



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
248 Central Park West
July 11, 2006**

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 a rooftop addition at 248 Central Park West, a Queen Anne-style rowhouse in the Upper West Side/Central Park West historic district designed by Edward L. Angell and built in 1887-88.

As we stated in our testimony on April 25, 2006, 248 Central Park West is part of a remaining trio of picturesque, gabled rowhouses that, as the district's designation report states, "are rare examples of single-family residences on that avenue." This building is truly a survivor, having withstood a devastating fire in the early 1990s and LPC-approved inappropriate renovations in the late 1990s. It is unclear why overscaled rooftop additions that are visible from Central Park have been allowed at 248 and its southern neighbor 247 in the past, and the Commission should not perpetuate this problem by allowing yet another addition.

The elegance of these three rowhouses is significantly threatened, as the owners have established a trend of continual rooftop and rear yard addition-building. Thus, our Committee objects to the revised design for the proposed rooftop addition. The revised design for the addition would still be highly visible from 85th Street, and would only contribute to the large number of existing inappropriate additions on this trio of rowhouses. Furthermore, the bulk added by the brick rooftop addition is out of scale with the refined details of the existing building.

When the applicant came before the Commission with a proposal for a rooftop addition on April 25, 2006, the Commission expressed serious concerns about how yet another addition would change the building's unique character. As one Commissioner stated, "[this application] asks the building to do more than it should." The proposal before you still does not address the Commission's stated concerns, and our Committee urges the Commission to reject this application. This is an opportunity to put a halt to additional top-heavy alterations that have overwhelmed these handsome structures.



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
10 West 70th Street
July 11, 2006**

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 install a trailer and a fence.

Because the proposed trailer and fence are temporary and demonstrate an effort to relate to the adjacent school building, our Committee is not opposed to the application.

However, we would like to take this opportunity reiterate our grave concerns about the Commission's approval in March 2006 of Congregation Shearith Israel's application to construct a 124-foot-tall building on this midblock site, situated on the mostly rowhouse block of West 70th Street, adjacent to the magnificent individually landmarked Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue.

Because this LPC-approved building fails to comply with the contextual zoning mapped to protect this block's low-rise context, this application must now go to the Board of Standards and Appeals for a slew of variances exempting them from the rules that other property owners must follow. It is fortunate that yesterday's disaster that destroyed a four-story brownstone in the Upper East Side did not result in the loss of human life. It did, however, set up a very serious test for this Commission. Like 10 West 70th Street, 34 East 62nd Street was located in a historic district and in a contextual R8-B zoning district. East 62nd Street has nowhere near the kind of low-rise consistency that West 70th Street currently does, yet it nonetheless has a strong historic character that will now be subject to redevelopment.

However the Commission responds to this challenge, we sincerely hope it will take some guidance from the concerns raised by historic communities throughout the city in connection with the erosion of character and scale in our neighborhoods. No other city agency has as much discretion when it comes to determining the future shape of our city. We look to you to defend the protections that have been so hard fought and so hard won.