

London Borough of Bexley

Greater London Authority

News Release

For Immediate Release

17 February 2017 / PR 9449

ERITH'S ICONIC CARNEGIE BUILDING TO REOPEN

A local company, The Exchange Ltd, is set to be the new occupier of the landmark Carnegie Building in Erith, under a lease and partnership agreement with the London Borough of Bexley. It will be working with the Council on a £1.6 million project to develop the building as a high quality centre for innovation, enterprise, creativity, learning and production.

It means that the building will remain in public ownership, to benefit other organisations and the wider community, in line with the original principles of the Andrew Carnegie Trust.

"We are very pleased to have found three experienced local entrepreneurs who have established The Exchange Ltd to work with us to prepare the building for the next exciting phase in its history," said Cllr Linda Bailey, Cabinet member for Regeneration and Growth. "We have agreed to co-finance the refurbishment of the building together with the Mayor of London and the new operator, and we believe it will be a powerful demonstration of the ways in which regeneration can benefit the town and its people."

Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills, Jules Pipe, said: "The redevelopment of the historic Carnegie Building will give it a new lease of life as a community arts hub and events space. This milestone is part of wider plans to deliver much-needed new homes, jobs and public space thanks to funding from the Mayor of London and the London Enterprise Action Partnership, in partnership with the London Borough of Bexley."

The Exchange Ltd plans to offer cultural, artist and designer studios, space for exhibitions, workshop space for creative businesses to make and sell their products, plus a café that will provide courses and food fairs, plus an exciting daytime and evening menu. They hope that some initial programmes will begin during the refurbishment – possibly as early as the autumn of this year.

The directors of the company said: "We are incredibly excited to have been offered the opportunity to make the Carnegie Building lively again, and we are looking forward to developing this project over the coming months. It will be wonderful to see

the building cared for and busy, and to provide opportunities for people within Erith to showcase their work and talent.”

The Carnegie is a Grade II listed building. Council officers will work closely with The Exchange Ltd and Historic England to ensure that the refurbishment work is carried out in a way that is sympathetic to the character of the building.

A well-known local landmark, the Carnegie Building is located opposite the recently completed campus of Bexley College and a short walk from Erith Station. Erith Library moved to a new building in the town centre in 2009.

London Borough of Bexley has plans to develop Erith into a thriving town centre through an ambitious programme of regeneration. It aims to provide a mix of housing, new business premises and leisure uses set within new residential streets and improved public spaces. The Council has secured grant funding of £926,600 from the Mayor’s London Regeneration Fund for the project, which is part of the £1.96m it won for the Erith Town Centre Regeneration Programme. This is in addition to the £4.2 million repayable loan funding it secured for the Erith Town Centre Regeneration Programme from the London Enterprise Action Partnership’s Growing Places Fund.

‘ENDS’

The Mayor’s London Regeneration Fund (LRF)

The London Regeneration Fund aims to re-energise the capital’s places of work and high streets by embracing the city’s incredible talent for creativity and technological innovation. It was launched by City Hall in January 2015 following a successful bid to Government as part of the city’s Growth Deal.

London Enterprise Action Partnership (LEAP)

[LEAP](#) is the London Economic Action Partnership. LEAP brings entrepreneurs and business together with London’s government to identify actions to support and lead economic growth and job creation in the capital. It is the region’s Local Enterprise Partnership.

Growing Places Fund (GPF)

The Growing Places Fund is a revolving capital fund and aims to help deliver ambitious projects with tangible outcomes that respond to the London Enterprise Action Partnership’s priorities. Public funding offers the opportunity to make strategic and long-term investment choices, which private sector investors might otherwise be unable to undertake in the absence of market incentives, because of the risk associated with the scale of the proposals, or their dependence on adequate public infrastructure. The Growing Places Fund is used to support projects that are strategically important to London’s economic growth, where its impact can be recaptured, repaid after time, and reused to fund new projects in other parts of London.

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Attachments

- Erith's landmark Carnegie building - built in 1906 [Erith's landmark Carnegie building - built in 1906](#)