



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
Kinderberg/Chess and Checkers House, Central Park Scenic Landmark
December 7, 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 Chess and Checkers, a structure built in 1952 as well as the Kinderberg, a plaza and landscaping surrounding a structure. Both elements are within the Children's District in the southern section of Central Park, an English Romantic style public park designed in 1858 by Olmstead and Vaux. The first application is to modify infill and install partitions. The second application is to replace a pergola and paving, install railings and construct a barrier-free-access ramp.

The Certificate of Appropriateness Committee received a preview presentation of this application on December 2, which clarified many finer grain questions about this application. During our discussion we learned that the ramp was chosen for this location in order to provide continuity with an existing ADA network of connected paths. Given that clarification, and barring less obtrusive ramp locations, we support this proposal.

Although this imposes a specific front and back on what was formerly a flexible pavilion, further removing it from its original experience, our Committee finds that adding additional park amenities not only enhances user experience but also improves the city. Partly repurposing the underutilized Chess and Checkers house will expand the visitors promenade from the Dairy and address a long-standing need for restrooms.

In doing so, the applicant will make Chess and Checkers accessible for the first time offering all mobilities access to a recognized promontory within the scenic landmark.

Although not a true restoration to the original design intent of a fully rustic structure, this proposal uses discerning creative license to unite different periods of the park's history while updating and improving upon them for today's park goers.

The Landmark West! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee found this proposal a public benefit, and supports approval.