Iconic London landmark secures £18.8m in Heritage



Archive footage will be used to tell the story of the birth of television

Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust (APPCT) is delighted to announce that it has been awarded £18.8million of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to restore the Palace's most significant historic spaces to their former glory and secure the Palace's future as one of London's leading heritage destinations.

Under the plans, the eastern end of the Palace, comprising the BBC Studios and the Victorian Theatre will be repaired and refurbished, together with the glazed East Court in which a new and more welcoming public entrance hall will be created.

The BBC studios – birthplace of high-definition television broadcasts in 1936 – will be turned into an interactive visitor attraction, drawing on the BBC's extraordinarily rich archives and telling the remarkable story of popular entertainment culminating in the birth and development of broadcast television. There will be a special focus on schools and learning programmes, displays of historic equipment and hands-on engagement with the art of making television programmes.

The Palace's stunning hidden theatre dating back to 1875 will also be brought back to life for community and commercial use with theatrical performances, cinema screenings, live comedy, acoustic music and corporate entertainment among the ideas backed by leading arts figures. The theatre will accommodate audiences of up to 1,300 but has been designed to suit smaller and more intimate audience numbers too.

Duncan Wilson OBE, Chief Executive of APPCT, commented:“We are thrilled with the HLF announcement. Today marks a hugely positive and significant step in realising our aspirations to bring the Victorian Theatre and BBC Studios back to life and fulfil the potential of the Palace and its remarkable history for the local community, visitors from all over the UK, and overseas.

“There are further challenges ahead, including the launch of a new fundraising programme and preparing the Palace for the start of the construction programme later this year, but this announcement represents a huge achievement for the trust and its supporters.”

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: "Alexandra Palace has played a pivotal role in the development of popular entertainment – culminating in the birth of British television. The Eastern end has stood derelict for 35 years but now Lottery funding is heralding a new chapter for this iconic building, creating an inspirational space where people can learn about its rich and colourful history.”

As part of the development phase a six-week public consultation was conducted, with over 2,000 local residents and many more key stakeholders and community groups pledging their support for the scheme and contributing to the final plans.

Cllr Joanna Christophides, Chair of the APPCT Board, said: “I have been hugely encouraged by the show of local community support we have received in the lead up to this decision and I would like to thank everyone for their valuable contribution. We are already starting to see the benefit of this project with the growth of our pubic engagement programmes, including history tours, volunteering initiatives and our schools programme over the past two years. We are very grateful to the HLF for backing our plans to transform the Palace.”

The award of £18.8million HLF funding contributes towards the total project cost of £26.7m, with the London Borough of Haringey having pledged £6.8m and the trust committing to a fundraising target of £1m before the start of the project in 2016.

Haringey Council Leader Claire Kober said**:** “It’s fantastic news that the Heritage Lottery Fund has embraced this exciting vision for Ally Pally, which secures the long-term future of one of London’ s most iconic landmarks. Alexandra Palace has been through some challenging times, but this historic restoration will allow some of the building’s hidden gems to finally be unveiled. This tremendous achievement is testament to the hard work, determination and enthusiasm of staff and local people.”

Notes to editors

History and Heritage
Alexandra Park opened in 1863 as a pioneering Victorian leisure park. The original 220 acres of parkland purchased from the Tottenham Wood Farm and was designed by Alexandra McKenzie to provide botanical and wildlife lovers with beautiful and interesting green spaces for outdoor exploration. The park was also intended to be a centre for education and entertainment.

Alexandra Palace is one of London and the UK’s most iconic buildings. Built as the People’s Palace in 1873, the remarkable seven-acre Grade II listed historic entertainment destination is surrounded by 196 acres of North London parkland and offers unprecedented views of the city.

The palace and park were created in the enterprising Victorian era to provide the people of North London with a magnificent cultural and recreational centre. Since then, Alexandra Palace has become globally recognised as the birthplace of the world's first high-definition television broadcast and has been home to the BBC Television Service, a horse racing track, cricket, football club and ice rink – as well as staging many legendary rock and pop concerts.

Alexandra Park and Palace Today

Alexandra Park and Palace maintains its original enterprising spirit by continuing to host an eclectic mix of live music, sport, cultural, leisure and corporate events. Combined with 196 acres of park open all year, they are able to host an array of outdoor activity and an extensive amount of high profile events. Alexandra Palace is the number one visitor destination in North London. More information is available at the Alexandra Palace website.

Further information

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