



PRESS RELEASE

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CINEMA RESTORATION MOVES A STEP CLOSER

The planned restoration of the historic Curzon Community Cinema moved a step closer this week with the announcement by the Board of Trustees of how it plans to go about phasing the restoration project over a number of years.

Announcing the decision, Trustee Chair Chris Brain, said,

“The Heritage Lottery Fund are supportive of our project, and gave us a Project Planning Grant in 2004 to develop our thinking. We used the Grant to commission a Conservation Report, an Audience Development Report and an Access Audit from a team of experts. The Board has now decided what needs to be done first and also how the later stages should be programmed. It means that we will start to see something happening on the ground more quickly than if we had tried to get funds for the whole project at once.”

A critical element for the Curzon restoration is fundraising. The Curzon will need to match any Lottery funding with somewhere between 25% and 40% of the restoration cost. This means raising capital of between £1.25m and £2m.

Curzon Vice-Chair and Director of Fundraising, Hilary Neal is confident that the Curzon can raise that sort of money. “Doing the restoration project in manageable stages makes the fundraising task less risky and also means that the priority elements of the project can happen earlier.

“Once we get the phasing approved by HLF we can, with the support of our advisors, map out a fundraising strategy that delivers what we need, when we need it. Fundraising is never easy. But we know how important the survival of the Curzon is to the local community and they want us to succeed. We fully expect that as we go along people will see what we are achieving and be inspired to keep supporting us ”

The next task for the Curzon is to commission detailed cost estimates for the scheme. Armed with this information and with its fundraising strategy in place, an application will be made to HLF for a Project Development Grant that will cover cost of preparation of detailed architects drawings and an application for the various consents needed, such as planning consent, listed building consent and conservation area consent.

The Curzon's annual Open Day on Sunday 24th April 2005 will be a chance to find out more about the plans. The Open Day provides the opportunity for the general public to take a 'backscreen' tour of the historic cinema, seeing parts of the building that are not normally open to public view – some of which dates back to the original 1912 structure. For more details of the Open Day call the Curzon Information Line on 01275 871000.

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Notes to Editors:

1. The Curzon Community Cinema is believed to be the oldest purpose built, continuously operated cinema in the world, having opened its doors for the first time in April 1912. The cinema celebrates its 93rd birthday later this month, when it opens its doors for its annual Open Day (Sunday 24th April 2005).
2. For the past 8 years the cinema has been operated as a registered charity having been saved from closure by public subscription.
3. The full cinema restoration is likely to cost in the order of £5m, including re-opening the Grand Circle (closed to the public in the 1970's), the construction of a new educational lecture theatre, restoration of the historic tin wall and ceiling panelling, a new entrance foyer on Great western Road as well as disabled access to all floors.

The expected phases are as follows:

Preliminary Phase:	Application for Development Funding from HLF
Phase One:	Roof Structure
Phase Two:	Construction of Educational Lecture Theatre, and refurbishment of 'stable block'
Phase Three:	Restoration of main auditorium, screen and metal panelling (excluding fit-out of Grand Circle & restoration of side boxes)
Phase Four:	Restoration and fit-out of Grand Circle, boxes and installation of lift and staircase access to upper floors (includes construction of atrium foyer, subject to availability of funding)
Phase Five:	Restoration of Oak Room Café and windows, creation of top floor conference suite (would include atrium foyer if not constructed under Phase Four).
Phase Six:	Façade and stonework and restoration of shop units.