

Funding support for Lady Lever

24/10/2013

The Lady Lever Art Gallery has received initial support from HLF for a major redevelopment of the gallery.

National Museums Liverpool is planning £2.8m improvements to the venue that will see 500 square metres of gallery space transformed and returned to its original architectural design. This equates to a revamp of more than a quarter of the venue.

Other works would include making the gallery's internationally renowned collections more accessible to visitors and the entrance at the south end of the building would re-open. The refurbishment would see more than 1,700 items of fine and decorative redisplayed and new educational resources would also be developed for local schools and the community.

The collections set to benefit from new themed displays include Wedgwood, Chinese porcelain, 18th century paintings and furniture and Napoleonic era arts.

HLF has given the project a first round pass which includes a development grant of £149,400. This means National Museums Liverpool has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award.

Sandra Penketh, Director of Art Galleries National Museums Liverpool, said: "We are delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has accepted our first round application. This project will transform the gallery and breathe new life into the collections. It will also mean improved accessibility for our visitors and greater educational resources for local schools and the community. We'll be working hard to secure funding from elsewhere as we progress with this project."

The scheme would be entirely funded through major grants, donations and corporate sponsorship. A £350k gift from a charitable trust has already been gratefully received along with £200k from Garfield Weston.

Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West, said: "Bringing the Lady Lever Art Gallery's collections into the 21st century and making them relevant to today's audience while respecting the buildings original architectural design is a fantastic use of Heritage Lottery Fund money.

"This project aims to not only provide improved access and exhibition space for the world-class collections but it will also, through providing such a varied and interactive programme of community activities and events, enable thousands more people to enjoy what the gallery has to offer."

Alison McGovern, Wirral South MP and Shadow International Development Minister, said: "I have been going to the Lady Lever for many years and it is great to discover that this bid is progressing well. It is exciting news about one of Wirral South's prized jewels set in the historic and beautiful village of Port Sunlight."

Lady Lever Art Gallery was opened in 1922 by William Hesketh Lever to house the best of his personal art collection. It's situated in the centre of the model village, Port Sunlight.

Built by Lever for his workers, the gallery is today considered to hold one of the best fine and decorative arts collections in Europe. It has the best collection of Wedgwood Jasperware anywhere in the world and its collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings is internationally renowned.

Notes to editors

Heritage Grants applications are assessed in two rounds. A first-round pass is given when HLF has endorsed outline proposals and earmarked funding. A first-round pass may also include an immediate award to fund the development of the project. Detailed proposals are then considered by HLF at second round and as long as plans have progressed satisfactorily and according to the original proposal, an award for the project is confirmed.

National Museums Liverpool comprises eight venues, including some of the most visited museums in England outside of London. The collections are among the most important and varied in Europe and contain everything from Impressionist paintings and rare beetles to a lifejacket from the Titanic.

We attract more than 3million visitors every year. Our venues are the Museum of Liverpool, World Museum, the Walker Art Gallery, Merseyside Maritime Museum, International Slavery Museum, Border Force National Museum, Sudley House and the Lady Lever Art Gallery.

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Further information

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