



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**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 completely inappropriate for a building's primary façade. But as LANDMARK WEST! has argued on many previous occasions, the rear yard doughnut is an important historic context in its own right. And the rear yard component of this proposal is the epitome of inappropriate excess.

Whereas the architect has successfully designed rooftop additions to be minimally visible from the public way, the rear yard additions, as proposed, 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. We understand that these three buildings will soon be joined internally to create one massive living space. Still, it is important that they retain their historical identity as three individual buildings. By contrast, the additions read as a single three rowhouse-wide structure, providing no articulation or distinction between the three historic facades.

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.