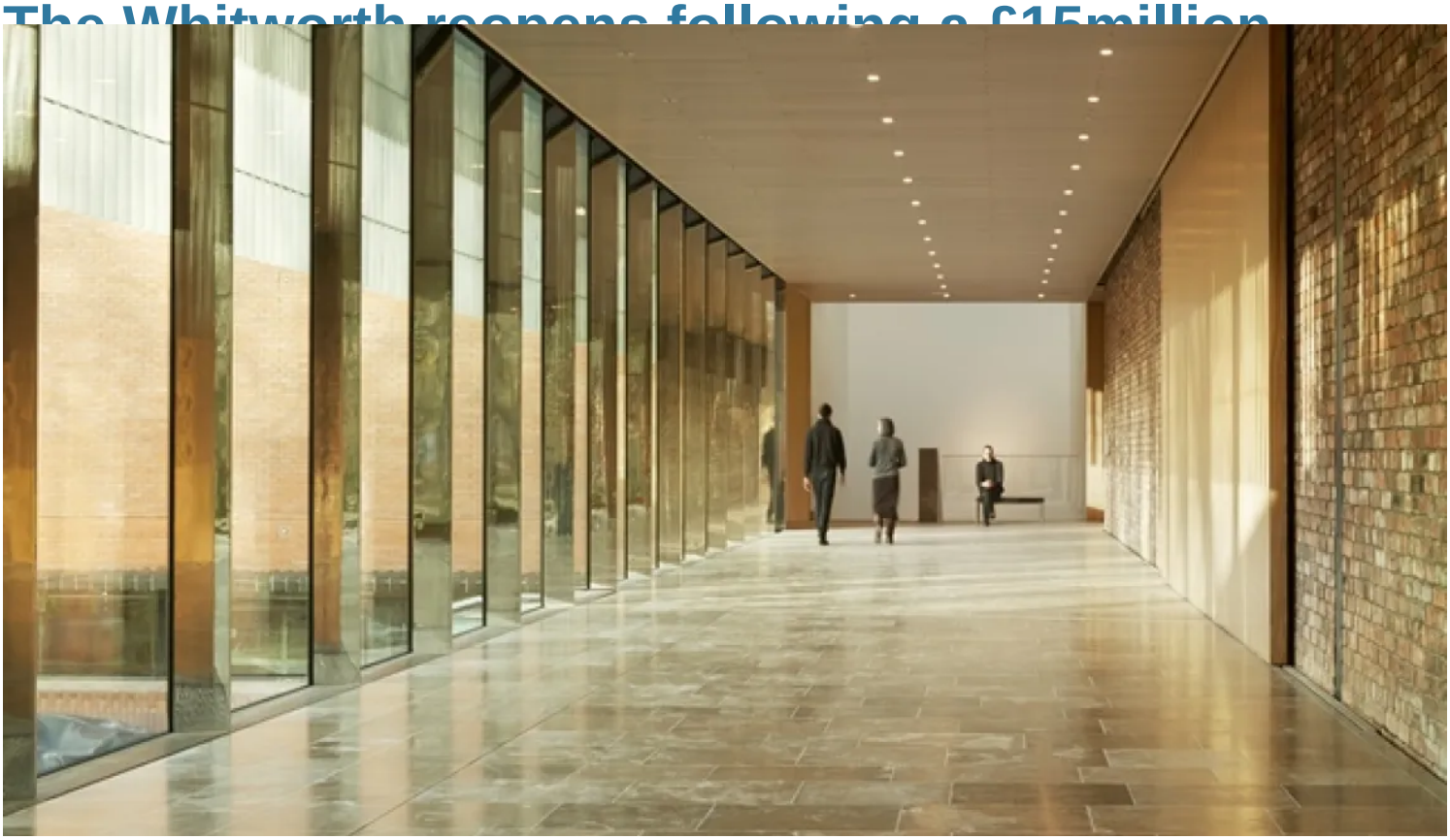
The Whitworth reopens following a £15million



Inside the Whitworth Alan Williams

The redevelopment, which has been supported by a major Heritage Lottery Fund grant, The University of Manchester and other funders, has doubled public space and created state-of-the-art new facilities including expanded gallery spaces, a study centre, learning studio, and a collections centre. Leading with a major solo exhibition from one of Britain's most acclaimed contemporary artists, Cornelia Parker, the opening programme celebrates the Whitworth's eclectic and extensive collection of historical and contemporary fine art, textiles and wallpapers.

The redevelopment
At the heart of MUMA's major redevelopment project is the creation of an elegant glass, stainless steel and brick extension, which sees two wings extend into Whitworth Park from the back of the existing 19th-century building. For the extension, MUMA have developed a unique Whitworth blend of British brick and a brickwork pattern with a traditional textile slash work effect, inspired by the gallery's extensive textile collection.

Drawing on the Whitworth's heritage as the first English gallery in a park, the new wings create an art garden between them and are connected by a glass promenade gallery overlooking the surrounding landscape. The landscape gallery wing provides exhibition space for the display of landscape works and large scale sculptures. Across the promenade, a beautiful linear café extends into the trees in Whitworth Park. A large window in the centre of the existing building reveals a sight line into the main exhibition space, connecting the gallery to the surrounding park beyond.

