

Greetings, Neighbor...

It's an upbeat time of year – and an upbeat issue: the designation of the East River Savings Bank (below); “Unsung Heroes of the Upper West Side” are sung (p. 11); progress on W. 72 Street, including a helpful prod from a “schlock”-offended judge (p. 2); a determined West Side preservationist who took on her co-op board, an aluminum window salesman, and a sluggish Landmarks Preservation Commission (p. 5); and “My Preservation Journal” – a fabulous tool to introduce fourth to sixth-graders to architecture, neighborhood history and landmark issues (pp. 3-4). Of course, there are clouds. There are always clouds. Battles to protect the 63 Street West Side



“Y” and to extend the CPW historic district with its “Missing Block” between W. 64-65 Streets; the complicated, continuing Towers Nursing Home saga; the threat to the glorious Blum brothers buildings on West End Avenue. You'll be hearing about these in coming issues. Meanwhile, it is springtime!

Preservationally Yours,

Arlene Simon
Arlene Simon, President

Great News!



On February 10, 1998, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the East River Savings Bank (W. 96 St. and Amsterdam) as the Upper West Side's 52nd and newest individual landmark. Our Fall 1997 newsletter featured an article by Andrew Scott Dolkart on this magnificent Classical Revival style building, and we had advocated for its designation since 1986. Thanks to all who turned out for the LPC hearing and **Kudos to the LPC!** Next step: Designation of the building's banking hall as an interior landmark.

Front cover illustration by R.O. Blechman

Back cover photographs from Texture and Design in New York Apartment House Architecture

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West 72 Street: Restore It, & They Will Come

by Robert Iulo

LANDMARK WEST!'s campaign to rejuvenate West 72 Street's troubled retail district, from Columbus to Broadway, by combining the preservation ethic with sound marketing principles continues to pick up support.



As reported in our Fall 1997 newsletter article, “72 Street: Back to the Future,” a great coalition of owners; tenants; city agencies; elected officials and corporations is in place and working. And now our position is strengthened by the opinion of New York Supreme Court Judge Robert Sackett in a similar case on 34th Street. Responding to a merchant whose signage was in violation of the Zoning Resolution, and who asserted that efforts at illegal canopy and sign removal are elitist follies, the judge said:

“Who gives a damn what 34th Street looks like, with all these schlock stores and signs, is that your

argument?... I think that the Zoning Resolution is one of the most important methods that the city has to protect itself against inappropriate or garish or ugly signage.... [A sign too large and too high] denigrates the architecture of the building for the purpose of attracting business.... I can't blame a business for trying to do business, but you don't do it to the detriment of the architecture.... [The purpose of the Zoning Resolution] is to preserve a measure of good taste of the original architecture of the building.... [T]he court finds the defendant guilty.” (The defendant paid a significant fine and removed the sign.)

Happily, on West 72 Street, of the 18 canopies targeted by LW!, 11 have been removed. While seven remain, progress is being made. And the evidence that the clean-up is producing economic, as well as esthetic, results is in. To paraphrase a popular cry: “Show me the banks!”

Banks are a reliable barometer indicating the popularity – and commercial viability – of this neighborhood. Three major banks now operate branches on this single block of West 72 St.: Chase Manhattan Bank, at 101 W. 72 St.; Citibank, at 170 W. 72 St.; and our newest neighbor, North Fork Bank, at 175 W. 72 St. Each of these banks occupies a building of historic significance and architectural distinction, and each has made a serious commitment to renovations sensitive to its landmark status. Together, they are proving that preservation pays.



Bravo to the banks and the law-abiders. With due emphasis on the positive – and correction of the negative – we shall succeed.

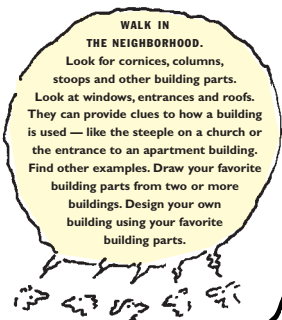
Robert Iulo is a zoning specialist with the City of New York and a LW! board member.

FROM TOP: C. 1930 NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY; ROBERT IULO, 1996; STEPHEN B. JACOBS GROUP, P.C., 1997

Coming Soon! *My Preservation Journal*, grades 4-6

THE PARTS MAKE THE WHOLE

Your clothes are designed with different parts. Sleeves cover our arms to protect them from the sun and cold. Buttons are necessary so we can get in and out of our clothes. But sleeves and buttons are also decorative. Tiny mother-of-pearl buttons can make a shirt beautiful, huge polka-dot buttons on a clown's costume can be funny. Think of dividing a building into parts. Like the sleeves and buttons on our clothes, these parts are both functional and decorative. Windows allow light and air into a building, but they come in many shapes and sizes. Let's look at the many functional and decorative parts that make up a building.



