

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Rhiannon Broomfield 0207 389 2117
Matthew Paton 0207 389 2965

rbroomfield@christies.com
mpaton@christies.com

DUMFRIES HOUSE, CUMNOCK, AYRSHIRE, SCOTLAND

John Bute, Christie's and Savills announce that Dumfries House and its contents, together with its 2,000 acre estate, have been acquired for the nation by The Art Fund. Those contributing towards the venture were brought together by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales and include The Prince's Charities Foundation, the Scottish Executive, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Monument Trust, The Art Fund, the National Heritage Memorial Fund and SAVE Britain's Heritage.

Dumfries House in Ayrshire was designed and built by John, Robert and James Adam between 1754 and 1759 and contains the most important collection of Rococo furniture by Thomas Chippendale to remain in private hands, and the only fully documented furniture commission dating to his seminal *Director* period.

John Bute said: "I am delighted to say that following the closing date, I have decided to sell Dumfries House and its contents to the nation. Dumfries House and its contents will remain intact as a unique example of Georgian craftsmanship. Since announcing my intention to sell Dumfries House in 2004, considerable effort has been made by all parties involved to reach this conclusion. Dumfries House has been a private family residence since its creation in the 18th century by my ancestor, the 5th Earl of Dumfries, and it is my hope that it will go on to be enjoyed long into the future by a wider public.

The amount of time, effort and commitment put into this rescue package by Marcus Binney of SAVE and his colleagues and The Art Fund has been rewarded with an appropriate outcome. I would also like to acknowledge the very considerable effort made by my own private advisers to bring the sale to its final conclusion: Christie's, Savills and Anderson Strathern. However, there is no doubt that the person responsible for galvanising the heritage funding bodies and who also generated separate finance is Prince Charles. In my opinion, the rescue package would have failed without his intervention.

Apart from the importance of preserving the building and contents as part of Scotland's heritage, I am also extremely optimistic about the positive impact that this development will have on the local economies of Cumnock and Auchinleck as well as East Ayrshire."

Charles Cator, Deputy Chairman, Christie's International said: "Over the last four years, Christie's has supported John Bute's hope of finding a negotiated private treaty sale solution for Dumfries House and its contents. It has long been part of Christie's history to secure sales of works of art to the nation and we are delighted to have played a key role in saving this magnificent house and its exceptional contents. Dumfries House is one of the finest and most original collections of British furniture and contains the only fully documented works of art dating from Chippendale's illustrious Director Period, as well as the finest private collection of documented Scottish 18th century furniture. We look forward to supporting the future of Dumfries House and hope that it will be admired and appreciated by the public long into the future."

Anna Thomas of Savills Edinburgh office said: "The sale of the Dumfries Estate generated a great deal of interest from buyers in UK, Ireland and internationally, resulting in strong competition at the closing date. Savills is proud to have been instructed with the sale of this truly exceptional property and delighted that the winning bid will enable the house and estate to be saved for the nation."

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Notes to Editors

CHRISTIE'S PRIVATE TREATY SALES

Since 1956 on the introduction of tax incentives encouraging sales to the nation, Christie's has been at the forefront of private treaty sale negotiations on behalf of our clients. As a consequence, Christie's leads the field in both private treaty sales and negotiated sales to the British nation. Our Heritage and Taxation department has been responsible for a number of important sales including Tyntesfield to the National Trust in 2003 as well as numerous sales of individual works of art from *Whistlejacket* by Stubbs to the National Gallery in London to the 2003 sale of Titian's *The Birth of Venus* to the National Gallery of Scotland. Over the last four years, we have supported John Bute's hope of finding a negotiated private treaty sale solution for Dumfries House.

DUMFRIES HOUSE

Dumfries House in Ayrshire, Scotland, was designed and built on the instructions of William, 5th Earl of Dumfries (1699-1768), an officer of note in the British army who served as aide-de-camp to the commander of the Allied forces at the Battle of Dettingen in 1743. William first opened discussions with William Adam in 1747, the year before the architect's death, and the project was adopted by William's three sons, John, Robert and James, who designed the house and oversaw its construction which took place between 1754 and 1759.

In 1759 and 1760, the Adam brothers set about the task of furnishing the Palladian mansion. Having approached the design of the house with a classical style, they turned to their friend Thomas Chippendale (*circa* 1718-1779) in order to furnish the house in a manner which complemented their design. A number of rooms were furnished entirely by Chippendale, including the Blue bedroom where almost all the pieces from the four poster bed to the overmantel mirror, were produced by the greatest of all English cabinet-makers. Lord Dumfries also employed several Scottish cabinet-makers in order to provide furniture for the house; Francis Brodie, Alexander Peter and William Mathie, who at times used Chippendale's furniture

as inspiration for their own work. Lord Dumfries and his family are thought to have taken residence at the house from August 1760.

William, 5th Earl of Dumfries, died without issue and the title passed to his nephew Patrick, 6th Earl of Dumfries. He had a daughter, Lady Elizabeth Penelope Crichton, who was born at Dumfries House in 1772. In 1792, she married John, Viscount Mountstuart, eldest son of the Marquess of Bute. Their elder son inherited the Earldom of Dumfries from his mother and the Marquessate of Bute from his father, becoming John, 7th Earl of Dumfries and 2nd Marquess of Bute. For succeeding generations, the principle residence of the family became Mount Stuart on the Isle of Bute.

After the death of the 6th Earl of Dumfries in 1803, his grandson, the 7th Earl, instructed the undertaking of an inventory of Dumfries House. No longer the principle residence of the family, Dumfries House was uninhabited until 1890, and lay redundant again between 1910 and 1950. What is so exceptional is that the contents of the house are fully documented, with original receipts for much of the Collection, from the bookcase by Thomas Chippendale which was acquired in 1759 at a then considerable cost of £47 5s right the way down to the fire-grates and fenders in each and every room.

In 1754, Chippendale published the *Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director*. This comprehensive book of furniture designs became popular with European nobility, gentry and cabinet-makers; Catherine the Great and Louis XVI, two of Europe's most prolific collectors, owned editions in French. The success of the book prompted Chippendale to publish an enlarged edition in 1762, and the period surrounding its publication is recognised as *The Director Period*, considered to be the cabinet-maker's most important and influential style. Dumfries House contains the only fully documented Chippendale furniture dating from this period, which '*unquestionably forms the outstanding monument to his early Rococo phase*' (Christopher Gilbert, *The Burlington Magazine*, 1969).