

## 100 Days to Save the 'Beating Heart of Ancoats'

Manchester has less than 100 days to save Ancoats Dispensary formally known as the Ardwick and Ancoats Hospital. This week, Ancoats Dispensary Trust (ADT), the grassroots community group working to restore one of Manchester's most iconic Victorian buildings, announced that it needs to raise £55,000 by February 2015. This 'match' funding will unlock over £770,000 of funding recently awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The trust is launching its urgent appeal on the crowdfunding website, Space Hive <https://spacehive.com/thebeatingheartofancoats> asking the people and businesses of Manchester and those who support Manchester to give whatever they can. The donations will help ADT meet conditions set out by the Lottery to release funds for initial work needed to stabilise the historic Grade II listed building. This is the first stage of an ambitious £6m project to restore the building and transform it into a combined community and social enterprise hub. The centre will offer health and wellbeing services, training opportunities and rented work space for creative businesses as well as creating a small number of new jobs and apprenticeships.

Launching the appeal, Linda Carver, ADT Coordinator said, "Right from the start of this campaign, we've been contacted by people with stories of how Ancoats Dispensary literally saved their lives. We're on the verge of being able to safeguard these memories and open a new chapter for a building that's done so much to heal the people of Manchester over the years. But we aren't there yet! Raising this money by the February deadline is the only way we can move forward. So, if it's crossed your mind to get involved but you haven't had a chance yet, this is your opportunity. And if you are one of the thousands of people who have already shown their support then we're asking you to please help again to meet this urgent challenge.

The landmark building has faced the threat of demolition since 2011 when it was proposed as part of the *New Islington* regeneration scheme for Ancoats. Local residents quickly mobilised to save the building, writing letters, knocking on doors and contacting local and national politicians to raise awareness and convey the level of community support for the building. A core of supporters set up the permanent vigil at the building in protest against the proposal to pull it down.

Three years on, ADT is on the brink of taking possession of the building from the developer, Urban Splash, and the community's hard work and belief in the campaign has been rewarded with the HLF funding for vital remedial work to make the fragile structure more stable.

Amy-Grace Whillans-Welldrake, the ADT director charged with coordinating the fundraising campaign said, "The fight to save Ancoats Dispensary has brought out the best in the community. Raising the £55,000 is another piece of the jigsaw for Stage 1 of the project, which will see the building safeguarded and design work progressed to secure a planning permission. Doing it in just 100 days is a huge task but I know we can do it! The Dispensary has so much brilliant potential, to bring benefits to give to communities both locally and across Manchester, that failure just isn't an option".

MP for Manchester Central, Lucy Powell said, "The Ancoats Dispensary is a fantastic building at the heart of my constituency. I'm pleased to support ADT's 100 Days appeal to raise the funding necessary to kick off the first stage of the project."

"So many people have got in touch with me about this project, not just from within Manchester, but from all around the world – they love the building and the campaign has inspired them."

"The ADT have shown tremendous commitment and determination in bringing the plans forward and thanks to that work there is now a very real chance of a successful future for the building."

"I hope that people in Manchester will get behind the project and give their support."

**Editors Notes:**

Construction of the Ardwick and Ancoats Dispensary building was completed in 1874. Its was part of Ancoats Hospital and the build was funded by local employers and philanthropists to care for the labourers and textile workers of Ancoats. The Dispensary has a distinguished history of medical advancements including as specialisation in fractures and orthopaedics by Sir Harry Platt, Charles Harrison Blackley's work in identifying pollens as the cause of hay fever and Manchester's first dedicated X-ray department.

Photos, further information and interviews with Ancoats Dispensary Trust are available. Contact: 0161 237 1103 or [ancoatsdispensarytrust@gmail.com](mailto:ancoatsdispensarytrust@gmail.com).

