Multi-million grant secures the future of Sir Walter Scott’s historic home

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The award of HLF funding means that a further £4 million of pledged funding for the project is now secure.

Abbotsford, near Melrose, is one of Scotland’s great cultural sites. The landscape, architecture and interiors were created by Sir Walter Scott, one of the most influential Scots that ever lived. Set amid extensive grounds, the house has been beautifully designed in the Scottish Baronial style to take advantage of its dramatic site overlooking the Tweed. It houses rare and unique collections including weapons belonging to Rob Roy and Bonnie Prince Charlie as well as Scott’s own huge library of over 9000 volumes exactly as it was when he was alive.

As Scott’s fame and influences spread across the world, Abbotsford became a celebrated literary shrine with tourists visiting even in Scott’s own lifetime. The house has changed little since then and is now in need of urgent repair and conservation.

With the help of Heritage Lottery funding, a new visitor centre with an exhibition area will be discreetly built into the landscape where people will be introduced to Scott and the many aspects of his life. There will be a new learning suite and a Learning and Engagement Officer who will develop for the first time a programme for schools and life long learners. In the house itself, the Sir Walter Scott rooms, which form the basis of the visitor tour, will be restored and repaired while modern security and environmental conditions will improve the long-term conservation of the collections.

Commenting, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland, Colin McLean, said: “Sir Walter Scott is recognised as the man who re-invented our Scottish national identity then presented it to the world through his literature. Through this project, Abbotsford can once again take its place on the world’s stage as a tourist destination and valuable education resource.

“The Heritage Lottery Fund has worked closely with the Abbotsford Trustees for over a year in developing this project. Today we can celebrate that this exceptional piece of Scottish history is going to have a vibrant and sustainable future, bringing income to the Borders and to Scotland.“

Michael Moore, MP for Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk, said: “The announcement of a £4.8m grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund is great news as it means the restoration of one of Scotland’s iconic and well known houses can now take place. It also means that funding from the Scottish Borders Council and the Scottish Government will also be released to help secure the future of the house for generations to come.

“Abbotsford House was the home of Sir Walter Scott who is regarded as one of the most influential writers and poets of his time. He was the first English language writer to have an international career during his own lifetime and it is only right that we retain a link with the man and his work.

“The restoration of the house will lead to another tourist attraction for the Borders which will help the local economy once completed.”

Culture Minister Fiona Hyslop, said: "This is fantastic news that the Abbotsford Trust are a step closer to providing world class facilities at the home of Sir Walter Scott. The appeal of Scott played a huge part in the success of the Year of Homecoming - generating £10m for the national economy and demonstrating the continuing international appeal of the man and his writing almost 200 years after his death.

"When I visited Abbotsford earlier this year I was particularly impressed by how the new facilities at the visitor centre will not just benefit people going to the house but will offer a base for wider tourism across the Borders, linking walking trails and showcasing what the region has to offer."

Lord Sanderson, Chairman of the Abbotsford Trust, said: “Our plans for Abbotsford aim to create a legacy for one of Scotland’s most important sons and through this, create a financially-viable, world-class visitor attraction that will bring lasting economic and cultural benefit. We are obviously delighted with today’s announcement which means that we have now raised £9 million of the estimated £10 million we believe is required to make our vision for Abbotsford a reality. We would like to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund and all of our other funding partners and supporters in the Borders, Scotland and beyond for their vital assistance.”

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has invested over £71.5million in land and countryside projects in Scotland.

Abbotsford is currently open daily until 31 October 2010. Mondays to Saturdays, 9.30am-5pm, Sundays; March, April, May and October: 11am-4pm
Sundays: June, July August and September: 9.30am-5pm
Admission:
House and grounds: Adult £7.00, Child £3.50
Family ticket (two adults and two children 6-15 years) £16.00
Gardens only: £3

www.scottsabbotsford.co.uk

Further information

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