



**MY**  
[preservation]  
**JOURNAL**





## PREFACE

Welcome to the 21st-century edition of “My Preservation Journal.” With its lessons on neighborhood history, architectural vocabulary, and civic engagement, as well as its playful original design by Nicholas Blechman with illustrations by R.O. Blechman, this is essentially the same award-winning work-book — beloved by educators, students, and parents alike — first introduced by LANDMARK WEST! in 1998, only updated and expanded.

But don’t take our word for it. Please read on!

What is LANDMARK WEST? We are a nonprofit community organization formed in 1985 to preserve and protect the architectural heritage of Manhattan’s Upper West Side. LANDMARK WEST! pursues a vigorous program of advocacy and educational outreach, enlisting support through our publications, website and social media, walking tours, workshops, lectures, and public forums. We work with residents, businesses, building owners, and city agencies, including the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, to safeguard the future of our neighborhood’s historic buildings, blocks, and parks.

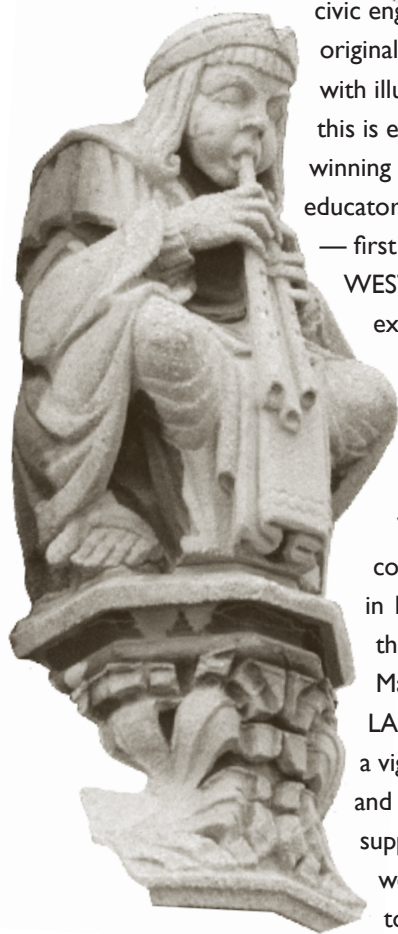
Today, LANDMARK WEST! is the proud curator of the over 3,500 designated landmarks between West 59th and West 110th Streets, Central Park to Riverside Park (up from only 337 when we began our work in 1985). We promote public awareness of these landmarks and the urgent need to protect them against insensitive change and destruction for the sake of our community quality of life.

“My Preservation Journal” is the linchpin of a multifaceted school program called *Keeping the Past for the Future* (KPF) for grades K-5 that introduces students to the concept of architectural design, its importance in their everyday lives, the story of the neighborhood’s development, and the need to preserve it for their own future. This program and accompanying study guide engage children in an ongoing dialogue about their built environment while developing strong visual and critical thinking skills.

Nearly 20 years and an estimated 25,000 students after its original publication, “My Preservation Journal” and KPF remain focused on these goals. Our program has expanded to reach more children, now also in Spanish. LANDMARK WEST! educators visit classrooms — free of charge — throughout the year.

We’re delighted to share “My Preservation Journal” with you. Adventures await!

Kate Wood, President, 2017



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## INTRODUCTION

# KEEPING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

Welcome! This preservation journal will introduce you to many of the special features of the Upper West Side.

What is preservation? Maybe you've never used the word, but you're probably already a preservationist! Do you have a place where you save special toys or books that you used when you were younger? Saving these important pieces of your past — for yourself, or for your own children when you're older — is a type of preservation.

Like those toys or books, many buildings are meaningful parts of our world and our history that are worth preserving. With this book as a guide, you will explore those buildings on the Upper West Side that connect the present to the past and, if we're careful, to the future as well.

The future depends on you. For preservation to work, people must join together to protect buildings and communities. We must all save the past for the future.

But there are so many buildings in the neighborhood — buildings for school, for work, for living. Why are some of them special? Let's begin the journey, and you will see for yourself.

Why is this your  
favorite building?

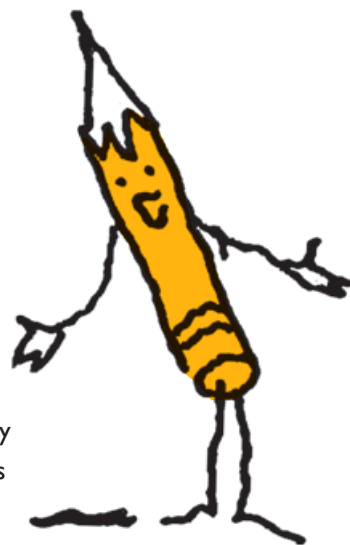
What is the building  
used for?

How do you feel when  
you are there?

Do you have a  
connection to it?

## PROJECT: MY FAVORITE BUILDING

Take a walk in your neighborhood. Choose your favorite building to draw. It could be your home, school, a friend or relative's house, a museum, a building you pass on your way to school, or your favorite place to visit.



P.S. 166, 140 West 89th Street  
(1898-99, C. B. J. Snyder)

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## OUR LANDMARKS

How can we protect our buildings? One way is to have them designated “**landmarks.**” A landmark, according to New York City’s **Landmarks Law**, can be a building, property, or object that is determined to have special historical, cultural, or architectural value. Designating a landmark means recognizing its value and protecting it with the **Landmarks Law**. The law is designed to recognize and protect buildings that represent the

city’s history, help to improve **property values** (how much money buildings are worth), and promote civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past, both for the residents of New York and the many visitors to our city. Landmarks are often buildings, but they may also be roads, bridges, monuments, plazas, parks, or, as in special cases in Brooklyn and Queens, trees. The **Landmarks Law** of 1965 is the main tool preservationists use to protect buildings.



Postcard showing the original Pennsylvania Station (1901-10, McKim, Mead and White)





Pennsylvania Station interior (1901-10, McKim, Mead and White), c. 1905

## HISTORY TELLS THE STORY

At West 34th Street and Seventh Avenue in midtown Manhattan, there was a magnificent building called Pennsylvania Station. It was so big it took up two full city blocks and construction took nearly 10 years (from 1901 to 1910). It was built of pink granite on the outside with stone, glass, and steel on the inside. The design was based on an ancient Roman building. But, by the 1960s, some people thought Penn Station was

out of date and too expensive to keep. Sadly, it was demolished. Later, on April 19, 1965, Mayor Robert Wagner signed the **Landmarks Law** and officially formed the **Landmarks Preservation Commission** to protect New York City's historic architecture. The **Landmarks Preservation Commission** is in charge of protecting landmarks in the five boroughs of New York City from being damaged or destroyed.



## LANDMARK DESIGNATION

New Yorkers were so upset by the destruction of Penn Station and other special places that they pushed for government to create the **Landmarks Law**. But that doesn't mean that all important buildings in New York City automatically become landmarks. People must **advocate** (publicly support a cause) to protect the places they believe deserve landmark designation.

LANDMARK WEST! is an example of a group of people who work together to achieve landmark status for special places. LANDMARK WEST! has saved many buildings and preserved many streetscapes of the Upper West Side.

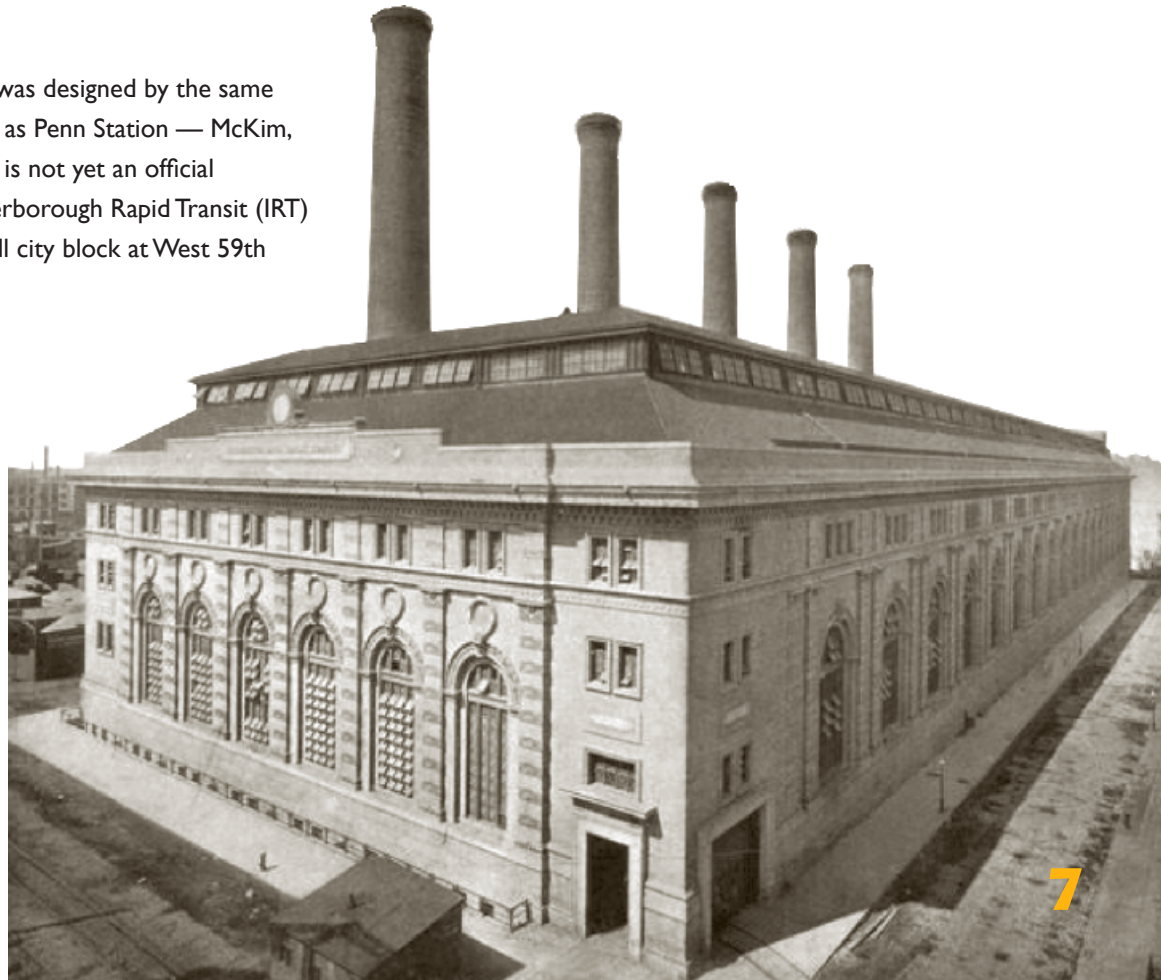
The building shown here was designed by the same celebrated architect team as Penn Station — McKim, Mead and White — but it is not yet an official landmark. The former Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) Powerhouse takes up a full city block at West 59th

Street and Eleventh Avenue. It was built in 1904 to power the subway line to the Upper West Side, where more people were starting to live. Like Penn Station, the Powerhouse was also built to look like an ancient Roman building. Luckily, it is still standing today! But without landmark protection, that could change.

