

Ricky Tomlinson presents National Lottery Award to Glasgow heritage project

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The National Lottery Awards is the annual search to find the UK's favourite Lottery-funded projects. Heritage Lottery-funded Gartnavel Chapel – Cancer Support Centre emerged as the winner in the Best Heritage Project category, securing more public votes than its six fellow finalists, including world famous landmarks the Cutty Sark and the Giant's Causeway.

Well known for his role as the cantankerous patriarch of The Royle Family, Ricky's enthusiasm for the Glasgow project was at odds with the character's infamous 'my arse!' retort.

Ricky said: "Looking at this building today, it's difficult to imagine that it was close to ruin a few years ago. It's fantastic that the Glasgow Building Preservation Trust has restored it and turned it into a sanctuary where cancer patients can take time to relax, away from the pressures of their daily lives. This heritage project is not only about preserving the past but also helping people now and looking to the future.

"More than one in three of us will be diagnosed with cancer in our lifetime which is why the work of charities such as Cancer Support Scotland is so important. Gartnavel Chapel – Cancer Support Centre is a brilliant success story and I am delighted it has been recognised as the nation's favourite heritage project in the National Lottery Awards. National Lottery players should be proud that their money is supporting incredible projects like this."

Designed by architect JJ Burnet in 1904, the beautiful Gartnavel Chapel was at risk of being lost to structural decay before a bold project by Glasgow Building Preservation Trust, boosted by over £365,000 from the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund, saved the Category B building and restored it to its former glory.

The restoration of the building was combined with the conversion of its interior to house the new Calman Cancer Support Centre run by Cancer Support Scotland. The centre features calm and welcoming spaces where complementary therapies and counselling are delivered for free to cancer out-patients and their family and friends.

Colin Graham, Chief Executive of Cancer Support Scotland, said: "We are overwhelmed to have won this award. This time last year, we were operating out of small, cramped and totally unsuitable accommodation. By working in partnership with Glasgow Building Preservation Trust who secured National Lottery funding to help with the renovations, we now have this beautiful building which exceeds our expectations, enabling us to help and support more people through their cancer treatment. We are very grateful to everyone who voted for us – to know we are so valued by friends, visitors and supporters is wonderful."

Gill Stewart at Glasgow Building Preservation Trust added: “Whilst the process to bring Gartnavel Chapel back to life as a cancer support centre has been long, it’s been extremely rewarding. It’s brilliant to see the building being used as a haven again – similar to its original purpose as the non-denominational chapel of the former Royal Hospital based at Gartnavel. The motto of the chapel is ‘Let there be light again’ and we’re delighted that we’ve been able to fulfil that sentiment once more”.

Gartnavel Chapel beat off six other challengers in a public vote to win the Best Heritage Project. They will receive a £2,000 cash prize to spend on their project as well as a coveted National Lottery Awards trophy. The project will also feature at a star-studded awards ceremony hosted by John Barrowman and broadcast on BBC One in September.

Notes to editors

Gartnavel Chapel – Cancer Support Centre received £367,291 of National Lottery funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund .

Further information

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