



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
18 West 75th Street
December 15, 2015**

LANDMARK WEST! is a not-for-profit community organization committed to the preservation of the architectural heritage of the Upper West Side.

The Certificate of Appropriateness Committee wishes to comment on the application to construct mechanical bulkheads, alter the entry, expand an existing rear yard addition, excavate the rear yard and construct a cellar level addition, and alter the windows at 18 West 75th Street, a Renaissance Revival style rowhouse with Queen Anne elements designed by John C. Burne in 1889-90. 18 West 75th Street is part of the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee appreciates what the Applicant is attempting to achieve by restoring the front facade with new windows in an effort to match the historic condition, and repair historic details. While our Committee would prefer they take this "restoration" one step further by recreating the stoop, restoring the parlor entry, and stripping the decades of applied paint from the brownstone, our Committee agrees that the abridged restoration proposed for this 10-apartment building turned three-bedroom home is an improvement over the existing condition.

The Committee also finds that the turret is the defining element for much of this block's profile and we appreciate that other rooftop accretions are sufficiently set back so as to not visually interfere with it. Our Committee kindly requests further clarification about its proposed roofing finish material and color.

In regard to the rear facade, there is hesitation.

Limiting glazing, maintaining the dogleg into the doughnut, and retaining punch windows are usually elements which resonate with our Committee's criteria. And, as established by recent practice, the Commission allows considerable artistic license in altering the rear facade, regularly preferring when alterations contrast with the original fabric to show they are from a different time.

Here, a rear-yard dogleg is actually being maintained in volume and substructure, but it is being completely re-clad in a variant brick. The choice is an aesthetic one. Since this is not being re-built, just re-clad, there is question as to whether its utilitarian cladding should not be maintained as John Burne intended.

Last week, the Commission heard a proposal for re-inventing the West End Collegiate School properties; there, the Applicant had proof of the original fabric (in that case windows) and yet, they proposed to make the replacements stand out more than originally intended by their designer. We find this scenario is quite similar.

These are mainly conceptual concerns considered by our committee. The stand-out request involves the underground build-out, which the Committee asks be pulled back to a minimum of five-feet from the rear yard lot line, as is standard to allow for a planted rear edge.

Thank you for your time.