



Transforming Arts Organizations Worldwide

## Insights on Museum Expansions and Renovations

FEBRUARY 2023

# Research Question & Sources

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## Primary Question

What are the best practices, common pitfalls, and potential innovations for museums undergoing a major building expansion and/or renovation?

In interviews with peer organizations and in supplementary research, we addressed the following topics:

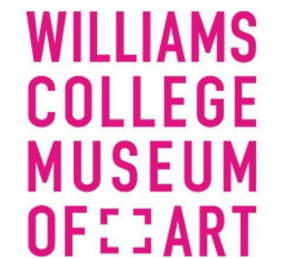
- History of the museum building and past expansions/ renovations
- Status of ongoing or most recent project
- Specific catalyst that lead to the new project
- Main objectives of the expansion
- Budget and timelines of process
- Architect selection and relationship
- Fundraising for the campaign
- Biggest innovations or areas of excitement
- Challenges and lessons learned
- Management of collaboration with staff

To investigate these questions, we integrated research from multiple sources:

- In-depth interviews with 8 comparable museums and institutions that are undertaking (or have recently undertaken an expansion/ renovation project
- Past ABA proprietary research, including:
  - *Strategies Around Naming Rights*
  - *Capturing the Digital Opportunity*
  - *Insights on Museum Closures*

# Research Participants

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# Financial Snapshot of Participating Organizations

Organization	Operating budget	Project budget	Endowment	Footprint of facility and project	Full time staff
Asia Society, Texas Center	\$4.1M	\$10.7M (increased with inflation)	\$15.7M	Total 40,000 sf	38 (from 990)
Hood Museum of Art	\$5.5M	\$50M	\$1.8M from college endowment \$3.7 own endowment	Total 65,000 sf Project expanded floor space by 50%	50
Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego	\$6.8M	\$105M	\$36.9M	Existing: 57,800sf Renovation of existing 34,600sf New: 43,400sf	67 (from 990)
Portland Museum of Art	\$8,350,000	\$45M	\$42 million	Aiming to reach 75,970 sf (increasing 60k sf)	81 (budget for 92 FT positions)
Princeton University Art Museum	\$17-19M	(Undisclosed)	\$11M (own endowment fund)	50,000 sf for galleries 90,000 sf for rest, including offices	72 (10 PT at 75% ¾ days a week)
Shaker Museum	Growing Progressively: 2015: \$350K; 2022: \$900K next year \$1.2M approved budget	Still under review- new estimate \$26M	N/A	All new building (original museum closed in 2009)	6.5
Smith College Museum of Art	\$3.3M	\$3M (storage only)	\$64M (restricted portion of endowment for museum, but managed by overall college endowment)	Total 59,000sf, approximately 37% for gallery spaces, 15% collection managements	23
Williams College Museum of Art	\$4.6M	(Undisclosed, in process)	\$46M	In design right now	28 FT (total staff 41)



# Report Outline

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## 1. Key Takeaways



## 2. Interview Stories



## 3. Additional Research and Resources

# Key Takeaways

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## DIFFERENTIATED PURPOSE

1. **Identifying a clear “differentiated purpose” for the project will help significantly** in making hard trade-offs in design, identifying and motivating key stakeholders, and inspiring donors.
2. For projects in higher-educational environments, to the extent possible, **align your purpose with a specific elements of the overarching strategic plan** for the institution. Goal alignment reduces the chances that project challenges will arise and, if they do arise, makes them easier to resolve.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

3. Your project’s differentiated purpose is likely to imply some community (or communities) that you are especially interested in serving in addition to the overall campus and local community. For this community, **think about understanding and satisfying their needs, not just addressing their concerns.**
4. For the communities that the project is intended to serve, **meet with representatives frequently** to 1) understand their unmet needs, 2) deeply understand their aspirations, ideas and concerns, and 3) get their buy-in and advocacy. There is no substitute for strong advocacy from the communities you’re serving.
5. Write down your criteria for architect selection and develop specific questions to test those criteria with candidates and their references. **Ensure that the selection committee explicitly discusses candidates’ performance relative to each criterion** before making an overall assessment.

## DESIGN

6. **Don’t assume an “if we build it, they will come” approach for community space** in your building. Your differentiated purpose should give you a specific reason why your building will be a congregating space, and your design should reinforce that purpose.

# Key Takeaways (Continued)

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## ARCHITECT SELECTION

7. The collections of many museums are expanding, putting pressure on existing storage. **Positioning storage needs in terms of “access to the collection for educational purposes”** is generally more appealing than “improving storage.”

## PLANNING

8. **Make sure you think about “the next 15 years,” not just your current needs.** Some institutions point out that they feel on the verge of outgrowing their new space not too long after it’s completed.
9. To ensure productive use of space, **think through scenarios for usage** (e.g., likely concurrent use of classroom space, scenarios for use of multi-purpose space). Some organizations pointed out that their logistical issues (as opposed to design issues) lead to inefficient use of space.

## BUDGETING

10. Organizations suggest **building in at least 10% contingency funding into the project budget.** Delays are usually more expensive than paying more for specific items in building projects, and a contingency can help avoid some delays.
11. Several institutions pointed out the value of **including a capital reserve as part of the fundraising plan**; one interviewee had previous experience with a museum expansion project whose fundraising goal was split between building construction (60%) and future maintenance (40%).

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT

12. For projects in higher-educational environments, **inclusive project teams with senior representatives from across the institution seem to be worth the added collaboration costs.** Inclusion fosters understanding and willingness to advocate, which are more valuable than speed in an academic environment.
13. It’s easy for projects to bog down or extend through mission-creep. **Hire and empower a strong project manager** to ensure process and budget discipline, keep the focus on key objectives and swat away tempting distractions.

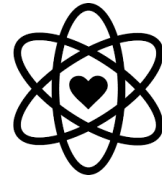
# 1. Overall Process Key Themes

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## 1. Key Takeaways

We have organized the main process takeaways in the following themes:



**Values, vision and design:** Understanding what the museum stands for, the values you want your design to espouse and your architect selection



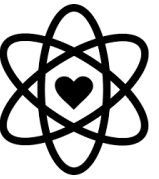
**Staffing/teaming your project:** Bringing in diverse stakeholders into decision making, and ensuring your architects are supported with strong project management teams







**Timeline, fundraising and budget lessons:** Commonalities around major campaign fundraising, framing your project for support and budget anecdotes



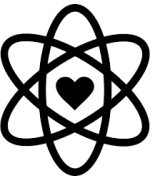
# Differentiated Purpose Provides a Framework for Design Decisions



While nearly all interviewed museums shared some core motivations in their building projects (e.g., access/storage, HVAC upgrades, gallery space, offices, modern classrooms), most had some differentiated purpose that framed their unique needs, the communities they most needed to engage and their message to donors and other stakeholders.

Differentiated Purpose	 <p>Community hub grounded in Shaker values</p>	 <p>A museum appealing to non-museum goers</p>	 <p>Teaching through art, not just about art</p>	 <p>A hub for museum professionals (including alumni) and regional arts</p>
Distinct Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local business community</li> <li>Local cultural community</li> <li>State tourism officials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local community members, especially non-attendees and occasional attendees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students</li> <li>Teaching staff in non-arts majors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Museum leaders globally</li> <li>Alumni museum professionals</li> <li>Regional arts organizations</li> </ul>
Design Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building designed as community hub at end of main street, with open plan and windows feel like communal market</li> <li>Lobby built around communal Shaker table to signal community role</li> <li>No café, in order to avoid competition with local merchants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maker space at front entrance signals welcome, creativity, desire for interaction</li> <li>Classroom space engages community and supports other local non-profits</li> <li>Deemphasis on glitz/formal feel</li> <li>Community stewardship through sustainable design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building includes large staging locations to house and coordinate objects coming from offsite storage for use in 'exhibitions' for each class</li> <li>Visible first-floor teaching classroom signals the teaching value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Auditorium, office and other "field" space capable of supporting Master of Arts program in Art History and interactions among leaders in museum field</li> <li>Performance spaces to host local arts ecosystem (e.g., Jacob's Pillow, Tanglewood, MASS MoCA, Clark)</li> </ul>
Architect Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chose architect aligned with Shaker values (e.g., all-woman team) and committed to learning more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chose architect with diverse team and facility in soliciting/ incorporating community input (including from minority/female-led local businesses)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chose architect with diverse team and facility in soliciting/ incorporating community input (including from minority/female-led local businesses)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selected firm with arts, museum and education experience in order to resonate with professionals in those communities</li> </ul>

# Soliciting Community Input Along the Way



The Portland Museum of Art's expansion project focused on creating a museum for non-museum-goers, so it was especially important to get feedback from the community and bring the community along as advocates in the process. The museum created a thorough process for engaging with the community. Such a process can be time consuming but pays off in terms of goodwill, avoidance of unexpected delays and eventual visitorship.



