

# MORNINGSIDE SPEAKS!

## A Report on the January 25, 2017 Morningside Heights Community “Visioning” Workshop



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# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	pp. 4-6
<b>I. Background and Organization of the Workshop</b> .....	pp. 7-9
<b>II. Workshop Output: “Voices of Morningside Heights”</b> .....	pp. 10-17
<b>III. Morningside Heights Overview</b> .....	pp. 18-24
<b>Outdated Zoning Laws and Luxury Overdevelopment = Gentrification, Rent-Burden, Excessive Density, and Stress on Infrastructure</b>	
<i>Appendix A: MHCC Platform</i> .....	p. 25
<i>Appendix B: Community Workshop “Flyer”</i> .....	p. 26
<i>Appendix C: Stakeholder Invitation Letter</i> .....	p. 27
<i>Appendix D: Invited Stakeholders List</i> .....	pp. 28-35
<i>Appendix E: Community Workshop Welcome Letter</i> .....	p. 36
<i>Appendix F: MHCC Volunteer Sign-Up Sheet</i> .....	p. 37
<i>Appendix G: Community Workshop Participant Worksheet</i> .....	pp. 38-39
<i>Appendix H: Community Workshop “Guidelines and Principles”</i> ..	pp. 40-43
<i>Appendix I: MHCC Report – Primary Sites in Morningside Heights Vulnerable to Overdevelopment (“Soft Sites”)</i>	pp. 44-57

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community “Visioning” Workshop, facilitated and sponsored by the **Morningside Heights Community Coalition** on January 25, 2017 at Corpus Christi Church, was an opportunity for approximately 150 residents and stakeholders to discuss their community’s future, and consider implementing potential solutions, such as re-zoning, to ensure that neighborhood character is sustained; the local economy thrives; and middle-class and working-class residency and diversity remain viable now and for years to come.

Preceded by two other large community gatherings in June and September, the January 25 Workshop was prompted by the current and planned overdevelopment of luxury residential 32 and 40 story towers enabled through the sale of “air rights” by venerable Morningside institutions, the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), and the Union Theological Seminary (UTS). Additionally, over twenty other “soft sites” (empty lots, low-rise structures, vacant buildings) have been identified enabling luxury developers to take advantage of “as of right” zoning in Morningside, often combined with the unfettered purchase of “air rights,” to greatly exceed zoned height limits. Aside from casting shadows, blocking views and sunlight – the luxury towers cause area tax rates to rise, leading to higher rents, and displacement of long-time residents and small businesses.

Bordered by 110<sup>th</sup> Street and 125<sup>th</sup> Street, from Riverside Park to Morningside Park, (and dominated by local institutions such as Columbia University, Barnard College, St. Luke’s/Mt. Sinai, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Teachers College, Manhattan School of Music, Riverside Church, JTS, and UTS) Morningside is among the most densely populated, rapidly gentrifying New York neighborhoods. But only 7% (all in one building, the Enclave) of the estimated 1200 new apartments planned could be considered “affordable,” based on the current Area Median Income of \$90,600 for a family of four.

The Community Workshop participants’ voices were expressed and documented at the round-table discussions, through submitted written worksheets (*See Report Section II for direct quotes and evaluations*), and through the following summary “headlines” presented by a representative of each of the thirteen table groups at the end of the workshop:

*Morningside Needs to Preserve "Small Town" Environment, Infrastructure. Maintain "Quality of Life"*

*Institutional Overdevelopment "Creating Dead Community"*

*"Truly Affordable" Housing Needed to Promote Diversity and Preserve Sense of Community*

*Schools Overcrowded, Underfunded -- Need a New School Built for the 21st Century*

*Apartment Rental Pricing Soaring -- Middle-Class Priced Out*

*Arts Funding Would Improve Quality of Life and Economic Growth*

*Greenspace Opportunities: Covering Subway Tracks -- "High Line" Type Park Reduces Noise, Creates an Attraction*

*Re-Zoning Needed to Promote Contextual Development, Limit Building Heights -- "What Happened to Aesthetics?"*

*Transportation Needs Upgrade -- More Buses, More Trains, Elevators for Elderly and Disabled, Improve 125th Street Station Conditions*

*Tall Towers Robbing Morningside of Light, Air, and Space*

*Overdevelopment Limiting Pedestrian Spaces, "Walkability"*

*"Mom and Pop" Stores Disappearing -- Luxury Housing Raising Rents*

*Construction Safety Plans Should Be Enforced -- Neighborhood Residents at Risk*

Written concerns, comments and solutions from the submitted worksheets included the following examples:

*"We need to maintain the unique feel and scale of Morningside Heights. The neighborhood – its parks, its landmarks and institutions, its locally owned stores and its low rise scale – are special in Manhattan and we don't want to lose them."*

*"Developers should contribute to neighborhood improvement by developing or enhancing schools, infrastructure, and services in exchange for constructing buildings that exceed a certain height, size and number of units."*

The January 25<sup>th</sup> Workshop was attended and addressed by Councilmember Mark Levine, State Assemblymember Daniel O'Donnell, and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, all of whom attended MHCC's prior community meetings, and endorse the goal of rezoning to promote reasonable development in Morningside Heights.

## CONCLUSION

Morningside Heights remains a highly attractive, “as of right” zoning oasis for luxury developers, prompting the Workshop participants to express their concerns about the ongoing displacement of long-time residents and small businesses in their rapidly gentrifying area. Increasing density is placing additional stress on infrastructure and services; school resources; and already overcrowded subway cars, stations, and platforms. Participants felt that updating Morningside’s 1961 zoning laws could promote affordable housing, reasonable density, and development, while enforcing contextual architecture and limiting building heights.

In addition to modifying zoning laws, Workshop participants felt that Morningside’s local institutions and the developers should allocate some portion of both the “air rights” price and the construction budget to directly benefit the community – for example, to provide better subway access for the disabled, living-wage jobs, a new school, a senior center, and affordable housing. The process might take the form of a “Community Benefits Agreement,” for which there is local precedent.

The Workshop participants felt strongly that local government representatives and city agencies should work closely with the community to ensure the enactment and enforcement of updated zoning regulations, and the allocation of funding from wealthy developers for essential improvements needed in Morningside Heights.

## I: Background and Organization of the Workshop

On January 25, 2017 residents and others with a stake in Morningside Heights gathered at a “Community Workshop” at Corpus Christi Church to consider the community’s future, with specific attention focused on controlling excessive development and the potential for modifying outdated local zoning regulations.

The Workshop was sponsored by the Morningside Heights Community Coalition (MHCC). This civic organization was founded in April 2016 in response to plans by developers to build luxury condominium towers of 32 and 40 stories respectively on the campuses of Jewish Theological Seminary and Union Theological Seminary on West 122<sup>nd</sup> Street. These two massive and inappropriate developments are part of 1,200 new apartments, 93 % at market rate, at eight sites slated for the Heights. Morningside Heights’ obsolete and generous zoning regulations, unchanged since 1961, the existence of numerous other potential development sites, and the strength of Manhattan’s real estate market, all but guarantee that developers will seek to build additional high-density luxury housing in the neighborhood.

In June 2016, the founders of the MHCC drafted a Platform for Residential Development in Morningside Heights, setting forth seven principles for growth in the neighborhood, including limits on the height and requiring a minimum share of affordable housing in new buildings, mitigating the adverse effects on the neighborhood and social and economic investment in the Heights by institutions and developers. *(See Appendix A: MHCC Platform for Residential Development in Morningside Heights)*

The MHCC’s January Workshop was preceded by two well-publicized community meetings at the Church, each of which attracted around 200 people. At the first meeting on June 20, the threat and consequences of development at the eight sites were discussed and the Platform was reviewed. At a second on September 19, a comprehensive and detailed survey of over 20 other “soft sites,” where additional high-density development could occur, was presented. Two committees – Action and Zoning – were then formed to carry out the work of the Coalition. The committees have since met regularly, with over 20 people at each session. *(See Appendix B: Flyer announcing the January 25<sup>th</sup> Community Meeting)*



O’Donnell *(seen here in picture at left addressing the Workshop)* and Manhattan



Borough President Gale Brewer, all of whom endorse the Coalition's goal of rezoning for reasonable development in the Heights.

Both committees played major roles in publicizing, planning and conducting the Workshop. Flyers were distributed on the street and in building lobbies, publicized on Facebook and on the MHCC website; multiple emails were sent to hundreds of residents; dozens of local merchants were invited as were other stakeholders, such



as public and private institutions and churches. Members of the Coalition were already experienced in reaching the community through the recent successful campaign to designate the first Morningside Heights historic district. *(See Appendix C: Letter of invitation for the Workshop, and Appendix D: Invited Stakeholders List)*

The Workshop was attended by 150 people, mainly residents, but also including representatives from Community Board 9, Columbia University, Jewish and Union Theological Seminaries, elected officials' offices, the Morningside Area Alliance, and local schools. It was organized into small groups of 10-12 people at 13 tables to encourage discussion and thoughtful responses. A map showing where participants live and work indicates that they came from all parts of the Heights.



Every table had a volunteer facilitator, who had been trained in advance by an experienced facilitator, and a reporter to take notes. Each participant received a letter explaining the purpose and organization of the Workshop and a form for volunteering for one of the MHCC's committees. *(See Appendix E: Meeting Purpose and Appendix*

*F: Volunteer Form)* The heart of the Workshop material was a form listing various areas, such as housing, transportation, and public services, to guide the discussion and on which participants were asked to enter their priorities and comments. *(See Appendix G: Community Workshop Worksheet Form)*



After about 45 minutes of discussion, each table announced its participants' most important conclusions, termed "headlines," and shown in Section II of this report, and the completed forms were collected for tabulation. A total of 81 forms were returned and over 20 more residents volunteered to serve on the Coalition's committees. The notes from each table and the completed forms are the basis for the Workshop's findings presented in Section II of the report.



Explanatory material was displayed at the Workshop. Enlargements of the Coalition's Platform (*See Appendix H: Guidelines and Principles*) were on the walls, as was the extensive survey of soft sites" (*See Appendix I: MHCC Report – Primary Sites in Morningside Heights Vulnerable to Overdevelopment*), a map of the eight sites now slated for development, and graphic illustrations of the condominium towers proposed by the Seminaries.



The photos of the Workshop – overall shots and of individual tables – capture the enthusiasm and commitment of the participants.



