

Greetings, Neighbor!

We did it! LW's first "grown-up fundraiser" on December 7, 2005, was an unqualified success and a celebratory end to our 20th-anniversary year, one of our most eventful and productive years ever.

Because we're so often focused on battle — and life is too short — I'll linger for just a moment on the event, which took place at Lincoln Center's Kaplan Penthouse and honored Joseph Volpe and Nathan and Daniel Brodsky. Tom Brokaw was a witty, delightful Master of Ceremonies. New York Philharmonic cellist Qiang Tu provided a magical performance in honor of the Brodsky family. A quartet of Metropolitan Opera Chorus members gave a hilarious "doo-wop" tribute to Joe Volpe. Over 275 guests feasted on great food (especially the fabulous spread of artisanal cheese) and imbibed delicious drink (donated by an "angel"). Invitations were designed by R.O. Blechman, who also did this issue's cover art (see also Spring 2004 "Preservation Profile"). Honest to goodness, it was terrific. And it raised a fistful of money, enabling LW! to continue to fight the good fight to preserve the best of the Upper West Side's architectural heritage. If you were unable to join us, the whole shebang is recorded in video format on our web site (www.landmarkwest.org).

The best part of all has been the friends who have been there to support us each step of the way. We thank you.

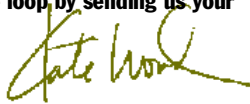


A Note from Executive Director Kate Wood

This newsletter starts off with an uplifting report on our youth education program, *Keeping the Past for the Future* (p.2). Hats off to the nearly 1,000 students, teachers and principals we have the privilege of working with this school year.

The following pages turn somewhat graver, as portended by R.O. Blechman's cover art. Forty-one years after the creation of New York City's historic Landmarks Law and the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), preservationists are still fighting an uphill battle. Too many of our city's significant sites never receive the hearings they deserve or receive them too late (see p.8 article on the former Crawford Clothes building by architect Morris Lapidus). Case in point: the LPC's refusal to hold a public hearing for 2 Columbus Circle. Our response: the first ever (that we know of) "People's Hearing" (pp. 3-4)! LW's leadership to improve the responsiveness and transparency of the LPC was recognized with a Grassroots Preservation Award from the Historic Districts Council.

Because the pages of this newsletter can provide no more than a glimpse of the full scope of our activities (don't miss "Updates" on pp. 10 & 11), **we have greatly expanded our website (www.landmarkwest.org) to provide more details.** There, you will find an extensive timeline of the 2 Columbus Circle campaign and a record of our 24/7 live-action "Shame Cam"; copies of reports and testimony related to the series of City Council oversight hearings on the LPC; a draft of the "Landmarks Hearing" bill that resulted from the Council's scrutiny of the too-mysterious landmarks process; and much more. **Visit us online, and make sure to stay in the loop by sending us your e-mail address today!**



Looking and Learning: Dentils and Dormers

by Rena Sichel Rosen

Looking back over LW's first 20 years (1985-2005), few victories, awards or accolades warm our hearts more than the following quote from a 4th-grader from Manhattan Valley's P.S. 145 (105th St. and Amsterdam Ave.) who participated in our youth education program, *Keeping the Past for the Future*: "Thank you for the fun and all those good words like Dentils and Dormer windows."

Whether this youngster chooses to pursue the arts or sciences, business or politics, she will shape our world in the years to come. Our hope is that whatever path in life she and those like her follow, they will also be preservationists. Preservationists are people who take time to look and learn — and most importantly — take care of their physical surroundings, in ways large and small. Appreciating architectural details like dentils and dormers, restoring a brownstone façade, maintaining a garden or park, speaking up at a public hearing — all of these are acts of preservation. All are absolutely central to the life of our city.

In 2005-2006, LW! will reach nearly 1,000 students and teachers in the Upper West Side's public and private schools, museums and after-school programs. LW! board member Carlo Lamagna helped spearhead *Keeping the Past for the Future* and its centerpiece, "My Preservation Journal", which uses stunning historical photographs, interactive lessons, and delightful design by Nicholas and R.O. Blechman to introduce kids to architecture and local history. Kids' response is a resounding "WOW!" Presto, a new generation of preservationists is born.

