

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

1903, addition 2012

25 Evans Way Boston, MA 02115

Willard T. Sears addition by Renzo Piano
Art Museum

Approx. 94,463 sf

<http://www.gardnermuseum.org>

By Matthew Gallagher



Former entrance to the 1903 museum building along the Fenway.



Interior Courtyard of the Gardner Museum.

Scarff, Siena. 2012. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston. Gardens - Courtyard. Web. 10 Feb. 2016. <http://www.gardnermuseum.org/gardens/courtyard>



Exterior of the new wing of the museum designed by Renzo Piano.



View of the museum from Evans Way Park.

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum opened in 1903 as the first art museum fully run and controlled by a single woman. Mrs. Gardner herself led the museum until her death, and through her Will, saw that the museum would continue to operate as a public art museum long after her death. The mission of the museum is to bring to life and preserve the collection, cultivate talent, support artists, and engage local and global audiences.

The Gardner Museum is located at 25 Evans Way, in the Fenway neighborhood of Boston. Located just a five-minute walk away from the Museum of Fine Arts, the museum is located across the street from the Muddy River in the Back Bay Fens and neighbored by the Colleges of the Fenway.

The complex consists of the original structure and a major addition directly next door. The original building, an Venetian Renaissance inspired villa, was designed by Willard T Sears, with oversight by Mrs. Gardner herself. One reason the site was chosen,

according to legend, is that Mrs. Gardner enjoyed riding on her personal gondola along the Muddy River and wanted a location nearby so she could ride the boat right to her front door.

The addition was designed by Renzo Piano and was completed in 2012. The museum had grown over the past century and needed more sufficient locations for guest amenities, staff and temporary contemporary art. This expansion allowed the original building to return back to the way Mrs. Gardner left it.

The museum is known for Mrs. Gardner's eclectic tastes in art, having curated her entire art collection herself. The museum reached global recognition for the collection of rare art. This also led to the most infamous event in the museum's history. On March 18, 1990 two thieves stole thirteen priceless works of art in the biggest art heist in history estimated to be valued at \$500 million, a crime unsolved to date. The empty frames hang on the walls to indicate the missing art.