

DRIEHAUS MUSEUM

DRIEHAUS MUSEUM TO RESTORE AND REVITALIZE THE HISTORIC MURPHY AUDITORIUM

Construction on this vital new addition culminating in a new cultural campus in downtown Chicago begins in June.

Chicago, May 15, 2023-- Starting June 2023, the Richard H. Driehaus Museum will begin renovation work on the John B. Murphy Memorial Auditorium at 50 E. Erie, an important part of the museum campus. Upon completion in February 2024, this new project will renew 32,000 square feet of former office space to create a dynamic new Learning Center with art and maker studios, a study center with classrooms, a library and archive, redesigned office spaces, seminar rooms, and an 800-square foot outdoor terrace on the top floor.

The magnificent design of the main auditorium space on the ground floor is being restored to its original grandeur and enhanced with cutting-edge acoustics that will make it a world-class venue. The opening of the updated building will present a full suite of new programming tied to the Driehaus Museum's strategic vision, along with a range of activities and events, both public and private, for the community. This renovation is in line with the Museum's strategic plan to be a more active and visible part of our community.

According to Interim Driehaus Executive Director Lisa Key, "It is thrilling for us to embark upon this important renovation which will create a new Museum campus, offering visitors not only an incredible museum of art, architecture, and design, but now a newly rejuvenated auditorium that will add a vital and dynamic public space to the cultural campus in Chicago that will continue to increase the historical profile of this great city of architecture."

The Museum will remain open during the construction, and the Murphy's historic exterior will remain intact with the renovation work enhancing the grandeur of its soaring interior. On the main floor, the seating area will be unified by levelling the floor, and new lighting and acoustics will improve the visitors' experience. The Museum elevator will be closed for several months at the start of the project and the Museum will be making alternative arrangements for visitors who require access during this time.

“It was a huge relief to learn about the Driehaus Museum expanding its campus into the adjacent Murphy Memorial. There are not many options for finding an appropriate re-use that would respect the historic character of such a monumentally scaled historic building while at same time providing a positive impact on the surrounding neighborhood,” said Tim Samuelson, the Cultural Historian Emeritus of the City of Chicago. “The Driehaus Museum has been a thoughtful community partner and valuable neighborhood asset for the past twenty years, and its expansion into the Murphy will make something great even greater!”

Ongoing through spring 2024, the construction will include a 14-foot-high sidewalk canopy on Erie Street, running about 100-110 feet total from the alley to part of the Nickerson Mansion. The parking lane from the corner of 40 E Erie to 50 E Erie will be closed for the majority of the construction project for a staging area.

Antunovich and Associates and Bulley & Andrews, both of whom were involved in the extensive renovation of the Nickerson Mansion from 2003-2008, are the architecture and building partners for the Museum. The Museum will be updating progress regularly via the website at www.driehausmuseum.org/construction and its newsletter, which can be subscribed to here: <http://eepurl.com/irOPo6>

About the Murphy Auditorium

Located at 50 E Erie, the six-story, 32,193-square-foot French Renaissance-style building was built between 1923 and 1926 by the American College of Surgeons. Designed by noted Chicago architects Benjamin Marshall and Charles E. Fox of Marshall and Fox, the Murphy was used originally to host meetings and serve as a center for education in surgery. Its iconic exterior is Marshall’s interpretation of the double-columned, two-story façade and flanking entry staircase of the Chapelle Notre-Dame-de-Consolation (1900) in Paris.

The building features a pair of cast bronze doors designed by Tiffany Studios at the front entrance, comprised of six panels depicting prominent figures in the history of medicine. It also has a towering, multicolored stained-glass window inside the auditorium. It was built as a memorial to founding member John B. Murphy, MD, FACS. Dr. Murphy was regarded worldwide as the greatest clinical educator of his generation, and known for performing a life-saving surgery on President Theodore Roosevelt in 1912.

About the Driehaus Museum

The Richard H. Driehaus Museum engages and inspires the global community through exploration and ongoing conversations in art, architecture, and design of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its permanent collection and temporary exhibitions are presented in an immersive experience within the restored Samuel Mayo Nickerson Mansion, completed in 1883, at the height of the Gilded Age. The

Museum's collection reflects and is inspired by the collecting interests, vision, and focus of its founder, the late Richard H. Driehaus.

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