



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
“Victory” - Central Park
May 6, 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 the “Victory” sculpture project proposed within Central Park, An English Romantic style public park designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux and built in 1857-1858. Application is to remove a masonry plinth in the perimeter wall, install a statue and ironwork, and replace paving.

The LANDMARK WEST! Certificate of Appropriateness Committee would like to acknowledge that opportunities for impactful public art in spaces as iconic and visible as Central Park are incredibly rare. This proposal represents not only a rare artistic opportunity but also a civic one—a chance to meaningfully engage with history, memory, and public space in a way that is inclusive and thought-provoking.

The replacement of a monument commemorating a deeply troubling chapter in medical history—one that involved significant ethical violations and suffering—is both necessary and admirable. The original statue symbolized medical progress achieved at the profound expense of humanity and dignity. Replacing it with a piece of public art that invites reflection and dialogue is a step toward honoring the individuals who were harmed and acknowledging that history transparently and responsibly.

This is not a gesture of erasure, but a thoughtful act of reckoning and reinterpretation. That said, such a change demands a delicate and robust interpretive framework. We strongly hope that the site will include comprehensive and well-considered interpretive elements—contextual, educational, and accessible—to help the public understand the complex history that underpins the new work.

We urge that as part of the proposal, there be a clear and committed maintenance plan to care for the artwork. The sculpture’s materials—particularly the wrought iron and bronze—will be subject to environmental stress and human interaction, and it's vital that they are preserved with integrity over time.

Lastly, although the subject matter is troubling, we recognize that the removed statue still exists for its educational value. In that same vein, we do hope that Parks will consider retaining the soon-to-be removed base for a complete record.

Our Committee fully supports this proposal.

Thank you.