

Greetings, Neighbor!

MEA CULPA! If only the passage of time since our last LANDMARK WEST! newsletter could be attributed to a spell of peace and quiet on the West Side preservation front, I could probably skate by on my cute Latin apologia and move on. But, as the contents of this issue indicate, it has been anything but peaceful. LW! has been buzzing, and my duty to keep this newsletter current and timely unfortunately yielded to the pressure simply to man the trenches!



On to business... I hope that you find this edition interesting, substantive and challenging. From 2 Columbus Circle (see stunning 1964 cover photo by Ezra Stoller and p.3) to a rowhouse block of W. 70th St. (p.2) to the beleaguered Towers Nursing Home on 106th St. and CPW (p.11), we're working to balance preservation with responsible development all over the Upper West Side. And beyond – see our report card for Mayor Bloomberg (p.4).

We are also pleased to announce the appointment of Upper West Sider Roberta Brandes Gratz to the Landmarks Preservation Commission! Gratz, an award-winning writer on urban revitalization issues, joined the LPC in 2003, as did Chair Robert B. Tierney. Welcome! Your phones will be ringing...

Preservationally yours,

Arlene Simon, President

A Note from Executive Director: Kate Wood



June 14, 2004, marks my 3-year anniversary as executive director of LANDMARK WEST! Without fanfare, but with a great deal of support from our terrific board and volunteers, I settled in and got down to business. Now, I'm pleased to be part of this extraordinary team that includes 2 additional staff members: Rena Sichel Rosen (education coordinator) and Erin McCluskey (administrator).

Early on, I learned that the key to LW's effectiveness is our ability to "turn on a dime" with intelligence and substance. Technology has speeded up our operations enormously. Many of you now receive (and, thankfully, respond to!) LW's frequent e-mail updates and calls for action. We are also in the process of rethinking and revitalizing our website to make it a more effective, up-to-the-minute visual tool for learning about preservation on the Upper West Side (visit us regularly at www.preserve.org/lmwest). And, we remain committed to publishing our informative newsletter – enjoy! Rest assured, one way or another you'll continue to hear from us.

And we want to continue to hear from you. If any of the issues discussed in the following pages strikes a chord (or a nerve), let us know. We're proud of our tough stands and even prouder of the community that stands by us. If you're not already on our e-mail list for notices and alerts, contact us at landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org.

Kate Wood, Executive Director

Shearith Israel (8 W. 70th Street): R8B...or Not to Be?

by Ron Prince

[The Congregation Shearith Israel proposal] will irreparably harm the balanced land use regulatory policy that has helped make this area one of America's leading urban neighborhoods.

- Dr. Elliott D. Sclar, Columbia University, urban planner

Whoever thought land-use policy could elicit such passion? Oh, but it can, especially when it comes to individual landmarks, historic districts, and R8B contextual zoning, designed to protect the low-rise midblocks of the Upper West Side and other rowhouse-rich NYC neighborhoods.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL DESIGNED BY BRUNNER & TYRON. 1897. SHOWN HERE WITH PROPOSED NEW TOWER ON W. 70 STREET. IMAGE SHAWN TRIPOLI.

Beginning in October 2002, neighbors, architects, planners, historians, elected officials, and civic organizations – led by LW! – united to urge the LPC to protect the special character of our historic districts by denying an application to construct a 15-story, 168-foot tower at 8 W. 70 Street, on the midblock between Columbus Ave. and CPW. Here's why: the building would be several times the size of its neighbors, mostly 4-story, 50-foot-tall brownstones and, immediately to the east, the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue, a.k.a. Congregation Shearith Israel (CSI), an individual landmark (designated in 1974) and also the applicant. The site is located in an R8B zoning district (mapped by the City Planning Commission in 1984) and in the UWS/CPW Historic District (designated in 1990).

To paraphrase NYS Assembly Member Richard Gottfried, if this building does not flunk the 'harmonious' test, what does flunk? Fortunately, the LPC agreed. In December 2003, the community scored a victory when the LPC told CSI to return to the drawing board and come back with a smaller, more contextual building that addresses the midblock.

