CB9M Landmarks Preservation & Parks Committee Minutes and Updates Wednesday, May 3, 2023

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting, Called to Order at 6:38pm.

Co-Chairs: Hon. Heather Jason and Hon. Jonathan Thomas

Committee Members Present: Hon. Patricia Caldwell, Hon. Dan Cohen, Hon. Heather Jason, Hon. Carolina Ramirez, Hon. Hugo Torres-Fetsco, and Hon. Liz Waytkus.

Absent Committee Members: Hon, Michael Palma and Hon, Jonathan Thomas.

Community Members, Stakeholders, Affiliates and Park Representatives Present Mark Vaccaro, Regional Manager Districts 7 and 9(NYC Parks), Wesley Hamilton (Riverside Park), Stephanie Caban (Riverside Park Outreach Coordinator), Adrian Kondratowicz (Friends of St. Nicholas Park), Brad Taylor (Friends of Morningside Park), Shannon Richards (142nd Dog Run), Michael Johnson (Morningside Park Café Kiosk), Basia Nikonorow (17 Trees, To Be Precise Children's Book), Wendy Hilliard and Doria Josma (Wendy Hilliard Gymnastics Foundation), Laura Friedman, Michele Kuhn, Phoebe Roosevelt, Harry Schwartz, and Robert Stern etc. (611 West 112th Maranamay), Kim Johnson (snpba), Emma Leonard, Liz Leber, and Aaron Lamport (Beyer Blinder Belle), Loftin Flowers, Phoebe-Sade Arnold, Karri Rivera, and Denise Ferris (Columbia University), Leslie Wright (Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park (DFRBSP), Mallory Craig (DFRBSP The Hort and Community Gardens), Bailey (We Act for Environmental Justice) Paul Shneyer, Eileen Brockbank, Amelia Marshall, James Delfino, Ye Liu, Allyn, and C. Revan.

MCB9 Members: Daria Hardeman, Arts & Culture, Tiffany Kahn, Housing Land Use & Zoning.

New Business: Parks Updates and Announcements

- NYC Parks and Historic Harlem Parks: Mark Vaccaro, Regional Manager
 - The path has started construction at the northern end of Morningside Park, from W 120th along the lower path. It's expected to take about a month.
 - The Jacob Schiff seating area is to be completed this summer.
 - The Sheltering Arms Park House is expected completion late summer to fall.
 - o School Construction Authority work expected complete in 2023-2024.
 - St Nicholas Park state of good repair path work north of W 135th Street is projected to start this fall.
 - Movie night at Jacob Schiff on May 5th and May 6th at St. Nicholas Park.
 - Is it possible to have a pine tree planted at Donnellan Square?
 - o If a request is made, someone is sent out to inspect. There are seasonal plantings twice per year dependent on species.
 - There are many tree planting restrictions, such as trees cannot be planted within 10 feet on each side of a Con Ed power line or gas line, waterline, sewer line, or a hollow sidewalk.

o Cherry, blossom, or magnolia trees, please?

Brad Taylor, Friends of Morningside Park

- o Many events planned over the summer, including a couple of art installations.
- Volunteer groups come into the park and help with weed control.

Adrian Kondratowicz: Friends of St. Nicholas Park

- The Easter egg hunt on Earth Day was a great turnout.
- "It's My Park Day" is Saturday May 20th.
- o The youth gardening program with Morningside Park starts in June.
- High School Math & Science Tuesday volunteer group cleans up the park.
- Saturday weed gardening group tackles our issues at the park.

Wes Hamilton: NYC Parks Riverside

- The plentiful rainfall this last week has caused the grass to grow quickly. A third of the park has been mowed.
- o Permit applications are increasing. Prepared to have many summer events.

