

October 11, 2016

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Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor, North
New York, NY 10007

Cc: Ellen V. Futter, President, American Museum of Natural History

Re: American Museum of Natural History Gilder Center

Dear Chair Srinivasan,

On behalf of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), and its more than 5,200 registered architects and associated design and construction professional members, we would like to register our support for the proposed Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation, designed by Studio Gang architects.

Since its founding in 1869, the American Museum of Natural History has stood as a beacon of science and education in New York City and beyond. The proposed Gilder Center not only embraces the Museum's core tenets, it advances the Museum's role in scientific research and creates enhanced capacity to share their extensive resources with more members of the community. This proposal will expand access to a broader range of the Museum's benefit for students, teachers, and families, offering new learning opportunities and experiences.

Furthermore, Studio Gang's design of the proposed Gilder Center is consistent with the values upheld by the American Institute of Architects. The proposal confronts the necessary work of producing forward thinking architecture with respect and consideration of historical context. The AIA supports architects, like Studio Gang, who seize the challenge of doing thoughtful, contemporary work which respectfully compliments historically significant structures such as the American Museum of Natural History and the Upper West Side-Central Park West Historic District. The proposal successfully balances new ideas and design in a manner responsible to the surrounding buildings, neighborhood and rich history.

The Museum and Studio Gang's continued commitment to working with the City and community to ensure its success is equally commendable. The AIA affirms an architect's duty to engage not only with clients, but with community members and stakeholders alike. Through their iterative process, Studio Gang's proposal has helped create a place that supports the community's values and communicates its aspirations while contributing to the expansion of a New York City institution.

Sincerely,



Carol Loewenson, FAIA
2016 AIANY President



Benjamin Prosky
Executive Director