It is up to the **Landmarks Preservation Commission** to decide whether or not they will use the **Landmarks Law** to protect this beautiful and important building.

LANDMARK  
WEST! thinks the  
Powerhouse should  
be a landmark.  
What do you think?

IRT Powerhouse (1904,  
McKim, Mead and White)



## HOW ARE LANDMARKS DESIGNATED?

Anyone can advocate for a place to be landmarked by contacting the **Landmarks Preservation Commission**. The **Commission** has 11 members who decide which places to landmark, with help from a staff of researchers. The process can take years:

- 1 Once the Commission decides to consider a place for designation, a public hearing is scheduled to gather information and give people the opportunity to testify for or against designation. Opinions can come from property owners, local residents, elected officials, and the general public.
- 2 After the hearing, researchers prepare a thorough report on the building's architectural, social, and cultural history.
- 3 Commissioners review this report and then schedule a public meeting where they vote for or against the designation.
- 4 The City Planning Commission and City Council must also approve the landmark designation before the site becomes an official NYC landmark.



Preservation campaign poster, illustrated by Jules Feiffer, c. 1986

## FUN FACT

Sometimes a building doesn't look very special on the **EXTERIOR** (outside), but is so beautiful on the **INTERIOR** (inside), that the interior is landmarked. The Beacon Theatre on Broadway and West 74th Street is an example of a spectacular interior landmark!





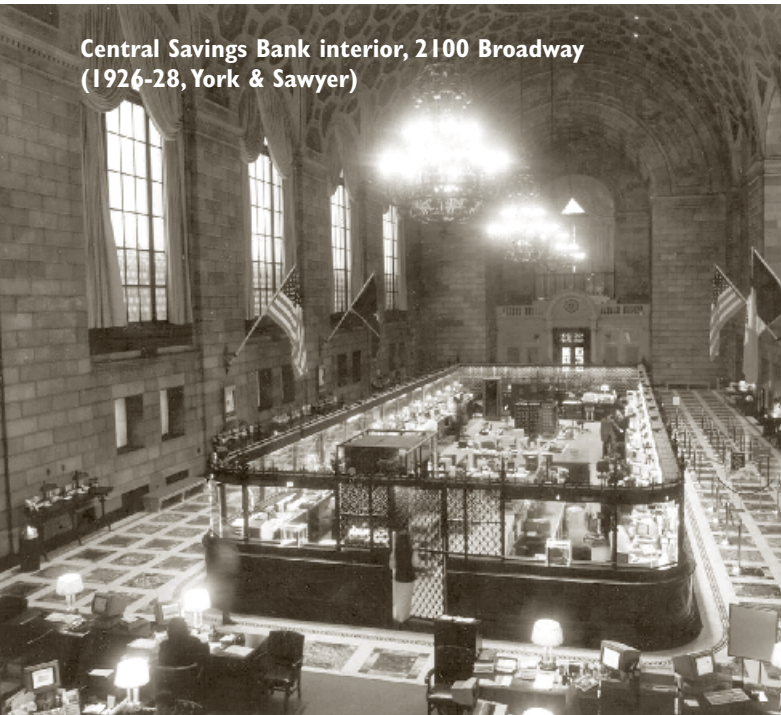
Beacon Theatre interior, 2124 Broadway  
(1929, Walter W. Ahlschlager)



**Dakota Apartments, 1 West 72nd Street  
(1884, Henry J. Hardenbergh)**



**Central Savings Bank interior, 2100 Broadway  
(1926-28, York & Sawyer)**



## THE 4 KINDS OF LANDMARKS

To be a designated landmark, a site must be at least 30 years old. For instance, the original World Trade Center, or “Twin Towers,” never got to be 30 years old, so they were not landmarked. The new One World Trade Center (completed in 2014) is too new to be landmarked.

There are four types of landmark designations:

- 1** An **individual** (or exterior) landmark, like the Dakota Apartments, is a single building of particular importance.
- 2** An **interior** landmark refers to an inside space that is accessible to the public, like the banking hall of the Central Savings Bank (now Apple Bank) on Broadway and West 73rd Street, or the inside of the Beacon Theatre on Broadway and West 74th Street.
- 3** An **historic district** refers to an area with lots of buildings that have a special character as a group, such as the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District or the Riverside–West End Historic District.
- 4** A **scenic** landmark usually has plants, trees or grass, like Central Park or Verdi Square at Broadway between West 72nd Street and West 73rd Street. Scenic landmarks may have no buildings at all.



### MY PERSONAL LANDMARK PROJECT: NOW YOU TRY

- Which building, interior, neighborhood, or park do you think should be a landmark?
- Why do you think it might be a landmark?
- What about this place is important to you or the neighborhood?
- There are many individual landmarks shown on the map that comes with this book. How many have you seen?

## FUN FACT

Central Savings Bank has been designated both an **INDIVIDUAL** and an **INTERIOR** landmark!

It is across the street from Verdi Square, a **SCENIC** landmark, and it is within the **Upper West Side/Central Park West HISTORIC DISTRICT**.

So, right there on West 73rd Street and Broadway, you can experience all four landmark types at once!

Central Savings Bank, 2100 Broadway  
(1926-28, York & Sawyer)





Manhattan Avenue looking north from 104th Street, 1927



Brown historic district street sign at Columbus Avenue

## HISTORIC DISTRICTS

**Historic districts** preserve lots of buildings in the same area. An historic district is designated because of a special role it has played in history, or because it represents especially well one or more periods of the city's architectural styles. Historic districts are one of the best ways of preserving the character of a neighborhood because all of the buildings in an historic district are protected.

The nine **Historic Districts** of the Upper West Side are:

1. Upper West Side/Central Park West
2. West End—Collegiate
3. Riverside Drive—West End
4. Manhattan Avenue
5. Central Park West—West 76th Street
6. Central Park West—West 73rd-74th Streets
7. Riverside Drive—West 105th Street
8. Riverside Drive—West 80-81st Streets
9. West 71st Street

The Morningside Heights Historic District also dips into northern blocks of the Upper West Side. Find these historic districts on the map in the back pocket of this book. They were all created to protect our neighborhood's special apartment buildings, public buildings, tenements, and rows and rows of rowhouses!

## FUN FACT

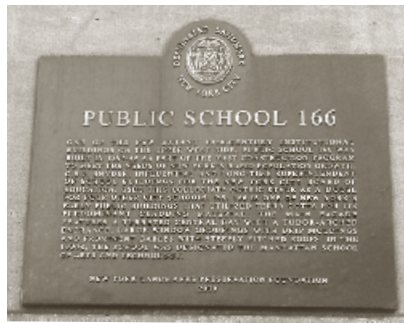
**Most street signs are reflective green. But you know you are in a historic district if you look at a street sign and it is brown and says the name of the historic district in small letters at the top.**





West 74th Street rowhouses  
and the San Remo apartment  
building in the Upper West Side/  
Central Park West Historic District





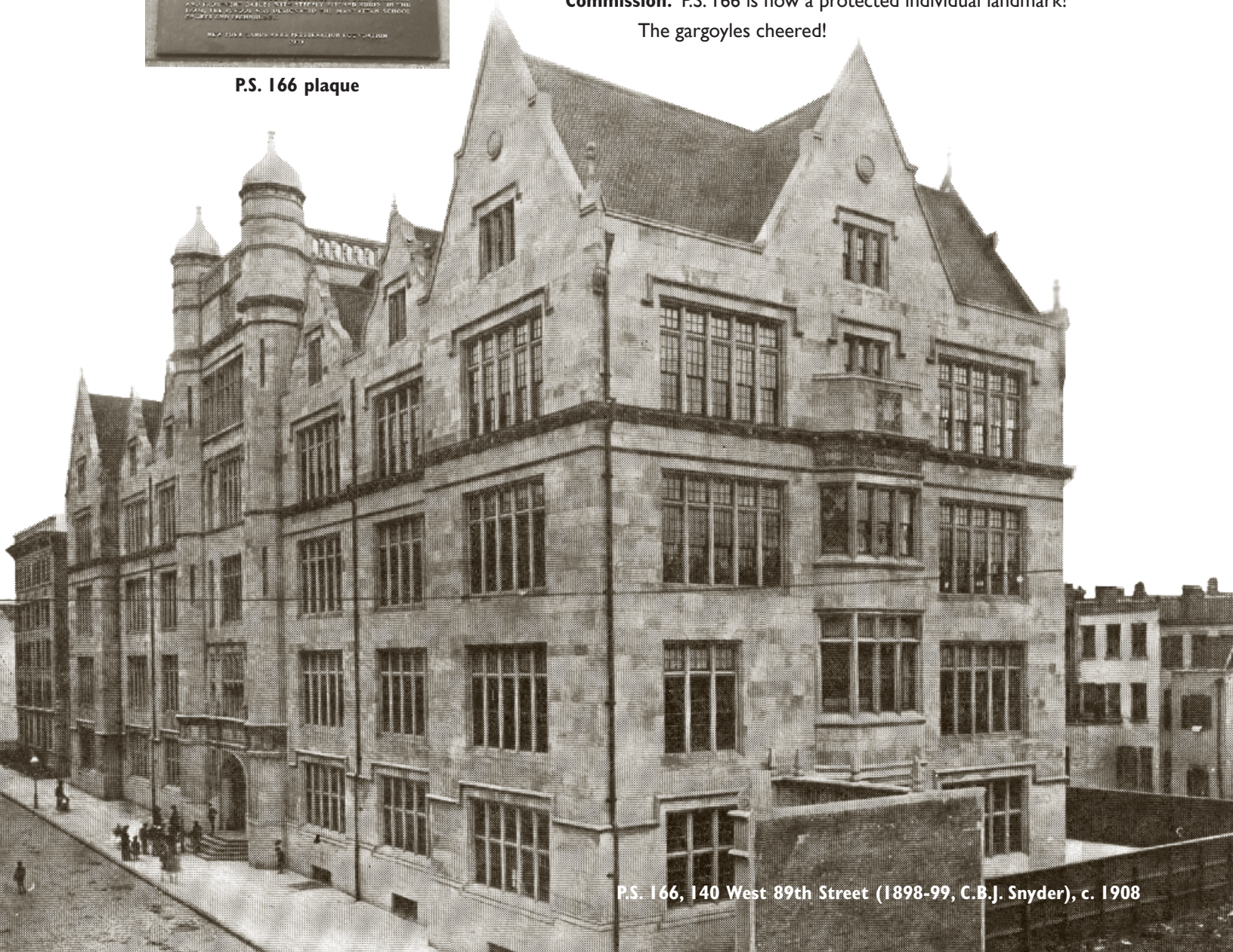
P.S. 166 plaque

## SOMETIMES YOU WIN, SOMETIMES YOU LOSE...

In 2000, children from P.S. 166 testified at a public hearing in support of making their school an individual landmark. Their written and spoken feelings about the importance of their beautiful, unique 19th-century school building helped persuade the **Landmarks Preservation**

