

# American Museum of Natural History

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July 2023

## NYC PARKS AND THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY REOPEN FULLY RENOVATED WESTERN PORTION OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT PARK



FULL PRESS KIT WITH PHOTOS & VIDEO [HERE](#)

**NEW YORK, NY, July 13, 2023** — Today, NYC Parks and the American Museum of Natural History reopened the final renovated sections of Theodore Roosevelt Park, the greenspace in which the Museum is located, completing the extensive renewal of park areas undertaken as part of the [Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation](#) project. The renovated sections enhance the overall experience of the park while maintaining its fundamental character and uses. Comprising nearly two acres of the west side of the park located next to the new building, the renewed portions feature additional trees and plantings, improved circulation, new gathering areas and seating, and upgraded park infrastructure including new lighting, irrigation, and storm water management. Landscape architecture firm Reed Hilderbrand developed the design with input from community organizations, elected officials, Community Board 7, and government agencies.

To celebrate the reopening, today at 4 pm the Museum will host a community event in the park. As the Sun begins to set, a viewing party will take place on 79th Street to observe Manhattanhenge—the stunning natural phenomenon when the setting Sun aligns with New York City’s cross streets—and offer neighbors and New Yorkers another opportunity to gather and enjoy the park.

“On behalf of the American Museum of Natural History, I am delighted to welcome our neighbors and visitors to this rejuvenated area of Theodore Roosevelt Park, the greenspace the Museum is fortunate to call home. I want to thank NYC Parks for its stewardship of the park and its collaboration with the Museum and local community in making these improvements,” said Sean M. Decatur, President of the Museum. “We take pride that the Museum, including the new Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation, is a building located in a park, and it’s wonderful to mark this occasion together with our neighbors.”

“I am so pleased to join the reopening festivities for Theodore Roosevelt Park as we welcome back the Upper West Side community following renovations by the American Museum of Natural History,” said NYC Parks Commissioner Sue Donoghue. “Hot on the heels of the opening of the Gilder Center earlier this year, this revitalized park now offers a more welcoming space for museum visitors and neighborhood residents alike to rest on the new benches, picnic on the now-opened Margaret Mead Green, and take a walk on the new paths throughout the park.”

The overall Gilder Center project included a plan to revitalize the parkland next to the building, which is located on the west side of Theodore Roosevelt Park, in addition to conserving notable canopy trees. Key features of the renovation included:

- A renewed and enlarged 13,500-square-foot Margaret Mead Green lawn, made newly available for passive recreation at designated times throughout the year
- Additional and expanded park gathering spaces, including paved terraces and seating near the Margaret Mead Green and Nobel Monument. With the installation of 15 new benches, the total number of benches in the project area has increased from 23 to 38.
- Twenty-three new canopy and understory trees. Together with new shrubs, groundcovers, and planted islands, new plantings in the park will create a rich tapestry with seasonal interest.
- An enlarged and welcoming entrance at Columbus Avenue that provides a gradual transition from Columbus Avenue into Theodore Roosevelt Park
- New curvilinear paths, including a new path with seating adjacent to the Museum near 78th Street, improving pedestrian circulation and making more of the park publicly accessible

“We have come to know Theodore Roosevelt Park as essential to daily life on the Upper West Side,” said Reed Hilderbrand’s partner in charge, John Grove. “Like any great urban public park, this park has evolved as the city surrounding it changed and grew. To realize the park’s next chapter has been immensely rewarding for us, knowing that our work has enriched and expanded a beloved landscape for future generations.”

Renovations to the northwest corner of the park, where the Nobel Monument is located, were completed in the fall, and the park section re-opened in November 2022. The *New York Times* Capsule, which was designed by Santiago Calatrava and installed on the west side of Theodore Roosevelt Park in 2001, will be re-installed near the entrance to the Museum’s Rose Center for Earth and Space.

### **Park Working Group**

The renovations of Theodore Roosevelt Park were developed in collaboration with the Park Working Group, which was formed in the early stages of the project and included representatives from the offices of local elected officials, City agencies, and community groups.

The group – which convened dozens of times throughout the course of the project – was co-chaired by the Museum and Friends of Roosevelt Park, and its members included representatives from the offices of Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, New York City Council Member Helen Rosenthal,

Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal, NYC Parks, Community Board 7, the West 77th Street Block Association, Theodore Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association, the Defenders of Teddy Roosevelt Park, and the Columbus Avenue Business Improvement District.

“The Gilder Center project was a true collaboration among NYC Parks, the Museum, Friends of Roosevelt Park, and several neighborhood groups – a win-win for all,” said Peter Wright, President, Friends of Roosevelt Park.

### **SUPPORT FOR THE GILDER CENTER**

The American Museum of Natural History gratefully acknowledges Richard Gilder and the Gilder Foundation, Inc., whose leadership support made the construction of the Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation possible.

The Gilder Center is also made possible thanks to the generous support of the City of New York, the Council of the City of New York, the Manhattan Borough President, the State of New York, the New York State Assembly, and the New York State Senate.

Critical founding support has been provided by David S. and Ruth L. Gottesman; Kenneth C. Griffin; Allison and Roberto Mignone; the Davis Family; the Bezos Family Foundation; Louis V. Gerstner, Jr.; the Susan and Peter J. Solomon Family; Judy and Josh Weston; the Macaulay Family Foundation; Katheryn C. Patterson and Thomas L. Kempner, Jr.; New York Life Foundation; the Seedlings Foundation in honor of Michael Vlock; the Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Foundation; Valerie and Jeffrey Peltier; Morgan Stanley; The Marc Haas Foundation in honor of Robert H. Haines; The Hearst Foundations; Joella and John Lykouratzos; the Yurman Family; the Charina Endowment Fund; Nancy Peretsman and Robert Scully; Shaiza Rizavi and Jonathan Friedland; Nancy B. and Hart Fessenden; Keryn and Ted Mathas; Elysabeth Kleinhans; the Estate of Margaret D. Bishop; the Henry Peterson Foundation; and an anonymous donor.

### **ABOUT THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (AMNH)**

The American Museum of Natural History, founded in 1869 with a dual mission of scientific research and science education, is one of the world’s preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. The Museum encompasses more than 40 permanent exhibition halls, galleries for temporary exhibitions, the Rose Center for Earth and Space including the Hayden Planetarium, and the Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation. The Museum’s scientists draw on a world-class permanent collection of more than 34 million specimens and artifacts, some of which are billions of years old, and on one of the largest natural history libraries in the world. Through its Richard Gilder Graduate School, the Museum offers two of the only free-standing, degree-granting programs of their kind at any museum in the U.S.: the Ph.D. program in Comparative Biology and the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Earth Science residency program. Visit [amnh.org](http://amnh.org) for more information.

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