As we peer into the next 20 years, preservation education is foremost on our minds. How many pitched battles against wasteful, destructive development might be avoided if the concept of saving the best of our past was as ingrained in our children as, say, not being a litterbug was in us? Teachers e-mail us after our classroom visits, reporting, "The children still talk about, point things out when we go outside" and "It's among the highlights of our year." And teachers come back to work with us year after year. High praise indeed.

See page 11 for a list of schools we're working with. Who could believe that all of this is done with one part-time staff member and one intern? Can you imagine how much more we could accomplish with full-time or even additional part-time assistance? **To support this vital program, please call us!**

LW! Education Coordinator Rena Sichel Rosen is a graduate of Columbia University's Historic Preservation program. She joined LW's staff in 2002.



The Parade Passes By... In October 2005, LWI set up a web camera (the 2 Columbus Circle "Shame Cam") to monitor the building around the clock. While the world watched during the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) erected scaffolding in preparation to destroy the building.

2 Columbus Circle... Named one of the Preservation League of New York State's "Seven to Save" in 2003, one of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's '11 Most Endangered Historic Places' in 2004, and one of the World Monuments Fund's '100 Most Endangered Sites' on the planet in 2005. Designed by Edward Durell Stone, built in 1964, defaced in 2006.

Landmark Hearings 101: Let the People Speak

When it comes to best practices for preservation of the world's most important historic resources, few scholars or practitioners have more credibility than former Landmarks Commissioner Anthony M. Tung.*

His weighty voice of reason set the tone for the "People's Hearing" for 2 Columbus Circle on July 14, 2005. Over 150 participants filled the library of the General Society for Mechanics and Tradesmen (an Individual Landmark on West 44th Street in Manhattan). The quantity and quality of testimony underscored the LPC's failure to give Edward Durell Stone's 1964 building the official public hearing it deserved, as did 11 empty chairs representing each of the landmarks commissioners, who were invited but did not attend.

Tung offered a lesson on the vital importance of public landmark hearings. His refrain was echoed by dozens of other passionate participants including Tom Wolfe, Robert A.M. Stern and numerous elected officials including Council Member Bill Perkins, who shortly thereafter introduced legislation to address the dearth of public hearings (see 'Updates' on p.10). A full record of the proceedings, chaired by NYS Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, is available at www.landmarkwest.org. Are Mayor Bloomberg and his recently reappointed LPC Chair Robert Tie may listening? (See Tiemey profile on p.9.)



Tom Wolfe and Robert A.M. Stern at the People's Hearing for 2 Columbus Circle.

The following are excerpts from Mr. Tung's presentation:

“ [U]pon attending a duly advertised public hearing on designations, the appointed members of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission are constitutionally responsible to consider all substantive evidence brought forward by the public consistent with standards regularly applied in the designation of more than 24,000 properties.

Failure to employ these standards with consistency in designation rulings is arbitrary, capricious, and inherently illegal — undermining the diligent record of previous generations of the Commission.



I should state that as a personal matter of architectural aesthetics I am not enamored of this building. But having listened to my fellow New Yorkers over recent years, I find it impossible to disregard the substance of the arguments of those who value this structure.

Thus, as a former commissioner — having participated in the designation of over 200 individual landmarks and 12 historic districts composed of about 3,500 properties — I find the failure of the Landmarks Commission to calendar 2 Columbus Circle for a public hearing to be a gross dereliction of duty. Because, when applying the Commission's regular standards to the body of substantial evidence thus far

brought forth by the people, it is clear that a sizeable percentage of the 24,000 properties already designated in New York do not have a comparable weight of evidentiary support.

I would advise the Commission that it is not too late to remedy this situation.

Tung's advice fell on deaf ears, despite the weighty "evidentiary support" of experts such as artist Chuck Close, who wrote in a September 20, 2005, letter to Mayor Bloomberg — co-signed by famed architects Richard Meier and Peter Eisenmann, Yale professor Vincent Scully and many others — that 2 Columbus Circle has "for too long been mischaracterized and underappreciated for the important work of art that it is."

