



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
Literary Walk, The Mall, Central Park
December 3, 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 the Literary Walk on the Mall in Central Park, an English Romantic style public park designed in 1865 by Olmsted and Vaux. The application is to install a permanent statue.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee supports this application. The statuary that populates Central Park, in many ways, defines the experience of its visitors. Allegorical women are represented among these many statues, such as, mythical beings, Juliet, with Romeo, Mother Goose, and Alice, of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. Currently, however, there are no real and historic female figures present among the park's dozens of bronzes. You would have to be "mad as a hatter" and believe in fantastic creatures to think this is acceptable. It is not truly representative of contemporary American culture, especially not the current culture of New York City.

While there were countless female New Yorker's throughout history who would make fantastic additions to the park, the centennial anniversary of the passing of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is approaching. It seems very fitting to welcome three New York women active within the Women's Suffrage Movement as permanent residents of Central Park. The proposed statue, encompassing the figures Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, is not only a symbol of gender equality, but also a respectful addition to the parks statuary.

The statue of these suffragists does not boldly challenge the park's existing sculptural tradition. It harkens back to the styles and forms of the statues within Central Park. However, its composition also "breaks the mold," differentiating it from the older works that reside here. It does not insult past artisanship through contemporary imitation. It defines itself as a worthy addition through its juxtaposition and subtle stylistic defiance. The situation of the three women upon the same pedestal, gathered around a table and interacting with each other, is a fantastic representation of the spirit of the Women's Suffrage Movement and a pleasant complement to the existing body of sculptural work housed within Central Park.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee supports this application for approval.