Restoration of mound marks major milestone in Duthie Park's Victorian makeover

30/11/2012

With its spiral walkway and flag pole set on a granite plinth, the iconic landmark now reflects its original design, first drawn up in the late 19th century.

The mound will be open to the public from Monday 3 December 2012 offering impressive vistas across the south of the city.

Aberdeen City Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) are joint funders of the restoration project which will revitalise the historic 44-acre park, encourage even more people to visit, and make it an attractive setting for new activities and events.

Councillor Neil Cooney, Convener of Housing and Environment, said: "The completion of the mound is an exciting milestone in this ambitious restoration project which is breathing new life into one of our most loved parks.

"The mound has always been an impressive landmark in Duthie Park but in recent years lost its iconic image. I am absolutely thrilled that it has now been reinstated and that the hard work of everyone involved is there to see. This is the first of many milestones in the restoration project and I am sure the whole city will watch with interest as we continue to return Duthie Park to its former glory."

Colin McLean, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland, said: "This is a landmark milestone in the restoration of this extremely popular park. Not only is the heritage of Duthie Park being protected but new and better facilities will encourage more people through the gates to enjoy this Aberdeen treasure. We are delighted that our Parks for People programme is helping make that happen."

Tony Dawson, chairman of the Friends of Duthie Park group, said: "The Friends group is delighted to hear about this hugely positive step forward in the restoration of Duthie Park. This is a project which has our full support and, once complete, will undoubtedly lead to more people enjoying this great facility."

Despite later modifications, Duthie Park remains an outstanding example of a late Victorian park, one of the best and most complete of its type in Scotland.

Its historical significance has led to its inclusion in Historic Scotland's Inventory of Designed Landscapes and Gardens and the restoration and reconstruction of some of the lost features is being inspired by old written and photographic sources.

The restoration of Duthie Park was conceived in 2001 and secured a £2.56million grant from the HLF, matched with £2.67million from Aberdeen City Council.

Most of the park and the David Welch Winter Gardens remains accessible while the restoration work in other areas continues, however, some parts of the park will be out of bounds during certain stages in the interest of health of safety.

Members of the public are advised that tarring work will be taking place from Monday 3 December to Friday 7 December from the Polmuir Road entrance past the play area and to the restaurant. This could cause some disruption for park users who might have to use alternative park entrances for short periods.

Elsewhere, work continues as follows:

The Linked Lakes
Work on the upper lake is nearing completion. The balustrade across the upper dam is now in place, as are the sluice gates which are now closed and ready for the lakes to be filled. Ornamental coping is being installed on the edge of the lower lake and work has started on paths and steps in this area.

The Terrace
All of the surfacing to the footpaths and planting area is complete and gardeners will soon begin planting.

Duthie Fountain
Stonemasons have started work to restore the fountain. Scaffolding has been erected and repairs are being made to the flowers, leaves and swan’s beaks sculptures at the base of the fountain.

The Pavilion
Work is nearing completion at the former Bowling Pavilion.

Boating Lake and Car Park
The footpaths around the boating lake have been tarred and work to improve access to this area is continuing.

Fencing and boundary walls
Work to repair the wall at the south west corner of the park is now complete. The stonemasons are currently working at the south east entrance to the car park. Final repairs are being made to the ornamental railings.

Notes to editors

The Duthie Park restoration is separate to work being carried out at the park using money donated by the late Lorna Doreen Russell. Mrs Russell bequeathed £834,000 for the sole purpose of 'extending, improving or otherwise refurbishing that part of the Duthie Park known as the Winter Gardens or providing further facilities at the park.' Mrs Russell’s donation will fund the replacement of greenhouses, refurbishment of play areas, creation of a new play area, reorganisation of the restaurant and shop area and improvements to the raised bed courtyard area in the winter gardens.