Piece Hall set to become world class heritage destination

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The Piece Hall Transformation project will turn this extraordinary building into a world class heritage destination in the heart of the North of England. The Piece Hall is at the centre of the regeneration of Halifax, boosting jobs and tourism for the whole of Calderdale – another sign that Halifax is well and truly on the up.

The funding will help deliver a 21st century Piece Hall with a visitor and heritage centre offering a unique insight into the history of the building; learning opportunities; exciting events; shopping, eating and drinking; workspaces for creative businesses; a venue for conferences and meetings; all enclosed in a beautifully restored Georgian building, with an open town square courtyard.

Work is expected to commence in late 2013 and will be done in phases to enable the Piece Hall to remain open throughout. It is expected to be completed in 2015, when it will transfer to an independent Trust.

“This is fantastic news!” says Council Leader, Cllr Tim Swift. “A revitalised Piece Hall will be a magnet for visitors, offering a spectacular heritage attraction and public space and excellent leisure and retail business opportunities. This will be of huge economic benefit to the town and to Calderdale as a borough.”

The whole project is expected to cost £19million and will require significant investment from the Council and other sources. But the £7million investment from the HLF was key to the project going ahead.

“We put a great bid together and the HLF’s decision confirms what Calderdale people have always known – that the Piece Hall is a national treasure and a huge asset to the region,” says Cllr Swift.

Fiona Spiers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Yorkshire and Humber, says: “The Piece Hall’s courtyard has huge potential as an open civic space and popular tourist destination. We’re very pleased to have awarded £7m to help create a vibrant piazza which will retain the integrity of the 18th century architecture and celebrate its role in West Yorkshire history. This project is a good example of the role that heritage can play in bringing people together and creating the perfect site for learning and recreation.”

Calderdale Council’s Deputy Leader, Cllr Janet Battye, says: “The HLF decision confirms that all our hard work has been well worth it. It will be incredibly exciting to see work starting on site later this year to realise the Council’s vision. People are extremely proud of the Piece Hall and its rich heritage. As custodians of this beautiful and unique building, we want to make sure it can be enjoyed by generations to come. This project will go a long way to ensuring that happens.”

Calderdale Council’s Conservative Group Leader, Cllr Stephen Baines, says: “The Piece Hall transformation, along with other developments in the town, will help Halifax strengthen its civic pride, its confidence, and its reputation as a business district, and will help to attract further investment.”

Calderdale Council's Director of Communities, Robin Tuddenham, says he is delighted with the news: "We have worked extremely hard over the last two years to put together a strong bid and it's great to see that work rewarded. The love for the Piece Hall and its potential for the future shone through the bid. We are over the moon and really excited to progress the scheme and deliver a new heritage attraction everyone can be proud of."

Calderdale Council submitted its bid to HLF in March 2012 following public consultation last year, inspiring more than 2,000 separate comments:

- "The Piece Hall is unique to Britain and is an outstanding piece of architecture"
- "There's nothing like it in the country. This should be a destination for the whole of the north"
- "This is a very important building in West Yorkshire, even in England and needs to be preserved and cared for at all costs"
- "The Piece Hall is architecturally stunning and if the plans get the go ahead could attract thousands of visitors to Halifax, boosting the local economy"

Quotes on the Piece Hall:

- "The Piece Hall is the building that makes Halifax unique and is perhaps Yorkshire's most important secular building." **English Heritage, The Building of Halifax, 2010**
- "Piece Hall is a surprise and a delight. It has a sense of place that is all its own, with a friendly atmosphere and a casual approach to commerce. Despite an up-and-down history, Piece Hall wears its noble architectural heritage with dignity and modesty." **Robert F Gatje, Great Public Squares, 2010**
- "Halifax is full of character and hidden beauty. The Piece Hall is symbolic of its hidden and great worth. The skyline of Halifax, its churches, chapels, mills and warehouses, is something never to be forgotten and gives Halifax its identity." **Sir John Betjeman, 1979**
- "We believe passionately that Halifax's rich architectural legacy is a major asset to be enjoyed and celebrated by residents and visitors alike." **English Heritage, The Building of Halifax, 2010**

Notes to editors

Nestling in the South Pennines between Leeds and Manchester, Calderdale is a vibrant, contemporary place to be. The river Calder and its tributary valleys link together the open fields of the lower valleys giving way to the Pennine moors climbing west towards Manchester.

Halifax is Calderdale's largest town and still retains one of the most Victorian landscapes in Britain.

Calderdale also boasts amazing towns and villages such as Hebden Bridge, Heptonstall, Sowerby Bridge, Brighouse and Todmorden.

Further information

For computer generated images, artist's impressions and photographs please contact elizabeth.mandebura@calderdale.gov.uk.