



**West End Preservation Society Statement before the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
regarding the CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS for 272-274-276 West 86th Street-
Riverside-West End Historic District Extension I October 1, 2013**

Good Afternoon, Chair Tierney, Commissioners and Staff. My name is Josette Amato and I am the Executive Director of the West End Preservation Society (WEPS).

We appreciate the promised restoration, by the developers, of this wonderful row of 1895 buildings designed by C P H Gilbert. They have been vacant for far too long. However, the proposed plans hold some concern for WEPS.

These buildings are situated on the major corridor of W 86th Street between Broadway and West End Avenue. The rooftop additions will reach across three of the four like-designed buildings. Designing any structure that spans the majority but stops short of one in a group is challenging. We don't feel this challenge was conquered here. These additions appear too large and out of scale for these rowhouses. They will also compromise the roofline of the block as they will be visible from the public thoroughfare, if built as planned.

The three adjoining rear yard additions will add substantial bulk without adding significant detail to the properties, forever changing the rear landscape.

More than the additions, the excessive excavation in order to have underground habitable space is questionable at best, dangerous to these foundations and those of the adjoining buildings at worst.

The substantial reduction of the current backyards by both the additions and the proposed hardscaping is not a precedent we should be setting. There were green spaces in these yards with soil and mature trees. Leaving a 10 foot wide cushion of soil across three lots is unacceptable at a time when we should be incorporating more area for plants and trees in our backyards. Given this opportunity, beautifully landscaped green spaces could be designed to not only add value to individual properties but also add to the health and benefit of an entire neighborhood.

We respectfully request the Landmarks Preservation Commission ask for significant changes in this proposed design before it considers approval.

These plans must be more compatible to the historic district and to their neighbors.

Thank you for considering our comments.