Construction begins on new Battle of Bannockburn visitor centre

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Mansell Construction Services Ltd, backed with a wealth of expertise in the conservation of heritage buildings having previously upgraded elements of the Palace of Holyrood House, The Usher Hall and Edinburgh Castle, have been appointed to build the new centre, designed by award-winning architects Reiach and Hall as part of the landmark project which is a partnership between Historic Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland.

The new visitor facilities will greatly enhance the site and give a deeper understanding of the battle and its significance to our history. The project is funded with £5million from the Scottish Government and £4.1million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and work will finish in time for the 700th anniversary of the battle during the year of Homecoming in 2014.

The new building will house a unique and exciting exhibition. The use of state-of-the-art 3D technology will bring visitors face-to-face with medieval battle in a way that has never been experienced before.

Mansell's construction schedule will consist of building and landscaping work and the conservation of the listed monuments, including the iconic 1960s statue of Robert the Bruce created by Pilkington Jackson which is recognised around the world. Landscaping work will open up views of the memorial. The current building prevents views straight through to the Rotunda and flagpole which mark the site of the Borestone where Bruce planted his standard on 23 June 1314.

The existing Bannockburn visitor centre is set to close on 31 October and will be demolished. From autumn 2012, there will be temporary visitor facilities onsite and the Bannockburn team will carry out an education outreach programme.

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs said: "The eyes of the world will be on Scotland during the year of Homecoming in 2014, when our country will host international events such as the Commonwealth Games and the Ryder Cup and marking the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn. This project will allow us to celebrate our heritage and promote Scotland as a world-class tourist destination to the world.

"This is a once in a generation opportunity to create a state-of-the-art visitor centre at Bannockburn and repair the protected monuments that previous generations commemorated the battle with and I am delighted that work is on track."

Callum Leslie, Regional Director in Central Scotland for Mansell, said: "The Battle of Bannockburn is one of the most significant historic events to have taken place in Scotland, so is it fitting that the new centre will open in time to pay tribute to the 700th anniversary. The new visitor centre will also showcase the celebrated architectural, engineering and construction heritage Scotland is internationally renowned for.

"Mansell is contributing to creating an important legacy with Bannockburn Heritage Centre, attracting thousands of visitors during 2014 and beyond, and allowing them to experience one of Scotland's most iconic destinations."

Kate Mavor, Chief Executive of the National Trust for Scotland, said: “Now that construction work has commenced, the Battle of Bannockburn project has taken another significant step forward and the two-year countdown to the 700 year anniversary of the battle has begun.

“Bannockburn is one of the most significant sites in Scotland. We know that when it comes to the battle, plenty of people have heard the myths, we want the new centre to be the place where you get the facts. The Trust takes pride in ensuring that the story of the battle is told accurately and compellingly, giving every visitor the chance to learn more about this critical point in history.”

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: “Today marks a major milestone as we begin to see the vision of an international new centre, designed to engage people in an exciting and dynamic way, begin to take shape.

“The Heritage Lottery Fund is committed to preserving Scotland’s heritage in a way that makes it appealing for everyone to explore. We are extremely proud to be part of the Battle of Bannockburn project which is set to inspire visitors of all ages with an experience that reflects the cultural significance of this iconic battle site.”

Note to editors

1. The Battle of Bannockburn Project is a joint venture by the National Trust for Scotland and Historic Scotland, on behalf of the Scottish Government, and with generous support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, to provide a new visitor centre and experience for one of the most significant battles in Scotland’s history for the 700th anniversary in the 2014.
2. The design team include:
• Architectural Team – Reiach and Hall with Sinclair Knight Merz (Engineer), Turner and Townsend (QS) and KJ Tait (M&E Engineers)
• Interpretation Concept and Design – Bright White
• Landscape Architects – Ian White Associates
• 3D Research, Development and Realisation - Centre for Digital Documentation and Visualisation (CDDV)
• Contractors - Mansell Construction Services Ltd
3. Historic Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Government charged with safeguarding the nation’s historic environment. The agency is fully accountable to Scottish Ministers and through them to the Scottish Parliament. For more information visit the Historic Scotland website.
4. The National Trust for Scotland is one of Scotland’s leading conservation charities, which relies on the financial support of its members to fund its important work of caring for the natural and cultural heritage of Scotland for everyone to enjoy
5. Register with Historic Scotland for media release email alerts. If you wish to unsubscribe at any time, please email hs.website@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

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