## **II. Workshop Output: “Voices of Morningside Heights”**

### **Table Discussions**

There were 13 tables, each with between 10 and 12 active participants, facilitated by

community residents who had received training from a professional facilitator; discussions were animated and respectful, characterized by a common concern for the future of the neighborhood: participants overwhelmingly were in agreement on the need to preserve existing affordable housing and to develop new affordable housing; exert some public control over real estate development and limit the height of new buildings; ensure that city services are upgraded to accommodate the influx of new residents. In addition, participants offered other thoughtful recommendations for the future of the neighborhood.

### **Headlines**

At the conclusion of the table discussions, representatives from each of the 13 tables presented headlines capturing the group discussion in a few words:

*Morningside Needs to Preserve "Small Town"  
Environment, Infrastructure -- Maintain "Quality of Life"*

*Institutional Overdevelopment "Creating Dead  
Community"*

*"Truly Affordable" Housing Needed to Promote Diversity  
and Preserve Sense of Community*

*Schools Overcrowded, Underfunded -- Need a New  
School Built for the 21st Century*

*Apartment Rental Pricing Soaring -- Middle-Class Priced Out*

*Arts Funding Would Improve Quality of Life and Economic Growth*

*Greenspace Opportunities: Covering Subway Tracks -- "High Line" Type Park Reduces Noise, Creates an Attraction*

*Re-Zoning Needed to Promote Contextual Development, Limit Building Heights -- "What Happened to Aesthetics?"*

*Transportation Needs Upgrade -- More Buses, More Trains, Elevators for Elderly and Disabled, Improve 125th Street Station Conditions*

*Tall Towers Robbing Morningside of Light, Air, and Space*

*Overdevelopment Limiting Pedestrian Spaces, "Walkability"*

*"Mom and Pop" Stores Disappearing -- Luxury Housing Raising Rents*

*Construction Safety Plans Should Be Enforced -- Neighborhood Residents at Risk*

**Summary: Table Discussions and Worksheet Comments**

The worksheets, as might be expected, reflected the discussion at the tables. (See Appendix G: Community Workshop Worksheet) Worksheets were distributed to all entrants (approximately 130 distributed, and 81 returned). The following are the total number of responses participants chose to provide and submit for each

category presented on their personal “worksheet.” The worksheets were submitted anonymously, unless participants chose to enter “Name” and “Email” address in the spaces provided. (34 out of 81 provided some form of contact information).

68 commented on *“What Is Most Important to You?”*

61 commented on *Housing*

54 commented on *Building Heights/Views*

35 commented on *Schools*

39 commented on *Preservation/Landmarks*

37 commented on *Transportation*

33 commented on *Economic Development*

26 commented on *Community & Cultural Resources*

18 commented on *Municipal Services: Police, Fire, EMS*

28 commented on *Environment*

17 commented on *Additional Topics*

**Morningside Heights residents expressed a common sense that the unique character of their neighborhood is of great value, and that new luxury high-rise developments threaten that character.**

*“Institutions in Morningside Heights are creating a ‘dead community’.”*

*“Morningside Heights grew up due to the Cathedral of St. John, The Roosevelt/St. Luke’s Hospital, Columbia University, and should always be associated with these institutions.”*

*“We need to preserve the sense of neighborhood in Morningside Heights, including diversity in all areas -- age, race, economic, ethnicity.”*

*“Morningside Heights is a remaining small town in New York City. Desirable features of our neighborhood are parks and community feeling. We fear that the construction of large new buildings will destroy the quality of the neighborhood.”*

*“Increased density in Morningside Heights means more and better upkeep of both Morningside and Riverside Parks.”*

*“This is already one of the most densely populated neighborhoods in the country. It is irresponsible to allow unfettered development to continue.”*



*"We need to maintain the unique feel and scale of Morningside Heights. The neighborhood – its parks, its landmarks and institutions, its locally owned stores and its low rise scale – are special in Manhattan and we don't want to lose them."*

**Participants recognized the need to preserve affordable housing and to build new housing affordable to young people seeking to stay in the neighborhood and to newcomers other than the wealthy.**

*"Keep and preserve Public Housing. Preserve and increase diversity."*

*"Housing should be diverse and affordable divided into 40% lower income, 40% middle income and the remaining being higher income."*

*"Utilize existing spaces for arts/theater/cultural opportunities and residences for artists."*

*"Create as much rent-regulated housing as needed to serve long-term residents as well as students and newcomers."*

*"There should be a minimum low-income housing requirement in new construction."*



*"I raised my daughter here, and now she cannot afford it."*

*"Rising costs of housing affects whether students can continue to live in the area after they graduate."*

*"Young people coming out of college can't afford to live on their own, they must live with parents."*

*"Gentrification is happening – beyond anything we have seen."*

*Pictured: Columbia and Barnard Students from the Roosevelt Institute participated in the Community Workshop.*

**Participants cited particular neighborhood problems including:**

- Pedestrian safety
  - Noise from ambulances going to and from Mt Sinai/St Luke's Hospital
  - Crowded #1 subway stations with lack of access for disabled people and non-working escalators
  - Overcrowded buses
  - Lack of quality schools
  - Need for more parking.
- Positive note: Several residents noted that the neighborhood is safer now than in the past. (An overall reduction in crime has been recorded in Morningside Heights, and throughout New York City.)

**Participants often cited a need for action to require “give backs” from developers and institutions to fund neighborhood projects, and enable current low and middle-income residents to stay in their homes.**

**“Give-backs” from developers and institutions:**

*“Developers should contribute to neighborhood improvement by developing or enhancing schools, infrastructure, and services in exchange for constructing buildings that exceed a certain height, size and number of units.”*

*“There should be a ‘Community Benefits Agreement’ with public participation on the participatory budgeting model to determine the allocation of resources.”*

*“Institutions have a moral obligation to ‘pay back’ for community acceptance. There should be a community/institution development forum, rather than allow the institutions to impose their economic priorities.”*

**Along these lines, participants cited specific needs that could be funded and developed using “give backs” to the Morningside community:**

- Senior centers: To be included in new buildings or existing ones
- Senior subsidies: To benefit an aging population and enable residents to “age-in-place.” *“We are a neighborhood with many older people. Seniors shouldn’t have to leave their homes of decades because rents/maintenance, and items in stores are becoming unaffordable.”*

- Quality schools: More resources and supplies for existing schools, and new school construction to relieve severe over-capacity.
- Child care centers and playgrounds: To attract and meet the needs of families
- Support of 'Green Spaces' and existing gardens: Numerous public gardens are threatened by overdevelopment
- Green roofs in new structures: Morningside Heights as an energy efficient showcase neighborhood.
- Jobs for people who live in the neighborhood: *"The construction jobs at the buildings should be union jobs, and hire local residents; for example Grant Houses residents could get training for this."*
- Retain small businesses: Promote new "mom and pop" stores, limit period of time a storefront can remain vacant, and introduce "Pop-Up" stores to fill vacant storefronts.
- Transit Improvements: Elevator access for the disabled, escalators, expanded subway platforms to relieve overcrowding due to higher neighborhood density. *"Transportation is already overburdened in the area and will need massive updating to accommodate growth."*

**Some participants offered more comprehensive "vision" solutions, combining categories and new ideas to suggest long-term sustainable plans.**

*"Rezoning to ensure low buildings, preserving the low-rise, residential, unique character of the diverse Morningside neighborhood, and enhancing its mix of small business and capacity to be a showcase green community, accessible to mixed incomes."*

*"Preserving small local establishments and discouraging big box stores is key. Preserving historic facades is essential to the character of the neighborhood. New construction, if needed, must complement existing styles."*

*"Retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency and zero carbon or other advanced energy technologies – very appropriate green leadership for the Columbia neighborhood."*

*"Extend the Historic District to all Morningside Heights."<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Morningside Heights Historic District, covering approximately 115 buildings in the area between 110<sup>th</sup> Street and 116<sup>th</sup> Street, is in the final stages of approval.



**Long-time Morningside Heights residents shared personal details and observations. Here are some examples:**

*Rosemary has been employed at both Union Theological Seminary (UTS) and Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) and hates the idea of “doubling” the population and what it would mean in terms of crowding for shopping and buses.*

*Elise works at St. Luke’s Hospital and has lived in Morningside Heights for over 50 years. Her children attend neighborhood schools and she “wants to see it preserved as the same kind of neighborhood where I raised my kids.”*

*Liz has lived in Morningside Heights since 1968 and works at UTS. She finds it a “wonderful neighborhood” that is “spectacularly located,” and worries that “too many people, particularly wealthy” are moving in resulting in a “lack of community spirit.” “I treasure the views and the architecture really gets to me.” She objects to some of the newer buildings, such as the Teachers College dormitory on 121<sup>st</sup> Street, and Columbia’s Northwest Science Building (Broadway at 120<sup>th</sup> Street), which she feels do not fit in the architectural character of earlier buildings.*

*Doris has worked in Morningside Heights since 2001 and dislikes the development around the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. She already feels changes in that area including greater crowding on the streets and rising rents. “The people are not the same any more” with more affluent residents moving in.*

*Bemshi is a musician who has lived on Claremont Avenue for 42 years, having moved from the West Village because Morningside Heights was “quiet, pretty and had a park.” “I raised my daughter here, and now she cannot afford it” and has moved to Washington Heights. She expressed concern about a long pattern of broken promises from Columbia University in its interactions with the neighboring community. For her, “the noise and vibration of new construction [at the Manhattanville Campus] are a public health issue” that is not being adequately addressed. She worries about the stress on the neighborhood infrastructure and worries about “crowding on the #1 train, the only subway line serving the neighborhood,” and the fact that the M4 bus is slow. She noted that services like laundromats are disappearing as well as affordable restaurants. “Not everyone can afford Pisticci’s, as much as I like it,” she bemoaned. She feels a growing “lack of sense of community,” and an “alienating sense of entitlement from new residents.” She finds as rents go up, fewer residents greet one another in their buildings.*

*Alice has lived in “the Appletree building” [120<sup>th</sup> and Amsterdam] since 1983 and noted that her husband is on the faculty at Columbia so some of her issues are different but she said she had heard echoes of her own concerns from around the table. She said she wanted to make one point, that “change will come but it should be good change*

*and we should capitalize on that. Alice noted that a good change in Morningside Heights since she moved in is the greater safety in the parks, especially Morningside Park, which was “unwalkable in 1983.” She has seen “immense improvements” in the neighborhood over the last 30 years. She is now worried that new residential towers “will block sunlight and lead to more crowded trains and buses.”*

*Jennifer has lived in Morningside Heights since 1996. She felt that if only chain stores come into Morningside Heights, they may offer lower wages as well as having tough last-minute work schedules for employees, all of which make it more difficult for residents of Morningside Heights to find local good-paying jobs. One of the special advantages of Morningside Heights is that many can live within walking distance of their places of work, but this may change as the economic and residential nature of the neighborhood changes through development.*

**Overall, the discussions presented a clear capacity for an organized community able to express the multifaceted needs of Morningside Heights and advocate for its interests.**

### **III: Morningside Heights Overview: Outdated Zoning Laws and Luxury Overdevelopment = Gentrification, Rent Burden, Excessive Density, and Stress on Infrastructure**

The residents and stakeholders of Morningside Heights strongly expressed their deep concerns and aspirations during the roundtable discussions held at the Community Visioning Workshop on January 25, 2017 at Corpus Christi Church. Reading from the “Headlines” that were generated at the workshop, the community strongly believes the stress and impact of luxury overdevelopment, high-rise towers, soaring rents, displacement of residents, neglect of seniors, rising tax rates, declining small businesses, declining schools, overburdened infrastructure and transportation – are all leading to the steady erosion of the fabric and historic character of Morningside Heights.

