

Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
Regarding the Heckscher Playground Building in Central Park
December 7, 2004

LANDMARK WEST! is a non-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 create door openings and construct a rooftop addition.

We would like to thank the Conservancy for presenting to our Committee and keeping us closely informed on the progress of this proposal.

In general, the Committee is pleased with the restoration work proposed for the historic Heckscher Playground and building. Restoring the entrance to the playground through the Heckscher building's colonnaded porches will enhance the experience of entering the playground and the sense of connectedness between the playground and the building that is currently lacking.

The proposed changes are in keeping with the evolution of the building over time and carry on a pattern of change that retains the building's integrity as an individual work of architecture and as a building within the scenic landmark of Central Park.

We have two recommendations for the design of the building as it moves forward into the final proposal. First, the roof vents should be triangular instead of eyebrow vents to echo the lines of the peaked roof. Second, the roll-down gate be as transparent as possible when closed and disappear into the architecture when open. The roll-down gate operation of the gate does strike us as rather too commercial in character. The Committee would prefer a folding metal gate that fits within the columns, reminiscent of Italian portico gates, and more in keeping with other gates and fences in Central Park.

In closing we would like to state our continued support of the Conservancy's efforts to restore the buildings in Central Park and hope that the care and funding that has gone into the Heckscher building restoration will be similarly applied to the restoration of the Naumburg Bandshell. While the Heckscher Playground building restoration will mainly benefit staff and will cost \$1 million, only \$32,000 has been invested in the restoration of the Bandshell, a structure given to the Park for the sole purpose of public enjoyment.