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LORD CULTURAL RESOURCES TO ADVISE THE SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) has announced that Lord Cultural Resources will play a key part in the planning, programming and design of the Museum. Established by an Act of Congress in 2003 and sited on the National Mall, the NMAAHC will be the only national Museum exclusively devoted to the documentation of African-American life, art, history and culture. In planning for the Museum, Lord Cultural Resources will lead the national public engagement process, the establishment of general museum and facility requirements, and preparation for collections storage.

The NMAAHC will be the nation's most important institution addressing the African American experience in the context of America past, present and future. In accordance with its status, the NMAAHC will be erected on a high traffic site next to the Washington Monument and across from the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. It is expected to open its doors to the public in 2015.

The selected program planning team is a collaboration among architectural and design firms Davis Brody Bond of New York and Washington; The Freelon Group of North Carolina; Lord Cultural Resources; and Amaze Design of Boston. Collectively, the team has been responsible for the creation of more African American cultural projects than any other planning or architectural firm in the world. Lord Cultural Resources has previously partnered with team members on such notable projects as the National September 11 Memorial and Museum at the World Trade Center (with Davis Brody Bond) and the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco. (with The Freelon Group)

Other relevant Lord Cultural Resources museum project credits include the August Wilson Center for African American Culture in Pittsburgh; National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis; Reginald F. Lewis Museum in Maryland; African American History and Culture in Baltimore; Albany Civil Rights Institute in Georgia; Canadian Museum of Human Rights in Winnipeg; and the Heritage Museum at Constitution Hill in Johannesburg.

Lord Cultural Resources (www.lord.ca), founded in 1981, is the world's largest professional practice dedicated to creating cultural capital having conducted over 1,500 cultural, heritage and museum projects in 36 countries on 5 continents. We collaborate with people and organizations to plan and manage cultural places, programs and resources that deliver excellence in the service of society.

The official press announcement from the Smithsonian Institution is available at http://newsdesk.si.edu/releases/nmaaahc_1st-steps-building.htm.

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Smithsonian

*National Museum of African American
History and Culture*

News

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The Smithsonian's Newest Museum Takes First Steps Toward the Creation of Its Museum Building

The Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture has selected Freelon Bond, an association of architectural and design firms Davis Brody Bond of New York and Washington and The Freelon Group of Research Triangle Park, NC, to conduct a study as Phase One of the planning leading to the design and construction of the museum building.

The 18-month study will examine the various needs of the museum—from facilities, operations and technology, to acoustics, fire protection and security—in collaboration with Lord Cultural Resources, a museum-planning firm with offices around the world, including New York and London, and Amaze Design, an exhibition design firm based in Boston.

The team will hold a series of meetings and focus groups across the country to hear what visitor-oriented features—such as auditorium, library/book store, restaurant and conservation center—should be included in the interior space. The study is scheduled to be completed by Jan. 31, 2009 and will outline the full spectrum of requirements for the new building.

The museum is expected to open its doors to the public in 2015. It will be erected on a 5-acre tract of land on the National Mall known as the “Monument site” (bound by Constitution Avenue, Madison Drive, and 14th and 15th streets N.W.). The site is adjacent to the Washington Monument and across the street from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Davis Brody Bond and The Freelon Group have extensive experience in the planning, programming and design of African-American-themed museums. Their major museum credits include the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute in Alabama; the Martin Luther King Center in Atlanta; and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture in Baltimore.

Planners from Lord Cultural Resources worked on the Heritage Museum at Constitution Hill in Johannesburg, South Africa, the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco

with The Freelon Group and the National September 11 Memorial and Museum at the World Trade Center with Davis Brody Bond. Amaze Design has worked on numerous heritage projects including the African Burial Ground Interpretive Center in New York, the August Wilson Center for African American Culture in Pittsburgh and The National Museum of Australia.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture was established as a Smithsonian Institution museum by an Act of Congress in 2003. The new museum will be the only national museum devoted exclusively to the documentation of African-American life, art, history and culture, with collections and educational programming covering such varied topics as slavery, post-Civil War reconstruction, the Harlem Renaissance and the civil rights movement.

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