

## **The Community Service Award Nomination Narrative**

Nominee: Achva Benzinberg Stein, FASLA, Professor & Director Landscape Architecture Graduate Program Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture

Nominee's Address:  
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Nominator: Tricia Martin, President NYC ASLA; On behalf of the New York City Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects

I was first inspired by Achva's work while I was writing my graduate thesis: "Interstices: A framework, vocabulary and design for urban public space." I was determined then, as I am now, that the in-between spaces of our communities can and should play a critical role in solving some of world's most pressing social and environmental problems. Nobody understands and has practiced this mantra more than Professor Achva Stein. At the Uhuru Garden and the Carmelitos Garden in Los Angeles, Achva applied sustainable concepts to inner-city living conditions demonstrating the potential for linking interstitial landscapes, residential complexes and varied programming. From her work in marginalized neighborhoods in California to the Manteo plan in North Carolina and continuing through her current service work at the City College Architecture Center in New York, Achva has made outstanding pro bono contributions that have made our world a better place.

Among Stein's projects in Los Angeles are the Carmelitos Garden / Community Garden and Training Center in Long Beach, California, the Richardson Mini-Park in Los Angeles, the Memorial for the Blacklisted "Hollywood Ten" on the grounds of the University of Southern California (USC) with artist Jenny Holtzer, several housing sites for low income and handicapped residents, and the West Hollywood Gateway Project for the city of West Hollywood, California. It is no wonder that in 2000 the Princeton Review noted that "USC [the University of Southern California] may be the most ambitious social-outreach program of any private university in the nation" with Achva Stein's Richardson Park project, a vacant, junk-strewn lot near the University, featured in the lead photograph. In his recommendation for Achva's promotion to tenure at USC, Professor Victor Regnier wrote "If we had more people with the values, commitment to balance, the compassion for living things (fauna and flora as well as the bigger more intelligent forms of life), the understanding, the resolve, the ability to advice and

to take advice, the humor and decency of Achva Stein, we would have a much better world."

Building off the (1980 – 2000) Master Plan created by Randy Hester for Manteo, North Carolina, Achva developed a new Master Plan and Design Guidelines that included saving an old school building and making stronger links between the center of Manteo and the North Carolina State campus. Her focus was on teaching the community how to work through the community planning process and empowering individuals to learn how the civic process works from the inside.

For the past five years, Achva has donated her time leading, directing and working on initiatives through The City College Architectural Center (CCAC) in New York City. CCAC works to improve the quality of the built and natural environment through community design and engagement. It focuses on physical design, planning, and advocacy projects. Its home is the School of Architecture, Urban Design, and Landscape Architecture (SAUDLA), of the City University of New York (CUNY), and it draws upon the expertise of its faculty and introduces student to, and trains them for, social responsibility and public work. In all ways, and with keeping with the mission of the City College, it strives to foster a sense of civic duty to make New York City greater, better, and more engaging than it was transmitted to us.

According to Dean George Ranalli, The Dean of the School of Architecture, Urban Design and Landscape Architecture at the City College of New York, Achva "has saved the Architectural Center from extinction by devoting her time and services to over twenty New York City community-based projects, offering her technical assistance and advocacy in planning and design to communities concerned with the physical and economic development of their neighborhoods". When Achva joined City College, The Architectural Center had been nearly abandoned and she made it her own mission to revive the program and put it to use. The impressive list of projects that she has finished in the last three years through the Architectural Center are The Hempstead Gateway, the Mount Vernon, NY Downtown Revitalization Plan; she reviewed and compiled a 500 page report on research for the Washington Heights and Inwood communities, finished the Bradshaw Commercial Corridor Plan which is going into a second stage of implementation, and she has prepared the design and the plan for the Library Lane to be considered as a Greenstreet by the New York City Department of Transportation.

