

Fitted Rigging House ropes in National Lottery funding

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The Fitted Rigging House will go back into wider commercial use once redeveloped Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust

Nearly £5million of National Lottery funding has been awarded to the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust (CHDT) for the redevelopment of the Fitted Rigging House.

The Grade I listed Fitted Rigging House occupies a landmark position on the Anchor Wharf at the Dockyard, the world's most complete dockyard during the age of sail. Built in 1793, it is currently a costly, under-utilised building that is increasingly 'at risk'. CHDT's plans will put it back into commercial use as part of the wider Dockyard which is home to 100 historic buildings and structures.

New uses for an old building

A rental space will be created within the building for commercial tenancy. There will also be a new volunteer centre of excellence to improve facilities for on-site volunteers. The Dockyard's Library and Archive, a nationally important collection, will be opened for wider public use.

[quote=Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive of HLF]"Chatham Historic Dockyard is a National Lottery success story!"[/quote]

Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive of HLF, said: "Chatham Historic Dockyard is a National Lottery success story! We're proud to be supporting its latest project - the redevelopment of the Fitted Rigging House – which takes our total investment in the Dockyard experience to nearly £30m. This money is helping draw in more tourists, making a serious contribution to the local economy as well as providing jobs and training opportunities."

Economic impact on Medway area

The project is costing £8.2m with an additional £1.5m being provided by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. It will build on the Dockyard site's economic impact on the Medway area, currently estimated to be around £16m each year.

John Glen, Minister for Heritage, said: "The famous Historic Dockyard is at the heart of Chatham and helps attract tourists to this beautiful part of Kent. Thanks to National Lottery players this £4.8m investment will preserve this important maritime heritage site, bring a huge range of benefits for local businesses and encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to get involved in volunteering."

Enduring legacy

Originally the Fitted Rigging House provided both accommodation for dockyard riggers to make warships' standing rigging and a storehouse for new equipment. Together with Storehouse 3 and the Ropery it forms an outstanding group of related 18th-century brick structures that have survived relatively unchanged.



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