



EDSEL & ELEANOR FORD HOUSE

**Media Contact:**  
Megan Peterson  
Franco  
248-330-9807  
[peterston@franco.com](mailto:peterston@franco.com)

## Edsel & Eleanor Ford House Breaks Ground

*Ford family leads groundbreaking for new administration building and visitor center*

**GROSSE POINTE SHORES, Mich. (Nov. 14, 2017)** – The Edsel & Eleanor Ford House (Ford House) today broke ground for two new facilities, a visitor center and an administration building, marking the start of the first major construction on the historic estate in more than 25 years, and the largest new construction since the home was built. The new facilities are part of a long-term restoration and rehabilitation plan for the National Historic Landmark estate.

“My grandmother wanted her home to be a place where people could come to enjoy the estate and make memories, just as she and Edsel had done,” explained Edsel B. Ford II, chairman of the Ford House board of trustees. “Both of my grandparents would be very pleased with the opportunities that our new buildings will bring to the thousands of visitors who come every year.”

The new 40,000 square foot, state of the art visitor center will be a two-story building in the location of the current visitor center. The building will feature dedicated space for enhancing the orientation, education and overall experience for Ford House visitors. It will have space for traveling and changing exhibits as well as indoor and outdoor classrooms to expand education opportunities. Social spaces include an expanded restaurant and retail shop, as well as second floor event space overlooking Ford Cove.

The new 17,000 square foot administration building will remove Ford House operations from the main house and other historic buildings, allowing the organization to better preserve the historic core. It will also enable the staff wing of the main house to eventually be restored and incorporated into the tour and educational program.

“We’re calling this initiative *Ford House Forward*,” said Kathleen Mullins, president and CEO of the Ford House. “This new construction is about being a relevant, experience-driven site where communities come together to experience something uniquely grounded in the history of this iconic American family who, themselves, have always been forward thinking.”

Designed by SmithGroupJJR, a nationally recognized, integrated design firm, both new buildings are intended to demonstrate sustainability best practices. The administration building has been designed LEED platinum as well as net-positive energy, targeting to create more power than it consumes and contributing to the energy supply of the visitor center. It is anticipated that the building will be one of few buildings in Michigan at the time to be net-positive. The visitor center has been designed to LEED Gold standards.

SmithGroupJJR incorporated sustainable strategies, such as solar panels, natural ventilation, highly efficient geo-thermal heating and cooling, automatic shades and bird-safe glass into the design.

From an aesthetic standpoint, according to Bob Varga, SmithGroupJJR's lead designer for the project, the buildings' architectural design is a modern interpretation of the Cotswold style that the original architect, Albert Kahn adopted in 1927.

"We studied the Cotswold villages from England, working to complement the original house and campus with our new designs," Varga said. "We went back to the traditional architectural roots to bring a refreshed design to address the modern needs of the campus."

Frank Rewold and Son (FRS), based in Rochester, Mich. was selected for construction management. FRS has expertise in the installation of geothermal renewable energy systems and LEED standards, as well as experience in historic buildings and new office buildings.

The buildings are scheduled to open in spring 2019. Ford House will continue to offer tours, events on the grounds and special programming during construction.

"We invite people to enjoy the estate just as the Fords did," said Mullins. "For our visitors, and for the future of the estate, we are enriching their opportunity to be part of the historical environment when they visit. We want to use the work we are doing as a means for understanding and learning about good stewardship to the Ford family legacy."

The Ford House was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2016. In order for visitors to enjoy the estate for centuries to come, the team is dedicated to the preservation of the House in its truest, original state. The new buildings will provide alternative locations for visitors and staff to interact. For more information, visit <http://www.fordhouse.org/about/master-plan>.

#### **About Edsel & Eleanor Ford House**

Edsel & Eleanor Ford House is located at 1100 Lake Shore Road in Grosse Pointe Shores. Since 1978, Ford House has welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors to share in Eleanor Ford's vision of preserving the estate for future generations to enjoy through interpretive tours, family activities, lectures, exhibits and gardens and grounds events. For more information, visit [www.fordhouse.org](http://www.fordhouse.org) or call 313.884.4222 and connect with the Ford House on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

###