CSI has considered real estate development before. In 1953, it demolished 3 brownstones to erect its existing 4-story community house. Thirty years later, an outraged community defeated CSI's proposal to cantilever a 42-story apartment tower over the landmark synagogue. Large parts of the neighborhood were rezoned R8B to ward off such development in the future. This effort to preserve the low-rise integrity of the midblocks set the stage for the LPC 1990 historic district designation, spearheaded by LW!. The result: a rational alignment of landmarks and zoning protections, and a block that is still, according to *NY Times* columnist Christopher Gray "full of late-19th-century row houses."

CSI's most recent proposal asked for a series of special permits to stack more than 10 stories of luxury condominiums on top of a new community house. The project would not significantly expand CSI's facility; instead, CSI's president has called the tower an "economic engine." No doubt other developers are watching with interest to see if such special concessions might come their way in the future, eroding the historic scale *we thought* was protected. It's not over yet – this issue is one to watch.

Ron Prince is a marketing consultant to the media industry and has lived in the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District since 1994

What More Will It Take?: Save 2 Columbus Circle

by Nina Gray

In December 2003, *NY Times* architecture critic Herbert Muschamp wrote, “The refusal of the NYC LPC to hold hearings on the future of 2 Columbus Circle is a shocking dereliction of public duty. Unacceptable in itself, this abdication also raises the scary question of what other buildings the commission might choose to overlook in the future.”



2 CC advocates Tom Wolfe & preservationist Margot Gayle

These fightin’ words rode fast on the heels of Tom Wolfe’s excoriating 2-part *Times* Op-Ed piece, which appeared in October and, in turn, cited architect and premier NYC historian Robert A.M. Stern’s description of 2 CC as a “masterwork,” “a landmark in the history of architectural taste,” and an “embodiment of artistic risk-taking.”

So, why is 2 CC still in peril? When countless numbers of architects, historians, urban planners, design professionals, and civic organizations call for a public hearing to discuss the merits of a signature building by a world-class architect, isn’t it the LPC’s mandate to spring in to action? Apparently not in this administration (see Mayor Bloomberg’s “report card”, p. 4).

Bloomberg and his appointed LPC Chair, Robert B. Tierney, have each turned a deaf ear and a blind eye to architect and pioneer modernist Edward Durell Stone’s controversial but undeniably significant Gallery of Modern Art (a.k.a., 2 CC). As a result, this unique work of mid-20th-century Modernism may soon be replaced with a new design proposed by the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD), a cultural institution vying to re-use, but not restore, the building. And in another 30 years, who knows? One recalls yet another *NY Times* editorial, mourning the demolition of Pennsylvania Station: “We will probably be judged not by the monuments we build but by those we have destroyed.”

On May 24, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, America’s leading preservation organization, added its considerable voice to the multitude of local, state, national, and international organizations lobbying to preserve 2 CC, naming the building to its 2004 list of “11 Most Endangered Places.” Last November, the Preservation League of New York State placed 2 CC on its “Seven to Save” list. Meanwhile, LW! has taken our case to NY State Supreme Court, challenging the City’s failure to analyze the building’s historic importance, as legally required. We are supported by affidavits from renowned architectural scholars and structural engineers who assert that, under proper stewardship, 2 Columbus Circle could be restored and revitalized. As this newsletter went to press, we learned that our court petition had been denied. Never fear, the legal battle will continue!

The City, the State, and the Nation are watching and waiting.

WHAT MORE WILL IT TAKE? It’s time to schedule a hearing!

Let the Mayor and LPC Chair know where you stand on 2 CC. Write to: Mayor Bloomberg, City Hall, NYC 10007. fax: 212-788-2460 or go to <http://nyc.gov/html/mail/html/mayor.html> to post an e-mail message

LPC Chair Robert B. Tierney, 1 Centre Street, 9th Fl., NYC 10007, fax: 212-669-7955, comments@lpc.nyc.gov

Nina Gray, a graduate of the NYU Institute of Fine Arts, is an independent curator and scholar.

