



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
320 West 88th Street
November 24, 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 rear yard and rooftop additions at 320 West 88th Street, an Elizabethan Renaissance Revival style rowhouse built in 1889-90.

The Applicant's package solely focuses on this property. There is no effort to site it in context of a street wall, or figure ground map. It lacks reference to the historic district or any of its neighbors--as if anything else is inconsequential.

For instances where the Applicant proposes removing the rear yard dog leg, a typical two-step dance of reaction ensues. LANDMARK WEST! advocates for preserving the character of the rear facade and open space in the rear yard doughnut, and the Commission, citing precedent, recalls that this is where the architect has an opportunity to *experiment*.

An experiment is a test. It is a trial. A "tentative procedure or act of operation for the purpose of discovering something unknown or for testing a principle or supposition".

If the "control" in this experiment is the current existing condition, and the "variable" is history, original fabric, and reference to context, how does the hypothesis always become "glass"?

It's curious how every experiment, despite architect, style, date of construction, or historic district within the Upper West Side seems to yield nearly identical results. Glass. Lot-line to lot-line, glass. Garden level and above, glass. As much glass as possible, save (of course), for the lonely uppermost story, which finds new companionship in a purposefully incongruous rooftop addition.

A proposal as textured, nuanced, or even as idiosyncratic as what has been long preserved (here, for 126 years) and is now, proposed to be lost would qualify as *experimental*.

We urge you to deny this application.

Yet again, here is an anonymous, full-width facade to disrupt the continuity, spoil the privacy, and shed light upon neighbors. Its a tactic so normative that it has become rote.