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Chairman Robert Tierney and
Commissioners
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Re.: The Landmark Designation of West-Park Presbyterian Church (West-Park)

Dear Chairman Tierney and Commissioners:

Service on the Landmarks Preservation Commission is an important and time consuming commitment. It takes time from your profession and time from your family. I and all of the supporters of West-Park's Landmark designation thank you for your time and your commitment to the preservation of the buildings, districts and landscapes that comprise the architectural and cultural heritage of the City of New York.

On July 14th each of you will have a very important decision to make. You will have the power to save an important part of New York's cultural and social heritage from destruction by Landmarking the West-Park Presbyterian Church. There is no doubt that the entire building qualifies for the protection that only a landmark designation can provide. Many members of the immediate community as well as residents of the City of New York will appear either in person at your hearing on July 14th or, like myself in writing, to appeal to you to Landmark West-Park.

Some will have the expertise and qualifications to discuss the important architectural details and history that makes this a landmark building and explain how West-Park fulfills all of the legal criteria for landmarking; others will focus on the building's place in cultural and social development of the Westside and the City of New York while others will offer personal stories regarding the impact of this building on their lives and their neighborhood. Each will add to what I believe your staff and perhaps you already know, that is, that West-Park should be **landmarked and landmarked now**.

There has been a lot of delay in coming to this day and West-Park has suffered for it. It is now time to formally recognize what the community and the experts have always known: that West-Park is a landmark and should be saved for the education and enjoyment of generations to come. Continued delay is not an option.

Feel-good protestations or promises that West-Park will be preserved if the LPC would only work with the owners and not tie their hands by landmarking, are unenforceable and worthless. You know that as well as I do. The goal of the LPC should be the preservation of this important landmark-quality building. Landmark designation is the only way that the community through the LPC will be able to make sure West-Park is preserved. That is how it should be done that is how the Commission should do it. No backroom deals, no landmarking by contract, no demolition by neglect and no more DAKOTA STABLES.

The legislation that established the Landmarks Preservation Commission (the "Legislation") was very clear about two important issues. First, "the protection, enhancement,

perpetuation and use of improvements and landscape features of special character or special historical or aesthetic interest or value is a **public necessity** and is required **in the interest of the health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people**"; and, the LPC was established in order to effect and accomplish these important public policies and goals. As a result, it is abundantly clear that the legislators expected that the LPC would act in the stead of the people and in their interest to protect what was left of the city's heritage. Second, the process by which these goals and policies would be effect and accomplished was mandated by the City Council to be **transparent**. All actions taken by the LPC are to be done at public meetings and only after a public hearing. Public hearings are absolutely key to this process. [REDACTED]

As the legislative purpose at the beginning of the Legislation makes clear [REDACTED] was not enacted because a group of city council people had some time on their hands, rather, it was enacted because the Council found "that many improvements....and landscape features... having special character or special historical or aesthetic interest or value and many improvements representing the finest architecture products of distinct periods in the history of the city **have been uprooted**, [REDACTED] notwithstanding the possibility of preserving and continuing the use of such [REDACTED] improvement....without adequate consideration of the **irreplaceable loss** to the people of the city of the aesthetic, cultural and historic values represented by such improvements and landscape features."

The Council was not simply motivated by some single minded, aesthetic sensibility, but rather by a recognition of the very real and continuing economic value for the maintenance of [REDACTED] historically significant buildings brings to the City in terms of tourism and its national and international status. Landmarked buildings and districts enhance the City's standing as a world capital of business, culture and government. Allowing the destruction of cultural assets was and is an attack on the City's status and prestige as well as its cultural fabric and its communities. **Don't let this happen to West-Park. Landmark it now.**

Thank you for listening to and considering my views. [REDACTED] respectfully request that this letter be made a part of the record of the hearing on July 14. Friends of West Park has been authorized to have a member of the public read this letter into the record at the hearing. [REDACTED]

Very truly yours,

Susan Nial