Besides her work in California, North Carolina, and New York Achva has also taught, practiced, and offered her pro-bono services in Europe, Israel, India and China. Achva has also devoted public service and time to many non-profit and community boards including the Arroyo Seco Task Force, The North Hollywood Beautification Committee, North East Trees (a non-profit organization dedicated to the greening of Los Angeles) the American Institute of Architects, North Carolina Chapter, California and New York Chapter, the New York Chapter of the

American Society of Landscape Architects and many others. Achva has also been the recipient of many honors and awards for her teaching, practice and dedication to service, including Certificates of Commendation for Service to the Community City of Los Angeles in both 1991 and 1999.

At the time of writing this letter, I am also reading Rural Studio: Samuel Mockbee and Architecture of Decency by Andrea Oppenheimer Dean and Timothy Hursley. I am preparing for a presentation that I will give next week at the late Mockbee's Auburn University entitled: "Community Entanglement: A Philosophy and Method for Design". Both Mockbee and Achva share one very special trait – that it is their duty to give and share their gifts of knowledge and experience to make communities healthier, greener and more beautiful. This journey through Achva's career in service has reinvigorated my spirit for service work and I will be proud to achieve a fraction of the service-based accomplishments that Achva has tirelessly managed over her career.

Sincerely,

Orin Hark



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**Office of the Dean**

**George Ranalli, Dean**

ASLA Community Service Award Nominations  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC  
20001-3736  
Attn: Carolyn Mitchell

Dear Members of the Selection Committee:

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to nominate Professor Achva B. Stein for this year's ASLA Community Service Award. I am pleased to write on her behalf.

I appointed Prof. Stein to the Spitzer School of Architecture several years ago as a full professor and Director of the Landscape Architecture program. In her capacity as Director of the Landscape Architecture program she worked tirelessly to integrate the school program with outside public and community agencies. Prof. Stein and her students performed very well on projects that extended the school's assistance into communities and agencies that could not afford landscape architects and designers.

A few years ago there was a vacancy in our community outreach agency, the City College Architecture Center, and I appointed her as Director of the Center as well. In her capacity as Director of the CCAC she has completed many public and community projects with excellent results. The Center works on master plans, streetscape designs, parks and general public space initiatives. Prof. Stein has been a staunch supporter of the Center and public advocacy in general. Prof. Stein is currently working on a book of the work of the CCAC, which is due to be released in Spring 2010.

