Heritage Lottery Fund grants £1.3million for



Archive document from part of the National Museum of Flight collection

Located at former RAF Station East Fortune, the site is considered to be the best preserved Second World War airfield in the UK. The £3.6million project, which will be completed in 2016, will see National Museums Scotland conserve and restore two nationally significant Second World War hangars and create new exhibitions within them.

Confirmation of this award means that over £3.1million of funding is now in place for the project, including £1.8million from the Scottish Government.

Built in 1940-41, the hangars are part of the East Fortune Airfield Scheduled Monument, and had an original projected lifespan of only around ten years. The project will restore them to their original condition and will enhance the visitor experience by introducing new displays and interpretation.

Once complete, one hanger will display military aircraft while the other will display smaller commercial and leisure aircraft dating from 1939 onwards. An English Electric Lightning, the RAF's first supersonic jet fighter, which could match the speed of Concorde; an RAF Panavia Tornado, a Scottish Aviation Twin Pioneer and a Britten Norman Islander are among the aircraft which will be on display in the restored hangars.

The hangars, which will close to the public next month, will be heated and insulated for the first time. An imaginative environmentally friendly ground source heating system will be installed as part of the project. The enhancement of the environment of the spaces will allow a selection of objects which are currently in storage – including uniforms, documents and photographs – to be displayed alongside the aircraft. The improvements will also enable audio visual and interactive exhibits to be used for the first time within the displays.

Dr Gordon Rintoul, Director of National Museums Scotland commented: “I am delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded funding for the next phase of our development plan for the National Museum of Flight. It allows us to restore these important structures, which long ago surpassed their original intended lifespan, and to enhance the visitor experience at what is already one of Europe’s major aviation museums, showcasing our internationally significant collections to best effect."

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: “Situated on one of the best preserved Second World War airfields in the UK, these iconic aircraft hangers house over 100 years of aviation history. With new modern displays and imaginative interactive activities, visitors will gain a greater understanding and appreciation of our national aviation collection. We are delighted to be able to help in this transformation, safeguarding the hangers and the meticulously restored aircraft they house for generations to come.”

Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop said:“National Museums Scotland holds a collection of national and international importance and is one of the leading museum groups in the UK and Europe.

“Following the hugely successful Chambers Street refurbishment project, this very significant development at the National Museum of Flight demonstrates a national museum which is going from strength to strength and always looking to deliver more for the people of Scotland.

“This Scottish Government is pleased to be able to support this project and I am delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund, also one of the main funding partners in the Chambers Street project, is again providing critical support.”

The National Museum of Flight houses the majority of the national aviation collections which are in the care of National Museums Scotland. The collections are one of the most significant in the United Kingdom and Europe, and comprise aircraft, engines, photographs, archives, models, flying clothing, instruments, ordnance and other equipment. Further highlights of the collection include one of only two Vulcan bombers ever to have seen military action, a Comet airliner, a Spitfire from the Second World War and British Airways’ first operational Concorde.

Notes to editors

National Museums Scotland looks after museum collections of national and international importance and provides loans, partnerships, research and training in Scotland and internationally. Our individual museums are the National Museum of Scotland, the National Museum of Flight, the National Museum of Rural Life and the National War Museum. The National Museums Collection Centre in Edinburgh houses conservation and research facilities as well as collections not currently on display.

To date, the Heritage Lottery Fund has invested over £611million in Scotland’s heritage.

Further information

Images from the announcement taken by Neil Hanna will be available upon request.

National Museums Scotland press office: Esme Haigh, Susan Gray or Alice Wyllie on 0131 247 4391, e.haigh@nms.ac.uk for further information and images. National Museums Scotland website

HLF press office: Jon Williams on 020 7591 6035, email: jonw@hlf.org.uk.