

Victorian Chapel in Oxford House Keith Greenough

Oxford House, a wonderful grade II-listed community, arts and heritage centre in London's East End, will be revitalised following the announcement of support made possible by National Lottery players.

Originally established in 1884 by Keble College and the University of Oxford, Oxford House is now home to 25 small business, charities and social enterprises, and provides a variety of spaces for artistic development.

An HLF grant of £1.4million will repair and open up the Victorian hidden chapel, as well as providing a new roof, a café, a roof garden and an event space.

The project will also bring to life stories from Oxford House’s 130-year history, including those of the diverse local communities it has served. The programme will be led by a new heritage curator and programmer and delivered by community partners who include resident companies like Green Candle Dance, Kayd Somali Arts & Culture and the Young & Talented drama school.

[quote=Justine Simons, Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries]"This will breathe new life into the area and will ensure it can remain at the heart of Bethnal Green's diverse community for years to come."[/quote]

John Ryan, CEO of Oxford House, said: “This is fantastic news which brings us a step closer to carrying these much-needed works to secure Oxford House’s future for the next century. HLF support is wonderful and recognises the significant heritage and community value of Oxford House.

“The new café space will be at the heart of Oxford House, opening out directly into the Derbyshire Street Pocket Park, which is already a firm favourite with the local community. It is a fitting way to celebrate Oxford House’s continued role in supporting community life in Bethnal Green and East London.”

Stuart Hobley, Head of HLF London, said: “Oxford house has a fascinating history, and has been embedded in East End life for over 130 years. We are delighted that support from National Lottery players will help to open up this wonderful site, celebrate world heritage and bring a very valuable historic community site back into use.”

Over 200 people will volunteer and receive training during the two-year activity programme which will include summer and winter festivals and creative projects that celebrate the charity’s rich heritage.