Alexandra Palace secures lottery support

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The HLF Board of Trustees were unanimous in their decision to award the ‘People’s Palace’ a total of £844,800 in development phase funding.

This funding will be used to further develop the project’s designs and business plan to ensure its ability to deliver the maximum sustainable long-term benefit for the Palace, its visitors and local communities.

At the conclusion of this development phase, a further application will be submitted to the HLF for the remaining funding towards the required construction works.

Duncan Wilson OBE, Chief Executive for Alexandra Park and Palace, said: “The HLF announcement marks a significant moment in the future of Alexandra Palace. Finally we can plan with confidence to bring back to life the glorious Victorian Theatre and the historic BBC Television studios. The ‘People’s Palace’ in its entirety can now become a reality and we are thrilled that the HLF have endorsed our plans for its future in this way.”

The HLF funding will contribute the major part of a £23.9m project which will transform the eastern end of the palace, making accessible to the public the most historically significant – yet currently derelict and inaccessible – parts of the building.

Sue Bowers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund London, said: “Ally Pally is held with huge public affection and we’re delighted to be giving our initial support for this exciting project. This is the first step in the journey to secure a full Heritage Lottery Fund grant and we’re looking forward to working closely with the trust in the coming months.”

As the birthplace of the world’s first regular public high definition television broadcast in 1936, one of the key aims of the HLF project is to refurbish the BBC studios to provide an interactive historical and educational visitor experience as well as access to a significant collection of digitised archive materials.

Robert Seatter, Head of BBC History expressed the BBC’s support of the regeneration and opening up of the old BBC studios at Alexandra Palace. He said: “As the birthplace of British television, it is a unique historical destination which merits being preserved and interpreted for future generations.”

The project will also include the ‘as found’ restoration of the Victorian Theatre, retaining its unique ‘look & feel’ and the conservation of key heritage aspects such as the ceiling and balcony.

Matt Cooke, Chair of the APPCT Board, said: “This HLF funding will not only re-open derelict areas to full use and access, but will give a massive boost to the whole-site regeneration of one of London's most exciting buildings.

“I'm absolutely clear that this success is a testament to the efforts of our brilliant Chief Executive Duncan Wilson and each and every member of our talented and committed staff team.”

The HLF project forms part of the trust’s overall masterplan which was adopted in July 2012 following extensive public consultation.

It identified six key areas for phased regeneration across the palace, all of which will contribute to the local economy over the coming years and will provide improved educational and leisure opportunities for the wider community.

Councillor Claire Kober, Leader for Haringey Council, commented: “Opening up the stunning theatre and BBC studios to the public would be the start of a new chapter in the palace’s life as a treasure for the whole borough and further cement its position as a destination for Londoners.

“We are delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has backed the proposals and that together we can start drawing up more detailed plans to restore this historic landmark for the benefit of the community.”

As a supporter of the trust’s initial HLF application, London’s Mayor Boris Johnson commented: “As the birthplace of national television and an icon of Victorian enterprise, Alexandra Palace is a place of enormous historic and cultural significance.

“So it is fantastic and fitting that, with continued support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the ‘People’s Palace’ is now well on the way to a new lease of life as a major entertainment destination for North London and indeed the world.”

Notes to editors

Alexandra Park was opened in 1863 as a pioneering Victorian leisure park. The original 220 acres of parkland purchased from the Tottenham Wood Farm and was designed by Alexander McKenzie to provide botanical and wildlife lovers with beautiful and interesting green spaces for outdoor exploration. The park was also intended to be a centre for education and entertainment.

Alexandra Palace is one of London and the UK’s most iconic buildings. Built as the 'People's Palace' in 1873, this remarkable seven acre Grade II historic entertainment destination is surrounded by 196 acres of North London parkland and offers unprecedented views of the city.

The palace and park were created in the enterprising Victorian era to provide the people of North London with a magnificent cultural and recreational centre. Since then, Alexandra Palace has become globally recognised as the birthplace of the world’s first high-definition television broadcast and has been home to the BBC Television Service, a horse racing track, cricket, football club and ice rink - as well as staging many legendary rock and pop concerts.

Today, Alexandra Park and Palace maintains its original enterprising spirit. It also fulfils its original purpose of hosting an eclectic mix of live music, sport, cultural and leisure events, becoming a Cool Venues Award Winner in 2011. Live commercial events tripled in 2012 and Alexandra Palace played a role in the London 2012 Olympic programme by hosting the Torch Relay and Holland Heineken House.

Alexandra Park’s 196 acres of Grade II listed English Heritage parkland is maintained by a specialist team dedicated to ensuring the beautiful landscape is well preserved and remains very much at the heart of the local community. The park has held a Green Flag Award since 2008. Other park awards include the BALI Award for mainly hard landscaping construction cost over £100,000 in 2007, a silver gilt award for a Large Park or Public Garden by London in Bloom in 2009, 2011 and 2012, and the Green Heritage Award every year since 2010.

On 21 July 2013, Alexandra Park will celebrate its 150th anniversary with a daylong celebration of the extraordinary.

Further information

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