

LANDMARK WEST!

THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE



NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2007

Greetings, Neighbor!

“ Ideas are great arrows, but there has to be a bow.
And politics is the bow of idealism. *Bill Moyers* ”

In the early 1980s, the Upper West Side faced huge development pressures. But surely, everyone thought, the historic buildings and blocks that made the West Side the West Side were protected from destruction? Wrong. A wake up call came when the Related Companies announced a plan to replace the Classical-style Second Church of Christ Scientist on Central Park West and 68th Street with an apartment tower. Neighbors rallied to save the church, giving rise to LANDMARK WEST! and the Upper West Side preservation movement. Since 1985 (when LW! was officially founded), the number of landmarks in our community has grown from 337 to nearly 2,700.

This achievement took vision, persistence and, yes, a lot of idealism. What kind of city do we want to live in? A city of anonymous high-rises? Or one layered with symbols of the past, beckoning us to look closer, scratch the surface, touch our history. The question, as always, is how we turn this idealism into a matter of public policy.

Enter LW's designation Wish List. First generated by an expert group of historians, architects and other neighbors in 1985, this list is a touchstone for our advocacy. By no means exhaustive, it aims to focus discussion about the kinds of historic resources that matter most to Upper West Siders. The Wish List has been repeatedly submitted to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), the only local government body empowered to designate and protect landmarks. Their response, or lack of response, has resulted in the designation of some buildings, such as the Horn & Hardart Automat (p.15) and the New York Cab Company stable (p.17), and the destruction of others, such as the Dakota Stable (p.10). The stable was defaced as part of a Related Companies plan to develop a luxury apartment building. Central Park West institutions including Congregation Shearith Israel (W. 70th Street) and the New-York Historical Society (W. 76th Street) continue to eye their low-rise landmarks as "development opportunities," inviting proposals from developers like Related (whom the *NY Times* recently called "one of the city's most politically connected developers"). Plus ça change.

It's easy to blame the developers. But, really, it's all politics. At the LPC, City Hall, the Mayor's office, City Council, the Borough President's office, the community boards. Identifying great buildings, portrayed here in ravishing photographs and lively text, is only half the battle. As a survey of some of the best architecture the West Side has to offer, this Wish List newsletter is meant to inspire you—and to steel your resolve. The campaign to preserve our neighborhood isn't over, not by a long shot. Ready your bows.



Arlene Simon, President



Kate Wood, Executive Director

Special thanks to photographers Michael Beldech (<http://picasaweb.google.com/michaelbeldech>) and Henrik Olund (www.henrikolund.com); LW's Wish List Committee (Françoise Bollack, Mosette Broderick, Gregory Dietrich, Andrew S. Dolkart, Tom Killian, Sarah Bradford Landau, Christopher London, Barbara Michaels); Francis Morrone; Kathleen Randall; Fritz Umbach. Sources: David Dunlap, "From Abyssinian to Zion: A Guide to Manhattan's Houses of Worship" (2004); Christopher Gray, *NY Times* "Streetscapes" columns; Robert A.M. Stern, "New York 1900" (1983) and "New York 1900" (1995); Bruno Bertaccini and Andrea Bassan, "The Level Club" (1991); Lorraine B. Diehl and Marianne Hardart, "The Automat" (2002).



251 WEST 71st STREET

Between Amsterdam and West End Avenues

Henry B. Herts, 1924

Located on a quiet midblock between Amsterdam and West End Avenues, the small, six-story apartment building at 251 West 71st Street represents one of the last works of architect Henry B. Herts (1871-1933), best known for his partnership in the celebrated firm Herts & Tallant. Herts attended Columbia University and later the École des Beaux-Arts, where he met fellow architect Hugh Tallant. Their first commissions were primarily residential, but their designs for theaters throughout New York City, including the Lyceum Theater and New Amsterdam Theater (both 1903), soon brought them fame and fortune. By 1911, Herts & Tallant dissolved their partnership, and Herts resumed residential work. The sophisticated façade of 251 West 71st Street is beautifully proportioned with a variety of visually arresting, yet subtle colors and textures, achieved through the creative use of brick, stone and terra cotta. The terra-cotta detailing around the arched portal that frames the main entrance to the building and along the second floor balcony is particularly fine. A unique mid-rise apartment building among the rowhouses that characterize most Upper West Side side streets, 251 West 71st Street warrants landmark protection.

