

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Urgent Business Committee
DATE	29 th November 2012
Acting DIRECTOR	Patricia Cassidy
TITLE OF REPORT	Aberdeen Art Gallery Redevelopment Programme
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/12/062

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Council on progress for the submission of an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Art Gallery redevelopment and provide an update on related work, in particular, the Museums Collections Centre.
- 1.2 To confirm the level and extent of the financial commitment from the Council to the overall programme at this time, as instructed by Committee previously. It has not been possible to report within the normal Committee cycle due to the time required to complete the necessary internal processes and to comply with the Heritage Lottery Fund deadline. Therefore, officers have requested that the report is considered at the Urgent Business Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Urgent Business Committee:

1. Notes the progress to date on the Art Gallery redevelopment and Museums Collections Centre;
2. Confirms that the Council submits an application for the redevelopment of the Art Gallery to the Heritage Lottery Fund's Heritage Grant programme prior to this year's deadline on 30th November 2012 for £10 million;
3. Confirms that a sum of £3 million is set aside from the Council's Non Housing Capital Programme in 2013/14;
4. Confirms that a sum of £10 million is set aside from the Council's Non housing Capital Programme for the financial period 2013-2017;
5. Confirms that the Council provides a guarantee to meet any shortfall in the level of fundraising up to £10 million;

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The total cost of the investment required to deliver a Museums Collections Centre and redevelopment of the Art Gallery is estimated to cost a total of £33 million over the next 4 financial years and will form a cornerstone of the Council's City of Culture Bid 2017.
- 3.2 This total cost can be broken down into two elements, namely:
- Museums Collections Gallery - £3 million
 - Art Gallery Redevelopment - £30 million
- 3.3 The Museums Collections Gallery will require to be completed prior to the redevelopment of the Art Gallery and as such will be included within the 2013/14 Non Housing Capital Programme (NHCP).
- 3.4 The subsequent impact of the successful completion of the Museums Collections Gallery will then lead to the redevelopment of the Art Gallery. The proposed funding package being sought is, it is anticipated, to be financed as follows:
- Council's NHCP £10 million
 - Heritage Lottery Fund £10 million
 - Fundraising Finance £10 million
- 3.5 Given the above profile it is proposed that the Council provides an allocation of its NHCP 2013-2017 to meet this level of contribution. The exact profile will be reported to 7 February 2013 Budget Council meeting.
- 3.6 It is also anticipated that the Council will raise £10 million through other grant funding as well as other corporate, philanthropic and personal support. This would be combined with a high profile public fundraising campaign.
- 3.7 Given the significant level of fundraising required it is felt prudent for the Council to underwrite this element of the funding package at this time. This will provide assurances to the Heritage Lottery Fund that should the bid for funding from them be successful the Council has in place a full funding package to deliver the project and that there will be no delays should fundraising not meet its target.
- 3.8 The final element of funding will be requested as part of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £10 million.

- 3.9 The outcome of the Heritage Lottery Fund application will be known in April/May 2013. Based on comparable projects, it is possible that the HLF Trustees may delay making a final decision at this point, and request additional information from the Council. Should this be the case, the delay would impact on the timings of the works schedule and the draw down of finances from HLF.
- 3.10 In summary, it is therefore proposed that the Councils NHCP will fund the Museums Collections Centre in 2013/14 at a cost of £3 million and £10 million for the Art Gallery redevelopment for the financial period 2013-2017.
- 3.11 The Council will also guarantee any shortfall in the level of finance to be raised through fundraising and the remainder of the funding will be by way of Heritage Lottery Fund grant.
- 3.12 There will also be Revenue cost implications to deliver a continuing service and these costs will be reflected in the Council's 5 Year Business Plan once the full timing of the project is finalised. A small provision has already been made to reflect this within the current 5 Year Business plan.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There will be legal implications in terms of both financial and legal commitments the Council is being asked to make, including design, construction and related contracts, compliance with grant and other funding awards.
- 4.2 There are major capacity issues in order to realise the programme, which will require careful consideration of the current staffing complement. Additional staffing or other capacity will be required to raise funding, manage relations with funders, users and other institutions. It is proposed that the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund will include additional capacity to support the above, which are for a fixed term period of up to five years, to support fundraising and plan and deliver the Activity Plan required by HLF. Education, Culture and Sport has agreed to recruit to the currently vacant posts within the Museums and Galleries Service which focus on Business Development, outreach and learning, and liaison with volunteers and work placements. These posts all are key to demonstrating that the terms of grant funding will be delivered and provide a greatly enhance visitor experience when the Art Gallery re-opens.
- 4.3 The logistics of the redevelopment programme will be considerable; staff already have considerable experience of the implications of relocating the Collections and emptying the Art Gallery will require considerable planning, preparation and care. The redevelopment costs will include the removal costs, as well as costs accounted against the replacement Museums Collections Centre.

