

Birmingham Roundhouse

A project to breathe new life into Birmingham’s historic Grade II* listed Roundhouse, has come a step closer to fruition with the award of £2.2m from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The project marks a new partnership between the Canal & River Trust and National Trust and will transform the Roundhouse into a city base from which to explore Birmingham’s revitalised canals on foot or by bike.

Situated on Sheepcote Street, next door to the newly re-opened Fiddle & Bone Pub, the Roundhouse is owned by the Canal & River Trust. Built in 1874 by the Birmingham Corporation, it was originally used as stables and stores. Designed by local architect WH Ward, the horseshoe shaped building is now an iconic and much loved Birmingham landmark.

For the last 10 years the majority of the building has been disused and has been steadily falling into disrepair. This new collaboration between two major heritage organisations, plus this vital investment from HLF, will put an important and underutilised building back at the heart of the city’s canal network and give it a new lease of life.

As well as offering a base from which to explore the canal network, plans for the Roundhouse include a cycle hire and repair workshop, volunteering opportunities and a shared working space for conservation organisations. HLF has awarded an initial £225,000 development grant which will be used to work up these plans into a larger £2.9m scheme that will see the full restoration of this unusual building.

The grant has been awarded through HLF's Heritage Enterprise programme. It is designed to help when the cost of repairing an historic building is so high that restoration simply is not commercially viable. Grants of £100,000 to £5m bridge the financial gap, funding the vital repairs and conservation work needed to convert derelict, vacant and under-used buildings like The Roundhouse, into new, usable commercial spaces that can have a positive impact on local economies.

Vanessa Harbar, Head of HLF West Midlands, said: "Distinctive and highly adaptable, investing in historic industrial buildings like Birmingham's Roundhouse, has been proven to deliver economic benefits for both business and local communities. This vital National Lottery investment is helping to unlock that potential and promises to ensure the building has a sustainable future whilst triggering wider investment and job creation."

Stuart Mills, from the Canal & River Trust, said: "The Roundhouse is a truly iconic building and part of the history of Birmingham. We're really delighted to be working in partnership with the National Trust to bring it back to life, transforming it into somewhere for local communities and visitors to connect with the waterways and the broader history of Birmingham."

Lizzie Hatchman, General Manager for the National Trust in Birmingham, said: "We're very pleased with this announcement; it's a positive step towards saving an important part of Birmingham's history and heritage. This funding will allow us to start fully developing plans on how we can breathe new life into the building, and how we best showcase it to Birmingham's residents and visitors alike. The partnership between the National Trust and Canal & River Trust underpins what we hope will be a truly collaborative project, working with partners across Birmingham."

Notes to editors

The Canal & River Trust

The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales, caring for the nation's third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites.

They believe that living waterways transform places and enrich lives and their role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature. More information about the trust can be found at the Canal & River Trust website. Follow them on Twitter: @CanalRiverTrust, @crtcomms.

The National Trust

The National Trust looks after more than 250,000 hectares of countryside, 775 miles of coastline and hundreds of historic places across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. For more information and ideas for great value family days out, visit the National Trust website.

Best known in Birmingham for the hugely popular Back to Backs houses, the National Trust also cares for more than 250,000 hectares of countryside, 775 miles of coastline and hundreds of historic places across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This project constitutes part of the National Trust's new strategy, Playing Our Part, that seeks to explore new ways that the conservation and heritage organisation can 'play its part' in the places where people live and 'look after special places for ever, for everyone'.

Further information

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