

Home for 18th century hearse turned into exhibition room

The ruins of a 19th century church shed built to house a horse drawn hearse have been transformed into an exhibition room in Penicuik.

The Hearse House at St Mungo's church yard in the town had fallen into serious disrepair with concern over the condition of the roof and stone walls leading to it being fenced off.

But now it has been restored as part of the Penicuik Heritage Regeneration Project and will be a central part of a new town centre trail marking the heritage of the community.

The building, which is listed as a Category B on Historic Environment Scotland's buildings at risk register, was built in 1800 to house the original horse drawn hearse.







The Penicuik Heritage Regeneration Project is a six-year scheme aimed at regenerating the historic core of the town through historic building grants, shop front improvements, public realm improvements and an extensive education, training and engagement programme.

It is funded by Midlothian Council, the National Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Environment Scotland and is supported by Penicuik Community Development Trust, Penicuik and District Community Council, Penicuik Arts Association, The Penicuik Alliance and the Penicuik Historical Society.

The project received grants from the Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Fund to help restore the Hearse House as part of its work.

The new exhibition room is now home to a model of the Clerk Mausoleum – an ancient monument within the church graveyard which dates back to the mid 17th century and is seen as a

pioneering example of classic architecture.

Exhibition boards illustrating Penicuik's unique history and heritage are also in the new space which will be open for the public to come and see at a special launch event next weekend.

The event will see Provost Debbi McCall lead a walk from the town hall to Hearse House before taking a guided walk along the new heritage trail stopping at a series of new interpretive panels along the way.

Councillor McCall said: "I am relieved and pleased that we have been able to save and restore this important part of Penicuik's history.

"Giving the Hearse House a new lease of life as a base for the town centre heritage trail will enable visitors and residents to gain a valuable insight into aspects of the town's history and heritage.

" I hope that it can be used by the schools as part of their history studies. Penicuik has a unique heritage which hopefully will now be more accessible and encourage people to delve into the history and find out more ."

The launch starts at the town hall on Saturday, August 24, at 10am.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter