



THE GARDEN CONSERVANCY

POST OFFICE BOX 219 • COLD SPRING, NEW YORK 10516 • 845.424.6500/6501 FAX

For Immediate Release

The Garden Conservancy Supports Preservation of Russell Page Garden at the Frick Collection

SEPTEMBER 22, 2014, GARRISON, NY: The Garden Conservancy urges the Frick Collection and New York City to preserve the Frick's singular courtyard garden designed by Russell Page and now threatened by the planned renovation of the museum.

The Frick, one of New York's gems, is full of treasures. Its richness spills out of the building and into the circumscribed landscape that surrounds it. The steward of not one, but two, renowned gardens designed by giants of the genre—Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Russell Page—the Frick embraces them on its website and speaks of “visually integrating art and gardens in a way no other museum in the city can.”

Together these two gardens create incomparable value and opportunity for the Frick. Russell Page (1906-85) was a world-renowned landscape architect who plied his art on hundreds of sites on four continents. His garden at the Frick is one of his best known urban gardens and has served as the inspiration for both public and private commissions. It has been described as “...his lasting contribution to the city,” a “courtyard jewel,” and “...one of the masterpieces of the Frick Collection.”

It is long beyond debate that green space in urban environments is critical to the physical, mental, and emotional health of its inhabitants. “Having green space available, even just visually, yields measurable benefits,” says Jenny Young du Pont, president of the Garden Conservancy. “Nowhere is this more important than in large metropolitan areas like New York City, where steel, concrete, glass, and stone dominate.”

New York, like most large cities, has far too little open space. That gardens and parks exist at all is testament to a fundamental but often undocumented need to have plants around us. Those who use the courtyard garden know its pleasures and benefits firsthand. The masses who see it as they pass by on the street benefit as well, even without realizing it. “No doubt,” writes Paula Deitz, editor of the *Hudson Review*, “Page also saw his enclosed design as an antidote to the rustic openness of Central Park across the street.”

Time is seldom kind to practitioners of the garden art. Masterpieces disappear or, almost worse, fall into disrepair and wind up bearing no visual relation to the original. Gardens designed by luminaries in the field are no less prone to this possibility. Everett Fahy, former director of the Frick Collection, noted that Page, “...regarded this garden as his calling card.”

“The Frick has a rare chance to preserve a treasure that is not painted on canvas, carved from wood, shaped out of precious metal, or sculpted of stone—it can save a living, breathing work of art,” says Carlo Balistrieri, vice president of preservation at the Garden Conservancy.

About the Garden Conservancy: The Garden Conservancy is the nation’s leading nonprofit organization dedicated to saving and sharing outstanding American gardens for the education and inspiration of the public. For more information: www.gardenconservancy.org

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Press contact:

George Shakespear, Director of Organizational Communications, The Garden Conservancy
845.424.6500 gshakespear@gardenconservancy.org