Palace House project wins £4.2m

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The grant will support the proposed redevelopment of Newmarket's Palace House Site to create the Home of Horseracing National Heritage Centre.

Project plans include fully restoring the Palace House Stables and transforming the site into a heritage centre celebrating Newmarket's rich heritage as the historic home of horseracing. It will create a new home for the National Horseracing Museum as well as a gallery in Palace House itself for the nationally important collections of the British Sporting Art Trust.

The site's historic Rothschild Yard (built by Leopold de Rothschild in 1903) will be restored as a flagship home to the Retraining of Racehorses charity allowing the Museum for the first time to show live horses as part of the visitor experience.

Palace House is an architectural gem in the centre of Newmarket and the last remaining element of Charles II's sporting palace in the town.

Museum Director, Chris Garibaldi, said: "We couldn't be more pleased to have received this news – it recognizes the national importance of the Palace House site which was highlighted in Time Team's recent archaeological investigation. Our present exhibition at the Museum looks at the Royal history of Newmarket and is based on the extensive academic research which supported the HLF bid.

"One of the most important aspects of the support from the HLF is that it will help us to fund a programme of activity during the course of the redevelopment which will place the project at the heart of the local community. The HLF's support is particularly welcome, following on as it does from a major award announced by the Wellcome Trust last week to support the generation of new science displays in the redeveloped museum."

Peter Jensen, Chairman of the Home of Horseracing Trust which is raising funds for the project, said: "We are obviously delighted that the project has received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund. We are launching the final public phase of our fundraising campaign at the Craven meeting at Newmarket in April. We still have to raise £2m but we are confident that we are now entering the final furlong – it really is great news.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank Chris Garibaldi and his team at the museum and all the hard work of the many people who helped with the application process, together with the outstanding support of Forest Heath District Council and Suffolk County Council."

Cllr Robin Millar, Chairman of the Chairman of the Home of Horse Racing Working Group at Forest Heath District Council, said: "This is great news for a terrific project that will give Newmarket and racing the world class attraction that befits its status as the International Home of Horse Racing. There is no doubt this will be worth the wait and a big boost for the town and local economy."

Suffolk County Council's Portfolio Holder for Sport, Culture, Diversity, Health and Wellbeing, Cllr Kathy Gosling, is

delighted with such a major investment in the centre of Newmarket: “This will be a major boost in strengthening the appeal of the town centre beyond race days. Creating a major destination attraction which will create jobs whilst also promoting the unique appeal of the area. Suffolk County Council is pleased to be backing the development along with Forest Heath District Council.”

Inga Grimsey, Chair of Heritage Lottery Fund East of England Committee, said: “We at HLF are delighted to be able to support the development of the Home of Horseracing National Heritage Centre. Our grant of £4.2million underlines the importance of this fantastic heritage story. Through transforming Palace House and Stables, and bringing together both the Horseracing Museum and the British Sporting Art Trust, we can, for the first time, share the global history of horseracing.

"And in addition, the involvement of the Retraining of Racehorses charity will help visitors to fully understand the crucial role this sport has played in the life of Newmarket and the communities who live and work there. More importantly, this project will support future development and regeneration of the town, making a huge contribution to the local economy.”

Notes to editors

The National Horseracing Museum was opened to the public by its patron Her Majesty The Queen in 1983 and holds a nationally and internationally significant collection of fine and decorative art, social history objects, archive material and photographs relating to the history and science of racehorses and the people and places connected with the sport and industry of horseracing. The NHRM is a registered charity and operates independently of the government, local authority and racing industry.

It relies wholly on income from ticket admissions, sponsorship, donations and trading through its café and shop.

Further information

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