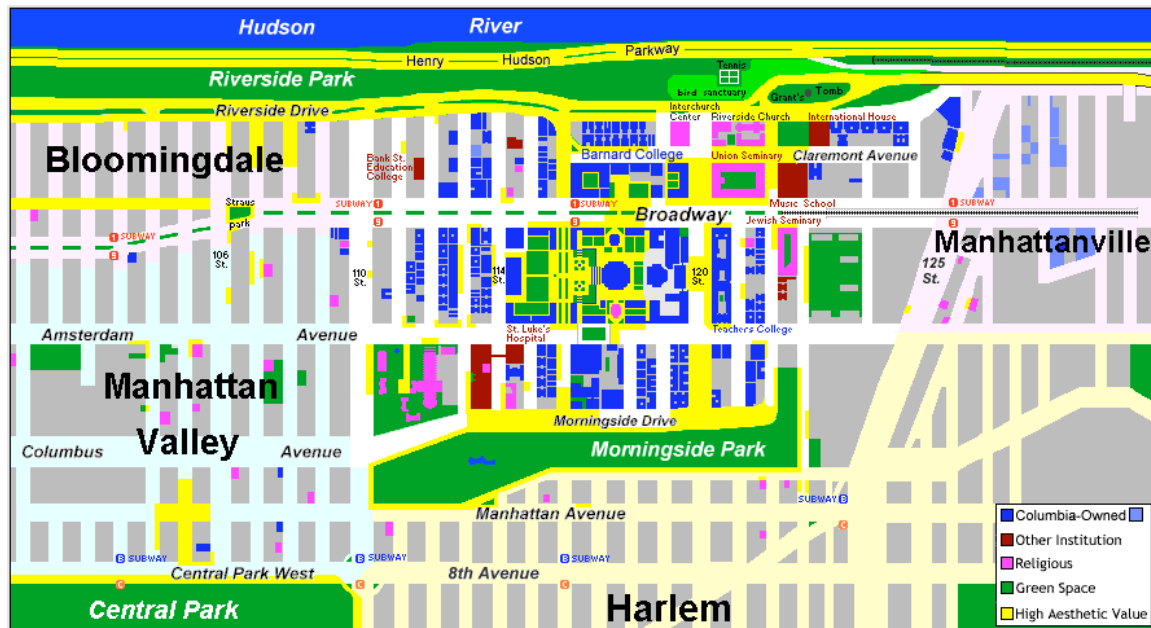
#### **A Brief History of Morningside Heights**

*Morningside Heights is graced with the highest concentration of institutional complexes built in a relatively short period at the turn of the 20th century, both in the city and anywhere in the United States. It is home to monumental places of worship, higher learning and healing, which accentuate its backdrop of rowhouses and apartment buildings, culminating in streetscapes that are both elegant and eye-filling. Topographically, it is situated on a plateau historically known as Harlem Heights, while geographically it is bounded by West 110th Street to the south, West 125th Street to the north, and two Frederick Law Olmsted– designed parks to the east (Morningside Park) and to the west (Riverside Park).*

*The introduction of the subway into Morningside Heights in 1904, coupled with the neighborhood’s magnificent parks and prestigious institutions, led to a frenzy of speculative apartment house construction, attracting middle-class residents who could now commute directly downtown to work. Even before the advent of zoning regulations for land use, developers erected rowhouses and modest apartment buildings on the side streets and grand apartment houses on the avenues, with particularly monumental examples on Riverside Drive, Claremont Avenue and Cathedral Parkway, and mixed-use commercial buildings along Broadway, giving the neighborhood a heterogeneous yet cohesive character. Morningside Heights’ unorthodox yet distinctive sense of place comes from the coexistence of residential and institutional clusters, as exemplified by elegant rowhouses and apartment buildings just steps away from renowned academic institutions and houses of worship.*

*Today the neighborhood still enjoys this singular sense of place. Its institutions are impressive examples of Beaux-Arts planning and design, including the graceful*

*approach to Grant's Tomb, the entrance façades of St. John the Divine and Riverside Church aligned with the axes of 112<sup>th</sup> Street and 122<sup>nd</sup> Street, and especially Charles McKim's plan for Columbia University, whose symmetry and axial layout emphasize the monumentality and unity of the surrounding architecture. The residential architecture, though sometimes grand, offers a human scale and balance to the whole neighborhood.<sup>2</sup>*



**NOTE:** On February 21, 2017, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designated a large portion of Morningside Heights as a Historic District -- over 115 buildings including those from 110<sup>th</sup> to 116<sup>th</sup> Streets, and up to 119<sup>th</sup> Street along Claremont Avenue and Riverside Drive. The designation may slow overdevelopment in this area, but large strips along Broadway outside of the new “Historic District” remain vulnerable, and the area from 116<sup>th</sup> to 125<sup>th</sup> Street, which may be considered for future approval by the Commission, is currently ripe for overdevelopment.

### **Morningside Heights: “As of right” Zoning Oasis for Luxury Developers**

Long-time Morningside Heights residents cherish their institutions, architecture, and “quality of life” seeking to preserve the community’s rich heritage and character. But the area is rapidly gentrifying, and rents are rising. These conditions are in large part attributable to Morningside’s attractiveness to luxury developers seeking to take advantage of “as of right” zoning.

“As of right” allows developers to execute the unfettered purchase of what are known as “air rights” (using the unused rights from an adjacent site to build a larger building) and greatly exceed the height limits set by zoning regulations dating to 1961, without seeking permission from the City Planning Commission, the City Council, or the local community. The “Mandatory Inclusionary Housing” law,

<sup>2</sup> from the Six to Celebrate Series – Historic District Council, c. 2013  
MHCC – Community “Visioning” Workshop Report  
March 1, 2017

which requires developers to provide affordable apartments when exceeding certain zoning restrictions, does not apply in an “as of right” zone where “air rights” are available for purchase.

Several years ago, residents of the neighborhood just south of Morningside Heights were outraged when two soaring glass towers, the Ariel West (31 stories) and Ariel East (37 stories) were erected by the Extell Development Company on Broadway and 99<sup>th</sup> Street. Working with local officials, community activists managed to achieve the passage in 2012 of a special-purpose zoning designation to limit future construction heights, and regulate commercial development. The same year, the area north of Morningside, West Harlem, was officially rezoned to accommodate the negotiated expansion of the new Columbia University campus while ensuring that low-rise, mid-block buildings were preserved in most areas and that affordable housing would be mandated for buildings exceeding zoned height limits. Today, Morningside Heights, sandwiched between these two re-zoned areas, has become an “as of right” oasis for luxury developers who can purchase available “air rights” and greatly exceed contextual building height, offering little or no affordable housing.

Aside from casting shadows and blocking views and sunlight, when a luxury high-rise is built in a middle-class and working-class community, real estate taxes are eventually assessed at a higher rate for the entire area. In turn, local landlords charge higher rents and may try to pressure rent-regulated tenants to leave. Owners of buildings that contain commercial space raise rents on small business owners or refuse to renew their leases in the hope of attracting higher-paying chain stores or banks. A number of small Morningside Heights merchants are on month-to-month leases, and many storefronts are deliberately being kept empty. New residents filling large towers place additional stress on community services (police, fire), transportation (subway crowding and overflowing platforms), and already neglected schools. The character, fabric, and quality of middle-class neighborhood life deteriorates.

Morningside Heights mean income is \$65,700, ranking 100 out of 117 neighborhoods included in the upper 20<sup>th</sup> percentile of New York neighborhoods (\$14,600 below the mean). At 68,240 residents per square mile, it is ranked 21 out of 118 in highest density (just behind the West Village and ahead of High Bridge and the South Bronx) when included in the survey with Hamilton Heights. Children, ages 0-17 make up only 11%, ranking 105 out of 118 neighborhoods, just behind the Upper Eastside, and ahead of Little Italy. The non-white population is 52.8%, divided evenly between Black, Asian and Hispanic, similar to the rest of Manhattan.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Statistical Atlas – Morningside Heights – April 2015

But recent and planned residential developments are in great conflict with Morningside demographics. Of the approximately 1200 new apartments already built or due to go online in the next few years, MHCC estimates that only 7% could be considered affordable (all in one building, the Enclave) under the guidelines of the current AMI (Area Median Income) of \$90,600 for a family of four, which includes areas outside of the five boroughs, including Westchester County.

According to the Furman Center report: *Focus on Gentrification (2015) Morningside Heights*, which includes Hamilton Heights, is among the fastest gentrifying neighborhoods in New York.<sup>4</sup> The study data collected between 2010 and 2014 shows a rise in rent of 36.7% between 2000 and 2010-2014, versus an average for New York City of 22.1%.

According to the Furman report, “recently available rental units became less affordable to low-income households in all neighborhoods, but particularly in gentrifying neighborhoods. In 2000, citywide, the median renter household could afford 20.2 percent of recently-available units; by 2010-2014, that share had fallen to just 13.3 percent. The largest decreases in affordability were for households earning 80 percent of AMI, especially in gentrifying neighborhoods. In 2000, 77.2 percent of recently-available rental units in gentrifying neighborhoods were affordable to households earning 80 percent of AMI. In 2010-2014, that share fell to less than half. Households at 80 percent of AMI saw smaller but still significant declines in affordability in other neighborhoods too.”<sup>5</sup>

According to the report, the share of recently available rental units affordable to low-income household declined sharply in gentrifying neighborhoods between 2000 and 2010-2014. And the share of low-income households (those earning between 50 and 80 percent of AMI) that were rent-burdened in gentrifying neighborhoods increased by 21% while the share of rent-burdened moderate income household increased by 18% during the same period.

