

## Hudson River Park Trust Monument Policy January 2022

### Introduction

Hudson River Park (the “Park”) is a 550-acre park and estuarine sanctuary spanning four miles in and along the west side of Manhattan, from the northern boundary of Battery Park City in Tribeca to West 59<sup>th</sup> Street in Hell’s Kitchen. It is operated and maintained by the Hudson River Park Trust (the “Trust”). Situated within the Park are certain monuments, including art elements, memorial plaques, and historic markers created to honor, commemorate, or memorialize people or events.

Careful consideration must be taken with the planning, design and siting of all such proposed projects for many reasons, including to ensure that any approved commemorative elements relate to the overall Park’s design, mission, and context, and further, that they can be adequately cared for.

This policy provides guidelines for the Trust’s review and consideration of commemorative elements and monuments (as defined below). This policy does not cover items that are proposed solely for artistic purposes.

### Monuments

The Trust refers to large-scale, permanent installations that either occupy a large Park footprint or could create a change to surrounding Park use as Monuments. Monuments generally take the form of public art or sculpture. Approval by the Trust’s Board of Directors (“Board”) of new Monuments is required. The Board shall consider the following factors when reviewing any such proposal and may reject any proposal, or require alterations to any proposal, for one or more of the identified criteria:

#### 1. **Appropriateness:**

Monuments should generally be relevant to the location, such as historical associations between the subject of the proposed Monument and the Park or proximate inboard community, but could potentially also relate to the programmatic intent of the Monument and the relationship to the proposed Park setting. No Monuments should be installed to living persons. As a guideline, a minimum of ten years is recommended between the occurrence of an event and its commemoration to allow for some historical perspective. For the same reason, a five-year period is recommended between the death of any individual and the proposal for any Monument to be installed commemorating that individual. The Trust shall also consider whether there are already existing tributes to the subject nearby or otherwise in New York City.

## **2. Compatibility:**

Consideration must be given to the surrounding Park context. The Board will consider the degree to which the proposed Monument significantly alters the existing Park design and prefers Monument(s) that can be integrated successfully within the existing environment.

## **3. Impact on Park Use:**

A primary purpose of Hudson River Park is public recreation. Consequently, Monuments should not unnecessarily interfere with or prohibit existing Park use or functions, including but not limited to significantly altering use or visitation patterns. The Trust shall engage in the public review process below if the Design Committee of the Board of Directors believes that a proposed Monument would create a functional change in Park use. In the event that the Design Committee of the Board of Directors does not reach consensus as to whether the proposed Monument would create a functional change in Park use, the matter shall be considered by the Trust's Board of Directors.

## **4. Aesthetics:**

Though conditioned by a range of subjective considerations, aesthetic merit is an important determinant in the creation of Monuments. Proposed Monuments must show evidence of the artist's mastery of the medium (stone carving, bronze casting, etc.) and should not degrade the surrounding Park design. Works of inferior workmanship, as determined by and in the judgement of the Design Committee of the Board of Directors, will not be approved. Works must show a sensitivity to their surroundings. The Trust shall engage in the public review process as outlined below if the Design Committee of the Board of Directors (or the Trust's Board of Directors, if such decision was rendered by the Trust's Board of Directors pursuant to item 3 above) believes that a proposed Monument would create a functional change in appearance of the nearby landscaped areas.

## **5. Permanence:**

Consideration will be given to the expected duration of the Monument. Assumptions about the proposed duration of the Monument must be made explicit, as duration affects other aspects of the proposed review, including but not limited to maintenance requirements.

## **6. Maintenance:**

Maintenance of both the Monument itself and the area surrounding it must be considered. Generally, the Trust will not consider proposed Monuments that would substantially increase the time or effort needed to clean and maintain the landscaped areas surrounding the Monument, nor require customized tools or approaches to such maintenance. Further, the Trust will not support the installation of Monuments that impose costly or unreasonable maintenance burdens for Trust staff. For this reason, the Trust may require an endowment or annual maintenance payment from the donor or sponsor. The Design Committee of the Board of Directors will provide a recommendation for consideration by the Board of Directors as to the necessity and size of any endowment for care. The recommendation will be based

on the estimated cost for the repair, replacement, or restoration of the Monument. The use of durable materials, able to withstand the weathering process and potential acts of vandalism, will diminish the long-term maintenance costs, and the Trust will consider such factors during review of proposed Monuments as well.

#### **7. Safety:**

The Trust will assess the design of both the Monument itself and the surrounding area for public safety.

#### **8. Public Review:**

The Trust has a long-established practice of consulting with the public regarding Park design, impacts on park uses and aesthetics. In general, the Trust will do this by engaging the community board in which the project is located on these questions. For larger projects, the Advisory Council would also be consulted, and the Trust may additionally opt to hold independent public meetings.

#### **9. Public Design Commission:**

In addition to Trust Board approval, the Public Design Commission of the City of New York must review and approve all projects on New York City property. For proposals on New York City property, the Trust must first grant its conceptual endorsement of the Monument, after which the appropriate staff will work with the sponsors to prepare the necessary design submission documents to the Public Design Commission. The Trust may elect to require the project sponsor to pay for any design consultants needed for Public Design Commission review and approval. The separate Public Design Commission review process is described in "The Public Design Commission Guidelines for Donating Works of Art to New York City" on its website.

### **Commemorations**

The Trust classifies small branded plaques installed at benches, trees, gardens, and other Park locations as Commemorations.<sup>1</sup> These are generally installed in coordination with Hudson River

---

<sup>1</sup> Planning documents for the Park have included concepts for plaques, art, or other physical elements to be incorporated into the Park's design to enhance the Park environment and to educate Park visitors about historical, cultural, social or natural events or phenomena that have occurred in or near the Park. The Trust refers to such features as Interpretives. Examples of Interpretives currently located within the Park are the glass panels and corresponding metal medallions installed in the pavement on the esplanade near Little Island, the plaques located on Pier 26 celebrating natural history, and the historic plaques located on Pier 76. Consideration of Interpretives does not typically require approval by the Trust's Board of Directors, although they may be reviewed with the Board's Design Committee as part of the design plans for various Park areas.

Park Friends as part of a donor program that provides opportunities for members of the public to honor family or friends using plaques that conform to the Park's approved branding, though on certain occasions, the Trust may elect to install such a plaque directly.

Commemorations do not require approval by the Trust's Board of Directors, provided that:

- (1) the intended Commemoration is generally consistent with previously established Park design guidelines;
- (2) the size, location and nature of the intended Commemoration do not require nor cause changes to the surrounding Park use in the area where the Commemoration would be installed;
- (3) the Trust determines that the intended Commemoration does not require significant maintenance; and
- (4) there is no significant financial burden to the Trust associated with the installation, including with respect to its future care and maintenance.

---