Birmingham – a city in the making

20/11/2009

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG) has been awarded £4.8m by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) towards the £9.7m 'Birmingham – A City in the Making' project.

The money will go towards the development of an innovative and groundbreaking new wing of galleries focussing on the history and development of Birmingham and its people.

Birmingham – A City in the Making will substantially raise the profile of the city's important global heritage, with the new galleries serving as a landmark destination for visitors to the city who want an insight into its historical significance. BMAG passed the first stage of the HLF application process last December and today's announcement means work on the ambitious new project can get underway early in 2010.

Leader of Birmingham City Council, Mike Whitby, said: "This is excellent news. Competition for this funding is fierce, so I'd like to congratulate our museums service and thank the Heritage Lottery Fund for its support.

"This exciting project will tell the story of Birmingham's great global history to both local people and visitors, keeping a fascinating period of our history alive for generations to come.

"We're talking about a unique collection of objects dating from 1500 to the present day. The collection represents our manufacturing tradition, the diverse communities found here in Birmingham and the continuing growth of our great city."

Anne Jenkins, Head of HLF West Midlands, said: "Birmingham is one of the UK's most vibrant and multi-layered urban centres and these new galleries will celebrate all aspects of its heritage. We were particularly keen to support the Museum's plans for using more of its rich historical collections to tell the often untold and fascinating story of the city."

Rita McLean, Head of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, added: "This is magnificent news for the museum and I would like to thank the HLF and our other funders.

"This announcement recognises the need for a project that tells the story of Birmingham – a project that will be of long term benefit to the gallery and its visitors."

Plans for 'Birmingham – A City in the Making' continue to be developed in consultation with a wide range of people, communities and cultural or heritage organisations from across Birmingham.

The people of Birmingham will also have the opportunity to contribute their own stories and personal artefacts through an ambitious accompanying community engagement programme.

The project will get underway in January 2010 with a planned opening date of Autumn 2012.

Notes to editors

Birmingham – A City in the Making will see the re-display and reinterpretation of BMAG's outstanding Birmingham history collections. The displays will also draw upon other designated collections

The new project will be housed in over 1000m2 of refurbished galleries and will meet public demand for more emphasis on Birmingham history at BMAG, presenting the city's history in its significant global and national context.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 28,800 projects, allocating over £4.3billion across the UK.

Further information

Katie Owen, HLF Press Office on 020 7591 6036 or 07973 613 820.

Geoff Coleman on 0121 303 3501.