



The Freer House is home to MPSI faculty and administration offices and meeting rooms.



## Vision of Freer House Future Comes Into Focus

— by William Colburn  
Director, The Freer House

Over the past year, a variety of new projects and accomplishments have advanced the Freer House restoration and public education goals. First and foremost, construction was completed on a new historically appropriate cedar shingle roof, copper gutters and downspouts, as well as the cleaning of the exterior masonry, thanks to a commitment of \$750,000 from the WSU Board of Governors.

An ambitious project to restore the severely altered former “Whistler Picture Gallery” was launched with a benefit concert in March. A major goal for 2012 is to raise funds for a professional planning study to guide the restoration of this historic gallery into a future meeting, conference and exhibit space. Earlier in Merrill Palmer’s history, this room served as a children’s play space.

The Americana Foundation funded the development of a basic Interpretation Plan for the Freer House to improve the visitor experience. Planning began in May with design consultants Staples and Charles of Alexandria, VA. New displays highlighting the rich histories of Mr. Freer, the Freer House and the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute will be part of Phase I of this public education project.

With underwriting from the Americana Foundation, the Freer House lecture series drew capacity audiences with talks ranging from Freer’s 1910 Exhibition of

Oriental and American Art at the University of Michigan to a unique concert and theater event on the theme of “Freer and Whistler.” Students from Wayne State, the University of Michigan, and the College for Creative Studies are conducting Freer House research and documentation projects, including a comprehensive effort to document historic furniture that once belonged to Charles Freer and is now in the private collection of Dr. Thomas Brunk, Freer House historian.

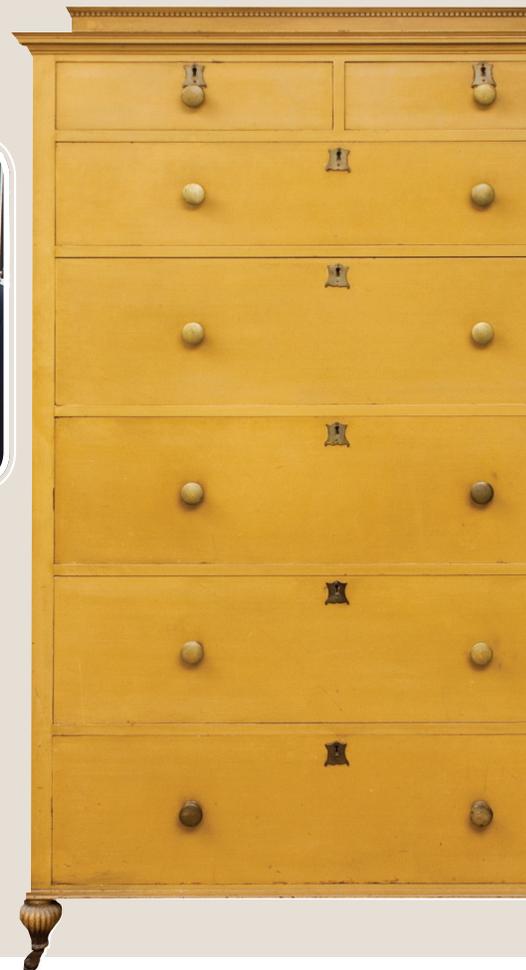
*Anyone can become a Friend of the Freer House. Your support makes our accomplishments possible. Membership costs only \$35 per year (\$10 for students) and includes free or reduced admission to Freer House lectures and events. To join, contact Rose Foster at **313-664-2500** or **rmfoster@wayne.edu**.*



Eighty-five people attended Carole McNamara’s lecture on “Whistler’s Seriousness,” which examined the earnest side of the artist known for his brilliant wit and rapier criticisms. Dr. McNamara is the senior curator at the University of Michigan. Above, left to right, William Colburn, Denise Stein, WSU Provost Ron Brown, Director Peter Lichtenberg.

Right, bedroom dresser owned by Charles Freer, now part of the collection of Dr. Thomas Brunk being documented by a team of university students.

Upper right, decorative detail of one of the Freer House’s new copper downspouts installed in 2010 along with the cedar shingle roof.



To learn more about The Charles Lang Freer House visit [www.mpsi.edu/about/friends-freer.php](http://www.mpsi.edu/about/friends-freer.php)