



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
26 West 76th Street
February 27, 2007**

LANDMARK WEST! is a not-for-profit community organization committed to the preservation of the architectural heritage of the Upper West Side.

The Certificate of Appropriateness Committee wishes to comment on the application to alter the front façade and construct a rear yard addition on this Renaissance Revival style house which was designed by Schickel & Ditmars, built in 1896-98 and designated as part of the Upper West Side-Central Park West Historic District.

Alterations to the Front Façade

The proposed new entry, while in some ways a handsome design and an aesthetic improvement over the current state, is completely out of character with this historic townhouse in the middle of the Central Park West-76th Street Historic District, one of the most cohesive and earliest blocks to be designated on the Upper West Side. LW! and the Commission have worked with many applicants to restore their stoops and put rowhouse entrances back where they historically belong—at the parlor level and typically not in the center of the façade. This building's original stoop is clearly visible in the tax photo. Restoring the stoop would dramatically enhance not only this building, but the entire block. And, as experience has shown, once one property owner does the right thing and restores a stoop, neighbors follow suit. However, in this case the applicant points to three other examples in the neighborhood for the placement of a center basement-level entry. None of these examples represents an original condition so holding any of them up as a model only shows what other owners have done, not what this Commission ought to allow.

The French doors on the parlor floor are an improvement over the current aluminum replacement windows. However, they necessitate the enlargement of the openings and the removal of original masonry. The total effect of this change, plus the remodeling of the front entrance, would be to stray completely from the historic appearance of this façade.



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Rear Yard Addition

LW! has consistently advocated for the preservation of the “donut” of open space created by contiguous rear yards on the UWS. The Committee is sensitive to maintaining the doughnut of open space that is characteristic of the Upper West Side’ interior block structure, however, the existing integrity of this block has already been altered by many different rear yard additions of varying heights and sizes. The proposed rear year addition this building, while full width, appears to allow more open space in the doughnut than the current addition. Our primary concern is the original fabric from the rear façade that will be removed to create this new addition.



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**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
176-182 West 82nd Street
February 27, 2007**

LANDMARK WEST! is a not-for-profit community organization committed to the preservation of the architectural heritage of the Upper West Side.

The Certificate of Appropriateness Committee wishes to comment on the application to construct a rooftop and rear addition and install a barrier-free access lift on this Romanesque Revival flats building which was designed by Gilbert A. Schellenger, built in 1892-93 and designated as part of the Upper West Side-Central Park West Historic District.

Facade Alterations

In general, our committee is in favor of restoring the façade of this building as is specified in the application materials, but would like to point out two significant details. First, we hope the proposal to “resurface” stonework on the building includes stripping paint from the rusticated arches and other intricately detailed stonework on the first floor. The second issue is the rectangular sidewalk canopy that has been proposed for one of the building’s gracious arched entryways. It is unclear why this building would require a sidewalk canopy, given that the entries offer generous, approximately eight-foot recesses providing ample weather protection for residents coming and going from the building. The only conceivable purpose for a canopy is advertising, which is inappropriate, especially since the canopy would interfere with the rhythm of the arches that define the base of this building. And the restored building is, at the end of the day, its own best advertising.

Rooftop and Rear Addition

It is unclear to our committee why the massive rooftop addition cannot be set back farther from the front façade in order to reduce its visibility from Amsterdam Avenue and West 82nd Street. Or the overall size of the rooftop addition should be reduced, since a highly visible two-story brick addition is inappropriate for a modestly-scaled five-story flats building. As we have testified in the past, our Committee strongly believes that whatever portion of the addition is visible from the public way should incorporate materials that reflect a rooftop vocabulary--such as metal and glass--that declare the structure as a new addition to the building.



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Barrier-Free Access

As the application currently stands, one of the building's characteristic stoops will be removed to install a handicap-accessible ramp. We urge the applicant and the Landmarks Commission to seek alternative, preferably reversible, means of providing barrier-free access or, if possible, to procure a waiver since a ramp would require the sacrifice of significant original fabric and interrupt the overall symmetry of the facade, one of its most distinctive features.



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**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
101 West 77th Street
February 27, 2007**

LANDMARK WEST! is a not-for-profit community organization committed to the preservation of the architectural heritage of the Upper West Side.

The Certificate of Appropriateness Committee wishes to comment on the application to create two new entrances to this Renaissance Revival flats building which was designed by Thom & Wilson, built in 1891-92 and designated as part of the Upper West Side-Central Park West Historic District.

Columbus Avenue entrance

The proposed new punched entrance on Columbus Avenue is inappropriate. If this function of this new opening is to provide access to the restaurant basement, then it is unclear why a bulkhead in the sidewalk would not do as well, without disturbing the facade. If the applicant can make a case for the necessity of a doorway through the facade, then it should be better scaled and detailed so that it does not detract from the decorative features of the facade, which include the blind arch into which this new opening is proposed to be inserted. Given the prominent location of this arch on this landmark's Columbus Avenue frontage, this entrance cannot be treated as a back door. It should be unobtrusive, but sensitively designed.

West 77th Street entrance

The proposed new elevator entrance on 77th Street has similar problems. Not only is the proposed new elevator door an unattractive addition to the facade, the creation of an opening within this arch would require the removal of a small round-arched window, an original detail. Utility entrances that compromise original building details should not be allowed.

In conclusion, we recommend that the application explore installing a sidewalk bulkhead to address the ingress and egress issues with this building. New entrances should not compromise original decorative details and must be well-designed to avoid detracting from the building's appearance.