

Images Available Upon Request

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WAVE HILL ANNOUNCES RESTORATION OF A GRAND HUDSON RIVER VALLEY MANSION

Bronx, NY, March 25, 2011 – A public garden and cultural center in the Bronx overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades, Wave Hill is pleased to announce that historic Wave Hill House, the largest structure on the institution's grounds, is undergoing transformative improvements that will meet the expectations of the 21st century visitor. The project affirms the excellence of the institution by elevating the building to the exceptional level of the surrounding gardens, landscape and vistas. Since the early 1960s, the house has been transformed many times to accommodate the change of Wave Hill House's use from residence to public cultural institution. During the entire project, visitors can expect to enjoy all the amenities they are accustomed to at Wave Hill, including regular programming and food service.

Project Anticipates 50th anniversary of a Beloved Bronx Institution

In anticipation of its 50th anniversary celebration in 2015, the Board of Directors and Senior Administration determined that the next logical step in the institution's growth was the renovation and restoration of Wave Hill House. Several other historic buildings on the property have already been updated and restored for public use. Through a competitive bidding process, Dattner Architects was selected by the City of New York and Wave Hill to design the overall restoration of Wave Hill House. Building Conservation Associates (BCA), as the historic preservation consultant to Dattner Architects, was contracted to provide historic preservation and material conservation services. The scope of work involves both exterior and interior elements, including significant structural repair throughout the building to correct deterioration that has taken place over the years.

Interior Restoration

When the restoration is complete, visitors will find more accessible and attractive public spaces for programs that for many are central to the experience of Wave Hill—its Family Art Project, annual concert series and ever-popular Café. The restoration starts at the main entrance, where the wood door will be refinished and the leaded transom will be repaired. Throughout the house, wood base moldings, ornamental details, wood trim, and hardware will be repaired, replaced and finished. A desirable venue for weddings and conferences, Wave Hill House also generates significant revenue for the institution.

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- **Café**

The layout of the Café will be changed to restore the space to its primary use as a dining area with direct access to the Kate French Terrace. An adjacent serving area will be created to accommodate cafeteria-style service. Ornamental marble details will be repaired or replaced on the Café and Tea Room's fireplaces and mantles. Missing and mismatched wood panels will be replaced to match the finish and detail of the original. New lighting and furnishings will complete the Café's transformation. During the renovation, a custom-built food truck staffed by Great Performances, Wave Hill's exclusive, onsite caterer, will be sited in a discrete location to maintain visitor satisfaction while protecting the vistas and enjoyment of the gardens.

- **Meeting and Performance Spaces**

Armor Hall's Juliet balcony will be repaired and layers of paint will be removed from the fireplace and mantle. Stucco and paint will be removed from the gneiss wall, restoring the original stonework. Conservators will refinish the second-floor Toscanini Room fireplace. New lighting and wireless internet access will improve this meeting space.

- **Learning Center**

School children and families will find the new and improved **Sally & Gilbert Kerlin Learning Center** feeling like an entirely new space. Walking into the room, the visual sightline will be opened up. Visitors will sense a lightness and brightness to the room that creates a seamless transition to going outdoors for garden and nature. The clean-up sinks will be moved to a more discrete location with an upper and lower sink to serve the needs of children and adults. A semi-enclosed space will be added for coats, umbrellas and strollers. Materials will be neatly tucked away into built-in shelving surrounding the room. Designated display areas will showcase the latest work. Tables and chairs will continue to vary in size for diverse needs.

- **New Program Space**

The **Sarah & Geoffrey Gund Theater** will provide school children and families a multi-purpose performance space with upper and lower levels. The new theater space includes a ramp to accommodate strollers and wheelchairs on the lower level with built in seating available on both levels. The area will be opened up to match the footprint of the Mark Twain room above and will expose windows that are now hidden on both sides of the room. This brightens the room allowing for the glow of natural light to come in when appropriate. In addition, the space will be suitable for multimedia presentations or video screenings —by children and for children—during our educational programs.

System Upgrades and ADA Compliance

The Wave Hill House capital project includes upgrades to the plumbing, electrical, and fire protection systems, as well as the installation of a new energy efficient HVAC system and improvements to meet ADA compliance.

- **Plumbing**

This project will provide new or modified existing plumbing as required for ADA toilets and a new water heater relocated to the Boiler Room. Modern public bathrooms will be built to replace the two which currently exist.

- **Electrical**

This involves rewiring, securing all service conduits and general improvements to replace the 40-year-old system, bringing it up to standards current use. This upgrade will also reduce Wave Hill's energy consumption.

- **Fire Protection**

When these system upgrades are complete, sprinkler service will be extended throughout the entire cellar to include the Learning Center and in the second and third floors. Existing service will be retrofit to meet Bronx County and New York City fire codes.

- **HVAC**

The plan calls for installation of an energy-efficient boiler as well as a central air conditioning system throughout Wave Hill House, including all public areas other than the Toscanini Room. In addition to making the building more welcoming to the public, this upgrade will reduce humidity, which will ultimately protect the building's historic wood finishes.

