



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
143 West 72nd Street
November 9, 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 143 West 72nd Street, an Art Deco style commercial building from within the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District. This landmark was designed by Boak and Paris and built 1935, later altered by the Penta Group Architects in 1989. The application is to modify and legalize rooftop and rear yard additions constructed without Landmarks Preservation Commission permit(s).

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee vehemently opposes legalizations of work installed without LPC permits. When property owners ignore the Landmarks Law and make changes without the Commission's guidance and consent, all too frequently, the results are, at best unremarkable, and at worst destructive. As additions, this case is the former. In either case the practice of legalizing alterations after the fact, in essence penalizes property owners who often go to great lengths to comply with landmarks regulations by rewarding those who flout the law.

Specifically, in the instance of 143, originally a row house that was twice altered, refashioned as two stories in a deco garb, expanded to three mimicking the original faceted windows of the deco Automat across the street, and expanded again prior to this latest proposed expansion we are confronted with a drab, skimmed brick wall with a service ladder as its greatest detail. One would hope that had the proper channels been followed, and with LPC guidance, the result could have been more than the current illegal blank wall.

Although the rear façade alterations are an improvement over the existing, would they be approved if they only exist in AutoCAD vectors and PDF format? Our Committee does not think so. Similarly, are multiple blind stories of stucco on a primary façade befitting? In a word, no. This may be why there is no similar site as precedent within the district (reportedly the most varied and second largest of any HD citywide) to cite as reference for such an approval.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee recommends denial of this application for legalization.

Thank You.