In April 2006, MAD covered 2 Columbus Circle's demolished façade with a 10-story advertising billboard (without bothering to get proper city permits). Welcome to the neighborhood!

* Mr. Tung is the author of *Preserving the World's Great Cities: The Destruction and Renewal of the Historic Metropolis* (Clarkson Potter, 2001). See *Books in Brief*, p.5.

Books in Brief



Bricks and Brownstone: The New York Row House 1783-1929 by Charles Lockwood **photography by Madeleine Isom (Rizzoli, 2003, 303 pages, \$75).** Lockwood’s 1972 edition of this beautiful book made its mark as the first, and still the only, examination of New York’s architecturally diverse row houses in which 19th-century stylistic descriptions are combined with their residents’ histories. The new edition brings readers even more than the original, with 66 vivid color photographs of outstanding brownstones and ten architecturally distinguished interiors. In addition, there are 14 “Best of the Brownstones” walking tours in which readers are led through handsome neighborhoods with Lockwood’s lively narrative of history and significance as a guide.

Preserving the World’s Great Cities: The Destruction and Renewal of the Historic Metropolis by Anthony M. Tung (Clarkson Potter, 2001, 469 pages, \$40). Tung’s book provides an exciting, insightful tour of architectural and cultural preservation efforts in 20 cities across the globe. The Washington Post calls it “A landmark of creative urbanism... Tung’s breadth of vision and rapid-fire insights recall Lewis Mumford at his best.”

See our book offer on p. 6

Upcoming Events: Tours and Talks

Walking Tour Join architectural historian Andrew S. Dolkart for a stroll along upper West End Avenue, beginning in Straus Park (106th Street), an area included on LW’s landmark designation ‘wish list’. Soak in the rich architecture of pre-war and post-war apartment buildings, forming a distinctly coherent streetwall all the way down to 96th Street, and explore side streets full of largely intact row houses. **Wednesday, May 31, 6-8 pm. Meet in Straus Park, 106th St. and Broadway. The cost is \$15 in advance (\$20 on day of tour). Space is limited.**

Olmsted Talk and Fundraiser Author and professor Witold Rybczynski will discuss Frederick Law Olmsted, whose contributions to American urbanism go far beyond his acclaimed Central Park, co-designed with Calvert Vaux. **Thursday, June 8, 6 pm at the New York Society for Ethical Culture, Central Park West at 64th St. Join us afterwards for cocktails and sweeping views of Central Park, courtesy of Harperley Hall and Gail Gregg. The cost is \$100 for talk and cocktails (\$25 for talk only).**

Landmarks Workshop Architectural historian Anthony Robins will offer a daytime seminar on the the history and workings of the Landmarks Commission, Upper West Side landmarks, and researching and understanding historic buildings. This hands-on program (plus optional site visit to major repositories of NYC property records) is especially ideal for real-estate professionals and home owners. **Date and location tbd. Contact LW! for details.**

RSVP 212-496-8110
For other events, visit www.landmarkwest.org



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 \$250 or more, and receive a gift of *Bricks and Brownstones: The New York Row House 1783-1929* by Charles Lockwood (photographs by Madeleine Isom); *Preserving the World’s Great Cities: The Destruction and Renewal of the Historic Metropolis* by Anthony M. Tung; or another book from our collection.

- ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$150 ☒ \$250 ★ ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1000
☐ Whatever you give will help \$_____ (we really need your support)

- ★ ☐ *Bricks and Brownstones* ☐ *Preserving the World’s Great Cities* ☐ collection
(call or email us for titles)
- ☐ Thanks, you can keep the book... but here’s my gift of \$250
- ☐ 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
- ☐ Notify me of walking tours, lectures, candidates breakfasts, etc. (e-mail if possible)
- ☐ Please do not publish my name as a contributor to LW!

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LW’s map of UWS landmarks and back issues of our newsletters are available at www.landmarkwest.org

Thank you for your support!

