

Lottery drives growth by investing in empty historic buildings

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Bridgford Hall, Nottingham

Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is announcing grants totaling £3.3million that will make three vacant and derelict historic buildings commercially viable, putting them back to business use.

Merkinch Welfare Hall in Inverness; Bridgford Hall in Nottingham and The Bothy in London have all received funding through HLF's Heritage Enterprise programme.

Heritage Enterprise is helping when the cost of repairing an historic building is so high that restoration simply is not economically viable. Private sector businesses in partnership with not-for-profit groups can apply for grants of £100k to £5million that bridge the financial gap. Funding the vital repairs and conservation work needed to convert derelict, vacant buildings into new, usable commercial spaces that can have a positive impact on local economies.

Ben Greener, HLF's Historic Environment Advisor, said: "Historic buildings are inspirational spaces and our research shows they are very places where enterprise thrives. However, once they've fallen out of use, the high cost of restoration makes them commercially unattractive and they become at risk of spiralling into decline. With Heritage Enterprise, HLF is stepping in – making them fit for purpose, attractive for investment and secure for the future."

More detail about today's new grants

Merkinch Welfare Hall, Inverness - £656,400

Built in 1914 as a temperance meeting hall, the original purpose of this now C-listed building was to attract young men away from alcohol by giving them a provision of planned activities such as sporting activities. On the Buildings at Risk Register since in 1998, this investment will return this vacant building to its original use as a community space, housing an amateur boxing club alongside much-needed offices for local community services.

Bridgford Hall Renovation, Nottingham - £1.5million

Built in 1768 as a family home, this Grade II listed Georgian house later became the council offices of Rushcliffe Borough Council. It once provided the location for Nottinghamshire County Council's registry office services. This investment will enable the ground floor to once again be used as a registry office whilst the two floors above will be converted in to a high quality aparthotel containing seven serviced apartments. It will create nine FTE jobs.

Terapia @ The Bothy, London - £1,012,000

The Bothy is a Grade II listed Victorian Gothic folly situated in the grounds of the Avenue Estate in Finchley and is semi-derelict and on English Heritage's Heritage at Risk register. This grant will enable it to be restored and converted into a centre of excellence providing training and psychotherapy services to vulnerable children, young people and families. It will create 4 FTE jobs.

Notes for editors

FTE jobs – Full time equivalent

Further information

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