



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
118 West 79<sup>th</sup> Street  
February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

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 alter window openings at 118 West 79<sup>th</sup> Street, a neo-Romanesque-style apartment building designed by Emery Roth and built in 1925.

This beautiful apartment building belongs to the roster of prolific hotels and residences designed by Emery Roth. As you know, his work includes: the Ritz Tower, New York City's first residential skyscraper; the San Remo, the city's first twin-towered residential skyscraper; the Ardsley; the El Dorado; and many other significant buildings which contributed to the Golden Age of New York apartment houses in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Any alteration to a Roth-designed apartment house must be carefully scrutinized.

This secondary façade of 118 West 79<sup>th</sup> Street is considerably visible due to the fact that there are buildings to the East only six stories in height. Our Committee finds this proposal to be inappropriate – this type of masonry alteration would call undue attention to this particular facade and create a discontinuity of window configuration.

What's more, we must look ahead. By evaluating this application's appropriateness in isolation, the Commission may be setting this building up for a difficult future. Apartment by apartment, the east façade could become a hodge-podge of window alterations lacking any cohesion. Such changes would adversely impact the building as a whole. More importantly, the proposed design and future alterations of the same vein would impact the streetscape, as it would be visible from Columbus Avenue, West 80<sup>th</sup> Street, West 78<sup>th</sup> Street, and even from the American Museum of Natural History.

Looking to the Commission's own *Rules*, Section 3-04(d) states that on secondary facades visible from a public thoroughfare, replacement windows are appropriate *if* they match the historic windows in configuration and finish. The former of these qualities is not being met.

We recommend denial of this application.