



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
311 West 102nd Street
November 16, 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 311 West 102nd Street, a French Renaissance style rowhouse designed by Clarence True and built in 1891-92 from within the Riverside – West End Historic District Extension II. The application is to construct a rear-yard addition.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee always appreciates reviewing Clarence True buildings. Arguably the most prolific architect on the Upper West Side, his designs are among the most exuberant of rowhouses which often expand upon the heavily adapted typology.

In 1893, a year after constructing this landmark, he wrote:

One of the striking anomalies of the City of New York where continued effort is widely exhibited in the variety, new ideas and general improvement pervading all other artistic and practical enterprises—is the wearisome sameness and unattractiveness of its dwelling houses. John Rukin has well said somewhere, that row after row of brown-stone fronts, mostly bad copies of the Farnese palace in detail, making up the living streets of the city, ought all to be torn down.

Of course, he wasn't speaking of his own work, which shouldn't be torn down. 311, like the others in the row are not the staid box or box and alternating dogleg so common to the UWS, rather these are a series of losenges...nearly full-width bays front and back which expanded living space and built character-filled homes.

Although the proposed expansion features handsome mutli-lite windows and fine masonry detailing, it is an alteration towards the common from the unique. Our committee appreciates that the overall form will be legible but laments the loss of the original clarity.

With living space at a premium, more is more, and we are reminded of Morris Lapidus in more ways than one: *Too Much is Never Enough*. The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee would prefer the applicant retain the original Clarence True volume.