

Agency pumps £5.5m into waterfront scheme

BY MARK LAVERY

A FLAGSHIP development at the heart of plans to transform Wakefield city centre has been given a major cash boost.

Regional development agency Yorkshire Forward has approved investment of more than £5.5m towards the regeneration of Wakefield's Waterfront.

And the European Development Fund has earmarked more than £8m towards the project, which will be crowned by the £24m Hepworth gallery to showcase work by the city's most famous daughter, sculptor Dame Barbara Hepworth.

Wakefield Council, the Arts Council England and the Her-



WATERFRONT VISION: How the development would look

itage Lottery Fund have already pledged £15m towards the overall £100m project cost.

The Yorkshire Forward investment will enable flood prevention work, highway improvements to provide access to the site and site infrastructure works.

Part of the first works phase will be the restoration of the Grade II Calder and Hebble Navigation warehouse to provide 2,600 sq ft of commercial floor-space, the development of a new office building and 52 new residential apartments.

Andrew Wallhead, head of West Yorkshire branch of Yorkshire Forward said: "This is an exciting time for the renaissance of Wakefield."

"After many months of planning, work is under way that will be the catalyst for further development of one of Wakefield's major assets, the waterfront area of the city."

Alison Biddulph, of Govern-

ment Office for Yorkshire and Humber, which manages the European Regional Development Fund in the region, said: "This project will transform this long-neglected area."

"Restoration of historic buildings for high quality commercial use will create opportunities for the jobs and business space that will bring this quarter back to life and back into the heart of Wakefield."

The plan, drawn up by Yorkshire Forward and Wakefield Council as part of the urban renaissance programme, has identified a range of projects across the city that will be developed over a 25 year timespan