How’re You Doing, Mayor Mike? Here’s Your Report Card

In February 2003, after a year in office, Mayor Michael Bloomberg issued a personal report card listing the status of his campaign promises. This is undoubtedly a laudable exercise because one of the most frustrating aspects of advocacy is witnessing the inevitable slippage in commitment once a candidate becomes an elected official.

How is Mayor Mike doing on the landmarks front? The links between historic preservation and the public good resonated well from the campaign trail. Too often in the past, however, landmarking and preservation issues have yielded to the budget-cutters – not to mention the pleas and contributions of high-roller developers – once the ballots were counted.

Prior to the election, LW! led a coalition of 125 neighborhood and city-wide preservation advocacy groups in mounting a Preservation Platform that called for a range of meaningful reforms. Each of the 5 mayoral candidates received the Platform and a briefing with advocates. Each then attended a breakfast hosted by LW! to present their views on historic preservation and respond to questions from the audience.

200 people met Candidate Bloomberg at a breakfast forum on August 1, 2001, at the Empire Hotel. A full transcript of the proceedings is posted on our website. **Let’s compare Candidate Mike with Mayor Mike:**

At his breakfast, Candidate Mike said...	Mayor Mike has done...
Regarding the LPC budget: “You really do have to give them some money and it’s not going to be in the grand scheme of things anything that’s going to bust the budget.”	Froze Landmarks Commission’s already miniscule \$3-million budget (<.0001 of the City’s entire budget, equal to 1 week of overtime in the NYC Police Department)
Regarding the selection of the LPC Chair: “I think that you have to have somebody running Landmarks that has the respect of the constituency that they serve.”	Kept Giuliani-appointed acting chair in place until January 2003, one year into his administration. When it comes to architecture and preservation, new chair Robert B. Tierney, a corporate attorney, has a steep learning curve.
Regarding zoning: “We’ve got to make sure that zoning laws of this City are consistent with what organizations like Landmarks want to do.”	Grassroots advocacy groups – not the Mayor or the LPC – have led the charge for zoning reform to protect neighborhood identity.
Regarding tax incentives: “You’ve got to give tax rebates ...You’ve got to find an incentive for people to do what we’d like them to do.”	No progress. Instead, at Bloomberg’s charge, the LPC has proposed <i>permit filing fees</i> , which would force owners of landmark properties to pay extra when applying to work on their buildings.
Regarding accountability: “We’ve got to constantly measure and make sure that the policies that we’re trying to implement are actually working.”	2 Columbus Circle? Towers Nursing Home? Only 1 inspector to ensure landmark compliance throughout the entire city? It doesn’t take a scientific study to show that the process too often DOES NOT WORK!

**Does Mayor Bloomberg deserve a passing grade on preservation?
Let’s just say we’re inclined to agree with him on the issue of social promotion.**

Books in Brief

New York Streetscapes: Tales of Manhattan's Significant Buildings and Landmarks by Christopher Gray & Suzanne Braley (Harry N. Abrams, 2003, 448 pages, \$35) LW! newsletter readers are familiar with architectural historian and *New York Times* columnist Christopher Gray's witty and urbane articles on New York's historic buildings. Many of these pieces are included in this collection of 190 of his award-winning *New York Times* "Streetscapes" columns. Whether the building is obscure or famous, Gray's descriptions show his enthusiasm for NYC's architecture and his concern for the preservation of the city's architectural treasures. Ada Louise Huxtable writes, "This is a book that gives us real stories about real buildings. Christopher Gray keeps history and memory alive." Writer and Upper West Sider Jimmy Breslin notes, "This book will live forever."