Morningside Heights rents increased 7.7% (1990-2000), but surged 26.7% (2000-2010-2014), while incomes increased at a far slower rate, dropping from 9.5% to 7.6% during the same period.

**Long-time residents are rent-burdened by the real estate luxury overdevelopment boom that has arrived in rapidly gentrifying, densely populated Morningside Heights. And the evidence continues to rise all around us.**

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<sup>4</sup> Note: The Furman Center Report, and other available research reports, does not isolate Morningside Heights data.

<sup>5</sup> Furman Center Report: Focus on Gentrification, 2015

- Union Theological Seminary, located between 120<sup>th</sup> and 122<sup>nd</sup> Street, is proposing to co-develop a condominium tower located on the campus's quadrangle. The seminary would sell 350,000 square feet of "*air rights*," which would go towards a slender tower, potentially rising 35 to 40 stories.<sup>6</sup> Union's president, the Rev. Dr. Serene Jones, maintains that as much as \$150 million is required to renovate the campus. "We're a New York City institution " Dr. Jones has said, "and we have a New York City-sized problem. But fortunately we also have a New York City-sized answer. God is calling us to have another 100 years and '*air rights*' are the answer to that call."<sup>7</sup>
- Jewish Theological Seminary at 3080 Broadway sold a parcel of land to the developer Savanna which is building a 250,000 square-foot luxury condominium 32-story structure. Savanna paid \$77 million for the land, and "*air rights*." The seminary is using the money to renovate existing space and add new facilities, including a performing-arts center, library, and residence hall.<sup>8</sup>
- As a recently declared landmark (February 21, 2017), given its location, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine can sell its ""*air rights*"" to developers seeking to build across 110<sup>th</sup> street, but no deal has yet been announced. But in 2003, the church identified, in consultation with the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission, two development sites that were both offered to developers under 99-year leases. In 2008, AvalonBay communities developed the Avalon Morningside with 295 rental units, 20% of which are designated "affordable" which limits tenant income to \$23,000 a year. Recent market rate unit listings (2/26/17) are \$3,800 for a one-bedroom and \$7,200 for a two-bedroom. The church receives around \$2.5 million yearly from the developer for the Avalon. The second site, The Enclave, generating \$3 million yearly for the church, has 428 units, with 87 units designated "affordable."
- Nearby, St. Luke's Hospital sold 1080 Amsterdam Avenue (20 stories) in 2015 for \$29.1 million. The building had provided affordable housing to the hospital staff before conversion to all luxury housing (now called The Stonehenge) with studios starting at \$2,795, 1 bedrooms at \$3,575, and 2 bedrooms at \$5,995.
- A few blocks over, on 30 Morningside Avenue, the developer Delshah paid \$111.5 million to Mount Sinai/St. Luke's for five hospital buildings (two of which are landmarked) to be converted to 200 all-luxury rentals. Delshah is seeking to receive federal 20% historic preservation tax credits, totaling over

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<sup>6</sup> YIMBY – December 15, 2015

<sup>7</sup> New York Times – December 11, 2015

<sup>8</sup> The Real Deal – February 1, 2016



\$20 million, for the development costs in return for maintaining the landmark facades.

- Existing rental buildings are being sold or renovated as luxury units, displacing long-time residents. Three contiguous buildings, 3143-3149 Broadway, are on the market for \$48 million, with current average rents of \$3000 per unit. In another sale, The Orbach group paid \$19 million to the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) (part of their real estate and “air rights” sale) for 415 W. 120<sup>th</sup> Street, a seven-story 1910 student residence, built of Harvard brick and Indiana limestone, that is being demolished to make way for a 15 story luxury rental. JTS has also sold 3060 Broadway, a nine-story student dormitory with several ground-floor small businesses (barber shop, copy shop, coffee shop, deli) to eventually be converted to market rate housing by Coltown Properties.
- **Soft-Sites:** Additionally, The Morningside Heights Community Coalition has identified more than 20 local “soft sites” -- vulnerable real estate parcels with at least one of the following distinctions: low-rise, tenant-free, nonresidential, vacant and/or with available “air rights” with lots large enough for development, which in turn enable developers to build large towers inconsistent with the surrounding area and to create luxury rentals and condos beyond what the community can afford. It is just a matter of time and opportunity as to when local landlords and institutions will sell or develop these parcels or their “air rights” (*See Appendix I: Primary Sites in Morningside Heights Vulnerable to Overdevelopment*).
- **Transportation:** As the Community Workshop participants raised during their roundtable discussions, Morningside’s subway station platforms are often overcrowded and are inaccessible by the elderly and disabled. Costly improvements such as new escalators at 125<sup>th</sup> Street and the installation of elevators at the 110<sup>th</sup> and 116<sup>th</sup> stations, are essential. Real estate developers should be required to provide transit improvements in exchange for expanded FAR (Floor Area Ratio), as in other neighborhood areas. Significant new high-density developments resulting in an estimated 1200 new apartment units should trigger a mandatory transportation analysis by City Planning. The minimum number of units requiring analysis is 200 for Zone 2 (Manhattan north of 110<sup>th</sup> Street). <sup>9</sup> City Planning should undertake the study and work to enforce laws requiring that developers contribute to transit, and other transportation improvements needed based on the resulting impact analysis.
- **Schools:** Schools are overcrowded and outdated. For example, the top-performing Teachers College Community School has a capacity of 131, but

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<sup>9</sup> CEQR Technical Manual – Transportation p. 16-3, March 2014  
MHCC – Community “Visioning” Workshop Report  
March 1, 2017

has an enrollment of 273, or 208 percent over capacity. But parents say that the DOE's plan of placing some students from other schools in nearby P.S. 36 only worsens a situation where students are already struggling with limited resources.<sup>10</sup>

- **Community Amenities:** Centers are needed for seniors in a community with a large percentage of residents who are "aging-in-place." Stairs that provide access to both Riverside and Morningside Parks are crumbling. Continuing overdevelopment of densely-populated apartment towers without upgrading infrastructure will worsen the situation

### **Conclusion and Next Steps**

Updating Morningside's 1961 zoning laws could promote affordable housing, reasonable density, and development, while enforcing contextual architecture and limiting building heights. But in the meantime, neighborhood tax rates are rising, long-time residents are being displaced, subways are more crowded and infrastructure is stressed.

One helpful way to provide some balance is to allocate some portion of both the "air rights" price and the developer's construction costs to directly benefit the community – for example, to provide better subway access for the disabled, living-wage jobs, a new school, a senior center, and affordable housing. The process might take the form of a "Community Benefits Agreement," for which there is local precedent in the case of Columbia's expansion into West Harlem, and which has been executed in other New York neighborhoods and other cities. This would not in itself prevent (without new zoning restrictions) the current erection of luxury towers, but at least the community would realize certain benefits from their arrival.

And longer-range solutions are also required, because if steps are not taken to remedy this situation, Morningside Heights will suffer from the displacement of long-time residents and businesses and increased stress on local infrastructure and services, while major developers and real estate fund managers are handsomely rewarded. Morningside Heights residents need zoning updates enacted, and compensation to fund essential improvements from wealthy developers, and the local institutions reaping financial windfalls from the sale of property and "air rights." These are not wishful neighborhood aspirations; they should be supported by our local government and city agencies "as of right."

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<sup>10</sup> DNA Info – February 16, 2017

## **APPENDIX A: MHCC PLATFORM**

### **MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS COMMUNITY COALITION PLATFORM FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS**

Manhattan's residential real estate boom has arrived in Morningside Heights. Two luxury rental projects have recently been completed: the 428- apartment Enclave on West 113<sup>th</sup> Street and the Stonehenge with 96 apartments on Amsterdam Avenue. St. Luke's Hospital is selling four vacant buildings for \$115 million for conversion into hundreds of high-rent apartments. Jewish Theological Seminary recently sold the rights to build a luxury condominium tower of up to 40 stories on West 122<sup>nd</sup> Street to the Savanna Real Estate Fund for \$ 77 million and sold buildings at 3060 Broadway and 415 West 120<sup>th</sup> Street, with a total of 86 apartments, to investors for \$54 million. Union Theological Seminary is planning to sell the rights to build a condominium of up to 42 stories on its campus.

Neighborhood organizations want to make sure that the planned developments do not harm the Heights and in fact offer real benefits to the neighborhood, its families and public services. Our platform for residential development consists of seven features.

#### **Height Consistent With Nearby Buildings**

The height of new buildings should be consistent with their neighbors. In the cases of Jewish Theological Seminary and Union Theological Seminary they should not exceed the Manhattan School of Music and the Teachers College residences, which are each 18 floors.

#### **Exteriors Harmonize With Surrounding Buildings**

The exteriors of new buildings should be of the same or similar materials, mainly stone or brick, as buildings in their immediate vicinity.

#### **Views of Nearby Landmarks Preserved**

The views of nearby landmarks, such as Riverside Church and the UTS tower, should not be blocked by new buildings nor should they cast intrusive shadows.

#### **Mitigate the Impact on the Environment and Local Services.**

Mitigate any adverse impacts of new development, especially its cumulative effects. This includes transportation, parking, schools and other public services, shopping, resident displacement as well as air quality, sanitation and noise during and after construction.

#### **Provide Affordable Housing**

At least 30% of the apartments in the buildings or in nearby locations should be designated permanent affordable housing.

#### **Support Local Social and Economic Development**

Institutions and developers that will benefit from the planned housing should invest in local social and economic ventures. This might include education and employment for youngsters, assistance for seniors, aiding local businesses and reusing the gate house on Amsterdam.

#### **Rezoning Morningside Heights**

The neighborhood's zoning should be revised to encourage appropriate development in terms of land use and the height and bulk of buildings.

In addition, guiding practices for building construction should stress well-paid jobs, training and local business opportunities.

