the bust of Olaudah Equiano (WOA S758)

Grace Saull, Assistant Curator, briefed the Committee.

Ms Saull reported that the bust of Olaudah Equiano (WOA S758) had been moved to its new location on the first floor of Portcullis House following the Committee’s decision at its last meeting. She added that the bust of Sir Edward Du Cann, donated to the Committee in 2019, had been displayed near Bellamy’s restaurant.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the update.

5) Any other business

Highlights report

The Committee **noted** the highlights report for September.

Diversity and inclusion

A Member asked what progress had been made on work to review and update the Collection to improve diversity and inclusion, particularly on setting up an Advisory Panel. Melissa Hamnett, Head of Heritage Collections, said that the Committee would receive an update its next meeting, when representatives from We Too Built Britain would attend to feed into the work that was being done in this area.

6) Date and time of the next meeting

The Committee will next meet on **Tuesday 17 November at 4.30pm.**