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VIVAT TRUST

SAVED FOR THE NATION! Grade I listed Hadlow Tower

The Vivat Trust (Vivat) is delighted to announce today (24th February'11) the transfer of ownership of Hadlow Tower - the Grade I listed gothic revival folly in Kent, from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to the Trust- and the start of the restoration work.

The Trust will restore the building and, once completed, this historic landmark will offer luxury holiday accommodation and will join the Vivat Trust's portfolio of historic holiday properties. Contractors Mansell Construction Services, as well as a number of specialist sub-contractors will be carrying out the restoration work, which includes the reinstatement of missing pre-cast and moulded decoration, and the reinstatement of the lantern.

The ground floor of Hadlow Tower will provide exhibition space where the history of the building and its significance will be explained. This space will be opened to the public on a regular basis and is the initiative of the SAVE Hadlow Tower Action Group.

Vivat Director, Laura Norris says, "I'm thrilled that we are now in possession of the Tower and that work can start. It is a testament to a great deal of determination and team effort on the part of the local council and the key funders and heritage organisations. We are delighted that the building will be saved and that that once restored, the building will be enjoyed by a wide range of visitors. It will be a landmark that the local community can be proud of once again. "

David Hughes, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's Chief Executive, says: "This has indeed been a very long process but, with the future of such an important building at stake, we were determined to play our part in helping to save Hadlow Tower for future generations. I am delighted that we have at last been able to transfer ownership of the Tower to the Vivat Trust and that restoration work can now begin."

The campaign to save this building- identified by English Heritage as a longstanding building at risk - and provide it with a sustainable new use, has been on-going for a number of years. In 1998 it joined the WMF's list of the 100 Most Endangered Sites in the World.

The works are costing a total of £4 million pounds and the project has received the support of major heritage bodies and funders, including £2million from the Heritage Lottery Fund with further funding from English Heritage, the Architectural Heritage Fund, the Country Houses Foundation and the Monument Trust, amongst others.

Dr Andy Brown, English Heritage Regional Director for the South East says: "We are pleased that the determination of the Trust and its partners has brought us to this milestone on the journey, and that work can at last begin to restore this magnificent landmark."

Ian Lush, Chief Executive of the Architectural Heritage Fund, says "The Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) has been pleased to stand alongside the Vivat Trust through the development phase of this challenging project and looks forward to the main capital works starting soon. The AHF has supported Vivat for many years and the Trust's imaginative approach to finding new uses for buildings at risk is always admirable."

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Caroline Elcombe from Save Hadlow Tower Action Group said: "We are delighted that Hadlow Tower is now in the safe hands of The Vivat Trust. The village of Hadlow will at last see their dream of the full restoration of Hadlow Tower realised. We would like to thank the Vivat Trust for taking on the project and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council for their expertise in making the transfer to Vivat possible. The Action Group is now looking forward to working with The Vivat Trust towards the full restoration and the exciting prospect of there being a public exhibition space at this unique building."

Stuart McLeod, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for the South East says: "This is excellent news that the restoration of Hadlow Tower can now progress. It is a fine example of gothic 19th century architecture that will now be saved for future generations with access for all."

The tower was built by local land owner Walter Barton May in around 1835 by the naval architect Ledwell Taylor. It was built to rival Beckford's gothic folly in Wiltshire and is the UK's tallest folly. It forms part of Hadlow Castle, most of which is now lost bar the tower itself and the courtyard buildings.

For further information please contact Alice Yates at The Vivat Trust alice@vivat-trust.org
Tel: 07909 76 55 99 for images please go to www.vivat-trust.org

Notes for Editors:
The Vivat Trust is a registered charity and a national building preservation trust. It was established in 1981 to rescue small to medium sized historic buildings and to breathe new life into them by sympathetically converting them for short stay holidays. It also manages and markets historic properties on behalf of private individuals through its subsidiary; Vivat Trust Management Services Ltd. Twenty five historic properties are currently available for short stays through Vivat.
www.vivat-trust.org

Heritage Lottery Fund
Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 30,000 projects, allocating £4.5billion across the UK, including £428million in the South East alone. www.hlf.org.uk