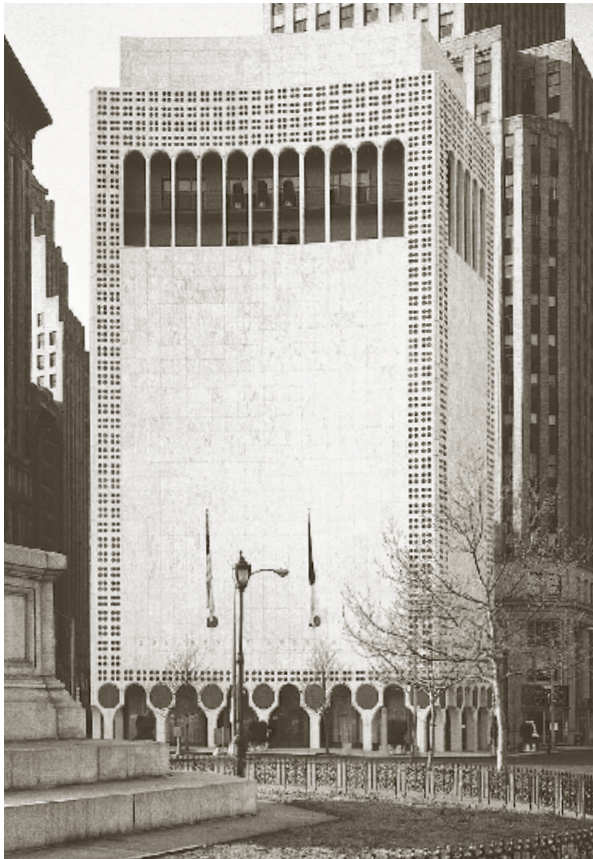
**Commission.** P.S. 166 is now a protected individual landmark!

The gargoyles cheered!



P.S. 166, 140 West 89th Street (1898-99, C.B.J. Snyder), c. 1908





**2 Columbus Circle (1964, Edward Durell Stone) in 1964**

LANDMARK WEST! worked hard to try to save 2 Columbus Circle, one of only two buildings on the Upper West Side designed by the famous architect Edward Durell Stone. (The other one is P.S. 199 on West 70th Street.) Have you ever seen a building that looks like this? Unlike many other buildings from the mid-20th century, 2 Columbus Circle did not have big glass windows. Instead, it used solid white marble with small, round windows like a ship's portholes.



**2 Columbus Circle (2008, redesigned by Brad Cloepfil/ Allied Works Architecture) in 2015**

Can you guess why some people called it the “lollipop” building?

Many advocates tried to convince the **Landmarks Preservation Commission** to hold a public hearing on 2 Columbus Circle, but the Commission refused. In 2005, a museum bought the building and changed its exterior, erasing almost all of Stone's original design.

Look at your clothes. What do you like about your clothing? Does it have a special shape, color, or pattern? Clothes come in many different shapes, colors, and patterns, and clothes have many different uses — heavy coats for winter, shorts for summer. People **design** (decide how they should look) clothes, and people also design buildings. Buildings have many uses — they provide the shelter people need to live, work, go to school, and play. We design buildings to meet specific needs, but often we design buildings to look beautiful, too. Let's explore how we talk about **architecture** — design, parts of a building, style, decoration, and building types.

## ALL ABOUT DESIGN

Shape and form, lines, texture, color, and pattern — all of these contribute to design of a building.

Find each design element on the building **façade** (the front of a building) on the next page.

- **SHAPE AND FORM.** A shape is two-dimensional and is made when a line is closed. Shapes can have many sides, like a hexagon (six sides), or just one, like a circle. A form is a three-dimensional shape that takes up real space. It can be a cone, pyramid, cube, sphere, cylinder, or block.
- **LINES** connect two end points and can be thick, thin, straight, curved, angular, wavy, short, or long.

- **TEXTURE** describes a material's surface. Textures can be hard, soft, sharp, moist, gooey, slimy, dry, furry, coarse, grainy, smooth, rough, pebbly, spongy, scratchy, greasy, grooved, slippery, or slick.
- **COLOR** on buildings can be created by the colors of the materials used, like marble, brownstone, brick, metal, wood, or paint.
- **PATTERN** is created when line, color, shape, form, or texture is repeated. Examples include stripes, plaid, polka-dots, herringbone, diagonal, and fluted.

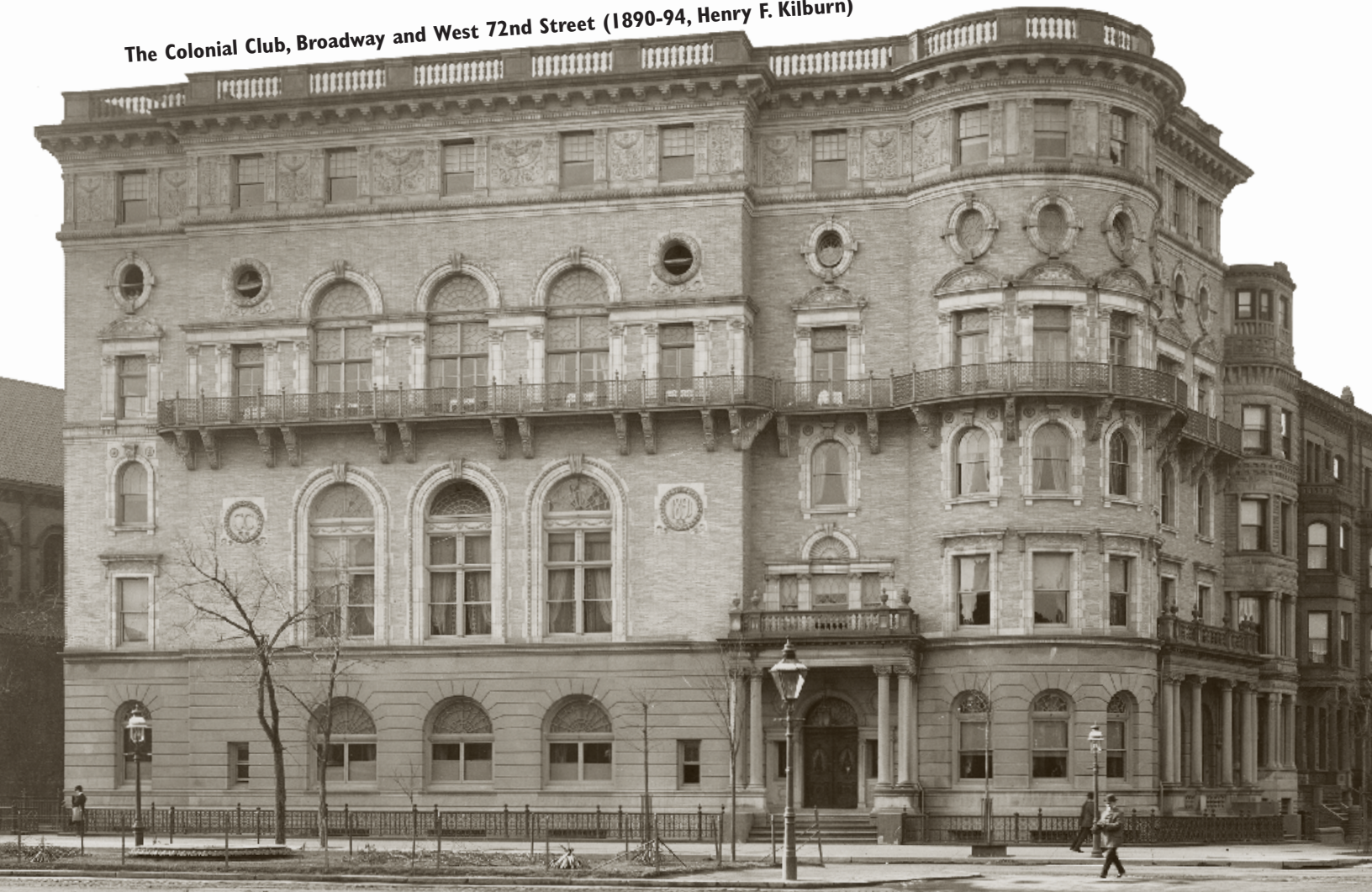


**The Landmarks Preservation Commission did not designate the Colonial Club a landmark. It was not protected by the Landmarks Law, and the building was demolished and replaced by an ordinary glass tower in 2006.**



- What design elements do you see?
- Draw the shapes, lines and patterns you see on this building.
- How does color add to the design of a building?

**The Colonial Club, Broadway and West 72nd Street (1890-94, Henry F. Kilburn)**





## THE PARTS MAKE THE WHOLE

Your clothes are designed with different parts. Sleeves cover our arms to protect them from the sun and cold. Buttons are necessary so we can get in and out of our clothes. But sleeves and buttons are also decorative. Tiny buttons can make a shirt beautiful; huge polka-dot buttons on a clown's costume can be funny. Think of dividing a building into parts. Like the sleeves and buttons on our clothes, these parts can be both functional and decorative. Windows allow light and air into a building, but they come in many shapes and sizes. Let's look at the many functional and decorative parts that make up a building.

### WALK IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Look for cornices, columns, stoops, and other building parts.

Look at windows, entrances, and roofs. They can provide clues to how a building is used — like the steeple on a church or the entrance to an apartment building.

Find other examples.

Draw your favorite building parts from two or more buildings.

Design your own building using your favorite building parts.

341 West End Avenue  
(1891, Lamb & Rich)







## BUILDING PARTS TREASURE HUNT

Think about how the parts of a building function and contribute to the building.

Find these parts on the building façade on these two pages:

- A ROOF:** the top of the building which protects it from the elements.
- B WINDOW:** the eyes of a building, allowing light and air inside.
- C ENTRANCE OR DOOR:** the way to enter a building.
- D STOOP:** the steps leading up to the building entrance.
- E CORNICE:** the molding that projects out from the top of a building.
- F ARCH:** a structural way to span an opening, either curved or pointed, over a door or window.
- G DORMER:** a window that sticks out from a roof to provide more light and air.
- H BAY WINDOW:** a window that sticks out of the façade of a building to capture more light.
- I BRACKET:** a piece of wood or stone used to hold up another building part, such as a cornice or a balcony.

## BLOOMING BUILDINGS

Look up! Why do certain buildings have a special “personality” or style? What features do you notice?

The buildings of the Upper West Side are covered with ornament and decoration. Ornament may be carved, painted, molded, or attached for decoration. An architect uses ornament as part of the building’s design. It makes the building more interesting to look at.

Our story begins with the designers and craftsmen of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. We don’t know the names of these artists, but we do know they were mostly immigrants from England, Scotland, Germany, Italy, and Russia. After the Civil War, African-Americans from the South also joined the group of skilled artisans. Architects who were designing buildings sometimes bought pieces of ornament ready-made. Other times, they chose what they wanted from sketches in books about ornament and decoration. The artisans usually interpreted the

subjects. They used their imaginations, humor, and new American ideals. For example, if asked to carve a face, the artisan might create a happy, scary, or funny face with hair made of leaves.

