

Expand Upper Manhattan Historic District, Elected Officials Say

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Local politicians came together Friday in an effort to save a Washington Heights home with ties to the Underground Railroad.



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An image of 857 Riverside Drive (Shorter building to the left) nestled into its Washington Heights street. (Google Maps Screenshot)

WASHINGTON HEIGHTS, NY — Elected officials, community organizations, and residents held a press conference Friday morning to call on the Landmarks Preservation Commission to expand the Audubon Park Historic District and save 857 Riverside Drive.

857 Riverside Drive is a Washington Heights home near West 159th Street that has ties to the Underground Railroad and the Abolitionist Movement.

The 1851 wood-frame house is the only remaining element of a former abolitionist colony in Upper Manhattan, but is currently set to get demolished and replaced with a 13-story condo.

The Upper Riverside Residents Alliance, which has spearheaded the fight to save the property and also attended Friday's press conference, has proposed expanding the Audubon Park Historic District to include buildings on Riverside Drive from 158th to 162nd Streets.

The historic district currently stretches from West 155th to West 158th Streets and gives added protection to properties within the area.

The Landmark Preservation Commission previously rejected a resolution passed by Community Board 12 in 1989 to expand the historic district. There have also been smaller resolutions to expand the district in recent years that were denied.

The expanded historic district and preservation of 857 Riverside Drive has corresponded with a larger call for more properties and areas to get landmark status with ties to the Civil Rights Movement, especially in Upper Manhattan, ensuring their preservation for decades to come.

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, State Senator Robert Jackson, the Upper Riverside Residents Alliance, and others were in attendance of Friday's press conference.

A walkthrough of the 857 Riverside Drive home followed the event.

[Read More: Community Orgs, Pols Fight To Protect Historic Wash Heights Home](#)

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