Royal Shakespeare Company wins initial support for costume workshop renovation

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The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) has received initial support for a National Lottery grant of £950,000 to renovate and share the heritage of its costume workshop.

Located opposite the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, the RSC's costume workshop is the largest in-house workshop of any UK theatre and employs 30 craftspeople to create men's and women's stage outfits, from armoury and millinery to dyeing and printing.

The project aims to restore and enhance the Grade II listed workshop and stockroom in Stratford-Upon-Avon's Conservation Area, making it fit for purpose and opening it up to visitors for the first time.

Traditions and techniques

Part of a wider £8.7million project to expand and redevelop the workshop, HLF investment would enable the RSC to better share the stories of craftspeople and tradition of costume making in Stratford, exploring how techniques have changed over time.

The improved workspace will also open up opportunities for apprenticeships and training, as well as tours and new digital visitor experiences.

Stitch In Time

The project has already secured £2.1m of funding from Arts Council England. Today the RSC announce the Stitch In Time campaign to raise a further £3m towards the project costs.

Gregory Doran, RSC Artistic Director, said: "It's special to think that costumes have been made on this site continuously, since at least the 1940s. However, the workshop is now bursting at the seams as our costume making requirements and skills have developed over the years. It's in urgent need of attention, and our Stitch in Time campaign will help us to create modern-day costume-making facilities and secure the legacy of that craftsmanship and the heritage buildings that house it."

Stratford-upon-Avon's heritage

National Lottery funding of over £17.8m has been awarded to projects celebrating and preserving the rich heritage of Stratford-Upon-Avon, from Shakespeare's birthplace to events commemorating the centenary of the First World War.

A £2.8m grant from HLF funded the RSC's The Play's The Thing exhibition in the newly restored Swan Wing, which explores the history of staging Shakespeare's plays.

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