

Armenian Genocide Museum of America
1140 19th Street, NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202-383-9009, Web: www.armeniangenocidemuseum.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 28, 2008

CONTACT: Rouben Adalian

Phone: (202) 383-9009

E-mail: ani@agmm.org

Web: www.armeniangenocidemuseum.org

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD APPROVES
ARMENIAN GENOCIDE MUSEUM OF AMERICA PROPOSAL**
Planners complimented on imaginative use of historic building

In a public hearing convened on March 27, the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), which is charged with responsibility for the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of properties of historical, cultural and aesthetic merit in the District of Columbia, in a unanimous vote gave concept approval for the [Armenian Genocide Museum of America \(AGMA\)](http://www.armeniangenocidemuseum.org). The plans call for restoring the exterior of the historical bank building, modifying the interior to accommodate the museum exhibits, and building a new glass structure next to the historic bank, which will be surfaced with native Armenian stone to complement the bank building.

HPRB Chairman Tersh Boasberg complimented AGMA and its team for their care in developing a project, "that's what historic preservation is all about," adding that AGMA's plans for the structure to deal with the Armenian Genocide were "exciting."

Van Krikorian, chairman of the museum building and operations committee, opened by thanking HPRB members for the interest they have taken in the project. He stated that AGMA is excited about the project, and is moving forward with special "sensitivity to the history of the building," and stressed that AGMA wanted to preserve the historical building in which it will be housed, especially considering our experience from the Genocide and Armenians' own sensitivity to preserving important historical structures. He thanked the HPRB and those who had contributed for their involvement and assistance.

Upon hearing principal architect Gary Martinez present in detail the proposed museum and the restoration plans for the former bank building located two blocks from the White House, HPRB also commended AGMA for the team assembled to create what it described as a "highly imaginative project." HPRB described the museum plans as "dramatic" use of the historically-designated building. Details of some sensitive interior issues remain to be worked out as the development progresses, and AGMA indicated its flexibility in working with the HPRB in that process. HPRB Commission members and staff had several questions and constructive comments.

Earlier in the week, the AGMA planning team made presentations to the DC Preservation League and the Advisory Neighborhood Committee's Community Development Committee (ANC-CDC). The DC Preservation League, a community-based organization, strongly endorsed the project and its representative Patrick Burkhardt called the proposal to locate a museum in the historic building a "textbook marriage." The ANC-CDC also endorsed the project.

Following the unanimous vote, Krikorian again thanked the HPRB, the AGMA staff, architects, exhibit planners, and project managers, adding "this is a great day for all of us committed to

opening a first class Armenian Genocide Museum in Washington." HPRB Chairman Boasberg closed the hearing by saying that the Armenian Genocide Museum project will "add to the kind of vitality that historic preservation can provide" in the heart of downtown Washington, with a benefit for the District of Columbia as well as national and international audiences.

The former National Bank of Washington has interior and exterior designations on the National Register of Historic Places. Only a dozen privately-owned structures in the capital city have such a high level of historic designation. The bank building is slated for complete restoration and renovation, as well as application as the exhibit space for AGMA. HPRB concept approval and enlistment of local community support registered two certified milestones in opening the museum on schedule.

HPRB commissioners are appointed by the mayor of the District of Columbia. The presentation they heard was prepared by the firm of [Martinez & Johnson Architecture](#), whose talents and experience in rehabilitating especially ornate historic buildings was noted. The architectural team was supported by representatives from [Gallagher & Associates](#) contracted by AGMA as its exhibit design firm, the [Armenian National Institute](#) serving as the research arm of the museum project, and by the project management firm of [Regan Associates](#).

Martinez & Johnson Architecture and Gallagher & Associates have been working on the development of the museum project since mid-2007. Regan Associates joined the planning team in February of this year. Among several museum and other projects led by the firm, most recently Regan Associates completed the Orientation Center, Education Center, and Museum at Mount Vernon Estates, the home of President George Washington.

NR#2008-01