Look at buildings and find:

- animals
- plants
- creatures that are half-human and half-animal
- creatures that are two animals combined
- geometric shapes
- patterns

Now, identify what material they are made of.

Are they made of:

- natural stone like carved brownstone or marble
- cast stone like terra cotta, cement, or plaster which is ground up, liquified, and poured into molds, then cooled so it gets rock hard
- cast metal melted down and poured into molds
- hammered wrought iron that is heated and bent into shapes

**Winged mythical lion capital, brownstone**



**Floral and abstract geometric panels, stainless steel**

**Acanthus face on keystone, brownstone**





## ORNAMENT HUNT

Search for the animals, plants, and creatures that cover the buildings in your neighborhood. The photographs on these two pages are some examples of ornamentation found on the Upper West Side. Try to find as many as you can. Look for other ornaments on your hunt. Make a list. Happy hunting!

- **MASKS** or **FACES** go back to the popular harvest games of ancient Greece when all the actors wore masks.
- **GARGOYLES** were originally water spouts to get rainwater off the roof so there were no leaks. They were carved into mythical creatures with scary faces.
- Artists designed their own **LEAVES** and **FLOWERS** that cannot be identified as any specific plant. This is called abstracting or stylizing ornament from nature.

- **FESTOONS** or **GARLANDS** are fruits tied in a bunch with leaves and flowers. They have been used as building decoration since ancient times.
- Oak and maple leaves, roses, **GRAPE LEAVES**, lilies, and bluebells are some of the natural looking plants you will see. Can you find any other plants?
- The **ACANTHUS** leaf on the bracket is abstracted from the plant called “akanthos” found in Greece. It is often found in patterns on buildings in many shapes and sizes.
- Fabulous monsters and invented creatures decorate buildings. The **GRIFFIN** is a mythical animal from ancient Greece symbolizing power and wisdom, has a lion’s body, an eagle’s head and wings, and was very popular as ornamentation.



Festoons and  
keystone above  
arched doorway,  
terra cotta

Woman's face  
with shells,  
terra cotta



Grapevine and acanthus leaf  
bracket under a bay window,  
painted brownstone

## YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE STYLE

*"Style is the way a building looks. It is form, not function. Throughout history, different styles of architecture have been popular at different times. Each style has its own way of arranging building parts and using ornaments."*

*Maddox, Diane. Architects Make Zigzags: Looking at Architecture From A to Z. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1995.*

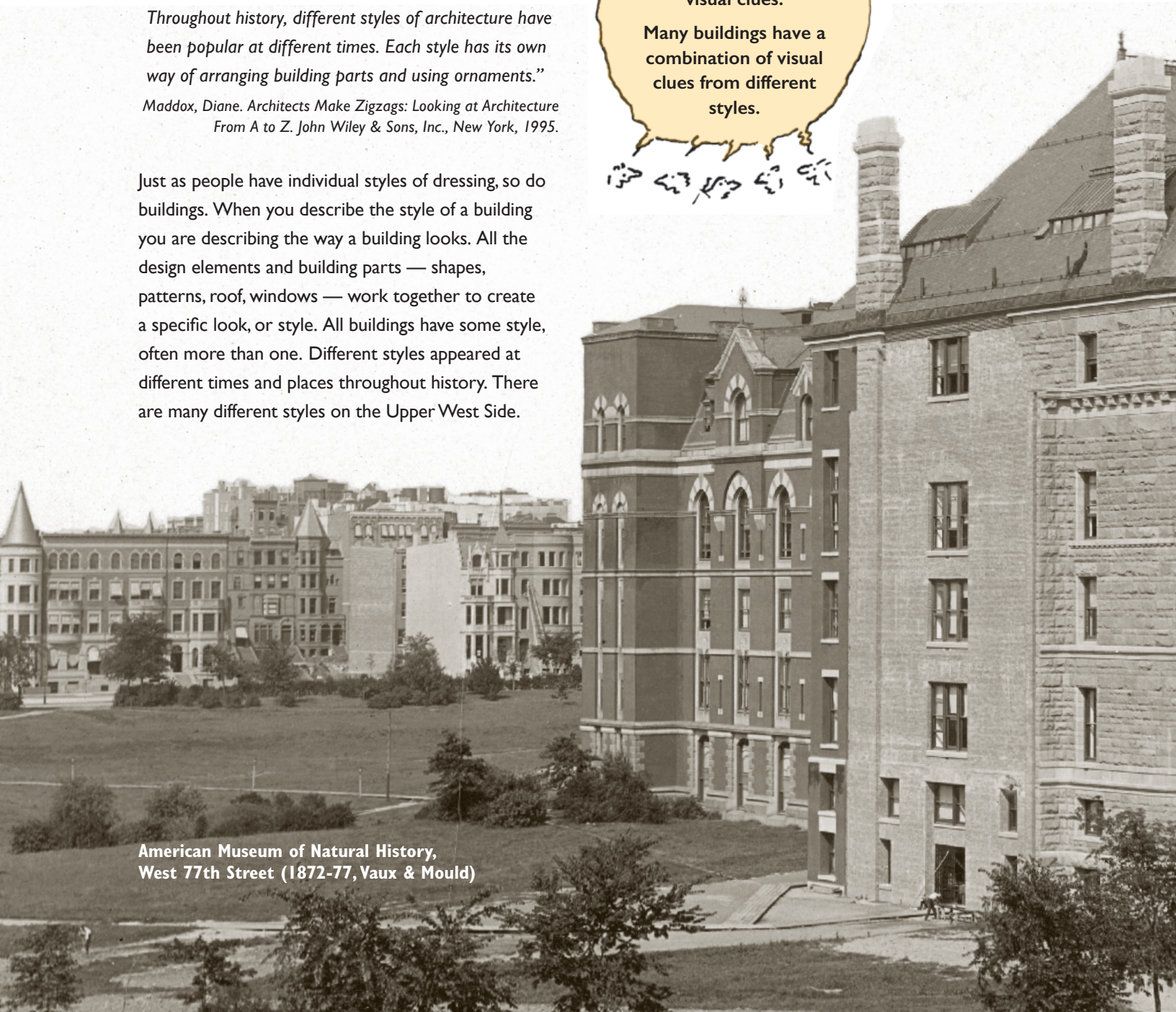
Just as people have individual styles of dressing, so do buildings. When you describe the style of a building you are describing the way a building looks. All the design elements and building parts — shapes, patterns, roof, windows — work together to create a specific look, or style. All buildings have some style, often more than one. Different styles appeared at different times and places throughout history. There are many different styles on the Upper West Side.

### WALK IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Find examples of the  
visual clues.

Many buildings have a  
combination of visual  
clues from different  
styles.

American Museum of Natural History,  
West 77th Street (1872-77, Vaux & Mould)



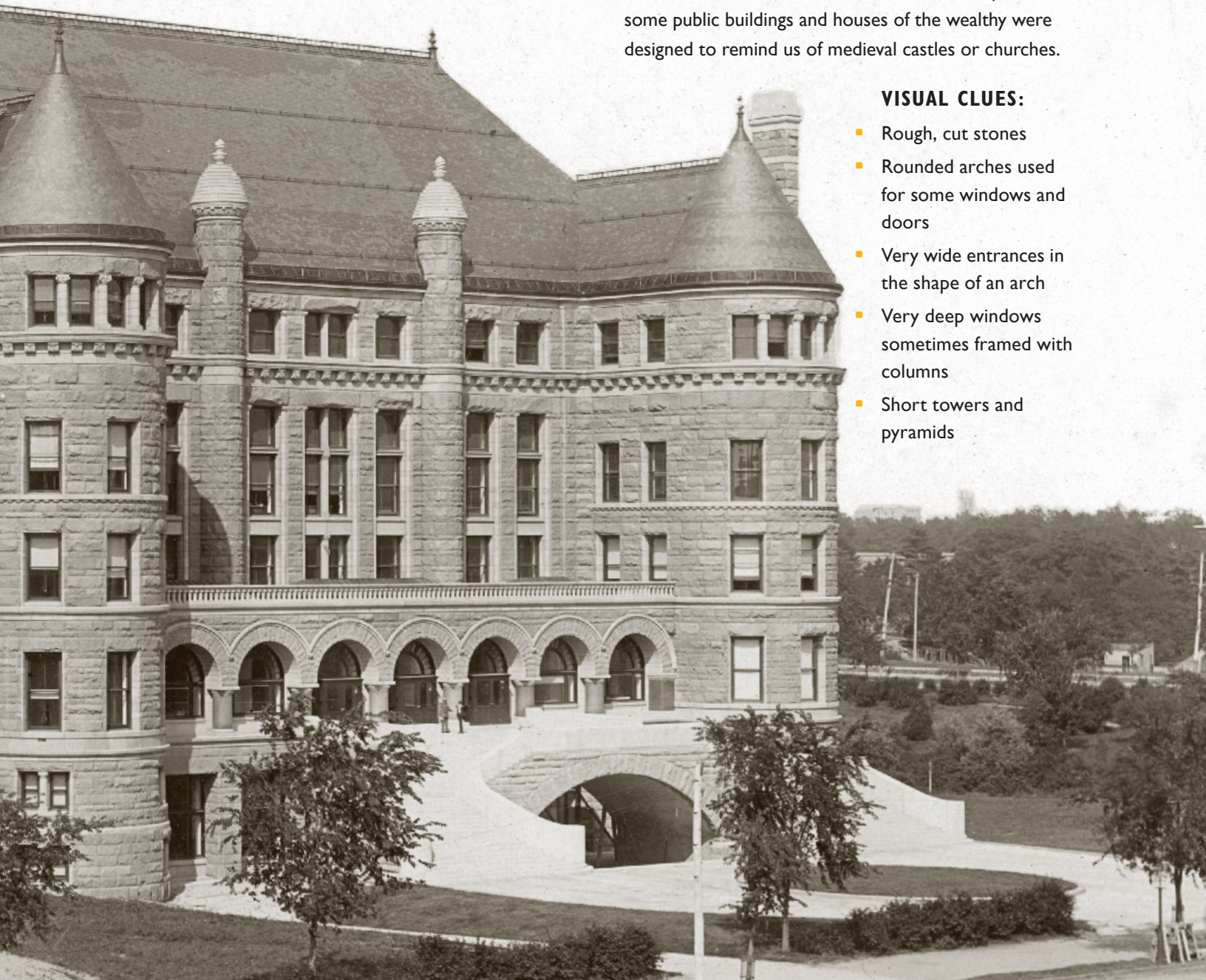


## ROMANESQUE REVIVAL

This is an old photograph of the American Museum of Natural History. The style is Romanesque Revival. In the United States from about 1880 to the early 1900s, some public buildings and houses of the wealthy were designed to remind us of medieval castles or churches.

