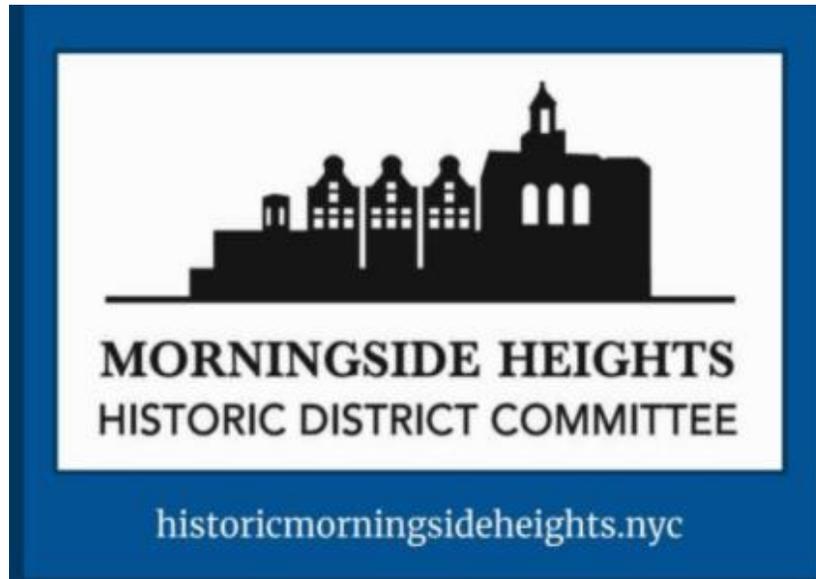


# **Morningside Heights Historic District: Designating Phase II Study Areas - Survey Findings -**



Conducted by the Morningside Heights Historic District Committee

June - July 2021

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## **Historic District Phase II Study Areas - Five Geographical Clusters**

*In 2017, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (NYC-LPC) designated the Morningside Heights Historic District, encompassing apartment buildings along the Cathedral Parkway corridor, large segments of Riverside Drive and Claremont Avenue, and parts of Broadway and its cross streets to the west, that included apartment buildings, mixed-use apartment buildings, row houses, a town house, a church, and a commercial building.*

*While this designation has resulted in landmark protections for predominantly residential buildings in the southernmost and westernmost portions of the neighborhood, other portions containing residential buildings of equal distinction—along with their institutional counterparts—still go unprotected.*

To ensure the preservation of Morningside Heights' essential heritage, the Morningside Heights Historic District Committee (MHHDC) has requested the Landmark Preservation Commission to designate Phase II.

Phase II contains a total of 156 apartment buildings in five separate geographical clusters in Morningside Heights. Phase II Historic Designation will substantially preserve the unique architectural character of Morningside Heights and greatly limit development of non-contextual buildings, such as tall towers in mid-block locations.

### **Morningside Heights Historic District Extension**

Sixty-two properties roughly bounded by West 114th Street to the north, Amsterdam Avenue to the east, West 112th Street to the south, and Broadway to the west

### **Amsterdam Avenue-Morningside Drive**

Thirteen properties roughly bounded by West 116th Street to the north, Morningside Drive to the east, West 115th Street to the south, and Amsterdam Avenue to the west

### **Amsterdam Avenue-Morningside Drive North**

Eighteen properties roughly bounded by Morningside Drive to the north and east, West 118th Street to the south, and Amsterdam Avenue to the west

### **Broadway-Amsterdam Avenue**

Forty properties roughly bounded by West 123rd Street to the north, Amsterdam Avenue to the east, West 121st Street to the south, and Broadway to the west

### **Riverside Drive-Claremont Avenue**

Twenty-three properties roughly bounded by Tiemann Place to the north, Claremont Avenue to the east, West 122nd Street to the south, and Riverside Drive to the west

## Summary of Findings

Morningside Heights residents want the defining characteristics of the neighborhood to be sustained.

This includes expanding Historic District designations beyond the areas currently designated as such.

- 88% are in support of adding additional areas of Morningside Heights as Historic Districts.
- A majority (85%) of those in support of expanding Historic Districts designation are in favor of all five Phase II Study Areas be given the Historic Districts designation.
- Support for landmarking McGiffert Hall is fully supported (83%). While some are undecided (13%), very few (4%), are not supportive of landmarking McGiffert Hall.

