



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
7 West 82nd Street
TBD, 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 legalize work performed at the primary façade and areaway without Landmarks Preservation Commission permits at 7 West 82nd Street, a Renaissance Revival style rowhouse designed by Thom & Wilson and built in 1886-87.

One week prior to today's review of the myriad violations present at 7 West 82nd Street, LANDMARK WEST! staff met with the homeowner of this property to discuss the existing conditions of the residence. At that time, we assessed not only the issues of noncompliance known to the homeowner by way of their assigned Commission staff member, but also identified other possible violations to the *Rules*.

Facade

First floor window (see handout page 2): Via conversation with the applicant, it is our understanding that the transom window at the parlor floor level was thought to possess a stained glass, "special" window at the time of historic district designation (1990). By zooming in on the designation photo, it appears that what may look like window leading is more likely security gating installed on the inside of the window.

Second floor converted window-to-door; balcony railing (see handout page 4): The enlargement of a window opening to become a door without Commission permits is most distressing. Such an enlargement resulted in the loss of historic brownstone material, a modification on a principal façade that the Commission would have surely found to be inappropriate. The metal railing installed to accommodate this altered balcony space exacerbates the second floor noncompliance issues. If in fact such a railing is required for insurance purposes, we are certain that an appropriate design solution is possible. This is not it.

Third floor special window (see handout page 3): As with the first floor window, zooming in on the designation photo to inspect this arched window proved essential in determining that inappropriate modifications have been made to this "special" window. The designation photo (1990) depicts the curving window frame. Looking then to photos of the existing conditions, we can see that inappropriate aluminum panning has been installed in front of the window—and the window itself seems to have been replaced following designation. Both of these were done without LPC permits and should be folded into the portfolio of noncompliance issues being addressed at 7 West 82nd Street.

(Continued ...)

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Areaway

Lighting conduits: By downgrading to one single lighting fixture in the areaway, centrally mounted above the window, lighting conduits can be hidden on the interior.

Window (see handout page 5): Since the time of the designation of the Upper West Side-Central Park West Historic District in 1990, this window has been installed, replacing a rudimentary wooden panel. The white vinyl windows currently in place is inappropriate, as is the metal grillwork. To get a sense of what would be appropriate metalwork for this Thom & Wilson rowhouse, LANDMARK WEST! advised the homeowner to complete a survey of other residences by this firm. To that end, we provided the full listing of the nearly 300 buildings in the UWS-CPW Historic District attributed to Thom & Wilson in the designation report along with a map of these addresses.

Door gate: The style of the existing door grillwork is not appropriate for this Renaissance Revival style rowhouse. Again, a survey of ironwork at other contemporary Thom & Wilson rowhouses could serve as a departure for identifying a replacement.

Garbage collection bins: The existing metal bins rise off their wheel casters several inches. Dropping the bins down, to rest directly on the areaway floor, would significantly reduce their visibility from the street.

Conclusion

These points are intended as a springboard to begin a deeper discussion on correcting the illegal alterations at 7 West 82nd Street—merely. As we discussed with the applicant, LANDMARK WEST! is ready and eager to work collaboratively with Commission staff and the homeowners to address this list of illegal work. Whether the violations were inherited from past owners or completed during the current owners' tenure, our primary concern must be the building itself and what we can do—together—to correct the illegal and inappropriate work completed here.

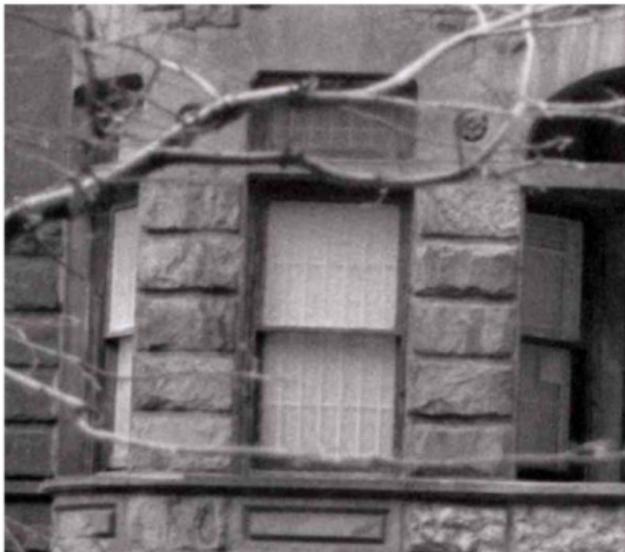
1

Designation photo:
Taken in 1990 at the
time of the designation
of the Upper West
Side-Central Park West
Historic District.



2

Top: Zooming in on the 1990 designation photo, we observe that the lines in the parlor floor window are likely security gates installed on the interior of the window.

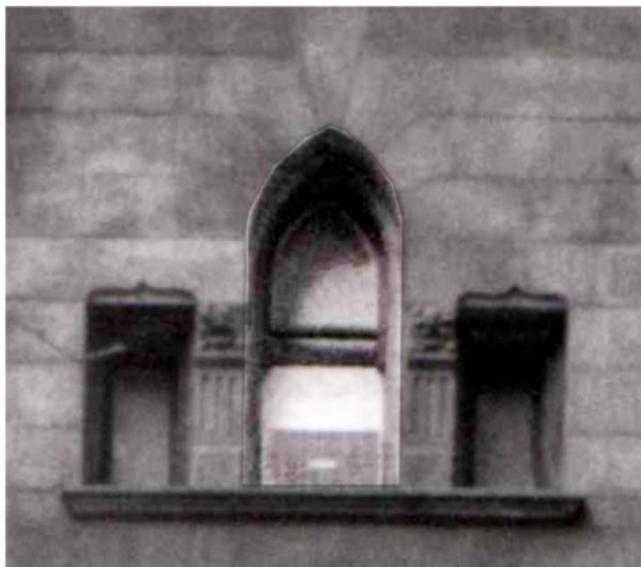


Bottom: Existing conditions photo of the parlor floor window.



3

Top: Using Photoshop to lighten the shading created by this special window's arched stone surround, the curvature of the window at the time of designation (1990) is visible.



Bottom: Existing conditions photo of the special arched window, showing that in addition to replacing the window (without LPC permits), inappropriate aluminum panning has been installed.



4

Top: Designation photo (1990) depicts second floor balcony and window conditions: Stone parapet and one-over-one window.



Bottom: Existing conditions photo shows that the window has been converted to a door and railing has been installed atop the historic brownstone parapet.



5

Top: Designation photo (1990) shows that a crude wood door stood in place of a window at the areaway level.



Bottom: Photo of existing conditions shows that a new window has been installed (without LPC permits) and covered with inappropriately patterned metal grillwork.

Need Photo