Early Christmas present for the Charles Dickens Museum

20/11/2009

The Charles Dickens Museum has secured funding of £99,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to develop plans for Great Expectations, the Museum's major redevelopment project.

As a result of the first-round pass* the Charles Dickens Museum can progress to the second stage of the HLF application process. The Museum has two years to submit detailed plans aimed at radically transforming and increasing display areas and improving the overall visitor experience at the Doughty Street Museum. The Museum can then apply for second stage support from HLF for £1,773,000 including development funding to support the £2,744,529 project.

Great Expectations will establish the Charles Dickens Museum as Britain's most accessible and inspirational literary house museum. The project will increase space for the interpretation and housing of the collections by 100%, introducing state-of-the-art facilities to preserve the collections for the enjoyment of future generations. In the adjacent property, which is owned by the Museum, a new visitor centre with study facilities and teaching rooms for the National Dickens Library and Archive will be created. The project also promotes Dickens's cultural and social legacy through a comprehensive activity programme to mark the bicentenary of the author's birth in 2012.

The redeveloped Museum will help ensure that people from all backgrounds and of all ages can appreciate the artistic and social legacy of Charles Dickens in the author's former home at 48 Doughty Street in which wrote Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby. The Charles Dickens Museum will promote an exploration of the life and times of Dickens by using traditional and modern media to reach audiences across the UK through performance arts, screen adaptations and interactive resources.

As an organising partner of the global Dickens 2012 plans, which were recently announced with the Mayor of London Boris Johnson and FilmLondon, the Museum is delighted to be leading Great Expectations, one of the most significant legacy projects for the Dickens bicentenary.** Working in partnership with more than 30 national and international partners, the Museum will develop plans to improve access to Dickens heritage in a contemporary context and to demonstrate that Dickens's work and social legacy are very much still alive.

Commenting on the award, Dr Florian Schweizer, Director of the Charles Dickens Museum, said: "We are delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given its initial support for this significant development project. This award is a fantastic springboard for our on-going campaign to provide a world-class museum and learning centre dedicated to the life and works of Charles Dickens, undoubtedly one of Britain's iconic literary figures."

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund, said: "Charles Dickens is one of this country's literary greats whose writing has continued to resonate with readers for nearly two centuries. We are pleased to be able to give our initial support to the Museum's ambitious plans, particularly as preparations for Dickens' bicentenary in 2012 begin in earnest."

Simon Callow, actor and writer, commented: "Interest in Dickens has never been higher, and nowhere can one find a more vivid and personal sense of what he was like and how he lived than in his first London house. I am delighted to

hear news of the Heritage Lottery Fund's initial support for this innovative project which would include the expansion of the Museum's educational work."

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.

However, a first-round pass does not guarantee the applicant will receive a grant as the second-round application will still be in competition for funding, and no money is set aside at this stage. 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 more than 28,800 projects, allocating over £4.3billion across the UK.

**On 3 November 2009 the Charles Dickens Museum, Mayor of London Boris Johnson and Film London announced plans for Dickens 2012 – a major celebration of events and activities to mark the bicentenary of literary giant Charles Dickens. Dickens 2012 was unveiled as the biggest commemoration of the author yet. www.dickens2012.org
Press Release

The Charles Dickens Museum in London is the world's most important collection of material relating to the great Victorian novelist and social commentator. The only surviving London home of Dickens (from 1837 until 1839) was opened as a Museum in 1925 and is still welcoming visitors from all over the world in an authentic and inspiring surrounding. On four floors, visitors can see paintings, rare editions, manuscripts, original furniture and many items relating to the life of one of the most popular and beloved personalities of the Victorian age.

48 Doughty Street
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020 7405 2127
www.dickensmuseum.com
Registered charity 212172
Open daily 10am – 5pm

The Museum is open on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day in 2009.

Further information

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