
PRESS RELEASE

2nd June 2010

Living Radically: BAC Old Town Hall Plans progress for BAC's Old Town Hall preservation

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has given the green light to BAC to work up plans to preserve and restore its iconic old Town Hall home to re-imagine the building as an arts hub for the twenty first century as they begin a new 125 year lease on the premises. Development funding of £171,300 was awarded to help progress their plans.

The HLF first-round pass* means that BAC can now progress to the second stage of the HLF application process. They have up to two years to submit more detailed plans and apply for the £2,444,300 of HLF support that they are seeking for their project.

Under the principles of the 19th century Battersea motto 'Not for You, Not for Me, But For Us', BAC will increase visitor numbers by improving access, infrastructure and facilities, and bring their extraordinary heritage to life in a vibrant, welcoming building where a diverse range of local, national and international communities come together to learn, celebrate, meet and share experiences and stories.

The HLF Grant will enable BAC to undertake essential repairs to conserve the roof, brickwork, windows, glass dome, chimneys, masonry and partial restoration of the organ. BAC will also invest in deepening their audience's engagement and ownership of the building by creating a publicly accessible digital archive, increasing the cataloguing of artifacts and materials relating to their political, cultural and physical heritage. A series of building-wide installations will also be created with schools and local communities for all visitors can enjoy.

Sue Bowers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund London, said;
"We are delighted to have given our initial support to Battersea Arts Centre so that these vital redevelopments can begin. New digital archives and educational programmes will really get the local community and visitors involved, and encourage people to engage with the fascinating history of this handsome historic building. We look forward to working with BAC and watching this project progress."

Since 1893, Battersea's Grade II* listed Old Town Hall has been a political and cultural hub at the forefront of progressive movements of feminism, racial equality, and socialism. This radical democracy lives on in BAC's programme today, with recent flagship events including a major Transition Towns conference (an international grassroots movement addressing issues of Peak Oil and Climate Change); a sell-out new production of George Orwell's *1984*, supported by Amnesty International; and Nic Green's *Trilogy* which stimulated debate across the mainstream press in its exploration of modern-day feminism.

Commenting on the award, Artistic Directors David Jubb and David Micklem said:

"Support from the Heritage Lottery Fund is critical in enabling BAC to achieve its ambitions around learning, participation, access and audience development, without which the building will fall further into disrepair, negating the impact of any opportunities created for learning and engagement for visitors and making an uncertain future for Battersea's former Town Hall."

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Notes to Editors:

*A first-round pass means the project meets our criteria for funding and we 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.

On occasion an applicant with a first-round pass will also be awarded development funding towards the development of their scheme.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the **Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)** 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, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK. Website: www.hlf.org.uk