HLF awards £950,000 to the National Museum of Scotland

The figure of a bodhisattva in gilt bronze from 15th-17th-century China National Museums of Scotland

The award of a first-round pass for a grant of £950,000 towards this major £3million project will enable National Museums Scotland to create two new galleries to open in 2018. The two galleries will showcase internationally important Ancient Egypt and East Asian collections.

This project will be the fourth and final phase of a 15-year masterplan designed to transform the National Museum of Scotland. Phase by phase the masterplan is restoring one of the UK's finest Victorian buildings, revealing remarkable treasures and creating inspiring learning experiences to engage yet more visitors.

The outstanding collections that will be displayed in the new galleries will include:

- the Qurna burial, the only intact royal burial group outside of Egypt
- a statue dedicated to King Snefru, who built the first true pyramid
- a bodhisattva in gilt bronze from 15th to 17th-century China
- a Japanese woodblock print from 1861, which is one of 4,000 owned by National Museums Scotland

Dr Gordon Rintoul, Director of National Museums Scotland, commented: "We are delighted that HLF has awarded funding for the final stage of our Masterplan for the National Museum of Scotland. This grant will enable us to create two

exciting new galleries in which to showcase our outstanding collections of Egyptian and East Asian material. Importantly the funding also allows us to create an ambitious programme of work right throughout Scotland, sharing collections, knowledge and skills across the breadth of the country."

Lucy Casot, Head of HLF in Scotland, said: “As the most popular museum in the country outside London, the National Museum is of paramount importance to the country’s tourist economy. HLF is extremely proud to have been a partner since the museum began its transformation and delighted that, thanks to players of the National Lottery, we can give our initial support to this last piece of the jigsaw.

"As a modern, engaging and fascinating place to visit, these two new galleries will attract even more visitors through the doors to marvel at Scotland’s national collection.”

Reaching the fundraising target

This announcement comes as National Museums Scotland confirmed it had reached the fundraising target of £14.1m to complete the third and current phase of the Masterplan. This phase sees ten new galleries of decorative art, fashion, design, science and technology opening to the public on 8 July.

The fundraising has been a huge success, and concluded with a £100,000 public campaign led by famous author Alexander McCall Smith. This inspired over 650 donors to give to the campaign, meeting its target well ahead of opening. The project has now been funded in full, thanks to HLF, the Scottish Government, the Wellcome Trust and other significant charitable trusts and foundations, as well as many individual Members and supporters who are vital partners in this redevelopment. Together their generosity has made the development possible.

The transformation so far of the National Museum of Scotland has achieved national and international recognition. In the five years since opening the second phase of development in 2011, the Museum has welcomed over 8.5m visits from Scotland, the UK and internationally.

The final phase

The final phase of the masterplan will create two new galleries: Ancient Egypt Rediscovered and Exploring East Asia. These will display material from some of the most important civilisations in human history through artefacts that are among the finest of their kind.

While the Egyptian gallery will show many previously unseen treasures from the national collections, the East Asia gallery will explore China, Japan and Korea with a host of important, beautiful and thought-provoking objects.

The galleries will invite visitors to reinterpret the familiar and explore the unknown. They will include a range of innovative digital experiences and be supported by an extensive learning programme, deepening engagement for students and visitors of all ages.

In conjunction with the two new galleries, an extensive national programme is being developed to increase access to the collections across Scotland. These will provide a range of activities, loans and outreach activity to extend knowledge of these fascinating collections beyond the walls of the Museum.

National Museums Scotland will work with individuals, trusts, foundations and the corporate sector to secure the remaining funds to complete the next phase of this ambitious and important project. The galleries will open in late 2018, when the Masterplan will then be complete.

Notes to editors

National Museums Scotland looks after museum collections of national and international importance and provides loans, partnerships, research and training in Scotland and internationally.

Their four museums are the National Museum of Scotland, the National Museum of Flight, the National Museum of Rural Life and the National War Museum. The National Museums Collection Centre houses conservation and research facilities as well as collections not currently on display.

The National Museum of Scotland reopened in summer 2011 following a three-year, £50m redevelopment. With over 8.5m visitors since reopening, the National Museum of Scotland is the most popular museum in the country outside of London according to ALVA figures.

Further information

National Museums Scotland : Susan Gray, via email: s.gray@nms.ac.uk or on tel: 0131 247 4088

HLF, Shiona Mackay, via email: shionamackay1@btinternet.com? or on tel: 01786 870 638/07779 142 890 or Jon Williams via email: jonw@hlf.org.uk or on tel: 0207 591 6035