Ready, steady, redevelop! Manchester Jewish



The Manchester Jewish Museum encourages volunteering within the community Manchester Jewish Museum

Manchester Jewish Museum has secured National Lottery support of £2.9million which will help the museum, housed inside a former synagogue, to double in size.

The grant will go towards a £5m development project with plans including the creation of new galleries, learning spaces, a shop and a café within an extension to the existing Grade II* listed synagogue. The original building will also undergo extensive restoration and repairs.

Plans in place

Building work will commence towards the end of next year and will open in summer 2020.

Nathan Lee, Head of HLF North West, said: “Manchester Jewish Museum is one of Manchester’s most important historic buildings and our investment of nearly £3m is set to bring it back to life for a new generation. Thanks to National Lottery players, visitors will get a greater understanding of why this Cheetham Hill site is so important, as well as hearing moving and uplifting stories about one of the UK’s oldest communities.”

Manchester's oldest synagogue

The building within which Manchester Jewish Museum operates is a former synagogue – the oldest in Manchester. Built in 1874 by Jewish textile merchants, the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue has been described as a ‘jewel’ by architectural historians. The development project will restore the synagogue to its original architectural splendour with new interactive displays, soundscapes and live performances bringing it to life for visitors.

[quote=Max Dunbar, Chief Executive, Manchester Jewish Museum]“The historic stories of Manchester’s Jewish community are also the stories of today."[/quote]

Max Dunbar, Chief Executive of the Manchester Jewish Museum, said: “The historic stories of Manchester’s Jewish community are also the stories of today. These stories remind us what happens when people, politics and religion drive us apart – and how a city like Manchester can bring people together.”

Home to 30,000 objects

Alongside preserving one of Manchester’s most significant historic buildings, the museum cares for over 30,000 objects, from personal letters and photographs to Torah scrolls hidden from the Nazis during WWII. These objects help tell the story of Jewish Manchester, as well as broader stories of migration, identity and the Holocaust.

Commenting on the news museum patron and writer, Howard Jacobson, said: “Manchester Jewish Museum is a vital resource, especially at a time when memories are shortening and histories are being lost. But a visit to the museum is also a hugely pleasurable experience.”

Get involved

While £4.4m in funding has been secured, the museum continues to fundraise and is keen to get people involved.