

Lincoln Center

Lincoln Center Announces Design Team To Reimagine Amsterdam Avenue Side of Its Campus

**Hood Design Studio, Weiss/Manfredi, and Moody Nolan Will Develop
Design Ideas Based on Feedback from Thousands of New Yorkers**

Initiative Continues Series of Bold Investments in the Vibrancy of NYC

New York (March 4, 2024) - Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) today announced the design team that will develop plans for the Amsterdam Avenue side of its campus.

The first phase of design will focus on Damrosch Park to deliver a major revitalization, providing open space for New Yorkers and state-of-the-art performance areas for artists from across the globe. Damrosch is a park under the jurisdiction of NYC Parks, operated and maintained by LCPA.

The design team—**Hood Design Studio**, landscape architect; **Weiss/Manfredi**, design architect; and **Moody Nolan**, architect of record—will create proposals based on ideas and feedback from more than 3,400 New Yorkers who have participated in a robust and ongoing [participatory planning process](#) focused on making the campus more welcoming and accessible for all New Yorkers.

The feedback from thousands of neighbors, community members, and city-wide stakeholders are collated in a publicly available report, [here](#).

This project builds upon a number of bold initiatives from LCPA in recent years that invest in the vibrancy of New York City through the arts—including Restart Stages, an outdoor performing arts center created in 2021 during the height of the pandemic so the live performing arts could continue; Summer for the City, soon embarking on its third summer welcoming hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers; and the recently completed new David Geffen Hall, built through the pandemic and supporting 6,000 jobs and \$600 million in economic activity when the City needed it most.

Guided by broad community input, this marks Lincoln Center's continued commitment to signature investments that open up the campus to more New Yorkers. That means a Damrosch Park that is both a state-of-the-art outdoor performance space and a welcoming place where students, neighbors, visitors can meet up with friends, relax, have a snack, watch a summer show and take a moment to enjoy the magic of the City.

Lincoln Center was initially built in the 1950s during the Robert Moses era as part of a series of “urban renewal” projects that razed the nearby San Juan Hill community to make way for the arts center and other neighboring institutions. A huge swath of the area, home to more than 7,000 families and 800 businesses by mid-century—was razed in the 1950s as part of the project, called the Lincoln Square Development Plan.

The campus was ultimately designed with a fortress-like wall along Amsterdam Avenue, separating the neighborhoods to the west from Lincoln Center’s campus and making it largely inaccessible to foot traffic. A stark contrast to the iconic Revson Fountain and open plaza oriented to the east.

The **Stavros Niarchos Foundation** (SNF) is a Founding Partner of this visionary process, building on their support of many initiatives vital to transformation at Lincoln Center, including [Summer for the City](#) and [Legacies of San Juan Hill](#).

Upper West Side community members, elected officials, the design team, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), and Lincoln Center leadership weighed in on the news.

Quotes are available [here](#).

The design team

LCPA has hired a team composed of three of the world’s premier design firms to action the learnings from the ongoing participatory planning process. The team will develop ideas to present to the public that reflect the community’s aspirations, ideals, and visions for the Amsterdam Avenue side of the Lincoln Center campus.

Altogether, the team brings together designers with collective decades of experience in public design.

[Hood Design Studio](#) (landscape architect), was founded in 1992 and is led by creative director Walter Hood. The studio is dedicated to work that attempts to reveal and activate the benign, looking to existing site elements—the sidewalk, the sign post, the tree canopy, the narrow stream—as infused with emergent beauty, strangeness, subjectivity, and possibility. The firm is known, among other projects, for its work on the International African American Museum in Charleston, South Carolina, for which it won a prestigious Project of the Year award from the Architect’s Newspaper, and for the Oakland Museum of California, the de Young Museum, and the Cooper Hewitt Garden in New York. Hood is also a 2019 MacArthur Fellow and is member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

[Weiss/Manfredi](#) (design architect) is a multidisciplinary design practice based in New York City. Founded by Marion Weiss and Michael Manfredi, the firm is known for the dynamic integration of architecture, art, infrastructure, and landscape design. Weiss/Manfredi is well known for its work on the Seattle Art Museum’s Olympic Sculpture Park and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden Visitor Center. The firm’s current projects include the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India and most recently, Weiss/Manfredi was selected through an international competition to reimagine the

La Brea Tar Pits and Museum in Los Angeles. In 2018 the firm was recognized with the Cooper Hewitt National Design Award and in 2020 with the Thomas Jefferson Foundation Medal in Architecture.

