Restoring Gorton Monastery

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The HLF's support will kick-start the next phase of work which will enable essential repairs and conservation to the deteriorating stonework, original Pugin stencils, marouflage paint schemes and original tiled floors. It will also allow vital stabilisation and repair to the altar areas.

The development funding will help progress the monastery's plans for further community and visitor facilities including a new front wing to house an education and interpretation centre.

Commenting on the grant, Elaine Griffiths MBE, Chief Executive of the Monastery of St Francis and Gorton Trust, said: "This Heritage Lottery Fund backing is so important for the future of the monastery. We already provide jobs, projects and events for local people but we will be able to do so much more with HLF funding for this exciting next phase. This will mean many more local people and schools will be able to enjoy community events and projects here, and be part of this unique heritage project in the heart of Gorton. It's fantastic that we're now able to get skilled craftsman back on site to complete the work."

Paul Griffiths, Chairman of the Monastery of St Francis and Gorton Trust, said: "We have had a superb start to the year. This funding announcement comes only a week after being awarded three top national industry awards including UK's Best Unusual Venue for the second year running. Since re-opening as an events venue in 2007 we have gone from strength to strength, generating £8.5m for the city's economy, aside from our own revenues. Unfortunately there was never enough money in the initial rescue and restoration work to repair the altar and other essential work and sadly they have been deteriorating badly over the past few years.

"The HLF recognise that if we don't act now there is a risk that many of the original works of art will be lost forever. This support is tremendous and hugely appreciated."

Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West, said: "We are delighted to support the next phase of this project that will not only conserve the historic fabric of the much-loved Gorton Monastery, build on previous HLF investment and ensure its place in the heart of the community but also help local people get involved. It demonstrates how a heritage building, while providing an important link to a community's roots, can also be adapted for the needs of today."

Notes to editors

Gorton Monastery: Edward Pugin, one of the leading architects of the day and whose father Augustus was the architect for the Houses of Parliament, was commissioned to design and build the imposing church and friary on Gorton Lane by the Franciscans in 1863.

The Franciscans left the site in 1989 and after a failed attempt by a developer to convert the buildings into apartments, the building was finally handed over to the care of the Monastery of St Francis and Gorton Trust in 1996 after years of neglect. The Grade II * monastery's £6.5 million restoration was funded by major grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, European Regional Development Fund, English Heritage, and private donations, Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and the Architectural Heritage Fund.

The monastery is now widely regarded as Manchester’s most unique and inspiring events venue. Its flexible space accommodates up to 500 people and is ideal for events from product launches and corporate celebrations to weddings and large social occasions. For smaller, more intimate occasions, the Private Chapel can hold up to 50 people and is perfect for private dining or small business events. Last year, the monastery appointed Graham Campbell, a Michelin starred chef, as their Head Chef.

Further information

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