Key to maps: Red areas are Wish List items. Dark gray areas show already designated historic districts. In addition, there are 52 individual landmarks on the Upper West Side.





AMSTERDAM HOUSES

West 61st to 64th Street between Amsterdam and West End Avenues

Grosvenor Atterbury, Harvey Wiley Corbett, and Arthur C. Holden, 1947-8

Home to thousands, including many World War II veterans, and an incubator for civil rights activism in post-war New York, the buildings and tree-covered grounds of Amsterdam Houses are a resource worthy of a secure and celebrated place on the Upper West Side. In contrast to later towers-in-the-park developments, this 13-building public housing complex was one of the last such projects "to define open space along Classically inspired lines and to exhibit brickwork that was carefully detailed to create simple ornament," according to Robert A.M. Stern. The Amsterdam Houses design team included some of the most prestigious professionals working in New York City at the time: architects Grosvenor Atterbury, Harvey Wiley Corbett and Arthur C. Holden worked together with landscape architects Gilmore D. Clarke and Michael Rapuano to come up with a plan aligned with the city grid and oriented on a central landscaped axis running west from Amsterdam Avenue towards the Hudson River. Amsterdam Houses marks the end of an era when government viewed the creation of model housing for low-income citizens as a social responsibility. It exemplifies an early effort by the New York City Housing Authority to ensure racial and ethnic diversity in one of its projects. Today, despite wear and tear and some alterations, such as the removal of the original steel windows, many of the architectural and landscape features that speak to the significance of Amsterdam Houses as a well-designed, community-oriented public housing project remain largely intact.

BREAKING NEWS

Determined "eligible" for the State and National Registers of Historic Places!





ASTOR COURT

Broadway between 89th and 90th Streets

Charles A. Platt, 1914-16

Robert A.M. Stern calls Astor Court “perhaps the loveliest of all the courtyard apartments built between 1900 and the First World War,” a nice compliment since the arrangement of apartments around a central courtyard places this building in the company of such august West Side landmarks as the Apthorp (Clinton & Russell, 1906-08) and the Belnord (Hiss & Weekes, 1908-09). Astor Court occupies the full block front along Broadway. Residents accessed their homes via the interior garden with entrances on West 89th and 90th Streets. Charles A. Platt—architect, landscape architect and artist—frequently collaborated with the Astors, who by the time they commissioned Astor Court had amassed one of New York’s largest fortunes, mainly in real estate. In 1912, John Jacob Astor IV perished aboard the *Titanic*, leaving his son, Vincent, to take over the family business. Astor Court was one of Vincent Astor’s first large-scale development projects. He went on to establish the influential Vincent Astor Foundation, which became a major cultural force under the leadership of his wife, Brooke Astor (Vincent Astor died in 1959). The most impressive exterior feature of this 13-story, Italian-palazzo-style building is its immense, classically styled cornice, originally painted in gold and red to recall ancient monuments. So many unprotected apartment buildings have been stripped of their monumental tops, making Astor Court’s boldly projecting cornice a landmark on the Broadway skyline.





BROADWAY FASHION BUILDING

Broadway and 84th Street

Sugarman & Berger, 1930-31

The Broadway Fashion Building has been turning heads since it was built in the early 1930s. Its Art Deco style and materials give this sleek, four-story structure an appeal and distinction that belies its modest size. The *AIA Guide to New York City Architecture* (Norval White and Elliot Willensky, 4th ed., 2000) describes its significance as follows: "Long before the curtain walls of metal and glass descended upon midtown, this curtain wall of metal and glass and glazed terra cotta came to grace Broadway." Architects Sugarman & Berger, prolific designers of both residential and commercial buildings throughout New York City, caught the critics' attention in their day as well. As the Broadway Fashion Building was under construction, *The New York Times* remarked that the "façades will be 90 per cent glass, with white stainless metal for decorative work," in vivid contrast to neighboring buildings of solid masonry. The *Times* also noted that "a system of exterior and interior illumination will give the structure an unusual appearance at night." The building was intended to glow in the evening, while during the day the nearly all-glass design allowed natural light to reach the high-end retail shops on each of the floors.





