

JEFFREY E. EPSTEIN

May 28, 2018

Chair Meenakshi Srinivasan
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
David N. Dinkins Municipal Building
1 Center Street, Ninth Floor North
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Srinivasan,

Only this past weekend was I informed of the details of plans submitted to the Commission for approval of a brutish and apparently unjustified expansion of The Frick Collection, and that a hearing before the Commission on those plans is to take place on May 29, 2018. Although my home [of 18 years], located at 9 East 71st Street, is literally across the street from the 71st Street entrance of the Frick Art Reference Library, The Frick's management has made no attempt to provide me with any meaningful detail regarding its expansion plans or consult with me on how those plans might adversely impact the architectural integrity, nature or character of this neighborhood. From what little meaningful objective information I was able to pull from the public relations campaign mounted on the Frick's website, as well as accounts from neighbors and other interested parties, it appears that the Frick's expansion in the manner presented in its plans will do violence to the history of The Frick Collection and the intent of its original founder, substantially disrupt its architectural integrity, and destroy the elegant quietude of this "jewel" in midtown Manhattan enjoyed by visitors for 83 years.

The Frick Collection represents one New York's few remaining mansions from the Gilded Age and provides a unique opportunity to experience masterpieces by artists such as Bellini, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Gainsborough, Goya, and Whistler in an intimate environment of tranquil beauty as intended by its founder, Henry Frick. No matter how The Frick's management might attempt to spin it, the gross commercial expansion of The Frick Collection ignores its historical intent and significance, and threatens to destroy that which makes the experience so special and unique for its visitors. Moreover, traffic flow in this neighborhood is already strained to its limits by the existing volume of visitors to The Frick. Any further expansion of the Frick must take into account the impact of additional traffic on a neighborhood that has already exceeded its capacity, and the harm that does to the experience of those visiting The Frick Collection.

Unfortunately, I have been provided with little information or details of the planned expansion, or the reasons for it, in order to provide further necessary context for the Commission's review and approval process. I would note, however, that the conduct of a hurried campaign, seemingly designed to keep neighbors in the dark as to its critical elements, and the rush for approval without soliciting input from those neighbors, who are most directly affected by it and who would likely have invaluable information and perspectives to bear on it, should itself caution the Commission against it. Moreover, if there is truly a need for expansion to meet legitimate

objectives consistent with the historic mission and intent of The Frick Collection, there is an adjacent building for sale at 11 East 70th Street that could be acquired and utilized without altering the exterior of the existing structures. Any plan that fails to consider utilization of this additional space in lieu of dramatically changing the elevations of an historical landmark must be closely and carefully examined.

I would ask the Commission to delay any decision on The Frick Collection's plans until I and other directly interested persons have been provided with sufficiently detailed information regarding The Frick Collection's expansion, so that we can better evaluate what appear to be a number of alarming components of it. While our review is underway, I would also urge the Commission to closely scrutinize the expansion plans to determine whether and to what extent such expansion is justified at all, and if it is, whether the proposed plans best meet the purported needs for expansion in a way that does not unnecessarily and irretrievably damage one of New York's most important historical landmarks. Until then, I vehemently oppose the planned expansion of The Frick Collection and respectfully request that the Commission reject the submitted plans.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Epstein