



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
2 West 64<sup>th</sup> Street – New York Society for Ethical Culture  
September 17, 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 2 West 64<sup>th</sup> Street, an Art Nouveau Style institutional building designed by Robert D. Kohn and built in 1909-10. This is an Individual Landmark, which is also within the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District. The application is to install signage.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee finds the proposal somewhat extraneous. Adjacent the Ethical Culture School, this landmark is already well recognized. One is hard-pressed to imagine an errant tourist straying from Times Square could be misled by reading “Merchant’s Gate” and thus recalibrate in order to find the unlabeled Central Park directly across the street--should that be next?

The Central Park West façade has existing bronze letters spelling out “The Society for Ethical Culture Founded in the City of New York May 1876” as well as a banner with hashtag along with a lit sign box. The north façade, where this 8” lettering is proposed already has an individual landmark plaque with this name, a sandwich board sign with this name, and a mounted sign box with this name in addition to a flag on a pole, reading “ETHICAL”.

In terms of cumulative impact, this Individual Landmark is very self-aware!

Architect Robert D. Kohn made a conscious decision for a Spartan, largely blind Central Park West façade, and here too, the Committee believes less is more, or rather six signs is sufficient.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee does not find the redundant signage appropriate.