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# Smithsonian downsizes \$2bn expansion of its south campus in Washington, DC

The institution unveils planned changes to its historic Castle and Arts and Industries Building

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14th January 2021 21:13 GMT



The Smithsonian Institution's Castle on the National Mall in Washington, DC

The Smithsonian Institution has scaled back its \$2bn plan for expanding buildings on the southern end of its Washington, DC, campus, while unveiling details of the restoration and renovation of its 1855 Castle and its

1881 Arts and Industries Building (AIB). The updated cost has not been disclosed.

Presenting the second stage of the revised programme on Wednesday to community leaders, a Smithsonian historic preservation specialist, Carly Bond, focussed on the Castle and AIB as well as an underground utility plant that will serve those two buildings and others. The Castle, an administrative building, and the AIB, a former exhibition space that has been mostly closed since 2004, are both National Historic Landmarks.

Among the improvements Bond outlined were an enhanced visitors centre on the ground floor and basement level of the Castle, seismic protection for the structure, and heating, cooling and other infrastructure systems as well as a communal space for the AIB. Linda St Thomas, a spokeswoman for the Smithsonian, said that work on those two buildings was expected to begin in 2023 and last until 2028 or 2029.

Gone from the third phase, approved in 2018 by the National Capital Planning Commission, are such ambitious elements as new entrances facing the National Mall for the National Museum of Asian Art ([formerly](#) [the Freer and the Arthur M. Sackler Galleries](#)) and the removal of a copper-domed kiosk next to the Castle serving as an entrance to the S. Dillon Ripley Center to make way for a major loading dock, St Thomas says.

“It’s simply the evolutionary process, me coming in and answering questions,” the Smithsonian’s secretary, Lonnie G. Bunch III, told *The Washington Post* this week. Like other museum institutions, the Smithsonian has been jolted financially by the extended closures related to the coronavirus pandemic, which have eaten deeply into revenue.

The master plan, first unveiled in 2014, was designed by the Danish architect Bjarke Ingels as part of an ambitious revitalisation effort that would make the Smithsonian more welcoming. The first phase involves renovations of the Hirshhorn Museum and a revamp of its sculpture garden. (The Hirshhorn is currently [under pressure](#) [to rethink two core elements of the garden redesign.](#))

The third phase, on which work could begin in 2029, will now centre on the removal and eventual restoration of the Enid A. Haupt Garden, positioned above the underground Quadrangle building, so that the underlying structure's roof can be replaced. The building houses the National Museum of African Art, the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the S. Dillon Ripley Center, home to the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, the International Center and the national and resident associate programmes.

The AIB has been mentioned as a potential home for a new National Museum of the American Latino, whose creation was [approved](#) [↗](#) by Congress last month. Asked about that possibility at Wednesday's presentation, Smithsonian officials emphasised that the legislation had just been passed and said they expected a site to be selected by December 2022.

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