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Portrait Gallery of Canada Unveils Concept Designs for New Home

Ottawa, ON, March 23, 2005 - The concept designs for the new Portrait Gallery of Canada were unveiled today by the Honourable Liza Frulla, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister Responsible for Status of Women, and the Honourable Scott Brison, Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

Upon completion of the building project in 2007, the Portrait Gallery of Canada will join a prestigious network of federal and cultural agencies along Confederation Boulevard. Representatives from the two departments and Library and Archives Canada, as well as the architects and exhibition designers, were on hand to celebrate this major step toward opening a permanent new space for the Portrait Gallery.

"The Portrait Gallery will be a modern institution that focuses on our history and on those who have made Canada the prosperous and diversified country it is today," said Minister Frulla. "At the Gallery, people of all ages will be able to discover the character of a country filled with talent, creativity and innovation."

The building slated to become the new Portrait Gallery was originally opened in 1932 as the US Embassy, the first embassy ever constructed in Ottawa. Now designated a heritage property, it will be fully restored and adapted for its new use as a gallery with a modern wrap-around addition providing a new entrance, visitor services and state-of-the-art galleries.

Key to the successful construction and restoration are design architects Edward Jones and Stephen Teeple of Dixon Jones/Teeple/Cole Architects. This team will join with government partners to refurbish the site and make it a tailor-made home for some of Canada's oldest and most precious, yet previously hidden treasures. Also critical in this endeavour are Reich + Petch Design International, who will be responsible for the Portrait Gallery's opening exhibition designs.

"This project will allow us to safeguard this important architectural symbol," said Minister Brison. "The building will also meet high standards of environment-friendly design and construction."

As part of Library and Archives Canada, the Portrait Gallery will not only continue to develop and preserve its current holdings, it will also have access to all of the Library and Archives' other unique and priceless collections, and will borrow portraits in public and private collections from across Canada and internationally.

"The Portrait Gallery of Canada will continue to build on its efforts to connect Canadians with their history and with its extensive collection through outreach activities such as travelling exhibits and a new Web site," states Ian E. Wilson, Librarian and Archivist of Canada.

The Portrait Gallery of Canada, announced by the federal government in 2001, is dedicated to showcasing the many men and women from all walks of life who have helped to shape and continue to shape the country. Through its collections of portraits, photographs and other works of art, the Portrait Gallery promotes the values which define Canada and which continue to provide an enduring basis for our country's vision of nationhood now and into the future.

The project's cost of \$44.6 million is funded through existing government budget allocations.

For more information about the Portrait Gallery of Canada or to view the new concept designs, please visit: www.portraits.gc.ca.

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