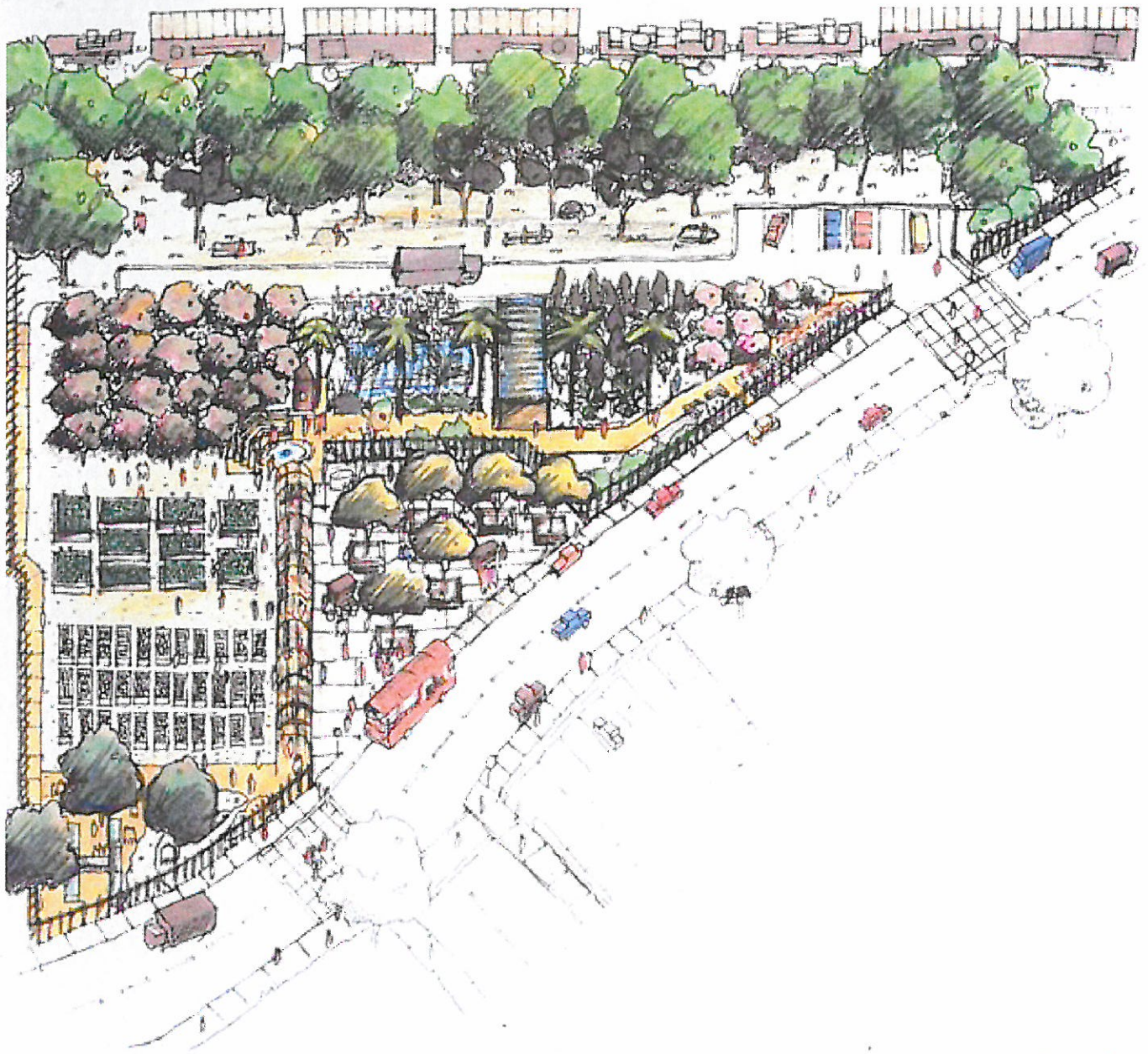
Professor Achva Stein is exactly the right person to receive this ASLA Community Service Award. She exemplifies the entire good works a professional and community activist can do for society. Her work actively demonstrates that community assistance is still alive and functioning well. It would be a strong signal to the world to acknowledge her extraordinary efforts on behalf of landscape architecture and landscape architectural education. She is a true champion of this cause. I recommend her wholeheartedly knowing she is an exceptional candidate and will represent your award to the highest standards possible. I urge the committee to look upon her with utmost seriousness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Ranalli".

George Ranalli, Dean  
GR/kms





**ASLA The Community Service Award**  
*Achva Benzinberg Stein Nomination*

**Nominee: The New York City Chapter of the American Society of  
Landscape Architects**  
**Tricia Martin, NYC ASLA President**  
**2010**





**CARMELITO COMMUNITY GARDEN**  
Community Garden and Nursery Training Center  
Los Angeles, California

Achva Benzinberg Stein provided design and coordination services for the development and construction of an unique community garden that provides training and working experience for the participants including residents of the local public housing. The project was funded through the Common Ground Program of the Community Development Commission of Los Angeles Housing Authority.



**ASLA The Community Service Award**  
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# Pro-Bono / Service Projects - California

## Multnomah "Sustainable School" North East Trees Hollywood Beautification Team LADWP & LAUSD

### Wildlife Habitat

Oak, Sycamore, Walnut, Elderberry  
Recycled Mulch on Slope  
Biofiltration Pond

### Playing Field/ Track

Zoysia "De Anza" Turf  
Recycled Rubber Added to Soil Mix  
Decomposed Granite Track  
Recycled Plastic Header  
Cistern, Clarifier, Pump