WALK IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

Look for cornices, columns, stoops and other building parts. Look at windows, entrances and roofs. They can provide clues to how a building is used — like the steeple on a church or the entrance to an apartment building. Find other examples. Draw your favorite building parts from two or more buildings. Design your own building using your favorite building parts.

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BUILDING PARTS TREASURE HUNT

Parts of a building include windows, stoops, doors and columns among others. Think about their function and how each part decorates the building. Follow the directions below.

Find each building part on the building facade on these two pages. The parts have letters next to them as clues. Write the letter in the circle next to its definition below (Answers are on Page 41).

- ☐ **ROOF:** the top of a building, which protects it.
- ☐ **WINDOW:** the eyes of a building, allowing light and air inside.
- ☐ **ENTRANCE OR DOOR:** the way to enter buildings.
- ☐ **STOOP:** the steps leading up to the building entrance.
- ☐ **CORNICE:** the molding that projects out from the top of a building.
- ☐ **ARCH:** a structural way to span an opening, either curved or pointed, over a door or window.
- ☐ **DORMER:** a window that sticks out from a roof to provide more light and air.
- ☐ **BAY WINDOW:** a window that sticks out of a building to capture more light.
- ☐ **BRACKET:** a piece of wood or stone used to hold up another building part such as a cornice or a balcony.

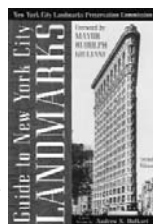
Townhouse at 76th Street and West End Avenue (1891, Lamb & Rich)

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This 44-page interactive study guide with archival photographs and fanciful line drawings will be introduced in Upper West Side schools this fall.

Books in Brief

***Guide to New York City Landmarks* by Andrew S. Dolkart, second edition, foreword by Rudolph Giuliani, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998, 340 pages, \$19.95.** This brand-new edition of the *Guide to New York City Landmarks* shows you the best of classic New York buildings and places - what they are, where they are, and how to find them. With up-to-date entries on individual landmark buildings and interiors, scenic landmarks, and historic neighborhoods, this guide has it all. "From cover to cover, you'll be able to see why New York City is the Capital of the World." -Rudolph W. Giuliani



***Manhattan in Maps, 1527-1995* by Paul E. Cohen and Robert T. Augustyn, foreword by Tony Hiss, Rizzoli, 1997, 164 pages, \$50.00.** This lavishly illustrated volume explores New York's history through rare and beautiful maps of the city produced during the past four hundred years and collected from archives and libraries throughout the world. As Hiss writes in his foreword, "Maps are evocative, provocative; they nudge and push. Each time we pore over one, it is subtly urging us to do more with ourselves, to get out and about, to take better care of the communities and landscapes it has recorded."



See our book offer, p. 6

Summer Events: Walking Tours

Learning Together on Foot: A Family Walking Tour

This walking tour with preservationist and educator Anne Delano Steinert is for school-age children and their parents and will focus on the evolution of the Upper West Side using W. 89 Street as an example. Children will learn about basic architectural features, construction materials and the social history of the neighborhood. This tour will include plenty of looking, touching, sketching, questioning, wondering, discussing and discovering, so please come ready to exercise these skills! **Sunday, October 4, 1998, 11-1 pm. Meet at the Soldiers & Sailors Monument at W. 89 St. and RSD. The cost is \$10., \$5. for children. For reservations call LW! at 496-8110.**

Manhattan's Upper West Side: The "Home Section" of New York

This walking tour, led by architectural historian and writer Andrew Scott Dolkart, will explore the development of the West End Collegiate Historic District, one of New York's finest residential neighborhoods. We will examine the late nineteenth-century development of a prestigious collection of single-family rowhouses near West 72nd Street and then see how the advent of subway service influenced the rebuilding of the area with handsome apartment houses. **Tuesday, June 23, 1998, 6-8 pm. Meet at the Ansonia Hotel, 73 Street entrance between Broadway and West End Avenue. The cost is \$10. For reservations call LW! at 496-8110.**

Through the Looking Glass: Saving Windows

by Lori Segal Zabar, Esq.

Preservationists be warned! Location in an Historic District may not be sufficient to prevent insensitive change to a building. Continued vigilance and shareholder savvy are often required, as the recent personal experience of one LW! board member shows.

