



## **VMFA EXPANSION FACT SHEET**

### **Project Overview**

Groundbreaking was in 2005 for an expansion program at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts to provide the public with a five-level, glass-and-stone wing featuring galleries for permanent and temporary exhibitions as well as expanded visitor amenities; return the orientation of the museum's façade and entrance towards the street; carve out two main axes connecting the new and existing buildings; and replace surface parking with a new three-level parking deck under a terraced, landscaped roof, thereby reclaiming 4 acres of land to create the E. Claiborne and Lora Robins Sculpture Garden. The plan unites the museum's recently expanded 13-1/2-acre campus, which includes three historic buildings.

The ambitious project will significantly expand the role of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, a public-private partnership and the nation's first and largest state art museum, as the flagship cultural institution of Virginia.

### **Architectural Team**

Architect

Rick Mather + SMBW, a partnership of London-based American architect Rick Mather with Richmond-based SMBW Architects

### **Landscape Architect**

Olin Partnership, Philadelphia

### **Consulting Engineers**

Hankins and Anderson Consulting Engineers, Richmond

Atelier Ten, Environmental and Building Services Engineers, London and New York  
Dewhurst Macfarlane and Partners, London and New York

### **Museum Planning Consultants**

M. Goodwin Associates, Inc., and Randall Stout Architects, Inc.

### **New Public Space**

Situated at the heart of the museum's campus, the Robins Sculpture Garden will provide 3.5 acres for the display of sculpture and performances and for relaxation in an outdoor garden setting.

The expansion program will add more than 165,000 square feet of new space to the existing 380,000 square-foot building.

Total existing gallery space: 80,000 square feet.

Total gallery space after expansion is completed: 134,000 square feet

### **The New Building**

The dramatic glass-and-stone structure will incorporate a new main entrance as well as new display galleries, educational facilities and public services. Key design elements include:

- **An atrium**, a triple-height "main street" that will connect the new building with two existing wings; its partially glazed roof will deliver natural light into the atrium and surrounding spaces.

- **An east window**, a broad, 40-foot-high glass wall overlooking the Boulevard that will signal the purpose of the building from the outside by showcasing works of art and revealing public activity within.
- **A glass beacon**, enclosing a stairwell on the north façade, that will draw attention to the main entrance and glow softly at night.

#### **The Five Levels:**

- **Lower Level:** The atrium opens to 12,000 square feet of exhibition galleries that can accommodate up to three exhibitions at a time. This increases the VMFA's ability to bring important exhibitions to Richmond, enhancing the quality of art experiences for the community and the museum's educational mission while contributing to tourism. The new exhibition gallery is directly adjacent to a new 150-seat lecture hall and the museum theater.
- **Level 1 (entrance level):** A double-height main entrance will lead into the triple-height atrium, an interior space designed as a hub where the new building will fuse with the old. A new café, library, museum shop and education center will line the internal street, creating what the architect terms a "city in miniature."
- **Level 2 (main gallery level):** Thirteen-foot-high galleries will connect to the primary gallery level of the original building. Three glazed bridges, a pair on the west overlooking the Robins Sculpture Garden and one on the east overlooking the Boulevard, span the atrium and extend two main north-south axes through the entire museum building. Visitors will be able to circulate without retracing steps, and the collections will be organized in more meaningful relationships.
- **Level 3 (upper gallery level):** Another public axis will lead from new permanent-collection galleries across another pair of bridges through to the upper levels of the Lewis and Melon Galleries in the 1985 wing. A restaurant and boardroom will overlook the Robins Sculpture Garden and the landscaped campus. This floor will also include a new 9,000-square-foot space for the museum's objects and painting conservation laboratories - taking advantage of skylights and north windows.
- **Level 4:** Administrative offices and mechanical systems will be housed here.

#### **Materials**

Glass  
Stone

#### **Project Cost**

Approximately \$150 million

#### **Parking Deck**

Three parking levels, situated below-, above-, and on-grade, will accommodate 600 cars under a terraced, landscaped roof that forms part of the Robins Sculpture Garden. As visitors proceed between the parking deck and the new main entrance, a garden and watercourse will parallel their movement.

#### **Construction Timetable**

Groundbreaking: 2005

Parking deck opening: 2007

Sculpture Garden: Phase 1 to be complete d early 2010. Remainder by end of 2010

Expansion opening: May 1, 2010

**CONTACT:** Suzanne Hall, 804.204.2704 or Sarah Pennington, 804.204.2701 ;  
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 200 N. Boulevard, Richmond VA 23220-4007; FAX  
804.204.2707; e-mail [shall@vmfa.state.va.us](mailto:shall@vmfa.state.va.us)