# Enniskillen Castle master plan project given green light

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The proposals from Fermanagh District Council received a first-round pass and development grant of £111,200, which will be used to work up more detailed plans in order to secure the full £2.47million grant.

Enniskillen Castle was built in the 15th century by the Gaelic Maguires who ruled Fermanagh. Situated next to the River Erne and guarding one of the few passes into Ulster, it was strategically important throughout its history. The castle is within easy walking distance of the town centre and contributes greatly to the unique character of the area.

The new project will involve the restoration and refurbishment of many of the historic buildings contained within the castle complex for reuse as exhibition space. New visitor welcome and orientation spaces will be created to provide a more cohesive experience, hosting services such as a heritage, tourism and genealogy information point. A digital film archive and history hub will also be created to provide access to the museum's archives, photographic records and library. Four new galleries will create additional space to showcase the museum's collections which consist of thousands of objects, images and oral histories relating to the region.

Commenting on the award, Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: "Museums have an invaluable role to play in helping us to learn more about our past by using their collections to engage and inspire local communities, which is why HLF has already invested £31million in establishing and transforming our network of local and national museums.

"We are delighted to make this latest announcement of support for the museum sector which will see this hugely important heritage asset become the heritage gateway to the area. Having been awarded a first-round pass, Fermanagh District Council can now further develop the project to achieve its full potential and go forward to secure the full £2.47million grant."

A lecture series, seminar and public engagement programme will be used to involve the local community in the project.

Chairman of Fermanagh District Council, Councillor Alex Baird, welcomed news of the award: "Fermanagh District Council is delighted by the announcement that the Heritage Gateway Project at Enniskillen Castle has received an award from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This support is vital and will allow us to fully develop our proposal for the castle site. It represents a significant step towards creating a world class facility for Fermanagh to tell its unique story to visitors and locals alike."