565 West End Avenue, an Art Deco-style cooperative (H.I. Feldman, 1938) located in the Riverside Drive-West End Historic District, is one of the few left on the Upper West Side with all its original, multi-paned steel-casement windows intact. Last spring, the co-op's Windows Committee, looking into the question of window replacement, met with the Staff of the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), where they learned that installation of double-paned aluminum-framed casement windows might very well be approved by the LPC.

In response to this unsettling news, I sent a memorandum to the co-op Board of Directors. It pointed out the significance of our distinctive windows in making our building an outstanding example of the Art Deco style, and noted that selective replacement of windows would create a hodge-podge effect on the facade and would ruin its current cohesiveness. Nonetheless, the Board voted overwhelmingly to proceed with the proposal for aluminum window replacement.

Spurred into taking more aggressive action, a neighbor and I gathered enough shareholder signatures to call a special meeting of the Board to discuss the window repair program (already in progress). Prior to the meeting, sympathetic shareholders distributed a memorandum stating our arguments against new aluminum windows and urged our neighbors to attend or execute a proxy, as a quorum was essential for a vote on the windows.

Persistence pays off; a quorum did appear for the meeting. We were advised by the salesman who gave a presentation on the proposed aluminum window replacements that his product had been approved by the LPC for other buildings. In response, a shareholder presented measured drawings comparing the profile of the glass, sash and corner post of an existing window with that of the proposed window, which clearly demonstrated that the thicker dimensions of the frame and glazing, would change the exterior appearance of the building, and the view from the inside looking out. The result of the vote by written ballot was 52% against the window option. We had won.

There were several factors responsible for the defeat of the new window option. Some shareholders were concerned with the historic integrity of our building; others, whose existing steel casement windows had already been repaired, were very pleased with the result and had communicated this sentiment at the meeting; and many were not interested in purchasing the new windows because they were costly. As I see it, the moral of this story is that regular building-sponsored window maintenance can, and should, prevail over the quick fix push for new windows, whether by salesmen or co-op board members. Landmark designation does not insure the protection of original windows.

Lori Segal Zabar, Esq., is president of Kurland-Zabar (Antiques) and an architectural historian.



Support LANDMARK WEST! – we need your help. Please make your tax-deductible contribution below, and return this form.

★ **A special offer:** Contribute \$150 or more, and receive a gift of either an autographed copy of *Guide to New York City Landmarks* (2nd ed.), by Andrew Scott Dolkart; *Manhattan in Maps*, by Paul E. Cohen & Robert T. Augustyn; *Terra Cotta Skyline* by Susan Tunick; or another book from our collection.

1 \$30 1 \$50 1 \$100 1 \$150 ★ 1 \$250 1 \$500 1 \$1000

1 *New York City Landmarks* 1 *Manhattan in Maps* 1 *Terra Cotta Skyline*

1 Whatever you give will help \$ _____

1 Thanks, you can keep the book...but here's my gift of \$150

1 I would like to make a gift in honor of _____

1 I will do volunteer work for LANDMARK WEST! – send me a form

1 My employer offers a Matching Grants Program – the form is enclosed

1 Send me a copy of the LANDMARK WEST! map newsletter

1 I would like to be notified of walking tours

1 To save costs, I do not need acknowledgement of my gift

1 Please remove me from your mailing list 1 walking tour list

Name (please print) 1 You may not print my name as a contributor

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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 2,605 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.

Board Members

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838 WEA



780 WEA

LWI Wish List
780 & 838 WEA (George & Edward Blum, architects) have been proposed by LWI to the LPC for landmark designation.

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NEW YORK, NY
PERMIT NO. 7847
DATED MATERIAL

Preservation Profile:

Vicki Match Suna

by Nina Gray



Vicki Match Suna, an architect with Lee Harris Pomeroy Associates, has been a Landmarks Preservation Commissioner since 1991. Match Suna came to architecture from an early interest in urban planning, and has long been fascinated with the built environment and what makes spaces attractive and inviting. Born in Queens and raised in Fresh Meadows and Bayside, she earned her B.A. and M.Arch from Washington University in St. Louis. Professionally, she has worked on a number of significant interior renovations including Compton and Goethals Hall at City College, the Plaza Hotel, the Swiss Bank Tower, the expansion of Saks Fifth Avenue and the adaptation of 660 First Avenue from a brewery to a mixed-use office building. In addition, Vicki Match Suna has designed several health care facilities for research and academic use at New York University and Cornell University. She is particularly fascinated by the design of functional spaces, including laboratories and libraries, and the ways in which they must respond to current technology.