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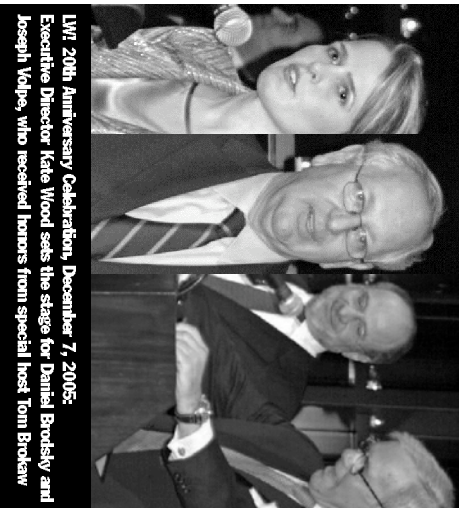


About LANDMARK WEST!

LANDMARK WEST! is a non-profit award-winning community group working to preserve the best of the Upper West Side’s architectural heritage from 59th to 110th 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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PHOTOS BY ALAN GORDON

LNY 20th Anniversary Celebration, December 7, 2005.
Executive Director Kate Wood sets the stage for Daniel Brodsky and Joseph Volpe, who received honors from special host Tom Brokaw

“...so long as there are groups like LANDMARK WEST!
there is hope for New York.” Francis Morrone, arts critic and historian

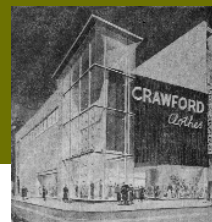
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Too little, too late. After years of inexplicable delay, the LPC finally scheduled a public hearing on the former Crawford Clothes building on Union Square... but not before demolition of the building's signature tower had already begun. Chair Robert Tie may told a *New York Times* reporter that if the LPC decided to designate the structure, it could be rebuilt. Ultimately, the LPC deemed the building too altered to be landmarked.



Morris Lapidus: More is More

by Christopher Gray

As the Landmarks Preservation Commission edges closer to protecting the vernacular architecture of the mid-20th century, the line between high art and schlock art is becoming harder to define. No American architect in the 20th century embraced more flamboyantly the flagrantly commercial aspect of design than did Morris Lapidus.

People know Lapidus best for his wild Miami Beach hotels, like the Eden Roc and Fontainebleau. But they usually overlook his piquant little essays in retail architecture, like the 1950 Crawford Clothes building at 14th Street and University Place.

Lapidus came to the United States from Russia as an infant and grew up in New York. His store designs, beginning in the late 1920's, put Lapidus in the front ranks of retail designers. All of Lapidus's projects incorporated elements like deeply recessed store fronts, "cheese holes" — walls perforated with circular openings for no apparent reason — wavy half-ceilings, simple wall surfaces, and curved merchandise displays.

In 1948, Crawford Clothes hired Lapidus to design a store at the southwest corner of 14th and University. Lapidus created one of his most ambitious stores, in three essentially separate parts: a long side wall of rich Roman brick, topped by a high clerestory of industrial windows; a billboard-type facade with floating letters, angled in from the street wall; and a three-story glass tower floating almost free at the corner.

Paterson Silks later took over the Crawford Clothes building and divided some of the large panes of glass in the tower into smaller rectangles, installing a Mondrianesque patchwork of colored panels. The glass panes in the clerestory on the brick wall were also painted in different bright colors. The architect John Reimnitz removed the Silks changes in a 1998 renovation of the building for Odd Job Trading, drawing the attention of several preservation organizations.

BLDG Management took title last June [2004], and the building's most distinctive feature, a glass-walled tower, was removed in early March [2005], just before the Commission scheduled a hearing on the structure. Donald Olenick, a company spokesman, said that the company is planning to build a 14-story condominium tower on the site. Olenick said that his company had not removed the tower to avoid landmark designation but only to move ahead quickly with the project.

The corner is now in limbo. The Commission could designate two-thirds of the Lapidus building, so further alteration would require commission approval. Or the Commission could decide that too much of the original structure has been lost to warrant protection, or even that there is too little left from the hand of the architect who was so often accused of doing too much.

