



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
2112 Broadway
April 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 sidewalk canopies and signage at 2112 Broadway, an individual landmark designed by York and Sawyer and constructed between 1926-28 in the Italian Renaissance Palazzo Style.

The former Central Savings Bank, an individual landmark designated in 1975, is a gem of the Upper West Side, and we all eagerly anticipate the completion of its restoration and the removal of scaffolding. LANDMARK WEST! is a 20-year customer of the applicant, Apple Bank for Savings, and we care about the future of both the landmark and the institution.

That said, we have several objections to this proposal. First, the 18-foot long canopy does not comply with Department of Buildings and Department of Transportation standards since the backlit glass frieze would violate zoning code restrictions against illuminated signs on canopies. Further, entrance canopies are typically associated with hotels or residential buildings, not commercial establishments. In this instance, the canopy is really an excuse to project signage into the public right-of-way and increase the bank's visibility on Broadway. A canopy is an inappropriate vehicle for signage.

Similarly, the marquee over the residential entrance detracts from the building's magnificent Beaux Arts façade. The Broadway entrances to the bank and the residential areas should be marked with simple plaques at the street level, not faux-historical elements. The marquee's retro design insinuates that it is contemporaneous with the remarkably significant Yellin gates, not a 21st Century addition. We do not ever want a 2006 element to be confused with an original element.

The design for the new sign proposed for the 73rd Street façade is attractive, successfully brands the bank and should also be considered for the bank's Broadway entrance instead of the canopy. Our principal concern with this sign is that it should not be internally illuminated. Further, having two signs on the 73rd Street façade is excessive. We advocate approving the new sign, without the internal illumination, and removing the sign at the cornice line, which obscures architectural elements.

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In conclusion, we are sensitive to the need to mark Apple Bank's presence, but we believe there are other, more appropriate ways to present promotional signage and market the bank's services. On this note, it is puzzling why the applicant has chosen to cover its sidewalk construction shed with illegal beer advertisements instead of using this medium to pronounce itself more effectively. We learned from the Department of Buildings (DOB) that there are currently four outstanding violations for the Heineken ads on this building. The DOB representative also told us that the applicant will probably not remove the signs and will simply pay the fines because the bank is making so much money on the advertisements.

We close with the suggestion that perhaps the bank's best advertising and marketing is its building, a magnificent landmark that conveys a sense of security and stability unmatched by its nearby competitors.



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**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
248 Central Park West
April 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 and install a gate 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.

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 inappropriate renovations in the late 1990s. LANDMARK WEST! volunteers were on the scene soon after the December 1991 blaze and called in the residing Landmarks Preservation Commission chairperson and employees from the preservation department to assist with stabilizing the building. As we reported in our Winter and Fall 1991 newsletters, the Commission's early intervention saved the building from immediately being razed by the fire department. In the years since, our committee has paid close attention to subsequent new development at this location, and we have concerns about the application you are considering today.

We object to the proposed rooftop addition due to the significant bulk it would add to this structure. It is unclear why unattractive 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 that is visible from 85th Street. The trend of continual rooftop and rear yard additions to this trio of picturesque houses seems likely to continue until property owners fill their respective lots. The proposal before you will only contribute to this problem.

Regarding the proposed gate, we are generally opposed to stoop gates, but this location presents a unique instance of a combined stoop and areaway. Consequently, our committee objects to the design of the proposed gate. The lacy filigree of the proposal closely matches original ironwork at 249, a sideyard gate which originally led to a garden off 85th Street. Not only is the design distracting and overwrought as a front entrance gate, it also falsely asserts itself as an original historic element in this context. This flamboyant gate detracts from an already ornate and *original* front façade. Further, the

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curved top significantly adds to the gate's height and extends it above the entryway piers. The applicant should take inspiration from the simpler and more contemporary design of the new entryway gate at 247 Central Park West.