Among her favorite interiors in Manhattan are the Daily News Building, which she hopes will be landmarked very shortly, Grand Central Station, the Ford Foundation Atrium, and the Grand Hall of the Metropolitan Museum. In our conversation she spoke about the complex issues regarding landmarked interiors. She believes that they must be carefully selected with an eye toward realistic maintenance.

As a Landmarks Commissioner, Match Suna defines her role through her experience as a New York-born architect. In particular, she believes that streetscapes deserve special consideration. She respects the cohesiveness of historic districts, but sees a place for innovative and responsive design and believes that new building and renovation can complement the historic fabric. She takes pride in the collaboration between the Commission and landlords, and their willingness to come to solutions that meet the needs of preservation and construction. One such experience on the Upper West Side that was particularly gratifying was the new addition to the Trinity School. The original plan for the new building obscured an important facade of the St. Agnes Parish House. By rethinking the design, and incorporating a glass wall which leaves the parish house's east facade visible, the Trinity Plan provides a wonderful example of how groups with varying interests can come to a successful compromise.

In the future Vicki Match Suna would like to see the Schwartz Chemical Plant Building by McKim, Mead & White designated and Washington Heights made a historic district. She complimented LWI for its efforts in raising public awareness and appreciates their hard work.

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

Editor's note: The 11-member LPC was established by law as the city agency responsible for identifying, designating, and regulating changes to the city's individual landmarks, buildings in historic districts, and scenic landmarks.

CARL FORSTER, LPC

All New Yorkers Were Moved: One Foot Per Minute



Escorted by giant balloons of Abbott and Costello, the Empire Theater was moved 170 feet west on 42 Street to its new home in the early morning hours of Sunday, March 1, 1998. Described as being “as exciting as watching paint dry,” the relocation effort employed sophisticated techniques that involved hydraulically lifting the Empire off its original foundations onto a temporary platform resting on a track of eight steel rails. Eight 6-foot cylinders were then used to pump and push the platform at a top speed of one foot per minute.

The Empire opened its doors as the Eltinge Theatre in 1912, and, until it was abandoned in 1985, served as a showcase for movies, stage productions and burlesque. The relocation of the theater was undertaken by Forest City Ratner in order to redevelop the site. The theater will be incorporated into the lobby of a new movie and entertainment center. Only eight blocks from where Penn Station was demolished in 1963, the move is a fitting tribute to a burgeoning preservation consciousness.

OFFICE OF METROPOLITAN HISTORY, 126 W 73 ST. (BELOW)



118 W. 72 St. is part of LWI's retail rejuvenation pilot project. See page 2.

Three Identical Buildings: a 'Daddy' as their Father

by Christopher Gray

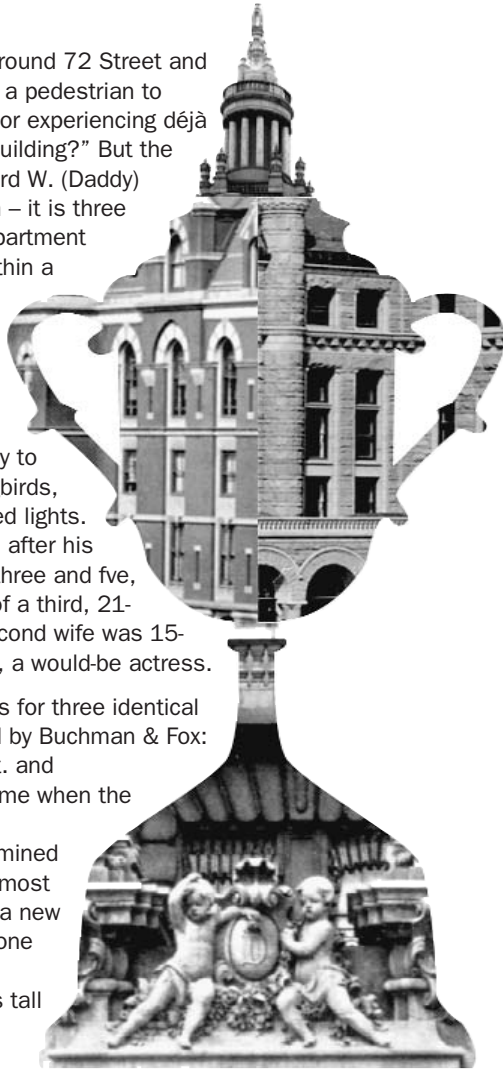
A walk through the blocks around 72 Street and Columbus Avenue may lead a pedestrian to think he is seeing a mirage or experiencing déjà vu— "Didn't I just see that building?" But the architectural legacy of Edward W. (Daddy) Browning is no hallucination – it is three identical white terra-cotta apartment buildings put up in 1915 within a block of one another.

