

L S Lowry's 1952 painting 'Ancoats Hospital Outpatients' Hall'

Ancoats Dispensary Trust (ADT), in partnership with Igloo Regeneration, has successfully secured backing from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to help save from demolition the much-loved Grade II listed Ancoats Dispensary, subject of L S Lowry's 1952 painting *Ancoats Hospital Outpatients' Hall*.

In a two-round application process, HLF has awarded the partnership initial support towards a full grant of £4.5million. The partnership will receive a development grant of just over £770,000 to undertake immediate stabilisation works to the fragile building and enable it to fully develop its plans to restore and transform the building into a new hub for Manchester's cultural industries.

Designed by architect Daniel Lewis in the neo-gothic style, the formerly known Ancoats and Ardwick Hospital was built in 1874 and provided out-patient and home-patient care to industrial workers and their families. A vital building within the local community, its influence was and remains far reaching crossing over into popular culture like Lowry's famous painting.

The building served the local community for over 150 years and remained a hospital until it closed in 1989. It has rapidly declined in recent years and with no roof was scheduled for demolition until the local community stepped into to find a way to save it, staging a daily vigil at the site which has lasted for over three years.

This earmarked funding from HLF means that ADT and Igloo Regeneration can now develop exciting proposals to transform Ancoats Dispensary into a sustainable community and enterprise hub – to be known as 'the beating heart of Ancoats'. Alongside providing health and well-being facilities, the refurbished building will also have the potential to house a range of creative businesses – from photography studios and fashion workshops to technology companies and graphic designers - which could create up to 50 jobs and bring a vital economic boost to the local area.

This grant has been awarded through HLF's Heritage Enterprise programme. The scheme is designed to empower people, working in partnership with the private sector, to find sustainable new uses for disused historic buildings in their local communities. It addresses buildings like Ancoats Dispensary which have previously failed to attract investment or realise their commercial potential because the cost of repair has meant that - until now - they were not commercially viable. HLF's investment announced today bridges that financial gap. It will specifically help fund vital repairs and conservation works to the building, converting it into a safe, usable and inspirational space for new businesses.

ADT Co-ordinator, Linda Carver, said: "This success has been the result of massive commitment from all concerned and I would also like to thank all those who have sponsored, responded to our social media on both Twitter and Facebook, national and local heritage groups, local businesses, community groups but last but not least to the local community for their massive faith in us.

"We very much hope that the dispensary will play its part in the wider regeneration activity in the New Islington area and will not only be a community hub for the local area but will also attract visitors and Mancunians alike."

Sara Hilton, Head of HLF North West, said: "Our trustees were inspired by the passion and commitment demonstrated by the local community to secure Ancoats Dispensary and felt it was important that HLF support them. The Heritage Enterprise grant programme was designed to enable local people to revive these types of much loved buildings so that rather than being an eyesore, they can play a positive role in the economic and cultural landscape of their local communities once again. Although there is still a long way to go to secure the future of the dispensary, our funding enables the trust to take the important next step with their development partner Igloo."

Lucy Powell, Member of Parliament for Manchester Central, said: "This is fantastic news for the dispensary and for the whole area. It is testament to Linda and the whole community for coming together to work on a viable future for this much treasured part of our heritage. Over the coming months there will be a lot of work to do to develop and design the future plans and I look forward to working with Linda and the group, along with the city council and others."

News of this grant is a very significant step in the future of Ancoats Dispensary. However, the Heritage Enterprise funding alone will not deliver this much needed community hub. The funding must be matched by around £1m of additional funding if the project is to progress to the construction phase. ADT will now set about trying to raise these funds to ensure the dispensary can be restored as a sustainable community facility. To find out more about how to help email: saveancoatsdispensary@btinternet.com leaving contact details and a representative will contact you directly.

Notes to editors

Ancoats Dispensary Trust
Ancoats Dispensary Trust is a grassroots community organisation behind the vision to restore Ancoats Dispensary. A well-managed delivery group, it was formed from a passionate local community group who stepped in to try to save the building from demolition. Further information can be obtained at the Ancoats Dispensary Trust website.

Further information

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New ideas need old buildings