

PRESS RELEASE EMBARGO UNTIL MONDAY 23 JANUARY

LEACH POTTERY RESTORATION PROJECT

Bernard Leach's famous pottery in St. Ives will be saved as a result of recent funding decisions. Penwith District Council, the Bernard Leach (St. Ives) Trust and St. Ives Town Council are very pleased to announce that the Leach Pottery Restoration Project in St. Ives has been awarded £450,767 by the European Regional Development Fund and £100,000 from the Rural Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Partnership, who deliver Rural Renaissance funding on behalf of the South West Regional Development Agency.

With these two substantial awards, added to awards from the Heritage Lottery Fund (£610,000), Arts Council England South West (£98,685), Cornwall Council Council (£75,000 and support from Cornwall Enterprise) and from Penwith District Council's own capital programme budget (£75,000), the Council and Trust are now able to 'go live' with the project. The project still needs to raise in the region of £100,000 from supporters throughout the UK and overseas and so we are today also launching a Public Appeal. For information on how to support the project, email: donations@leachproject.co.uk

The Council has now acquired the Leach Pottery site, buildings and property owned by the pottery company and two private owners, in order to safeguard this site of international significance and revive the pottery's reputation as a centre for training and an inspirational focus for studio pottery.

The project aims to restore and preserve the Leach Pottery for future generations, unlock its potential for generating significant levels of long-term sustainable employment and creative activity, as well as foster emerging talent, open up the site and its history to visitors and create a showcase gallery for contemporary studio pottery. There will be

opportunities throughout the year for people to find out more.

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Cont/...2 LEACH POTTERY RESTORATION PROJECT

Quotations

Carleen Kelemen, Director of the Objective One Partnership, said: “Bernard Leach is part of the long and rich history of art in Cornwall, particularly St. Ives. This project will revitalise a building that is known across the world and turn it into a working attraction, complementing those already established which include the Tate St. Ives and the Barbara Hepworth Museum. It will open the pottery up to visitors and, as importantly, provide education for those who are keen to follow in the footsteps of this great artist.”

Cllr Bert Biscoe, Chairman of RCP, said: “The RCP is delighted to be supporting this project. It is an excellent, well prepared and presented initiative, which provides a strong boost to the contribution made by the Cornish creative sector, to our regenerating economy. It will also further strengthen St. Ives as a global creative centre – particularly through the bond with Japan, first established by Bernard Leach.”

Stephen Bohane, Head of Operations in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly for the South West of England Regional Development Agency, said: “This is a site of international significance and the RDA is pleased to be playing a role in funding its restoration. The site is now held by the public for future generations and will build upon Cornwall's reputation for excellence in the creative industries. It will provide opportunities to attract visitors as well as helping to develop home-grown talent.”

Cllr Irene Bailey, Chairman of Penwith District Council, said: “This is really wonderful news for St. Ives, as the project will ensure that this internationally important pottery is sensitively restored and developed for the benefit of the local area. We still need to raise quite a large sum of money from the public appeal, but I know that the project is very well supported by the town and the wider pottery community.”

Lady Carol Holland, Chair of Bernard Leach (St. Ives) Trust, said: “The Bernard Leach (St. Ives) Trust is delighted that the major funders have shown such faith in our ability to deliver this wonderful project. Now is the chance for local people and other supporters to become part of this exciting adventure by supporting our appeal”.

Nick Capaldi, Arts Council England, South West Executive Director, said: “The Leach name is synonymous with the development of the crafts in the south west. This important project, drawing on the Pottery's distinguished heritage, offers an opportunity to look at craft making in the twenty-first century. Part of the attraction of this project is the opportunity it provides for young ceramicists to develop their skills, contribute to the creative industries and, we hope, be inspired to start up their own studios. Projects like this are part of our investment in the fast-growing creative industries sector which is key to the region's future prosperity and identity”.

SWRDA / RR: (to come)

Notes to Editors:

Launch of the Leach Pottery Restoration Project:

Monday 23 January at 10:00
Leach Pottery, St. Ives

(parking on the industrial estate as very limited on site)
cont/...3 LEACH POTTERY RESTORATION PROJECT

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Attending launch:

Lady Carol Holland, Chair, Bernard Leach (St. Ives) Trust (Chair)
Jim Daniel, Bernard Leach (St. Ives) Trust
Harry Isaacs, Bernard Leach (St. Ives) Trust and past potter at Leach Pottery
John Bedding, Bernard Leach (St. Ives) Trust and past potter at Leach Pottery
Peter Cowling, Project Manager, Director Falmouth Quay Consultants
Tamsin Daniel, Project Co-ordinator, Penwith District Council
GHK Architectural Team

Cllr Irene Bailey, Chairman, Penwith District Council
Cllr Hudson Smith, Chairman, Social Environment & Economy Committee, Penwith DC
Cllr Andrew Mitchell, Economy Portfolio Holder, Cornwall County Council
Sue Holland, Mayor of St. Ives
Carleen Kelemen, Director of the Objective One Partnership
Cllr Bert Biscoe, Chair of Cornwall Enterprise
Bill Holliday, Cornwall Enterprise

Digital images of the site are available on request from:
tamsin.daniel@penwith.gov.uk (01736 336818)

Additional information:

The Leach Pottery is a site of international significance, being the home and workplace of Bernard Leach and for fifty years, the epicentre of the craft pottery movement. After 85 years, the pottery and cottage was put up for sale and in danger of being lost, both as a place where pots are made and where people can experience something of the spirit of the Leach Pottery in its heyday.

The Leach Pottery site was put on the open market at the beginning of 2003, presenting the community with potentially a one-off opportunity to bring this historic site into the public domain and to maximise its regenerative potential for St. Ives and Cornwall. The project would also complete the cultural jigsaw in terms of the cultural heritage of St. Ives, as well as diversifying the cultural offer and encouraging more off-peak visiting. The project has the potential to become an inspirational focus for the revival of studio pottery within the creative industries in Cornwall.

The project will:

- i) restore the existing Grade II listed buildings, including the original kiln which is the first example of this type of Oriental climbing kiln in the West;
- ii) create a new museum exhibition space for the interpretation of the site, the life and legacy of Bernard Leach and the story of studio pottery up to the present day, through a programme of changing exhibitions, including use of film, oral history and archival material;
- iii) create a showcase contemporary studio pottery gallery to support and reinvigorate Cornwall's strong pottery cluster, and to present this work within an international

context;

- iv) create a new pottery training facility accommodating four incubation units and four business start-up units, supported through a programme of professional development under the guidance of a lead potter and University College Falmouth, fostering emerging talent and new SMEs;

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cont/...4 LEACH POTTERY RESTORATION PROJECT

v)

- vi) create a programme of pottery-based courses and events open to the general public and visitors;
- vii) improve public access and visitor facilities throughout the site

Main contacts:

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