



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
105-109 West 78<sup>th</sup> Street  
June 26, 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 legalize façade alterations on three Renaissance Revival rowhouses designed by Joseph Turner and built in 1890-91. All are designated as part of the Upper West Side-Central Park West Historic District.

The question of whether or not to grant this application goes beyond whether one likes or doesn't like the blue paint that obscures this brownstone façade. Applied illegally without Landmarks Preservation Commission permits, the blue paint is more than just a direct violation of Commission guidelines. To legalize this work would be essentially to legitimize blatant disregard of the Landmarks Law, the public trust, and the Commission's own government sanctioned responsibilities as the steward of New York City's historic built environment.

Landmark West! feels strongly that the Commission should require the property owner to strip the illegal blue paint and expose the natural stone of the façade. Rather than referring to the painted brown façade of the building visible at the time of its designation as part of the Historic District, we believe that the building's historic appearance would be best honored through restoration of its original façade material. With restoration, Landmark West is not opposed to the grandfathered stairs and "bridge" being treated with a complementary earthen color finish that would allow for a balanced contrast between the lighter-toned façade and these unusual stairs.

Ultimately, there is no room for piecemeal solutions and legalizations in the protection of New York City landmarks and historic districts. It is essential that the Landmarks Preservation Commission not become a rubber stamp for illegal work. Each legalization serves to chip away and weaken the Commission's vital mission.