New York, NY (October 2, 2019) – The Morgan Library & Museum today announced site improvements to its 36th Street grounds as part of its four-year, $12.5 million project to restore and enhance the exterior of J. Pierpont Morgan’s Library. Developed by award-winning landscape designer Todd Longstaffe-Gowan and lighting designer Linnaea Tillett, the new garden and lighting will revitalize the southern section of the Morgan’s campus and provide visitor access to its grounds for the first time in the institution’s history.
The exterior restoration of J. Pierpont Morgan’s Library that is currently underway presents a unique opportunity to reimagine its setting. The existing landscaping—essentially a simple lawn—does little to complement the architecture of the Library, nor does it encourage visitor interaction with the landmark building’s exterior. By creating new spaces and opportunities for engagement and drawing attention to the site, the project will reinvigorate this portion of the Morgan’s campus, which was somewhat removed from visitors’ experience when the Morgan’s entrance shifted from 36th Street to Madison Avenue as part of the 2006 Renzo Piano–designed expansion.

The new plan will create an accessible route from the interior campus to the exterior of J. Pierpont Morgan’s Library, and an inviting space for tours and other programs. The low profile of the design respects and enhances the restrained façades of both the original Library and Renzo Piano’s addition. Paths of bluestone, set in patterns that derive from the Library’s floor and exterior paving, will provide a fully accessible surface for garden visitors. Limited use of elegant pebble work will add texture and visual variety to the ground plane.

The garden’s planting strategy includes an extension of existing groundcover, the introduction of beds of periwinkle flanking the Library’s loggia, and the addition of colorful, low-height herbaceous beds. The garden will also display several antiquities from the Morgan’s holdings that up until now have been inaccessible to the public. These include a large Roman sarcophagus, a Roman funerary stele, and a pair of Renaissance corbels.

Todd Longstaffe-Gowan has extensive experience designing and developing landscapes for some of the most distinguished sites in the United Kingdom, including Hampton Court and both Kensington and Kew Palaces, and his imaginative designs respect the spatial and historic significance of a site while enabling new functionality. The Morgan Library & Museum commission is the firm’s first in the United States.
“The new 36th Street garden is a significant part of the Morgan’s commitment to increasing public engagement with our historic original building and surrounding site,” said Director Colin B. Bailey. “The enhanced grounds will allow visitors and school groups to look closely at the fascinating exterior architectural and sculptural details of the Library. It is a privilege for us to be able to share such a significant architectural marvel with our community.”

The Morgan’s site improvements also include a lighting scheme by Tillett Lighting Design Associates that will enhance the building’s presence at night and accentuate both the architecture and the new garden.

![Rendering of south elevation lighting design. Courtesy Tillett Lighting Design Associates.](Image)

The new lighting design will create an enchanting, moonlit nocturnal environment, which will sit in contrast to and mediate the ambient street lighting. J. Pierpont Morgan’s Library was originally commissioned as a private space, and the lighting will emphasize the domestic quality of the architecture. The design centers on the relighting of the historic lantern that hangs in the Library’s loggia, and spotlights that will gently highlight the building’s details and the garden’s antiquities and sculptures.

In combination, the comprehensive exterior restoration of J. Pierpont Morgan’s Library and the 36th Street improvements will bring new life to a magnificent library over one hundred years after its initial construction. The complete restoration and site enhancements will be unveiled to the public in spring 2021. The unveiling will be accompanied by an exhibition chronicling the history of the Library, as well as a scholarly publication that will be released in summer 2021.*
*Note, this was updated as of January 30, 2020 to reflect the new opening date of the Garden, which was previously slated to open in fall 2020.

Lead sponsorship provided by the Charina Endowment Fund, Inc., Sherman Fairchild Foundation, Inc., Morgan Stanley, Katharine J. Rayner, Mrs. Oscar de la Renta, The Thompson Family Foundation, Inc., and public funds from the City of New York through the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, with support from Mayor Bill de Blasio, City Council Speaker Corey Johnson, and Council Member Keith Powers.

Morgan Stanley

The Project Team
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Architectural Conservator: Integrated Conservation Resources
Architectural Conservation Contractor: Integrated Conservation Contracting
Art Conservation: Art Conservation Group
Construction Manager: Sciame Construction
Coordinating Architect: Beyer Blinder Belle
Landscape Designer: Todd Longstaffe-Gowan Landscape Design
Lighting Designer: Tillett Lighting Design Associates
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 comprises 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.

J. Pierpont Morgan’s Library is the heart of the Morgan Library & Museum. Commissioned in 1902 by financier 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.

About Todd Longstaffe-Gowan
Todd Longstaffe-Gowan read Environmental Studies at the University of Manitoba and Landscape Architecture at Harvard University, and completed his PhD in Historical Geography at University College London. Since entering private practice in 1990, Longstaffe-Gowan has advised on a number of public and private historic landscapes. He has developed and implemented long-term landscape management plans for the National Trust, English Heritage, and a wide range of private owners in the United Kingdom and abroad. He has similarly had extensive input in the conservation and redevelopment of a variety of historic landscapes, including the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, Kensington Palace Gardens, and The Crown Estate in central London. He holds a variety of advisory roles, including Gardens Adviser to Historic Royal Palaces, with responsibilities at five royal palaces in Greater London, and founding member and President of the London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust.

About Linnaea Tillett, PhD
A lighting designer, environmental psychologist, public artist, and sought-after speaker, Linnaea Tillett holds a BA in Philosophy from University College London and a PhD in Environmental Psychology from City University of New York. Using the principles of environmental psychology, she has forged a highly acclaimed approach to lighting: imaginative, public-spirited, ecologically sensitive, and technically innovative. Her firm, Tillett Lighting Design Associates, has thirty-five years of experience with projects across the United States and beyond. Encompassing a range of typologies and scales, the firm’s portfolio includes urban parks, waterfronts, cultural campuses, and connective corridors as well as intimate gardens, private estates, fine art collections, and public art. In addition to her practice, Tillett served on the faculty of The New School’s Parsons School of Design for fifteen years.