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##### Press Release

3 April 2024

**STATE-OF-THE-ART NEW SCOTTISH OPERA HEADQUARTERS IN CANAL-SIDE MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT SUBMITTED TO CITY PLANNING**

Scottish Opera is delighted to have submitted a full planning application to Glasgow City Council to develop its Production Studios at 40 Edington Street in Glasgow.

The design aim, which has been developed by Page\Park Architects, is to create a thriving, mixed-use development on a site adjacent to the Glasgow branch of the Forth & Clyde Canal, which is currently brownfield and known locally as **New Rotterdam Wharf**.

At the heart of this application is a **fit-for-purpose 21st century** **new headquarters** for Scottish Opera. Founded 61 years ago in Glasgow, Scottish Opera is Scotland’s national opera company and the nation’s largest performing arts organisation. The development will serve as a creative Education and Community outreach hub for the citizens of Glasgow and include state of the art rehearsal and performance spaces, adaptable to becoming a film sound stage. The development will also contain classrooms for skills development courses, music practice rooms for hire, and a café with panoramic views over the city. Other facilities to be provided include a large costume store for theatre, TV and film productions, and an extensive music library.

Central to the proposals, reflecting Scottish Opera’s commitment to community and public benefit, are extensive public realm improvements fronting and activating the western edge of the Forth & Clyde Canal. A publicly accessible rooftop ‘hidden garden’ will lie at the heart of the proposals, accessed via bridge links from the canal towpath. This garden, flanked by a café space with panoramic views towards the west of the city, will provide opportunity for performance as well as quiet relaxation in this city centre location.

New high quality public realm including new stepped connections linking the canal towpath down to Garscube Road will be provided at all edges of the site, activated by building entrances and public uses.

The New Rotterdam Wharf site, which has been vacant since at least the 1980s, was acquired by Scottish Opera in 2020, and proved immediately important in hosting Scottish Opera’s successful outdoor productions during the pandemic, including *La bohème*, *Falstaff* and *Candide*.

The development would help secure the Company’s presence within Glasgow for the next 60-plus years, by rationalising and consolidating three of its current, scattered five premises onto one site and demonstrates measurable economic, business, and artistic advantage.

Scottish Opera will partially fund its new headquarters building and the associated public realm by fully developing the site as a true mixed-use development. Also designed by Page\Park Architects as part of a coherent scheme of regeneration, this mixed use will include Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA), contributing to reducing Glasgow’s shortage of student accommodation seen across the city. By selling two parcels of land at either end of the site to a PBSA developer, Scottish Opera has engineered for itself a once-in-a- generation opportunity to achieve its vision and remain as a continued presence in Glasgow while providing significantly to the ongoing regeneration of the western edge of the Forth & Clyde Canal.

Acclaimed Glasgow based architects Page\Park said: ‘It is a pleasure to be working once again for Scottish Opera to shape their vision for a new headquarters development at New Rotterdam Wharf. The continued regeneration of this area of the city and canal edge, building on the existing ‘cultural quarter’ established in the area, desperately needs a development such as this to bring 24/7 life and activity to the canal side. This project provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a smart mixed-use development that provides cultural creativity integrated with the surrounding community. The approach taken places people at the heart of proposals, with high quality public realm in and around the site, and enhanced connections up to the canal edge – one of Glasgow’s best and least known public open spaces.’

A Scottish Opera spokesperson said: ‘We are delighted to be working with award-winning Glasgow-based architects Page\Park on our vision for regenerating New Rotterdam Wharf into our new headquarters. Our ambition includes multipurpose versatile spaces suitable for developing new creative work, hosting events, and performances. It will undoubtedly also become a social hub for the local community.

‘The location is ideal in terms of proximity to the Theatre Royal and it brings all the business needs under one roof. Funding for capital projects such as this is a challenge, so this is an innovative solution to secure our commitment to Scottish Opera remaining at home in Glasgow for the next 60 years and beyond.’

-ENDS-

**Notes to editors**

1. Founded in 1962 by Sir Alexander Gibson, Scottish Opera has played a fundamental role in the cultural ecology of both Glasgow and Scotland for over 60 years.
2. Scottish Opera is one of four National Performing Companies to be based in Glasgow contributing to the City’s creative impact and well-being. It is a crucial component of each of the music, theatre, film, education, and health sectors.
3. Scottish Opera’s extensive touring programme is one of the largest of any European opera company, ensuring performances are within reach of as many of Scotland’s dispersed population as possible, including island communities.
4. Scottish Opera productions, made in Glasgow, are globally recognised for their excellence. In 2023, its productions were in Seville, Madrid, Toulouse, Paris, Santa Fe, Los Angeles, Detroit, Vancouver, Toronto, and Cardiff.
5. The Company’s Outreach & Education programme is the longest running in Europe.
6. As one of its earliest cultural tenants, the opening of Scottish Opera’s Production Studios in 1999 led the way in transforming the Speirs Wharf / New Rotterdam Wharf area into a hub of cultural workplaces and activities.

Scottish Opera is supported by the Scottish Government.

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