

Scottish National Gallery – work starts on creating accessible paths

The Scottish National Gallery is being revamped and work will continue from today with some noticeable changes to the facilities in and around the gallery.

The gallery shop and the Scottish Café and Restaurant will be closed for a few months to allow a new accessible path, landscaping and wider steps to be created in East Princes Street Gardens.

When complete the galleries will join the community toilet scheme which means anyone, whether they are visiting the gallery itself or not, can use the facilities there.

There is also work taking place inside the building where former offices and storage spaces will become new galleries entered from the gardens. These will house the NGS collection of historic Scottish art with artists such as Raeburn, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Scottish Colourists featuring.

You can access the galleries from The Mound only while work progresses. The access from the gardens will remain closed.

The accessible toilet at the Mound will be removed as part of the works and the new landscaping will get underway to help those with prams and wheelchairs to get around the gardens more easily.

There are 22 new trees to be planted in East Princes Street Gardens with species chosen to complement existing trees in the wider gardens. These trees will be between 4.5 metres and 6 metres in height. They will replace 52 trees removed in Autumn 2018 to enable the reshaping of an embankment that is necessary for the new accessible path.

The new trees are depicted in the new animated fly through, and landscape architects and other professional organisations supporting the project have advised and verified on their depiction, including their size and species. NGS has confirmed it is also in discussion with the CEC and Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust about the planting of additional trees in other locations in the city.

Speaking today, Sir John Leighton, Director-General of the National Galleries of Scotland, said: "It has been very exciting over the autumn to see work on this transformational project get started, and as we move out of winter and into spring we're looking forward to some of our first milestones becoming a reality. Landscaping will start shortly and by the spring our new accessible route into Princes Street Gardens will be complete and our restaurant and enlarged shop will reopen to welcome the public.

"Unavoidably there will be some disruption around the site over the coming weeks, and we are grateful for the public's patience while we create these improvements to the galleries and the surrounding space. We want the Scottish National Gallery to be a place for everyone to enjoy. We have two years to go before opening, but we hope that as this year progresses people will already begin to feel the great benefits of the work we are doing here."

Dr Tricia Allerston, Co-Director, Scottish National Gallery Project, added: "We draw around 2.5 million visitors each year to our Edinburgh-based galleries, and our ambitious plans for the Scottish National Gallery will ensure we continue to meet

the needs and expectations of all. With this once-in-a-lifetime project, we will transform the way we show the world's greatest collection of historic Scottish art, both in the new, light-filled, state-of-the-art display spaces and in the innovative way we will be showcasing the work of Scottish artists alongside our wider international collection.'