For more information: [morningsideheightscommunitycoalition.com](http://morningsideheightscommunitycoalition.com)

## APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP “FLYER”



40-Story Tower at UTS  
On 122<sup>nd</sup> Street



32-Story Savanna Tower  
at JTS on 122<sup>nd</sup> Street



15-Story Tower at 411  
West 120<sup>th</sup> Street

*Three luxury apartment towers are already planned*

# STOP OVERDEVELOPMENT!

**TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT OUR  
NEIGHBORHOOD**

COME TO A COMMUNITY WORKSHOP TO PLAN  
THE REZONING OF MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS  
*We need you... and your ideas*

**Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM**  
**Corpus Christi Church**  
**529 W 121<sup>st</sup> Street (East of Broadway)**

Sponsored by the Morningside Heights Community Coalition (MHCC)  
[Morningsideheightscommunitycoalition.com](http://Morningsideheightscommunitycoalition.com)  
Contact: [Info@morningsideheights.org](mailto:Info@morningsideheights.org)

## APPENDIX C: STAKEHOLDER INVITATION LETTER

### MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS COMMUNITY COALITION

P. O. Box 250405 Columbia University Station

New York, NY 10025

[info@morningsideheights.org](mailto:info@morningsideheights.org)

January 4, 2017

#### ***INVITATION TO JANUARY 25 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS COMMUNITY COALITION***

Dear Stakeholder in Morningside Heights:

The Morningside Heights Community Coalition (MHCC) cordially invites you to a **Community Visioning Workshop** to consider the future of the Heights. It will be held on **Wednesday, January 25 at 6:30 pm at Corpus Christi Church, 529 West 121st Street**, east of Broadway.

The Coalition was formed in the spring of 2016 in the wake of widespread concern that the Heights is being threatened by overdevelopment, such as the luxury condominium towers planned on West 122nd Street at Jewish and Union Theological Seminaries. Surveys by the Coalition showed that more than 20 other "soft sites" are also vulnerable to overdevelopment.

In response to these imminent threats, MHCC sponsored two community forums in June and September of 2016, each attended by over 200 residents.

At these forums it became clear that drastic changes in the character of the Heights could only be addressed by modernizing its obsolete zoning regulations, which date from 1961. Rezoning for reasonable development would also enable the Heights to take account of its needs for additional facilities and services and to preserve what distinguishes the neighborhood. We are already working on the rezoning with city agencies and it is strongly supported by our local elected officials.

At the Workshop on January 25, residents, merchants, developers, representatives from churches, educational institutions, schools and other parties will gather to talk about the future of the community we share. The discussions, mainly in small groups, will be based on the attached Principles and Guidelines prepared by the Coalition.

We look forward to your active participation in the Workshop and would ask that you RSVP to let us know if you will be attending. You can send your email reply to: [RNRETS@aol.com](mailto:RNRETS@aol.com)

Sincerely,  
Laura Friedman, President

## **APPENDIX D: INVITED STAKEHOLDER LIST**

At several committee meetings, the MHCC Zoning Committee determined the following list of Stakeholders were significant in developing an inclusive Vision for the Morningside Heights community. The names in parentheses are the MHCC members who suggested and/or contacted the invitee. (PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION HAS BEEN DELETED)

### **Grant Houses**

Carlton Davis Sr. (B. Weinberg)  
Tenant Association President,  
55 LaSalle Street NY, NY 10027

### **Community Board 9 (B. Weinberg)**

[info@cb9m.org](mailto:info@cb9m.org)

### **Teachers College**

Thomas James (L. Grimes)  
Dean of Teachers College

Janice Robinson (L. Grimes)  
Dean for Diversity

Nancy Streim (L. Grimes)  
VP for School and Community Partnerships

### **Columbia University**

Columbia University (H. Schwartz)  
Lee Bollinger, President  
Low Library  
535 West 116th Street  
New York, NY 10027

Maxine Griffith (H. Schwartz)  
Executive VP for Community Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations  
Low Library  
535 West 116th Street  
New York, NY 10027

### **Roosevelt Institute – Columbia Students**

Rachel Knowles (R. Stern)

Ali Freeman (R. Stern)

Connor Haseley (R. Stern)

### **GRANT’S TOMB (E. Sullivan)**

Mailing address:  
General Grant National Memorial  
122nd Street and Riverside Drive  
New York, NY 10027

**INTERNATIONAL HOUSE (E. Sullivan)**

Mailing addresss:

500 Riverside Drive

New York, NY 10027-3916

***The President's Office:***

Calvin Sims

President & CEO

Michael Walter

Special Assistant to the President

*Admissions, Programs & Resident Life Office (mostly deals with admissions, events and activities for residents):*

[Carla Fernandez-Soto](#)

Manager of Programs & Resident Life

Teacher's College

**Block Associations**

115-116 Streets Block Association (H. Schwartz)

c/o Harry Schwartz

50 Morningside Drive #31

New York NY 10025

**Co-op Boards**

Mark McDougle (R. Stern)

President

390 Riverside Drive

New York, NY 10025

545 West 111th St. (S. Stroud)

Nathaniel Polish, President of co-op (apt.8)]

president of Daedelus Technology

managing agent:

A.J. Rexhepi

Century Management Services

440 9th Ave., 15th Floor

NY, NY 10001

La Touraine Apartments (H. Schwartz)

50 Morningside Drive

New York NY 10025

c/o Robert Farrell, Pres.

Mt. Cenis Apartments (H. Schwartz)

54 Morningside Drive

New York, NY 10025

Judy Thoms

Toby Golick

Leta Weintraub (D. Robinson)

Board of Directors President

Spencer Apartments

523 West 121st St #43

New York, NY 10027



**Schools (Private and Public)**

The Cathedral School  
Columbia Sciences

P.S. 036 Margaret Douglas School (M036) (L. Grimes)  
123 Morningside Drive (at Amsterdam Avenue  
Manhattan, NY 10027  
(212) 690-5807  
Grades PK, 0K, 01, 02, 04, 05  
District 5  
Principal – Ms. Heather JnBaptist  
Parent Coordinator - Ms. Lisa Flores (L. Grimes)

P.S. 125 Ralph Bunche School (M125) (L. Grimes)  
425 West 123<sup>rd</sup> Street (between Amsterdam Avenue and Manhattan Avenue)  
Manhattan, NY  
10027  
Grades PK. OK, 01, 02, 03, 04, 05  
District 05  
Principal – Ms. Claudetta Lustin  
P.S. 125 Ralph Bunche School continued.  
Parent Coordinator – Ms. Griselda Hernandez

KIPP STAR College Prep Charter School (M726) (L. Grimes)  
[KIPP, the Knowledge is Power Program, is a nationwide network of public charter schools with several elementary, middle and college prep high schools in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem and Washington Heights.  
433 West 123<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Manhattan, NY 10027  
Grades 0K, 01, 02, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12  
District 05  
Principal of KIPP Star Elementary School– Ms. Stacy Johnson

Columbia Secondary School for Math, Science and Engineering (M362) (L. Grimes)  
425 West 123<sup>rd</sup> Street [shares a building with PS 125]  
Manhattan, NY 10027  
Grades 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12  
District 05  
Parent Coordinator – Ms. Andi Vaida Velasquez (L. Grimes)  
Head of School Leadership Team – Mr. Kevin Daly

Corpus Christi (MACU) (L. Grimes)  
535 West 121<sup>st</sup> Street  
Manhattan, NY 10027  
Grade: PK  
District 3  
Principal – Mr. Christian Mariano  
cmariano@ccschoolnyc.org  
[Corpus Christi School is a Catholic school covering grades PK through 8. I am not sure why the listing of the NYC public schools includes its PK division and I could not find out what “MACU” stands for.]

Virginia Connor, Head of School (S. Stroud)  
St. Hilda's & St. Hugh's School

Miriam Nightengale (S. French)  
Principal  
Columbia Secondary School for Math, Science and Engineering  
425 West 123rd Street  
NYC 10027

Mr. Reginald Higgins (05M125) (S. French)  
Principal PS 125

Dr. Sanayl Becklee-Canton (S. French)  
Director of Family Services  
Lutheran Social Services  
475 Riverside Drive Suite 1244  
10115

Miriam Nightengale (S. French)  
Principal  
Columbia Secondary School for Math, Science and Engineering  
425 W 123rd Street  
Ralph Bunche Campus

Kevin Daly (S. French)

**St. Lukes/Mt. Sinai**  
Arthur A. Gianelli (L. Friedman)  
President  
Mount Sinai, St. Luke's  
1111 Amsterdam Ave.  
NY., NY 10025

Marian Y. Scott, MS (L. Friedman)  
Director, Community Health  
Mount Sinai St. Luke's  
555 W. 57th Street, Suite 5 - 43  
NY, NY 10019

**Small Businesses**  
Mr. Larry LEVI (L. Grimes)  
Owner (co-owner?) of Appletree Market  
1225 Amsterdam Avenue (between 120<sup>th</sup> and 121<sup>st</sup> Streets)  
New York, NY 10027

Ms. Thaon PHAN (L. Grimes)  
Owner of Hartley Pharmacy  
1219 Amsterdam Avenue (@ 120<sup>th</sup> Street)  
New York, NY 10027

Mr. Jorge ALVARADO (L. Grimes)  
Owner of Vino Fino Wine Shop  
1252 Amsterdam Avenue (between 121<sup>st</sup> and 122<sup>nd</sup> Streets)  
Note: Mr. Alvarado is also the superintendent at 423 W 120<sup>th</sup> Street,  
a Columbia University building

International Wines & Spirits (H. Schwartz)  
2903 Broadway  
New York NY 100025  
Manager: Katia  
Nancy Phillips, Pres

Hamilton Delicatessen (H. Schwartz)  
1129 Amsterdam Avenue  
New York, NY 10025  
Mgr: nick ,Steve

University Housewares (H. Schwartz)  
2901 Broadway  
New York, Ny 10025  
Owner: Bob

Strokos Delicatesen (H. Schwartz)  
1090 Amsterdam Avenue  
New York NY 10025  
Nick: Mgr

Morton-Williams Supermarket (H. Schwartz)  
2941 Broadway  
New York, NY 10025  
Avi Kaner

Milano Market (H. Schwartz)  
2892 Broadway  
New York, NY 10025

West Side Market  
2840 Broadway  
New York NY 10025  
Mgr: Nick

KURO KUMA (coffee shop at 121 LaSalle) (E. Sullivan)  
Dave Jang, Owner

LILY (H. Schwartz)  
P.O. Box 250402  
Columbia University Station  
New York NY 10025

Village Copier (H. Schwartz)  
1181 Amsterdam Avenue  
New York, NY 10027

The Vitamin Shoppe (H. Schwartz)  
2841 Broadway  
New York, NY 10025

Sweetgreen (H. Schwartz)  
2937 Broadway New York NY 10025

DuaneReade by Walgreens (H. Schwartz)  
2864 Broadway  
New York, NY 10025

3139 Bway Wines & Liquors (H. Schwartz)  
3139 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027

Starbucks (corner Tiemann Place, New location (H. Schwartz)  
3165 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027  
Mgr: Yesenia

Bettalona Restaurant (H. Schwartz)  
3143 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027

The Mill Restaurant (H. Schwartz)  
2895 Broadway  
New York, NY 10015

Community Food and Juice (H. Schwartz)  
2893 Broadway  
New York, NY 10025

Kissaten Jin (H. Schwartz)  
3187 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027

Claremont Chemists (H. Schwartz)  
3181 Broadway  
New York, NY 10025  
Steve Soon Cha, Pres

Jin Ramen Noodle Bar (H. Schwartz)  
3183 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027

### **Theological Institutions**

Riverside Church  
(C. Mayerson)

Fred Cox is very active on committees at Riverside Church and will know how to route our mail or act on it himself.

