

# Historic Morningside Heights



*“Among the city’s diverse neighborhoods, Morningside Heights stands apart...”* — Professor Andrew Dolkart, 1998

---

## SPRING 2023

In this Issue:

### **NO TOWER ALLOWED – HISTORIC DESIGNATION SAVES OUR RIVERSIDE CORNER!**

611 W. 112th Street (The Maranamay) Must Stay Contextual and Height Limited

### **MORE ON HEIGHT LIMITS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Morningside Heights Rezoning Plan is Progressing

### **CROTON AQUEDUCT GATEHOUSE:**

NYC Parks Asks MHHDC for Help to Find Developer to Restore and Repurpose  
Museum of the City of New York Makes Available Historic Aqueduct Exhibit Materials for  
a Permanent Site Installation!

### **“THIS SIDE OF PARADISE” on CLAREMONT AVENUE**

Learn more about F. Scott Fitzgerald in Morningside Heights and the proposed “Morningside Riverside Drive-Claremont Area” Historic District Expansion (See Map Below).  
Your support is needed to designate additional historic districts!

### **MHHDC Mugs for sale!**

---

### **NO TOWER ALLOWED – HISTORIC DESIGNATION SAVES OUR RIVERSIDE CORNER!**

**611 W. 112th Street (The Maranamay) Must Stay Contextual and Height Limited**

As previously reported, Columbia purchased the 1904 landmarked Maranamay (611 W 112th Street) for \$25 Million with the intention of repurposing the former dilapidated and shuttered SRO as an undergraduate dormitory with 162 beds planned.



SOUTH ELEVATION PROPOSED OVERALL SCOPE:

- WINDOW REPLACEMENT
- CORNICE RE-CREATION
- MASONRY REPAIR
- ENTRANCE REPLACEMENT
- ADA SLOPED WALKWAY

03 May 2023 | Beyer Blinder Belle

But the development site could have looked catastrophically different – similar to the 34 story tower Columbia is building on 125th Street and Broadway (142 residences for faculty and graduate students – see recent Photo) where there are currently no historic district requirements and no zoning height limitations. Without our Morningside Heights Historic District rules in place, a developer (Columbia or other) would have been free to demolish the Maranamay, purchase “air rights” from adjacent buildings, and construct an all-luxury tower, just off the corner of Riverside Drive.



At a meeting called for by MHHDC and our sister organization MHCC, Columbia and its design firm Beyer Blinder Belle presented construction plans focusing on the façade restoration, including windows replacement. Meeting participants, particularly from adjacent buildings, pointed to potentially disturbing noise levels from future outdoor undergraduate parties, and from HVAC and other systems on the roof.

MHHDC, MHCC and Community Board 9 are also strongly advocating that 30% of the living units be made available and affordable to community residents. The Maranamay had at one time provided housing stock for the general community. Columbia’s current plan removes potential apartment units from the public marketplace.

**Please let us know if you would like to join us: [mhhistoricdistrict@gmail.com](mailto:mhhistoricdistrict@gmail.com)**





## MORE ON HEIGHT LIMITS & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

## Morningside Heights Rezoning Plan is Progressing

Also, see the [Morningside Heights Planning Study](#) to learn how rezoning can limit building heights to preserve neighborhood character, and protect rent-stabilized apartments while promoting affordable housing. The community-led rezoning Plan is co-sponsored by Borough President Mark Levine, Councilmember Shaun Abreu, and Community Board 9, and developed by the City Council Planning and Land Use Group working closely with the [Morningside Heights Community Coalition \(MHCC\)](#).


The Plan imposes varying building height caps throughout the neighborhood while “upzon- ing” specific sites adjacent to transit to en- courage affordable housing development. An Environmental Assessment Statement is cur- rently being conducted to evaluate the Plan’s effect on neighborhood lifestyle and services including Transportation, Traffic, Schools, Sanitation, Police, Fire etc. Next, a Racial Eq- uity Statement will assess the Plan’s impact

on community diversity, followed by the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) heading toward City Council approval of the Plan.



## CROTON AQUEDUCT GATEHOUSE

## NYC Parks Asks MHHDC for Help Finding a Developer to Restore and Repurpose the Gatehouse – Museum of the City of New York is Making Available Aqueduct Exhibit Materials for a Permanent Site Installation!



NYC Parks is renewing its efforts to find appropriate commercial vendors, such as restaurants, and developers capable of restoring and repurposing the vacant Gatehouse, located at 119th Street and Amsterdam. (See the [NYC Parks Request for](#)

[Proposal and Documents](#)) MHHDC has long advocated for providing a community meeting space as one of the Gatehouse functions.