### VISUAL CLUES:

- Rough, cut stones
- Rounded arches used for some windows and doors
- Very wide entrances in the shape of an arch
- Very deep windows sometimes framed with columns
- Short towers and pyramids





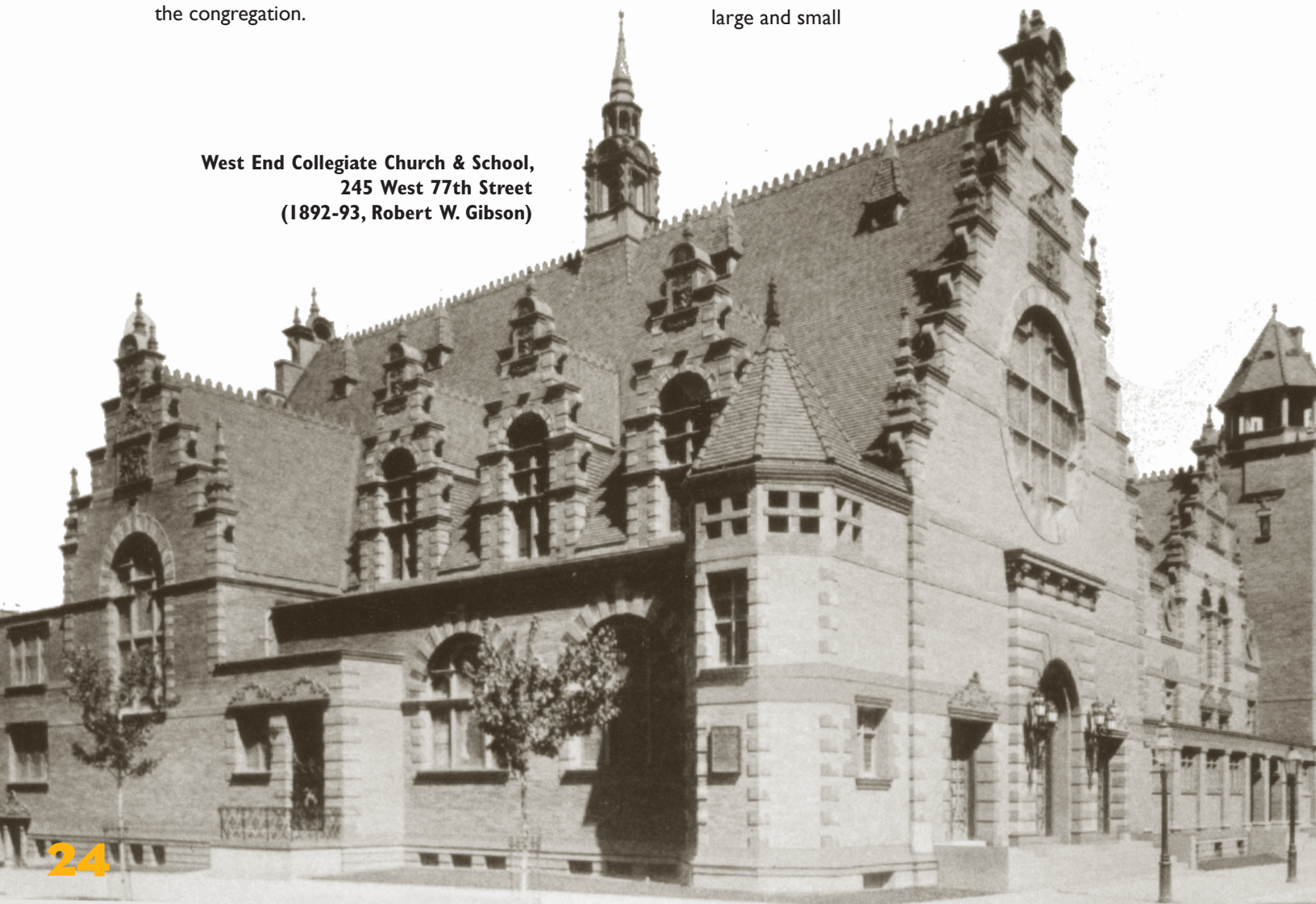
## DUTCH REVIVAL

The West End Collegiate Church was built in 1892, during a time when many people were moving to the Upper West Side. A new row of houses was built on West End Avenue and West 83rd Street in an older Dutch style. Using an older style is called a **revival**. The Church was part of this revival in the area, but its structure also represents the Dutch roots of the congregation.

### VISUAL CLUES:

- Decorative brick and stonework
- Dormers — windows that stick out from the roof
- Very steep roof with stepped gables (the triangular tops of walls)
- Quoins — stones at the corners of buildings that are placed in a special way, alternating large and small

West End Collegiate Church & School,  
245 West 77th Street  
(1892-93, Robert W. Gibson)





[illegible][illegible]

- [illegible]

A black and white photograph of the Chrysler Building, showcasing its iconic Art Deco architecture with its stepped-top design and numerous windows. A vintage car is parked on the street in front of the building.



## BEAUX ARTS

Many American architects from the late 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century studied in France and were influenced by the ideas and designs that had been used for buildings there for over 250 years. The Ansonia, pictured here, is a grand example of this style in America. It reminds us of a fancy wedding cake. The Beaux-Arts (Beaux rhymes with rose) style was often used for large public buildings.

### VISUAL CLUES:

- Columns in pairs
- Very grand entrance
- Ornamental swags, medallions, and sculpture
- Elaborate iron railings

Ansonia Hotel,  
2109 Broadway  
(1899-1904, Paul  
E.M. Duboy)





## GOthic REVIVAL

This style grew out of a fascination with romantic stories that took place in the Middle Ages. From 1830 to 1860, it was often used for churches, colleges, and other buildings. The fanciful Studio Building on the Upper West Side shows you many of the visual clues for Gothic Revival style.

### VISUAL CLUES:

- Pointed arches
- Towers
- Columns clustered together
- Pinnacles — pointed ornaments on the top of towers or roofs
- Tracery — ornament that looks like lace
- Gargoyles

**Studio Building, 44 West 77th Street  
(1909, Harde & Short)**





## HOUSING TYPES ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE

### A CASE STUDY: THE MANHASSET

The **Manhasset** is an 11-story apartment house located on Broadway between West 108th and 109th Streets on the Upper West Side. Apartment houses were a brand new building type imported from France. When they began appearing on the Upper West Side in the 1880s, families had to adjust to the idea of living in the same building as other families. Advantages of apartment living included not needing so many servants and having elevators, which were new technology then.

Built in 1899, the Manhasset is colorful and grand. The top floor roofs have a special form called **mansard**. The building covers the entire block-front, and, because it is located where Broadway makes a curve, it can be seen from many blocks away. Originally, the Manhasset was an eight-story apartment house. A few years later it was redesigned by two famous architects, Janes and Leo. In addition to making it taller, they added many shops on the first floor after the opening of the subway in 1904.



The Manhasset Apartments entrance,  
301 West 108th Street





## FUN FACT

People did not commonly have air conditioners in their homes until the 1950s. Before that, awnings were installed over windows to create shade and keep apartments from heating up. As you can see in the 1905 photograph of the Manhasset, many people who lived there used awnings to keep their apartments cool.

### VISUAL CLUES:

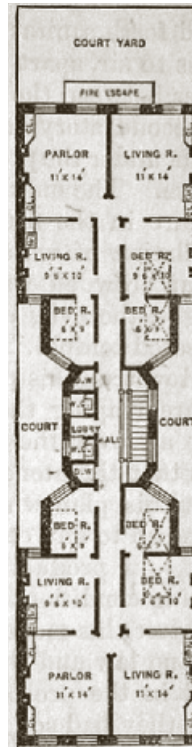
- Highly ornamented façades in different historical styles
- Lobbies, doormen and building staff
- Ten to fourteen stories tall with elevators
- Built mostly on the wider and fancier boulevards, like Broadway, Central Park West, and Riverside Drive

The Manhasset also tells us about the history of the people who lived in the building.

*The original 77 apartments, planned for upper middle class families, contained six, seven, or nine rooms with one to three baths. In 1905, the New York Census records the presence of many professional and business people. Most of the renters were born in the United States, but there were also a number of adults who were immigrants from Germany as well as others from Ireland, France, and Canada. As would be expected on the diverse Upper West Side, the residents appear to have been from various ethnic groups and religions and included Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. Each apartment included a single servant's room, and most residents had one or two live-in servants.*

(Andrew Scott Dolkart, LANDMARK WEST! Newsletter, Spring 1996)

The Manhasset Apartments, 301 West 108th Street  
(1901-1904, Janes & Leo), c. 1905



This is a dumbbell-shaped “Old Law” tenement floor plan, which is like a map of a building. It is as if there is no roof and you can see straight down.

**460 Amsterdam Avenue  
(1877, John G. Prague)**

## TENEMENTS

Tenements were the first building type in New York City made for more than one family. The word “tenement” comes from the word tenant, someone who rents his apartment from the owner of the building. Tenements were first built in the 1830s for poor people who had come from other countries to live here and did not yet have the means to live in single-family homes. The tenements were often extremely crowded. The first tenements were four stories high without elevators. They were 25 feet wide and had four tiny apartments on each floor with three rooms and one window per apartment.

The **Tenement House Act of 1867** mandated fire escapes, at least one bathroom for every 20 people, and no large farm animals in the building!

But, this was not enough improvement, and in 1879, there was another law, now called the “**Old Law.**” The Old Law stated that every room had to have a window. So new tenement buildings were five stories tall and built in a “dumbbell” shape creating two light shafts. Unfortunately, the windows were so small and there were so many people sharing the same small light shaft that this still did not solve the problem of making the tenements healthy places to live.



West side of Amsterdam  
Avenue between 49th and  
50th Streets, May 15, 1932



## FUN FACT

460 Amsterdam Avenue was built under the 1867 law, and is the oldest surviving tenement on the Upper West Side. It was built with storefronts on the ground floor, but without bathrooms, and there could have been small farm animals living there too!

In 1901, another law was passed. This is called the “**New Law**.” The New Law demanded that new tenements be much wider and that they have space around the buildings, creating courtyards rather than shafts. They were also usually six or seven stories tall, still with no elevator, but they were more spacious with better air circulation.

### VISUAL CLUES:

- Style often matched rowhouses on nearby side streets
- Highly ornamented façades in different historical styles
- Ornamental fire escapes
- Four to seven stories tall without an elevator
- Stores on the ground floor
- Built mostly on Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues because of the transportation there



**35-39 West 89th Street (1894-95,  
Gilbert A. Schellenger), c. 1915**

## ROWHOUSES

In addition to larger apartment buildings and tenements, rowhouses are a common building type on the Upper West Side. You can still find whole blocks of rowhouses here, many protected as part of historic districts. Often many of the rowhouses on one block were built in the same style by the same builder at the same time between the 1880s and 1900. There may be a style pattern, like every other roof will be pointed and every other roof will be flat.

