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MAS Testimony before the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the Certificate of Appropriateness for the Frick Collection

May 29, 2018

In 2015, the Municipal Art Society expressed deep concern about the destruction of the Russell Page garden as part of the Frick Collection's proposed expansion. The uniqueness of the Frick is not confined to the great works of art within its walls, but extends to its outstanding exterior *and* landscape architecture.

Therefore, we are appreciative of the effort and creativity that has gone into achieving the museum's programmatic goals, while preserving the Russell Page garden. In fact, the recognition that it is the centerpiece of the museum complex is welcome and allows for the historic rhythms of the design to be reinforced. Furthermore, we are grateful that recent revisions include the incorporation of the green door, exterior window treatments, and plantings on the north wall.

However, we do have some recommendations for continued improvement of the proposal. First, we find that the façade of the reference library and its connection to the addition have not been resolved. A true setback at the band course, and textural finishes on the "link building" may offer a more amenable design solution.

Second, the one-story addition over the reception hall may be better expressed as a skylight. Indeed, a mock-up would help to visualize this alternative, or any proposed alteration.

Finally, we regret the loss of the Music Room. We understand that the interior is not designated and therefore this decision is entirely at the discretion of the Frick Collection leadership.

In sum, we ask the Landmarks Preservation Commission to work with the applicant to implement these suggestions before approving the Certificate of Appropriateness.