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**The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8**

May 25, 2018

Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building
One Center Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY, 10007

RE: 1 East 70th Street, The Frick Collection (between Fifth and Madison) – Individual Landmark. Annabelle Selldorf, Architect – Neo-French Classic style mansion, designed by Carrere & Hastings and constructed in 1913-1914, museum conversion and expansion and Frick Art Reference Library designed by John Russell Pope and constructed in 1931-35, reception hall designed by H. Van Dyke (John Barrington Bayley) and constructed in 1974-1977. Application is to enlarge the Museum and Art Reference Library and for alterations to create accessible entrances.

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

At the March 16, 2018 Community Board 8 Manhattan Full Board meeting, the Board considered two proposed resolutions concerning The Frick Collection's application to enlarge the Museum and Art Reference Library and create accessible entrances. The Board did not carry either resolution.

A proposed resolution to approve the application as presented failed to pass with a vote of 19 in favor, 20 opposed, 1 abstention, and 1 not voting for cause.

A second proposed resolution to disapprove the application with the following clauses failed to pass with a vote of 20 in favor, 19 opposed, 1 abstention, and 1 not voting for cause.

WHEREAS the Frick Collection has expanded its mission from a House Museum to a museum with a multi-faceted mission; and,
WHEREAS the Frick Collection needs more space for temporary exhibits, public education, conservation for art and books; and administration; and,
WHEREAS the Frick Collection needs more space to display large works of art; and,
WHEREAS the Frick Collection needs more space to accommodate the increasing number of visitors including larger lobby, coat room, and rest rooms; and,
WHEREAS the Frick Collection needs a larger auditorium that can be used even when the museum is closed; and,
WHEREAS the Frick Collection Library is one of the top art research libraries in the world; and,
WHEREAS the Frick Collection needs to provide accessible entrances for the museum and the library; and,


WHEREAS the Frick Collection needs to replace old infrastructure with new, energy efficient, systems; and,
WHEREAS the garden is on the roof of below grade space including a vault; and,
WHEREAS leakage from the garden is causing corrosion; and,
WHEREAS the proposed additions and renovation will provide for the functional needs of the museum and library, incorporate new infrastructure, and mostly recreate the Russell Page designed 70th Street garden; and,
WHEREAS the galleries in the original mansion will remain unchanged and will continue to display the personal collection of Henry Clay Frick; and,
WHEREAS the second floor of the mansion will become galleries open to the public;
WHEREAS most elements of the garden will be restored or replaced including the plantings, pool, east and west walls, paths, stone bench and urn; and,
WHEREAS the north wall of the garden will be reconstructed to its original appearance except that windows will replace the niches and trellises in the wall, and the planter with trees on the top of the wall will be eliminated; and,
WHEREAS the removal of the garden will enable the demolition of the vault and the construction of an underground auditorium; and,
WHEREAS the reconfigured steps and the switch-back ramp at the entrance to the museum enable appropriate access for the disabled; and,
WHEREAS the linear ramp alongside the wall on 71st Street leading to an existing basement entrance, in combination with a new elevator, enable access for the disabled directly into the library building; and,
WHEREAS the existing rear wall of the library was not intended to have been seen and would have been minimally visible from the public way as it was shielded from the south by three large townhouses that preceded the 70th Street garden; and,
WHEREAS the library building will be expanded into the rear yard of the building up to the north wall of the garden; and,
WHEREAS the library addition will step up from east to west to an enlarged penthouse for mechanical equipment; and,
WHEREAS the penthouse will have louvers that will match the limestone in color; and,
WHEREAS the enlargement will match the Indiana limestone and window proportions of the facades of the library building visible from 71st Street; and,
WHEREAS the windows in the library enlargement will be thermally broken, double glazed casement windows with rolled bronze mullions and bronze frames; and,
WHEREAS a two-story structure will be added to the west of the library over the "Music Room;" and,
WHEREAS the north façade of the lower floor of the addition is set back in line with the northern edge of the upper floors of the mansion and the upper floor is set further back; and,
WHEREAS the south façade of the two-story structure is set in line with the southern face of the enlarged library; and,
WHEREAS the new two-story addition is intended to provide conservatory space and administrative space – and create a stronger visual connection of the museum to the library when viewed from the exterior; and,
WHEREAS the two-story addition is linked to the library with a 16-foot-wide, three bay, bronze and glass curtain wall with limestone spandrel panels; and,
WHEREAS the new one-story addition to the reception hall pavilion is set down into the upper volume of the reception hall to enable a second-floor lobby and a connection from the mansion to the library; and,
WHEREAS setting the second floor through the roof of the reception hall pavilion eliminates the shallow, curved ceiling of the current reception hall; and,
WHEREAS the height of the new one-story addition is kept to a minimum but is still visible; and,
WHEREAS the façade of the one-story addition is continuously glazed with bronze frames and mullions; and,

WHEREAS the roof of the one-story addition is made of copper to match the copper roofs that exist; and,
WHEREAS there was little in the presentation of actual proposed dimensions, there were no site line studies; and there was no mock-up of the enlargements (even though a mock up for highly visible elements is not required by the Landmarks Preservation Commission); and,
WHEREAS the model of the Frick Collection was diminutive within the surrounding buildings and, thereby, not as instructive as a larger model of the building or a mock-up of the proposed bulk relationships; and,
WHEREAS it appears as if the programmatic requirements of the Frick Collection have been met with the current application, the proposed additions are too large and not in scale with the landmark mansion or the Russell Page designed garden; and,
WHEREAS it appears, per observations made during the Committee discussion, that programmatic requirements can be met with other functional iterations that would reduce the size of the above grade additions; and,
WHEREAS the garden will not be fully restored in that the niches and trellises in the rear wall will be replaced with glazed openings, and the continuous planter on the top of the wall and its trees will be eliminated; and,
WHEREAS the perspective from the garden to the north will be lost due to the overwhelming mass of the library addition; and,
WHEREAS the existing one-story connection between the mansion and the library does not detract from the mansion, the two-story addition over the Music Room is very visible and extends the more institutional scale and character of the library into the sector of the mansion; and,
WHEREAS the one-story addition to the entry hall pavilion is visible, changes the scale of the pavilion, and eliminates the high copper roof with its fan-like termination that was more in the family of the mansion's roofs than the proposed shallow copper roof; and,
WHEREAS the experience of the mansion from the exterior is of a large house, the proposed enlargements will change the character of the mansion and detract from the experience of the Frick Collection as a House Museum; and,
WHEREAS maintaining the scale of the mansion does not preclude the Frick Collection from growing as an institution;

Accordingly, Community Board 8 Manhattan takes no position on this application.

Please advise this office of any action taken regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Alida Camp 
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Chair

David Helpen  + *Jane Parshall* 
David Helpen and Jane Parshall
Co-Chairs, Landmarks Committee

cc: Honorable Bill de Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York
Honorable Carolyn Maloney, 14th Congressional District Representative
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 26th Senatorial District
Honorable Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District
Honorable Ben Kallos, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District