Rowhouses were originally built for single families. Sometimes they are called “brownstones” when they have a thin layer, or veneer, of brownstone — a chocolate-colored sandstone — on the façade. Most of the brownstone on the Upper West Side came from a quarry in Connecticut. The builders used brownstone over the brick because it provides a softer surface and is easier to carve into or sculpt, allowing for very decorative façades.

### VISUAL CLUES:

- Usually built in groups and share a wall
- Three to five stories, never tall enough to need a fire escape
- Large cornices often decorated with dentils (tooth-like projections) held up by brackets
- Highly ornamented façades
- Entrances can have columns and arches
- Stoops lead up to the front doors
- Bay windows



Preservation is similar to the way people collect objects or photographs. Today we keep family albums of photographs and videos to help us understand where we came from. It is one way to treasure the past.

Preservation is about keeping memories and “collecting” buildings and neighborhoods for future generations.

In what ways does do you think the Upper West Side looks the same today as it did 50, 100 or 200 years ago? Why did it change? Let’s examine how the Upper West Side has changed over time. To do this we can interview people about the past and look at old photographs and drawings. This chapter explores the history of the neighborhood.



Photograph from a family album, c. 1920s

**THEN**



## **HISTORY DETECTIVE**

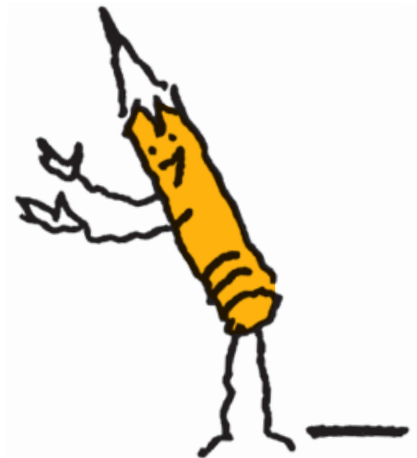
Blast to the past. You are now ready to become a history detective and uncover clues to the people, buildings, and neighborhoods of long ago. As a history detective, you use historic documents to tell a story of the Upper West Side. Preservationists, historians, and architects use old photographs, drawings, and maps to discover how people lived long ago.

- Look at the 1905 photograph of the Upper West Side (“THEN”). Find the clues to the past.
- Compare it to the present day photograph taken in the same location (“NOW”). “Read” the photograph to find out how the scene has changed and how it is still the same.

**NOW**



View north on Broadway from 71st Street. Top: c. 1905. Bottom: 2017





## TIME TRAVELER PHOTOGRAPHER

Now that you are an expert in finding history clues, there are more pieces to the story of the Upper West Side. Imagine you are a photographer who travels through time. You took the photograph in the same location but in two different time periods — one



West End Avenue and West 94th Street, c. 1889

### THEN

#### WHAT I SEE THROUGH MY CAMERA IN 1889

- Who might live in the house?
- What materials were used to build the house?
- What is planted in the fields?
- What are fences used for?
- Describe the roadway. What might be used for transportation?
- How does it feel to walk along the road?

in 1889 and the other in the present day. Describe what you see as you take the photographs. Use the questions below to guide you. Write your comments on a sheet of paper.



West End Avenue and West 94th Street, 2017

### NOW

#### WHAT I SEE THROUGH MY CAMERA TODAY

- What types of buildings do people work and live in?
- What materials are used?
- Describe the street activity. What transportation is used?
- How does it feel to walk along this street?
- How is life different today from 1890?



## TIME TRAVELER REPORTER

Imagine you are a reporter for *The New York Times* in 1900 and in the present time. Your job is to write the architecture column for the Sunday paper. Your assignment is to review an elegant new building



**“Bishop Potter’s Residence,” Riverside Drive and West 89th Street (c.1900, attributed to George P. Hall & Sons)**

on West 89th Street and Riverside Drive. Write a newspaper column about each building and its surroundings, using the questions below. Write your column on a sheet of paper.



**Site of former “Bishop Potter’s Residence,” Riverside Drive and West 89th Street, 2017**

## THEN

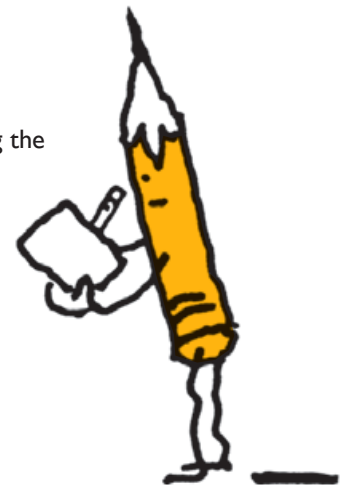
### GO BACK IN TIME TO 1900

- What is special about this building? Think about the size, shapes, building parts, ornament, and style of the architecture.
- What do you like about the building? What do you dislike about it?
- Who lives in this building? What do you think life is like living here?
- What is it like walking along the street?

## NOW

### COME BACK TO THE PRESENT

Write a second column reviewing the apartment building now in the same location. Use the same questions as before.





*“Preservation is everything people do to keep buildings in working order and save them to be used for another day. Making sure that the roof is watertight and the outside is painted helps preserve a house. So does joining a group to stop a landmark from being torn down. Preservation means caring for buildings worth saving.”*

*Maddox, Diane. Architects Make Zigzags:  
Looking at Architecture From A to Z. John  
Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1995.*

Preservation is not just about designating landmarks. It also means keeping the building or streetscape in a condition that recalls its past and makes it usable in the present and future. Think about a special book. You save it to remind you of when you were younger. What happens if the book cover is torn off? Its appearance and value is changed. A building can be ruined if it is changed without taking into consideration its design, style, and history. Preservation of a building protects our history for the future.



**Demolition of All Angels Church,  
West End Avenue and West 81st Street  
(1890, Samuel B. Snook), c. 1979**

## PRESERVATION ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE

### A CASE STUDY: THE HOTEL BELLECLAIRE

The Hotel Belleclaire, built in 1902, is an individual landmark building located at the corner of Broadway and West 77th Street. Designed by the famous architect Emery Roth, it is unique because it is one of very few art nouveau style buildings in the city and was one of Emery Roth's first designs. This elaborate style gives the building a grand, luxurious look.

Like rowhouses, apartment buildings, and tenements, apartment hotels were another common building type on the Upper West Side and in New York City. Wealthier people often lived in them for a long time because they provided the comforts of a hotel, with the privacy of separate apartments.

Over time, the Hotel Belleclaire was neglected and badly altered. The tower and **cupola** (a domed roof) were removed, and the original entrance was moved from Broadway, around the corner on to West 77th Street. By the 1990s, chunks of the building were falling off and the sidewalk had to be protected.

- What do you like about the building?
- What building parts do you recognize?
- What story do the photographs tell?
- The street level of the building has changed a lot over the years — why do you think this is so?



Hotel Belleclaire (1902, Emery Roth), c. 1910

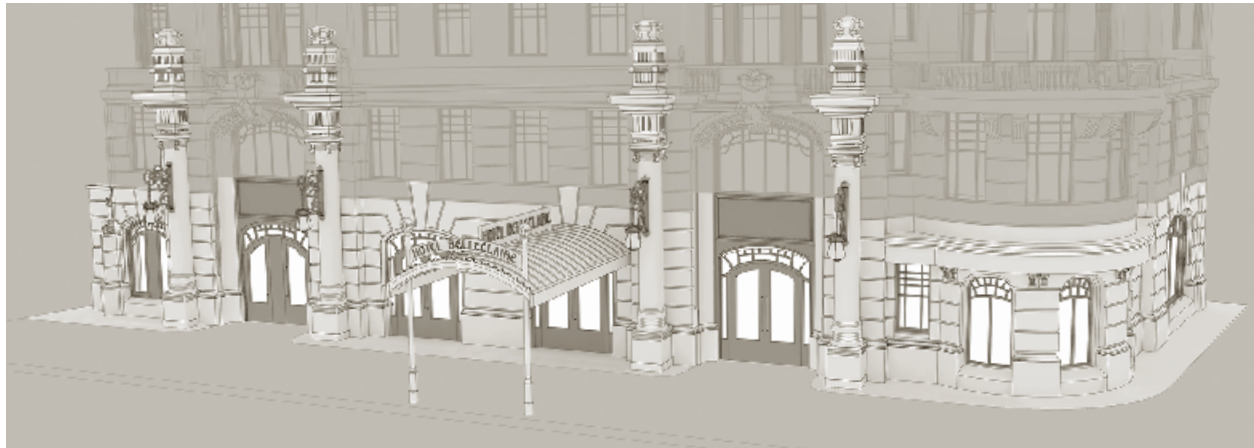


Hotel Belleclaire c. 2015





Detail of the Hotel Belleclaire street level in 1910



Detail of proposed storefront renovation and restoration, 2016, by Studio Castellano

Whenever the owner of a designated landmark wants to make an alteration to the outside of the building, the owner first needs permission from the **Landmarks Preservation Commission**.

For a big change, the owner applies for a permit called a **Certificate of Appropriateness**. This process involves building owners, architects, the Commission, and members of the public. Everyone comes together at a public hearing to have their opinions of the proposed project heard.

In 2015, the owners of the Hotel Belleclaire presented plans to the **Landmarks Preservation Commission** to restore the street level to its original appearance, including putting the white limestone back on the ground floor of the building.

- What differences in the photographs do you notice first?
- In addition to the current West 77th Street entrance, there is a new entrance planned for Broadway, in a different place from the original one — why do you think this has been done?

## RESTORATION AT WORK

Restoration of a building means taking away thoughtless changes and replacing them according to an understanding of the building's style and surroundings. For example, the cornice of a rowhouse was removed many years ago by the owner. Then a new owner restores the building in the original building style so that it now looks like the cornices of the buildings next door. When a building is restored, its appearance reminds us of the way it looked when it was built. Restoration helps to maintain the building in good condition for the future.

## RESTORATION EXPERTS

You are now restoration experts. Look at the buildings that were built with the same design, style, and building parts. Two of the four rowhouses in this photograph need restoration and repair.

- The two buildings in the middle were changed. How were they changed? What was added to these buildings? What is missing from these buildings? Look at the buildings on the right for clues.
- Restore the two buildings in the middle by adding the missing building parts. On a separate piece of paper, trace the buildings and add the restored building parts to the row of houses.

