



ARTS & CULTURE



Woodmere Art Museum gets \$750,000 state grant for Chestnut Hill expansion

The funding will go toward turning an historic mansion into gallery space, a cafe, and more.





by Rosa Cartagena

Updated on Mar 8, 2023, 10:00 a.m. ET

🔑 This is an exclusive article only for paid subscribers.

Thank you for your subscription - this article is possible because of subscribers like you.

The Woodmere Art Museum is inching closer to opening its second venue, a renovated mansion on Germantown Avenue in Chestnut Hill. The organization recently announced that it will receive a \$750,000 grant from Pennsylvania's Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) to aid efforts to transform the 19th-century building into a museum.

The Frances M. Maguire Hall for Art and Education, named after the Philadelphia artist and former Woodmere board member who died in 2020, was built as a country estate in 1854. In the 1900s, it became St. Michael's Hall, a school and later a convent owned by the Sisters of Saint Joseph. At 9001 Germantown



Woodmere Art Museum director and chief executive William Valerio and Pa. State Rep. Tarik Khan in February. They announced the news of the RACP grant to fund the construction of the Frances M. Maguire Hall for Art and Education. [... Read more](#)

Courtesy of Woodmere

Woodmere purchased the 17,000-square-foot mansion in October 2021 from the Sisters of Saint Joseph for \$2.5 million. In 2022, the museum received a whopping [\\$10 million from the Maguire Foundation](#),

The \$750,000 RACP grant will go toward construction costs, including the creation of construction jobs, for Maguire Hall. The building will need to replace all utilities and create public bathrooms, among other changes. Woodmere will continue fundraising as the space is developed. The museum initially hoped to finish renovations and open the venue by the end of 2024, but that expected completion date has been pushed to spring 2025.

ADVERTISEMENT

“This RACP grant is concrete evidence that elected officials, such as Woodmere’s State Rep. Tarik Khan and State Sen. Art Haywood understand the importance of the arts, and the creativity and inspiration that museums bring to their communities,” said director and chief executive William Valerio via email. “At Woodmere, we focus on the art and artists of Philadelphia, and this amazing grant recognizes the cultural vitality that makes Philadelphia a great city.”

The mansion’s bedrooms and parlors will be transformed into galleries to hold some of the museum’s 9,500 artworks that have been in storage, including paintings by Philadelphia artists Violet Oakley and

Woodmere plans to construct a glass-box cafe and restaurant as well as a sculpture fountain in the entrance. There will also be the Love Kids Art Center, dedicated to children's art and education programs.

Woodmere hosts a variety of cultural events, including art exhibits, jazz and classical music concerts, painting and watercolor classes, lectures, and film screenings. The museum operates out of a stone mansion at 9201 Germantown Ave. with nine galleries and sculptures on its front lawn.

It opened as a public arts space in 1910 and has since grown a collection of work by Philadelphia artists.

Published March 8, 2023



Rosa Cartagena [✉](#) [🐦](#)

I write about arts, entertainment, and culture in Philly.
