Derelict historic buildings soon to open for



Exterior view of Ashton Old Baths

How HLF is unlocking the commercial potential of two historic buildings

Almost every town and city across the UK has at least one - a disused historic building that used to sit at the heart of its local community but has become neglected. Perhaps now faded and in some cases even considered a blot on the landscape, these buildings remain much-loved by local people keen to see them put back to use.

This is the case for Ashton-under-Lyne's former municipal baths. Designed by architects Paull and Robinson, Ashton Old Baths was built in 1870 and served the Ashton community until it closed in the 1970s. Since then, the baths have remained largely derelict and on English Heritage's Heritage at Risk register with no viable solution on the horizon.

Like many historic buildings that have fallen out of use, Ashton Old Baths has become very expensive to restore, making it unattractive for private investment. Now, £1.7million of HLF money is giving this building a second chance, transforming it into a 21st century business premises for start-up digital, creative and media companies.

[quote=Ben Greener, HLF's Historic Environment Advisor]"What Heritage Enterprise is doing is providing the financial leg-up needed to get these buildings in the right shape to become self-sustaining."[/quote]

The money has been awarded through Heritage Enterprise. What's different about this HLF progamme is that it funds projects seeking to restore historic buildings for commercial use. Our funding pays for the vital repair and conservation work needed to make the building usable and therefore sustainable. By doing so these buildings can then generate jobs, create wealth and boost local economies.

Ben Greener, HLF's Historic Environment Advisor, said: "Far from being a hindrance, we know that with a good business plan in place historic buildings can in fact have an incredibly positive impact on local economies. What Heritage Enterprise is doing is providing the financial leg-up needed to get these buildings in the right shape to become self-sustaining."

Another key aspect of Heritage Enterprise is that we will also fund projects being delivered by private businesses as long as it is in partnership with not-for-profit groups. In the case of Ashton, the project is a partnership between property developer, PlaceFirst Ltd and Tameside Council.

Another project to recently receive funding through Heritage Enterprise is Finsley Gate Wharf - an historic, disused canal wharf in Burnley. £2million will help create a new boat repair yard, restaurant, rental cottage and moorings.

Do you know of a former cinema, disused warehouse, redundant factory or closed pub that might benefit from Heritage Enterprise?

Efallai y bydd gennych chi ddiddordeb hefyd mewn ...



Credit: Katomi Creations

New ideas need old buildings