• Stephanie Caban - Riverside Park Outreach Coordinator

- Over 282 free public programs in the Park which is really exciting.
- Exercise classes, concerts or children's programming.
- Free public programming from 59 Street to 181st Street.
- Seeking applicants for our team cohort program, which is a high school youth paid internship for 18 youth specifically in CB9 between the ages of 13 and 18 to focus on horticulture and environmental.
- https://riversideparknyc.org/youth-opportunities/
- Saturday May 13th is "Sandsational" day where all the sand in the sand boxes throughout the Park is being replaced.
- https://riversideparknyc.org/summer-on-the-hudson/
- https://riversideparknyc.org/youth-opportunities/

Basia Nikonoro, 17 Trees, To Be Precise (a children's book)

- Resident of CB9 and prior member of the community board.
- o Founded the 137th Street Beautification Day.
- Block Planting Day will be Sat 5/13 9am-12noon.

Mallory Craig (The Hort)

- There is public programming six days a week at The Greenhouse Education Center at Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park which is open 7 days a week.
- o I Love My Parks is this Saturday where planting and stewarding is planned.
- o Installed a butterfly habitat and will share knowledge about it this Saturday.

- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1L4AwZBhU6bqnRAI5M611qNGxCakMpYiF/view?usp=share_link
 Spanish
- https://drive.google.com/file/d/17WpNWwKUYq4EXpUNJS2zXezSqMMoJOJ B/view?usp=share_link English
- Harlem farm interns.
- Accepting school field trips Wednesday through Friday morning.

Leslie Wright: Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park (DFRSP):

- Parks & Trails New York :: I Love My Park Day (ptny.org) Saturday May 6, 2023
- o Riverbank State Park (Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park)
- o Riverbank State Park | New York NY | Facebook
- June 17th will be the celebration of the park turning 30. There will be a big party with music and fun and some fantastic performances such as puppet shows.
- o Everything will be open and free. Swim, Skate, and ride the Merry-Go-Round.
- o Roller skating is open. The ice gone. Check the website for the schedule.
- Get the free New York State Parks Explorer app. It gives the hours for every parks programming and updates whether offline or canceled, due to weather or whatever the up to the minute update.
- The track and field project is ongoing. Drainage issues were more complicated than expected. Therefore, the project timeline is extending and will be completed by the end of the summer instead of June.
- The locker room and restrooms renovation project in the athletics department is very much on track, and will be completed by June.
- The locker room renovations in the Aquatics Department will begin after the anniversary celebration on June 17th and it will be challenging for swimmers.
- The extraordinary volume of rain recently exacerbated a problem at the park, and some of the façade suffered extraordinary water damage. This led to safety concerns on the facade overhead the passageway between the 2 buildings leading outside and that short walkway. Until the safety issue could be resolved, the pedestrian passage was closed to patrons and staff.
- o Is there any plan to spruce up the West 138th Street entrance?
- There is a robust list of things that need to be renovated at the park, and the 138th Street entrance is definitely one of them to make the overall treatment and look much more welcoming, fresh and renewed.
- The 5 light globes that were replaced at entrance and many of them have been dark for quite a long time, look really beautiful at night now.
- Friends of Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park meets every second Saturday of the month in the Theater Rehearsal Room. (Reminder)

• Wendy Hilliard: Wendy Hilliard Gymnastics Foundation

- Running this gymnastics foundation for over 25 years. First Black woman to compete for the United States in rhythmic gymnastics. Competed on 3 world championship teams. Coached an Olympic athlete. In the Hall of Fame.
- o Long career in gymnastics. President of the Women's Sports Foundation.

- Worked on the Olympic bid when New York was bidding for the Olympics.
- The Foundation was at Riverbank for about 10 years, from 2008 until 2018, and the community Saturday classes were in the theater.
- The demand for our classes has expanded.
- o Provide free and low cost, gymnastics programs. Gymnastics is expensive.
- o The main expense is space especially in Manhattan and anywhere in NYC.
- Currently in a partnership with Harlem Children's Zone at the Harlem Armory, where the majority of programs are performed.
- A dedicated gymnastic space is needed where you can only do gymnastics.
- Gymnastics is a great foundational sport especially for girls. It creates confidence, it's extremely popular, and part of U.S.A. Gymnastics.
- Many disciplines of the sport such as artistic gymnastics, bars, beam, acrobatics, floor exercise, (most popular) and general gymnastics.
- Gymnastics is very rare in urban areas taught by coaches that look like those that we serve. Our foundation is like the HBCU of gymnastics
- There's only one really large gymnastics facility in Manhattan, which is Chelsea Piers and it is about 18,000sf.
- Targeting Riverbank because it's such a wonderful facility and we previously used the space.

