Peter Pan Trust celebrates lottery grant success for children's literature centre

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The development grant, of nearly £220,000, comes hot on the heels of last week's Creative Scotland award of £45,000 to the project and, together, they will allow the Trust to determine the future design and content of their plans to restore Moat Brae House and Garden in Dumfries.

Announcing the award, Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: "The Heritage Lottery Fund has given an initial indication of support to this exciting and challenging project which could capture people's imagination. Moat Brae and its gardens have an important place in the history of Dumfries. A new breath of life has the potential to transform them into a visitor attraction that could boost the town's tourist economy and inspire children today and tomorrow, as they once inspired JM Barrie. We look forward to seeing the project develop further."

The Trust's patron, Joanna Lumley, greeted the news, saying: "These grants will make a sensational difference to Moat Brae and the plans for the future of the Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust. It means that we can move swiftly towards our goals of restoring the house in readiness for its role in the literary life of children in Scotland. Our aims are to nurture the memories of past writers and to encourage the emergence of new young talent: to respect our extraordinary literary inheritance and to enable children's imaginations to fly, like Peter Pan. What a thrilling piece of good news! "

The news was also welcomed by the Trust's Chairman, Dame Barbara Kelly, who said: "This announcement comes at a very crucial stage of our development and is really good news for Dumfries. To have both HLF and Creative Scotland invest in the region in such a major regeneration project is a very significant and optimistic message for the future. This is of huge importance to us all and it's a wonderful moment for the Trust as we embark on our journey to celebrate the birthplace of Peter Pan in Neverland."

Project Director Cathy Agnew said "We now have a lot of work ahead of us but these grants will enable us to tease out the detail of how we will achieve our vision and to research the wide range of literary and cultural activities we plan to promote". She added: "This has given us the opportunity to refine and hone our ideas and build robust partnerships with other national organisations who will want to play their part in the future of Moat Brae. We will then apply again to both HLF and Creative Scotland for further funding towards Phase B capital works."

The grants will allow the Trust to produce designs for the final development of Moat Brae House and gardens, including exhibition space within the existing building and a proposed new development, adjacent to the property, to house modern visitor facilities. The work is expected to take up to two years and will run in parallel with existing plans for the Phase A restoration works which are expected to start on site in January 2013. This weekend also saw over 250 people visit Moat Brae as part of the Doors Open Days initiative.

Notes to editors

Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland has awarded the Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust a round one development grant of £219,706.50. Together with matching funds from Creative Scotland and other sources, this will allow the Trust to

commission work on the design of the new development which is expected to take up to two years to complete.

On Monday 24 September Creative Scotland made the Trust a Development Award of £45,000. The Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust was set up in 2009 to save Moat Brae House and garden from demolition and to celebrate its international literary connection as ‘The Birthplace of Peter Pan’. Its aim is to save and restore the ‘B listed’ Moat Brae house and garden in George Street, Dumfries, where J. M Barrie played as a child and was inspired to write one of the most famous children’s stories in the world, developing this into Scotland’s Centre for Children’s Literature.

The Trust’s fundraising campaign was launched by patron Joanna Lumley in August 2011 and, as a result of this, the Trust has been able to complete emergency works on the house and recently announced that it had been successful in raising the funds necessary to start on Phase A restoration work. The latter is expected to start on site in January 2013.

The Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust is a member of the Association of Building Preservation Trusts.

This project has been adopted for support by the Prince’s Regeneration Trust “For our escapades in a certain Dumfries garden, which is enchanted land to me, was certainly the genesis of that nefarious work – Peter Pan” - J.M Barrie

Further information

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