New life for Castle Drogo

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Castle Drogo has suffered major structural problems ever since completion which have now resulted in serious leaks and water penetration throughout the building. If extensive conservation is not undertaken, the castle would eventually have become inaccessible and this national treasure would have been lost forever.

Castle Drogo is the last castle to have been built in Britain, between 1911 and 1931. designed by the renowned architect Edwin Lutyens, it was built for Julius Drewe, a food retailing magnate, whose dream was to have an imposing granite fortress that would appear to have existed for hundreds of years.

By contrast, the inside offered the ultimate in modern living and convenience with all the technology and comforts of the age. Plans to preserve the castle include the renovation of the massive flat roof structure using cutting-edge materials to make it permanently watertight.

This will be conservation on a grand scale. In order to install the new roof system, 2,355 granite blocks weighing 680 tonnes will have to be removed and then returned. Some 900 windows containing over 13,000 panes will be refurbished to stop them leaking and over 60,000 metres of pointing will need to be replaced.

A key aim of the project will be the involvement of local people. There will be opportunities for learning new skills such as masonry, joinery and leaded windows and exciting ways for volunteers to take part in their local heritage.

The future of the castle will also include new learning and exhibition spaces and opportunities to explore the estate's extensive grounds on Dartmoor.

In November 2010, the HLF awarded a first-round pass for Castle Drogo's application. This first-round pass award meant that the National Trust was able progress to the second stage of the HLF application process, in order to seek £2.5million of HLF support towards the £11million total cost of the project over five years.

Mark Harold, National Trust Regional Director, said: "We're delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this grant to help us save Castle Drogo. This grant will help safeguard the future of one of the country's most iconic buildings. In 2011 we launched a public appeal to raise £1.5million to safeguard the future of one of the country's most iconic buildings – Castle Drogo in Devon. Since that date just over £1million pounds has been raised, we would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has supported our public appeal so far."

Richard Bellamy, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund South West, said: "Castle Drogo is one of Devon's historic treasures and it is wonderful that we at the Heritage Lottery Fund are able to support the National Trust in its conservation. In addition to saving the unique building from the threat of loss, this fantastic project will also ensure that more people are able to actively engage with both the castle and its surrounding estate. Together we can ensure that this fine example of the country's heritage can be enjoyed by visitors for many generations to come."

To support the campaign to save Castle Drogo visit the National Trust website, follow the Castle Drogo campaign on twitter at www.twitter.com/savecastledrogo and on Facebook. You can also make a donation direct to the appeal by texting DROG11 followed by the amount you'd like to give (so DROG11 5 to give £5) to 70070.

Further information

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