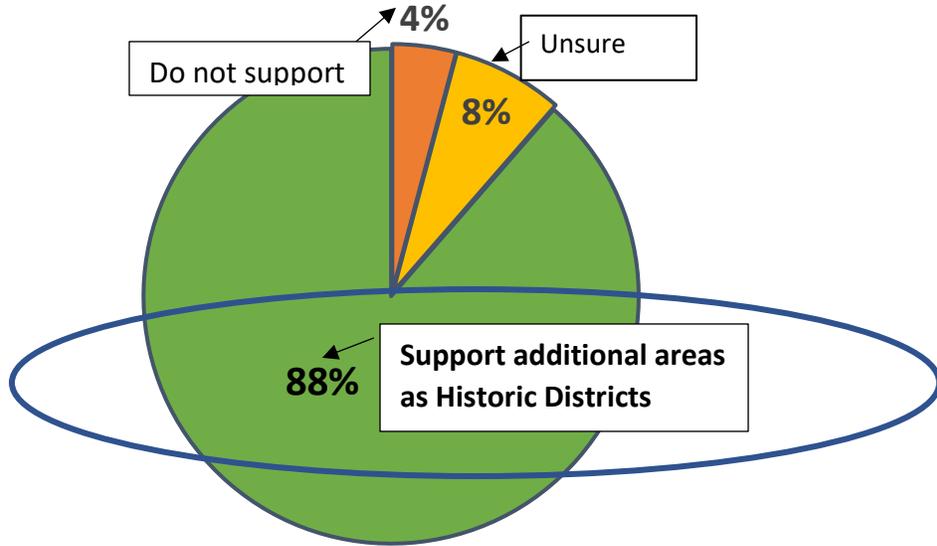
Maintaining the desirable characteristics of the Morningside Heights community corresponds with Historic District designation.

- Real estate overdevelopment stands out as a perceived threat to the neighborhood (85%).
- Locally owned businesses not able to remain in the neighborhood (71%) is also a strongly felt concern.
- Consistent with survey findings conducted by the Morningside Heights Community Coalition conducted over the past year, having affordable housing is essential for the neighborhood, but its availability is at risk (62%).
- Day-to-day factors that contribute to an enjoyable quality of life are considered as being impinged upon. Increased traffic in the neighborhood and the noise and safety issues that stem from more cars, trucks and unruly bike riders are concerns to Morningside Heights residents.
- Expansion by area institutions, especially Columbia University, is among the concerns expressed by neighborhood residents.

## Detailed Findings

### Support for Historic Designation in Phase II Areas

A majority (88%) support adding additional areas as Historic Districts in Morningside Heights.

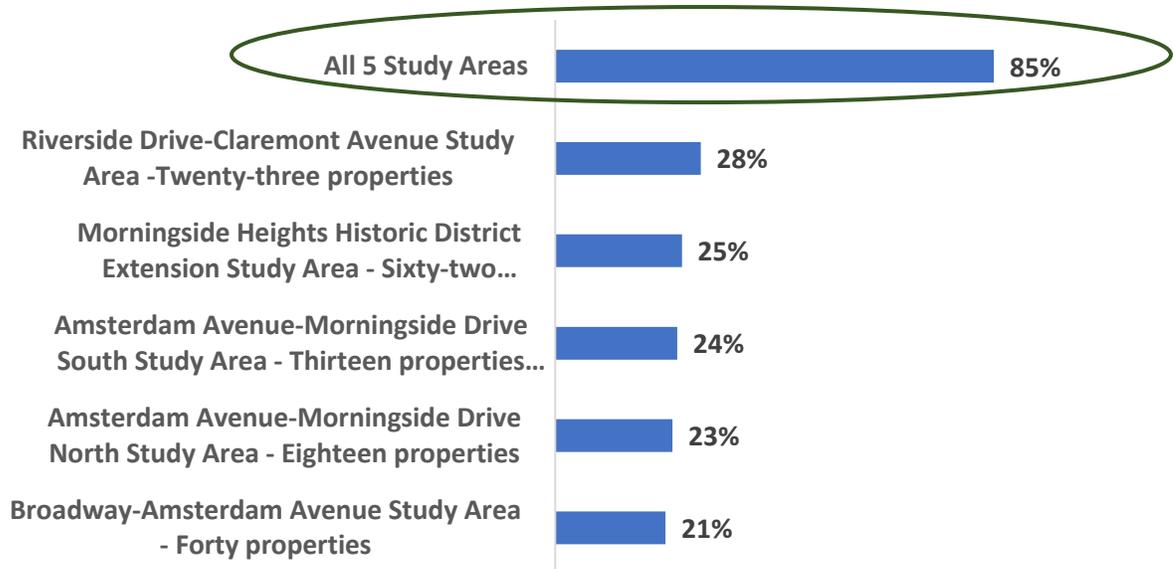


Base: Total Respondents (306)

