



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
100 West 74th Street
July 25, 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 on a neo-Grec style flats building designed by Thom & Wilson and built in 1886-87.

We object to this application on the basis of the addition's visibility from Columbus Avenue and also because the alteration of the building's parapet wall diminishes the architectural integrity of the structure. The parapet wall is also visible from Columbus Avenue and features corbelled brick, an original architectural feature of the building. Raising the parapet above the original wall would alter the architecture of the building and detract from the corbelled brick.

We urge you to deny this application.



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**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
153 West 78th Street
July 25, 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 on this Renaissance Revival style rowhouse built in 1890, located within the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District.

As in the past, we urge the Commission to consider the “doughnut” of open space formed by the rear yards of Manhattan rowhouse blocks as an important element worthy of preservation. This proposal represents yet another encroachment into the doughnut on this block. As there is already a greenhouse addition under construction behind this rowhouse (presumably approved at staff level), we ask you to consider: would both rear yard additions have been approved if they had been part of the same application? This looks like an attempt by the applicant to amass an inappropriately bulky addition by dividing it into two applications. Taken as a whole, these additions fill much of the rear lot and represent a significant intrusion into the block’s doughnut. As at 139 West 78th Street, recent approval of other rear yard additions on this block represent the gradual erosion of the doughnut. We urge you to consider the cumulative impact of Commission approvals.

Further, this addition will also obscure the punched one-over-one window on the second floor, an original architectural element of the rear façade. This gradual removal and concealment of original details diminishes the historic integrity of this landmarked structure.

Denying this application is an important step towards maintaining the historic integrity of this block’s nearly pristine rear yard.



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**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
38 West 83rd Street
July 25, 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 and rooftop addition to this Queen Anne style townhouse designed by Marcus Hutchinson and built in 1886-87.

Our committee is opposed to this application on the basis of encroachment into the block's rear yard doughnut of open space. In general, the Committee is sensitive to maintaining the "doughnut" of open space that is characteristic of the Upper West Side's interior block structure. If all rear yard additions were permitted as a rule, the entire block would become a concrete platform, totally eliminating the interior open space so important to the historic integrity of these blocks.

Also troublesome is the fact that the proposed rear yard addition is in fact an entire new façade and will obscure all of the remaining historic fabric. An example of this is the change in fenestration from the historically appropriate one-over-one configuration to sliding windows.

The Committee is concerned about the appropriateness of the proposed rooftop addition's gabled roof. A flat roof will draw less attention to the addition and is also more in keeping with other flat-roofed rooftop additions on the block. The choice of stucco as a material is also out of context, as the few other rooftop additions in the area are typically brick.



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
201-225 West 86th Street – The Belnord Apartments
July 25, 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 entrance gates and a security booth at the Belnord Apartments, an Italian Renaissance style apartment building, designed by Hiss and Weekes and built in 1908-09.

We wish to thank the architect for presenting this project to our committee. Clearly, he has enjoyed designing large entrance gates and a security booth worthy of Versailles. However, we do not feel the gates' exuberant, intricately wrought and gilded design and excessive height are appropriate for the Belnord, whose robust and austere facade is more evocative of a Medici palazzo than a Louis XIV palace.

The West 86th Street entrances to the Belnord's remarkable interior courtyard did not originally have gates. The arched, rusticated openings make a strong enough statement without further embellishment. A simpler, less flamboyant design – with straight lines, no gilding – would do more justice to the character of this building.

The security booth should also be toned down. The peaked, copper roof is out of sync with the building's Italianate style. Our Committee also noted that the proposed location of the booth on the public sidewalk would create a potential pinch-point for pedestrians given the presence of a tree pit and other street furniture nearby.



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
Central Park, Bethesda Terrace Arcade
July 25, 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 light fixtures at Bethesda Terrace Arcade in Central Park, an English Romantic style public park designed in 1856 by Olmsted and Vaux.

First of all, we wish to thank the Central Park Conservancy for its presentation to our Committee on proposals concerning the lighting and decorative cast-iron grid. When we last testified on the Bethesda Terrace Arcade restoration, we commented on the importance of a lighting plan to culminate this long-anticipated project. We agree that the Minton tiles and other restored elements should be illuminated in a way that enhances the public's ability to enjoy this remarkable space.

In general, we feel that the lighting should be subtle and unobtrusive, making the ceiling visible without over-illuminating or disrupting the intentional contrast between the bright outdoors and the dim arcade interior (this space was not originally intended to have artificial lighting). In addition, our committee applauds the Conservancy's careful research on the cast-iron color scheme. Since the original scheme is currently unknown, we believe that priority should be given to creating a palette that does not compete with the colorful and intricately detailed Minton tiles. Our first impression is that using a dark or vibrant blue as the dominant color would cause the cast-iron grid to advance rather than recede as it should.

That said, it is impossible to fully evaluate the appropriateness of the proposed scheme without careful study of a mock-up, which we understand the Conservancy has prepared. We urge the Commission to defer any decision on this application until the mock-up has been reviewed.