



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
471 West End Avenue
December 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 471 West End Avenue, an altered Renaissance Revival-style rowhouse, designed by McKim, Mead & White and built in 1885-86. The application is to alter the facade and construct rooftop and rear yard additions.

The Landmark West Certificate of Appropriateness Committee appreciates the revival of this long-neglected holdout, which has been altered so many times in its lifetime, it is sometimes hard to delineate elements of its original glory—thankfully we have a well-documented history. In the application, there are some attempts to highlight the original design, but the proposed plans will further remove the authenticity of this rowhouse. Raising the entranceway and returning to a brick facade on the first floor are strong steps towards restoring the primary facade to its original condition, however, why was this not pursued whole-heartedly? The proposed entrance and diapered Morse-code brick pattern does not relate in any way to the once-dominant alternating brick string courses pierced by the arches of the parlor level. Today's proposal ignores the original fan light entrance door and first-floor window. This decision lacks historical reference to anything in this district, let alone McKim, Meade, White in favor of a suburban split-level entry motif. We feel this was a missed opportunity.

Further, the applicant ignores original features while introducing even more new ones in the form of skylights—referencing four precedents, only one of which is on the Upper West Side, but not even from this district.

Our C of A Committee is concerned that with the introduction of this application, what was originally a three-story building will reach almost six stories in height. The rear yard extension also deviates from typical rowhouse-style rear yards in materials and a design that looks foreign in the context of other rowhouses of the district. Lowering this bulkhead to code minimum would begin to alleviate some of the visibility concerns.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee urges the applicant and the Commission to minimize the size of the bulkheads as much as possible and more closely reference the original design.