



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Holyrood Progress Group to Host 'Question Time' in Parliament's Chamber

6.30pm, Wednesday, December 12

MSPs will have the chance to put oral questions to the Holyrood Progress Group on the new Scottish Parliament building in a question and answer session to be held in Parliament on Wednesday (December 12).

The session in the Parliament's main chamber will begin at 6.30pm. The 'question time' style format is the fourth in a series of such meetings giving Members the opportunity to raise a wide range of questions on the progress to date of the Parliament project.

The Progress Group members answering the questions will be John Home Robertson, Linda Fabiani and Jamie Stone.

Members of the media are invited to attend.

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Scottish Firm Wins £560,000 I.T. Services Contract for New Parliament Building

Photo Opportunity: 9.00am Wednesday, October 24

Lanarkshire based IT services company, Stiehl Networks, has been awarded a £560,000 contract to provide the new Scottish Parliament building with a state-of-the-art communications infrastructure.

To mark the award, Stiehl Networks managing director Doug More will visit the Parliament site tomorrow (Wednesday, October 24) for a photocall along with

MSP members of the Holyrood Progress Group (HPG). Media access details below.

Announcing the contract award HPG convener John Home Robertson MSP said:

"Stiehl Networks is one of the UK's fastest growing IT services companies. And I am delighted that this contract will see a Scottish firm take charge of installing our cutting edge telecommunications network.

"Stiehl Networks will install 400km of 'blown fibre backbone', which means that instead of laying down fibre optic cables directly the company will put in tubes, similar in size to drinking straws, which are then used to carry the fibre optics.

"This pioneering approach to deploying IT infrastructure will ensure that not only is the new Parliament making full use of technology when it opens in 2003, but that it will be 'future proofed' to allow even more advance fibres to be installed at a later date, but without major cost or disruption."

John Home Robertson MSP, convener of the Holyrood Progress Group and Tom McCabe MSP, member for Hamilton South, the constituency in which the company is based, will be present for the photo call.

Access Details

Tomorrow's photocall will be held on the top floor of the MSP block at Holyrood with views across the rest of the parliament building site.

For health and safety reasons all media attending will have to wear hard hats and steel toe-cap boots. Media must, therefore, assemble promptly at 9.00am at the new entrance to the site management compound to be kitted out.

The management compound entrance is no longer on Holyrood Road next to Dynamic Earth, but on Queen's Drive between the two mini roundabouts at the foot of Salisbury Crag. Late comers are unlikely to be able to gain access.

To help with prompt access to the site it would be helpful if media (both accredited and unaccredited) could confirm the names of representatives attending by close on Tuesday evening (phone 0131 348 5604 or 5605)

Background notes

Based in Lanarkshire, Stiehl Networks specialises in the design, build and ongoing management of mission critical information and network infrastructures.

Stiehl Networks has increased its turnover dramatically since establishing in 1991. With offices throughout the UK, its turnover has more than quadrupled since 1999 to just under £16million, whilst setting an ambitious target of doubling turnover year on year until 2004. The company currently employs over 200 staff.

The company's Scottish Parliament work is due to be completed by December 2002.

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Holyrood Progress Group to Meet Parliament Design Team in Barcelona

Group also to meet President of Catalan Parliament and attend international exhibition on Holyrood Design

Four members of the Holyrood Progress Group (HPG) will fly out to Barcelona later today for high level discussions with the Catalan-based architects from the Parliament project design team.

Whilst in the city to review progress on the latest detailed design features of the new Parliament building, the HPG members will meet with the President of the Catalan Parliament, Sr Joan Rigol and attend a high-profile, international architecture exhibition which celebrates the work of Enric Miralles and his last major commission - the new Scottish Parliament building.

