

## **PROPOSED MORNINGSIDЕ HEIGHTS HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Actions: Calendared September 13, 2016; Item to Be Heard on December 6, 2016

The proposed Morningside Heights Historic District consists of approximately 115 buildings in an area stretching from West 109<sup>th</sup> Street to West 119<sup>th</sup> Street, Riverside Drive to Amsterdam Avenue. The proposed district is a remarkable reflection of the rapid residential development that took place in Morningside Heights in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. That development history resulted in a cohesive residential district that is comprised primarily of apartment and flats buildings, along with a smaller number of rowhouses that represent the district's earliest development.



Throughout most of the 19th century, Morningside Heights remained largely undeveloped except for scattered estates and clusters of mid-century frame houses clustered around West 110th Street (later renamed Cathedral Parkway) and modern-day Broadway. Three factors contributed to the area's delayed development – its location on an elevated plateau bordered by rugged cliffs; the presence of two large institutions: the Leake and Watts Orphan Asylum (1843) and New York Hospital's Bloomingdale Insane Asylum (1821) and the lack of public transportation. With the sale and closure of the orphanage and asylum in the 1890s, the large tracts of land were purchased and developed by a number of significant institutions, eventually leading to the larger Morningside Heights neighborhood being known as the “Acropolis” of New York.

Like much of the Upper West Side, the earliest residential development in the proposed district includes private town houses such as 625-627 West 113th Street (1897-98, C. P. H. Gilbert) and speculative rows such as 604-616 West 114th Street (1896, Frank A. Lang) that were built in the 1890s.

Although some multiple-family dwellings were also built in the 1890s, it was the arrival of the IRT subway in 1904 with stops at 110th and 116th Streets that spurred development on the plateau and rapidly transformed the area into a neighborhood of apartment buildings marketed to the middle class. Within the boundaries of the district, 64% of the buildings were built between 1900 and 1910. Wide streets such as Riverside Drive, Cathedral Parkway, West 116th Street and Claremont Avenue are lined with impressive apartment buildings while the narrower streets have smaller apartment and flats buildings, row houses and club buildings.

Many of the district's apartment buildings were designed by some of New York City's prominent apartment house architects and firms such as Gaetano Ajello, George & Edward Blum, Neville

& Bagge, George F. Pelham, Rouse & Sloan, and Schwartz & Gross. The buildings display a mix of stylish ornament including Beaux Arts, Secessionist, Arts and Crafts, and the Renaissance, Tudor, Colonial, Federal and Georgian Revival styles popular at the time. Some apartment houses were designed to respond to the area's unique topography, such as the massive Hendrick Hudson (Rouse & Sloan, 1906-07) and the Paterno and Colosseum (Schwartz & Gross, 1909-10, and 1910 respectively) with their unique curved facades.

In addition to the residential buildings there are several institutional buildings included in the district, among which are the Broadway Presbyterian Church (1911-12, Louis A. Jallade) and the West Side Unitarian Church (now Congregation Ramath Orah) (1921-22, Hoppin & Koen).





Today, this cohesive residential district is distinguished by its fine early 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture, with a high level of integrity.



**(Proposed) Morningside Heights Historic District | LP-2584**

Borough of Manhattan  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Calendared: September 13, 2016

-  Proposed Morningside Heights Historic District
-  Riverside-West End Historic District Extension II
-  Building Footprints
-  New York City Tax Map Lots

