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Clyfford Still Museum site selected

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A planned museum showcasing nearly 90 percent of the output of famed 20th-century painter Clyfford Still will be built on an 18,500-square-foot site just west of the Denver Art Museum's \$90.5 million expansion.

The Clyfford Still Museum's board of directors chose the location on the east side of Bannock Street between 12th and 13th avenues because of its proximity to the Denver Art Museum and other prime cultural attractions, said Project Director Dean Sobel.

"This particular four-block area, which is called the Civic Center Cultural Complex, is really Denver's cultural mecca, so the fact that the Clyfford Still Museum can join those existing august institutions establishes us also as a leading cultural amenity," he said.

Particularly important will be the museum's adjacency to the Denver Art Museum, which is expected to draw more than 1 million visitors a year once its architecturally daring addition - the Hamilton Building - opens this fall.

The construction costs of the privately funded Still museum will depend on the architect eventually selected, Sobel said. Original estimates placed the price tag at \$7 million to \$10 million plus a \$10 million operations endowment for the 30,000-square-foot facility.

The Still board is putting the final touches on plans for an international architectural search. Finalists could be named by the end of the spring and an architect is expected to be chosen by midyear. Sobel said board members are addressing these questions:

"How will we vary the process that is well rehearsed in this community from the justice center, MCA (Museum of Contemporary Art/Denver) and Denver Art Museum? How will we alter those relatively similar processes to suit the uniqueness of the Clyfford Still Museum?"

Denver drew national headlines in 2004 when the artist's widow, Patricia A. Still, agreed to give the city more than 2,100 paintings and works on paper from Still's estate on the condition that the city build a museum.

In October, the city announced the museum would also receive the artist's archives and 400 more of his works from Mrs. Still's estate following her death in August.

Still was a pivotal figure in the 1940s and '50s development of abstract expressionism along with Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning and Mark Rothko.

The Still board selected the Golden Triangle over three other neighborhoods also considered - the Central Platte Valley, Civic Center and LoDo.

The museum will occupy three parcels of land. Pending City Council approval, it will purchase one from the David Clifton Ministries for \$910,000 using private donations. And it has an informal agreement to buy the other parcels from the Denver Art Museum.

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