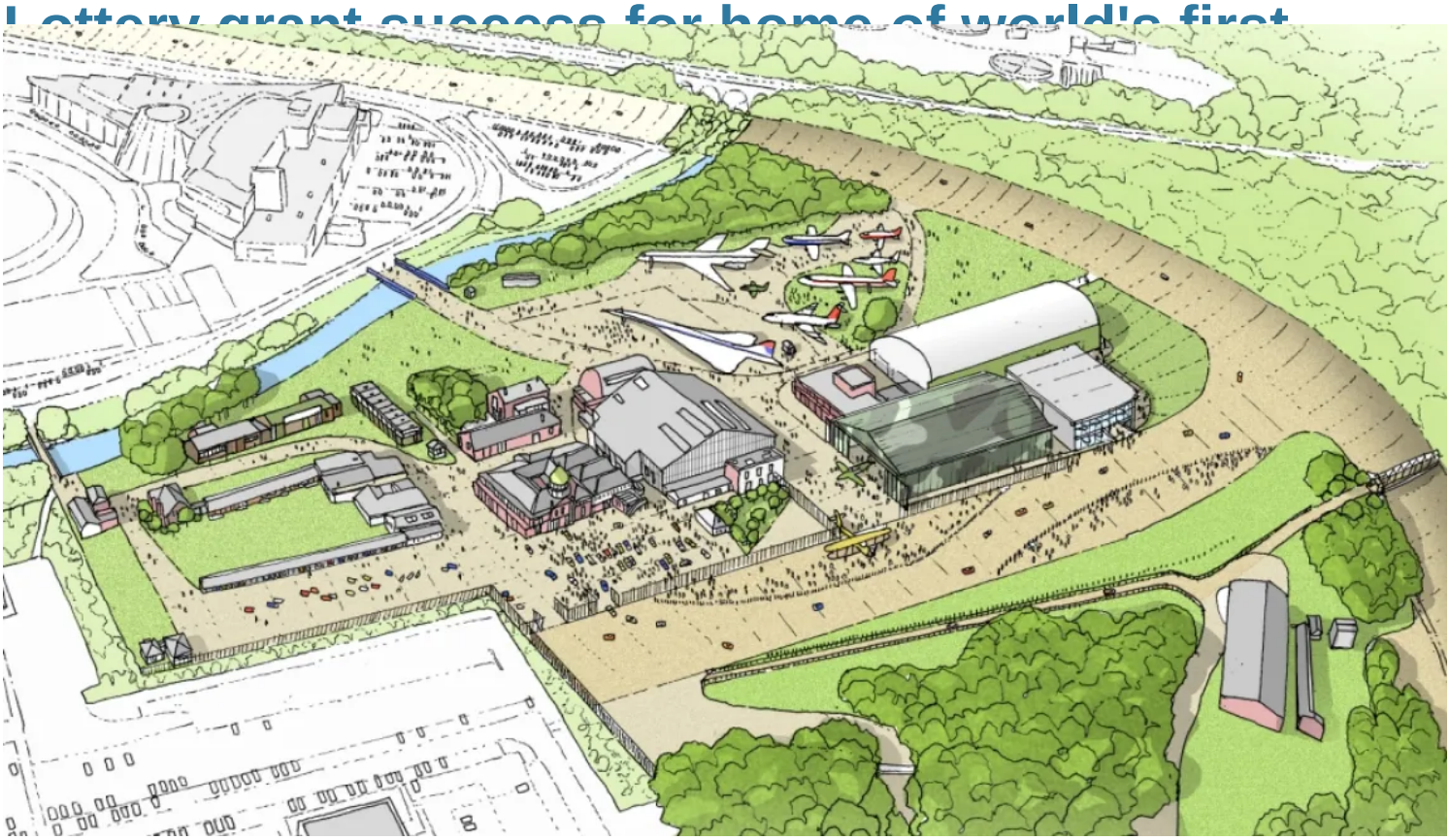
Lottery grant success for home of world's first



An artist's impression of how the Brooklands Museum will look following it's HLF-funded redevelopment

Brooklands Museum in Weybridge, Surrey, has today received a confirmed grant of £4.681million from HLF for its Brooklands Aircraft Factory and Race Track Revival project.

This project will restore the Finishing Straight of the Brooklands Race Track, the world's first purpose-built motor-racing circuit; transform the Museum's Grade II listed Second World War Wellington Hangar into 'The Brooklands Aircraft Factory' and build a new annexe (the 'Flight Shed') to house more of the Museum's outstanding collection of historic aircraft.

