A new young view of an old ‘forgotten jewel’

12/01/2011

That omission is now to be put right, thanks to a young people’s project awarded a £24,400 grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Working with Hulme-based social enterprise organisation REELmcr, a group of young people from the estate and local schools are to research the ‘forgotten jewel in Manchester’s crown.’

The young people, aged 13 to 21, will research what local life was like when the estate was built in 1919. They will be exploring information held at the People’s History Museum, The Working Class Movement Library in Salford and archives held by Manchester City Council.

Pupils from a number of local schools will be involved in the project that has been funded under the HLF’s Young Roots programme. These include Whalley Range High School for Girls, Loreto High School and William Hulme Grammar School.

The project will bring together older and younger generations on the estate with the young people recording the memories of older local residents to create a people’s history of the area. The material collected from the research and interviews will also be used to devise a drama documentary looking at the past and present of the Wilbraham Estate in which local volunteers or all ages will be invited to take part. The resulting DVD will be premiered next summer with copies distributed to local schools and libraries and donated to the North West Film and Sound Archives.

Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund North West, Sara Hilton, said: “This project will span the generations giving young and old a common goal to discover, to tell and to preserve the social history of their area.”

For REELmcr Jacqui Carroll, Creative Director, said: “It has never been so important to explore the origins of social housing as many changes are now taking place. The Wilbraham Road Estate was built in the inter-war period to house working class people from existing housing areas in Manchester, such as Hulme and Chorlton-on-Medlock. The standard of this inter-war 'housing estate' was far higher than the municipal housing already present in Manchester at that time. This Estate still has residents who are descendants from these first tenants. REELmcr has wanted to deliver a Heritage project about this fantastic estate for many years and is over the moon with this Heritage Lottery Fund grant.”

The grant was welcomed by Sir Gerald Kaufman MP, whose Gorton constituency includes the estate. He said: “I am delighted by the news of the Wilbraham Estate Heritage project. I have represented this marvellous area for many years and I am thrilled that, with the help of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant, young people will be able to compile fascinating information about their family background, their neighbourhood, and their city. Many congratulations!"

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

For further information please contact

Roland Smith, HLF Press Office on 020 7591 6047 / 07713 486 420 or rolands@hlf.org.uk

Jacqui Carroll, Creative Director REELmcr on 0161 226 4487.