



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
361 Central Park West
June 9, 2020**

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 individually landmarked 361 Central Park West, a Beaux-Arts Classical style church designed by Carrere & Hastings and built in 1899-1903. The application is to construct additions, replace windows, alter entrances and replace doors, install signage, and excavate at the cellar.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee appreciates the applicants efforts to begin to incorporate some of the input from the community. Certain elements of the historic structure have improved with less modification through this exercise. We particularly appreciate the reduction in height of the roof bulkheads and removal of the south facing terrace. The opening up of the steeple as an outdoor space is still very troubling for many reasons. This space does not seem to be appropriate for children's use, as again, outdoor activities could be held in Central Park across the street.

The entry doors are still a concern. At the hearing, Commissioners suggested one set be altered for ADA compliance, yet all original doors are still slated for change. Rounded leafs of the flanking entries are being lost and the replacements are buried under the 1'6" bronze base plate. Perhaps the pairs of side doors have the same scale of decorative grillage as the center door? The pattern is also being forced into a differently shaped frame.

The windows are still a concern. The removal of the stained glass inset panels remains difficult to understand. The addition of so many floor levels will already mitigate visibility upon entry. While we can appreciate the enhanced percentage of glass remaining on site, questions remain.

- While using clear glass as the exterior protective layer, will this be a treble frame and muntin glazing system?
- How will the stained glass be thermally protected from heat gain?
- Will there be a gap at the top and bottom of the two inner frames to allow air to circulate?
- Is there any requirement to clean this treble glazing system? If so how?

The tactics employed seem more like convenience reuse than preservation best practice.

The signage is still a concern. At the hearing Commissioners noted there was simply too much. The signage remains but is now rendered in the whisper of a pale green. What stops this from being blood orange or royal blue such as the colors of your ramp in your existing facility? At this scale, they will surely detract from the individual landmark.

The roof is still a concern. With regard to the roof facing south, the reinstating of the terracotta tile roof is welcome. As the program calls for a performance space, the center of the building with the construction of the sixth floor would seem sufficiently tall to have the reconstructed lantern at the original height. The skylights are a nice feature, but how will they be maintained/cleaned? Are the solar panels enough to provide any benefit to the building or just another accoutrement to burdern the underlying landmark? There are no longer any guard rails that would enable easier access for cyclical maintenance (pigeon droppings, bird nests, and dead birds etc.) being so close to Central Park.

Lastly, how will the vertical windows of the lantern facing south be cleaned and maintained?

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee voices these many questions out of concern and because some of these questions, despite being asked for months remain unanswered. We, alongside the community look forward to a proposal we can fully appreciate and support.