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# Londonderry heritage projects get £2m lottery fund boost



Austins is one of Derry's best-known buildings

1 hour ago

**Lottery funding of more than £2m is being given to seven heritage projects in Londonderry.**

The projects include the restoration of two landmark city centre buildings, further funding for the city's new maritime museum and an expansion of

Ulster University's archive of Northern Ireland's Troubles.

Dr Paul Mullan of the National Lottery Heritage Fund said the £2.2m was testament to Derry's commitment to heritage-led regeneration.

That initial package could rise further, to more than £10m, the National Lottery Heritage Fund said, through potential future funding commitments.

"Thanks to National Lottery players, we're helping to revitalise landmark buildings like Austins and St Columb's Hall into accessible spaces with sustainable futures," Dr Mullan said.

The restoration of the Austins' building is to receive £459,000 – and the building's owners can now apply for a further grant of £4.47m from the lottery's heritage fund.

Earlier this year it was purchased – **with more than £1m of government funding** - by the Inner City Trust, which works to inject commercial and social life into Derry's city centre.



The building has been empty since the store closed its doors nine years ago

Helen Quigley, from the trust, said the funding would let work begin on "the essential restoration of Austins - carefully beginning the work needed to return it to its former glory while creating a vibrant, sustainable hub at the heart of our community".

The building dates back to 1830 when Thomas Austin came to Derry and opened a drapery shop in the corner of the Diamond.

Austins **closed in 2016 after going into liquidation.**



NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND

St Columb's Hall originally opened its doors in 1888

Often referred to as "the people's hall", St Columb's Hall was immensely popular in its heyday, attracting performers including Roy Orbison, Ruby Murray and Val Doonican.

Emmeline Pankhurst, who campaigned for women's right to vote, made a keynote speech at St Columb's Hall in 1910.

It is to receive initial funding of £243,000 – with the trust that is overseeing its restoration now eligible to apply for a further grant of £3.7m.

Chair of St Columb's Hall Trust Conal McFeely said the lottery funding will "allow us to really open up this amazing building to the whole community".

"This funding will help us repair stonework, plan an inclusive theatre experience and give people access to the entire building so that this is the People's Hall for all."





NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND

St Augustine's Church's Sexton's cottage is to become tourist accommodation

Funding of £246,344 has been awarded to St Augustine's Church of Ireland, where there are plans to transform its 190-year-old Sexton's cottage into tourist accommodation.

The church is thought to be the site of a 6th Century Columban monastery.

Three archive projects documenting various aspects of the city's history have also been awarded lottery fund grants.

The Home in Troubled Times project is an expansion of Ulster University's Cain - Conflict Archive on the Internet - which covers the history, key events and political issues concerning the Troubles.

It has been awarded funding of more than £250,000, while the North West Civil Rights Archive project has received £421,000.

## Extra funding for maritime museum

Meanwhile, St Columb's Park Reconciliation Trust has been awarded £177,000, for its Our Hidden Healers project documenting healing and health through the ages.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has also announced additional funding of £400,000 has been awarded to Derry City and Strabane District Council for its Derry-Londonderry North Atlantic (DNA) Museum.

That takes overall lottery funding to date for the museum, which will explore

Derry's maritime history, to £3.5m.

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