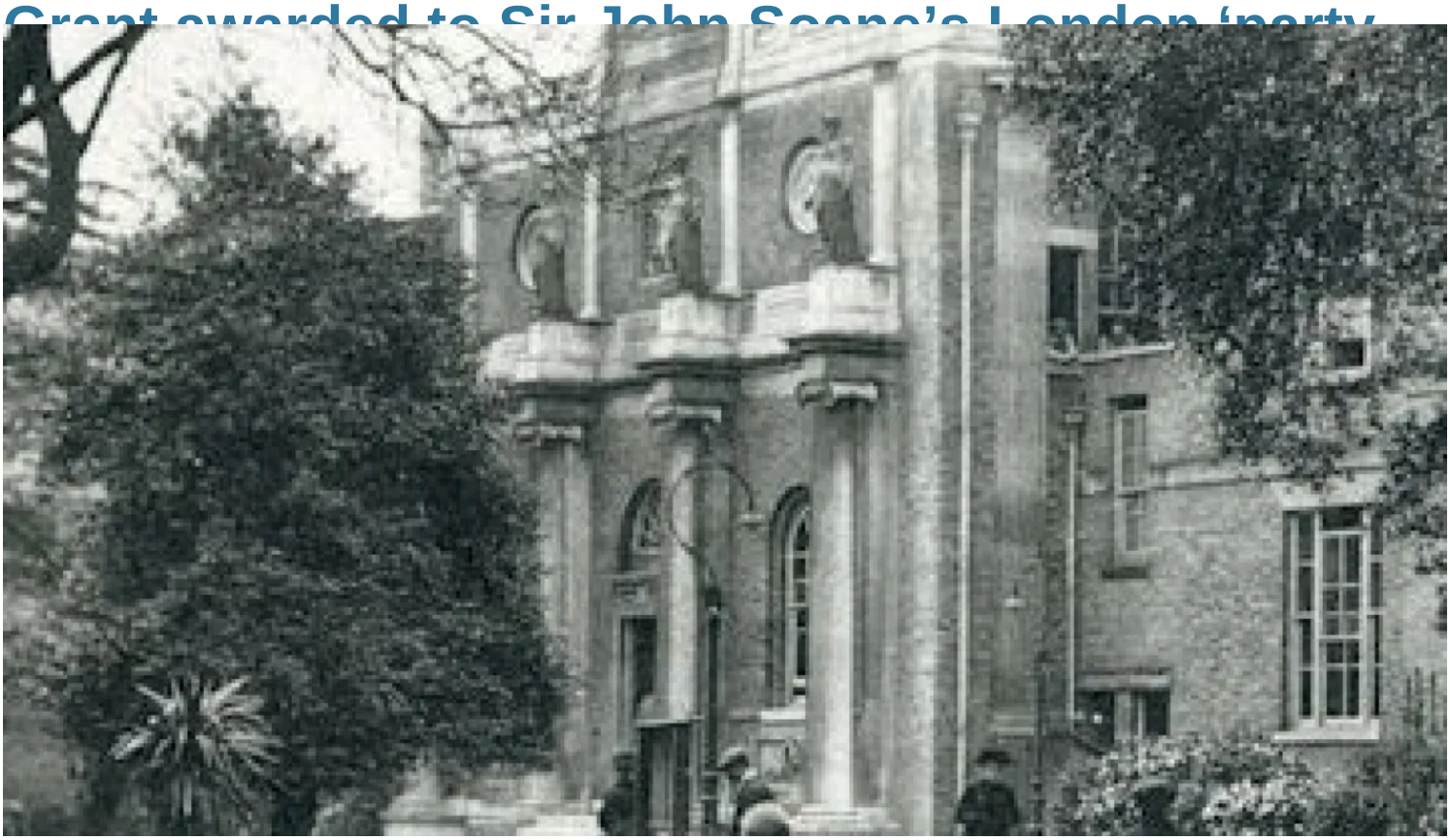
Grant awarded to Sir John Soane's London 'party



One of London's architectural treasures will be fully restored following today's announcement of a major grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Pitzhanger Manor House, the personal 'dream home' created in the early years of the 19th century by one of Britain's greatest architects, Sir John Soane, will undergo a major redevelopment thanks to the £4.42m grant.

The project, which is being led by Ealing Council in partnership with Pitzhanger Manor Trust, will include completely restoring the building, upgrading the 1939 art gallery extension and creating a new café in the walled garden, as well as improving visitor facilities and accessibility. Appointed by Ealing Council, a design team led by architects Jestico + Whiles, including conservation architects Julian Harrap Architects LLP and landscape architects J&L Gibbons, will transform Pitzhanger Manor House and reinstate the rich heritage of Soane's designs within their original Regency landscape setting.

Pitzhanger Manor House is an internationally significant part of London's architectural heritage. Today's award means that Soane's Grade I listed historic manor house will be restored properly for the first time, creating a world class heritage site, as well as the restoration of the gallery for major exhibitions and seeing the magnificent revelation of Soane's original vision for his weekend home, a rare, surviving Regency villa and gardens, uniquely positioned in the now urbanised setting of Ealing Town Centre.

Important areas such as the north side of the building and the west elevation of Soane's Eating Room, which are currently hidden by unsympathetic later additions to the building, will be revealed; original rooms, currently closed to the public and used as offices, will be opened up; and important illustrations of Soane's design genius, notably his glasshouse, will be reinstated. And, for the first time, Pitzhanger will be fully accessible by all visitors.

The whole project will present Pitzhanger Manor House as Soane intended, restoring the visual power of the building and enabling all visitors to appreciate its quality. The project will also see the house and gallery re-integrated with the adjoining Walpole Park, originally the grounds of Soane's home, in which he used to stroll and go fishing with his friend, the artist J.M.W. Turner. A major project to restore the historic landscape and build new facilities in the park is also underway, providing a complementary setting for the rejuvenated house and gallery. The park is expected to be fully restored by the end of summer 2014.

Leader of Ealing Council, Councillor Julian Bell, said: "This is a momentous day for Pitzhanger Manor House and Gallery and evidence of years of hard work by the council's project team to pull it all together. The manor house and gallery is bursting with beauty and history, so I am delighted that Ealing Council can now work alongside Pitzhanger Manor Trust to restore the building and build new facilities so that the story of Soane can be fully revealed for the first time. Pitzhanger Manor House and Gallery is the crown jewel of Ealing and is a true inspiration with its fascinating history and architectural significance. Thank you to the Heritage Lottery Fund for guaranteeing its future and helping us to open up the house and gallery to more people than ever before."

The Pitzhanger Manor Trust was formed at the end of 2012 to work with Ealing Council to manage the project and raise the remaining funds. Chair of the Trust, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, said: "This exciting news is the culmination of years of work by Ealing Council and, since it was set up in November 2012, by the Pitzhanger Manor Trust. It has taken a number of years and lots of hard work to get to this stage. But this is only the start and not the end for the trust! We still have about £2m to raise of the nearly £11m needed for the planned restoration and rebuilding of the manor and gallery. While we are well on our way, there is still a lot to do. With the plans on the table and the support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, I am certain that when the manor, gallery and new café / event space re-open in 2018 we will be delivering not only a local but a world class attraction that will take its rightful place in England's cultural heritage."

Sue Bowers, Head of HLF London, said: "We were impressed with the council's plans, in partnership with Pitzhanger Manor Trust, to restore Pitzhanger Manor and reveal its fascinating back story. Since its creation as a 'dream home' by Sir John Soane in the 18th century, the site has played an important role in Ealing life but is a bit of a 'hidden gem'. With help from the Heritage Lottery Fund the site will be connected back to the nearby high street and to its regency landscaping in Walpole Park, putting the manor and its gardens back on the radar of both the surrounding community and those who come to visit from further afield."

Inside the house, a new permanent exhibition will tell the story of Soane, examining his architectural style, his rise to fame and his greatest buildings, through the prism of his ten years at Pitzhanger Manor (1800-1810). This was a significant time for Soane and a period when London was the biggest city in the world, at the heart of international political, artistic and social movements.

As the manor is revealed, the adjoining Pitzhanger Manor Gallery (built in 1939 as Ealing Public Library), currently a thriving contemporary art venue, will be developed into a new gallery space, with a programme of visual arts, design and architecture exhibitions. It will also include a new visitor reception area and shop. Elsewhere in Soane's walled garden will be the new café building.

A new learning programme will run throughout Soane’s rooms, taking inspiration from his work to offer talks, tours, workshops and curator events, covering history, architecture, design and visual arts subjects. Programmes specifically for people from the local borough will aim to introduce new audiences to Pitzhanger Manor House & Gallery and increase their understanding of their town’s heritage, while enabling people who have recently arrived in Ealing to meet, learn about each other’s culture and the place in which they have come to live.

Jestico + Whiles is the architect leading the project team, working closely with heritage experts Julian Harrap Architects LLP and Sarah Couch Historic Landscapes and in collaboration with landscape architect J&L Gibbons and exhibition designers Ralph Appelbaum Associates. Engineers Ellis & Moore and environmental specialists King Shaw Associates complete the team.