*Q. Would you support efforts to add additional areas as Historic Districts in Morningside Heights?*

## Phase II Areas Would Support for Historic Designation

The addition of all five study areas is fully supported (85%) by those in favor of an expanded Historic District designation.



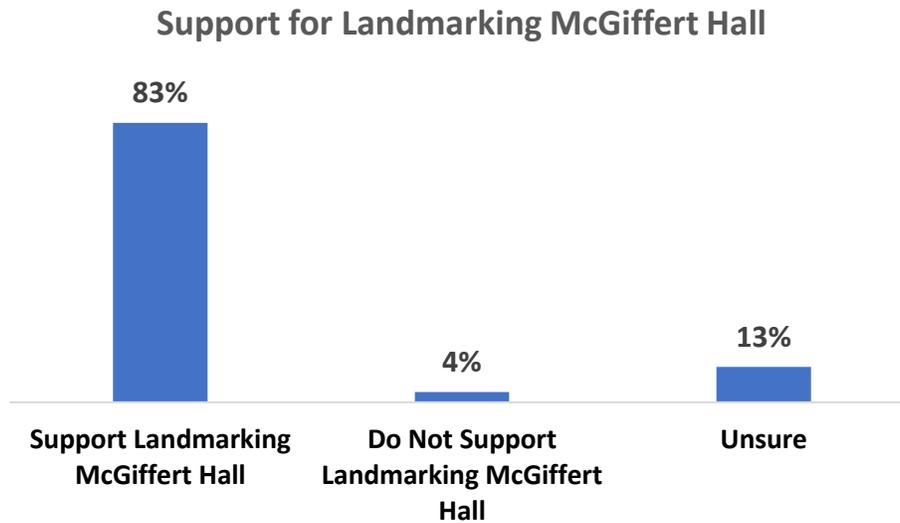
Base: Respondents supporting adding additional Historic Districts and answering (220)

*Q. Which of these five listed areas would you support to be designated as an Historic District?*

## Support for Landmarking McGiffert Hall – A Residential Building Owned by Riverside Church

*McGiffert Hall, designed as an apartment building for Union Theological Seminary in 1931, is a significant work of architecture by a firm that was a pioneer in Collegiate Gothic design.*

There are far more area residents supporting the Landmarking of McGiffert Hall on Claremont Avenue at 122<sup>nd</sup> Street than those who do not support the Landmarking.



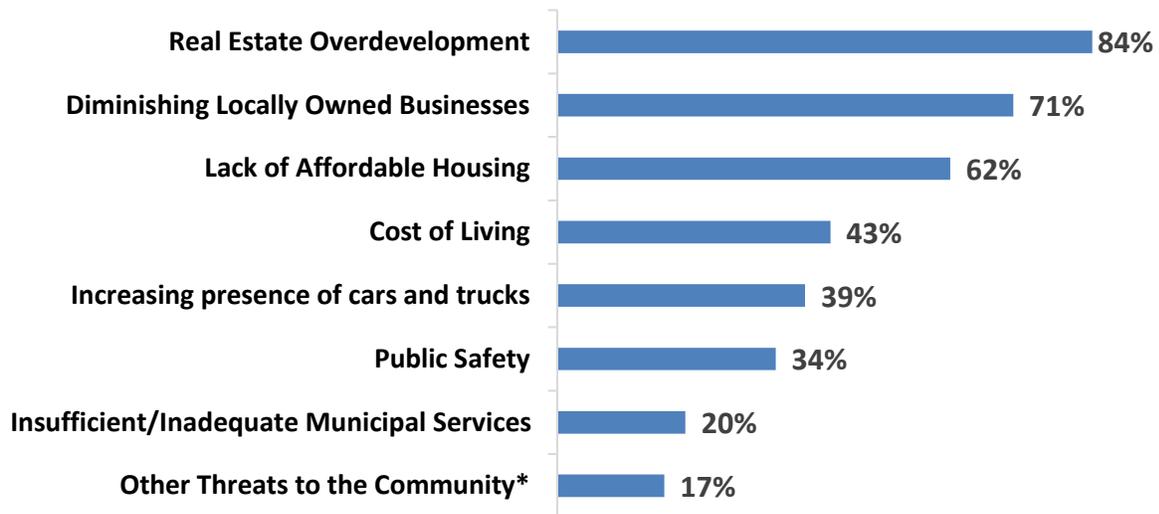
Base: Total Respondents Answering (306)