### Mediterranean Grove

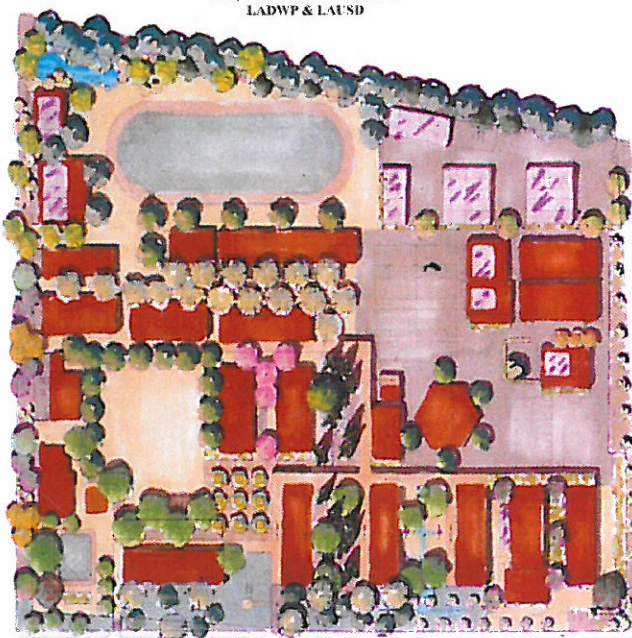
Cork Oak, Pomegranate, Olive, Carob  
Messy Fruit Located Behind Fence

### Campus Center

Large Shade Trees, Camphor, Ginkgo  
Assembly Court: Stabilized  
Decomposed Granite  
Recycled Plastic Header  
Entry Courtyard with Permeable  
Interlocking Pavers with Raised  
Planters

### Kindergarten

Lawn  
Cistern, Clarifier, Pump  
Tricycle Safety Track  
Tables on Permeable Paving



### Master Plan

NORTH SCALE



**Parking**  
Photo Voltage Shade Structure  
Biofiltration Swale  
Storm Water Collection

### North Campus

Mixed Citrus Orchard on Slope  
Recycled Concentric Seating Wall  
Bamboo Screening Storage Shelters  
Solar Panels on Roofs

### Coast Redwood Grove

Dry Stream  
Native Plant Community  
Cistern, Clarifier, Pump

### Environmental and Conservation Elements

Recycled Broken Concrete Seating  
Mixed Orchard Prunus,  
Apple, Apricot, Persimmon  
Compost Bins  
Vining Shade in Courtyard  
Light-toned Paint on Roofs  
Gray Water Recycling  
Greenhouse  
West Wall Pergola with Vines  
Windmill

### Water Court

Fish Pond Fountain  
Water Channel  
Interactive Manual Pumps  
Water Wheel  
Cistern, Clarifier, Pump



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## An aerial photograph of a city intersection. A roundabout is visible in the center, with several roads converging and diverging. The surrounding area includes residential neighborhoods with houses and parking lots, as well as commercial buildings and industrial structures. The image is oriented vertically on the page.

- When possible, use at least a 4 foot planting strip between curb and sidewalk or 5 foot tree wells.
- Install planters at the Gateway.