[Moody Nolan](#) (architect of record), the largest African American-owned architecture firm in the country, was founded more than 40 years ago. It is known for its work on the Jacob Javits Convention Center, as well as aviation projects at LaGuardia Airport and John F. Kennedy Airport. The team is working on the renovation of the Ancient Near Eastern and Cypriot Art galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In 2023, the team was recognized for its work on the award-winning International African American Museum in Charleston, South Carolina. The firm prioritizes diversity and inclusion with 42 percent of its 360 employees identifying as minorities and 46 percent of the staff composed of women.

Beginning with Damrosch Park, the design team will now work to develop proposals that reimagine the Amsterdam Avenue side of the campus, to make it more publicly accessible while transforming it into a state-of-the-art performance park. Feedback from more than 3,400 neighbors, advocates, and community leaders over the past several months indicated the importance of beginning with Damrosch Park, which occupies the largest footprint on the west side of Lincoln Center's campus and does not currently accommodate the extensive needs for a wide range of performance types. Exploring design opportunities within Damrosch Park will be a key toward reimagining a more accessible, inclusive, and welcoming Amsterdam Avenue for all.

The team will also work towards a design that includes a commemoration of the history and public memory of San Juan Hill and historic Lincoln Square, continuing a slate of programmatic and artistic collaborations that celebrate the legacies of the neighborhood, anchored by the [Legacies of San Juan Hill](#) digital hub.

A robust public process

Since June 2023, LCPA and its partners have hosted thousands of conversations, including one-on-one interviews, focus groups, a paper and online survey, pop-up events, and workshops in collaboration with the award-winning architecture, urban design and planning firm NADAAA and the nonprofit firm Hester Street, which has an established track record of building relationships with people that are historically and currently marginalized from civic decision-making.

Between the summer and December 2023, LCPA hosted more than 3,400 neighbors, nearby NYCHA residents, advocates, community groups, staff and students from nearby educational institutions, elected officials, civic leaders, and other members of the New York City community to share their ideas, interests, questions, and feedback about the campus.

To provide broad access to each session, engagement materials were translated into Spanish and Simplified Chinese, and when workshops were held, Spanish, Mandarin, and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters were offered and assisted listening devices (ALDs) were made available. Engagement events were held on weekdays and weekends during daytime and evening hours with childcare and refreshments made available during workshops.

In total, the work included:

- **2,220+ surveys**, online and on paper, that gathered information from stakeholders and Lincoln Center campus users about the current appearance of the wall along Amsterdam Avenue, the design of Damrosch Park, and the uses (both actual and desired) of the park and the campus' outdoor spaces
- **1,000+ sticker exercises** that enabled participants to discuss how often they visit Damrosch Park, what they do there, and the largest challenges of the space
- **1,200+ memories**, shared by participants offering personal recollections of Lincoln Center experiences, as well as ideas about memories they'd like to create on campus
- **7 stakeholder interviews** with local community leaders to seek guidance and gather comprehensive feedback to help guide the participatory planning process
- **5 focus groups** of 10 to 15 participants each, including community stakeholders, accessibility groups, seniors, NYCHA residents, community organizations, school leadership, and members of Community Board 7
- **3 community workshops** attended by 170 participants in total, in which stakeholders offered design ideas, reflections on access, and posed invaluable questions about the future of the campus

What we learned

In total, LCPA gathered information from more than 3,400 individuals to ensure a broad array of stakeholders have had a voice in the process, allowing for a lasting, positive impact.

