



## Press Release

28 February 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Leeds College of Art announces major expansion

Leeds College of Art is pleased to announce the start of building works on their new £14 million state-of-the-art expansion, due to be completed by summer 2018. This new build is the biggest capital investment that the College has ever embarked upon and has been two years in development. The expansion marks the start of an exciting journey for the College, with plans in place to become the *only specialist arts university in the North of England*.



The project is being delivered by the main construction contractor ISG on the current car park area at Blenheim Walk, creating a five storey building, 6,000 square metres in size using a bespoke design drawn up with architects DLA Design. It will accommodate purpose-built art, design and performance facilities for increased student numbers and new courses. HSBC have helped with financing the building development.

The current Blenheim Walk campus has reached capacity so the new building will ensure the College can grow to meet demand for places and the future expectations of students.

Some of the College's higher education and postgraduate courses currently taught at the Blenheim Walk campus will move across to the new facility. In addition, the new building will allow the College to create a more diverse mix of educational courses including the introduction of BA (Hons) Filmmaking and BMus (Hons) Popular Music Performance in 2018.

Specialist facilities will include a 230 seat auditorium, music, film and photography studios, and a larger specialist arts library. There will also be an open plan atrium-style entrance with a public exhibition gallery and coffee shop, together with an enterprise centre which will also allow the College to engage more fully with regional businesses, and the local and wider communities of Leeds, as part of its employability agenda for students and alumni. The building will have many sustainable features including solar energy panels and an urban roof garden; and will achieve a high BREEAM rating.

**Professor Simone Wonnacott, Principal, Leeds College of Art said:**

*"This year promises to be just as exciting for the College as our 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year. As we move forward with our purpose-built expansion, and add new courses to our portfolio, we will attract more students to the city offering them a greater diverse mix of creative courses. Our new build project coincides with our application to become a university, which will see the College becoming the only specialist arts university in the North of England, which we hope to make an announcement about later in the year."*

**Andy McLinden, Regional Managing Director for ISG's UK Construction North & Scotland business, added:**

*"Leeds College of Art has ambitious plans for its future development and these new facilities will provide the infrastructure to support significant expansion at the Blenheim Walk campus, and promote greater engagement with the local community. The use of the YORbuild2 framework has proved instrumental in getting this complex project from concept to site quickly to maximise efficiencies and drive innovation in the build process."*

**Mike Swift, Area Director of South and West Yorkshire, HSBC Corporate Banking said:**

*"We are pleased to have helped with financing Leeds College of Art, this is a demonstration of us being able to actively support growing organisations and businesses. The College is a great educational asset to Leeds, and we look forward to seeing the benefits of their expansion, which will help create jobs within the region and give the North a UK leading cultural institution."*

The building construction company delivering the build is ISG; DLA Design are the architects that have worked with the College to draw up the bespoke design; WYG are the structural engineers; GVA Apleaona are the project management consultants; TB+A Mechanical & Electrical and Rex Procter & Partners are the quantity surveyors.

## **Editor's Notes**

For more information, images or to arrange interviews contact: Emma Morris, PR & Communications Officer, 0113 202 8044 or [emma.morris@leeds-art.ac.uk](mailto:emma.morris@leeds-art.ac.uk)

Caption for image above: Left to right, Jon Taylor, Director of ISG's UK Construction North & Scotland business, Ally Horton (Animation student), Thomas Griffiths (Photography

student), Adam Allsuch Boardman (Student Union President), Craig Reed (DLA Architects) Professor Simone Wonnacott (Principal, Leeds College of Art).

## **Leeds College of Art**

Founded in 1846 as the Leeds Government School of Art and Design, Leeds College of Art has contributed significantly to the development of art education in Britain and across the world. Today, Leeds College of Art remains one of only a few remaining independent art schools in the UK, leading the way as a centre for art and design education. The College has an impressive history of notable past students, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth were students in 1919 and 1920. In later years Damien Hirst, Marcus Harvey, Eric Bainbridge, Clio Barnard and Georgina Starr all studied at the College, known then as the Jacob Kramer College. The College's recent graduates continue to win prestigious international awards year on year and enjoy successful careers in the creative industries.

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