THE CLIFF DWELLING APARTMENTS

243 Riverside Drive at 96th Street

Herman Lee Meader, 1914-16

No list of unique Upper West Side buildings would be complete without including the Cliff Dwelling, striking for its unusual floorplan and its Native American-inspired terra-cotta ornamentation. The footprint of this dramatic, 12-story apartment building conforms to its triangular lot, created where the curve of Riverside Drive intersects with West 96th Street. The northern end of the building is only nine feet wide. Large terra-cotta friezes featuring cow skulls, twin-headed snakes, and mountain lions in low relief span the Riverside Drive façade. The architect, Herman Lee Meader, apparently used these so-called "Pueblo Deco" motifs to draw an amusingly appropriate parallel between the habitats of ancient Southwest American cultures and modern, apartment-living New Yorkers. The Cliff Dwelling, one of Meader's earliest works designed shortly after he started his own practice, opened as a residential hotel in 1916 and was converted to apartments in 1932. Possibly Meader was inspired by the 1915 Panama-California Exposition at Balboa Park in San Diego, where the New Mexico Pavilion was a popular venue. Rich, creative ornament plays an equally important role in Meader's other New York works, including a loft building clad in polychrome terra cotta at 14th Street and Seventh Avenue and a building with pre-Columbian-themed ornament at 25th Street and Lexington Avenue.





THE CORNWALL

Broadway and 90th Street

Neville & Bagge, 1909-10

The Cornwall is among the most graceful and cleverly designed of the many speculative apartment buildings built on the Upper West Side after the opening of the subway beneath Broadway in 1904. The Cornwall is oriented around a large light court facing Broadway, but the main entrance is located on West 90th Street, leaving the ground floor along Broadway to lucrative commercial uses. Neville & Bagge were prolific architects of residential buildings in New York City and experimented with various apartment house formulas. The real showpiece of this stately brick-and-limestone building is its extraordinary, sculptural terra-cotta cornice. Copper brackets, the massive Corinthian-piered double-story entrance, and rich decorative elements give the façade dramatic texture.

The developers of the Cornwall, Arlington C. Hall and Harvey M. Hall, also built the Midtown Theater (later the Metro Theater) on Broadway between 99th and 100th Streets (an Individual Landmark designed by Boak & Paris, built in 1932-33). In addition, the Halls were responsible for the Claremont Theater Building on Broadway at 135th Street, designed by Gaetano Ajello and opened in 1914 as one of the earliest purpose-built movie theaters in New York.





EUCLID HALL

2345 Broadway between 85th and 86th Streets

Hill & Turner, 1900-1903

"[A]mong the most ambitious apartment houses of its time," according to Christopher Gray, Euclid Hall is a prime example of advanced multiple-dwelling design at the turn of the 20th century. The seven-story building occupies Broadway's entire block front between 85th and 86th Streets. Deep, narrow courtyards penetrate the otherwise massive bulk of the façade, making it appear to be three separate buildings at first glance and allowing light and air into apartments at various points around the perimeter. The basement once housed a large restaurant and café. But, unlike later buildings, including Astor Court and the Cornwall (see pp.4&9), the ground floor of Euclid Hall was not originally designed for retail uses, despite its ideal situation near a stop on the new IRT subway line. Like their contemporaries at the Ansonia and the Dorilton, built further south along Broadway at about the same time, Euclid Hall's developers believed that shops would undermine the building's elegance. In keeping with then-current fashion, architects Hill & Turner used French-style ornament (red brick embellished with light-colored limestone and iron details) to augment the sophistication of their design. The building's promoters called it "New York's Finest Family Apartment," playing to an upper-middle-class market that was increasingly interested in apartment living and the cutting-edge buildings that were transforming Broadway. Hill & Turner's floorplan, so modern at the time, soon became outmoded. Euclid Hall was converted for single-room-occupancy use in the 1930s.





