

Press Release. 17th March 2019

Great News for Harborne. Architectural Heritage Fund Makes Grant of £4,520 to Harborne Royalty Trust.

The Harborne Royalty Trust received the exciting news that we are to receive a grant of **£4,520** from the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) to enable the Trust to engage professionals and undertake further research in order to test the viability of proposals for the Royalty building and then produce a Project Viability Report.

Funding to Provide Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment

The funding will enable the Trust to engage a **Conservation Accredited Architect** to prepare a **Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment** to accompany our proposals for the restoration and redevelopment of the Royalty Cinema. The Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment will inform HRT of what can and should be saved and restored at the Royalty, which in turn will provide the evidence for securing further funding as we move forward. We will also look to secure independent structural advice on the building.

Harborne Royalty Trust Still Working Hard to Save the Royalty

The Harborne Royalty Trust with our skills base, experience of development of community facilities, fundraising and finance, remains best placed to work in partnership with the owner and local authority to ensure a viable scheme comes forward. Funding such as the AHF has generously provided gives us the necessary funds to properly assess the restoration work required.

Latest Plans

The consultation results showed tremendous support for a restored Royalty and our latest plans, which we have been working through with our architect and advisors, still include a **large multipurpose auditorium for cinema, live performance and functions, a smaller dedicated cinema, restaurant, cafe and dedicated community space.**

The Importance of the Royalty and the Work of the Trust Recognised

These grants are always extremely competitive, with many worthwhile projects, so we like to think it is a reflection on our application and the value attributed to securing the restoration of this grade II listed building on Harborne High Street that has enabled us to be successful.

We would like to express our thanks to the AHF for supporting us with this funding.

This award follows a previous grant from Birmingham City Council for £5,000.

Time for the Owner to Step Up to the Plate

We are playing our part working up constructive proposals for the Royalty. The Council expect community to be part of any future planning application. We will be ready and waiting.

Want to Know More?

Contact Harborne Royalty Trust: Rob Sutton, Chair 07904 924 609 or chair@theroyaltyharborne.co.uk

Visit our website www.theroyaltyharborne.co.uk

www.facebook.com/theroyaltyharborne

NOTES TO EDITOR

The Royalty, Harborne is a 1930's Art Deco former cinema designed by the architect Mr. Horace G. Bradley who was responsible for several fine Birmingham cinemas of this era and style.

Set in a prominent position on the "West End" of the High Street of the leafy Birmingham suburb of Harborne, this beautiful grade II listed building was latterly a bingo hall before being closed in 2012. Since then it has experienced two fires, a minor one in November 2017 and a more serious incident in September 2018, which damaged the exquisite internal original features.

However, the building and in particular, the frontage was saved by the Fire Service. In response to the calamity, the community rallied around in support of the Harborne Royalty Trust (HRT) plan to bring the building back into active use.

A public consultation being held at the time of the second fire found that 90 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that the building should be preserved for community use. Key facilities proposed and which received the most support included a cinema, multi-use auditorium for community functions, café, restaurant, skybar, children's nursery. The intention is that the building will be economically active and fully self-sustaining from a financial perspective while delivering the services the community wants.

The surrounding businesses and locale which was formerly known as the "West End" of Harborne High Street will benefit from the regeneration effect created by the increased footfall of this destination for visitors to Harborne and locals who will not need to commute into the centre of the city for an enhanced cinema, social and cultural experience.

This HRT plan is in contrast to the plans of the owners of the site, who have had their plans to convert the building into a private apartment scheme rejected by the community and the council.

The HRT as a not for profit organisation can apply for and access funds to support the restoration and development of the community facilities not available to the current owner. There is confidence that investors and businesses that have already expressed an interest will commit, and work with HRT to convert the building into a community hub for the future of the area.

Key consultation results

90% - want to see the Royalty restored as a community facility.

88% - would use a cinema.

75% - think Harborne should have a new live performance venue.

95% - no to the Royalty being demolished and rebuilt as apartments.

93% - a restored listed building can add to the vitality of a High Street.

View Courtesy Miller Studio

