

A first for coal to clean energy

Thursday 4 January, 2024

The home of the Durham Miners is believed to be north east England's first heritage building to be powered by the heat of the earth.

The 108-year-old headquarters will be warmed by a ground source heat pump system.

Over 8,000 feet of boreholes have been sunk to tap heat from rocks at a depth of over 130 metres.

The system will provide carbon dioxide-free central heating in a building which was once at the heart of industrial coal mining.

County Durham was once the biggest deep mine coalfield in the world. It is estimated that 30 billion tonnes of coal was extracted from Durham pits and burned all around the world.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has backed the ground-breaking heating system because Redhills will become the focus of climate change studies.

Redhills CIO chief executive Nick Malyan said: "It is somewhat poetic that we are installing the most carbon neutral heating system to a building that represents generations of miners, their families and communities.

The system will be a reminder of the need to offset the carbon footprint created over the past 200 years. Of course, this is a small, but important contribution to the bigger challenges. It will be the focus of the climate change education programmes we will run from Redhills with partners including Durham Energy Institute and Oases."

Work is progressing at Redhills Durham Miners Hall to develop it into a centre for education and heritage. The building is being renovated and renewed to honour the collective endeavour of generations of Durham miners and their association. It will reopen to the public in late autumn next year.

North east contractors Meldrum Group lead the renewal project. CEO Dave Meldrum said: "Redhills is one of the major heritage projects we have worked on. We understand the deep meaning and significance of the building's role in our regional history. The ground source heating brings Redhills roaring into the modern era. It is an honour to be part of this historically important project."

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