

The
Morgan
Library &
Museum

Press
Release

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The Morgan Announces the Restoration of J. Pierpont Morgan's Library Designed by McKim, Mead & White and the Enhancement of Surrounding Grounds



*Madison Avenue near East 36th Street. J.P. Morgan Library. Wurts Bros. (New York, NY), ca. 1905.
Museum of the City of New York, X2010.7.1.197.*

New York, NY, February 14, 2019 – The Morgan Library & Museum announced today the exterior restoration of J. Pierpont Morgan's Library, designed by McKim, Mead & White. The four-year, \$12.5 million project, which marks the first preservation of the landmark library's exterior in its 112-year history, will restore and conserve one of the finest examples of Neoclassical architecture in the United States, enhance the surrounding grounds, improve the exterior lighting of the building, and increase public access to and appreciation of this historic architectural treasure.

J. Pierpont Morgan's Library is the heart of the Morgan Library & Museum. Commissioned in 1902 by financier John Pierpont Morgan as his private library, the building was completed in 1906 and is considered one of McKim, Mead & White's finest works, perfectly embodying the Renaissance ideal of the unity of the arts through the integration of architecture, sculpture, and painting with exceptional craftsmanship and materials. The structure reflects its contents: majestic in design, yet intimate in scale.

In 2010 the Morgan restored the interior rooms of J. Pierpont Morgan's Library. In 2016 the Morgan began planning for the exterior restoration by engaging Integrated Conservation Resources (ICR), a firm

specializing in the restoration of historic structures, to provide an initial needs assessment of the Library's condition. Following the needs assessment, the Morgan engaged ICR to undertake a more detailed analysis of the building, which resulted in a fully articulated restoration approach. ICR, supported by the architecture firm Beyer Blinder Belle, carefully studied and documented existing conditions, installed data loggers to monitor the performance of the exterior envelope, tested proposed remediations, and finalized the restoration's details.

The forthcoming restoration will be comprehensive and will address issues such as masonry deterioration, masonry joint failure, roof conditions, deterioration of the fence and other metalwork corrosion, and sculpture conservation.

In conjunction with the restoration, exterior lighting on J. Pierpont Morgan's Library—currently minimal and ineffective—will be improved by enhancing existing light emanating from the interior, using historic fixtures coupled with new technologies. The scheme will create a painterly effect of layered light at dusk and dark. Developed by Tillett Lighting Design Associates, the new lighting design will give the Library a subtle, timeless, and inviting presence.

Restoring J. Pierpont Morgan's Library presents a unique opportunity to reimagine the natural setting around it and to provide for visitor access to the site's exterior for the first time in the institution's history. The current landscaping—comprising a simple lawn and trees—does little to complement the architecture of the Library, nor does it provide accessible pathways or spaces to encourage visitor interaction with the landmark building's exterior. By creating new spaces and opportunities for engagement, the project will help to reinvigorate this portion of the Morgan's campus, which has been less visible to visitors since the Morgan's entrance shifted from 36th Street to Madison Avenue as part of the 2006 Renzo Piano–designed expansion.

After an extensive search, the Morgan has engaged Todd Longstaffe-Gowan Landscape Design to develop designs to address these issues. An accomplished landscape architect, historian, teacher, and author, Todd Longstaffe-Gowan has led notable projects in the United Kingdom, including for Hampton Court Palace, Kensington Palace Gardens, and the Royal College of Art. This is his first appointment in the United States. Longstaffe-Gowan will collaborate with New York–based Future Green Studio to ensure the development of plantings that will flourish in New York City's dense, challenging environment.

“Restoring the sublime exterior of J. Pierpont Morgan's Library is far and away our most important capital project for the next decade,” said Director Colin B. Bailey. “This is our responsibility. And, in many respects, it is our privilege. Once the restoration of the Library is complete and the grounds are revitalized, the public will be able to engage more fully with one of McKim, Mead & White's most important architectural achievements. The enhanced grounds will create a generous new space for outdoor programming and allow visitors to look closely at the exterior architectural and sculptural details of the Library.”

To date, 74 percent of the required \$12.5 million is funded. On-site work will commence in February 2019, directed by Sciame and executed by Nicholson & Galloway, longtime partners in the architectural expansion and stewardship of the Morgan. Restoration of J. Pierpont Morgan's Library will be completed by December 2019, at which point work will commence on the surrounding grounds. The library will still be open to visitors during the restoration process. The entire restoration and rehabilitation of the grounds will be unveiled to the public and accessible in fall 2020. The unveiling will be accompanied by an exhibition chronicling the history of the Library, as well as a scholarly publication.

Major Corporate Sponsor

Morgan Stanley

Lead funding provided by Katharine J. Rayner, the Sherman Fairchild Foundation, Inc., Annette de la Renta, and the Charina Endowment Fund

Project Team

Project Manager: Jon Maass

Architectural Conservator: Integrated Conservation Resources (ICR)

Architectural Conservation Contractor: Integrated Conservation Contracting (ICC)

Art Conservation: Art Conservation Group

Construction Manager: Sciame Construction

Coordinating Architect: Beyer Blinder Belle

Landscape Designer: Todd Longstaffe-Gowan Landscape Design

Lighting Designer: Tillet Lighting Design Associates

Local Landscape Consultant: Future Green Studio

Masonry and Waterproofing Contractor: Nicholson & Galloway

Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing Engineer: Goldman Copeland

Structural Engineer: Old Structures Engineering

About the Morgan Library & Museum

A museum and independent research library located in the heart of New York City, the Morgan Library & Museum began as the personal library of financier, collector, and cultural benefactor Pierpont Morgan. The Morgan offers visitors close encounters with great works of human accomplishment in a setting treasured for its intimate scale and historic significance. Its collection of manuscripts, rare books, music, drawings, and works of art comprise a unique and dynamic record of civilization, as well as an incomparable repository of ideas and of the creative process from 4000 BC to the present.

The Morgan Library & Museum | 225 Madison Avenue | 212.685.0008 | themorgan.org

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