Gotham Restored: The Preservation of Monumental New York. by James Rudnick (photographer) and Thomas Mellins (Penguin USA, 2003, 176 pages, \$50) Architectural historian Thomas Mellins writes the introduction to this collection of 150 of James Rudnick's photographs depicting four New York landmarks: the New York Public Library, Grand Central Station, the Brooklyn Bridge, and the Statue of Liberty. Rudnick began photographing these New York icons after moving to Brooklyn in 1977, and he later became the restoration photographer when these masterpieces were restored to their former glory. The book's photographs include "before" shots of the neglected landmarks, "in progress" photos of the craftspeople and technicians lovingly restoring the structures, and glorious views of the finished landmarks. Paul Goldberg writes, "James Rudnick's photographs document the intimate connection between four of New York's greatest monuments and the life of the city."

Upcoming Events: Tours and Lectures

Talk N' Walk with NYC Townhouse Expert Charles Lockwood

Ever wonder how New York's historic townhouses were designed, built, and sold – and how they functioned as family homes? Join noted restoration expert Charles Lockwood, author of the recently reissued *Bricks and Brownstone: The New York Row House 1783-1929* (Rizzoli, 2003, 303 pages, \$75) as he tells the hidden stories behind the city's townhouses. **Tuesday, June 8, at 6:30 PM Slide lecture, "The Secrets of New York City Townhouses,"** followed by a book sale and signing at the Makor Center of the 92nd Street Y (35 W. 67th St.). To register, call Makor at 212-601-1000. **The cost is \$12 in advance or \$15 at the door.**

Wednesday, June 9, at 6:30 PM Walking tour of Riverside/West 105th Street Historic District (designated in 1973) and the proposed Riverside-West 107-108th Streets Historic District To register, contact LW! at 212-496-8110 or landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org. **The cost is \$15 in advance; \$20 on day of tour.**

Manhattan Avenue Join architectural historian Andrew S. Dolkart for a tour of historic Manhattan Avenue, including the eclectic Queen-Anne-style row houses that define the blocks around W. 105th and 106th Sts., a LW! proposed historic district. These modest, but charming houses were built between 1885 and 1889, shortly after the Ninth Avenue elevated train (the El) opened with a station stop at 104th Street. **Tuesday, June 22, 6:00 PM.** To register, contact LW! at 212-496-8110 or landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org. **The cost is \$15 in advance; \$20 on day of tour.**

LANDMARK WEST!

Support LW! – we need your help to keep preserving the Best of the West. Please return this form with your tax-deductible contribution.

- * **A special offer:** Contribute \$150 or more, and receive a gift of either *New York Streetscapes: Tales of Manhattan's Significant Buildings and Landmarks* by Christopher Gray & Suzanne Braley; *Gotham Restored: The Preservation of Monumental New York* by James Rudnick (photographer) and Thomas Mellins; or another book from our collection.
- \$50 \$100 \$150 * \$250 \$500 \$1000
- Whatever you give will help \$ _____ (we really need your support)
- NY Streetscapes* *Gotham Restored* *collection (call or email us for titles)*
- Thanks, you can keep the book... but here's my gift of \$150
- To save costs, I do not need acknowledgement of my gift
- I would like to make a gift in honor of _____
- I will do volunteer work for LANDMARK WEST! – send me a form
- My employer offers a Matching Grants Program – the form is enclosed
- Send me a copy of the LANDMARK WEST! map of UWS landmarks (map and back issues of LW's newsletter are also available on our website)
- Notify me of walking tours, lectures, candidates breakfasts, etc. (e-mail if possible)
- I am interested in attending a tax-incentive seminar

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LW! 45 W. 67th Street, NYC 10023 TEL (212) 496-8110 FAX (212) 875-0209

E-mail us! landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org **Check out our site!** www.preserve.org/lmwest

Thank you for your support!

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About LANDMARK WEST!

LANDMARK WEST! is a non-profit award-winning community group working to preserve the best of the Upper West Side's architectural heritage from 59 to 110 Street between Central Park West and Riverside Drive. Since 1985 it has worked to achieve landmark status for individual buildings and historic districts. Today, **LANDMARK WEST! is the proud curator of the area's 2,606 designated landmarks (up from only 337 in 1985)**, and continues to promote awareness of these architectural treasures and the urgent need to protect them against insensitive change and demolition.

