New Brunel museum confirmed with major funding



The new museum will be located on Bristol's waterfront David Noton

The new museum, set to open in Bristol in 2017, will celebrate and explore Brunel, one of the world's greatest engineers and designers.

The attraction will feature galleries and interactive experiences set in reconstructed buildings that reflect the original Victorian waterfront panorama. Brunel's Drawing Office, a Grade II listed building, will be restored to become part of the new museum.

Located within Bristol's top-rated visitor attraction, Brunel's ss Great Britain, and next to the ship itself, the addition of Being Brunel will provide a huge boost to tourism, contributing an extra £1m to the city's economy annually.

The ss Great Britain Trust holds an extensive collection of artefacts including some of Brunel's personal possessions and documents that will be displayed for the first time. The national collection (of over 14,000 items from the University of Bristol Brunel Collection, the Clive Richards Brunel Collection and the ss Great Britain Trust Collection) has been awarded Designated Status by Arts Council England. Being Brunel will secure the Brunel Collections for the nation, providing even greater visitor experiences at Brunel's ss Great Britain, and inspiring future generations of engineers, inventors and innovators.

With the HLF funding, the £7.1m project is now 90% funded. The ss Great Britain Trust needs to raise an additional £670,000 to complete the project, which will attract more than 200,000 visitors annually when it launches.

Matthew Tanner MBE, Chief Executive of the ss Great Britain Trust commented: “Brunel was a visionary hero and has become a national treasure. I am delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given its support to Being Brunel: the national project which will create a dedicated place where Brunel’s inventive genius and the personality behind the icon can be explored.”

Nerys Watts, Head of HLF South West, said: “Brunel’s name is synonymous with groundbreaking feats of engineering and his influence today is inescapable. With this support from National Lottery players the new museum will, for the first time, allow people to get up close to the places and objects that tell Brunel’s story. We’ve seen a surge of interest in this remarkable figure in recent years and this project will capitalise on his genius to inspire the next generation.”

Being Brunel is planned to open in Easter 2017 and Brunel’s ss Great Britain will remain open for the duration of the build.

For more information about Being Brunel: the national Brunel project, see the ss Great Britain website.

Notes to editors

Brunel’s ss Great Britain is the world’s first great ocean liner and the most experimental steam ship of her time. Launched in 1843, this iron-hulled steamship revolutionised travel and set new standards in engineering, reliability and speed. Today, Brunel’s ss Great Britain is Bristol’s no.1 visitor attraction (as voted by the public on TripAdvisor) and home to the Brunel Institute, housing one of the world’s finest maritime and Brunel collections.

Please note, for brand continuity, the attraction is ‘Brunel’s ss Great Britain’, the ship herself is the ‘ss Great Britain’, the charity which manages and maintains the ship is the ‘ss Great Britain Trust’ and the trading branch of the charity is ‘ss Great Britain Trading Ltd’. The ‘ss’ is always written in lower case or small caps; or in a smaller font size when only capitalisation is available.

Brunel’s ss Great Britain has won over 30 major awards covering heritage, tourism, conservation, access, education, venue hire and customer service; including: 3* in the Michelin Guide to Great Britain 2012, Rough Guide to Accessible Britain 2010, England’s Large Visitor Attraction 2007, UK Museum of the Year 2006.

Further information

ss Great Britain Communications Officer Dom Rowe, tel: 0117 926 0680 ext 219; email dominicr@ssgreatbritain.org.

ss Great Britain Head of Marketing Paul Chibeba, tel. 0117 926 0680 ext 309; email paulc@ssgreatbritain.org.