Is there space at DFRBSP?

- DFRBSP would have to displace other programs, and there's so much demand for all the different activities at the park. There is no physical space at Riverbank to have a dedicated gymnastic center.
- It was suggested that the Fairway vacant space that is owned by Columbia University could be a possible location for a dedicated Gymnastics Facility.
- Fairways is not possible because it will probably be replaced by another supermarket according to Columbia.
- The CBA was mentioned as a document to research to determine if any leverage exists to establish this dedicated gymnastics facility.
- 611 West 112th Street, "The Maranamay" Docket: LPC-23-08973
- Denise Ferris, Vice President for Columbia University Facilities & Operations
 - o 611 West 112th Street is located at the Manhattanville campus.
 - o Columbia acquired the property about a year ago in February 2022.
 - o It is a single room occupancy residence. (SRO)
 - The building has been abandoned and neglected for about 10 to 15 years.
 - There's considerable roof damage and a lot of water infiltration.
 - The building's interior structure has suffered considerably which gives Columbia an opportunity to renew the building interior, and to restore its architecturally significant features.

- In keeping with Columbia's sustainability goals and in alignment with those of New York City, this building will be all-electric, a first and essentially net zero carbon emissions in terms of operations.
- Columbia plans to use this building to house undergraduate students and this will allow us actually to empty some of existing dorms and do necessary renovations in those buildings, as well as sustainability upgrades.
- Construction is planned to begin late this spring, early summer, and the occupancy goal by students is for the fall semester of 2024.

• Loftin Flowers, Vice President, Government & Community Affairs

- We've initiated outreach about our plans for this site with the Morningside Heights and broader community beyond our normal efforts with projects of this scale. We are open to suggestions to improve what we're doing.
- We've been in direct conversations with a number of the neighboring buildings immediately around the property, letting them know about the acquisition, and plans as they were taking shape at the very basic stage.
- We were made aware of quality of life issues related to the building by neighbors on the block and on 112th Street. There were some lighting issues under the scaffolding that are believed to be satisfactorily resolved.
- In late February the Morningside Heights Community coalition invited Columbia to attend a forum to present the plans for the project. There were over 60 attendees. An overview of the plans was presented.
- Feedback from neighbors, including construction impacts, use, and the undergraduates who we plan to inhabit that site were discussed.
- o Planning another informational meeting on May 16th at 6:30pm.
- The project team, construction management firm, Government Affairs and Facilities, etc., will be able to respond to questions at that point related to the construction impacts related to the use of the site.
- Created a repository of public information about the project and set up a website including presentations and plans and archive newsletters.
- o Phoebe-Sade Arnold sends email updates and receives a lot of feedback.

• Emma Leonard, Beyer Blinder Belle Architects, **Docket:** LPC-23-08973

- This project is presented today because a Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) Hearing is scheduled for May 23, 2023.
- The overall scope for the building will be clarified with 3 specific topics:
 Window replacement, a new entrance to provide an accessible entrance, and the replacement of a historic feature of the building, the cornice.
- o The property is in the Morningside Heights Historic District.
- Location between Broadway and Riverside Drive at West 112th Streets.
- o Holes are in the roof just from lack of maintenance.
- o Similar scale apartment buildings on the same side of West 112th Street.
- There are some taller apartment buildings across the street, such as the Bank Street School.
- o Built in 1903 or 1904 as middle class housing along the subway line.
- The original building as it stands today is 6 stories. It has a facade of brick, limestone and terracotta.
- It was converted in the 1940s to an SRO.

