STUDENT HISTORY DETECTIVES EXPLORE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

By Andra Moss, Landmark West!

Last month a Corcoran broker spotted something unusual outside a W. 71st Street row house: a cluster of school kids, clipboards in hand, talking excitedly about stoops and pointing up at

classroom study, in Spanish and English, with child-focused walking tours and hands-on design and building projects for K-5 students from every corner and population of the Upper West Side.



"Building Detectives" on the hunt on the UWS

cornices. Was this a junior appraisers team in training? No – it was a second grade class from PS 199's "Building Detectives" on the hunt!

Each school year local Upper West Side NGO LANDMARK WEST! introduces some 1,500 elementary school kids — the next generation of preservationists and community advocates — to architecture, neighborhood history and historic preservation through its award-winning education program, Keeping the Past for the Future.

Available free of charge to NYC schools since 1995, Keeping the Past for the Future integrates

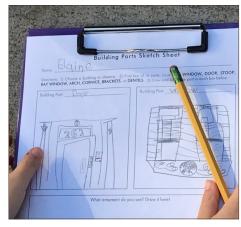
Following imaginative in-class activities that introduced basic architectural concepts and vocabulary, PS 199's crack team hit the pavement on a beautiful early November day for a neighborhood walk. Along West 71st Street, the savvy Detectives could now point out parts they saw on each façade: the dentil, bracket, cornice, stoop, window, door, and ornament. Clipboards at the ready, the kids then put these parts together to create their own detailed drawings of the brownstones — amazing!

Meanwhile, a few blocks away, a second grade class of "Local History Detectives" from PS 87 followed clues in historic photos to discover how their neighborhood and the Museum of Natural History had changed over the last 100 years. Who lived on these blocks — where did they come from and where did they shop, eat, and go to school? Was the PS 87 building the same? Who was Margaret Meade?

Piecing together such clues from the past is bringing the Upper West Side's rich architectural history to life for hundreds of kids who live and study in the neighborhood.

"Our students not only sketched and designed, wrote poetry and learned new vocabulary, they were also thinking deeply about the whys and hows and making connections between the past, present and future," enthused PS 9 second grade teacher Cindy Merkelson. "Most importantly, they had enormous fun while learning important and exciting information."

Does your family love exploring the Upper West Side? Check



out KPF's innovative workbook, My Preservation Journal, neighborhood maps, historic photos, art supplies, and more all free online at http://www.landmarkwest.org/education.

Want KPF in your school? Contact Rudie Hurwitz, Youth Education Director, at landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org.

Since 1985, LW! has led efforts to preserve and educate the public about the rich architectural heritage and special character of the Upper West Side, starting with our very youngest citizens. Today, LW! is the proud curator of the neighborhood's more than 3,500 designated landmarks (up from only 337 in 1985), including such icons as the Dakota and the American Museum of Natural History, plus blocks of brownstone rowhouses that give the Upper West Side its distinctive character. To learn more, visit: www.LandmarkWest.org



