

Testimony October 4, 2010
Gerard Romski on behalf of Arverne by the Sea
Before the New York City Council
Committee on Economic Development
Rockaway Empire Zone Boundary Revision

Good Afternoon Council Members. My name is Gerard Romski and I am the Project Executive of Arverne by the Sea. I have been involved with Arverne by the Sea since its inception in 2001. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding the Rockaway Empire Zone Boundary Revision.

The proposed local law would amend section 22-712 of the Administrative Code, which upon approval of the Commissioner of the New York State Department of Economic Development will revise the boundaries of the Far Rockaway Empire Zone within the borough of Queens.

Arverne by the Sea is sponsored by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development and is a mixed-use transit-based urban redevelopment that is part of the Arverne Urban Renewal Area. Arverne by the Sea is spearheading the revitalization of the Rockaway Peninsula in Queens, NY. .

The land where Arverne By The Sea is being constructed has been vacant and blighted for over 40 years. It truly was an "urban waste land". Indeed, packs of wild dogs use to roam the area. The area where Arverne by the Sea is located has been described as a "Highly distressed" economic area with high employment. Numerous attempts to redevelop Arverne by the Sea over the years, including a plan to build casinos and a large techno-zone failed.

The Arverne By The Sea redevelopment plan includes the installation of new public infrastructure, a new Stop and Shop supermarket, a 22,000 sq. ft. Retail Transit Plaza centered around the existing and upgraded "A Line Arverne by the Sea "subway station., a new 45,000 sq. ft. YMCA community center with pools and a baseball field, a new public charter school and approximately 150,000 square feet of additional retail/commercial space. Arverne By The Sea will also contain approximately 2,300 middle-income units (comprised of two-family home and condominiums) of which about 15% are designated as affordable. The school and additional 150,000 retail/commercial spaces are part of the revised zone and are a future phase. The YMCA is already in the Zone.

Arverne By The Sea has already won numerous awards and been hailed as one of the premier urban developments in the Country. Arverne By The Sea is being developed in a number of phases. Over 1,000 units have already been sold and occupied. Two phases remain, one of which, The Dunes, is currently under construction. The other neighborhood known as the Tides which may include over 150,000 sq. ft. of retail/commercial space, will contain up to 886 new housing units.

In accordance with the City's approved plans for ABTS many of the previously existing streets were not replaced and others, such as Rockaway Beach Blvd., were expanded and relocated. In addition, a new Beachfront Road was added to the City map and numerous changes to the Zoning Map were made after the adoption of the initial Far Rockaway Empire Zone Boundaries including the addition of numerous commercial overlays which added nearly 200,000 sq. ft. of commercial space to the area. Unfortunately, although all believed the entire Arverne by the Sea area was in the Far Rockaway Empire Zone it was not discovered until in or about May 2010 that a part of this redevelopment was not technically included in the Far Rockaway Zone.

We are requesting that the Far Rockaway Empire Zone be expanded into these contiguous areas so that the current redevelopment of this area may continue and the many public benefits, such as a new YMCA, beach front preserve and parks can be constructed. It was always the intention of the ABTS project collectively to be a Qualified Economic Zone Enterprise (QEZE) and that all parts of ABTS would be in the Far Rockaway Empire Zone.

It is important to note that the parcels now to be added to the Far Rockaway Empire Zone are contiguous with the existing zone and will have a significant potential for business development and job creation; which will continue to enhance the economic revitalization of the zone and benefit zone residents. The existing infrastructure, such as water, sewers and roadways are being expanded for approximately another \$50 million dollars of immediate investment.

The Local Board supported this request.

The City only benefits from this minor revision. There is NO negative impact to the City. Without this correction many jobs including current future jobs, will be lost and the completion of the award winning Arverne by the Sea will be, at the very least, substantially delayed.

Arverne By The Sea has generated approximately 160 direct construction jobs including construction laborers, managers, superintendents, sales staff, site cleaners, filing representatives to name a few. A substantial majority reside in the local Rockaway area.

In addition, Arverne By The Sea has resulted in hundreds of additional impact jobs. Arverne By The Sea and its construction unit has retained a number of subcontractors such as electricians, plumbers, roofers, carpenters, painters, window installers, etc. Many of these are MBEs. It is also noteworthy that just about all of Arverne by the Sea subcontractors are contractually obligated to hire 1 of 4 of their qualified workers from the local area.

