



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
325 West End Avenue
November 13, 2007**

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 rooftop pergolas and screens on this neo-Renaissance style apartment building designed by Neville and Bagge and built in 1915-16.

This elegant neo-Renaissance-style building is typical of the traditional apartment houses that proliferated along West End Avenue in the early 20th century. Characterized by its rich reddish-brown brick and classical terracotta ornament, this thirteen-story pile dominates the corner of West End Avenue and 75th Street, and as an interesting side note, the Neville & Bagge-designed structure replaced an earlier house that was home to Charles Evan Hughes, a Supreme Court chief justice and former New York governor.

The proposal is a highly designed project with several elements that are visible from public rights-of-way and, therefore, of concern to the Committee. We urge the applicant to revise this proposal to incorporate more appropriate materials consistent with those traditionally used on West End Avenue apartment buildings and minimize the visibility of the pergolas, stanchions and screens from public areas of the Riverside-West End Avenue historic district and from the Riverside Park Scenic Landmark.

Pergolas

Our committee is not opposed to rooftop pergola additions, in principle, and in June 2005, spoke in favor of the proposed pergola that now graces 325 West End Avenue's west penthouse. That said, we have serious objections to the choice of materials and siting for this particular proposal. The pergolas are highly visible from 75th Street and Riverside Drive and Park and conflict with the nature of the building. The proposed plantings designed to screen them may be attractive, but their appearance is dependent on the good will of present and future owners. The Commission should anticipate their appearance should the plantings not be maintained. Of concern is the stainless steel chosen for the pergolas, as this material without plantings would be highly reflective and bears no relationship to the building. We recommend that the pergolas be constructed of a more muted material that, if not actually wood, would be read from the street as wood (e.g. a metal painted a dark brown) and therefore more traditional and less ostentatious.