

The iconic Old College is set to secure its future as a centre for culture, heritage, discovery, learning and enterprise, hoping to attract 190,000 visitors every year.

One of Wales' outstanding Grade I buildings, Old College has today been awarded almost £10million (£9,732,300) of National Lottery money. The funding will help in its renovation and secure its long-term future.

Old College was first purchased by the University of Wales for just £10,000 in 1867 using money donated by the local community.

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>
> *Baroness Kay Andrews, UK trustee and chair of The National Lottery Heritage Fund in Wales*



An artist's impression of the new entrance to the college

150 years of learning

Since first opening its doors in 1872, the gothic seafront building played a pivotal role in the educational history of Wales and the survival of the Welsh language, culture and national identity. However, when the university moved to a newly built campus in the 1960s, Old College became largely redundant.



A design for the new Centre for Dialogue

That is about to change as it finds new life and new purpose. It is hoped that the building's rejuvenation will be completed by 2022–23 as the university celebrates its 150th anniversary.

Baroness Kay Andrews, UK trustee and chair of The National Lottery Heritage Fund in Wales, said: "At the start of a new decade it could not be better news that Old College – thanks to National Lottery players – is about to embark on a new lease of life.

“Now it will come into its own again – but this time, it will be at the heart of the whole community – creating jobs, and offering hospitality, helping to turbo-charge the economy, building community skills and opportunities, and opening its doors to all manner of discovery and learning."

Re-creating a building for the future

The revamped building will include:

- gallery spaces
- a centre for entrepreneurs and new businesses
- artist studios
- a café
- community rooms
- facilities for major events and festivals



(L–r) Lord Elis-Thomas, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Elizabeth Treasure (Vice-Chancellor of Aberystwyth University, Baroness Kay Andrews (UK trustee and chair of the National Lottery Heritage Fund in Wales. Credit: Whole Picture

A new Centre for Dialogue, the first in the UK, will be a key attraction in new spaces for meetings and conferences.

Old College will house a Discovery Centre – the World of Knowledge – displaying some of the 30,000 items normally in storage. Science exhibitions will showcase cutting-edge interactive displays, highlighting the university's role in space exploration.

There will be new student study spaces and lifelong learning facilities, plus new shared spaces for local young people to use for activities and volunteering.

Creating jobs and opportunities

Around 900 people will benefit from training in heritage, tourism and hospitality. As well as creating around 50 new jobs and 400 volunteer opportunities, plus apprenticeships and work placements, the revitalised Old College will also encourage graduates to stay within the town and establish new businesses.

The total cost of the redevelopment is estimated to be around £27m, with the university planning other sources of financing for the project including a second phase of fundraising.

Funding for Wales

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museums

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