Stars of ‘Mr Turner’ urge support to save JMW



Mike Leigh at the gate of Turner's House

Following generous support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) with a £1.4m grant, as well as private funders, the trust must still raise a further £270,000. Grade II* listed Sandycombe Lodge is on English Heritage’s Heritage at Risk Register.

Joining Mike Leigh were Marion Bailey (Mrs Booth), Paul Jesson (Turner’s father) and Nicholas Jones (Sir John Soane).

“Sandycombe Lodge is a unique and largely unknown three-dimensional work of art, designed by Turner for his own use. We support the trust’s intention to restore it to Turner’s original design, to be enjoyed by future generations. We cannot let this heritage be neglected.” said Mike Leigh.

Together with Timothy Spall, the actors had previously visited Sandycombe in the early stages of researching their film, although it did not feature in the film which was set later in Turner’s life. Having ‘lived’ Turner, they feel even more passionate about saving his country villa, his retreat from the hurly-burly of the Academy, patrons and domestic life. Here his ‘Old Dad’ kept house for his son, helping to entertain his friends, including Sir John Soane, architect and fellow-fisherman.

“We are delighted to have the support of Mike Leigh and his Mr. Turner cast, helping us to raise awareness and enabling the vision of restoring Sandycombe to become a reality,” said Catherine Parry-Wingfield, Chair of Turner’s House Trust. “Like the artists who have visited Sandycombe Lodge to paint, many say they have been inspired by a feeling that Turner’s legacy remains in the house. With our recent Heritage Lottery Fund grant, offers of support from other funders and generous public donations we are so near our goal to save this Turner treasure. We just need the final slice.”

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

Notes to editors

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.

Further information

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Mr Turner’s Twickenham home will be saved