

PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday, 12th July 2017

National Library announces major redevelopment programme

The [National Library of Ireland](#) (NLI) has today (12.07.17) announced that it is embarking on a major redevelopment of its main building on Kildare Street, Dublin 2, in partnership with the Office of Public Works (OPW) and funded by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

The project is called 'Reimagining the National Library'. It will allow the NLI to create the storage and preservation conditions necessary to keep the national collections safe for the long-term. At the same time, the Library will benefit from enhanced public spaces and services.

Speaking at the announcement, Director of the NLI, Dr Sandra Collins said: "We are very excited about this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reimagine the National Library. As Ireland's memory-keeper, it is essential that the national collections in our care are kept safe and protected and the redevelopment works will put in place modern storage and preservation standards.

"The Library is also delighted that the redevelopment will deliver on our ambition to enhance our public spaces and services. The enhanced public spaces will enable new and continued engagement with the national collections, and universal access to our services. The renovated West Wing will include a new exhibition space, a new lecture room, a public lift to all floors and a new café and retail space.

"The redevelopment of the National Library is a four-year project, with multiple phases impacting different parts of the main building at different times. We are working hard to make sure that the building works will have as little impact on our readers as possible, and the Library will remain open throughout the project duration.

"At the same time, many of the collections held by the National Library have been digitised, and significant digitisation will continue throughout the refurbishment. Online access to collections will continue to be enhanced during the works."

Funding and departmental support

The budget for the redevelopment works at the NLI is €10 million and funding is provided by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Speaking at the announcement at the National Library, Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys TD commented: "The Creative Ireland Programme prioritises

Government investment in our cultural institutions, so I am delighted today to be unveiling the plans for this major €10 million investment package in the National Library of Ireland. It is the most significant investment in the historic wing of the Kildare Street building since it was first opened in 1890.

"The redevelopment plan will not only refurbish the historic building and upgrade the storage facilities for our national collections, it will also completely transform the visitor experience at the National Library and will allow the NLI to develop further as a venue for research, culture, learning and tourism.

"This investment is only possible thanks to our improved economic situation, and it is vitally important to me that our arts and cultural sectors benefit as we seek to reinvest in our public buildings and services. By investing in the National Library, we are investing in Ireland's unique story and our capacity to share it with the world.

"Today is a very important milestone in the Library's redevelopment plan. On completion of the works, we will have a National Library that will be the envy of our international counterparts and will provide the best possible experience to researchers and visitors of all ages."

The building project will be managed by the Office of Public Works (OPW). OPW Commissioner, John McMahon said: "Following the original announcement of funding, the Office of Public Works have engaged in detailed studies with the National Library, working through various options so that the proposals can best reflect their vision for meeting the requirements of a modern National Library while enhancing the character of the fine Victorian building.

"This period of preliminary planning has given both the NLI and OPW the opportunity to address in detail how significant construction works can take place while maintaining the day to day operations of the Library and we will now be progressing a number of contracts through Statutory Approval and Procurement. Enabling works for these contracts will commence in September this year."

To allow for enabling works to take place, some service restrictions will commence in August

- The Main and Manuscript Reading Rooms will be closed on Mondays from 14th August. The reading rooms will continue to be open all day Tuesday to Friday (with late opening until 7.45pm on Tuesday and Wednesdays as normal) and on Saturday morning. All digital services, including the online catalogue, will continue to be available 24/7.
- Access to Prints & Drawings and Ephemera Collections will be online only. The physical collections will be stored offsite for the duration of the project and physical access by researchers to the collections will not be possible. 17,000 images are currently online, with more being added this summer. The NLI will continue to catalogue and digitise these collections on an ongoing basis, and requests for

cataloguing and/or digitisation of particular collections by researchers should be directed to prints&drawings@nli.ie.

ENDS

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Notes to Editors

- Photographer Nick Bradshaw will issue photographs to picture desks this afternoon.
- The National Library of Ireland (NLI) is the library of record for Ireland. Established in 1877, its mission is to collect, protect and make available the recorded memory of Ireland. A reference library, it cares for more than ten million items, including books, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs, prints, maps, drawings, ephemera, music and digital media. It is open, free of charge, to all those who wish to consult the collections. The Office of the Chief Herald in Kildare Street and the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar are both part of the National Library. The five strategic priorities for the National Library for 2016 – 2021 are to collect, protect, connect, innovate and collaborate. The NLI's Strategy 2016 – 2021 can be downloaded from [here](#). Further information is available at www.nli.ie. Follow the NLI on Twitter [@NLIreland](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr on the Commons](#) and [Vimeo](#).