

Press Release

For Immediate Release:

Reopening of St Martin-in-the-Fields Church

The church of St Martin-in-the-Fields reopened yesterday, Sunday 30 September marking the completion of the first stage of Eric Parry Architects' masterplan for the renewal of the whole site.

The church closed to the public on 6 May 2007 to allow conservation and restoration works to take place. Victorian additions have been removed and post-war glazing replaced bringing the Grade I listed church closer to James Gibbs' original design.

The magnificent ceiling of St Martin's has been completely restored and repainted. The sanctuary is once again the focus of the church interior with gilding over a warm stone colour. The nave and main ceiling are painted with lighter stone and stucco colours.

Clear handmade glass replaces the translucent glazing of the windows allowing natural light to flood the church once again. The Victorian chancel arrangement has been stripped out and the sanctuary remodelled to provide a more flexible space for both worship and concerts.

New church furniture – moveable choir stalls and benches for the congregation – has been crafted and will sit on a fine new floor of Purbeck stone in the centre aisle and sanctuary, to match the existing stone in the side aisles.

The brick vaulted 18th century crypt has been restored to its full volume and as a single space will house the popular café, which will be opening on Monday 1st October.

Robert Kennett, Project Director at Eric Parry Architects says *"The church of St-Martin-in-the-Fields is rightly regarded as Gibbs' masterpiece and it has been exciting and satisfying seeing it returned to its former glory. We're delighted to see the church open to the public and are continuing our work on the rest of the site to complete the new facilities for all users of St Martin's."*

Speaking about the reopening of the church the Revd Nicholas Holtam, Vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields, says *"This is a wonderful moment. The heart of the St Martin's community is being re-established first. After five months of church closure and 'St Martin's on Tour' the building is coming back into use and looks glorious."*

The renewal of the remaining existing buildings and the masterplan for the church precincts designed by Eric Parry Architects is due for completion in Spring 2008. It will include:

- a new pavilion entrance, giving public access to the foyer and crypt below, and a new lightwell on Church Path
 - entirely new underground facilities housing
 - a new chapel
 - a new Bishop Ho Ming Wah Chinese Community Centre
 - a new Church Hall
 - a new rehearsal space for choirs and musicians
 - an enlarged and relocated Shop in the Crypt - newly sited in the foyer and accessed through the pavilion entrance
 - extended amenities for The Connection at St Martin's, which benefits over 6,500 homeless individuals a year
 - new, contemporary living and work accommodation for clergy and church staff
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The total cost of the Renewal of St Martin-in-the-Fields is £36million. £32million has already been raised, including £15.35m from the Heritage Lottery Fund. A public appeal will be launched on 1st October with a target of £250,000 towards the balance. Donations to the Public Appeal for the Renewal of St Martin-in-the-Fields can be made via the website: www.givelight.smitf.org or telephone 020 7766 1169, email campaign@smitf.org. More information about the Renewal of St Martin-in-the Fields can be found at www.smitf.org/campaign

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The Revd Nicholas Holtam, Vicar of St Martin's, and Eric Parry/Robert Kennett of Eric Parry Architects are available for interview

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Notes to Editors:

Eric Parry Architects is an established and award-winning practice with a growing portfolio of notable work.

Current projects include Aldermanbury Square in the City of London and the practice has recently been appointed to design a new recital hall for Wells Cathedral School, Somerset – the UK's leading specialist music school.

The practice undertakes a broad range of work, varied in scope and scale. It has won numerous awards, including an RIBA Award and an AIA Design Excellence Award in 2003 for the design of the office building at 30 Finsbury Square, London, which was also short-listed for the prestigious Stirling Prize in the same year. The Spa at the Mandarin Oriental, Hyde Park was awarded Best Leisure Design at the FX International Interior Design Awards in 2001 and Foundress Court at Pembroke College, Cambridge University, won an RIBA Award in 1998.

The practice is based in Finsbury, London, and employs over 50 staff. EPA also has an office in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where the practice has designed a number of residential schemes.

Eric Parry has a key involvement in all projects, particularly in their design development stages. He is keenly interested in the bridges between theory, practice, space and society.

<http://www.ericparryarchitects.co.uk/>

St Martin-in-the-Fields

Key Dates in the Renewal of St Martin-in-the-Fields:

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| January 2006 | Building work began |
| 7 September 2007 | Topping Out ceremony |
| 30 September 2007 | The church re-opens |
| 1 October 2007 | The crypt re-opens with launch of the public appeal to raise a proportion of the funds still required. St Martin's music programme recommences |
| 4 October 2007 | First evening concert to be held by candlelight in the transformed church |
| Spring 2008 | The Renewal of St Martin-in-the-Fields concludes - hoardings will conceal elements of the site until full completion |

The precincts of James Gibbs' church, consecrated for worship in 1726, are a complex mix of buildings which also include John Nash's North Range, formerly a school and now home to The Connection at St Martin-in-the-Fields, the round-the-clock care organisation for homeless people, and underground crypts and vaults. Eric Parry Architects' masterplan has unified the site and create a series of uplifting spaces flexible enough to accommodate the church's wide range of activities now and in the future.

Since the 13th century, St Martin-in-the-Fields has been at the heart of varied and changing communities. St Martin's attracts over 700,000 visitors a year and serves an extraordinarily diverse range of people, including the congregation, vulnerable and homeless people, users of the Bishop Ho Ming Wah Chinese Community Centre, concert and café goers and tourists. Reaching beyond its Anglican congregation, St Martin's is a place in which all people of faith can meet and pray.

HRH The Prince of Wales is Patron of the Renewal of St Martin-in-the-Fields For further information on the Main Contractor, the Costain Group plc, visit www.costain.com, and Project Manager, Gardiner & Theobald, www.gardiner.com

The contractors for the church interior are:

Dorothea – metalwork
 Meica – Mechanical & Electrical
 Elite Lifts
 Avondale – builders work & bricklaying
 Holy Well Glass – re-glazing of windows
 Stonewest – stone flooring
 Cousins – decorations (including gilding)
 Taylor Pearce – memorial protection
 Variety Flooring - lino
 Stanford Scaffolding
 Stevenson's of Norwich – plaster repairs
 Treske - furniture
 Walker – organ protection
 JJ Sweeney Joinery – panelling & pew repairs
 Hallmark – Crypt Kitchen equipment

The Heritage Lottery Fund enables communities to celebrate, look after and learn more about Britain's diverse heritage. From supporting its great museums and historic buildings to local parks and beauty spots, or recording and celebrating traditions, customs and history, HLF grants open up the nation's heritage for everyone to enjoy. It has supported more than 26,000 projects, allocating £4billion across the UK. www.hlf.org.uk.