



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
267 Columbus Avenue  
May 9, 2017**

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 267 Columbus Avenue, a neo-Grec style flats building designed by Charles Buek and Co. and built in 1888-89. The application is to replace cast iron vault covers.

The Landmark West Certificate of Appropriateness Committee acknowledges that although sidewalk vaults are more common in other neighborhoods across the city, they do have a place in UWS streetscapes and they represent an important street accessory, delighting the passer-by with a sense of how these spaces functioned. Unfortunately, they are a dwindling species and need to be protected. Thankfully through historic district designations, they are.

Among the last cast iron vaults on the avenue, this specimen is enframed in granite before transitioning to concrete. It has clearly faced indignities. An unsympathetic concrete ramp, poured over a central panel was chopped out in the “collapse” photos. Without speculating as to whether the jackhammering and sledgehammers used on the storefront removal lead to this damage, it is shameful that the contractor did not put proper protections in place.

Our Committee believes this vault warrants a proper restoration. Contractors carry insurance and absentee craftsmanship should not be tolerated—lest rewarded. The Landmark West! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee recommends denial of this application.