Speaking prior to the day and a half-long visit, Progress Group Convener John Home Robertson MSP said,

"We are flying out to look at advanced, detailed designs for the new Parliament's main debating chamber, committee rooms and landscaped grounds. Much of the design work by our architects EMBT-RMJM is done electronically, but this visit will give us the opportunity to look at their most up to date, large scale, three dimensional models. The visit also offers the professional experts on the Progress Group the chance to give direct feedback to the Barcelona-based architects.

"Before flying back on Thursday afternoon, I am delighted that we shall also have a brief chance to represent the Parliament at a significant exhibition which is currently on display at the city's celebrated Mies van der Rohe Pavilion.

"When you realise that the exhibition is dedicated almost entirely to Scotland's new Parliament building it is hugely exciting, and rather humbling, to know that thousands of people have been coming all summer to see this major architectural event in the Catalan capital.

"Coupled with the 28,000 people from all over Scotland and beyond who have already been to the parliament building Visitor Centre at Holyrood, there is clear evidence that interest in and enthusiasm for the new building extends far beyond Edinburgh itself."

The other engagement in the HPG members' busy schedule will be to meet with the President of the Catalan Parliament, Sr Joan Rigol. The members are due to brief the President on the latest building developments prior to his visit to Scotland next month.

Background notes

The four member of the Holyrood Progress Group travelling to Barcelona are:

John Home Robertson MSP (convener)
Jamie Stone MSP (HPG group member)

John Gibbons (Scottish Executive Chief Architect and professional member of the HPG)
Andrew Wright (architect and professional member of the HPG)

Sarah Davidson, Holyrood Project Director will also attend.

The officials will fly out to Barcelona on Wednesday lunchtime (August 29) and return the following evening. The full cost of the 5 person visit will be approximately £4,400 (flights are British Airways economy class flexible tickets).

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Holyrood MSPs Welcome Highlands Influence on New Parliament Building

The use of Highland sourced building materials in prestigious, high profile parts of the new Scottish Parliament building was today welcomed by MSP members of the Holyrood Progress Group (HPG) during a visit to construction suppliers in the north of Scotland.

Speaking en route to site visits to Caithness Stone Industries Ltd of Wick and Cromartie Timber Ltd of Strathpeffer, by Dingwall, Jamie Stone MSP for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross, and HPG Member said:

"Speaking as a Highlander, today's visit to meet Highland companies involved with supplying building materials to the new Scottish Parliament building comes with no short measure of pride.

"It is highly encouraging that Scottish companies, and indeed Highland companies, are seen to be involved with what is perhaps the most important and symbolic building project in Scotland in three hundred years.

"Such is the importance of the role of indigenous companies and the use of indigenous resources, the Parliament's design team has, from the outset, made clear its desire to showcase the very best of Scottish materials in the most prestigious 'front of house' parts of the new Holyrood building.

"With Caithness flagstone we have a wonderful material, with strong individual characteristics and a distinct Highland identity. And I am delighted that this type of flagstone will be a recurring feature throughout the Parliament site.

"Visitors will be welcomed through the formal front entrance by an impressive Caithness flagstone floor, the landscaped grounds to the south of the building will also contain Caithness features and MSPs will delight in the knowledge that the wash-hand basins in their office building are to be set in the very same Caithness stone.

"The highest quality Scottish Oak will also feature prominently in front of house areas in the new building. As the Holyrood Team has gone to considerable lengths to secure as much Scottish Oak as possible, our architects envisage incorporating wood from yards, such as Cromartie Timber Ltd, into the design features of the Parliament's main debating chamber itself.

"Overall, the Holyrood Progress Group has been highly impressed by the quality of indigenous materials and the strong desire shown by Scottish firms to become involved with the Parliament building project. These companies have managed to meet our demanding standards, and it is to their credit and the prestige of Scottish firms that their materials will feature prominently at Holyrood."

Background

Cromartie Timber Ltd near Strathpeffer and Caithness Stone Industries Ltd in Wick and Scrabster are being visited by Holyrood Progress Group Members John Home Robertson MSP (convener) and Jamie Stone MSP on August 24.

