

**Statement of LANDMARK WEST!
Submitted to the City Planning Commission
Regarding the Lincoln Center Redevelopment Project,
Phase I (65th Street Corridor)
Uniform Land Use Review Procedure
April 13, 2005**

LANDMARK WEST! is a non-profit community organization committed to the preservation of the architectural heritage of the Upper West Side.

Since Lincoln Center announced their conceptual plans for the 65th Street corridor, including the Juilliard Building and the North Plaza, last spring, LW! has met with the design team numerous times to exchange ideas and provide feedback on their proposals. This continuing dialogue will, we believe, result in a much-improved project.

Lincoln Center was determined to be eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places in May 2000. It is one of only a relatively small number of outstanding historic resources under the age of fifty to be so designated. The sensitive historic and architectural character of the campus demands that each Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) item be carefully scrutinized for its potential impact on this unique place, America's first "cultural center," designed by a consortium of the 20th century's most accomplished architects. Lincoln Center is a priceless part of not just the Upper West Side and New York City, but of our collective American heritage.

Changes in the City Map (050098 MMM):

First, with regard to the application to demap and convey two segments of West 65th Street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue to Lincoln Center, we understand that this action would enable the sidewalk on the south side of 65th Street to be widened by 12 feet, setting the stage for tremendous improvements to the pedestrian environment on this block. We applaud this goal.

We would like to point out, however, that the conveyance of this portion of sidewalk to Lincoln Center would generate nearly 90,000 square feet of potentially developable floor area. Approval of this conveyance should be contingent on a written agreement that this floor area will remain unused and untransferrable.

Second, the aim of the application to modify the public place designation covering Lincoln Center's North Plaza is to enable Lincoln Center to build a privately operated restaurant on the north side of the reflecting pool. While LW! does not object to the restaurant itself, we question the trade-off of public space for a structure that would force a total reconfiguration of the original landscape design by Dan Kiley.

Dan Kiley is to 20th-century landscape design what Frederick Law Olmsted was to 19th-century landscape design. North Plaza, Josie Robertson Plaza, Damrosch Park are all

every bit as significant and sacred as Central Park or Riverside Park. Former *New York Times* architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable poetically described Plaza North as “the sole moment [in Lincoln Center] that lifts the spirit of those to whom the 20th century is a very exciting time to be alive.” Dan Kiley’s carefully orchestrated, minimalist geometry was integral to the original success of this space and still suggests the landscape design that gave “a sense of order and continuity to the complex as a whole,” according to landscape architect Ken Smith. Along with Damrosch Park and Josie Robertson Plaza, Plaza North still stands as a remarkable example of Modern landscape architecture.

We feel strongly that a restaurant and other amenities can be sensitively integrated while keeping essential elements of the original Kiley design, including the original shape of the reflecting pool, the trees surrounding the pool on both the south and east sides, the raised travertine planters, and the light-colored concrete aggregate paving. We look forward to working with Lincoln Center and their team to find a solution that does not compromise the serene geometry of this space for the sake of a commercial venture.

Finally, in order to ensure that the roof functions as a usable public space, we recommend that Lincoln Center construct a full-scale mock-up to test the comfort of the grades. This type of mock-up is very common when designing new types and forms in landscape architecture.

Modification of the special permit and drawings previously approved for the Rose Building (M 860382(E)ZSM):

While altering the Juilliard Building may be “as of right” in terms of the underlying zoning, it requires special permission since the building is part of a merged zoning lot with the Rose Building, which received a series of special permits in 1986.

The proposed design would utterly transform the Broadway façade of the Juilliard Building. Lincoln Center has opted not to pursue alternative design solutions, such as a sensitive roof-top addition, placing this historic building very much at risk.

According to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation’s “Resource Evaluation,” which demonstrates that Lincoln Center meets the eligibility criteria for the National Register of Historic Places, “the Juilliard School is a unique expression of a late-Modern style not otherwise well represented in New York City.” The LANDMARK WEST! report that led to the May 2000 determination of eligibility also emphasizes the importance of the building’s design as a rectangular block. The proposed street-hugging intervention (following the diagonal of Broadway) would detract from the inherent qualities of the original design and remove all of the significant features of the Broadway façade – the most familiar façade to members of the general public who experience Lincoln Center most frequently from the outside – including its travertine paneling and symmetrical configuration of rectangular windows.

Furthermore, the proposed design poses many maintenance dilemmas, particularly the exposed travertine soffit, which will inevitably suffer from staining due to water run-off and pollution.

A zoning text amendment to allow signs at heights above that permitted in the Special Lincoln Square District (N050169ZRM):

Any amendment to the zoning text of the Special Lincoln Square District to allow signage at heights more than 20 feet above curb level must place additional restrictions on the size, projection, illumination, and animation of those signs. Although Lincoln Center's current proposal does not appear to incorporate oversized, flashing, or projecting signage, the zoning text must not be written in such a way as to open the door for this type of signage in future.

Revocable consent allowing installation of a series of informational signs along the south side of West 65th Street (050170GFM):

A widened sidewalk, minus garage entrances and curb cuts, are important steps towards enhancing the pedestrian environment along 65th Street. The design and configuration of street furniture, lighting, and signage are just as essential.

Additional signage might be welcome. However, the current plan is overkill, especially with regard to the vertical blade signs spaced at approximately 50-foot intervals along 65th Street, forming what the Environmental Assessment Statement refers to as a "dynamic, 700-foot-long signage system." Lincoln Center has shown animated visuals demonstrating that the primary purpose of these signs would be to broadcast commercial-like advertising for Lincoln Center. While Lincoln Center may think of these promotions as "informational," in our view, they cross the line and would transform 65th Street into a light show that tips the balance between public and private space.

West 65th Street is for everyone, not just Lincoln Center and its patrons.

We urge the City Planning Commission to do everything within its authority to ensure that Lincoln Center retains its special character for generations to come.