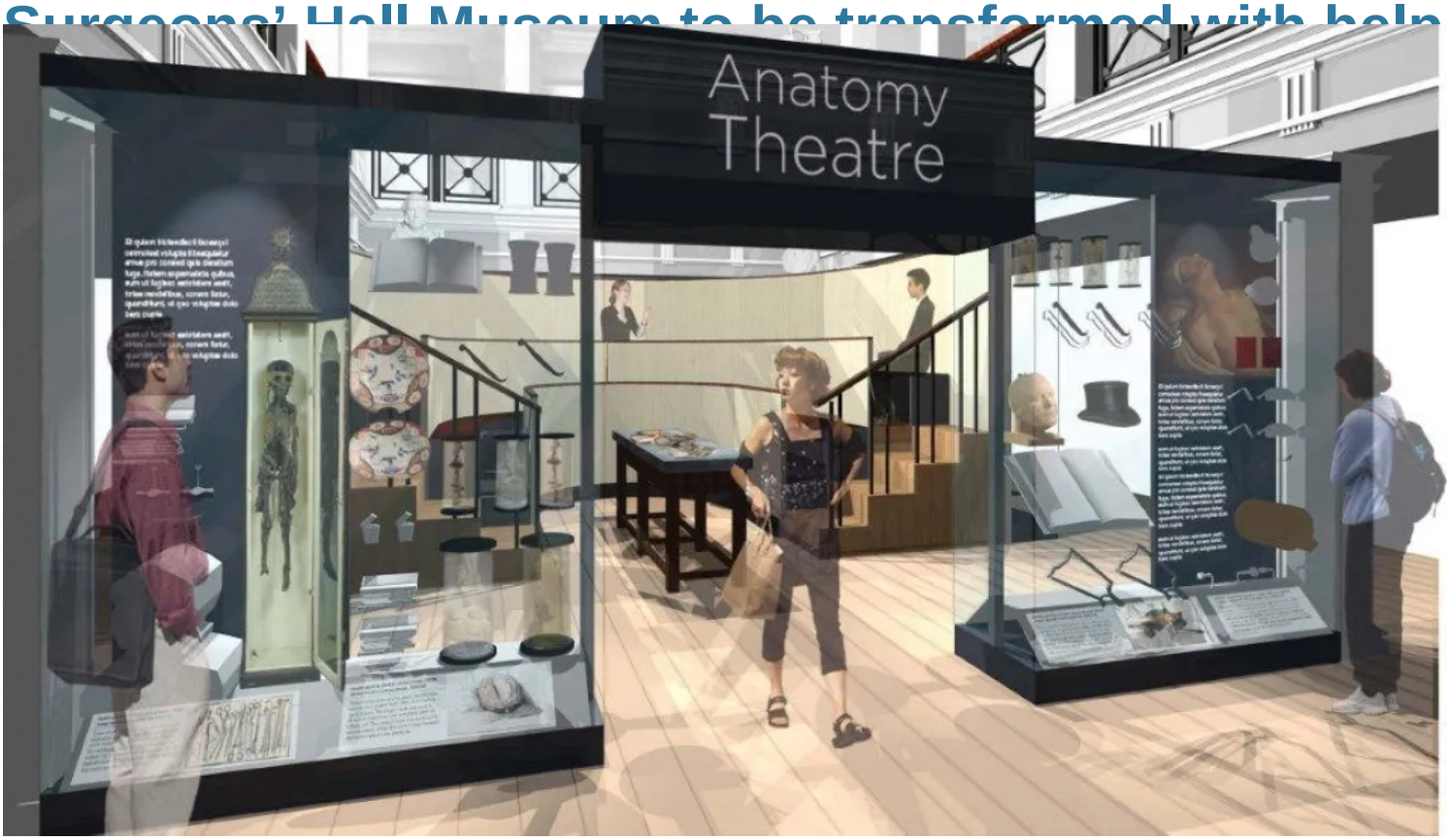
Surgeons' Hall Museum to be transformed with help



Artists impression of the planned redevelopment of Surgeon's Hall in Edinburgh

The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCSEd), the UK's oldest surgical Royal College, today announced that it had been awarded the grant to extend and redevelop its Surgeons' Hall Museum. Originally developed as a teaching museum for students of medicine, it has been open to the general public since 1832, making it Scotland's oldest medical museum. The museum charts the transition of medicine from perceived 'witchcraft' through to recognised science, and includes in its archive a letter from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle crediting Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh Fellow, Dr Joseph Bell, as the main inspiration for the character of Sherlock Holmes.