**West End Avenue rowhouses between  
West 90th and 91st Streets**





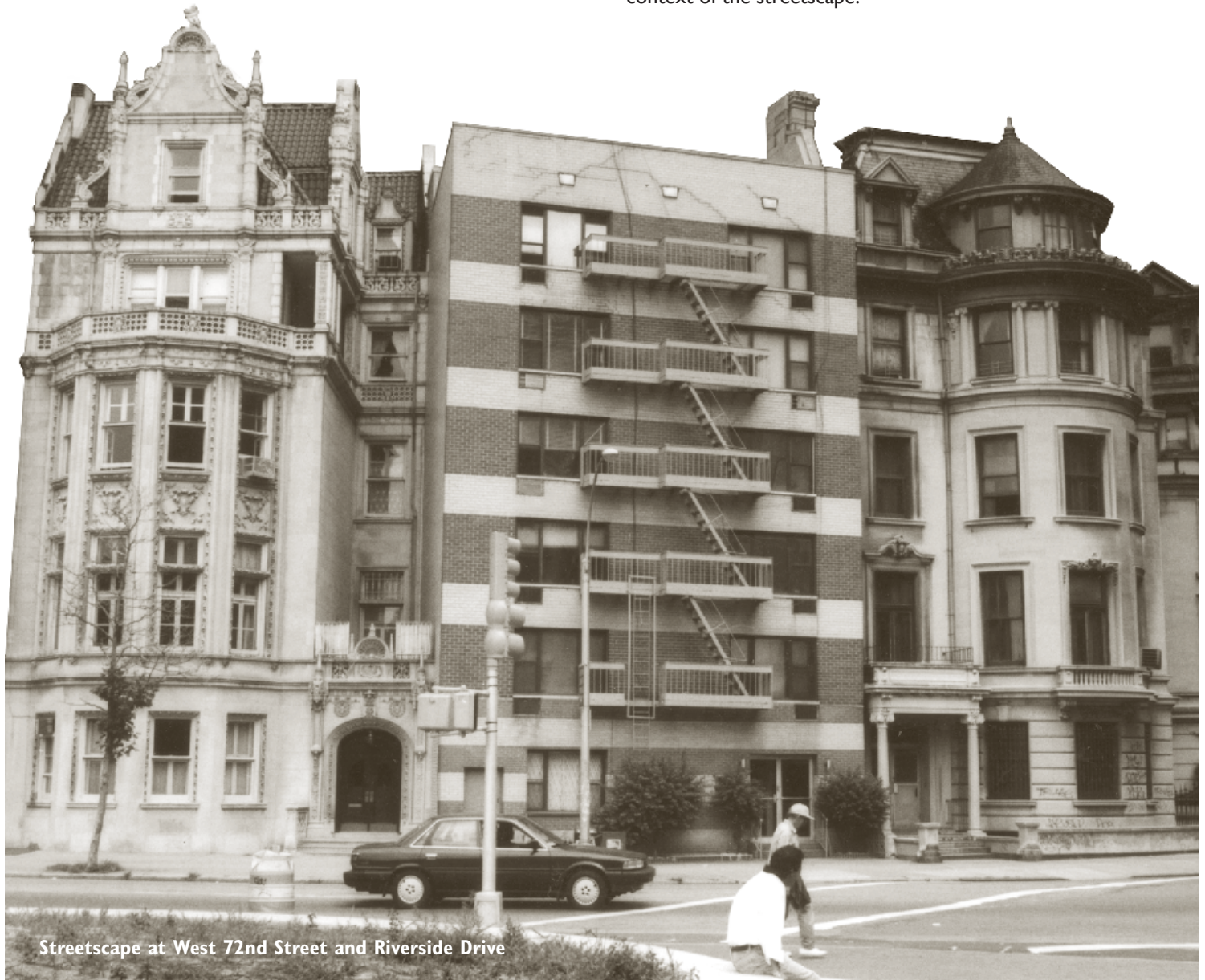




## DESIGN DETECTIVE

When buildings combine in a row along a street, it is called a **streetscape**. In a streetscape, all buildings' designs, style, and ornament work together to create

a special look or feeling called **context**. When new construction is planned in an historic district, preservationists work with builders to maintain the context of the streetscape.

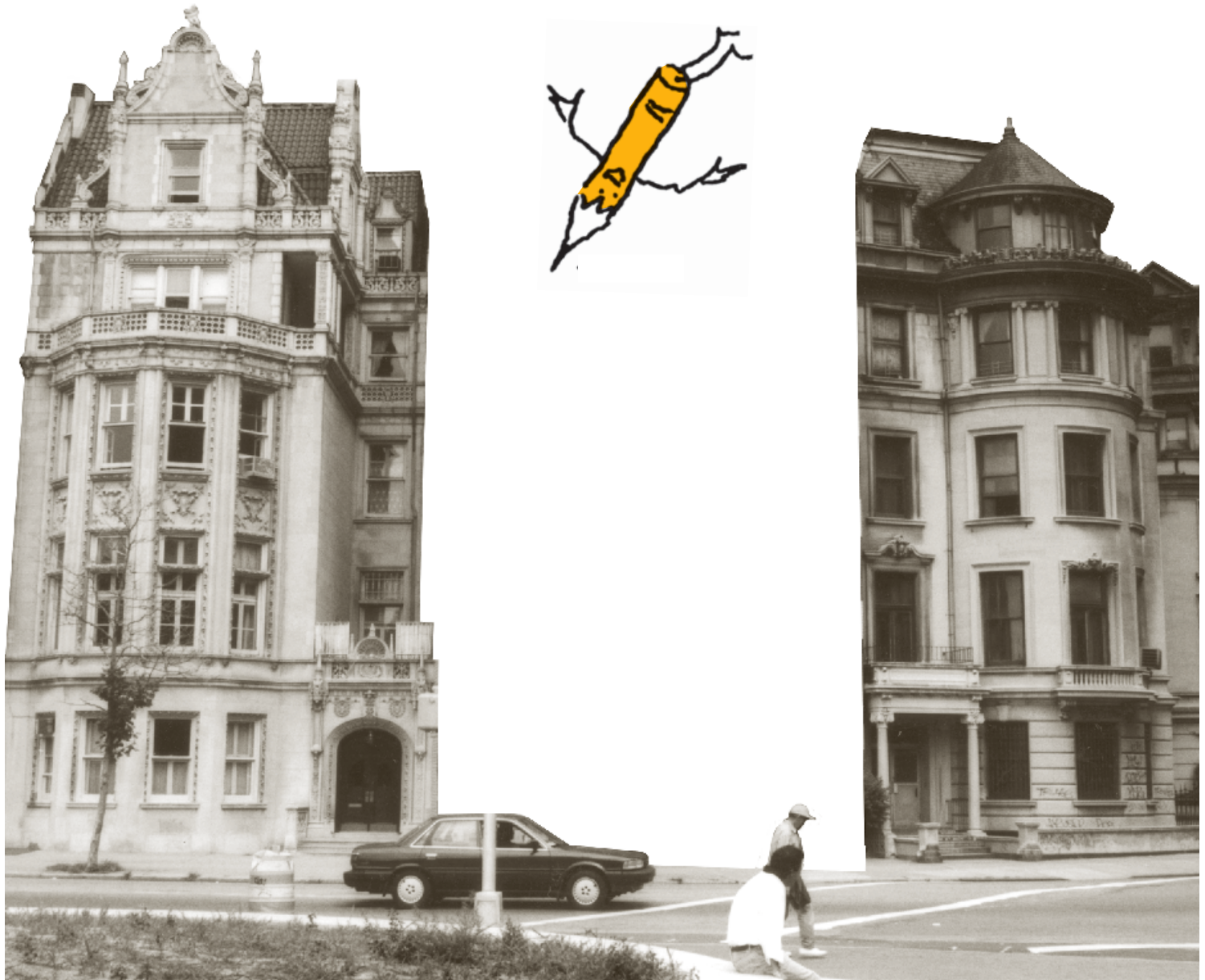


Streetscape at West 72nd Street and Riverside Drive



- You are the design detective. Your assignment is to redesign the middle building to fit in context with the other buildings.

- On a separate piece of paper, trace the outlines of the two buildings and add in your new design for the empty space in the streetscape below.



## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE

The fast growth and development of the Upper West Side can be summarized in one word: transportation! Before the invention of fast, safe, public transit, the Upper West Side was not a popular place to live. Why? Because it was far away from the commerce and action of downtown, where most people worked. Once New Yorkers were able to travel longer distances in less time, they began to move into new neighborhoods.

## TIMELINE

**1864:** The Eighth Avenue Horsecar line is extended to West 84th Street.

**1878:** The Ninth Avenue (Amsterdam Avenue) Elevated train is extended, with stops at West 72nd Street, 81st Street, 93rd Street, and 104th Street.

**1904:** The IRT (Interborough Rapid Transit) subway, which we use today — the 1, 2, and 3 lines — is extended through the Upper West Side.

Photo of subway  
construction. c. 1901





## 72ND STREET CONTROL HOUSE

The arrival of the first segment of the subway system on the Upper West Side in 1904 was controversial. Not everyone liked the new 72nd Street subway station, called a “control house.” There were many different opinions about buildings, just as there are now. In fact, a group called the West End Association wrote a statement calling the building, “not only an offense to the eye, but a very serious danger to life and limb.”

## SENSIBLE NEW DESIGN

By the year 2000, a new control house was needed to make it less crowded and easier to get to the subway. A lot of planning and consultation went into the project. The old station was also restored and improved.

The city decided that the 72nd Street subway station needed additional entrances to accommodate all the people who used the station. There were many different aspects of the project to consider, including a landmark building (the original control house) as well as a scenic landmark (Verdi Square). Neighbors were very involved in the process, meeting with the architects and speaking at the **Landmarks Preservation Commission** and other public forums.

After much advocacy and community input, the Commission approved a new, modern-style building designed by architect Richard Dattner in 2002 that also respects the original structure.

**Contemporary aerial photo of  
old and new subway control houses**



## THE MAGIC OF MAPS

How can you describe the neighborhood where you go to school? One way to find out about the buildings, streets, parks, and other features of the Upper West Side is to look at a map. Maps provide us with information about where places are in relation to other places and to natural boundaries, such as parks and rivers. Let's begin with a special kind of map.

### MAP YOUR MEMORY

- Draw a memory map of the neighborhood surrounding your school. Memory maps are mental maps: what you remember in your mind without looking at real maps or drawing from what you see outside.
- Draw what you remember — buildings, streets, outdoor spaces, storefronts, traffic and street signs, benches, lampposts, and even garbage cans.
- Draw places you go to that are special to you — like an after-school center or a playground.
- Label the streets and avenues and your school.

### A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Usually you see the buildings and streets of the neighborhood from the ground as you walk. You also can see parts of the neighborhood from a window of a building. Look at the Upper West Side streetmap on the right. A streetmap is an **aerial** view. Aerial views are seen from above, from the air. They allow us to look at the neighborhood from another viewpoint — as if you were a bird, or looking down from a plane.

- What do you see on the Upper West Side aerial view?
- What does the aerial view show us that the street map doesn't?



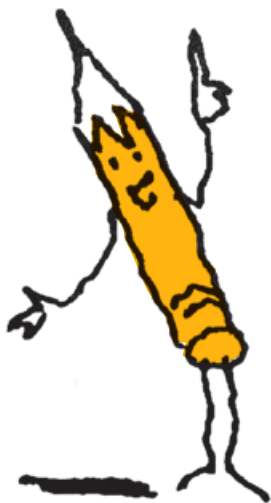
This map was created in 1860, before there were drones or even planes! How did they know what the neighborhood looked like from above?



## MAPPING THE UPPER WEST SIDE

Now let's look at the map in the back pocket of this book. Street maps are not made from memory. They record everything that is really there. Look at this map of the Upper West Side to do the following activity.

