



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
161 West 78th Street
July 24, 2007**

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 rear yard addition on this Renaissance Revival style rowhouse with neo-Grec elements designed by Thom & Wilson and built in 1890.

As we have stated in the past, our committee is committed to the preservation of open space in rear yard doughnuts. As designed, this addition will eliminate 113 square feet from this block's rear yard. The applicant has stated that the northern half of the block's rear yard is occupied by large apartment buildings on West 79th Street, but it is important to note that, with the exception of a school building and school yard on the western edge, the southern half of the doughnut is largely open. Approximately 24 rowhouses have existing ell-shaped extensions, and otherwise the rear yards remain unbuilt. As designed, this proposal will fill in the existing ell, which is likely to start a trend among other property owners on this block. It is important to consider the long-term implications of approving this application.

There are other remaining questions about the design. First, we ask if the applicant considered preserving any fabric from the building's original rear façade and, in fact, incorporating elements, such as piers, in the building's interior plan. As proposed, the rear façade will be completely eradicated.

Further, it is unclear from the presentation if architectural details are extant at the rear parapet and how they will be preserved with the addition of significant bulk to the roof and the rear.

We urge the Commission not to approve this application until the details regarding the addition's bulk and original fabric are considered.



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**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
300 Central Park West, aka the El Dorado
July 24, 2007**

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 an addition to this individually landmarked 1929 Art Deco style apartment building that is part of the Central Park West/Upper West Side historic district and was designed by Margon and Holder, with Emery Roth as a consultant.

Standing as sentinels on the Central Park West skyline, the soaring towers of the El Dorado are truly among the Upper West Side's most iconic architectural treasures. Visible from across Manhattan, this remarkable building resonates with New Yorkers today just as it did nearly eighty years ago, when *The New York Times* effused on the El Dorado's opening: "Central Park West seems destined to present distinct and imposing architectural characteristics, superior, perhaps, to any other long thoroughfare."

Even the most modest additions to such a revered landmark should never be taken lightly or approved summarily. LW's Committee does not object to this minimally visible addition which has been presented as an in-kind replacement of an enclosed terrace. That said, we do not extend blanket support to additional construction on the grand terraces of this individual landmark. Having been preceded by an earlier shed, this addition's grandfathered status is a special circumstance and certainly should not be considered a precedent for further accretions on this Art Deco masterpiece.

What concerns our committee, however, is another nearly invisible structure: the mock-up. According to the applicant, the mock-up for this terrace enclosure was dismantled in April. This was at least a month before May 31 when the Commission first publicized the application for public review. As a result, the public was not aware of the mock-up and not able to independently evaluate its visual impact. We request that, in the future, the Commission notify the public about applications that require mock-ups before the tools for evaluation are removed.



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
427 Amsterdam Avenue
July 24, 2007**

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 new storefront on this one-story commercial building which was built in 1937 and designated as part of the Upper West Side-Central Park West Historic District.

Our Committee would like to commend the Commission staff for enforcing the multiple violations on this building that LANDMARK WEST! first reported in November 2005. The previous tenant's sunshine-yellow plastic storefront and oversized sidewalk display racks completely obscured the simple lines of this cast-stone Depression-era taxpayer. We are pleased to remove 427 Amsterdam Avenue from the list of dozens of Upper West Side violations that remain uncorrected.

We would also like to thank the applicant for presenting to our committee. We are generally in favor of this proposal's direction, but feel the presentation materials are inadequate to evaluate this scheme.

The following questions remain unanswered in the proposal as presented and should be fully explained before a certificate of appropriateness is issued:

- Stucco has been proposed for sections of the storefront. This is perhaps not the most sophisticated material to use at the street level for this building or the historic district in general. Has the client considered other, more durable materials?
- It is unclear why the glazing will be set farther into the structure than the original condition indicates. We also ask if the applicant considered incorporating more glass in the storefront, particularly in the transom.
- Did the applicant explore incorporating a bulkhead into the design, to be more in keeping with other storefronts in the district?