

West Side Landmark Unit Set

By ROBERTA B. GRATZ

A West Side community planning board will form a committee to press for designations of several sites as landmarks.

The step, announced last night, was taken, according to the local board's chairman, to counter "a longstanding policy of ignoring the West Side's rich architectural heritage" by the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission.

It is unusual for a local planning board to establish a committee whose concern is seeking landmark designation for area sites. The Greenwich Village board has a Landmarks Committee, but only because the Village is a designated historic district and the committee serves as a watchdog of the Commission's administration of the district.

Rita Aid, chairwoman of the local board, which covers 25 St. to 110 St., pointed out that in the seven years since passage of the Landmarks Law, only seven individual sites and no historic districts have been designated within the board's boundaries. Others, she said, had been proposed years ago, argued at public hearings and either rejected or left unacted on.

Of the rejected proposals, Mrs. Aid continued, the Central Savings Bank building on Broadway and 17th St. across from the Ansonia Hotel, was the most notable. Central Savings, considered one of the city's finest examples of Italian Renaissance architecture, was rejected for designation in 1966. Mrs. Aid, an active participant in the battle for designation of the Ansonia, added: "We finally won that one and the Ansonia and Central Savings buildings together form the real gateway to the Upper West Side."

Mrs. Aid said the establishment of the Landmarks Committee was only the first step in "mapping out a campaign to get designated some of the community's landmarks that are increasingly endangered by real estate development in Lincoln Center to the south and an urban renewal area to the north."

"People choose to live on the West Side because it is a mixed area," Mrs. Aid said. "It is mixed racially, economically, ethnically, and it is architecturally mixed, too. We have a combination of the old and the new with the emphasis, thank God, on the old. It would be a nightmare if the West Side ever began to look like the East Side."

Crime Probe On in Quebec

MONTREAL (AP)—Several subpoenaed witnesses appeared before a Quebec inquiry into organized crime yesterday to explain their financial interests.