

Rooms and Board.

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# Real Estate

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The New York Times/Jack Manning

Facades of some of the buildings on 78th Street between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues in proposed historic district.

## Preserving Upper West Side History

### Tests Loom on Process Of Designating Districts

By ANTHONY DePALMA

**B**OUND by place and time, the dapper side streets and avenues of Manhattan's Upper West Side evoke so strong a sense of the city's past that preservationists want to lay the protective veil of historic designation over most of the neighborhood.

All told, the proposed Central Park West Historic District, which will be discussed at a public hearing before the Landmarks Preservation Commission on Jan. 12, and

the Riverside-West End district — on which a public hearing already has been held — as well as several smaller districts and individual sites, would, if designated, constitute the largest historic demesne in the city.

This attempt to preserve the past comes at a time when the Upper West Side is struggling with the greatest changes it has faced since it shot up in the lowlands west of an inchoate Central Park a century ago. In both size and scale, this preservation effort may be the strongest test of the city's authority to protect the look of an area targeted for, but not yet designated as, a historic district.

The proposed Central Park West district runs along that celebrated avenue from 62d to 96th Streets and then generally protrudes west like an overturned bowl to Columbus Avenue. At its farthest stretch west, the district bumps against the edge of Amsterdam Avenue. The smaller Riverside-West End district encompasses the grand old buildings along Riverside Drive from 85th to

95th Streets, and over to the dour wall of apartment houses lining West End Avenue.

Included are the eclectic rowhouses on the side streets in between. Most of Broadway, the Upper West Side's Main Street, is excluded and thus able to absorb some of the development restricted in the surrounding areas.

While much of the physical Upper West Side has survived unchanged, the people who live there have undergone tremendous migrations, some forced. Since 1970, the median family income of the Upper West Side has more than doubled to over \$30,000, a figure that in 1970 would have been more than enough to cover the total price of a rowhouse. Today, the same building could cost \$1 million.

Developers, who have not been blind to the change, rushed in, building the 35-story Park Belvedere just west of the American Museum of Natural History, proposing a

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