

Remarks from SUSAN M. SIMON, *leader* *of the* CPW NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATION

It is wonderful to be here tonight to celebrate this great victory which had impact not only for our community, but for historic preservation throughout this city. I hope it will give those who might seek to exploit our landmarks pause, to think again.

As an ordinary private citizen over two years ago, I learned about the fate of the magnificent First Church of Christ Scientist in passing, and hoped for the best. I had great confidence in our city agencies such as the Landmarks Commission to uphold the Landmarks Law, and protect the legacy of our historic monuments. But I soon felt as if I'd fallen into a rabbit hole and a baffling experience with bureaucracies that seemed to have lost their focus on the meaning of the law they were mandated to uphold. And I came to know that without organizations like Landmark West, and without attorneys like Michael Hiller who are masterful, and committed to the cause of preservation, this city would somehow manage to put its historic legacy up for auction, sold to the highest bidder.

I cannot stress enough how important smart, committed, and visionary organizations like Landmark West are for this city. I would like to thank a hundred times over Kate Wood for her leadership and calm. She reached out again and again to make all this happen with incredible knowledge and a can do spirit that was infectious. And to Sean Khorsandi for his humor, his architectural knowledge and abilities to explain complicated zoning matters addressed in a vocabulary of numbers that was unintelligible to ordinary people. And to Arlene Simon who was so inspiring in sharing her wisdom and encouraging me to keep going. This is a truly great organization we are so fortunate to have on the UWS.

To the CPW Neighbors Association-enormous thanks for a very hard working group of citizens who are the best and the brightest, who didn't waver in their commitment to protecting this special landmark, and our community. And especially to David Murphy, our historian, and scholar who has an amazing mind and calm presence who along with the wonderful architects Antonia Rossello and Luis Salazar made this project and victory possible. To all those who worked so hard, wrote so many thoughtful letters and attended so many hearings. And to Pastor Terry and his committed congregants who put the hallelujah into this struggle. Who reminded us of the human values we cherish and the loss we suffer when those values are bartered away.

And to our very supportive elected leaders, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and staff. And Councilman Mark Levine and staff. You exemplify what good government is all about. Many thanks for your work in supporting and believing in us.

And last but not least, to Michael Hiller and his wonderful staff. We had the privilege of working with Michael who was not only highly skilled and well prepared for every argument, but who is a wonderful person who cares. Michael helped us to focus, and to remain confident throughout this process finding case law upon case law which exponentially proved that the regulatory law on the books at the Board of Standards and Appeals could not be waived or ignored. Not this time! Michael, I speak for all of us when I say how grateful we are to have taken that leap to work with you. **Together we have managed to help save this magnificent landmark and stained glass windows for future generations. Thank you all so much.**