



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
117 West 81st Street  
April 5, 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 117 West 88th Street, a Northern Renaissance Revival Style Rowhouse from within the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District. This landmark was designed by Henry L. Harris and built 1884-1885. The application is to legalize the restoration of the brownstone façade in non-compliance with 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. 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.

Our Committee is stymied in part because the applicant today has a long standing track record of successful interventions and updates to the landmarks in our district. And when this project was first presented in 2008, the façade was atomized under a separate permit which may well be why this permit fell through the cracks while the rest of the scope was properly permitted.

The existing façade is undoubtedly an improvement over its prior condition before the illegal work, but we wonder if it would have been approved in exactly this state. The parlor level headers read more as smooth canopies, or worse the roof of a shopping center Fotomat booth without the articulated effect visible in the historic record. Similarly, the third floor appears vacant without the baptismal font sills. The original Henry L. Harris design connected all ornament of the two primary bays vertically across three levels. This illegal design falls short.

Once lost, the LPC cannot demand these features be returned but in a façade restoration, acknowledgement of them can be incorporated into the design.

Our Committee suggests any legalization be dependent upon the applicant working with staff to correct these specific sills and headers.

Thank You.