Peckham Conservation Area wins initial Heritage Lottery Fund support

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The project aims to support the high quality redevelopment of historic buildings, public realm improvements and complementary community activities in this historic town centre with this conservation-led grant scheme.

Development funding of £50,000 has also been awarded to help Southwark Council progress its plans to apply for a full grant at a later date.

The project aims to assist in delivering the council's Area Action Plan vision and address the needs of historic buildings in the town centre. This will complement existing public realm improvements and other emerging proposals for high quality redevelopment. It will focus on investing in tackling building decay and the reinstatement of lost architectural detailing as well as providing a platform for complementary initiatives such as building the local community's capacity in traditional skills, education and involvement in the local heritage.

In 2009 English Heritage published its Historic Area Assessment of Central Peckham, which provided a detailed assessment of significance. The findings of this report ultimately led to the designation of the area as the Rye Lane, Peckham Conservation Area.

Peckham was first mentioned in the 11th century Domesday Book, as 'Pecheham'. The spelling of Peckham derives from the Old English words 'peak' and 'ham', describing a village or homestead by a peak or hill. Peckham's origins are as a small rural hamlet.

Today, Peckham is an inner-city area in south London with a densely built-up townscape. It developed from a rural hamlet to a metropolitan satellite in the 18th century before becoming suburban in the 19th century. Historically, it has been well connected to central London, served by a branch of the Grand Surrey Canal and suburban railway, as well as buses and trams.

The principal economic focus of central Peckham since the late 19th century has always been as a shopping centre. The historic settlement grew up around Peckham High Street, Peckham Hill Street and Rye Lane which still form its main road network. Although an area that suffers from social problems and economic deprivation, it is also a lively and culturally mixed place with a diverse built environment.

The Rye Lane Peckham Conservation Area is defined by its three principal roads: Peckham High Street, Peckham Hill Street and Rye Lane, and the staggered crossroads where they meet. The busy commercial streets, Rye Lane and Peckham High Street, contrast with the residential streets of the adjoining conservation areas of Holly Grove and Peckham Hill Street. The conservation area is largely characterised by a mixture of 18th century to mid-20th century buildings.

Councillor Peter John, Leader of Southwark Council, said: “We’re delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this substantial support in recognition of Peckham’s historic and architectural importance. It is a vibrant and beloved area for residents, who I am sure, will be equally pleased about this investment. The Townscape Heritage Initiative will complement the existing regeneration and Area Action Plan with the conservation of Peckham’s historic town centre, and will reinforce our commitment to investing in the community.”

Sue Bowers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund London, said: “Peckham is a buzzing local town and home to some wonderful heritage - some of which has been sadly fallen into disrepair over recent years. This Heritage Lottery Fund support will ensure that important regeneration plans can progress and some of the problems with the historic buildings in the area can begin to be addressed. We are proud to be playing a key role in helping to revitalise Peckham and provide some much needed support for the local authority and residents who want to make where they live a better place to be.”

Notes to editors

A Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) earmarked first-round pass means that money has been set aside by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the scheme in question. Competition at this stage is tough, and while it does not guarantee funding, it is an indication of positive support. The applicants can then progress to the second round and submit a further, fully-developed application to secure the full award. This early level of strong financial commitment means that THIs can build strong partnerships with the assurance that funding for their scheme is in place provided their final proposals develop well.

HLF’s Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) encourages partnerships of local organisations to carry out repairs and other works to a number of historic buildings, structures or spaces. Grants range from £500,000 to £2m. To date, HLF has invested over £214m regenerating towns that have suffered serious social and economic decline. The deadline for first-round applications is 31 October and decisions will be made in March 2013.

Further information

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