



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
161 West 78<sup>th</sup> Street  
July 24, 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 a rear yard addition on this Renaissance Revival style rowhouse with neo-Grec elements designed by Thom & Wilson and built in 1890.

As we have stated in the past, our committee is committed to the preservation of open space in rear yard doughnuts. As designed, this addition will eliminate 113 square feet from this block's rear yard. The applicant has stated that the northern half of the block's rear yard is occupied by large apartment buildings on West 79<sup>th</sup> Street, but it is important to note that, with the exception of a school building and school yard on the western edge, the southern half of the doughnut is largely open. Approximately 24 rowhouses have existing ell-shaped extensions, and otherwise the rear yards remain unbuilt. As designed, this proposal will fill in the existing ell, which is likely to start a trend among other property owners on this block. It is important to consider the long-term implications of approving this application.

There are other remaining questions about the design. First, we ask if the applicant considered preserving any fabric from the building's original rear façade and, in fact, incorporating elements, such as piers, in the building's interior plan. As proposed, the rear façade will be completely eradicated.

Further, it is unclear from the presentation if architectural details are extant at the rear parapet and how they will be preserved with the addition of significant bulk to the roof and the rear.

We urge the Commission not to approve this application until the details regarding the addition's bulk and original fabric are considered.