Adapted from material in Christopher Gray's April 10, 2005, New York Times article.

ORIGINAL RENDERING, CRAWFORD CLOTHES BUILDING, 1950 : WWW.METROHISTORY.COM

Preservation Profile: Curses, FOIL-ed Again!

Usually, our newsletter includes a feature on a New York preservationist of note. For this issue, LW! invited LPC Chair Robert B. Tierney to share with us his experiences over the past few years (he was appointed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg in January 2003 and reappointed early in 2006). Tierney did not respond to our invitation. However, his many e-mail exchanges with Laurie Beckelman, former LPC Chair turned director of the project to deface 2 Columbus Circle (referred to by Tom Wolfe in the July 4, 2005, issue of *New York* magazine as the “Bob and Laurie letters”), provides some insight into his take on preservation.

He Said (to Beckelman):

May 1, 2003: Tierney forwards LW! email alert re: May 8 Community Board 5 meeting on sale of 2 Columbus Circle, with the following note: “On the off chance that you haven’t seen this, just so you know what they’re up to.” The next day, Tierney forwards an email received from a 2 Columbus Circle supporter: “Do you want to see some, all or any of these letters?”

May 8, 2003: On the eve of Community Board 5’s final vote to approve sale of 2 Columbus Circle to MAD, Tierney writes: “Good luck tonight.”

June 6, 2003: Tierney forwards an e-mail of support for a hearing on 2 Columbus Circle from the New York Landmarks Conservancy: “FYI in confidence. Things really seem to be getting ratcheted [sic] up.”

January 5, 2004: In response to *Times* architecture critic Herbert Muschamp piece on LPC’s refusal to hear 2 Columbus Circle: “‘shocking dereliction’ ‘unacceptable’ and ‘abdication’”. Other than that, I thought his comments were fine. How do we get ourselves out of this craziness?”

May 24, 2004: “The National Trust just announced the most endangered list, and of course one of the 11 is... 2 Columbus Circle. Congratulations. Let’s talk a little later.”

She Said (to Tierney):

May 2, 2003: “I would really appreciate seeing all of them, if it is not too much trouble.”

LW! could only gain access to LPC files and correspondence via a FOIL request. After many months and many letters, the LPC finally complied. A staff person stood guard as we reviewed the papers, which cost us 25 cents per page to copy!

May 9, 2003: “We got the vote 18-8, but I see trouble ahead, thanks for all of your support.”

(Tierney replies: “Let me know how I can help on the trouble ahead.”)

June 6, 2003: “Yes, I know about this and the League and National Trust letters... and when are you free to talk?”

(Tierney replies: “Call anytime... in office now.”)

January 5, 2004: “I don’t have an answer, I am speechless when it comes to Herbert...”

Muschamp called the LPC’s inaction on 2 Columbus Circle one of the architectural “lows” of 2003.

October 21, 2004: Beckelman forwards a LW! e-mail alert reporting support for 2 Columbus Circle from former LPC Chair Beverly Moss Spatt and former LPC Commissioner Anthony M. Tung: “It is nice when you have friends from within, can’t believe it former chairs and commissioners, outrageous”

Updates: Past, Present and Future

Hear Ye, Hear Ye Between LW!’s “People’s Hearing” for 2 Columbus Circle and the three City Council’s oversight hearings on the LPC, there have been several unusual opportunities of late for the public to speak its mind on landmarks issues. The fact that potential landmarks are not receiving the official hearings they deserve prompted Council Member Bill Perkins to issue a hard-hitting report on the need to reform the landmarks process and to introduce the ‘Landmarks Hearing’ bill (Intro. 705) in August 2005. Supported by 23 Council members and over 60 preservation groups citywide, this legislation would require the LPC to hold public hearings when directed to do so by a Council majority vote. Perkins left the Council due to term limits, and the 2005 legislative session ended without any action on the bill. It will be re-introduced in 2006.

