East Belfast's Templemore Baths gets £5million



Templemore Baths today

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) confirmed the award in support of Belfast City Council’s plans to breathe new life into the last surviving Victorian baths in Ireland.

The project, which is likely to cost £17m, will blend the old and the new, conserving the building’s historic features and sharing its important social history. It will also provide upgraded leisure facilities including a new 25-metre pool and state-of-the-art gym.

Templemore Baths was the last in a series of public baths to open throughout Belfast in the late 19th century. It provided washing and sanitary facilities for the families who came to live in the area, attracted by the development of Harland and Wolff shipyard and other engineering enterprises in the east of the city.

The baths are one of the few remaining links to a disappeared way of life and a time when inner-east Belfast was a thriving industrial community.

Today, part of the complex remains in use but many of the baths' historic features, including the slipper baths and the smaller swimming pool, known as the minor pool, are in need of urgent restoration and repair.

The new project will safeguard these historic features and interpret their history to share the story of the baths and the wider industrial and social development of east Belfast. Seven distinct zones in the original building and a programme of events and activities, including tours, oral history workshops, and volunteer opportunities, will engage visitors with the unique heritage of the complex.

Funding for the project was awarded through HLF's Heritage Enterprise programme which provides funding when the cost of repairing an historic building is so high that redevelopment simply is not commercially viable.

Announcing the award, Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: "Templemore Baths has a special place in the heart of the local community and it is wonderful to be involved in this fantastic project. Thanks to National players this £5m investment will help to conserve this historic building and ensure it continues to be a valued and vital resource for the people of Belfast for many generations to come."

Welcoming the grant, Alderman Jim Rodgers, Chair of Belfast City Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, said: "We are absolutely delighted to have been awarded this funding by the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the restoration and redevelopment of Templemore Baths. The combined £17million investment will have the dual benefit of restoring this iconic building to its former glory and allowing us to deliver our ambitious programme of improvements to leisure provision in Belfast."

"The work at Templemore Baths forms part of our city-wide Leisure Transformation Programme – our ten year, £105m investment to develop seven new state-of-the-art leisure facilities, improving leisure services and programming to enable more people to get more active more often."

Notes to editors

Belfast City Council is investing £40m in new leisure facilities in east Belfast including:

- £12m in Templemore Baths
- £20m in the forthcoming Robinson Centre
- £8m in Avoniel leisure centre

Both Avoniel and Templemore will remain open until the new Robinson Centre opens in 2019, ensuring continuity of leisure provision in the east of the city.

More information

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