



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
44 West 87th Street
November 13, 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 this binding report to construct stair and elevator bulkheads, alter the rear facade and install a barrier-free access lift on this Romanesque Revival rowhouse designed by Charles Buek & Company and built in 1892.

We would like to thank the architect for presenting to our committee and commend the minimally obtrusive solution proposed for the barrier free access lift. We are not opposed to the stair and elevator bulkheads that are part of this application as they are not visible from the public right-of-way. We are also not opposed to the removal of the oriel window on the rear façade, which the architect has described as deteriorated and not original.

Although the window replacement on the primary façade is not part of the application that is being considered, we never miss the opportunity to applaud an applicant's decision to use wood windows to replace aluminum, non-original windows. That being said, we have additional suggestions for successful execution of this project. First, the applicant should consider restoring the 9 original wood windows that still adorn this brownstone. A more appropriate approach to this façade would be a hybrid of restored original windows and brick molds and new matching wood windows, where replacement is absolutely necessary.

In addition, we recommend that the applicant restore the counter-weight balance system of the original windows and explore this option for the replacement windows as well. Spring-loaded windows have a poor maintenance record and comparatively short life span.

Further, we recommend that the applicant conduct a paint analysis of the remaining original windows to determine the exact historic color.

In conclusion, we look forward to seeing the façade of this building restored yet updated with sensitively designed elements to suit the needs of its occupants.



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**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
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Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
325 West End Avenue
November 13, 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 rooftop pergolas and screens on this neo-Renaissance style apartment building designed by Neville and Bagge and built in 1915-16.

This elegant neo-Renaissance-style building is typical of the traditional apartment houses that proliferated along West End Avenue in the early 20th century. Characterized by its rich reddish-brown brick and classical terracotta ornament, this thirteen-story pile dominates the corner of West End Avenue and 75th Street, and as an interesting side note, the Neville & Bagge-designed structure replaced an earlier house that was home to Charles Evan Hughes, a Supreme Court chief justice and former New York governor.

The proposal is a highly designed project with several elements that are visible from public rights-of-way and, therefore, of concern to the Committee. We urge the applicant to revise this proposal to incorporate more appropriate materials consistent with those traditionally used on West End Avenue apartment buildings and minimize the visibility of the pergolas, stanchions and screens from public areas of the Riverside-West End Avenue historic district and from the Riverside Park Scenic Landmark.

Pergolas

Our committee is not opposed to rooftop pergola additions, in principle, and in June 2005, spoke in favor of the proposed pergola that now graces 325 West End Avenue's west penthouse. That said, we have serious objections to the choice of materials and siting for this particular proposal. The pergolas are highly visible from 75th Street and Riverside Drive and Park and conflict with the nature of the building. The proposed plantings designed to screen them may be attractive, but their appearance is dependent on the good will of present and future owners. The Commission should anticipate their appearance should the plantings not be maintained. Of concern is the stainless steel chosen for the pergolas, as this material without plantings would be highly reflective and bears no relationship to the building. We recommend that the pergolas be constructed of a more muted material that, if not actually wood, would be read from the street as wood (e.g. a metal painted a dark brown) and therefore more traditional and less ostentatious.

Screens and Railings

The Committee has two concerns about the proposed railings. First, their visibility from 75th Street, Riverside Drive and Park is increased by their height, which should be restricted to the 42- inch minimum height required by code. In addition, the screens and railings should be simplified, with perhaps pipe rail as the material choice, rather than the combination of highly designed, commercial-looking glass and stainless steel on the upper deck and much of the lower deck, and of virtually solid wood on the balance of the lower deck.

Stanchions

The proposed stanchions are inappropriate in scale, material and lighting. Vent pipes are common on roofs throughout the city and therefore tend to blend with other utilitarian elements. In this instance, the pipes are being hidden by large, high, stainless steel stanchions that become sculptural objects, and hence highly visible. We would otherwise recommend that the vent pipes simply be replaced with new and more attractive pipes, or hidden by trellises with plantings, which would bear a better relationship to the pergolas. In no instance should the Commission permit these elements to be lit.