This increased exhibition and public space allows the Whitworth to show, share and care for its significant collection of over 55,000 historical and contemporary works. A new environmentally sustainable collection storage area has been created in the lower ground floor, including a public collections access area. Extensive refurbishment of the existing gallery building has restored the volume of the three 19th-century barrel-vault exhibition gallery ceilings enabling the display of major, large scale shows. Visitors can now also gain access to the reinstated Grand Hall on the first floor through glorious Edwardian staircases returned to public use for the first time in over 50 years.

A £1.8m grant from the Arts Council England has completed the refurbishment with an improved entrance to the gallery on Oxford Road and Sculpture Terrace with works by Bernard Schottlander (*Terminal*, c.1965) and Gustav Metzger (*Flailing Trees*, 2009).

The Art Garden
A new Art Garden and an Orchard Garden have been designed by Chelsea gold medalist Sarah Price, who co-designed the 2012 Olympic Park gardens in London and will be completed in spring 2015. Grasses and perennial plants in the Art Garden will keep sight lines open whilst creating a sense of depth. Loosely clipped, evergreen hedging will be arranged to form rolling, distorted clouds varying in height and shape. The hedging will be designed to look interesting from every angle and suggest partially enclosed interior spaces, creating backdrops suitable for displaying outdoor artworks. Extending the exhibition space beyond the gallery walls, a significant number of new outdoor sculptures by artists including Christine Borland, Nate Lowman, Simon Periton and Nico Vascellari from a recent donation of 90 works from The Karpidas Foundation will go on permanent display in the Art Garden. The enclosed Orchard Garden and wildflower area will offer a place for relaxation and reflection as well as support the Whitworth's work to promote the biodiversity of the park.

The opening programme
The Whitworth programme opens with a major solo exhibition from one of Britain's most acclaimed contemporary artists, Cornelia Parker whose work transforms ordinary objects into the compelling and the extraordinary. Featuring career-defining works such as *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View* (1991) and *The Distance (A Kiss With String Attached)* (2003), this exhibition also shows many new works that continue her preoccupation with dematerialising matter; bullets, blood and bronze are transformed into linear explorations. Unique to the Whitworth is War Room, a vast and immersive installation made from punched out paper negatives taken from the Poppy Factory in Richmond, its moiré of empty spaces echoing the 45 million remembrance poppies made each year.

The opening night of the exhibition will be marked by Cornelia Parker's new 'meteor shower' work, *Blakean Abstract*. This has come about through a collaboration with the University of Manchester scientist, Kostya Novoselov, who, with Andre Geim, was awarded the Nobel Prize for his work on graphene - the thinnest and strongest known material. Working with a paper conservator, Novoselov took microscopic samples of graphite from drawings in the Whitworth's collection by William Blake, Turner, Constable and Picasso as well as a pencil-written letter by Sir Ernest Rutherford (who split the atom in Manchester). He then made graphene from these samples. Parker will use the Blake graphene for this work of art to trigger a firework 'meteor shower' in Whitworth Park inspired by William Blake's watercolour The Ancient of Days, which itself is part of the Whitworth's collection.

Alongside Cornelia Parker, the opening programme celebrates the Whitworth's eclectic and extensive collection and bring together the best historical and contemporary fine art, textiles and wallpaper, including:

- *Unmanned Nature*, a spectacular 45-metre long gunpowder installation by leading Chinese–born artist, Cai Guo-Qiang launches the Whitworth's stunning new landscape gallery

- Two exhibitions of works recently donated to the Whitworth from The Karpidas Foundation, including pieces by Laure Prouvost, Dorothy Cross, Nathan Coley, Hayley Tompkins, Gillian Wearing, Keith Coventry, Gary Hume, Richard Patterson, Paul Noble and Michael Craig-Martin, Dexter Dalwood, Matt Connors and Richard Aldrich
- An exhibition celebrating portraits of people whose lives and relationships brought the gallery and the collection into being and continue to make the collection live, including Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud and Sir Stanley Spencer, as well as some key figures from the Musgrave Kinley Outsider Collection, held at the Whitworth
- A selection of images from leading photographer Johnnie Shand Kydd's extensive portfolio, which capture YBAs (Young British Artists) during the 1990s amongst other familiar art world figures on yearly trips to the Greek island of Hydra at the invitation of the art collector Pauline Karpidas
- An exhibition of works presented to the Whitworth by the owner of the Manchester Guardian (now The Guardian), John Edward Taylor, including works by three of the best exponents of watercolour: 22 works by JMW Turner, seven by William Blake and four by John Robert Cozens
- Paintings, prints and sculptures from the 1960s, the last great moment of expansion of the Whitworth, reflecting a uniquely British artistic perspective, including pieces by Peter Blake, Allen Jones, Bridget Riley, Peter Phillips, Richard Hamilton, Colin Self and Elizabeth Frink.
- An exploration of green and all of its associations through works by artists and designers such as William Morris, C. F. A. Voysey, Lucienne Day, Keith Vaughan, Michele Walker and Susie MacMurray brought together for the re-opening of the Whitworth's textile gallery.
- A gallery papered with Sarah Lucas' *Tits in Space* (2000) wallpaper, in which multiple pairs of cigarette-encrusted orbs float against a pitch black background. The wallpaper forms the backdrop to a selection of sculptures by the internationally renowned British artist.
- An installation of *Low Tide Wandering*, by leading German artist Thomas Schütte, whose daily etchings will be suspended just above head height from taut wires encompassing the whole gallery.

