



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
513 Columbus Avenue
November 15, 2016**

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 replacement of storefront infill and the installation of an awning, signage and light fixtures without Landmarks Preservation Commission permits at 513 Columbus Avenue, a Romanesque Revival style flats building designed by John G. Prague and built in 1894-95 that is part of the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee opposes legalization because it undercuts the legitimacy of the Certificate of Appropriateness requirement and rewards applicants who willfully refuse to follow the rules.

In the case of 513 Columbus Avenue, the applicant's unpermitted and illegal modifications disrupt what was once an approved pair of three-bay wood storefront infills. Prior to the unpermitted modifications, each bay exhibited a pair of doors in conversation with their respective transoms, punctuated by wood framed pilasters. The bespoke scale of each inner bay was further articulated through an individual, retractable awning. However, as a result of the the applicant's illegal action, this is no longer the case.

It is difficult to imagine that the illegal modification before the Commission was "designed". At best, it bears the hallmarks of contractor will. Even the full-bay awnings are a simplification of a once-thoughtful storefront. Now each awning belies the elements behind it, serving as a mask rather than an accessory.

On a note of redemption, our Committee did find the gooseneck lights to be appropriate; however, even those lights were not included in the original approved plans.

The Commission has the opportunity to correct the damage. The Committee recommends that the Commission order the applicant to return the storefront to the design approved by the Commission.

Thank you for your time.