***Q. Would you support the landmarking of McGiffert Hall, an historic residential building owned by The Riverside Church, located at 97-101 Claremont Avenue?***

## Perceived Threats to the Morningside Heights Neighborhood

Current residents want Morningside Heights to be a community that is accessible across a spectrum of household income. There is concern that characteristics of a good quality of life in the neighborhood are diminishing.

- Building affordable housing, contextually, not out of character or scope for the neighborhood, is essential to sustaining the neighborhood.
- Community members are concerned that local businesses, a mainstay for the neighborhood, are at risk.



Base: Total Respondents Answering (302)

*Q. Which of the following describe what you feel is/are threats to the community of Morningside Heights?*

\*Verbatim comments, see following page



## **Survey Objectives and Methodology**

In order to determine how members of the community feel about Phase II plans for Historic Designation, MHHDC conducted a survey among Morningside Heights residents.

A brief online survey, using the Survey Monkey program, was sent to MHHDC's Mailchimp mailing list on June 30, 2021. A reminder about the survey was emailed on July 14, 2021. The online survey closed on July 16, 2021. The survey was also available offline (on paper) on June 10, 2021, at a Street Fair on West 111th Street.

306 respondents completed the survey, including the online (n=297) and offline (n=9) surveys.

The survey findings are limited to a self-select sample (not a random sample) and therefore not statistically projectible.

The Phase II five geographical clusters (Study Areas) are:

### **Morningside Heights Historic District Extension**

Sixty-two properties roughly bounded by West 114th Street to the north, Amsterdam Avenue to the east, West 112th Street to the south, and Broadway to the west

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# Appendix

## **Verbatim Responses: Other Threats to the Community**

### **Excessive/Increased Noise**

Excruciatingly loud sirens

loud noise; particularly gangs of motor bikes and fireworks

Increased noise

late night noise.

Increasing noise

Motorcycle noise!!

Noise

Noisy motorcycles

noise

sprawling construction sites

noise from motorcycles and cars without mufflers; battery-operated vehicles on sidewalks

Increasing and uncontrolled noise pollution from motorcycles, motorcycle 'parades' late nights and weekends, helicopters

### **Street/Park Cleanliness/Disrepair**

GARBAGE EVERYWHERE! and Scaffolding that is up for years.

garbage filth dirt and scaffolding

infrastructure of Riverside drive and Riverside Park (drainage, walking paths and stairs, safety)

Inadequate street cleaning

Sidewalk cleanliness; street paving;

Disrepair of sidewalks & Riverside Park

## **Verbatim Responses: Other Threats to the Community (continued)**

### **Safety/Crime/Ignoring Traffic Rules**

EBikes and motorcycles that do not obey traffic laws

Delivery bicycles (motorized and pedaled) operating on the sidewalks and up streets illegally against the direction of auto traffic. Food vendors selling on Bdway without permits and running motors or generators for 10-12 hrs a day (well beyond the 5 minute limit set by NYC/NYS DMV regulations. Also, these food vendors take up parking spaces and do not pay the designated parking, outrageous. to NYC.

delivery people riding their electric bikes too quickly

Food vending trucks selling illegally (contrary to NYC law) Also, delivery bikes riding on sidewalks and the wrong way on one-way streets. running their motors/generators for 10-12 hrs/day (contrary to 5-minute idling law in NYC & NYS DMV law).

vehicular traffic on Claremont Avenue between Tiemann Pl and west 120 street needs to be rerouted to Broadway as pedestrians are going to be killed by speeding cars/trucks on Claremont Avenue.