## Organize public listening sessions early on

*“Early-on feedback and affirmation was so loud and clear for a need for more public space. We heard a lot about how hard it is to get kids to relax in formal settings/ intimidation”*

The Portland Museum of Art hosted a number of public listening sessions during their design/ ideation phase to really understand what the public wanted from an expanded museum.

They hosted many series during covid, and, while the online format was less personal, it did allow them to engage a diverse group of people online. The museum also recommends hosting sessions with students to gain insights from the next generation on museum goers.

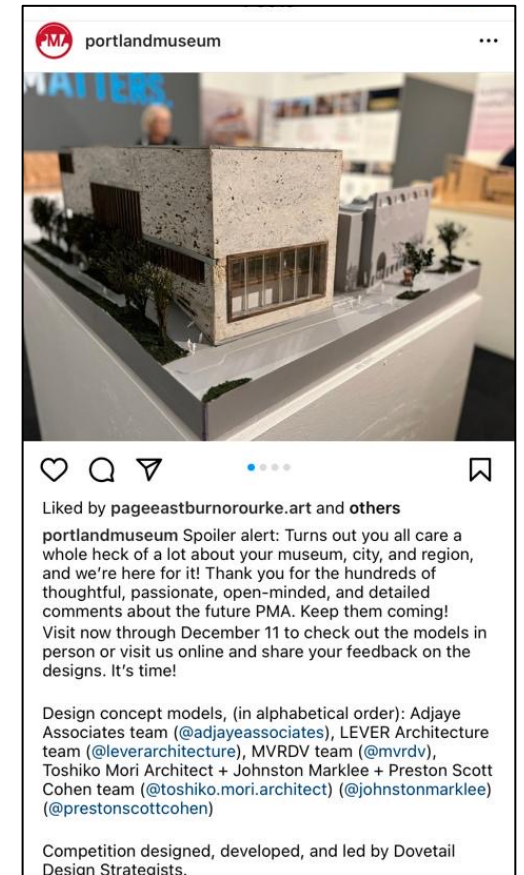


## Use social media to gain public insights

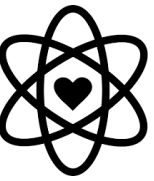
*“There is always a risk of losing donors if the building isn't glitzy enough...but we can fall back and explain our process of listening to the community's input”*

The Portland Museum of Art not only hosted public listening sessions during the ideation phase, but also opened to the public opportunities to weigh in on some of the proposals from architectural firms later in the process.

The museum used their social media to solicit feedback on the museum's future and design. This process supports full transparency, and allows the museum to really focus their vision and tell a specific story to donors from a community lens.



# Envisioning Designs that Respond to Community Interests



Museums and cultural centers often use the occasion of their expansions to engage with visitors and communities in new ways. Interviewed organizations identified several specific opportunities in space and design to engage with audiences and enhance the visitor experience in the following ways:



## Multipurpose spaces

Many museums are thinking intentionally about multi-purpose spaces beyond exhibition areas. Multipurpose spaces can signal a sense of welcome and also give the museums flexibility to think well beyond exhibitions and classroom education in terms of programming.



## Maker spaces for non-traditional audiences

Beyond formal education spaces and classrooms, many museums are incorporating hands-on spaces for visitors to make art. These spaces are oftentimes being positioned near the entrance to convey a sense of engagement and informality as the first thing visitors see.



## Functional spaces for object learning

Especially in higher-education settings, the demand for object-based interdisciplinary learning has grown, and museums have responded with functional staging areas that enable them to serve their mission and become more integrated with their wider campus community.



## Modern storage to increase access

Museums are leveraging their expansion and renovation projects to not only display more of their collections in galleries, but to also make their collections available in new ways like visible storage, and increase use/circulation in classrooms and for study etc.



## Hybrid in-person with digital storytelling

In addition to physical renovations, some museums and cultural centers are also looking at how they can design virtual exhibits that expand the learning and engagement opportunities for their audiences from home or school.



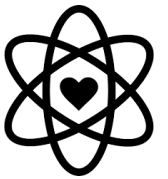
## Bringing outside in to open up the museum

Many museums are being more intentional with how they interact with their landscape—using large windows to open their indoor spaces to their outdoor surroundings. This is an effort to be more open and connected.



## Vibrant Community Hub

In the past, many college museums have felt closed off from the rest of the community, even when they are located in the physical heart of the campus. In their renovations or expansions, museums are thinking about the communities that make most sense to congregate in their spaces and how to attract them.



# General Criteria for Architect Selection

Most museums work with an architect selection committee made up of museum staff, board members, facilities teams and other faculty (for college museums). The process usually involves a call for proposals based on a carefully crafted RFPs. Here are common themes heard in our interviews.



**1. Did the firm do its homework?**

Did the firm read through every element of the brief and understand critical elements such as the vision, demand for diversity and resources?



**2. Do they seem collaborative and inclusive?**

Who is on their team? During the presentation did they all share their ideas? Are they open to new ideas?



**3. Are they aligned with your vision, history etc.?**

How did they balance sharing their vision and being open to yours? Are they making your building or theirs?



**4. Do they have the expertise and experience?**

Have they completed similar builds? Can they manage complex sites and complex project requirements?



**5. Are they sensitive to diversity and sustainability?**

Is their team diverse? Have they looked for diverse vendors and local partners? Are they versed in using sustainable materials?



**6. Is their design creative and functional?**

Have they proposed creative uses of space? Have they considered the visitor experience and your teaching needs?



**7. Are they a cultural fit?**

Do their overall company values align with your own? Can they work with external project managers?

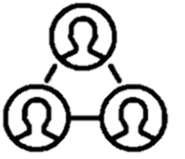


**8. What is their reputation? Are they emerging?**

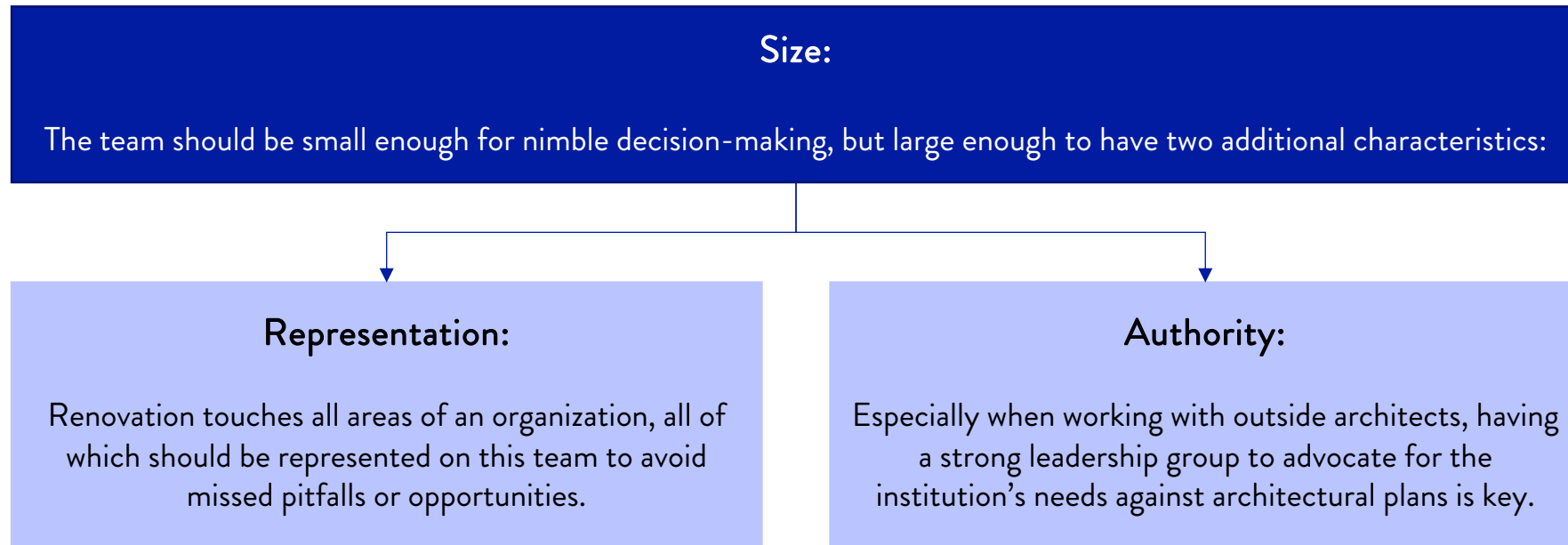
Are they established or emerging architects? How will their selection facilitate support for your project?



