



PRESS RELEASE

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URBAN SPLASH APPOINTED TO TRANSFORM STOKE-ON-TRENT SITE

Urban Splash, the UK's leading regeneration specialist, has been appointed by RENEW North Staffordshire to lead the landmark transformation of a run-down area into a thriving, urban community.

Urban Splash will lead work to turn the 4.6 hectare (11.4 acre) site in City Waterside, Stoke-on-Trent, from a place of derelict land, bricked up terraces, and unmodernised Victorian buildings into a model of successful regeneration.

The site, centred on the Caldon Canal, just five minutes walk from Stoke-on-Trent city centre, will include iconic new buildings designed by the winners of an international architecture competition and the refurbishment of a pottery factory and Victorian school.

Urban Splash's redevelopment of this area has the potential to transform the image, housing market and economy of Stoke-on-Trent. It links closely with plans to revitalise the city by creating new job opportunities in the creative industries and making best use of industrial heritage, green space and the city centre.

Under the development agreement signed between RENEW North Staffordshire and Urban Splash, the company will:

- work with the winning design from the European 9 competition
- refurbish and redevelop the Victorian Bridgewater Pottery factory
- refurbish and redevelop the vacant Victorian Joiners Square Primary School
- develop new housing and commercial uses on vacant land between the new Waterside Primary School and the Caldon Canal.

The whole site will be developed with a mix of housing, business space, leisure and retail uses. It will develop its own identity as a distinctive and high-quality residential "quarter", within easy reach of the Stoke-on-Trent city centre.

High quality contemporary architecture and open spaces will create a new sense of place and highlight the new role for this area. New businesses such as restaurants and bars could be developed in the Bridgewater Pottery. The old school may be developed for small scale offices and studio spaces.

Urban Splash will now lead a competition to choose masterplanners who will develop a detailed vision for the whole site. The selection is expected in the autumn.

A planning application for the first phase of development is expected in early 2008, with work beginning on the ground after summer 2008.

Hardial Bhogal, director of RENEW North Staffordshire, said: "We are delighted to have appointed Urban Splash for this flagship regeneration project.

"Urban Splash has a tremendous track record of transforming the image of places that were previously run-down and derelict through their innovative and high-quality design.

"They will be working with tremendous assets in City Waterside, using the Caldon Canal, the Bridgewater Pottery, the former Joiners Square School and the European 9 competition site."

Bill Maynard, manager director of Urban Splash (Liverpool), said: "In Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham, Urban Splash has been at the forefront of the regeneration process and now we want to do the same in Stoke-on-Trent

"Working with RENEW North Staffordshire and its partners we will create a new quarter for Stoke-on-Trent that will be a superb environment for people to live, meet, work and enjoy themselves."

Mark Meredith, elected mayor of Stoke-on-Trent, said: "With Urban Splash on board the scale and pace of regeneration in Stoke-on-Trent will speed up dramatically.

"They have great experience in transforming places that were previously derelict and run-down into thriving, residential and business communities. Their expertise and capabilities will bring great benefits to Stoke-on-Trent city centre and North Staffordshire as whole."

Ends

Background information

City Waterside

The Urban Splash site is part of City Waterside, 50 hectare a (120-acre) new neighbourhood centred on the Caldon Canal, promoted by RENEW North Staffordshire in partnership with national regeneration agency English Partnerships, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, the Housing Corporation, the North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone and British Waterways. A masterplan and development framework for City Waterside were launched in March 2006 and several sites are already being developed.

The Urban Splash site

The 4.6 hectare (11.4 acre) hectare site is bounded by Lichfield Street, Eastwood Road and Hampton Street. It includes four important areas of land:

1. European 9 site

This 2.29 hectare (5.6 acre) former housing clearance area is one of three English entries in the biennial European competition for young architects, promoted in England by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. Entries to the competition closed in June 2007. Winning designs will be announced in January 2008.

2. Bridgewater Pottery

RENEW North Staffordshire announced its plan to acquire the working pottery used by Emma Bridgewater in February 2007. The factory is not listed but has a strong frontage to Lichfield Street - the main route to Stoke-on-Trent city centre from the east - and the Caldon Canal, which leads from the Trent and Mersey Canal to the Peak District at Froghall. The company will move to modern premises nearby.

3. Joiners Square School

The distinctive former Joiners Square School is a Victorian building vacated in December 2006.

4. Land next to Waterside School

The new Waterside School, next to the former Joiners Square School, was built on land acquired by RENEW North Staffordshire in 2004. Some of this land remains vacant alongside the Caldon Canal and will now be used by Urban Splash for new build apartments.

Notes to editors

1. RENEW North Staffordshire is the housing market renewal pathfinder for Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Biddulph East. Our aim is to help make North Staffordshire a thriving, diverse conurbation where people want to live, work, invest and study. We do this by working with communities and partners to:
 - balance housing supply and demand
 - retain and attract population
 - provide quality housing that meets the aspirations of existing and new residents
 - transform the environment and make the best of our heritage and green space
 - support economic regeneration.
2. The RENEW North Staffordshire team can be contacted by the public on 01782 232024 or renew@civic1.stoke.gov.uk. Further information can be found on the website: www.renewnorthstaffs.gov.uk.
3. Property developer Urban Splash was founded in 1993 by Tom Bloxham MBE and Jonathan Falkingham. The company has an

established reputation as a pioneer in urban regeneration and advocate of modern design.

From a standing start and financed entirely through the re-investment of profits, the company has created over 3,000 new jobs, 1,000 new homes and half million square feet of commercial space.

Urban Splash is currently investing over £1 billion in regeneration projects across the country including: Castlefield, Manchester; New Islington, the third Millennium Community at east Manchester; Altrincham, Cheshire; Ropewalks, Liverpool City Centre; Royal William Yard, Plymouth; Fort Dunlop, Birmingham; Lister Mills, Bradford; Park Hill, Sheffield; Lake Shore, Bristol; and the Midland Hotel, Morecambe.

The company has received 209 awards to date for its commitment to architecture, design, regeneration and enterprise. Its award winning projects include: Timber Wharf, Box Works and Moho, Castlefield, Manchester; Vanilla Factory and Matchworks, Liverpool; Silk Warehouse, Lister Mills, Bradford and Rotunda, Birmingham. Urban Splash has received 30 prestigious RIBA Awards for Architecture – the most received by a private property developer and was placed in the Sunday Times Best Small Companies to Work for List in 2007 for the fourth year in a row.