



April 21, 2025

RE: 1000 Fifth Avenue – Metropolitan Museum of Art
LPC Docket no: LPC-25-08909 & LPC-25-08226

**Application to demolish the Lila Acheson Wallace Wing
addition and construct a new addition**

Dear Members of the Commission:

The Olmsted Network (ON) has several serious concerns related to the proposal for the Metropolitan Museum of Art (the Museum) to demolish and replace the Lila Acheson Wallace (LAW) Wing at the southwest corner of the Museum's building in Central Park.

The Olmsted Network, formerly known as the National Association for Olmsted Parks (NAOP), was founded in 1980. For four-and-a-half decades the Olmsted Network has been dedicated to championing Olmsted parks, places and principles and the legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted and the Olmsted firm. That legacy, as you undoubtedly know, began when Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed Central Park.

While the Olmsted Network recognizes the value and importance of the Museum and its collection as treasured resources of the City, the Museum must equally recognize the value and importance of the work of art in which it is situated. ON urges the Landmarks Preservation Commission (the Commission) to give equal consideration to the impact of this proposal on the other landmark under the Commission's protection— Central Park.

The Olmsted Network acknowledges that the footprint and height of the proposed new wing is the same as the LAW. However, it features significant alterations that ON believes will have serious adverse consequences for Central Park. First, the additional height continues the solid wall— currently three stories— to the top of the building. Second, the new wing eliminates the setback of the upper two stories, blocking light, creating shadows and cutting into skyviews.

Park users on the paths, East Drive and the Great Lawn looking East will see a five-story blank wall. Rather than blending harmoniously with the landscape, the proposed wing is an affront to it. The increased mass and height of the solid wall will detrimentally affect Central Park as a naturalistic landscape and an escape from the built City in which it is situated. Finally, this proposed wing deviates from the 1971 Master Plan, which the Museum promised would guide its future building. Even minimally invasive incursions degrade and erode the park and its value to park-goers.

One goal of the 1971 plan was to avoid the merely “additive” development of the museum building. This wing is such an “additive” expansion. While one could easily envision worse incursions, each must be carefully scrutinized in the context of Olmsted’s original vision of parks as places of relaxation and respite.

The Olmsted Network urges the Commission and the Museum to change the park-facing facade, making it less blank and undifferentiated and, if possible, to have some setback to the upper floors. The museum in consultation with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation should also consider plantings and treatments of the blank wall that would make it less visible and impervious-looking. ON would encourage that the construction itself not extend westward beyond the footprint of the building. Finally, it is imperative that any disruption of the surrounding landscape be restored within a specific time after work is complete.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Cunningham', written in a cursive style.

Caroline Cunningham
Interim President,
The Olmsted Network