



Bank Hall restoration to start this summer, thanks to National Lottery players

Date: 22 August 2017

Bank Hall is a Grade II* listed Jacobean country mansion in Bretherton, Lancashire, which has been vacant and decaying steadily since 1971. A Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant of £2.2million will see this historic building brought back to life as part of a £5.6million project designed to return it to its former glory.

Currently in the highest risk category on Historic England's Buildings at Risk register, Bank Hall was the first building to feature on BBC Two's TV series 'Restoration'. The restoration project, which is due to start in Summer 2017, will be delivered by Chorley Borough Council (CBC) in partnership with Heritage Trust North West (HTNW), Urban Splash (US) and Next Big Thing Developments Ltd. (NBTD).

The grant will help with the conservation of the historic Lancashire landmark and its sympathetic conversion to residential use.

The Friends of Bank Hall (previously the Bank Hall Action Group) have been campaigning tirelessly for over 22 years to save the building from dereliction and decay and more recently Chorley Borough Council has facilitated the final stages of the grant application process and will play an active future role in managing the project.

Thanks to money raised by National lottery players the project aims to conserve the building and convert it to high quality living accommodation with the central 'Prospect tower' having public access and providing an educational resource.

Whilst the outer shell of the building will be repaired and returned to its former glory, the interior will be converted to twelve high quality apartments. The central area including the tower will be accessible to the public and will include an educational resource centre and space for public exhibitions and meetings.

The works will include training opportunities for craft tradespeople, volunteers and visitors ranging from hands on practical building skills to heritage interpretation and local history.



LOTTERY FUNDED

The building, which up to now is owned by the Lord Lilford Trust, dates back to 1608. In 1832-33 under the ownership of George Anthony Legh-Keck the house was extensively remodelled by the Kendal based architect, George Webster in an early example of 19th century Jacobean style. The main entrance porch on the north side, a drawing room wing at the west end and extensive service accommodation were all added in this phase. The Lilford family inherited the Hall in 1860 and never fully occupied it as a residence but maintained it until the late 19th century when they decided to rent it out. During the Second World War the Hall was used by the military and then handed back to the Estate, after which it was primarily used by the Estate Managers. Last occupied in 1971, it has since been left to the vandals and weather erosion resulting in its decline and present derelict state.

Work starts on site Summer 2017 and will take around 18 months to complete.

QUOTES:

Councillor Peter Wilson, Deputy Executive Leader of Chorley Council, said, "Chorley Council is delighted to be taking a supporting role in this exciting building conservation project that will see a nationally significant site brought back to life to be enjoyed by many future generations. This has been a long haul to get to this point, we applaud all the parties involved in this tremendous joint effort and are glad that we will all soon be able to see real progress being made on the ground. "

Nathan Lee, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West said: "We are delighted that the partnership organisations and project team are now in place to deliver this exciting restoration at Bank Hall. We look forward to tracking their progress and, thanks to National Lottery players, seeing the finished building in the near future."

Janet Edwards, Chairperson of the Bank Hall Friends, said she was delighted with the news: "The building is an important feature of the heritage of Lancashire having a rare prospect tower with a Jacobean cantilevered staircase. We have moved a big step closer to giving the Hall a new lease of life."

Peter Wild of Next Big Thing Developments said, "We feel that this was the very last opportunity for this important building to be saved. We are delighted to be starting work on site and look forward to unveiling the finished building in the future. The fact that 12 new homes are being created as part of the scheme as well as spaces to be enjoyed by the general public is particularly exciting as the building will become lived in once again."

Notes to editors



LOTTERY FUNDED

HTNW Heritage Trust for the North West is one of the leading charitable building preservation trusts in the UK, which next year celebrates its 40th anniversary. It has been involved with Bank Hall since 1993, when it featured in 'Silent Mansions' – the first of what was to become an annual publication by SAVE Britain's Heritage about buildings at risk in the UK.

At the time the trustees never dreamt that it would be 25 years for the project to come to fruition. There have been many setbacks and false dawns along the way, but the sheer persistence of the partners, most notably the Bank Hall Action Group, with the support of the owners, the Lord Lilford Estate, a solution has emerged. One of the features of the campaign, which ironically has led to the delay, has been the way the trustees have harnessed the involvement of six partners, each with their own lawyer, resulting in an ingenious, if complex, way to save an historic grade II* Building at Risk, which many thought was past repair.

Next Big Thing Developments specialises in difficult conservation building projects in the North west of England. It has worked with a range of stakeholders to ensure that important buildings are saved and removed from Historic England's 'Heritage at Risk' register.

The Friends of Bank Hall have held numerous fund raising events and open days over the past twenty years in order to draw attention to their campaign to save the Hall and allow members of the public to see the fragile nature of the building. The popular 'Snowdrop Sundays' have attracted many thousands of visitors over the years. Extensive work in the grounds has been undertaken by the friends and a small visitor centre has been created as well as research resulting in the publication of a history book.

Chorley Council is the local authority and has been working with the project since 2005. More recently it has been working on the final stages of the grant approval process and will take a lead role in managing the delivery of the project.

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #HLFsupported.

Further information

For further information, images and interviews please contact:



LOTTERY FUNDED

Andy Banks, Digital Communications Officer, Chorley Council, 01257 515151

Andy.Banks@chorley.gov.uk

John Miller, Heritage Trust for the North West – 01282 877686,

john.miller@htnw.co.uk

Simon Humphreys, Urban Splash – 07810 158683,

Simon.Humphreys@urbansplash.co.uk

Pete Wild, Next Big Thing Developments – info@nextbigthing.email

The Friends of Bank Hall – Andrew Allen, 01772 746703,

andrew.allen10@talktalk.net