

# URBAN D.C. Inc.

*Building Restoration ~ Contractors & Engineers*

## Project

Marcus Garvey Park  
Mt. Morris Fire  
Watchtower

The NYC Dept. of Parks

## Scope of Work

Cast iron restoration  
& reconstruction

Structural steel

Anchoring of structure &  
underpinning

Restorative painting

## Professionals

Robert Silman  
Structural Engineer



*Photos clockwise from top left. Completed structural support system. Parks Dept. representative working with Urban D.C on structural analysis. Urban D.C in-house crew underpinning the tower.*



Fire was a universal terror in 19th C. New York City. The typical method of alert was a corps of watchmen who oversaw the city of wooden buildings from iron watchtowers. James Bogardus, progressive iron-construction engineer, erected one of the city's first iron watchtowers in Mt. Morris Park. By 1880 only this fire watchtower remained, largely because it was set high atop the park's rocky crest, now called Marcus Garvey Park.

Mt. Morris Fire Watchtower, a designated landmark, required emergency stabilization after large cast iron pieces began falling to the ground. The NYC Department of Parks hired specialty contractor Urban D.C. to stabilize the structure with an exterior steel framework. It was necessary for Urban D.C.'s in-house crew to carefully dismantle portions of the tower, in order to repair and recast various pieces around the new steel structure. This fragile structure, the century old example of "constructive expressionism," as quoted by Christopher Gray of The New York Times, was secured. Urban D.C. fabricated and installed new structural footings and finished the assignment with restorative painting.