£2million summer lottery boost for Yorkshire's heritage

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Doncaster's Grade I listed 12th century landmark Conisbrough Castle, and Rydedale's Grade II* listed Scampston Conservatory will now both benefit from major conservation and restoration works.

Fiona Spiers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for Yorkshire and the Humber, said: "This investment is exciting news for Doncaster and Ryedale, as we see two of Yorkshire's much-loved heritage sites brought to life and back to the heart of their communities. A rare medieval castle, and a gem of Victorian garden design will now offer exciting opportunities for people of all ages to get involved in the heritage on their doorstep while these special places are conserved and protected for future generations."

Liz Page, English Heritage Historic Properties Director for the North, said: "It's wonderful that two of Yorkshire's finest heritage gems are receiving this funding. We're particularly excited about the plans for Conisbrough Castle, a property in our care steeped in medieval history, and one of the best preserved Norman castles in the UK."

Conisbrough Castle, Doncaster: £900,000 confirmed Heritage Lottery Fund award
Exciting improvements are planned at Conisbrough Castle thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund which will see the castle become a premier heritage attraction and bring the medieval landmark back to the heart of the community.

The £1.1m project, to be run by Doncaster Council in partnership with English Heritage, will enhance the visitor experience and encourage greater community use for people of all ages. A new visitor centre housing educational and exhibition spaces will be created at the site's historic Custodian Lodge, offering exciting interactive interpretation for visitors, new educational materials such as 'Discovery Visit' workshops for local schools, and training on historical investigation techniques for volunteers to get involved. A programme of outreach work, learning and events will also be created and the site will benefit from improved access, signage and parking.

The 12th century Grade I listed castle – dating back 1000 years and made famous by featuring in Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe - is one of South Yorkshire's best surviving examples of medieval military architecture and one of the only surviving examples of its kind in Europe. Occupied by a string of noble families until it was handed back to the Crown in 1461 in a state of neglect, the castle features one of the most astounding Norman circular keep towers outside of France and thanks to early abandonment it escaped the ravages of Civil War and has been little altered since.

Mayor of Doncaster, Peter Davies said: "I am delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has supported this exciting project. Doncaster is the only place in Britain that is home to this type of unusually designed castle Keep, with the only similar kind existing in northern France. In its time, the castle was an advanced piece of design and even hosted royal visits, so I'm pleased the new visitor centre will celebrate its history. This investment will help transform the facilities and ensure visitors and our residents gain maximum enjoyment from its rich heritage. Doncaster is going from strength to strength as it makes the most of its many wonderful assets."

Caroline Flint, MP for Don Valley also showed her support for the project: "This is great news for Conisbrough and for heritage tourism in Doncaster. The £900,000 funding has the potential to transform tourism at the Castle and play a role

in the regeneration of Conisbrough town, which has not benefitted as much as it should have from this brilliant asset being on its doorstep. The plans foresee a growth in visitors and that can only be good for the town. The Heritage Lottery Fund decision is a vote of confidence in Conisbrough castle and everything this town offers."

Scampston Conservatory Restoration and Learning Centre: £1million confirmed Heritage Lottery Fund award
The Victorian conservatory in the grounds of Grade II* listed Scampston Hall, Ryedale, is to be saved from certain collapse in a project that will restore the historic structure to its former glory.

To be led by the Scampston Conservatory Preservation Co Ltd (SCPC), the scheme will conserve and protect the 1894 William Richardson & Co. Darlington designed building and surrounding brick-built gardeners' bothies - a major feature of Scampston Hall's Walled Garden and a significant example of the work of one of the most important hot house designers of the time. The house, (Hall) dating to 1690, and 80 acres of Capability Brown designed parkland are on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The Walled Garden at Scampston is a major attraction in the area and has been restored to a 21st century design by internationally recognised plantsman Piet Oudolf.

Once restored, the conservatory - built on a heated brick wall and currently missing its wings and many architectural details – will be put to use for heritage and education activities for schools and local groups. The new centre will see the conservatory interior divided by sliding screens into three main public areas for schools, community and an exhibition space, as well as an area for plants. A part time Learning and Education Officer is to be appointed to develop links with volunteers and widen the use and appeal of the conservatory to visitors of all ages.

Caroline Legard, project leader for SCPC said: "We are absolutely delighted with this award. It will be a huge challenge to the team at Scampston, but we now have the opportunity to restore the historic focal point of the Walled Garden together with the Bothies and use them to enable a wide range of people to become involved in our heritage, both cultural and environmental, at many levels. This concerns not only the Walled Garden but the estate as a whole, and this resource is completely untapped at present.

"We are also very grateful to our other major funder, RDPE Leader Coast, Wolds, Wetlands and Waterways, which is being financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and Defra as part of the Rural Development Programme for England. The HLF is an amazing gift to this country, especially in this economic climate: their funding has not only saved an important building from dereliction, but does much more besides, ensuring that everyone benefits and there is a lasting contribution to local people."

Anne Mcintosh, MP for Thirsk and Malton, welcomed the news: "I am delighted that Scampston Hall in Ryedale has been awarded this funding to regenerate the Victorian conservatory in the grounds of the Hall. It is a fantastic opportunity for the area to be able to attract more customers. The heritage and educational plans for the conservatory will encourage children to show an interest in the history of their local area."

Could you help the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to discover Yorkshire's enormous heritage potential? Last chance to apply this week - closing date for applications is Monday 9 July.
This year HLF is looking to recruit four new committee members to join its Committee for Yorkshire and the Humber. Made up of local people across the region, a place on the committee represents an exciting and challenging opportunity for individuals with a strong commitment to our diverse heritage.

From April 2012 all HLF regional committees have responsibility for awarding grants between £100,000 and £2million and acting as advocates for the value of heritage to modern life at every stage of the grant process. For more information on how to apply, call 0113 388 8030 or email: FionaS@hlf.org.uk

Note to editors

A confirmed award means that money had already been earmarked by HLF for the project in question and that the full amount has now been secured.

The HLF grant to the project Scampston Conservatory Restoration and Learning Centre is for £1,044,500 (83% of project costs) and is a second-round pass, which means it is a confirmed award.

The HLF grant to the project Conisbrough Castle is for £902,600 (82% of project costs) and is a second-round pass, which means it is a confirmed award.

Doncaster Tourism
Further information on Doncaster's visitor attractions is available on their website.

English Heritage
English Heritage is the Government's statutory advisor on the historic environment. We provide advice on how best to conserve England's heritage for the benefit of everyone. While most of England's heritage is in private hands, we work with all who come into contact with it - landowners, businesses, planners and developers, national, regional and local government, the Third Sector, local communities and the general public - to help them understand, value, care for and enjoy England's historic environment.

We are also entrusted with the custodianship of over 400 sites and monuments which together form the national collection of built and archaeological heritage. These include some of the most important monuments of human history such as Stonehenge and Hadrian's Wall. For further information about our work, please visit the English Heritage website.

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