



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Friday, March 12, 2021**

Mercer Museum Awarded Grant from Institute of Museum and Library Services

DOYLESTOWN, PA – The Mercer Museum, operated by the Bucks County Historical Society (BCHS), is pleased to announce that it has begun efforts on a grant-funded preservation project that will result in a detailed condition survey of all 256 windows, dormers, and skylights located in the original 1916 National Landmark Mercer Museum building in Doylestown, PA.

The museum was the recipient of a \$40,000 matching grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a federal agency, in 2020 as part of IMLS' *Museums for America* grant program which will support the Mercer Museum's need of preserving and providing access to the collections entrusted to its care.

The condition survey will be conducted by the Philadelphia firm Materials Conservation, LLC, and will result in a comprehensive report, with recommendations and methodologies for repair and remediation intended to improve environmental conditions for exhibited collections.

In the past few months, conservators have been classifying window typologies, taking photographs, and examining window conditions from the museum's interior, as well as surveying the lower level exterior windows. Beginning in March 2021, a hydraulic lift will be used to survey exterior conditions for all of the Mercer Museum's upper level windows, dormers and skylights – unreachable otherwise from the ground. The lift work will be followed by additional examination of the exterior of the museum with the aid of an aerial drone to access the castle's highest windows. The survey will be completed by early summer of 2021.

As the condition of these windows has deteriorated over time with exposure to the elements, water penetration has threatened certain vulnerable exhibition areas, and their collections of hand tools, folk art, musical instruments, metalwork, pottery, and a variety of other artifacts, and this survey will allow museum staff to create a plan for improving the windows and exterior conditions of the museum.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s libraries and museums. They advance, support, and empower America’s museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. Their vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities.

The Mercer Museum project was one of 109 projects nationwide funded through IMLS’ *Museums for America* grant program in 2020. Of these 109 grants, only six were for projects in Pennsylvania. The matching portion of the Mercer Museum grant, \$40,340, is being supported by community contributions and the museum’s operating funds.

“These grants help museums at the institutional level and are essential for the vital role they play in their local communities,” said Paula Gangopadhyay, Deputy Director of the IMLS Office of Museum Services.

The Bucks County Historical Society’s Vice President of Collections and Interpretation Cory Amsler added, “The architectural marvels left to our community by Henry Mercer – the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle – require an extraordinary amount of care. They are continually threatened both by time and the elements. This project will help us to prioritize and plan our future preservation efforts, and define the methodologies necessary to restore and preserve one of the Mercer Museum’s most remarkable features – its more than 250 concrete sash windows.”

This project is supported in part by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, a federal agency.

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About the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle

Located in Doylestown, Bucks County, PA, the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle are historic castles celebrating the legacy of Henry Chapman Mercer (1856-1930), American archaeologist, anthropologist, ceramicist and scholar. Both sites are operated by the Bucks County Historical Society (BCHS).

The Mercer Museum, one of Bucks County’s premier cultural attractions and a Smithsonian affiliate, features both local and national seasonal exhibits as well as a core museum collection of over 50,000 pre-Industrial tools. This permanent collection offers visitors a unique window into pre-Industrial America through sixty different crafts and trades, and is one of the world’s most comprehensive portraits of American material culture. The museum also features a research library that is a center for

local history related to Bucks County and the surrounding region, with its roots dating back to the founding of the Bucks County Historical Society in 1880.

Fonthill Castle was built between 1908-1912, and was the home to Henry Chapman Mercer. Mercer built Fonthill Castle as his home and as a showplace for his collection of tiles and prints. The castle serves as an early example of reinforced concrete and features forty-four rooms, over two hundred windows, and eighteen fireplaces. Fonthill Castle's interior features Mercer's renowned, hand crafted ceramic tiles designed at the height of the Arts and Crafts movement.

The Mercer Museum is located at 84 South Pine Street, Doylestown, PA, 18901.

Fonthill Castle is located at 525 East Court Street in Doylestown, PA, 18901.

For up-to-date ticket and schedule information, please visit mercermuseum.org.

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