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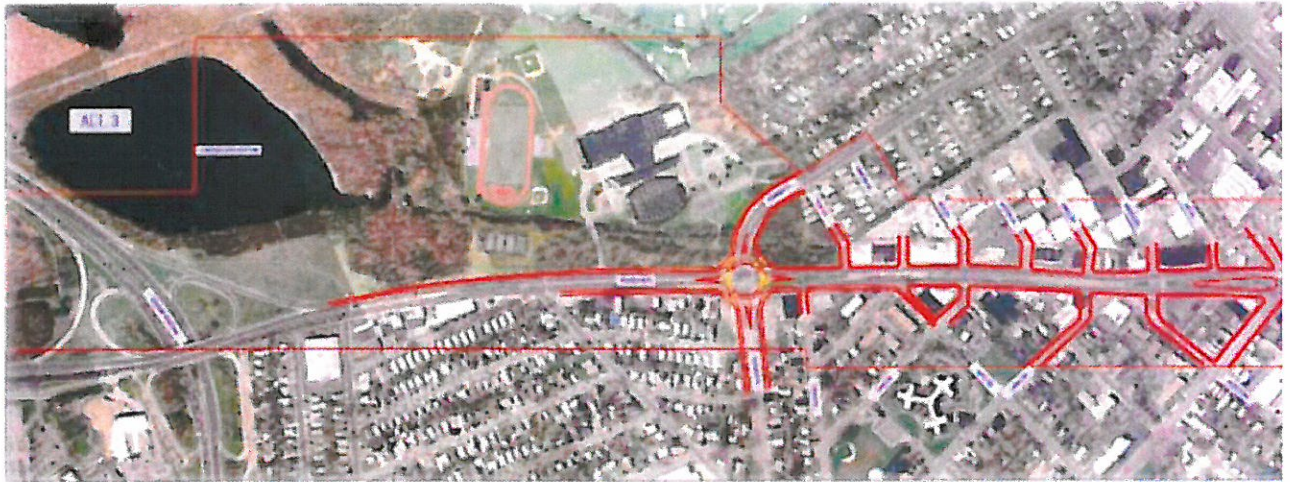
### Trees

Source: Cornell Cooperative Extension for Nassau County

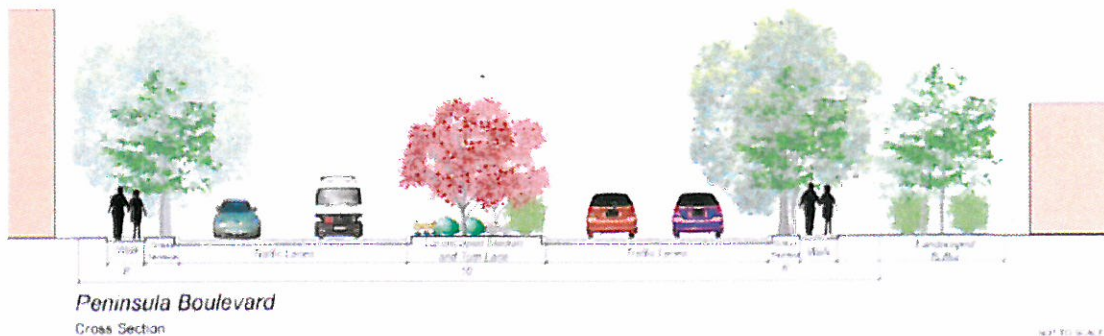


Alternative One includes the following actions:

- A. Existing gateway redesigned with enlarged median and a traffic island which will better direct the traffic to President Street.
- B. Create safe walkways and reduce the traffic speed limits to help slow drivers as they enter Peninsula Boulevard, and corresponding lower speed limit and additional lighting at Franklin Street.
- C. Redesign and replant the new median with appropriate plant materials and special paving to create pedestrian refuge.
- D. Develop a new system of signage to serve as a method of wayfinding for the village yet correspond to requirements of the county and the state, if applicable.



Alternative 2: Peninsula Boulevard: roundabout with no median



### Crosswalks

- Use 'piano key' treatment for all pedestrian and bicycle crossings that are marked on asphalt pavement (single for 'minor' crossings; double for 'major' crossings and all crosswalks across Peninsula Boulevard).
- Install textured crosswalks and textured intersection pavement high priority locations such as the Peninsula Boulevard Gateway, Polk Street, Whitson Street, Madison Street, and the Franklin Peninsula Gateway. Use smooth brick or other flush unit pavers for pedestrian areas. Rough texture may be used in the centers of intersection (see page 39).
- Install pedestrian refuge islands and raised or depressed crossings at priority locations and difficult high traffic spots where significant pedestrian/vehicle interaction is known or expected.
- Reduced speed limits s/b 20 mph max, but allow for continuous flow.



