£1.2m funding to 'open doors' in historic Mansion



Mansion House, York

City of York Council has welcomed the award to help improve access, displays and conservation at the Mansion House.

The HLF has granted £1,198,700 to support the 'Opening Doors' project which looks to give the historic building a more financially secure future, get more people involved in learning at the Georgian town house, and make it easier for more people to visit. This funding follows the agreement for City of York Council to invest £736,000 to support the project at a Cabinet meeting in February.

The four main areas of the 'Opening Doors' project involve restoring the original kitchens; improving displays, conservation and access to the civic collection of gold and silver ware; developing an integrated environmental and conservation plan for the structure; and preparing an oral history project, involving people past and present with a connection to the building.

The funding will also allow the building to be open to residents and visitors for longer. Once the restoration work is completed the Mansion House will open to the public five days a week as opposed to the three days a week it is open currently.

Councillor Tracey Simpson-Laing, deputy leader of City of York Council, said: “For almost 300 years, this historic building has witnessed many significant events and welcomed many Lord Mayors and Sheriffs as well as visitors. This funding will bring about the most comprehensive restoration of the Mansion House since its completion in 1732. This is great news for the city and will open the Mansion House up to more residents and visitors who will be able to learn more about the building’s heritage and for the first time allow them to view the stunning collections the house holds.”

Fiona Spiers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Yorkshire and The Humber, said: “The Mansion House is a building of national significance and this restoration will reveal its true Georgian splendour to visitors.”

The Mansion House is a focal point for the local community, hosts numerous civic and community events and was the first purpose-built house for a Lord Mayor in the country. Since then it has been used for celebrations, business, civic events and announcements, including welcoming Her Majesty the Queen in April 2012 as part of the York 800 celebrations, and announcing that York will host the Grand Départ of the Tour de France last July.

Notes to editors

In restoring the kitchen, the aim is to create a fully working, 18th century and modern kitchen allowing the house to continue hosting culinary events and functions, as well as to illustrate three centuries of eating in the house.

Other aims include improved interpretation, education, conservation and access to the gold and silver collections incorporating displays about the people behind the objects; the York silversmiths who made them and their donors and patrons.

The integrated environmental and conservation plan will cover the contents and structural requirements of the building, including installing an effective conservation heating system to minimise long-term damage to the contents and fabric of the building and reduce its carbon foot print.

The oral history project will collect and share memories from those who have been associated with the house, such as the butlers, cleaners and cooks, along with the Lord Mayors and Sheriffs.

Further information

City of York Council: Andrew Harrison, Communications Assistant on 01904 552 022, fax: 01904 551 064, mobile / out of hours: 07767 318 082, email: andrew.harrison@york.gov.uk.

The council’s cabinet member for Health, Housing and Adult Social Services is Councillor Tracey Simpson-Laing on 07761 460 134.



Mansion House, York

Civic, church and chocolate heritage: York has it all!