



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
15 West 63<sup>rd</sup> Street  
February 7, 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 canopy at 15 West 63<sup>rd</sup> Street. Formerly the McBurney School, this 1931 neo-Romanesque limestone and brick structure was designed by Dwight James Baum and is adjacent to his 1929 YMCA building. Together two buildings make a strong architectural statement in this neighborhood and are rare examples in Baum's urban portfolio as he was best known as a suburban residential architect who designed more than 60 houses in the recently designated Fieldston Historic District. Reflecting Baum's hallmark attention to detail, the McBurney School contributes to the elegant simplicity of the existing streetscape where the lower portions of the buildings contrast with the stone carving and architectural detail on the upper floors.

The Committee recommends against the proposed canopy because this superfluous intrusion will disrupt the composition of the building as well as the streetscape. Not only will the canopy obscure the pedestrian's view of important building details: the carved stone and polychrome brick arch around the entryway and intricate metal work in the transom, it will detract from the simple symmetry on which the school and the YMCA are based.

As Robert A.M. Stern noted in *New York 1960*, Baum's composition on 63<sup>rd</sup> Street created "a low, almost domestic street front," and this intimacy and simplicity is a hallmark of his architecture. To erect a canopy would unnecessarily disrupt this stately composition.