



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Central Harlem West 130<sup>th</sup>-132<sup>nd</sup> Street Historic District  
April 17, 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 the proposed designation of the Central Harlem West 130<sup>th</sup>-132<sup>nd</sup> Street Historic District. The proposal would create protection for rowhouses located on 130<sup>th</sup>, 131<sup>st</sup>, 132<sup>nd</sup>, and 133<sup>rd</sup> Streets between Lenox Avenue and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard.

LANDMARK WEST! wishes to express our resounding support for the designation of the Central Harlem West 130<sup>th</sup>-132<sup>nd</sup> Street Historic District. This designation will create protection across four blocks of stunning brownstones rich in history and architectural delights. It is high time that these blocks—and uptown—get their due time in the spotlight. Harlem is the birthplace of some of New York—and America's—most iconic and ground-breaking cultural, literary, musical, and social movements, yet despite this incredible legacy, it is sorely lacking in measures to preserve its physical, architectural history.

Historic preservation has a duty not just to the dominant narratives of this city. Working to preserve the narratives of people of color, of women, of LGBTQ people is one of preservation's most important responsibilities. These histories are ones which are especially susceptible to the ravages of time, to lack of funding, to lack of attention. Preserving the architectural fabric of the legacy of black history in Harlem is one step closer to ensuring that this history cannot be forgotten or built over. It must be celebrated. It must be commemorated. For that to be possible, it must be preserved. Upon evaluation of the architectural and historic richness of this area, the Commission has expanded the scope of this district through the north side of 132<sup>nd</sup> Street, and we commend them for this recognition of the area's tremendous value.

In recent years, the Commission has made some significant moves to immortalize diverse histories in our city, to protect spaces that have great significance to narratives beyond the white, the male, the moneyed, the colonial. You have worked to recognize and lift up the complexities of history. As Chair Srinivasan herself has said, "The experiences of different communities are fundamental to New York's legacy and culture, and should be protected and preserved—particularly when they're reflected in our built environment." We ask that in that spirit, the Central Harlem West 130<sup>th</sup>-132<sup>nd</sup> Street Historic District be entered in to the pantheon of protected treasures that New York is so blessed to contain. We call on you to save Harlem now!