



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
254 West 88th Street
April 18, 2023**

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 254 West 88th Street, a Renaissance Revival-style rowhouse designed by Nelson Whipple and built in 1884 from within the Riverside - West 105th Street Historic District. The application is to construct rooftop and rear yard additions.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee would be hard-pressed to take issue with this proposal given the rooftop addition has minimal visibility from the public thoroughfare and a nearly identical rooftop and rear yard addition has been recently approved next door at 256 West 88th Street. It is encouraging to see this poorly treated ensemble of rowhouses on 88th Street getting some much-needed attention and their restoration is a treasure to this block.

Although the design of the facade has evolved to more closely resemble the historic character at the behest of the owner and our dedicated community members, our Committee believes this restoration is a great opportunity and should be taken a step further.

The proposed design implements rusticated stonework at the parlor level referencing the historic, pre-1930s tax photo condition. However, the design fails to emulate the low-arched brows framing the parlor-level openings. We see this design referenced on page 7 of the presentation on the neighboring rowhouses. Similarly, the entrance and single window in what was originally the setback bay are just off enough to be wrong. We would ask that these new elements shift to align with the windows of the two original upper floors. We urge the applicant and the Commission to reconsider these two aspects which can provide greater coherence for this hybrid design.

Our Committee recognizes that the facade work is not listed under the scope of this C of A. The facade is the most public interface of this landmark, and details of the original design only came to light during a public meeting hosted by CB7, which underscores the importance of community

participation. While we value the very capable staff of the LPC, this is but one instance where the community has improved the proposal for the betterment of the landmark, row, and block.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee recommends approval and asks the Commission and Staff to consider our facade comments about alignment and header details.