Whitechapel wins £1.4 million Heritage Lottery regeneration boost

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This Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) will become part of a wider £10m regeneration scheme named ‘High Street 2012’ that also plans to provide public realm improvements, community, art and heritage events as it rejuvenates the area.

Whitechapel, in the city’s East End, is a bustling and culturally diverse place. Its High Street forms the key link between central London and the Olympic Park and is currently undergoing major regeneration work to help create a lasting legacy from the 2012 Games for East London. The market dates from the 17th century and will be transformed with traditional shop fronts being restored and any under-occupied buildings brought back into use.

The project is one of eleven town centres across the UK that are to receive a much-needed boost totalling £14m, HLF announced today. The earmarked* money will help fund vital community regeneration schemes in these currently neglected areas.

This investment is part of the HLF’s Townscape Heritage Initiative which has committed over £200m since 1998 towards the regeneration of towns and cities that have suffered serious social and economic decline.

Sue Bowers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for the London region, said: “The Heritage Lottery Fund is proud to be playing a key role in helping to revitalise once thriving towns and cities. The benefits are far reaching. This investment will help support the transformation of the Whitechapel area, making essential improvements and repairs that will encourage local business stability and growth, and bring visitors back into this historically vibrant area.”

Commenting for Tower Hamlets Council, Development & Renewal Corporate Director, Aman Dalvi, said: "Despite challenges faced by many markets over recent years, Whitechapel market has remained busy. This additional funding for the facades and shop-fronts of historic buildings surrounding the market will greatly improve the whole streetscape, and compliment the other works taking place on Whitechapel Road as part of the High Street 2012 programme. This will sustain and improve local businesses whilst guaranteeing the future of this important hub for the local community".

The London work focuses on a cluster of historic buildings at Whitechapel Market. Tower Hamlets Council is taking advantage of the momentum created by the Olympics to galvanise a range of local stakeholders and make significant improvements to the landscape and economy of the area.

The THI covers a terrace of approximately 60 historic buildings, all of which have shop frontage. The repair and restoration to be carried out will create a considerable impact over a short period because of the timetable dictated by the Olympics. Work is due to commence in December this year with most of the buildings complete a year later. Eight of the buildings are listed Grade 2 and four are listed locally.

Work to be done includes repairing the historic facades, carrying out alterations that will replace out of character shop fascias, installing painted timber signs, replacing plastic windows with new timber sash windows; all of which whilst retaining the vibrancy of the area. These interventions will encourage better use to be made of underused space in the

upper floors of buildings in the future.

The THI will be part of the wider ‘High Street 2012’, programme, extending for over three miles in Tower Hamlets, along Whitechapel High Street, Whitechapel Road, Mile End Road and Bow Road, which are key parts of the marathon and paralympic marathon routes.

Notes to editors

* The Whitechapel project has received a first-round pass of £1,387,500 including £40,000 development funding. A Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) earmarked first-round pass means that money has been set aside by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the scheme in question. Competition at this stage is tough, and while it does not guarantee funding, it is an indication of positive support. The applicants can then progress to the second round and submit a further, fully-developed application to secure the full award. On occasion, development funding will also be awarded at the first round. This early level of strong financial commitment means that THIs can build strong partnerships with the assurance that funding for their scheme is in place provided their final proposals fully meet the programme criteria.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

Further information

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