

### **Ambitious tower project takes Inverewe to ‘new heights’**

The National Trust for Scotland has today (Tuesday 9 July 2018) revealed the first public sketches of its new proposed viewing tower at the award-winning Inverewe Garden in Wester Ross.

The bold plans, which have been submitted to Highland Council for planning consent, would see an approx. 20m observation tower installed below the High Viewpoint overlooking Loch Ewe, deep in Inverewe Garden.

If given the go-ahead, the tower would provide unique panoramic views for visitors with minimal impact on surroundings and could be used to host educational talks. The sustainable development plans mark the latest in a series of projects undertaken by the conservation charity to enhance the visitor experience at the heritage garden.

Simon Skinner, Chief Executive at the National Trust for Scotland, said: “Inverewe Garden has been earmarked as one of our priority projects over the next few years. It is part of our wider plans to spend £57 million enhancing the visitor experience and condition of heritage at the sites and properties in our care.

“As a result of the Gulf Stream meeting the Highlands, Inverewe Garden is a nirvana of unusual and wonderful plants and wildlife. This exciting project will create another fantastic dimension at the estate, providing visitors with a whole new experience and way to enjoy Scotland’s national and natural treasures; all while helping us to establish the property as an international centre of arts and culture.”

Clea Warner, General Manager at the National Trust for Scotland North West Region, added: “We’ve seen a surge in visitor numbers at Inverewe thanks to our recent investment including the renovation of Inverewe House, the development of the new Sawyer Gallery and Bothy Café, as well as new glasshouses. This next phase of development at Inverewe will make it an even more coveted place to visit while protecting the landscape now and for future generations to come.”

Since 2016, Inverewe has developed a full and varied events programme aligned to a new museum and art gallery. This has resulted in a 30% increase in visitor numbers, partly benefitting from the international success of the North Coast 500 tourist route, while enabling the development of a Highland Art community centred on showcasing work based on the inspirational garden and surrounding landscape of Wester Ross. The estate has received national recognition last year after being voted the UK’s number one garden in 2017 and the Inverewe House project received the Gold Award in the Marketing Society Star Awards 2018 for the Interpretation of Inverewe House in recognition of the quality of the creative design and effectiveness in supporting the visitor experience.

Clea said: “Inverewe Garden is gaining a reputation as an imaginative and inspiring arts destination in its own right, with a thriving programme of cultural activity. We’re pleased to be adding architecture to the list and have plans to make more enhancements with a new light and projection system.”

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