

Olympic medallist Polly Swann with team-mate Caitie Gorton-Phillips in front of the boathouse

Built in 1905, West Boathouse on the River Clyde has helped develop many successful rowers.This year it celebrated the success of two Rio Olympics medallists, Polly Swann and Karen Bennett, who took silver in the Ladies Eight event.

Other notable rowers who have trained at one of the two historic clubs based at the Boathouse include three-times world champion Peter Haining and London 2012 gold medal-winner, Katherine Grainger.

Thanks to support from HLF, plans are being developed to restore and revitalise this rare building, securing its future as a base for future champion rowers.

[quote=Lucy Casot, Head of HLF Scotland]“Thanks to National Lottery players, we are delighted to give our initial support to a project which will bring to life a building with a great sporting history while helping rowers today by providing modern new facilities.”[/quote]

Rio 2016 Olympic silver medallist, Polly Swann, was on hand to share the good news with the Scottish rowing community at a recent event at the West Boathouse. Polly spoke about her fond memories of visiting the West Boathouse for events as a junior ("sitting in the corner after a race, snacking on square sausage and Irn Bru").

After leaving school, Polly spent two seasons training out of Clyde ARC on her pathway to Team GB. She spoke of her rivalry with Clydesdale's Karen Bennett when they both trained on the river and how that rivalry strengthened their performance as crew-mates in the Olympic final - comparing this to the rivalry between the two clubs today and Polly's

confidence that they will, together, make this project a fantastic success.

Sharing with the local community

An important part of the project will be getting more people using the building and enjoying being out on the river. It will also encourage people to learn about all the other sports that have a connection with Glasgow Green through interpretation and heritage activities.

Lucy Casot, Head of HLF Scotland, said: “Thanks to National Lottery players, we are delighted to give our initial support to a project which will bring to life a building with a great sporting history while helping rowers today by providing modern new facilities.

“The West Boathouse has been a feature of Glasgow Green for over 100 years so we are excited to see plans to reanimate this part of the River Clyde, sharing and celebrating its fascinating history with the local community.”

Deputy Leader of Glasgow City Council, Councillor Archie Graham OBE, said: “The West Boathouse is a valuable part of Glasgow’s rich sporting heritage and I’m delighted it now has a viable future, thanks to this funding from HLF. It is fitting that this award comes at the end of a really exciting summer for the Boathouse’s rowing clubs.

"Most importantly, though, they have also been recruiting new members, with 180 schoolchildren from the East End of Glasgow getting a taste for the sport.”