# A Well-Structured Working Group Is Key

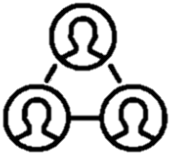


Across all of our interviews, organizations who created a **small working group of cross-departmental leaders** reported that it was one of the most important factors in their successful renovations. When establishing a working group of your own, consider the following qualities.



*While having a general working group for the full capital project is helpful, it can also be productive to create smaller catalyst teams for particular elements of a renovation. On the next slide, we'll outline a case example of one such group.*

# Leverage Committees to Engage Diverse Stakeholders



In addition to working groups managing the more operational side of your building project, many museums we spoke with also maintained advisory committees to weigh in on specific design features, architect selection and program content. These committees are a great way to gain diverse perspectives throughout the project, but they do require management.

## Engage internal expertise and activate your board/stakeholders

*“Head of sustainability for college is on the committee. They are super technical and very eager.”*

~

*“Started with architectural selection committee – bespoke ad hoc committee from the board. We also brought in past museum presidents. This was a prestigious committee to be on.”*

## Invite new staff and senior leadership to participate

*“Including new senior staff is good onboarding for them and can create important advocacy for the project.”*

*With the change of provost, I had to rebuild that relationship. I invited the new provost to be on the selection committee to engage her in the ongoing process.*

*She is the senior person by far on the committee. Her questions from the leadership perspective allow me to respond and include those considerations into my process...”*

## Include students perspectives, especially for programming

*“On our selection committee we included students. We have MA students and 2 undergrads. The undergrads are harder to bring along for all our meetings, but they focus more on the programming side and less on the building side - but we want to listen and represent their ideas in the project.”*

## Keep the conversations going after architect selection

*“Once we selected our architect design firm, we created a building committee. On this committee we looked for more experience working on facilities, like people who had experience working with the city, less about leadership with our museum but more about what they could do to help us moving forward.”*

# Ensure You Have All Required Expertise



Several museum directors emphasized how important it is not only to select and establish collaborative partnerships with the design architects, but also to hire effective project managers to oversee the day-day operations of the build and act as liaison with the museum staff.



**Leverage skills of your college facilities team and architect (if applicable)**

*“We have an excellent relationship with the architect so far, and our college facilities also really helped in our collaboration. They helped manage specific vendor contracts and a lot of other procedural things that we luckily didn’t have to think about”*



**Hire a project manager as your resident “bad cop”**

*“We had a great project manager. She would listen very carefully- take no prisoners, very tough. She was here to make sure the building was done on budget- even if that meant rustling feathers . She was also very detailed specific and able to have tough conversations”*



**Hire an executive architectural team**

*“Another key element is having the executive architectural firm that works with the mechanical/operational side of things. We are very lucky with our executive team, They are familiar with our building and know all the code requirements etc.! “*

# Anticipate Extended Timelines for Completion



Initial conversations and feasibility studies for building expansions and fundraising opportunities often start years before formal plans are set in motion. Extended timelines can feel bureaucratic, but are often purposeful, in order to keep stakeholders engaged and account for careful planning.

2+ Years

## Ideation and Vision

Once a decision has been made to move forward with a major building campaign, many museums use this critical period to set up a **steering committees** to study the field and visit peer institutions.

This is also a moment to gather as much intel as possible, with **public listening sessions** to better understand what your diverse stakeholders want and need.

Once a museum has also listened to its community and other stakeholders, assessed gaps and determined the framing purpose of the renovation, it's time to **design an RFP for architectural proposals**. This process can take several months.

2+ Years

## Architect Selection and Design

Once an architectural RFP is public, receipt of proposals usually takes **several months**, depending on the scale and scope of your search.

Many museums create advisory committees at this stage to **review proposals and invite selected finalists for in-person (ideally) presentations**, both to improve decision-making and increase buy-in.

Review, selection and announcement of the winning design firm can take up to 10 months. **This is also a critical moment to hire a project manager and/or executive architect** firm to work along-side the creative designers.

Once a firm is selected, final designs and approval from various committees, contracts and permits can take another 10-18 months on average.

Varies depending on project

## Construction and Opening

In the 1-2 years before breaking ground, it is important to clearly establish and announce your internal **project team and working parameters**.

If required, **safely moving the collection into temporary storage can require a full year**.

**External communications** about closures should be shared at least 6 months in advance.

**Construction can take up to three years** depending on the scale of the project. Assume delays and unforeseen costs, allocating of at least 10% of your budget to contingencies.

Most institutions shared that one year was a comfortable amount of time to **move back into the renovated space before public opening**.



# Be Prepared for Unexpected Costs



Cost overruns can create real headaches for project managers. Interviewed museums emphasized the importance of realistic expectations around time and cost, as well as the importance of funding the true costs of the project.

## Predictable Budget Busters

*“What puts you most over budget are the everyday delays...”*

*“Time/cost of inflation and the supply chain disruptions threw our budget and schedule off a bit... not widely off schedule- few weeks maybe...”*

*“I think its internalizing what others said to me. It’s going to cost more, take longer and be harder overall. That’s all normal . And keeping your board engaged is a constant- assuage their fears, keep them excited.”*

## Inevitable Cost Surprises

*“As we got into the detailed construction drawings and planning, we discovered the original blueprints for the building were not fully accurate nor properly recorded. We needed structural reinforcement in some of our spaces, so our project became much more complicated.”*

*“We had budget struggles—profound issues with our power plant. We needed whole new one. This unanticipated 7-figure expense rippled through everything else, slowing lots of other things down..”*

## Funding the True Costs of the Project

*“I wish we had been much more disciplined about asking donors of collection pieces to also fund their care. The costs of a growing collection are real... It would be great to have funded for that in addition to the actual construction project.”*

*“We put a contingency buffer in our budget of 10%, but it wasn’t enough. Always go beyond what you think is necessary. You can always use contingency somewhere else, especially now with inflation.”*

## Protecting the Essential Elements

*“For sustainability, this whole commitment needs to be front and center. We had to understand and commit to the fact that a sustainable building will take longer and be ok with that. Make sure sustainability is not the first thing to be cut out of the budget.”*

# Commonalities in Major Fundraising Campaigns



Across our interviews, a few common themes repeated around fundraising practices and general tips to consider for major building campaigns.

## Secure lead funding from the start

*“We didn’t launch our public campaign until we had a 3rd of our original projected budget.”*

*“We received a key \$1.6 M gift from the state, huge early vote of confidence and our ability to execute to plan.”*

## Open the door to diverse donor motivations

*“We want to broaden our philanthropy and demonstrate that our building is a statement for and towards the community.*

*That way we can have a multi-pronged approach in fundraising. Not just targeting art lovers but all new potential donors. “*

## Be creative with naming rights

*“We are naming the geothermal for a family committed to sustainability, instead of the traditional main entrance. Among our audience we also find it is easier to name a classroom than a gallery right now.”*

Naming rights seem to be a pretty ubiquitous tactic. Some naming rights start at \$500K depending on the visibility provided.

## Consider how you use your development team

*“As the Education Director, I do the pitches for our project, leaning into Education policy.*

*We wanted to make sure we are aware of our team resources, and how we allocate work. Our development team writes our day-to-day grants and general content, which helps me focus on in-person pitches. “*

## Be prepared for a long tail of smaller donations

*“Last 500K is the hardest to fundraise for. We have a consultant helping us identify new leads. We need to do deeper research, and we need national foundation support as well.”*

# Framing your Project for Donor Support



Align project with larger strategies



Good for institutional/ donor support

Aligning your museum project and priorities with wider college, community or city strategies encourages support from organizational leadership and also government agencies.

