Southbank Centre receives support for Festival



Artist impression of Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer with improved access and views to the terraces

This £24million project, which is expected to begin in September 2015, will address the urgent repairs and maintenance needed to keep these buildings open and is the foundation for Southbank Centre's longer-term ambitions for this part of the site.

This initial support means that Southbank Centre has secured earmarked funding, including a development grant of £90,800, from HLF. The project also includes an extensive, permanent programme of learning and participation, which will allow people of all ages and backgrounds to engage with the history of these important buildings and Southbank Centre's archive.

The second round application to HLF will be submitted in February 2015 and the outcome is likely to be announced in May 2015. This follows the £16.7m grant from Arts Council England announced in May 2014.

Alan Bishop, Chief Executive of Southbank Centre, said: "I am delighted that HLF has given us this significant encouragement for this important project for Southbank Centre. After nearly five decades of intensive use, this project will restore the facilities for audiences and artists to world-class standards and keep the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery open for future generations."

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: “Since the Millennium, the South Bank has been transformed into a hub of creativity and buzzing street life. Southbank Centre itself has played a huge role in the area’s wider redevelopment and has a great track record in innovation and community engagement.

“HLF is supporting these latest plans to conserve two important buildings and ensure the centre’s little-known historic archive is properly maintained and given a much higher public profile. The partnership working with schools and places of higher education is an exciting proposal for the future, and represents a very positive step in the continuing regeneration of one of London’s most popular riverside areas.”

Southbank Centre has appointed Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios to lead on the repair and maintenance project. Building on the success of the Royal Festival Hall refurbishment, the project will prolong the life of the buildings for future generations and includes the following:

- refurbishment of the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room auditoria to preserve the character of the venues including renovating the walls, floors and ceilings and retaining and restoring the existing seats; and new, upgraded technical production facilities for performances
- a refurbished Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer incorporating a new ceiling, and opening up the riverside wall with new glazing, refurbished ticket desk, cloakroom and toilets
- improved access for both audiences and artists, including accessible dressing rooms
- replacement and upgrade of building services including the central plant; heating, cooling and ventilation; water supply; lighting, including specialist stage lighting
- fire alarm; security; radio; and IT cabling
- replicating the iconic Hayward Gallery Pyramid Roof to allow controlled natural light into the upper galleries as originally conceived, and refurbishing the galleries including the renovation of the stone floors
- repairing exterior terraces to improve drainage and accessibility
- enhancing the environmental performance of these 1960s buildings, reducing energy consumption

From Monday 29 September, the repair and maintenance project will be shared in a public exhibition in the Royal Festival Hall foyer and online at Southbank Centre’s website (until 19 October). The exhibition forms part of the public consultation of this project ahead of a planning application being submitted to Lambeth Council later this year.

While the repair and maintenance project takes place, Southbank Centre will continue its artistic and festival programme across the rest of the site, and expand its touring programme across the UK and internationally.

Southbank Centre remains committed to a wider scheme for the Festival Wing, creating new arts and cultural spaces to provide more free arts and education opportunities for everyone, in particular children and young people, and is working to resolve its funding. Any future plans for this part of the site will include the retention of the undercroft for skateboarding, BMX and street writing, following the recent agreement with Long Live Southbank (LLSB), the skateboarder’s campaign group, which recognises the undercroft as the long-term home of British skateboarding and other urban arts activities.

Cllr. Lib Peck, Leader of Lambeth Council, said: “This funding is a great endorsement of Southbank Centre’s huge contribution to arts and culture. It’s a significant step towards the realisation of their plans to create new arts and cultural spaces that will be used and enjoyed by many and will be of particular benefit to our local community, especially children and young people.”

Kate Hoey, MP for Vauxhall, said: “Southbank Centre has played a leading role in helping to transform the South Bank into London’s top destination. This project will enable Southbank Centre to preserve this part of the site for generations to come and lays the foundations for their long-term plans for a more ambitious arts and cultural programme.”

Timothy Jones, Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas, London at English Heritage, said: “We warmly welcome the plans to repair these important 1960s buildings, which will enhance their architectural and historical significance, and look forward to working closely with Southbank Centre on this project.”

Notes to editors

Southbank Centre is the UK’s largest arts centre, occupying a 21-acre site that sits in the midst of London’s most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and the Hayward Gallery as well as The Saison Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. For further information please visit the Southbank Centre website.

Initial support plus development funding means the project meets our criteria for funding and we believe it has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so this is an endorsement of outline proposals. The project will submit fully developed proposals to secure a firm award at a later date.

Further information

Patricia O’Connor, Head of Press, Southbank Centre: on tel: 020 7921 0632, or email: patricia.oconnor@southbankcentre.co.uk.

Katie Owen, HLF press office, on tel: 020 7591 6036.