Contract Details

Caithness Stone Industries Ltd will be supplying around 500 square metres of Caithness flagstone worth around £250,000.

Cromartie Timber Ltd is one of 13 timber suppliers in Scotland who will be supplying high quality Scottish Oak to the Parliament. The companies involved have demonstrated that they can meet the highest of standards in terms of quality and sustainability (all suppliers have been licensed by the Forestry Commission, whose detailed environmental requirements ensure that the Parliament's 'green' aspirations are met).

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Holyrood Progress Group Members Visit Highland Suppliers to the Parliament

Friday, August 24

Two Highland companies supplying local materials for the new Scottish Parliament building in Edinburgh will be visited on Friday (August 24) by politicians involved in overseeing the historic construction project.

Members of the Holyrood Progress Group (HPG) are to visit Cromartie Timber Ltd near Strathpeffer and Caithness Stone Industries Ltd in Wick and Scrabster to meet staff involved in the production of timber and stone for the new Parliament building.

HPG Convener John Home Robertson MSP, along with Group member Jamie Stone MSP, will be available for picture opportunities and interviews at both venues.

Friday's itinerary is as follows:

10.00am Arrive at Cromartie Timber Ltd, The Sawmill, Castle Leod, Strathpeffer, by Dingwall (tel: 01997 421013).

10.10am Meet staff and tour the facility, including the harp manufacturing unit. PICTURE OPP - suitable pieces of oak (the material being supplied for the Parliament) along with examples of the harps made by the company will be available.

11.00am Depart

3.00pm Arrive at the offices of Caithness Stone Industries Ltd, The Shore, Wick (tel: 01955 605472). NOTE: Media are advised to head straight to the quarry (details below).

3.10pm After meeting staff, HPG members and company representatives will drive to Scrabster Quarry.

3.30pm Arrive Scrabster Quarry. PICTURE OPP - a very large piece of Caithness Flagstone is available for a photo-call.

4.00pm Visit ends.

Media wishing to attend either or both legs of the visit should arrive at the relevant venue in good time and report to company staff in attendance. Interviews and photographs should be arranged by approaching the HPG members directly at each venue.

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Holyrood Progress Group to Announce Arts Consultant

11.00am, Wednesday, July 18

The implementation of an arts strategy for The Scottish Parliament Building will take a further step forward tomorrow (Wednesday, July 18) when the successful arts consultant will be announced.

The announcement will take place at 11.00am at The Holyrood Building Visitors Centre, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh. The announcement will be made by Linda Fabiani MSP of the Holyrood Progress Group. The successful consultants and representatives from the architects will join members of the Holyrood Progress Group for questions.

There will also be an opportunity to view new images of the design of the Parliament Building's foyer being released tomorrow.
There will be an opportunity for photos directly following the announcement and questions.

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Donald Dewar Reading Room to be Created at Holyrood

Late First Minister's book collection kindly gifted to Parliament by his family

A dedicated reading room in memory of Donald Dewar will be provided within the new Parliament complex at Holyrood, it was announced today.

The room, within Queensberry House, will feature a substantial selection of the late First Minister's large book collection, kindly donated by his children, Marion and Iain.

The Parliament's Presiding Officer Sir David Steel, making the announcement on behalf of the Corporate Body (SPCB), said the reading room was a highly appropriate way of remembering Donald Dewar in the Parliament he worked so hard to create.

Speaking at a media reception, Sir David said:

"Donald Dewar's love of literature was legendary. His home was full of books, old and new, covering a vast and varied range of subjects.

"The SPCB is delighted that Donald's children, Marion and Iain, have kindly offered the Parliament a substantial selection of books from the impressive collection built up by their father over the years.

"In accepting this offer, the SPCB was also keen to ensure a suitable home was provided for part of this collection, and the creation of a dedicated reading room at Holyrood, which will be named after Donald Dewar, is seen as highly appropriate - a fitting memorial to the man and his political achievements".

Iain and Marion Dewar said:

"We are delighted that the Parliament is able to accept this collection, and particularly pleased that a dedicated reading room is to be created in his memory."

Senior staff from the Parliament's Information Centre (SPICe) have liaised closely with the Dewar family to consider the scope and nature of the books that will be gifted to the Parliament.

The donated books will now be securely stored at The Scottish Parliament as work is carried out to prepare the collection for its eventual home at Holyrood.

It was been agreed that the collection should focus mainly on politics and Scottish history, but at the same time reflect other areas of Donald Dewar's diverse personal interests. It contains a fine and varied selection of political biographies and a large number of books which Mr Dewar had reviewed for the media, most of which include his own hand-written notes.

Discussions have also taken place about ways to keep the collection 'alive', and it has been agreed that the collection should be augmented by adding works about Mr Dewar and his political career.

The reading room at Holyrood will be located on the ground floor (Canongate level) of Queensberry House, close to the MSP entrance. Designs left by the late Enric Miralles will be used in the furnishing and fitting of this room.

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Holyrood Progress Group to Host 'Question Time' in Parliament's Chamber

6.00pm, Wednesday, June 20

MSPs will have the chance to put oral questions to the Holyrood Progress Group on the new Scottish Parliament building in a question and answer session to be held in Parliament on Wednesday (June 20).

The session in the Parliament's main chamber will begin at 6.00pm. The 'question time' style format is the latest in a series of such meetings giving Members the opportunity to raise a wide range of questions on the progress to date of the Parliament project.

The Progress Group members answering the questions will be John Home Robertson, Linda Fabiani and Jamie Stone.

Members of the media are invited to attend.

Background

This Q&A session is being held in advance of the Parliamentary debate on Holyrood scheduled for 3.30pm on Thursday (June 21).

The motion under debate on Thursday is:

Des McNulty on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body:

Holyrood Project - That the Parliament notes the terms of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body's (SPCB) report of 13 June 2001; notes that £60 million of the construction costs for the new Parliament building has been committed to date and that a further £57 million (at 1998 prices) remains to be let; further notes that building industry inflation is currently estimated to be adding at least 16% to the costs of packages remaining to be let and that under the construction management contract there are additional and not fully quantifiable risks to which the project may be exposed between now and completion; directs the SPCB, through the Holyrood Progress Group, to work with the design and project teams to complete the project without compromising quality, while managing risks rigorously, and requires the SPCB, on a quarterly basis, to provide information to the Parliament's Finance Committee on the progress of the project in respect of inflation and materialisation of risk in order to inform the committee's consideration of the annual Budget Bill.

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Progress Report on Holyrood Published Ahead of Parliament Debate Next Week

The latest Holyrood Project progress report from the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) has been published today (Wednesday) ahead of a proposed debate in the Chamber next week.

The report, published on the Parliament's website, outlines the latest position in relation to cost and timescale, and features details of a SPCB motion lodged today, which reads:

"That the Parliament notes the terms of the SPCB's report dated 13 June 2001; notes that £60m of construction costs for the new Parliament building have been committed to date and that a further £57m (at 1998 prices) remains to be let; notes the fact that building industry inflation is currently estimated to be adding at least 16% to the costs of packages remaining to be let; further notes that under the construction management contract there are additional and not fully quantifiable risks to which the project may be exposed between now and completion; directs the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, through the Holyrood Progress Group, to work with the design and project teams to complete the project without compromising quality, while managing risks rigorously; and requires the Corporate Body, on a quarterly basis, to provide information to the Parliament's Finance Committee on the progress of the project in respect of inflation and materialisation of risk in order to inform their consideration of the annual Budget Act."