**Example:** Smith College Museum of Art made it a practice to develop their strategic plans following the college plans, like uplifting collection access as a priority for place- based learning in communities.



Demonstrate tangible need and impact



Good for donor support

Identifying your current business limitations, such as overbooked education programs or storage capacity with concrete statistics and numbers, highlights the sense of urgency and support for your project.

**Example:** The Hood Museum made clear statements in their case for support that they don't teach about art but with art, reaching students across disciplines. They used impactful attendance to figures to demonstrate demand and need to growth.



Inclusion of community input



Good for donor support

By hosting public listening sessions to establish community needs, museums could explain and connect their design vision and priorities to donors through a community lens.

**Example:** Portland Museum of Art solicited community input on their social media. They could therefore connect their building design choices to explicit community preferences, which appealed to many donors.



Identify and serve education gaps



Good for donor/ government support

Identifying gaps in the local economy, or gaps in public discourse/ education can be a great way to frame your project priorities as addressing those issues/

**Example:** The Asia Society Texas Center, identified with local school teachers a clear gap in curriculum content around Asian cultures. Their expansion therefor explicitly connects with school learning and digital engagement tools.

# Participant Reflections on Funding



A few interviewees shared lessons about their fundraising efforts, both recommendations and mistakes to avoid, in order to help others embarking on major funding efforts as part of a building campaign.

## Prework

*“Before undergoing a major expansion/renovation campaign, **get an honest sense of the confidence level of your organization**, being realistic about what you are going to be able to raise and how committed your supporters are.”*

*“We think our donors want to see that community/public involvement... We spent 2 years thinking on our expansion, organizing listening sessions before we even picked an architect. **We were effectively stewarding our potential donors for 2 years before even asking for a dollar.**”*

## Positioning

*“Getting funding for a project is often a bit of a political game and some projects are more or less appealing, and easy to gain momentum. **We had to frame our project to the college in the lens that not doing this project on site would be much more expensive and would require future builds off-site. We were actually solving a real problem to reduce/delay future costs.**”*

## Hindsight

*“It’s important to raise money not just for the building itself, but for longevity. At my previous museum, **2/5<sup>th</sup> of the campaign project was for the future and 3/5<sup>th</sup> for the building itself. I wish we had included capital reserve funding in the current campaign.**”*

*“We were really really strict about our budget - we might have been too strict... sometimes good ideas can have bad timing. **We were done and we had reached what we wanted and still more donors wanted to help. We needed to stop the campaign for the building, but we want to go back to those donors and ask for endowing staff.**”*



# Report Outline

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## 1. Key Takeaways



## 2. Interview Stories



## 3. Additional Research and Resources

# Hood Museum Catalyst Story

The original Hood Museum building (c. 1985) was designed for a smaller collection, smaller staff and smaller education programming. As the institution grew and expanded their work, structural limitations spurred the need for a new building. When expanding the space, the Hood wanted to transform its educational footprint on campus by creating the capability to teach multiple disciplines through art, not just teaching students about art.

## 1. Identifying needs that drive change

- Pre-expansion, classrooms and facilities were not meeting the needs of their programming and the demand (3-5K students/ year)
- Classrooms were too tight and not properly air-controlled
- Original building built for a staff of 10 (vs. 50 presently)
- Building felt removed from main Green

## 2. Translating needs into core building objectives

### Primary objectives:

- Increase education facilities and hands-on learning capabilities
- Support interdisciplinary education (be the “largest classroom” on campus)

### Secondary objectives:

- Increase visibility on central town Green
- Increase office space for growing team
- Provide in-door and flexible multi-use public spaces (atrium)



# Hood Museum's Architect Selection

The Hood chose Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects because of their listening skills and their creative solutions to key design challenges. The final product was built to support the integration of art (from internal collections and external storage) into hundreds of classes each semester.

## Some Key Criteria for Architect Selection



### Understanding the client's vision

*“Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects were not looking to make a signature building. They were looking to make OUR building from the inside out.”*

The Hood Museum's was not looking for an architectural sculpture, celebrating the outside view. They needed a truly functional and serviceable museum focused on the teaching happening happening within. Their design firm understood this brief.



### Achieving creative space solutions

*“Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects were the first group who solved the space problem by building a cantilevered section over the old courtyard. Their design vision is what won them the bid.”*

Considering the location of the Hood Museum, the new design had to leverage a tight spot between existing buildings. Tod Williams Billie Tsien architects were the most creative firm- combining careful reuse of existing spaces with the construction of new building elements.






“We think about each class that takes place as a separate exhibition. So, effectively, we put on XX exhibitions every year, and we needed the design of the space to support that...”

“They gave us a machine for running a museum in... We are now the largest classroom on campus”

*John Stomberg, Director*

# Hood Museum’s Timeline, Cost & Outcomes

After a nine-year planning and implementation process, the revitalized Hood Museum opened in 2019. With a clear vision and objectives, along with a collaborative partnership with its architect and in-house project manager, the Hood managed to complete all elements of the initial design slightly under budget (\$49.3M) without mission creep.

 <h3>Timeline</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning/ ideation started in 2010</li> <li>• Architect firm selected in 2012</li> <li>• Design process started in 2014</li> <li>• 2016 started to break ground for renovation and expansion.</li> <li>• 2018 design and building completed</li> <li>• 30 months of construction</li> <li>• Open to the public in 2019</li> </ul> <p>Total timeline: 5+ years from start to finish</p>	 <h3>Costs and fundraising</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$23M budget to renovate existing space</li> <li>• \$27M budget for new expansion</li> <li>• Fundraising started with lead donors. First gift came in at \$5M</li> <li>• Long tail of smaller donations at the end with a final gift of 100K</li> <li>• Thanks to their ‘tough’ project manager, project comes in slightly under budget</li> </ul> <p>Total project budget \$50M Total actual cost \$49.3M</p>	 <h3>Core outcomes</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Three new object-study galleries in the revamped Bernstein Center for object study</li> <li>✓ Sophisticated staging areas for art-handling/ teaching classes while most of collection is stored off-site</li> <li>✓ Flexible atrium and public spaces that have been used for various events and have become popular hang-out spaces for students</li> <li>✓ Increased office spaces for growing staff (50 FT staff)</li> <li>✓ 5 new exhibition galleries with total footprint up by 40%</li> </ul>
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# MCASD's Catalyst Story

Since opening in 1941, the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD), has undergone multiple expansion iterations, with a most recently completed project of their downtown San Diego site in 2007. Since then, the main building in La Jolla has not grown despite significant increases to the collection.

## 1. Identifying needs that drive change

- Collection had doubled in size since the most recent previous gallery expansions
- Additional prominent collections were being donated to the museum
- Need for more permanent and special exhibition spaces to showcase collection
- In previous building projects, the museum had expanded downtown and increased education spaces, but not gallery spaces

## 2. Translating needs into core building objectives

### Primary objective:

- Increase gallery spaces to display more of the permanent collection and special exhibitions

### Secondary Objectives:

- Improve visitor experience with enhanced mobility through spaces
- Enhanced reference to nature and location with art park, windows etc.



Photo credit: Nicholas Venezia



Photo credit: Nicholas Venezia



# MCASD's Architect Selection

MCASD chose Annabelle Selldorf and Selldorf Architects for its expansion. The museum was looking for an architect firm that was at the same time well established and experienced at working with historic spaces, but would also view the project as a centerpiece to their work (rather than a small project).

## Some Key Criteria for Architect Selection



### Sensitivity to the site and history

*“For us it was more about the fit and sensitivity to working with us. We wanted to see how thoughtfully they had researched our space – someone who could be a team player with us and our community.”*

Selldorf Architects combined experience and expertise, with appropriate sensitivity to the challenging site and existing historic spaces.



### Existing reputation and experience

*“We were looking for teams who could manage the scale—combining old and new—and various architectural styles in a complex building project... We wanted our project to be their crowning piece.”*

Selldorf Architects had an established reputation in museum buildings which would garner excitement and visibility around the project, without being out of MCASD's budget range.



Image credit: Selldorf Architects

*“Our goal for the museum was to allow the fantastic site and views of the Pacific Ocean to guide a coherent circulation path and instill a generous and inclusive spirit to bring people to the great collection of MCASD.”*

*Annabelle Selldorf, architect*

# MCASD's Timeline, Cost & Outcomes

After four years of construction and multiple unforeseen setbacks (including a new power plant, complications from a geo-soil survey and bed rock excavation), the museum opened to the public in April 2022.