LANDMARK WEST!

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Stroll, Stop & Shop!: Miracle on W. 72nd St.

by Arlene Simon

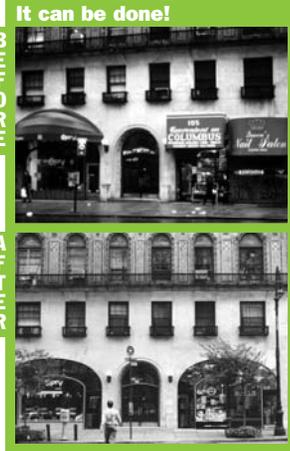
In 1998, W. 72nd St. was an absolute mess! Not a single significant capital investment had been made on the block for decades. Audacious signage, rundown sidewalks and illegal – not to mention unsightly – commercial awnings and canopies were only a few of the problems plaguing the street. In response to the proliferation of landmark and zoning violations on the block between Broadway/Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues, and a corresponding decline in quality retail activities, LW! collaborated with local merchants, property owners and neighbors to establish our Retail Assistance Program (RAP).

Through RAP, LW! has worked with city agencies to upgrade the street's infrastructure while also providing essential guidance to help merchants and building owners comply with landmark and zoning regulations. In addition, we've helped come up with marketing strategies focused on the street's intriguing architecture, especially its storefronts.

Supported by then-Council Member Ronnie Eldridge, RAP had such success with this pilot project that it was extended along the entire length of 72nd St. from Central Park West to the West Side Highway (4 blocks in total) in 2001. Today, 72nd St. is not lined with illegal signs, awnings, canopies and beat-up street furniture, but with 47 historic bishop's crook lampposts (double the pre-existing number of lights, see Blechman, p.9), new landmark-gray sidewalks and granite curbs, enlarged tree pits and street trees, and 15 muni-meters to replace the former forest of parking meters.

Last October, these efforts were celebrated with a special Small Business Award from Commerce Bank/Manhattan Media/1010 WINS, which recognized 72nd St. merchants for their participation in improving the pilot block. Accepting an award, Tip Top Shoes owner Danny Wasserman said, "LW! has taken 72nd St. to another level. Not only did they understand how to revitalize a neighborhood, they understood the dynamics of retailing, where presentation rules." (Tip Top Shoes, a family-owned business, has been on W. 72nd St. since 1940.)

The National Trust for Historic Preservation echoed Wasserman's sentiment in selecting 72nd St. as a semi-finalist for its 2004 Great American Main Street Awards. Kennedy Smith, the director of the Trust's National Main Street Center noted, "True revitalization happens incrementally and is sustained over a long period of time, with small improvements leading to bigger ones." The 72nd St. story has become a model for other communities – the NYC Department of Small Business Services has even included images of 72nd Street successes (from a PowerPoint presentation created by LW!) in a program it presents throughout the city. In response to popular demand, LW! will produce and distribute its own how-to brochure.



EXTRA! EXTRA! 2 Columbus Circle Named to National Trust for Historic Preservation's 11 Most Endangered List!

105 W. 72ND ST., GEORGE & EDWARD BLUM, ARCHITECTS, 1913

NON-PROFIT ORG.
 U.S. POSTAGE
 P A I D
 NEW YORK, NY
 PERMIT NO. 7847
DATED MATERIAL



PHOTO BY VIRGINIA PARKHOUSE

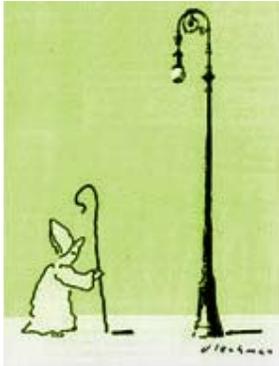
LW! Board Member Bruce Simon Welcomes Michael Bloomberg to LW!'s "Mayoral Candidates Breakfast", August 1, 2001. See Page 4 for Bloomberg's Report Card.