- 4.4 In addition, as explained above in the Financial implications (3.12), the Museums and Galleries Service will consider how best to show items from the Collection while the Art Gallery is closed. Ensuring that there is dedicated gallery and museum space in the city centre while the Gallery is closed will be important.
- 4.5 Continuing to offer visitors to the City the opportunity to know what is in the Collections, as well as promote the redevelopment will require front-facing city centre space(s), as well as potentially showing work elsewhere in the city, dependent on, and in addition to the practicalities and assessing the risks involved.
- 4.6 The building designs will incorporate sustainable and other related environmental standards.

5 BACKGROUND

- 5.1 **The Art Gallery is a key visitor attraction** in the city and wider North East. In Aberdeen and Grampian it is the third highest Visitor Attraction, only after the David Welch Winter Gardens at the Duthie Park and Aden Country Park (2011 figures). In Scotland, Outdoor/nature attractions attract 33.4% of the population, Museums and Galleries (excluding the National Museum of Scotland) attract 22.5%, the next most visited category. Being able to continue to attract visitors is not only about the range of exhibitions and activities on offer, it is about the quality of the visitor experience, as reflected above. The Art Gallery and its programme are also major contributors to the city's Cultural Strategy, *Vibrant Aberdeen*, enabling many to engage with, and in, artistic and cultural opportunities.
- 5.2 The City aspires to be the UK City of Culture in 2017 and renovating and improving the Art Gallery will enable one of the city's main cultural venues to match that vision. Making an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund this year, for the redevelopment of the Art Gallery and also to build a Museums Collections Centre, will enable the former to re-open in the second quarter of 2017, at Easter time.
- 5.3 The Council has previously agreed that the Art Gallery redevelopment was its top Cultural priority; its location is at the heart of the city's Cultural Quarter and the investment being proposed will increase access to the Collections by a third, as well as making it possible to welcome more and larger incoming exhibitions. The Activity Plan required to be submitted as part of the HLF application, scopes out a wide range of projects and programmes, which will encourage many more opportunities for and to visitors of all ages, across a wider range of opening times. The Education, Culture and Sport Service has internally prioritised the Museums Collections

Centre and the Art Gallery redevelopment as its number one and two infrastructure priorities.