Jewish Theological Seminary (H. Schwartz)  
3080 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027  
Marc Gary, Executive Vice Chancellor

Union Theological Seminary (H. Schwartz)  
3041 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027  
Rev. Dr. Serene Jones, President

Frederick A. Davie, M.Div.  
Executive Vice-President  
Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York  
3041 Broadway at 121st Street  
New York, NY 10027

**REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS**

Delshah (Development at St Luke's)  
Jeff Holmes  
Jeff Bogino

Orbach Group 415 W 120  
Efriam Friedman  
Michael McKeon  
Jaime Birman

**Riverside Park Conservancy**

President of the Riverside Park Conservancy and also the Parks Dept. Director of Riverside Park

Marie Ledoux  
Recording Secretary

**Morningside Heights - West Harlem Sanitation Coalition**

100 La Salle Street, 19F  
New York, NY 10027

**Manhattan School of Music**

Rebecca Charnow, Director (C. Mayerson)  
Community Outreach Program, Manhattan School of Music.

**Film and TV shoots in Morningside --- Mayors office of Film – Film Studios who need unique atmosphere of Morningside (L. Kostrinsky)**

The Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment is comprised of two divisions: the Office of Film, Theatre, and Broadcasting, and NYC Media.

Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME) of Film and TV mayors office : Julie Menin

**Libraries**

Maggie Barbour (L. Friedman)  
Library Manager  
NYPL - Morningside Heights Library  
2900 Broadway  
New York, NY 10025

**Nursing Homes**

Jim Davis (L. Friedman)  
President and CEO  
Amsterdam Nursing Home aka Amsterdam Cares  
1060 Amsterdam Ave  
New York, NY  
10025

Judith Fenster, M.S., L.N.H.A. (L. Friedman)

Senior VP and Administrator  
Amsterdam Nursing Home aka Amsterdam Cares  
1060 Amsterdam Ave  
New York, NY  
10025

**Local Politicians**

State Senator Bill Perkins (H. Schwartz)  
NYS Office Building  
163 West 125th Street  
Suite 912  
New York, NY 10027 contact: Philippe-Edner Marius

Council Member Mark Levine (L. Friedman)  
Aya Keefe – Chief of Staff  
500 W. 141 Street  
NY, NY 10031

Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell (L. Friedman)  
Nicole Migliore  
245 West 104<sup>th</sup> Street  
NY, NY 10025

Borough President Gale Brewer (L. Friedman)  
Jessica Mates – Chief of Staff  
1 Centre Street, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor South

Member of Congress Jerrold Nadler (L. Friedman)  
Robert Gottheim  
201 Varick Street, Suite 669  
NY, NY 10014

Member of Congress Adriano Espillat  
David Baily  
Deputy Chief of Staff, Community Affairs  
NYS Senator Adriano Espaillat  
31st District  
5030 Broadway, Suite 701  
New York, NY 10034

Manhattan Borough President Office  
Lucian Reynolds

Broadway Democrats (District Leaders)  
Paula Diamond  
Cutis Arluck

**City Planning**

Edwin Marshall (L. Friedman)  
120 Broadway  
New York, NY 10271

**Consultants**

Jonathan Martin (H. Schwartz), BFJ Planning, Associate Professor at Pratt

**APPENDIX E: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP WELCOME LETTER**  
**Morningside Heights Community Coalition**  
**Community Workshop**  
**Corpus Christi Church**  
**January 25, 2017**

Welcome! Thank you for coming to the Morningside Heights Community Workshop. Members of the Morningside Heights Community Coalition (MHCC) organized this event and we look forward to working with you.

**Community Workshop Purpose**

The purpose of tonight's workshop is to hear from you. We want to document your ideas on the key issues facing our community, your concerns about challenges to our quality of life, growth you want to see, and development you want to stop. MHCC will document all your ideas, thoughts, and quotes and deliver a report to the Department of City Planning, the Office of the Mayor, our local political representatives, and the media, as part of our ongoing campaign to make Morningside Heights a better place to live. We are working to revise outdated community zoning regulations in order to halt overdevelopment, and ensure affordable housing in the future.

To start the dialogue, the MHCC Zoning Committee developed Guidelines and Principles addressing:

**Community** – such as affordable housing, proper schools, emergency services  
**Business and the Arts** – such as neighborhood businesses, tourism, the arts  
**Adaptability** – such as energy efficiency, open spaces, transit improvements  
**Building Heights and Views** – such as contextual materials and density  
**Preservation** – such as ensuring homes for low and moderate-income tenants, maintaining landmarks, re-using structures to serve the community,

You will see posters with this, and other information around the room. We need your ideas, support and criticism. Tell us what is most important to you about Morningside Heights, and what would you like to see happen. Or write it down on the form provided.

**Stay Involved**

Sign up to our mailing list by contacting: [info@morningsideheights.org](mailto:info@morningsideheights.org)



**APPENDIX F: MHCC VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP SHEET**

**SIGN-UP TO TAKE ACTION ON  
OVERDEVELOPMENT IN MORNINGSIDE  
HEIGHTS**

**Please let us know what you would like to do now to prevent  
overdevelopment in Morningside Heights by checking below.**

**--- Action/Coordinating Committee**

**--- Health and Safety Committee (monitor new construction)**

**\_ Rezoning Committee**

**\_ Outreach and Communications Committee (e.g. tabling, contact  
neighbors)**

**Please give us your ideas and comments about what the MHCC  
should be doing.**

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**Name (Print)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email (Print)** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return to the MHCC representative. Thank you**

**Morningside Heights Community Coalition**

[www.morningsideheightscommunitycoalition.com](http://www.morningsideheightscommunitycoalition.com)

Facebook: [morningsideheightscommunitycoalition](https://www.facebook.com/morningsideheightscommunitycoalition)

MHCC – Community “Visioning” Workshop Report

March 1, 2017

## APPENDIX G: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT WORKSHEET

### **MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS COMMUNITY COALITION WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT SURVEY -- JANUARY 25, 2017**

FILL IN ANY OR ALL OF THE SECTIONS BELOW WITH YOUR OPINIONS, THOUGHTS,  
SUGGESTIONS. **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU ABOUT....**

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU ? \_\_\_\_\_

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HOUSING \_\_\_\_\_

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BUILDING HEIGHTS/VIEWS \_\_\_\_\_

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SCHOOLS \_\_\_\_\_

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PRESERVATION/LANDMARKS \_\_\_\_\_

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TRANSPORTATION \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

COMMUNITY & CULTURAL RESOURCES \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

MUNICIPAL SERVICES: POLICE, FIRE, EMS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ENVIRONMENT \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL TOPICS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT INFO (OPTIONAL) NAME \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX H: “GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES**

### **Community**

#### **GUIDELINE:**

Maintain and promote a diverse, thriving and singular neighborhood character and a “Morningside” sense of place by ensuring that current residents, including seniors and low-income families, can remain in their homes, while attracting a diverse group of new, young families.

#### **PRINCIPLES:**

1. Ensure that seniors, the disabled and students have access to affordable housing.
2. Provide affordable two and three bedroom rental apartments for younger families.
3. Provide sufficient space, teachers, and staff for public schools, and expand school support programs, such as after-school activities.
4. Improve and maintain entryways to buildings, parks and subways to accommodate the disabled, the aged and children.
5. Increase police, fire, EMS and sanitation services for a growing population.
6. Expand public library services, especially for students, seniors and low-income families.
7. Provide senior and other community centers and services that will enable older people, especially those with low and moderate incomes, to remain in the neighborhood.

## **Business and the Arts**

### **GUIDELINE:**

Maintain and promote a commercially viable neighborhood by enabling a diverse merchant base to thrive and serve local residents, families and visitors.

### **PRINCIPLES:**

1. Encourage a mix of current and new small businesses at rents they can afford.
2. Minimize storefront vacancies through strategies, such as temporary “pop-up” stores and cultural exhibits, that encourage pedestrian traffic and local commerce.
3. Limit the size of commercial spaces and frontages to discourage inappropriate chain or big-box stores that diminish the quality of life and displace smaller, local establishments.
4. Promote tourism and access to historic sites, such as Grant’s Tomb, Riverside Church, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and Columbia University, and ensure that they are accessible and not blocked by new buildings.
5. Increase investment in the arts – theater, music, dance, galleries -- to enhance the quality of community life and to attract visitors and commerce.
6. Increase the availability of convenient and essential neighborhood commercial services and amenities, such as laundromats, at reasonable rents.

## **Adaptability**

### **GUIDELINE:**

Adaptability initiatives should include preserving the unique character of Morningside Heights and ensuring that the fabric of the neighborhood will endure.

### **PRINCIPLES:**

1. Promote energy efficiency by retro-fitting existing buildings and constructing new buildings with the latest energy technology to make Morningside a showcase "green" community.
2. Enhance access to the indoor and open spaces of local institutions, such as Columbia and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, by residents and visitors.
3. Improve transit – buses and subways – by expanding and making subway entrances and platforms more accessible and increasing the frequency of service. Make it easier and more convenient for the elderly and disabled to use the subways by keeping escalators in good order and installing elevators.

## **Building Heights and Views**

### **GUIDELINE:**

New buildings in Morningside Heights should reflect the neighborhood's scale and character.

### **PRINCIPLES:**

1. The heights of new buildings should be consistent with nearby structures. For example, new buildings at or near the seminaries should not exceed the Manhattan School of Music and Teachers College residences, which are 18 floors.
2. The design and materials of new buildings should be consistent with and harmonize with their surrounding buildings.
3. Accommodate increased density by restricting new, high-rise buildings to designated avenue blocks, such as Broadway, while ensuring that mid-block, lower-rise buildings are preserved.
4. New buildings should not cast intrusive shadows over residential areas and

parks.

5. New construction should offer space at reasonable rents to existing businesses.

## **Preservation**

### **GUIDELINE:**

Maintain the historic character, views and sense of place of Morningside through building preservation, creative adaptive re-use of existing historic buildings and measures to ensure that vulnerable tenants are secure in their homes.