Board Members Terry Andreas, Kent Barwick, Jonathan Brandt, Cynthia Copeland, Andrew Scott Dolkart, Preuit Hirsch, Victor Kovner, Sarah Bradford Landau, Christopher London, Barbara L. Michaels, Kirsten Moffett Reoch, Jennifer Morris, Amy Newman, Bruce Simon, Deirdre Stamford, Elizabeth Starkey, Lori Zabar, Caroline Rob Zaleski
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OR CURRENT RESIDENT

Preservation Profile: R.O. Blechman

by Nancy Rosen



Blechman helps LW! celebrates the return of the bishop's crook lamppost to West 72 St. — see LW! Spring 1998 newsletter cover.

That inky-black, uniquely *Blechman* line is one of the Upper West Side's treasured resources. R.O. Blechman's drawings and graphic designs are regular features of LW's newsletters, postcards and our student workbook, *My Preservation Journal*. The famous illustrator's involvement in preservation can be traced back to the neo-natal years of LW!, when hanging around the sandbox at the West 67th Street playground (designed by Richard Dattner, 1966) he and his wife, Moisha, met a family named Simon who had children the same age (one of whom, Nicholas O. Blechman, a.k.a. Knickerbocker, is a graphic designer in his own right who has helped LW! get its message across in pictures as well as words — see 2CC logo p.1).

Cartoonist, illustrator and animator, creator of umpteen New Yorker covers, author of seven books, the wit who dreamed up an Alka Seltzer commercial in which a distressed man has an argument with his stomach, Blechman receives this first-time visitor in a baronial interior that looks more like the Hotel Des Artistes (1 W. 67 St.) than an office on W. 47th St. The elaborately decorated wood-paneled studio dates to 1912, and was originally created by the architect Bertram Goodhue as his office. Over the past 25 years, Blechman, has lovingly rescued and reclaimed the penthouse — testimony to his eye and his heart for New York landmarks.

Blechman was born in Brooklyn in 1930 and migrated with his family to the Upper West Side (315 CPW) by the age of nine. Hanging out at Columbus Circle, he got his early political education from the soapbox speakers on Wednesday evenings. At the High School of Music and Art, Blechman's civic-minded classmates included former UWS City Council Member Ronnie Eldridge, whose mother was Blechman's first collector — a watercolor for \$25.

Early on, Blechman began to see himself as a political cartoonist. By the age of 22 he had already written and illustrated his first book, *The Juggler of Our Lady*, cited as one of the 50 best-illustrated books in 1952. Maurice Sendak recalled the psychological and graphic resonance of *Juggler* — and his own dismay on learning that its artist-inventor was actually two years his junior.

With the kitchen table at 315 CPW doubling as his studio, Blechman found freelance work drawing for a variety of magazines. By 1968 his drawings and story-telling talents found their way into animated film, picking up Clions, Emmies and Gold Medals along the way. As they say, the rest is history.

R.O. Blechman, we salute you and your black, inky line, a “voice” fit for any soapbox in Columbus Circle!

Nancy Rosen is an independent curator and public art advisor who lives and works in Alwyn Court, an individual landmark. She serves on the Art Commission of the City of New York.



66th Street Subway: Artemis, Acrobats, Divas and Dancers

by Amy Newman

An ambitious program of mosaic murals by artist Nancy Spero in the 66th Street IRT subway station gloriously mirrors the real-life pageant of the neighborhood above ground, Lincoln Square. Her murals are ensconced in a beautiful overall station renovation by architect Lee Harris Pomeroy.

“Artemis, Acrobats, Divas and Dancers,” a project commissioned in 1997 by the MTA's Arts for Transit program, covers most of the station's 600-ft. platforms with an unusual melding of spirited subject and elegant execution. As the artist projected in her original proposal, the murals capture a “vision that enhances and celebrates the diverse activities which consume the subway and its surrounding neighbors.”

The 66th St. subway project benefited from a particularly conscientious planning and approval process. The UWS community is unusually rich in concerned constituents, all of whom felt enormous proprietorship and held small hope for consensus — until they saw Spero's design.