The contents of the report are summarised as follows:

The project is still scheduled for completion of construction at the end of December 2002 and phased occupation thereafter;

47% of the total cost plan value of the project has now been let and a further 35% is going through the tender process, leaving 18% still to be tendered;

most packages have been let at a price broadly in line with the cost plan estimate: across the contracts let to date there have been cost overruns (excluding inflation) totalling just over £6m, which can be offset by cost savings on other packages of over £3m;

opportunities for cost savings have been carefully considered and taken wherever possible. They have been unanimously rejected where the integrity or quality of the architecture would be compromised;

in the absence of any outstanding inflation and risk related costs, the current projected outturn cost of the project would be £198m; BUT construction industry inflation is estimated to be likely to add at least a further £10.4m to future packages.

A rigorous risk analysis of all likely eventualities over the remainder of the project has assessed that if they were to come to fruition the impact on costs would be £14.2m tender, (or 'design') risk and £12.1m construction risk;

all risks will continue to be managed rigorously, keeping up strong pressure on costs. The SPCB will provide information to the Finance Committee on any variations from the expected budget so that both Parliament and Executive can be informed at the earliest date about the final outturn costs as these become more certain.

The motion at the top of this release will be debated by Parliament on the afternoon of Thursday, June 21, subject to Parliament's approval tomorrow (Thursday) of a Business Motion.

Should the debate be timetabled as planned, a Holyrood Progress Group Question and Answer Session for MSPs will be held in the Chamber at 6pm the previous evening (Wednesday, June 20), to which media will be invited.

[SPCB Report to Parliament: Holyrood Project June 2001](#)

Background note

Previous reports, other information about Holyrood, and up-to-date images of work on site can be found on the Parliament's website at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/vli/holyrood/building/>

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Holyrood Progress Group Launches Art Strategy

Members of the Holyrood Progress Group have today taken another step forward in planning for the new building by advertising for a consultant to work with them in implementing an arts strategy.

Commenting on the advert, which appears for the first time today, Progress Group member Linda Fabiani MSP said:

"It has always been envisaged that the Scottish Parliament would offer really good opportunities for incorporating and displaying art and design. We know that there is an immense amount of talent out there in the artistic community - both in Scotland and beyond. The job of the arts consultant will be to help us tap into that and then bring forward a range of options from which an initial selection of works can be made.

"We have already consulted with the Scottish Arts Council and Royal Society of Arts officials in drawing up the statement of principles which forms the basis of the strategy. It is our intention that the successful consultant should continue that process of consultation with the arts community in Scotland so that we can be sure that we are drawing on the very best advice across the whole spectrum of art and crafts."

An Art Strategy for the Scottish Parliament Building: A statement of principles

The new Scottish Parliament building will be a significant work of art in itself. The sculptural form of the building can be enhanced by artists and craftspeople exploiting the opportunities which it offers for displaying their work; skilful blending of art and the building design is essential.

Art in its various forms will play a key role in adding value to the ambience, image and dignity of the Parliament building, to Parliamentary activities and to enhancing the environment and lives of people who work there and of visitors.

Opportunities must be identified for exploiting the existing construction budget to combine function and aesthetic considerations in key areas of the building, (e.g. glazing, stone detailing, furniture)

The term 'art' embraces a wide range of outputs: art; craft; design: from paintings hung on walls to ceremonial chairs; from stained glass to stone carving; from installations in the landscape to performance art.

The new Parliament building will be a national building of international importance. It therefore has to reflect "Scottishness" while at the same time accepting its place in the international community.

The art strategy is not an event. Art in the Parliament will be dynamic, offering flexible gallery spaces as well as being the permanent home for some works. It will be capable of being adapted to support specific events and times as well as offering a more constant backdrop to the activities of the Parliament.

The art strategy will require to be congruent with the interior design and signage strategy.

The art strategy will be incremental as well as dynamic. The new building offers a raft of opportunities. While these can be identified from the outset, they do not all have to be exploited right away.

Artistic themes could include: the 'land' of Scotland, (landscape geology, history, philosophy); the 'people' of Scotland, (diversity, ethnicity, age group, famous people), including Scottish achievements in the UK/Europe/the Commonwealth/the World; Scottish Parliaments.

