



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
108 West 76th Street
December 5, 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 rear yard addition and alter the front façade at this Renaissance Revival-style rowhouse designed by John C. Burne and built in 1891-92 in the Upper West Side-Central Park West historic district.

Our Committee is unable to support this proposal. Both the rear yard addition and the alterations to the front façade would destroy significant original building fabric and should not be sanctioned by the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Rear Yard Addition

We commend the fact that the proposed rear yard addition would restore 112 square feet of open space to the “doughnut” on the interior of this rowhouse block. However, the existing rear façade appears to have significant, historic architectural details—including a tri-part bay window, capped by a decorative frieze and cornice, plus metal railings—that would be removed in the proposed, full-width scheme.

The Commission’s Guidelines set a clear standard allowing rear yard additions only when the “Rear of building has no significant architectural features which would be lost or damaged as a result of the construction of the addition” (Section 2-16(b)). In addition, sub-section (h) reads: “The rear façade will not be removed from the entire width of the building; instead, existing openings are being modified to provide access into the addition. This approach retains original fabric and lessens structure intervention.” We see no reason why the Commission should not uphold both of these standards in this case.

Front Façade Alterations

Likewise, the proposed alterations to the front façade are inappropriate. Much of the original, 1890s fabric has been lost. Still, the circa-1930s elements have achieved significance in their own right and should be preserved. The proposed scheme would eliminate the historic metal railing that encloses the areaway and replace it with a

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masonry wall that extends across most of the width of the façade, not only creating an unfriendly barrier between the building and the sidewalk but also undermining the historic rhythm of solids and voids that is still intact at other addresses along this block.

We also understand that the applicant proposes to raise the parlor level windows by several inches. This would break the continuous sill line that visually links this façade, even with its 1930s alterations, with its neighbors.

We recommend disapproval of this application.

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