National Lottery Support for the Restoration of



Celia Sinclair Chair of the Willow Tea Rooms Trust and The Lord Provost of Glasgow Eva Bolander at the funding announcement Stewart Attwood

The £3.579m award from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) will ensure the completion of The Willow Tea Rooms Trust's mission to conserve and restore the Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Willow Tea Rooms Building at 217, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. The tea rooms and new visitor centre are scheduled to open for the City of Glasgow's celebrations to mark the 150th anniversary of Mackintosh's birth on the 7th June 2018.

The HLF award will allow The Willow Tea Room Trust to continue their work restoring the original tea rooms and famous Salon de Luxe. The Trust also plans to incorporate an interactive visitor centre, education and learning suite, conference facilities and shop to ensure that the project is sustainable for future generations to enjoy. It will operate as a genuine social enterprise delivering a range of exciting activities far beyond its original function as a tea room.

Lucy Casot, Head of HLF Scotland, said: "What better way to celebrate the Year of History Heritage & Archaeology than to support the revival of these famous tea rooms. Thanks to players of the National Lottery, we are delighted that works by one of Scotland's greatest and most influential designers will be restored so that they can be enjoyed by all as they were first intended."

The Willow Tea Rooms Building

The building is recognised internationally as the only surviving tea room designed in its entirety by Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Mackintosh and his wife, Margaret MacDonald, had total control over both the architecture and decorative elements, from the interior and the design of the cutlery to the waitress's uniforms. The major restoration project led by The Trust, will conserve and interpret the building's unique heritage, increase accessibility with the installation of new visitor facilities and provide a range of opportunities for learning and skills development. The tea rooms building will become a focal point for cultural tourism in the city, attracting both domestic and international visitors. Just as Gaudi is intrinsically linked with Barcelona, Frank Lloyd Wright is linked with Chicago, visitors from around the world will visit Glasgow to see and experience Mackintosh. Visitors to the city can learn more about the architect and designer at the same time as being able to relax and enjoy high quality hospitality within the unique surrounds of an iconic Mackintosh building.

The achievements of Glasgow businesswoman, Miss Cranston, the original owner who commissioned the tea rooms designed by Mackintosh in 1903 will also be celebrated within the visitor centre. Miss Cranston's entrepreneurial spirit and business acumen, as well as her enlightened views on the role of women, social enterprise and philanthropy, provide a fascinating reflection of Glasgow at the turn of the 20th Century.

Celia Sinclair, Founder and Chair of The Willow Tea Room Trust said: "Thanks to National Lottery players the important cultural and rich heritage of The Willow Tea Rooms Building will be conserved. Works to the exterior of the building are almost complete. The HLF award means that our vision for restoring the interior, commissioning furniture, crockery, cutlery and building the interactive visitor centre along with an education and learning suite, conference facilities and shop can now forge ahead."

The Board of Trustees are supported by an Expert Mackintosh Advisory Panel who scrutinise every detail of the restoration. The Trust has also been supported by The Monument Trust, Glasgow City Heritage Trust, Historic Environment Scotland, Glasgow City Council, Dunard Fund, Scottish Enterprise, The Architectural Heritage Fund, The Hugh Fraser Foundation, Thomas Tunnock Ltd, Robert Barr's Charitable Trust, The Dean of Guild Court Trust and public donations.

Professor Pamela Robertson, Emerita Professor of Mackintosh Studies said " The Heritage Lottery Fund grant is major step for the refurbishment of Mackintosh's Willow Tea Rooms. With this funding we will be able to bring the Tea Rooms back to their former glory."

Alastair Davis, CEO of Social Investment Scotland said "Social Investment Scotland was delighted to be the cornerstone investor in the acquisition of the Willow Tea Rooms by the Willow Tea Rooms Trust in 2015. We provided additional cashflow funding to bridge the secured grant monies in 2017 to allow the completion of the external façade renovation works. As well as supporting the restoration of the Willow Tea Rooms, these investments will help create jobs, support tourism and open up the world of Scottish artistry and architecture to a wider social demographic. Importantly, the Trust's ability to generate revenue from the retail outlet and rented commercial space next door will help to make it financially sustainable. This is an excellent example of how taking on investment and a social enterprise business model can secure the long term future of charities like the Willow Tea Room Trust."

For more information please contact Philip Gregory or call 07767 668400.

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Time for Tea as it used to be!