



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
17 West 67th Street
March 27, 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 17 West 67th Street, a Neo-Renaissance/Romanesque Revival style apartment building designed by Gronenberg and Leuchtag and built in 1930-31. The application is to replace windows.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee sees a number of ways in which this application can and should be improved to better serve this landmark. We understand the applicants' desire for consistency in their apartment windows, but windows are not mere personal amenities; in a historic district, they are also elements of a streetscape, defining features of a landmark, and a clear signifier of the historic character of a neighborhood. The purpose of a Certificate of Appropriateness is not to sign off on what is easiest and most coveted by the applicant—it is to determine what is most appropriate to a landmark and its history.

In the case of 17 West 67th, the history of the Upper West Side Central Park West Historic District as well as that of the 67th Street Artists' Colony is being disregarded. Examples *do* still remain of the handsome multi-pane windows that graced this building originally. While we agree that some of these are in poor condition, the purpose of work on our historic sites should always be to maintain, enhance, and augment what we *do* retain of their historic fabric. The applicant here is not only trying to change the material and operation of these windows, but also to introduce an entirely new configuration to the mix, without sufficient respect for that history.

We would recommend a two-part plan to the applicant. Firstly, in this specific residence, we urge them to pursue restoration of the original steel casement windows. Secondly, we strongly recommend a building-wide masterplan that would aim to protect extant historical material and correct the intrusion of the one-over-one double hung windows which mar the current façade.

Such plans should be our first steps to ensure the protection of the historic character of our landmarks. If the applicants absolutely insist that such common-sense actions are not feasible and that the materials and operations of these windows must change, we at least request they adhere to six-over-six and eight-over-eight configurations rather than six-over-one and eight-over-one.

Still, we fear this counsel may simply go out the window with the winds of changes sweeping through the LPC. Under the proposed rules changes, secondary façade windows in large buildings such as this may already be a forgone conclusion, addressed at staff level, and reviewed with the blinds drawn, and the public blocked from considering such piecemeal degradations of our landmarks. These rules changes would in fact encourage such inconsistency. For these reasons, the LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee recommends denial of this application.