

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Regarding 201 West 79<sup>th</sup> Street  
September 21, 2004**

LANDMARK WEST! is a non-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 the installation of doors, signage and lighting and conduit without LPC permits.

The Landmarks Commission plays a vital role in preventing the loss of historic fabric and in upholding high standards for new design in historic areas. When property owners ignore the law and make changes without the Commission's guidance and consent, the results all too frequently range from unremarkable to destructive.

In the case of the Hotel Lucerne, the side doors, lighting, and signage suffer from being so unremarkable as to be inappropriate for the Hotel Lucerne, a grand audacious turn of the century hotel building designed by Harry B. Mulliken. The doors are too residential in their detailing - the doorknocker, the heavily varnished and pale color and black metal banding are more along the line of a stock construction house than a turn of the century hotel building. Although this is a side door to the building, the doors should still convey the grandeur and special character of the Lucerne.

The signage and lighting are also out of character with the building. The sign should be installed lower on the building façade so it is more clearly read as a pedestrian sign. It should be made smaller so it does not fill the entire face of the stone but is framed by the dimensions of the stone block. The lighting could be more carefully thought out and installed more discreetly next to the sign and within the framing of the door, which would also serve to highlight the door and the business.

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Regarding 494 Amsterdam Avenue  
September 21, 2004**

LANDMARK WEST! is a non-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 replace the storefront on Amsterdam Avenue.

The Committee supports this storefront design. In particular, we are pleased to see they are taking down the security gate and housing and implementing a simple and understated design. We applaud the designer and store owner for choosing simplicity in their design and hope that the signage, which was not addressed in the plans we saw, will follow in this vein of understatement and simplicity.

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Regarding 326 West 87<sup>th</sup> Street  
September 21, 2004**

LANDMARK WEST! is a non-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 a rear year addition.

We applaud the applicant for recognizing the beauty of this building and restoring the stoop. We hope it starts a chain reaction of stoop replacement on this once elegant block of rowhouses.

The reconfigured rear year addition while full width, is shorter and therefore allows for more green space, air and light. We have no complaints with the modern fenestration on the rear façade but would like the applicant to rethink the rooftop basketball court. The basketball court, although not visible from the street, diminishes the buildings value and integrity. The chain link fence is a cheap, suburban material and more appropriate on a school than on a 1890 rowhouse.

While we understand that this hearing is only to address the construction of the rear yard addition, we wish to add a few comments regarding other aspects of this renovation. While we are glad to see the applicant maintaining the original stained glass windows on the parlor floor and replacing windows in-kind, we would rather not see this replacement at all. Old wooden windows are superior in construction and look to new wooden windows and every effort should be made to repair the original windows. It was unclear from the plans, but we also want to stress that the curved windows in the front façade need to remain curved windows.

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Regarding 201-225 West 86<sup>th</sup> Street  
September 21, 2004**

LANDMARK WEST! is a non-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 install rooftop HVAC equipment.

The Belnord Apartments were originally designed and built by Hiss and Weekes (1908-09) with ventilation and cooling in mind. The central courtyard, windows and window AC units should provide adequate cross ventilation for the apartments but may not provide the kind of cooling the commercial tenants demand. This is the only reason we can deduce for installing enormous HVAC platforms on the roof. The proposed platforms and HVAC units are highly visible from all angles as the Belnord is situated on wide streets with prime views of the roof.

We recommend the applicant work with LPC to come up with a less intrusive way to cool the Belnord with a combination of geo-thermal cooling and a green roof. Adding a thin layer of soil and plants to a roof, reduces roof maintenance costs and energy use by insulating from extreme temperature, thus limiting the need for summer cooling and large HVAC units. A green roof does not diminish from a historic building as it does not interfere with sight lines or change the roof line of the building.

At the very least, the HVAC units should be set back as far from the edge of the building as possible to minimize their visibility from the street.

