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**MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO AND PROSPECT PARK ALLIANCE UNVEIL DESIGN
FOR \$8.9 MILLION RESTORATION OF GRAND ARMY PLAZA**

Prospect Park Alliance will undertake restoration of historic Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Arch and surrounding Berms and Plaza

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio, NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, and Prospect Park Alliance President Sue Donoghue today unveiled the design plans for the nearly \$9 million restoration of Grand Army Plaza, a New York City and National Historic Landmark, including the Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Arch and the landscaped berms that frame the plaza. Prospect Park Alliance, the non-profit that operates Prospect Park in partnership with NYC Parks, is undertaking the project, which builds on their work over 30 years to restore Prospect Park and its historic landscapes. Images of the design, and historic photos of the Arch, can be viewed [here](#).

“Grand Army Plaza is an iconic Brooklyn destination, welcoming New Yorkers and visitors from across the world to the beautiful Prospect Park. The restoration of the Arch and surrounding landscape will ensure the Plaza is magnificent for generations to come,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

“By restoring the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch and surrounding area, this project will enhance Grand Army Plaza and help preserve the historic entryway to Prospect Park,” said **NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP**. “We are grateful to Mayor de Blasio and the Prospect Park Alliance for recognizing the need to invest in this beloved Brooklyn landmark.”

“Grand Army Plaza is not only a Brooklyn treasure, but Prospect Park's grand entranceway, welcoming communities from both the east and west sides of the park. The Alliance is incredibly excited to restore this space to its original grandeur,” said **Sue Donoghue, President, Prospect Park Alliance**. “Our award-winning team of architects and landscape architects has undertaken the restoration of many important park destinations, from the Carousel to the LeFrak Center at Lakeside, and this work is central to our mission in the park.”

Design Plans

The restoration plan focuses on the Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Arch, which has deteriorated over time: replacing the arch's roof; cleaning and repointing the brick and stone structure; repairing interior elements, including historic iron staircases that lead up to the roof; and upgrading the exterior lighting with new high efficiency fixtures.

In researching the restoration design, Prospect Park Alliance worked with Atkinson-Noland & Associates to conduct radar and magnetic investigations of the arch's structure and internal conditions, and Karcher Company to test the cleaning and conservation processes. In addition, working with Renfro Design Group, Prospect Park Alliance developed a lighting design scheme that showcases the historic elements of the arch and its statuary while making the lighting more environmentally friendly by utilizing energy efficient technology.

The project also includes restoring elements of the surrounding plaza and landscaped berms that frame the plaza on its east, west and north sides. This includes removing invasive vines, shrubs and trees that are in poor condition and planting mostly native trees and shrubs that provide interest and color throughout the seasons. The Alliance will also replace the existing chain link fence with low, decorative steel fencing, and restore the broken bluestone and granite paving around Bailey Fountain and the John F. Kennedy Memorial so that it is accessible.

Background on the Project

Park creators Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed Grand Army Plaza as the grand formal entrance of Prospect Park at the time of its construction in 1867. In 1889, the plaza became the site of the Soldiers and Sailors Arch, which was dedicated in 1892 to commemorate those who fought with the Union troops during the Civil War. The arch was designed by John H. Duncan with sculptures by Frederick MacMonnies, two preeminent figures of their times. On top of the arch is a quadriga of Columbia, who represents the United States, surrounded by two winged Victories who trumpet her arrival. Smaller sculptures mounted on pedestals depict soldiers and sailors.

In the early 1900s, the plaza was redesigned when the subway was constructed below, but retained its original form and layout. In the 1930s, the plaza's fountain was replaced by Bailey Fountain, designed by architect Egerton Swartout and featuring bronze sculptures by Eugene Savage. Paving around the fountain was changed from asphalt hex block to bluestone borders in ashlar pattern and granite block in fan pattern, bound by low granite walls and steps. In addition, a chain link fence was erected around the berms, which broke up their gentle contours and diminished their intended rural effect.

The Arch was landmarked in 1975, when the structure was in severe disrepair, and in 1976 Columbia literally fell from her chariot. The City undertook a restoration of the Arch in 1977-79, with subsequent work in 1989 and the mid-1990s. In 1999, the Arch's bronze statuary groupings were restored by the NYC Parks Monuments Conservation Program.

In addition to the restoration of Grand Army Plaza, Prospect Park Alliance also is restoring the adjacent northeast corner of Prospect Park. This includes the restoration of the Flatbush Avenue perimeter of the park, through funding from Borough President Eric Adams and New York City Council Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo; the construction of two new entrances to the park on Flatbush Avenue, the first new entrances to the park since the 1940s, through funding from NYC Parks through its Parks without Borders program; and is also restoring pathways, benches and lighting in the northeast corner of the park through \$2 million in funding from Mayor de Blasio.

"The restoration of Grand Army Plaza and the Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Arch is a bright spot in what has been a dark and difficult year for our borough and city. This iconic location,

which draws millions of local residents and visitors each year, has a rich history dating back to the park's founding. As more Brooklynites and New Yorkers flock to our world-class public parks, it's more critical than ever that we preserve and improve upon this infrastructure. I have been proud over the course of my time as borough president to allocate millions of dollars in capital funding toward making Prospect Park more accessible and equitable to all residents, and I thank the Parks Department and the Prospect Park Alliance for spearheading this exciting new project," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**.

"For months, New Yorkers have been following social distancing guidelines and coping with the effect that COVID-19 has had on both our physical and mental health. It is only right that our community leadership invests in the spaces which have proven beneficial to the wellbeing of our residents and the betterment of our community. Prospect Park has not only served as a place for Brooklynites to exercise, congregate safely, and enjoy nature within its 250-acre forest, but also a hub for cultural activity. I am proud to support the work Mayor de Blasio, Department of Parks & Recreation, and Prospect Park Alliance are doing to restore, beautify, and make outdoor spaces more accessible for everyone in our community," said **NYC Council Majority Leader Laurie A. Cumbo**.

"Grand Army Plaza has long been a central hub in Brooklyn, but in these past few months it has become even more beloved so as New Yorkers flocked to the park for socially-distant recreation and socializing, and gathered for demonstrations for racial justice. I'm looking forward to seeing the Soldier and Sailors Memorial Arch and the Plaza restored to their full splendor and am grateful to City Hall and the Prospect Park Alliance for prioritizing this beautiful Brooklyn landmark," said **NYC Council Member Brad Lander**.

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