Further, although not employed directly, Arverne by the Sea has and will continue to produce direct impact jobs such as hundreds of Retail/Commercial jobs. For example, the new Stop & Shop and the Retail Plaza provide over 150 new jobs.

Thank you for providing us with this opportunity. We look forward to the successful completion of Arverne by the Sea and thank you for your support.

Testimony October 4, 2010
Department of Small Business Services
Before the New York City Council
Committee on Economic Development
Rockaway Empire Zone Boundary Revision

Good Afternoon Council Members and thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding the Rockaway Empire Zone Boundary Revision.

SBS supports this bill to amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York to extend the boundaries of the Far Rockaway Empire Zone. Specifically, the proposed local law would amend section 22-712 of the Administrative Code, which upon approval of the Commissioner of the New York State Department of Economic Development, will revise the boundaries of the Far Rockaway Empire Zone within the borough of Queens.

It was determined that there was a section of commercial space including areas opened to development that were located just outside of the existing boundaries of the Far Rockaway Empire Zone.

This boundary amendment to the Far Rockaway Empire Zone is seeking the inclusion of 54.9 acres of contiguous land into the Zone - which will allow for the continuation of three significant phases of the Arverne by the Sea ("Arverne") development.

Arverne is a master planned community and a significant part of New York City's effort to revitalize the Rockaway Peninsula. The aim of the Arverne development is to improve the commercial as well as the residential character of the area; resulting in increased economic vitality for the Rockaways. The availability of the State's Empire Zone benefits was considered a significant catalyst by the developer for the original decision to build the Arverne project.

To provide a brief history for context: The Empire Zone Program was established in 1986 to benefit certain areas of New York State that faced long term unemployment and were underdeveloped. The program's intent is to stimulate private investment, business development

and job creation through a variety of financial incentives including State tax credits. None of the money used for Empire Zone Credits is paid by the City. Eleven Empire Zones were established in New York City including the Rockaways.

To become eligible for benefits, the entity needs to be within an Empire Zone Boundary; be approved by a local Zone Administrative Board and submit an application to the Empire State Development Corporation for certification. The Board reviews specific key aspects of benefit to the Zone, such as:

- Is the entity likely to create new employment or prevent a loss of employment within the Empire Zone
- Is the business enterprise likely to enhance the economic climate of the Empire Zone
- Will there be an overall improvement to the community

Upon approval by the local Empire Zone Administrative Board, an application is submitted to the NYS Commissioner of Labor and the NYS Commissioner of Economic Development. Once approved an applicant is granted Empire Zone Certification and will be eligible to take Empire Zones benefits. Examples of some of these benefits include:

Real Property Tax Credit available to Qualified Empire Zone Enterprises to claim a refundable credit against business or income taxes based on real property taxes paid in the zone;

EZ Wage Tax Credit for hiring full-time employees in newly created jobs. The benefit may be claimed for up to five consecutive years. The credit is typically \$1,500 per year.

Prior to submission of this bill, the Far Rockaway Zone Administrative Board met on June 25, 2010 and passed a resolution authorizing the application to the Empire State Development Corporation for a Boundary Revision; the Board also approved for consideration the Empire Zone Certification of applicants that would be within the expanded zone. The Certification of these applicants would be contingent upon approval of the boundary revision. The ESDC then approved the preliminary boundary revision application.

Although the Empire Zone Program sunset on July 31, 2010, projects approved by the local Zone Administrative Boards can still seek Empire Zone Certification by the State. The boundaries of the Rockaway Zone must be expanded into these contiguous areas so the applicants for the Arverne project seeking certification can be approved, which would ensure the continued redevelopment and revitalization of the neighborhood. This is consistent with the mission of the Far Rockaway Zone Development Plan.

The project according to the developers and local development organization will result in construction, management, office, maintenance and related jobs. The majority of the employees are expected to reside in New York City and particularly in the borough of Queens.

To date, the City has been working with the local and community partners in addition to the State's ESDC, and is taking all necessary steps toward the processing of the boundary revision application - and I would like to thank the Council for its assistance. Passage of local legislation will authorize the City to finalize the application and submit it to the ESDC for approval.

To underscore, extending the current Rockaway Empire Zone will help foster the continued growth of renewed economic activity within the area, and provide consistency with the original plan envisioned for the area. Accordingly, the Agency urges the earliest possible favorable consideration of this legislation.

