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## Having abandoned its controversial expansion, The Frick Gallery comes up with Plan B

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By **Howard Halle**

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Citing an increasing number of visitors each year, The Frick Collection (<http://www.timeout.com/newyork/museums-institutions/the-frick-collection>) released renderings in 2014 for a planned expansion. The drawings showed a six-story addition to the Gilded Age mansion housing The Frick, complete with a roof-top garden with Central Park views. This being New York,

however, the expansion was immediately greeted with vocal opposition, especially since it required building over the existing gated garden just outside the museum. The groundswell against the project became so immense, The Frick wound up canceling it.

That was 2015. Now, however there's a new wrinkle in the ongoing saga. The Frick recently announced that it is reformulating its expansion, and while details are scarce, the one thing it will not involve is

building over the garden.

Still, there's merit to the case for expansion. Anyone who's visited The Frick on a weekend knows the place gets packed and that there are waiting lines to enter. There's also the fact that temporary exhibitions tend to be intimate affairs mounted in the museum's smaller rooms. Why? Because, larger shows, like the Frick's current Van Dyke (<http://www.timeout.com/newyork/art/van-dyck-the-anatomy-of-portraiture>) offering, necessitate temporarily removing all or part of the vaunted permanent collection (<http://www.timeout.com/newyork/art/the-100-best-paintings-in-new-york-the-frick-collection>).

The situation serves neither the viewer nor a museum whose program shouldn't be kept static. The status quo, though, suits the many locals, especially those on the Upper East Side, who think they have a proprietary relationship with The Frick even though they hardly visit the place. For the moment, proposals are being reviewed from a field of 20 architects. Whether any of them will satisfy New York's legions of notoriously cranky critics remains to be seen.

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Howard is the editor-at-large and chief art critic for *Time Out New York*. Follow him on Twitter at @HowardHalle (<https://twitter.com/howardhalle>).

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