

Resources for Visitors with Disabilities



ISABELLA
SEWART GARDNER
MUSEUM

Welcome

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum welcomes visitors with disabilities to enjoy our collection and special exhibitions, and to participate in our programs and events. We offer a variety of resources to ensure the accessibility of the Museum and our programming. In January 2012, the Museum completed a new wing designed by Renzo Piano, expanding our ability to provide an exceptional experience for all; the new wing features visitor amenities, learning spaces, a performance hall, and special exhibition gallery.

Housed in a stunning 15th-century Venetian-style palace with three stories of galleries surrounding a plant-filled Courtyard, the world-class collection includes paintings, sculpture, tapestries, and furniture. The galleries have remained as Isabella Stewart Gardner (1840–1924) arranged them, as stipulated by her will. The historic building has various types of flooring, rooms with narrow doorways, and low light levels to preserve the exquisite works of art on display.



VISITORS WITH LIMITED MOBILITY

The Museum offers a limited number of wheelchairs, rollators, and canes for use, free of charge, on a first-come, first-served basis. Please inquire at the admission desk. Motorized wheelchairs are permitted but may not fit through all doorways. Please see additional notes in the “Accessing the Museum” section of this brochure for navigating specific areas.



VISITORS WHO ARE BLIND OR HAVE LOW VISION

An introduction to the Museum is available in large print and Braille. This can be picked up in the Living Room.

Audio guides, available at the admission desk, are available free of charge to the blind or those with low vision.

Service animals are welcome in the Museum.



VISITORS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING



The audio tour transcript is available free of charge to visitors who are deaf or hard of



hearing—just ask a Visitor Services staff member at the admission desk. Neckloops are also available to accompany the audio tour.

Accessing the Museum

PARKING AND ARRIVAL

There are two designated handicapped parking spaces and a ramped loading zone in front of the Museum.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

Volunteers wearing “Ask Me” buttons can be found throughout the historic building and in the Living Room on the first floor of the new wing. They are here to answer your questions about the Museum’s history, collections, and exhibitions. Visitor Services and Security staff, identified by their staff ID badges, can also assist with questions about accessibility resources.



ELEVATORS AND LIFTS

Both buildings have a main elevator for visitor access to all public floors.



The historic building has a lift as an alternative to the two steps that lead to the main elevator.

The second and third balconies of Calderwood Hall can be accessed using a lift, after taking the main elevator to the fourth floor.



RESTROOMS

Accessible restrooms are located on the first floor of the new wing. Additionally, all other restrooms in both buildings have accessible stalls.



HISTORIC BUILDING



While the new wing is entirely wheelchair accessible, the historic building presents some challenges. Some doorways are narrow, so navigating through the galleries (including exiting and entering the elevator) requires some tight turns. Please ask any Visitor Services or Security staff member for more information or assistance.

An interactive virtual tour is available as an alternative viewing experience for the galleries that are not fully wheelchair accessible (Spanish Cloister on the first floor and the entire third floor). The virtual tour is available upon request at the coat check.