Again, Thank you

Testimony

Jonathan Gaska- District Manager CB14

Good afternoon,

I was asked by the Beachwood /Benjamin development team to testify before you this afternoon in regards to the expansion of the NYS Economic development zone. I gladly accepted.

I have been the District manager of Community board 14 for over 23 years.

The development of the Arverne by the Sea project has forever changed an area that was the site of Over 50 years of City government neglect. The Arverne Urban Renewal area was the site of dump outs, Packs of wild dogs as well as drug use and prostitution. The Beachwood/Benjamin team has become a Welcomed partner and neighbor in the renaissance of the Rockaways. They have built quality Affordable 1-2 family homes through the” down “real estate market and they brought a sense of community and hope to the Arverne area.

The developers have kept all of the commitment they made to us prior to Community board approval. They have built a Stop & Shop super market ,they have recently completed The Transit plaza which has brought local neighborhood retail to the new ABS residents as well as the residents of Rockaway Beach and Arverne/Somerville. Construction has started on the long anticipated State of the art recreation center which will be this city’s newest YMCA and will be open by next fall.

We are looking forward to the build out of Ocean way with its mixed use development as well as the new Charter school which the development will be building

I strongly urge you to vote to include the Arverne by the sea project into

The NYS Economic development zone.

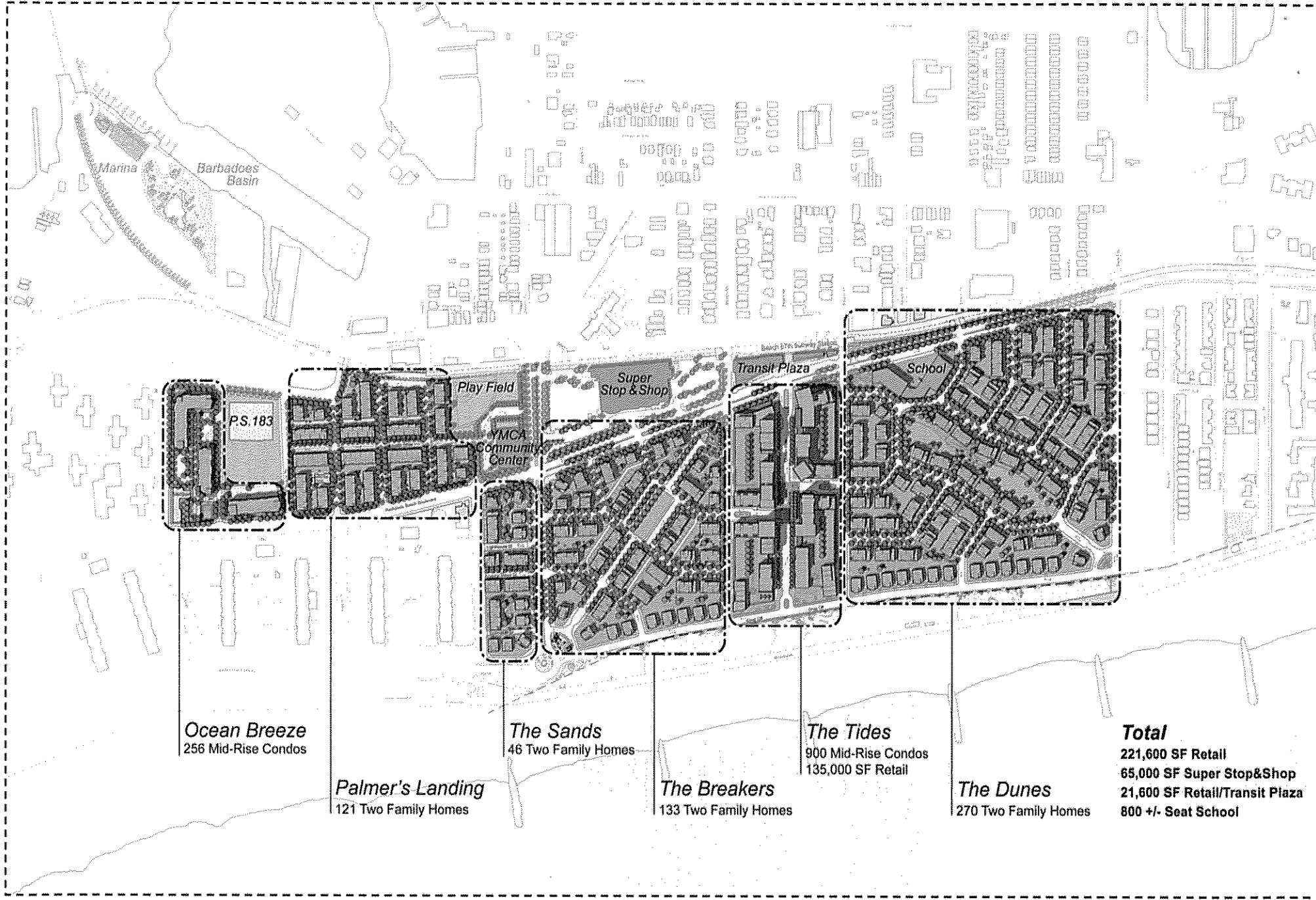
Thank You

Arverne By The Sea - April 2004



Arverne By The Sea - June 2012





Ocean Breeze
256 Mid-Rise Condos

Palmer's Landing
121 Two Family Homes

The Sands
46 Two Family Homes

The Breakers
133 Two Family Homes

The Tides
900 Mid-Rise Condos
135,000 SF Retail

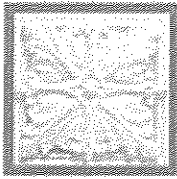
The Dunes
270 Two Family Homes

Total
221,600 SF Retail
65,000 SF Super Stop&Shop
21,600 SF Retail/Transit Plaza
800 +/- Seat School









WEST END PRESERVATION SOCIETY



Looking To The Future By Preserving The Past: Riverside-West End Historic District Ext I

514 West End Ave Suite 15B New York NY 10024
www.westendpreservation.org

The Two Major Development Phases of West End Ave Are Described in the Architectural Landscape Of The Avenue:

1) Row Houses

