



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
541 Columbus Avenue aka 61 West 86th Street  
February 8, 2022**

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 541 Columbus Avenue, aka 61 West 86<sup>th</sup> Street, a Romanesque Revival style flats building from within the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District. This landmark was designed by John G. Prague and built from 1888-1889. The application is to replace ground floor infill.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee accepts that this ground floor infill is not original to the landmark and the landmark may well benefit from its replacement.

Opening the closed in street level can only lead to a more lively streetscape and better implementation of natural resources like sunlight.

While we would prefer the ordering of glazing and doorways relate to the orders of the intact landmark above, and that the new stone follow a rusticated texture similar to the original, we are most concerned about what will be uncovered behind the currently dense, opaque façade. So much of the original has already been lost; it would be a shame if this alteration continued the trend. Throughout the drawing set, we do not see evidence of probes nor any planned accommodations for found materials such as cast iron columns, which are common at storefronts along Columbus Avenue.

John G. Prague built several structures along the Columbus corridor and we would hope that those references could serve as lessons for what might be implemented here. This would amplify the vertical masonry supports, shrink or eliminate the wall sconces for storefront gooseneck lights and thin the signband.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee recommends the applicant perform probes and work with staff to retain and incorporate any cast iron elements that may remain within.

Thank You.