- 5.4 The City Vision for **Aberdeen 2022**, as outlined in “Aberdeen – the Smarter City”, the Draft Five Year Business Plan 2013/14 to 2017/18, includes “a tangible sense of pride and passion”, “local activity has defined Aberdeen’s cultural renaissance. It has also led to the city’s presence on the circuit of major popular, modern and classical cultural events.”, and “developed a much wider asset base in...culture.” The planned redevelopment of the Art Gallery and the new Museums Collections Centre will contribute to all these aspirations, as well as the economic development of the city. It is estimated that the Art Gallery alone, once re-opened will potentially host 69% more visitors, including locals, day visitors, tourists and a wider educational clientele. The increase in visits will have benefits both for the Gallery itself and also the wider city centre.
- 5.5 The new Museums Collections Centre will also offer a new and important space for the public to access, and for school and other learning and research. Dependent on its location, other benefits may also accrue, including regeneration within a community. The Museums Collections Centre is an important first step in realising the overall programme. Having it ready by the end of 2014, prior to decanting the Gallery collection, will enable the Council to have the most appropriate storage and protection of the highest valued and regarded parts of the permanent collection, usually on display in the Gallery. It will also minimise the costs of removal and return to the Gallery, with little need to store items in other, potentially less than ideal locations, likely to have to have additional security and equipment costs for a relatively short period of time (around two years).
- 5.6 The Art Gallery redevelopment has been under discussion over a number of years as it was recognised that the current complex required significant investment to improve physical access into and around the building for visitors, as well as for staff and general operations. There is need to make improvements to environmental conditions, both to protect the Collection and the building itself, as well as meet the ever increasingly stringent conditions imposed by lending institutions. Coupled to the Gallery requirements. It was recognised that the current storage facilities were no longer suitable, with a need to reconsider location, as well as replace environmental equipment which had reached its lifespan and is now no longer able to operate within the required limits.
- 5.7 It may be useful to set the current report in the context of the work to date; in 2006, the Best Value Review of the Museums and Galleries Service identified the need to invest in both the Art Gallery and also improve the Reserve Collections storage. The Gallery itself was opened to the public in 1885 and has had a number of additions,

extensions and alterations over the years, including the Cowdray Hall, the city's War Memorial and War Memorial Court, following the First World War.

- 5.8 The following year, 2007, the Marguerite McBey Trust agreed that it would give £75,000 in order that a Development Study Scheme of the Art Gallery be prepared. The Council commenced the process of inviting interested parties to consider bidding to take part, which attracted 40 architectural practices, of which eighteen submitted proposals and from a short list of six, Gareth Hoskins Architects was successful. The Design Study brief from then is in Appendix 1, which explains the scope of the project.
- 5.9 Council agreed to support the redevelopment of the Art Gallery at its meeting of 24th June 2009. In 2010, a report to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee of 27th May gave an update on progress and Finance and Resources Committee of 17th June 2010, agreed to fund the Conservation Statement (estimated to be £19,644 plus VAT), required as part of a Stage One Application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 5.10 At the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 18th November 2010, it was advised that the conservation architect had completed the first draft of the Supplementary Report, which covered the assessment of the architectural value and current condition of the building. The report outlined that a number of works required to be carried out to ensure that the current building was protected, particularly in relation to the poor condition of the current roof and gutters. The report had also highlighted that the deterioration of the external shell of the building was having an impact on the running costs of the Gallery.
- 5.11 The report advised that since the previous Committee decision in May, various factors had affected the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund which had originally been planned for September. The Council was in the process of reviewing the Non-Housing Capital Programme, and the Heritage Lottery Fund had also altered the terms of the application process and the timescale for applications. Work was ongoing to assess how the Council could best utilise existing budgets towards the overall assessment of the costs of the redevelopment. This would identify any additional Capital funding required by the Council, subject to successful private, commercial and Heritage Lottery funding.
- 5.12 It was agreed that a fundraising campaign be developed to establish the level of support which might be available from the local business and wider community. It was also hoped that in the event that the project did not proceed, the campaign would stimulate interest in the Art Gallery.