First wave of residential development, lasting from the late 1880s to the turn of the century; originally single family.

It is characterized by three and four-story row houses with raised basements.



Designed in picturesque groups by several prolific residential architects, including: Clarence True, C.P.H. Gilbert, Lamb & Rich, Charles T. Mott, Berg & Clark and George F. Pelham.

-Landmarks Preservation Commission

310-312-314 W 83rd St

2) Apartment Buildings:

With the opening of the Broadway subway line in 1904, land values on the Upper West Side rose so sharply that row-house development was rendered infeasible.

This condition, coupled with the growing respectability of apartment living among Manhattan's affluent citizens and the expiration of 20- or 30-year covenants originally placed on the properties to restrict development to single-family dwellings, led to the construction of several large elevator apartment buildings of seven to 12 stories in height, constituting the **second major wave of development West End section.**

Landmarks Preservation Commission



The rapid transformation of West End Avenue and the surrounding neighborhood, in which high-end dwellings less than thirty years old were demolished and re-developed with more technologically and stylistically up-to-date apartment buildings in a very short period of time, **represents a rare development pattern in the history of the city.**

W 81st St

West End Preservation Society seeks to preserve this unique area of New York City. We want our homes cared for and protected - not just as an architectural feast but as the very backbone of daily life on the Upper West Side.

We have been confronted with the reality of demolitions, eradication and modification of architectural details while we could only stand and watch our beloved boulevard bleed from the wounds inflicted.

Designation offers protection and guidance to insure the character of our neighborhoods remains intact while our communities continue to thrive and grow.



The landmarks law states that a historic district must have a 'sense of place.'

More than perhaps any other residential street in New York City, West End Avenue has this sense of place - a unified group of buildings:

- all built to the lot line
- most rising to a consistent height
- all clad in similar materials
- almost all built within a few decades of one another
- largely by a small group of architects.

West End Ave is one of the streets that define residential New York.

