

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ISABELLA
STEWART GARDNER
MUSEUM**

**Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Board of Trustees Votes to
Proceed with New Building and Palace Restoration Project**

BOSTON, MA, MAY 18, 2009 • In a meeting late today, the Board of Trustees of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum voted unanimously to proceed with the museum's proposed new building and palace restoration project. The vote recognizes that the project has received all necessary regulatory approvals and that the museum has met a critical internal benchmark in its capital fundraising.

"The new building and palace restoration project is essential to the long-term preservation of the historic museum and collection," says **Barbara Hostetter**, *President* of the Board of Trustees. "It ensures that the museum will continue to provide 'for the education and enjoyment of the public forever,' as Isabella Stewart Gardner intended." The project will include a new building designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Renzo Piano, adjacent to the museum, and important restoration work in the historic palace.

"This moment brings us an important and encouraging step closer to ensuring that the museum will continue to inspire and engage the public for generations to come," says **Anne Hawley**, the *Norma Jean Calderwood Director* of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. "We deeply appreciate the extraordinary generosity and support of all those who share our passion for the Gardner and for our continuing efforts to carry on Isabella Gardner's rich legacy."

"This project is first and foremost about preserving the palace and the collection," says **John Lowell Gardner**, *Chairman* of the Board of Trustees and great grand-nephew of Isabella Gardner. "But it is also about an interplay of the arts that will continue to breathe life into the museum. This project is a harmonious marriage of preservation and progress."

Strategic planning for the project began nearly a decade ago. Following the installation of a museum-wide, state-of-the-art climate control system (1991-1996), the museum recognized a continuing critical need to reduce wear-and-tear on the historic museum building and collection. "This project is the Gardner's latest effort to ensure the museum's future," adds Hawley. "At the same time, it will anticipate keeping life in the palace with programming on an appropriate scale, a scale which the palace was built for."

Formal regulatory review of the project began in fall 2006. The project has the support of all leading city and state historic, preservation, and regulatory agencies—Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC), Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), and the Boston Preservation Alliance (BPA). The project has also been approved by the Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts which, in March 2009, ruled that the project is "entirely consistent" with Isabella Gardner's Will. The project has also earned the strong endorsement of Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, City Council President Michael P. Ross, and the museum's institutional neighbors and community groups in the Fenway including the Fenway Community Development Corporation (Fenway CDC) and the Fenway Alliance.

The Board vote marks the final formal approval the museum needs to move forward with the project. Enabling and site preparation work will begin later this month; visitor hours will not be affected.

ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM • 280 The Fenway Boston, MA 02115 617 566 1401 www.gardnermuseum.org ·
Tue.-Sun., 11 am-5pm; plus Gardner After Hours third Thursdays 5:30-9:30pm · \$12 adults; \$10 seniors; \$5 students; \$2 discount w/ same day Museum of
Fine Arts admission; FREE for members, children under 18, and all named Isabella – and on your birthday ·

A little more than 100 years ago, Isabella Stewart Gardner developed a new context for art in America by creating a museum where visitors experienced music, performance, the beauty of gardens, and historic and contemporary art, all in a highly personal setting. Modeled after a 15th-century Venetian palazzo and centered around a light- and flower-

filled interior courtyard garden, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is home to more than 5,000 art objects spanning 30 centuries and including works by Botticelli, Titian, Raphael, Rembrandt, Degas, and Sargent. Contemporary and historic special exhibitions, America's oldest museum concert series, lectures, special performances and events, an Artist-in-Residence program, and innovative school and community partnerships continue to enrich the permanent collection and provide ongoing inspiration for visitors the world over.

Anne Hawley is *Norma Jean Calderwood Director* of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. John Lowell Gardner is *Chairman* of the Board of Trustees. Barbara Hostetter is *President* of the Board of Trustees. For additional information and a calendar of programming and events, visit the museum online at www.gardnermuseum.org.

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