



**West End Preservation Society Statement before the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding
Certificate Of Appropriateness for Borough of Manhattan: 17-0198 - Block 1248, Lot 36, Zoned R10A
555 West End Avenue
Riverside-West End Historic District Extension I**

May 19, 2015

Good Afternoon Chair Srinivasan, Commissioners and Staff,

My name is Josette Amato and I am speaking on behalf of the West End Preservation Society (WEPS).

We would first like to commend the applicant for their outreach on the Upper West Side, it is welcomed and appreciated. We also commend the Tamarkin team for their obvious affection for this wonderful 1907 school building and their mindfulness in its restoration and conversion to residential units.

This Collegiate Gothic building is one of West End Avenue's gems. It boasts many of its original architectural details, including its brick and stone colonnettes with owl corbels and crenellated caps. This project takes great care to restore what has not fared well throughout the years, like the missing segments of the parapet and its long lost medallion.

WEPS supports the decision to change the main entrance to W 87th St, allowing the West End Ave entrance to remain intact with restored historic doors. We believe a canopy to the main entrance is appropriate for the district, although we feel the proposed canopy, unveiled at the Community Board, may be too stark a contrast to the building. The proposed rear façade modifications and changes to the rear yard make for a cleaner, more open look than exists now. Replacing existing windows with all wooden ones and opening long closed windows will move to bring the façade back to life.

WEPS also supports transforming the blind arcades to windows and the rooftop addition of the penthouse. We believe it has been thoughtfully designed and is appropriate to both the building and the district, although we would be happier to see less of it from the public thoroughfares.

Unfortunately, we feel that the deliberate consciousness of the penthouse is undone by the awkward and bulky design and placement of the mechanicals. It is too much mass atop the living space and it detracts from the penthouse and the wonderful restoration of the rooftop former gym.

We understand the dilemma that exists for the applicant in regard to the mechanicals but hope that either a new configuration or a more creative design can be applied.

Thank you for considering our comments.