Dr Maria Balshaw, Director of the Whitworth, said: "We have long held the view that the gallery and the park should be a unified experience for our visitors. Our new building makes this a reality. The opening programme, led by Cornelia Parker's remarkable exhibition, captures the spirit of the Whitworth – a place where marvellous, eclectic art works connect to people and our place in Manchester."

Dame Nancy Rothwell, President and Vice-Chancellor, The University of Manchester, added: "The £15million expansion of the Whitworth is a fantastic example of The University of Manchester's commitment to using its knowledge and resources to engage with our local audiences and to draw people from all over the world to the university and the city."

Stuart McKnight, MUMA, said: "The brief for the Whitworth offered a unique opportunity to capture the qualities of the surrounding landscape. The extension not only connects with the park, creating an outdoor gallery – an Art Garden – it also acts as a pressure relief allowing us to reconfigure and rationalise the existing building. In this way, whilst we are extending the building by one third, we are actually doubling the area available to the public."

Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West, said: "We at HLF are delighted with the transformation of the Whitworth. By reconnecting the gallery with its surrounding landscape and creating an exciting programme of events and activities, local people and visitors will be better able to appreciate and enjoy the full Whitworth experience."

Alison Clark-Jenkins, Director North, Arts Council England, added: "This is a significant development for the Whitworth and we are pleased to be part of such a landmark project in the city. Our capital investment funding supports organisations to develop resilience by giving them the right buildings and equipment to deliver their work, and to become more sustainable. We are looking forward to seeing how this new phase of the galleries story further

contributes to the world-class cultural offer in Manchester."

Notes to editors

About the Whitworth
The Whitworth is part of The University of Manchester. It is home to internationally renowned collections of modern art, textiles, watercolours, prints, drawings and sculpture. Created in 1889 as the first English gallery in a park, the Whitworth is today developing a new vision for the role of a university gallery. A creative laboratory within an ambitious university, the Whitworth is serious in intent but playful in execution. It is a place where good, odd things happen.

Since 2005, the Whitworth's audience has increased by 120%. In 2013, the Whitworth welcomed almost 190,000 visitors. The formal learning programme reaches 12,000 primary and secondary school pupils annually. The new dedicated learning studio will increase this by 20%. Informal learning programmes will expand to reach 45,000 people. The Whitworth redevelopment is just one part of an ambitious Campus Masterplan that will see The University of Manchester invest £1billion over the next ten years to create a world class campus for staff, students and visitors. More information is available at the Whitworth Art Gallery website.

About MUMA
MUMA (McInnes Usher McKnight Architects) was established in 2000 and since then has delivered a number of high profile, public projects. All of MUMA's projects have been secured through winning design competitions and each completed project has won national and international awards. MUMA's projects seek a sensitive response to their contexts and brief with rational, strategic decisions informing the plan. Each project pursues an on-going fascination with light, views and composition and an interest in the crafted use of materials. MUMA's current projects include a third project at the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Community Centre and Nursery at the North West Cambridge Development for the University of Cambridge.

In the past, MUMA has completed the 2004 restaurant at The Royal Academy of Arts, a new cafe for the Victoria & Albert Museum, the extension and refurbishment of the original Grade II listed Newlyn Art Gallery and the conversion of a redundant telephone exchange in Penzance into a contemporary art gallery, both for Newlyn Art Gallery. These galleries, though modest in scale and budget, have won numerous awards, including two RIBA and two RIBA Town and Country awards and were both included in the Architect's Journal and Channel 4 Top 50 Buildings of the Millennium in 2008.

MUMA's new Medieval & Renaissance Galleries at the V&A opened in December 2009 to critical acclaim, attracting interest from around the world. The project has since won twenty national and international design awards including three RIBA awards, a nomination for the Stirling Prize shortlist, English Heritage and D&AD awards, two World Architecture Festival awards, a British Construction Industry Award and two Civic Trust Awards. In 2011 MUMA won the British Design Awards' Architectural Achievement of the Year and the Royal Scottish Academy Medal for Architecture. More information is at the MUMA website.

Funding for the project
The project has been made possible with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, The University of Manchester, Arts Council England (ACE), and grants from a number of other funders and individuals including The Clore Duffield Foundation, Friends of the Whitworth, The Headley Trust, The Granada Foundation, The Clothworkers' Foundation, The Wolfson Foundation, The Garfield Weston Foundation, Sir Siegmund Warburg's Voluntary Settlement, The J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust, Pilgrim Trust and The Mercers Company.

Further information

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Sara Hilton, Head of HLF North West and Maria Balshaw, Director of the Whitworth in Manchester

Award set to transform Whitworth Art Gallery