**Pro-Bono / Service Projects -  
The City College Architectural Center - City College of New York  
Briggs Playground, New York**



Before



After

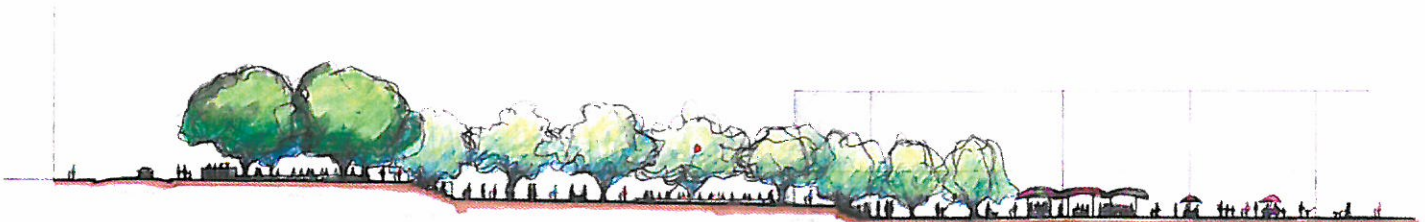
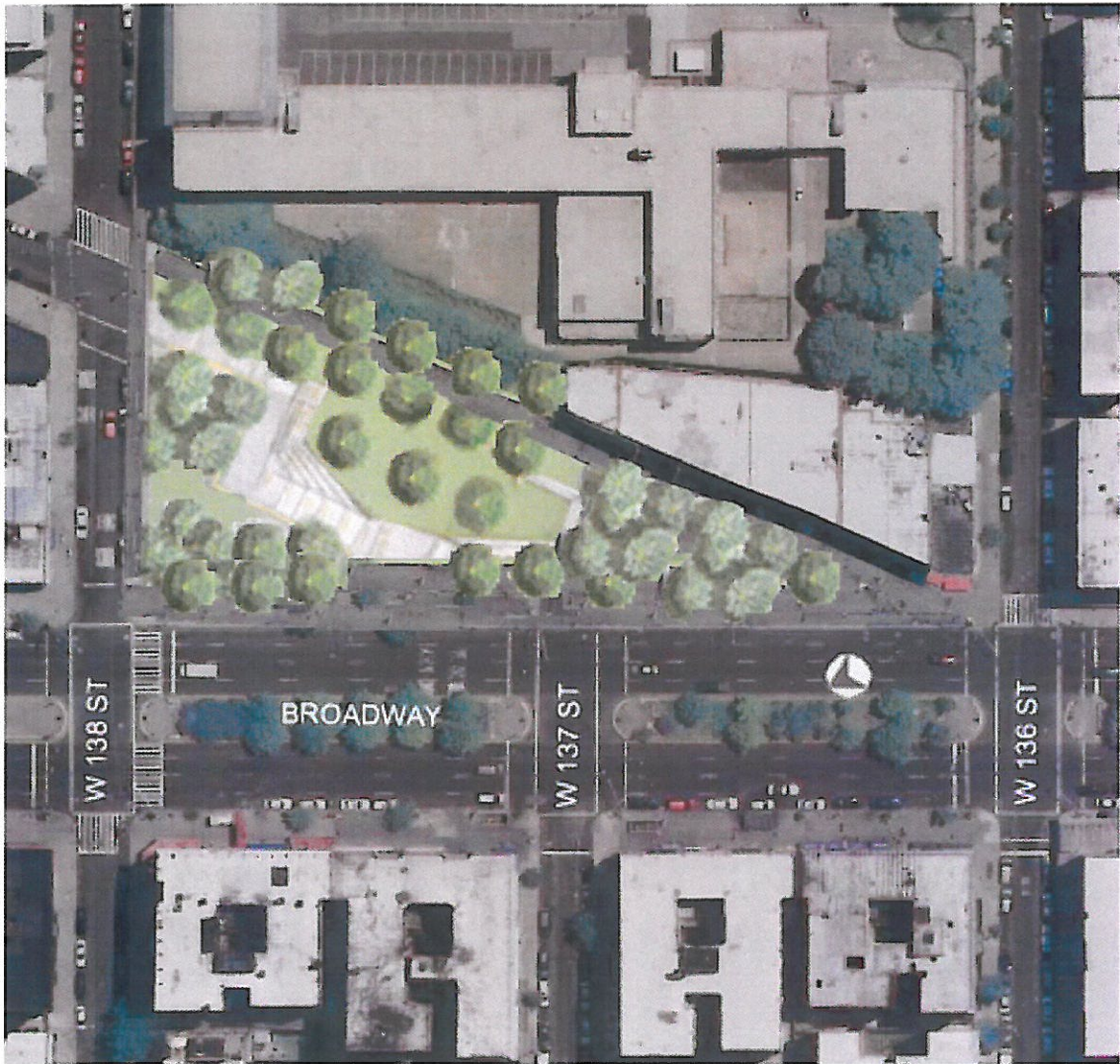


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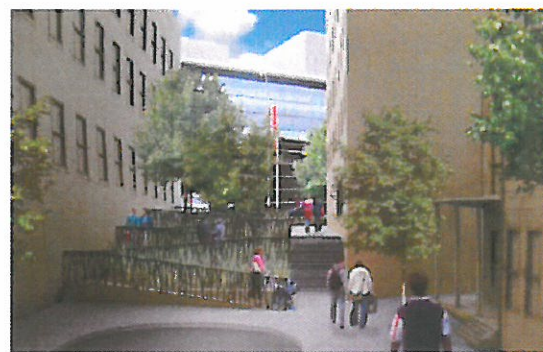
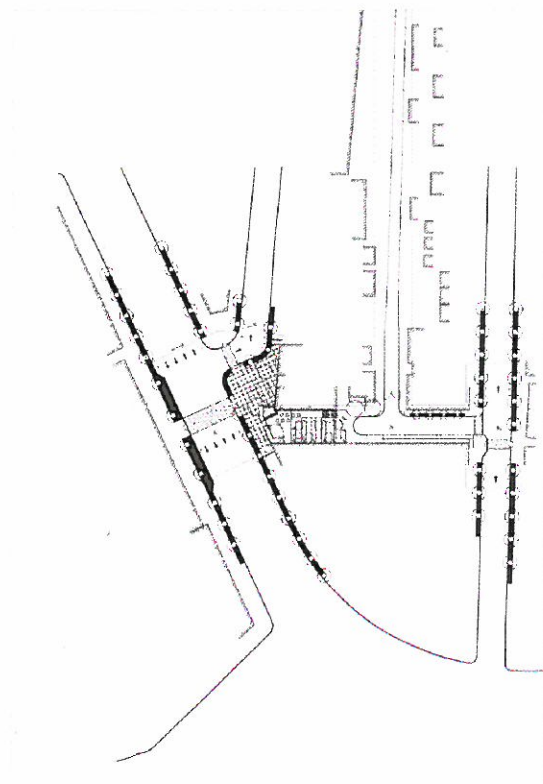
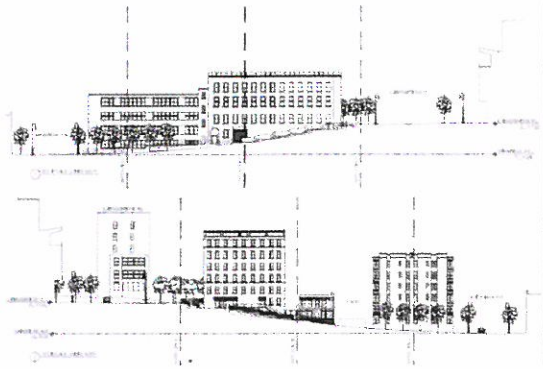




**Pro-Bono / Service Projects -  
The City College Architectural Center - City College of New York  
Montifiori Plaza, New York**



**Pro-Bono / Service Projects -  
The City College Architectural Center - City College of New York  
Library Lane, New York**











**Achva and team of interns and students for the  
City College Architectural Center**