



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
53-57 West 70th Street
February 12, 2019**

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 53-57 West 70th Street, within the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District. This landmark is comprised of three Renaissance Revival style rowhouses designed by Charles Buek & Co. and built in 1890-1891 and altered in 1959 by Frank S. Lindgren. Application is to alter the buildings' base and areaway.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee recognizes that these rowhouses have been badly altered for nearly half of their existence. While the proposed work to remove the white glazed brick facing at the ground level and replace it with brownstone will not restore the original look and feel of this level, it is a better semblance of original intent if not a missed opportunity to truly correct a wrong.

Lamenting the absent features of cornice, stoop and areaways can only go so far. While these original features may never return, one mustn't settle for further intrusions of foreign urban design. The trash enclosures do not fit historic precedent. Areaways would have had partial knee walls, but never a 33' 5 1/2" long one, and never one with a planter on top to further block the base. These enclosures give cover to vermin and entice nesting, whereas stand-alone bins could more easily be cleaned and maintained. Following a false precedent only perpetuates the cycle of diminishing the original look and feel of the district. For these reasons, the LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee would request that the Landmarks Preservation Commission approve the façade work but not the trash enclosure portion of this application.