Conservation project at Llancaiach Fawr Manor set

Llancaiach Fawr, Caerffili

The £1million works have been carried out with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (£943,200), Cadw (£30,000) and Caerphilly County Borough Council to create a high quality conservation project of national importance.

The ambitious project has seen the manor's servant's quarters in the attics being opened up for the very first time, offering visitors to Llancaiach Fawr a complete picture of the household in 1645.

As well as the extensive conservation works, the manor has benefitted from improved physical and sensory interpretation, including open fires, sound and lighting, to create help create an improved atmosphere of 17th century domestic life, and an enhanced experience for people with learning difficulties. The modern lights throughout have been replaced with horn lanterns and copper chandeliers, and the background heating has been encased behind bespoke pieces of furniture.

Ensuring the manor is as accessible to as many people as possible has also been a very important principle throughout the works. Wrought iron hand rails have been installed, and a sympathetically designed external staircase tower has been installed with a platform lift for wheelchair users and those with mobility difficulties to be able to get to the upper floors of the building for the first time.

Specialist and dedicated conservation architects and builders were crucial to the success of the project, as was the sourcing of traditional material such as oak from the Usk Valley to use in the manor.

First Minister, Carwyn Jones, said: “I’m delighted to officially unveil this fantastic regeneration project. Llancaiach Fawr Manor has long been an important link between the past and the present, offering an imaginative and vibrant insight into 17th century Wales. I’m pleased to have supported this exciting development – the recent work only enhances the manor’s appeal and I’m sure the coming months will see more people than ever enjoying all that this historic site has to offer.”

Cllr Ken James, Caerphilly’s Cabinet Member with responsibility for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development said: “I am absolutely delighted that this ambitious conservation and development project has reached completion. These major improvements to the historic Manor House will undoubtedly help transform not only the way we present the past to a modern audience, but also enable more visitors than ever before to explore all that Llancaiach Fawr has to offer.”

He continued: “These works, together with the continued support of the council, Heritage Lottery Fund, Cadw, our dedicated group of volunteers, supporters and many others will mean that visitors to Llancaiach Fawr of all ages can continue to discover the rich heritage and history of this flagship attraction for many years to come.”

Richard Bellamy, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Wales, explains what drew HLF to the project: “The manor dates to the 1500s and was home to one of the most prominent families in Welsh history, the Prichards. For us, this makes it of key importance both to Caerphilly and Wales, which should be protected for future generations.

“Restoring Llancaiach Fawr is also an important project for the community, as the manor is one of the key tourist attractions in the area. Lottery player’s money has meant that servant’s quarters can be opened to the public for the very first time, helping visitors get a sense of what it was really like in 1645. We are very excited to get a tour of the house from the ‘servants’ themselves - I’m sure they will have lots of interesting tales to tell.”

The Friends of Llancaiach Fawr have also provided crucial input to the project, through fundraising to provide all the servant’s beds, bedding and basic furniture to furnish the attics. They have received generous support also from the Ystrad Mynach Quilters, The Ashley Family Foundation and their own events and donations.

The grant from Heritage Lottery Fund has also helped fund a Development and Outreach Officer post, which is helping to develop community activities, the skills of volunteers and attracting new audiences.

Llancaiach Fawr has been a landmark in the local landscape since c.1550, and is considered to be one of the most important gentry houses to have survived from the 16th and 17th century period. The manor is presented to visitors through live interpretation, where the staff are the servants of the household in 1645 – the year that Charles I came to the Manor to try and gather more support from the men of Glamorgan during the Civil Wars.

Further information

For further information on Llancaiach Fawr, please visit Llancaiach Fawr website or call 01443 412 248.