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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Broadway at 79th Street

George Keister, 1890-93

First Baptist Church is a landmark in every sense, situated at a major crossroads of the Upper West Side and beloved by all who frequent the neighborhood. The congregation built its first house of worship on Gold Street in Lower Manhattan in the early 18th century. In the 1890s, after several moves, the congregation settled into this site in the heart of the neighborhood developing along Broadway. There was already talk of the IRT subway with a stop at 79th Street. George Keister, a residential and theater architect later known for designing the Apollo Theater on 125th Street (1913-14), was selected through a design competition to develop the building's novel plan and eclectic Italian Romanesque Revival façade. The axis of the church sits at a 45-degree angle so that it embraces the Broadway intersection and maximizes the interior auditorium space, covered by a barrel-vaulted, stained-glass ceiling. Biblical iconography is intricately woven into the façade. Even the two asymmetrical towers have symbolic meaning. This conscientious appreciation of architecture and symbolism has been sustained by the First Baptist congregation, who, as dedicated stewards, have warded off developers seeking to exploit the site's redevelopment potential. The days of resistance may be numbered, however. The congregation recently announced that it was weighing the possibility of allowing redevelopment that would destroy the historic structure. Without landmark designation, there is nothing to prevent such destruction.





THE HOHENZOLLERN*

West End Avenue at 84th Street

George F. Pelham, 1908

Developer Lorenz Weiner arrived in New York from Germany before the Civil War, during which he served in the Union Army. The name of this nine-story brick and limestone apartment building, built on speculation in 1908, clearly demonstrates the builder's continuing fondness for his homeland; the House of Hohenzollern ruled Germany through 1918. At least one historian theorized that the building was originally constructed to house personnel of the German consulate, but census records disprove this theory. The building name was abandoned in the early years of World War I, as the American public rejected all things German. Its cultural legacy lives on, however, in the heavy, Renaissance-inspired ornamentation that was typical of German-American civic and public buildings of the time. Architect George F. Pelham worked in a range of styles and building types, perhaps most famously designing Hudson View Gardens (1923-25), one of New York's earliest planned, cooperative apartment complexes, on Pinehurst Avenue between West 182nd and 186th Streets in Washington Heights.

*** NOW 491 WEST END AVENUE**





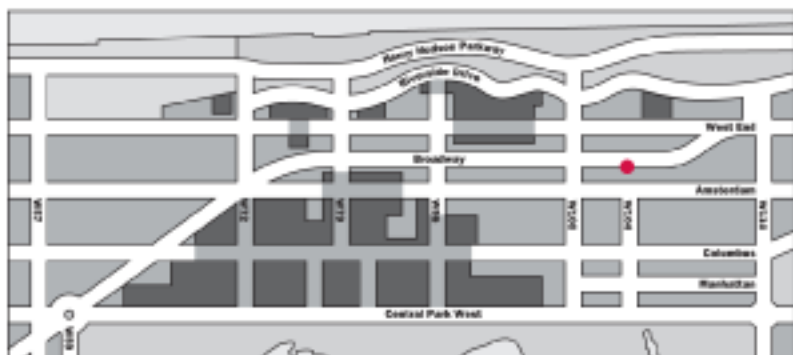
HORN & HARDART AUTOMAT

2712 Broadway at 104th Street

F.P. Platt & Brother, 1930

This joyous Art Deco building, purpose-built as a Horn & Hardart Automat in 1930, is one of New York's last and most intact surviving examples of this once-ubiquitous building type. Joseph V. Horn and Frank A. Hardart opened their first Automat (a waiterless restaurant where customers took their food from nickel-operated windows) in Philadelphia in 1902. New York's first Automat opened in 1912 in Times Square and quickly ingrained itself in the popular culture. A place where people of all classes could gather for a quick, inexpensive meal, Automats were immortalized in movies, song lyrics and millions of New Yorkers' memories. The 104th Street example is a case study in prototypical Automat architecture as developed by F. P. Platt & Brother, designers of many Horn & Hardart Automats. Ravishing polychrome terra-cotta ornamentation, created by the Atlantic Terra Cotta Co. following a faintly Mayan, Art Deco motif of geometric plants and flowers, drew eyes to this diminutive building. The monumental, arched window on the Broadway façade provided full visibility to the shiny glass and steel technological marvels within. The ground-floor exterior is covered over with a contemporary storefront, but the original details remain undisturbed though temporarily out of sight. After failing to act quickly enough to save another former Automat on West 57th Street, the LPC designated the 104th Street Automat as a Landmark on January 30, 2007.

