



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!  
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee  
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
86 Riverside Drive  
September 13, 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 86 Riverside Drive, an Elizabethan Renaissance Revival style row house from within the Riverside Drive – West 80<sup>th</sup>-81<sup>st</sup> Street Historic. This landmark is designed by Clarence True, and built in 1897-1898. The application is to construct rooftop and rear yard additions.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee is very concerned by this proposal. With all but 14 structures in the district by Clarence True, the Riverside Drive – West 80<sup>th</sup>-81<sup>st</sup> Street Historic District might well be named for him. Known for creating a scene, here, True used his full toolbox for a harmonious streetscape but, per usual saved the best for last—or in this instance, the most prominent, corner lots.

Demanding attention from passers-by, and buttressing the row in two directions, 86 Riverside Drive's outsized role in the ensemble was understood by True who made it the largest of his sequence. Leaning on a rich assemblage of skylights, "parapets, gables, dormers chimneys, stepped end walls" and the like, True gave this building everything he could, but he did not give it a steel cable railing system. He purposefully gave it steeply pitched tile roofs, which demand the eye take notice, but yet no roof deck. This was all intentional by design, and insists the urban explorer take notice.

In his portfolio titled Designs of 141 Dwelling Houses, Built on the West Side, True best outlined his manifesto, "that this unattractiveness is everywhere visible along the avenues and streets of our city" and thus he sought to rectify a miscarriage of urban realm and made it his life's mission. The resulting 86 Riverside Drive is a prime example.

The proposal to interrupt these strong-willed, attention-seaking roof pitches and ornate rooftop celebrations with visible, and unnecessary utilitarian devices seen from multiple locations on the right of way and from the scenic landmark of Riverside Park and Drive, not only undermines the original but it invites similar treatment to the contiguous row which is the lions share of this district.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee deems the proposal for rooftop additions excessive and urges denial.

Thank You.