At a January 1997 community meeting, Sandra Bloodworth, Director of Arts for Transit, showed examples of previously completed projects. Bloodworth presented the budget, materials and schedule, discussed community concerns, solicited resumes of local artists and professionals to be considered as voting panelists, and asked for slides of existing work by artists who might be considered for the commission.

Arts for Transit chose 3 voting panelists: Amy Newman, art consultant and critic (and LW! board member); June Larkin, Director of the Edward John Noble Foundation; and Elaine Reichek, artist. Also voting were Lee Harris Pomeroy, the station's architect, and Sandra Bloodworth. At a marathon meeting in April 1997, these 5 joined 30 non-voting panelists representing neighborhood stakeholders (including LW!) to view slides of work by 44 artists. After noting the sense of the room, the voting panelists chose five artists to submit proposals. At the final meeting in July the artists made their presentations. The schemes were of gratifyingly high quality — any one of them could have been chosen.

But Spero's, the last proposal to be shown, brought down the house. The combination of joy, dignity, contemporaneity and timelessness seemed to satisfy the wildly divergent interests and, yes, egos that Lincoln Square represents. Viva la diva!

Amy Newman, a LW! board member, has been working in the art world for over 30 years as a writer, editor, teacher and consultant.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LEE HARRIS POMEROY, ARCHITECT

UPDATES

Lincoln Center LW! submitted a comprehensive professional report supporting our nomination of **Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts** for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. On May 1, 2000, the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) issued an official determination that Lincoln Center is eligible for the Register, recognizing its exceptional significance as the nation's original cultural center. Alterations to "eligible" properties must be reviewed under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which provides some measure of protection against unsympathetic renovations. Lincoln Center is still not a designated NYC landmark.



Over the past year, LW! has met several times with Lincoln Center President Reynold Levy and Chairman Bruce Crawford to discuss future plans for the **Lincoln Square "bow-tie" (Dante and Tucker Parks), Avery Fisher Hall, and West 65 Street**. (See our Spring 2000 newsletter, p.4, for previous coverage of this issue.) Architects Diller, Scofidio + Renfro have been brought on to renovate Lincoln Center's public spaces – a positive sign given the team's reputation for sensitive creativity, so stay tuned...

Tax Benefits for Owners of Historic Properties The **UWS/CPW Historic District**, encompassing over 2,200 buildings from W. 62nd to 96th Street, has been certified for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This certification does not prevent owners from making changes to their properties, but it does qualify owners of income-producing properties for substantial **historic preservation tax credits** against their federal income tax if they make certain rehabilitative improvements. Call or e-mail LW! to let us know if you're interested in participating in a **tax incentive seminar**. To find out if your building is in the historic district, visit our website.

Towers Nursing Home In our Fall 1993 newsletter, we reported on the LPC's approval of a plan to restore the **Towers Nursing Home** (106th St. & CPW) and build a 27-story luxury residential tower behind it (which LW! opposed because we were concerned even then that the new building would



not guarantee preservation of the historic landmark). Today, the new tower nears completion. However, to neighbors' shock, but not surprise, the fragile shell of the landmark was exposed to the weather for over 3 years after its distinctive turreted roof was removed. The roof is now being replaced and refitted with real slate (not synthetic material, as the developer proposed earlier in the project), although the LPC allowed the building's grand wood windows to be replaced in aluminum. In March 2003, LW! enlisted historic building engineer Robert Silman (who worked on conserving Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater, among other notable buildings) to assess the structure's present condition. In his June 2003 report to LPC Chair Robert B. Tierney, Silman expressed "surprise" that the LPC had permitted so much of the original building fabric to be destroyed. He received no response. Hello?

FROM TOP: PHOTO COURTESY OF SANDOR ACS; FORMER NEW YORK CANCER HOSPITAL, CHARLES C. HAIGHT, ARCHITECT, 1884-86

LANDMARK WEST!

THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2004



**Mayor Bloomberg,
what more will it take to
SAVE 2 Columbus Circle?**