PHOTOS LEFT TO RIGHT: MICHAEL BELDOCH; HEWLETT OULIND





LEVEL CLUB

53 West 73rd Street between Broadway and West End Avenue

Clinton & Russell, 1927

The Level Club sits on a side street midblock in the shadow of its more celebrated neighbor, the landmark Ansonia Hotel. It is nonetheless a monument to the grandiose aspirations of its Masonic builders, who called themselves the "Levelers." No one who passes this towering, 17-story, Neo-Romanesque structure can help but marvel at its polychrome façade replete with Masonic symbols, such as the all-seeing eye, and topped by modern setbacks. The building is partly the result of a friendly rivalry with the Shriners, another Masonic group, over who could build a better "fort." In 1923, the Shriners completed the Mecca Temple (now City Center) straight through from 55th to 56th Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, using the same architects, Clinton & Russell, who would soon design the Level Club. (At around the same time, the Knights of Pythias were building the Pythian Temple of West 70th Street between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues, now part of the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District.) The Levelers aimed to create a central clubhouse on the scale of such so-called "high-rise urban clubs" as the Yale Club on West 44th Street (James Gamble Rogers, 1915). The Levelers' ambitions were short-lived. The 1929 stock market crash ruined the club, and their grand fort became a commercial hotel under a series of names until it was converted to condominiums and renovated, with considerable care given to preserving its architectural integrity, in the 1980s.





NEW YORK CAB COMPANY*

318-324 Amsterdam Avenue at West 75th Street

C. Abbott French, 1889

A robust, well-preserved example of the Romanesque Revival Style, the New York Cab Company stable is an anchor of the old Stable Row, a cluster of private and livery stables built along Amsterdam Avenue in the late 19th century. This building is a rare survivor of an age when New Yorkers relied on horses and carriages for transportation, but relatively few city residents actually owned their own livery (also see p.10 on the now-destroyed Dakota Stable). Developer William T. Walton, a dry-goods merchant who lived in the neighborhood, leased the building to the New York Cab Company, established in 1874, to provide "a cheap and improved transit system in New York." The New York Cab Company introduced the concept of yellow and black-and-white checkered horse-drawn cabs (or cabriolets, a kind of carriage) prowling the streets, available for hire. Hundreds of cabs and horses were housed here at 75th Street and Amsterdam Avenue until the automobile overtook them in popularity in the early 20th century, at which point the building was converted into a garage. The architecture firm of C. Abbott French & Co. designed the Cab Company building in the fashionable, round-arch style of its day, with a monumental bracketed cornice, richly textured brickwork, and three large, arched entrances on West 75th Street. After decades of petitioning from LW! and others, the LPC designated the New York Cab Company as a Landmark on November 14, 2006.

★ NOW BERKLEY GARAGE





P.S. 165

234 West 109th Street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue

C.B.J. Snyder, ca. 1900

This French Renaissance Revival-style public school building represents one of the finest and most intact works of C.B.J. Snyder, who served as Superintendent of School Buildings from 1891 to 1923. P.S. 165 is the prototype for Snyder's signature "H" plan for public schools. The innovative arrangement of classrooms around courtyards and steel-frame construction allowed for enormous windows, creating light- and air-filled learning environments. Health and safety in school architecture were growing concerns, reflecting the expansion of the city's educational system as a result of the influx of immigrants in the late 19th century. Snyder's design, which took optimum advantage of less expensive midblock sites such as this one, was replicated throughout the city. Today, only a handful of examples of this important building type remain.

In 1936, the school was named after Robert E. Simon, a philanthropist and real-estate operator who owned Carnegie Hall. P.S. 165 is better known by its students and nearby residents as "The Palace School."

In 2000, students from another H-shaped, Snyder-designed school — P.S. 166 on West 89th Street — joined LW! to testify before the LPC for the landmark designation of their school. It passed! We look forward to the day when students of the equally worthy P.S. 165 will have the opportunity to testify on landmark status for their school.





ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH COMPLEX

Amsterdam Avenue and 99th Street

Robert W. Gibson, 1891

This gleaming-white limestone church, with its commanding corner tower, red terra-cotta tile roof and Romanesque-arched windows (stained glass by Louis Comfort Tiffany, America's great master of design and decorative arts), together with its adjacent parish house and rectory, is a true landmark on the Amsterdam Avenue skyline. This part of the Upper West Side was pastoral until the construction of the Ninth (Columbus) Avenue elevated train in 1879. To keep up with its growing congregation, St. Michael's replaced its 1854 structure (already the second on the site) with a magnificent new church to seat 1,600. *The New York Times* remarked on its Romanesque design by architect Robert W. Gibson (who also designed West End Collegiate Church, an anchor of the West End Collegiate Historic District), calling it "a radical departure from the Gothic architecture of the majority of the city's sacred edifices." The building's light-colored façade also sets it apart from other churches of the day. For example, whereas West-Park Presbyterian Church (see p.21) uses dark-red sandstone, St. Michael's achieves equal monumentality using rough-hewn blocks of Indiana limestone. The Tiffany windows, added in stages after 1895, have been restored along with the interior, which contains more Tiffany-designed elements. The church's website proudly boasts, "[T]hese works represent one of the largest Tiffany installations still intact in its original setting." But it is the remarkably well-preserved exterior (the part of the complex that is eligible for landmark designation) that makes St. Michael's a star to wish upon.



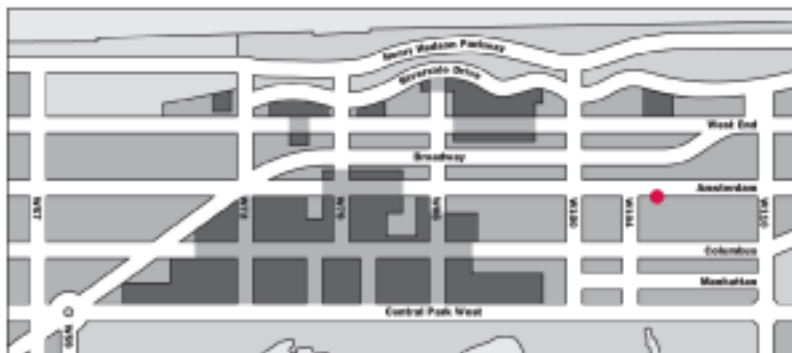


WEST END PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Amsterdam and 105th Street

Henry F. Kilburn, 1891

At the same time as architect Henry F. Kilburn was completing work on West-Park Presbyterian Church on Amsterdam Avenue at 86th Street (see p.21), he was creating another masterpiece 20 blocks north. The names are easy to confuse, but West-Park and West End Presbyterian are studies in contrast. The two structures follow similar forms, each strongly marking its corner with a soaring bell tower and its openings with bold, round Romanesque arches. Yet West End Presbyterian on West 105th Street has a softer presence, using light-yellow, speckled brick with matching, intricately detailed terra-cotta banding in place of West-Park's robust, rusticated, deep-red sandstone. A 1900 article in *The Brickbuilder* noted West End's ornament featuring "the classical fret and honeysuckle, the Norman zigzag, the spiral angles found in early French Renaissance, and the lozenged shafts of Venetian Gothic." The author raves, "indeed, the several components are so placed that a latent affinity seems to spring up where, in less skilfull hands, incongruity might have been expected. Whether viewed as a whole, or as to the relationship of its parts, there is hardly a discordant note in what is virtually an original composition." Both churches were commissioned to accommodate the Upper West Side's rapidly growing Presbyterian flock. In fact, West End Presbyterian once housed the largest Presbyterian congregation in New York City.





WEST-PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Amsterdam and 86th Street

Leopold Eidlitz, 1884; Henry F. Kilburn, 1890

The West-Park Presbyterian Church was designed to stand out in the neighborhood—its dramatic bell tower a beacon to worshipers, and its boldly massed, red sandstone façade keeping step with the fashion of the time. Indeed, West-Park may be the only example of a Richardsonian Revival-style church to survive in Manhattan. The robust stonework and heavy round arches reflect the popularity of medieval Romanesque forms, while the use of Lake Superior red stone trimmed with Longmeadow brownstone, a magnificent material used on no other known religious structures, reveals a new interest in earth-toned materials in the 1880s. These elements combine to create a building of singular power, unquestionably one of the most beautiful religious structures on the Upper West Side. West-Park began as two separate congregations that merged in order to accommodate the neighborhood's growing population. The Park Church, on West End Avenue and 84th Street, purchased the prominent corner site on 86th Street in 1882. The congregation quickly outgrew a chapel built to the east of the corner and designed by Leopold Eidlitz, one of New York's most important 19th-century architects (sadly almost all of his buildings have been demolished). Henry F. Kilburn was commissioned to design a new church, incorporating Eidlitz's chapel and recladding its façade in 1889. West-Park was formed in 1911 when Park Presbyterian Church merged with the West Presbyterian Church, then on West 42nd Street. As of this writing, the church is closed and under imminent threat of demolition.





