



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
70 West 71<sup>st</sup> Street  
December 12, 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 70 West 71<sup>st</sup> Street, a neo-Grec style rowhouse designed by Christian Blinn and built in 1878. The application is to legalize the installation of awnings and wall at the areaway without Landmarks Preservation Commission permit(s).

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 this case, our Committee is concerned with how the applicant has disregarded the process of procuring permission from the Commission, and how noticeably they have altered the façade of this landmark building. In inconsistently tacking on awnings, which are not retractable, the applicant has altered the character of this residential street in a way that is not seasonal, nor a response to weather conditions, nor a signal to passersby that their restaurant is open. Instead, these unpermitted awnings impose a permanent, year-round change to the block; unlike neighbors Bin 71 who do use retractable awnings and planter partitions on the avenue side of this very landmark.

Our Committee is apprehensive about the precedent that would be set by an approval of such alterations, as it would allow the intrusion of the avenue's commercial aspects deeper and deeper into this residential brownstone block. While most love and appreciate the medley of home life and commerce that New York City living provides, it is of interest to all involved that businesses respect the primarily residential neighborhood that supports them.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee recommends denial of this legalization.