

**SPEAKER'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WORKS OF ART****Note of the meeting held on 23 February 2021 at 4.30pm [INF08]**

*[Virtual meeting]*

Members present: Hywel Williams (Chair)  
Simon Baynes  
Theo Clarke  
Sally-Ann Hart  
Barbara Keeley  
Gagan Mohindra  
Caroline Nokes  
Dean Russell

Apologies: Sarah Champion and Kim Johnson

In attendance: Gary Connor, Media Officer  
Melissa Hamnett, Curator of Works of Art and Head of Heritage  
Collections  
Emma Gormley, Assistant Curator  
Lorcan O'Donoghue, Media Officer  
Grace Saull, Assistant Curator  
Melanie Unwin, Deputy Curator

**1) Informal Note [INF07]**

The Committee **agreed** the informal notes of the meeting on 19 January 2021.

**2) Works of art policy and the Northern Estate [WOA 40]**

Melanie Unwin, Deputy Curator, briefed the Committee.

Ms Unwin gave a visual presentation of the indicative floorplans and a walkthrough video of the refurbishment of 1 Derby Gate and sought the Committee's views on whether artworks should be hung in Members' offices following the installation of a water-based fire prevention system. It was recommended that a decision on the display of artworks in corridors should be taken once the Committee had completed a walk-round tour of the building. The Committee also considered the display of a site-specific artwork (WOA 5808 *Holbein receiving the Commission from Henry VIII to build the Holbein Gate, Whitehall*) on the staircase and two paintings in the reception area (WOA 3482 *The River Pinn* by Kathryn Thomas; and WOA 5854 *Houses of Parliament* by Bernard Vogel), the display of which would be dependent on active condition and humidity monitoring by the curators.

**Decision**

The Committee **agreed** the following policy for artworks in 1 Derby Gate:

- that only glazed prints from the collection would be hung in Members' offices;

- that site-specific work WOA 5808 would be hung on the staircase (where there was no water-based fire suppression) until a better understanding of the finished building was had; and
- that WOA 3482 and 5854 would be hung in the reception area subject to condition checks confirming that they could be accommodated safely.

### **3) Diversity Commission [WOA 41]**

Melissa Hamnett, Head of Heritage Collections and Curator of Works of Art, briefed the Committee.

Ms Hamnett and Ms Gormley (who gave a visual presentation) sought the views of the Committee on the list of potential subjects for the diversity artwork commission that had been refined since its initial discussion in January. Ms Gormley added that the most successful commissions tended to be in prominent, accessible locations and this was something that the Committee might wish to consider.

A Member said that of the subjects on the list, they favoured an artwork commemorating lesser-known individuals who were not already represented in the Collection. The Chair supported this view.

#### **Decision**

The Committee **noted** the update.

### **4) Collections Advisory Group**

Melissa Hamnett, Head of Heritage Collections and Curator of Works of Art, briefed the Committee on developments to establish a Collections Advisory Group since the Committee's discussion at its meeting in January.

Ms Hamnett said that advice from colleagues in the Governance Office had indicated that the recruitment of expert members of the Group would need to be done through an open call to ensure fairness, rigour and transparency in the recruitment process. She added she was already working with the HR and Diversity team on clarifying the recruitment process for expert membership of the Group.

A Member emphasised that membership of the Group should represent a range of opinions and experiences. Another Member said that class and socio-economic background should also be considered.

#### **Decision**

The Committee **noted** the update.

### **5) Inward loan renewals (part two) [WOA 42]**

Melanie Unwin, Deputy Curator of Works of Art, briefed the Committee.

Ms Unwin presented a list of the artworks on inward loan from institutional lenders that were imminently due for renewal and sought the Committee's views on whether to renew the loans and, where applicable, to agree the term of the renewal. The largest institutional lender was the National Portrait Gallery, which among others had loaned several large-scale works on display in committee rooms. It was proposed that these were renewed for a period of three years, given the Committee's previous discussions on the possibility of refreshing displays in future. It was noted that institutional loans came from stock not on public display.

The possibility of refreshing the display of artworks in the Members' Tea Room was then discussed, particularly as a way of engaging Members with the Collection. It was suggested that this could include works depicting House staff to commemorate their contributions to the work of the House. Ms Unwin welcomed the proposal and suggested circulating a list of possible display themes to seek the views of Members.

### **Decision**

The Committee **approved** the suggested renewal period for the loans listed in the paper.

## **6) Updates, acquisitions, displays, moves and loans**

### **a) Potential acquisitions – Portcullis House Jubilee prints and 'New Dawn' prints [WOA 43]**

Melanie Unwin, Deputy Curator of Works of Art, briefed the Committee on the potential acquisition of additional copies of prints depicting Portcullis House commissioned to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and prints by Mary Branson to accompany the *New Dawn* artwork commission. If acquired, copies of the prints would be available for use in Members' offices given that there was a demand for artworks, particularly copies of the *New Dawn* prints.

### **Decision**

The Committee **agreed**:

- to acquire copies of the Portcullis House Jubilee Series and *New Dawn* limited edition prints for office hangs across the House of Commons for £10,715 from the acquisitions budget; and
- that one set of each series be formally added to the Norman Shaw North print collection.

### **b) Heritage Collections Online Services (website update)**

Grace Saull, Assistant Curator, briefed the Committee and gave a preview of the proposed website design, which had been designed with a number of factors in mind, including the branding of UK Parliament, best practice in accessibility, user friendliness, and letting the Collection images speak for themselves. Ms Saull then gave an overview of the various website pages, adding that there would also be a search function and improvements such as the ability for users to curate their own collection page.

The following points were then raised:

- the importance of optimisation for use on mobile phones;
- that the site would be a significant improvement on the previous offer on the website; and
- that the new website would be very useful for students who lived too far away to be able to travel to Westminster to see the Collection in the flesh.

### **Decision**

The Committee **noted** the update.

## **7) Any other business**

Heritage Collections monthly highlights report **[WOA 44]**

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

Financial statement (as at 31 January) **[WOA 45]**

The Committee **noted** the financial statement.

### Correspondence

The Committee **noted** correspondence between the Chair and the Chairman of Ways and Means regarding the display of the bust of Nelson Mandela in the Grand Committee Room **[WOA 46a and 46b]**.

Portrait of Kate Hoey by Tess Barnes **[WOA 47]**

The Committee **noted** the label text for the portrait of Kate Hoey by Tess Barnes.

### International Women's Day 2021

Melanie Unwin, Deputy Curator, reported that Diane Abbott MP had accepted the Committee's invitation to introduce the International Women's Day 2021 lecture in March.

### Collections Review

Grace Saull, Assistant Curator, reported that the second iteration of the collections review document had recently been published on the Committee website. A further update would be provided in April after further research.

## **8) Date and time of the next meeting**

The Committee will next meet on **Tuesday 23 March at 4.30pm.**