Brooklands Museum Director Allan Winn says: "This support from Lottery players is a real vindication of the Museum's vision of bringing a wartime temporary aircraft assembly building back to life as the only place in the country dedicated to showing how aircraft are designed and built. This unique exhibition – coupled as it is with a new home for our live aircraft, new workshops and stores, and the restoration of the Finishing Straight of the Race Track to its 1939 appearance – will give visitors of all ages an unmatched immersive and imaginative experience. We are now really looking forward to working with our consultants, contractors and volunteers to turn this fantastic vision into an exciting reality."

The project aims to inspire current and future generations to embrace science, technology and engineering, and will include a training scheme for volunteers in historic aircraft restoration and a raft of new activities on the Race Track. Work is due to start in the next couple of months with completion of the Aircraft Factory and Flight Shed experiences due in the summer of 2016.

The Museum has already been successful in raising over £1.2m in match funding for the project and is currently fundraising for the remaining £775,000. Including preparation and development work already undertaken, the complete cost of the project will be some £7 million, making it the largest endeavour the Museum has ever embarked on.

Stuart McLeod, Head of HLF South East, says: “The Brooklands site has played such an important role in the country’s history. Today’s glitzy Grands Prix and state-of-the-art airliners can all be traced back to innovation that took place here. HLF's investment in this remarkable site will help the Museum create a unique experience for visitors, helping them understand the pivotal role that the UK has played in the field of engineering.”

The Brooklands Race Track was opened in 1907 and marked the start of organised motor racing in the UK. Within a year, early experiments in aviation were taking place on the site as well. From these beginnings, Brooklands rapidly evolved into an outstanding centre for the development and operation of racing cars, motorcycles and aircraft. The first person to travel over 100 miles in one hour, Percy Lambert, did so at Brooklands in 1913. The first British Grand Prix took place at Brooklands in 1926 as well as the first public demonstration of powered flight in the UK in 1909. Early aviation pioneers including A V Roe, Tommy Sopwith and Harry Hawker all tested, built and flew aircraft on the site.

Although motor racing ceased at Brooklands on the outbreak of the Second World War, the aviation factories of Vickers-Armstrongs and Hawker were greatly expanded, with Vickers erecting a number of buildings on the track, of which the Museum’s Wellington Hangar was one. Built in 1940 on top of the Finishing Straight of the Race Track, it was used for the assembly of Wellington bombers and later for a variety of other industrial purposes. It now houses the Museum’s famous Wellington “R” for “Robert” recovered from Loch Ness in 1985 and restored at Brooklands, and numerous other aircraft.

Under the HLF-funded project, the Hangar will be completely restored on a new site adjacent to its current one, allowing the Finishing Straight of the Race Track to be brought back into use for both motoring and aviation activities. Fittingly, in view of its original purpose, the Hangar itself will be presented as an aircraft factory, its displays showing how aircraft from the earliest biplanes and triplanes to Concorde were designed, built and developed at Brooklands over an 80-year period. The “Factory” will be an interactive learning centre, in which visitors will be able to immerse themselves in the atmosphere of an aircraft manufacturing plant and try for themselves many of the crafts and skills used by thousands of workers in Brooklands’ manufacturing heyday.

In a new adjoining “Flight Shed”, the Museum’s active aircraft such as its Sopwith Camel and Hurricane will be kept ready to roll out onto the refurbished race track for static and taxying demonstrations. In the Flight Shed’s lower floor, Museum volunteers will learn and practice aircraft restoration skills in new workshops, and environmentally controlled, purpose-built storage (the first the Museum has had), will protect Brooklands’ internationally significant archives.

Notes to editors

About Brooklands Museum

Brooklands Museum is operated by an independent charitable trust, and occupies a 32-acre site at the northern end of the 1907 Brooklands Race Track in Weybridge, Surrey. Opened in 1991, it attracts over 175,000 visitors a year including large numbers of school children on organised educational visits. The Museum presents the history of motor

racing from the earliest days right up to modern Formula 1, and also the history of aircraft manufacture and development in Surrey over more than a hundred years. Many of its displays are housed in historic motoring and aviation buildings (including the 1907 motor racing Clubhouse) adjoining the Members' Banking, the steepest part of the historic circuit. The displays include exceptional racing cars such as the 1933 Napier-Railton (the ultimate lap-record holder) and aircraft including Concorde – full details can be seen on the Museum's website.

The Museum is keen to hear from anyone who worked at the aircraft factories at Brooklands – please contact John Pulford, Head of Collections & Interpretation.

Further information

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