- 5.13 The report also advised that the redevelopment project had been included in the Tax Incremental Fund (TIF) project which could potentially change the emphasis of the fundraising campaign, depending on the outcome of the TIF project.
- 5.14 Work has progressed within the context of wider Council considerations of potential funding streams, Non-Housing Capital programme commitments and priorities. In addition, there has been ongoing financial support from the McBey Trust, to assist in developing the various aspects of the project to make it attractive to prospective financial and other supporters.
- 5.15 The most recent report, was initially considered by the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 7th June 2012, then the Finance and Resources Committee of 21st June; the latter agreed to fund RIBA Design Stages C (Concept Design) and D (Design Development, including submission of an application for Planning Consent) of the Art Gallery redevelopment to the value of up to £560,000. There was also recognition that in the meantime, the Council should spend its resources in the most effective and prudent manner; the report's recommendation, to only spend what is absolutely necessary to protect the Museums Reserve Collection at Kittybrewster and the Art Gallery roof, was agreed.
- 5.16 The Committee also instructed officers to report to Committee in advance of the deadline to make an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, to determine the Council's financial and wider commitment to the overall development.

MAIN ISSUES

- 5.17 Members may recall the very successful *Artists Rooms* inaugural tour in 2009, when the Art Gallery exhibited sculptures by Ron Mueck and that his piece, "The Big Baby", amongst others, had to be unpacked and taken into the Gallery through the front door. It was only through the good will of the National Galleries of Scotland that they were prepared to facilitate the exhibition to take place, using this means of entry. Permission to close Schoolhill also had to be arranged.
- 5.18 This is a situation which is neither sustainable, nor desirable and is only one example of the support the Service has from partners. If the city is going to continue to show quality travelling and special exhibitions in the future, then the ever increasing requirements which lenders make need to be met, in the same way that we require borrowing institutions to meet our own lending requirements. Equally, our collections need to be kept in stable environmental conditions and it is not currently possible at either the Gallery or stores to ensure. In the Gallery, the solar gain from the roof lights in the exhibition galleries and variances in heat and cold throughout the

building need to be reduced. In the stores, as mentioned above, the environmental equipment is overdue for replacement. Equally, the spaces available to show these exhibitions are limited and there are occasions when an exhibition requires editing due to the constraints of the exhibition galleries at Aberdeen Art Gallery. A current example is the National Gallery of Scotland's major exhibition on S. J. Peploe, now showing at Modern 2 in Edinburgh, which will be reduced in scale when it comes to Aberdeen next year.

- 5.19 **The permanent Collections** are of great intrinsic value to the city, as they tell its story through many narratives; these include social and maritime history, technology, science and industry, costume, fine and applied art, sculpture and archaeology. The main exhibition space for the fine art collection is the Art Gallery and it includes a large number of significant works, including within the Collections, Francis Bacon's *Pope | Study After Pope Innocent X by Velazquez*, currently on loan to the Art Gallery of New South Wales, in Sydney, Australia as part of a major retrospective on the artist; works by the Scottish Colourists, including F. C. B. Cadell and S. J. Peploe, seven of which are currently on loan to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art for its winter exhibition on the artist; *To Pastures New* by Sir James Guthrie, which was the "signature image" for the "Pioneering Painters: The Glasgow Boys 1880–1900" exhibition at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow in 2010, going on the London thereafter, along with *The Tennis Party* by Sir John Lavery.
- 5.20 There are 18th century portraits by Raeburn, Hogarth, Ramsay and Reynolds, 20th century works by Paul Nash, Ben Nicholson and Stanley Spencer. The French Impressionists and Post Impressionists include work by Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Toulouse-Lautrec and Degas. John Singer Sargent, John Phillip, James McBey, William Dyce, Joan Eardley and Joseph Farquharson are all represented. The contemporary collection includes work by Damien Hirst, Alison Watt, Kenny Hunter, Louise Hopkins, Peter Howson, Gavin Turk and Tracey Emin. It is one of the strengths of the Collections that through the Macdonald Fund, set up by one of the founders of the Art Gallery in 1885, that it has been possible to continue to purchase works of art, created no later than twenty-five years previously.
- 5.21 **The buildings are in need of major investment;** the current visitor facilities are now no longer appropriate. Though the entrance has been made more accessible, with a ramp and automatic doors, those with limited mobility or prams have to reach the lift at the rear of the building, which is primarily used for transporting items from the collections and is not designed for public use, requiring staff to operate it. The public toilets are no longer adequate and while remedial work will be undertaken in the current financial year to improve the situation, they will remain limited. Services for visitors, including toilets, are one of the main criteria which is assessed by

Visit Scotland in its grading of the Art Gallery as a visitor attraction; they are in need of a much more radical enhancement. The Gallery does not have adequate facilities to encourage school and other groups, appropriate accommodation for activities related to the exhibitions on show, nor to meet the demand for exhibitions originating from the community.

