

Dance centre bids for funds

CARDIFF'S historic Coal Exchange could become the home for a new Welsh national dance centre.

A £6.5m bid for Lottery cash has been made and, if granted, would be used to provide the much-needed addition to the arts in Wales.

Plans were unveiled this morning to construct rehearsal space and production studios for Welsh companies in the Cardiff Bay building.

Jocelyn Pretty, administrator of the Cardiff-based Diversions company, which would be housed in the new centre, said the mod-

Lottery cash could mean arts addition

By Lisa Mitchell

ern facilities were desperately needed in Wales.

"We rehearse in an old chapel at the moment and it is very cramped.

"This would allow us to stage bigger shows and it will raise the profile of dance in Wales."

If cash from the National Lottery arts and heritage fund is granted in October, work could begin on the

conversion of the Coal Exchange by next summer.

It could take three years for the project to be completed but part of the Grade 2 listed building would be ready for use much earlier.

Project director Prof Ifan Payne said: "The Exchange building is in the right place, at the heart of where Cardiff's future is.

"The dance centre will be the hub of activity in a glorious building that we are bringing back to life."

The project has been developed by the Welsh Dance Theatre Trust.

It is envisaged dancers will use the Exchange Hall, next to the Coal Exchange, for performances.

Maldwyn Pate, dance director of the Arts Council for Wales, said: "All levels of dancers will have access to superb facilities.

"These simply do not exist at the moment.

"This is a chance for dance finally to have a home in Wales."