



Request for Proposal for Museum Exhibit Design

# Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi Heritage Museum

Solicited by: Vishwa Nirmala Dharma (a section 501(C)(3) non-profit organization)  
(d.b.a Sahaja Yoga International)  
268 Overpeck Ave, Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660

Concept Note



## Shri Mataji's Abode in New Jersey, USA

The property at 268 Overpeck Avenue in Ridgefield Park, NJ (referred to as "Shri Mataji's Abode") is one of the few places in the world that Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi established as Her residence in Her ceaseless efforts for the liberation and enlightenment of the seekers across the world through Her unique spiritual practice. This hallowed ground in New Jersey represents not only a place where She would reside during Her visits to America but is an expression of Her desire and inspiration in physical form.

Shri Mataji Herself sketched the initial concept for the unique curving façade of the house on a sheet of notebook paper for this truly one of kind architectural statement that stands out in this quintessential town in New Jersey. It is the only such structure designed by Her in the Western Hemisphere.

The house was built by artisans who came from across the globe and with materials that Shri Mataji sourced Herself from various places around the world. A multi-year full restoration was undertaken of the house and was completed in 2019 and earned a Renovation of the Year for the builder upon completion.

This structure is modelled as a two-story family home. Currently the lower level is being utilized by the organization to host regular meditation sessions. It also includes the personal chambers of Shri Mataji along with its inclusions as originally designed and used by Shri Mataji.

## Background

Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi Srivastava is one of the greatest masters in spirituality, who developed a unique method of giving en-masse self-realization and founded the meditation practice of Sahaja Yoga in 1970. Since then, for more than forty years, she travelled internationally, offering free public lectures and the experience of self-realization to all, regardless of race, religion, or circumstance.

A Nobel Peace Prize nominee and recipient of numerous awards and commendations worldwide, Shri Mataji desired to offer a genuine experience that people could use to transform and heal themselves. Lovingly revered as a Mother by Her followers, Shri Mataji always said, "There can be no peace in the world until there is peace within."

Millions of people since, have learned how to awaken and benefit from their inner spiritual energy through Sahaja meditation - a simple, time-honored technique that also helps reduce stress and increase wellness.

Sahaja meditation centers have now been established in more than ninety-five countries, where volunteers teach the technique free of charge.

Shri Mataji had a special consideration for the United States and its people. It was one of the first countries she visited in the early 70s when she embarked on her global mission as she always considered this nation as having its own unique spiritual destiny.

To know more about Shri Mataji please visit - [shrimataji.org](http://shrimataji.org)

To know more about Sahaja Yoga please visit - [sahajayoga.org](http://sahajayoga.org)



# The Heritage Museum Project

## Vision

In keeping with those profound spiritual values embedded in our collective personal experiences, we desire to create that very sense of a 'living presence' of Shri Mataji in the abode. Every visitor to this abode should feel Shri Mataji's presence therein as if She is in residence. That whenever they visit this sacred ground, they are in fact 'coming home' to their Mother. It is not intended to be just a memorial. It is envisioned as Her dwelling wherein She exists, in person – for all eternity. That in essence is the spirit of the vision for this property.

## Objective Outcome

To design and establish a world-class museum at Shri Mataji's Abode which will narrate the unique relationship Shri Mataji had with the US as a country and its people for over 3 decades. Its ultimate aim is to fulfill the vision for this property as mentioned above and provide a seeker with the opportunity to learn about the life and achievements of Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi and Sahaja Yoga. We do not envision it as just another traditional museum exhibit, but an immersive environment utilizing realistic recreations, state of the art multimedia, sound, and lighting. Visitors should enter it – literally feeling the proximity to Shri Mataji – and explore the different facets of Her Divine personality, Her work, and travels in the United States.

### Key features of the museum and exhibit areas envisioned:

- Interactive and immersive multimedia displays to learn about Shri Mataji and Sahaja Yoga.
- Multimedia screening room with seating for orientation and film screenings.
- Display of artifacts and personal items with recreation of a story around it.
- Ability to interchange display items and have special themed exhibits on an occasional basis.
- Scope to admire the architecture and the interior artistic work of the Abode and to learn about its design and origin.

## Target Audiences

The exhibit must appeal to a broad general audience. The characteristic audiences will be further elaborated after consultations with the Design Firm.

## Project Scope for the Design Firm

The Museum Designer selected for this project will develop the conceptual design (master plan) for an integrated, immersive museum exhibit experience for visitors. The Designer will be charged with the design of all museum exhibit and exhibit-related areas including any audio-visual or interactive components. The Designer will work in partnership with a team from Vishwa Nirmala Dharma which also includes an in-house Architect.

The following general responsibilities are envisioned for the Designer:

### Master Planning Phase

- Designer will review the concept and goals to reaffirm and establish the full scope of the project keeping in mind the intended audience. Designer will assist in the development of story line that will inform concepts.

### Writing & Concept Development

- Further develop the notions of visitor experience through story

### Exhibit Planning & Design

- Develop and locate specific concepts and how they appear through plans and renderings that illustrate the key components of the exhibit, the relationships between them, and how they will be integrated into existing spaces in the Abode.

### Media Production

- Plan & develop media-based concepts that work with concept exhibits

### Project Management

- Designer will develop a preliminary budget for developing and installing the exhibit. This budget should provide line-item totals for major design, fabrication, and installation categories. This will be used for fundraising purposes.
- Designer will develop a projected schedule for developing and installing the museum exhibit and expected completion dates for major project components.

## Conclusion

This concept note is our vision of the Heritage Museum, but we know it can be even better than we imagine. That's why we are excited to begin working with creative people who can bring their own ideas and experience into the process and help us make our vision a reality.