



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
320 Central Park West  
The Ardsley  
November 13, 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 approve a new windows master plan for 320 Central Park West, the Ardsley, an Art Deco style apartment building designed by Emery Roth and built in 1930-31.

With the Rules of the LPC in mind, we turn the Commission's attention to Rule 3-01(d)(1) which puts forth that windows guidelines are based on the following principles:

- (1) The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building's structure, or site and its environment, should not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any distinctive architectural feature should be avoided whenever possible.
- (2) Deteriorated architectural features including windows should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible.
- (3) If replacement is necessary, the new window should match the original or historic window in design and other visual qualities.<sup>1</sup>

By approving this application, the Commission would be going against each of these guiding principles and putting in danger all 718 of this iconic Art Deco masterpiece's extant original windows, as our Committee's handout illustrates point-by-point.

First, the windows of the Ardsley are an integral part of the building's design. In *Mansions in the Clouds: The skyscraper palazzi of Emery Roth*, architectural historian Steven Rutenbaum's summation of the Ardsley's fenestration is invaluable:

Multipane windows were favored by most architects and builders of the period because they contributed texture to facades. For the large windows facing [Central Park], however, [architect Emery] Roth designed an entirely new window configuration that maintained multipane texture at the same time [that] it provided unobstructed views. He achieved this by surrounding large plate glass "view windows" with multipane sashes on the top and sides. Such a configuration clearly was a step in the direction of Modernism, and it set the Ardsley apart from most other buildings of the period.<sup>2</sup>

*Over, please*

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<sup>1</sup> Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Chapter 3: Windows Guidelines," in *Rules of the Landmarks Preservation Commission*, p. 3-1.

<sup>2</sup> Steven Rutenbaum, *Mansions in the Clouds: The skyscraper palazzi of Emery Roth*, p. 148.

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Pages 1 and 2 of our handout concretize the importance of texture to the Ardsley's façade.

Second, the Commission's Rules instruct applicants to repair – not immediately replace – windows whenever possible. Restoration and maintenance should be the first line of defense against window deterioration. The Ardsley retains a tremendous number of original windows – 67 percent! (See Page 3 of accompanying handout) A naked-eye survey of the Art Deco apartment buildings along Central Park West reveal that the Ardsley is an increasingly endangered species – a building which still retains more than half of its original steel casement windows. To ascertain the potential for restoration at the Ardsley, our Committee reached out to Walter Sedovic of Walter Sedovic Architects. A recognized leader in the field of historic preservation and an expert in windows restoration, Mr. Sedovic offered the following opinion:

In the over two decades that we have been undertaking historical restoration campaigns, we have worked on thousands if not tens of thousands of windows. Never – not once – have I encountered a steel window which was beyond the scope of restoration. The windows of the Ardsley look to present no exception. What's more, the residents will find that while their replacements would likely begin to fail in eight to ten years, necessitating a second replacement and wasting a horrifying amount of energy and capital, restoring their windows would have an initial lower cost, promote sustainability *and* improve the performance of the windows over even their original quality.

Third, the proposed Skyline series would oversimplify the configuration of the windows. Replacing the delicate muntins and multipane character of the original windows with the proposed thicker-profile replacement windows would essentially destroy one of the main design features of the building's façade – the textural quality that the windows were intended to add would be lost. Existing non-original windows on the Central Park West façade are testament to the negative impact inappropriate window configurations can have on this building.

This proposal flouts two additional LPC Rules. Rule 3-04(c)(2)(iii)(C) says: “where the historic windows possess special architectural value, including ‘special’ windows as defined in the definitions (Section 3-01) and illustrated in Appendix A, replacement windows shall match the material of the historic windows.” Page 6 of our handout shows that the Ardsley's windows are indeed “special” according to the LPC Rules. All metals are not equal – aluminum is not steel, and this must be minded. Finally, Rule 3-04(c)(2)(iii), which refers to large apartment buildings, requires that replacement windows match the original in configuration and detail. With minimal divided lights and thick muntin profiles, the proposed replacement windows do not satisfy this Rule.

Let the visual evidence provided here steel your resolve to protect the integrity of this building. The approval of an inappropriate windows master plan would perpetuate the window-by-window desecration of this 1930-31 landmark building. There is still so much to be saved – remember, 67% of the Ardsley's windows are original. Do not allow for more to be lost. We urge the Commission to deny this application.