-Andrew Dolkart *West End Ave Survey*

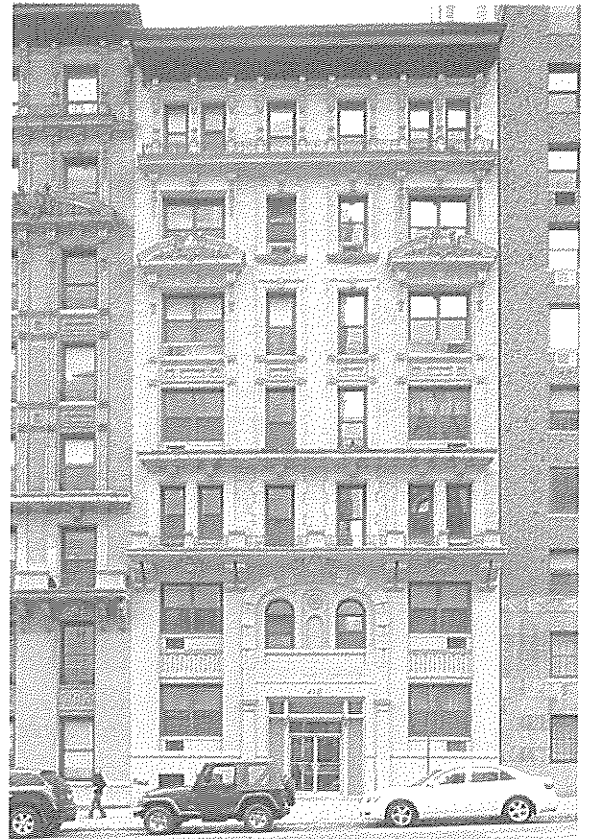
410 West End Ave

This Beaux-Arts style flat, dating back to 1898 and designed by Henry Anderson is similar to its neighbor.

Two-story limestone base with a central entrance with a pair of arched windows above, all set within a Gibb's surround.

The upper stories, faced in beige Roman brick, are ornamented with heavy terra-cotta detail:

- Cartouches
- Sculpted brackets
- Balconies
- Segmental-arch pediments
- Projecting sills.



W 79th / W 80th Sts

Broadway Fashion Building



Art Deco Style designed by Sugarman and Berger (1930-31).

The building's facade is 90% glass with white stainless metal.

Currently undergoing interior renovation for a Major Medical Clinical Practice: primary care services, specialty care services and imaging services through Weill Cornell Medical College. Opens Fall 2012.

Broadway & W 84th



520 West End Avenue

Individual Landmark

Architect: Clarence F. True

W 85th St

Built as a single family home in 1892 as the residence of Isabella and John B. Leech. At that time, West End Avenue was lined with single family homes belonging to prosperous families.

530 West End Ave

1911 eclectic design with Spanish Baroque ornament. Pink terra-cotta base and ornament on beige brick building with deep joints.

Unusual color combination typifies work of Mulliken & Moeller, as is evident at their nearby Hotel Lucerne on W 79th Street and Amsterdam Ave.

Wonderful entry with baroque volutes:

- Tapered columns, arms, flaming torches, and other details
- Lowest story faced with rusticated terra-cotta blocks with granite finish
- Brick laid in interstices
- Additional baroque detail on four and upper stories



W 86th St

272-276 W 86th Street



DEMOLITION PLANNED IN 2007 & 2008

272-278 is a row of four, five-story brick and stone houses. They were designed as single-family residences in 1895 by the prominent architect CPH Gilbert for John O. Baker. The elegant Renaissance Revival style houses are three-bays wide, each with a four-story bow front with a dentillated stone cornice with a garland frieze, and topped by a stone balustrade.

-Mary B Dierickx
Historic Preservation Consulting
272-278 West 86th Street Significance

Throughout this district, there remains a mix of harmonious apartment buildings standing tall alongside remaining townhouses.



471 West End Avenue

1886 design by McKim, Mead & White. Sole survivor of a group of six houses that extended along W 83rd St.

In 1931, it was converted into apartments, resulting in major alterations to the façade & roof.