- Throughout its history, there were additional alterations. The windows in the 1940s tax lot photo were replaced with one over one aluminum windows.
- The cornice has been removed. There's also a service door and other deterioration to the front façade.
- The tripartite windows were replaced with equal size windows instead of what was there historically and don't match the historic conditions.
- o There's been a lot of water, infiltration and damage to the interior.
- The overall scope of the building exterior is to bring back the building to as close to the historic nature as we can while doing it responsibly. This includes a full window replacement.
- Replacement will be aluminum clad windows, and will have the historic proportions and characteristics, including the diamond pattern.
- o The tripartite and others will also be brought back.
- o Plan is to recreate the cornice, and also the raised parapet originally.
- The full facade will get a restoration. This includes pointing of the brick repair
 of all the damage to the limestone and to any terracotta that's been damaged
 over time. The paint will be removed, and the limestone will be exposed.
- Replacing the dilapidated front entrance.
- o Main façade change is a barrier-free entrance using an existing areaway.
- The windows that originally had aluminum clad windows with the muntin pattern would be created using painted aluminums divided, lay a similarly divided light with spacer bar.
- There are a few windows that are visible on the west facade through a narrow alleyway on the adjacent property. The first row of windows are visible from the street view because they are on a lot line which has a rating requirement. Will use a steel rated construction instead of the aluminum clad, like the ones on the south façade. Otherwise they will look pretty similar.
- The specialty window on the south facade main public view due to the nature of current construction practices, will be slightly less glass than what was there originally, but well within the typical criteria expected from LPC.
- Due to the steel construction or material change, the details are a slightly different proportion. But again, we're well within the LPC criteria. The biggest difference is just the wider meeting rail, but otherwise they will be double hung, and have the look to match the historic windows.
- The historic building is not accessible. There are steps leading up to a vestibule, and inside there are a couple of more steps.
- An accessible entrance is required in order to bring the building up to the current code. We thought taking an advantage of this existing areaway, would be a good location and disturb the façade as little as possible.
- In our proposed design we are keeping most of the historic existing rail, but making a modification by creating an opening and then placing our ramp entirely within that areaway.
- The ramp is a 1 to 20. It's not a true ramp in the sense of needing hand rails which allows just a very simple rail along the outer edge to provide an enclosure and a guieter appearance.
- The proposed materials are meant to blend in with the existing conditions. In order to create that new door, we're taking an existing window opening and extending it down to the level of the interior floor, and keeping the existing head of the windows aligned with our door opening.

- We would take inspiration from what we believe the original door looks like to create the paneling on the door.
- The historic rail would be maintained and refurbished repainted. The new rail would be a similar materiality painted metal handrail, but it'd be a lot quieter and smaller than the existing rail.
- The cornice recreation is based on historic photos and documentation from other buildings around the same time. It has since been removed, except for small details, which we will be incorporating into the new cornice and will be built out of the GFRC material, which is a composite material, a lot more durable, easy to maintain, and lighter weight which makes it easier to install.
- We're also building back the raised central parapet area that will be a cast stone with a CMU backup wall behind.
- We don't control the alleyway, but we are making sure that whatever is visible from the alleyway meets appropriate secondary facade consideration.
- There's an existing elevator that is very tiny. We need to make this meet current code with a stretcher elevator. Therefore, we are expanding it, and it will have a metal clad which is not visible from the street.
- In terms of the interior of the building, the cellar level is primarily back of house space at the back of the building adjacent to our narrow rear yard.
 There are a couple of common spaces, and an apartment for faculty or staff.
- On the first floor and above is primarily where the students will live. There's one small common room on each floor, and otherwise it is the same bedrooms and shared bathrooms.
- The cellar and the first floor with the main entrance are shown. Typical floors
 2 through 6 are repetitive as we go on.
- A view of the roof show mechanical equipment. This will be a fully electric building, which means we are going to be using a system of ERVs which will require condensing units and will be surrounded by sound barrier walls. We're very aware of the acoustic issues.
- Additionally, since the roof will be replaced, Local law 92, 94 is applicable, and we are looking at doing a green roof to meet those requirements.
- All of this equipment has been placed specifically away from those visible edges, so that it will not impact the views from the street or any public way.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS DISCUSSION REGARDING THE MARANAMAY PROJECT:

- We have concerns with the noise mitigation and effectiveness of the sound barriers planned for use on the roof.
- We will be doing a sound study this weekend onsite off a roof of an adjacent Columbia building to know and monitor the existing acoustic conditions so that we know the baseline. We will be meeting or exceeding the code requirements.
- What noise mitigation steps is Columbia planning to take on the street and on the building as work is being done on the building, both inside and outside?
 - We'll be implementing clean construction into trade contracts to specifically address noise, dust and pest management.
- Why do the mechanicals have to be on the roof instead of in the basement?
 To meet fresh air requirements, that is the best place for the equipment.

