



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
256 West 88th Street
February 11, 2025**

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 256 West 88th Street, a Renaissance Revival style rowhouse built in 1884 by Nelson M. Whipple and altered in 1911 by C. Jackson from within the Riverside - West End Historic District. The application is to legalize the reconstruction of the top floor of the rear facade, construction of a rear yard addition and alterations to the front facade extension completed in non-compliance with Certificate of No Effect 22-05915 and Certificate of Appropriateness 22-06274.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee 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.

This applicant made multiple decisions, many of them errors, but these weren't mishaps or mistakes, they were deliberate, and in violation of several permits. Our Committee would also like to emphasize that there are open violations of non-compliant work done on the neighboring building, 254 West 88th Street, some of which is depicted peripherally in photos included in this legalization application. Both landmarks share the same owner, and any approvals after the fact for noncompliant work here will, by extension, allow it there. Any such approval will set a precedent for applicants to continue to disregard permits and be rewarded for it.

Our Committee is appalled by the changes implemented in violation of the original permit at the front facade. Previously approved wooden panels were replaced by stucco, an intercom system was punched into historic material even though this could have been easily (and discretely)

incorporated into the newly constructed fabric, and the overall dimensions of what was approved were changed.

On the rear facade, works done in violation include dozens of linear feet of parapet wall in lieu of the approved railing, making the overall appearance of the rear opaque and harsh. We recommend all previously approved work at the rear be constructed according to its original permit.

On the front facade, our Committee wants to see this alarming disrespect for the City's landmarks process remedied. We recommend the applicant remove the non-complaint work and replace it with previously approved work or investigate a restoration of the first two floors to their historic condition and return this block to its original beauty.

Thank you.