ACCOLADES FOR MUSIC ISLAND AND THE ESPLANADE

First phase of the historic landscape restoration of Olmsted and Vaux’s original design for Prospect Park, led by a $10 million grant from the Leon Levy Foundation, received two prestigious awards in April

Brooklyn, NY – As construction continues on Lakeside Center, the Prospect Park Alliance is proud of the recognition that Christian Zimmerman, Crystal Gaudio and Laura Evans of the Design and Construction office have recently received for their work on this project.

In early April, the New York Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects presented the Prospect Park Alliance with a 2012 Chapter Design Award to recognize the meticulous restoration of the most formal area of the Park – The Shelby White and Leon Levy Esplanade at Lakeside and Chaim Baier Music Island.

With its shoreline and scenic views, in 1867 Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux conceived of Music Island, the Esplanade and the Concert Grove as a central space for Brooklyn residents to come together, whether for musical concerts or ice skating on the Lake. The original Olmsted and Vaux landscape was dismantled in 1960 for the construction of the former Wollman Rink. The recreation of Music Island and the Esplanade is the first phase of a restoration project that will include, in the second phase, a new 25,000 square foot facility and two skating rinks to be completed in December. The first phase was funded principally by a $10 million grant from the Leon Levy Foundation, with additional funding from the Environmental Protection Fund of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the New York State Dormitory Authority, and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Music Island is named in honor of Ms. White’s father, Chaim Baier, and the Esplanade recognizes Ms. White and her late husband, Mr. Leon Levy.

Drawing on Olmsted and Vaux’s plans for Prospect Park as well as photographs and documents from the Park’s early years, Music Island and the Esplanade have been restored to their original design. Music Island sits within five acres of re-excavated Lake. The granite walls along the formal part of the esplanade replicate their original design and the soft edge of the extended esplanade was restored with boulders and native trees, shrubs and aquatic plants. The radial path system and terrace in the Lower Concert Grove was also re-established. The completion of Music Island and the Esplanade marks a significant milestone in the Alliance’s ongoing restoration of Prospect Park and the entire 60 acre lake and 15 acre watercourse.

On April 29, the Alliance received a Lucy G. Moses Preservation Project Award for Lakeshore at the Concert Grove from the New York Landmarks Conservancy.

The New York Landmarks Conservancy has been at the forefront of efforts to preserve, restore, and reuse New York City’s wonderful architectural legacy for 40 years and the Lucy G. Moses Preservation Awards are the Conservancy’s highest honors for outstanding preservation. The Moses Awards are the Conservancy’s highest honors for outstanding preservation efforts. Named in honor of dedicated New Yorker and noted philanthropist Lucy G. Moses, the Awards recognize the property owners, builders, architects, artisans, and designers who renew the beauty and utility of New York City’s distinctive architecture. The annual Moses Awards celebrate the success of historic preservation and its role in the economic, social, and cultural vitality of the City.
Preservation Awards are given to projects that demonstrate excellence in the restoration, preservation, or adaptive use of historic buildings, streetscapes, and landscapes that preserve commercial, residential, institutional, religious, and public buildings. This is the third time the Prospect Park Alliance has received a Lucy G. Moses award for its efforts to restore Prospect Park. In 1991, the Alliance received the inaugural award for the restoration of the now 101 year-old Carousel and then again in 1998 for the restoration of the Ravine.

Emily Lloyd, President of Prospect Park Alliance, said, “The Chaim Baier Music Island and the Shelby White and Leon Levy Esplanade mark a transformative milestone in the restoration of Prospect Park. For the first time in over fifty years, Prospect Park has the gathering place of extraordinary beauty that was central to Olmsted and Vaux’s vision for the Park as both a great gathering place and a place to reconnect with nature. Countless Park visitors will benefit from Shelby’s vision and the Leon Levy Foundation’s generosity for decades to come. We are thrilled to be recognized for our efforts to restore Prospect Park.”

Music Island, the Esplanade and Concert Grove are an integral part of the $74 million, 26 acre Lakeside project to restore the southeast area of the Park to its original glory. Lakeside will also replace the old Wollman ice skating rink with a 25,000 square foot facility designed by Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects. The new sustainable facility, which is awaiting LEED Gold certification, has green roofs and is designed to seamlessly blend into the surrounding parkland. It will feature both indoor and outdoor space with two rinks providing 30,000 square feet in total skating surface. The rinks will host ice skating and hockey in the fall and winter and roller skating and a water playground in the spring and summer. It is anticipated that Lakeside will accommodate three times the number of visitors as compared to the former rink.

Lakeside is a project of the Prospect Park Alliance, in partnership with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and the New York City Economic Development Corporation. Prospect Park Alliance landscape architect, Christian Zimmerman, FASLA, and the staff of the Alliance’s Design and Construction office provided the design for Music Island and the Esplanade, and are working in partnership with the renowned architects Tod Williams and Billie Tsien as the landscape architects for the entire Lakeside design. Christian and his team also provided the landscape design for the restoration of the original Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux design throughout Prospect Park. For project updates please visit our website: www.prospectpark.org/lakeside.

For more information on Prospect Park programs, volunteering and membership, call the Park Hotline at (718) 965-8999, or visit www.prospectpark.org.

Dial 311 for all Parks & Recreation information.

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The Prospect Park Alliance partners with the City of New York and the community to make Prospect Park the beautiful place Brooklynnites know and love. We care for the natural environment, preserve historic designs, provide facilities and host events, programs and activities throughout the year for all New Yorkers.

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