

# PACKER

## About the Garden House: A New Home for our Lower School



The expanded and renovated Garden House is a stunning new purpose-built home for our Lower School. The effort, a cornerstone capital project of Packer’s Campus Master Plan, involved the renovation of an existing 8,200 square foot landmarked brownstone paired with a 17,250 square foot expansion. Led by

award-winning multi-disciplinary practice WXY architecture + urban design, the project was rooted in a sustainable, human-centered approach to crafting highly effective early learning environments.

The innovative space features a sustainable wood (Cross-Laminated Timber or CLT) structure—one of the first of its kind in a school in New York—and a brick façade made of 100% recycled clay content. Natural light-filled classrooms connect students to nature, and dedicated floors for each grade oriented around a central, social staircase foster a strong sense of place and community. The fully accessible Garden House features natural, locally-sourced materials and all-electric systems. The design anticipates a renewably-sourced electrical grid and a shift away from reliance on fossil fuels.

Each Lower School grade has a dedicated floor with its own sequence of classrooms, learning suites, restrooms, and breakout spaces. An all-weather connector adjoins the Garden House to the main building, facilitating movement through campus for specialist classes and fostering the intentional cross-divisional interactions that help relationships and belonging flourish at Packer.

### Garden Level

First Grade Classrooms, Conference Room

### First Floor

Lower School Office  
Second Grade Classrooms

### Second Floor

Third Grade Classrooms

### Third Floor

Fourth Grade Classrooms

### Green Roof

# PACKER

## About the Garden Renovation

The renovated Packer Garden is a model of sustainable landscape design, using permeable surfaces for better water management, fostering a biodiverse and resilient local ecosystem with native and climate-adaptive plants, and employing natural planting strategies to improve air and water quality. Starr Whitehouse Landscape Architects and Planners PLLC led the Garden renovation.

- The new play surfaces are made with **permeable materials**, a key sustainability feature that allows rainwater to soak directly into the ground, helping to replenish local groundwater, reduce stormwater runoff, and naturally manage water on-site.
- The Garden design envisions an **urban forest** inspired by the Northeast's natural layered woodlands and savannahs. This means we didn't just add a few plants; we created a diverse ecosystem with over 40 new trees, 179 shrubs, and over 1000 perennials and grasses, in addition to the three existing mature trees.
- **Almost 90% of plant species in the renovated Garden are native to our region or are climate-adaptive, significantly advancing Packer's commitment to sustainability.** These plants will thrive with less need for extra watering, fertilizers, and pesticides, promoting a healthier environment.
- A **buffer planting** along Livingston Street helps to naturally filter pollutants and reduce noise, improving air quality within the Garden.

