

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!**  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
**Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission**  
**Regarding the Designation of The Windemere Apartments**  
**400 - 408 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**January 18, 2005**

LANDMARK WEST! is a non-profit community organization committed to the preservation of the architectural heritage of the Upper West Side.

LW! enthusiastically supports the designation of the Windemere Apartments built in 1880-81 and designed by Theophilus G. Smith. This apartment building with its intricate brickwork patterns, polychrome facades, and three-story bow front windows, is a prime example of a large New York City apartment house of the 1880's and of the architectural eclecticism prevalent in the buildings at this time. It is one of the oldest surviving apartment buildings in the City and specifically in an area locally important for the development of the iconic New York City apartment buildings that would continue to be built with growing popularity throughout the city following their introduction in the 1870's and 1880's.

The area west of Fifth Avenue, between 52<sup>nd</sup> and 64<sup>th</sup> Street was the first "apartment district" in the City and a place where the new architecture associated with building large multi-family dwellings could be tried out and refined. As one of only a few remaining apartment buildings in what was once a grand and rapidly changing neighborhood, the Windemere stands as a reminder of this exciting moment in American urban architecture. In the 1890's, the Windemere became a residential and artistic center for the "New Women," a term including unmarried, wage-earning women becoming an important cultural landmark in American and Feminist history.

We wish to commend the Landmarks Preservation Commission for their foresight in nominating an empty building with a bleak future and are reminded of the insightful and forward-thinking designations of two other abandoned buildings with no plans for reuse: the New York Cancer Hospital and the Association Residence for Respectable Aged Indigent Females. Parenthetically, we are sorry that the LPC has not employed the same kind of foresight when it comes to a building two blocks north at 2 Columbus Circle.

The Windemere has been neglected by indifferent owners, at the center of numerous battles and controversies, and now stands empty with an uncertain future; it is more important than ever that the Windemere be protected as a New York City Landmark.