## Timeline

- 2012-2014: architectural selection process
- 2015-2018: design and permits approved, with site preparation and mobilization
- 2019-2020: major demolition and construction
- 2021: completed, and occupancy
- April 2022: Public opening

Total timeline: Approximately 10 years from start to finish



## Costs and fundraising

- Initial budget was approximately \$55M
- Completed design budget went up to \$85M
- With full demolition and moving parking from outside to inside, closed at \$105M
- Major \$30M gift from Joan and Irwin Jacobs started fundraising
- Launched public fundraising campaign after they had already received 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the original \$55M projected budget.

Total project budget \$105M



## Core outcomes

- ✓ Quadruple gallery spaces with two floors of light-filled spaces
- ✓ Public park
- ✓ Several ocean-view patios and terraces
- ✓ New store and new amenities, including dining options and hospitality/ event spaces
- ✓ Added 43,400 sf to reach new total of 101,200 sf





# Portland Museum of Art's Catalyst Story

After long-term conversations about an expansion project, the Portland Museum of Art recently acquired a final piece of land enabling it to expand its footprint for an entire city block. With this acquisition, a good endowment position, and growing membership the museum is poised for growth.

## 1. Identifying needs that drive change

- Community listening sessions revealed that the museum did not have enough public spaces for the types of programs they wanted to do with (e.g., maker spaces)
- Existing spaces are too formal and uninviting, especially for younger visitors
- While subsequent phases will focus on additional storage and parking, the current effort focuses on community elements

## 2. Translating needs into core building objectives

### Primary objective:

- Become an arts center for the community (a building for people who don't come to museums)
- Increase maker-spaces and hands-on opportunities
- Redesign spaces to be welcoming and more visible

### Secondary objectives:

- Sustainable green building
- Increase gallery spaces





# Portland Museum of Art's Architect Selection

PMA choose Lever Architecture as its architect. The firm distinguished itself on values alignment with the museum, as well as a deep commitment to the region and the local community. This was especially important given the museum's interest in bringing in non-traditional visitors.

## Some Key Criteria for Architect Selection



Embedding the culture of the client in the design

*"Future prosperity and growth is coming from immigration. We want to be part of that growth. We see our building as a manifestation of our values"*

Lever Architecture embraced the brief of a *museum for everyone*, designing spaces that break down barriers by making creativity visible right at the entrance. They also celebrated the local indigenous heritage of the Wabanaki and their conception of place to further the sense of welcoming and openness.



Embracing the call for equity in the team and planning process

*"They really did their homework. They understood the culture and what we needed and put the right team around that."*

Lever Architecture not only understood the brief in terms of the design, but also the working culture of the museum. For example, they included plans to work with local partners, sourcing materials from minority owned/ women owned businesses. They also brought the most diverse team to the table.



*"LEVER, and the team they have assembled, have demonstrated that they care deeply about our region's future, our unique arts culture, and the needs of our community. They share our values of courage, equity, service, sustainability, and trust..."*

**Mark Bessire**, Director



# Portland Museum of Art's Timeline, Cost and Outcomes

After more than 40 years without increasing gallery spaces, visitor amenities or capacity, the PMA announced an ambitious \$100MM expansion project set to open in 2026. The new building aims to reimagine the way museums are built and experienced, focusing on community engagement and sustainability.



## Timeline

- 2015: started community listening sessions/ designing strategy for the expansion
- 2019: purchased land assets for expansion/ increasing footprint
- 2022: RFP review process (10 months)
- Jan 2023: Architect announced
- Digging expected to start in 2026

Total Timeline: approx. 10+ years



## Costs and fundraising

- Original budget \$45M for 60,000sf expansion (part 1 of multiple phases)
- Final budget raised to \$100MM after revised design plans and scope
- Has already raised \$32M of \$100M
- Following the architect announcement, development team will come back in May 2023 with fundraising plan
- Aim to broaden donor base with their sustainability commitment

Total budget: \$100M



## Core outcomes

- ✓ Proposed increase in square footage: community spaces—205%, gallery space—77%, mixed spaces for operations—105%
- ✓ Total increase to museum footprint by 60,000sf
- ✓ 6-7 storey new building including: communal gathering spaces, classrooms, flexible auditorium, floor dedicated to housing local non-profits, makers spaces, photo centre, restaurants and outdoor sculpture park on rooftop level.

# Princeton University Museum of Art's Catalyst Story

Previous to its current project, Princeton University Museum of Art's most recent expansion was in 1989. Like many museums, the former building could not meet the growing needs of the museum's collection or its expanded work with students and the community. The old building has been entirely torn down, except for the library, which will be connected with the new expanded building.

## 1. Identifying needs that drive change

- 1980s building wasn't able to keep up to date with the size
- General need to modernize a lot of the features and amenities of the building
- Need to reimagine the museum's relationship to campus, as its central location is underutilized

## 2. Translating needs into core building objectives

### Primary objectives:

- Increase capacity and capabilities as a teaching museum for campus and K-12 programs
- Increase access and viewing of collection
- Egalitarian display of the collection (rather than tiering by floor based on judgments about importance/quality)

### Secondary objectives:

- Invigorate central location of museum as a place for campus and community  
Improving way-finding/ access





# Princeton University Museum of Art's Architect Selection

The museum selected Adjaye Associates as architect for their new building. This selection was based both on the firms' marquis status (which is the norm for building projects on Princeton campus) and because of their understanding and creativity around the museum's intent to be an inclusive community hub for students, faculty and members of the surrounding community, even for those who are not primarily focused on the museum's collection.

## Some Key Criteria for Architect Selection



### Reimagining the visitor experience

*"The design inserts itself dynamically into campus life with key pedestrian pathways flowing into and through the Museum via two "art walks"*

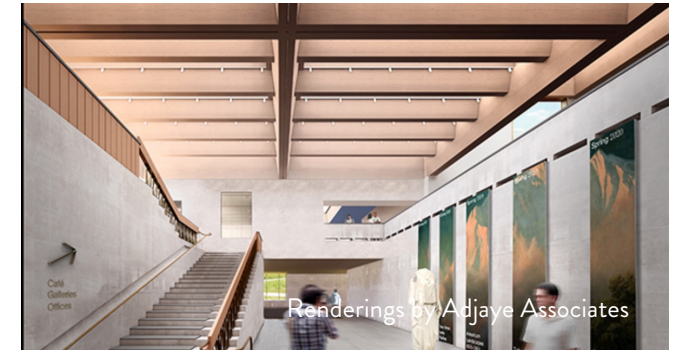
The ethos of Adjaye Associates towards community-driven projects matched the museum's vision. They answered the need to make the museum a crossroads for the campus. They also reimagined the museum experience by placing all galleries on a single floor—thus dismantling traditional exhibition hierarchies.



### Providing expertise and renown

*"Qualifications had to match scale of our project. We needed to know they were a solid business that could deliver."*

The international reputation and previous projects of Adjaye Associates were an important part of the selection. Princeton has a history of working with known architects, which was important to the committee and for fundraising perspectives.



"The design will give us a building that fosters new modes of investigation, allows us to deploy our collections in new and more inclusive ways, and affords new moments of aspiration and inspiration."

**James Steward**, Director

# Princeton University Museum of Art's Timelines, Cost and Outcomes

The museum is currently mid-construction. The projected three-story museum will dedicate floors for education, exhibition and operations, respectively. The intent is to create a dynamic hub at the heart of campus for students, faculty, and the community. Opening is planned for 2024.



## Timeline

- Approximately 2+ years of conversations and listening sessions to create the vision and RFP (pre-architect selection)
- Architect named in 2018
- Construction started in 2021
- Building should be done by 2024

Total timeline: 6+ years



## Costs and fundraising

- Undisclosed project budget (university policy)
- Donors especially inspired by commitment to increase the percentage of the collection view on view and the expansion of educational opportunities
- The project provides numerous naming opportunities throughout the building
- Fundraising campaign includes funds to endow future maintenance

Total Budget: N/A



## Core outcomes

- ✓ Increase education spaces by 76%, space for visitor amenities by 80% and exhibition spaces by 38%
- ✓ New offices for art and archaeology departments
- ✓ 6 object study rooms and 2 creativity labs, two auditoriums for events, etc. , lounge for everyday use + café , new storage spaces and conversation studio

# Shaker Museum's Catalyst Story

As a result of the economic crisis of 2008 and declining visitorship, the original Shaker Museum museum held in the founding collector's farmhouse in Old Chatham closed in 2009. Starting in 2017, conversations to envision a new cultural and public space started to take shape.