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!**  
**Certificate of Appropriateness Committee**  
**Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission**  
**Regarding the Designation of St. Aloysius Church (Item 1)**  
**and Church of All Saints, Parish House and School (Item 2)**  
**September 21, 2004**

LANDMARK WEST! is a non-profit community organization committed to the preservation of the architectural heritage of the Upper West Side.

LW! enthusiastically supports the designation of St. Aloysius Church built in 1902 and designed by William W. Renwick. This church with its mixture of colored brickwork and glazed brick trim, combined with delicate terra cotta is a resplendent building and a huge asset to Harlem's rich architectural heritage. David Dunlap, in his guide to Manhattan's houses of worship, sites St. Aloysius as "a little known treasure, one of many in which Harlem abounds."

We also support the designation of Church of All Saints, and Parish House, built between 1886-1889, designed by James Renwick, and the School built in 1902-04, designed by William Renwick. More effusive in decoration and coloring than James Renwick's other notable buildings including St. Patrick's Cathedral, Grace Cathedral and St. Ann's Episcopal Church in Brooklyn -- Church of All Saints dominates East 129<sup>th</sup> Street with its gothic tracery, wheel windows, patterned brickwork and a tall bell tower. The parish house and school continue in this vein of expressive gothic architecture and enhance the campus surrounding the church.

We are pleased that the Commission is finally breaking the "logjam" and moving forward with public hearings on these two churches, both of which have not only great architectural and historical significance, but also deep social value to the community – not just the Harlem community, but New Yorkers at large. After all, it's your mission. No other city agency has the power to hold hearings and designate landmarks. And, therefore, we must take this opportunity to remind the Commission of two other worthy buildings not yet calendared for a designation hearing, St. Thomas Church and 2 Columbus Circle.

In December 2003, NY Times architecture critic Herbert Muschamp wrote: **"The refusal of the NYC LPC to hold hearing on the future of 2 Columbus Circle is a shocking dereliction of public duty. Unacceptable in itself, this abdication also raises the scary question of what other buildings the commission might choose to overlook in the future."**

What is the problem? Both St. Thomas Church and 2 Columbus Circle are unique works of master architects, each working in his own signature style – ecclesiastical genius Thomas H. Poole at St. Thomas Church and Modernist pioneer Edward Durell Stone at 2 Columbus Circle. Both buildings have widespread public support for at least a hearing to consider their merits for landmark designation. So, I repeat, what is the problem?

Former Landmarks Commissioner Anthony M. Tung, who served from 1978 to 1988, wrote in a letter dated August 30, 2004, to Chair Robert B. Tierney regarding 2 Columbus Circle: **“In the 26 years of my involvement in preservation matters, beginning with my appointment as a commissioner by Mayor Edward I. Koch in 1979, I have never seen the commission turn its back on such a widely supported and substantive argument for a hearing.”**

He goes further, **“Is the commission being arbitrary and capricious?”**

In the more than twenty years that I myself have been involved in preservation, I have always believed in my heart that the purpose of these designation hearings was to allow for open discussion and exchange of ideas about the future of our city’s architectural heritage. I have always believed that the commissioners listened to feedback from the community and that our comments genuinely helped to shape the commissioners’ thinking on the complex issues at stake.

If this is true, then I ask you to take very seriously what I say before you now. We are all grateful to have the opportunity to speak today about the future of these worthy historic churches. But I, and many of my colleagues and concerned New Yorkers, are sorely disappointed and disenchanted with the landmarks process itself. Chair Tierney’s comments in the press notwithstanding, it is not too late in the process to affect it. The potential loss of St. Thomas or 2 Columbus Circle is regrettable; it is incredibly sad. But even more regrettable would be the failure of the Landmarks Commission to put politics aside, respond to the scholars, architects, planners and just plain lovers of New York’s historic neighborhoods, and exercise its power when and where it is needed.

Otherwise, how many more historic buildings will be lost?