Bright future for Wedgwood Institute thanks to



The Wedgwood Institute will be restored with an HLF grant of £2.6m Raven Photography courtesty of PRT

One of England’s most ‘at risk’ Victorian buildings, the Wedgwood Institute in Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, will be restored thanks to HLF investment of £2.6million.

Leading regeneration charity, The Prince’s Regeneration Trust (PRT), can now progress an ambitious £6.9m project, in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent Council, to restore the Wedgwood Institute.

The Grade II* listed building will be transformed into an enterprise centre for start-up businesses. PRT estimates that the Institute could provide space for around 20 to 25 businesses, creating up to 150 jobs for local people, as well as room for business meetings, professional training and mentoring and community facilities.

Vanessa Harbar, Head of HLF West Midlands, said: "Paid for by local people, for the benefit of local people, the Wedgwood Institute truly is a public building deeply-rooted within its local community. Now this vital National Lottery funding will give it the much-needed financial boost it needs to reinvent itself for the 21st Century.”

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The Wedgwood Institute was built in 1863 as a centre of education for local working people, with the money for its construction raised entirely through public subscription. Initially home to Burslem School of Art and Science, the Institute then housed a college and a library before it closed in 2007.

Ros Kerslake, PRT chief executive, said: “The HLF decision is fantastic news for the revival of this iconic building and for the wider regeneration of Burslem.”

HLF’s support is a significant step forward for this regeneration project to save the Institute from dereliction. On top of £130,000 already provided by Stoke City Council, it means about 40% of the cash is now in place, leaving a further £4.2million to be raised by PRT.

Building work for the first phase of works started in February. Inside, the refurbishment of the ground floor means that by the spring of 2016 it will be opened up for temporary office space, community events and exhibitions. PRT is now looking for potential tenants and short-term occupants for the interim use of the building.