



MEDIA RELEASE

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Griffin Museum of Science and Industry to Renovate the Building’s South Portico with \$10 Million Grant from Driehaus Foundation

The project will reopen the original south entrance, increase accessibility and enhance public spaces including an outdoor café and terrace

CHICAGO –The Griffin Museum of Science and Industry is set to transform its historic South Portico, restoring its architectural splendor and enhancing visitor experience. The project is made possible through a \$10 million grant from the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation — the largest grant awarded by the Foundation since it was established in 1983. Starting in spring 2025, the project will increase accessibility, add modern amenities and create vibrant public spaces. Upon completion in 2027, visitors will be able to access the Museum’s original south entry from Jackson Park and enjoy features such as a cafe and a terrace overlooking the park’s Lagoon and the nearby Obama Presidential Center, which is scheduled to open in 2026.

“This project represents a pivotal moment for the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry as we honor its historic past while leading the museum forward,” said Dr. Chevy Humphrey, President and CEO of Griffin MSI. “The Driehaus Foundation’s generosity allows us to enhance this iconic space while ensuring it is welcoming and accessible for all and continues a legacy of inspiration and engagement for decades of future visitors.”

Originally designed by Charles Atwood for D.H. Burnham & Co as The Palace of Fine Arts for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition, the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry building is the only structure remaining from the exposition’s “White City.” These renovations will reopen the original main entry of the Museum and functionally reconnect the building to the Columbian Basin and the rest of Jackson Park.

“The Driehaus Foundation is proud to play a part in the historic renovations at the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry,” said Anne Lazar, Executive Director of the Driehaus Foundation. “These plans offer a once in a lifetime opportunity to reopen the historic southern entrance and preserve the public space that had fallen into disrepair over time.”

The upgrades to the Museum’s South Portico and entrance are also focused on increasing and improving accessibility. The restoration will incorporate a variety features, including an elevator, to provide accessible entrance to the museum and public spaces.

“Restoring the South Portico is not only about preserving a historic architectural treasure but also supporting the museum’s efforts to connect more deeply with the community,” said David Vitale, Griffin MSI Board Chairman. “This project reflects the Board’s commitment to advancing the museum’s mission, and we are profoundly grateful to the Driehaus Foundation for making this vital project possible.”

The Museum will remain open throughout construction, and there are no plans to limit public access to the road or the park.

Images and renderings: <https://msichicago.resourcespace.com/?c=2060&k=ea80631a3a>

Credit: Renderings by Alden Studios for RAMSA

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About the Kenneth C. Griffin Museum of Science and Industry

The Kenneth C. Griffin Museum of Science and Industry (Griffin MSI) offers world-class and uniquely interactive experiences that support the Museum's mission: to inspire the inventive genius in everyone. As one of the largest science museums in the world featuring award-winning exhibits and hands-on activities, a visit to the Griffin MSI is guaranteed to connect fun and learning. Griffin MSI is committed to offering comprehensive educational programs -for students, administrators, teachers and families -that make a difference in local communities and contribute to Griffin MSI's goal to transform and illuminate STE(A)M (science, technology, engineering, art and math) pathways for people of all ages. The Museum is grateful for the support of its generous donors and guests who make its work possible. The Griffin MSI is also supported in part by the people of Chicago through the Chicago Park District. For more information, visit msichicago.org or call (773) 684-1414.

About the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Driehaus

The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation is based in Chicago, Illinois and was established in 1983 by prominent investment manager and philanthropist Richard H. Driehaus (1942-2021). It funds a wide range of initiatives with a focus on the built environment, arts and culture, and investigative journalism for government accountability. The Foundation's work continues to reflect the values of its founder and remains committed to historic preservation, architecture, and investment in the built environment to ensure that urban areas are designed to meet a community's needs. It believes the arts play an essential role in cultural life and understands that investigative reporting and an independent press have the power to improve society. Additional information can be found at driehausfoundation.org.