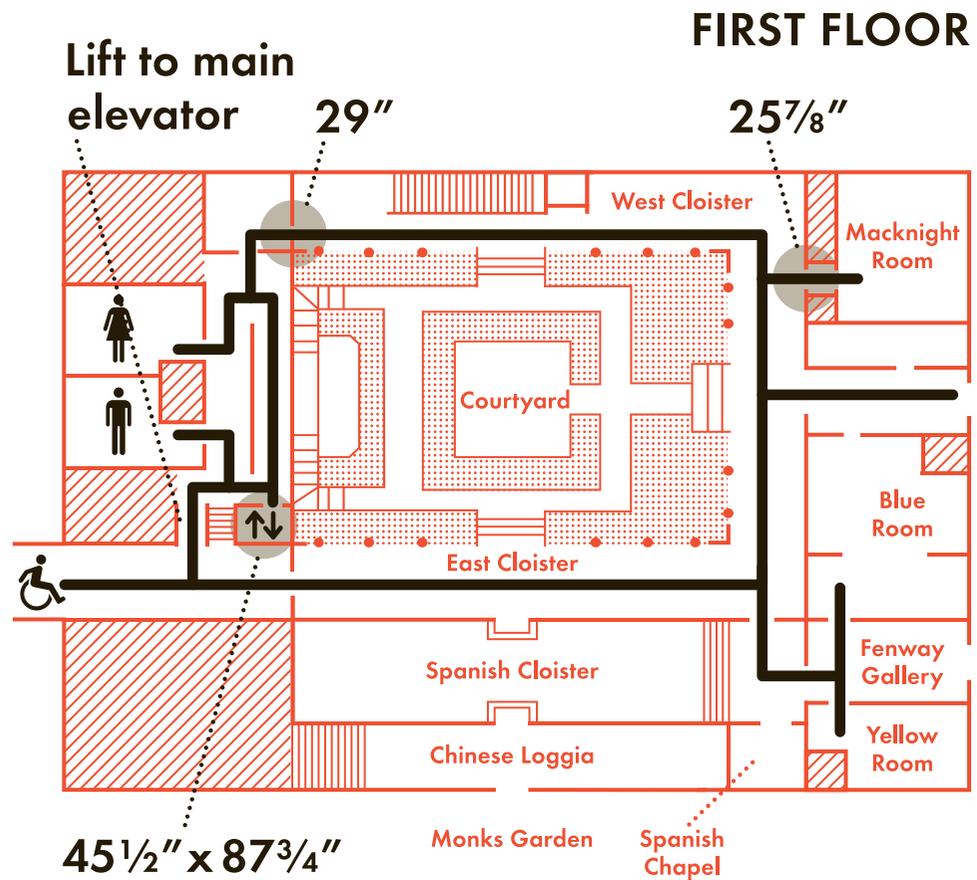
First floor

Located on the first floor of the historic building, the Spanish Cloister is not wheelchair accessible. Three steps lead down to this long, narrow space. Alternatively, binoculars can be borrowed from the security officer in that area to help view *El Jaleo*, a painting by John Singer Sargent, hanging at one end of the room.

