

Gardner Restoration and Expansion Project
Preservation, Protection, and Patronage of the Arts

FACT SHEET

About the Gardner

Modeled after a 15th-century Venetian palazzo, centered around a light-filled interior courtyard garden, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is home to more than 2,500 art objects, spanning 30 centuries, including works by Botticelli, Titian, Raphael, Rembrandt, Degas, and Sargent – and the first Matisse to enter an American collection. Contemporary and historic exhibitions; America’s oldest museum concert series; lectures; special performances; an Artist-in-Residence program; and school and community partnerships continue to enrich the permanent collection and provide ongoing inspiration for visitors the world over.

Five Cornerstones

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. Mrs. Gardner wanted her museum to fire the imagination. Today the curators, artists-in-residence, and programming staff continue the vibrant legacy of the museum’s founder by building programs on five cornerstones: **Historic Art, Contemporary Art, Music, Education, and Landscape**. A continuum of scholarly and popular programs and special exhibitions – designed to delight and inspire each visitor, from elementary school students to lifelong members – complement the gallery installations that make the Gardner a Boston icon of international renown.

Project Overview: Why a New Building?

The Gardner is facing urgent challenges to preserve the Palace, its treasures, and public programs. A new building is essential if the museum is to continue, as Mrs. Gardner stipulates in her will, to provide “for the education and enjoyment of the public forever.” The museum that Mrs. Gardner created 100 years ago welcomed approximately 1,000 visitors in a year – a figure closer to 200,000 today. Ten thousand people a year attend concerts and other programs in the Tapestry Room alone. A new building will alleviate the pressures of public access; protect the Palace and collection from unnecessary wear and tear; and preserve Mrs. Gardner’s legacy by deepening its commitment to public programming and the patronage of the arts. The restoration and expansion project will also allow the museum to return several spaces within the Palace to their original orientations – including the Tapestry Room, which will be returned to a preeminent gallery for viewing tapestries.

Improved Amenities

The proposed expansion will allow visitors greater accessibility to programming across the institution’s five cornerstones. New or improved services include:

- *A new entrance and visitor orientation area
- *An acoustically superior, flexible-use performance hall
- *A dedicated Special Exhibition Gallery
- *Studio-classrooms for the museum’s education and family programs
- *State-of-the-art conservation labs
- *Accommodations and work-space for artists-in-residence
- *An on-site greenhouse, fully visible to the public from Evans Way
- *More garden space accessible to visitors
- *A new Café and Terrace
- *A new Museum Shop
- *Administrative offices
- *and more

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Location

The museum's property includes a lot behind and adjacent to the Palace, where the new building will be situated.

Design Overview

The new building will stand no taller than the roofline of the historic museum, and is designed in a way that respects and complements the Palace and the neighborhood. Designed by award-winning architect Renzo Piano, the new building, like Mrs. Gardner's original, will itself be a work of art and an important cultural and architectural landmark for the city of Boston.

Visitor Entrance

The museum entrance will be in the new building and oriented toward Evans Way Park. This will allow for safer visitor pick-up and drop-offs and improved security for the museum generally. In the current design concept, there will be single-story glass corridor between the buildings, through the south garden. Isabella Gardner choreographed her visitors' entrance into the historic Palace: in from the bustling street through a tranquil passageway and, finally, into a four-story, light- and flower-filled courtyard garden. This experience will be preserved in the new plan.

New Building Materials and Environmental Impact

The predominant materials are low-iron glass, steel, brick, and metal panels (exterior). The building will be LEED Certified – the museum will be applying for Gold certification – and will feature a geothermal well system; rainwater will be recycled for greenhouse use.

Project-by-the-Numbers

<i>Total area – New Building interior</i>	~60,000 sq. ft
<i>Performance Hall</i>	~300 seats; Tapestry Room accommodates ~260 3 balconies, 64 people/balcony, all front row seats 96 people at stage level
<i>Special Exhibition Gallery</i>	1,500 sq. ft – 3 times the size of current space
<i>Greenhouse</i>	1 greenhouse, ~2,500 sq. ft
<i>Cost</i>	TBA; building and construction costs tied to final design
<i>Total area of the historic Palace</i>	~60,000 sq. ft
<i>Max. capacity of the historic Palace, before and following expansion</i>	~200,000 visitors/year

About Architect Renzo Piano

Renzo Piano was born in Genoa, Italy, in 1937 to a family of builders. He graduated Milan Polytechnic in 1964. In 1971, he founded the Piano & Rogers studio and, together with Richard Rogers, won the competition for the Centre Pompidou in Paris. From the early 1970s to the 1990s, Piano collaborated with engineer Peter Rice, founding Atelier Piano & Rice in 1977. In 1981, he established the Renzo Piano Building Workshop, with offices in Genoa and Paris.

Renzo Piano's distinguished architecture has captured admirers around the world for more than 30 years. His work is sculptural, beautiful, technically accomplished and sustainable. – American Institute of Architects (AIA), 2008

Renzo Piano has been awarded the highest honors in architecture, including the Pritzker Prize; RIBA Royal Gold Medal; Medaille d'Or, UIA; Erasmus Prize; and, most recently, the Gold Medal of the AIA. Among Piano's recent projects: expansion of the Art Institute of Chicago and the High Art Museum, Atlanta; Menil Collection, Houston; Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas; Beyeler Foundation, Basel, Switzerland; and the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Switzerland.

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Local Architect

Renzo Piano and the Renzo Piano Building Workshop will work in partnership with local architectural firm Burt, Hill.

Chief Executives

Anne Hawley is *Norma Jean Calderwood Director*. Peter Bryant is *Chief Operating Officer*. Helena B. Hartnett is *Director of Development & External Relations*. John L. Gardner is *Chairman of the Board of Trustees*; Barbara W. Hostetter is *President of the Board of Trustees*.

Curators

Historic Collection: Alan Chong

Contemporary Art, Artist-in-Residence Program: Pieranna Cavalchini

Music: Scott Nickrenz

Landscape: Patrick Chassé; *Head Gardener*: Stan Kozak

Education: Peggy Burchenal

Gardner Online

For exhibition news, a calendar of events, or additional information about the museum, visit the Gardner online at gardnermuseum.org

Press Contact

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March 2008