Crime

Crime

food vending vehicles running engines or generators for 12 hrs/day, 5-7 days/week. The NYC/NYS limit on idling is 5 minutes. Also, bicycle delivery vehicles operating on sidewalks and going up streets the wrong way. Please on both of these issues. Also, food vending trucks (when they had a valid permit) used to be only to set up on side streets and NOT on main streets, such as Broadway, the food establishments operating out of storefronts are paying 10-20 thousand dollars or more in rent, and these food vending trucks as far as I know pay no daily fee or have any city issued permits to be operating. Thirty years ago, when I used to rent a space at some street fairs around Manhattan, the daily fee for a food stand was \$200-250/day. And these food vending trucks are not being ticketed by any NYC police or other patrol people for what appears to me to be multiple violations per day per vehicle.

### **Reduced Parking Spaces**

a lack of parking

Non-profits taking parking spaces

Loss of parking due to bike stands

Removal of parking spaces for commercial use, e.g., Citi bike and zip car

## **Verbatim Responses: Other Threats to the Community (continued)**

### **Expansion by Columbia/Area Institutions**

Columbia University Real Estate's rapacity

Columbia University's hegemony

Columbia U pressure in all directions

Displacement of residents by Columbia University and other institutions, directly and indirectly

Columbia University in the City of New York

Destructive modification of historic buildings, such as Union Theological Seminary and the development between St. Johns and Mt. Sinai, for purposes of high-end but poorly built housing, when other properties lay vacant and suitable for development or demolition (see 112th St, Maranamay building and also the bank structures on 112th and Broadway).

Columbia University expansion

Encroachment by "non-profit"/non-tax-paying institutions (ergo untouchables) on neighborhood life

### **Homelessness**

We were very sad and angry to the shelter on our block, used as transitional housing for women and families, closed. We actually valued that facility on our block and cooked for them and helped out with clothes and toiletries and housing advice, as we could.

Homelessness

Need more social services for homeless,

Homelessness

non-profits not providing services for homeless who live in vehicles on Riverside Dr. south.

## **Verbatim Responses: Other Threats to the Community (continued)**

### **Miscellaneous Verbatim Comments**

Food Stores....Drug Stores are everywhere, but Groceries are limited to basically 3 'supermarkets' and the largest is Westside Supermarket...which keeps food prices at a high level with little to no competition.

I don't know if local businesses are diminishing but if they are that is concerning for the vitality and uniqueness of the neighborhood. I also have no sense of whether we have insufficient/inadequate municipal services. If so, that is also a threat to the viability of this community.

Increased ridership of the local subways

Absence of community organization

vacant storefronts

Increased number of movies/tv filmed in the area

Proposed restrictions on building height, without regard to use(s) of the property. (Building height, in itself, is not a problem in this area.)

All who work in area need to realize the value & beauty of its Hx [sic] to preserve the character for the quality of life here.

Columbia's InterCampus buses can be a nuisance

Recognition of diverse histories

Overcrowding of Public Transportation and diminishing thereof

Efforts to stop construction, stop tall buildings. Historic district rules are terrible nimbyism.

extraordinarily parsimonious locals

democrats

## Profile of Respondents

### Connection to Morningside Heights

Permanent Resident	92%
Student	1%
Other Temporary Resident (non-student)	3%
Local Employee	1%
Visitor	1%
Other	2%

Base: Total respondents answering (n=306)

Q. What is your connection to Morningside Heights?

### Location of Morningside Heights Residence

Outside of Study Areas (e.g., West 110th, 111th Street, Morningside Gardens)	49%
Morningside Heights Historic District Extension Study Area - Sixty-two properties	16%
Amsterdam Avenue-Morningside Drive South Study Area - Thirteen properties	4%
Amsterdam Avenue-Morningside Drive North Study Area - Eighteen properties	5%
Broadway-Amsterdam Avenue Study Area - Forty properties	11%
Riverside Drive-Claremont Avenue Study Area - Twenty-three properties	14%

Base: Total respondents answering (n=306)

Q. Which area in Morningside Heights describes where you live?

## **Profile of Respondents (continued)**

### **Length of time have lived in Morningside Heights**

Less than one year	1%
1 to 4 years	3%
5 to 9 years	12%
10 to 14 years	13%
15 to 19 years	5%
20 to 24 years	13%
25 to 29 years	12%
30 years or more	42%

Base: Total respondents answering (n=306)

Q. How long have you lived in Morningside Heights?

### **Type of Home**

Coop	58%
Rental	37%
Condo	4%
Other	1%

Base: Total respondents answering (n=306)

Q. Which of the following describes your home?