



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
170 Central Park West – New-York Historical Society
June 15, 2021**

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 170 Central Park West, a Roman Eclectic style museum and library, designed by York and Sawyer and built in 1903-1908, with wings added in 1937-1938 by Walker and Gillette. This is an individual landmark that is also within the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District. The Application is to demolish a free-standing wall, construct an addition, reconstruct and alter the library stack tower, and alter the south façade.

The Landmark West Certificate of Appropriateness Committee was fortunate to preview the proposed expansion plan for the New-York Historical Society during a truly memorable presentation on April 23rd, 2021. Guarded after past proposals for towers by Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer and Richard Meier, we had steeled ourselves for another round of frank discussions about scale, use and institutional need.

Instead, we received a justifiable reasoning for a mission-driven expansion to improve collection storage, expand visitorship through added classrooms and support spaces, and bring the Upper West Side a new LGBTQ museum—that would be the first of its kind.

The architects prefaced these needs with a thorough investigation of the site history, and existing building limitations. Today's presentation clarifies these even further for additional peace of mind.

Although there was some commentary from our committee that the building could have been more daring, we believe that the proposed limestone edifice will unify the museum footprint and volumetrically bridge to the contextually zoned mid-block without overwhelming the context.

The specified materials continue a dialog between Walker and Gillette with their expansion of the York and Sawyer original, and are wholly suitable for an immortal institution such as the New-York Historical Society who will occupy these buildings for the next century more, and beyond.

Robert A.M. Stern Architects has struck the appropriate Goldilocks balance for this contested site, and has proven that it is possible to work within context, meet client needs and respect the underlying community with a timeless solution.

We fully support the proposed interventions.

Thank You.