



**West End Preservation Society Statement before Landmarks Preservation Commission Application
143727 to construct rooftop additions to the Apthorp Apartments, 390 West End Avenue, Manhattan.**

Good afternoon Chair Tierney, Commissioners, Staff. My name is Josette Amato and I am the Executive Director of the West End Preservation Society (WEPS). We do not believe this proposal is the best way to proceed for one of our most exceptional buildings.

Begun in 1906, this Italian Renaissance Revival by Clinton & Russell is one of the most important New York City apartment house designs on the Upper West Side. It holds a place in our history, development and culture.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, designated by the LPC in 1969 as an individual landmark, and a recent 2013 addition to the West End-Collegiate Historic District Extension there can be no doubt that this is a true gem which needs to be respected as a whole, which includes that rarity of an enormous drive-in landscaped courtyard and its rooftop pergolas. Intended to give shade and allow residents to socialize, enjoy the breeze and views, this roof promenade, as it was referenced in 1908, was an integral part of its plan.

The proposed penthouses that would sit atop this century old building, would irrevocably change the intention of this design. Despite its setback from the Avenue or perhaps because of it, the mass of the two-story addition will loom large over the interior courtyard. It will interrupt and alter the roof line. Viewed from public thoroughfares the existing rooftop pergolas, meant to stand alone, will now be swallowed up by adjoining structures. Their designed transparency from streetview will be eliminated. This will change architectural details and impact the streetscape.

We believe this proposal will overwhelm, not enhance. Despite the claims by the applicants to respect the architecture, they will inevitably alter it. These penthouses seek to be the cherry on top of the Apthorp, but the Apthorp already has its topping. Adding something of this scope to the roof is like adding gravy to a parfait. It will detract from the visual, lessen its significance and make it harder to swallow. We respectfully request that you do not approve this addition as proposed.

Thank you for considering these comments.