

Plans to save Castle Drogo a step closer thanks to funding

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This first-round pass award means that the National Trust can progress to the second stage of the HLF application process, where they will be seeking £2.5million of HLF support towards the £12million project.

Castle Drogo - the last castle to be built in Britain - has suffered serious structural problems which have resulted in water penetration throughout the building. If extensive conservation works to the roof are not undertaken, there is a real risk that the building will become inaccessible.

Plans to preserve the castle building include the renovation of the roof structure using cutting-edge materials to ensure that the structure is watertight, whilst preserving the vision of the original design. All of the castle's windows would be refurbished, and the walls re-pointed.

The project also plans to create a heritage skills training and development hub at Castle Drogo, offering training in masonry, joinery and furniture-making to volunteers and visitors. This will help protect the future of the castle by offering a wide range of uses for the building including new learning and exhibition spaces and opportunities to explore the estate's extensive grounds on Dartmoor.

Nerys Watts, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South West, said: "This first-round pass is an important step toward the future conservation of Castle Drogo, one of Devon's historic treasures. The National Trust can further develop plans to create a heritage skills training and development hub based at the site, and to open up access so more people are able to enjoy this remarkable building. Although this does not guarantee that at second-round an award will be made, HLF will offer the National Trust full support in taking their application further."

Adrian Colston, Dartmoor General Manager for National Trust, said: "This is fantastic news for Castle Drogo and everyone who loves this wonderful 20th century masterpiece. Over the next year we will be consulting and talking to local people and our supporters about how they can get involved in helping save this important building from severe water penetration. Receiving this first-round pass award means that we can start to put some of our plans in action and get wider input into shaping the overall project when work on site will hopefully begin in 2012. It's a really exciting time for the property and I'm truly grateful that the Heritage Lottery Fund have recognised what an important and vital building Castle Drogo is."

Castle Drogo is the last castle to have been built in England, created between 1911 and 1931. The castle was created by Julius Drewe, a food retailing magnate, and designed by architect Edwin Lutyens. The castle was designed to appear as though it had existed for hundreds of years. Building materials were sourced from within 30 miles of the site to ensure that the castle blended into the surrounding landscape.

Castle Drogo is the only 20th-century building in Devon to have a Grade I listing, and one of less than 50 across the UK.

Notes to editors

*A first-round pass means the project meets our criteria for funding and we believe it has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award.

On occasion an applicant with a first-round pass will also be awarded development funding towards the development of their scheme.

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 over 30,000 projects, allocating £4.5billion across the UK.

For further information

Roland Smith, HLF Press Office on 020 7591 6047 / 07713 486 420 or rolands@hlf.org.uk