

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Pulitzer to Transform Former Church on Spring Avenue into Public Space for Visitors and Art Programs

Renovations to stabilize the structure and provide safe public access begin in May 2020. Spring Church planned to open to the public in spring 2021.



Front view of the church located at 620 N. Spring Ave. in St. Louis, Mo. Photo by Jim Corbett

ST. LOUIS, MO, MAY 26, 2020—The Pulitzer Arts Foundation today announced that it has recently acquired the former church located at 620 North Spring Avenue in the Grand Center Arts District of St. Louis, and will transform it into the “Spring Church,” a space that will function like a public park while also serving as a site for creative programs and artist projects.

Working with St. Louis-based Vessel Architecture and Design, the Pulitzer will begin renovations this month to repair the masonry, ensure ADA accessibility, and further stabilize the structure while maintaining its architectural character. The roof will remain open to

the sky, for example, retaining a feature that has made the building an iconic site in the neighborhood. Additional features will be added to enhance the visitor experience. These will include handrails, a repaired staircase, and infrastructure for electricity and lighting, among other features. The site plan also includes the adjacent lot north of the church, which will remain a publicly accessible outdoor green space with minor improvements to ensure easier public access.

Pulitzer Director Cara Starke states: “The Spring Church is a unique space and an important architectural icon in the neighborhood, but its future was uncertain, due to issues related to stabilization. Turning it into a community asset that the public can enjoy is an important aspect of the Pulitzer’s investment in the St. Louis community and contributes to the ongoing development of the Grand Center Arts District. This is a special building with a long history and we hope this new phase will enable the public to enjoy it for years to come.”

About the Spring Church



Interior view of the church prior to renovations. Photo by Jim Corbett

Built in 1884, the church is located at 620 North Spring Avenue, in the present-day Grand Center Arts District of St. Louis. Over the course of its history, the church was home to several congregations of many denominations. The building is notable for its now-open roofline, the result of a fire in 2001 that caused the Church's congregation, the National Memorial Church of God in Christ, led by Reverend Robert Chatman Williams, to relocate.

In 2003, Grand Center, Inc., the non-profit organization behind the Grand Center Arts District, purchased the property with plans for an outdoor sculpture garden. That project did not come to fruition, however, and since that time, the building has existed in its current state, with only the walls remaining. It has been used informally by the public for various pop-up photo shoots and events. In 2008, the Pulitzer presented *The Light Project*, a temporary exhibition of public art at the church and in the surrounding neighborhood, organized in collaboration with the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, the Saint Louis Art Museum, and White Flag Projects.

Construction on the church will begin on May 26, 2020, and is planned to continue through the end of the year. For reasons of safety, there will be no public access to the Spring Church during construction. When the work is complete, the site will be open daily, free of charge, from sunrise to sunset.

About the Pulitzer Arts Foundation

The Pulitzer Arts Foundation is a museum that provides dynamic experiences with contemporary and historic art presented in dialogue with its celebrated building by Tadao Ando. Since its founding in 2001, the museum has organized a range of exhibitions featuring art from around the world, exploring a diverse array of ideas and inspiring new perspectives. Highlights have included the exhibitions *Ruth Asawa: Life's Work* (2018-19); *Blue Black*, curated by artist Glenn Ligon (2017); *Medardo Rosso: Experiments in Light and Form* (2016-17); *raumlaborberlin: 4562 Enright Avenue* (2016); *Reflections of the Buddha* (2011-12); *Urban Alchemy / Gordon Matta-Clark* (2009-10); and *Brancusi and Serra in Dialogue* (2005). These exhibitions are complemented by programs that bring together leading figures from the fields of art, architecture, design, urban planning, and others. The Pulitzer is a place for contemplation and exchange that brings art and people together.

Located in the Grand Center Arts District of St. Louis, Missouri, the museum is typically open on Thursday through Sunday between 10am and 5pm, with evening hours until 8pm on Friday. Admission is always free. Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Pulitzer remains

temporarily closed and all public events have been postponed until further notice. For more information, visit pulitzerarts.org

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MEDIA CONTACTS

National:

Ennis O'Brien

Lucy O'Brien: lucy@ennisobrien.com | +1 973-879-4037

Betsy Ennis: betsy@ennisobrien.com | +1 917-783-6553

St. Louis:

Katie Hasler Peissig: khasler@pulitzerarts.org | +1 314-754-1850 ext. 235