West Lodge Tea Rooms is the Icing on the Cake

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The well-known Cardiff landmark has undergone an exciting refurbishment project and now boasts a traditional tea room, small gift shop, a new outdoor seating area, improved surrounding landscape area and will provide additional public toilets within the park.

The development is part of the £5.6m Bute Park restoration project which is supported by a £3.1m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The Leader of the Council, Cllr. Rodney Berman and Executive Member for Sport, Leisure and Culture, Cllr. Nigel Howells were joined by Dr. Manon Williams, Chair of HLF Wales and tea room operator David Le Masurier.

To mark the occasion invitees laid the final tiles which completed the beautiful tea room floor. This marked the completion of the works and the beginning of the tea room business.

It also commemorated a milestone in the history of West Lodge and the handover of the establishment from Cardiff Council to the new operator.

The tea room floor, which has been described as a real-life historical jigsaw puzzle, has been an important element of the restoration process, bringing a large collection of Victorian tiles back into public view after almost four decades.

The 125-year-old loose tiles date back to the late 1800s and originally lay in the Blackfriars Friary site situated in the west of Bute Park. In 1977 they were lifted and recovered by members of the Victorian Society to protect them from damage and theft.

Since then they have laid in storage until Cardiff Council were joined by volunteers from the Bute Park Friends Group and original members of the team who first lifted the tiles in carrying out the task of putting them back together again ready for their new home.

The project aimed to depict the spirit of the original Victorian design whilst creating a unique feature in the tea room that members of the public can enjoy.

The new floor compliments the original features of the building whilst adding to the pleasure and enjoyment of an authentic British tea room experience.

The Pettigrew Tea Rooms, named after the head gardener to the third Marquess of Bute, will adapt the feel of a traditional Victorian tea room and celebrate the British past time of ‘taking tea’.

Tea room operator, David Le Masurier has a clear vision of the business which will serve quality loose leaf teas, finely brewed freshly roast coffee and classic home baking prepared on site.

Patrons can enjoy sweet treats including Victoria sandwiches, classic meringues, scones with local jam and Welsh clotted cream as well as savoury dishes such as elegant sandwiches, salads and hot fresh soup.

Refreshments will be served on charming mismatched porcelain amongst antique furniture in an ambient and peaceful environment, all contributing to the delightful experience.

In warmer months the outside terrace will allow for open air seating and splendid view of the park.

West Lodge was designed by architect Alexander Roos and was completed in 1863. It was known as an ornamental gatehouse as part of the third Marquess of Bute's long term plan to develop the estate.

Cllr. Rodney Berman said: "The development of West Lodge is a great addition to Bute Park and will provide a unique opportunity for people to relax in this magnificent green space situated in the heart of the city.

"The refurbishment in the building, which has been entirely in keeping with the style and heritage of the original lodge, allows its rich history and character to shine through and will be a fantastic part of the Bute Park visitor experience.

"The Bute Park restoration project aims to protect and enhance one of Cardiff's most cherished and popular attractions and I am sure West Lodge will be well-used by current and new generations."

Executive Member for Sport, Leisure and Culture, Cllr. Nigel Howells said: "The refurbishment of West Lodge is an exceptionally exciting part of the Bute Park restoration project and a place that I think will be well-received and enjoyed by the people of Cardiff.

"West Lodge is an important historical part of Bute Park and the new tea room allows members of the public to visit and take pleasure from this wonderful facility.

"The completion of the floor using the Blackfriars tiles celebrates a key milestone in the building's history and celebrates Bute Park's latest asset which will provide new opportunities and draw people to this wonderful attraction."

Dr. Manon Williams, Chair of HLF Wales, said: "The new West Lodge building will safeguard a fascinating part of Cardiff's rich heritage, while also providing a distinctive and attractive place for local people and visitors to relax and enjoy the beautiful surroundings of Bute Park.

"As I can testify myself, the park is a vibrant green space that plays a crucial part in the daily lives of Cardiff's residents, and this latest development is a great addition to the visitor facilities."

Tea room operator, David Le Masurier said: "The West Lodge building has long intrigued me. It is a stunning building that I am delighted to see restored and for the first time open to the public so that everyone can use the space.

"I have had a vision of opening a very traditional tea rooms in Cardiff for over two years now, serving quality home made cakes, leaf teas and brilliant Welsh roasted coffee served in an elegant and relaxing environment.

"The educational responsibility of the West Lodge and Bute Park really excites me. I am only now discovering the wonderful heritage of Bute Park. There is much for me to learn, but I will make it a priority along with educating my team so that they are ambassadors for the city."

The Bute Park restoration project aims to improve physical and intellectual access to the park, provide visitor facilities and conserve its historical features and landscape.

Improvements have already included the restoration of the Animal Wall, the Summerhouse Kiosk refreshment facility and the recently completed Bute Park Education Centre.

Further information

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