Suffolk's archives span nine centuries

The project, a partnership with University Campus Suffolk, aims to create a flagship heritage facility to protect and promote the county's archives, provide state of the art learning facilities, and engage more people in the history of Suffolk through an ambitious programme of community activity.

[quote= Robyn Llewellyn, Head of HLF East of England]"With more than nine miles of archival material spanning nine centuries, Suffolk Record Office holds precious resources telling fascinating stories."[/quote]

The Hold, which is one of the 21 key delivery projects of the 'Ipswich Vision', should open its doors in time for the 900th anniversary of the Record Office's oldest document in 2019.

Development funding of £538,100 has also been awarded to help Suffolk County Council progress their plans to apply for a full grant of £10.3million at a later date.

Located on the university's north campus beside Ipswich's historic waterfront, the new facility, The Hold, will house the bulk of Suffolk's nationally and internationally significant archives and a range of archaeological records. As well as providing teaching and research space fit for the 21st-century, it will also form a unique visitor attraction and an important cultural resource for the community.

The project will drive a new way for the Record Office to extend and deliver its outreach work; a county-wide activity programme called 'Mapping Suffolk's Stories' will see Record Office staff and UCS work alongside a wide range of community groups, volunteers and schools, engaging them with Suffolk's rich heritage in new and exciting ways, beginning with researching and digitising historic map collections.

Suffolk Record Office cares for over nine miles of unique archives, spanning nine centuries. Jewels of the collections include its maritime records, manorial records from the medieval period, and the papers of some of the most illustrious families of England, such as the de Saumarez family and the Marquesses of Bristol.

Commenting on the award, Councillor Sarah Stamp, Cabinet Member for Communities, said: "We're absolutely delighted that HLF has given us this important support. Working in close partnership with University Campus Suffolk, The Hold will not only completely transform our ability to care for and showcase our county's records and collections, but also to promote them and give access to a broader audience. Getting national recognition for and vital investment in our innovative plans is fantastic and we are now a step closer to this exciting new vision for our new heritage building becoming a reality."

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of HLF East of England, said: "With more than nine miles of archival material spanning nine centuries, Suffolk Record Office holds precious resources telling fascinating stories. The Hold will be a beacon of discovery for everyone and throughout the county people will be able to get involved in using historic maps to learn about their own local area. Thanks to National Lottery players we're delighted to offer our support to this partnership project and look forward to seeing the plans develop."

Notes to editors

Suffolk Record Office is part of the Culture, Libraries, Sport and Communities Service, within the Adult and Community Services Directorate of Suffolk County Council. Its role is to collect, preserve and provide access to the recorded history of the county for residents and visitors. It is rated as a four star service by The National Archives (TNA) and works to deliver SCC's priorities in all its activities, through promotion, education and outreach, and its work to conserve the historic archives (spanning 900 years of history).