



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

## **DRAFT**

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
258-262 West 88<sup>th</sup> Street  
September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008**

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 rooftop and rear yard additions on these three Renaissance Revival style rowhouses designed by Nelson M. Whipple and built in 1884.

Too often, historic rowhouse rear yards are thought of as venues for excess; an applicant seeks permission for a design that would be considered out of scale or out of context on a residence's primary façade. The rear yard component of this proposal is just such an example.

Whereas the architect has successfully designed rooftop additions which will be minimally visible from the public way, the rear yard additions, as proposed, are inappropriate. They would severely and negatively affect the historic character and integrity of these buildings.

Looking to the Commission's eight criteria for rear yard additions, we see that criterion "e," which instructs that the rear of the buildings must retain the scale and character of individual rowhouses, is not satisfied. Regardless of the fact that these three buildings will soon be joined internally to create one massive living space, they are historically individual living units and must continue to be designed as such. Though the two new rear yard additions are designed in harmony with the existing, previously modified addition, they are not then inherently permissible. The additions read as a three rowhouse-wide singular structure and are entirely inappropriate for a rowhouse in the Riverside-West End Historic District.

Time and time again, diminutive rowhouse structures such as these are pushed to their max. So much is being asked of these buildings which they are not historically meant to accommodate. Our committee opposes this proposal. We urge the Commission to protect the character of these rowhouses and to deny this application.