5.22 While the Gallery is a Grade A Listed building, the overall fabric of the complex is in need of significant investment, with water ingress in a number of areas. In June it was reported that the initial conservation report within the overall Design Scheme had indicated that water penetration into the building has been caused by the state of the roof and gutters, both of which are in urgent need of attention.

5.23 The Education, Culture and Sport Committee of 7th June 2012 and the subsequent meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee of 21st June, agreed the recommendations that a strategic view be taken of the Council's investment and while funding had been allocated for repairs, that only essential work be undertaken, in the case of the Gallery, because the proposals within the Scheme include building a new level above the current roof. Similarly, it was agreed that only essential work be carried to the roof at Kittybrewster. A tender in the sum of £90,000 to carry out the former work has now been accepted. It was agreed to progress the various strands of work included in the overall development, with funding committed of up to £560,000 to progress RIBA Design Stages C and D.

5.24 **Timescale and Programme;** The Design Scheme work, currently ongoing will enable a planning application to be made for the Art Gallery project next year. At this time, work is well advanced on RIBA Stage C, with the architects, Gareth Hoskins Architects (GHA), developing designs to meet the specification, including proposals as to how to access the proposed new top floor. Work internally and externally has been undertaken to ascertain if the current structure can support an additional level, through structural surveys and test pits. Other intrusive surveys will be required in due course, undertaken in ways to minimise the impact on visitors' enjoyment of the Gallery.

5.25 GHA have recently indicated that the current timeline is still achievable, however would benefit from any flexibility which can be given. They have been asked to review the timeline with a view to commencing construction work in April 2015, which would add three months to the construction and fit-out phase. At this time, this seems prudent, given it within the same financial year as the existing time line; however were there to be any flexibility into the end of the preceding financial year, 2014/15, then that would be welcomed by GHA.

- 5.26 Discussions have taken place with Historic Scotland and Planning to ascertain what might be acceptable in terms of interventions and design, given that the Art Gallery is a “Grade A” Listed building. A request has been made to the Lord Provost, so he in turn can consult with veterans and other groups, on how the integrity of the War Memorial Court can be maintained, with possible sympathetic changes to and uses of the space. An initial conversation has taken place with the Director of Finance at Robert Gordon’s College, as neighbours, and another is planned with the Robert Gordon University.
- 5.27 A meeting with the Architect, Activity Plan co-ordinator (Jura Consultants) and Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Case Officer was held on 23rd October to ensure that the drafted application complies with the criteria and to discuss funding. New criteria were issued that week and it is crucial that the application complies. HLF emphasised the benefit of an application that can demonstrate the extent of financial and other commitment from the applicant. The ability to deliver the required Activity Plan, which is a key component of the application, and being able to demonstrate that there is a Fundraising Strategy in place, were emphasised. Both these have been prepared and along with letters of support, are available to include within the application.

