



**West End Preservation Society Statement before the New York City Council's Committee For Land Use in
Opposition of Proposed Legislation Intro 0775-2015**

Sept 9, 2015

Good morning Chair Greenfield and Council Members,

My name is Josette Amato. I am the Executive Director of the West End Preservation Society (WEPS) a non-profit organization founded in 2007. Our mission is to preserve and protect Manhattan's West End Avenue.

The goal of a more definitive and transparent process in Landmarks designation is one we share. Intro. 837's database would be a welcome addition to available information. Without providing additional resources, this may be difficult to achieve within the time allotted.

Intro. 775 does not move preservation forward as it should. The backlog of properties is being addressed by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the time limits stated are too narrow and provide no acceptable grounds for extension and it imposes a five year ban for failure to meet the target date. For these reasons, we cannot support it.

This bill treats all individual sites and all historic districts as equal. They are not. Had this law been in place, more than 50 historic districts, including our most recent historic district extensions, would not have made the cut. We could see future historic districts limited not by their merits but by their deadlines. According to the Council's own data, sites were not designated within this time frame. Should we not err on the side of caution to ensure more designations rather than cross our fingers and hope for the best?

The punitive provision is more dangerous. Should LPC miss this imposed deadline, sites remain off their radar for five years. In our historic districts, we would have lost a minimum of ten buildings during that waiting period. If owners view designation unfavorably, they now have five unfettered years to remove, replace or demolish that which made the property noteworthy.

Essential in this preservation process is community involvement. This ban will gut any momentum of support. It places a bottomless burden on those seeking designation. People will lose hope. That is not the purpose of legislation.

If New York is to be a world city that honors our history, culture and values preservation, we respectfully request you vote no on Intro. 775, as written.

Thank you for considering our comments.