

Sir Peter Luff, Chair of HLF, Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Nuala McAllister and Victorian botanist Ernest Henry Wilson(actor Jason Parks) at the official re-opening of Belfast City Council's Tropical Ravine

The Tropical Ravine in Belfast's Botanic Gardens is set to reopen to the public tomorrow after a huge three-year, £3.8million restoration.

The listed building which dates back to 1887 has been restored to its former glory, with many of its original Victorian features reinstated and preserved. The project also safeguarded the ravine's significant collection of exotic plants, some of which are thought to be more than 150 years old.

The ravine has been split over two levels with an open reception area on the ground floor, and the building has been modernised to make it more energy efficient with new triple-glazed windows installed to retain heat and create the right environment for the tropical plants.

Visitors will now be able to learn about the conservation work and plant collection thanks to new interactive and digital exhibits. Accessibility has also been improved with the introduction of sensory facilities for sight and hearing-impaired visitors.

A true heritage treasure

Invited guests including HLF chair Sir Peter Luff had an opportunity to tour the building ahead of the public opening.

Sir Peter Luff, said: “The Tropical Ravine is a true heritage treasure that rewards visitors with a unique entertaining and educational experience. It is thanks to National Lottery players that the Ravine’s fine Victorian built heritage and hugely important plant collection have been preserved for the people of Belfast and beyond to enjoy for many more years to come.”

For more information on the Tropical Ravine and the project, please visit Belfast City Council's website.

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