- **ADA Compliance**

The upgrade of Wave Hill House to meet ADA Compliance standards is a critical piece in the institution's plan to make all its public buildings ADA Compliant. The placement of ADA ramps and an elevator in the building have been carefully assessed to minimize impact of this historic structure. When the building reopens, all public levels of Wave Hill House will be easily available to visitors of varying needs. The City's generous funding toward this project highlights its importance in New York City's ADA Compliance initiative for City-owned facilities.

Exterior Restoration

The project will protect the exterior of Wave Hill House and restore major portions of its structural integrity,

including stonework on walls and chimneys, roofs, ornamental metalwork, windows, lintels and woodwork. The contractor will rebuild the stairs and the entrance to **the Kerlin Learning Center** and repair windows throughout the building.

History of Wave Hill House

Built as a country home, Wave Hill House has a distinguished history that aligns closely with the garden's mission of helping people connect with the world of nature. One of its earliest owners was publishing scion William Henry Appleton, who in the latter half of the nineteenth century brought to his home such pioneering natural scientists as Charles Darwin and Thomas Henry Huxley, who declared that the Palisades, across the river from Wave Hill, was one of the world's great natural wonders. Theodore Roosevelt's family rented the house in the nineteenth century, when the future president was a young boy. The experience here significantly deepened his love of nature, later prompting him to secure the preservation of millions of acres of American parkland. Mark Twain leased the estate in the early twentieth century, setting up a treehouse parlor in the branches of a chestnut tree on the lawn and writing eloquently about the "hoarse song" of the winds of Wave Hill winters, "that thrills me and ...makes me want to live always." In addition to scientific and literary figures, Wave Hill has also been home to cultural icons, such as Arturo Toscanini, who spent three years at the house starting in 1942. The property was purchased by George Walbridge Perkins, a well-respected businessman and enlightened conservationist who was instrumental in creating the Palisades Interstate Park. In 1960, the Perkins-Freeman family donated the remaining 28-acre estate, including Wave Hill House, to the City of New York for public use and to continue Perkins' mission of preserving the land and scenic views along the Hudson River. Today, Wave Hill is a member of the Cultural Institutions Group, a coalition of 33 publicly owned and privately operated cultural organizations located in the five boroughs of New York City.

Wave Hill's goal is to create a welcoming, empowering space for inquisitive minds. These spaces hold tremendous potential to be reorganized more effectively during non-peak hours throughout the week, and even within the course of a day, to provide additional access to visitors and greater opportunities for generating revenue.

The renovation of Wave Hill House launches the first major capital initiative of Wave Hill's strategic plan

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and its three-prong approach to sustaining the excellence of the institution—addressing programming, capital needs and governance—to prepare for an exciting future.

Speaking on behalf of the institution, Wave Hill President and Executive Director Claudia Bonn described the eagerness with which “Wave Hill has anticipated the renovation of our beloved Wave Hill House, which will not only offer greater accessibility to everyone, but enhance and enrich the entire visitor experience. Our heartfelt thanks go to all who have made this important restoration possible.” Reflecting on New York City’s commitment to the initiative, Kate D. Levin, Commissioner, Department of Cultural Affairs, commented that “The restoration of Wave Hill House will expand the institution’s capacity to welcome and serve audiences of all ages and backgrounds, while returning an extraordinary property to its original grandeur. We look forward to partnering with the board and staff on this important renovation project, and to introducing more New Yorkers and visitors to Wave Hill’s dynamic collections and vistas for years to come.”

Slated to begin in April 2011, the \$9.7 million project itself has been divided into two parts: the first is a \$6.6 million initiative underwritten by the City of New York to bring Wave Hill House up to ADA standards; the second, underwritten by private donations, is a \$3.1 million restoration of the building’s public spaces. Wave Hill expresses gratitude to the initial underwriters of this project, especially the City of New York, members of the Perkins-Freeman family, Wave Hill’s Board of Directors and the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation. Wave Hill House is scheduled to reopen in 2013.

Wave Hill 675 West 252nd St Bronx, NY 10471 718.549.3200 www.wavehill.org

HOURS Open all year, Tuesday–Sunday and many major holidays: 9AM–5:30PM. *Closes 4:30PM, Oct 15–Apr 14*
ADMISSION \$8 adults, \$4 students and seniors 65+, \$2 children 6–18
Free Tuesday, Saturday mornings until noon. Free to Members and children under 6.

DIRECTIONS—Getting here is easy. Located only 30 minutes from midtown Manhattan, Wave Hill’s free shuttle van transports you to and from our front gate and Metro-North’s Riverdale station, and the 242nd Street stop on the #1 subway line. Limited onsite parking is available for \$8 per vehicle. Free off-site parking nearby with continuous, complimentary shuttle service to and from our front gate. Complete directions, shuttle bus schedule at www.wavehill.org.

Wave Hill, Inc., is an independent, non-profit cultural institution governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The buildings and grounds of Wave Hill are owned by the City of New York. With the assistance of the Bronx Borough President, and Bronx representatives in the City Council and State Legislature, Wave Hill’s operation is supported with public funds through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquariums Grant Program administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts, celebrating 50 years of building strong, creative communities in New York State’s 62 counties.



Target Free Days
Target sponsors free Tuesday and Saturday morning admission to Wave Hill, providing public access to the arts in our community.

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