## 1. Identifying needs that drive change

- After 2009, the museum no longer had a physical presence; collection was in storage
- Beyond the deep Shaker roots of the community, unclear what a specific rallying point might generate community support

## 2. Translating needs into core building objectives

### Primary objectives:

- Become a cultural, economic and physical community center for the town of Old Chatham
- Celebrate the values/ contributions of Shaker community
- Showcase the great collection and improve storage

### Secondary Objectives:

- Answer community needs with flexible multi-use spaces/ meeting rooms etc.
- Increase educational facilities, resource library etc.





# Shaker Museum’s Architect Selection

The Shaker Museum leadership started with a set of principles (rooted in Shaker values) and the notion of providing the community with an anchor for tourism and local gathering. Ultimately, they chose an architect that resisted the temptation to jump straight to Shaker design, and instead focused initially at the concept level. They also believed that the marquis architect could play a role in attracting funding.

## Some Key Criteria for Architect Selection



### Culture fit of the team and vision

*“The team from Selldorf was made up of women, which aligns with an important Shaker value. It was clear that they had listened very closely to the values as described in the RFP.”*

Selldorf Architects came to the Shaker Museum presentation with an all-female team, which resonated with the female leadership of the Shaker community. Additionally, their open concept and mode of communication demonstrated their collaborative work ethics.



### Expertise and renown

*“We loved this one group from Brooklyn, they were very community oriented... but in the end we were worried they didn’t have the depth and experience to manage a project of this complexity”*

Selldorf Architects combined culture alignment and sensitivity to the Shaker design/aesthetics with experience and reputation to manage the scale of the project. Furthermore, as a whole new museum their name would help anchor fundraising efforts, putting the museum on the map for new donors.



Image credit: Selldorf Architects

*“The way the partners on the Selldorf team talked to each other during the presentation was really collaborative... it made us feel like they would be a good partner for us. ”*

**Lacy Schutz** , Director

# Shaker Museum's Timeline, Cost and Outcomes

Compared with other projects, the Shaker Museum has been able to move relatively quickly from concept to fundraising. The speed can perhaps be explained by the groundwork laid with the community and the mutual benefit in creating a cultural and economic hub in the heart town.



## Timeline

- First started discussing idea of new museum in 2017
- Identified a site in 2018
- 18 months of exploratory work and feasibility study
- Hired architect after a bidding process in 2019
- Anticipate another 1.5 years of fundraising and 18 months of construction

Total Timelines: approx. 6+ years



## Costs and fundraising

- Campaign budget \$26M
- Original budget 18M (inflation is a big driver of the difference)
- Seed money from board members and an angel investor in the community
- Without an endowment, the organization is cultivating funders even as it begins work
- Early support from the NYS and NEH grants helped boost legitimacy and visibility of project

Total Budget: \$26M



## Core outcomes

- ✓ Will contain galleries, a public reading room, community space, and a conservation and storage facility.
- ✓ Lobby space critical piece to the whole design with a communal Shaker-style table to emphasize welcome and inclusion
- ✓ Design with open windows, to highlight transparency of the space, almost like an open market at the end of a main street in town
- ✓ Will also feature a Shaker-inspired landscape

# SCMA's Catalyst Story and Architect Selection

After a smaller-scale tune up renovation to the museum in 2014-15, including a reorganization of spaces, creation of a dedicated gallery for Asian art, and a black box space for time-based media project, the Smith College Museum of Art shifted its attention to critical storage and collection-access priorities.

## 1. Identifying needs that drive change

- Collection has grown by 30% in recent years with no increase in storage
- Existing storage facilities make access to 28,000 artworks heavily used by faculty more difficult, impeding the teaching mission
- Want to further their core functional principle to make their collection accessible
- Desire to push back the reality of developing an off-site storage in future

## 2. Translating needs into core building objectives

### Primary objective:

- Enhance on-site storage
- Easier access to collections (innovation in storage and display)

### Secondary objective:

- Enhance seminar room functions for interdisciplinary teaching
- Technology upgrade for teaching

## 3. Targeted objectives led to easy architect selection process

With very focused building objectives for this round of renovations, the museum **worked closely with the college facilities team to select an architect and overview the project.**

It was a unanimous and uncontested decision to go with Schwartz/ Silver Architects, as **a leader in museum collection and storage design.** They did not open up the project to other bids or proposals.

# SCMA's Timeline, Cost and Outcomes

This tightly scoped project came within budget, and only slightly delayed due to covid-related restrictions and supply chain constraints. The museum is now in conversation with the college facilities team for a speculative final phase, where the museum could take over a sub-basement from the library, to increase art-circulation.



## Timeline

- 2017: hired architect and museum storage specialist Larry Bauer at Schwartz/Silver to conduct needs analysis
- Early 2018: the team members presented their findings and recommendations for a phased project
- 2021: resumed project and construction after covid-pause.

Total timeline: approx. 3+ years



## Costs and fundraising

- After completing a major facilities capital project for the library, the college had very limited available budgets for other projects
- Luckily, the museum managed to fully finance their storage project thanks to two major gifts
- \$500K was earmarked for planning and enabling work and \$3MM for construction

Total project budget: \$3.5MM



## Core outcomes

- ✓ Enhanced and expanded on-site storage (hopefully enabling the collection to remain entirely on-site for at least 15 more years)
- ✓ Improved classroom and seminar study spaces to meet teaching and study demand (can now hold 40 people safely)
- ✓ New virtual teaching technology including cameras and zoom to enable guest-expert participation

# WCMA's Catalyst Story

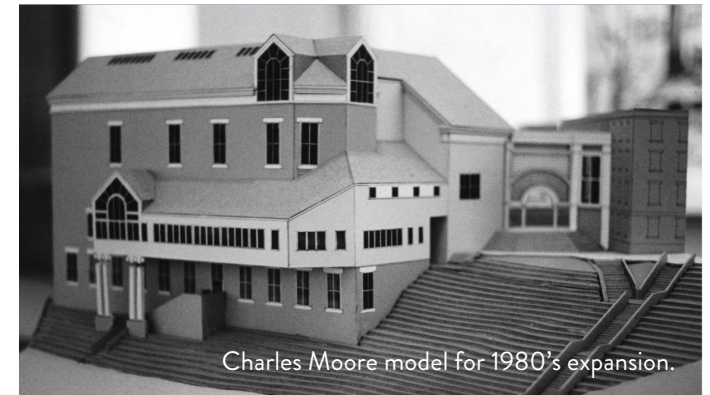
In 2014, the Williams College Museum of Art conducted a facilities report on the core, which dates from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and its most recent addition of the 1980s building, concluding that a new space was required to meet the needs of the growing collection and student/program demand. The ongoing project will be the museum's first stand-alone building.

## 1. Identifying needs that drive change

- Need to strengthen partnership with art department while not losing sight of other departments
- Classroom space overbooked
- Williams is acknowledged as a producer of talent for the museum sector and wanted a 'home base' for that talent
- Desire to be a natural center for the vibrant arts scene in the region, adding to the cultural vibrancy for students.

## 2. Translating needs into core building objectives

- Double size of facilities to accommodate interdisciplinary education programs and informal maker-spaces
- Develop spaces to which museum leaders, including alumni, want to return professionally
- Create space capable of acting as a hub for the region's rich art ecosystem
- Design a space that is more environmentally sustainable and in tune with the local natural ecosystem





# WCMA's Architect Selection

WCMA's new museum is still in the concept phase, and its design will need to be approved by the College's Board of Trustees. The museum's first purpose-built building promises to increase interdisciplinary learning, promote the future of the museum field and connect actively with the vibrant cultural ecosystem of the region.

## Some Key Criteria for Architect Selection



### Meeting the brief and demonstrating collaboration

*"We looked at who they brought to the presentation. Were those present able to talk and share?"*

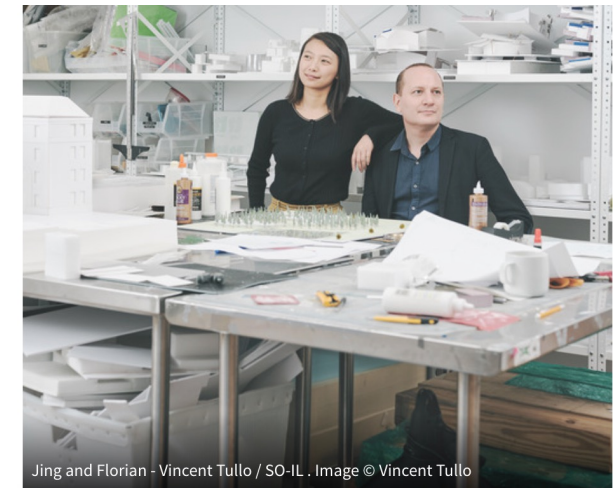
The requirements in WCMA's RFP proposal were exhaustive, so the selection committee relied heavily on complete proposals, including plans for a sustainable building. The committee also paid attention to the presentations to ascertain working culture and degree of collaboration.



### Providing expertise and renown

*"With SO-IL, we have a firm that perfectly matches the profile of our museum: deeply engaged with the arts and academics..."*

So-IL is known for art, education and civic projects that prompt social engagement. The firm's previous projects include the Jan Shem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum at UC Davis. Their expertise, vision and and renown matched the scale of WCMA's project.



Jing and Florian - Vincent Tullo / SO-IL . Image © Vincent Tullo

*"The new museum will connect the campus to the larger cultural ecosystem of the Northern Berkshires ... offering students invaluable expertise in responsible stewardship."*

**SO-IL co-founders**



# WCMA's Timeline, Cost and Outcomes

Of interviewed museums, the Williams College Museum of Art is in the earliest phase of planning. As the project moves forward, the museum will leverage the knowledge of its far reaching alumni base in leadership positions in museums globally.



## Timeline

- 2014: facility report confirms need for a new building
- 2018: arrival new Director Pamela Franks
- 2019-2021: two-year planning and program study
- 2021-2022: Selection of architect
- Conceptual and schematic design process expected to last 18 months
- 2026-27: museum should open in time for museum's centennial

Total timeline: approx. 8+ years



## Costs and fundraising

- No budget yet exists—the project is in the conceptual phase
- Budget will be a significant (perhaps \$100M)
- The museum is preparing for considerable fundraising

Total Budget: Under review



## Core/ desired outcomes

- ✓ Increase number of exhibition spaces while retaining signature intimacy
- ✓ Multi-purpose auditorium
- ✓ Informal spaces e.g., break spaces with views to nature and back into gallery, café etc.
- ✓ Hands-on, informal studio spaces
- ✓ Increased teaching galleries/ classrooms
- ✓ Student community lounges and office spaces

# Asia Society Texas Center's Catalyst Story

Asia Society Texas Center has been in Houston since 1979. Its first stand-alone building opened in 2012, a \$50MM building project designed by Japanese architect Yoshio Taniguchi. The current project is an extension of the main building, focusing on K-12 education both onsite and online.

## 1. Identifying needs that drive change

- The museum wanted to increase engagement and activity in the space during the week
- The Houston Department of Education identified a curriculum gap around focus on the Asian experience
- To understand the need, the museum created an advisory board, visited 20+ museums, and held workshops with 30 educators and 120 students

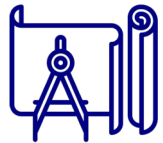
## 2. Translating needs into core building objectives

- Building project with two education components: [Online learning platform](#) and [onsite interactive exhibition](#)
- Give a voice to the experiences of Asian Americans and promote Asian cultures more widely
- Serve as a premier education hub for both students and educators
- Flexible permanent on-site exhibition with multiple stations



# Asia Society Texas Center’s Architect Selection and Timeline, Cost and Outcomes

The Asia Society Texas Center selected an architect in 2020 and wrapped up its fundraising campaign in 2022. The organization is in the final stages of establishing a timeline for the build-out.



## Architect selection and process

### Criteria

- Looking for a firm that could work with an iconic building
- Careful about where they were planning to source their materials (overseas vs. local)
- Ability to match vision for both the on-site and online components of the projects

### Process:

- RFP for the project – with open bids
- 10 different firms interested- received 7 bids
- As a staff they narrowed it down to 5
- Advisory board narrowed down to 2 for interviews



## Timeline and major steps

- 2018: research visits to museums
- 2019: secured funding for a full- time Director of Education
- April 2019: first advisory board meeting
- Summer 2019: curriculum framework designed with input from educators
- Fall 2019: put RFP out for bids
- Early 2020: firm selected
- When pandemic hit, pushed back fundraising launch to 2021 and completed by 2022

Total timeline: 5+ years



## Costs and fundraising

- Original concept mainly just on-site exhibition
- In conversations with stakeholders, online component became more important; expanded online component from \$500K to dedicated \$2M budget
- Campaign final budget \$9.7M of which 50% to go towards endowment for future maintenance
- Raised campaign to \$10.7 with inflation
- \$3.5M - \$4M came from individuals

Total Budget: \$10.7M

# Common Values and New Space Visions from Interviews

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# Additional Links Related to Our Interview

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- **Asia Society, Texas Centre**

<https://asiasociety.org/texas/education-project-online-learning-platform-and-onsite-exhibition>

- **Hood Museum:**

<https://twbta.com/work/academic/hood-museum-of-art/>

<https://hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu/explore/museum/building-expansion>

- **Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego**

<https://mcasd.org/page/expansion>

<https://www.selldorf.com/projects/museum-contemporary-art-san-diego-2>

- **Portland Museum of Art**

<https://www.portlandmuseum.org/blueprint>

- **Princeton University Museum of Art**

<https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/about/new-museum-princeton>

<https://www.adjaye.com/work/princeton-university-art-museum/>

- **Shaker Museum**

<https://www.selldorf.com/projects/shaker-museum>

- **Smith College Museum of Art**

[https://scma.smith.edu/sites/default/files/SCHEMA2021\\_AnnualReview\\_FinalSpreads%204.11.22.pdf](https://scma.smith.edu/sites/default/files/SCHEMA2021_AnnualReview_FinalSpreads%204.11.22.pdf)

- **Williams College Museum of Art**

<https://artmuseum.williams.edu/news-item/so-il-architects-selected-to-design-the-first-stand-alone-building-for-the-williams-college-museum-of-art/>

<https://www.williams.edu/museum-building-project/faq/>

# Report Outline

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## 1. Key Takeaways



## 2. Interview Stories



## 3. Additional Research and Resources



# Transparency Is Crucial For All Constituents

The most consistent theme heard across calls was the need for as much transparency as possible — and as early as possible for internal stakeholders. Even if you do not have all the answers, sharing the process will prevent individuals from assuming negative outcomes.



## Visitors & Public

*“Our initial strategy was to focus more on the positive aspects of the renovation and to speak less about what visitors might not be able to see.*

*But looking back, we might have changed our communications strategy to be more transparent in order to manage better expectations and avoid disappointment — especially from our regular visitors who feel close to our art.”*



## Donors & Members

*“We’re always so careful when communicating with donors, because we don’t want to tell them something wrong. But it’s not about wrong, it’s about bringing people along.*

*Early in the pre-renovation period, we showed donors visuals of designs that were subject to change — this really helped us secure funding and get them excited.”*



## Staff

*“Everyone on the staff needs to be up to speed on the renovation project. Staff need to see physically see what’s happening to get a better sense of the process. This is the best way to ensure that they are invested.”*

*“We did a big charrette at the beginning with the conservation team so they could get all their hopes and dreams out, then had two more meetings over the next three months to hone and discuss what was and was not possible.”*

Overall, the consensus among interviewees was that all communication channels are useful in unique ways — what is most important is to have a mix. Working through partners (community organizations, government, etc.) can be an effective way to engage local constituents who may miss your own messaging.

# Keeping Staff Engaged

Disruptions can be challenging moments for staff engagement. Keeping employees actively looped into the progress of the renovation is the best way to maintain positive energy around the project. During their renovation, the Denver Art Museum found two key ways to structure staff engagement into the process.



## Design Input Opportunities

Throughout the initial design process, the renovation project manager held regular meetings with all departments to gain input into various aspects of the project, including:

- Building requirements for their work
- Opportunities to engage various stakeholders (visitors, donors, etc.) during the period of closure
- Potential challenges they foresaw

This created a strong sense of ownership throughout the museum and helped avoid potential pitfalls that the architects might have missed.



