



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
51 West 81<sup>st</sup> Street  
February 20, 2018**

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 51 West 81<sup>st</sup> Street, a Beaux-Arts style hotel building designed by Frederick C. Brown and built in 1903-05. The application is to establish a masterplan governing the future installation of windows.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee appreciates the applicants' efforts to establish a window masterplan. Such measures help guard our landmarks against the haphazard piecemeal changes that can significantly degrade their architectural integrity.

The applicant's intent to establish continuity with the existing configurations is clear. Thus, while ideally we would see a return to the wood window frames and sidelights denoted in the original architect's plans, we can understand codifying the current state. Accordingly, we appreciate the retention of the transom elements as proposed.

However, we must comment on the second floor conditions. Comparing the proposed designs to both the historical and current fenestration of the landmark, we see a great deal of evolution. What were originally multipane windows with transoms and sidelights now are double-hung windows with transoms, and are proposed to be replaced by casement windows, which echo neither era, and which differ both in appearance and in operation from all preceding manifestations and contexts.

The historic sidelights, which complimented the landmark's rusticated stone, were originally reflected across the entire façade, providing a pleasing cohesion and unity in line with the architect's original intent—and the loss of these touches is felt most keenly at the lower levels, made particularly visible due to their size and proximity to the street.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee could approve of a masterplan that included provisions correcting the second floor fenestration.