Strawberry Hill’s forever

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Horace Walpole’s magnificent Gothic castle, Strawberry Hill, will re-open to the public on Saturday 2 October. The site in Twickenham has undergone a £9million, two-year long restoration programme which was partly funded with a £4.9m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Strawberry Hill is Britain’s finest example of Georgian Gothic Revival architecture and is set to become a major tourist and heritage attraction for both London and the UK. It was designed and created as a Gothic fantasy between 1747 and 1792 by Horace Walpole, historian, writer and collector and son of Britain’s first Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole.

Having fallen into a state of extreme disrepair, the house had been on English Heritage’s ‘At Risk’ Register since 1991. Furthermore, it was listed by World Monuments Fund as one of the world’s 100 most endangered heritage sites in 2004, a move which proved a catalyst in starting a campaign for its repair.

Michael Snodin, Chairman of the Strawberry Hill Trust which has orchestrated the restoration, said: “With Strawberry Hill Horace Walpole set a fashion for Gothic architecture which led to buildings such as the Houses of Parliament and this trend then spread throughout the world.

“Strawberry Hill is an important part of Britain’s architectural history because it is a physical manifestation of Horace Walpole’s cultural legacy, which was to pioneer an imaginative self-expression in building, collecting and decorating which still inspires us today”.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of the Heritage Lottery Fund, said: “Back in the 1780s, Horace Walpole created a little bit of heritage magic in Twickenham. Fast forward several centuries and Strawberry Hill is once more resplendent in its Gothic glory and ready to throw its doors open again to visitors. The Heritage Lottery Fund’s support has helped safeguard the villa’s future, ensuring people of all ages will enjoy its wonderful architecture as well as learn about its central role in our country’s fascinating political history.”

Further information

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