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Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building  
One Center Street, 9<sup>th</sup> floor  
New York, NY 10007

Date May 28, 2018  
Subject The Frick Collection

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

I write as a concerned architect and founder of a firm that has for 45 years dedicated itself to “Preservation *and* Progress.” I was also the architect of the 2015 conceptual counter-plan for Unite to Save the Frick, so I know much more of the program could have been accommodated below grade.

I am also co-chair of the Landmarks Committee of Manhattan CB8, where neither my committee nor the full Board could sort out what was appropriate. Their lamentable confusion about appropriateness arose because the lovely drawings and model were seductive but misleading: They focused on access, amenity, and functionality ... but they fudged about the bulk and scale of the additions. They hide that the Frick will lose its sense of place as one of the world’s great house museums.

The Frick is entitled to grow as an institution – but it is doing so yet again at the expense of the garden and the mansion.

- The library’s southern expansion endangers the Russell Page-designed garden. When it is rebuilt, they need to recreate the continuous planter and trees atop the north wall, and step back the proposed enlargement at the rear of the library. [The western enlargement discussed below also blocks a considerable amount of light, which needs to be discussed.]
- The two-story expansion over the Music Room is a hard-edged volume with punched-in windows. This is not compatible with the Neo-Classical style of the Frick’s original architecture.
- This mass – also the library’s western expansion – intrudes into the realm of the mansion, changing its profile and character against the sky and the surrounding buildings.
- LPC is concerned with the view into a structure through major street-level windows. The new scheme replaces the entry hall’s subtly-curved ceiling, visible through the arched windows of the garden, with a lower, flat ceiling. The original graceful form, part of the original architectural ensemble, is lost.
- At the same time, a line of Modernist windows incompatible with the hall’s style will replace the high copper roof with its fan-shaped termination. Once again, the cohesion of the original composition is sacrificed.

I have no doubt that the Frick and its current architect could solve both the functionality and the appropriateness. Please direct them to do so.

Sincerely,  
*(We no longer provide an electronic Signature)*  
David Paul Helpert, FAIA  
President