Why is a side door needed instead of ramp access right into the main door?

The exterior entrance has an interior vestibule with a couple of steps up. The landing on the exterior isn't the same height as the first floor. It would be hard to squeeze the areaway ramp between the columns and not modify historic entrance.

How much space is there on the sidewalk in case you had to modify the front stairs to make room for everyone to enter the primary entrance door?

We're up against the property line. It's just the width of the sidewalk.

Will all the windows be double paned windows?

Yes.

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What are the plans for the outdoor courtyards, particularly rear yard spaces and façade which are tremendous concerns? Are you putting in new doors?

Yes we're closing a couple of doors, adding a couple of doors and we are turning a couple of windows into doors.

What is going to be outside?

It's a small sitting area for students. There'll be plantings along the perimeter and fence to create visual barriers and a few tables and chairs.

What's the size of that rear yard space?

I think, 13 feet in depth and the width is, I believe, 87.5 feet. It is a fairly narrow space. The number of occupants out there will be quite limited.

You're going to be modifying that back facade in order to accommodate different doors, but you have no pictures. Is that correct?

Yes. They are out of public view, and so they are not applicable for LPC.

Explain why some doors must be closed and moved to a different location?

It has to do with the interior planning and a new egress path.

I understand why the community was asking for the floor plans. In reference to the common space in the cellar. Is it possible to flip the faculty/staff apartment with the common room, and put it on the other side? Sound travels.

Any sound transmittance through that wall will is negligible.

I have a couple of questions that weren't clear to me about terracotta and the overall safety of the facade. I'm assuming you've done an inspection, so that it is compliant with any kind of local law 11 considerations, is that correct?

Our firm has not specifically done a local law 11 inspection.

The building has been shuttered for years. I'm sure there's significant damage from water and the terracotta. Do we have your assurance that you'll be doing that type of inspection? It's very likely more than the cornice will be replaced?

We've done an inspection as part of our work, not specifically a local law 11 inspection. The terracotta is in good shape. We're not planning on replacing much.

Are you replacing terracotta with actual terracotta or are you fabricating it?

Whether it is being done in kind as a new terracotta unit or whether we're patching with mortars and others in areas, both will be a fabrication process.

Can you show us on the drawings, where it will be fabricated? Are you saying you'll use firms that create terracotta that will replace the original terracotta?

No, I have not expressly said that. On a case by case basis we will be making a final determination of whether areas of replacement will be a new fabricated terracotta product versus an alternate patching repair method.

Can you show the photograph of the original or current conditions, and point out the terracotta on the façade for people unfamiliar with this material?

- We're grateful that Columbia is restoring this building. Deteriorated as it is, we would liked to have seen some restoration of affordable housing, perhaps shared with Columbia faculty or with office space.
- Columbia again is taking housing stock out of the community.
- The Housing, Land Use and Zoning subcommittee of Community Board 9 has been presented with a Resolution regarding the use of this building and the inclusion of affordable housing not just in this building, but as we see in and all buildings, whether they be at institutions like Columbia or throughout our community. We are going to take up that Resolution for discussion. Our meeting is next Tuesday May 9th at 6:30pm.
 - Once Columbia has negotiated easement rights with 400 Riverside Drive, in addition to replacing the windows, you will, have to point the brickwork. My question is, when will this work start, and how long do you expect it to last?

I would say, late summer, through the winter maybe into the spring. Is there any discussion directly with anyone at Columbia with decision making authority to have the property used as a graduate or faculty dorm with apartments versus an undergraduate dorm, with approximately 160 residents? At some point, I hope representatives of Columbia, who have authority to make decisions will engage with a neighbor, being us about the concerns. The proposal for the restoration of the facade is sound. It restores the historic

The proposal for the restoration of the facade is sound. It restores the historic detailing. The cornice looks like a lot, but if that's what you're saying was there before, I believe you, and I think it'll look good.