W 82nd / W 83rd Sts

330 W 86th Street

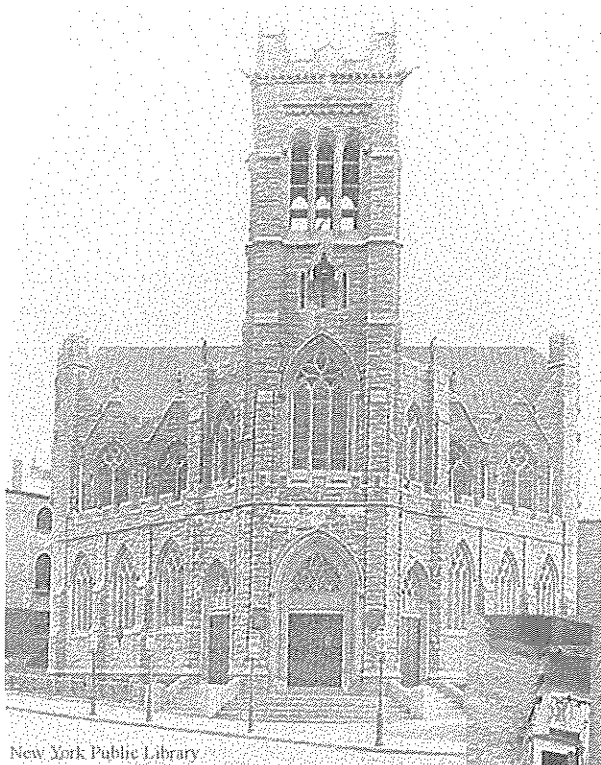


ON THE BRINK OF DEMOLITION IN 2010

All Angels' Church

Samuel B. Snook of J.B. Snook & Sons designed the neo-Gothic cruciform-shaped church, which was built of bluestone, Indiana limestone and brick from 1888 to 1890.

Among its treasures were a two-and-a-half-story Tiffany window and a pulpit ringed with limestone angels that wrapped around the banister and parade toward the top. There, a carved wooden angel leaned out and blew his trumpet into the center of the sanctuary.



DEMOLISHED 1979



Out of the ashes of All Angels' Church rose a discordant 21 story building of brick, glass and concrete.

West End Avenue & W 81st St



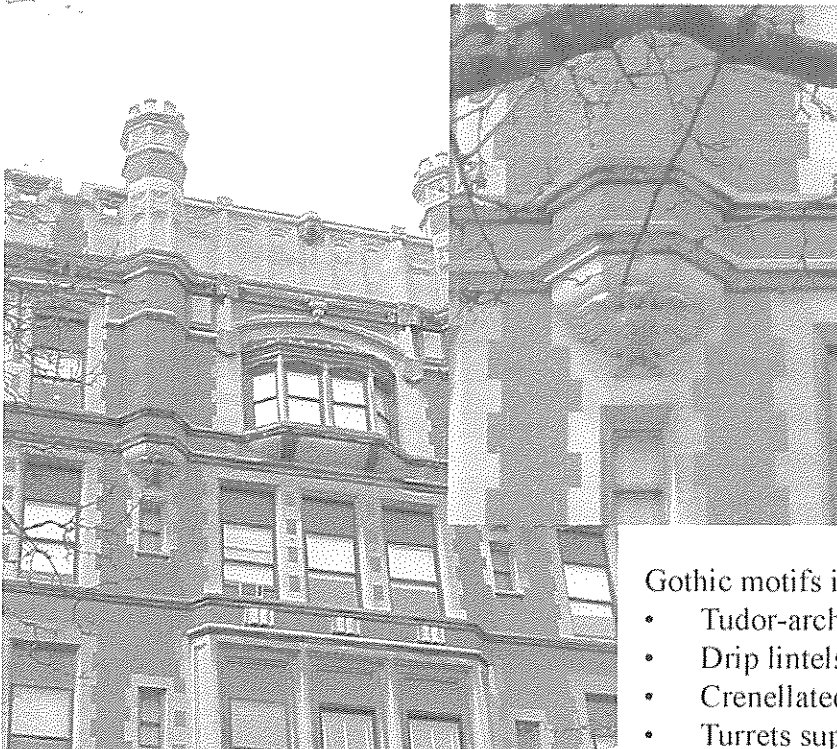
508-510 West End Ave

DEMOLITION PLANNED 2006-2012

Built in 1892, by architect G A Schellenger, these buildings remain standing from an original row of single family dwellings on the block.

W 84th / W 85th Sts

**St. Agnes Boys School
555 West End Ave**



1907 Collegiate Gothic building with limestone base, red brick upper stories and limestone trim.

Gothic motifs include:

- Tudor-arch entrance
- Drip lintels resting on angel corbels,
- Crenellated parapet
- Turrets supported by owl corbels.