93RD, 94TH & 95TH STREETS STUDY AREA

Midblocks between Central Park West and Amsterdam Avenue

This pocket of late 19th-century rowhouses near the northernmost tip of the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District (UWS/CPW HD) offers a virtual catalogue of styles including Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, and neo-Renaissance. Here, a handful of developers employed virtually every material, motif, color and composition to achieve a remarkably varied streetscape. The uniform low scale of the houses gives these midblocks their sense of cohesiveness, bookended by taller buildings on Central Park West and Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues. What these buildings also have in common is their inclusion in the West Side Urban Renewal Area (WSURA), a plan conceived in the late 1950s to create new and rehabilitated housing for low, middle and upper-income residents. Instead of being demolished, abandoned and dilapidated houses were purchased by the city and renovated as part of the effort to improve public housing. This approach has been touted as one of the greatest successes of the WSURA, while the program's Columbus Avenue towers have received mixed reviews. For now, the 93rd, 94th and 95th Street midblocks could be preserved by an extension to the existing UWS/CPW HD and the creation of a smaller district between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues. This protection would come none too soon as the urban renewal provisions protecting these rowhouses are soon to expire.





MANHATTAN AVENUE STUDY AREA

West 104th Street to 106th Street

This picturesque pocket of Victorian rowhouses on Manhattan Avenue between 104th and 106th Streets has a calm air that seems to remove it from normal city life. Manhattan Avenue was not on the original city street plan, but by 1868 it was mapped as "New Avenue." The earliest building activity on the Avenue occurred in 1885, when Frederick Seitz put up row houses on the west side of the street from 105th to 106th, designed by Joseph M. Dunn. The next year John Brown built up the east side of the same block with houses designed by C.P.H. Gilbert, and in 1889 Joseph Turner had the architect Edward Angell design the houses on the west side of the Avenue from 104th to 105th. Although other developers were putting up traditional high-stoop brownstones, all of these buildings were three-story brick structures with stone and terra cotta trim and lower stoops. The Gilbert-designed houses have elements of the Queen Anne style, with sunburst motifs, wavy linear ornament, and multi-light stained glass windows. Those by Dunn are a little wilder, with a wide variety of arches and gables. The Angell houses are Romanesque Revival and more sophisticated. All have unusual ornament—terra-cotta panels with rivet-head figuring, sunburst ironwork and highly detailed brickwork.

These blocks sit in the shadow of the New York Cancer Hospital, later the Towers Nursing Home, an Individual Landmark that was recently restored as luxury condominiums. In May 2007, the LPC voted to designate this area, on LW's Wish List since 1985, as a historic district.

Adapted with permission from Christopher Gray, "Streetscapes," NY Times, 11/28/99



LANDMARK WEST!

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Please return this form with your tax-deductible contribution.

- ★ **A special offer:** Contribute \$250 or more, and receive a gift of *Bricks and Brownstone: The New York Row House 1783-1929* by Charles Lockwood (photographs by Madeleine Isom); *The Automat: The History, Recipes, and Allure of Ham & Hardart's Masterpiece* by Lorraine B. Diehl and Marianne Hardart; *From Abyssinian to Zion: A Guide to Manhattan's Houses of Worship* by David W. Dunlap; *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York* by Hilary Ballon and Kenneth T. Jackson; or another book from our collection.

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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 nearly 2,700 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!

THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE
45 WEST 67 STREET NEW YORK NY 10023 (212) 496-8110
LANDMARKWEST@LANDMARKWEST.ORG

**GOODBYE TO A LANDMARK
THAT NEVER WAS**

**The Colonial Club Built 1894, Destroyed 2007.
Broadway and 72nd Street, architect Henry F. Kilburn**

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK



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