Plans for canal heritage project receive funding

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The Weir Cottages at Canalside Beeston Rylands has received the money from Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Chairman Stewart Craven, of Canalside Heritage Centre Trust, said: "I have lived on a narrow boat on the Beeston Cut for nearly 13 years and always wondered why the then British Waterways was not doing anything to repair the cottages.

"After talking to local residents, and many visits to the Nottinghamshire Archives, I started to understand the heritage of the cottages and what would be lost if they were allowed to deteriorate further. Getting this amount of money really is the icing on the cake and means the project to restore the cottages will go ahead.

"Although most of the money has now been secured the real work starts now. We want to bring the whole waterfront back to life and I am confident that we are going to do it. The Environment Agency is going to clear the site in early 2014 and we want to start work on the development in May. If everything goes to plan the project will be completed by 2015."

Once complete, the heritage centre will include a museum and exhibition gallery showcasing the history of the Beeston Canal, along with a community resource centre as well as a cafe and outdoor seating.

There will also be nature trails and information points to help people explore, plus a cycle hire and fishing tackle shop. An on-site allotment will also provide the most local of produce for the cafe.

Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East Midlands, Vanessa Harbar, said: "This project gives a new lease of life to these historic and important lock cottages. It will help inform and educate local people and visitors about the valuable heritage of the Beeston and Nottingham Canal from its 18th-century heyday."

Trustee and project architect Julian Owen, from Julian Owen Associates Architects, said: "Everything is now coming together and this project will reach so many members of the community. The cottages will be restored to how they were when they were first built in 1796. There will also be an extension built, but you will not be able to see this from the canal.

"The extension will be a contemporary design which will allow us to put in disabled access to the building. This project has been a pleasure to work on."

The initial £30,000 funding for the feasibility study into the project came from Nottinghamshire County Council's Local Improvement Scheme and in total, the project has received £120,000 from the authority.

Beeston councillor Kate Foale, of Nottinghamshire County Council, said: "What fantastic news for the Beeston area that this project has been given the green light. The funding will give the area a whole new lease of life and will no doubt attract people interested in the county's heritage for years to come."

Further information

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