Why are the number of windows on the top floor changing from 3 to 2?

In the historic tax photo most of the windows are the tripartite, so the 3. We're matching the window configuration that was there originally.

Is the ramp considered ADA accessible? I thought a 5 foot diameter is required, and this seems to be a much smaller turning radius.

There's another type of turn called a "T turn." It'll allow a turn into the door. Once inside, you have the 5 foot turning radius. We refer to it as a ramp, but it is a 1:20 slope. Legally speaking, it is not a ramp. We're trying to use the natural topography to make an easier access point into the building.

What radius does the "T turn" require to enter the building?

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It's just a "T turn", not a radius. It's not like a standard 5 feet areaway.

The ramp is a little over 3.5 feet wide. The proposed secondary door appears to have paneling above, as opposed to glass and it disrupts the symmetry of the primary entrance. Furthermore, it doesn't align with both sides of the primary entrance door which has an equal number of windows on each side. You're proposing to remove one of the windows and make it a door without including some characteristics from the window into the door that might improve the loss of symmetry. Can you explain your thought process behind why you chose the second door entrance details as it is currently designed?

We could look at adding glass instead of paneling. It's more of the language of the main entry door, not the windows. I hear what you're saying about symmetry. Is it possible to add the diamond pattern from the windows into the second door glass transom to make it look more symmetrical with the windows?

Yeah. I don't know if that's possible. The more significant issue is the height change of the door coming into the building. The second door allows us to come uphill at a higher height, and into the lobby where everyone's at the same level.

What is the rated window value on pp.21-22?

The west facade is on the property line known as lot line windows. The rating that is required is one hour rated windows that can't be opened by the students.

Can you help us understand why you're making the lot line windows fixed?

To maintain the fire rating it is not viable to have them still operate. When a student opens the window it would no longer be a rated window.

Will students have some windows in every unit that are operable?

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All will have operable windows as part of light and air mandates by the city. It's not an LPC issue, but why is it that none of the bedrooms have closets?

Columbia's standard furniture layouts include a furniture wardrobe. They do not typically provide built-in closets.

Are you changing the existing plan or layout? Will this layout that you have shown today remain the same after the existing students move, considering this a holding type dorm while other dorms on campus are being renovated?

I suspect it would be many years, and we don't have plans to change the plans. There is really nothing left of the existing layout. The interior has been gutted. Bearing walls that run east to west, as well as the exterior masonry walls will remain. The bathrooms have already been removed. There aren't floors. No walls.

Is this presentation that we are viewing today the same presentation and architectural plans that are going to be submitted to LPC and DOB?

You're getting more than the 3 topics required for the LPC Hearing. For DOB, there's a full set of drawings including all of the trades, mechanical, electrical, etc. For DOB there's additional information that will be provided.

Has Columbia received a certificate of no harassment to convert this SRO into a dormitory? Was it received before or after the building was purchased?

Columbia real estate has received the Certificate of No Harassment (CNH). We can get the correct information to you tomorrow.

Is that adjacent foliage green space area of the alumni building on 113th Street belong to Columbia, and could it be used by the residents of 611? Is there a way the 2 buildings will connect and become a hangout outside?

They're at different elevation heights. Our rear yard is much lower. You can't walk between the two. 614, not 616 or 618 brownstone is owned by Columbia.

How is Columbia able to obtain a CNH if there are no residents?

Our real estate group who was responsible for purchasing the property will answer those questions relative to the CNH, the timeline, and how it was attained.

Was there any consideration given for the new handrail to match the existing handrail, because it's higher up, it naturally stands out more?

It is appropriate to differentiate, not to reproduce historic fabric and try to fake that it was always that way. While we take queues from the historic fabric, we want to do a quiet intervention, something that might not be as disruptive to the facade.

The vote is called for a letter of support with five in favor and one abstention.

Are there any Old Business Updates?

- New trash receptacles have been added by Parks and DOT at Riverside Park, which is great. Shaun Abreu's office is securing more trash cans.
- The West Harlem Historic District Conference is taking place on Saturday, June 10, 2023 at City College.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:11pm. Respectfully submitted by Heather Jason.