

May 29, 2018

STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE N.Y.C. LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR THE FRICK COLLECTION, 1 EAST 70TH STREET AND 10 EAST 71ST STREET, AN INDIVIDUAL LANDMARK

Good day, Chair Srinivasan and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn, speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy's Public Policy Committee has reviewed the proposed alterations and additions to the Frick Collection and supports this application.

The Frick is one of the City's finest buildings and most beloved museums. This overwhelming success has triggered the challenge of expanding space for gallery, visitor, administrative, educational, and conservation needs, in a manner that respects the property's history and architecture.

We would like to thank the board and staff at the Frick for listening to the concerns generated from the earlier expansion proposal, for starting over, and for conducting extensive community outreach. We thank Selldorf Architects and Beyer Blinder Belle for a thorough and comprehensive presentation. The result is a proposed intervention which is appropriate for this landmark and meets the institution's goals.

Since Carrere and Hastings designed the original mansion in 1914, there have been a series of careful additions and alterations that responded to the needs of several generations. We believe that this thoughtful proposal continues in that tradition.

Our Committee found that the new limestone-clad additions are appropriate in their height, massing, and materials. They draw inspiration from the historic buildings in a respectful manner. The rooftop addition to the Reception Hall will rise gracefully from the building, in the manner of a conservatory. The connecting link is modest, but well-considered. There will be no loss of historic fabric, and while some façade elements of the Library Building will be less visible, they will not be removed or altered by this project.

Like many others, we are pleased to see that the Russell Page viewing garden, an icon of 1970's landscape architecture, will be rebuilt to match the original design with similar species of plantings, grass, and trees. The Frick's decision to retain the green door at the rear of the garden preserves the slight air of mystery that is part of the garden's allure.

Finally, alterations at the entrances at 70th and 71st Streets will be a great improvement for the Frick, with only minor modifications to historic fabric. They will increase, and in some cases create, accessibility, as well as ease the ability to move fragile works of art. Upgrades to the aged systems will be a benefit to visitors and staff alike. While it is not the purview of the Commission to consider use, we would like to note that plans to unwind and reconfigure the visitor entrance sequence will be especially welcome.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Conservancy's views.