



THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

**Testimony of LANDMARK WEST!
Certificate of Appropriateness Committee
Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission
17-19 West 88th Street
November 26, 2024**

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 17-19 West 88th Street, a building designed by Wechsler & Schmenti and built in 1968-1970, from within the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District. The application is to legalize painting the façade and the installation of banner poles without LPC permit(s).

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.

We are disheartened to see that The Dwight School, an educational institution and steward of a landmark, failed to comply with regulations. As educators, the future is watching, and they should lead by example. The already stark contrast which exists on the block created by interventions at this address in the 1960s is further exaggerated by the illegally painted white facade. It is inappropriate to paint a facade of this kind, let alone without permits. Doing so shows a disregard for the streetscape and treats the building as the backdrop to student's work instead of part of the built fabric of the district.

We also believe the installation of four banners on a residential street is excessive.

It is equally disturbing to see the applicant mislead the community when presenting to the Community Board. They did not disclose the fact this proposal sought to correct a violation and stated falsely that the facade had not been altered yet when, in fact, this was why the violation was issued. We hope to see better from applicants at the Community Board, and all information is forthcoming with accuracy and proper process.

Our Committee recommends the Commission reject this proposal. Thank you.