



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
150 West 77<sup>th</sup> Street  
July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

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 rear yard addition and alter the basement entrance at 150 West 77<sup>th</sup> Street, a Renaissance Revival-style row house designed by Gilbert A. Schellenger and built in 1891.

**Inaccurate information from the applicant**

When reviewing the proposal for 150 West 77<sup>th</sup> Street today, in particular for work proposed for the rear façade, use caution. From the time of the Community Board's review of this project in March 2010 up to today, the applicant's plans have changed. But we're not referring just to the scope of work for the building in question, No. 150, we're talking about the renderings of the surrounding buildings, No. 152 in particular.

To the community, the applicant presented a simplistic view of the proposed rear façade as a near replica of its western neighbor, No. 152, hinting towards a desire for visual harmony, one might presume. Yet the renderings now available show significant details—a projecting bay window, for example—on both Nos. 150 and 152 that were, until now, literally not part of the picture.

**Rear Façade: Recommendation for no action**

This means that the context of the proposed rear yard addition as presented to the community and as voted on by both the Community Board 7 (CB7) Parks & Preservation Committee and its Full Board was inaccurate. The appropriateness of the proposal was being evaluated in relation to a building façade that does not, in fact, exist. No existing conditions photos have been provided; we're still relying solely on the applicant's renderings today.

LANDMARK WEST! strongly urges the Commission to take no action today, and to require the applicant to return to CB7 with a complete and accurate set of photos and drawings describing their proposal and present it for a new vote.

From the renderings we saw at Public Review, there appear to be significant architectural features that would be affected, if not destroyed. The Community Board and neighbors need to be told and shown the truth about this impact. Without such photos, discussion of the proposed rear façade and its inappropriate extrusion-like effect (essentially, pushing the existing rear façade—top to bottom, full-width—out into the yard), sacrificing an entire façade of historic building fabric for the sake of three feet of interior space, is only skimming the surface.

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**Basement entrance: Design modification recommendations**

While the proposal to remove the existing brick veneer surrounding the modified basement entry at 150 West 77<sup>th</sup> Street, exposing and restoring original, underlying details, is a positive step, this improvement is marred by other proposed interventions on the front façade.

The proposed entry surround is designed to directly mimic the window surrounds of the parlor level, the historic point of entry. But to simply copy-paste the design motif to the contemporary entryway is a misguided design move. The result is a façade containing confusing architectural references and that appears over-designed and inappropriate.

We strongly urge the Commission to deny this application as proposed today.