Scotland’s ancient capital to get flagship museum thanks to £2.8m Heritage Lottery funding

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Today the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) announced a grant of £2.8 million to establish a new contemporary museum and art gallery in the historic city of Dunfermline. The investment is set to transform the cultural development of the city and boost its tourist economy.

The ancient capital of Scotland from the 11th to 15th century, Dunfermline has one of the best surviving medieval townscapes in teh country. Its Abbey and Palace were founded in the 11th century when Malcolm III established it as a new seat for royal power, while the nearby Abbey Church contains the tomb of Robert the Bruce. The city also has an important collection of industrial heritage from the 18th - 20th century relating to its once thriving textile, pottery and coal industires. The new Dunfermline Museum and Art Gallery will bring this illustrious history to life.

The facility will be developed across the site linking two Victorian buildings within the Outstanding Conservation Area: the Dunfermline Carnegie Library (the first of 2,600 libraries worldwide funded by the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie) and an adjacent B-listed former bank. Striking new architecture will cleverly integrate and extend the two buildings to create contemporary internal spaces for displaying the collections, while offering spectacular views of the mediaeval abbey and its historic setting.

Combining a museum, art gallery, archive, library and local history services, the new attraction will be a focal point for visitors and residents. Currently inaccessible collections will be displayed and interpreted for the first time, there will be facilities to stage touring exhibitions and a new programme of activities and events for schools, students and the people of Dunfermline will be launched. The museum will also act as a gateway to the town’s other heritage attractions such as Abbot House, the Palace and Abbey, St Margaret’s Cave and Pittencrieff Park.

Commenting on the decision, Colin McLean, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland, said: “The new museum will be a fantastic boost for Dunfermline and a top visitor attraction for Scotland. New life will be breathed into these two striking buildings so that treasures, which have been stored away for years, can be brought out for people to enjoy in a dynamic and contemporary setting. The Heritage Lottery Fund is delighted to be able to support Dunfermline’s holistic approach to its heritage so that visitors and locals alike can enjoy all that this important mediaeval capital has to offer.”

Cllr Mike Rumney chair of the City of Dunfermline Area committee, said: "This really is fantastic news for Dunfermline and for Fife. The major funding announced today from HLF, added to the £6.8 million investment from Fife Council and support from the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust, gives the project the green light and means our dreams of creating this exciting, new facility will now become a reality. It also reinforces the council's commitment to Dunfermline City centre through the town centre action plan.

"This new museum will showcase the past in a building fit for the future and give young and old a chance to access first class cultural facilities and learn more about the important part Dunfermline has played in Scottish history."

Further information

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