



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
351 Amsterdam Avenue
January 10, 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 the application to legalize the installation of storefront infill installed in non-compliance with Landmarks Preservation Commission permit(s) at 351 Amsterdam Avenue, a Renaissance Revival style tenement building designed by Gilbert A. Schellenger and built in 1895 which is part of the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District.

As a rule, the LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee opposes legalizations of work installed without LPC permits. When property owners ignore the Landmarks Law and make changes without the Commission's guidance and consent, all too frequently the results are, at best unremarkable, and at worst, destructive. In either case, the practice of legalizing alterations after the fact, in essence penalizes property owners who often go to great lengths to comply with landmarks regulations by rewarding those who flout the law.

In the case of 351 Amsterdam Avenue, the approved proposal sought balance. It exhibited continuity with the structure above. Brick was carried down and around the storefront creating a sense of continuity and believability. A trim sign band provided identity but did not overwhelm, and most importantly, allowed for high clerestories and vertically stretched bays providing the illusion of height. Eyes wide open, the informed applicant chose a heavy-handed alternate approach with additional framing, reduced glazing and a huge sign band.

On many levels, this unapproved insertion can be summarized as "thick".

LANDMARK WEST!'s C of A Committee supports the original configuration as approved and recommends rejection of this legalization.

Thank you for your time.