

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
Carrère Staircase, Riverside Park at 99th Street
TBD**

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 restore the Carrere Memorial Staircase in Riverside Park at 99th Street, designed by John Hastings and built in 1916-1919.

As half of the esteemed architectural firm of Carrère and Hastings, masterminds behind our iconic New York Public Library and cultural gem the Frick Museum, John Carrère merited the honor, noted by a *New York Times* columnist in 1919, of being only the second architect in the United States to whom a memorial was erected.¹ Now, in 2009, by faithfully restoring the memorial that bears his name, Carrère’s contributions to the field of architecture—as well as those of his partner, John Hastings—are once again honored.

Our committee applauds the architect for her thoroughly researched proposal. Diligent investigation—the kind on which all applications for modifications should be founded—produced the original construction documents, prepared by John Hastings himself. Because of this historical source document, it is possible to restore the pink granite exedra and bluestone outlook and stairs to a state of excellent repair without compromising the memorial’s integrity.

Reuse and Matching of Materials

Regarding the bluestone pavers, we are pleased to hear that the maximum amount of bluestone will be salvaged to reconstruct the star pattern on the exedra landing. It is our understanding that some areas of bluestone have been damaged beyond repair or reuse, and that in those instances New York State bluestone, to match the original historic fabric, will be used. There is no equal to in-kind replacement, and the end result will be a testament to that fact.

Structural Repairs

The rough hewn stones of the exedra’s base list dangerously westward, compromising the structural integrity and safety of the stairs and landing. The architect proposes complete disassembly of the wall, construction of new, more sound foundations, and reassembly of the wall. A complex project to be sure. Careful cataloguing of each stone before it is temporarily relocated is so important here, and we hope that Commission staff remains closely involved with the project to guarantee precision and careful handling of the materials.

Citing the proposal’s dedication to the original design intent of John Hastings and its commitment to in-kind materials restoration, our Committee recommends approval of this application.

¹ “Carrere Memorial Presented to City: Exedra and Staircase Leading from Riverside Drive to Park Tribute to Architect,” *The New York Times*, 17 Oct 1919, p. 17.