



THRILLED: Major General Seymour Monro at the museum. Photograph: David Whittaker-Smith

Highlanders Museum on march towards its refurbishment target

£120,000 FOR FORT GEORGE CENTRE

BY JANE CANDLISH

A MUSEUM dedicated to the history of the Highland regiments has received a major financial boost to its refurbishment fund.

The Highlanders Museum at Fort George, near Inverness, has recently received more than £120,000 from four sources.

The Heritage Lottery fund has given £32,000, the largest sum so far, while Highland Council and the Highland Leader Programme each gave about £30,000, with Highlands and Islands Enterprise contributing a further £27,000.

The museum needs £2million to complete its first significant upgrade in nearly 30 years.

Plans include the creation of a new archive and study centre, interactive exhibits, and the restoration of the building, which is a scheduled ancient monument.

The revamp will also include new display cases, improved access for disabled people, and interpretation for visitors who do not speak English.

It is hoped to start the refurbishment next year and the museum will close for the duration of the year-long project.

The building, which is operated by an independent charity, houses the largest regimental collection outside

London and attracts over 55,000 visitors each year. Some exhibits will be moved to different areas of the base at Fort George, while others will be put into storage.

The Highlanders Museum Development Committee will use the £120,000 to investigate and design a new layout for the exhibits.

Committee chairman Major General Seymour Monro, who formerly commanded the Queen's Own Highlanders in Belfast and the Gulf, said: "We are thrilled to have received such a broad base of endorsement and support from these hugely respected organisations.

AMBITIOUS

"I think the reason we have been so successful is that we are a most deserving project that undertakes a wide range of work with the community, as well as our unashamedly ambitious plans to take this superb museum up to the next level. These funds have got us off to a tremendous start."

The committee also plans to launch its own fundraising campaign later this year.

Highland Council convener Sandy Park said: "The Highlanders Museum not only celebrates and helps to maintain our cultural heritage, but it also assists the economic vibrancy of the region in helping to generate and sustain tourism."