6. IMPACT

Corporate - This report relates to ‘Aberdeen – the Smarter City’, in particular:

- We will improve access to and increase participation in arts and culture by providing opportunities for citizens and visitors to experience a broad range of high quality arts and cultural activities.
- We aspire to be recognised as a City of Culture, a place of excellence for culture and arts by promoting Aberdeen as a cultural centre hosting high quality and diverse cultural events for the whole community and beyond.
- We will embrace the distinctive pride the people of Aberdeen take in their city and work with them to enhance the sense of well-being here, building strong communities which look out for, and look after one another.
- We aim to leave a legacy which will make compelling reading in a new chapter in the history of Aberdeen and we aim to do this with one voice.
- We will provide a high quality education service within our schools and communities which will improve attainment and life chances of our children and young people to achieve their full potential in education, employment or training.
- Working with our third, public and private sector partners, we will provide opportunities for lifelong learning which will develop

knowledge, skills and attributes of our citizens to enable them to meet the changing demands of the 21st century.

- We will aim to have a workforce across the city which has the skills and knowledge to sustain, grow and diversify the city economy.

There are also clear links with the delivery of the city's Cultural Strategy, "Vibrant Aberdeen" and the bid development to become UK City of Culture. It also has direct links to the city's Learning Strategy and in supporting the experiences and outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence.

In terms of the Single Outcome Agreement, the programme contributes to Outcome 3, "We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation" and Outcome 13, 'We will take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity'. The new SOA guidance for Community Planning Partnerships includes inclusion of the following key national priorities as appropriately, including particular focus on how local inequalities of outcome will be reduced through a clear strategic focus on the:

- Early years and early intervention
- Outcomes for older people
- Employment
- Economic recovery and growth
- Health inequalities
- Safer and stronger communities

The Programme offers opportunities to contribute to a number of these, particularly in partnership.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Aberdeen Art Gallery redevelopment, Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 7th June 2012 and Finance and Resources Committee, 21st June 2012.

Condition and Suitability Programme 2012-13, Finance and Resources Committee 15th March 2012

Cultural Priorities 2011-2015, Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 24th March 2011

Progress report on proposals to redevelop Aberdeen Art Gallery, 18th November 2010

Finance and Resources Committee, 17th June 2010, referral of report from the Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 27th May 2010

Progress report on proposals to redevelop Aberdeen Art Gallery and report on improving access to the Museums and Galleries collections, Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 27th May 2010

Art Gallery redevelopment, Council, 24th June 2009 (Appendix 1, the Design Study brief, is below)

Minutes of the Marguerite McBey Trust, 4th February 2005 and 19th March 2007

Minutes of the Cowdray Hall Committee, 11th February 2008 and 24th June 2008

Best Value Report on Museums and Galleries Service, Education and Leisure Committee, 16th May 2006.

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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Appendix 1

Development Study Scheme

It is proposed that the present facility be redeveloped to form a space which will meet new objectives and user needs and stay at the cutting edge of cultural resources within the City of Aberdeen. These objectives include the aspirations of the McBey Trust, established in May 2001 to disburse the funds bequeathed by Mrs McBey, widow of local artist James McBey, to see the McBey Room revitalised.

Key to the development is the wider context of ensuring citizens have full access to their "Cultural Entitlements", to be defined by the forthcoming Culture Bill in the Scottish Parliament. Also particularly relevant in this context will be the need to ensure that there is an over-riding ethos of improving access, both emotionally and physically. We recognise that public buildings, particularly those built in an era to be seen as uplifting, as pillars of and to philanthropy, or for the public good, may not be as welcoming today as we would wish.

It is crucial that in the realisation of the redevelopment, both citizens and visitors regard the Art Gallery as "their" place, not someone else's. This needs to pervade the whole project, from the external setting, to the use of space, exhibitions and all public areas.

Description of the Property

The Art Gallery, Schoolhill, Aberdeen, 'A' Grade Listed Building, designed by local architect Alexander Marshall McKenzie, was opened in 1885. Situated in the heart of the city with its impressive architecture, fine collections and excellent special exhibitions, it attracts some 200,000 visitors a year. The Art Gallery is the largest public gallery in the North of Scotland and is a key contributor to the city's portfolio of tourist attractions. It has been awarded 3 star Visitor Attraction quality assurance status by visit Scotland and has Full Accreditation status under the Museums Libraries and Archives accreditation scheme.

The Art Gallery is sited in an area which has a number of cultural and educational centre, being adjacent to Robert Gordon's College and the administration offices and Students Union of the Robert Gordon University. Close by is the Belmont, an independently operated cinema and opposite, Citymoves, the dance agency for the North East of Scotland. Nearby are the recently extended His Majesty's Theatre and the Central Library. Union Terrace Gardens is the current planned location for an excitingly designed Contemporary Arts Centre for Peacock Visual Arts, which will also host the City Council's Arts Education team, Community Arts and Arts Development service, as well as a relocated Citymoves. The Gardens are also used for special events, including music concerts and other cultural activities.

The building is entered via the dressed Corrennie granite access ramp and steps through a granite colonnaded atrium which incorporates a central water feature and highlights a Barbara Hepworth sculpture. Adjoining the Art Gallery is the Cowdray Hall erected under the terms of a deed of trust by the Viscount and Viscountess Cowdray in 1923. The Hall is designed to accommodate musical recitals and cultural activities and may be accessed through a discrete street entrance or from the Art Gallery main atrium, via an unusual indoor war memorial, which was funded by public subscription.

Current Usage

The Gallery is open to the public 10.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. Monday - Saturday throughout the year except for Christmas/New Year public holidays. It is open during all other public holidays.

Key to the Gallery's profile as one of Scotland's principal art galleries is the richness of the collections of art and design. It has 14 individual galleries including the balcony around the Central Court atrium. These galleries house a mix of exhibitions and displays drawn from the permanent collections of oil paintings, drawings, prints, sculpture, costume, silver and ceramics, including works by local artists William Dyce, James Cowie and Joan Eardley and fashion designer Bill Gibb. Challenging contemporary work by modern masters such as Francis Bacon, Ian Hamilton Findlay and Damien Hirst can be seen on the ground floor.

Three rooms show a lively selection of touring exhibitions featuring cutting edge contemporary art and design from home and abroad. Many of the visiting exhibitions have their only Scottish showing in Aberdeen.

Towards the rear of the building is situated the McBey Print Room and Library, founded in 1961, the gift one of the Gallery's most important benefactors, Mrs Marguerite McBey. Regular displays can be seen in the Print Room and the Library situated on a mezzanine floor operates as a reference library, open to the public Mon-Fri 10.00-16.00.

There are office areas accommodated in a 1970s extension at the back of the building, along with collection storage areas and workshop areas for preparing exhibitions and framing works of art. Meeting rooms and areas of the Gallery can be hired for corporate events and activities including workshops and talks. The Cowdray Hall, noted above, is frequently used for concerts and recitals but is also hired for other events such as CIMA examinations, while the Gallery itself is host to regular educational visits and activities.

There are toilets and café both of which are currently falling below visitor expectations. The Gallery Shop is acknowledged as one of the top museum retail sites in Scotland.

Selected rooms, including the Centre Court are available for corporate hire, functions and events.

The Concept of Developing the Brief

Areas to be addressed in the above.

- Accessibility
- Reception Area
- Environmental Control
- Heating/Lighting
- Office Accommodation
- Workshop Space
- Education & Research Space
- Flexibility & Corporate Usage of Space

Catering/Retail Spaces
Marguerite McBey Trust and McBey Room
Memorial Court
Use of Cowdray Hall
Staff & Visitor Toilet Provision
Cloakroom/Lockers for Visitors
Collection Storage Areas
Service Access/Loading Bay/Parking

The brief should include advice, recommendations and feasibility on the extent of the works, along with budget costs, funding and programming details.

Consultants will have access to the Gallery 8.15 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. Monday - Saturday & 2.00 p.m. - 5.00 p.m. Sunday.

The list above is purely indicative and is not an exhaustive overview of the needs and objectives of the Gallery as a whole.

The Art Gallery Development Concept

The main entrance should direct the visitor to a clearly defined reception area or "Welcome Desk" where information about the Gallery, its collections, layout and information packages will be made available.

It is envisaged that the existing Gallery will be expanded and modernised and be able to provide appropriate improved areas for educational and research space than that currently provided. (Educational Partnerships may indicate the need for specialist requirements.)

Within this new environment there must be areas which are designed to stimulate groups of schoolchildren during the day that, in the evenings, have the flexibility to be used as venues for corporate events, lectures or breakout spaces.

The revitalisation of the McBey Room, and Library accommodated on the mezzanine floor, are central to the redevelopment plans.

A key aspiration is to accommodate an area for visitors to access collections by computer for both educational research and development.

Consideration may be given to the demolishing the rear office extension and replacing this with a new service area.

All new space/ volumes must be designed to have controlled cooled environments to provide a suitable environment for art loans from around the world as well as the Gallery's permanent collection. One of the main challenges will be to detail cooling to the galleries without destroying the historic fabric of the building while also complying with the design to achieve clean flexible modern spaces. It is obvious that the heterogeneous nature of the collection will necessitate a flexible display/design/storage strategy with fully integrated services.

In order to establish a robust visitor flow pattern throughout the development, careful consideration must be given to providing a fully accessible outlook to all areas of design development, not only in terms of vertical/horizontal circulation, but also in lighting, signage, visitor toilet facilities, furniture and fittings.

Each new space must incorporate suitable administrative and curatorial offices, readily accessed from covered loading bays, with temperature and humidity controlled storage zones nearby.

Each new core service, fire escapes, points of access and egress will require careful attention to innovative design. Accessible staff toilets, rest rooms and security features/facilities should be integrated with this overall design concept and not appear to be an afterthought.

Catering Spaces

The role of the café in a Gallery is central to how visitors view the "Gallery Experience". It is important, therefore, that café area has both its own identity and a synergy with the host environment.

Assuming the above, it is envisaged that the café area/restaurant will be designed, not only to be used as a public catering space, but also as late opening restaurant within its own right such as Kelvingrove Art Gallery in Glasgow and the London Transport Museum.

The location of the café is therefore crucial in the overall footprint of the building and circulation routes should be fully exploited to achieve the required results. It must also be easily accessible to external caterers for the preparation of food served at corporate hire events.

Shop/Retail Outlet

The provision of abundant space with appropriate circulation and storage facilities should be provided to ensure a quality retail facility can be designed and integrated within the overall concept of the Gallery.

In a similar fashion to the café it will be important to investigate the siting of the shop to ensure that maximum income from this resource can be achieved without the necessity to open the building as a whole.

Cowdray Hall

This section of the Gallery is not used to its maximum capacity. State of the Art sound systems and stage lighting will be required to enhance the quality of the concerts and recitals which take place within. Investigations into suitable types of flexible auditorium seating should be undertaken to allow a more flexible programme of events to be held on a regular basis. An accessible toilet should be established within the footprint of the Cowdray Hall to allow this stand-alone facility to be used without the need to open the Gallery.

Service Access

Currently the access to the service yard is through a very narrow entrance from Blackfriars Street. This access is very restricted and requires the assistance of a banksman to allow the safe access of service vehicles into the yard. It may be that consideration is given to the purchase of the area of ground of Robert Gordon's University Science Block which is sited next to the rear access yard of the Gallery.

Another area which could be considered as part of the footprint of the proposed refurbished Gallery is the area of the Robert Gordon University building which is linked to the Gallery by the arch into Gordon's College and was formally part of Gray's School of Art.

Summary

The successful redevelopment of this outstanding piece of Aberdeen's cultural and architectural heritage will further promote the tourist profile of the City of Aberdeen whilst increasing accessibility to collections and exhibitions for local visitors and communities. The building is situated close to the award-winning His Majesty's Theatre and the City Library offering the potential to create an unparalleled "cultural quarter" for the City.