## Hard-Hat Tours

Several museums shared that offering hard-hat tours of ongoing construction efforts was one of the best ways to keep staff engaged. The Denver Art Museum took extra steps to create structure around this initiative:

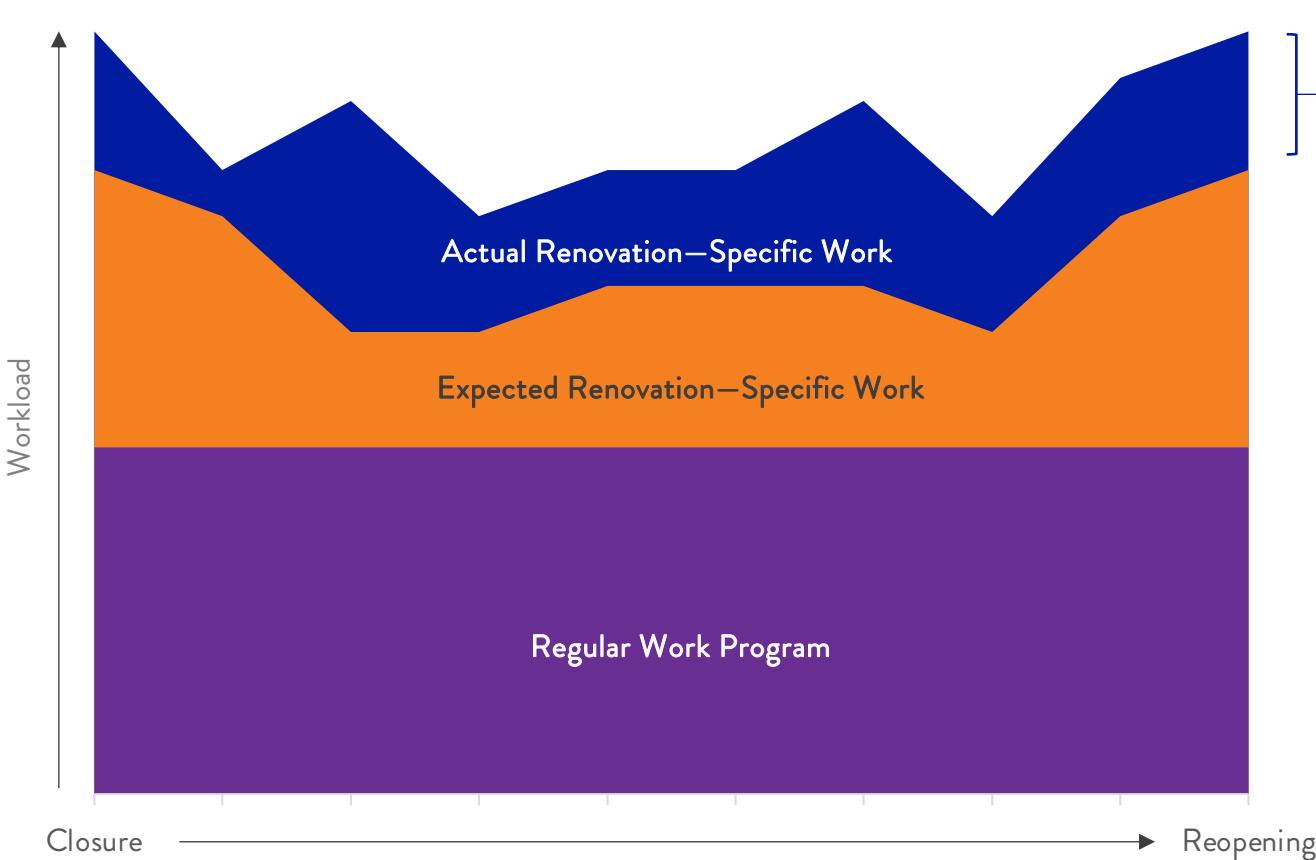
- Each tour had 15 spots with an online sign-up, and efforts were made to ensure members of all departments had the chance to attend
- Curators were given special tours when planning their reopening exhibits so they could visualize the future of the space

Tours add to the excitement of the project, which is crucial to counteract the challenges of renovation.



# Managing Increased Workload

We asked all participants about the amount of work that arose above the normal program. While all anticipated extra work, the reality is that renovations create even more additional work than expected if your organization is to truly take advantage of the opportunity — and this work will ebb and flow.



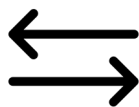
## Tactics for Managing Increased & Variable Workload



**Project Manager:** one of the top recommendations from several institutions was to have a member of the staff whose full job is project managing the renovation. This can be achieved via an external hire or adjusting the role responsibilities of a member of the existing team.



**Regular Check-Ins:** the project manager should conduct quarterly or monthly check-ins with each team, bringing his or her holistic view of the project and aligning with which teams have capacity to support capital projects.



**New Opportunities:** at one institution, the in-house object photographer, whose workload diminished, became the official documenter of the renovation project. Identify areas where work will lessen to shift to reno-specific work.

# Who Will You Be When You Reopen?

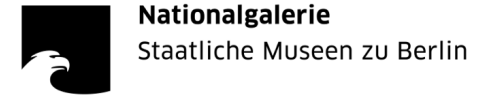
A renovation project is a fundamental opportunity to question who you are as an institution, and to transform accordingly. The existing disruption in your “normal” operations leads to a chance to creatively disrupt all aspects of how you operate – visitors, donors, and staff are all already primed for change.

It is important to identify your priority early so it can act as the guiding principle of the many choices you can make during closure and renovation.

Across our calls, we spoke to several organizations who used this moment of renovation to redefine who they are as institutions:



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## New Vision:

A museum dedicated to accessibility for all visitors

An institution that reflects the modern community and culture of New York City

A core part of the revitalization of Calgary, accessible to people of all backgrounds

A conservation effort of a building that is in itself a work of art

## Project Implications:

- Renovation partners must have deep knowledge of accessibility
- Design choices must prioritize accessibility for all

- Communication and feedback with visitors and various cultural groups in the city must inform changes to the museum’s future priorities and offerings

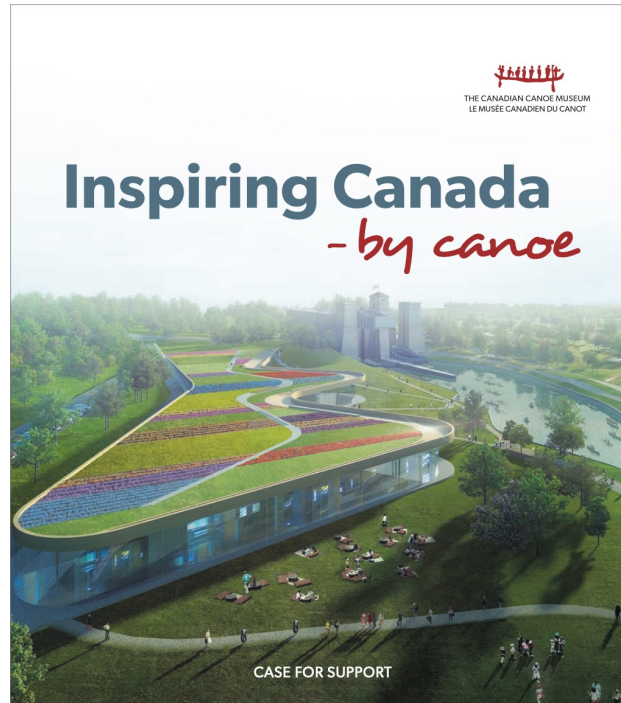
- The city government and public stakeholders must have deep engagement with the capital project
- Design choices must prioritize accessibility for all

- When conflicts arise in the design and construction process, in most cases the architects will prioritize what is best for the building

# Sample Case for Support Documents



[Hammer Museum,  
Case for Support 2018](#)



[Canadian Canoe Museum  
Case for Support 2018](#)



[USC Pacific Asia Museum  
Case for Support 2018](#)



[Modesto Children's Museum  
Case for Support, 2022](#)



# Next Steps: Further Reading, ABA Research

Two of ABA's past reports, cited in this project, cover some additional strategies for two particular components of the renovation process:

How to leverage digital based on your priorities and capabilities:



How to engage donors and sponsors with naming opportunities:

