Story of Worcester Porcelain to be told thanks to Lottery support

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The project will ‘Celebrate 250 years of Innovation, Industry and Craftsmanship’ and will champion the role that Royal Worcester and its highly skilled workforce played in the world of ceramics.

A £88,992 development grant from HLF has been awarded to carry out detailed planning in the New Year, and the museum will need to raise matched funds of £34,609 for this stage of the works. When the plans are complete, it will apply for 78% of the remaining balance to implement the changes and if successful phased work will begin in the autumn of 2013 to ensure the museum remains open to the public throughout.

The museum is adjacent to the old Royal Worcester Factory in Severn Street and just 2 minutes walk from Worcester Cathedral.

From the very start of production in the 1750s, visitors were encouraged to take a factory tour and marvel at the manufacturing processes and factory skills required in this labour intensive industry. Visiting the factory was one of Worcester’s major tourist attractions and the experience was lost when the site closed in 2008. This investment from HLF means the museum can reintroduce the story of manufacturing through the introduction of new displays and feature the worker’s emotive audio recordings and memories of their time at Royal Worcester.

The museum will open a hidden treasure trove of film, archives and collections, develop vibrant educational services and involve volunteers and people who worked at the factory to create the truest representation of an industry that touched the lives of nearly everyone who lives in the City of Worcester.

The project will offer opportunities and training for new and existing staff and plans are afoot to recruit a team of volunteers to help with all aspects of the redevelopment. They also include wider community use of the museum, educational workshops and courses where people can learn new and heritage skills.

Sam Driver White, Museum Chairman, said ‘We are delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund are supporting this project and that we have the opportunity to update and upgrade our displays and create an exciting and elegant destination that will introduce more people to our collections and attract visitors to the City of Worcester.

The fact that Royal Worcester was the finest porcelain made in the United Kingdom is something of which Worcester people are proud and I hope that many will help us by contributing to the matched funding that is required.’

Reyahn King, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands, said: “We’re extremely pleased to give initial support to the project, which aims to bring alive the story of the oldest porcelain manufacturer in England for the local community and visitors alike. We shall watch the developing plans with interest.’

Notes to editors

About the Museum of Royal Worcester

Charles Dyson Perrins purchased the Royal Worcester Company and its former museum in the 1930s and in 1946, he created a museum trust to administer and unite his own important private collection of Worcester porcelain with that of the company's museum. Later, when his second wife Freda died she bequeathed the Victorian school building that houses the collections to the museum.

The museum is a registered charity and continues to be administered by a voluntary board of trustees. Its income is derived from entrance charges, profits from the museum shop, events, activities, charitable and private donations.

The museum houses the largest collection of Worcester porcelain and supporting exhibits in the world. When the factory closed the management and workforce placed a considerable number of artefacts within its care, the redevelopment means these will now be made available for view.

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Further information

Images and interviews, please contact Amanda Savidge, Museum Director, Museum of Royal Worcester on 01905 21247 / 07760 616 061.