



410 Riverside Drive

Façade Repairs and Historic Restoration

Columbia University is making necessary repairs to the building's façade in accordance with Department of Buildings and Landmark Preservation Commission requirements. The façade repair work is required to keep 410 Riverside Drive structurally sound and in compliance with the Façade Inspection and Safety Program (formerly known as NYC Local Law 11). These repairs represent the first significant façade work at the building in more than 13 years.

410 Riverside Drive Façade Repairs and Historic Restoration Activities Update — March 2021

What is Happening

The project is approximately 50 percent complete. The completed and remaining phases are as follows:

Completed Phases

- Pipe scaffolding installation and inspection
- Architect's inspection of the façade and identification of terra cotta units in need of replacement
- Masonry repairs at rear (east) elevations
- Fire escape painting at south elevation
- Removal of terra cotta units (e.g. quoin, watertable, lintel, sill)
- Ordering of terra cotta replacement units – delivery is scheduled starting this summer

Remaining Phases

- **Brick removal** – Approximately 25% complete. Work will create jackhammering noise, vibration and dust.
- **Brick and stone joint cutting** – Approximately 25% complete. Work will create grinding noise and dust.
- **Window sealant removal** – Approximately 50% complete. Work will create grinding noise.
- **Window sealant installation** – Approximately 50% complete. This is mostly quiet work.
- **Brick replacement** – This will be mostly quiet work
- **Brick and stone joint pointing** – This will be mostly quiet work
- **New terra cotta installation including balcony enclosure, watertable, quoin, lintel and sill** - Each terra cotta unit will receive approximately 2-4 pins which will be drilled into the back-up masonry wall. This work will create intermittent drilling noise.
- **Fire escape painting at east elevation** - This will be mostly quiet work with minor odor from the paint.
- **Masonry cleaning** – This work will create a minor spraying noise.
- **Leak repairs at copper mansard** - This work will create minor intermittent grinding and tapping noise.

The pipe and hanging scaffolding will be removed as soon as construction is completed, and the protective sidewalk bridge will remain in place until the project is fully signed-off by the NYC Department of Buildings.

Efforts to Reduce Construction Impacts

Since the project started, we have worked with the contractor to make some provisions to reduce construction impacts where possible. Some mitigation efforts include:

- **Reduced work scope:** The scope of work has been reduced to only essential work that needs to be performed, where possible. As part of this, the Juliet balconies will no longer be reinstalled and the balcony reconstruction design has been simplified to stay in line with the overall project schedule.
- **Changes to work time:** The contractor starts noisy work after 9:00 A.M. to better accommodate residents' schedules.
- **Installed alternative netting:** Based on feedback from residents, we installed open netting to allow more light and improve views out of windows.

Schedule

The project is now anticipated to be complete in December 2021. This change is due to the mandatory pause of all construction work by New York State last spring due to the pandemic and some inclement weather conditions at the beginning of this year. The architect's inspection also found a slight increase in structural repair work, including brick and terra cotta unit replacements. In addition, scheduled work is subject to cooperative weather conditions, as work cannot take place during inclement or freezing weather.

Work Hours and Precautionary Measures

At the start of each workday, the contractor will close any open window in the work area. To prevent construction dust from entering apartments, these windows should remain closed and shades drawn for privacy during the workday.

Please be advised of intermittent dust and noise during construction, which will be restricted to the hours of 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, with noisy work starting at 9:00 AM.

Project Communications

To date, we have provided monthly construction look-aheads to inform residents of construction work expected, accompanied with building diagrams indicating where the work is taking place. Going forward, we are increasing the frequency of these updates to weekly, along with a more precise location of the work and its impact. These updates will also be posted to the project webpage available at facilities.columbia.edu/410-riverside-drive.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is this project required? As part of regularly scheduled façade inspections in accordance with the city's Façade Inspection and Safety Program, deteriorated masonry and metal were found in areas of the building's façade. These conditions must be addressed within the time frame specified by the architect. The building is also located within the Morningside Heights Historic District, requiring façade repairs to be approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission in keeping with the building's French Renaissance characteristics.

Could the project be paused until in-person classes resume? The NYC Department of Buildings requires us to complete this work within the time frame specified by the architect for safety reasons. To meet that deadline, work cannot be paused on the building.

Could more workers be hired to speed up the schedule? Because of the pandemic, the contractor was required to reduce the number of workers onsite to comply with COVID-19 health and safety protocols. At this time, we cannot increase the number of workers to complete the project sooner.

Can noisy work be scheduled at a certain time of day? The contractor can start noisy work after 9:00 AM. The complexity of the work and varying schedules among residents make it difficult to schedule noisy work for a specific time of day.

Can a rent credit be issued due to the ongoing project impacts? We understand the significant impacts of this project in terms of noise, sunlight, and other impacts and how those impacts are exacerbated with so many people working from home during the pandemic. The timing of such a project is never good but made only more challenging due to COVID-19. Unfortunately, according to the city's FISP cycle schedule, this building is currently subject to required façade repairs. Since this is required repair work for safety reasons – part of regular building maintenance – and not a special circumstance, rent credits would not be issued for this project. Columbia's residential budget is self-financing to keep rent as reasonable as possible, and money for all operations and repairs come from rent payments. Rent abatement for required repair projects would likely lead to higher rent increases in the future.

Why is the terra cotta replacement necessary, and why is it so time consuming? 410 Riverside Drive is located within the Morningside Heights Historic District, requiring façade repairs to be approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC). The LPC requires that terra cotta in need of repair is matched and replicated. The inspection to determine the amount of terra cotta to be replaced was completed in January 2020. After LPC approval was received in May 2020, an order was placed with a vendor to produce terra cotta replacements to the level that LPC requires, which is a complex and time-consuming process that can take as long as one year due to high demand. Columbia University had some terra cotta units in storage which allowed us to begin repairs with the current inventory to expedite the repair process while awaiting fabrication and delivery of the remaining units. The new terra cotta units are anticipated to be delivered this summer.

For More Information

A webpage for the façade repair work is available at facilities.columbia.edu/410-riverside-drive so residents can view updates, schedules and diagrams related to this project. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your superintendent, Eustace Mejias, at (212) 854-0885 or Nelson Falcon, Director for Residential Services, at nf36@columbia.edu.