Jestico + Whiles’ Director, Heinz Richardson, said: “Having been originally appointed in 2009, it is extremely pleasing to have secured further funding to continue the restoration of Pitzhanger Manor’s rich history. The expert team has worked together closely on a design that will sensitively restore and reveal Soane’s masterpiece whilst introducing contemporary design into the refurbished gallery and new café, ensuring its future as a world-class manor house and cultural venue for West London.”

Soane bought Pitzhanger Manor House in 1800, demolishing most of the existing property and redesigning and rebuilding it to his own specification. Sitting within Walpole Park in central Ealing and similar to his main London home, the house contains some of Soane’s most impressive interiors, with vaulted ceilings, interconnecting rooms, inset mirrors and stripped back classical detailing. He sold Pitzhanger Manor House in 1810 and it passed through several hands until, in 1843, it became home to the daughters of Britain's only assassinated Prime Minister, Spencer Perceval, who was shot in the lobby of the House of Commons.

With the Bank of England and Dulwich Picture Gallery among his many buildings, Soane’s work is internationally celebrated. He built Pitzhanger Manor House as a ‘sort of portrait’, originally intending it as a showcase for his architectural approach, to house much of the art and objects which formed the basis of Sir John Soane’s Museum’s collections and as an inspiration for his sons to become architects. While the latter did not come to pass, Soane was particularly fond of Pitzhanger Manor House, regularly inviting his extended circle of friends and contemporaries from the arts and sciences, to visit him at his weekend home.

Soane’s invitations, to the likes of Turner, sculptor John Flaxman, opera singer John Braham and Bank of England Director Samuel Thornton, were to take part in cultural gatherings - opportunities to discuss and debate the issues of the day. The events would take place in the Eating Room, with Sir John and his wife Eliza, entertaining neighbours, friends, artists and clients, but rarely other architects. Apart from dinner, the evenings would include a walk in the grounds and a tour of the House.

Notes to editors

- Pitzhanger Manor is both a historic venue and contemporary arts venue. Pitzhanger Manor Gallery is the 1939 extension to Pitzhanger, built on the site of Soane’s original kitchen block and mock Roman ruins. The largest exhibition space in West London, PM Gallery houses contemporary art exhibitions throughout the year. Exhibitions often run through from the gallery into the house, with site-specific work that responds directly to the history and architecture of the house.
- Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles is the first Chairman of the Pitzhanger Manor Trust. After 33 years in HM Diplomatic Service, he now works in a senior advisory role at HSBC Holdings. He spent his last three and half years as a diplomat working in and on Afghanistan. Sherard also served as British Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and to

Israel. Sherard read classics at Oxford where he was also an active member of the Architectural Society. He speaks Arabic, French, Hebrew and some Pashtu. Sherard lives in Ealing, close to Pitzhanger Manor and quite coincidentally was married at Pitzhanger Manor in April 2012.

- Pitzhanger Manor House & Gallery are owned and run by Ealing Council, which has five top priorities: securing public services, making Ealing cleaner, securing jobs and homes, making Ealing safer and delivering value for money. For more information please visit Ealing Council's website or follow Ealing Council on Twitter @ealingcouncil.
- Jestico + Whiles is an award-winning architecture and interior design practice with offices in London and Prague. Its international portfolio of work spans over three decades, including many examples of strikingly innovative and contemporary new uses for significant heritage buildings across Europe. The practice has worked on more than 25 listed buildings in the UK, and its ambition to bring design excellence to the rejuvenation of existing buildings exemplifies its commitment to sustainability and quality of design in all forms of construction. Jestico + Whiles' reputation for excellence is well established both nationally and internationally, with recent projects completed including the refurbishment of 32 Lincoln's Inn Fields (Grade II listed) for London School of Economics & Political Science, 10 Portman Square for British Land and the RIBA award winning Borough Viaduct redevelopment for Network Rail.
- Julian Harrap Architects LLP, based in Hackney, London, was established in the early 1970s. The award-winning practice is involved with many prestigious buildings and is currently working on projects for the Soane Museum, Pitzhanger Manor, Cliveden House, the Royal Academy and Lakenhaal Museum in the Netherlands. JHA specialises in architectural services for the repair and restoration of historic buildings, estates and landscapes, as well as the design of new buildings in historic settings.

Further information

Contact Emilie Armstrong on 020 8825 9437, email: armstronge@ealing.gov.uk.