

**NEWS RELEASE**

For immediate release 3/8/07



From left to right: The refurbished interiors of Anglesey Abbey Picture Galleries. Images by Ashley Courtney, Freeland Rees Roberts Architects (Copyright: National Trust). Reproduction is permitted providing authorship is credited.

**HISTORIC CAMBRIDGESHIRE ABBEY REOPENS TO THE PUBLIC FOLLOWING SENSITIVE REFURBISHMENT**

Following the completion of refurbishment works at Anglesey Abbey in Lode, north east of Cambridge, the National Trust has today reopened the doors of the Grade 1 listed Picture Galleries to the public. The treasured property has recently undergone repairs and alterations, designed by Freeland Rees Roberts Architects, to restore the grade 1 listed Upper and Lower Galleries according to the vision of former owner Lord Fairhaven, who occupied the property from 1926 until his death in 1966

The galleries were formally opened in a ceremony which took place yesterday, Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> July, at 7pm. It was attended by staff, volunteers and those directly involved in carrying out the refurbishment works, including project architects Ashley Courtney and Henry Freeland of award-winning Freeland Rees Roberts Architects of Cambridge.

Lord Fairhaven's nephew, Ailwyn, Mike Southerill, Curator and Paul Coleman, Senior Building Surveyor for the National Trust, also attended and gave speeches to around 80 attendees, all of whom enjoyed a wonderful piano recital given by David Dolan.

The property dates back to 1600 and is built on the site of a 12<sup>th</sup> century Augustinian priory, which was dissolved by King Henry VIII in 1536. The site was then acquired by the Parker family, who used it to build a new country home, and in 1926 by the first Lord Fairhaven and his brother, Henry Broughton.

***'My thoughts and hope is that in a changing world the house, its furniture and the gardens and their lay-out should be preserved and kept representative of an age and a way of life that is quickly passing'***

*Lord Fairhaven (1896-1966) Letter to the executors of his will 1964*

The recently completed works, which commenced in January 2007 following the commission of Freeland Rees Roberts in April 2006, were carried out due to the building's previously deteriorating environmental condition. The project has involved dry-lining the cold east wall which was causing mould growth on the back of some

important oil paintings, including works by Aelbert Cuyp and Claude Lorraine. New matching cornice and stone skirtings and controls to allow humidity levels to be accurately maintained have also been installed.

To recreate the atmosphere Lord Fairhaven had intended, all pictures have been returned to the original 1950s layout, and new state-of-the-art picture lighting has been fitted to dramatically enhance the appearance of the many notable works contained within the galleries.

The interior has also been redecorated and fitted with many interesting items of sculpture and furniture. A new 12 x 4 m hand made replica Aubusson carpet costing over £20,000 has been given to the Abbey by the National Trust Association of Kensington and Chelsea and is due to arrive later this year. In addition, a 1906 New York Steinway piano (made for Lord Fairhaven's mother, Cara) has been reinstated – all as Lord Fairhaven had originally conceived. It is hoped that the gallery may in future be used for the occasional piano recital or recording.

Bringing the building up to modern day electrical standards, the galleries have been completely rewired and have been fitted with a new fire and security alarm system.

External repairs were undertaken to the lead flat roof and some leaded metal casement windows, whilst areas of defective stonework at parapet level were replaced and re-pointed. The overall project expenditure for the National Trust is £253,000, of which approximately £150,000 was managed by Freeland Rees Roberts Architects.

Ashley Courtney, project architect for the refurbishment works, commented: "Throughout this project, the aim has been to realise the vision of Lord Fairhaven as accurately as possible, whilst ensuring the longevity of the building. As with all historic sites, alterations have to be handled in a very sensitive manner to protect original features and conscientiously restore the space. These alterations and repairs ensure that the artworks are properly protected within an interior that is welcoming, safe and comfortable. Our knowledge of the site's history and many years experience in the conservation, restoration and refurbishment of historic buildings has helped considerably in realising this vision for Anglesey Abbey."

Paul Coleman, Senior Building Surveyor for the National Trust, commented: "We are delighted with the quality of the refurbishment work and attention to detail which have brought new life to the galleries. The importance of Freeland Rees Roberts' experience in the restoration and conservation of historic buildings cannot be over estimated. These works have been vital to ensure that the spirit of the building is kept alive for generations of visitors to come. And with a brand new Redwoods restaurant recently opened, and extensive visitor facilities currently being completed (including a contemporary shop and plant sales area), now's the time to come and experience the improvements for yourselves."

Other historic building projects Freeland Rees Roberts Architects have been involved with include the conservation and relocation of Temple Bar to Paternoster Square, City of London (which has been awarded seven architectural awards in the past two years); the redecoration of period buildings in Magdalene Street, Cambridge; the refurbishment and expansion of the University of Cambridge's Department of Architecture; the conversion of a former derelict gallery into new library facilities at Peterhouse, Cambridge, (which was awarded a national RIBA Conservation Commendation in 2006) and numerous conservation and repair projects at Ickworth house, Suffolk.

For further information on Freeland Rees Roberts Architects, visit: [www.frrarchitects.co.uk](http://www.frrarchitects.co.uk). For further information on the National Trust, visit: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk).

**-Ends-**

**Notes to the editor:**

1. The digital images that appear above are the property of NTPL and are protected by copyright. If you would like to obtain either/both of these images in a high resolution, please contact the National Trust Picture Gallery. Visit [www.ntpl.org.uk](http://www.ntpl.org.uk) or contact Arabella Stewart on 01793 817700.
2. For images of schemes designed by Freeland Rees Roberts Architects, an interview or photo/film opportunity, please contact Carri Crook or Martin Downing, Carisma Communications. Email: [carri@carismacommunications.co.uk](mailto:carri@carismacommunications.co.uk), telephone 01842 811313 or mobile: 07704 920 350.
3. Freeland Rees Roberts Architects' key areas of expertise include: Schools, Colleges & Universities; Local Authority; Sport & Leisure; Private Houses; Residential Schemes; Churches & Cathedrals; Commercial & Workplace; Healthcare; Historic Buildings & Conservation and Libraries.
4. Anglesey Abbey, Gardens & Lode Mill are open Wednesdays to Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays. Gardens, Restaurant, Shop & Plant Centre 10.30am to 5.30pm (also open on Tuesdays in school holidays) House and Mill 1 - 5pm. Call 01223 810080 for more information
5. The National Trust is Europe's largest conservation organisation and looks after special places across England, Wales and Northern Ireland for ever, for everyone. People and places are at the heart of everything it does. Over 3.5 million members, 49,000 volunteers, 500,000 school children, and millions of visitors, donors and supporters help the Trust look after 300 historic houses and gardens, 700 miles of coastline and 250,000 hectares of open countryside.