

Park West 77th Street Block Association

Dear Neighbor,

Our beloved American Museum of Natural History is behaving badly. And we don't like that.

Last December, the AMNH announced through the New York Times its plans to build a new center for scientific research and education. The museum revealed the size of the complex (218,000 square feet), the cost (\$325,000,000) and the architect (Jeanne Gang, a MacArthur Fellow), but was vague about the location (the Columbus Avenue side of their 26 building complex, near West 79th Street).

And while we applauded the museum's plans, we became alarmed, when this past June it finally revealed to the Columbus Avenue Business Improvement District exactly where it wants to build — in the pocket park extending from the Times Capsule plaza all the way to Columbus Avenue at West 79th Street!



The land surrounding the museum — Theodore Roosevelt Park — does not “belong” to the museum. It is “our” park, a public park, actually part of Central Park. And it has been landscaped and maintained by both the Friends of Roosevelt Park and the NYC Parks Department — not the museum.

So how can the museum present as a *fait accompli* the location of its new building? The museum believes it has the right because of a NY State law dating from the 1870's that allowed the creation of the museum within public parkland in the first place. Community activists are challenging this law — does it really allow the museum to build with impunity in Theodore Roosevelt Park in perpetuity?

While the AMNH has given lip-service to its desire to interact with the community and address our concerns, it has had little or no substantive dialogue with Community Board 7, Landmark West!, Friends of Roosevelt Park or the West 77th Street and West 81st Street Block Associations.

We encourage the museum not to rob us of a tranquil refuge enjoyed by the community and tourists alike. And since it still says there are no architectural plans for building, we hope it will explore: (1) repurposing existing space within its complex of buildings, (2) building up, perhaps over the Powerhouse, (3) building down, like it did for its parking garage or (4) selecting a satellite location for the new center.

We encourage you to become informed and get involved... Visit the clearinghouse for our opposition efforts — SaveTeddyRooseveltPark.org — where you can see how our community is mobilizing, read the current press on our fight and most importantly, link to our Change.org petition. And share your thoughts on facebook.com/savetedyrooseveltpark.

We do not want to lose the only truly peaceful gathering place we have in our bustling community.

Anne Snee
Block Association Co-Chair

Jan Prager
Preservation Committee Chair

parkwest77ba@gmail.com