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Hornsey Town Hall vision unveiled

An exciting vision for the future of Hornsey Town Hall has been welcomed by Haringey Council's Cabinet.

Cabinet members agreed last night (April 26) to move ahead with proposals – backed by community group the Hornsey Town Hall Creative Trust – to restore the landmark Grade II* listed building and invite Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts to make the venue its home.

The partnership will bring the Town Hall back into use, restore heritage features, see a world-class drama school in Crouch End, allow access to public spaces for the first time in many years, and offer a host of community benefits.

Cllr Joe Goldberg, Cabinet Member for Finance and Sustainability, said: "Together, the council, the Hornsey Town Hall Community Trust and Mountview have agreed a plan which meets their shared aims and is an exciting vision for the future of Hornsey Town Hall.

"The building itself will be beautifully restored and cared for, Mountview will be back at its home in the heart of Crouch End, there will be community access, a fantastic arts programme, and an influx of students and visitors which will bring vibrancy and culture to the area. It really is a complete package."

The proposals will see the Town Hall restored and managed by Mountview, with benefits including:

- Community access to spaces not currently open to the public, including the historic foyer, assembly hall, committee rooms and council chamber
- Opportunities to explore the architectural features of the building
- A boost for local businesses with an influx of students and visitors to the area
- A unique centre for arts education and training with local, national and global significance at the heart of Crouch End
- A youth theatre, weekend workshops, educational programmes, summer schools and mini festivals for young people from across Haringey
- Outreach projects across Haringey to bring different communities together and unite east and west

- A commitment from Mountview to maintain the fabric of the building

Ann Wilks, Chair of the Hornsey Town Hall Community Trust, said: “HTHCT has been working in partnership with Haringey Council since 2007 to find a solution for Hornsey Town Hall which meets their stated objectives of restoring this historically important building and using it a financially viable way that also has strong community benefits.

“The Trust believe that leasing Hornsey Town Hall to Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts is the option that most fulfils these aims and objectives.”

Mountview Principal Sue Robertson said: “I am delighted that the council and the Trust share our vision for Hornsey Town Hall.

“These plans bring Mountview back to Crouch End, stronger than ever, in stunning new facilities for theatre training and performance.

“The move will allow is to act as a real resource for the borough, extending our education and community programme across Haringey and enabling the community to enjoy this important heritage building once again.”

Under the proposals, Mountview will occupy the Town Hall. Surrounding land will be sold by the council and developed for housing to cover some of the costs of restoring the historic features of the building, while Mountview will take responsibility for its refurbishments and repairs and maintenance throughout the lease.

ENDS

Notes for editors:

1. Photographs as follows (left to right): HTH1: Cllr Joe Goldberg, Haringey Council Cabinet Member for Finance and Sustainability; Sandy Orr OBE, Chairman of Mountview; Ann Wilks, Chair of HTHCT; Sue Robertson, Principal of Mountview. HTH4: Ann Wilks and Sandy Orr in foreground, Sue Robertson and Cllr Joe Goldberg in background. HTH5: Cllr Joe Goldberg, Ann Wilks, Sue Robertson, Sandy Orr.
2. Further details of the proposals can be seen in the attached Cabinet report
3. A number of conditions will be attached to the lease to ensure the ongoing maintenance of the Town Hall and a range of community benefits.
4. Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts is one of the UK’s leading drama schools. It is a not-for-profit organisation, a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It was established in 1945 as a Crouch End based drama club. Mountview has around 400 undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as running an evening Foundation course and a range of education and community projects.

5. The council will work closely with Mountview to ensure that the plans are viable before entering into any final agreement.
6. All Cabinet decisions are subject to a seven-day "call-in" period
7. A fresh planning application will be submitted for the site and will be subject to the usual planning committee process and approval by English Heritage.
8. The revised plans will mean a smaller proportion of the site would be used for housing, with 78 residential units instead of the 123 given planning consent last year. The level of affordable housing will remain the same.
9. The site will be disposed of to Mountview on a leasehold basis and a lease granted at a peppercorn rent for 125 years.
10. Mountview will occupy the Town Hall site, while the rest of the complex will be sold to a private developer.
11. A contribution from the sale of the land by the council will be invested in restoring the Town Hall.
12. Mountview will be responsible for fundraising to meet the remaining costs of restoring, refurbishing and developing the Town Hall, estimated to be around £19million in total.
13. The Town Hall Square will continue to be owned and managed by Haringey Council
14. For further information, contact senior communications officer Sally Lowe on 020 8489 4584 or email sally.lowe@haringey.gov.uk