

THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM RECEIVES MAJOR GRANT FROM THE SHERMAN FAIRCHILD FOUNDATION

New York, NY, January 8, 2018 — The Morgan Library & Museum announced the receipt of a \$5 million grant from the Sherman Fairchild Foundation to support two key initiatives, the creation of an endowed position to lead the museum’s internationally recognized conservation department and the exterior restoration of its 1906 McKim building, the original library of founding benefactor, Pierpont Morgan.



Thaw Conservation Center staff at work. Photograph by Justine Provino.

The museum’s conservation department is noted for its work across a variety of media—including rare books, prints and drawings, and medieval and Renaissance manuscripts—as well as for its education and training programs. The center’s state-of-the-art facility, called the Thaw Conservation Center, was opened in 2002. The new position funded through the Sherman Fairchild grant will be titled “Head of Conservation” and direct all activities of the department.

The McKim building is a National Historic Landmark and is considered one of the finest examples of neoclassical architecture in the United States. It was designed by Charles Follen McKim of the celebrated architectural firm of McKim, Mead, & White. The Morgan restored its interiors in 2010, but there has never been a comprehensive restoration of the exterior. Unsurprisingly, the façade has shown deterioration over the years. In addition, important elements of sculptural work, including two large lionesses by Edward Clark Potter, need specialized art conservation.



McKim building exterior from 36th Street, Photography by Graham S. Haber.

“All of us associated with the Morgan are extraordinarily grateful to the Sherman Fairchild Foundation for its generous grant,” said Colin B. Bailey, director of the museum. “The Thaw Conservation Center provides services that are vital to all that we do at the Morgan and its training of young conservators is of national and international significance. To be able to endow the leadership position at the center helps ensure its continued success. The McKim building is the historic heart and soul of the Morgan. Its preservation and restoration is the institution’s highest priority capital project over the next decade.”

Since the Thaw Conservation Center opened it has mentored more than forty interns, students, and post-graduate fellows. Many of these individuals now occupy leading conservation positions at cultural institutions in the U.S., Singapore, France, England, and Switzerland. The center is part of the Network Initiative in Conservation Science that is headquartered at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and it is also involved with a number of conservation partnerships with institutions in Europe.

The Morgan began planning for the restoration of the McKim exterior in 2016 by engaging Integrated Conservation Resources, a firm that specializes in the preservation of historic structures, to prepare an assessment of the building's exterior condition. Phase 2, a detailed site analysis including documentation and testing, is nearly complete.