Sources of art will include: the sponsorship, loan or donation of identified works of art or craft; original commissions to selected artists, directly by the Parliament or nominated organisations (e.g. competition through Colleges of Art, Art schools etc) or funded through successful applications to grant-giving organisations.

Background notes

The text of the advertisement is attached.

The deadline for returning completed application forms is 20 April 2001. It is anticipated that an appointment will be made before the summer recess.

Arts Consultant: Advertisement

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body has resolved that art and craft in their various forms, including the performing arts, will play a key role in adding value to the ambience, image and dignity of the new Scottish Parliament building; to Parliamentary activities and to the environment and lives of those working in and visiting the building.

The construction of the Parliament is well underway and when it is occupied in 2003 it will become the permanent home for Scotland's new legislature and a showpiece building both for the people of Scotland and for visitors to the country. The new building will be a significant work of art in itself and the Parliament believes that the sculptural forms and use of the building can be enhanced by artists and craftspeople exploiting the opportunities which it offers for displaying their work; skilful blending of art and the building design will be essential.

To this end, the Parliament is seeking to appoint an arts consultant to work with the client in realising the implementation of an arts and craft strategy for the new building. The task will include the preparation and implementation of the strategy; undertaking an 'audit of opportunities' for incorporating art; identifying opportunities for exploiting the construction budget to combine function and aesthetic considerations in key areas of the building; advising on issues of sponsorship, loan or donation of identified works of art or craft as well as the commissioning process and presenting the client with a range of options from which a selection can be made.

The appointed consultant will have relevant experience and be able to demonstrate an understanding of working within a public sector environment and delivering to a tight timescale and budget. The commission will be for a 2 year period with the possibility of an extension at the sole discretion of the Client.

Expressions of interest are invited from individuals or organisations working in the commercial or public sector. For a pre-qualification questionnaire please apply in writing to Nicole Evans, The Scottish Parliament, Procurement Office, Edinburgh EH99 1SP. Completed questionnaires must be returned by noon on 20 April 2001. For information about the commission please contact Eric Kinsey of the Holyrood Project Team on 0131 348 6518.

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Holyrood Progress Group to Host 'Question Time' in Parliament's Chamber

6.00 pm, Wednesday, February 7

MSPs will have the chance to put oral questions to the Holyrood Progress Group on the new Scottish Parliament building in the latest question and answer session to be held in Parliament on Wednesday (February 7).

The hour-long session in the Parliament's main chamber will begin at 6.00pm and will be chaired by Deputy Presiding Officer Patricia Ferguson. The 'question time' style format is the second in the series of meetings designed to give Members the opportunity to raise a wide range of questions on the progress to date of the Parliament project.

The Progress Group members are Lewis Macdonald, Linda Fabiani and Jamie Stone.

Members of the media will be able to watch all the proceedings in the usual fashion from the Chamber's press gallery.

Members of the public will also have access to the public galleries on a first come basis, advance booking of tickets will not be required for this event.

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Holyrood Landmark Reached With 'Topping Out' of MSP Offices

A major milestone in the creation of the new Scottish Parliament building at Holyrood was reached today with the completion of the main superstructure of the MSP's office accommodation.

To mark the occasion, Sir David Steel, Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, and Lewis Macdonald MSP, Convener of the Holyrood Progress Group, joined John Spanswick, Managing Director of Bovis Lend Lease Europe, to perform the 'topping out' ceremony of the new building at the west end of the Parliament site.

Speaking at the event, Sir David said:

"I am delighted to participate in this significant milestone in the project. Looking around today, there is no question that the quality of the work so far - prefabricated off-site as well as that produced on-site - is of a high standard befitting a national Parliament building.

"The project's construction workers can be proud of their achievements particularly given the pressures of the tight timescale for delivering the building and the level of attention the project is receiving.

