



New Life for Old College Project Update February 2020

Our vision is to bring new life to Old College, a grade 1 listed building and home of the first University College of Wales, and to transform this iconic building into a major cultural and creative centre for Wales where diverse communities can engage with learning and heritage, share in discovery, exchange through dialogue and prosper from enterprise. Old College will offer shared facilities, resources and activities that benefit the University, our 8,000 students, our community, and 189,000 annual visitors from around the world and thousands more through digital and community outreach. We aim to achieve our vision through the extensive renovation and restoration of Old College by our 150th anniversary in 2022/23 at a total cost of £27.6 million.

Our vision took shape in 2014 when our remaining academic departments moved from Old College to the University's purpose built campus overlooking the town of Aberystwyth. A joint University and Welsh Government feasibility study that year, evidenced the strategic need for major new University and community town facilities and a unique opportunity to deliver these through the transformation of Old College into a mixed-use facility that would also catalyse social and economic regeneration in a disadvantaged region of the UK.

Thanks to a £850,000 Development grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the University then consulted widely in 2017/19 to develop our vision with the support of a Project Board of University, student, alumni, community, school and youth representatives. The Board developed plans with the support of a team experienced in the delivery of major heritage projects; architects (Lawrays and Austin Smith Lord), consultants in activity and audience development (Headland) and business planning (Amion). A major development in design terms included the incorporation of two Georgian villas adjacent to Old College, resulting in exciting new opportunities for enhanced visitor access, hospitality and increased capacity for major events and festivals.

Our project is one of the most ambitious educational, heritage, cultural and community projects in Wales and wholly dependent on external funding. The University launched the project's Delivery Phase in January 2020, having secured 70% of the total costs in January 2020 thanks to; a further grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund of £10 million, grants from Welsh Government/EU of £7 million, trust grants of £1.2 million and donations and pledges from alumni and friends around the world totalling £1 million.

Detailed project plans and planning applications were approved in July 2019 for the transformation of Old College into a centre that will attract diverse audiences to enjoy programmes of activities in stunning spaces across 7 floors and 143 rooms, including 10 rooms with capacity ranging from 60 and up to 200 people. Our plans are supported by Welsh Government, Ceredigion County Council and our project partners of National Museum Wales, Hay Festival and National Library of Wales. A robust operating model and business plan is in place with projected annual gross revenues of £2.33 million from 2022/23, 48 new jobs, 900 training opportunities, 400 annual volunteering opportunities and contribution of £3.55 million p.a to the region.

In summary, our project's strategic aim is to deliver major educational, cultural and socio-economic outcomes for our students and community whilst fully complementing existing University and local provision. Old College will throw open its doors to enrich lives and stimulate learning across all ages and attract hard to reach and excluded audiences. Dynamic activities will be programmed in four inter-related zones to spur creativity, innovation and enterprise and symbolise Aberystwyth's national and international aspirations. All activities will be enhanced by state of the art technology that is sensitively integrated within the building's inspiring and eclectic high Victorian gothic architecture. The four zones will be:

Public entrance and visitor welcome- a visitor welcome centre, volunteer facilities, stunning new atrium and rooftop function room with sea views, seafront café/restaurant, bar and shop and access to 31 hotel rooms;

Community and cultural engagement- art galleries in and around the Quad for permanent and temporary exhibitions of University and partner collections, galleries for University collections of national significance and to showcase major University research projects. Spaces for festivals, activities and functions will include the Old Hall and Library. This large zone also includes spaces for Meetings and Dialogue and the flagship project of the UK's first Centre for Dialogue for 60 participants in a unique 'in-the-round' setting. The Centre will be located alongside multi-purpose teaching and training rooms for students, our community and business visitors, including the seafront Seddon room named after the building's visionary Victorian architect;

A World of Knowledge- Taking its inspiration from the University's motto, this zone will inspire learning that is accessible to all, and will include a Centre for Science with a state of the art cinema and virtual reality experiences for public shows, a University Museum, a Centre for Advanced Study to drive innovative interdisciplinary approaches to global challenges, further exhibitions of University collections and archives, a Makerspace, 24 hour student study spaces, a Young People's project, Lifelong Learning teaching spaces, 5 artist studios and a Printmaker studio. This zone will also include spaces to deliver much needed curricular and non-curricular learning opportunities for schools and colleges in rural West Wales aligned to a new Wales Curriculum from 2022;

Enterprise and Innovation- a Business Enterprise Hub with 12 units and communal spaces to encourage young entrepreneurs in creative and digital businesses, two fast growing sectors of major economic importance to West Wales. Tenants and visitors will showcase, research and test their products, including apps and virtual reality applications through public demonstrations and programmed activities across Old College for wide audiences, including schools and colleges as well as industry and supplier networks.

The University will maximise all opportunities to raise the final £7 million of our project costs. Our Fundraising Appeal, our largest since the University secured the purchase of Old College in 1872, will continue until 2023. Charitable donations from our global network of 60,000 alumni, our community and from charitable trusts and foundations remain crucial to success. The University will launch a range of donor recognition opportunities at all levels to inspire gifts and to record our thanks in perpetuity to our donors.