Browning, born in 1874, lived with his first wife in a rooftop apartment at 35 W. 81 St., where he built an expansive garden, eventually to include a lake, captive songbirds, Japanese temple and colored lights. He was nicknamed "Daddy" after his adoption of two girls, ages three and five, and the annulled adoption of a third, 21-year old, Mary Spas. His second wife was 15-year old "Peaches" Heenan, a would-be actress.

In 1914 Browning filed plans for three identical apartment houses designed by Buchman & Fox: 42 W. 72 St., 118 W. 72 St. and 126 W. 73 St. This was a time when the high-class rowhouses of W. 72 St. were being undermined by commercial intrusion. In most cases this took the form of a new owner converting a brownstone into stores and apartments. Browning's tall buildings were unusual, a harbinger of the tall apartment development that arrived in force in the 1920s.

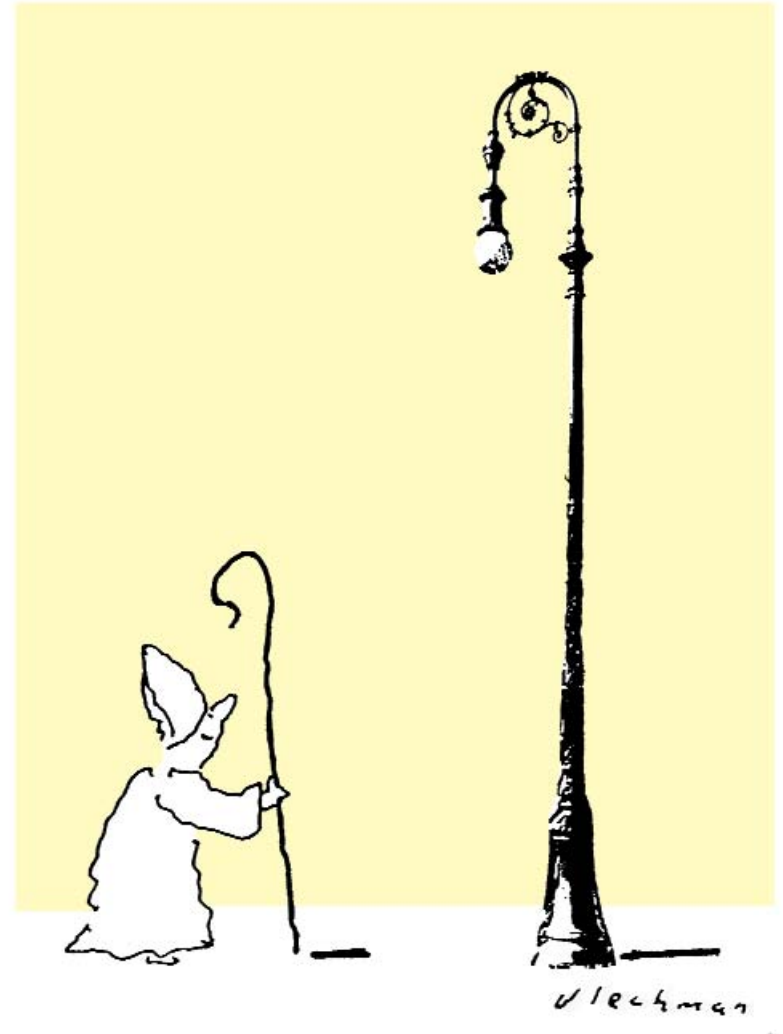
Each building is 25 feet wide and 13 stories high, faced in white terra cotta of Gothic design. Browning's initials, "EWB," are in cartouches at the third-floor levels. The buildings are peculiar in that they are designed with banks of windows flush against the neighboring property line, but a title search shows no easement or restriction - Browning was relying on luck. (Of the six side faces, four remain unblocked.)

At 126 W. 73 St., a facade project has just been completed in which the principal problems were the vertical mullion units separating the windows. Because the original design did not call for adequate steel, the architects have had to replace 40 of the original 55 units, putting in new steel behind and replacing the terra-cotta units with fiberglass replicas.



LANDMARK WEST!

THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE



**The historic "bishop's crook" returns
to West 72nd Street.**

NEWSLETTER SPRING 1998