"This building is the most important to be built in Scotland for some 300 years and today marks a significant milestone in the programme. This ceremony marks the arrival at its full height of the office block for MSPs. The foundations are also well under way for the Chamber and committee room structures at the east end of the site where for many months there was previously a deep water-filled hole. At the same time work is under way on the renovation of Queensberry House hidden under its scaffolded shroud.

"For this I wish today to thank all those involved: the architects, the project team, the contractors (Bovis), and all who have been employed both on and off the site. I especially want to thank on behalf of the Corporate Body, and indeed the Parliament as a whole, Lewis Macdonald and his colleagues on the Holyrood Progress Group who have worked diligently and reported to us regularly as this highly complex prestigious project develops.

"I would also like to take the opportunity to mention two other matters of legitimate public concern. You may have seen a flurry of agitation recently about artwork in the new building. "First things first" as my mother used to say. You cannot have art works until you have somewhere to put them. It is only now with two years still to go to occupation that we are able to turn our attention to this important aspect. There will be full consultation with acknowledged experts, including those who have been prematurely anxious not to be ignored! We will have more to say soon on how art will be incorporated into this building.

"The second matter is the landscaping and roadworks surrounding the building, which is, of course, separately allowed for within the Scottish Executive's spending plans. The details of these proposals have recently been finalised and the images and models

illustrating them will shortly be on display in the visitor centre across the road. It is self evident from these that they will greatly enhance not just our building, but Holyrood Palace, Dynamic Earth, the Scotsman Publications building, the Teague Homes development and of course the public at large.

"Once this is all complete we will have not only a parliament building of international distinction but it will be "set in the land" and will mark the final phase of the rehabilitation of what had become a seriously run down semi-derelict area of Edinburgh.

"Everyone working on the construction of this project is helping to create tomorrow's history. I must congratulate their professionalism and I particularly welcome Bovis's excellent safety record achieved so far and hope that this will continue for the duration of the project."

Presenting a commemorative engraved silver plated trowel to Sir David, John Spanswick, Managing Director of Bovis Lend Lease Europe, said:

"We are very proud to be associated with the Scottish Parliament Building and are confident that, on completion, Edinburgh and Scotland will have yet another splendid landmark that will become both nationally and internationally acclaimed".

Since traditional 'topping out' ceremonies not only celebrate the completion of the superstructure, but also pay tribute to the accomplishment of the construction workers, a safety jacket was presented to New Deal employee Tommy Ashton in recognition of more than half a million safe working hours on the Parliament site.

The new Scottish Parliament building is on schedule for completion in the winter of 2002.

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'Topping Out' of MSP Office Block on Wednesday Morning (10am)

Holyrood photo opportunity

A significant milestone in the construction of the new Parliament building at Holyrood will be reached on Wednesday (January 24) with the completion of the main superstructure of the MSP's office accommodation. To mark this occasion, a traditional 'topping out' ceremony will be held on the roof of the building at the west end of the Holyrood site.

Performing the topping out will be the Parliament's Presiding Officer Sir David Steel, the Convenor of the Holyrood Progress Group, Lewis Macdonald MSP, and John Spanswick, Managing Director of Bovis Lend Lease Europe, construction managers of the new Parliament building.

A photo-call will be held on Wednesday morning. As this will take place on the roof of a multi-storey building, there are particular health and safety requirements which must be adhered to. These are outlined below:

Media wishing to attend should contact ourselves (number below) or Bovis Lend Lease (Marie Guthrie - 0131 472 7100) in advance.

Those attending should report at 10.00am to the Bovis Lend Lease site office at the foot of Holyrood Road (to the east of Our Dynamic Earth and across the road from the Parliament building site). Latecomers risk not gaining access to the site in time for the ceremony. Some parking may be available. Protective clothing **MUST** be worn by all those going on site. This will be provided by Bovis. It should also be noted that the photo-call will take place on the roof of a building reached only by an external staircase.

The platform party will be welcomed by a lone piper on the roof of the MSP office block. After the ceremony, Sir David Steel will be presented with a silver-plated engraved trowel for the Parliament by Mr Spanswick.

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