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**August 27, 2006****UPPER WEST SIDE**

## **Where Clipclops Sounded, Fears of the Wrecking Ball**

**By SAKI KNAFO**

It's been a while since horses last pranced through the Romanesque Revival arches of the old New York Cab Company, a hulking brick-and-stone pile on Amsterdam Avenue and 75th Street. The former stable now serves as a parking garage. But replace the Hondas and Chryslers with horses and carriages, and you have a building that has scarcely changed since it opened in the 1890's.

For two decades, Landmark West, an Upper West Side preservation group, has urged the city to protect that building and two other former stables on the west side of Amsterdam Avenue between 75th and 77th Streets. What worries preservationists is that all three buildings lie just outside the western boundary of the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District, and are thus vulnerable to demolition.

Now those worries are more real. A large development group, the Related Companies, has announced that it is interested in building housing on the southwest corner of 77th Street, currently the site of the Dakota Stable, a tan and salmon, armorylike structure. Alicia Goldstein, a spokeswoman for Related, which does not yet own the property, said the site represented "an excellent location for residences, for which the area has a substantial need."

Last spring, Landmark West began a new campaign to build support for protecting the buildings, and in July, Community Board 7 voted to urge the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission to consider the case. Gale Brewer, the local City Council member and a strong supporter of the preservation effort, lavished praise upon the former homes of the New York Cab Company, the Dakota Stable and a third, unnamed stable. Among the other businesses that share the three buildings are two garages, an Equinox health club and a Chirping Chicken fast-food restaurant.

"When you look up and you see the color, and you take away the garage and you take away the Chirping Chicken and you take away the Equinox," Ms. Brewer said, "they're gorgeous."

Both the New York Cab Company and the Dakota Stable once served a public clientele, much

like the garages that replaced them. Kate Wood, executive director of Landmark West, said the drive to save them was prompted by the aesthetic appeal of what she described as the “rusticated” masonry and soaring arched windows. The effort also springs, she said, from the idea that old stables can help tell “the story of the development of the Upper West Side from essentially farmland to a residential area.” SAKI KNAFO

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