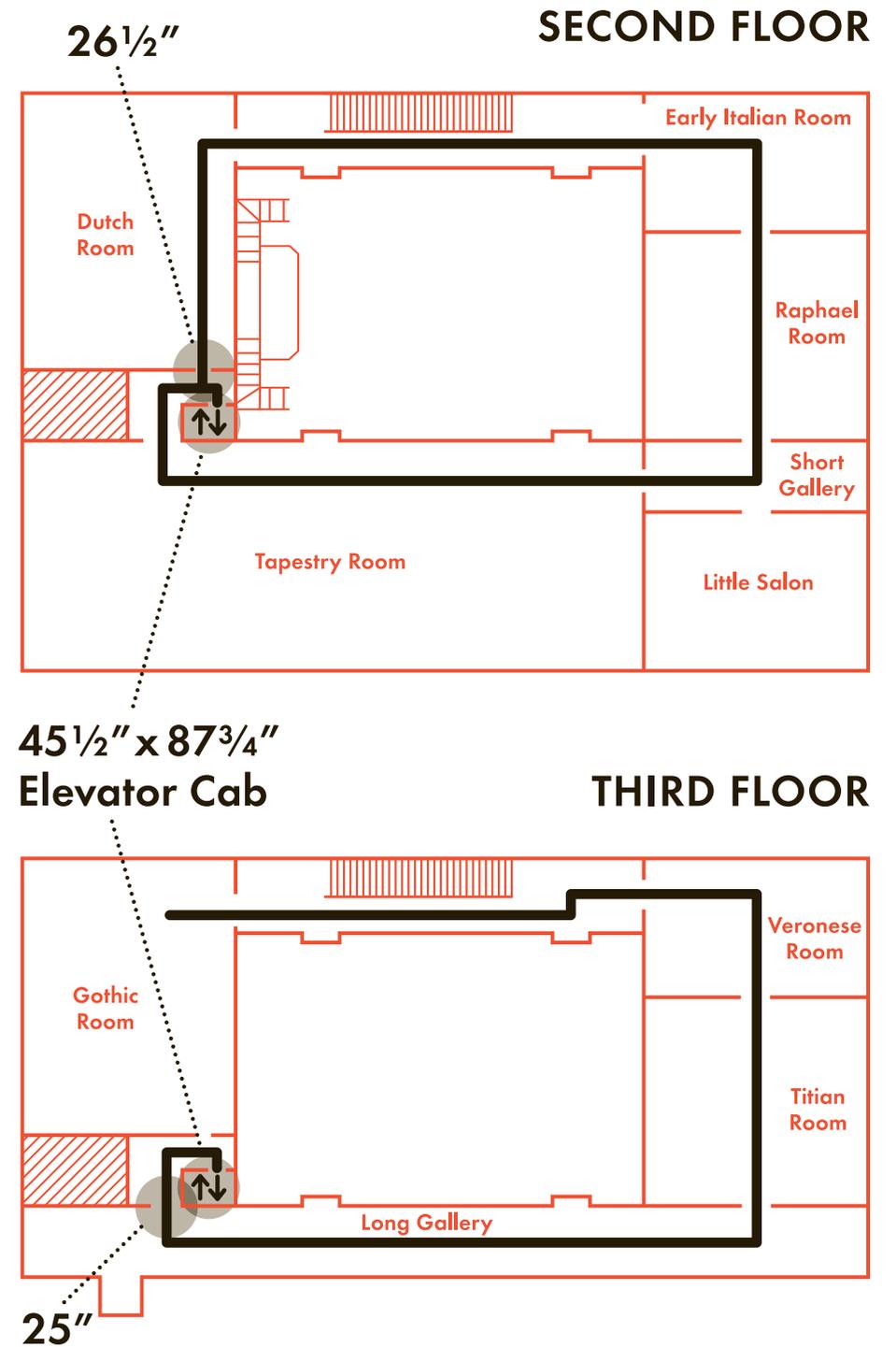
Third floor

One historic doorway between the elevator hall and the rest of the floor is just 22" wide, presenting a challenge for some wheelchairs. Visitors in wheelchairs may opt to switch into a transport chair, which is narrow enough to go through the doorway. To locate the transport chair, simply ask the nearest security officer (either in the Gothic Room or the Long Gallery).

Accessing the Museum: The historic building



-  Accessible path
-  Narrow doorway





CALDERWOOD HALL



Calderwood Hall, our new performance space, is located in the new wing, and is unique in structure and sound capability. A square space, it offers four levels of viewing, with seating on all sides of the performance area. All levels are wheelchair accessible. Please advise the box office of any accessible seating needs when you reserve your tickets.

Performance level

This level offers the most flexible access as the seating is completely movable, and no lift is required. Take the main elevator to the second floor.

First balcony

Take the main elevator to the third floor; wheelchair seating is in the middle of the south side of the hall.

Second and third balconies

Take the elevator to the fourth floor, turn left and look for the lift at the end of the corridor. Take the lift down to reach the second balcony, up to reach the third balcony.



EXTERIOR GARDENS AND TERRACE CAFÉ

The exterior gardens and terrace café are wheelchair accessible through the new wing (weather permitting).

Programs



TOURS



The Museum offers a variety of free (with admission) public talks and tours for visitors:

- Introduction to the Gardner Museum: 20-minute slide talk in Calderwood Hall
- Architecture Tour: 30-minute look at the new wing and historic building
- Collection Highlights Tour: hour-long look at Museum masterpieces
- Spotlight Talks: 15-minute examinations of a single work of art

For specific dates and times, please check gardnermuseum.org or call 617 278 5156.

Special tour accommodations are available with advance request, including a sighted guide or American Sign Language interpreter. Private tours for school and adult groups can also be scheduled in advance. For more information please call the Tour Manager at 617 278 5147.



CONCERTS AND PERFORMANCES



The following accommodations are available by advance request for any concert or lecture:



- FM transmitters / assistive listening devices
- Accessible seating
- Large print programs

To request any of these accommodations, please call the box office at 617 278 5156.

General guidelines and information

WHILE YOU'RE HERE

- You'll notice that light levels inside the Museum vary from space to space. Low light levels in the galleries help us protect works of art from long-term damage and maintain

the interplay of light and shadow that has always been part of the Gardner Museum experience. When entering a darker space from a lighter one, allow your eyes a few moments to adjust.

- Though our collection is displayed in a very approachable fashion, please help us protect the collection by not touching.
- Photography is permitted on the first floor of the new wing only. Photography is not permitted in the historic building, Hostetter Gallery, or Calderwood Hall.
- All large bags, backpacks, umbrellas, and coats not being worn must be checked in the coatroom, free of charge.
- Please be considerate of others and turn off phones and pagers. Phone conversations are not permitted in any of the Museum galleries.
- Only pencils may be used when writing in the Museum.
- Food, beverages, and smoking are not permitted in the Museum or the exterior gardens.

DINING AND SHOPPING

Café G and Gift at the Gardner, our Museum store, are open during Museum hours.

JOIN TODAY

Members enjoy unlimited free Museum admission for one year, special member prices and advance notice on concerts and lectures, and a 10% discount in the Museum store and Café G.

Become a member today by visiting the admission desk, joining online at gardnermuseum.org, or calling the Membership Office at 617 566 5643.

HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you have other access questions or need additional help planning your visit to the Gardner Museum, please call 617 278 5156.



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gardnermuseum.org