



Colonial Williamsburg

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION

**THE COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG FOUNDATION NAMES
W.M. JORDAN COMPANY GENERAL CONTRACTOR
FOR THE EXPANSION OF ITS ART MUSEUMS**

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum and DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum will remain open to guests throughout the two-year, donor-funded \$40-million project, scheduled to begin this week



An artist's rendering shows the planned Francis Street entrance to the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg. Work begins this week on the two-year, \$40-million, donor-funded expansion of the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Museum and DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum.

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation has named W.M. Jordan Company of Newport News, Virginia, as general contractor for the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg's \$40-million expansion. Work on the two-year project is scheduled to begin this week. Both museums – the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum, which celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, and the DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum – will remain open throughout construction.

Financed entirely with dedicated donor funds, the Art Museums' expansion and renovation is the primary capital priority of the Foundation's ongoing \$600 million Campaign for History and Citizenship. The project will expand the museums by 65,000 square feet and create a new façade and entrance on South Nassau Street, among other significant enhancements.

“The expansion of our two world-renowned art museums is an essential element of our core educational mission,” said Colonial Williamsburg President and CEO Mitchell B. Reiss. “By more appropriately showcasing our outstanding collections and improving the visitor experience, we aim to attract more guests than ever. Entrusting this vital construction work to W.M. Jordan Company will ensure that the Art Museums thrive for generations to come.”

W. M. Jordan Company is a local firm recognized nationally for its work on numerous cultural institutions, including the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown; the Virginia Air & Space Center (the official visitor center of [NASA Langley Research Center](#)) in Hampton; the USS Monitor Center at Mariners Museum and Park in Newport News, (designated by Congress as America’s National Maritime Museum); and most recently the Dewey Gottwaldov Special Events Center and SPEED Gallery at the Science Museum of Virginia in Richmond. W.M. Jordan was the successful bidder among four competitors for the project, which is designed by Samuel Anderson Architects, based in New York City.

“Our past and current capabilities are a very good fit for this project. Our ability to model and simulate the galleries and new entrance will facilitate final decisions and selection by the curator,” said John R. Lawson, II, president and CEO, W. M. Jordan Company.

The Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg are home to world-class collections of American folk art dating from the 18th century through to the present day and to British and American fine and decorative arts from 1670-1840. The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum is the oldest, continuously operating institution in the United States dedicated solely to the collection, exhibition and preservation of American folk art. The DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum features furniture, paintings, silver, numismatics, ceramics, tools, textiles, maps, weapons and other media. Combined, these diverse and extensive collections play critical roles in Colonial Williamsburg’s mission to inform and engage Americans in the dramatic story of their country’s founding.

“This fully donor-funded project will dramatically enhance the guest experience at our already successful Art Museums,” said Ronald L. Hurst, Colonial Williamsburg Carlisle H. Humelsine chief curator and vice president for collections, conservation and museums. “We are pleased to be working once again with Samuel Anderson Architects, and look forward to our partnership with the highly regarded team from W.M. Jordan Company.”

The expansion will increase total exhibition space by 22 percent, enabling considerably more of the celebrated collections to be on view. New galleries will be designated for an introduction to the Art Museums; folk art; coins, currency and medals; archaeology; musical instruments; costumes; maps, prints and drawings; toys and dollhouses; tools, weapons and scientific instruments; architectural preservation; paintings; silver and metals; as well as an additional space for changing exhibitions.

The expansion will also significantly improve public access to the building through a new visitor-friendly entrance on South Nassau Street. This new entrance will replace a circuitous, partly-underground route with a tunnel and multiple stairs through the reconstructed Public Hospital of 1773, which was the first building in North America dedicated to treatment of the mentally ill.

Community, Colonial Williamsburg and Art Museums leadership and donors broke ground on the expansion during a ceremony April 27.

Additional improvements will include:

- A new lobby and orientation space overlooking the pastoral site of the John Custis House and

Garden, and a grand concourse that will provide access to both museums, which will improve visibility of the complex to guests approaching on foot from the Historic Area.

- Guest services, such as an expanded museum café and store, will move to the lobby level where they may be accessed without a ticket. Those areas will be bathed in natural light through new, expansive windows overlooking the picturesque Bicentennial Park. Car parking, including that for the mobility challenged, will also be considerably improved. In addition, the Colonial Williamsburg bus stop will move to the museum entry area from its current location near the intersection of South Henry and Francis streets.
- Dramatically enhanced programming and activities to engage visitors.
- Space and equipment for efficient operations and exhibition presentations.
- New and upgraded mechanical and climate-control systems.

Samuel Anderson Architects, based in New York, has designed the expansion and is the firm that previously designed the space that now houses the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum when it moved in 2007 from its previous location.

The Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg are open daily 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. to guests with Colonial Williamsburg or Art Museums admission. Tickets and additional information are available online at colonialwilliamsburg.com by calling 855-296-6627 and by following Colonial Williamsburg on [Facebook](#) and [@colonialwmsburg](#) on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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