In addition, as a special incentive to developers, MHHDC has reached out to the Museum of the City of New York to make available for permanent installation, for a fee paid by the developer, the displays, pictures, and information materials from their engrossing 2017 exhibit about the Croton Aqueduct, [“To Quench the Thirst of New Yorkers.”](#)



NYC Parks is open to hearing from potential candidates, or recommendations from the general public. Please tell MHHDC if you know a developer and/or vendor who might be interested in taking on the project and concession.

Contact: Robert Stern at [Robert@MHCCNYC.ORG](mailto:Robert@MHCCNYC.ORG)

Note: Read more about the Croton Aqueduct history and the Gatehouse in the [Columbia Eye](#), and in the [New York Times](#).



## **“THIS SIDE OF PARADISE” on CLAREMONT AVENUE**

Learn more about F. Scott Fitzgerald in Morningside Heights and the proposed “Morningside Riverside Drive-Claremont Area” Historic District Expansion (See Map Below).

Did you know that F. Scott Fitzgerald, working as an ad copy writer in 1919, was living at 200 Claremont Avenue?

Upon his discharge from the Army on February 14, 1919, Fitzgerald relocated to New York City, where he unsuccessfully begged

each of the city editors of the seven newspapers for a job. He then turned to a career in advertising, hopeful that it would be lucrative enough to persuade Zelda to marry him. Fitzgerald wrote to Zelda frequently, and by March 1920, he had sent Zelda his mother’s ring, and the two had become engaged. Many of Zelda’s friends and members of her family were wary of the relationship, as they did not approve of his excessive drinking, and Zelda’s Episcopalian family did not like the fact that he was a Catholic.



At the time, Fitzgerald was working for the Barron Collier advertising agency, living in a single room at 200 Claremont Avenue. Although he received a raise for creating a slogan for a laundry in Iowa: “We keep you clean in Muscatine”, Fitzgerald was still relatively poor. Still aspiring to a career in literature, he wrote several short stories and satires in his spare time. Rejected over 120 times, he was only able to sell a single story, for which he was paid \$30. But in 1920, he published his first novel, “This Side of Paradise.”  
– Excerpted from *Harlem World*









Your support is needed to designate additional historic districts! **Let us know if you're lucky enough to live in this area, and tell us why you feel historic designation is important to you.**

[Please sign OUR PETITION.](#)

Note that the following information is adapted from the [Request for Evaluation](#), a document created by our preservation consultant Gregory Dietrich and submitted to the Landmarks Preservation Commission.



**Riverside Drive, view southeast from no. 528.**



**Riverside Drive, view northwest from no. 549.**





Claremont Avenue, view southwest from no. 175.



Claremont Avenue, view southeast from La Salle Street.



Claremont Avenue, view southwest

**The Riverside Drive-Claremont Avenue Study Area offers one of the most cohesive, intact rows of “New Law” tenement buildings of anywhere in the Heights.** Located at 180-200 Claremont Avenue (even nos.), this entire blockfront comprising eight tenement buildings was designed Neville & Bagge in 1905, and bear all of the hallmarks of the Renaissance Revival style, incorporating Colonial Revival elements. Directly across the street, two “New Law” tenements at 189-191 Claremont Avenue (Denby & Nute, 1905) create a harmonious counterpoint to Neville & Bagge’s blockfront, executed in the Renaissance Revival style, and incorporating both Colonial Revival and Arts and Crafts detailing that includes red brick with burnt headers laid in Flemish bond, keyed and splayed lintels, and decorative brickwork that includes prominent square and diamond motifs running along the top floor. This study area also features distinctive examples of the six-story elevator apartment house, such as 160 Claremont Avenue (Maximillian Zipkes, 1911), with its eye-filling Art Nouveau-inspired design, incorporating polychromatic terra cotta along its roofline. Along Riverside Drive, there is a row of Tudor-inspired buildings, ranging from the high style Ulysses at no. 528 (Lafayette A. Goldstone, 1908), with its Tudor-arched bays, quoins, Gothic-arched spandrel and diaper-pattern brickwork, to the more streamlined Claremont Court (no. 530; George Keister, 1907), Hague Dwelling (no. 547; George Keister, 1906),





160 Claremont Avenue Art Nouveau detail.



Monticello Façade Detail

## MHHDC Mugs for sale!



Celebrate Morningside Heights with your favorite tea, coffee or whatever your choice. MHHDC mugs, displaying our charming MHHDC illustrated Logo, are now available for purchase at the following locations: Riverside Church Gift Shop, 91 Claremont Avenue, Between 120th & 122nd Streets; Janoff's Stationery, 2870 Broadway between 111th & 112th Streets; The Shop at St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Avenue at 112th Street; and Book Culture, 536 W. 112th Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenues.

**Each purchase helps to promote and fund MHHDC!**

---

## PLEASE DONATE TO MHHDC

We are an all-volunteer organization that depends on donations to cover our costs. Please [donate](#) today and visit our [website](#) for more info. **THANK YOU!**

---