



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
55 Central Park West
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 a trellis, install mechanical equipment, and replace a window at 55 Central Park West, an Art Deco-style apartment building built in 1930 and designed by Schwartz & Gross.

It's a busy afternoon for Schwartz & Gross!

55 Central Park West, aka the "Ghostbusters Building," is one of the six signature Art Deco apartment houses of the iconic Central Park West skyline. Its wedding-cake setbacks are highlighted by a single tower window which serves as the key jewel of the building's tiara. The Certificate of Appropriateness Committee feels strongly that this diamond should not be re-set. Although many windows have changed, they are read in quantity. This proposal would alter a window that shines as a singular entity and contributes to the scenography of Central Park. Each bay of its casement windows is an individual facet, set off to reveal its brilliance. The proposed replacement changes design, material, operation, style and statement—and should be denied.

The Applicant has not demonstrated that the architectural features are deteriorated beyond repair nor provided substantive reasons for deviating from historic design or visual qualities for this multi-lite special window.

Our Committee finds that while we do prefer the appearance of the proposed design over the existing extension, it would raise the height too much. Since the bulkhead is already visible from the street, raising the existing construction to match it will not only increase this extension by nearly 25% in height, but subsequently increase visibility of any further accretion from the street.

Doing so would impact the legible symmetry of this edifice across the park, and, most tragically, it would subsume the impact of the tower. Building this extension out will clearly interrupt the delicate massing so central to the building's character. Here is where precedent becomes a great concern: If the Commission approves this increase, then why not add/expand the North penthouse too?

This proposal would not only alter the overall character of the building and the CPW skyline, but almost as importantly, would irritate the ancient Gozer the Gozerian! While Rick Moranis is still an Upper West Sider, he may not be able to handle this alone. This application should be denied, or at the very least maintained at the current, already expanded height.