

University Museum of Zoology

New centre for biodiversity conservation named after Sir David Attenborough

21 April 2015

An iconic building in the centre of Cambridge is, today, being named the David Attenborough building, in honour of Sir David's pioneering work in bringing the wonders of our natural world to our screens. The David Attenborough building will become a focal point for research and practice to transform our understanding and the conservation of biodiversity.

Currently undergoing refurbishment, the David Attenborough building is located in the heart of the city, on the University of Cambridge's New Museums Site. Once completed, it will provide a vibrant hub for the partners in the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI), a unique collaboration between the University of Cambridge and the Cambridge-based cluster of leading conservation organisations, and the Museum of Zoology.

The CCI space has been designed to provide collaborative facilities to foster innovation, generate solutions to conservation challenges and create an ideas-rich environment to inspire future generations. It will house over 500 academics, practitioners and students from the University and its CCI partner organisations.

As part of this building, the Museum of Zoology is undergoing major refurbishment, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, to create new displays to inspire and engage audiences with the wonders of animal diversity, and new stores to preserve its outstanding collections for the future. "Sir David Attenborough's work, introducing and enthusing millions of people to the beauty, fragility and our scientific understanding of the natural world, makes the naming of this building in his honour particularly significant," said Dr Mike Rands, Executive Director of the Cambridge Conservation Initiative. "The David Attenborough building will act as a collaborative hub for the conservation community within Cambridge and beyond. Creating a collaborative and dynamic space in which experts from academia, practice and policy can interact and work together on a daily basis will help shape the future of life on Earth and the relationship between people and the natural environment on which we depend for our own wellbeing and survival."

The collaborative space of the Conservation Campus is complemented by the presence of the University of Cambridge's Museum of Zoology in the lower floors of the building. The Museum's collections include many significant specimens that have been instrumental in furthering scientific knowledge, from Darwin's finches to the iconic Dodo, one of many examples of extinct organisms. As Professor Paul Brakefield, Director of the Museum of Zoology, comments "The refurbishment of the Museum of Zoology will allow many new audiences to discover these wonders for themselves, as well as maintaining the Museum's key role in University teaching".

Refurbishment work on the David Attenborough building is due to be completed at the end of 2015, and the Museum of Zoology is scheduled to reopen in the summer of 2016. A series of events are being planned to mark the opening of the building, which will give members of the public the chance to view the building and to learn more about the innovative work that will be taking place under its roof.

Notes to Editors

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) aims to make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities across the UK and help build a resilient heritage economy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported over 36,000 projects with more than £5.9bn across the UK. www.hlf.org.uk.

The Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI) exists to deliver transformational approaches to understanding and conserving biodiversity and the wealth of natural capital it represents. It aims to do so through strategic collaborations between its partners and others. By joining together in strategic collaborations CCI's partners are able to tackle new and existing issues with innovative approaches, and across disciplines, in ways that cannot be achieved by any one partner alone. The CCI partners are: BirdLife International, British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), the Cambridge Conservation Forum, Fauna & Flora International (FFI), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), TRAFFIC, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Tropical Biology Association, UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre and the University of Cambridge.