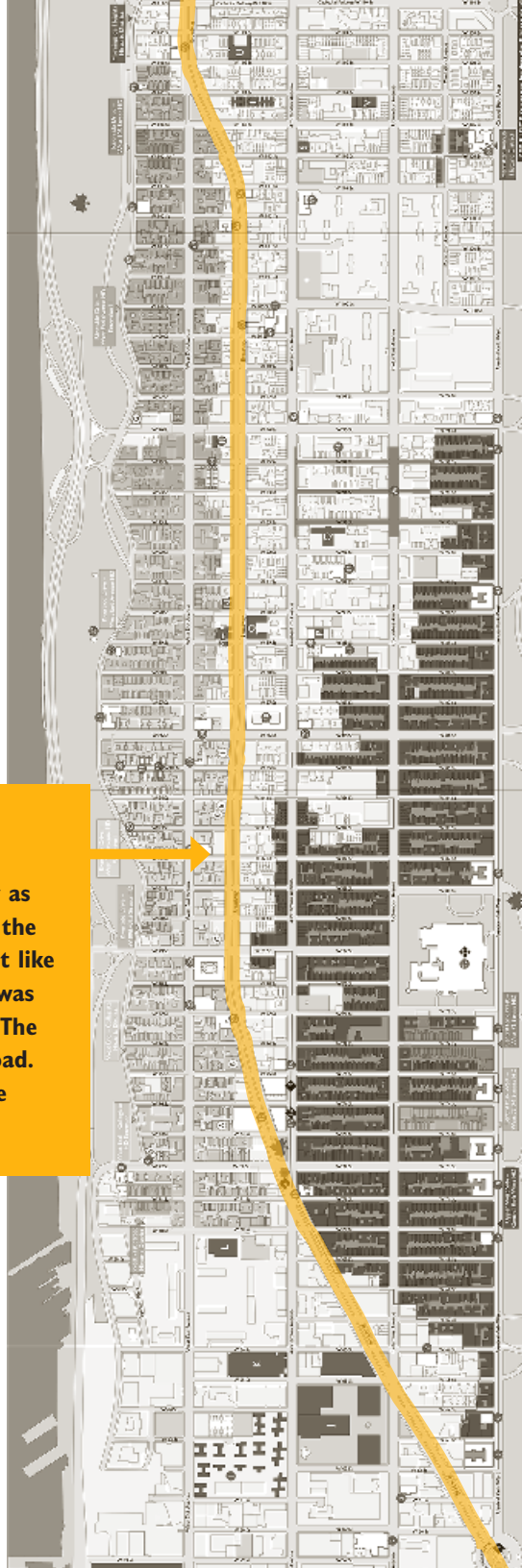
- Find the streets that border the Upper West Side on the north, south, east, and west.
- Find the parks and the bodies of water that border the Upper West Side on the east and west.
- Find your school.
- If you live on the Upper West Side, find your home.
- Trace your route from home to school on the map with your fingers.
- Find Broadway.



### FUN FACT

The long street we know today as Broadway curves right through the Upper West Side. It is not straight like the rest of the grid because it was a Lenape Native American trail. The Dutch called it Bloemendaal Road.

In 1868, the city changed the name to Broadway.



## PRESERVATION IS GREEN

In addition to keeping the character and history of our neighborhoods alive, historic preservation also benefits the environment. By keeping — and restoring — what already exists, we can prevent demolition debris from ending up in a landfill. One way that people preserve buildings is through adaptive reuse. This is when the building's function, or use, changes over time. For example, the Central Savings (now Apple) Bank on Broadway at West 73rd Street is still a bank on the bottom floors, but the top four stories have been converted to apartments, and the basement is a baseball school!

Did you know that most rowhouses on the Upper West Side have open space behind them — and that

many of these backyards are filled with greenery such as trees, plants, and bushes? Each block can contain a mini urban forest inside it!

By preserving the buildings that surround the open backyards, the green spaces are protected as well. Some of the benefits of the mini urban forests include:

- Lower temperatures: less concrete and more trees
- Cleaner air: trees clean the surrounding air
- Improved water drainage: dirt and grass soak up more water than concrete

Shorter buildings also allow more sunlight to reach sidewalks and parks.

**This is an aerial view map of an entire city block between Columbus Avenue and Central Park West, from West 86th to West 87th Street**





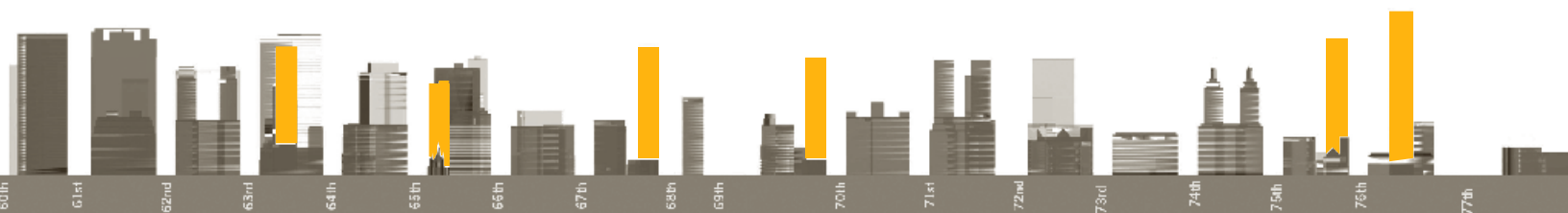
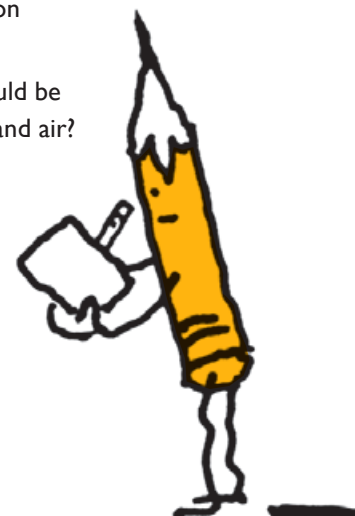
## PRESERVATION IS OUR FUTURE

New York City is very special because it is one of the oldest cities in the United States and because we have a Landmarks Law to protect the architecture of our long history. Within New York City, our Upper West Side neighborhood is unique, with its many landmarks and nine historic districts, made up of blocks of rowhouses, avenues of tenement buildings, and boulevards lined with **distinguished** (famous and excellent) apartment buildings. One day we may be able to show our own children the building we lived in, the elementary school we attended, and the museums we visited. Special sites like these have something called “sense of place” — like the roots of a tree, they make us feel secure. They also help make a community **livable** (pleasant to live in). Of course, these places will only last if we are **vigilant** (watching carefully) and speak up to protect our history. For preservation to work, we must join together to save the past for the future.

Here are some questions to think about:

- Do we need older buildings and artifacts to truly understand our own past?
- Why is a photograph of an old building different than seeing the building itself?
- What do you think about new **towers** (very tall buildings) rising up all over our city?
- Do you notice their shadows on sidewalks and parks?
- Do you think new towers should be allowed to block our sunlight and air?

Remember, **the future depends on you.**



**Can new towers be built along Central Park West? The answer is yes, unless together we advocate for a different future.**

## PRESERVATION PROJECTS: NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Now it's your turn to be a preservationist and join the **Best of the West**. Here are some projects you can do to keep the past for the future and save the history and architecture of the Upper West Side.

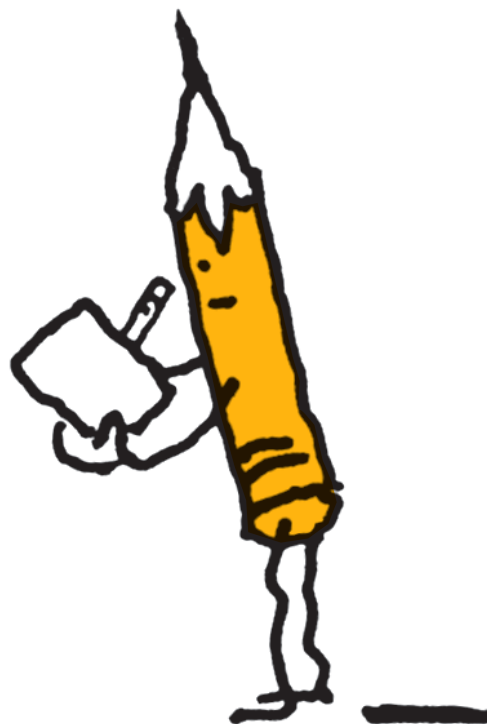
Educate your classmates about preservation issues, publish a landmark calendar, write about and give walking tours of your neighborhood, conduct an oral history, and present Neighborhood Preservation Awards to people who are active in local preservation.

### AN INTERVIEW WITH HISTORY

One way to find out about the past is to listen to the memories of people. You can write about their lives and neighborhoods and how they changed over the course of time. Interview an adult who has lived for at least 10 years in your building or a building near your home or school. Find out about the neighborhood and its history from her or his point of view by asking the following questions. Record the interview on another piece of paper. Draw a picture or paste a photograph of the person.

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- How long have you lived on the Upper West Side?
- When did you move here? Why?
- How has the neighborhood changed since you have lived here?
- What are some important or significant changes in the neighborhood?
- What did you like about the neighborhood then?
- What do you like about the neighborhood now?





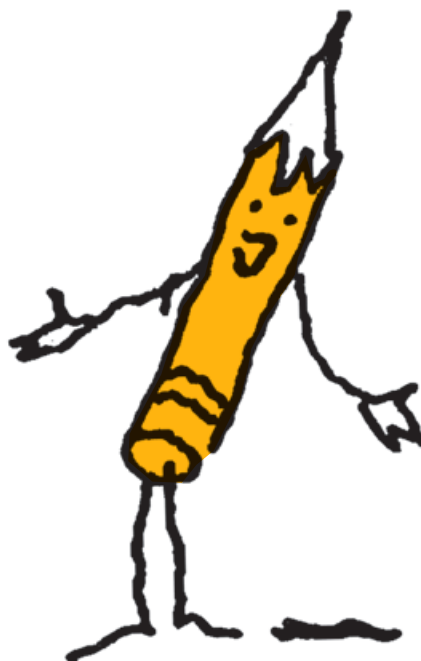
## NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION AWARD

Find people who are working on preservation projects.

Interview local designers, historians, preservationists, and community members who are restoring a building, building new structures to fit the context of a streetscape, or working to designate an area as an historic district or a building as a landmark. Write a summary of each interview on a separate piece of paper. Include photographs or drawings of their preservation work. Hang up all the interviews on a bulletin board or create a book. Your class can vote on the one or two people who will receive a class or school award.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What is your preservation project?
- Who works with you on this project?
- Why is it important for the future of the Upper West Side?
- Why do you participate in preservation projects?
- What other preservation projects have you been involved with?
- What still needs to be improved or saved on the Upper West Side for the future?



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LANDMARK  WEST!

THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE