British Postal Museum & Archive secures initial support from Heritage Lottery Fund

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Initial HLF support has been granted for an application of £4.25million and development funding of £250,000 has been awarded. The new Postal Museum & Archive will be situated in Calthorpe House on London's Mount Pleasant site, where the country's oldest mail centre is located.

The first-round pass means that the BPMA can now progress to the feasibility stage of its development and work up detailed proposals ahead of a round two application in 2013 to secure the remaining £4m. Further activities to generate funding to create a state of the art museum and visitor facility are taking place throughout 2012-13. The opening of the new museum is planned for late 2014.

The new Postal Museum will provide access to the BPMA's unique collections of 400 years of postal, social and design history. The collections, which include iconic objects such as red pillar boxes and postal vehicles, as well as every British stamp issued since the Penny Black, original design artwork, posters and photographs, are currently stored in cramped and inaccessible conditions. The new centre will also enable a vast expansion of its educational programme and engagement with young visitors.

The fascinating story of the Post Office underground railway will form part of the exhibition, together with other captivating stories from social, postal and design history.

Sue Bowers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund London, said: "The British Postal Museum and Archive's collection gives us a fascinating insight into 400 years of postal history and how it has shaped our world today. We're pleased to be giving initial support for this exciting project to regenerate the Royal Mail's Mount Pleasant site and give an internationally important collection a permanent home in the heart of London. We will be working closely with the Postal Heritage Trust over the coming months as they progress plans to secure a full HLF grant."

Adrian Steel, Director of the BPMA, commented: "We are delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given such a strong indication of its support for a new postal museum & archive. HLF initial investment of £250,000, together with public recognition from such a prestigious funder, is a ringing endorsement of our work to preserve Britain's postal heritage. It allows us to embark on the next stage of this exciting project to bring the human story of communication, industry and innovation to everyone."

Notes to editors

The British Postal Museum & Archive is the leading resource for all aspects of British postal history. It is a combined museum and archive, bringing together the Royal Mail archive and a museum store. With collections ranging from staff records to stamps, poster design to photography and from transport to telegrams, it cares for the visual, written and physical records from 400 years of innovation and service, illuminating the fascinating story of British communications. Records in the Royal Mail archive are designated as being of outstanding national importance. For more information see BPMA's website.

1. A Heritage Lottery Fund first-round pass means the project meets the HLF criteria for funding and their belief of its 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 applicant with a first-round pass will also be awarded some funding towards the development of their scheme.

Further information

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