

NEWS RELEASE

HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND GIVES GREEN LIGHT TO MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PLANS AT THE GEFFRYE, MUSEUM OF THE HOME

It was announced today that the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has awarded a Development Grant of £518,500 to help the Geffrye Museum progress its plans for an exciting development under its new title of Museum of the Home. The HLF first-round pass means that the Geffrye can now progress to the second stage of the HLF application process and have up to two years to submit more detailed plans and apply for the balance of their £10.9m bid. The total project cost is an estimated £13.2m and is due for completion in April 2015.

Guided by a Masterplan by David Chipperfield Architects, the trustees and staff are seeking to make the museum a centre for learning and discovery about not just the physical nature of home, but also the ideas, meanings and values which are expressed through home.

The plan aims to ease congestion caused by growing numbers of visitors, open up public access to the collections, library and archive and increase the capacity for education, learning and dissemination. It will:

- Provide new entrances to the museum from Hoxton Station and Kingsland Road to a single, central reception space able to handle increasing numbers of visitors.
- Ease congestion in the museum's period room displays, improve visitor flow throughout the museum and create a distinctive and attractive restaurant.
- Create public access to its library, archives and collections for use, study and enjoyment and increase its capacity to disseminate ideas and knowledge about the home through a new temporary exhibitions gallery and improved education and conference facilities.

(Please see below for full details)

The achievement of these development proposals during 2014-15 will be a fitting celebration for some very important anniversaries for the museum, 400 years after the museum's namesake Robert Geffrye's birth in 1613, 300 years after the opening of the Geffrye Almshouses in 1714 and 100 years after the opening of the Geffrye Museum in 1914.

The Geffrye's director, David Dewing says: "This combination of our vision for the Museum of the Home and the growing demand amongst new and existing audiences creates a pressing need for physical changes to our buildings. We are determined to create the best possible conditions for our collections, library and archive and to ensure many more people can engage with them for learning and enjoyment. It is fantastic news that the HLF have given the project their initial support and we are very excited to be able to move ahead, based on the Masterplan developed by David Chipperfield last year".

Sue Bowers, Head of HLF London, says: "The Geffrye Museum is a popular cultural gem with a particularly impressive track record for working with Hackney's diverse communities. The Heritage Lottery Fund is pleased to be giving initial support for this exciting project and particularly welcomes the museum's plans to develop the site as well as enhance its already impressive learning programme".

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Development Details/...

DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

The main elements of the Geffrye's development plan, supported by a Masterplan by David Chipperfield Architects, are as follows:

A new entrance and reception area

We will create a single reception space at the heart of the new Geffrye with entrances both from Hoxton Station and Kingsland Road. Visitors will be able to access different parts of the museum from this central hub, increasing the museum's capacity and reducing congestion.

Improved visitor flow

An enclosed, glazed walkway will be built along the rear of the almshouses leading from the new reception area to the north corner of the museum. This will give views over the period gardens and provide a one-way route back past the sequence of period room displays in the almshouses.

New restaurant

A new restaurant will be located either in a new 'pavilion' building alongside the reception area or in the former Victorian pub on the corner of Cremer Street, which will be sensitively restored and extended. In either location the restaurant will have street access.

New facilities for collections, exhibitions and learning

A new building on two floors will provide an additional 1,500 sqm to open up our collections, library and archives and make them available for study, exhibition and learning as an internationally important resource for studies of the home. Facilities will include:

- temporary exhibition gallery, a large, flexible, purpose built space with direct access from the reception area;
- stores for the museum's object collections, the main one being open access, with a large selection of objects for visitors to view at will. The stores will provide state of the art conditions for the proper conservation and care of the collections, currently kept in poorly controlled areas with very restricted access;
- library with a reading room and stack for the book collection and archives; these are currently in temporary storage and mostly inaccessible. We anticipate the acquisition of the Evan Bedford Library, the most important and comprehensive private furniture history library in the country, which will complement our existing holdings and, together with our growing archive and collections, create an internationally significant resource for studies on aspects of home;
- conference facility for 100 delegates, located either in the new building or in the restored and extended former pub, to enable us to develop our study programmes relating to the home. The facility will ease pressure on existing education spaces and increase our overall capacity for learning and dissemination.

Together, these improvements will preserve and enhance all the best elements of the Geffrye whilst opening up our collections, resources and facilities for more people to use and enjoy.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- 1) For further information or images, please contact Nancy Loader, Press Officer on 020 7739 9893 or nloader@geffrye-museum.org.uk.
- 2) The Geffrye has received initial support for the HLF bid. A first-round pass means the project meets their criteria for funding and they believe it has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award.
- 3) Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, they invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported over 33,000 projects, allocating £4.5billion across the UK. Website: www.hlf.org.uk. For more information, please contact Katie Owen, HLF press office, on 020 7591 6036/07973 613820.
- 4) Overall, the Geffrye expects visitor numbers to increase by 25% by 2015. Visitors have responded well to the theme of the home and numbers have been increasing year on year. In 2010-11 the total was 103,000. Around half are repeat visitors, which indicates very high levels of satisfaction. Our learning and education programmes reach some 35,000 children and adults each year. Some of the increase will be the direct result of the new London Overground line, opened in May 2010, with Hoxton station right next to the museum. The Geffrye is now much more easily accessible by public transport and already a quarter of our visitors are using the train.
- 5) The Geffrye explores the home from 1600 to the present day. The museum's focus is on the living rooms of the urban middle classes in England, particularly London. A chronological sequence of period rooms show how homes have been used and furnished over the past 400 years, reflecting the changes in society and patterns of behaviour as well as style, fashion and taste. The museum is set in the former almshouses of the Ironmongers' Company, elegant 18th-century buildings with attractive gardens and mature trees in Shoreditch, East London. The gardens behind the museum have been developed into a series of period gardens which echo the museum's period rooms and illustrate the changing function of gardens in relation to domestic life.



THE GEFFRYE
MUSEUM OF THE HOME

10 May 2011