Mix & Mingle City Council Speaker Gifford Miller was the guest of honor at a reception following the Council’s May 16, 2005, oversight hearing on the LPC. Over 100 preservationists from across the city gathered in the W. 67th Street home of Arlene and Bruce Simon (in the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District) to thank the speaker for facilitating the oversight hearings, raise a glass and swap preservation stories. Between April 2004 and May 2005, LW! also hosted a series of informal discussions with candidates for Manhattan Borough President. A highlight was getting former BP Ruth Messinger’s always creative and insightful perspective on the important role a borough president can play in setting land-use priorities. Messinger was BP from 1990 to 1997.



Borough Historians Lloyd Ultan (Bronx), Cal Jones (Manhattan) and Ron Schweiger (Brooklyn) greet City Council Speaker Miller

Lincoln Center Lincoln Center’s redevelopment plan for W. 65th Street, Juilliard and the North Plaza received a green light on all of its Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) permits from the City Planning Commission. Together with landscape architects Ken Smith and Michael Gotkin, LW! continues to meet with Lincoln Center president Reynold Levy and project architect Liz Diller of Diller, Scofidio + Renfro to review designs for the open spaces of this historic campus. In 2000, LW! was successful in getting Lincoln Center determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The LPC has never formally considered the campus and its buildings for local landmark designation.

Place Your Bets As long as LW! has anything to say about W. 72nd Street (and we do), it’s odds are 100-to-1 that the block between Broadway/Amsterdam and Columbus Avenue will never, ever have an Off-Track Betting (OTB) facility. When OTB’s lease ended at 200 W. 72nd Street (west of Broadway), property owner Robert Kramer encouraged OTB to relocate to his building at 143 W. 72nd St. Nearby businesses and neighbors turned out in force for a Community Board 7 meeting in December 2005, supporting the Board’s vote to deny the move. OTB hasn’t given up, but if Borough President Scott Stringer and Comptroller William C. Thompson, Jr., stand firm, all bets are off.



The full texts of all emails made available to LW! through the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) are available on our website (www.landmarkwest.org).

Mayoral Candidates... & Danish



In June 2005, LW! organized the Historic Districts Council, Municipal Art Society and New York Landmarks Conservancy to co-host breakfast forums with each of the four Democratic mayoral candidates – Fernando Ferrer, C. Virginia Fields, Gifford Miller, and Anthony Weiner. Candidates were given the mike to discuss historic preservation and land-use issues. Q&A followed. O’Neal’s Restaurant

provided the venue (and danish) for these well-attended events. (Mayor Michael Bloomberg declined our invitation to participate, although he come and speak during our 2001 breakfast series.)

Back from the Drawing Board



On March 14, 2006, the LPC voted to approve Congregation Shearith Israel’s (CSI’s) proposed new building at 8 W. 70th St., adjacent to the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue, an Individual Landmark. More than 3 years after introducing plans for a 15-story building on this largely 4- to 5-story brownstone midblock (in what we all thought was a protected historic district and mandatory, low-rise contextual zoning district), CSI received the LPC’s blessing to erect a 10-story building

(taller than any other building on the midblock, twice the height of that zoning allows on this site). The plan must be presented to the Board of Standards and Appeals in order to get the series of zoning exemptions (for height and setbacks) it needs. Many groups from across the city joined LW! in opposing this project because of the precedent it would set – thanks and stay strong!

When You Wish Upon a Star...



For the better part of our two-decade history, LW! has maintained a “wish list” of potential individual landmarks and historic districts that merit consideration by the LPC. In honor of our 20th-anniversary, a committee of architectural historians reviewed our list and picked 20 top priorities to pursue anew. The list includes overlooked resources such as the 1947 Amsterdam Houses (Amsterdam Avenue from 61st to 65th Street, designed for WWII servicemen and their families by Grosvenor Atterbury, Harvey Wiley Corbett, and

Authur Holder (see image at left) as well as the area between 96th and 110th Streets. Visit www.landmarkwest.org for photographs and more information on our designation wish list.

In 2005-2006, LW! is working with nearly 1,000 students and teachers in the following schools: PS 75, PS 87, PS 166, PS 199, The Crossroads School, Rodeph Sholom, and the Calhoun School.

Read more about it on p. 2!



LANDMARK WEST!

THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE



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