FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

15 November 2026

Ministry of Defence approves sale of the Woolwich Rotunda to Rotunda Trust

Rotunda Trust is delighted to announce that the Ministry of Defence has approved the sale of the Rotunda to the Trust, subject to contract. The Trust is acquiring the site in partnership with the Greenwich Enterprise Board as part of a joint plan to activate the site for the wider community.

The Rotunda is one of Britain's most architecturally significant heritage buildings, and this milestone marks a major step forward in securing the long-term future of the Grade II* listed landmark, bringing it back into active public use for the benefit of the local community and future generations.

Designed in 1814 by John Nash, who remodelled Buckingham Palace and designed the Royal Pavilion at Brighton and Marble Arch, the Rotunda began life as a grand structure erected in the grounds of Carlton House to celebrate the peace of that year during the Napoleonic Wars. It was subsequently relocated to Woolwich Common, where it became the home of the Royal Artillery Museum for more than 180 years.

Since the museum's closure, the building has faced an uncertain future and has been on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register since 2007. Despite these challenges, the Rotunda remains one of the most significant historic structures in south-east London and an important part of the nation's military, architectural and cultural heritage.

Rotunda Trust, a charitable Building Preservation Trust established to acquire, restore and safeguard the building, has developed plans to return the Rotunda to sustainable use while preserving its exceptional historic character. The Trust's vision is to create a vibrant destination for community activities, heritage interpretation, education, cultural events, exhibitions and private and commercial hire, ensuring the building can support itself financially while remaining accessible to the public.

Lakshan Saldin, Chair of Rotunda Trust, said:

"Having the sale of the Rotunda approved by the Ministry of Defence, subject to contract, is a hugely significant moment in the campaign to save this building, which has been part of Woolwich's story for more than two centuries and is one of London's most distinctive heritage assets.

Our vision is simple: to rescue the Rotunda from the Heritage at Risk Register, to restore it to good condition, and return it to public use as a place where people can gather, learn, celebrate and create memories.

Our immediate priority is to get the Rotunda through the harsh winter without further deterioration - our continuous monitoring shows humidity rising in the roof, with condensation forming on cold, clear nights.

Whilst we are incredibly grateful to everyone who has supported this project, from local residents and heritage advocates, to our professional advisers and partners, there is still much to do as we move into 2027. However, this announcement is a key step towards securing a sustainable future for a building that deserves to be enjoyed by generations to come."

The Trust has now entered the next phase of the process and is working closely with the Ministry of Defence and its partners to progress the transaction. Subject to the successful completion of legal, contractual and due diligence requirements, the Trust anticipates completing the acquisition early in 2027. Completion of the purchase would enable the Trust to advance detailed conservation, restoration and business planning for the building.

The Trust is buying the Rotunda in partnership with Greenwich Enterprise Board, a Greenwich-based not-for-profit social enterprise that has restored listed buildings in the Royal Borough for over forty years, including Orangery Studios and Royal Arsenal Gatehouse. GEB will be taking a long lease on part of the site to the rear of the Rotunda for redevelopment into affordable workspace, which will further establish the Rotunda as a destination around a shared public realm.

The Trust will continue to work with heritage organisations, public bodies, local stakeholders and potential funding partners as it develops plans to secure the Rotunda's long-term future. Further announcements will be made as the project progresses.

The Trust would like to thank all those who have supported the project to date and look forward to working with the community and partners to realise the full potential of this nationally significant historic building.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

About Rotunda Trust

Rotunda Trust Limited, company 17115816, registered charity, 1220458, is a Building Preservation Trust established to acquire, restore and preserve the Rotunda on Woolwich Common. Its purpose is to secure the future of this nationally significant heritage asset for public benefit and community use.

About the Rotunda

- Designed by John Nash in 1814
- Grade II* listed building
- Home of the Royal Artillery Museum from 1820 until 2001
- Listed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register since 2007
- A conoid roof on 24 laminated timber principal rafters, built in 1814 by the carpenters William Nixon, Jeffry Wyatt and William Wyatt

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