

Heritage Lottery Fund awards £1.13m for Heath Robinson Museum in Pinner, NW London

The Project to build a Heath Robinson museum in North London has reached a pivotal point with the award of a £1,133,100 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Museum will display and make accessible the only significant public collection of work by the artist, cartoonist and illustrator, best-known for the complicated and outlandish inventions he portrayed. In addition to a gallery housing a permanent exhibition, there will be a gallery for temporary exhibitions, a learning and activity studio, an archive and a museum shop.

William Heath Robinson is an artist of international standing, and his work, whether in his well-known humorous drawings or his illustrations for Kipling, Shakespeare or his own children's stories, is integral to the fabric of British cultural heritage. The museum will be a major attraction for Pinner, the north-west London suburb where he lived for many years. The collection of more than 500 original artworks – including cartoons, book illustrations and watercolours – was given by Heath Robinson's son-in-law in the hope that it would go on permanent public display.

The project is a joint venture between The William Heath Robinson Trust which owns the collection and the people of Pinner who are providing the site for the new museum. Geoffrey Beare, a trustee of the William Heath Robinson Trust said: "The Heath Robinson Museum Project will fill a significant gap in the arts provision in this country. There is a real public hunger to see Heath Robinson's work and learn more about his life. Our project will make accessible for the first time a unique collection of his works, supporting documents and published material to inform, educate and entertain a broad range of people. Apart from the Trust's collection there is very little of his work in public collections and that is rarely shown."

The Museum will hold four temporary exhibitions a year showing particular aspects of the collection or works by related artists. The Museum's Activity Room will allow visitors of all ages to make their own creations and study aspects of the collection. Pinner is easily accessible from central London, and just 25 minutes from Baker Street on the Metropolitan Line.

Martin Verden, who chairs the project steering committee, expressed his gratitude to HLF and all the people who have worked so hard to get the project to this stage. However, he cautioned that "We still need to raise £200,000 to build the Museum. People from all over the world have been very generous in supporting our Kickstarter campaign and appeal, and we hope that more donors will give the project the best possible Christmas present, so that we can reach our target."