Key learnings include:

- A repeated point community members made was that they want the design to take a **community-centric approach that emphasizes interaction and communication through thoughtful design**
- **The entrance should feel welcoming** and offer pathways where everyone can enter, regardless of physical ability, particularly along Amsterdam Avenue and 62nd Streets
- Stakeholders expressed a need for a dedicated area for **community performances where local talent can have a stage** that is separate from the main stage. Additionally, flexible exhibit spaces should celebrate new talent and student artists, as well as **community-generated artwork**

- Community members also feel strongly that we should prioritize **greenery and sustainability**
- Food options in Damrosch Park during events should **reflect different cultures and ethnicities** to enhance the park experience and cater to diverse tastes

Enhancing the campus experience

The design team will develop plans that explore possibilities along the Amsterdam Avenue side of the Lincoln Center campus. Sites for design considerations will begin with Damrosch Park, in collaboration with NYC Parks (especially how it is accessed at the southwest corner of the campus); and, in the future, the campus entrance at the northwest corner; as well as the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts terrace and Amsterdam Avenue entrance.

In addition to the initiative's primary goal to extend a greater sense of welcome and improved access to communities to the west, a significant priority is also to upgrade aging infrastructure, including:

- Heating and cooling systems
- Power and data distribution
- Public and back-of-house restroom facilities
- Access for the artists, audiences, and community members

Improvements to these systems are essential for the campus's resident organizations, will provide better service to operators and audiences, and increase efficiency to meet contemporary sustainability standards.

A commitment to a more equitable future

To honor the communities of the neighborhood, LCPA has invested in several major projects that shine a light on this important history and celebrate its significant cultural impact. These include the [Legacies of San Juan Hill](#) digital hub, a collaboration with the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College (CENTRO) and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, as well as a series of [events and exhibits](#) that engage with this history from a multitude of perspectives.

Years in the making, [Legacies of San Juan Hill](#) features scholarly essays, articles, multimedia, and a series of live events from a diverse slate of contributors. It is a resource that will grow over time.

The initiative also recognizes that more inclusive programming across Lincoln Center's outdoor venues requires updated facilities to improve audience experience and access, which will allow the institution to continue to usher in new audiences. Among those programs are the annual [Summer for the City](#) festival, which has included hundreds of free events and thousands of artists performing across Lincoln Center's 16-acre campus.

Call to action

LCPA is still calling upon New Yorkers to get directly involved by offering feedback through [LincolnCenter.org/series/planning-process](https://lincolncenter.org/series/planning-process) and by participating in workshops, focus groups, surveys, and events on and off the Lincoln Center campus, including upcoming workshops in April and May.

Imagery may be accessed [here](#).

About Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) is a cultural and civic cornerstone of New York City. The primary advocate for the entire Lincoln Center campus, our strategic priorities include: fostering collaboration and deepening impact across the Lincoln Center resident organizations; championing inclusion and increasing the accessibility and reach of Lincoln Center's work; and nurturing innovation on stage and off to help ensure the arts are at the center of civic life for all. LCPA presents hundreds of programs each year, offered primarily for free and choose-what-you-pay, including many specially designed for young audiences, families, and those with disabilities.

About Hood Design Studio

Hood Design Studio, Inc. is a social art and design practice based in Oakland, California founded in 1992. The studio's practice is tripartite: art + fabrication, design + landscape, and research + urbanism. This breadth allows us to understand each place in its scale and context. We respond not with a standard design, but with an approach adaptive to the particulars and specifics of a space. We strengthen endemic patterns and practices—those ecological and cultural, contemporary and historic, and those that remain unseen or unrecognized. Urban spaces and their objects act as public sculpture, creating new apertures through which to see the emergent beauty, strangeness, and idiosyncrasies around us.

