



PO Box 199
Hudson, NY 12534-0199
518-828-1872
OLANA.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 17, 2021

Media Contact:
Melanie Hasbrook
Director of Advancement and Marketing
518-751-6979
mhasbrook@olana.org

Executive Contact:
Sean E. Sawyer
Washburn & Susan Oberwager President
917.880.8154
ssawyer@olana.org

Assembly Contact:
Gunnar Wordon
Deputy Chief of Staff/
Director of Communications
Office of Assemblymember
Didi Barrett
845-750-3589
wordong@nyassembly.gov

**ASSEMBLYMEMBER BARRETT SECURES HISTORIC \$1 MILLION IN ASSEMBLY FUNDING FOR
OLANA**

HUDSON NY—Assemblymember Didi Barrett (D-Dutchess/Columbia) joined with NYS Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Erik Kulleseid, to announce that she has secured \$1 million to support capital development plans for Olana State Historic Site. This is the largest single grant from the Assembly to a NYS Historic Site. The funds will be allocated towards the construction of The Frederic Church Center, a new visitor entry and orientation facility that will transform the visitor experience. The project is the linchpin of the site's larger capital development plan being undertaken by the public-private partnership of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation and The Olana Partnership.

This sustainably designed, all-electric facility includes a spacious entry lobby for ticketing and orientation, a café, restrooms, and a multipurpose room adjoining outdoor terraces and paths that connect to Olana's historic carriage road network, making all 250 acres of the historic landscape an integral part of public interpretation. As the principal entry point for a National Historic Landmark and New York State Historic Site that attracts over 200,000 visitors annually, the Frederic Church Center will provide a highly visible, publicly accessible demonstration of sustainable design and carbon neutral construction.

"Frederic Church is a singular historic figure who made his home here in our beautiful Hudson Valley and whose impact continues to be felt in the worlds of art, landscape design, architecture, agriculture, environmental conservation and beyond," said Assemblymember Didi Barrett (D- Columbia and Dutchess Counties). "I am proud to announce that I have secured \$1,000,000 in funding to support the construction of the Frederic Church Center at Olana, a new state-of-the-art, sustainable center to welcome and orient local and global visitors. As our region continues to grow as a hub for diverse arts and cultural institutions, I look forward to

seeing this pivotal New York State project move to its next phase. I thank New York State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, The Olana Partnership and New York State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation for their partnership in this effort!”

New York State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, “Olana State Historic Site is one of the most visited landmarks in New York State, and investments like these will help Olana continue to expand, accommodate more visitors and drive the economy in the Hudson Valley. In 2018, I had the privilege of touring this beautiful site, and it is truly a one-of-a-kind experience. From breathtaking views, informative tours, and educational programs, Olana is an incredible example of the amazing tourism opportunities right here in New York, and this funding will help expand those opportunities. I would also like to thank Assemblymember Didi Barrett for her advocacy for Olana and tireless dedication to her community.”

State Parks Commissioner Erik Kulleseid said, “I’m grateful to Assembly Member Barrett for securing crucial support for our ongoing work to bring Frederic Church’s Olana alive for our visitors. This is a huge triumph for the public-private partnership investing in this national treasure to protect the site’s historic integrity, enhance the enjoyment by visitors, and draw more tourists to the Hudson Valley.”

“The Olana Partnership is grateful to Assemblymember Barrett for her extraordinary support for this critical project and for her deep commitment to enhance the cultural, educational, and economic welfare of our region” said Meredith Kane, Chair of The Olana Partnership’s Board of Trustees.

“Didi Barrett is a visionary and committed ally in strengthening our work to serve our communities, enhance our economic impact, and implement smart and sustainable design to make the non-profit and public sectors models for environmentally responsible and equitable design,” said Sean Sawyer, the Washburn and Susan Oberwager President of The Olana Partnership.

The State Environmental Quality Review process is underway, and the project will be presented for public comment in early 2022. Anticipated to start construction in 2023, The Frederic Church Center will be the threshold to a fully restored Olana that will expand and deepen the visitor experience of this National Historic Landmark as a unique world-class destination at the intersection of American art and environmental consciousness in New York’s Capital Region.

For more information, visit OLANA.org/churchcenter

About Olana and The Olana Partnership: *Olana is the greatest masterpiece of Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900), the preeminent American artist of the mid-19th century and the most important and intact artist’s home, studio, and designed landscape in the United States. Church designed Olana as a holistic environment integrating his advanced ideas about art, architecture,*

landscape design, and environmental conservation. Olana's 250-acre artist-designed landscape with five miles of carriage roads and a Persian-inspired house at its summit embraces unrivaled panoramic views of the Hudson Valley and Catskill Mountains and welcomes more than 200,000 visitors annually. The landscape is open daily 8 AM-sunset free of charge, and public tours and educational programs are offered year-round.

Olana State Historic Site, administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, is a designated National Historic Landmark and one of the most visited historic sites in the state. The Olana Partnership, a private not-for-profit education corporation, works cooperatively with New York State to support the restoration, conservation, and interpretation of Olana. The Olana Partnership operates Olana State Historic Site in a cooperative agreement with New York State Parks.