Turner’s house gets green light for restoration

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Completed in 1813, this pretty Regency villa was designed by Turner as a country residence for himself and his elderly father. Grade II* listed Sandycombe Lodge is largely unspoilt apart from some later additions, but, seriously threatened by damp and long neglect it is now on English Heritage’s Buildings At Risk Register. With additional damage caused by recent extreme weather patterns, restoration is now urgent and cannot be delayed.

This autumn, Turner’s House Trust will launch a £2million Bicentennial Appeal to save the house from dereliction and restore it to Turner’s own design. This is the amount needed for the project to be done properly: conservation of the lovely stair light alone is estimated to cost around £10,000.

In addition to the Heritage Lottery Fund grant for the development phase of the work, match funding will come from an Architectural Heritage Fund Project Development Grant, the trust’s own resources as well as many hours of volunteer time to get the project off the ground.

Whilst recognising past invaluable support from private donors and a generous Pilgrim Trust grant for emergency repairs to preserve the fabric, Turner’s House Trust is relieved that securing Sandycombe Lodge from further decline is now a certainty.

Catherine Parry-Wingfield, Chairman of Turner’s House Trust said: “With this generous support we shall now be in a position to seek the expertise of specialist conservationists to assess the extent and methodology of the restoration work required, and in particular, to learn more about the original appearance of the interior of Sandycombe Lodge. Turner’s own choice of wall colours may emerge from paint analysis, which would be extremely valuable.”

She continued: “We are delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund recognises the importance of this major building designed by Turner for his own use, and the potential to bring a little-known aspect of this famous artist’s life and work to a broad public.”

Sue Bowers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund London said: “We’re extremely pleased to give initial support to this project. Turner’s house in Twickenham is a little known historical gem, being the only surviving residence in the country designed and built by a major artist for his own use. We shall watch the developing plans for this 3.5 year project – which aims to restore, conserve and open up Sandycombe Lodge - with interest."

Notes to editors

Funders for the Turner’s House restoration project

The project has to date received support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Architectural Heritage Fund, the Pilgrim Trust, the Andrew Lloyd Webber Challenge Fund for Historic Buildings At Risk, Goldsmith’s Company, the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Civic Pride Fund, the Friends of Turner’s House, as well as a number of generous private donations.

Phase II: the capital phase and future development

A substantial grant towards the matching funding needed for the capital phase has been offered by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Challenge Fund for Historic Buildings at Risk. The aim of the Turner's House Bicentennial Appeal is to secure the remainder.

As well as carrying out essential repairs, the plan is to return Sandycombe Lodge to Turner's own design, an approach endorsed by English Heritage.

The house will be furnished quite sparsely and simply with furniture from the early 19th century, as records of Turner's visitors suggest. The Trust's collection of art, currently in store and suffering from decades in a damp environment, will be displayed for visitors to enjoy once restored.

The garden, now much smaller than Turner's large grounds, is key to the setting and character of Sandycombe Lodge, and planning its future appearance will be an important part of the development of this project.

Future plans include the development of education and outreach programmes as well as national and local partnerships, to ensure that Sandycombe Lodge is preserved for the nation and the enjoyment of art lovers worldwide.

Above all, working with conservation architects and many specialists, the Trustees of Turner's House have determined a sound strategy to secure an exciting and fitting future for the Twickenham home that provided the artist with a base for sketching along the Thames, an area of great beauty, which inspired many of his paintings, and also for his much-loved fishing trips.

Donations can be made at Turner's House in Twickenham website.

A first-round pass means the project meets HLF criteria for funding and HLF believes the project has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award. On occasion, an applicant with a first-round pass will also be awarded development funding towards the development of their scheme.

Further information

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