About Weiss/Manfredi Architecture/Landscape/Urbanism

WEISS/MANFREDI Architecture/Landscape/Urbanism is a multidisciplinary design practice based in New York City. Founded by Marion Weiss and Michael Manfredi, the firm is known for the dynamic integration of architecture, art, infrastructure, and landscape design. The firm is well known for the Seattle Art Museum's celebrated Olympic Sculpture Park, and other notable projects include the Women's Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden Visitor Center, and Hunter's Point South Waterfront Park. The firm's current work includes the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India, and most recently, Weiss/Manfredi was selected through an international competition to reimagine the La Brea Tar Pits and Museum in Los Angeles.

Weiss and Manfredi have won numerous awards, including the 2024 Louis I. Kahn award for architecture, the 2020 Thomas Jefferson Foundation Medal in Architecture, the Cooper Hewitt National Design Award, the AIA President's Award, the Academy Award for Architecture from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the International Veronica Rudge Green Prize for Urban

Design. They have also been named one of North America's "Emerging Voices" by the Architectural League of New York, received the New York City AIA Gold Medal of Honor, and were inducted into the National Academy of Design. Michael Manfredi is a Senior Critic at Harvard University and Marion Weiss is the Graham Chair Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania. Three monographs on the firm's work have been published, including most recently *Public Natures*, and their upcoming book, *Drifting Symmetries*, is slated for publication with Park Books in fall 2024. Their work has been exhibited at the Venice Biennale, the São Paulo Biennale, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Museum of Modern Art.

About Moody Nolan

Moody Nolan is the country's largest African American-owned architecture firm. Founded in 1982 with just two employees in Columbus, OH, Moody Nolan has grown to more than 360 employees in 12 locations around the country, leveraging the power of diverse backgrounds to drive design innovation. Specializing in cultural, corporate, education, sports/recreation, collegiate, healthcare, housing/mixed-use, and civic, Moody Nolan is guided by its mission to improve every life the firm touches through responsive design – pairing empathetic listening with innovative thinking – to find harmony between client, community, and environment. Acknowledging the firm's sustained professional excellence, The American Institute of Architects (AIA) named Moody Nolan as the 58th recipient of the Architecture Firm Award in 2021; the highest honor the AIA bestows on an architecture practice. In 2022, the firm celebrated its 40th anniversary and was also named one of the most innovative architecture firms by Fast Company. For more information about Moody Nolan, visit www.moodynolan.com.

About NADAAA

NADAAA is an architecture and urban design firm led by principal designer Nader Tehrani, winner of the American Academy of Arts and Letters' 2020 Arnold W. Brunner Prize, member of the Cooper Hewitt, and a newly elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Tehrani leads the studio with partner Arthur Chang, AIA who also leads the office's fabrication workshop NADLAB.

NADAAA has evolved over three decades as a multi-disciplinary practice dedicated to bridging design disciplines; from landscape to urbanism, architecture to interiors, and industrial design to furniture. With an eye towards integrated thinking, the office enters the discourse on technology, aesthetics, and building protocols as part of a holistic process. Rather than focus on typology, NADAAA's portfolio is built on process, with examples of institutional, academic, housing, commercial, retail, and civic projects.

Design excellence is core to NADAAA's pursuits. The firm boasts 19 Progressive Architecture Awards, 4 American Architecture Awards, 4 Chicago Athenaeum Awards, and an AIA Cote Top Ten Award. NADAAA is a 2017 Moriyma RAIC International Prize Finalist and a 2017 Marcus Prize for Architecture nominee. NADAAA consistently places among the top design firms in Architect Magazine's annual ranking of US design firms, and has been selected as top firm three years in a row.

About Hester Street

Hester Street is an urban planning, design and development nonprofit that works to ensure neighborhoods are shaped by the people who live in them. Hester Street offers planning, design and community development technical assistance to community-based organizations, government and other institutions in order to foster more equitable, sustainable and resilient neighborhoods and cities. With projects in nearly every zip code of New York City, and a history of deep collaboration to engage NYCHA residents, Hester Street is uniquely positioned to lead community engagement for the Lincoln Center *West Initiative*.

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