### **PRINCIPLES:**

1. Ensure that low and moderate-income tenants can remain in their homes by enforcing rent regulations and protecting against harassment and displacement by landlords.
2. Appropriately re-use existing buildings, such as the landmarked reservoir Gate House, to better serve the community, such as for a senior or visitor center.
3. Maintain Morningside's landmarks and vistas to enhance the singular character of the neighborhood and to encourage tourism and local commerce
4. Maintain Morningside's attraction to film and television production companies who value its accessibility and character and contribute to the city's economy.
5. Keep existing residential structures in good condition.

## **APPENDIX I: MHCC REPORT – (“SOFT-SITES”)**

# **Primary Sites in Morningside Heights Vulnerable to Overdevelopment**

Prepared by:  
The Morningside Heights Community Coalition  
The Morningside Heights Historic District Committee  
P.O. Box 250405, Columbia University Station  
New York, N.Y. 10025

September 2016



## Purpose

The purpose of this report is to draw urgent attention to the potential for overdevelopment of many “at risk” sites that threatens to change forever the face of Morningside Heights.

From new apartments at the Enclave on the grounds of St. John the Divine on West 113<sup>th</sup> Street to the four former St. Luke’s Hospital buildings across the street, to high-rise luxury towers going up at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) and Union Theological Seminary (UTS), our neighborhood has already been uniquely targeted by developers taking advantage of outdated zoning regulations that enable “as-of-right” construction and unfettered acquisition of ““air rights”.”

Recently completed new and rehabilitated housing and projects in active planning, such as JTS and UTS towers, will contain close to 1,200 apartments, of which only 7% will be affordable, all in the Enclave project at the Cathedral. We, and many in the community, believe that the already built and proposed new structures are wildly out of context with the surrounding neighborhood, impose stress on our already beleaguered infrastructure, and displace long-established small businesses. We are concerned that new and proposed luxury rental and condo buildings will exert market pressure for local landlords to evict working-class and middle-class tenants who comprise the college-town fabric of our distinct area.

We recognize and support the benefits of reasonable increased development density to provide affordable housing that will ensure new and current working-class and middle-class families a stable home. And we also strive to preserve the urban charm, historic institutions, and college-town lifestyle of Morningside, which developers also recognize as a highly attractive neighborhood for significant investment. We are seeking planning and zoning solutions that support the following objectives:

- Building heights consistent with nearby buildings
- Exteriors that harmonize with surrounding buildings
- Preservation of landmark views
- Mitigation of impact on the environment and local services
- Provision of affordable housing
- Support of local social and economic development
- Rezoning of Morningside Heights to encourage appropriate development

- Well-paid construction jobs, training, and opportunities for local businesses

## **Vulnerable “Soft Sites” for Overdevelopment**

In order to work from a common understanding of the areas that are “at risk” for overdevelopment in Morningside, we have researched and compiled a list of “soft sites,” selected because they have one or more of the following distinctions: “low rise,” “tenant free,” “non-residential,” “vacant” and/or with available “air rights” “sufficient lot size for development”-- enabling developers to erect large towers inconsistent with the surrounding area, and create luxury rentals and condos beyond the affordability of our community.

The following data was obtained from the City Register (ACRIS); online articles and real estate information web sites; discussions with local representatives and with local merchants; and our own observations at site visits.

Based on a sampling of property reports, all applicable sites within this Morningside Heights area are assumed to be Zoned R-8, with commercial overlay C1-4, and with an allowed FAR of 6.02.



### **(1.)\*TD Bank and American Apparel (VACANT) -- 2831**

Broadway (NW corner 109th Street along Broadway)

Block 1893

Lot 43

Most recent recorded

deed: 4/27/2016 -- Party 1, TD

Bank and Party 2, The Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburgh, but there is

also a 4/27/2016 deed to 2825 Broadway LLC (No further info found). Along with the adjacent Rite Aid site, this entire block, comprised of three one-story commercial sites, is at risk for overdevelopment.



### **(2.) \*Rite Aid -- 2853 Broadway**

(SW corner 110th Street)

Block 1893

Lot 50

(Note: Formerly Sloan's Supermarket -- property remained with Sloan family real estate ownership)

Most recent recorded

deed: 4/13/11 -- CKMR Corporation F/K/A Sloan's Supermarkets, Inc., 2 Bennet

Avenue, New York, NY 10033 -- 212 795 5600. Large, one-story corner site at risk for overdevelopment, along with entire block.

**\*Note:** Though the TD Bank, and vacant American Apparel are separate ownership and Lot from the Rite Aid, the contiguous storefronts and Lots could be combined to form an entire, block-long development along Broadway.



**(3.) Congregation Ramath Orah Synagogue** – 550 W. 110<sup>th</sup> Street  
Block 1881

Lot 56

Built in 1921 in the Neo-Georgian style as the Westside Unitarian Church, the congregation was founded in 1942, and has been nominated (6/12/2015) by Gov. Cuomo to the State and National Registry of Historic Places.

Most recent deed recorded:

8/28/2007 – Congregation Ramath Orah. However, an Agreement also dated 8/28/2007 cites The

Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York.

Note: According to Meeting Notes from a Land Use Committee hearing in 2000, regarding variances for Columbia to construct a 12-story school and retail outlet adjacent to the Synagogue (which they proceeded to develop), “The applicant plans to use these development rights to develop the proposed building -- the unused development rights associated with the neighboring Lot 56 (Congregation Ramath Orah Synagogue) which rights are owned by the applicant (Columbia).”

Soft Site? – It would seem that Columbia has already used the Synagogue “air rights”, but if not, the site would be attractive to a developer who could offer to house a new Synagogue within a modern tower, unless the proposed historic designation (not yet granted) prohibits destruction of the site.



**(4.) Banco Popular** -- 2852

Broadway (SE corner 111th Street) -  
- (slated for demolition, according to Assemblymember Dan O'Donnell)

Block 1882

Lot 61

Most recent recorded deed:

6/2/2016- Urban-Scape LLC, Wells Fargo Bank as Trustee

Urban-Scape LLC (not to be confused

with Chicago corporation of same name), owned by Eddie Mizrahi (no further information found). Columbia offices also located in building.  
 Additional Background: Low-rise site is next to building with commercial space and tenants (4 stories) housing Koronet Pizza and Mel's Burger, owned by Lawrence Friedland, chairman of Friedland Properties (whose website reports owning over 100 properties). It would seem "air rights" could be obtained from Friedland to build a high-rise at site, and is therefore at risk for overdevelopment.



**(5.) Citibank Site** -- 2861 Broadway (NW corner 111th Street) -- **VACANT**, closed since January 2014 fire completely destroyed site.

Block 1894

Lot 47

Most recent recorded deed:

4/30/2014 -- Elizabeth Hutchins, Co-Executor

Additional Background: The property has been in the Hutchins family since 1971, perhaps earlier. Hutchins, along with her husband R. Alastair Short, inherited property from her

father. According to Assemblymember Dan O'Donnell, Citibank, the lessee, is responsible for re-building the site, but initially had wanted to purchase the building and perhaps neighboring building "air rights" (2867 Broadway, and adjacent buildings) to develop a taller structure. However, the owners prefer to continue to lease the site to Citibank. Current plans are for a modest, low-rise bank site, similar to previous. O'Donnell has confirmation of Citibank tentative plans: Phase I: Oct. thru Dec 2016 – Demolition, Scaffolding, Façade Restoration; Phase II: Dec. through July 2017 – Rooftop, Infrastructure; Phase III: July through Dec. 2017 – Build new branch. Site still at risk for overdevelopment until the rebuilding of the previous type of site is confirmed as underway. A job filing for Demolition was listed 9/9/16.



**(6.) Samad Deli and The Heights (upstairs restaurant)** -- 2867 Broadway (between 111th - 112th Street, Westside)

Block 1894

Lot 49

Most recent recorded deed: 3/12/2012 -- Miriam Jochowitz, and Carol Jochowitz, Executrix, inherited from Ruth Fink.

Note: According to Samad owner/manager, store is on month-to-month lease, and "real estate people"



were taking pictures and "looking around". Site still at risk for overdevelopment, depending on plans for the former Citibank site.



**(7.)The former Vareli Restaurant (VACANT) -- 2869**

Broadway (between 111th-112th Street, Westside)

Block 1894

Lot 50

Most recent recorded deed: 6/13/2012 -- ZOI Realty.

Note: Site is owned by Zoitas family, owners of Westside Market. The former Vareli restaurant was owned and operated by the son of George Zoitas. Spotted online ad in May 2016 for leasing site at \$30K/month, but site remains vacant. Still at risk for overdevelopment.



**(8.) 2875 Broadway (aka 600 West 112th Street -- SW corner)**

Block 1894

Lot 52

Most recent recorded deed: 10/30/2003 -- Longfellow Properties, Inc. and Lillian Seril (Party 2)

Note: Site has the following retail storefronts: Pinkberry, Possibilities -- a party notions store, Chase Bank, a small VACANT storefront, and a large VACANT storefront on the corner (the former Bank Street Book Store). Building also has upstairs office tenants, including The Columbia Spectator, the student newspaper of Columbia University.

Note: Longfellow is a real estate company operated by Barbara and Pearl Seril, the daughters of the original owner, Lillian Seril, who died in 2004. Seril once owned THE BELNORD, 225 W. 86th Street, the site of a highly contentious rent strike in the 1970s. Barbara Seril is currently registered as an attorney with an office at the Longfellow Properties location, 30 East 76th Street, Floor 4, New York, NY 10021. 212 327 0011.

NOTE: This 2875 Broadway corner block site, along with the Citibank corner site, is optimal for overdevelopment when "air rights" of adjacent sites are obtained, possibly across the entire 111th-112th Westside block.



**(9.) Community Garden -- known as The Peoples Garden -- 1036**

Amsterdam Avenue at 111th Street

Block 1883

Lot 28

Most recent recorded

deed: 10/18/2004 -- City of New York

Note: Local community activists won

permanent "garden status" and approval from City Planning in 1985.

Soft Site? Would require change of status from City.



**(10.) Parking Lot -- 506 W.**

112<sup>th</sup> Street

Block 1883

Lot 38

Most recent recorded deed:

7/16/2010 -- Ecumenical

Community Housing

Opportunities, Phipps

Affordable II Housing

Development

The Parking Lot is adjacent to

508 W. 112th Street, a small

apartment building owned by

Nunz Realty, and it is also

adjacent to 1050 Amsterdam

Avenue. 1050 is a 100%

affordable housing facility

primarily for senior citizens, called Echo Apartments, and is owned by Phipps Affordable Housing (Phipps House), which is affiliated with the Sunnyside Development (a large affordable housing project voted down by Councilmember Van Bramer) and develops/manages many affordable housing apartment buildings throughout New York. Even though the Parking Lot is owned by a business entity that relies on government funding to support development of affordable housing, Phipps may be free to use "air rights" from adjacent buildings (508 owned by Nunz, and 1050 Amsterdam, owned and/or operated by Phipps itself) to construct a "non-contextual" mid-block tower.



