

News Release



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FUNDING BACKING FOR MUSIC HALL RENOVATION PROJECT

A council project to renovate and conserve one of the oldest music halls in the country, the Leeds City Varieties, has received backing from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

A grant of £2.739m has been approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund signalling its support for the £9.2m scheme.

The work, which will begin in April next year, will see a comprehensive refurbishment of the music hall to bring it back to its former glory. Designs are based, as far as possible, on the building as it was in the late 19th century.

Councillor Andrew Carter Leeds City Council leader and executive board member for Development and Regeneration, said:

"We're very pleased to have the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund to help us with our ambition to restore this much-loved music hall back to its former glory. It plays such an important part in the heritage of our city and in conjunction with the work already carried out at the Grand Theatre, the opening of the new Leeds Museum and progress on the Arena, we are providing the city with a wide range of entertainment and cultural facilities to rival anywhere outside of London."

Fiona Spiers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund, Yorkshire and Humber, said:

"Leeds City Varieties is steeped in music hall history as well as being held in huge affection by the people of Leeds. The Heritage Lottery Fund's confirmation of its support for this project means that work can now begin enabling this wonderful building to be restored back to its original Victorian glory."

Councillor John Procter, Chair of the Leeds Grand Theatre Board, said:

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“This is great news that helps us to progress with our plans to revitalize the City Varieties. It’s such an important facility not just for its performances but its architecture and social history means that it can also be enjoyed as a learning resource too.”

The work involves restoration of the auditorium, improved stage and backstage facilities, additional toilets, improved access including more ground floor foyer space, relocated box office and installation of a public lift to serve all levels of the auditorium.

The refurbishment scheme has been made possible through funds of £5.2m from Leeds City Council, the £2.739m grant from the HLF and £1.261m contribution from the Leeds Grand Theatre and Opera House Ltd raised through fundraising.

Peter Sandeman, General Manager at City Varieties, said:

“We are very grateful for the generous support we have received so far, in particular from the Friends of the City Varieties and many other donors, who have over the years made a significant contribution to our work. It’s encouraging to see that so many people share our aims to preserve this historically important music hall for future generations to enjoy. We still have more funds to raise and would like to hear from anyone willing to give to this exciting project.”

To contribute to the refurbishment appeal, please send donations to the City Varieties Music Hall, Swan Street, Leeds LS1 6LW or call 08451 260 696 or visit www.cityvarieties.co.uk

Notes to editors:

Work on the City Varieties is scheduled to start on site in April 2009 and complete in August 2010, with a public opening planned for September 2010.

The Friends of City Varieties and other donors have already raised £500,000 towards the City Varieties refurbishment appeal.

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), using money raised through the National Lottery, 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, investing in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 26,000 projects, allocating over £4billion across the UK. Website: www.hlf.org.uk. For more information, please contact Katie Owen, HLF Press Office, on tel: (020) 7591 6036.

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