

Hearing Date: April 27, 2004

LPC Docket Number: 040140

Manhattan, Block: 1218, Lot: 10

169 West 87th Street - Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District

A Romanesque/Renaissance Revival style rowhouse designed by Gilbert A. Schellenger and built in 1889-90. Application is to install a barrier-free access lift and a fence at the areaway.

HDC Testimony

The Historic Districts Council commends the applicant for the new front door design, which will greatly improve the look of this Romanesque/Renaissance Revival rowhouse. That said, we do not object to the installation of a barrier-free access lift as long as the work is completely reversible and does not do irrevocable damage to this 1889 rowhouse. For instance, we question how the new lift will affect the historic paving that lines the areaway. We ask the Commission to ensure that this bluestone remains unharmed by the installation of the lift.

HDC does object, however, to the replacement of the existing fence and gate with a new fence and gate. The existing fence is consistent with the other fences along West 87th Street. Moreover, the replacement fence does not seem to meet any code standards that the existing fence and gate do not already meet. It appears as if the new gate will open on the opposite side from the existing gate. We suggest, therefore, that the applicant simply re-hang the existing gate so that it opens on the left-hand side to meet the needs of the person using the handicap access lift.

Hearing Date: April 27, 2004

LPC Docket Number: 045685

Manhattan, Block: 1231, Lot: 36

200 West 84th Street - Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District

A neo-Grec/Queen Anne style flats building, built in 1889-90 and designed by Jacob H. Valentine. Application is to legalize the installation of a canopy without Landmarks Preservation Commission permit(s).

HDC Testimony

The Historic Districts Council regrets the installation of the canopy at 200 West 84th Street. While we understand that the restaurant owners want the West 84th Street establishment to be seen from Amsterdam Avenue, a canopy is not the right solution. Canopies, which by definition extend over the sidewalk and attach themselves to the sidewalk near the curb, take away precious sidewalk space from pedestrians. They create long shadows on the sidewalk and interrupt the pedestrian flow, and therefore are not appropriate for our historic districts. One only has to look at the transformation of West 72nd Street, also in the Upper West Side Historic District, after Landmark West encouraged the removal of the many canopies along the block to see how the absence of canopies frees up the sidewalk space for pedestrians and allows the area's architecture to stand out.

We ask that the Commission deny the applicant's request for legalization. We further suggest that the applicant make use of the existing flagpole, which appears to have been used at the time of designation, for a more appropriate way to announce the restaurant establishment.

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