

Dear Neighbors of the Maranamay building (611 W. 112th Street),

As many of you are aware, Columbia University purchased the Maranamay building at 611 W. 112th Street earlier this year. The property, a former single room occupancy building, has been vacant for many years. The university intends to renovate the property for university housing. I am writing to provide an overview of current conditions at the building and to introduce my office as your point of contact for any questions or concerns now and as the project progresses.

First Step: Building Assessment

Because the property has been vacant for many years, the basic building structure has been neglected. Holes in the roof have led to water damage, and in turn, that water damage has resulted in deterioration and unsafe conditions inside the building. These conditions prevented Columbia representatives from moving beyond the first floor during an initial assessment of building conditions. There is also extensive debris throughout the building.

Columbia intends to have a design team develop plans for interior renovations, but before architects survey the building to create those plans, the conditions described previously must be evaluated so that the building is safe for people to go inside.

Preliminary Preparations

There will be some preliminary preparations that will take place prior to the start of the assessment and waterproofing work. This preliminary work includes installation of temporary lighting in the basement space and removal of an abandoned 4,000-lb. oil tank. This preliminary work is anticipated to begin in the coming weeks. We will alert neighbors once this has been scheduled and will provide more information about what to expect related to the tank removal at that time.

Note that we have completed installation of a construction fence in front of the property for the safety and security of the building.

Next Steps

Columbia has received proposals from professional teams to complete the structural evaluation, waterproofing, and design work, with intent to award that work before the end of the year. All design teams contacted for this RFP have a specialty in historic restoration in recognition of the building's location within the Morningside Heights Historic District.

Once awarded, the team will develop a plan and timeline for completing selective structural and waterproofing work. We do not expect that work to start until December or January at the earliest and will share more details with neighbors once a more definitive plan of activities and timeline is known. The only work that will take place before then is the preliminary preparations referred to earlier.

Looking Ahead

Soon after the design team is procured, Columbia will issue an RFP for a construction manager. The scope of work for the eventual project will involve a gut renovation and exterior restoration.

We recognize that many neighbors would like to know the overall project stages and overall timeline. We hope that the overview in this update provides insight into the building's current status and the sequence of our planning work to help better understand why it is premature to provide an overall project timeline at this stage. We will continue to keep neighbors informed and apprised of timelines and work as professional teams for design and construction are brought on board.

Ongoing Communications

The project team will prepare and provide periodic construction updates to keep residents apprised of progress on the building. You can register for construction updates directly by emailing pa2461@columbia.edu with the subject "Maranamay Construction Updates."

In the meantime, please contact me with any questions or concerns. Thank you for your patience and understanding while we perform this work.