

The Painted Hall at Greenwich's Old Royal Naval College Adrian Brooks

Considered the greatest achievement of English Baroque art, the spectacular Painted Hall at Greenwich's Old Royal Naval College is one of Europe's most important architectural interiors.

Created in the early 18th century, it took Sir James Thornhill over 19 years to complete the paintings in Sir Christopher Wren's Royal Hospital for Seamen. Originally used as a refectory for the naval pensioners, it soon became a celebrated visitor attraction.

Over two hundred years later, Lottery funding is giving these magnificent paintings a face lift. The west wall and upper hall ceiling are now fully restored to their former glory following funding from HLF. New HLF investment announced today will see the lower hall, with its spectacular ceiling, the entrance vestibule and cupola similarly restored.

Brendan McCarthy, Chief Executive of the Greenwich Foundation: "The next few months will be very interesting. The Painted Hall will be transformed into a veritable development lab, with changing exhibitions, exciting talks and hands-on workshops. We will be inviting the public to play an active role in shaping this project."

The Painted Hall will be under scaffolding for around two years after the start of works, however the public will have access to the hall, including on the scaffolding itself. Visitors – including wheelchair users – will be able to get close up to the painted surfaces and watch conservators at work – an exciting element of project.