W 87th St

Historic Districts Make Sense

sense of place

sense of community

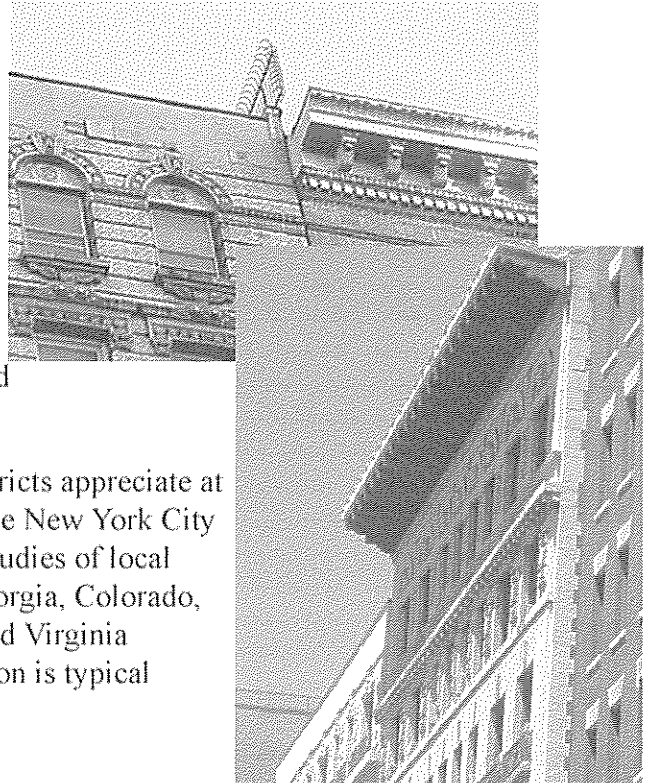
sense of history sense of economic stability sense of environmental responsibility

Along with the historic and aesthetic reasons seen here, historic districts offer developers and owners economic security and stability. Through landmark protections, owners are safe in the knowledge that their significant investment will not be jeopardized by a lack of concern or actual defacement by their neighbors.

Real estate property values are never dependent on a single home or building but are evaluated in context with the adjoining buildings and neighborhoods.

Owners will know their neighborhood will continue to exhibit the same standards that attracted them to the area, in the first place.

Studies have shown property values in historic districts appreciate at faster rates than non-designated neighborhoods. The New York City Independent Budget Office in 2003, independent studies of local historic districts in New Jersey, Texas, Indiana, Georgia, Colorado, Maryland, North and South Carolina, Kentucky, and Virginia showed that this economic effect of local designation is typical across the country.



Reinvesting in our older buildings is essential to the future of this city.

According to *The Economics Of Historic Preservation*, new construction costs are divided in a 50-50 split for labor and materials. In renovations and re-use, however, approximately 60-70% of total cost are for labor.

The labor for these projects is local labor, local artisans and sourcing materials locally. This means putting more money back into our local economy while conserving skills in vanishing trades like stone carvers, ornamental plasterers and stained glass.

Renovation and re-use is better for the environment as it is the ultimate in recycling.



West End Avenue and its surrounding streets meet the criteria set forth by the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission for a historic district.

Rather than stifle creativity or suppress change, we are choosing designation as a path to encourage vital, vibrant and thriving communities.

We have much more at stake in the ongoing success of our communities. We live here; these are our homes, renters and owners alike.

Our memories are rooted among these streets. We shop in local businesses, our children go to school and play in our parks. We hope to grow old gracefully, here. Now, we also share an enhanced common goal: the Riverside-West End Historic District Ext I.

We are the guardians for future generations. As our neighborhoods grow and change, as they inevitably will, we look for the guidance, experience and resources the Landmarks Preservation Commission can provide to retain the essence and character of West End Avenue in perpetuity.



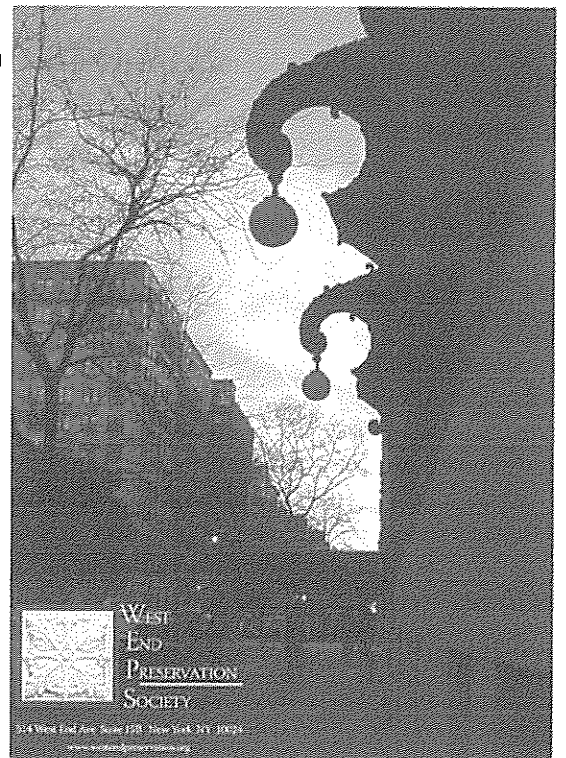
Step onto West End and there is no mistaking this wide, tree-lined, intentionally commercial free avenue for any other. Its buildings are historically and architecturally significant transcending mere bricks and mortar.

