Redevelopment for Aberdeen Art Gallery

29/04/2013

The redevelopment aims to transform Aberdeen Art Gallery and Cowdray Hall into a world-class cultural centre, celebrating art and music in the north east, and providing a focal point for the creative industries and Aberdeen‘s Cultural Quarter.

HLF’s support includes development funding of £126,200 to help Aberdeen City Council progress its plans to apply for a full grant at a later date.

The project will restore and modernise the buildings, celebrate and bring to life Aberdeen Art Gallery’s internationally significant permanent collections, expand the temporary displays and special exhibition galleries, enhance the visitor experience and allow the gallery to reach out to new audiences.

The redevelopment project will also seek to bring a renewed understanding of the third building within the complex – the War Memorial – which offers a treasured place for contemplation and reflection and continues to be the focus of the annual civic Act of Remembrance.

The total cost of the investment required is £30million over the next four financial years.

The level and extent of the council’s financial commitment to the overall programme includes a sum of £10million to be set aside from the non-housing capital programme (NHCP) for the financial period 2013-17.

It is also anticipated that the council will raise £10million through other grant funding as well as corporate, philanthropic and personal support. This would be combined with a high-profile fundraising campaign led by the Chief Executive of Aberdeen City Council, Valerie Watts.

An additional sum of £3millon has been set aside from the council’s non-housing capital programme in 2013 / 14 for an enabling project to create a museums collections centre. This centre, which will be open to visitors, will create a single site for all the museums and galleries collections and hold the art gallery collections during the building phase of the redevelopment.

The art gallery redevelopment is expected to begin in the first half of 2015 once the museums collections centre has been completed with the art gallery due to reopen in the summer of 2017.

Mrs Watts said: “The redevelopment will allow the city’s outstanding collections of fine and decorative art to be displayed to greatest effect and a new suite of temporary exhibition galleries will house large scale international exhibitions. Two dedicated spaces for schools and the community will increase the opportunities for people to engage with the collections and events programme and be inspired by Aberdeen's culture and history. It will also integrate the art gallery and Cowdray Hall more effectively, creating an unparalleled opportunity to connect art and music on a single site.

“As we bid to become UK City of Culture in 2017 this project is an important showcase for what culture means to the city and the people who live and work here.”

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: “The Heritage Lottery Fund is delighted to give our initial support to the transformation of Aberdeen Art Gallery into a modern venue fit for the city's wonderful collection. This ambitious project will breathe new life into an important building, with an imaginative new rooftop gallery, so that works which have been unavailable for some time can be displayed in a dynamic and contemporary setting.

“There is huge potential to showcase the arts and culture of the north east in a way in which will not only attract more tourists to the area, but will benefit Aberdonians of all ages as they explore and enjoy their heritage in a gallery of which they can be proud. We are excited to see how plans develop for the next stage of our funding process.”

Deputy Leader of Aberdeen City Council Councillor, Marie Boulton, said: "This is fantastic news. The redevelopment of Aberdeen Art Gallery is the council’s top cultural priority; its location is the very heart of the city's Cultural Quarter.

“Aberdeen Art Gallery attracts tens of thousands of visitors every year and its redevelopment will inspire and encourage the people who live, work and visit here to become more involved with an even bigger range of cultural activity and actively pursue their own creativity. This is another reason why Aberdeen is in a great position to bid to be the UK City of Culture 2017.”

The project architects Gareth Hoskins Architects of Glasgow is an award-winning practice whose clients include the Victoria and Albert Museum, the National Trust for Scotland and the National Museums of Scotland.

The architectural representations of the current redevelopment design ideas will go on public display on Saturday 27 April at Aberdeen Art Gallery, Schoolhill. These images are not the final design.

Notes to editors

A first-round pass means the project meets the 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 application with a first-round pass will also be awarded development funding towards the development of their scheme.

Gareth Hoskins Architects has completed a number of museum, gallery and cultural projects including the phenomenally successful redevelopment of the National Museum of Scotland in 2011.

Further information

Christine Rew, Art Gallery and Museums Manager, Aberdeen City Council, will be available for interviews / photographs on Friday 26 April 2013.

Aberdeen City Council: Stella Evans, Communications Officer on 01224 522 072, email: sevans@aberdeencity.gov.uk.

HLF: Shiona Mackay on 07779 142 890, email: shionamackay1@btinternet.com or Katie Owen on 0207 591 6036, email: katieo@hlf.org.uk.

Gareth Hoskins Architects: email: press@hoskinsarchitects.co.uk