High Mill Open Gallery receives support

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The project is focused on Dundee's internationally significant jute heritage, the cornerstone upon which the city's prosperity was built. The development will complete the restoration of the Category A listed Verdant Works, securing a sustainable future for this nationally important industrial heritage complex by creating a stunning space for the display of the trust’s collections and for artistic, cultural, educational and community events.

Development funding of £114,000 has also been awarded to help Dundee Heritage Trust progress their plans to apply for a full grant at a later date.

The £2.2million project will carry out essential conservation work to ensure the preservation of the High Mill and adjoining Glazed Alley which are currently derelict and on the Buildings at Risk Register. Built in 1833 the High Mill is the oldest and most imposing part of the significant industrial complex, approximately half of which has already been transformed into the award-winning Scotland’s Jute Museum @ Verdant Works.

As well as complete renewal of the roofs and building stabilisation work, the scheme involves an innovative idea to remove the rotten wooden floors, creating a full height cathedral-like space with a dramatic ‘forest’ of columns, revealing the monumental scale of the architecture.

The project will open up and improve public access to the city’s rich textile heritage by creating 971 square metres of new exhibition space, allowing for further interpretation and enabling some of the large industrial objects in the trust's reserve collections to be displayed for the first time. Graphic and audio visual interpretation will allow for more stories and themes to be explored and will use evocative images from the trust's important archive and photographic collections.

The project will create a new community resource where a wide variety of groups can meet to take part in heritage-based activities. A vibrant programme of events will engage diverse audiences, both current and new, with this newly accessible textile heritage. Having a flexible space suitable for innovative joint events and activities enables the trust to build new partnerships or strengthen existing ones with the numerous other cultural organisations within the city.

The project is also being generously supported by Historic Scotland which has allocated £500,000 towards the eligible building works. Dundee Heritage Trust is now embarking upon a major fundraising effort to raise the remaining £175,000 needed to ensure the project goes ahead.

Gill Poulter, Heritage Director for Dundee Heritage Trust said: ‘We’re delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this significant level of support which is fantastic news for the Trust and the city. The project gives us the opportunity to create something new and different that will have a dynamic future of its own but which is complementary to the existing jute museum, helping to protect and enhance it.’

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, added: “The Heritage Lottery Fund is delighted to give our initial support to a project which will complete the transformation of the Verdant Works site. Incorporating these last two buildings into the existing five star visitor attraction will mean that significant pieces of machinery can be brought out of storage and displayed for the very first time. This is an exciting time for Dundee as it develops as a cultural visitor

destination. It is only right that the heritage of the industry on which the town once thrived, plays a key role in that vision. We are excited to see how plans develop for the next stage of our funding process."

Martin Fairley, Head of Investment and Corporate Finance Policy at Historic Scotland said: "The 'A' listed Verdant Works High Mill is an important historic building with a fascinating history. We are pleased that it will be restored and give people the opportunity to learn about Scotland's textile heritage."

Notes for editors

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.

Formed in 1985, Dundee Heritage Trust is a registered charity dedicated to the guardianship, preservation and portrayal of Dundee's Heritage in ways that educate, inspire and enlighten current and future generations.

Historic Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Government charged with safeguarding the nation's historic environment and promoting its understanding and enjoyment.

Further information

For further information, images and interviews please contact Kim Adamson, Marketing Officer at Dundee Heritage Trust on 01382 309 067, email: kimadamson@dundeeheritage.co.uk.

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