



# Metropolitan Museum Board Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: METROPOLITAN MUSEUM BOARD**

**DATE: AUGUST 28, 2019**

**FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT**

**SUBJECT: DIRECTOR'S UPDATE REGARDING PLANNING, MAIN MUSEUM RENOVATION AND EXPANSION, HISTORIC HOUSES, STAFFING, COLLECTIONS, EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS, AND MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

## **ISSUE:**

Receive and file a Director's Update regarding planning, main museum renovation and expansion, historic houses, staffing, collections, exhibitions and programs, and marketing and communications.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Metropolitan Museum Board receive and file a Director's Update regarding planning, main museum renovation and expansion, historic houses, staffing, collections, exhibitions and programs, and marketing and communications.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **Planning**

The 2019-2024 Strategic Plan for the Museum includes several actions for the near term, apart from the most obvious task of planning the main museum renovation and expansion. Selected action include:

1. Finish relocating the collections and clearing the main museum building,
2. Rebranding, including overhaul of the website,
3. Plan reopening exhibitions and extend temporary exhibition plans three years forward,
4. Build network of collaborative partners,
5. Improve internal policies and procedures, to include a Collections Development Plan,
6. Upgrade collections management software,
7. Rehabilitate Robinson House for use as a Harada House interpretive center,

Progress toward these and other goals will be reported to the Board at least once each quarter.

### **Main Museum Renovation and Expansion**

Planning continues with the Museum's architects, Pfeiffer Partners. On July 11, 2019, Pfeiffer presented preliminary ideas for general massing of the spaces and fitting the necessary functions

into the site footprint. Design concepts were not yet presented. Staff input from this meeting will be incorporated into the next stage of planning. A meeting also took place regarding the impact of the project on parking nearby. A modest amount of exploratory surface demolition has occurred to gain information for the project engineers. Curator of Historic Structures, Lisa Masengale, reviewed historic assessments of the building in order to identify features of significance for which special consideration will be required.

### Historic Houses

Heritage House is closed, as is customary, for the warmest of the summer months. Cleaning and site maintenance are under way, including the removal of two (2) trees that are a threat to the house, replacement of the public toilets, and installation of a water bottle filling station. Curator of Historic Structures, Lisa Masengale, is continuing to detail and prioritize a comprehensive list of house maintenance projects.

The Harada House Foundation's grant-funded architectural assessments are wrapping up. A productive stakeholders' meeting took place on July 25, 2019 with Architectural Resources Group (ARG). Both ARG's and IS Architecture's assessments and cost estimates are due by August 16, 2019. Staff are working on a solution to funding the architectural design services that will be necessary for the Robinson House rehabilitation to proceed.

### Staffing

Katie Gove will join the Museum Department team on August 26, 2019 as the Museum of Riverside's new Collections Registrar. Ms. Gove is moving to Riverside from Kansas. She brings a wide range of experience with different types of collections from historic to biological to anthropological. She has skills in several key areas of concern for the Museum of Riverside, such as, relocating collections, data migration, establishing collections management procedures and data-entry protocols, and collections inventory. Her office will be located at Rumsey 1 ("R1"), the Museum's primary collections storage facility, which is a non-public site.

### Collections

The long-delayed specialized collection storage cabinets have arrived. The next stage in the collection move process will be loading collections into these cabinets, arranging for alternate taxidermy freezing facilities so that process can resume, and continuing to prepare selected objects for deaccession. Staff vetted a number of collections management software packages, selected a new system, and are at work on a solution to the budgetary impacts of making the transition. In the long term, the new software will have a significantly lower annual budget impact, in addition to having far superior functionality.

### Exhibitions and Programs

Pre-design planning continues for the reopening exhibitions as well as for one or two "pocket" exhibitions for installation in other sites in Riverside. Please calendar the following programs and events to occur at Heritage House: Chinese Moon Festival on September 13, 2019 and Croquet with the Mayor on September 21, 2019. Also, stop by and see Museum staff at the Long Night of Arts & Innovation on October 10, 2019 along Main Street.

### Marketing and Communications

Development of potential rebranding concepts continues; staff hope to have a group of options ready soon for audience field-testing. A cross-section of the staff have met to prepare a revised framework for the Museum of Riverside's social media presence. Look for a reactivated Instagram presence as well as continuing Facebook posts of upcoming program details, collections highlights (including discoveries made while packing the collection to move), and other news.

Curators, educators, and other staff will be contributing to the social media communication duties so that the Museum can maintain a lively presence at optimal frequency.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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