The Lister project – named after another notable Fellow of the College, Joseph Lister, who radically improved the safety of surgery by promoting the use of antiseptic technique – will transform Surgeons' Hall Museum into a modern, public museum using its internationally-important collections, amassed since the 15th century, to tell the history of medicine. It will be the first time that the building has been radically altered since 1908 and the funding will allow redevelopment work to create new displays and galleries, doubling the number of items which can be put on display and showcasing innovative audiovisual and interactive elements. The Playfair-designed building will also be conserved and transformed with contemporary additions such as a new glass atrium, providing the public with easier access. The enhanced museum will also boast a 17th century dissecting theatre while a new, dedicated education suite will increase opportunities for learning for schools, families and special interest groups.

Commenting on the award, President of the RCSEd, Mr Ian Ritchie said: “We are delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has chosen to support this exciting and important project. The promotion of patient safety and care has been at the heart of our college and its activities for over 500 years, inspiring advances in our profession and across healthcare. Our museum and library lie at the core of this heritage; through them we are able to highlight the achievements of the past, educate surgeons and the public about the development of our profession and inspire generations of future surgeons.”

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: “The Lister project will take the Surgeons’ Hall Museum to a world-class level commensurate with its outstanding collections. Scotland’s pioneering history of surgery will soon be a source of education and inspiration for visitors from home and abroad while making an important contribution to our tourist economy. The Heritage Lottery Fund is delighted to be helping make that happen.”

The project will be led by the college’s Director of Heritage, Chris Henry, who commented: “The past four years have seen a marked increase in visitor numbers to the museum: the Lister Project has been developed to ensure that all our visitors have a rewarding and inspiring experience. The museum collections are unique in their content and also in that they are displayed in the building originally built to house them nearly 200 years ago. The challenge of the Lister Project has been to produce a plan which will enhance the public space within the museum and ensure accessibility across all areas, whilst maintaining the integrity of the William Playfair-designed building in which the museum is primarily housed. We are proud of being the oldest medical museum in Scotland and of our important role in the work of the UK’s oldest surgical Royal College – the support of the HLF will allow us to continue this tradition for many years to come.”

Notes to editors

About Surgeons’ Hall Museum
The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh was founded in 1505, with the museum collections growing from 1699 after 'natural and artificial curiosities' were publically sought. In the 1800s, the museum expanded to include the remarkable collections of Sir Charles Bell and John Barclay. Initially established as a medical teaching resource, access for all is now a priority and visitors can explore The Pathology Museum, The History of Surgery Museum upper and lower (floors) and the Dental Museum. Having been awarded funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the museum is undergoing its first major transformation for over a hundred years, improving accessibility to the general public and adding innovative technology to its displays.

About The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh
RCSEd was first incorporated as the Barber Surgeons of Edinburgh in 1505, and is one of the oldest surgical corporations in the world with a membership of over 22,000 professionals in almost 100 countries worldwide. The college promotes the highest standards of surgical and dental practice through its examinations, and is also increasingly involved in the provision of surgical training and education, offering the UK’s only Faculty of Surgical Trainers, open to all those with an interest in surgical training regardless of college affiliation. RCSEd’s commercial enterprises offer conferencing and event facilities at The Playfair Building, Symposium Hall and Quincentenary Hall, and runs the Ten Hill Place Hotel.

Find RCSEd on Twitter @RCSEd and on Facebook.

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Further information

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