



case study

equal opportunities



Objective One is part-financed by the European Union



The Objective One Partnership for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

PENDENNIS CASTLE

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the project

The site of the 450 year old Tudor castle at Pendennis incorporates a Grade II listed building - the Royal Artillery Barracks. In recent years, the barracks have primarily been used as a youth hostel. This use ceased in 2000 and a project was developed to support refurbishment to provide a new use for the building which would yield both economic and community benefit.

The Programme has invested £538,700 from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the project which has a total cost of £1.4 million.

This English Heritage led project has enabled the conservation and adaptation of the largely under used Grade II listed barracks, now renamed the Royal Artillery Barracks, within the Pendennis Castle site. The project will support both increased economic and community use.

The project has brought the entire building back into use, providing both new and improved services and facilities to enhance the visitor experience and to develop and build a new market in the private/corporate sector. These include:

- Improved educational facilities through a new interpretation suite
- Two classroom / training areas for use by schools and the local community
- Three executive suites for hire with associated kitchen facilities (conferences, weddings and other events)
- Increased physical access to the entire building
- Increased accessible office space

All of these elements will enable this key Cornish attraction to meet the needs of the local community, increase usage by the business community (for both direct hire and through ancillary suppliers) and offer enhanced opportunities for general visitors. The facilities will enable English Heritage to market the site for year round use which will extend the market and in turn safeguard existing and create new jobs.



measures of equal opportunities adopted

To enable equality of access to opportunities for people with disabilities, including all levels of training and sustainable employment:

The project incorporates physical access to the two storey Royal Artillery Barracks; the 3 main entrances have wheelchair access ramps, entrance doors are powered and operable by push buttons, a platform lift has been installed to provide access to the first floor and the paint scheme has been selected to give reasonable visual contrast between features. All of these features support the new education and training rooms incorporated within the barracks and the three offices which will be occupied by newly recruited members of English Heritage staff.

Another element of the project is that of the educational and training material provided within the Interpretation Room. Displays have been designed to incorporate tactile elements, sensory media and sounds and smells. In addition, the exhibition has been designed for all levels of ability and a remote access module enables disabled people to access visual information of the less accessible areas of the castle.

English Heritage seeks "to increase access to the historic environment, particularly to those traditionally left out of cultural activities, physically, intellectually



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and financially' and 'to improve access to the historic environment for people with disabilities'. To enable this within the Royal Artillery Barracks project, an Access for All Group was established to address practical access issues in relation to plans and designs. A range of organisations and individuals with different disabilities undertook site visits during the planning stage and subsequently contributed their informed views and priorities to the project to ensure that physical access was both extensive and appropriate. The group has recently been reformed to provide an evaluation of the access elements of the project to complete the Project Management Cycle. It is envisaged that this group will also contribute towards the Welcome Host, Welcome All training for new staff, thus enhancing the awareness training, bringing the reality of access issues and potential problems to the forefront.

To support activities that increase the adoption of equal opportunities strategies and family friendly policies and / or the awareness of benefits of equal opportunities:

The project addressed equal opportunity strategies and family friendly policies in three different ways:

1. Considerate Constructors Scheme

The developers undertaking the refurbishment were asked to sign up to the National Considerate Constructors Scheme, a voluntary code of considerate practice. The scheme promotes good working practices which minimise disturbance and disruption caused by noise, dust and additional traffic and encourages sensitivity to the local environment, including Respect for People (those on site and the wider, local community). This scheme enabled the process of refurbishment to be undertaken whilst continuing public access to and within the Castle. The Scheme incorporated the need to ensure the work site was safe, tidy, limited disruption and that contractors were polite to visitors and communicated information about any substantial works that could have disrupted the running of the site.

2. Staff training

All new staff and volunteers working in the Royal Artillery Barracks will attend a Welcome Host, Welcome All training course thus promoting and extending knowledge and experience of equal opportunities and awareness of how to address any specific individual requirements when visiting the site.

3. Information provision

Interpretation: the exhibitions that have been developed for the Royal Artillery Barracks have been designed to maximise physical access and enable a range of

intellectual access. Particular attention has been given to:

- The height of displays
- The provision of hearing loops in the exhibition rooms (and throughout the building)
The installation of exhibitions providing two tiers of information (children and adults) which in turn will enable people with learning disabilities to access information
- The provision of tactile exhibits and sensory media

To enable equality of access to opportunities, including all levels of training and sustainable employment, for people who are disadvantaged in the economy, including by virtue of age, ethnicity, rural isolation etc:

The completion of this project will support the creation of at least two full time posts (Hospitality Manager and Hospitality Assistants) which will be accessible to a wider group of people as they will be based from a fully accessible building. A range of training will be provided for the new staff employed to manage and run the new facilities and services.

benefits of equal opportunities

The incorporation of equal opportunities within the project is a fundamental consideration for English Heritage, supporting increased access to the site and promoting its facilities to a wider group of people. This in turn will have an economic impact as that the new services and facilities will be accessible to more people, thus increasing potential visitor numbers and widening opportunities for more private / corporate bookings.

The running of the Considerate Constructors Scheme for the building company is perceived to have economic outputs. The contractors worked closely with English Heritage staff to promote the works as exciting and of interest in their own right; a way of showcasing the Castle and enthusing visitors – who may now return!

The integration of equal opportunities issues across the whole project means that the Royal Artillery Barracks are now open to and accessible by a much broader group of people, a new client group. This will expand and extend the market both in terms of visitor numbers and the length of the season. This is expected to increase general visitor numbers and the number of functions (private and corporate). Early figures indicate that bookings have already increased significantly (almost doubled) with even greater potential when corporate clients are sought. Such an increase will



impact upon hospitality services – both within the Castle (the café) and externally (a range of suppliers who are brought in for private and corporate functions).

lessons learnt

Callie Saxty, English Heritage, says:

“The incorporation of equal opportunities into this project was a natural consideration for English Heritage – a part and parcel of our project development. However, we were able to enhance this through local, direct consultation with an Access for All group both at development and completion stages. This benefited the project ensuring all practical aspects of accessibility were carefully considered. We have high expectations that this will provide economic benefit through the attraction of more visitors and clients.”

Vaughan Temby, Cornwall Disability Forum, says:

“Ensuring your property is as fully accessible as possible is essential (Disability Discrimination Act) and is also a matter of good practice to demonstrate that you are treating everyone as equally as possible. One of the most noticeable benefits of this approach can be economic, as it is estimated that there are 8.6 million disabled people in the UK with a spending power of £50 billion a year. Open your doors to this group and not only are you treating everybody equally but you may benefit financially into the bargain too.”

For more information about how you can incorporate equal opportunities into your project please contact the Objective One Partnership Office on 01872 241379 or email objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk.