



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
270 Columbus Avenue
April 11, 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 modify an existing enclosed sidewalk café that was altered without Landmarks Preservation Commission permits at this neo-Grec flathouse designed by Thom and Wilson and built between 1884-85.

Back in July 2004, the Commission considered and soundly denied legalization of the orange plexiglass enclosed sidewalk café at this location. At the time, we voiced our general opposition to enclosed sidewalk cafes, which typically destroy the bases of historic buildings, interfere with the streetscape and undermine the pedestrian quality of the district. Although this particular café was in place when the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District was designated, the goal here should be to make the café as transparent as possible. The applicant has stated that colored plexiglass is necessary to shade diners in the café, but whether it is orange or brown, this is particularly inappropriate as it makes the café even more visually obtrusive. It is important consider that the Commission would not have approved this application from the outset, and applicants seeking legalization should not receive a special dispensation. Shading the cafe should be accomplished with cloth screens or other materials on the interior well-designed to be as invisible as possible from the street.