**(11.) Book Culture and Post Office --**  
 536 W. 112th Street  
 Block 1883  
 Lot 54  
 Most recent recorded deed: 8/27/2013  
 -- Party 1, NYC Dept. of Transportation,  
 Party 2, The Trustees of Columbia  
 University in City of NY  
 Note: Low-rise two-story structure  
 Possible risk for overdevelopment if  
 Columbia decides to proceed.



**(12.) 611 W. 112th Street (The  
 Maranamay) -- VACANT AND  
 SHUTTERED**  
 Block 1895  
 Lot 8  
 Most recent recorded deed: 3/7/2006 --  
 Party 1, 611 Realty Co, Party 2, 611 W  
 112 St Realty Corp., P.O. Box 20570,  
 New York, NY 10017 718 275 8001  
 Note: The Maranamay, built in 1924,  
 had been a charming 6-story residence

with large window awnings, as depicted in an original sales brochure from the NY Public Library archive. More recently, it functioned as "Colonial House," an SRO residence, according to the Columbia Spectator, and has been cited with numerous code violations. The owner of 611 Realty is Mark Hersh, a landlord with multiple Westside properties and other SROs, who was reported to have evicted tenants by force. The fortunes of Westside real estate skyrocketed, and Hersh claims that he was prohibited from renovating because he required a special permit called a "certificate of no harassment," according to a 2006 Village Voice article. Again, based on most recent deed filed, Hersh still owns property. Soft Site? -- A renovated Maranamay could become a luxury Co-op, or it could be demolished (however, unlikely since it fits within the projected Historic District). At this time, site seems to be in limbo.



**(13.) 113th Street Play Garden\* -- 520  
 W. 113th Street -- contact John Arbo 212  
 865 0497 (based on web page)**  
 No Block and Lot available  
 Managed by the 113th Street Block  
 Association  
 Note: In 1998, Columbia decided not to  
 develop the site and instead funded



playground improvements, at the urging of the community, according to the Columbia Spectator.

Soft Site? -- This site likely remains owned by Columbia, who perhaps could decide to develop. No official "park" designation found in records.



**(14.) 514 W. 113<sup>th</sup> Street\***

Block 1884

Lot 42

Adjacent to the 113<sup>th</sup> Street Play Garden, this low-rise structure houses Columbia offices. No deed is found in the City Register. The property is cited as belonging to The Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York.

\*Note: Columbia could combine this Lot with the adjacent Play Garden to develop the site, if they chose to proceed.



**(15.) Parking Lot – Between 605 and 613 W. 113<sup>th</sup> Street**

Block 1895

Lot 52

Most recent deed: 4/10/1981, Party 1 - Columbia University City of New York, Party 2 – State of New York

Description: Large, square lot with chain link fence and Reserved Parking only with permit.

Note: No Block or Lot attributed

directly to the Parking Lot, only to 607 W. 113<sup>th</sup> Street, as “Entire Lot.” The 113<sup>th</sup> Street lot is adjacent to a smaller rectangular vacant lot on 114<sup>th</sup> Street (possibly another individual site at risk) that could be combined into one large through-block site. Assume Parking Lots are owned by Columbia and it can develop each site, or combination of the two sites, if it chooses to proceed.





**(16.) Columbia University Parking Lot and St. Luke's Building**

– West 115<sup>th</sup> Street through to West 114<sup>th</sup> Street including 411 W. 114<sup>th</sup> Street

Block 1867

Lot 9

Most recent recorded deed: 10/30/02 – Party 1 -- St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center, and Party 2 – Trustees of Columbia University in City of NY, and Consent

– 10/30/2002, Dormitory Authority of the State of New York, and United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The site consists of two parts: a parking lot along W. 115<sup>th</sup> owned by Columbia, and 411 W. 114<sup>th</sup> leased to St. Luke's and owned by Columbia..

Possible scenario: According to Columbia, the entire site may be slated for a 21-story building that would use air-rights from the adjacent Notre Dame church, and a zoning bonus for providing community facilities. The proposed building would be 300K sq ft, and Columbia has indicated that it could be used as an undergraduate residence.



Additionally, the adjacent parking lot along 115<sup>th</sup> Street could be at risk for overdevelopment as a separate site. It is used solely by Columbia University for their vehicles and storage. The entire parking lot site combined with the Columbia 114<sup>th</sup> Street building (along with the possible church "air

rights") currently leased to St. Luke's, are all at risk for overdevelopment in roughly two years should Columbia decide to proceed when St. Luke's lease for 411 W. 114<sup>th</sup> Street expires.



**(17.) 415 W. 120<sup>th</sup> Street**

Block 1963

Lot 9

Most recent recorded deed:

2/18/2016 – Assignment of Leases and Rents, 415 West 120<sup>th</sup> Holdings LLC, and Deed: 2/18/2016, Party 1 – The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), and Party 2 – 415 West 120<sup>th</sup> Street Holdings LLC

This residential building was recently sold by JTS, and is currently undergoing asbestos removal.

Originally “The Devinclare Residence for Self-Supporting Women”, built of Harvard brick and Indiana limestone,

was a gift to the Roman Catholic Church.

Note: 415 West 120<sup>th</sup> Holdings LLC is owned/managed by the Orbach Group, 707 Palisades Avenue, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632 201-242-4800. Orbach paid \$19 Million for the 5-story site, and owns multiple Westside properties including 929-971 Amsterdam Avenue, and 354 Cathedral Parkway. Orbach has been cited in articles for encouraging current tenants to leave in order to make room for higher-paying Columbia students.



**(18.) GMC Parking Garage – 532 W.**

122<sup>nd</sup> Street

Block 1976

Lot 56

Note: No deed listed in City Register, but Property is cited as belonging to Trustees of Columbia University.

Recently, Westside garages have become highly attractive “soft sites” for developers. This particular garage is situated on the opposite side of the street from the new Jewish Theological Seminary luxury tower, under development by the Savanna Group, and is at risk for overdevelopment.





### **(19.) Parking Lot and Garage – 500 Riverside Drive**

(International House rear on Claremont Ave.)

Block 1994

Lot 57

Most recent recorded deed – 5/1/96 - Dormitory Authority of New York State

Soft Site? – Though there is currently no construction permit on record, and the parking provisions may be mandated

under zoning laws, this expansive space may be vulnerable to developers seeking a prime location.



### **(20.) 3060 Broadway**

Block 1976

Lot 1

Most recent recorded deed:

2/10/2016 – Party 1, The Jewish Theological Seminary of America -- Party 2, 3060 Broadway Property

We understand that JTS has sold the site to 3060 Broadway Property LLC, but reserves the right to use the property as dormitory housing for its students for a period of four years, until the new JTS housing facility on 122<sup>nd</sup> Street is ready for occupancy.

Note: 3060 Broadway Property is owned/managed by Coltown Properties, headed by Steven

Neuman and Israel Weinberger. According to a 6/19/2015 Village Voice article, *A Manhattan Landlord Is Evicting An Entire Block of Latino Business Owners*, Coltown, as co-owners, gave 8 businesses 30 days' notice to vacate along 162nd-163rd Streets and Broadway, after raising the rents to unaffordable rates. Some had been in the neighborhood over 40 years. Councilmember Mark Levine intervened. Levine is quoted as saying that he's seen this scenario play out time and again across the city: Landlords raise the rent on commercial tenants, the tenants can't pay and are forced to move out, chain stores and restaurants move in, and the local fabric of the community is destroyed. With Coltown Properties' track record, it would seem that 3060 Broadway is ultimately at risk of overdevelopment. In jeopardy are 5 mom-and-pop stores, including the Olive Tree Deli, the Broadway Au Lait Café, Columbia

Cleaners, a barbershop and a copy shop that are part of the fabric of the neighborhood and provide important services.



**(21.) McDonalds -- 600 W. 125th Street\***  
Block 1995  
Lot 26  
Most recent recorded deed: 7/12/2004 -- Party 1, The Trustees of Columbia University in the City of NY, Party 2, McDonald's Corporation  
McDonald's is on the corner with a large parking lot.



**(22.) 614, 620, 622, 624 W. 125th Street (Abandoned)\***

Block 1995  
Lot 40  
This line of several crudely built delivery docks sits adjacent to the McDonalds Lot, and is listed as "inactive/dissolution" as of 9/23/1992, having been incorporated on 11/05/1980 by

Santagelo & Cohen, 253 Broadway, NY. NY 20007. No specific deed located in the City Register, but the Lot is listed under The Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York.

**\*Note:** The combined McDonalds and adjacent sites, across the street from the new Columbia campus site, are at high risk of overdevelopment should Columbia decide to proceed



**(23.) Duane Reade**  
 -- 568 W. 125th  
 Street  
**Amalgamated Bank**  
 -- 564 W. 125<sup>th</sup> Street  
**Wine Shop** -- 566 W.  
 125<sup>th</sup> Street  
 (VACANT)  
**Lincoln Fried**  
**Chicken** -- 576 W.  
 125<sup>th</sup> Street  
**Subway Shop** -- 578  
 W. 125<sup>th</sup> Street  
 Block 1980  
 Lot 75  
 Note: The SW corner  
 of 125th Street is  
 a one-story

commercial structure with a Duane Reade on Broadway, and several small retail outlets, including a Subway and a Wine Shop, and Amalgamated Bank on 125th Street around the corner. There is also a Bank of America forming the corner slot. Although some of these locations have different addresses, they all seem to fall into a single Block and Lot, and under the same ownership.

Most recent recorded deed: 10/26/2012 -- Jay & Mark Irgang at 125th/Broadway LLC Irgang Equities, 121 Tweed Blvd., Nyack, NY 10960 212 758 0588, own many NY properties.

The 125th Street corner is at high risk of overdevelopment, given the right offer, and perhaps contingent on the retail leases (one shop is already vacant) including Duane Reade (Walgreen), a national chain.

Note: An adjacent **CTown Supermarket** at 560 W. 125<sup>th</sup> Street, Block 1980, Lot 1, is not part of the same ownership or deed as the group of stores. CTown is deeded 4/25/2012 to New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and United States Department of HUD.