HLF to help Ditchling Museum realise vision

20/12/2010

The money will help bring exciting changes to the museum, its collection and facilities, including the creation of much-needed new education spaces and a broader programme of activities, events, workshops and educational sessions. The plans mean that the museum will be able to realise its vision of offering a brand new visitor experience - one in which the collections within will be able to be seen within the heart of the village in which they were created.

Ditchling Museum, founded by sisters Hilary and Joanna Bourne in 1984, is housed in the former Ditchling Village School and schoolmaster's cottage, dating back to 1838. It holds a nationally important accredited collection of works associated with applied artists living and working in the village in the early 20th century who were influenced by the earlier Arts and Crafts Movement.

These included Edward Johnston, perhaps best known for designing the London Transport logo and 'Johnston' typeface, which in turn influenced another widely used piece of 20th century design – the sans serif type face 'Gill Sans' designed by Eric Gill. Gill moved to Ditchling in 1907, and later as a well established sculptor, graphic artist and type designer went on to have a tremendous impact on 20th century sculpture. Others include Hilary Pepler, letterpress printer and founder of St Dominic's Press, Sir Frank Brangwyn and the internationally renowned weaver, Ethel Mairet.

Stuart McLeod, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for the South East, said: "Evidence of the artists' work remains highly visible in the village in the form of the Gill designed and Cribb carved village war memorial, amongst other physical reminders of their presence. A key aspect of the project will be to enhance the connection between museum collections and the social history of the village, offering the local and wider community alike greater insight and understanding into this fascinating aspect of our history based in Ditchling. There will be lots of exciting opportunities for volunteers and other people keen to get involved."

Appointed by competition in 2008, Adam Richards Architects have designed a complete revision of the site that takes in both a sensitive conversion of a listed cart lodge and a contemporary new build as well as redesigning the internal layout of the museum. Key works to the museum include:

- Conservation and refurbishment of the cart lodge to become the new entrance, with reception area, shop and café facilities.
- Improved access to the main museum via a link building, new stairs and lift.
- New environmentally controlled and accessible collection store.
- Refurbishment of the main gallery spaces, including the Hilary Bourne Gallery to create a 'working gallery' around the Stanhope Press.
- New research, resource and education spaces for visitors and local groups.

Sir Christopher Bland, a Patron of the museum, said: "The HLF rightly believe that 'small is beautiful' - and with the help of their generous grant, beautiful is what Ditchling Museum will become."

Notes to editors

The HLF grant to the project Ditchling Museum Development Project is for £835,600 (34% of project costs) and is a confirmed award.

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 33,900 projects, allocating over £4.4billion across the UK, including £423million to projects in the South East alone.

Further information

Vicky Wilford, HLF Press Office on 020 7591 6046 / 07973 401937 or vickyw@hlf.org.uk.

Hilary Williams, Ditchling Museum Director on 01273 844744 / hilary.ditchling@btconnect.com or Jenny KilBride, Chairman of the Trustees on 01273 843890 / jenny@jkilbride.plus.com.

Adam Richards, Adam Richards Architects on 020 7613 5077 or adam@adamrichards.co.uk.