The Boathouse from across the Clyde Alisdair Woodburn

This comprises a First Round Pass for a Heritage Grant of £1.212million including development funding of £121,900 for Glasgow Building Preservation Trust (GBPT) to develop their proposals further.

GBPT is working with volunteers from two historic rowing clubs to develop proposals to repair and adapt the timber-framed building on the banks of the Clyde in Glasgow Green. The project will promote the sporting and built heritage of the site through interpretation and heritage activities, getting more people using the building and enjoying being out on the river.

The announcement from HLF follows a successful MyPark Scotland crowdfunding campaign, which received 184 donations, exceeded the £5,000 target to raise £5,378 with donations received from as far away as New Zealand, Texas and Aberdeen – demonstrating the wider interest in the project. The West Boathouse campaign has been the most successful campaign on the MyPark Scotland platform to date.

In addition to the monies raised through the public appeal, GBPT has also secured development funding from the Architectural Heritage Fund, Glasgow City Council and the Spirit of Calton – a Fourteen Community. Historic Environment Scotland have also awarded a Building Repair Grant towards the eligible repair costs.

With total project costs of £2.4m identified, GBPT will spend the next year developing the proposals and raising the remaining funding before starting work in 2018, with completion anticipated in 2019.

Lucy Casot, Head of HLF in Scotland, said: “Scotland’s profile as a country which produces top-class athletes has never been higher. We’re delighted that thanks to National Lottery players, we can 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 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 the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is fitting that this award comes at the end of a really exciting summer for the Boathouse’s rowing clubs; which have connections to no fewer than three silver medallists from the Rio Olympics. 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.”

Ian Goodman, MyParkScotland Project Manager, said: “The West Boathouse has been one of the most successful campaigns on the MyParkScotland portal, with the largest number of donations received for any of the MyParkScotland campaigns so far. We have been impressed by the level of support shown for the project and delighted not only that the project surpassed its target but also over £700 has been raised from the Gift Aid contributions which will support future improvements to Glasgow Green through the endowment fund.”

Murray Shaw, Chair of Glasgow Building Preservation Trust, said: “We are thrilled that the Heritage Lottery Fund have given their support to this unique project. Once completed, we expect the West Boathouse will serve the users of Glasgow Green and wider community groups in the future, as well as it has served the rowing clubs in the past. We look forward to working with the volunteers of the two rowing clubs and local groups to ensure this project is a success."

Saturday 25 October

On Saturday 24 October, a rowing competition is taking place at the West Boathouse with Olympian Polly Swann in attendance. Photographers/film crew are welcome to attend this event and should contact Andrew McConnell via tel: 0141 554.

Alternatively, images will be available from Peter Devlin Photography. Please contact via email: info@devlinphoto.com or via tel: 07786 80 89 89.

Notes to editors

Glasgow Building Preservation Trust

Glasgow Building Preservation Trust (GBPT) was established in 1982 to rescue, repair, restore and rehabilitate historic buildings of architectural merit which through neglect or abuse may otherwise be lost in Glasgow and the surrounding area. Find out more on the GBTP website.

MyParkScotland

MyParkScotland is an independent Scottish charity which works to help people discover, enjoy and support Scotland’s parks.

The project development has been led by Scottish charity greenspace scotland, currently it covers parks in Edinburgh, Falkirk and Glasgow.

MyParkScotland is one of 11 UK ‘park trailblazers’ in the Rethinking Parks programme funded by Nesta and HLF. Find out more on the MyParkScotland website.

Polly Swann and Karen Bennett – Rio 2016 Olympic Silver Medallists in Women's Eight

Polly Swann spent a year training out of Clyde Amateur Rowing Club in Glasgow before joining Edinburgh University Boat Club. Polly rowed in the GB lead boat with Helen Glover until Heather Stanning returned from Army service. Injury blighted her 2015 season, but Polly returned in the 2016 season to row in the Women's Eight.

Karen Bennett learned to row at Clydesdale Amateur Rowing Club in Glasgow as part of the GB Rowing Team’s START programme. After several years of rowing on the Clyde, Karen moved to the START programme at Molesey Boat Club in London. She was selected in the Women's Eight in 2016.

No GB Women's Eight had won an Olympic medal until Polly and Karen earned a historic silver medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics.

The Rowing Clubs

Clydesdale Amateur Rowing Club was established in 1857. Clyde Amateur Rowing Club was established in 1865. Both clubs have occupied either side of the semi-detached West Boathouse since it was built in 1905.

The founder of Clydesdale ARC, James H Rodger, was part of Queen Victoria’s bodyguard when she opened the Loch Katrine waterworks in 1859, and was crew of the first eight-oared boat race in Scotland. Rodger contributed a significant sum to the costs of building the West Boathouse in 1905.

The River Clyde hosted the Scottish National Regatta in 1869; the founding members of Rangers Football Club in 1872 were originally rowers who played lacrosse when the river was unrowable; Clydesdale’s ‘Cronies Crew’ was unbeaten for several years on the Clyde; Clyde’s remarkable Penny Brothers were five brothers who dominated rowing competitions in the 1920s and 30s.

Gordon Simpson, a boy of the Gorbals in the 1950s, was caught throwing stones at the rowers and put in the coxswain's seat to "see how he’d like it". He loved it, became a member, served the committee for over 50 years, winning lifetime service to sport awards, BBC Unsung Hero award and, having once been neighbours with Katherine Grainger’s parents, was the first person to put the future Olympic champion in a boat – at the West Boathouse.

Three-time world champion Peter Haining, Sydney 2000 Olympic silver medallist Gillian Lindsay, London 2012 Olympic gold medal-winner Katherine Grainger, Rio 2016 Olympic silver medallists Polly Swann and Karen Bennett, Rotterdam 2016 World Champion Imogen Walsh – have all at one time been involved and rowed from the West Boathouse on Glasgow Green.

Project facts and figures

The estimated cost for the project is circa £2.4m.

The proposed works will include: replacing the rotten timber piles and substructure with concrete foundations; replacing the non-original external cladding; converting the building from a semi-detached building into a shared boathouse; renewing and repairing the roof, windows and doors; improving accessibility to the upper floors with lift and accessible facilities; providing flexible, multi-use spaces on the upper floor that will be available for use by other groups; provision of shared club room and replacement of all sanitary facilities.

The broad benefits and activities of the project include:

- improved access to the built heritage of the boathouse, the sporting heritage of the rowing clubs and the natural heritage of the river corridor
- learning and participation opportunities for more people in the development and delivery of the project and heritage activities
- economic benefits such as increased investment, more jobs and volunteering opportunities in an area of multiple deprivation
- supporting health benefits with improved access to facilities for informal recreational activity; promoting and stimulating the development of rowing and other healthy living pursuits
- demonstrating innovative low carbon solutions for the conversion of an existing building
- accessible, flexible facilities for events from social functions to event bases
- fostering and enhancing community enterprise through increased responsibility for the building, encouraging social enterprise and alternative uses
- creating a community-focused sporting legacy of the 2014 Commonwealth Games and the 2018 European Championships for the wider benefit of the people of Glasgow

Further information:

- Andrew McConnell via tel: 0141 554 4411.
- HLF: Shiona Mackay via tel: 01786 870 638/07779 142 890 or via email: shionamackay1@btinternet.com, or Jon Williams via tel: 0207 591 6035 or via email: jonw@hlf.org.uk