It forms an oasis in the heart of Manhattan that has been one of the most desirable places to live since its inception. Here, the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

These streets form the warp and weft that weave together an astounding tapestry of life on the upper west side, from 1880 until today. We want to care for each piece in our tapestry and not lose the bigger picture.

Designation is good for our neighborhoods and good for New York City.

What has been lost can never be restored. Let us work together to preserve what still remains.





October 3, 2012

West End Preservation Society Statement in Support of the Riverside-West End Historic District Extension I, before the NYC Council Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses

Good Morning, Chair Lander and Council Members. My name is Richard Emery and I am speaking as President of the West End Preservation Society or WEPS, a non-profit organization founded in 2007.

I am here to express our unconditional support and appreciation for the designation of the Riverside-West End Historic District Extension I, by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, and to urge the NYC Council to affirm that designation.

WEPS believes West End Avenue, from 70th to 107th St, merits the same landmark protection as those few streets included in neighboring historic districts. We commissioned a study of the Avenue, from Andrew Dolkart, Director of the Historic Preservation Program at Columbia University. Fortified with Professor Dolkart's conclusions, we submitted our request for evaluation and the *West End Avenue Survey* to the LPC, in 2009. This past June, the first proposed extension to include West End Avenue, was designated.

The designation report contains the rich details of our history. It describes wonderful architectural details and the architects who designed them, like Clarence True and George Pelham. We see the story of development on the Upper West Side, as it unfolds block by block.

WEPS fought to preserve this area for all those reasons, plus one. We live here. We want to enhance our dynamic, thriving community through designation—not freeze ourselves in time. Neighborhoods need to flourish to provide the best quality of life possible. Changes occur within historic districts all the time. Designation assures those changes will add to, not detract from, the bigger picture of our streetscape.

We have much at stake in its ongoing success.

People are financially invested. WEPS counts both owners and renters among its membership. I am President of my co-op board and designation has received the support of other boards in this district. (515 and 565 West End Avenue, 255 West 85th Street, 257 and 302 West 86th Street, for example.)

Preservation provides economic security and stability; it protects and enhances property values. It assures owners their neighborhood will continue to exhibit the same standards that attracted them to the area. It does not stress an already strained infrastructure and is at the heart of sustainable development, environmentally. Preservation provides ongoing local jobs with renovations, many of those jobs in highly skilled and specialized trades.

People are emotionally invested. Our memories are rooted among these blocks. Our children go to school here and play in our parks. We shop in local stores and eat in local restaurants. The community shapes our lives and we shape the community.

WEPS is proud to have garnered the support of our neighborhoods, through our membership and several thousand signatures on petitions and postcards, local Elected Officials, including the incredible support of the Council Member of this district, Gale Brewer, our Community Board (7), block associations, other community and preservation groups. We ask your help securing this designation, as it stands, so we may all share in its stewardship. Thank you.

West End Preservation Society

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kevin Alexander

Address: 1920 Matt Avenue

I represent: Rockaway Development and Rehabilitation Corp

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: OSCAR Williams

Address: 120-16 114 place

I represent: Arverne By The Sea Benjamin Beechuck

Address: 190 beach 67 St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sincere Smith

Address: 120-16 142 place

I represent: Arverne By the Sea Benjamin/Beechuck Companies

Address: 190 beach 67st

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 911 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 10/4/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Darryl Stoval

Address: 450 B. 48th Street / Lot

I represent: D+S Electrical Corp

Address: 450 B. 48th Street / Lot

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gerard Ronski

Address: _____

I represent: Acuone by the Sea

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Buddy BARDHAM

Address: 90-17 104th Richmond Hill, N.Y.

I represent: Banania Bealmond Company

Address: 90 beach 67th Street.

Arvona by the Sea.
Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jonathan E. Ska

Address: _____

I represent: Commun. by Bd 14

Address: 1731 W 4th Ave

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 10/4/2012

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Donald Ciampicchio

Address: 110 William St NY NY 10038

I represent: SBS

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms