



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
137 West 71st Street, under consideration for Individual Landmarks Designation
June 4, 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 James Baldwin Residence, 137 West 71st Street for Individual Landmark status.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee is in strong support for Individual Landmark designation of the one-time home of James Baldwin from 1965-1987.

In 1963, just two years after this 1890 rowhouse was converted to apartments and two years before Baldwin would move in, Henry Luce's Time Magazine, which had months earlier identified Martin Luther King Jr. as their Man of the Year, and was then boasting the world's largest circulation of any weekly news magazine described Baldwin:

"There is not another writer—white or black—who expresses with such poignancy and abrasiveness the dark realities of the racial ferment in North and South"

This appeared as part of their cover story of May 17, 1963—56 years and two weeks ago today.

But Baldwin's legacy didn't stop there, he pushed boundaries and represented bi-sexual and same sex relationships in his writing, playwrighting and activism. Recognizing—and celebrating—the influential staying power of his necessary and outspoken legacy amidst a time of significant cultural turmoil foils curiously with our current social and political circumstances.

Designation of the James Baldwin residence celebrates great strides in social history, ones forged on the Upper West Side, and yet still causing distant reverberations.

Reading Baldwin's writing today reminds us, that while we have come a long way, there is still much work to be done. Recognition and designation is a beginning.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee supports designation of 137 West 71st Street as an Individual Landmark.