Despite its monumentality, beneath the grounds of Columbia University rests histories and lands far older than the institution itself. Built upon a massive, flat plinth, it stands against the name “Manahatta” given to the land by the Lenape peoples. Its relationship to neighboring communities is documented in Morningside Park with the events of 1968, and even today in its wealth of real estate across New York. But this relationship to land is only made more important with the Land Back Movement pervading the United States today.

Regrowing Manahatta unearths these histories through replacing the school grounds with the forests and hills preceding it. Native oak, pine, and hickory trees which were livelihoods for the Lenape constitute a pavilion reminding visitors of what was there before the school. Old trunks and young saplings create landscapes nodding to the age and terrain of Manahatta and imbued with light, as a necessary prerequisite to regrowth. Finally, they are arranged in decentralized clusters allowing different groups to coexist, drawing parallels to how different Lenape groups lived on the land.

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